

desired. That interview was on the 28th. On the 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th, I had interviews with Sir George, at each of which he spoke in the same sense of the petition and the amnesty. He told me I should be quiet and not rack my head about anything; that the men with whom I was dealing knew something about business. This was at the last interview before I left.

I had some conversation with Sir George Cartier, in the presence of Mr. Scott, as to what I should do on my arrival at Manitoba. I do not remember whether Sir John Macdonald was then present or not. This was when we were discussing the Manitoba Bill. I then asked Sir George who was to govern the country, pending the arrival of the Lieut. Governor, and if he was to name somebody to do so. He answered, "No, let Mr. Riel continue to maintain order and govern the country as he has done up to the present moment." He asked me if I thought that Riel was sufficiently powerful to maintain order. I said I thought he was. Then he answered, "Let him continue till the Governor arrives." He also inquired whether Mr. Riel would require that the Governor should take authority as his successor. I answered that he would not; that his government was only a provisional one, and that he would immediately withdraw when the representative of Her Majesty arrived. "Very well," said Sir George; "let him be at the head of his people to receive the Governor." Before my departure on the 28th also, he recommended me to tell Riel and the people that they had nothing to fear. He even told me that it would be desirable if the half-breeds would meet the troops and serve as guides. He asked me whether provisions for the troops could be found there at the least for a fortnight or a month, until they could procure them from the States. I told him I thought so, but that the stores would be expensive. He told me to write to him on the subject as soon as I should get there. He gave me other instructions and suggestions as to my course. The *resumé* of what Sir George told me is this, "You have obtained all you desired; your amnesty will be proclaimed; it will be there before the Lieut. Governor arrives. In the meantime tell your people to remain quiet and to fear nothing. Let Riel maintain peace and not make *des sottises*." That is the word he made use of. "Because he has to-day to fear enemies who will make him believe that we are hostile to them. The Fenians also will make efforts there to deceive him." It was in the time of the Fenians here, and he had reason to fear that Riel would be led away by them. I told him very often that Riel would not enter into the plans of the Fenians, "but," I said "nevertheless I have not yet what would be of a nature to satisfy the people. I hope everything will go right, but I am not satisfied myself." I told him that I had expected myself to bring a proclamation of amnesty with the Manitoba Act. He told me that what I had was equivalent to the proclamation of an amnesty, as an amnesty would arrive before any other authority in the North-West, and that meanwhile Riel was master and had nothing to complain of. That is a *resumé*. I saw Sir George several times. He said he had a very plain reason for not giving me any more definite written statements, which was that the Canadian Government could not give the amnesty themselves; that the proclamation of the Governor was sufficient, and that he could not give a better one. The reason he gave me to sign the petition myself to the Queen, was in order that the Government and the Governor might not be compromised. He told me that on account of the excitement of feeling it was advisable to take all the means possible, which would arrive at the same end without exciting prejudices; that in a country like this, where there were different interests and several parties, provided you arrived at the same end, it was advisable to take those means which would least run counter to the opinions of some of the people. That secondly, the means he was taking to have the amnesty proclaimed was the safest and quickest way of obtaining the desired result without creating dissatisfaction; that by all that had occurred in our interviews, I should see that their own interests more than ours were to have an amnesty proclaimed; that they had commenced the grand work of Confederation; that without amnesty all their work would be lost, and that the people in the North-West were to remain tranquil until the amnesty should arrive. That was the result of a very large number of conversations on the subject in various forms, because I was quite dissatisfied at not having obtained what I required. I did

not expect to have to answer these questions, but I guarantee the substantial accuracy of what I say. I told Sir George that I believed what he said, but was very anxious to have it believed up there. Then he said, "Assure Riel and his followers that the amnesty will certainly be granted, and that if he wishes to reflect he will see that we have more interest than he in granting the amnesty; besides you know what the Governor and Sir Clinton Murdoch, and all those to whom you have spoken have said on the subject, and, moreover, always remember my answer to your letter, where the Governor says that the conduct of the Government will be of the most liberal character," and he added, moreover, "You are too particular, you have as much as you can desire, and you will see that Riel will be satisfied." I left Ottawa in the beginning of June, the first or second, I cannot remember exactly. Before I left Sir George asked me to write to him at all the stations where I could obtain news. I wrote him at St. Paul, St. Cloud, Georgetown, and on my arrival. I have drafts of what I wrote. Two or three of these letters speak of the amnesty, and I gave in them my idea of the feeling of the people, which I learned on the way and on my arrival. I produce the letters. Sir George never answered my letters directly, but he answered me through Mgr. Taché, acknowledging my letters and thanking me for them.

(No. 59.)

(Translation.)

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, 5th June, 1870.

"To the Honorable Sir Geo. Cartier,  
"Ottawa, Canada.

"SIR,—The newspapers of St. Paul are doing all in their power to excite trouble; they especially blame the sending of the troops, and exert all their efforts to make the matter seem a treacherous one on the part of England. They declare that the Manitobans should accept no conditions before the granting by England of a general amnesty, &c., &c.

"You know my private opinion on the subject; nevertheless, as soon as possible, a telegram from England, which you may have the goodness to send us, or something promising us an assurance of the amnesty, would benefit our cause greatly.

*(Continuation of the same Letter.)*

ST. CLOUD, 7th June, 1870.

"In the matter of the amnesty, and the condition of the *distribution of lands*, you know well how strongly we insisted on the scheme that we proposed to you at the first; I beg to call your attention again to the first of these points.

"What I learn here proves that they do not yet know at Red River the results of our negotiations. They anxiously wait our arrival; the sending the troops has created much uneasiness. They assure me that scouts have been sent out on all the routes leading to Fort Garry. Twenty-five men have, it is said, left in bark canoes to watch the expedition which is to leave Lake Superior.—I believe the story.

"The half-breeds would be disposed to resist in case of an attack on the part of Canada; and in such case they would not want for succour.

"In case of an arrangement being effected, they will willingly receive the Governor coming from Canada.

"The half-breeds whom I have seen here tell me that His Lordship has great influence; that Riel wishes seriously to come to terms with Canada; that he would not wish to accept the assistance of the Fepians.

"Mr. McTavish (the Governor), whom I have met here at St. Cloud, tells me that Riel is sincere, and that he wishes to remain in submission to the Crown of England. He has confidence in the loyalty of Riel. He has no doubt but that our conditions will be accepted. They tell me that no arrangement would be accepted which did not embrace a

"general amnesty. This is why it is so necessary that haste should be used to cause the assurance of this amnesty to reach us.

"They say that the Fenians openly show their intention to help Riel, and the latter has but to say the word to obtain as great a number of them as he requires.

"I have the honor to be, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"(Signed,) N. J. RITCHOT, Ptre."

(No. 60.)

(Translation.)

"GEORGETOWN, 13th June, 1870.

"To Sir George Cartier,  
"Ottawa, Canada.

"SIR,—We shall leave to-morrow in the steamboat for Fort Garry, where we shall arrive on the 16th or 17th. They are looking out for us most eagerly.

"The inhabitants of the Red River country whom I have met here, tell me that the expedition has given rise to great suspicions. Mr. Riel and his followers wish, however, to wait our coming before taking any determined measures.

"It is certain that the Fenians have offered assistance to the inhabitants of the North-West, assistance in money, in arms, and in men. I am informed that some individuals had conferences with them. Riel does not wish the help of the Fenians, but keeps all his people ready for any event. On the 1st of May he had, as yet, no particulars about our arrangements.

"The representations of a certain number of newspapers, of newspapers even which ought to support their position, render the inhabitants of Manitoba inimical. They persist in declaring that they have never rebelled against any authority; they are displeased at seeing that the Canadians accuse them of having been rebels, because they have driven back adventurers from Canada who came without any right to disturb them and to make war upon them in their own country. The want of tact on the part of some French Canadian newspapers has injured their cause much.

"It seems certain that the Fenians are making preparations to go and meet your troops; but they look for the countenance of the half-breeds: I am convinced that they will not succeed in gaining it. The half-breeds are serious; they will be satisfied, I trust, with our arrangements. All those whom I have met with are content, and would willingly accept them. They would have been equally content to see the troops come in, but they think that these troops ought not to have been sent before the arrangements, they look upon it as a threat, and say that Canada had no call to threaten in their case. In spite of all this, I hope that matters will go on well. I must, however, beg leave to remark, that the injurious expressions made use of against the Manitobans and their leaders, the arguments of certain newspapers, &c., place us in a position of great embarrassment."

"I have the honor to be, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"(Signed,) N. J. RITCHOT, Ptre."

I arrived at Fort Garry on the 17th of June. I saw Riel himself, who came to meet me at the steamboat with a certain number of other persons, including several members of the Provisional Government. I communicated my information to them immediately. On the question of amnesty I assured Riel and his friends that it would be proclaimed, that it was promised me as a *sine qua non* condition of our arrangements. Mr. Riel asked me if there was anything written on that subject. I answered him that I had something written that would not perhaps satisfy him if he had not explanations, but after the explanations I would give him, I hoped he would be satisfied. I then gave him a few explanations, to which he answered that, since I had thought the thing suf-

efficient, he hoped it was so,—at all events he would take the thing into consideration, and in the meantime he was satisfied with the general result of what had taken place. This authorized me to answer Sir George Cartier, a letter dated 18th June, 1870, which I now produce.

(No. 61.)

(Translation.)

"FORT GARRY, 18th June, 1870.

"To Sir George E. Cartier,  
"Minister of Militia, Ottawa.

"SIR,—I have the honor and pleasure to inform you that the Manitoba Act, &c., has been well received here.

"Mr. President Riel has shown himself satisfied with it. He is about to call together his Council and the Legislative Assembly of the Provisional Government, in order to get them to accept it, and, with them, to place it before the people. He is disposed to do all in his power in order that it should have the best possible effect on the population.

"Our Governor will certainly meet with a cordial and sympathetic reception. He should come by way of St. Paul, Minnesota; I will write you further on this subject by the first mail. I will beg leave to suggest to you the most convenient steps for him to take in order to proceed from St. Paul's to Fort Garry. They even speak of sending some one as far as Ottawa to meet him; but this is absolutely secret.

