

General of Canada, inclosing a Minute of the Privy Council of the Dominion, on the question of liability for losses sustained by the Company from the acts of the self-styled Provisional Government of the Red River Territory.

The Committee have not yet received an account of the losses which the Company have sustained by the plunder of their Stores at Fort Garry, and otherwise by the action of the insurgents, and they therefore consider that the time has not yet arrived for presenting any claim for compensation in respect thereof. When they are in possession of the information which they are expecting, they will present their claim to Her Majesty's Government, and will, at the same time, state the grounds on which they make it.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE,
Governor.

Hudson's Bay House,
London, 1st November, 1870.

Sir FREDERIC ROGERS, Bart., K.C.M.G.

SIR,

I am instructed by the Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company to request that you will submit to the Earl of Kimberley, that the time appears now to have arrived for the consideration of the Company's claim for compensation in respect of the losses sustained by them in the course of the disturbances at the Red River, now happily at an end.

The Committee do not think it necessary to trouble his Lordship with a recapitulation of the lengthened correspondence which led to the arrangements for the transfer of the Company's territorial rights to the Dominion Government, or of the circumstances under which the completion of those arrangements was arrested at the very moment when they were about to take effect. Neither do they now desire to enter on the question how far the disturbances which led to the suspension of the transfer were due to the action of the Dominion Government or its representatives; nor on the further question, how far that suspension was, under the circumstances of the time, justifiable. It is sufficient for them to point out, as a matter of fact, that the Company have in consequence of it sustained very heavy pecuniary loss, and to submit to Lord Kimberley that they have a fair right to ask Her Majesty's Government to take the proper steps for getting that loss made up to them.

The losses which the Company have sustained are of various kinds. In the first place, they were kept out of the purchase-money, which it had been stipulated that they should receive, for more than five months. The inconvenience occasioned by this delay was much greater than the mere loss of the interest of the money. The Government having officially informed the Committee that the money would be paid on the 1st of December, the Committee communicated that information to the Shareholders at the Annual Meeting of the Company on the 9th of November, when arrangements were made on the faith of this announcement which had afterwards to be disturbed to the inconvenience of individual Shareholders, and somewhat to the discredit of the Company.

Secondly, the Company were injured by the plunder of their Stores and Goods at Fort Garry. This loss was sustained by them in consequence of the absence of any proper authority in the Settlement, from the time when the government of the Company was virtually put an end to by Mr. Macdougall's proclamations of the 1st and 2nd December, 1869. The persons actually in power, calling themselves the Provisional Government, drew largely upon the Company's stores, of which they had taken forcible possession, and which they are said to have claimed as public property, besides seizing and putting to ransom a great quantity of valuable furs, admittedly the private property of the Company. The amount of ransom demanded and paid is stated at £5,000 in cash, and goods to the amount of £4,000. The Committee have not yet learnt whether the whole of the furs seized have been returned, or whether a further loss has been sustained; and they are not yet able to state the amount of the goods taken out of the storehouses. They expect shortly to receive information on these heads.

Lastly, there can be no doubt that the Company have sustained very heavy loss by the disorganisation of their trade, and the interruption of business throughout the country, in consequence of these disturbances. They found no claim on this loss, but think it right to refer to it as strengthening the equity of their case.

The Committee abstain from entering upon the question of the source from which the compensation they ask for should come. They think that it is a question more properly left to Her Majesty's Government, through whom these communications have from the first been carried on. They content themselves with submitting their case to Lord Kimberley, and with indicating the amount of the compensation to which they consider the Company to be entitled. They ask for interest at £5 per cent. on the purchase-money (£300,000), from the 1st of December, 1869, to the 11th May, 1870, the day on which the principal was paid. They ask to be reimbursed the amount exacted from them as ransom for their stock of furs, together with the value of any furs which may be proved to have been carried off. And, with regard to the pillage of their stores, they ask that a commission may be appointed to inquire into the amount of loss sustained, and to determine on equitable principles the amount of compensation which should be paid in respect of it.

They trust that Her Majesty's Government will assist them to obtain an early settlement of these claims.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE,
Governor.