

No. 4.

Mr. Taylor to Mr. Porter.

No. 441.]

UNITED STATES CONSULATE,
Winnipeg, September 12, 1885. (Received September 17.)

SIR: Inclosed is a petition of Louis Riel to the President.

I forward the original, thinking that such a course may be expected under the circumstances.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

JAMES W. TAYLOR.

[Inclosure in dispatch No. 441 at Winnipeg.]

Petition of Louis Riel to the President.

Jésus, sauvez nous.

Marie, intercédez pour nous.

Joseph, priez pour nous.

[NOTE.—Above on first page, reverse page blank.]

To His Excellency — CLEVELAND,

President of the United States and to His Excellency's Cabinet :

MR. PRESIDENT: The undersigned, your humble petitioner, a foreigner by birth, became American citizen about the 16th day of March, 1883, at Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana.

He is a native of the Northwest Territory, in British North America.

He has the honor to submit that the British Government gave, two hundred years ago, to a company of adventurers, the monopoly of the fur trade in the Northwest, thereby depriving the Northwest of its right and of the advantages of trading with the world, and depriving the world of its right and of the benefits of trading with the Northwest.

That the giving out of such a monopoly over the Northwest left that country, new as it was, altogether at the mercy of the Hudson's Bay Company; the more so that, from its having been constituted at first as a magistrature over its own servants, the same company was made, in the course of time, by imperial authority, to grow up as the government of the Northwest.

That this measure kept the Northwest confined to a strict "blooms" during six or seven generations: was a cause of continual calamity to the Territory itself; of damage to the adjoining countries, an insult as well as an injustice to the world at large.

And that, having been resorted to without reason whatever, consequently without justice at all, it constitutes the British Government guilty of an extraordinary crime against humanity.

The undersigned, your humble petitioner, submits that therefore the British Government have forfeited long ago all title and right of governing the Northwest.

The undersigned has the honor to submit that in '69 the Ottawa government envying the lands of the Northwest, bought them (so to speak of the transaction) from the Hudson's Bay Company, which did not own them: that the Hudson's Bay requested one-twentieth of the Territory for the perpetration of the sale, and was granted it; that the transaction, all against probity, as it was, received the sanction of the British Government, and was carried out under its careful attention; that in so doing the British Government replaced the oppressive calamitous fur-trade monopoly by one completely ruinous, as it gave the Hudson's Bay Company a still greater hold on the resources of the country than before, and as it established the government of another colony and of different interest master of the whole land, and at liberty to dispose of it, as of its own soil, as of its own property, without advantages in return, without any compensation.

That the Dominion began immediately to survey the Northwest, to cut the old surveys and ignore them, to cut roads through private properties;

That the Canadian surveyors at that work were soldiers under disguise and numbering some four or five hundred;

That the Dominion having at the same time in view to usurp the rule of the Northwest, made up a group of men, gathered from the vicinity of Ottawa, furnished that group with five hundred carbines, called it the Northwest Council, exported it, and