"The setting out of the troops before the arrangements were completed is displeasing to the people; however, the explanations which I have given on this point, and the assurances that they are coming for a pacific and useful purpose satisfies them. We have even a wish to send a certain number of half-breeds to meet them, in order to introduce them within the country. I am convinced that all will go well, provided always that the *amnesty* reaches us in good season.

"A house will be provided in Fort Garry (which will be best) or in the town of Winnipeg. Trappers who have come in from Rainy Lake state that there is a certain number of Indians rather badly disposed; but that nevertheless they go to meet the troops in order to treat.

"I have the honor to be, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

" (Signed,) N. J. RITCHOT."

I received from Secretary Thomas Bunn, the following letter, dated 23rd June, of which I produce copy.

(No. 62.)

Rev. N. J. Ritchot,  
St. Norbert.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
June 23rd, 1870.

"REVEREND SIR,—I beg to inform you that the Legislative Assembly was convened this day for the purpose of considering the report of the delegation sent from this Government to Canada, of which delegation you are a member. The President informed the House however that you did not at present intend to report; first, on account of bad health,—which I very much regret,—and secondly, that you preferred waiting for the arrival of at least one of your fellow-delegates before reporting officially. The House consequently adjourned till to-morrow at one o'clock, p.m., and expressed the hope that they might then have the pleasure of either meeting you personally or having your report in writing. I need hardly say to you that they are exceedingly

" anxious to hear the result of your mission to Canada, and feel the utmost confidence in your good faith. I have therefore been directed to request you to report to the House to-morrow, in person if your health will permit, or in writing.

" I have the honor to be, reverend Sir,

" Your obedient servant,

" THOMAS BUNN,

" Secretary."

I went to Fort Garry to their ordinary hall, and there I explained to them a few provisions of the Manitoba Act, and especially insisted on the question of amnesty, and recalled as much as possible all that had been told me on that subject. I explained especially the letter I had received from Sir George Cartier as a proof that the amnesty would be granted. I said to Mr. Riel and his friends that I had asked if they were to continue to maintain order in the country, and that I had been answered that up to the arrival of the Governor he was to maintain order as he had done up to that time; that nevertheless on the arrival of the Governor he should receive him, not as his successor, but as the competent authority arriving in the country. Mr. Riel complained that he remained charged with maintaining order under such difficult circumstances, but said that nevertheless he would continue up to the arrival of the representative of Her Majesty. These were his words, still he said the Government of Canada, placed him in a very bad position. He did not give any other explanations.

Then he told his councillors and the people who were there to continue to maintain order. Here are his words: " Consequently my friends, by what our delegate tells us, let us continue to maintain order, and I recommend to you peace and moderation in all your doings. I hope that very soon we will be discharged from the heavy burthen that lies upon us." Then the Council told him that they accepted the Manitoba Act, and were satisfied with that, as also with all our arrangements, provided they accorded with the interpretation I had put upon them. That put me in a position to write to Sir George this letter of the 28th June.

(No. 63.)

(Translation.)

" ST. BONIFACE, 28th June, 1870.

" To Sir George E. Cartier,

" Minister of Militia, &c., Ottawa.

" Sir,—On Friday last, the 24th inst., I was summoned before the Legislative Assembly of the Provisional Government to give some explanations in the matter of the Manitoba Act. All declared themselves very well satisfied. Their fears are disappearing. Sympathy with Canada is lively and sincere. Mr. Riel wishes to see the Governor arrive as soon as possible, in order to relieve himself of the responsibility which weighs upon him.

" His Lordship has sent you two telegrams and a letter, which will make you fully acquainted with what goes on here. Besides, His Lordship, who leaves this very day for Canada, will see you, and will give you explanations and details in reference to the country much better than I can attempt to do in writing. I embrace this opportunity to express to you my lively gratitude for the regard and sympathy which you have shown towards this country in the efforts which you have displayed to cause a bill to be adopted, which our friends regard as very favorable. I thank you most sincerely for the consideration which you have had for the delegates, and for myself in particular. Our people have been very appreciative of these marks of attention on your part. What I say on this head applies equally to Sir John Macdonald and those other Honorable Ministers, whose acquaintance we had the honor to make.

" You spoke to me about providing a supply of beef for the arrival of the troops. I stated to you that you will be able to find a certain quantity here on their arrival.

" You will find men here who will take contracts to furnish all the beef necessary for  
 " your troops ; but they must be notified a little in advance."

" I undertook to say a few words on this subject to His Lordship, who will be pre-  
 " pared to furnish you with all the necessary information in the premises.

" Without binding themselves absolutely, these contractors think that the price  
 " would be about 15 cents per pound.

" James McKay, whose name will be found on the list I left with you, is the best  
 " qualified man you can employ to negotiate with the Indians. You can speak about him  
 " to Bishop Taché.

" I have the honor to be, Sir,

" Your most obedient servant,

" (Signed,) N. J. RITCHOT, Ptre."

I read my letter 18th May, and the answer of Sir George Cartier, 23rd May, 1870, to the Council and Legislature, and they immediately took a copy. Later I explained myself in my parish, at a public meeting, the promises that had been made to me, saying that I had no doubt these promises would be immediately accomplished. I told them at these different meetings that the amnesty to be granted would include all acts accomplished up to the arrival of the Governor, and that I was authorised to tell them so by the Ministers of the Canadian Government. I also explained at length to Bishop Taché the promise that had been made to me on that subject, and whenever I had to speak on the subject I always spoke the same way up to the present moment.

(The despatch of Lord Lisgar, dated April 25th, 1872, was here read to the witness) which despatch is as follows :—

(63a.)

*Lord Lisgar to the Earl of Kimberley.*

" OTTAWA, April 26th, 1872.

" MY LORD,—I have the honor to forward herewith a Petition to Her Majesty the  
 " Queen, from the Rev. Abbé Ritchot and Mr. A. Scott.

" These gentlemen, with Judge Black, visited Ottawa in the spring of 1870, with  
 " the view of settling in an amicable manner the difficulties which had arisen in the  
 " North-West.

" The petition prays that Her Majesty will grant a general amnesty ' for all illegal  
 " acts which may have been committed by any parties concerned in those troubles.'

" It is necessary that I should in my own defence remark upon the paragraphs which  
 " relate, on the part of the Rev. Abbé Ritchot and Mr. A. H. Scott, their impression of  
 " what passed at the interviews which they had with Sir Clinton Murdoch and myself.

" I cannot do otherwise than express my extreme surprise at the version which they  
 " think fit to give of what I said.

" I am clear that I never made any such promise of an amnesty as that which they  
 " allege.

" I had the benefit of more than one consultation with my responsible advisers in  
 " reference to this question of amnesty, and was quite on my guard in respect to it.

" In reply to the earnest and repeated instances of the delegates, I uniformly  
 " answered that the question of amnesty should be duly submitted for the consideration  
 " both of the Dominion Government and of Her Majesty's Ministers, and that I had no  
 " doubt it would receive from them that serious attention in all its bearings which it  
 " merited, but I guarded myself by adding that I was not in a position to make any  
 " promise or give any assurances whatever on the subject.

" Sir Clinton Murdoch will, I am persuaded, bear me out in stating that this was  
 " the line agreed upon, and the language used at the interviews.

" I have, &c.,

" (Signed,) LISGAR."

His Excellency denies the premises of amnesty as we understood them, and I affirm positively, and as a proof I file a copy of my affidavit, sworn on the 19th November, 1873.

(Translation.)

(No. 64.)

“ DOMINION OF CANADA, }  
 “ Province of Quebec, }  
 “ District of Montreal. }

“ I, the undersigned, Noel Joseph Ritchot, priest, curé of the Parish of St. Norbert, in the County of Provencher, in the Province of Manitoba, being personally present in the City of Montreal, in the Province of Quebec, being duly sworn on the Holy Evangelists, do depose and say :

“ That the President of the Provisional Government of Assiniboia, by an Order in Council bearing date the 22nd March, 1870, commissioned the Reverend N. J. Ritchot, John Black, Esquire, and Alfred Scott, Esquire, to bear to Ottawa the list of rights claimed by the people of Assiniboia, and there negotiate the conditions in accordance with which this same people consented to enter the Canadian Confederation ;

“ That the said delegates, strengthened by this commission, proceeded to Ottawa, were received in their said quality of delegates by the Canadian Government, and negotiated with Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George E. Cartier, the two Ministers authorized for that purpose by the Government ; that on the 26th April, 1870, the negotiations were begun by taking into consideration the list of rights brought by the delegates, and which has served as the basis for the Manitoba Act ; that besides the Manitoba Act, &c., agreeably to the nineteenth section of the list of rights, the delegates demanded, as a *sine qua non* of the arrangements, a general amnesty for all acts done or authorized by the Provisional Government ;

“ That the Honorable Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George E. Cartier, after stating that the amnesty did not rest with the Government of Ottawa, declared that they were in a position to assure us that it was the intention of Her Majesty to grant the amnesty, and that they would take upon themselves to proclaim it, that in fact it would be proclaimed, immediately after the passing of the Manitoba Act ;

“ That on the 3rd May, 1870, before the closing of the negotiations, the Governor-General and Sir Clinton Murdoch assured the said delegates in the name of Her Majesty that the amnesty would be granted.—His Excellency quoted his proclamation of the preceding month of December, as proving the intentions of Her Majesty, and Sir Clinton Murdoch added among other things : that Her Majesty would willingly pass the sponge over the acts in question, in order to re-establish tranquillity in the country.

“ On the delegates complaining that they had no written documents to show to the population of the Red River country, the said representatives of Her Majesty assured the delegates on several occasions that the question presented no difficulty, and that the amnesty would be certainly granted.

“ The delegates accepted this promise on honor, and the Governor-General, Sir John Young, telegraphed to Lord Granville, ‘ Negotiations with the delegates closed ‘ satisfactorily.’

“ That on the 19th May following, the Governor-General of Canada, at his own house, in presence of Sir George E. Cartier, renewed to the delegates in person the assurance that the amnesty would certainly be granted ;—and furthermore, that it would reach Manitoba before the arrival of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, and that while waiting the proclamation, he (the Governor-General) would give orders that no person implicated in the troubles of 1869 and 1870, should be disturbed on account thereof,—And have signed after reading.

