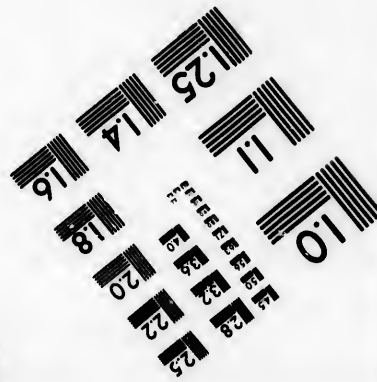
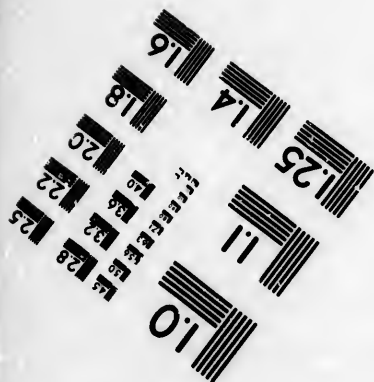
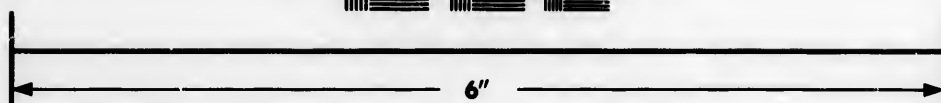
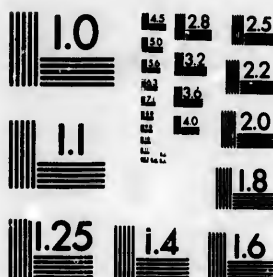


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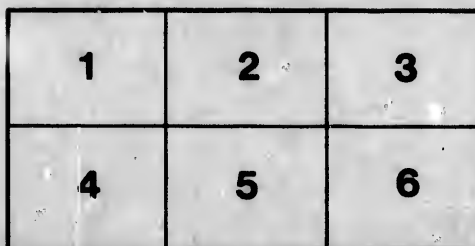
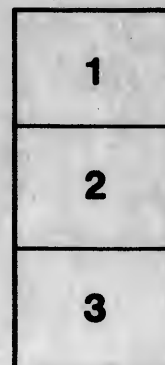
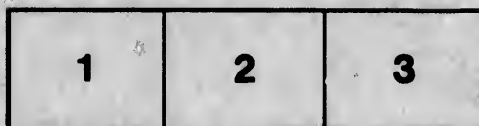
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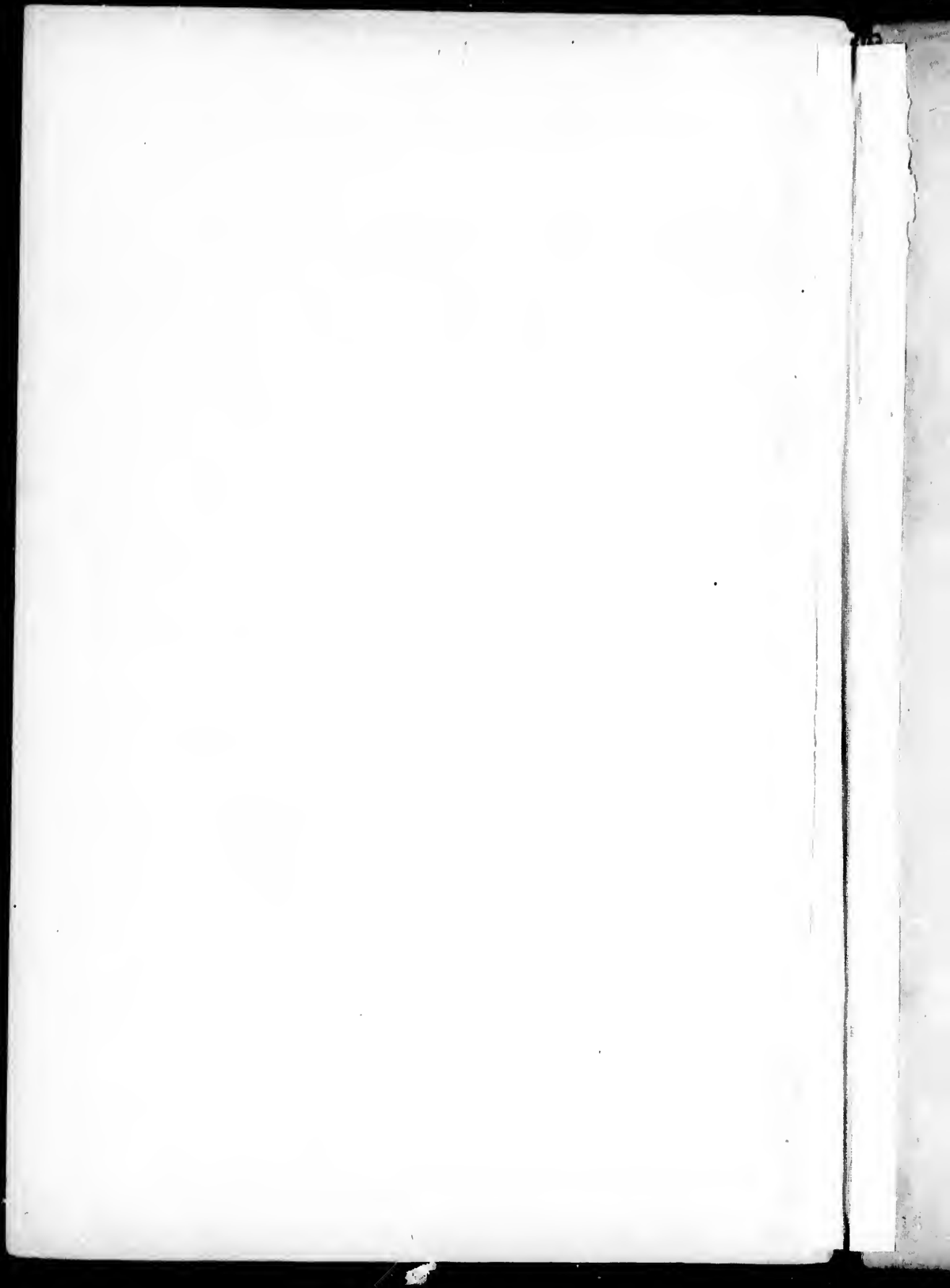
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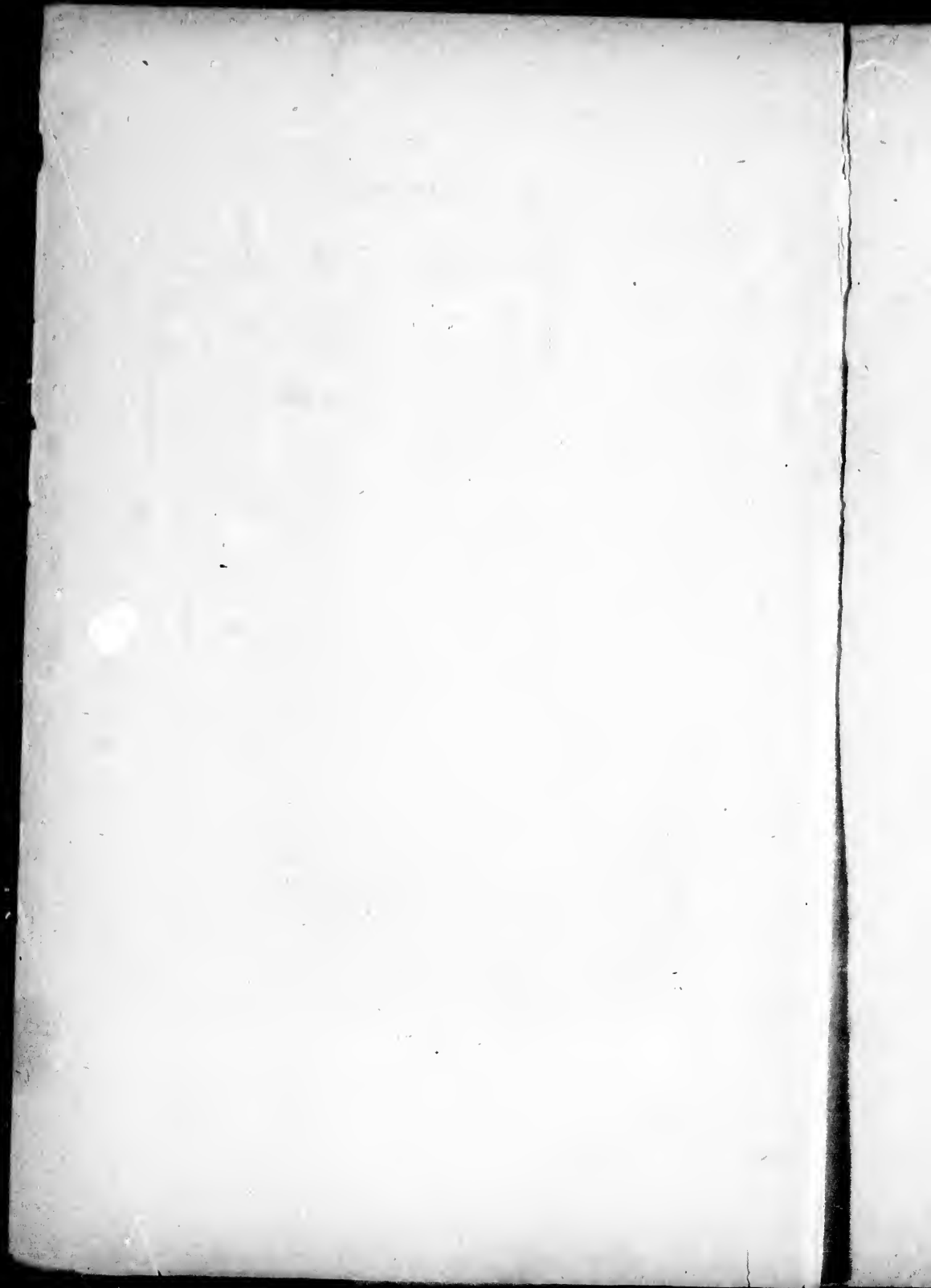
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SEVEN OAKS MONUMENT.





