

On the 26th of November, 1869, the Colonial Secretary sent in the Queen's name a telegraphic dispatch to the Chief Imperial Officer in British North America, Sir John Young, which formed the staple of a royal proclamation, issued by him, under the privy seal, and not as governor-general of Canada, bearing date the 6th December, directed especially to the people of the Red River district, expressive of Her Majesty's regret at the circumstances of disorder which had arisen, assuring them that she relied upon their loyalty to herself, pointing out that the proposed union with Canada when it should take place would be for their benefit and advantage, and guaranteeing them, upon the sacred honor of the Crown, that upon such union all their civil and religious rights and privileges would be respected, their properties secured to them and their country governed as in the past under the British laws and in the spirit of British justice. Copies of this proclamation and Earl Granville's message upon which it was based were immediately forwarded to Mr. McTavish, governor of Assiniboia, to the Protestant Bishop of Rupert's Land, and the Vicar-General of the diocese of St. Boniface, who acted in the place and stead of the Catholic bishop during the absence of the latter at Rome; while shortly thereafter, Mr. Donald A. Smith, the present Lord Strathcona, then at the head of the Hudson's Bay Company, in Canada, who had so long, so honorably, and so actively been identified with the Red River country and people, patriotically volunteered his services and was dispatched by Sir John Young to Fort Garry also bearing with him copies of the proclamation, and a letter from Sir John Young authorizing him to state to the inhabitants that Her Majesty's Government had no intention of acting otherwise or permitting others to act otherwise than in perfect faith towards the people of the Red River Settlement, and declaring the desire and determination of the Imperial Cabinet to see that, in the words of the ancient formula, "Right shall be done in all cases."

There was necessarily great difficulty in those comparatively remote days of communicating in mid-winter between places so distant as Ottawa and Fort Garry—no telegraphs, no railways, no roads, and no means of procuring definite information as to the progress of events, and, moreover, there was at Fort Garry no Bishop Tache to influence in the right direction the half-breeds, amongst whom he had dwelt for forty long years of his earnest, arduous, most useful and unselfish life, and over whom he had obtained an almost boundless influence. Urgent messages passed between Sir John Young at Ottawa and Earl Granville, in Downing Street, and the conclusion was reached to send for him immediately. He was in attendance at the Ecumenical Council at Rome, participating in its imposing ceremonies and deliberations when an urgent despatch summoned him to Ottawa. True to his duty, as a servant of God, and a most loyal and devoted subject of his sovereign, he asked and obtained the necessary leave to absent himself from further attendance at the council, at once responded to the call and repaired to Ottawa, where he arrived on the 9th of February, 1870. At Montreal he met Sir George Cartier, who told him of the serious aspect of affairs and begged him to help undo the mischief. He remained some ten days at Ottawa, was summoned by Sir John Young to several private audiences, sometimes alone, while at others Sir John Macdonald and Sir George Cartier were present. He attended meetings of the Privy Council, at which all the Canadian ministers participated, and after becoming well acquainted with all the unhappy circumstances which had arisen in his absence, and the views and policy of both the Imperial and Colonial Governments, fixed his departure for the 17th of February. The day previous to his leaving the capital he had a long and final interview with his excellency, who handed him the following autograph letter:

Ottawa, February 16, 1870.

"My dear Lord Bishop,—I am anxious to express to you before you set out the deep sense of obligation which I feel is due to you for giving up your residence at Rome, leaving the great and interesting affairs in which you were engaged there, and undertaking, in this inclement season, the long voyage across the Atlantic and long journey across the continent for the purpose of rendering service to Her Majesty's Government, and engaging in a mission in the cause of peace and civilization."

"Lord Granville was anxious to avail himself of your valuable assistance from the outset, and I am heartily glad that you have proved willing to afford it so promptly and generously."

"You are fully in possession of the views of my Government and the Imperial Government, as I informed you, is earnest in the desire to see the Northwest territory united to the Dominion on equitable conditions."

"I need not attempt to furnish you with any instructions for your guidance beyond those contained in the telegraphic communication sent me by Lord Granville on the part of the British Cabinet, in the proclamation which I drew up in accordance with that message, and in the letter which I addressed to Governor McTavish, your vicar-general, and Mr. Smith."

"In this last I wrote: 'All who have complaints to make or wishes to express, are called upon to address themselves to me, as Her Majesty's representative, and you may state with the utmost confidence that the Imperial Government has no intention of acting otherwise than in perfect good faith towards the inhabitants of the Northwest. The people may rely that respect and attention will be extended to the different religious persuasions, that titles to every description of property will be carefully guarded, and that all the franchises which have subsisted, or which the people may prove themselves qualified to exercise shall be duly continued and liberally conferred.'