“ (Signed,) N. J. RITCHOT, Ptre.

“ Sworn before me, this nineteenth day of November, 1873, at Montreal.

“ (Signed,) NAL. VALOIS, J.P.”

And, moreover, to corroborate that, I file a copy of a Petition, signed by my co-delegate, Mr. Scott; His Grace Archbishop Taché was present when it was signed, and saw Scott sign it.

(No. 64a.)

“ To Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, &c., &c., &c.,

“ May it please Your Majesty :

“ The Petition of the Rev. Abbé Ritchot and Alfred Scott, Esquire, both of the Province of Manitoba, Dominion of Canada, most humbly representeth :—

“ That Your Majesty's Petitioners, in conjunction with the Honorable Judge John Black, now in Scotland, were selected as delegates of the North-West; the subject of their mission being to lay before Your Majesty's Representative, the Right Honorable Sir John Young, Governor General of the Dominion of Canada, the wishes of the people of the Red River and of the North-West.

“ That the said delegates received their official mission from the President of the Provisional Government of the North-West Territories, in a document signed by Thomas Bunn, the Secretary of the said Government, and dated March 22nd, 1870.

“ That it was merely in conformity with that document that the delegates of the North-West presented themselves at Ottawa to negotiate with the Government of the Dominion.

“ That the Cabinet of Ottawa, after having been informed of the arrival of the delegates and of the nature of their mission, notified to them by a letter of the Honorable Joseph Howe, Secretary of State for the Provinces, and dated 26th April, that the Honorable Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir G. E. Cartier had been appointed to settle with them to the satisfaction of the people of the Red River, the difficulties which had arisen in their midst.

“ That on the day and at the hour appointed, the negotiations were opened, and that the delegates of the North-West declared to the Honorable Members of the Cabinet of Ottawa that in conformity with their instructions they could not come to any agreement unless a general amnesty should be granted for all the illegal acts which might have been committed by any of the parties concerned in the troubles that had occasioned the actual delegation.

“ That the Honorable Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir G. E. Cartier declared to the delegates that they were in measure to assure them that such was the intention of Your Majesty, that they could consequently proceed with the negotiations, being satisfied that the Royal Prerogative of mercy would be exercised by the grant of a general amnesty.

“ That before closing the negotiations, that is to say on the 3rd May, 1870, the delegates of the North-West were honored by an official invitation from Your Majesty's Representative Sir John Young, Governor General of Canada. That during that interview, His Excellency introduced the delegates to Sir Clinton Murdoch, stating to them that the honorable gentleman was a Commissioner sent by the Government of Your Majesty to assist in the settlement of the difficulties of the Red River people.

“ That both the Governor General of Canada and Sir Clinton Murdoch enquired of the delegates of the North-West if they were satisfied with the arrangements of the Cabinet of Ottawa, and if not they were ready and authorized by the Government of Your Majesty to adopt such measures as would satisfy them.

“ That in reply, the delegates stated that the question of the amnesty caused them a certain uneasiness, as they had no written document to lay before the people of Red River as a proof of the promise made to them on the same point.

“ That the Representatives of Your Majesty repeatedly assured the delegates that



"there would be no difficulty on that point, and that the amnesty would surely be granted in order to do away with all the illegalities and irregularities of the late troubles.

"That the delegates, entirely confident in the assurances given, expressed their satisfaction in such a way as to enable Sir John Young to telegraph the same day to Lord Granville 'negotiations with the delegates closed satisfactorily.'

"That in a subsequent interview, on the 19th of May, the Governor General of Canada renewed to the delegates then present, the assurance that the amnesty would be granted, and moreover that it would reach Manitoba before the arrival there of the newly-appointed Lieutenant Governor.'

"That on the 24th June, 1870, the Legislative Assembly, convoked to Fort Garry by the President of the Provisional Government, were informed by one of the delegates that the amnesty had been promised by Your Majesty's Representative.

"That this very promise and the entire confidence it inspired have largely contributed to avert new complications.

"That almost two years having elapsed without bringing a more explicit proof of Your Majesty's intention on this point an anxious and regrettable feeling exists throughout the Dominion. Some of those to whom the amnesty was promised, have been the object of personal revenge; one was killed; others obliged to flee to avoid the same fate, and all this from parties who call themselves loyal but refuse to believe in the promise made at Ottawa.

"That the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, by a motion passed in the House on the 5th of the present month, is about to present a humble address to Your Majesty, praying 'that Your Majesty will be pleased to command that the same House will be made acquainted with the action already taken, or which it may be Your Majesty's Royal pleasure to take, relative to the political movements of 1869 and '70.'

"Wherefore Your Petitioners dare take the liberty to address their humble Petition to Your Majesty, convinced that the interest Your Majesty bears even to the least of Her subjects, will determine Her Royal goodwill to take into Her favorable consideration their earnest prayer, that in order to secure peace and tranquillity it will be Your Majesty's Royal pleasure to proclaim the amnesty which was promised us when negotiating at Ottawa.

"And your Petitioners will, as in duty bound, ever pray and be grateful.

(Signed), "N. J. RITCHIE,  
"Delegate of the North-West.

(Signed), "ALFRED A. SCOTT,  
"Delegate of the North-West.

"Fort Garry, Manitoba,  
"8th February, 1872."

That is my first answer. His Excellency says in his letter that he was guarded. I say I was not guarded, but went freely, frankly, and as I felt. I took the words used as they were said, and in the sense generally given to them, as I understood then and affirm to-day.

In all the interviews I had with him he always said the same thing, and it was never denied. I had no further correspondence with the Minister, nor had I any communication with any of the representatives of the Government in the territory before my return to Canada. I then returned to Canada, and arrived on March 5th, 1873. I saw Mr. Langevin and Sir John A. Macdonald together and separately. Before seeing any of the Ministers, I thought proper to address myself directly to His Excellency the Governor General. I do not remember exactly the day I saw His Excellency; I believe it was the 28th June. Mr. Langevin was present. I complained to His Excellency that the promise made in 1870 had not been carried out, I will produce the *résumé* of what I said to His Excellency. I have given that *résumé* to him in writing.

(Translation.)

“ To His Excellency the Right Honorable Sir Frederick Temple, Earl of Dufferin,  
 “ Viscount and Baron Clandeboye of Clandeboye, in the County of Down, in the  
 “ Peerage of the United Kingdom, Baron Dufferin, and Clandeboye of Ballyleidy  
 “ and Killeleagh, in the County of Down, in the Peerage of Ireland, and a Baronet,  
 “ Knight of the Most Illustrious Order of Saint Patrick, and Knight Commander of  
 “ the Most Honorable Order of the Bath, Governor General of Canada, &c., &c., &c.

“ MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.—Several of the questions which Your Ex-  
 “ cellency was pleased to put to me during the audiences which I had the honor to have  
 “ granted me through the intervention of the Honorable Sir John A. Macdonald and the  
 “ Honorable H. L. Langevin, sanction my placing before you a condensed statement of  
 “ the principal events which have required my presence in Ottawa this year.

“ Without further prologue, I respectfully submit the following statement to the  
 “ consideration of Your Excellency :—

“ In the years 1869 and 1870 troubles arose in the North-West Territories, not at  
 “ that time part of the Dominion of Canada. These troubles were solely caused by the  
 “ proceedings on the part of the Dominion of Canada, taken to cause these territories to  
 “ enter the Confederation. Soon the little colony of Red River, so peaceable up to that  
 “ time, fell into a state of anarchy, and was exposed to all the horrors consequent on such  
 “ a condition of affairs.

“ The people alarmed, believed they could best provide for their own safety, and the  
 “ preservation of life and property, by establishing a provisional power, which would  
 “ shield them from the dangers of their situation. The people consequently created a  
 “ Provisional Government, and selected a President for its head. The Imperial Govern-  
 “ ment, pained by these troubles, instructed His Excellency the Right Honorable Sir  
 “ John Young, Baronet, &c., &c., then Governor General of Canada, to receive and take  
 “ into consideration the complaints of those who were dissatisfied, and to re-establish  
 “ order in these territories. At the invitation of the Government and His Excellency the  
 “ Governor General of Canada, the President of the Provisional Government of Assini-  
 “ boia sent a delegation to Ottawa to negotiate concerning the entry of this portion of  
 “ the British possessions into the Canadian Confederation. By a document, bearing  
 “ date the 22nd March, 1870, John Black, Esquire, Alfred Scott, Esquire, and the Rev-  
 “ erend N. J. Ritchot were appointed delegates to Ottawa by the President of the Pro-  
 “ visional Government for the purpose aforesaid.

“ On the 22nd and 23rd April, 1870, the delegates asked of the Dominion Govern-  
 “ ment to be heard, and on the 26th were informed by the Secretary of State for the  
 “ Provinces that the Honorable Sir John A. Macdonald and the Honorable Sir George  
 “ E. Cartier were authorized for this purpose to treat with them on the subject of their  
 “ mission. At eleven o'clock in the forenoon of the same day the delegates laid before  
 “ the Honorable Ministers the list of conditions placed in their hands by the President of  
 “ the Provisional Government, and opened the negotiation of which the result was the  
 “ Manitoba Act.

“ In addition, besides the Manitoba Act, &c., in accordance with the 18th section  
 “ of the list of conditions, the delegates required as a condition *sine qua non* of the agree-  
 “ ment, a general amnesty. As I have already had the honor of stating to Your Excel-  
 “ lency, that amnesty was promised, as it could not fail to be, for even in the case of its  
 “ being maintained those whom we represented were nothing but rebels; the ordinary  
 “ practice is not to invite rebels to treat, and negotiations are not entered into with their  
 “ delegates, if it is not proposed in case arrangements are effected, to pass the sponge  
 “ over the past and proclaim a general amnesty for all acts anterior to the arrangements,  
 “ and which were not perfectly known. Our Petition, addressed to Her Most Gracious  
 “ Majesty, dated the 8th February, 1872, and a copy of which is hereto annexed, gives  
 “ some details on this head.

" His Grace, Monseigneur Taché Archbishop of St. Boniface, was summoned from  
 " Rome by the Dominion Government, and commissioned to go and work in securing the  
 " pacification of the country. His arrival in March, 1870, in fact, contributed in an extraor-  
 " dinary degree to the maintenance of peace and order in those regions. His Grace had  
 " received from the Canadian authorities explicit promises. Strengthened by these  
 " promises, proceeding from statesmen whose word of honor should be a sufficient  
 " guarantee, Monseigneur Taché himself guaranteed the carrying out of these promises.

