

unsuspecting victim for his money or furs. Many carried out their various schemes under the guise of being free traders.

The southern portion of the country in Blackfoot and Peigan territory was polluted with so-called traders whose unbridled use of rotgut whisky was creating havoc amongst the once-proud Blackfoot nation and their allies.² The Americans from across the border of Montana had established so-called trading posts within our border and had accomplished what the thousands of Crees had failed to do in their best days, namely the subjugation of the southern tribes. The American long-range rifles and their speed with the short gun while they plied the natives with whisky and cheated them out of their belongings was a disgrace to a civilized nation.

It was with horror and impotent rage that I had listened to a recital of the growing power that these degenerate adventurers who acknowledged no authority but their unmerciful use of guns and whisky to victimize the natives. A man named Felix Monroe, who had been a Blackfoot interpreter with the Palliser expedition in '58, spent half the night telling us of the many misdeeds going on in that part of the territories.

I was in those days indifferent to the need of government, but now was fully awake to the fact that nothing could save my Indian friends but some authoritative action to oust these American vagabonds and leeches who were sucking the very life blood of the southern tribes.

My old friend Spence had kept me informed of the controversy raging in the settlement of the Red River and Fort Garry that ended with the Rebellion of 1869-70, the final outcome of which I had learned on this trip. During the transition of authority from the Hudson's Bay Company to the Government of Canada I had taken a neutral stand, not joining with any side in the disputed matters concerned with this change. I deemed the whole question was not of my concern, living in the western Territories. It would be some time before we were affected.³

The matter of annexation to the States was a different matter. Its accomplishment even to a minor degree by the usurping of authority by these unprincipled traders in our territory fairly made my blood boil as nothing had in all the years of agitation, petitions, and what-not that had predated the Riel Rebellion. I welcomed the news that a high official of the Government of Canada was being sent out to the West to investigate actual conditions and report recommendations.⁴

It was variously rumoured in Hudson's Bay circles that as a result of this investigation a police force would be made available to the Territories and that some form of authoritative