

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNORSHIP IN MANITOBA

1870 - 1882

A Thesis

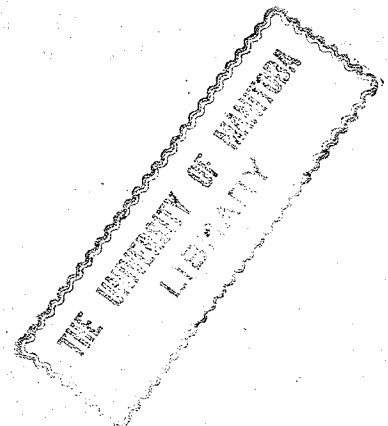
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PREFACE

This work might be said to comprise one principal study - the lieutenant-governorship - and several secondary studies - the aftermath of the Red River Insurrection, and the broad lines of Manitoba's social and economic development from 1870 to 1882. The latter aspects, which occupy the fifth, eighth, and tenth chapters, were judged necessary as essential background material which has not yet received adequate treatment by Canadian historians. Their inclusion accounts for the perhaps unusual length of this thesis.

It is only fitting to acknowledge at this point the generous assistance lent by the staffs of the Provincial Library and Public Archives of Manitoba, and of the Public Archives of Canada. The interest reflected in their co-operation provided constant encouragement. The same must be said of the judicious guidance given by Professor W. L. Morton, of the Department of History of the University of Manitoba, who bore patiently the rather violent fluctuations in the writer's enthusiasm and exertions.

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ABBREVIATIONS

P.A.C.: Public Archives of Canada.

P.A.M.: Public Archives of Manitoba.

1874 Report: "Report of the Select Committee on the Causes of the Difficulties in the North-West Territory in 1869-70." Canada, Journals of the House of Commons, vol.VIII, 1874, Appendix No.6.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION - A PANORAMA

"The smallest Province though Manitoba is, the office of its lieutenant-governor has entailed more extensive responsibilities than that of any other Province in the Dominion."

- Editorial, "Lieut.-Governor Morris"
Free Press Weekly, Dec. 1, 1877.

Were this study to be given an adequately descriptive title it would be something in the nature of: "The Role of the Lieutenant-Governors in the Political and Social Development of Manitoba, 1870 to 1882." It is obvious from such a description that the question of scope is of prime importance, and it would not be inappropriate, here at the start, to indicate generally what the following chapters attempt.

The lieutenant-governor, it was felt, must be regarded in a two-fold aspect. The first is as a political office, endowed with certain intrinsic functions and powers which are, relatively speaking, constant. But these functions and powers are essentially theoretical. For the lieutenant-Governor is also sinew and bone, mind and will, in a society which is equally a matter of mind and will. Consequently the historical operation of those theoretical functions and powers is determined by the mutual impact of those minds and wills, varying from individual to individual and even from moment to moment.

It is a common practice among constitutionalists gravely to undertake studies of the former aspect in isolation - to describe and define the theoretical office as a significant political fact. But it is here submitted that any such significance is illusory, and that the real significance lies in the

conjunction of three elements; the office, the man, and the society. Only through a conception embracing this broad view can distortion and false illusion be avoided.

Thus a narrowly constitutional approach was rejected at the outset. So, too, was the purely biographical approach. These things are meaningless unless related to the provincial society of the years in question, and when this is done the dates confining the study become important.

Manitoba in 1870 was that singular society, "a frontier of anticipation," far removed from the advancing fringe of settlement. In its external relations, at least with respect to the young Dominion of Canada, it was remote and ingrown. From the inception of the Red River settlement its avenues to the outer world had been predominantly to the north, and at the time of Confederation such tendency as existed away from this northern east of outlook veered to the south; such had been the case for two decades. If Confederation represented the triumph of Laurentian courtship it was a purely political marriage, and the social and economic consummation was yet to come.