"In declaring the desire and determination of Her Majesty's Cabinet you may safely use the terms of the ancient formula—'right shall be done in all cases.'

"I wish you, my dear Lord Bishop, a safe journey and success in your benevolent mission."

"Believe me, in all respects, faithfully yours,

"John Young."

Upon arriving at Fort Garry Bishop Tache found matters in a most precarious condition, infinitely more complicated and dangerous than he had anticipated, or been given to understand, or than was within the knowledge, or even contemplation, of Sir John Young or the Canadian authorities, events having arisen which rendered the situation almost inconceivably difficult to deal with, even to one of his extraordinary tact and resource, his vast experience, and knowledge of the half-breed character, and his undoubtedly potent and recognized influence over them, both as a man and as a priest.

If Riel was insane at this time as has been contended, and from his extraordinary conduct might perhaps somewhat reasonably be inferred, the people certainly did not so consider him, the more ignorant and credulous amongst them believing him to be "inspired," and he was quite sufficiently crafty to seek to create and strengthen that delusion, with a view to leading them to believe that he was greater than Bishop Tache, who was but a mere man; his vanity was incredible, his ambition boundless, and whatever his defects, mental or otherwise, he had many of the qualities of a leader of a semi-civilized community with just sufficient education to lend color to his assumption of leadership and his claim to be "a young Napoleon."

Moreover, he was inclined to be defiant of Bishop Tache, as he knew the Bishop would necessarily seek to guide the people in the path of law and order, and legitimate, and not his usurped authority. With him, and such as he, in lesser degree of intelligence and influence amongst the half-breeds, Bishop

Tache had to deal. Then, too, there was O'Donoghue, who had of late become influential; a noisy and dangerous demagogue. This man also was nominally a Catholic; he was a pestilence politically and otherwise, a Fenian, disloyal to British authority and institutions, actively instilling his sentiments of disloyalty into the people and in communication with the Fenian organization in the neighboring states of the Republic, with a view of their participating in and taking advantage of so rare and excellent an opportunity; while above all and beyond all, known to Bishop Tache best of all, and dreaded by him most of all, were that terrible menace, the Indians of the plains, watching and waiting and ready to spring and to strike. In the exigency he could not command, it was almost unwise to admonish: his only course was gently to counsel, to temporize, and, most deftly, almost imperceptibly, to lead, bearing constantly in mind that at any moment there might come a cataclysm, and that when the worst came to the worst, then indeed he must act with vigor and commanding influence, and alone, and that when all else failed there only remained as a last and final resort, to prevent the indiscriminate slaughter of every white inhabitant of the Red River Settlement and the vast territories beyond, the all potent, miracle-working, life-saving and soul-preserving sign of the Cross; and for such and in such dire extremity was he ordained priest of God, and had labored for forty years missionary amongst the Indians. Viscount Wolseley considers he was simply a scheming, crafty, self-seeking prelate and so designates him. If he will consult Lord Strathcona, who also took his life in his hand and together with Bishop Tache saved the situation, he will learn differently from the one man now alive who best knows and who can inform him into how great an error he has fallen and of the grievous injustice he has done, no doubt without sufficiently weighing his words, but also without proper knowledge of the facts, for Lord Wolseley is above disporting them, of set purpose or malice prepense.

In the end, and mainly if not entirely through the extraordinary influence, force of character and wisdom of these two great and deserving men, the provisional government was guided, swayed and persuaded into sending delegates to Ottawa to lay their grievances before Sir John Young and to negotiate directly with the Dominion authorities, Messrs. Black and Scott, being selected for the purpose, together with Father Richot, who was, of course, amenable to the Archbishop and to reason, and whose judicious choice was, no doubt, due to that discreet personage; and on the 23rd of March they set out for Ottawa, Father Richot bringing with him the "List of Rights," as prepared by the de facto government. What took place at Ottawa is matter of history, and culminated in the passage of the Manitoba Act, as the result of conferences between the delegates, Sir John Macdonald and Sir Geo. Cartier, extending from the 23rd April to the 2nd of May, the bill being introduced by Sir John on the latter day.

And now to deal with Colonel Wolseley's part. It can be done very briefly. He now expresses himself to the effect that all ranks of the force which he subsequently took up, necessarily including the commanding officer himself, regretted that "they were not attacked at any place between Lake Superior and the Red River." Let us see what view the British Government, in whose service he was, and whose wishes and policy were doubtless made known to him, took of matters.

Prior to the arrival of the delegates at Ottawa, events had transpired at Fort Garry which forced the hand of the Dominion Government, and numerous telegrams had passed between the Imperial authorities and Sir John Young, with a view to the organization of this military expedition, although the British Government had declined to assent to the use of force "until reasonable terms of settlement such as would meet with the saac-

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