" Three years have passed since the date in question, and the promises made in  
 " regard to the amnesty have not been fulfilled, and other promises and other conditions  
 " remain likewise as yet unfulfilled.

" So far from this being the case, men sent by the Dominion Government have  
 " engaged in committing actions the most alarming, as well as most unjust and atrocious,  
 " with respect to the inhabitants of the little Province of Manitoba. During these three  
 " years, on more than one occasion would the Province have become the theatre of scenes  
 " of horror which cause a shudder to think of, if the native population had engaged in  
 " reprisals.

" Worn out by the present state of affairs, the people of Manitoba complain of  
 " having been deceived, and ask for justice. We doubt not but that the Dominion  
 " Government is endeavoring to restore order, and to do justice; the Local Government  
 " of Manitoba, for its part, is doing the same. But this will not justify in the minds of  
 " the public either the Dominion Government, His Grace Monseigneur the Archbishop,  
 " or the delegates, so long as the guaranteed promises shall remain unfulfilled. In this  
 " latter event, nothing remains to His Grace and to the delegates, but to prove that they  
 " have deceived no one, but have been themselves deceived.

" Of the three delegates from Manitoba in 1870, the undersigned is the only one  
 " who resides now in Manitoba, and to whom the people apply in requiring the carrying  
 " out of the promises which have been made to them. It is because so urged by the  
 " necessity of satisfying an honest and confiding population who ask for what they have a  
 " right to—it is also because compelled by the necessity of either obtaining what has  
 " been promised us, or of justifying ourselves by establishing that we may have been  
 " deceived, but that we have deceived no one, that we are this day in Ottawa. And it  
 " is under these circumstances that I believed I ought to address myself directly to  
 " Your Excellency, trusting that you will willingly hear me, and employ all the means  
 " in your power to cause justice to be done to the inhabitants of Manitoba.

" Stimulated by these same circumstances I take the liberty of most respectfully  
 " praying Your Excellency to use your influence to the end that the promises which  
 " were made to us in 1870, especially those referring to a general amnesty, acknowledged  
 " by all to be necessary to the peace and happiness of the country, may be at once  
 " carried out.

" In begging this favor at the hands of Your Excellency, I believe that I am  
 " laboring in the public interests of the Province of Manitoba, as well as in that of the  
 " Dominion of Canada, and I believe that I express the feelings of all men of probity  
 " who desire the advancement and progress of the Canadian Confederation. This course  
 " would moreover be a justification of the confidence we reposed in promises made and  
 " guaranteed to us by honorable men, with whom, as delegates, we were in treaty in  
 " 1870, as the contrary one would place us under the necessity of justifying ourselves  
 " otherwise, by proving that in honor we had a right to act as we have done, that is  
 " what we can easily do, and what we cannot excuse ourselves from doing.

" We are this day compelled to break the silence which for three years we have  
 " kept on the subject of the arrangements of 1870; and upon more than one point we  
 " should be forced to reveal what, it would be wise policy, we believe, to leave buried in  
 " silence.

" Permit me to remark to Your Excellency that I am not ignorant that the members  
 " of the Government of Manitoba are here specially charged with the interests of that  
 " Province; their Honorable Ministers enjoy the esteem and confidence of the population

" they represent, I have no doubt, as they have my full confidence and sympathy. But this fact does not absolve me from discharging a duty which lies specially on my own shoulders as a delegate of 1870, to whom the promises were given.

"Permit me to hope that the steps I have taken this day will be approved of by Your Excellency, and that you will lead to a favorable issue the last efforts we make towards the perfect accomplishment of the work of pacification, with the charge of which we were specially entrusted in 1870.

" I have the the honor to be,

" Your Excellency's

" Most humble servant,

" Ottawa, 1st April, 1873."

" (Signed), N. J. ERICHOE, Ptre.

He only said he would take it into consideration before his Council, and he acknowledged the receipt of it; he moreover told me that later. It was evident that Lord Lisgar did not intend to deceive me, but it is probable that there had been some misunderstanding. I saw Mr. Langevin first after this interview with His Excellency. In this interview I complained to Mr. Langevin that the amnesty had not been granted, and that the Government should have kept us in such a painful position. Mr. Langevin said it was impossible for the Government to have acted otherwise. No Government, he said, could stand five minutes if it took up that question, and they were not bound to commit suicide. On the other hand I said that we neither were obliged to commit suicide, and that we had trusted the promise which had been made would have been kept. I also said that to-day we were compromised and crushed, and that if they had no means of attaining the end we were entitled to, we would do all in our power to attain it. Mr. Langevin observed that we would not then be any better off, and perhaps worse off. I answered, "We could not be worse off: we have nothing to lose." Mr. Langevin then attempted to prove that we had not been ill-treated by the Government. He gave me, as an example of this, the appointment of Mr. Archibald, who was a well-disposed man. I took the liberty of telling him that it was true he appeared well disposed, but his action had been quite paralyzed. I said further, if he had been left quite free he would have established peace immediately, and that the native population on both sides were well disposed towards him. That was about what I told him. I had a later interview with Sir John, but it was of little importance. I had some meetings with other Ministers, not very important meetings, but at which the amnesty was spoken of. I had an interview on the 29th April, 1873, with Sir John, at which were present Mr. Langevin and Mr. Masson, a member of this Committee. I exposed to him the subject of our complaint, particularly that the amnesty had not been granted. Sir John said the Government found itself under very embarrassing circumstances; then he read to me two or three letters of Sir Clinton Murdoch's, in one of which he said, as far as I can remember, that he had never met the Ministers at the same time as the delegates. He also said that during the interview of the 3rd May the question of the amnesty was not raised. I cannot remember the exact words, but this is, as far as I can recollect, the substance of them. In another letter he said, "The Ministers have refused to accept the 19th clause of the arrangements." I then remarked to Sir John that I could not understand how Sir Clinton Murdoch could state himself that the Ministers had refused to accept the 19th clause, when he had said that he never met us with the Ministers. Sir John A. Macdonald, moreover, stated:—"I said that if the delegates had been sent by the Provisional Government, I would not treat with them." That having been said in English, I asked for its translation in French, which being done, I said, "You did tell me that." "No," he replied, "I did not, but I have told it to my friends." I said, "I do not know what you have said to your friends, but you have treated with us in our capacity of delegates of the Provisional Government." Sir John then said he would do all he could to establish peace, and that he would like to see me later, when he would give me something which would satisfy me. It is on account of that that I wrote him a letter dated 16th May, 1873, of which I produce a copy.

(Translation.)

(No. 66.)

"BISHOP'S PALACE,

OTTAWA, 16th May, 1873.

" To the Honorable

" Sir J. A. Macdonald, K.C.B.,

" Minister of Justice, &amp;c., &amp;c., Ottawa.

" Sir,—At the last interview which I had the honor of having with the Honorable Mr. H. Langevin and yourself, I spoke at length on the subject of the amnesty. You requested me to wait a week, and that you would then give me a satisfactory answer. I have waited for more than a week, and I should like to have that answer before my departure. This is the reason why I take the liberty of begging you to inform me whether the Government will take up or not the important subject of the *Amnesty*.

" Permit me further to remark to you, that I believe I should betray the cause entrusted to me in 1870, and expose our Province of Manitoba to great disturbances, were I not to employ all possible and just means to obtain a settlement of this important subject.

" I have the honor to be, sir,

" Your most obedient servant,

" (Signed,) N. J. RITCHOT."

Having received no answer, I wrote again on the 23rd of the same month, a letter of which I produce also a copy.

(Translation.)

(No. 67.)

" BISHOP'S PALACE,

" OTTAWA, 23rd May, 1873.

" To the Honorable

" Sir John Macdonald, K.C.B.,

" Minister of Justice &amp;c., &amp;c., Ottawa.

" Sir,—As I have received no answer to the letter which I had the honor of addressing you on the 16th inst., I respectfully take the liberty of mentioning this to you, and again requesting an answer.

" I have the honor to be, sir,

" Your most humble and devoted servant,

" (Signed,) N. J. RITCHOT, Ptre."

He did not at that interview deny that an amnesty had been promised, though I told him at that interview that it had been well and truly promised. At that interview he neither denied nor acknowledged that an amnesty had been promised. I merely went to claim that which he had promised. There were other interviews with Sir John about the 8th or 10th of June. I saw Sir John at his office. I was alone. I again asked him to proclaim the amnesty, and he said he would do everything in his power to satisfy me. There were no other interviews with members of the Government last spring, nor with the Governor General. I wrote a letter to the Lieut.-Governor upon the occasion of the O'Donohue Fenian Raid. I have a copy of the letter which I can produce. The Lieut.-Governor then wrote me a note stating that he desired to see me. I have not the letter of Mr. Archibald in which he asks to see me. I went to see him. This was on 4th October, 1871. His Excellency said he wanted to know what attitude the French population would take on the occasion of the Fenian invasion. His Excellency stated that he was quite persuaded from what he had seen that the French population was loyal, but that under the circumstances such as those which presented themselves, it was his duty to have exact information of what was going on in the Province. He said if the population showed itself loyal, there would be nothing to fear from the Fenians,

whatever might be their numbers; but if, on the contrary, part of the population was hostile to the authorities, the country would be lost, because when divisions took place in a camp nothing could be done. He said if they could trust to that part of the Metis or half-breeds near the frontier, they had nothing to fear; consequently, he wanted to know from me if I was in a position, living amongst the French half-breeds as I did, to tell him positively if he could count on them; and that I answered him that it was quite certain that he could count on them, and that I had seen the leaders of them, amongst whom was Riel, and that they themselves were only anxious to know what attitude the authorities would take on the occasion of the invasion by the Fenians. I also said that they only waited for word to go to the front if required, and to place themselves in a position to meet that invasion whatever it might be. I stated that in Riel's opinion it was a measure of precaution which should be taken immediately. His Excellency commissioned me to tell the French Canadian half-breeds, and especially Riel, that he would be very happy to see them giving their help to the authorities. I then observed to His Excellency that he (Riel) was very perplexed because his friends told him that if he went forward and showed himself he would expose himself to be killed, that any action he would take would be badly interpreted, and that there were warrants out against him, and that he could be arrested the very moment he was in arms or elsewhere, if he appeared in a public assembly. His Excellency said there was no danger at all, and that any steps in that direction would be well considered, and that it was a good time for Riel to prove his loyalty. His Excellency also said that it would be a further occasion for the hastening of the granting of an amnesty, and that it was the time to prove that what had been said against him was false. I promised to communicate what he had said to Riel, and that on the very next day he would have news of my mission. Then after that I met friends, who observed to me that Riel's friends would not allow him to go forward unless there would be something in writing, saying that Riel would not be ill-treated. Upon this I took the liberty of writing the following letter to Mr. Archibald.