In its internal aspect Red River was, as might be expected of an 'anticipatory' society accustomed to paternalistic Company rule, protoplasmic and static - almost stagnant. The 1869-'70 Insurrection was in no sense a radical revolt; for the English-speaking minority of the insurgents it was the blind protest of bewildered and suspecting rustics; for the majority, the métis, it was the obstructive strategy of an ultra-conservative group who sensed the social revolution which the metropolitan link would bring, a revolution beyond the limits of their adapt-

ability. Red River was, one might say, a British North American counterpart to the American 'hill-billy' country, exhibiting the same lack of sophistication in social and political organization, the same distrust of outsiders, the same resistance to change, and even matching the Kentucky mountain folk in the possession of a distinctive dialect.

By 1882, however, this society had been transformed. The metropolitan link had been forged through immigration and the development of communications, culminating in the arrival of the C.P.R. at Winnipeg in that year. Internally the complexion of provincial society had changed beyond recognition through that same influx of settlers, Canadian, American, and European. In the face of the profound social changes wrought by these newcomers, the unassimilable half-breeds retreated to their last stand on the Saskatchewan River banks. The immigrants submerged many of the old local issues and altered the balance of forces on the West, and brought with them political experience, even political instincts, as the emergence of political parties in 1882 indicates.

It is this social and political transformation, then, that forms the dynamic background against which the following study of the early lieutenant-governors is made. A background of developing communications with the outside, bringing immigration and settlement, and, within the province, of shifting lines of factional and party alignment. It might be objected that such a background dwarfs the subject, but this chronicle, as it unfolds, should refute any such objection. Indeed, it is only in this panoramic setting that an undistorted account of

the lieutenant-governorship in these years can be given.

The lieutenant-governor, in 1870, occupied a position of peculiar importance, owing to three factors. First, he was the one tangible link to the new parent state of Canada, the evidence of the transcontinental promise. Second, he was within the community, the sole outside arbiter of the internal strife which was the heritage of the Insurrection, the one neutral position around which the disputants could meet. Third, he was the sole point of political experience in an otherwise politically unsophisticated community. Under these circumstances the choice of the first governor was a matter of vital importance, and it will be shown that this potential significance of the office was fully realized under Mr. Archibald.

Thereafter, however, the influx of immigrants and the growth of communications completed the metropolitan link; immigration and experience created growing self-confidence and savoir-faire in political matters; and with these developments the initial importance of the lieutenant-governor - probably unique in the history of that office in the Canadian provinces - declined progressively. In this decline, moreover, the attitudes of the individual governors were of enormous importance, for by their policies they could accelerate or retard the emergence of widespread civic capacity. In any event, by 1882 the lieutenant-governor was reduced to a position in the political society of Manitoba scarcely more vital than that occupied by his counterparts in the older provinces.

The lieutenant-governorship in the 1870's was a many-faceted office, and some attention must be directed to the

other aspects. The governor was not only an element in the provincial political structure, but also a part of the federal constitution, appointed and paid by the national government, instructed by the Governor General in Council, and in a large measure responsible to them for his actions. Like the Governor General of that era, he represented not only the executive power of the Crown, but also the will of the 'home' government. As long as the federal government pursued anything like a domineering colonial policy towards the new province, the lieutenant-governor occupied a position similar to that of the Imperial governors in the years preceding responsible government: accountable to his home government for events within his domain, but increasingly restricted in his ability to control colonial government as the political experience and astuteness of the colonists grew.

Insofar as such a policy in Ottawa is evident from a study of these years, it must be demonstrated in the following pages. And, in truth, the facts show that at the outset federal control of the province was exercised to a marked extent through the lieutenant-governor, whose pro-consular role was made possible by the weakness of local political organization. Even before the emergence in 1882 of the first provincial party lines, however, that pliant legislature which supported this role of the governor disappeared, and at the end of the period one encounters in the newly evolved parties a signpost pointing to a subsequent study of the avenues through which, thereafter, federal control sought to operate.

In yet another respect the lieutenant-governor acted as agent of the federal government, one which can receive but pass-

ing attention in this study; his responsibility for the administration, within the province, of the programmes of the federal departments. This function initially bulked large in the lieutenant-governor's task - Indian Affairs, Crown Lands, Customs - but it was not, strictly speaking, a function of the office itself. Its effect on the role of the governors was indirect: the prestige of the incumbent of the office was, at the start, undoubtedly enhanced by his vast powers over these vital matters, subject in part to his successful execution of popular policies, and his influence in provincial affairs was increased correspondingly. And as special agents were appointed to relieve the lieutenant-governor of these duties, leaving him eventually with only nominal responsibility, if any, his influence suffered a corresponding decline. But, at any rate, these duties were peripheral to the role of lieutenant-governor proper, and will be indicated only to the extent of their indirect importance.

