



Notable Canadian Monuments



X.—The Red River Rebellion

THE great Canadian West for many years was practically in possession of fur-trading companies, The Hudson Bay, a chartered company, having absolute control over the whole territory in 1670. The North West Company was organized in 1773 and aggressively pushed business westward toward the Pacific. In the early part of the nineteenth century for various reasons the former company brought from Scotland a number of colonists who settled on the Red River. The new company, however, made things rather unpleasant for these new settlers, who with endurance and patience withstood unwarranted attacks. But in 1816 such rivalry existed between the two companies that it resulted in the Imperial Government interfering in the interest of the country. Soon afterwards these two rival companies united, taking the name of the first company.

Besides the Indians whose "heritage had been entered upon," there were many half-breeds, the result of intermarriage of the French with the native tribes, and these all spent their time hunting on the vast plains, receiving ready

like in disposition" revolted in 1869 led by one of their number named Louis Riel, "a man of energy and eloquence." They started to fight "the shadows of events which might never come." The Governor, the Hon. Wm. McDougall was the object of their scorn, which proved futile, whereupon in the latter part of that year they took possession of the Hudson Bay Co.'s supplies at Fort Garry, soon afterwards calling the people to a convention to consider the situation.

Riel seemed determined to have a Provisional Government of his own, and the English speaking settlers assured the Dominion Government of confidence in its jurisdiction, asking it to establish peace. A Commissioner, was therefore sent, Donald A. Smith (now Lord Strathcona), to settle difficulties. Being a man of rare skill and tact he was specially qualified for his arduous task, and besides he had lived in that territory for a number of years, being respected by all classes. Securing an audience with Riel an open air meeting or convention was held from which delegates were sent to the Dominion Government, but Riel continued on his mad career, making arrests, etc.

The people were roused to a sense of the reality of their position by a lamentable incident on the Red River in the shooting of a young man by one of Riel's spies, and were thoroughly incensed when one of the prisoners in Fort Garry, named Scott, was unmercifully shot.

Troops, however, sent by the Government did not arrive until the summer, taking up their position on the Red River near Kildonan, afterwards marching into Fort Garry to find that Riel and his followers had vacated it, the leader fleeing to the United States. Mr. Donald A. Smith was administrator of Government until the installation of the first actual Governor under Canadian rule, the Hon. Adam G. Archibald, and his "cabinet."

Space will not permit to enter into detail concerning the making of the new Province, but "the Dominion will never wholly realize how much of the comparative peace she has enjoyed on the vast plains of the West she owes to the statesmanship of Governors Morris and Laird, aided by such men as James McKay, the Revs. John McKay, George MacDougall, Father Lacombe, "and others whom the Indians loved and trusted." Into the quiet of the prairies have grown large cities and towns connected by splendid railways, and thriving communities exist at Regina, Calgary, Edmonton, Prince Albert and Battleford.

"When Canada first took over the great North-west Territory, only a corner out of its vast area had been organized into a province called Manitoba; but in 1872 an Act was passed in Ottawa providing for the government of the unorganized territory by the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, and a council appointed by the federal authorities." Acts were shortly afterwards passed establishing for the first time in the West a mounted police force, and fuller organization of the North-west Territories followed in 1876.



SOLDIERS' MONUMENT ON MAIN ST., WINNIPEG.

sale or exchange for their furs from the Hudson Bay Company.

Settlers from the older Provinces of the Dominion began to take possession of the land without much ceremony at times, which tended to estrange many already there. Things were shaping themselves towards a confederation, which culminated in 1867 when the older Provinces came together, and steps were soon taken to secure the surrender of the charter held by the trading Company to the Imperial Government. The Company were to receive a stipulated sum of money and certain reservations, and the territory to be transferred to the Canadian Government.

The ideals of the statesmen who formulated the plan were good if they could have been judiciously carried into effect. Confederation brought untold benefits, but thousands of people had populated the new territory and were unapprised officially of steps "taken to secure and guard their rights and privileges." Dame Rumor produced uneasiness, and surveying parties going from place to place "setting up their stakes" considerably perplexed the people. The canny Scotch settlers waited patiently, feeling that ample justice would be afforded them, but the French half-breeds, excited and "war-