

such a movement upon the Fort, they said their object was to protect it. Protect it from what? they were asked. Their answer was—from danger. Against what danger, they were asked? To this question, they replied that they could not now specify the danger, but that they would do so hereafter, and obstinately took up the positions they have since kept in spite all our protests and remonstrances, at such a bold and high-handed proceeding.

On coming into the Fort, they earnestly disclaimed all intention of injuring either person or property within it, and it must be allowed that in that respect they have kept their word; but it is an inconvenience and a danger next to intolerable, to have a body of armed men, even with professions of peace towards ourselves, forcibly billeted upon an establishment such as this. Their intentions in coming to the Fort they have never definitely expressed, nor have they yet specified the danger from which their presence was meant to protect the place. We are, therefore, left in some measure to conjectures, and by these we are strongly led to believe that you were expected to come to the Fort, and that by thus having previous possession of the gates, they felt that they would be sure of keeping you out.

It is needless to ask why their presence was submitted to, for I presume you already know enough of the circumstances fully to understand that it was only borne as being apparently, with respect to immediate results, the less formidable of two very serious evils.

Towards the end of your last letter, you desire my opinion as to whether any useful purpose is likely to be served by your remaining for any length of time at Pembina, and feeling the importance that may be attached to any expression from me on that point, I have taken care to test my own ideas very closely by the opinions of the Council.

In compliance with your wishes, let me say, as the substance of our opinion on this point, that we perceive there is as little chance as ever of these people receding from opposition to your coming into the Settlement; that the attempt might be productive of the most disastrous consequences, and that while you remain at Pembina, the effect, so far as the Settlement is concerned, is likely to be the perpetuation, and possibly even the aggravation of this state of disturbance and danger. You can, therefore, yourself judge whether any good purpose would be likely to be answered by your remaining at Pembina, and perhaps your own view of the matter will be such as to prepare you for my adding, as I assure, I do with a feeling of inexpressible regret, that to the Council and myself it appears that your early return to Canada is not only essential for the peace of the country, but also advisable in the interest of the establishment in the future of the Canadian Government.

It is no doubt possible that a little more time may change the minds of the men, and public meetings are notified which may somewhat alter the present state of affairs. Your immediate departure ought not therefore, perhaps, to be at once determined upon. It might be advisable, a few days longer, to wait the course of events, or at any rate until I can again communicate with you; but at present, I confess, I see but little reason to expect the occurrence of anything that is likely materially to change the opinion I have expressed with regard to your movements.

I remain, &c.,

W. McTAVISH.

(B.)

WINNIPEG, Wednesday Evening,  
11 P.M., 17th Nov., 1869.

Council met at 12 yesterday. English delegates all staunch except the two from the town of Winnipeg. The English parishes considering such a meeting, as proposed by the French, illegal, sent representatives with written instructions, and these were to explain first, that they disapproved of all the acts committed, and, secondly, that they would not join in forming an independent Government. The French delegation consisted of the council of 12 before formed, and their president and secretary. Riel caused a salute of a number of field pieces to be fired, and the meeting took place in the Court House, which was at the time and since, guarded. Yesterday was consumed in the expression of the views of the English delegates, and it was expected that to-day the French were to show their hand. Late in the afternoon of