Finally, it is to be borne in mind that, until 1876, the same person held twin offices as lieutenant-governor simultaneously, of Manitoba and the new colonial empire in the North West Territories. But from the beginning the governors kept the affairs of the two offices separate, and the remarks in the foregoing paragraph regarding his function as an agent for the federal departments apply equally to his function as lieutenant-governor of the Territories.

Historians run to analogy like cabbage runs to seed, and in this the historians of the Canadian West are no exception.

There is a curious variety in the metaphors chosen to describe the annexation of the North-West and the creation of Manitoba.

To Professor G.F.G. Stanley, Canadian of English origin, these events mark the 'birth' of western Canada, and the Manitoba Act of 1870 is presumably in the nature of a birth certificate.¹

To Judge L.-A. Prud'homme, French-Canadian and trained in the *droit civil*, the occasion was matrimonial, and the Manitoba Act was a 'contrat de mariage.'² And surely in the eyes of the *metis*, who have been inarticulate, the Manitoba Act must have seemed in retrospect the death warrant of their Red River society.

Just so, among contemporaries of Red River there were

widely divergent reactions. In 1870 and throughout the years encompassed in this study, the *metis* fought stubbornly but vainly against social extinction. The newcomers from Ontario, at the other extreme, regarded Manitoba as something new-born, created

in the image of their former province. Only among the old Eng-

lish-speaking settlers and the French-Canadians (including those adaptable *metis* who remained *metis* in name only) was there continuity from the old west to the new; life went on, but there

had been a change of status - a marriage if you like.

It was this conflict of viewpoints that perplexed the

Ottawa authorities in 1869-70. The full story of Sir John A.

1. G.F.G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada*, London, 1926.
 2. L.-A. Prud'homme, *Le Conseil Legislatif de Manitoba*, "Trans-
 actions, Royal Society of Canada, 1921, Sec. I, pp. 61-64.

Macdonald and the west has yet to be told, and its broad outlines can only be guessed at here. Sir John, before the event, behaved in the manner of an unwilling parent called in to watch the birth of an unwanted child. There seemed to be no way out of it if the United States were to be prevented from severing for all time the route to the Pacific.³ "But," Macdonald remarked at an early point in the negotiations, "in any other point of view, it seems to me that that country is of no present value to Canada. We have unoccupied land enough to absorb the immigration for many years, and the opening of the Saskatchewan would do to Canada what the prairie lands of Illinois are doing now - draining away our youth and strength."⁴

By 1867 Macdonald was apparently reconciled to the approaching event. But imagine his consternation at finding, in 1869, that the child whose birth he was awaiting was demanding with all the assertiveness of youth that there must be a wedding instead, complete with marriage contract. Here indeed was a shotgun wedding, by its very nature distasteful to the groom; and, from Sir John's viewpoint, with a child-bride, a babe-in-arms.⁵

3. Sir Joseph Pope, Memoirs of the Right Honourable Sir John A. Macdonald, (Toronto, 1930) pp.397-98; Macdonald to Edward Watkin, Mar.27, 1865.

4. Ibid.

5. It is perhaps possible to regard all of Macdonald's failures in the west - and certainly these two disastrous ones of 1869 and 1885 - in terms of this confusion of metaphors. He never knew whether he was dealing with a child or an adult; he could never determine its needs, nor anticipate its reactions. Small wonder that his exasperation sometimes became explosive, as when, in the 1873 session of Parliament, Mr. Robert Cunningham, M.P. for Marquette, supported a provincial demand with a veiled threat of secession. "Mr. Macdonald," the newspaper reported, "said he did not care for the threat of the hon. Member for Marquette. He and his Province might leave Confederation tomorrow for all he cared. It had been a nuisance and a trouble to the Dominion ever since it became

Whatever view may be taken of the Manitoba Act, this much is certain: that however much it may have created, it assumed the prior existence of certain human resources for the new province. Something had gone before - the community of Red River.

i. "A Frontier of Anticipation."