## Seven Oaks.

In 1811 the Earl of Selkirk, a Scottish nobleman of great energy and breadth of view, secured a large tract of country from the Hudson's Bay Company, of which he was a prominent stockholder, to found a settlement on the Red River, in the heart of North America. The fur traders from Montreal, organized under the name of the "Northwest Fur Company" (See Mackenzie's *Voyages* 1801, and Vol. I. Masson's "*Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*"), had at the time establishments all through the country, from Lake Superior to the Pacific Ocean. The "Nor'westers," as they were popularly known, had the prestige of a generation of successful trade, and were led by Canadianized Highlanders of great energy and daring. Lord Selkirk's first settlers arrived, by way of Hudson Bay, at the Red River in 1812, and took up holdings on the Red River, near the site of the present City of Winnipeg. Several parties arrived in the years succeeding by the same route, until the Selkirk settlement in 1814 numbered about two hundred souls. In that year a "jauntily-dressed" officer of the Nor'-west Company, named Duncan Cameron, succeeded in inducing about one hundred and fifty of the settlers to desert the Red River and take up their abode in the western part of Upper Canada. (See Ross's "*Red River Settlement, 1856*," and Bryce's "*Manitoba*.") Governor Macdonell had erected buildings within what are now the limits of the City of Winnipeg; but the Nor'-westers resisted his authority, and even took the Governor prisoner; and their chiefs, one of whom was Cuthbert Grant, on June 25th, 1815, issued the mandate: "All settlers to retire immediately from the River, and no appearance of a colony to remain." In that year, however, another party of Highland colonists arrived from Britain, making the number up again to about one hundred and fifty. The deserted homesteads were again occupied. The colonists' buildings were erected in a more substantial form, a barricade was built around them, and reprisals were even made upon the Nor'-wester establish-

ment, Fort Gibraltar, which stood at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. (See Bryce's "Five Forts of Winnipeg," 1886.) An officer, Robert Semple, had been sent out by Lord Selkirk as Governor, and he took up his abode in Fort Douglas (1816). The Nor'-westers now determined to make a great effort, and the events which led to the battle of "Seven Oaks," in which the Governor and his attendants were killed, are given in the following extracts from "Manitoba: its infancy, growth and present condition," by Dr. Bryce, a life member of this Society.

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### The Bois-Brulés.

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"A lithe, cunning, turbulent, but adventurous and lively race were the Bois-Brulés of those early times. They were chiefly the descendants of the French voyageurs of the North-west Company, who had taken Indian wives and settled down on the shore of some lake or river in the fur country. Some of the Scotch partners, too, from Montreal, had become enamoured of the country, and had cast in their lot with this half-blood race, who now, in 1812, the time of the arrival of the Selkirk settlers, had begun to speak of themselves as the "New Nation." Grant, Mackay, McLeod, McGillivray, and many other Highland names, are found among these hunters and trappers of the western solitudes.

"By what name they should call themselves seemed to have been a subject of considerable interest among these mixed bloods of the prairies. The name then and now most in favor among them is that of the French word "Metis," of which the word half-breed is a fair translation, and which is now used in Acts of the Canadian Parliament as the legal title of this race.

"At the time of which we write, the Metis, or Bois-Brulés, were almost entirely connected with the North-west Company. The Hudson's Bay Company had up till this time been exclusively an English company. They had traded with the

Indians entirely; and hardly a trace, at least in the interior of their territories, could be found of the admixture of European and Indian blood.

"Since that date there has been a great change. The Hudson's Bay Company employed, subsequently to 1812, a large number of Orkney men in their service. These, after the manner of the early French voyageurs, intermarried with the Indian women, and founded a race of Scotch half-breeds, also known as English, i.e., English speaking half-breeds. In the year 1869, in which the Hudson's Bay territory was transferred to Canada, these Orkney half-breeds equalled in number those of French extraction, and altogether both summed up at that time 10,000 souls. The English half-breeds are far less volatile and more industrious than their French fellow-countrymen.

"It is only with those of French origin that we are at present concerned, as the Orkney men had not, to any extent, begun to come to the Red River country previous to the union of the North-west and Hudson's Bay Companies in 1821.

"How strange the sight of a race sprung up at this early date in the interior of the continent, combining the characteristics of the French and the Indian. Chateaubriand, who travelled in America, has indeed pointed out a fact, noticed by many other observers, that of all the Europeans, the French are most in sympathy with the Indians, and this arises from their liveliness, their dashing bravery, their love of the chase, and even of the savage life; though the English have far surpassed the French in management of the Indian tribes. There can be no doubt that the French half-breeds are of greater stature, are more restive under restraint, more inclined to the wandering life of the Indian, and more given to the hunt and to the use of arms, than those of Orkney descent.

"The Bois-Brulés, as the French half-breeds were commonly called, were admirably adapted for the purposes of the Nor'-westers, and indeed had a passionate attachment to the Company. The Company, recognising the power it gave them

with the Indians to have as agents those having Indian blood in their veins, encouraged the idea of an autonomy—a nationality among them.

"One of themselves had risen to be a ruling spirit among them, and though his name would not have betrayed his origin, Cuthbert Grant had all the ascendancy of a chief over this singular people. On him was afterwards conferred the title, of rather vague meaning, of "Warden of the Plains;" and he was evidently one of those men, found in all ages and countries, born to rule; and who, in spirit of governments and in the absence of government, under monarchy, republic, or absolutism, give the cue, direction, and force to the ideas of the community or mass. Happily, he seems to have been humane.

"Cuthbert Grant was known far and wide among the hunters and trappers of the North-west; and regions, hundreds of miles apart, on account of the sparse population, were brought into close connection. He had been educated in Montreal, had risen to be one of the most enterprising and energetic agents of the Company, and had been placed in charge of many of their expeditions.

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### **The Nor'-Wester Attitude.**

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"The Nor'-Westers were, from the first, averse to the establishment of Lord Selkirk's Colony. On the 22nd of May, 1811, at the very time the scheme was originating, one of the leading partners of the North-West Company, then in England, stated to Mr. Miles Macdonell, that he was "determined to give all the opposition in his power whatever might be the consequences;" that "such a settlement struck at the root of the North-West Company, which it was intended to ruin." If other people did not clearly see their own interest, he did; that the settlement "must at all times lie at the mercy of the Indians," who would not be bound by treaties and that "one North-West Company's interpreter would be

able at any time to set the Indians against the settlers to destroy them."

"It is stated by different writers, that no sooner had the settlers arrived than efforts were made to stir up the Indians against the colonists; and failing in this, the agents of the North-West Company had induced the Metis to disguise themselves as Indians, and, on the way to Pembina, rob one man of the gun his father had carried at Culloden, a woman of her marriage-ring, and others of various ornaments and valuable articles.

"No specially hostile acts were observed during the years 1812 and 1813.

"We come now to the celebrated proclamation of Governor Miles Macdonell, which undoubtedly had something to do with hastening the collision. The following is a copy of the document itself:—

"Proclamation."

"Whereas the Governor and Company of the Hudson's Bay have ceded to the right Honorable Thomas, Earl of Selkirk, his heirs and successors for ever all that tract of land or territory bounded by a line running as follows, viz:—

"Beginning on the western shore of Lake Winnipeg, at a point in 52° and 30' north latitude, and thence running due west, to the Lake Winipiquarish, otherwise called little Winnipeg; then in a southerly direction through the said lake, so as to strike its western shore in latitude 52°; then due west to the place where the parallel of 52° north latitude intersects the western branch of the Red River, otherwise called the Assiniboin River; then due south from that point of intersection to the height of land which separates the waters running into Hudson's Bay from those of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers; then in an easterly direction along the height of land to the source of the River Winnipic (running by such last-named river, the principal branch of the waters which unite the Lake Serginagus), thence along the main stream of the waters, and the middle of the several lakes into which they flow, to the mouth of the Winnipic River, and thence in

a northerly direction through the middle of Lake Winnipic to the place of beginning ; which territory is called Assiniboin, and of which I, the undersigned, have been duly appointed governor.

