



1885 AND AFTER CONFERENCE

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THE FRENCH-CANADIAN PRESS AND 1885

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FRENCH-CANADIAN OPINION AND 1885

There is a tradition in Canada according to which the East neither understands nor cares about the West, and which holds that central Canada has always tried to run the country according to its own interests, values, interpretations, and points of view. Whatever truth there may be in this as a general proposition, it does seem to apply to the Riel affair. In that case, most central Canadians really did not understand very well what was happening in the West, and they did try to determine the outcome of the affair according to their own interests, values, and points of view.

This should not surprise us, if we consider the distances that separated the North-West from Ontario and Quebec. In 1870, when Colonel Wolseley led the expeditionary force to Manitoba, it took him a month and a half to get from Thunder Bay to Winnipeg.¹ No wonder one of his French-Canadian officers wrote in 1871 that Quebeckers looked on Manitoba as "a savage land, situated at the end of the world, from which one only returns with the prestige of a great adventurer."²

It was hard to get reliable news from such a country. There were no wire services or professional correspondents. Newspapers had to depend on letters from Canadians who had moved to various parts of the North-West, and these were not often very reliable. A man living in Portage-la-Prairie would only be able to report the vaguest rumours of what was happening at Fort Garry. And by the time his letter reached Ontario (a matter of weeks at least), it would probably have been contradicted already. One can well understand why eastern newspapers came to use the expression "a Red River story" to mean a wild and unreliable report that was bound to be discredited the day after it was received.³

Things were not that much better in 1885. With the railroad incomplete, the telegraph lines undependable, the distances and the hostilities involved, papers still printed a good portion of rumour and speculation along with the news.⁴ It was really only natural, therefore, that easterners, lacking real, dependable knowledge, had to work out their notions of Riel's significance and the meaning of his uprisings largely on the basis of their own experiences, fears, expectations, and notions about each other.

In 1869, when the Red River uprising began, French Canadians had little knowledge of who Riel and the Metis were, what they wanted, or what they were doing. True, there had been French-Canadian missionaries in the North-West since 1818, and most French-Canadians probably knew vaguely, from them, that a majority of the Metis had French-Canadian roots. But missionaries' reports also let them know that the Metis were hunters, whose life resembled that of the Indians, and all in all, their notions about western peoples probably came as much from newspaper reports of Indian wars in the United States as from anything else.⁵

In any case, Quebeckers looked forward to the Canadian annexation of Rupertsland, as did Ontarians,⁶ and when that annexation was blocked by

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Riel's movement, French Quebeckers, like other Canadians, were annoyed. They saw the Metis resistance as a war against all Canadians, including themselves -- a war being waged by English and French Metis alike. During the winter of 1869-70, therefore, the Metis were repeatedly condemned in the French-Quebec press. They were referred to as "rebels" and "insurgents" and "ferocious mixed-bloods";⁷ Riel was referred to as a dictator whose power at Fort Garry was illegitimate and arbitrary;⁸ and hopes were expressed that he would quickly be put down.⁹

Gradually, however, these attitudes began to change as French Quebeckers noticed the ways in which Ontarians reacted to the uprising. Many Ontarians, struck by the prominent role of the French-Catholic part of the Metis community, and by the presence of priests around Riel, saw the movement as a conspiracy to prevent English-Protestant Ontarians from moving into the West, to turn the North-West into a French and Catholic province where clerical privileges and clergy reserves would be established, to the detriment of freedom and settlement alike.¹⁰ Who could be behind such a conspiracy if not Quebec and its priests.

Simply because a French-Canadian is at the head of the movement, and because the names of a few priests have been associated with it, some of our compatriots in Ontario are under the impression that this whole rebellion has been got up in the interest of Lower Canada and of the Catholic clergy.¹¹

French Canadians might deny and ridicule such accusations, but they were repeated nonetheless, and with more and more fury after the death of Thomas Scott before a Metis firing squad. In the end, such accusations drove French Canadians into a defensive position that aligned them with the Metis. They increasingly convinced Quebeckers that Ontarians were anxious to repress the Metis not because they were rebels but because they were French Catholics. Such a conviction could only lead Quebec -- the French-Catholic province -- to take up a position in favour of the Metis.

In the spring of 1870 Quebec opinion was calmed by the passage of the Manitoba Act. Quebeckers paid little attention to the contents of the act; their papers neither analysed nor commented on it; but it appeared to satisfy the Metis, and so it satisfied them. However, events were soon to revive the excitement of the preceding months.

