

to the new Dominion government they would not be deprived of any of the privileges of any kind which they had enjoyed up to that time. I wish to show as briefly as possible the nature of the negotiations entered into between the people known then as the Red River colony—in reality the only white and civilized inhabitants of Rupert's Land—and the Dominion government. Perhaps I had better read a recital of the facts such as they took place at that time from the narrative of Archbishop Taché, himself a prominent actor in these events and whose interference was solicited by the Dominion government in order that he should by his influence endeavour to bring about a successful issue of the conference, prevent violence and armed resistance by the people of the Red River, and secure to them what they considered—and very properly considered as British subjects—their rights, as a condition precedent to their entering under the control of the new authority. This is from Archbishop Taché's statement :

I may be permitted to review certain portions of our history, perhaps not too well known. In 1868 two delegates of the Canadian government, Sir George Cartier and the Hon. Wm. Macdougall, were sent to England to negotiate with the imperial government and the Hudson Bay Company for the acquisition of Rupert's Land and the Northwest Territories. After long deliberations the conditions of the transfer were agreed to by the interested parties.

Meanwhile Earl Granville, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, though rejoicing at an agreement he had so largely contributed to secure, felt a little uneasy about the future condition of the old inhabitants of the country, and, to relieve his anxiety, addressed to Sir John Young, then Governor General of Canada, a despatch dated the 10th of April, 1869, from which I quote the following paragraph :

I am sure that your government will not forget the care which is due to those who must soon be exposed to new dangers, and in the course of settlement be dispossessed of the lands which they are used to enjoy as their own or be confined within unwontedly narrow limits.

That government, I believe, has never sought to evade its obligations to those whose uncertain rights and rude means of living are contracted by the advance of civilized man. I am sure that they will not do so in the present case, but that the old inhabitants of the country will be treated with such forethought and consideration as may preserve them from the danger of the approaching change and satisfy them of the friendly interest which their new governors feel in their welfare.

To remedy the evil, Lord Granville telegraphed to the Governor General advising the issue of a proclamation in the name of Her Majesty in order to quiet the minds of the disturbed. In that proclamation of the 6th December, 1869, we read :

Her Majesty commands me to state to you that she will always be ready through me as Her representative, to redress all well-founded grievances and any complaints that may be made or desires that may be expressed to me as Governor General.

By Her Majesty's authority I do therefore

assure you that on union with Canada all your civil and religious rights will be respected.

Lord Granville having heard of the proclamation and of the goodwill of the Canadian authorities, wrote as follows to Sir John Young on the 8th January, 1870 :

I observe with great satisfaction the anxiety manifested by the Canadian government to avoid any collision with the insurgents in the Red River settlement and to exhaust all means of explanation and conciliation before having recourse to force.

Unfortunately the difficulties of communication prevented the knowledge of the proclamation being imparted to the interested parties at Fort Garry, and on the other hand the same difficulty of communication left the Canadian officials at Pembina in the greatest uncertainty. Expecting that the affairs were progressing as understood when they left Ottawa they thought they had but to proclaim the transfer and secure by force their entry in the Northwest Territories. They acted in accordance, but the result was altogether contrary to their hopes, and the difficulties were increased to such a lamentable extent, that Lord Granville expressed his regrets to the Governor General in a despatch dated 20th January, 1870.

I much more seriously regret the proclamation put forth by Mr. Macdougall and the commission issued by him to Colonel Dennis. Those proceedings do not render Her Majesty's government less desirous of the restoration of tranquility under the authority of the Dominion, but they have certainly enhanced the responsibility of the Canadian government.

I enter into some of these details in order to show the extent of the participation of the imperial government, and what followed ; and also to show with some degree of detail under what circumstances the solemn covenants to which I am about to refer were entered into. The Dominion government finally invited the settlers of the Red River settlement then organized as a provincial government—or at any rate organized in such a way as to be in a position to name representatives—the Dominion government invited the residents of the Red River to send delegates to Ottawa, to meet the Dominion government and to lay before that government the claims, the pretensions, and the desires of the residents of Rupert's Land and the Red River, so that an arrangement might be arrived at which would be satisfactory to these residents and lead to the peaceful taking possession of this vast territory by the Dominion government. There was a meeting of the members of the provincial government at Fort Garry, at any rate in the Red River settlement, and delegates were deputed to Ottawa, in conformity with the wish of the Dominion government, at the suggestion of the imperial government, and in order to carry out the intentions to which I have just referred. After an election had been made, a regular commission was issued to Judge Black, Mr. Albert Scott and Father Ritchot as representing the residents, to lay their claims before the Dominion authorities. Perhaps I may read the commission issued to these three delegates, in order to show