(No. 68.)

(Translation.)

" ST. BONIFACE, 4th October, 1871.

" To His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor.

" May it please Your Excellency :

" In the conversation which I had the honor to hold with you yesterday, we were both agreed that it was proper to secure the influence of Mr. Riel to direct his compatriots in the present state of affairs, and prevent them taking a false course.

" Upon deep reflection, I take the liberty of remarking to Your Excellency, that inasmuch as Mr. Riel is in such a position that he cannot act openly as a citizen, I do not believe that he should place himself at their head unless he had some guarantee that his proceeding would be looked upon with favor by Your Excellency.

" Consequently, I beg leave to ask of you some assurance which will shelter him from any legal proceeding at least for the present.

" (Signed,) N. J. RITCHIE.

" P.S.—Being about to leave immediately for my parish, I beg to request Your Excellency will kindly give an answer to the bearer, who will at once bring it to me.

" (Signed,) N. J. R.'

The paragraph which begins "En conséquence," and ending "au moins pour la circonstance actuelle" was added at the suggestion of a friend, who thought that without that addition His Excellency would think that I was desirous of embarrassing him, since I had not told him that I would write him before seeing Riel. I received the following morning a reply, of which I produce a copy :—

(No. 69.)

“ GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
“ October 5th, 1871.

“ REVEREND SIR,—Your note has just reached me. You speak of the difficulties which might impede any action of Mr. Riel in coming forward to use his influence with his fellow citizens, to rally to the support of the Crown, in the present emergency.

“ Should Mr. Riel come forward as suggested, he need be under no apprehension that his liberty shall be interfered with in any way: to use your own language, ‘ pour ‘ la circonstance actuelle.’

“ It is hardly necessary for me to add that the co-operation of the French half-breeds and their leaders in the support of the Crown, under present circumstances, will be very welcome and cannot be looked upon otherwise than as entitling them to most favourable consideration.

“ Let me add that, in giving you this assurance with promptitude, I feel myself entitled to be met in the same spirit.

“ The sooner the French half-breeds assume the attitude in question, the more graceful will be their action and the more favorable their influence.

“ I have the honor to be,

“ Reverend Sir,

“ Yours truly,

“ (Signed,) A. G. ARCHIBALD,  
“ Lieutenant-Governor.

“ Revd. Père Ritchot,  
“ St. Norbert.”

On the 5th I saw Mr. Riel, who was very glad to see that the Governor had confidence in him and in the population. He said he would get all the men available at the time; and two days afterwards he went to the Fort with a number of men, a great number of whom were armed and mounted. His Excellency accepted that offer, and charged one of their number to form an expedition after their own fashion, and go over the Province to see if there was really a gathering of Fenians as was reported to be in the direction of the mountain of Pembina and the mountain La Tortue. That expedition started immediately. I know that at that time Mr. Riel wrote to His Excellency; I cannot say if the communication was signed by other persons. I produce a letter, I do not know that it is an answer to that one; it is from Mr. Archibald to Riel, Lepine, and Parenteau. This letter was signed by Mr. Buchanan, the Governor's Private Secretary. I produce a copy of that letter.

(No. 70.)

“ GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
“ FORT GARRY, Oct. 8th, 1871.

“ GENTLEMEN,—I have it in command from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor to acknowledge receipt of your note of this morning assuring His Excellency of the hearty response of the Metis to the appeal made to them in His Excellency's Proclamation.

“ You may say to the people, on whose behalf you write, that His Excellency is much gratified to receive the assurance which he anticipated in his communication with the Revd. Père Ritchot, and which your letter conveys, and that he will take the earliest opportunity to transmit to His Excellency the Governor-General this evidence of the loyalty and good faith of the Metis of Manitoba.

“ His Excellency will be pleased to be furnished, as soon as possible, with a nomina

"list of the persons in each parish, who desire to enroll for active service in the present emergency.

"His Excellency will rely upon their readiness to come forward the moment they receive notice.

"I have the honor to be,

"Gentlemen,

"Your obedient servant,

"(Signed,)

W. F. BUCHANAN,

"Acting Private Secretary."

"To M. M. L. Riel,

"A. D. Lepine,

"Pierre Parenteau."

A few days afterwards Mr. Riel came to my place and gave me that letter. I told him that I would take care of it, and neither of them have spoken about it since. I have not a copy of the letter written by Riel; I do not know of any extraordinary meeting at which the half-breeds offered their services. They were speaking about Fenians privately. I do not know of any meeting of the people at which there was a discussion as to their joining the Fenians, and in which one, Mr. Delorme, suggested that they had better not join the Fenians, but go with the Government. I was in a position to know what was passing. It was upon receiving the letter of the 4th October already mentioned, requesting an interview with me, that I went to see the Lieut.-Governor. It was on Sunday that Riel came forward; on the 5th the half-breeds began to go about and catch their horses, which were on the prairie. The Fenians were certainly not in the territory before the 5th. I had no previous knowledge, whatever, of their intended attack. It was rumoured that fifteen or eighteen hundred Fenians, with eight hundred guns, were on the frontier; the Lieut.-Governor told me he had reliable information to that effect. I saw nothing of them. The French half-breeds never had any sympathy with the Fenians, and I have no knowledge of any of them having communicated with the Fenians; but some were accused of having done so. There was one man, named Delorme, who was accused of having seen and spoken with O'Donohue. It was not Pierre Delorme. There are several Delormes in the country. It was rumoured that a man named John Bruce had also seen O'Donohue, and communicated with him. I myself saw John Bruce at that time; when I put the question to him, and he entered upon a long argument to prove that he had met O'Donohue by accident; and he entered upon that argument because he had been accused by his compatriots with having communicated with O'Donohue. It was made a matter of reproach against Bruce by the French half-breeds.

N. J. RITCHOT.

COMMITTEE ROOM,

April 22nd, 1874.

The examination of the Revd. N. J. Ritchot continued:—

Nothing very particular took place between me and Mr. Langevin. I had the honor of seeing Sir John Macdonald, Mr. Robitaille and others, but nothing passed which was material to this question of the amnesty. I told them that I wanted to treat of the question of amnesty with them. This was after the late Government had been replaced by the new Government. I saw two of the new Ministers, Mr. Dorion and Mr. Letellier, a few days after the new Ministry was formed. I spoke to them about the question of amnesty. They said they would do all in their power to settle that question. Nothing particular transpired on the subject. I only stated that I trusted in them to settle that question. I remember having spoken particularly of Mr. Riel and Mr. Lepine, who was then in gaol. They said they would do all in their power to settle the question.

N. J. RITCHOT.



COMMITTEE ROOM,  
29th April, 1874.

Donald A. Smith, M.P. (Selkirk), deposed as follows :—

I understood from different members of the Government, that the amnesty was delayed in consequence of the continuance of the insurrection, that is the amnesty mentioned in the proclamation of 6th December, 1869. I received a copy of the telegram of 25th November, 1869, from Earl Granville to Sir John Young, and also the proclamation (both at Ottawa). Copies of the proclamation were taken into the territory by Father Thibault and Colonel DeSalaberry. I endeavored to have them at the mass meeting to read to the people, but could not read them then. I understood that the proclamations were in the possession of the Provisional Government, who refused to give them up.

I know of no actual promise of an amnesty having been made. Archbishop Taché, however, assured me over and over again, that such a promise had been made to him. I know that the Archbishop made the same statement to many other persons at various times, and continued to make it consistently. Colonel Wolseley said, on his arrival, that he had nothing to do with the Civil Government, and insisted that I should act as Civil Government. I have heard members of the Government at Ottawa frequently speak, of an amnesty, but I was never given to understand that any amnesty would be given although it was said that it was most desirable that these things should be settled, and that there should be an amnesty. I heard these statements frequently in conversation, both from Sir George Cartier and Sir John A. Macdonald; in fact they were always made a subject of conversation whenever I was in Ottawa.

I said it was most unjust that this state of things should continue. They agreed with this view, but never said that they would obtain an amnesty. In a conversation with Sir John A. Macdonald, about 23rd October, I submitted this to him. I told him that Archbishop Taché had informed me that an amnesty had been promised. He said no such promise had been given, and that he had letters from Lord Lisgar or Sir Clinton Murdoch denying any promise on their part. He said, however, that when he was in England he would see about it. On the ensuing 6th February, 1872, I was informed by a messenger from Governor Archibald, in the first instance, and afterwards by note, to call on him at his house on urgent business. I went, and found him and Archbishop Taché together. Governor Archibald informed me that he had asked me to come up on a most important matter: that there was danger of a rising of the French Metis. There had been a meeting, and they had resolved to arm, and I believe they were then armed. That the country was in a most dangerous condition. That he and the Archbishop had been talking over the matter, and that they had decided at the desire and with the consent of the Dominion Government to get some of the leading parties out of the way, and that information had reached Fort Garry that there had been a reward offered by the Ontario Government, and they said they had no money in the treasury of Manitoba, and I was asked if I could and would advance £600 sterling, it being distinctly understood that it would be made good by the Dominion Government. I had nothing to do with Riel, Lepine, or any other of the parties. The money was to be paid by me to Archbishop Taché, Lieutenant-Governor Archibald saying that he would take upon himself the responsibility that the Dominion Government would pay it. I signed an order that the money should be paid to him, and I directed it to be charged to the Canadian Government. This was in the first week in February. The names of Riel and Lepine were, I think, mentioned, and that the money was to be given to them to go out of the country. I cannot remember whether anything was said about subsisting their families. It was also mentioned that \$1,000, I think, were also available; I think it was mentioned that they were to remain away, or promise to remain away, for a year, but that they should not, under any circumstances, return until after the elections were over; but the elections were not given as a reason for their departure, but the desire certainly was, that they should not return until after the elections. I was leaving for Ottawa a few days afterwards, and Lieutenant-Governor Archibald requested me to inform the Dominion Government of the advance. On my arrival I spoke of it to Hon. Mr. Langevin and Sir

George E. Cartier. The latter appeared to understand it perfectly. I also mentioned it to Sir John A. Macdonald. Both of them assured me that it would be repaid to me. Sir John also appeared to understand it, and spoke of a sum already having been given to Archbishop Taché. The money was not then repaid. I saw them frequently about it and another matter. This other matter was £500, to be given by me to the loyal French half-breeds, whose assistance had been absolutely necessary in my position as Canadian Commissioner in 1869 and 1870. Some of those half-breeds had been imprisoned for the assistance they had given me, by Riel and his confederates. This sum was the least that could be given, and was repeatedly promised. It was on these occasions that the £600 were spoken of. In the autumn I saw Governor Archibald, who had come to Ottawa, and he told me that it had been arranged by the Government that either the £600 or £500 should be paid. This was in the end of October or beginning of November, 1872. I saw Sir John about it, and he said it would not be convenient to have it paid until after the Session of Parliament. All the discussions were in the same sense; such discussions and assurances were repeated also in the spring session of Parliament in 1873.