" And whereas the welfare of the families at present forming settlements on the Red River in the said territory, with those on their way to it, passing the winter at York or Churchill Forts in Hudson's Bay, as also those who are expected to arrive next autumn, renders it a necessary and indispensable part of my duty to provide for their support. In the yet uncultivated state of the country, the ordinary resources derived from the buffalo, and other wild animals hunted within the territory, are not deemed more than adequate for the requisite supply ; wherefore, it is hereby ordered, that no persons trading in furs or provisions within the territory, for the Honorable, the Hudson's Bay Company, the North-West Company, or any individual or unconnected traders or persons whatever, shall take out any provisions, either of flesh, grain, or vegetables, procured or raised within the said territory, by water or land carriage, for one twelve month from the date hereof ; save and except what may be judged necessary for the trading parties at this present time within the territory, to carry them to their respective destinations, and who may on due application to me, obtain license for the same.

" The provisions procured and raised as above, shall be taken for the use of the colony ; and that no losses may accrue to the parties concerned, they will be paid for by British bills at the customary rates.

" And be it hereby further made known, that whosoever shall be detected in attempting to convey out, or attempting to carry out, any provisions prohibited as above, either by land and water, shall be taken in custody and prosecuted as the laws in such cases direct ; and the provisions so taken as well as any goods or chattels of what nature soever, which may be taken along with them, and also the craft, cattle and carriages, instrumental in conveying away the same, to any

part but the settlement on Red River, shall be forfeited. Given under my hand, at Fort Daer, Pembina, the 8th of January, 1814.

"By order of the Governor.

"(Signed) MILES MACDONELL, Governor.

"JOHN SPENCER, Secretary."

Here, then, is the loudly denounced and oft-spoken of proclamation.

"Were the question asked, "Did the Governor act wisely?" subsequent events afford an answer in the negative. No doubt Governor Macdonell, armed with the opinion of the legal gentlemen we have already quoted, regarded himself as fully authorized. No doubt there was need for preventing the starving multitude of settlers being driven away every winter to Pembina. No doubt it was the difficulty, under December and January weather, of their getting sufficient food from the buffalo that urged the Governor to take the strong step he did at Pembina, of obviating the recurrence of the suffering he was then witnessing. Further, it was well known that instructions had been given the Nor'-wester agents, in their western posts (as shown by the evidence of Pritchard, at that time one of their employés), to buy up all the provisions possible and prevent the settlers getting them.

"All these things can be urged and have great weight; but the fact that the idea of law was yet new, that the feeling of the Nor'-Westers was hostile to a certain extent, and that they had the turbulent Bois-Brulés thoroughly under their control and ready to carry out any plans of attack, should have caused great caution on the part of the Governor, so newly created in his chair of authority. Further, all laws of non-intercourse, embargo, and the like, are regarded as arbitrary.

"Expedience would have dictated a more conciliatory and less drastic policy; especially when he was not possessed of a force sufficient to carry out his commands.

"But if the question be transferred to the region of abstract right, the case is different.



"The legal opinions given certainly justify the Governor in the steps taken. He proposed, what is usually considered the right of government, to take possession of supplies if life is at stake, and not only so, but to recompense in full for the amount taken. But it was a claim of supremacy; it meant the diminution of Nor'-wester influence over the Bois-Brulés and Indians, and must be resisted at all hazards.

"The council of Nor'-westers that met at Fort William in the summer of 1814, was presided over by the Hon. William McGillivray, the principal partner of the North-west Company. Mr. Pritchard gives evidence that he received direct information from Mackenzie, one of the North-west agents, that the following plan had been devised to accomplish the ruin of the settlement:

"The intention of the North-west Company was to seduce and inveigle away as many of the colonists and settlers at Red River as they could induce to join them; and after they should thus have diminished their means of defence, to raise the Indians of Lac Rouge, Fond du Lac, and other places, to act and destroy the settlement; and that it was also their intention to bring the Governor, Miles Macdonell, down to Montreal as a prisoner, by way of degrading the authority under which the colony was established in the eyes of the natives of that country."

"Who shall say after that that the spirit of the Nor'-westers since the days of Peter Pond had been in any way ameliorated?

"Had they a grievance, the courts of England, where they had much influence, were open to them. But no! Indians and Bois-Brulés must be stirred up, like the letting out of water, to end no one could tell where; and the words of Simon McGillivray, a Nor'-wester partner, in writing from London in 1812: "Lord Selkirk must be driven to abandon the project, for his success would strike at the very existence of our trade," are seen carried out into action. The smoking homesteads of 1815, and the mournful band of three-score persons taking the route down Red River, across Lake Win-



nipeg, and seeking Hudson Bay, as if the broad continent had no room for ever so small a band of peaceful and industrious settlers, tell their own tale.

"Cuthbert Grant again appears upon the scene, and along with him figure also the leading chiefs of the Nor'-westers. The return of the settlers to their homes in 1815 had filled the minds of their enemies with rage. The contempt of the wild hunters of the plains for the peaceful tillers of the soil can hardly be conceived. They despised them for their manual labor; they named them, by way of reproach, "the workers in gardens;" and their term "pork-eaters," formerly applied to the voyageurs east of Fort William, was now used in derision to the Scotch settlers. During the whole winter the fiery cross of the Nor'-westers had been flying; and they looked forward to a grand gathering in the spring at "The Forks," to give a final blow to the infant colony.

"We have seen how the refugees returned to their devastated homes. Fortunately the crops sown by them had not all been destroyed; and under Colin Robertson, and with their new friends from Scotland, they settled down to endure in the following year the fear and uncertainty of continued threatenings, at last to have the crisis reached in atrocious acts of bloodshed, and to be again driven from their unfortunate settlement.

"The expeditions were both to come from the east and west. Fort Qu'Appelle, some 350 miles west of Red River, was the rendezvous of the force expected from the west. The Bois-Brulés wherever found during the whole winter throughout the territories, at the most distant posts, exhibited signs of unmistakeable hostility. A party of these warlike Metis were reported as coming from the far-off Fort des-Prairies, on the Saskatchewan; while from the east, a leading partner, McLeod, was journeying all the way from Fort William, with a strong band to assist in the complete extinction of the colony.

"Of the western levies Grant was, as has been already said, the ruling spirit. He was the leader of the "New Nation."

On the 13th March, 1816, he writes from the River Qu'Appelle the following letter to one of the partners, showing the intentions for the spring :—

My Dear Sir,—I received your generous and kind letter last fall, by the last canoe. I should certainly be an ungrateful being, should I not return you my sincerest thanks. Although a very bad hand at writing letters, I trust to your generosity. I am yet safe and sound, thank God, for I believe it is more than Colin Robertson or any of his suit dare to offer the least insult to any of the Bois-Brulés, although Robertson made use of some expressions which I hope he shall swallow in the spring. He shall see that it is neither fifteen, thirty, nor fifty of his best horsemen, that can make the Bois-Brulés bow to him. Our people of Fort des Prairies and English River are all to be here in the spring ; it is hoped we shall come off with flying colours, and never to see any of them again in the colonizing way in Red River, in fact, the traders shall pack off with themselves, also for having disobeyed our orders last spring, according to our arrangements. We are all to remain at the Forks to pass the summer, for fear they should play us the same trick as last summer, of coming back ; but they shall receive a warm reception. I am loth to enter into any particulars as I am well assured that you will receive more satisfactory information (than I have had) from your other correspondents ; therefore, I shall not pretend to give you any ; at the same time begging you will excuse my short letter, I shall conclude wishing you health and happiness.

I shall ever remain,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

Cuthbert Grant.

“ J. D. Cameron, Esq.”

“After the settlers returned in 1815, Colin Robertson had organized the colony on his own authority, there having been no opportunity of communicating with Lord Selkirk ; and during the same year a new governor there came, Robert Semple, seemingly of Pennsylvanian origin, who had gone in early life

to England. He was an author of some note, an officer of experience, and moreover a man of amiable and generous disposition. Too good a man he was for the lawless region to which he was sent. He was appointed by the Hudson's Bay Company as their governor, and with all the powers conferred by their charter.

"As soon as spring was open the movement was begun. Governor Semple had dismantled the Nor'-Wester Fort, on account of the alarming rumours heard by him, but more especially because of definite information obtained from the letters intercepted by Colin Robertson during the winter. We shall allow an eye-witness of the event to tell his own tale as given on oath in Montreal, in 1818.

"It is the account of a gentleman in the Canadian Voyeurs—the corps that had so distinguished itself in the war against the United States in 1812-15. At the close of the war he entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company as a trader. He gives a very clear account of the expedition from Fort Qu'Appelle against the colony.

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### Story of Pierre Chrysologue Pambrun.

