

da, all your civil and religious rights will be respected."

Lord Granville, having heard of the proclamation and of the good-will of the Canadian authorities, wrote as follows to Sir John Young on Jan. 8th, 1870: "I observe with great satisfaction the anxiety manifested by the Canadian Government to avoid any collision with the insurgents in the Red River settlement and to exhaust all means of explanation and conciliation before having recourse to force."

Unfortunately the difficulties of communication prevented the knowledge of the proclamation being imparted to the interested parties at Fort Garry, and, on the other hand, the same difficulty of communication left the Canadian officials at Pembina in the greatest uncertainty. Expecting that the affairs were progressing, as understood when they left Ottawa, they thought they had but to proclaim the transfer and secure by force their entry in the Northwest. They acted in accordance, but the result was altogether contrary to their hopes, and the difficulties were increased to such a lamentable extent, that Lord Granville expressed his regrets to the Governor-General in a despatch dated 20th Jan., 1870: " * * I much more seriously regret the proclamation put forth by Mr. Macdougall and the commission issued by him to Colonel Dennis * * * Those proceedings do not render Her Majesty's Government less desirous of the restoration of tranquility under the authority of the Dominion, but they have certainly enhanced the responsibility of the Canadian Government."

The trouble had assumed such a dangerous aspect that the Federal authorities demanded the help of men who could command the confidence of the disaffected. The Very Rev. J. B. Thibault, Vicar-General and Colonel de Salaberry were sent to Fort Garry to make known to the people the good disposition of the Government towards them. A few days later on, Donald A. Smith, Esq. (now Sir Donald) was sent as special commissioner under the great seal. The three were to act jointly with Governor Mactavish to secure the pacification of the country and to advise the old settlers to send delegates to Ottawa, to make known their grievances and desires. The Rev. Mr. Thibault was to distribute the proclamation on the 6th of December, but only after conferring on the subject with the Hon. Wm. Macdougall, who was supposed to be still at Pembina. The hon. gentleman had left, so the Rev. Mr. Thibault could not see him, and the box containing the copies of the proclamation

was deposited at Pembina, pending new instructions. The three gentlemen sent from Ottawa did their best to establish confidence in Canadian rule. A convention of forty representatives from the different districts of the Red River settlement was summoned for the 25th Jan., 1870, at Fort Garry, with the object of considering the subject of Mr. Smith's commission and to decide what should be the best for the welfare of the country. The convention assembled and, under the presidency of Judge Black, discussed the affair, for which they were summoned, until the 10th of February following, and they framed a Bill of Rights.

By a resolution passed unanimously, the convention accepted the proposition made to send a delegation.

The proceedings of the convention came to a close by the nomination of a Provisional government having a president, a secretary of state, etc.

The president of the Provisional government made known to the convention his choice of the persons he would appoint as delegates of the Northwest, and the secretary of state notified these gentlemen of the choice the president had made of them. The following is a copy of the letter addressed to one of the delegates:

PORT GARRY, Feb. 21st, 1870.

Rev. J. Ritchot, St. Norbert, R.R.S.

Reverend Sir,—I am directed to inform you that you have been appointed by the President of the Northwest Territories as co-commissioner, with John Black and Alfred Scott, Esquires, to treat with the Government of the Dominion of Canada upon terms of confederation.

I am, reverend sir,

Your obedient servant,
(Signed) THOS. BURN,
Secretary.

Unfortunately, the troubles were not at an end; within a few days most regrettable circumstances occurred, which prevented the fulfilment of what had been decided. The delegation was postponed and Bill of Rights put aside.

At the same time Bishop Tache was requested to proceed to Fort Garry. The proclamation of the Governor-General was handed to the prelate with request to give it to the insurgents, in order to determine them to make known their grievances, complaints or desires to the Governor-General. Special importance was attached to a delegation, and to obtain it Sir John A. Macdonald, in his letter to Bishop Tache, 16th February, says: "In case a delegation is appointed to proceed to Ottawa, you can assure them that they will be kindly received and their suggestions fully considered; their expenses coming here and returning, and while staying in Ottawa will be defrayed by us."

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