

SIR GEORGE CARTIER AND THE NORTH-WEST.

To the Editor of the British Whig:

Sir,—My only excuse for writing on the subject of the North-West is, the experience I have had in that country, the knowledge of its vastness and resources acquired, the interest in the welfare of its people inspired, and the hope that some day I may be able to make it my permanent home. It seems to me that when others, who never saw that country, who know nothing of its inhabitants, present to the public their imaginations, I have a better and a juster claim to speak; for I have seen that country in summer and winter, I have wandered over its great prairies, and along its rivers, sweeping away eastward from the base of the Rocky Mountains, for more than 2000 miles, to Hudson's Bay; I have been with its inhabitants, its aborigines, its mixed races and whites; in summer I have been enchanted with its boundless verdure, in winter I have marvelled at its boundless desolation; for many days I was held a captive by the Insurgents in Fort Garry, and when liberated by the Insurgent Chief, had but two hours to prepare to make a journey of five hundred miles in the dead of winter.

I think, therefore, under all these circumstances, I have a right to give my impressions on the recent Legislation for that country, and the policy of the Dominion in reference to it.

The inhabitants of Manitoba consist of three classes: 1st, white people of various origins—English, Scotch, Canadians, Americans and others; 2nd, mixed races, commonly called half-breeds, the children of intermarriages between the whites of different nations and the Indians; 3rd, the last class consists of the aboriginal Indians. When this great North-West was handed over to the Dominion, the case stood thus: The Imperial arrangement protected the rights of the people of the Hudson's Bay Company, but it made no provision to protect the half-breeds or the native Indians. All were transferred, but not all protected! The consequence was that dissatisfaction ensued. I believe this dissatisfaction was fanned into a flame by parties from the United States, and others going amongst the French half-breeds, and taking advantage of their simple faith and the circumstances of the country, representing to them that their lands would be taken away, their rights not respected and themselves enslaved.

How far the Hudson's Bay Company's employers sanctioned or countenanced these representations it is impossible for me to say. But the gates of Fort Garry were left open, and the Insurgents who had been made to believe that the people of Canada were their inveterate foes, walked into the Fort unresisted, and later, the Canadians were imprisoned and made to suffer because they were Canadians.

In this state of things—in this sad condition—the question of the North-west came before Parliament, and the Manitoba Act is the result.

I do not mean to express an opinion of the whole Act. It was an urgent measure, and had to be pressed on rapidly. There was no time to consider all suggestions. A state of civil war existed, life and property were insecure, the Fenians were mustering their forces to assist the Insurgents, and the savages like hungry wolves, were flock-

ing round the outskirts of the settlement, before whom loyal and disloyal might both have perished alike. A law thus passed was not likely to be perfect, and, for myself, I should sooner find fault with it, for what it omitted, than for what it contained.

There is one section, however, upon which much censure has been bestowed, and great indignation expressed, which, from my knowledge of the people of that country, appears to me such an act of justice that it cannot fail to make a favorable impression. I allude to Section 31st, which secures protection to the half-breeds. It reads thus:—"And whereas it is expedient towards the extinguishment of the Indian Title to the lands in the Province to appropriate a portion of such ungranted lands to the extent of one million, four hundred thousand acres thereof, for the benefit of the families of the half-breed residents, it is hereby enacted, that under regulations to be from time to time made by the Governor-General in Council, the Lieutenant Governor shall select such lots or tracts in such parts of the Province as he may deem expedient, to the extent aforesaid, and divide the same among the children of the half-breed heads of families, residing in the Province at the time of the said transfer to Canada, and the same shall be granted to the said children respectively in such mode and on such conditions, as to settlement and otherwise, as the Governor General in Council may from time to time determine."

The effect of this Section is to secure to the children of the half-breeds 1,400,000 acres of land. But who are the half-breeds? It has been said that these half-breeds are Roman Catholics, the pupils of the priests, and that this endows the Church of Rome and establishes Church and State in Manitoba. There is not a vestige of truth in these allegations.

I have been there and I know that the majority of the half-breeds are Protestants. The only object, therefore, of this Section of the Act is to protect half-breeds of all kinds, and without regard to their religion.

And this protection for these mixed races was absolutely necessary, for the country will rapidly fill up with people of the European races, and as a weaker, and in some instances, less intelligent people, the half-breeds would inevitably be unable for the competition which must arise.