Canadian rule in the North-West began with the sending of a military expedition to ensure peace and order in the territory. Many of its Ontario volunteers, however, displayed an unfortunate excessive zeal to apprehend and punish those whom they considered rebels and murderers. Since French Catholics had been prominent in the provisional government and in the proceedings that led to Scott's death, it naturally appeared that the Ontario volunteers had "gone to Manitoba with the intention of getting revenge against the French and Catholic population."¹² That Ontarians were inspired by racial and religious prejudice rather than by a sense of justice seemed confirmed by their failure to react to the death of a French Metis, Elzéar Goulet. Goulet had died in obscure circumstances while fleeing from a group of angry Ontarians. His death was reported as an accident in the Ontario press,¹³ but Quebec papers reported it as a murder, and they naturally interpreted Ontarians' failure to demand the punishment of Goulet's killers, at

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a time when they were clamouring for the arrest of Scott's executioners, as a sign of anti-French fanaticism.¹⁴

The clamour for the arrest of Scott's killers did not stop. In early 1872 the Ontario government offered a \$5000 reward for their apprehension -- another indication to French Quebecers of Ontario's prejudice "against their race"¹⁵ -- and in the fall of 1873 Ambroise Lépine was actually arrested for his part in Scott's death. That such a thing could happen, despite the fact that Ottawa had apparently promised an amnesty to all those who had participated in the events of 1869-70, only intensified Quebec's sympathy for the Metis. So did Riel's expulsion from the House of Commons in the spring of 1874.

Riel's expulsion was accompanied by the setting up of a special Commons committee to look into the Red River troubles and to ascertain whether an amnesty really had been promised. Committee hearings only confirmed Quebecers' belief that Ontarians were after Riel not for anything he had done but because he was French and Catholic -- especially when Archbishop Taché of St. Boniface testified and spoke of Ontarians persecuting "the poor French Canadians of the North West."¹⁶ The committee's report seemed to indicate that an amnesty had been promised, but that "the French Metis" had been "duped and betrayed mercilessly."¹⁷ Even so, Lépine went on trial in the fall of 1874, was convicted and sentenced to hang. He was saved at the last minute, but by a commutation of the sentence rather than by a free amnesty or pardon.

But it was an amnesty that French-Canadians wanted. The English-Quebec Liberal, Luther Holton, urged Premier Mackenzie to grant one quickly, and to make it "unconditional."¹⁸ This was, he observed, "the only question on which the universal sentiment of the [French-Canadian] people is in accord with the clerical party."¹⁹ Yet when the amnesty came, in February of 1875, it excluded three Catholic members of the Red River provisional government -- the Fenian O'Donoghue, banished from Canada for life, and Riel and Lépine, banished for five years.

All these events had kept French-Canadian attention focussed on the West, and they had built up the idea that French Quebec had an important interest there: the protection of a French-Catholic community that was being persecuted by English Canada because of its race and religion.

By 1885, then, French Quebecers were much more ready than they had been in 1869 to look on the Metis as French-Canadians like themselves (or almost like themselves), who were disliked by the Anglo-Protestants for that fact. This made for a certain ambiguity in their attitudes toward the North-West rebellion. To be sure, they condemned the rebellion and agreed that it had to be put down at once. "We have not the least sympathy," proclaimed a leading paper, "for a revolt which, at the least, may well cost the lives of several of our own people."²⁰ Indeed, French Canadians participated in the North-West campaign -- and it was reported in the regional press, when the 65th battalion left, that there was "great enthusiasm among volunteers."²¹

Nevertheless, there were hesitations as well. An officer of the 65th battalion wrote to the minister of militia that "our men look on the Metis

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as their compatriots,"²² and a prominent magazine observed that many of the Quebec soldiers had sacrificed "their feelings and their sympathies" by serving in this campaign.²³ (In the end, of course, the French-Canadian battalions were not sent into action against the Metis.)

French-Canadian sympathy for the Metis was only intensified as Quebec newspapers reported that the outbreak of the rebellion had provoked anti-French and anti-Catholic feelings in Ontario. Such reports inevitably rearoused the old suspicions of the 1870s, that English Canadians wanted to suppress the Metis not because they were rebels but because they were French Catholics. French-Canadian newspapers could not help observing that many Ontarians were accusing the Catholic clergy or French Canada itself of responsibility for the rebellion. The Province of Quebec, its leaders, even Archbishop Taché of St. Boniface -- all were accused of being behind the rebellion.²⁴ Naturally, such accusations only strengthened French-Canadian identification with the Metis, as they had done in 1870.

