

the regularity of their nomination, which, I may say, has never been questioned :

To John Black, Esq :

Sir,—The president of the provisional government of Assiniboia in Council, by these presents, grants authority and commission to you, John Black, Esq., jointly with the Rev. N. J. Ritchot and Hon. A. Scott, to the end that you betake yourselves to Ottawa, in Canada ; and that when there you should lay before the Canadian parliament the list entrusted to you with the presents, which list contains the conditions and propositions under which the people of Assiniboia would consent to enter into confederation with the other provinces of Canada.

Signed, the 22nd day of March, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and seventy.

By order,
(Sgd.) THOMAS BUNN,
Secretary of State.

The delegates proceeded to Ottawa. Upon their arrival here a committee of the Privy Council of Canada consisting of Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George Cartier were named to confer with the delegates. I may mention that upon their arrival here two of the delegates were arrested. They were subsequently released and were able to proceed with the execution of their mission. They held several conferences with the Dominion ministers, and laid before them the list of rights which had been confined to them by those who had named them, and which they had brought with them to Ottawa. Hon. members will remember that there has been a controversy as to the authenticity of the Bill of Rights. The authenticity of the one called No. 4 has been questioned. That controversy is important only in so far as the educational settlement is concerned, because in one of these Bills of Rights the school privilege is not mentioned, but in both, in the same terms and in the same article, the important question of the preservation of both languages is mentioned in identical terms. I may say that at that time the French-speaking residents of that large district were in the majority. It is clause 16, strange to say, of the Bill of Rights which is in the following words :

That the English and French languages be common in the legislature and in the courts, and that all public documents as well as all Acts of the legislature be published in both languages.

Now, I will not trouble the House with a recital of what passed at the numerous interviews between these delegates and the Dominion ministers. Some of these results have been published and some have not ; but it is necessary only to state that, as a result of the conferences between these representatives of the old residents of the district and the Dominion government, many of the articles mentioned in the Bill of Rights were agreed to, among which was this article 16 referring to the languages. That was granted unreservedly ; and, as the Act treating the province of Manitoba was

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then under consideration by the House, in order to prove its good faith and its desire to carry out the covenant, the delegates were invited by the Dominion government to remain here until the Manitoba Act had passed through its different stages in parliament. It is a historical fact that at that time their labours were finished and they wished to return home. They were detained here until the third reading of the Manitoba Bill, in order that they should see incorporated in the charter of the new province this clause of their Bill of Rights, in which they had mentioned as a condition of their entry into confederation the adoption of both languages as legal ; and presumably that was stipulated at that time in the interest of the English-speaking residents, who were in the minority. The imperial authorities were kept au fait with all that was going on, and I wish to quote briefly, in support of this statement, which I deem to be one of considerable importance under the circumstances, some despatches exchanged between Sir John Young, the Governor General, and Earl Granville, who was at the head of the colonial department. On the 5th of March, 1871, Earl Granville telegraphed to the Governor General :

Her Majesty's government will give proposed military assistance provided reasonable terms are granted to the Red River settlement.

On the 22nd of March a despatch from the Under Secretary of the Colonies directs that :

Troops should not be employed in forcing the sovereignty of Canada on the population of Red River, should they refuse to admit it.

On the 17th of March Earl Granville cabled :

Let me know by telegram when you know delegates have started from Fort Garry.

On the 7th of April the Governor General telegraphed as follows :

Last of the delegates is expected at St. Paul on Thursday the 11th ; the others arrived there to-day, and may reach Ottawa on Saturday, the 9th.

On the 9th Earl Granville cabled :

Let me know as soon as you can by telegram the result of negotiations with Red River delegates.

On April 23rd, Earl Granville thus informed the Governor General :

The Canadian government to accept the decision of her Majesty's government on all portions of the settlers' Bill of Rights.

On May 3rd, the Governor General cabled to the home government :

Negotiations with the delegates closed satisfactorily.

And to this Earl Granville replied on the 8th :