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"I had been for some time under the orders of Mr. Semple, and on the 12th of April, 1816, I left Fort Douglas under his directions, to go to the Hudson's Bay Company's house on River Qu'Appelle. I set out with as much provisions as would last us six days, when we would get to Brandon House, about 120 miles west of Red River. To this place, according to my instructions, I was to go first, and from thence, if prudent, to the Hudson's Bay fort at Qu'Appelle. On the 1st of May I left Qu'Appelle with five boat-loads of pemican and furs. As we were going down the river on the 5th of May, near the Grand Rapids, I made the shore in a boat, and a party of armed Bois-Brulés immediately came and surrounded me, and forced me to give up the boats and furs, and the pemican. The pemican was landed and the boats

taken across the river. I was kept a prisoner five days. Cuthbert Grant, Peter Pangman, Thomas McKay were of the party who made me a prisoner. I was taken back to River Qu'Appelle, to the Northwest Company's post. I was kept there for five days. Mr. Alexander Macdonnell was in command at this station, and I asked him why I had been made a prisoner, or by whose orders I had been arrested? He said it was by his own. There were about forty or fifty Bois-Brulés at this fort. Cuthbert Grant frequently said they were going to destroy the settlement, and I was told Mr. Macdonnell said the business of the year before was a trifle to what this should be. Cuthbert Grant frequently talked with Bois-Brulés about going, and they sang war-songs as if they were going to battle.

"On the 12th I left Qu'Appelle. We drifted down to the place where I had before been stopped, and the pemican, which had been landed from our boats, was re-embarked by the North-west people. When we got to the forks of the River Qu'Appelle we encamped. The people who were taken with me had been liberated some time before, and had gone away. I had been left a prisoner. The next morning after we had encamped, that is, the people in the two boats which went with Mr. Macdonnell, a number of Indians who were in camp at some distance were sent for, and they came and went into Mr. Macdonnell's tent, who made a speech to them; a party went also on horseback from Fort Qu'Appelle armed, but I was in one of the boats with Mr. Macdonnell. In going down the river they talked freely of breaking up the settlement and taking Fort Douglas; and the people frequently told me that Mr. Macdonnell had said the business of the year before had been nothing to what this would be. Mr. Macdonnell's speech to the Indians was to this effect:

"My Friends and Relations,—I address you bashfully, for I have not a pipe of tobacco to give you. All our goods have been taken by the English, but we are now upon a party to drive them away. Those people have been spoiling fair lands which belong to you and the Bois-Brulés, and to which they

have no right. They have been driving away the buffalo. You will soon be poor and miserable if the English stay; but we will drive them away if the Indians do not, for the North-west Company and the Bois-Brulés are one. If you (addressing the chief) and some of your young men will join, I shall be glad." Mr. Macdonnell spoke in French, and Pangman and Primeau interpreted.

"The chief said, 'That he knew nothing about it, and should not go himself; if some of the young men went, it was nothing to him.

"Mr. Macdonnell then said: 'Well, it is no matter, we are determined to drive them away, and if they make any resistance, your land shall be drenched with their blood.'

"The next morning the Indians went away, and the party drifted down the Assiniboine River to the Grand Rapids. From there, about thirty started, among whom was Mr. Macdonnell, Cuthbert Grant, and a number of Bois Brulés. I was left behind and still a prisoner, but in the evening a spare horse was brought by two of them for me, and I accompanied them on horseback to the North-west fort near Brandon House. When I approached, I saw a crowd assembled about the gate. I suppose there were from forty to fifty persons assembled. Their arms were down by the gate, and as I entered it a number of them presented their guns at me, making use of insulting language. I complained to Mr. Macdonnell of this treatment, and asked him if it was by his orders, and he said he would speak to them about it, but I do not think he ever did. I saw at this fort, tobacco, carpenter's tools, a quantity of furs, and other things, which had been brought over from Brandon House—our fort near by.

"About the 24th or 25th of May the party was separated into smaller divisions, and chiefs appointed. The property was embarked, and the whole set off to go to Portage la Prairie; a part went by water, but the Bois-Brulés generally went by land on horseback. Having arrived at Portage la Prairie, the whole of the pemican and packs were landed and formed into a sort of breastwork or fortification, having two

small brass swivels there, which the year before had been taken from the stores of the settlement.

"On the morning of the 17th of June, being at Portage la Prairie still, which is about sixty miles from the settlement, the Bois-Brulés mounted their horses and set off for it; they were armed with guns, pistols, lances, and bows and arrows. Cuthbert Grant was with them, and a number of his race. I remained behind, so did Mr. Alexander Macdonnell and others; about thirty or forty men stayed to help guard the pemican. The object of this expedition was to take Fort Douglas and break up the settlement. If the settlers took to the fort for protection, then the whole were to be starved out. The fort was to be watched strictly at all times, and if any of them went out to fish or to get water, they were to be shot if they could not be taken prisoners. I certainly had, from all I heard, very serious apprehensions for my friends. I do not remember that Cuthbert Grant said anything particular on the morning he went away."

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### **The Affair of "Seven Oaks."**

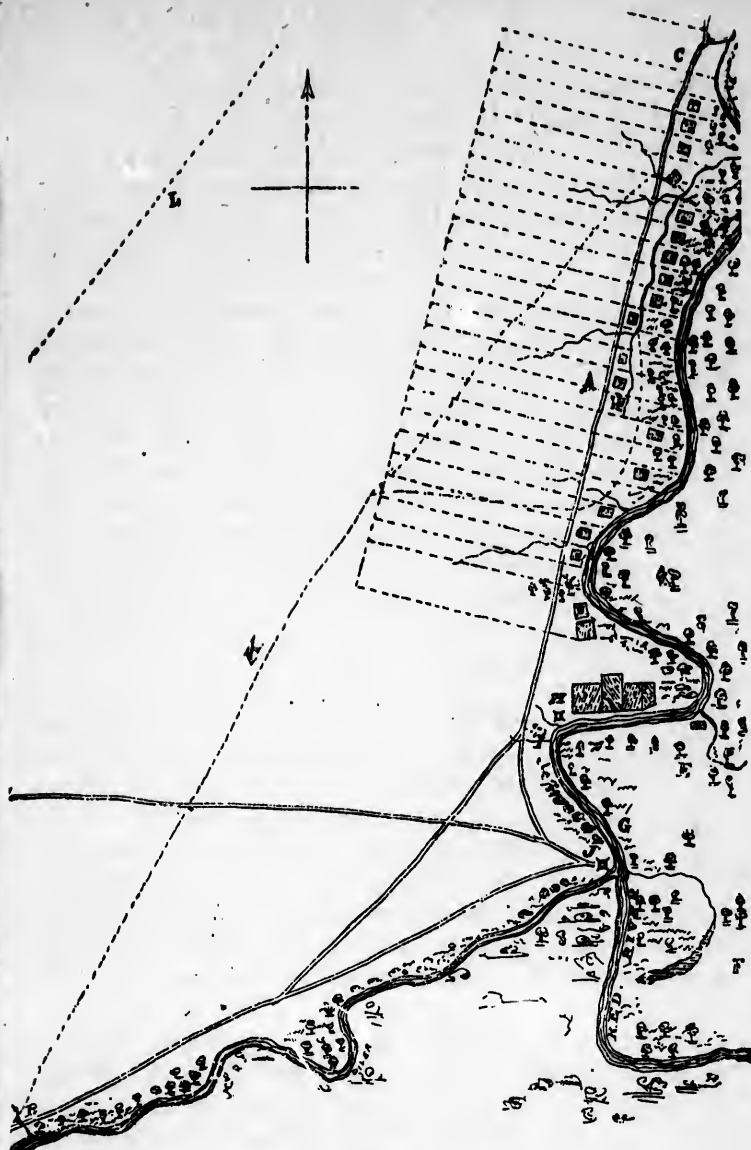
The following account of the affair of "Seven Oaks" is taken from "The Selkirk Settlement and Settlers" by Mr. C. N. Bell, F. R. G. S., a member of the Society.

"On Governor Semple's return to Fort Douglas from visiting the inland posts of the Hudson's Bay Co., in June, 1816, he again assumed direction of affairs, which had been temporarily managed by Colin Robertson. That he did not altogether approve of the management during his absence is learned from the testimony of an eye-witness, yet living, in the person of Donald Murray, who informs me that Robertson was in great disfavor with the Settlement and Hudson's Bay Co. officials, and when, on hearing of the probability of an attack by the Northwesters, he started for York Factory in a boat, taking Duncan Cameron, a prisoner, he insultingly hoisted a pemican sack as an ensign instead of the British

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# RED RIVER SETTLEMENT.

Fac-simile of section of Map (1818).

A—Seven Oaks, where Sempie fell.  
B—Creek where Metis left Assiniboine.  
C—Frox Pinin (since Kildonan church)  
E to F—De Meuron Settlers on Selne.  
G—Half-breeds (St. Boniface of today).