During the summer of 1885, Quebec's view of the Metis as French Catholics was important in determining the way in which Louis Riel's trial was interpreted. Quebec opinion was all agreed that as leader of the rebellion Riel must stand trial. At the same time, though, there was a universal feeling that the full rigour of the law could not be applied to him, because he was insane. His past confinements in Quebec asylums, his erratic behavior during the rebellion, and reports of his comportment as General Middleton's prisoner all seemed to confirm that "there is madness in Riel's conduct."²⁵ French Quebecers were convinced that he was "a maniac"²⁶ -- "a madman, possessed by hallucinations, entirely without responsibility for his acts."²⁷

Unfortunately, Ontarians did not seem to share this point of view. Their discussion of Riel seemed dominated by a hatred of everything French and Catholic, by a "pitiless pride of race."²⁸ Apparently they were insisting that Riel must be executed no matter what the trial might reveal. They even threatened to lynch him if the government did not do the job for them.²⁹

Given that Quebecers saw English-Canadian opinion in this way, it is not surprising that they found everywhere in Riel's trial evidence of a conspiracy to persecute him unjustly. Twentieth-century historians like Desmond Morton and Thomas Flanagan have argued convincingly that Riel's trial was conducted properly and legitimately and was about as fair as it could have been.³⁰ (This, by the way, was also the opinion of Wilfrid Laurier at the time. "There is no fair ground," he wrote to Edward Blake in December, 1885, "for imputing partiality to anybody connected with the trial."³¹) Yet it is easy to see why most French-Canadians came to the opposite conclusion. The six-man jury, none of whom was French-Metis, as well as the use of English throughout the proceedings, may have been legal and appropriate and according to North-West Territories precedent; nevertheless, they naturally seemed extraordinary and contrived to laymen unfamiliar with the legal circumstances. The magistrate's rulings may seem fair to historians, but many of his comments sounded harsh at the time -- and their harshness was often much exaggerated when they appeared in the columns of the Quebec press.³²

By the time the trial ended, therefore, French Quebecers were convinced it had been a sham, rigged from the beginning, and set up only to hide the fact that Riel had been condemned even before being heard. The

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defence argued that Riel was mad and therefore not responsible for his undoubted actions in leading the rebellion. Riel's own statement, however, must have confirmed the testimony of those medical witnesses who denied he was legally insane, and the jury found him guilty. He was sentenced to death.

Immediately, an agitation was begun in Quebec to protest against this sentence, and to call on Ottawa either to commute it or to pardon Riel. By all accounts, the fury among French Canadians was universal. The editor of a leading Conservative newspaper wrote to one of the three French-Canadian ministers at Ottawa:

Don't even ask me about Riel -- the people have gone completely wild from one end of the province to the other. You can be sure that the Liberals will have their revenge ... if Riel is hanged. You can't imagine the violence with which even our best friends express themselves.³³

A similar view of Quebec opinion was sent to Sir John Macdonald by Guillaume Amyot, a Conservative politician and commander of one of the Quebec battalions that had served in the North-West:

Every day public opinion here gets stronger and stronger against hanging Riel ... The courant d'opinion everywhere is getting irresistible, and take my word as a sincere friend that your best supporters will not be able to stand the position if Riel is hanged.³⁴

Indeed, Conservative papers in Quebec were as strong as any in campaigning against the execution and promised their readers that it would not -- could not -- take place.²⁵ They shared the prevailing French-Canadian belief that Riel was mad and therefore not responsible for what he had done. Even they agreed, moreover, that the Metis had had real grievances which constituted extenuating circumstances in Riel's case. (Liberals might be more inclined to blame the Conservative federal government for those grievances, while Conservatives laid the blame on individual western agents who had betrayed the government's good intentions, but all agreed that the grievances were real.) Certainly, these grievances could not justify rebellion, but at least ought to dictate mercy in the treatment of Riel.

But if Riel was to be hanged despite his madness, and despite the mitigating circumstances in his favour, it could only mean that he was being persecuted by the English Protestants simply because he was French and Catholic. An Anglo-Protestant would never have been hanged in the same circumstances.

