

tural districts, of the Northwest, and it had become after 1857 simply a question with them of securing a good bargain. No person can blame the Governor and council for doing the best possible in the interests of the shareholders.

There is no doubt but that there was a strong feeling among some of the Red river settlers, in favor of annexation to the United States, as being their only hope of escaping from the rule of the company, as witness the petition of 1864 mentioned above.

Later, in 1861, at the time of the Trent affair, when a war seemed possible, and even probable, between Great Britain and the United States, it is within my own knowledge, from official documentary evidence, that a proposal was made to the American Government, by a then prominent citizen of St. Paul, Minn., to send, in the event of war, a force of 1,000 Minnesota troops to Fort Garry, to secure possession to the whole of British North America west of Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains which, of course, under the circumstances, would have been a perfectly legitimate act. Accompanying this proposal was a detailed statement concerning the route to be taken by the troops, with a full description of the country and its population, resources and future prospects, while the indifference of the British authorities to the

complaints of the Assiniboia settlers was dwelt on as a reason why the inhabitants, "French, American and Metis," would welcome annexation.

Influential men in Minnesota were fully of the opinion that a change was about to occur in the Governmental system of Assiniboia. They knew it was to be either for Canada or the United States, and they hoped it was for the latter, and were fully prepared to take advantage of any opportunity occurring to seize on what is now the Canadian Northwest.

The Hudson's Bay Company, as a fur trading corporation, had made a fatal error in first placing settlers on the Red river, and after the retirement of Lord Selkirk, they endeavored to isolate the settlement as far as was possible, but the flood of emigration into Minnesota from 1850 to 1870 rendered this impossible, even without the action taken by the Canadian Government in seeking to obtain possession of the country. The settlers, virtually without a market, contrasted their position with that of their fellows who had abandoned the colony and gone to Canada, and with the new settlers in Minnesota; so that only time was necessary to ripen a movement that would end all control held over them by a close corporation like the Hudson's Bay company.