H—Fort Douglas (1815).  
I—Colony Gardens.  
J—Fort Gibraltar (N. W. Co.)  
K—Road followed by Metis.  
L—Dry Cart trail west of Settlers' lots.





flag which was the usual one used on such occasions. Word was received at the settlement that the Northwesters were determined to destroy both it and the settlers. On the 17th June, Peguis, chief of the Swampy Indians, residing in the district about the mouth of the Red River, waited on Governor Semple to offer the services of his men, some seventy in number to assist in protecting the colonists. This proffered assistance was declined with thanks by Semple, who did not foresee the occurrences of the succeeding two days. Alex. Macdonnell sent a party of about sixty Canadians and half-breeds with a few Indians, mounted on horseback and bearing some provisions, across by land from the Assiniboine to the Red River, the route followed taking them along the edge of the swamps, about two miles out on the prairie from Fort Douglas, and from that point gradually drawing nearer to the main highway, which is now the northern continuation of Winnipeg's Main street, until it joined the latter at a spot known as "Seven Oaks," on account of the seven oak trees growing there, within a hundred yards or so south of a small coolie, now called Inkster's creek. One half of the Metis had arrived at the coolie and passed on to Frog Plain (Kilbannon church prairie), taking two or three settlers prisoners to prevent their giving the alarm, when the remainder were discovered by a sentinel, placed in the watch tower of Fort Douglas, with a telescope. He immediately gave an alarm, and Governor Semple left the fort with a small party of company's servants to intercept the Metis, whom he met at Seven Oaks as they arrived at the highway. Semple had by this time been joined by some of his servants and officials, so that he arrived on the scene with about 28 companions.

It is difficult to get at the exact truth of what followed this meeting of the rival traders. A host of affidavits are on record made by men on both sides, who, while agreeing in the main particulars, disagree as to details. However, herewith is given a version of the affair emanating from each side.

#### TWO ACCOUNTS.

The first is an affidavit made by John Pritchard, who had

been in the service of both the X Y and Northwest companies, but in 1816 was a resident of the Selkirk settlement. He was the father of the Rev. S. Pritchard, and grandfather of Rev. Canon Matheson, of this city.

"On the afternoon of the 19th of June, 1816, a man in the watch-house called out that the half-breeds were coming. The governor, some other gentlemen and myself looked through spy-glasses, and I distinctly saw some armed people on horseback passing along the plains. A man then called out: 'They (meaning the half-breeds) are making for the settlers,' on which the governor said: We must go out and meet those people; let twenty men follow me.' We proceeded down the old road leading down the settlement. As we were going along we met many of the settlers running to the fort, crying, 'The half-breeds! the half-breeds!' When we were advanced about three-quarters of a mile along the settlement we saw some people on horseback behind a point of woods. On our nearer approach the party seemed to be more numerous, on which the governor made a halt and sent for a field piece, which, delaying to arrive, he ordered us to advance. We had not proceeded far before the half-breeds, with their faces painted in the most hideous manner, and in the dresses of Indian warriors, came forward and surrounded us in the form of a half moon. We then extended our line and moved more into the open plain, and as they advanced we retreated a few steps backward, and then saw a Canadian named Boucher ride up to us waving his hand and calling out, "what do you want?" The governor replied, "what do you want?" To which Boucher answered, "we want our fort." The governor said, "Go to your fort." They were by this time near each other, and consequently spoke too low for me to hear. Being at some little distance to the right of the governor, I saw him take hold of Boucher's gun, and almost immediately a general discharge of fire arms took place, but whether it began on our side or that of the enemy, it was impossible to distinguish. My attention was then directed to my personal defence. In a few minutes almost all our people were

## EITHER KILLED OR WOUNDED.

Captain Rogers, having fallen, rose up and came towards me, when, not seeing one of our party who was not either killed or disabled, I called out to him, 'For God's sake give yourself up!' He ran towards the enemy for that purpose, myself following him. He raised up his hands and, and in English and broken French, called for mercy. A half-breed (son of Col. William McKay) shot him through the head, and another cut open his belly with a knife with the most horrid imprecations. Fortunately for me, a Canadian (named Lavigne), joining his entreaties to mine, saved me (though with the greatest difficulty) from sharing the fate of my friend at that moment. After this I was reserved from death, in the most providential manner, no less than six different times on my way to and at the Frog Plain (the headquarters of these cruel murderers). I there saw Alexander Murray and his wife, two of William Bannerman's children and Alexander Sutherland, settlers, and likewise Antony McDonnell, a servant, were prisoners, having been taken before the action took place. With the exception of myself, no quarter was given to any of us. The knife, axe or ball, put a period to the existence of the wounded; and on the bodies of the dead were practised all those barbarities which characterize the inhuman heart of the savage. The amiable and mild Mr. Semple, lying on his side (his thigh having been broken) and supporting his head upon his hand, addressed the commander of our enemies, by inquiring if he was Mr. Grant; and being answered in the affirmative, 'I am not mortally wounded,' said Mr. Semple; 'and if you get me conveyed to the fort, I think I should live.' Grant promised he would do so, and immediately left him in the care of a Canadian, who afterwards told that an Indian of their party came up and shot Mr. Semple in the breast. I entreated Grant to procure me the watch, or even the seals, of Mr. Semple, for the purpose of transmitting them to his friends, but I did not succeed. Our force amounted to twenty-eight persons, of whom twenty-one were killed and one wounded. The governor, Captain

Rogers, Mr. James White, surgeon, Mr. Alexander McLean, settler, Mr. Wilkinson, private secretary to the governor, and Lieut. Holt, of the Swedish navy, and fifteen servants were killed. Mr. J. P. Bourke, storekeeper, was wounded, but saved himself by flight. The enemy, I am told, were sixty-two persons, the greater part of whom were the contracted servants and clerks of the Northwest company. They had one man killed and one wounded. The chiefs who headed the party of our enemy were Messrs. Grant and Fraser, Antoine Hoole and Bourassa; the two former clerks and the two latter interpreters, in the service of the Northwest company."

#### BOUCHER'S STORY.

The above declaration and the following are published in a book entitled "Statements Respecting the Earl of Selkirk's Settlement, etc.," written by Selkirk's relative, a Mr. Halkett, a director of the Hudson's Bay Company committee, and it is from this source that most historians have drawn their information relating to the Selkirk side of the case.

The man named Boucher, mentioned by Pritchard in his affidavit, was taken as a prisoner to Montreal, and while there made the following declaration, on the 29th of August, 1816, before a justice of the peace:

"Voluntary declaration of Francois Firmin Boucher, accused on oath of having, on the 19th of last June, killed at the colony of the Red River, twenty-one men, among whom was Governor Semple, says: 'That he did not kill any person whatever; that he was sent, four days before the death of Governor Semple, by one of the partners of the North-west Company, Mr. Alexander McDonell, from Portage la Prairie, to carry provisions to Frog Plain, about three leagues lower than the fort at the Forks of Red River. That he and his companions, to avoid being seen by the Hudson's Bay settlers, passed at a distance from the Hudson's Bay fort. That, with a view of weakening the Hudson's Bay party, the Bois-Brûlés wanted to carry away some of the Hudson's Bay settlers—and, assisted by the deponent to interpret for them in English, they went and carried one off. That, as they proceeded

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towards Frog Plain, they observed a group of Hudson's Bay people—upon which a certain number of the men in the service of the North-west Company, called Bois-Brulés, joined the deponent and his companions. That these, thinking the Hudson's Bay people meant them harm, because they advanced with their muskets in their hands, the Bois-Brulés wanted to fire on them; but the deponent opposed their doing so. That at last he advanced alone to the Hudson's Bay party to speak to them, and came so near Governor Semple, that the latter took hold of the butt end of the deponent's gun, and ordered his people to advance; that they, not obeying him, and the deponent saying that if they fired they were all dead men, Governor Semple said that they must not be afraid, that this was not a time for it, and that they must fire. Immediately the deponent heard the reports of two muskets fired by the Hudson's Bay people. That at this moment the deponent threw himself from his horse, still holding the mane, and that the horse being afraid, dragged him in this manner about the distance of a gun shot, where he remained. That, from the moment when he was thus carried away by his horse, the firing became general between the people of the North-west and the Hudson's Bay. That the fire was begun by those of the Hudson's Bay. That the men in the service of the North-west Company were about sixty-four in number (of whom thirty were at the beginning of the firing), assembled for the purpose of taking the Hudson's Bay fort by famine. He is uncertain by whose orders, but supposes it was by the chiefs, that is, Mr. McDonnell, Mr. Grant, Antoine Hoolle, and Michael Bourassa. That he heard Mr. McLean enjoin them to avoid a meeting with the Hudson's Bay people. That after the firing was over he saw a Bois-Brulé named Vasseur near Governor Semple, then wounded in the knee and arm, who was taking care of him, and who, notwithstanding, had taken his belt or sash, his pistol and his watch, and afterwards carried them away. That he himself had at the moment saved one Pritchard from

being killed, and also Francois Deschamps and several other Brulés wanted to kill him."