Petitions poured into Ottawa from French Canadians across the country calling for a change in the sentence. Many pointed out that an English Canadian, who had been Riel's secretary at the outset of the rebellion, and was believed -- wrongly, it is true, but believed nevertheless - to have been as fully involved in the rebellion as Riel himself, had been declared insane without a serious trial or medical examination, and thereby saved. That this man, Jackson, was saved, while Riel was to be hanged, seemed clear

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proof that Riel was the victim of religious and racial discrimination. It was "a revolting act of partiality, and a defiance, not only of our Metis compatriots in the North-West but of all French-Canadians...."36

But what made this particularly believable was the impression Quebecers had of Ontario opinion. It was Ontario's fanatical hatred of French Catholicism that seemed to be rushing Riel to the gallows. It was because he was French and Catholic that English Canadians wanted him dead:

If the sentence is carried out, ... Riel will have been hanged because he's not English; and because the French-haters of Ontario wanted to see him ... dance at the end of a rope.³⁷

That was from a stalwart Conservative paper. In fact, added another, "Riel is only a name. It's the whole French-Canadian and Catholic population that they'd like to see dancing at the end of a rope."³⁸

It must be said here that as far as it can be made out this view of Ontario opinion, although inaccurate, was not entirely without basis. Certainly, there were some papers in Ontario that did print some rather wild statements. These were particularly the sensationalist yellow press dailies of Toronto, the more irresponsible elements of the "people's press" that pandered to the lowest tastes and passions. Historians frequently quote the Toronto News, for example, claiming that the rebellion represented a French-Canadian attempt to secure "the complete reconquest of Canada, the establishment of a firm and lasting basis of French ascendancy throughout the Dominion," and that Riel should, accordingly, be strangled in the French flag.³⁹ The Toronto Telegram was only a little more moderate when it accused the Catholic clergy and French Canadians of supporting the rebellion with everything from sympathy rallies to money for arming the Metis, all in an "attempt to carve out another Quebec in the North-West Territories."⁴⁰

But these notorious papers did not represent all of English-Ontario opinion. A significant number of English Canadians did not seem to think that Riel should be executed at all. "Do not permit him to be executed," wrote the Presbyterian minister of Grafton, Ontario, to Sir John Macdonald. "There are many who believe as I do."⁴¹ The Macdonald papers in the federal archives contain only twenty-four letters from English Canadians who wrote to express their private opinions; but it is true that half of them asked the premier to spare Riel's life.⁴² Edward Blake, the Liberal leader, may have been flying in the face of most English-Canadian opinion when he held that Riel should not be hanged, but clearly not of all of it.

Still, the great majority of English Ontarians undoubtedly thought Riel should be executed; however, they did not necessarily deserve to be called fanatics for all that. For instance, despite what Quebecers thought, almost all Ontarians expressed sympathy for the Metis. This is not to say that they justified the rebellion, of course -- even Liberal party papers, which had the most to gain by blaming the government for provoking the rebellion, would not go that far. Yet even the Toronto Telegram agreed "that both half-breeds and Indians have grievances which should have been remedied long ago,"⁴³ and expressed "pity" for those Metis who had been

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killed, "perhaps feeling that their cause was equally just, and that they were being driven from their homes for seeking to get by force what they had failed to get by supplication."⁴⁴ The real and unresolved grievances of the Metis were indeed extenuating circumstances which ought to inspire a policy of clemency toward them. "It is the duty of all good people to let by-gones be by-gones...."⁴⁵

But that did not include Riel. He was seen, especially in the light of testimony presented at his trial, as a self-serving schemer, who had exploited the Metis grievances and purposely stirred up the Indians to a bloody war against innocent settlers, all for his own personal ends. What was more, he was a recidivist, a two-time offender. He had been amnestied for his first uprising, even though that too had involved murder, and now he had done it again. If he were let off now, wouldn't he soon be leading a third rebellion? Why, "he in his speech as good as said if he ever got free he would again raise the standard of rebellion."⁴⁶

This English-Canadian view of Riel may not have been any more accurate than was the French-Canadian view. It may have been less so. But what must be pointed out is that in this view Riel's Frenchness and Catholicism were not important. Most Ontario papers, in fact, made little mention of those things. (Some, indeed, actually managed to report the whole campaign without ever identifying Riel and his men as French or even Metis, but only as "the enemy," "the rebels," or "Riel's men."⁴⁷

Contrary to what French-Canadians believed, therefore, it was indeed the criminal, and not the French Catholic, that most Ontarians thought should be hanged. And after all, if Professors Morton and Flanagan can conclude that Riel's trial was fair, we ought to be able to believe that English Canadians at the time honestly thought so too. The failure of Riel's appeals to the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench and to the imperial Privy Council only seemed to confirm that nothing had been wrong with the trial. Riel had been given every fair chance. Why, then, should the sentence not be carried out? In fact, if Riel had been English and Protestant, nobody would have said a word against the sentence.

