

The one event which has always remained uppermost in the minds of the Ontario people in connection with the uprising, is the murder of Thomas Scott. Poor Scott was tried by a people who spoke a language unknown to him, and condemned to be shot without a word being heard in his defence. The sickening details of his death were soon written over and over by pens that were fired to a white heat by the shocking news. The story as told without embellishment in a Manitoba history is briefly as follows: "Shortly after mid-day, on the fourth of March, Scott was summoned to execution. He was calm and prepared to die. He requested time to bid his fellow-prisoners farewell. This was granted him, and he took final leave of those who had shared in his captivity. Being bound, he was conducted outside of Fort Garry and made to kneel in the snow a short distance from the walls of the Fort, when he was shot like a dog, by a party of six, under command of Adjutant-General Lépine; the whole party, it is said on good authority, being drunk at the time. Scott's last words were, 'I am ready,' and immediately after Lépine gave the signal, and the unfortunate man fell, pierced by several bullets. He uttered an exclamation as he fell, and on approaching the body it was found that life was not extinct. Some one in the crowd spoke up saying, 'Put him out of his misery,' and one of the party named Guilmette discharged a revolver at his head." This is enough of the painful story. Whether he still lived and had to be killed in one of the bastions of the Fort afterwards, is uncertain. That a little red cutter appeared at the gate of the Fort one moonlight night, with two men who passed the sentry, dug the body up from its temporary burial place, and carried it off in the conveyance between them to German Creek and there sunk it, loaded with chains, into the Red River, is almost generally believed. But these are subsequent events. The awful picture of Scott's death rivetted the gaze of the people in the East. To all it was apparent that the dominant party had mercilessly butchered a prisoner for some alleged insubordination, but Scott was an Orangeman as well, and sectional pens dipped in gall did not tire of exaggerating the horrors of the scene. So much has this incident engrossed the attention of the people in the Eastern Provinces that until this day a Manitoban would not expect from his friends in the East an intelligent estimate of the constitutional causes that led to the Rebellion, or an appreciation of it as an uprising against authority asserted without judgment. Even if this lamentable execution had not taken place and drawn off all attention from the causes of the Rebellion, and the constitutional demands which were made by the Métis (the French half-breeds), the remoteness of the Province itself, the prevailing ignorance, both as to the people who were being forced into Confederation and the mode of confederating which was being proceeded with under the provisions of the British North America Act, sufficiently account for the absence of sympathy with the movement which has always existed in Ontario.

In Manitoba the weight of opinion might almost be said to be approaching the other extreme. Louis Riel can never be regarded as a hero; the murder of poor Scott makes that impossible forever. Nevertheless, it must not be understood that Scott was inoffensive and harmless. It requires but a slight knowledge of his character to show what a thorn in the flesh he was to the Métis, and that his conduct could not fail to get him into trouble sooner or later. In the first place, he was one of the so-called "Canadian Party," which seems to have lost no opportunity of making itself thoroughly detested by the French and French half-breeds in Winnipeg and the parishes along the two rivers. By the time of the Rebellion an intense hatred had grown up between this Canadian-Orange Party and the Métis, who gave allegiance to the priests. This feeling had been forming ever since 1862. In that year an English Church clergyman in the Village of Headingly was arrested for alleged criminal conduct towards a half-breed girl and lodged in Fort Garry gaol—a low log building which has since disappeared. Early in the following year the reverend gentleman's parishioners forcibly liberated him from his log prison; but he had not been free long before the village schoolmaster found himself incarcerated in the primitive bastille for conspiring to effect his pastor's release. Next day, however, the Church members came around, mounted on thirty horses, to demand the schoolmaster's release, and showed that they were in earnest by tearing up the palisade with great vigour, breaking through one end of the gaol and liberating their co-religionist. The Battle of the Boyne was not crowded over more than was this triumph, and henceforward the Canadian Party delighted in showing their small hatred towards the Métis and in indulging in high-handed treatment of them. This spirit seems to have found full vent when it became known that the Hudson's Bay Company had transferred their control to Canada, and the "Canadian Party" felt that their hands would be strengthened by the incoming government. Scott is said to have been one of the most impetuous of this party. He hated Riel and made no attempt to conceal his feeling. He was twice imprisoned