Their protection was just, generous, Christian, and will commend itself to all who love peace, and feel that the weak are entitled to rights as well as the strong.

So far, the Act is undoubtedly just. But what I regret is that more direct protection was not secured to the aboriginal Tribes. The Indians in all the vast territory are loyal, most devotedly attached to the Crown, and penetrated, saturated even, with a thorough hatred of the Americans. They also were the original owners of the country.

When the insurrection broke out they were faithful to the Crown, and they are faithful still, and it would have fared hard with some of the Canadians who fled, but for the loyalty and humanity of these Indians. When the Legislature meets again, it is to be hoped that as great generosity will be shown to the whole blooded as well as to the half-blooded, and that these Red Races may not be driven back, *back, back*, till they are starving on the rocky mountains or buried in the arctic snows.

In a future communication I will have a few remarks to make on the controversy which has arisen on this subject and which has been so hostile to Sir George Cartier.

S. D. M.

Kingston, July 5th 1870

THE EARDLEY COMPANY OF VOLUNTEERS.

When the first note of "call to the front" was raised on the occasion of the Fenian "invasion," the loyal yeomanry of this fine township, promptly offered their services as Volunteers. They were not then organized. Since then they have been so; and have been steady at drill under their officers, Capt. Lawler and Lieut. Robert Conroy.

On Tuesday, the 12th inst. in the Market Hall, Aylmer, they were formally inspected by Lt.-Col. Bacon, the Brigade-Major of the Military District to which the Northern Ottawa belongs.

The muster, 51 out of 55 on the roll, was a very full one and in every respect a very fine one; a finer and more servicable looking body of young men for the work (and the Ottawa Valley is the best nursery in the world for such work) we have never seen, and we have seen many.

After some very creditable drill by Lieut. Conroy, under the eye of the Inspecting Officer, he was pleased to say that he was "very well satisfied with the Company," and that he would have much pleasure in reporting them fit for arms and uniform.

Under the present regime "volunteering," as we all know is not as it used to be, a sort of mere "playing at soldiers," and the youngest in that band, we feel assured, knew and felt the fact. After all, it is in the heart of its young that a nation has its bulwark.

All honor to the "boys" of Eardley!—*Aylmer Times.*

AMERICAN TAXATION.

Our neighbours across the lake are a free people. Under their great and glorious constitution they can either follow the example of the South Sea Islanders and go naked, or adopt more civilized habits and wear clothes, provided that when indulging in the latter luxury they pay the following taxes:—

"Hat—silk plush, 60 per cent.; riband 60 per cent.; alpaca lining for brim, 50 cents a pound and 35 per cent.; leather inside, 35 per cent.; muslin lining, 7 cents a square yard; glue, 20 per cent. Coat-cloth, 55 cents a pound and 35 per cent. *ad valorem*; silk lining 60 per cent.; alpaca used therein, 50 cents a pound and 35 per cent. *ad valorem*; buttons, if worsted, 20 cents a pound and 35 per cent. *ad valorem*; worsted braids 50 cents a pound and 35 per cent. *ad valorem*; velvet for collar, 60 per cent.; red worsted padding, 50 cents a pound and 35 per cent. *ad valorem*; hemp padding, 40 per cent. Pantaloon—cassimere, 50 cents a pound and 35 per cent. *ad valorem*; cotton used therein 5 cents a square yard; hemp cloth for facing, 40 per cent.; metal buttons, 30 per cent. Vest—silk or satin, 60 per cent.; linen lining, 35 per cent.; silk buttons, 60 per cent. Under shirts—if silk, 60 per cent.; if worsted, 50 cents a pound and 35 per cent. *ad valorem*. If cotton, 35 per cent. Drawers, the same. Shirt—cotton, 5 cents a square yard; linen for the front, 35 per cent. Buttons—35 per cent. Boots—raw hides, 10 per cent.; tanned leather, calfskin, 30 per cent.; if patent leather, 35 per cent.; soles, 35 per cent. Neckcloth—if silk, 60 per cent.; Pocket-handkerchief—silk, 60 per cent.; if cotton, 35 per cent. Gloves—kid gloves, 50 per cent. Pocket knife—35 per cent. Watch—25 per cent. Silk watch chain—60 per cent."