

"Le plus pauvre des citoyens peut, dans sa chambre, défier les forces de la Couronne, quelque humble qu'elle soit, elle peut trembler aux souffles des vents, l'orage, la pluie peuvent y entrer, le Roi ne le peut pas ; et sa toute-puissance doit expirer et s'évanouir devant l'humble-castel." Le juge, le roi doivent s'arrêter devant le seuil de la maison du plus pauvre homme ; mais le gouvernement de notre pays, au mépris de toutes les lois, s'empare de territoires considérables et soumet, sans les consulter, des milliers de citoyens à des lois à eux inconnues.

Cette cruelle politique ne fut pas oubliée, et a toujours été la cause d'un grand malaise.

A l'appui de ce que j'avance, j'aimerais à citer l'opinion de l'illustre archevêque de St-Boniface telle qu'exprimée dans une brochure publiée en 1874, mais l'opinion de ce grand prélat pourrait paraître partielle aux yeux de quelques-uns vu que le vieux missionnaire a toujours été considéré comme le constant et généreux défenseur des pauvres métis. L'opinion de ce digne homme fait pourtant autorité pour moi, mais je citerai, pour faire plaisir aux plus exigeants, un ouvrage publié par un homme dont la langue n'est pas la nôtre et dont les croyances religieuses nous sont aussi étrangères. [V. Leggo, History of the administration of the Earl of Dufferin in Canada :)

"On the 29th September, 1869, a Commission passed under the great seal of Canada appointing the Hon. Wm. McDougall, C. B., to be Lieutenant Gouverneur of the North West Territories, the appointment to take effect on the transfer. In October, he set out for Red River, having with him several gentlemen ready to receive some of the highest offices under the new Government.

"While on his way, the indignation of the people of Red River burst forth. It is an almost incredible fact that all these proceedings had been taken to transfer twelve thousand intelligent and comparatively wealthy people from one Government to another without the slightest communication with them. None of them had been consulted. They had been treated with contempt. The author of the transfer looked upon them as so many sheep who had neither feelings to be hurt, nor interest to be respected. A Government had been framed for them by the Dominion Act of May, of which they knew nothing until they saw it noticed in the public prints. A Governor had been appointed for them without the slightest intimation to them ; he was on his way to assume their rule ; surrendered by officers whose seats in and about the Provincial Cabinet and Courts had already, as they believed, been settled upon.

A system of Gouvernement had been established for them, in the formation of which they had been denied all voice, and surveyors had invaded their country sent by a power really as alien to them in this respect as the American Government would have been.

"Mr. McDougall arrived on the frontier on the 30th October, but nine days before, a barrier had been raised across the road leading to