

RED RIVER SETTLEMENT.

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explanations which they could have furnished. I am satisfied, however, that before that time it was too late to do any thing for the present season; for, in fact, before the communications from Earl Bathurst on this subject appear to have reached Quebec, the machinations which excited my apprehensions had been completely carried into effect. I beg leave to lay before your Excellency a narration of the occurrences at the settlement on Red River up to June 15th, drawn up by Miles M'Donnell, Esq. a gentleman of unquestionable honour and veracity. And I cannot entertain a doubt, that upon a perusal of this document, your Excellency will be satisfied of the urgent necessity of that protection, for which I applied to Earl Bathurst in February last, and that you will see the propriety of taking measures without delay; so that on the first opening of the navigation next Spring, a force may be sent up sufficient to prevent the renewal of similar acts of violence. As the narrative which I inclose embraces a variety of circumstances which are not immediately relevant to the points in question, your Excellency will permit me to direct your attention particularly to the 30th, 31st, 32d, 33d and 36th paragraphs; from which you will observe, that in the beginning of June last a body of armed men, under the influence of the North-West company, issuing from their fortifications, and commanded by persons actually in their employment, made a violent attack upon the settlement which had been formed upon my lands at Red River, that they not only fired upon my servants, wounded several of them; and besieged Mr. M'Donnell in his house, but also seized unoffending settlers, who were peaceably engaged in the cultivation of their farms, carried them away by force, so as to prevent their tilling the ground at that most important season of the year, destroyed the crops which had already been planted, killed or drove away their cattle, burned their houses, and destroyed all the improvements which had been effected by their industry.

Your Excellency will also observe, from the 35th, 39th and 41st paragraphs, that after Mr. M'Donnell, unable to resist the superior force of his antagonists, had surrendered himself a prisoner, the remaining settlers were compelled by the North-West company to quit their settlement, and fly for protection to the factories of the Hudson's Bay company on the sea coast.

I can well believe, that there are individuals among the leading partners of the North-West company, whose character and principles are too honourable to allow them to be concerned in such nefarious proceedings; and I have no doubt that the company at large will attempt to deny all participation in these outrages, and to ascribe them to the spontaneous movement of the individuals immediately concerned. Of the validity of this vindication it will be for a court of justice to decide. But the necessity of a military force to repress such violence in future, must be equally evident, whether the North-West company succeed in exculpating themselves or not. Even if the outrages which have taken place should prove to have been the wanton act of the persons immediately engaged in them, and prompted by no higher influence, it would surely be most disgraceful to the British government if these lawless ruffians should be suffered to make open war upon their fellow-subjects, to drive them away from their peaceful and lawful occupations, and deprive them of their rightful property, and their means of subsistence. Your Excellency will observe, from the 29th and 40th paragraphs, that these outrages were not committed by any of the Indian natives, but by Canadians, mixed with the bastard sons of others, who have thrown off the restraints of regular society, and cohabiting with Indian squaws, have formed a combination of the vices of civilized and savage life. These vagrants came originally into the country as servants to the fur traders; many of them are still in their immediate employment; and those who have been discharged remain in a state of dependence on the North-West company. The real Indian natives took no part against the colonists, but on the contrary were disposed to assist them. With respect to the conduct of Mr. Miles M'Donnell, I beg leave to observe, that this gentleman is not to be considered (as Mr. M'Gillivray seems to insinuate) merely as the agent of an individual or a chartered body. He was governor of the district, deriving his authority from the crown, through the medium of those to whom the appointment is delegated by a royal charter; by which also the powers of civil and criminal jurisdiction are conferred. And as there is no other judicature to try the crimes which may be committed in that district, or the questions which may arise there between man and man, it was by no means from a wanton disposition to assume authority, that Mr. M'Donnell was induced to exercise the powers with which he was invested. As to the proceedings which Mr. M'Gillivray calls in question as illegal, I have no doubt that when the matter is fully investigated, the conduct of governor M'Donnell