All writers are agreed in stressing the isolation of Red River in 1870. One calls it an "island". Another says: "It had all the characteristics of a frontier except the essential one of continuity with other settlements. Its base was neither at tidewater nor in the parent country, but, until the middle of the nineteenth century, in itself. If a frontier, it was a frontier of anticipation, insulated by wilderness scarcely penetrable, and in consequence stagnant."⁶ Or, to take yet another likeness, it was not a wave-crest but a puddle.

The focal point lay at Upper Fort Garry, the seat of government under Hudson's Bay Company rule, Provisional Government, and, at first, provincial government. Before it was clustered the nucleus of Winnipeg; across the river from the rear gate was St. Boniface. Geographically, politically, and socially it was the linchpin of the community.

Of Winnipeg, in 1870, there were only unpromising beginnings. A scant eight years had passed since the first building

a Province of Canada, and it was contrary to his wish that it had ever been admitted (cries of order). He did not care though it was sunk (loud cries of order and uproar)." - The Manitoban, May 17, 1873; "By Telegraph - Government House at Fort Garry." It would be unfair to imply that this accurately reflected Macdonald's policy, but it undoubtedly indicates an underlying attitude.

6. W.L. Merton, "The Red River Parish: Its Place in the Development of Manitoba;" Manitoba Essays, edited by R.C. Lodge (Toronto, 1937) pp. 89-90.

in the village had been erected by McKenny & Co., Rev. George Bryce, arriving in 1871, recorded as his first impressions, "a street with a few irregular buildings, some of them log, with a slanting surface requiring in muddy weather the skill of a Blon-
din to walk it, and the two story yellow stopping place with its dim and smoky lights!"⁷ The village, only one of three ganglia which later merged their growth to produce the city, had no legal existence until incorporated as the City of Winnipeg in 1873. It had not even a post office building of its own, but had to use the office in Fort Garry.

St. Boniface, across the river, had about the same population, three hundred, but, endowed as it was with a cathedral, a bishop's palace, and a school, it could (and did) look down its nose at the upstart village. It could look back fifty-two years to its beginnings - a Roman Catholic mission under Father P_rovencher in 1818.

Other settlements were scattered along the banks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, clustered, like St. Boniface, about the churches and missions. There is perhaps some significance in the fact that although all but one of the settlements existing in Assiniboia before 1870 were either trading forts or parishes, that single exception, Winnipeg - neither fort nor parish - was destined to dominate the future province.

The settlers of English and Scottish descent lived chiefly along the west side of the Red River, between Fort Garry and the Lower Fort, twenty miles downstream, with a few to the

7. George Bryce, "Early Days in Winnipeg," The Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions, No. 46 (1894) p. 4.

west along the north bank of the Assiniboine, around Headingly and St. James. Across the Red between the forts, along its banks to the south of the forks, and on the Assiniboine beyond Headingly lived those of French descent. But the distinction, although marked in most cases by a difference in language, was not as clear-cut as these bare facts would indicate. On the contrary there was a surprising homogeneity among these elements. Partly this arose from the conditions of frontier life which produced, as on the great American frontier, that curious blend of individualism and social cohesion. But chiefly it is attributable to the bond of common maternal blood, for few white women had come to Red River and mixed blood was the rule rather than the exception. However the French half-breeds and English half-breeds may have differed in characteristics - and the differences were quite striking - there was always an overriding and unifying sense of kinship. In Professor Stanley's words: "Cut off, as they were, from European expansion by the accident of geography and by the deliberate policy of the Hudson's Bay Company, they developed a resolute feeling of independence and a keen sense of their own identity which led them to regard themselves as a separate racial and national unit, and which found expression in their name, 'The New Nation.'⁸

Occupations within the settlement varied but little, and virtually all were concerned with either freighting or farming - or open, although illicit, trading. It was here, in fact, that the difference between English and French half-breeds becomes apparent, for the former showed a greater preference for farming,

8. Stanley, op.cit. p.10.

while the latter, more happy-go-lucky, scorned so settled an existence. But each year all were to be found together in the most important occupation of all - Red River's distinctive annual event: the buffalo hunt.

