

natives of the northern isles of Scotland and Scandinavian in origin. The threatened considerable addition to the present formidable indebtedness of the Dominion—by the purchase of the Hudson Bay Company's illegal claim to a country which already belongs to Canada—alone impels me to state what I believe to be the truth.

It is but justice to admit that, whatever inertness and lack of public spirit may have been chargeable against this Company in former times, that can no longer be laid to their charge since their amalgamation with the Northwestern Company. Their liberal assistance to the overland explorers in the Arctic regions, besides fitting out several expeditions conducted by Dr. Rae and Mr. Dease, whose daring enterprise, scientific acquirements, and extensive discoveries have added so much to geographical knowledge, were acts worthy of a great Company whose prosperity is so necessary to the welfare—not to say even to the existence—of the feeble remnants of the red man.

But, admitting all that can be urged on this head, it by no means follows that we should silently acquiesce in the alienation of our territory. Great Britain, in her treaties with her revolted colonies,—in which Canada was neither consulted or represented,—despoiled her of her fairest provinces. Previous to the revolutionary war, all that extensive and valuable territory northward of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi, about half of the States of New York and Vermont, and the greater part of Maine, formed part and parcel of Canada,—or New France,—occupied by Canadians and their Indian allies long previous to that war, and even after it had ceased, and only finally bartered by a treaty in favor of British interests so late as 1795. It is too much to expect us to sit with folded arms while the best part of what was left is being lost.

Had Simon McTavish been spared to attain the ordinary term of human life, it is much more likely that the Hudson Bay Company would have found it sufficiently difficult to maintain their positions in the vicinity of the Bay itself, than have

been permitted to pass its natural boundary and possess themselves of the Red River territory.

At this time—1800-04—the universal belief was that the Hudson Bay Company had no exclusive privileges, no monopoly or territorial proprietorship, and no legal existence as a corporate body. Satisfied of these facts, the Northwest Company built, armed, and equipped the schooner "Beaver," 150 tons burthen, loaded her with provisions and other merchandise for Indian traffic—and sent her round to Hudson Bay, where, during the short summer-season, her supercargo traded with the Indians at the very door of their rivals, and under the guns of their forts. Loud complaints were indeed made by the Hudson Bay Company, of violation of their rights; but, these being unnoticed, no redress was obtained.

Mr. MacTavish, the prime mover and energetic director of the great Canada Fur Company, died, at a comparatively early period of life, in the summer of 1804,—a loss to the Northwest Company, to Montreal, and to all Canada, severely felt ever since. The Grand Portage, with a width of two degrees of latitude across the whole continent, would not have been shamefully delivered up to the United States, in violation of the boundary stipulated by the treaty of 1783. By this the line was to pass from the discharge of Lake Superior, through the centre, to the farthest extremity at the River St. Louis; and not, by coasting the northern shores, to leave its large islands, and nine-tenths of its surface, to Americans.

Although the business of the Northwest Company was, for several succeeding years, apparently carried on with the same success, future events proved that its decline and final dissolution may be attributed to the death of the only person capable of defending its interests against the pretensions of its powerful rival; pretensions which—after Lord Selkirk had joined them—were shortly to be backed by deeds of violence and bloodshed till their object was attained. That nobleman, after visiting the Highland colony he had conveyed to perish by fevers,