#### AFTER THE FIGHT.

"Many of the settlers are of the opinion that the first shot fired was by Lieutenant Holt, whose gun went off by accident, thus precipitating the conflict. In all, twenty-one persons were killed, the remaining eight escaping into the woods, which at that time extended from the highway to the river bank, and making their way to Fort Douglas, one or two swimming the Red River and passing up the east side until opposite the fort. It is to be noticed that only one actual settler was killed.

"At the fort all was confusion, the settlers—men, women and children—crowding into the houses within its walls. Mr. Bourke managed to regain the fort with the cannon and a small remnant of the men he took out, and the tale they told struck terror into the hearts of all, who expected an attack would be made immediately by the North-westerns. An anxious night was passed, but no attack came, the Bois-Brulés having a wholesome dread of the cannon possessed by the colonists.

"John Pritchard had been taken as a prisoner to the camp ground of the main body of the Metis, which was situated where the Kildonan ferry landing now is, I am informed by Mr. Donald Murray, whose parents had also been taken prisoners on their farm, two lots above that point, on the morning of the tragedy. He begged of Cuthbert Grant, the leader, to be allowed to go to Fort Douglas. After obtaining permission from Grant, he met with a refusal from the rest of the party; but after giving a promise to return, and agreeing to bear a message to the fort people that they must leave the next day for Lake Winnipeg, he was allowed to depart. Grant accompanied him as far as "Seven Oaks," where the bodies of the killed lay upon the ground, but as it was after nightfall when he passed there, he was spared the sight of the horrible scene.

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"Arriving at Fort Douglas, he informed the settlers that the Metis demanded that the colonists should depart, and had promised that if all public property was given up to them, they would give a safe escort to the people and allow them to take all their personal effects. Two other parties of North-westerners were daily expected to arrive in the Red River, one coming from the Saskatchewan and the other from Lake Superior, and it would be necessary to send some of the Bois-Brulés with them to explain the position of affairs.

"The colonists at first refused to agree to the terms of capitulation, and Sheriff McDonnell, who was in charge of the settlement, decided to hold to the fort as long as the men were inclined to protect it. In the morning, however, after they had more fully considered their situation, the settlers concluded to depart, and after several visits of the sheriff to the Metis camp an arrangement was agreed on.

#### HOW THE INDIANS ACTED.

"A number of Indians under Peguis were camped on the east side of the river and took no part in the troubles, but their sympathies were plainly with the colonists. They went out the morning after the engagement and brought in the bodies of the killed, or as many as could then be found, for a small number, I am informed by eye-witnesses, were concealed in the heavy brush in the vicinity, as wounded men had crawled into thickets and there died. Mrs. Kaufman, who yet lives in Kildonan east (since died, 1892), informs me that she saw the Indians bring in the dead bodies to Fort Douglas with carts, and that Governor Semple and the doctor were buried in board coffins, and the others wrapped up in blankets, the whole number being interred in a grove of trees on the south side of the creek southwest of the fort, and quite near the spot whereon now stands the residence of ex-Mayor Logan. She says the body of one man was naked, the clothes having been stolen before the Indians found it. Mr. Donald Murray also informs me that when the burial took place, Chief Peguis stood near by, with the tears streaming down his face, and he



repeatedly expressed his great sorrow at the sad occurrences taking place. Donald Murray states positively that all these bodies were removed some years after to St. John's Church graveyard, but he is not now able to locate the site of their re-interment. He remembers distinctly that on the morning the settlers handed over the fort to the Metis, all the ammunition for the cannon was carried down to the river and thrown into the water from the end of a boat moored in the stream.

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### The "Seven Oaks" Monument.

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The Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society, in pursuance of its aim of marking the historic spots within their territory with suitable monuments, had in view the erection of a stone on the site of the affair of "Seven Oaks," a spot near the highway, which is a continuation through Kildonan of Main Street, Winnipeg. In 1890 the Countess of Selkirk, the widow of the last Earl of Selkirk, who was the son of the founder of the colony, visited Winnipeg, and offered to erect, under the auspices of the Society, a monument of the battle. This generous offer was gladly accepted, and a site was given by Miss Inkster, sister of Sheriff Inkster, for the purposes of the Society. In 1891 the monument, prepared by Mr. Samuel Hooper, of Winnipeg, was placed in position, and the Society, with a large company, proceeded to the unveiling of the monument on the 19th of June, the anniversary of the battle.

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### The Unveiling.

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The ceremony of the unveiling of the "Seven Oaks" monument in Kildonan took place on the afternoon of June 19th, and was well attended by old settlers of that vicinity and also by citizens of Winnipeg. Lieutenant-Governor Schultz and party drove down in four carriages. With His

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Honor were Mr. John MacBeth, President of the Historical Society; Col. Villiers and Col. Howard. In another carriage were Mr. C. N. Bell, Corresponding Secretary of the Society, Lieutenant Williams, and Mr. Ernest Phair, His Honor's private secretary. The ladies of the party were Mrs. Schultz, Mrs. Chief Justice Taylor, Mrs. Howard, Mrs. MacBeth, Mrs. W. J. Tupper, Mrs. Jellyman, of Chicago, Miss McDonald, and Miss Mair. The old families of the Red River settlement were represented by Messrs. Archibald Pritchard, sr., Wm. Fraser, Norman Matheson, Hector Sutherland, Donald Sutherland, Robert Sutherland, Angus Polson, Geo. Munroe, Jno. Bruce, Robert MacBeth, Sheriff Inkster. Miss Inkster, who gave the site for the monument, was among the ladies present. On the platform were the Lieutenant-Governor, Messrs. John MacBeth, C. N. Bell, Chief Justice Taylor, Mr. Justice Dubuc, U. S. Consul Taylor, Canon Matheson, Col. Villiers, and Col. Howard. Among the others noticed on the grounds were Messrs. G. F. Carruthers, C. P. Brown and Mrs. Brown, James Porter, W. D. Russell, T. C. Keenleyside, Dr. Phillips, Prof. Laird, J. T. Huggard, Archer Martin, and W. F. Henderson.

The proceedings were opened with an address by the President of the Historical Society, Mr. John MacBeth, who spoke as follows:—

#### THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

Your Honor, Ladies and Gentlemen,—We have met together to-day to unveil a monument, to mark one of the historic spots in our country. Before proceeding further, I, as President of the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society, wish to tender to the council and members of that body my grateful thanks for doing me the honor of electing me to the honorable position of president. No one more fully appreciates the fact than I do, that my election to preside over a society composed of so many learned and scientific gentlemen as is the one I have just referred to, was not made on account of my fitness for this honorable position, but entirely intended as a delicate compliment to the old settlers of this country by my colleagues. I would be indeed ungrateful if I did not

here publicly tender my thanks to the members of the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society, for thus honoring the old Selkirk settlers, by electing one of their number, humble and incapable though he may be, to preside on this occasion. On the 19th of June, 1816, just 75 years ago, an unfortunate conflict took place between the rival trading companies, the Hudson's Bay and North-west, in which Governor Semple and twenty men fell. Without entering into the causes which led to this lamentable affair, the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society are simply erecting this monument to mark, as I said before, a historic spot. I wish here publicly to express the thanks of this Society to her Ladyship the Countess of Selkirk, who, many of you will remember, visited this country and this spot a short time ago, for generously furnishing us with the necessary funds for erecting this monument. I also wish to tender, on behalf of the Society, our grateful thanks to Miss Inkster, who kindly donated to us the land on which this monument stands. I wish also, on behalf of the Society, to thank His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor for his kindness in consenting to unveil this monument; and for myself, as president, to thank him for his kind attention and assistance on this occasion. I cannot conclude these few remarks without expressing the thanks of the Society to the Messrs. Hooper, who made and erected this monument, for their promptness in the execution of their contract. Before proceeding to the unveiling ceremonies, Mr. C. N. Bell, our energetic and capable corresponding secretary, and ex-president, will read a brief sketch of the events commemorated by the monument.

#### A HISTORICAL SKETCH.

Mr. C. N. Bell was next called upon. He read the following account of the event commemorated by the monument:—

#### THE BATTLE OF THE "SEVEN OAKS."

Ladies and gentlemen,—I have been requested by the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society to read a short sketch of the incidents that have made the spot we now stand

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upon an historic one in the annals of the Canadian Northwest. Without entering into the merits of the dispute that led to the unfortunate affray which took place here, it will be necessary for me to state a few facts in connection with the occurrence, which are established by historical documents and sworn evidence offered in the courts of law in Canada.

Prior to the first years of the present century, the Hudson's Bay Company (speaking in general terms) had not established themselves on the banks of the Red River in any permanent posts. The North-west Company, composed mostly of Montreal merchants, with headquarters at Fort William, on Lake Superior, had a large number of employes engaged in the several branches of the fur trade, and occupied in their trapping pursuits the country extending from Lake Superior to Lake Winnipeg, and the lands adjacent to the Red, Assiniboine, Saskatchewan, Athabasca and McKenzie Rivers. The North-westers claimed a full right to trade in this country by virtue of exploration and occupation. The Hudson's Bay Company claimed exclusive trading privileges in this same district, as part of the territory described in their charter of 1670.

