

April 16, 1874

to urge that Scott's death was not a murder, he having been tried by six unprejudiced persons, the sentence being approved by six or seven others, and carried into effect by many others—all unprejudiced. If Riel were guilty of murder, the whole people of the district were murderers, for, as authorities said, when a crime is participated in by a large number of persons it loses its distinctive character and becomes a political offense.

He spoke of the convention which met there to prepare a bill of rights—a convention made up of people of all nationalities—and there Riel got up in his place and said that it was for the Government of which he was the executive to name the delegates, if it was resolved to send them, and he himself would name Ritchot and Scott. After this a Provisional Government was formed, of which, by a unanimous vote of the French delegates and a vast majority of the English ones, Riel was made President. After this Government was formed came the execution of Scott, under the authority of this Provisional Government.

After this execution of Scott, people in Manitoba, the most interested in the matter, did not shun or ignore the Government, but continued to sit in deliberation as before, and on the 15th March passed a resolution condemning the Imperial Government and that of Canada for ignoring the rights of the people; but still expressing their loyalty to the Crown of England. He quoted at length from Alexander Begg's book in support of what he said, saying that he (Mr. Begg) was not a man who had the greatest friendship for Riel and his Government.

Mr. SMITH (Selkirk) intimated that this was not the Mr. Begg who had been sent up with Mr. McDougall.

Mr. MASSON continued that Mr. Riel was supported in his last election by the most respectable men in Manitoba, such as Messrs. Girard and Royal, and certainly could not have been a common murderer. Besides, today they were occupying positions of honour in the Councils of the Crown, men who sat with him at the Council Chamber, who had approved the sentence of Scott.

He dwelt upon the fact that the man who, three years after the death of Scott, had, for personal spleen, been Riel's accuser, sat upon the Grand Jury before whom the indictment was laid, and proceeded to say that if there was any man who should be moderate, it was the hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Schultz), who had been the principal cause of these troubles there, he having caused a division between the French and English people by not obeying an order communicated to him. Mr. Schultz professed to be a loyalist. As for Riel and his associates, they anxiously awaited the arrival of the troops, and assisted them on their way over the Portages.

He said that he would vote for the amendment to the amendment, no matter what its effect might be, as he believed an amnesty was involved, and should be proceeded upon without any side motions. After what the Minister of Justice had said as to the wrong course pursued by the hon. member for Hastings North (Mr. Bowell), he thought that gentleman should have taken the matter in hand.

He (Mr. Masson) should, of course, vote against the motion of expulsion. He did not believe that Riel had disobeyed the order of the House, because it had not been conveyed to him in the usual

way by the Sergeant-at-Arms. Furthermore, Riel was not a fugitive from justice, but rather from injustice and a conspiracy to bring him before a Court before which he could not obtain justice, as had been proved by the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Cunningham), and by the course which had been pursued towards him in the Courts of Manitoba.

Mr. BÉCHARD (in French) considered that the course which had been pursued in this House in regard to this matter was one which was not consistent with the dignity and respect of this chamber. The whole trouble had been caused by charlatans who pandered to the very worst passions; but happily there were those in this House who were not going to be influenced by such men. He denounced the hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Schultz) as one of these, his perfection in this particular having been such as to merit his admiration. As for the Attorney General, who had given evidence before this House, he was better known in his Province by the word "traitor", an appellation which he thought could not be improved by any remarks which he might offer.

He discussed the motions before the chair, adding that the proposition of the hon. member for Châteauguay (Hon. Mr. Holton) was the best which this House could adopt under the circumstances. He complimented the hon. member for Bagot (Mr. Mousseau) upon the brilliancy of his entry upon public life, but believed that his motion, as had been explained by the Minister of Justice, was going somewhat beyond the record.

Mr. JETTÉ said that he would vote for the motion of the hon. member for Châteauguay. He thought the motion proposed by the member for Bagot (Mr. Mousseau) would not serve the object he had in view. The hon. member for Hastings North (Mr. Bowell) had cited English precedents for the expulsion of members from the House; but the right of expulsion had often been exercised in such a manner that historians and other writers, in after years, when free from bias and under the guidance of reason, had condemned it. In nearly all the precedents which had been cited action had been based on the report of the same Commission but there had been nothing of that sort in this case.

The only case bearing any resemblance to this was that of Sadlier; but, while he had been charged with a crime concerning which there could only be one opinion, Riel had been an actor in what was for a time a very successful rebellion, and the head of a *de facto* Government. He held that if Scott had been tried and convicted in a regular way, the offense of which Riel had been guilty was a political crime and should be dealt with accordingly. If Riel had been guilty of a felony, his extradition from the United States could be obtained; but he believed that if a demand for his extradition were made on the American Government they would refuse to send him back, as they would only consider that he had been guilty of a political crime.

He argued that when there was one party in the House which contended that the offense was murder, and another that it was only a political crime, they should pause before taking any decided action, and the motion of the hon. member for Châteauguay would give them an opportunity of doing this. (*Applause. Cries of "Call in the members".*)