So strong was the sense of unity among the half-breeds of differing paternal tongue, religion and blood, that not even the superimposition on the colony of eastern Canadian racial feuds could seriously impair it. And, indeed, at each extreme there were powerful divisive forces, mutually hostile. On the one hand the Roman Catholic clergy, drawn largely from Quebec, had long dreamed of transforming the settlement into a 'little Quebec,' and as this hope was threatened by immigration of a hostile nature the dream became an active policy.

On the other hand disruptive forces broke into the close-knit settlement from outside, in the form of immigrants from Ontario, or Canada West as it then was. Dr. John Christian Schultz, from Kingston, led the movement which continued steadily, although in slight strength, throughout the 1860's. Meekness and caution were not to be expected in men willing to risk the gamble of the long trip through wilderness to something little less than wilderness, and the boldness and aggressiveness of these men, coupled with their heritage of strong racial and religious prejudices and their contempt for the simple contentment of the half-breeds, created strange and dangerous currents of feeling. The leaven was relatively small, but little was needed. Within a decade the whole loaf was leavened.

It is safe to say that until the intrusion of this element of ferment there was no serious political problem:

"...in that happy, bucolic era haying was more important than politics...."⁹ True, there had been agitation throughout the 1840's against the Company's rigid trading restrictions, but after the winning of freedom of trade in Sayer's trial of 1849, harmony prevailed. In any event, that earlier dispute had been wholly economic, and at no time did it give rise to a challenge to the political order.

The political organization had been no more complex than the needs of the colony dictated. At the top (within the colony only, and subordinate to the Governor of Rupert's Land) was the Governor of Assiniboia, sent to guard the Hudson's Bay Company's interests. For his assistance a Counsel was provided, appointed by the Company, but in practice chosen by the Governor. Judicial matters were directed by a special officer, the Recorder of Rupert's Land, and under him a fairly extensive organization developed: three judicial districts, each with a number of magistrates holding courts twice-monthly, with summary jurisdiction. The supreme tribunal was the Quarterly Court of the Governor and Council of Assiniboia.

At virtually all times the rule was paternalistic and benevolent. "Although the interests of the Company naturally predominated, nevertheless there was a deliberate attempt to make the Council fairly representative of all the interests in the colony."¹⁰ Protestant and Catholic clergy, English half-breeds and French half-breeds, all had their seats at Council. The needs of the settlers were never forgotten, in consequence,

9. W.L.Merton, op.cit. p.101.

10. Stanley, op.cit. p.15.

and from time to time attempts were made to improve their lot through the introduction of local industry, such as brick-making, or of stable farming in hemp or sheep. Almost without exception these attempts failed, but the failure was caused not by any want of sincerity in Council's efforts, but by the inertia of the people. These failures were accepted by the Governor and Council with a shrug of the shoulders; theirs was no heavy-handed paternalism.

The society itself developed certain rudimentary forms of social organization, two of which are found to have taken on later a political significance. The first, and more truly unique was the burlesque hunt whose military organization was the supreme institutional achievement of Red River. With its development into a mass endeavor by the entire settlement it became essential that patterns of control be evolved and strict rules of conduct formulated. In 1869 it was demonstrated that these patterns and rules could, with very little change, be applied to the organization and direction of a political resistance movement.

The other important local institution was the church

parish, which in Red River acquired a quite exceptional character. At a very early stage the parish passed from an instrument of church organization to the basic social institution, and it, as it has been reported, there is no indication that the parishes were self-conscious political units, ¹¹ at least they performed quasi-political functions, such as petitioning Council. And in the troubles of 1869-70 these two acquired a new political status, as the units for representation in the

Assembly of the Provisional Government.

