

report from Sir William Eyre, the Lieutenant General commanding the forces in North British America. He states that "the Red River settlement consists of about 8,000, of whom 2,000 are Irish, English and Scotch; the remaining 6,000 all or mostly half breeds. They are generally good shots, skilled in the use of firearms, and good horsemen. A local force or militia of at least 1,000 men could be easily "organized and embodied." The barracks are perfectly habitable, and the post defensible, except against heavy ordnance, which it would be difficult to bring up against it. Norway is the chief horse depot of the company; the position might be made impregnable. All communication between Lake Superior and the Red River is now, according to Sir G. Simpson, impracticable for any body of troops. "A few individuals might go, but not any force. There is abundance of provisions in the country; no want need be apprehended; water is good, wood abundant. The climate is severe in winter, but healthy at all seasons." These few extracts may suffice to show that a settlement once established would be safe from danger from without. As regards the fur trade in this district, I need scarcely say, that if you take the land from the Hudson's Bay Company, the monopoly that goes with the land will expire. To attempt to maintain there the monopoly would be impossible, and only give rise to perpetual feuds. In fact, I must be pardoned if I say that there is good reason to believe that that monopoly has practically in a great measure ceased to exist in those parts. Major Seton reports from Fort Garry itself—"The Hudson's Bay Company have long since abandoned in practice their pretensions to exclusive trade in this district and far beyond it." Captain Palliser writes word:

"That monopoly there is unattainable now and forever more; that the people engaged in the illicit trade are inhabitants of the Indian land, and born on its soil. Most of them half-breeds, they are British subjects, and whatever the rights of the Hudson's Bay Company under the charter, they think it a very hard case that they should be debarred from trading in the land of their birth. There appears to be a shadow of justice in this complaint; but just or not, the opposition exists and nothing short of extirpating the people engaged in it can ever stop it."

Indeed, this report is so far confirmed by Mr. Shepherd himself on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company, that he states in a letter to the Colonial office:—

"That the diversion of the fur trade is carried on by the inhabitants of the Red River Settlement, who, regardless of the Hudson's Bay Company, conduct an illicit trade in spirituous liquors and furs in various parts of the country."

I think, therefore, there can be no doubt that when the company yields the land it must resign the monopoly. It will be an after-consideration by what regulations the trade should in that case be carried on, so as to maintain order and peace, and respect that considerate humanity which is due to the Indians. But now comes the difficulty. The land we would thus dispose of for colonization is within the charter of the Hudson's Bay Company, and if that charter be valid, the land belongs to the company, but not the monopoly of the trade, except as includes the right of ownership to keep others off the land. The law officers of the late government, men of very high distinction, consider,—