In 1811 Lord Selkirk gained a controlling voice in the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company in England, and obtained from the Company a grant in fee simple of 116,000 square miles of territory in the Red River Valley, on the condition that he founded a colony on the ground, and furnished from among the settlers, on certain terms, such laborers as were required by the Company in their trading operations. Lord Selkirk immediately after this date made arrangements for establishing a colony, and brought out by way of York Factory a number of settlers, mainly from Scotland. These landed on the bank of the Red River, in the vicinity of Point Douglas, in the autumn of 1812, Captain Miles Macdonnell being placed in charge of the colony as resident governor. The colonists were in succeeding years joined by other parties from the British Isles.

During the first year or two, the officers of the Hudson's

Bay Company and the North-west Company lived on amicable terms; the North-westerners having their Fort Gibraltar on the north bank of the Assiniboine, where that stream joins the Red River. The colonists had their Fort Douglas, on the point just north of the small coulee, which enters the Red River south of George Street, within the present City of Winnipeg. (The building known as "The Bungalow" is on the site.) Soon, however, disputes arose between the chief officers of the two companies as to the rights for trading for furs and provisions, which terminated in a number of attacks on each others posts, under the guise of legal actions. Governor Miles Macdonnell claimed authority as governor of the colony and by direction of Lord Selkirk; and the Wintering Partner of the North-west Company, who was in charge at Fort Gibraltar, was a justice of the peace for the Indian territory, holding his authority under the commission of the Governor-General of Canada.

In November, 1815, Governor Robert Semple assumed control of Lord Selkirk's territory. On the 19th of June, 1816, after a winter passed amidst alarming rumors as to what either party would do in the spring, a mounted band of some sixty North-westerners, when proceeding from the western plains with provisions, left the bank of the Assiniboine about Silver Heights, and struck across the prairie just outside the present city limits, heading for the banks of the Red River in Kildonan. They were conveying provisions for the crews of boats arriving from the inland districts and Fort William, who received supplies at Lake Winnipeg, for use both coming in and going out. As the party travelled towards Kildonan, the lookout men stationed in the watch tower at Fort Douglas noticed the cavalcade, and hastily issued an alarm to the inhabitants of the settlement, who, owing to the alarming rumors current, had for the most part congregated within the fort. Governor Semple, calling on his servants and a few settlers, for some reason never satisfactorily explained, advanced with twenty-seven others, fully armed, across Point Douglas towards what is now known as Inkster's Creek, with

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the intention of interviewing the North-westerns. On Governor Semple reaching this place where we now stand, and which derives its name from the fact that seven large oak trees stood here at that time, the North-westerns, who had crossed the creek, returned, meeting the governor's party on the south side, when a conversation took place between the governor and one of the North-westerns regarding the purpose of each others presence. What immediately then took place is practically as follows: According to sworn evidence afterwards given, a gun was accidentally discharged, and both parties thinking that the other had begun the attack, fired into each other. The North-westerns (it has been claimed 30 only were at the moment present), being mounted, spread themselves out in a half circle around the settlers, who were grouped together and received the full effect of their opponents' fire, so that in a few minutes twenty-one of the Semple party and one North-wester lay dead upon the field. The remaining seven or eight escaped to the woods, which here stretched to the banks of the Red River. Governor Semple, Lieutenant Holt, Capt. Rogers, Dr. James White, and Dr. Wilkinson, private secretary to the Governor, were among the dead. The survivors, hastily returning to the fort, announced the sad intelligence, and all was confusion. Closely following upon this event, a demand was made by the chiefs of the North-westerns that the settlers should immediately embark and abandon the settlement, under pain, if they remained, of having the fort destroyed and meeting with death. After some negotiations, the settlers agreed to do this ultimatum, and entering their boats, with such family goods as they could hastily gather together, passed down the Red River and Lake Winnipeg to Norway House, then known as Jack Fish House, where they remained during that winter, returning to the settlement in the following spring, after the arrival of Lord Selkirk, with an armed force, which ensured their protection.

Notwithstanding the petitions of the rival companies, the Imperial Government had, up to this time, declined to interfere between the claims of the two rival companies. The

Government were now compelled to interfere, and sent to the Red River settlement as commissioner, Col. W. B. Coltman, a prominent citizen of Lower Canada, who journeyed through to the Red River Settlement in 1817, and issued proclamations in the King's name, commanding a cessation of hostilities. Col. Coltman held conferences in the Red River settlement and arranged with Lord Selkirk and the representatives of the North-west company that the peace should not again be disturbed, after which he again returned to Montreal and sent in his report (which appears as an Imperial Blue Book 1819), while Lord Selkirk departed via the United States. From this date to 1820-1821 the settlers were not disturbed by any act of violence, and during the years named such pressure was brought to bear on the two rival companies that they amalgamated under the name of the Hudson's Bay company, and have since enjoyed the privileges granted under their charter of 1670.

Thus while the unfortunate affray which here took place caused much suffering and affliction at the time, it was the last of the troubles which had for some years harrassed and disturbed the settlement, and this monument is erected by the Manitoba Historical Society, by means of the generous aid granted by the present Lady Selkirk, to mark the spot on which was enacted a tragedy, which forms one of the most salient points in the history of the Red River Settlement, for the unfortunate occurrence led to the peaceful solution of all the artificial ills that distressed the first agriculturists, who first proved to the world the fertility of the lands of the Red River Valley of the North.

The Historical Society have long desired, and had in view, the marking of several historical sites, such as the Seven Oaks, Fort Douglas and Fort Gibraltar, and have been enabled through the kindness of Lady Selkirk to make this beginning. The work of the Society, in this direction however, will not be completed until a suitable tribute is paid to the intelligence, energy and patriotism of La Verandrye, and the self-sacrificing French-Canadian discoverer and explorer of this province, by



the erection of a stately and handsome monument, bearing on its face some record of his life's work.

CHAS. N. BELL,  
Corresponding Secretary.

#### THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

The Lieutenant-Governor was then asked to address the assembly and unveil the monument. He said :—

Mr. President and Members of the Historical Society, Ladies and Gentlemen :

You have heard from authoritative sources to-day all that relates to the monument before us, and upon that subject I need not touch ; but the present seems to me to be an occasion when we should all acknowledge the value of the services which have been rendered to the people of this province and and of the Dominion by the Historical Society of Manitoba and it is to their great credit that what we see to-day is only one of the many instances I might refer to, where their aid has been of the greatest value in giving permanency to those portions of the history of this country which, already dimmed by time in the memories of living men, are in danger of passing into the realm of vague tradition, or of being wholly lost.

I have been requested by the President and Council of this Society, on the anniversary of the event, to unveil the monument which commemorates it ; and while there may be differences of opinion as to the causes which led to the combat and loss of life these stones record, yet everyone present who is familiar with the early history of this country will agree with me that, even apart entirely from these events, this monument stands upon historic ground, and the Society, in determining the site to mark the battle of Seven Oaks, which extended from the grove which gave it its name to near Fort Douglas, was wise, I think, in placing it near this great highway, which traversing as it does this province from north to south and east to west, is but the enlargement of the trail which connected the great northern waters and woods, the home of the Chippewyan and Cree, with the vast prairies of

the south and west, where dwelt, differing in language only, the divisions of that great and warlike nation, the Dakotahs. I have said that this road, whether as Indian trail or King's highway, in old or more recent times, is indeed historic. Over it, in the dim past which antedates even Indian tradition, must have passed those aboriginal inhabitants whose interesting sepulchral remains near St. Andrew's Rapids and elsewhere, excite wonder and stimulate conjecture, and shew them to have been a race superior in many respects to those which succeeded them. Over this road and near this spot must have passed the war parties of the Assiniboines in their futile effort to oppose with arrow, tomahawk, and spear, the invading northern and eastern Cree, who had doubtless when similarly armed envied in vain the warlike "Stony" his possession of what was later known as the Image and White Horse Plains, with their countless herds of Bison; and when the earlier possession of fire-arms gave the Cree the ascendancy he sought, and that dread scourge, the small-pox, had thinned the Assiniboine ranks, it must have been along this great trail they retreated towards the blue hills of Brandon and to the upper waters of the river which still bears their name. La Verandrye, the first white man who looked on this fair land, must have seen this spot and passed by this trail, and while it was yet a bridle path or cart track, and long before it was known, as it afterwards became, the King's Highway, men who were great in their day and generation and are deservedly still remembered for their important discoveries and their administrative abilities have trodden the path which lies at our feet. Over it has passed discoverer, courier, missionary, Arctic voyager, chief, warrior and medicineman, governor, factor, judge, councillor and commander; along it have been carried wampum and tomahawk, message of peace and war. It has heard the rumble of artillery and the steady march of the Sixth of the Line, the Royal Canadian and 60th Rifles; and along its course the hard-pressed founders of the Selkirk Settlement alternately struggled southwards in search of food or hurried northward for safety