Such was the degree of social and political sophistication reached by the Red River settlement in 1869. "Economically and politically it was a simple society and filled the needs of a simple people for nearly two generations."¹² But adequate as it may have been, it did not fit the people of Red River for self-government, and it was inevitable that following the abrupt introduction of parliamentary forms in 1870 the need for political tutelage should become at once apparent. In this respect one of the most serious deficiencies of the old society was the complete lack of local government institutions - everything was directed from Fort Garry. Yet not until 1873 were steps taken to remedy this deficiency, by which time the need had been recognized as far away as Ottawa. Macdonald himself urged Lieutenant-Governor Morris to introduce a municipal system without further delay. "The emigrant from Ontario will understand its working," he wrote, "& it will introduce a feeling of responsibility & self-government among the people, of which they are as yet altogether ignorant. They have hitherto relied entirely on the Hudson's Bay Co. & have never thought nor acted for themselves."¹³

The indifference of the people could reasonably be attributed to general satisfaction with the state of affairs in the settlement. The system, if such it can be called, was well liked by the old settlers, and, indeed, naturally so, since it reflected their way of life. What it lacked in terms of self-government was compensated for, in part at least, by its benevolence.

12. Stanley, *op.cit.* p.17.

13. P.A.C., *Macdonald Papers*, vol.521, pp.655-56; Macdonald to Morris, Oct.8, 1872.

This was true, of course, only to the extent that all elements in the settlement were represented on the Council, and political discontent was lacking for only as long as social homogeneity prevailed. In the 1860's these conditions began to disappear, and in that decade serious political issues arose. The aggressive Canadian newcomers, rightly identifying the official policy with the profoundly conservative society of which they were so contemptuous, attacked the authoritarian form of rule by Governor and appointed Council.¹⁴

The major difficulty raised by this hostility towards the established order arose from the absence of physical power in support of the government's authority. Small military forces had been maintained in the settlement to protect the Company's interests, but even these (which had not been effective in defending the trading monopoly at the time of Sayer's Case) had been withdrawn in 1861. The lack of forces during the following decade¹⁵ permitted the Canadians to defy the Company's authority quite openly, and then to point to this successful defiance as proof of the Company's incapacity for government and the need for a new authority - namely, Canada. There is no doubt that by 1869 Company rule was a shell, and that a political vacuum existed. One of Lieutenant-Governor Archibald's first reports to the Secretary of State for the Provinces, in October, 1870, was to

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14. Evidence of this attack is to be found in the settlement's only newspaper of the 'sixties, Nor'Wester, begun in 1859 by two Ontario Immigrants, William Buckingham and William Coldwell, which became especially bitter after its ownership and direction were assumed in 1865 by Dr. Schultz.
15. In June, 1866, the Council of Assiniboia authorized the Governor to enrol a mounted militia of 100 men, for the defence of the colony against Indians. This was not, however, a body capable of enforcing the Company's rule.

the effect "...that no duties at all - or with very few slight exceptions, were collected last year - and none at all this year."¹⁶

A government which cannot enforce the collection of its revenues is government in name only. The question in 1869 was: who could fill the vacuum?

There was little chance of a new effective order growing out of the settlement itself.¹⁷ Where, then, was Red River to find a political order to which it might become affiliated? Here the settlement's isolation became a problem - one which the mere act of political union with Canada did not, in itself, solve, and which troubled the early lieutenant-governors of the new Province of Manitoba.

The extent of this isolation can be clearly illustrated in terms of communications. Mr. J.V. Dillabough remarks that "gold was discovered in the Cariboo and the Red River settlers were the first to hear of it, but the last to reach it."¹⁸ It may even be doubted that they were anything like the first to hear of it. By water, when the season permitted, there were two avenues to the world: north to Hudson Bay by York boat, to meet the Company ship which visited York Factory each year; or south into Minnesota. The first steamboat from the south, the 'Anson Northrup,' appeared at the settlement in 1860, and through the following decade shared the entire length of the Red River, from Fort Garry to Georgetown, Minnesota, with the Hudson's Bay

16. Canada: Sessional Papers, 1871, No. 20, p. 42; Oct. 21, 1870.

17. In point of fact, the Provisional Government of 1870 was of this sort, but it is doubtful that it could have succeeded for long, as anything more than a 'caretaker' regime.

18. J.V. Dillabough, Transportation in Manitoba, a mimeographed study for the Economic Survey Board, Province of Manitoba, (Winnipeg, 1938) p. 18.

