

that these shall be secured; they have interests, and they demand that these shall be protected. Too far removed to impress them with a consciousness of its power, Canadian authority has, by a series of blunders, forfeited their respect. Before acquiring lawful jurisdiction, or title of any sort, it commenced the work of surveying the territory—a measure which, in the circumstances, looked aggressive, and was calculated to awaken fears among the population as to the security of their tenure. It sent in functionaries and servants whose pretensions were an insult, and whose method of dealing with obstacles provoked jealousy and ill-feeling. To make matters worse, the governor appointed to rule over them was accompanied by a large staff of officials, selected by the Canadian government with no consideration for anything but its own pleasure. A cut-and-dry government was to be imposed upon the people—a government of whose *personnel* and character they knew literally nothing, and the approach of which seemed to them a sign of conquest, or at least of a bargain and sale, involving themselves and their interests, but over the terms of which they exercise no control. Against this state of things the insurrection is directed. Precisely how far it has enlisted the resident population, and to what extent the contest is between the people of French origin and of those more strictly British, we have yet to ascertain.

A mistake will be committed if, in considering the causes and scope of the insurrection, some allowance be not made for the variety and strength of the American influences which have long been in operation in the Red River region. Separated from Canada by a vast wilderness of rock and swamp, the inhabitants of the Territory have no communication with the outer world, save through the United States. They have been accustomed to carry their products to St. Paul for sale, and have derived thence their supplies. Their country was all but inaccessible until Minnesota enterprise established the means of communication. Minnesotians gave them stage coaches and a steamboat, with their attendant mail and commercial facilities; and the marvelous progress of the Minnesota railroad system holds out to them prospects of cheap and rapid intercourse with the market on which they mainly depend. All these are powerful agencies in the work of Americanizing the people. They know Canada only as a far-off country, which has never done anything for their benefit, and which proposes to make the purchase of the Hudson's Bay Company's possessions a pretext for inflicting upon them an authority having no sympathy with their wants or wishes. On the other hand, they know Americans as their neighbors and friends, as their co-workers and customers, with whom they are identified in all that relates to the future of the Northwest.

This feeling is, of course, reciprocated. Our pioneers and trappers and hunters know the people engaged in this insurrection, and will not stand idly by if the Canadian authorities attempt to carry out Mr. McDougall's threat and enlist Indians in their cause. If that government finds itself able to transport troops and supplies over its own territory via Fort William, and so manage to retake Fort Gary and put down the rebellion by regular force, there, for a time, the matter may end. The task may not be easily accomplished. These Red River men may draw aid and comfort of a very practical kind from the bold, adventurous element which forms so large a proportion of our frontier population. But if, after all, Canadian authority vindicates itself with the help of British troops, as against the insurgents of the Hudson's Bay Company's territory, there will be no disposition to begrudge its glory or to question its title. Thus circumscribed, it is a quarrel with which we have no direct concern. We shall cultivate neutrality after the approved British fashion.

But if it is to be made, wholly or in part, an Indian war—if the savages of the plains, whether of the Saskatchewan or of the country south of the border, are to become auxiliaries of British power in the effort to crush the opposition of those who by law are British subjects, the aspect of the case will be altogether changed. An Indian war on the frontier would really mean hostilities on both sides of the line. With the savages incited to savagery, the basis of a common cause between the frontiersmen would soon be found. A complication so aggravated would involve contingencies which few of us like to contemplate, just now. The fact that these contingencies will be precipitated upon us whenever the Canadian officials make Indians parties to their quarrel, should suggest to them the exercise of greater caution than has been apparent in the reported action of some of their emissaries.

The first condition of safety in this respect is the recall by the Dominion authorities of Mr. McDougall, whom the Red River insurgents refuse to receive as governor, and who is now an exile under the stars and stripes at Pembina. His position is at once anomalous and absurd. Unable to enter the Territory over which he was appointed to rule in state, he and his ministers and staff have sought refuge on American soil. Therein they have displayed prudence, if not dignity. As exiles, however, they have no right to profit by the opportunities of Pembina to inaugurate plans for waging war against the insurgents. If Mr. McDougall may with impunity convert a log shanty in that lively town into his headquarters as a Canadian official, with the view of carrying on hostilities in behalf of Canadian authority, why may not Mr. Riel, the leader of the insurgents, make his headquarters in another Pembina shanty? And why may