

ure they were very difficult to make. Though the agent of the Hudson Bay Company, and therefore bound to carry out the policy of the Company, as to not encouraging the entrance of too many religious bodies on Red River, he is said to have had a hand at the same time in framing the petitions forwarded to London by the Presbyterians of Kildonan. The Rev. John Ryerson, on his visit to Red River in 1854, tells of his going down to Kildonan to hear a lecture from Judge Thom "On the state and progress of the Red River Settlement," and the hearer says that the subject was treated "with great eloquence, beauty and ability." In the Council held at Fort Garry, the judge was a leading spirit; and we are told that by the people generally "his influence was regarded as disproportionately great." The Council being looked upon as the instrument of the Hudson's Bay Company, it is quite evident that his being a ruling influence in that body would subject him to severe criticism by the people, and that to a certain extent his influence as a Judge would be lost. As already stated, the relations of the settlers on the Red River to the Hudson Bay Company had become very unsatisfactory. The Company, by their charter, no doubt had a monopoly of the fur trade. But the mass of the people being hunters, and finding it difficult to gain a living otherwise, hardly recognized this—and indeed the Company had not enforced their claim. For some reason, according to some, on Judge Thom's advice—it was decided to enforce the right of Company. Accordingly, in 1844, Governor Christie issued two proclamations, one of them requiring each settler, before the Company would carry any goods for him, to make a declaration that for the past winter he had not, directly or indirectly, engaged in the fur trade; the other proclamation required the writer of any letter, which was sent by post to write his name on the outside, and should he not have made the declaration required as to trading in furs, then his letter must be deposited in the office, open, to be examined before being sent. These were tyrannical and severe enactments. Cases are cited in which settlers, traders and even missionaries, were caused much inconvenience and loss by these stringent regulations. The governor and the legal adviser, Judge Thom, naturally received the greater part of popular disapproval. The French half-breeds took the lead in the agitation against the Company. A strange story is related as to the way in which the English half-breeds who had hitherto supported the claim of the Company, came to throw in their lot with their French fellow-countrymen. A company officer had left his two daughters at Fort Garry to be educated. One of them was the object of the affection of a young Scotch half-breed, and at the same time of a young Highlander. The young lady is said to have preferred the Metis, but the fond parent favored the young Highlander. The Scotchman, fortified by the father's approval, proceeded to upbraid the Metis for his temerity in aspiring to the hand of one so high in society as the lady. As love ruined Troy, so it is said this affair joined French and English half-breeds in a union to defeat the Company.

During the five years after the publication of the proclamation, a constant agitation was going on among the French. The leader of this uproar bore a name better known to the present generation as that of his son, Louis Riel. Riel, the elder, was born at Isle a la Crosse, and was the son of a French-Ca-