In October, 1873, at the same conversation I have already referred to about the amnesty, this claim of £600 was brought up again, and I think Sir John then referred himself to the £600. He said "You will be up here next week, and we shall have it settled." I was up then again. I did not see Sir John at his office, but I saw his secretary, who spoke about that money. He said "It is about that, I suppose, you wish to see him." I said it is of no consequence now. On the 4th November I was at Sir John's office, but did not see him. In the evening I saw Sir John A. Macdonald in a committee room in the House. He said that "The matter should have been arranged long ago, but it will be arranged now, if you will just merely, as a matter of course, write me a note now, stating (in order that we may have something to show) that it was paid to Archbishop Taché, at the instance of Governor Archibald, and you shall receive a cheque or rather the money, to-morrow morning." I immediately wrote and posted the note required, mentioning the amount, with interest, at 7 per cent., from February, 1872. The note was in the terms Sir John had told me. I had not asked for the money in this conversation. This was the last conversation I had with Sir John about it in which he referred to giving this money. The payment of the money was spoken of by Dr. Tupper the next morning, and he said it would be repaid. And in conversation with Mr. Pope the same evening, he said that Sir John had said, in the previous week, that the money must be paid. The money has never been paid. I have had no conversation since with any member of the late Government about it. I have stated to members of the present Government that the money should be paid, but I have made no claim for it, but I consider that Sir John should see it paid. The Dominion Government had an account with the Hudson's Bay Company, which acted as the Government bankers in the territory. The money was not a transaction of my own, it was only in acting as the banker of the Government that the money was advanced, although if not paid by the Government, I might consider I should make it good to the Company. I say this because I have not any written order or authority from Mr. Archibald for this payment. I did not consider that I was asked to advise upon the policy of these parties leaving the country, but simply to supply the necessary funds. I may mention here, that both Governor Archibald and Sir John expressed themselves strongly that faith had not been kept by Riel and Lépine in remaining away as they had promised.

I received a letter from Governor Archibald, dated 20th December, 1873, extracts of which I produce for the Committee.

(No. 86.)

*Extract of a letter from the Honorable A. G. Archibald to Donald A. Smith, dated 20th December, 1873.*

"If only the unfortunate cause of all these troubles had had the sense to see as others saw for him, that the true solution of the question both in his own interest, in the interest of his half-breed friends, and of the Dominion, was to keep himself in the back

"ground till the storm had blown over, all these difficulties would have vanished. Public attention would have been averted from him, and in the course of a few years the people would begin to think that if there had been an insurrection and a great crime, that it was a happy feature of a rebellion against English authority that it held its own for ten months, and had but *one* crime to charge itself with; that is admitting that stealing a lot of your H. B. goods, and appropriating so much of other people's property as they found convenient, were not to be ranked under this category. There is no doubt that a very short time would have been needed to bring about a better state of feeling, and then he and his friends could have claimed an amnesty which, whether it was promised or not, was implied in the treaty, but which, whether promised or not, no Government could venture to give till the passions of the moment had cleared away a little and left them free to act in the true interest of the people of the Dominion.

\* \* \* \* \*

The following documents, numbered respectively 83, 84 and 85, were laid before the Committee by D. A. Smith, Esq., M. P.

(No. 83.)

*Letter from Lieut-Governor Morris to D. A. Smith M. P.*

" GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
" FORT GARRY, April 6th, 1874.

" SIR,—In accordance with your request communicated to me by telegram. I have the honor to enclose to you certified extracts of those portions of the record of a meeting of the Council of Assiniboia, held in October, 1869, which relates to the subject of enquiry with which the Committee of the House of Commons, of which you are I believe the chairman, are charged.

" There are no other entries in the minutes relating to the subject, and in fact there are no minutes that I am aware of, of any proceedings of Council, if any were had, subsequent to that date.

" For obvious reasons I do not feel justified in transmitting the minute book itself, as you requested, as it is a public record affecting various interests in this Province, and containing many regulations of the Council of Assiniboia, which are yet in force here.

" I have the honor to be, Sir,

" Your obedient servant,

" ALEX. MORRIS,

" Lieutenant Governor.

" Honorable

" Donald A. Smith, M.P.,

" Chairman of Committee of the House of Commons,

" Ottawa."

(No. 84.)

*Minutes of a meeting of the Governor and Council of Assiniboia, held 19th October, 1869.*  
*Inter Alia.*

" ADDRESS TO GOVERNOR McDougall."

The President then submitted to the Council a communication which had been addressed to Governor McTavish by members of the Council of Assiniboia, requesting him to call a meeting of the Council " For the purpose of drawing up a proper Address of welcome to the Honorable Wm. McDougall, the newly appointed Governor of the North-West Territory, and of taking the necessary steps for presenting it to him on his arrival here." In the propriety and desirableness of the object of the petition, the Council expressed their hearty concurrence, and with the view of giving expression to

their feelings of loyalty on the occasion; His Lordship the Bishop of Rupert's Land submitted the draft of an Address which he had prepared.

The Council carefully considered the draft in detail, and being of opinion that the document, as it stood, conveyed a just and appropriate expression of their sentiments, adopted it *in toto* as the form of an Address to be presented to Governor McDougall; the following being a copy of the draft to which the Council so agreed.

"To —

"*May it please Your Excellency.*—We the members of the Council of Assiniboia, nominated by the Governor and Committee of the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company, desire to welcome Your Excellency on your arrival in this country to assume the office of Governor under the new arrangements to which Her most Gracious Majesty has given Her consent. We would express the hope that you may personally enjoy your residence amongst us, and our conviction that your experience as a statesman will be of great service to this country at the present juncture.

"Your Excellency may rely on receiving from us individually, as private citizens, our best assistance in your administration of the affairs of the country; and as those who were formerly accountable under the Governor appointed by the Honorable Company for the direction of affairs, we venture to assure Your Excellency that you will find the old settlers of this country loyal subjects of Her Majesty, obedient to the laws, and ready to support Your Excellency in the just administration of them.

"We quite feel that from the altered circumstances of this country, which has been rapidly changing within the last few years, it is well that its Government has been transferred from the great commercial body on which it hitherto devolved; but the administration of the Honorable Company was we believe, on the whole well suited to the past state of things, and we are not unmindful of many acts of kindness shewn by it from time to time to the settlement, as for example, in the past year, when in addition to a generous vote of money, a large amount of grain was contributed to meet the necessities arising from the great calamity of 1868.

"Your Excellency can then well understand that there are mingled feelings in our community with respect to the great change that has taken place, and even misgivings as regards the future in the minds of some; but as we gladly see in the appointment of Your Excellency a proof of the interest that the Government of the Dominion takes in this land, so we have the fullest confidence, not only that all just rights of the old settlers will be respected, but that the transition will be made as easy for them as possible.

"Hitherto we have been so far removed from any settled community, that the outlay that would have been necessary to open up the country rendered the attempt impracticable. Indeed we believe that in the future there will not only be no surprise that nothing of the kind was attempted, but that it will be recognized as most creditable to the wisdom, discretion and honorable conduct of those who administered the affairs of this country, that a small defenceless settlement even existed for many years among wild tribes of Indians, without annoyance or trouble from them, and that a profitable trade was carried on without difficulty through the length and breadth of the land.

"But as our isolation is passing away, it will soon be practicable enough to open up the country to emigrants and to develop its resources, and we feel sure that its union with the Dominion of Canada will greatly promote this result.

"What the resources of this country are it is difficult to say, as they have yet to be accurately examined and reported upon, but we do not doubt that they are great and sufficient to maintain a considerable population.

"We would then express the hope that Your Excellency may see a large development of the resources of the country, while it is under your charge, and we pray that by the guidance and blessing of God, wise measures may be adopted, and peace, plenty and prosperity be the result.

"Signed in the name of the Council of Assiniboia.

"JOHN BLACK."

At the same time, however, in the prospect of the great political change which they believed was at hand, and which would necessarily dissolve the connection between them and Governor McTavish, the Council deemed the present a fitting occasion for placing on record some manifestation of their feelings towards one who had so long and so acceptably presided over their body; and the Bishop of Rupert's Land having presented the draft of a letter to Governor McTavish, of which the following is a copy, the Council adopted the draft, and directed that a letter in these terms be addressed to Governor McTavish by the President in the name of the Council, and be delivered to him along with the address to Governor McDougall.

*Letter to Governor McTavish.*

" DEAR GOVERNOR MCTAVISH,

" The Council have learned with very deep regret that you are in such a delicate state of health.

" They venture to express the hope that you will not refuse to yourself such relaxation as may give you the prospect of early recovery.

" At the meeting to-day the enclosed address to the Governor, who is shortly expected in the settlement, was agreed to, and the Council place it in your hands, with the request that you will kindly inform His Excellency of its contents and learn from him when and how its presentation may be acceptable.

