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THE MONTREAL TRADE REVIEW.

TORONTO, CAN., FRIDAY, MAY 13, 1870.

THE NEW PROVINCE OF MANITOBA.

Such is the name, borrowed from Indian mythology, given to the first province carved out of the new north-western territories of the Dominion. The dimensions are abnormally small: made so for reasons of state not altogether inscrutable. Its description is this:—Commencing at the intersection of the ninety-seventh meridional parallel with the forty-ninth degree of north latitude, the boundary line, running due west, is coincident with that of the United States and the British territory, a distance of two degrees—about ninety miles and a half;—then northward along the meridional parallel of seventy-nine to latitude $50^{\circ} 30'$ —something over one hundred and three miles and a half;—then due east to the ninety-seventh meridional parallel—a little less than eighty-eight miles;—and then south to the point of departure. The size of the new Province will be better understood if we say it is, in round numbers, nearly a hundred miles square (about $103\frac{1}{2}$ by $99\frac{1}{2}$), for it is only round numbers that can be easily understood and remembered.

In point of situation, the new Province may be called the gate-way of the North-west. Its eastern boundary is nearly coincident with the course of the Red River of the north. Between this eastern boundary and the Lake of the Woods there is some territory available for settlement; but east of that lake, where the granite formation commences, the country is of scarcely any value, except for its timber, of which there are several varieties. And this is true of the whole country east and north of Lake Winnipeg, whatever quacks and imposters, of which there is just now an extraordinary crop, may assert concerning it. The new Province may

be called the tenderloin of the North-West, in the same sense that Cobbett called one part of America the sirloin, and another the shanks and shin-bones.

It is unfortunate that it should have been found necessary to subject the very vestibule of the North-West to an exceptional treatment; but that is now inevitable, and we can only ponder over the effects on the future development of the country which this circumstance may have. The granting of representative institutions to the new Province, at the outset, is probably the best way of quieting the discontent; but it is to be regretted that British subjects who emigrate there will be disfranchised for a whole year, and the whole political power will at first be wielded by the old residents, mostly metifs, bois-brules, or half-breeds, as they are indifferently called, a moiety of whom have been in open rebellion all winter. The chances are now almost reduced to a certainty that they will accept the new terms of union which this bill gives them, and put an end to the serio-comic spectacle of a provisional government with "President" Riel at its head, and some more crafty persons in the back-ground for prompters. The force to be sent up will, in all probability, not have to fire a single shot. We apprehend the British Government will insist on the rebels receiving the most conciliatory treatment, and that, except the murderers of Scott, if they can be found and legally convicted, nobody will be hurt. That is the present prospect; and though it does not satisfy revenge, it is much clearer than that which has just passed away.

The reservation of one million four hundred thousand acres for the half-breeds, not *en bloc*, but in scattered fragments, is in itself objectionable; but it is part of the price which the Ottawa Government has thought it advisable to pay for peaceable possession of the territory. This reservation is for all the half-breeds of the territory; and it is anomalous that those at the distance of five or six hundred miles should get it here. The question of their legal right to any reservation need not be discussed. In any case, a large portion of the soil of the territory will have to be granted free to settlers, and it is not unreasonable that the children of the original settlers should be guaranteed a home near their parents and relatives. But it is difficult to understand why that part of the population which is not of mixed blood should be denied the same privilege. Ill-natured people may say this is rewarding rebels and punishing the loyal; and if it should come to be believed that rebellion is the only thing that pays out there, the example may prove contagious.

If it be necessary to submit the Province of Manitoba to an exceptional treatment, the smaller it is the better. The rest of the territory can hereafter be dealt with on better terms. But the whole of it has yet to be purchased from the Indians, and there is some danger of exciting their susceptibilities by our passing laws to dispose of their lands before we have extinguished their right in them. Some other Riel may possibly enter on this inviting field. The dealing with the claims of the Indians will be a more delicate task than is generally supposed. These errant people are constantly pushing upon one another's domain, and it would be no new thing if we had two tribes of Indians claiming the same land. That occurred in the case of the Huron reservation in Upper Canada. On the ground out of which this new Province is carved, the Nathaways—popularly but erroneously called Crees—met the Chippeways, in the latter part of the last century, and the latter were regarded as intruders. They are both of the same original stock, and are known by American writers as of the Algie race, a generic term, made by a contraction of the word Algonquin, used by the French. But their interests were totally separate.

This territory will require a large outlay before we can count on any returns. We have bought out the Hudson Bay Company; and with their superior knowledge of the country, and the Indians, they may be able, practically, to monopolize the fur trade for some time. We have to buy out the Indians. We are—shall we say?—throwing a large sop to the followers of Riel. We are to bear three-fourths of the unknown cost of a military expedition to the country. Communications have to be opened over a vast extent of difficult country, between Lake Superior and Lake Winnipeg; and so distant is the government from the scene of action, that it is sure to fall into the hands of charlatans. The world has never seen so imprudent a sham as the holiday exploring expedition of 1857. The result was a bundle of wholly unreliable, and worse than useless information; a map without latitude or longitudes; distances greatly inaccurate—Winnipeg river stretched out thirty miles beyond its real length—and almost all the other distances exaggerated. The whole thing was an impudent fraud on the public.

But we shall outlive all this, and in the end get a return for the great outlay on the territory. Without this assured hope, there would be nothing to console us for the sacrifices we are making, and shall for some time be obliged to continue to make, on account of this North West territory.