and broke gaol each time. He struck "the captain of the guard," and heaped insults on the Provisional Government individually and as an aggregate concern. He kept all the prisoners in a high fever of insubordination, surrounded Riel with an armed party at "Coutu's house," on one occasion kicked him out of a tavern in a most humiliating way, and worst of all, when freed from imprisonment in Fort Garry, delighted to clamber up its dreadful walls and grin at the warlike party within, very much to their discomfiture. There seems to be no doubt but that poor Scott, without in any way disparaging him, helped to secure for himself his death sentence. That he was bewildered with surprise when the sentence came, shows that he thought the Métis would submit to his abusing them with impunity. There seem to have been other reasons for determining upon his death, however, besides mere personal wrongs. One object was to frighten the Canadian Government into an appreciation of their power, and another to secure submission to the rule of the Provisional Government by punishing insubordination, and so prepare for an expected attack of the Indians—"in a word," so say Riel and Lépine in their letter to Governor Morris in 1873, "to secure the triumph of peace and order, which it was our duty to establish throughout the settlement, we had recourse to the full authority of Government." It might be added that their Provisional Government was the only authority in the country at the time. Governor McTavish, thinking that the Hudson's Bay Company had handed over all control to Canada, declared his power at an end before he should have done so; and the Hon. Wm. McDougall, armed with his commission, which was to take effect at the date of the transfer of the territory, through an unfortunate misunderstanding was trying to cross the southern boundary long before he should have attempted to do so. In the meantime, the Provisional Government was the only one in existence; it saw fit to try Scott by court martial and condemn him to death.

Without attempting to condone this wanton and blundering action on the part of the Métis, it is easy now to turn away from it to the constitutional features of the Rebellion. To fully comprehend the position taken by the people of Manitoba it is necessary to refer to "The British North America Act, 1867," before alluded to. In section 146 of that Act will be found the main cause of the Rebellion. This is the first section under sub-division No. 11, providing for the "Admission of other Colonies," and reads as follows: "It shall be lawful for the Queen, by and with the advice of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, on Addresses from the Houses of Parliament of Canada, and from the Houses of the respective Legislatures of the Colonies or Provinces of Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and British Columbia, to admit those Colonies or Provinces, or any of them, into the Union, and on addresses from the Houses of the Parliament of Canada to admit Rupert's Land, and the North-Western Territory, or either of them, into the Union, on such terms and conditions in each case as are in the addresses" (of the Houses of the Parliament of Canada) "expressed, and as the Queen thinks fit to approve, subject to the provisions of this Act." In this section is laid bare the root of the Rebellion; Newfoundland, British Columbia and Prince Edward Island were to be admitted on the address of their respective Legislatures. They were to come into the Union when they liked, and at the request of their people expressed formally through the Legislature. Newfoundland has not seen fit to come in as yet! Manitoba (Rupert's Land) on the other hand was to be "admitted" on the addresses from the Houses of the Parliament of Canada! Nothing was said about consulting her people as to the form of Government they desired. They were not to be asked whether they were anxious to join Confederation or not. They were simply to be "admitted," and then dragged in by the hair of the head if they exercised their option in refusing the gracious invitation.

Canada's first mistake arose from adhering literally to the words of the section. The whole transfer of the territory was a cut-and-dried proceeding. The Dominion Government was to pay £300,000 to the Hudson's Bay Company, the company was to surrender its right, title and interest to the Imperial Government, and the latter was then to hand over to Canada said right, title and interest. Nothing was said about the people of the territory. They were to be transferred incidentally like the hairs on a mink skin: they were to go with the soil, probably on the theory "*cujus est solus ejus est usque ad coelum*"—reserving the disputed point, whether the Hudson's Bay Company ever had a shadow of title to the soil. No notice whatever was taken of the fact that at the time of the proposed Union there were 12,000 people in the Province, exclusive altogether of trappers and others having no fixed residence. Of this number 1,565 were whites, including Canadians, Americans, English, Scotch, Irish and French, 5,757 were French half-breeds, 4,083 English half-breeds, and the small residue were Indians. Upon these people, many of them from Quebec, where they or their fathers had fought under Papineau for Responsible