" The Council cannot communicate this address without again expressing their sense of the many acts of kindness which the country has received from the Honorable Company, and they would be glad if you would convey this expression of their feelings to the Governor and Committee.

" To yourself personally they would wish to convey their most affectionate regards. Whilst you were looked to by every member of the Council as the most fitted to guide their deliberations, there was no one who less pressed his opinions, or listened more courteously to any suggestion that was made.

" The Council know well how inestimable your services are to the Honorable Company, and how devotedly you have given yourself to their business; yet your ear has ever been open and your advice ready for the poorest settler who was in any difficulty.

" The Council, therefore, while thanking you for all your invariable courtesy when at the head of their Board, would express the hope that you may be soon restored to health, and that your valuable life may be long spared.

" Signed in the name of the Council.

" JOHN BLACK."

" I certify that the foregoing are true extracts from the original minutes of the Council of Assiniboia, which said minutes are now in my custody.

" (Signed,) SEDLEY BLANCHARD,

" Clerk of the Executive Council,

" Province of Manitoba."

*Minutes of a Meeting of the Governor and Council of Assiniboia, held October 25th, 1869.*

" Present:—John Black, Esq., President; The Right Revd. The Lord Bishop of Rupert's Land; Dr. Cowan, Dr. Bird, Messrs. Dease, Sutherland, McBeath, Fraser and Bannatyne, Esquires.

" Mr. Black stated that in consequence, as he very much regretted to say, of Governor McTavish's continued illness, he was again called upon to preside at the present meeting of the Council.

" The minutes of the last meeting having been read and approved, Mr. Black proceeded to say that at their last meeting, as the Council was aware, an address had been prepared for the purpose of being presented to the Honorable William McDougall on

"his arrival in the settlement, an event which was expected to take place at some very  
 "early date; that the Council while preparing that address, were impressed with the  
 "conviction that the feelings of welcome and loyalty therein expressed were concurred  
 "in by the settlement generally, or at least were so far shared by the great majority of  
 "people, as to preclude all idea of open demonstrations of dissent; but he was very much  
 "concerned now to say that unhappily such was not the case, and that a large party  
 "among the French population appeared to be animated by a very different spirit. It  
 "had become too evident, that among them sentiments of a directly opposite nature  
 "prevailed with regard to the impending change in the Government of the country, and  
 "prevailed so strongly, that according to information lately received, and of the correct-  
 "ness of which there could be no doubt, they had organized themselves into armed  
 "bodies for the purpose of intercepting Governor McDougall on the road between this  
 "and Pembina, with the openly avowed intention of preventing his entrance into the  
 "settlement.

"It was to consider that serious state of matters that the Council had been  
 "assembled, and to see whether any, and what measures could be adopted to prevent the  
 "threatened outrage.

"The Council unanimously expressed their reprobation of the outrageous proceed-  
 "ings referred to by the President, but feeling strongly impressed with the idea that the  
 "parties concerned in them must be acting, in utter forgetfulness or even perhaps ignor-  
 "ance of the highly criminal character of their actions, and of the very serious  
 "consequences they involved, it was thought that by calm reasoning and advice they  
 "might be induced to abandon their dangerous schemes before they had irretrievably  
 "committed themselves.

"With this object in view therefore, Mr. Riel and Mr. Bruce, who were known to  
 "hold leading positions in the party opposed to Mr. McDougall, had been invited to be  
 "present at this meeting of the Council, and on being questioned by the Council as to  
 "the motives and intentions of the party they represented, Mr. Riel, who alone addressed  
 "the Council on the occasion, substantially said in the course of a long and somewhat  
 "irregular discussion, that his party were perfectly satisfied with the present Government  
 "and wanted no other; that they objected to any Government coming from Canada without  
 "their being consulted in the matter; that they would never admit any Governor,  
 "no matter by whom he might be appointed, if not by the Hudson's Bay Company,  
 "unless delegates were previously sent with whom they might negotiate as to the terms  
 "and conditions under which they would acknowledge him; that they were uneducated  
 "and only half-civilized, and felt that if a large immigration were to take place they  
 "would probably be crowded out of a country which they claimed as their own; that  
 "they knew they were in a sense poor and insignificant, but that it was just because they  
 "were aware of this that they had felt so much at being treated as if they were even  
 "more insignificant than they in reality were; that their existence or at least their  
 "wishes had been entirely ignored; that if Mr. McDougall was once here, most probably  
 "the English-speaking population would allow him to be installed in office as Governor,  
 "and then he would be our 'Master or King as he says,' and that therefore they  
 "intended to send him back; that they consider that they are acting not only for their  
 "own good but for the good of the whole settlement; that they did not feel that they  
 "were breaking any law, but were simply acting in defence of their own liberty; that  
 "they did not anticipate any opposition from their English-speaking fellow-countrymen,  
 "and only wished them to join and aid in securing their common rights; that they might  
 "be opposed by some Canadian party in the country, but for that they were quite pre-  
 "pared; and that they were determined to prevent Mr. McDougall from coming into the  
 "settlement at all hazards.

"The Council endeavored to convince Mr. Riel of the erroneous nature of the views  
 "held by himself and the party he represented; explained the highly criminal character  
 "of their proceedings, and pointed out the very disastrous consequences which might  
 "accrue, not only to themselves, but to the settlement generally, if they persisted in their



" Sworn before me at the said City of Winnipeg, in the Province of Manitoba, this  
 " 6th day of April, A.D. 1874.

" In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal  
 " the day and year aforesaid.

" (Signed,)

JOHN F. BLAIN,

" Notary Public,

" Manitoba."

(L.S.)

(No. 85.)

" FORT GARRY, 26th October, 1869.

" The Rev. N. J. Ritchot,

" St. Norbert.

" REVEREND SIR,—I hope you will excuse me for troubling you on the following  
 " subject, the more especially as you may already have endeavored without success to  
 " persuade the men now on the road near *la Rivière Salé*, for the purpose of preventing  
 " the Honorable Wm. McDougall from coming on into the settlement, to return  
 " peaceably to their homes, and give up the idea of forcibly stopping Mr. McDougall on  
 " the highway. But even if you have already done so, I would still beg you to make  
 " another attempt to endeavor by your influence to lead the men in question to reconsider  
 " their first intentions, and to abandon them, convinced as I am that they are acting in  
 " opposition to their interests, though I confess I have failed utterly in my attempts to  
 " make them see their actions in this light.

" I am very desirous you should see the men, if you consider it proper, as soon as  
 " possible, as the Council yesterday appointed Mr. W. Dease, with some others, to see  
 " the men who are now watching the road to Pembina, in the hope that they might be  
 " induced to disperse; but I confess I have so little hope in Mr. Dease's success, that I  
 " prefer the risk of inconveniencing you, in the hope that by your efforts beforehand,  
 " Mr. Dease's meeting with the other party may be unnecessary.

" In the hope that the desire for the peace and welfare of the settlement may be my  
 " excuse, with much respect,

" I have the honor to be,

" Your obedient servant,

" (Signed,)

W. McTAVISH."

COMMITTEE ROOM,

OTTAWA, April 30th, 1874.

*Right Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald, K.C.B.*, deposed.

Have read the Order of Reference.

As it was my duty, I waited yesterday on His Excellency the Governor General,  
 and received his permission to make any statement that, in my opinion, would not be  
 prejudicial to the public interests.

An amnesty was promised in the proclamation, the terms of which are before the  
 Committee. No difficulty existed at any time as to granting an amnesty pursuant to the  
 proclamation, after the arrival of Governor Archibald at Fort Garry.

It was not, however, asked for on behalf of the main body of the parties implicated in  
 those occurrences, and it seems to have been considered that such parties were quite safe  
 from molestation.

All requests to the Government on this subject were pressed with a view to include  
 those parties who were charged with complicity in the death of Scott. The Governor  
 General and his advisers held that the amnesty as proclaimed did not cover that charge;  
 and it seemed to be the opinion of every one interested that a proclamation expressly  
 excluding the parties last referred to would do more harm than good.

The proclamation I speak of is that of 6th December, 1869.



I do not remember that there was any other communication from the Colonial Office authorizing the proclamation, than the telegram of the 25th November, 1869, from Lord Granville to the Governor General. There may have been other communications to the Governor General of which I have no knowledge. I do not know that there was any direct authority from the Colonial Office for the promise as to an amnesty contained in the proclamation; but, on discussion with the Governor General, he considered that he was quite warranted in taking the responsibility of making that promise—as I presume, under his general powers. I presume that he considered that, under the exigency of the case, he could assume that power without waiting for direct authority.

The proclamation, as first issued, was transmitted for dissemination in the North-West through the Very Revd. Mr. Thibault.

It was printed in English, French and Cree, at Ottawa, and sent by him. At the same time, the Bishop of St. Boniface was telegraphed for and requested to return, if possible, and use his great influence among the people of his diocese.

The Government here was informed that, though Mr. Thibault was allowed access to the Territory, he was deprived of the proclamation given him, and that they were not published.

When Bishop Taché arrived in Ottawa, circumstances in the North-West had not materially changed, and the Governor General decided that the proclamation should be entrusted for publication to the Bishop. This would cover any offences which occurred between the date of the proclamation and the date of the instructions here to Bishop Taché. To that extent the promise of amnesty went, and I do not consider that it ever went further.

My letter to Bishop Taché of date February 16th, 1870, embodies the substance of any conversations that I had as a Minister with him at that time. (See letter No. 6 in Archbishop Taché's evidence, page 19.)

Between the 6th December, 1869, and the date of this letter, it was known that sundry parties had been arrested and imprisoned by the insurgents, and that a portion of the provisions belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company had been used by them. These matters were discussed between the Bishop and myself, and I stated that the Government could not interfere to protect parties from actions brought by individuals for imprisonment or other wrong; but that, as regarded the stores of the Hudson's Bay Company, I apprehended no difficulty with them, and that if they set up any claim, the Government would stand between the insurgents and any such claim. I have no recollection of any allusion made to events that might occur between the time of Bishop Taché's departure from Ottawa and his arrival at the North-West. Of course, the Government here was apprehensive that, if order was not restored, disastrous events might occur. I do not think I told Bishop Taché that if any further crimes should be committed in the interval between his departure and arrival at the North-West, he was not to issue the proclamation.