Company's 'International.' But until 1870 only Company freight was brought by the steamers, and few passengers. General freight had to make the long trip north by horse-cart - creaking, greaseless, metal-less Red River carts. At one time as many as 1,500 of these carts were used on the Fort Garry - St. Paul route, giving rise to the chief occupation of the French half-breeds.¹⁹ The springless buckboard appeared in 1867, but the first stage coach was not destined to reach Fort Garry until September, 1871, the same year in which Mr. J. J. Hill's steamboat, the 'Selkirk,' provided river transportation for the goods of the general public.

Such was the situation in 1870. However, great undertakings were then being planned, the first of these being the Dawson Trail from Fort Garry to the North-West Angle of Lake of the Woods, whence a lake and river route led with little interruption to Thunder Bay on Lake Superior. Named after Simon J. Dawson, who had traversed the general route for the Province of Canada in 1857, it was planned as an all-Canadian road and water route, and Thomas Monro, Engineer of the Dominion Department of Public Works, was able to report to Lieutenant-Governor Archibald, before the latter's departure for Fort Garry in the summer of 1870, that he had completed the survey and that the road would be kept open until a railway could be built.²⁰

Railways were the ultimate aim, and ambitious plans were already being laid in 1870. If the Canadian Government's plans were somewhat vague, those of J. J. Hill of St. Paul were more definite. Red River was to be tapped from the south. When,

19. Ibid. p. 10ff.

20. P. A. M., Lieutenant-Governors' Papers; Letter & report of Monro to Archibald, July 7, 1870.

in the winter of 1870, Donald A. Smith, southbound from Fort Garry, met Hill travelling north from St. Paul, the discussion that occurred may have been the kernel from which sprang the Canadian Pacific and the Great Northern Railways.

But that was all for the future, and Red River's isolation in 1870 was a fact beyond dispute, despite the progress that had been made in communications. That progress can be seen in terms of the mail service, which grew from a single annual mail through Hudson Bay in 1853, to monthly mail through the United States in 1857, weekly mail in 1863, and twice-weekly in 1868.²¹ The service at best was irregular - weather, and the disposition of the carriers permitting - and only as fast as a Red River cart. The first lieutenant-governor found his task further hampered by the absence of security, for in the course of sorting at Pembina the mail was thoroughly pawed and inspected by a crowd of post-office loafers.²²

Despite this isolation Red River was not permitted to go its way unnoticed by the outside world. And it is not surprising that the change of authorities, when attempted in 1869, should have caused trouble. A fresh stream of water turned into a placid puddle can be expected to stir up mud - especially if the stream itself is by no means clear. But it will also banish stagnation.

ii. "Le contrat de mariage."

The details of the troubles of 1869-70 need not be

21. Manitoba Free Press Weekly, Jan. 18, 1879; "Local and Provincial - Mails in Manitoba."

22. Canada, Sessional Papers, 1871, No. 20, p. 29; Archibald to the Secretary of State for the Provinces, Sep. 29, 1870.

retold here. That a new political power was necessary has been pointed out. That any change would be difficult can readily be understood in the light of the remoteness of the settlement, and the breakdown, through immigration, of its social unity.

The new Dominion of Canada was destined to succeed the Hudson's Bay Company in authority, and its initial plan was embodied by Parliament, in 1869, in 'An Act for the Temporary Government of Rupert's Land.'²³ With singular lack of imagination, it provided for continuing rule by governor and council, failing to see that such a course would merely continue the imperfections of form of the old regime. With the social cohesion of the community already a thing of the past, conciliar rule satisfactory to the whole community would be impossible, and without representative institutions the strength of the contending factions could not be gauged with any certainty. Increasingly the Governor and Council would have had to rely on their coercive powers, for lack of the means to measure public support of or hostility to their policies.

