

abandoned all its rights upon that country, which became thus a public domain. By the British North America Act, His Majesty transferred the administration of that part of his domains, as integral part of the Dominion, to the Privy Council of Canada. The British Act 31-32 Victoria, chapter 105, the Canadian Act, 32-33 Victoria, chapter 3, were passed to regulate this transfer from one jurisdiction to another, and provide for the organization of Red River as Province of Manitoba.

The Privy Council for Canada was not an expert in the art of governing and organizing a colony. It would not be saying too much that many of the members of that Privy Council believed that Canada was still a colony at that time. The Privy Council made many mistakes which necessitated the interference of the English cabinet. These mistakes and this interference brought the recognition of the rights and privileges of the inhabitants of the Territories, and the solemn promise that these rights and privileges would always be protected. Right shall be done in all cases, but let us not anticipate. This drama of the transfer of the territory to Canada lasted for more than a year. There were some comical incidents, when the governor of the new province would not be accepted by his subjects; tragical incidents, such as the execution of Scott, and last the opera bouffe finale, when Fort Garry was taken by Colonel Wolseley. These incidents of so different nature were merely incidents. The main part was the resistance of twelve or thirteen inhabitants of the territory who did not want to come under the government of Canada, the Canadian domination, unless all their rights and privileges would be granted to them. In order to give a better relation of the facts which have direct bearing upon the present Bill, I will quote the great pacificator of the west, the eminent Archbishop of Saint Boniface, whose last years were devoted in claiming the execution of the solemn promises which were made in the name of the Queen and of the government of Canada to this population which had full confidence in him.

I cannot have been used as a medium of pacification, during the difficulties of 1870, and be obliged, to-day, to remain a silent witness of the violation of the promises which, more than anything else, secured that pacification.

As a general proposition, I say without hesitation that what is now going on in Manitoba and the Canadian Northwest, with regard to schools, is a flagrant and unaccountable violation of the assurances given to the Catholic population of these vast countries. Such assurances were entrusted to me for transmission, precisely because I was the chief pastor of that population. My episcopal character did not prevent the civil authorities asking my aid in a settlement of political difficulties; and I claim the political mission I have accomplished should strengthen my voice when I state that the population was deceived when asked to accept an agreement which it would have repu-

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diated in a very energetical way if it could only have suspected what is going on to-day.

These reproaches are serious, Mr. Chairman, I will establish that they are well founded. Would this not be sufficient to cause to reflect those who in this House believe in the principles of honour and dignity of the Crown?

It was in March, 1869, that the conditions of the transfer of the Territory of the Northwest to the new Canadian confederation was settled between the imperial government, the commissioners of Ottawa and the Hudson Bay Company. In the course of that negotiation the inhabitants of the country were entirely ignored. Later on, Lord Granville in his despatch to Sir John Young, Governor General, cautioned the government of Canada: 'that the old inhabitants of the country will be treated with such forethought and consideration as may preserve them from the dangers of the approaching change.' This wise advice was not acted upon; on the contrary, such measures were taken that Lord Granville in a despatch, dated the 3rd November, 1869, did not hesitate to state: 'The Canadian government have by this measure given an occasion to an outburst of violence in the Territory.' The noble lord added afterwards: 'Those proceedings have certainly enhanced the responsibility of the Canadian government.' The imperial authorities, in consequence of the dissatisfaction of the people, took on themselves a closer direction of affairs, in order, according to Lord Granville's words: 'to exhaust all means of explanation and conciliation before having recourse to force.' To comply with such direction the Canadian government asked Vicar General Thibault and my friend Mr. De Salaberry to proceed to Red River, in order to calm the apprehensions of the people. Sir Donald A. Smith received a commission under the great seal of Canada, and started for Fort Garry to use his salutary influence as mediator, and to turn towards that end the resources of his ability and the means that his exalted position placed at his command.

I was then at Rome, enjoying the happiness that the grand and imposing ceremonies and deliberations of the Ecumenical Council of the Vatican would procure to a bishop devoted to his church, when a telegraphic despatch called me to Ottawa. Owing to the importance of the summons, the sovereign pontiff dispensed me from the ordinary rules of the council for obtaining leave of absence. His Holiness granted me a private audience, blessed my mission and myself and added with emotion: 'I bless the people of the Red river, on condition that they will listen to your advice and live in peace and charity.' I left the Eternal City on the 12th January, 1870. On my meeting Sir George Cartier in Montreal, he said to me, with his usual frankness: 'I am happy to see you. We have blundered, and you must help us to undo the mischief.' I proceeded with him to Ottawa, and remained in the capital some ten days. I often met the Governor General and his ministers. His Excellency called me to several private audiences, either alone or with some of his advisers. I had an interview with the whole ministry, and several with its leading members. After I had been made well acquainted with all the circumstances of the case, my departure for the Northwest was fixed for the 17th February. The day before leaving, I had the honour