

18 THE STRUGGLE FOR IMPERIAL UNITY

the Peace, and sent him to Fort Garry to endeavour to organise a sufficient force among the loyal population to put down the rebellion, and re-establish the Queen's authority.

When Lieut.-Colonel Dennis reached Fort Garry, he went straight to Dr. Schultz' house where Mair was staying at the time, and showed them his commission. Schultz, who was an able man of great courage and strength of character, as well as sound judgment, said at once that the commission was all that was wanted, and that he would organise a force of the surveyors, Canadian roadmen, etc., who were principally Ontario men, and that they could easily seize the Fort that night by surprise, as there were only a few of the insurgents in it, and those not anticipating the slightest difficulty. This was the wisest and best course, for had the Fort been seized, it would have dominated the settlement and established a rallying point for the loyal, who formed fifty per cent. of the population.

Colonel Dennis would not agree to this. On the contrary he advised Dr. Schultz to organise all the men he could at the Fort Garry Settlement, while he himself would go down to the Stone Fort, and raise the loyal Scotch half breeds of the lower Settlements. This decision at once shut off all possibility of success. Riel, the rebel leader, had ample opportunity not only to fill Fort Garry with French half breeds, but it enabled him to cut off and besiege Dr. Schultz and the Canadians who had gathered at his house for protection.

When matters had got to this point Colonel Dennis lost heart, abandoned his levies at the Stone Fort in the night, leaving an order for them to disperse and return to their homes. He escaped to the United