In its initial choice of Lieutenant-Governor and officials, the federal government demonstrated that the last vestiges of the representative principle were to be eliminated from the local hierarchy. It is not to be wondered at that, as Judge Prud'homme amplified his metaphor, "...la future épouse repoussa tout d'abord ses avances peu courtoises et trop familières. Le Canada dut consentir à rédiger avec elle les conditions du contrat de mariage."²⁴

23. Statutes of Canada, 32-33 Vic. cap.3.

24. Prud'homme, op.cit. p.61.

The insurrection resulted - the relatively restrained protest of an essentially mild and conservative people. It was a curious affair: the aggressive element, the men of such stuff as revolutions are made, were on the side of the new authorities.²⁵ In truth, the insurrection was more in the nature of a counter-revolution, for although the weapon of civil disobedience was political, the real enemy was the social revolution presaged by the immigrants of the 'sixties. This flavor of 1869-1870 is bound to be lost if, as so often happens, the insurrection is remembered chiefly for the one event which was out of keeping with the insurgents' character - the inexcusable judicial murder of Thomas Scott on March 4th, 1870. And yet, it is perhaps right that that single event should be best remembered; for it was that event which made the Insurrection important, not only in the history of Manitoba, but in the history of Canada. Without the Scott execution there would have been no amnesty question. And how infinitely easier would have been the role of lieutenant-governor in the new Province had there been no amnesty question, will subsequently appear.

After much journeying of delegates to and from Fort Garry and Ottawa, and protracted negotiations involving four lists of rights demanded by the colony, agreement was reached and the terms of union were settled. On May 3rd, 1870, Sir John Young, the Governor General, cabled to Lord Granville of the Colonial Office: "Negotiations with delegates closed satisfactorily. A province named Manitoba erected, containing eleven

25. The legality of that authority was, at the start at least, rather questionable.

thousand square miles."²⁶ More accurately, the 'postage-stamp' province contained 13,907,796 square miles, or 3,900,988 acres, more than one square mile for each of its people.²⁷

The deficiency of the 1869 Act was remedied; the constitution of the new province rested on a representative system. Institutionally, the essentials of full parliamentary self-government were brought into existence. Political comprehension was lacking, and the capacity of self-government not yet proven, but the political schooling of Manitoba had begun. It could safely be predicted that the education would have its stormy moments, but the ease with which it would be accomplished depended greatly on the lieutenant-governors, who were to be the principal mentors of the new province - though not its only ones.

Because of the illness of Sir John A. Macdonald it fell to the lot of Sir George Etienne Cartier to pilot the Manitoba Bill through Parliament in Ottawa,²⁸ and the charge has been made that Cartier attempted to bolster the plan of creating in the new province a little Quebec.²⁹ His biographer replied that "if such was Cartier's ambition it was for him a perfectly legitimate one;"³⁰ but, in fact, that is nothing in the Act to support the charge. Section 22, it is true, established the rights of religious denominations in the field of education, but

26. Arthur S. Merton, A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71, (London, no date), quotation on p.914.

27. P.A.M., Lieutenant-Governors' Papers; report of Dominion Surveyor-General, Col. Dennis, Mar. 22, 1871.

28. Statutes of Canada, 33 Vic, cap. 3.

29. John Boyd, Sir George Etienne Cartier, Bart., His Life and Times, ('Bonne Entente' edition, Toronto, 1917) p. 302f.

30. Ibid.

little that was not already to be found in Section 93 of the British North America Act, 1867; moreover, this education clause appears to have been a sine qua non in the demands of the Red River insurgents. The only other clause which might be construed as favoring the French-speaking element was the tenth, providing for life tenure of office in the Legislative Council; but the Act went on to provide that the balance could be adjusted to shifts in the composition of the population through an increase in membership from seven to twelve after four years. And it will be seen that subsequent complaints within the province of partiality towards the French, were directed in no case against the Manitoba Act but against the executive, the powers of which lay largely beyond the Act's comprehension; certainly executive policy could not be embraced in the statute. Yet, despite all this, it was undoubtedly regarded by some among the French, as it was by Judge Prud'homme, as a 'contrat de mariage.'

"Il est clair, précis; il consacre des droits inattaquables.

"Mainte fois, dans le passé, nous l'avons évoqué pour réclamer justice.

"C'était la sauvegarde officielle de nos libertés."³¹

31. Le Métis, Apr. 17, 1875; "L'Acte de Manitoba!!!"