I think the papers shew all the instructions to Bishop Taché. My letter already alluded to was written for the purpose of containing the results of our conversations. I do not think there was anything said as to new offences, nor anything restricting the Bishop's authority to issue the proclamation in the event of new offences occurring.

I assumed that if, on his arrival, circumstances remained as they were when he left, the proclamation would cover everything up to the time of his arrival. I think that would probably be the impression conveyed to the Bishop's own mind on the subject.

Bishop Taché saw the Governor General on the subject, at one or more interviews at which I was not present. But His Lordship was made aware that the power of pardon or amnesty rested with His Excellency.

The phrase in my letter "not only will there be a general amnesty granted" had reference to the amnesty promised in the proclamation. I consider that the Bishop had authority to publish the proclamation on his arrival, and that it would cover all offences of a similar character to those which the proclamation was intended to cover. The proclamation was called a general amnesty, but we understood it to mean a promise of

amnesty for the offences referred to in it. I do not think the contingency of a death having occurred before the date of the proclamation was contemplated when it issued, and I do not think its terms would have covered a capital felony. The proclamation would not have covered such a case as the death of Scott. Either that was an offence against the law, or it was not. If it was an offence against the law, it was more than a breach of the peace. If it was not an offence, it did not require an amnesty, and would not be affected by the proclamation.

Neither Bishop Taché, nor the Governor General, nor any member of the Government, took into consideration the possibility of life being taken. The only subjects, as I have stated, that were discussed, were the armed resistance which had continued for some time; the imprisonment and other wrongs alleged to have been inflicted on individuals; and the breaking into the Hudson's Bay Company's stores and using their goods.

The armed resistance was a very aggravated breach of the peace, but we were anxious to hold, and did hold, that under the circumstances of the case it did not amount to treason. We were informed that the insurgents did not desire to throw off allegiance to the Queen, or sever their country from the Empire, but that their action was in the nature of an armed resistance to the entry into the country of an officer, or officers, sent by the Dominion Government. We desired, therefore, that it should be considered in the light of an unlawful assembly, although it might technically be held to come under the statute of treasons, and it was intended that that continuous act, whatever it might be called, should come under the proclamation and be condoned by it.

We considered that the unfortunate issue of Mr. McDougall's proclamation increased the danger of hostile collision; and this subject was doubtless discussed between the Government and the Bishop.

There was a general apprehension of disastrous results, and I have no doubt but that he, as well as myself, was apprehensive of ultimate danger, unless order could be restored. But I did not myself apprehend any serious danger of loss of life, unless an armed force was sent to quell the insurrection by force, which was just what the Governor General and his advisers were anxious to avoid. The Government were aware that certain parties had been imprisoned. The information of the events then occurring were very scanty and imperfect however; and we could get no accurate statement as to the exact state of events within the territory.

When Bishop Taché went to the North-West in the spring, my impression is that he was requested to communicate with Mr. D. A. Smith, who had been instructed to act under the Canadian Government, but I cannot say positively. The papers will doubtless show.

I have no recollection of any discussion with Bishop Taché as to bloodshed being expected, beyond the expression of the general apprehension that things must get worse unless order was restored.

At the time of the interviews with Bishop Taché before he left, to the best of my recollection, the Government had been informed that Mr. Thibault's baggage had been taken possession of and the proclamations taken from him by the insurgents. I really forget if any one was to distribute the proclamations before Mr. Thibault took them; but I see by a letter dated 10th December, 1869, addressed to Mr. D. A. Smith, that a copy of the proclamation spoken of, with other papers, were placed in his hands as a Special Commissioner from the Canadian Government. This letter will show Mr. Smith's powers. (For this letter see page 51 of Blue Book, "Correspondence relative to the recent disturbances in the Red River Settlement.")

I do not remember the precise nature of the conversations between Mr. Smith and myself, but they were frequent, confidential and full. I suppose the instructions given to the Commissioners will speak for themselves.

I do not remember precisely what the instructions were, but I have no doubt they were instructed to communicate with the people of the North-West, and among others with the leaders. We recognized the existence of insurgents having leaders, but I recollect of our having been aware of their having a Provisional Government, but I do not recollect at what date we were first informed of it.

We knew that the Government of Assiniboia had been prevented from exercising their functions, and that Governor McTavish was, or had been, prisoner in his own fort.

I do not remember anything of importance occurring between this date and the arrival of Father Ritchot, Judge Black and Mr. Scott. I recollect their arrival.

Sir George Cartier and I had been appointed, I think, by Order in Council, to represent the Government in dealing with these delegates.

Judge Black and Father Ritchot met Sir George and myself at Sir George's house. Mr. Scott was absent from some accidental cause. They presented themselves as delegates appointed at a meeting of the people at Winnipeg. They presented a resolution or resolutions passed at that meeting.

Judge Black took me aside and stated that they had received and brought with them an authority from Riel, as Chief of the Provisional Government, to act on behalf of that Provisional Government, and also a certain claim, or a Bill of Rights, prepared by that Government. He asked me what was to be done with the authority and the "Bill of Rights." I told him they had better not be produced, as the Governor General could not recognize the legal existence of the Provisional Government, and would not treat with them as such. I stated, however, that the claims asserted in the last mentioned Bill of Rights could be pressed by the delegates, and would be considered on their own merits.

I understood from Sir George that he made a similar communication to Father Ritchot. Conversations between Father Ritchot, Sir George and myself were conducted by Sir George, in consequence of Father Ritchot's want of knowledge of English and mine of French.

After Judge Black and I returned to the room, we spoke plainly of the matter, and it was understood that the discussion was between the delegates of the Convention and the Canadian Government, excluding any other capacity in which they appeared. We avoided as much as possible, speaking of the Provisional Government. Judge Black desired to be spoken of as coming from the Convention, and not from the Provisional Government. The conversations took place both in French and English. I could understand Father Ritchot at times when he spoke slowly. I arrived at my understanding from what I understood of his conversation myself, and the explanations I received from Sir George when I had difficulty in comprehending. Father Ritchot understood that we did not recognize them as representatives of the Provisional Government; but I understood from Sir George that Father Ritchot was continually anxious to obtain some such recognition, while Sir George was avoiding any such recognition. We were, in fact, aware of the claim that was being made by the Provisional Government in this Bill of Rights. It had been published in the newspapers. We knew that it referred to an amnesty. Father Ritchot was pressing for an amnesty for everything that had occurred. He was told that the Canadian Government held that it had no power in the matter. It was a question for the Imperial Government alone, and the claim for such a general amnesty must be pressed by them on the Governor General, who would doubtless transmit to the Imperial Government any papers or statements laid before him. I have no doubt that the proclamation, and the amnesty promised in it, were discussed. It was understood that no difficulty would arise to the granting of an amnesty, excepting as regarded those charged with the death of Scott.

The statement of the necessity of referring to His Excellency had reference to the amnesty asked for these persons. That was the only question. I do not remember Father Ritchot saying that he had come prepared to treat with the Canadian Government, and that if they had not the power he would return, nor do I remember any such statement being communicated to me by Sir George.

I do not remember the specific reply made to them, but the result was that they were to see the Governor General while we went on to consider the other questions involved.

I was at all the meetings of the delegates until the 6th May, when I was taken ill. The question as to the amnesty to those charged with the death of Scott was suspended as it were, leaving it to the delegates to make such statements or representations to the Governor General as they thought fit.

The Government took the ground that the question of amnesty was not one for them, as the act had occurred before the territory was taken possession of by Canada.

Father Ritchot, I think, stated that no settlement would be satisfactory unless it included an amnesty to all. He did not, to my recollection or knowledge, say that he himself would take no part in the settlement unless there was a general amnesty.

I have letters from Sir George Cartier, Sir Clinton Murdoch, and Lord Lisgar, received by me last summer, and containing their accounts of what occurred.

Sir Clinton Murdoch had been sent here by the Imperial Government to arrange the terms of a joint expedition of Canadian volunteers and regulars, if an expedition should become necessary.

I produce Lord Lisgar's letter, dated 21st February, 1873, as follows :

(No. 52.)

*Lord Lisgar to Sir G. E. Cartier.*

“ 21st February, 1873.

“ MY DEAR SIR GEORGE,—I have in recollection the interview which I had with the Rev. Abbé Ritchot upon your introduction and in your presence.

“ He dwelt earnestly upon two points.

“ *First.* The redress of the political grievances of the inhabitants of the Red River Settlement, with especial reference, as I understood, to land grants.

“ *Second.* On an assurance of the exercise of the Royal Prerogative of mercy to cover all offences.

“ With regard to the first point, I gave him satisfactory assurances of the favorable dispositions of the Canadian Government and Legislature, as indeed evidenced by the passing of the Manitoba Act. With regard to the second point, I stated I was not in a position to give him any assurance, not having received instructions on the subject from Her Majesty's Government.

“ I promised to forward, without delay, the petition he spoke of as in preparation, and stated that I felt sure Her Majesty's Government would give full and serious consideration to any pleas which might be urged on behalf of the view he advocated.

“ I am quite clear that neither on the occasion in question, nor on any other, did I give an assurance or promise of an amnesty to cover all offences committed during the insurrection.

“ Pray believe me,

“ Sincerely yours,

“ (Signed,) LISGAR.”

I also produce copies of two letters from Sir Clinton Murdoch to Mr Herbert, Under-Secretary of the Colonies, dated respectively 5th and 6th March, 1873.

(No. 53.)

“ GOVERNMENT EMIGRATION BOARD,

“ 8, PARK STREET, WESTMINSTER,

“ 5th March, 1873.

“ MY DEAR MR. HERBERT,—I have no recollection of any promise or expectation of an amnesty to Riel and his associates having been held out by Lord Lisgar, when Mr. Ritchot had an interview with him, in my presence or at any other time. I scarcely think if such a promise had been made I could have failed to notice it at the time or to recollect it now. As regards Sir George Cartier, I do not remember having ever had any conversation with him on the subject, or being present at any interview when it was discussed between him and Lord Lisgar.

“ Very truly yours,

“ (Signed,) J. W. C. MURDOCH.”