with steps of fear. Over it have travelled the pioneer priests, minister and bishops of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and Wesleyan churches. The governors of the Hudson's Bay company have, as well as the lieutenants of the governors of the Dominion of Canada, all passed this way. Truly this is an historic place; and from the spot where I now stand could once have been seen nearly all of the old historic strongholds of the Hudson's Bay, the North-west, and the X Y Companies. From it may still be seen places made memorable by the good works of the Rev. Mr. West, Bishops Anderson and Provencher, the Rev. John Black, and other devoted men; within view are the residences of Hon. John Inkster, the father of our worthy sheriff, a member of the old Council of Assiniboia, and that of my brave and valued old friend, Hon. Robert McBeth, also a member, and the father of the President of our Historical Society, whose instincts of hospitality were not to be thwarted by the knowledge that confiscation and worse might follow his shelter of a hard-hunted friend; and I see all around me here worthy children of such worthy sires, the descendants of those pioneer Selkirk settlers whose tale of sorrow, suffering and danger always evokes sympathy and wonder. Mr. President, we are, if I mistake not, near the place where the first plow turned the first furrow—presage of peace, plenty and prosperity—on the eastern verge of that vast prairie which extends to the Rocky Mountains; and having suitably marked the scene of battle, let us bury with the foundation of this monument the feuds, jealousies and strifes of the past which it recalls, and remembering that English and Irish, Scandinavian, German and the descendants of the gallant Gauls and Gaels, as well as those of mixed blood, who have figured so prominently in the annals of this country, are now, by the mandate of our Queen, of one country and one people; and while still heirs of the unsullied patriotism and the invincible courage of our colonial and provincial ancestry, and proud of the heroic past, wherein English vied with French in the defence of their common country, we are Canadians all, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and we

may look forward with that hope which is justified by the immensity and value of our resources, by the law-abiding, moral and religious character of our people. If we be true to our God and ourselves in the great trust He has imposed upon us, endeavoring to avoid those strifes of race and creed which it was a great part of the life work of the great Canadian who now, amid the sorrow of the nation, sleeps with his fathers at Cataraqui, to reconcile, we may be the builders of a nation forming part of an empire greater than any the world has yet seen; and upon this continent to be a Canadian citizen may be even a prouder boast than was that of the citizen of an ancient empire, less great than is ours now, "Civis Romanus sum." Mr. President, I have spoken too long, and will now proceed to execute the duty with which your council has entrusted to me; and in the name of the contributors to this memorial, in the name of the president, officers and members of the Historical Society of Manitoba, I unveil this monument, which marks the scene of the battle of Seven Oaks, in the hope that when these rocks are seen from the historic path near which it is placed, and from the railway which passes close by, types in themselves of the change from the old to the new, it will be remembered that as nature has clothed with verdure this spot, once wet with blood, so should we, except as matters of historic interest and record, clothe with forgetfulness all animosities, jealousies, bitternesses and strifes, and turning to the fair prospects before us as an united people and nation, thank Almighty God that the sad past is indeed past, and implore His blessing upon our efforts for a brighter future.

At the close of his remarks His Honor unveiled the monument, the act being greeted with general applause. The monument is of native Selkirk stone, and the workmanship a credit to the designer, Mr. S. Hooper. It stands nine feet six inches in height, and its size is four feet at the base. On the top is carved a wreath of flowers. The inscription is on the west side, facing Main street. On the upper portion are carved the words, "Seven Oaks," and beneath is the inscrip-

tion: "Erected in 1891 by the Manitoba Historical Society, through the generosity of the Countess of Selkirk, on the site of Seven Oaks, where fell Governor Robert Semple and twenty of his officers and men, June 19th, 1816."

The ceremony of the unveiling was followed by several short addresses.

Rev. Canon Matheson spoke as follows: As a native of Manitoba, and one born within a few rods of this historic spot, I have been asked to say a few words on the occasion of the unveiling of this monument. Three-quarters of a century ago to-day my grandfather took part in the unfortunate conflict which occurred on the banks of this ravine, and was one of the few who survived that sad and fatal day in the annals of the Red River colony. He owed his life to the clemency and intercession of a friendly French-Canadian, and his record of the affair, known as Pritchard's narrative, is perhaps the most accurate which we possess to-day. As the adopted son in the home of that grandfather, I well remember what a close friendship was cherished and maintained to the relatives of that French Canadian for his kind deed to the head of our family in this land. Being, then, one of the direct descendants of a family so intimately connected with the history of the event which we mark to-day, my nature would be impervious to all sentiment were there not something stirred up in my breast by the ceremony of this afternoon. My feeling is one of thankfulness, and that thankfulness is of a three-fold nature. I am thankful, first of all, that we natives can claim such close kinship with the distant past of a country which is destined to have such a glorious future. I am thankful, in the second place, that a wise Providence overruled the disunion of that past, and so soon welded the discordant and oppressing elements of those early days in a community of a happy, contented and self-reliant people. It was well, perhaps, that our colony was thus at its inception baptized in struggle. It tended to make those pioneer forefathers of ours staunch men, staunch and true to lay broad and deep the foundations of that God-fearing little community in which it was our privi-

lege to be nurtured. Our present is a consequence of that past. We live to-day under the grateful shade of the tree which our forefathers planted. We reap in peace to-day the harvest, the seeds of which they sowed in toil and blood.

In the third place I would thank the members of the Historical Society and the Countess of Selkirk; I would thank them on behalf of the natives of the country, if I might be permitted to do so, for rearing this monument to perpetuate the memory of an event in our country's history. This is indeed a pleasing evidence of their interest in and of their close identification with the history of their adopted country. I will say no more, as there are other representatives of those connected with the event we commemorate who may wish to say a word or two. As I look around me, however, a thought comes to me. This monument erected in the parish in which it is my privilege to minister, and standing in my pathway as I go around with the message of peace which passes all understanding, will be a constant reminder to me of what we owe to the God of our fathers who has spoken His peace to this land, which was once the warpath of the plumed and painted savage of our plains. "Seven Oaks," once the scene of a battle bitter in its cruel intent, is now the scene of a battle benign in its benevolence, the scene of a contest in the civilities of a cultured life, the arena for the display of those amenities of social life which make it the meeting place, not of hostile factions but of hospitality's friends, the rendezvous where old times keep ever green the memories and friendship of the past, and where new-comers receive a warm welcome to the land of their adoption.

U. S. Consul Taylor remarked that he attended this interesting occasion with the assurance that he should enjoy the luxury of being a listener to President McBeth, Governor Schultz and Secretary Bell, and not a haunted man, oppressed by an engagement or a call to speak. Still he would endeavor to second what has been so well said of two Selkirk ladies. Firstly, he referred to Cicely Louisa, Countess of Selkirk, and the last of the title he regretted to add, whose visit to the

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Selkirk Settlement, now Manitoba, in 1889 was a most interesting event. The consul was present on two occasions, a Sunday service at Kildonan church and a garden party on the site of Fort Douglas, now the residence of ex-Mayor Logan, and when the representatives of the colonists of 1812-16, (actual colonists in the instances of Matheson, and a Bannerman, and a Polson) were presented to her Ladyship her personal knowledge of every family was most wonderful. It was his privilege to be present with Mr. and Mrs. John Fraser at the anniversary of their marriage fifty years before, it being the first union of children born in the colony on the Red River. The Historical Society owes to her Ladyship the suggestion and the fact of the present memorial of Fort Douglas, and its site is the appropriate donation of Miss Mary Inkster of "Seven Oaks," a descendant of the sterling Norse element of the Orkney Islands—that invaluable portion of the population of Central Canada which is native to the soil in the names of Bannatyne, Norquay, Inkster, Clouston, Polson and others equally and honorably memorable. Yesterday—18th of June—was marked by a Norse demonstration—a kindred event in the ethnology of Manitoba. The Icelandic element of the Province, 5,000 strong, assisted by influential deputations from Minnesota and Dakota, including two representatives in the Legislature of North Dakota, celebrated by an imposing procession and exercises the inauguration of self-government in Iceland, 1,017 years ago. The oldest historic Scandinavian stock has found its new home in the great prairie ocean of Northwest America, and so is destined to be repeated in this new world the story of the bold Northmen of yore—the sons of Thor—who rolled the conquests of the Teuton to the gates of Imperial Rome and gave new and wholesome life to the civilization of Europe. So mote it be on the American continent.

Judge Dubuc spoke of himself as being, not a descendant of the old settlers, but one of the pioneer settlers of the new generation, he having come here twenty years ago in the month of June. He had been glad to find a very fine country

and the people very hospitable. He said he had been glad to hear the references to the first white man who had come to this country, and referred to the fact that the foundation of a monument to La Verandrye had been commenced in St. Boniface.

Col. Villiers and Col. Howard were called upon to speak, and in a few words they expressed their pleasure at being present, and congratulated the Society on the completion of its enterprise.

Cheers were then given successively for the Queen, the Governor-General, the Lieutenant-Governor, and (at the call of his Honor) for the Historical Society and Lady Selkirk.



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