Here was the thing that really made Ontarians angry at the French Quebeckers: "No one can believe that if Louis Riel were an Englishman that Quebec would have taken the slightest interest in his fate."⁴⁸ It was the French Canadians, Ontarians thought, who were making a race question out of the Riel affair by trying "to do for Riel what they would not do for an English Canadian under the same circumstances."⁴⁹ They seemed to be saying that a criminal should be spared simply because he was French and Catholic, as if "no one of French blood should suffer capitally for any wrong done to one of another race."⁵⁰ They appeared to believe that there should be two laws in Canada, one for themselves and one for everyone else. But this seemed so unjust a pretension that it only intensified Ontarians' determination that the execution should take place:

Sir John Macdonald has now an opportunity ... of giving the French Canadians to understand that the laws were made for all alike and cannot be overridden on the ground of race or religion.⁵¹

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The situation in the fall of 1885, then, was a classic Canadian impasse. On the one hand, English-Canadians were convinced that Riel was guilty and should pay for his crimes in the way the law prescribed. They found it absolutely intolerable that he should be let go simply because he was French-Canadian. The French-Canadians seemed to want special treatment, special privilege, and the right to dictate the law to the rest of the country.

On the other hand, French-Canadians argued that Riel did not deserve to hang, and that if he had not been French and Catholic, no one would have dreamed of executing him. The carrying out of the sentence would thus be an intolerable attack on French Catholicism throughout the country.

In the end, of course, Riel was hanged. To most English-Canadians it seemed that law and order had triumphed. French-Canadians, however, saw in the execution the triumph of Anglo-Canadian fanaticism, of English-Protestant hatred for everything French and Catholic:

Riel is dead (wrote a Quebec pamphleteer), and the cursed city which has drunk his blood, the hordes of sectarians who called for it with foaming mouths and sinister, execrable cries are still plunged in an infernal orgy of fanaticism and hatred against everything French.⁵²

Riel had been hanged in order "to give satisfaction to the stupid fanaticism of the province of Ontario."⁵³ His race and religion had been his only guilt. "If Riel had not had French blood in his veins and if he had not been Catholic; if he had been English and Protestant, or even Turkish, there would never have been any question of hanging him."⁵⁴

The effects on Quebecers' feelings were, as Adolphe Chapleau commented, "electric."⁵⁵ Protest rallies were held everywhere; flags were flown at half mast; people put on black arm-bands, and the Montreal city council cancelled its regular meetings as a sign of mourning; marriages were postponed out of grief; in the larger towns furious crowds ran aimlessly through the streets shouting in frustrated anger.⁵⁶ French Canadians, as Wilfrid Laurier observed, were "very near unanimous in condemning the government."⁵⁷ So unanimous were they that the owners of the leading Bleu organ faced bankruptcy, as "their oldest subscribers and their best commercial customers publicly return the paper and withdraw their clientèle."⁵⁸

The biggest of the protest rallies was held at Montreal six nights after the execution. Thirty-seven speakers whipped up the passions of the crowd, but the most notable of them all was the leader of the Quebec Liberal party, Honoré Mercier. "In killing Riel," said Mercier, "Sir John has ... struck a blow at the heart of our race...." In hanging not the criminal but the French-Canadian, Ottawa had made war upon the French-Canadian nation, had left "two million Frenchmen in tears," and had inflicted a "national misfortune" on all of French Canada.⁵⁹

In saying this, the Liberal Mercier was only agreeing with Conservative papers. "The death of Riel," proclaimed one of them, "is a wicked declaration of war, an audacious defiance hurled at the French-Canadian race."⁶⁰ And another: "We all know that they'd have liked to slit all our throats,

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to kill all of us French Canadians."⁶¹

So, in the end, while French-Canadian opinion was strongly pro-Riel, it was so only because it saw him as a French-Canadian, as a representative of French Quebec persecuted by intolerant Anglo-Protestants. And this is a point of view that has endured even till today. A few weeks ago Toronto's French-language newspaper, L'Express, published an editorial calling for a pardon for Riel not as a recognition of Native rights, not as a vindication of the Metis cause, nor even as a gesture toward an alienated West, but as part of Mr. Trudeau's programme to extend bilingualism, and an acknowledgement that Riel's execution had been motivated by "anti-French and anti-Catholic" prejudice.⁶²

That French and English Canadians should each have perceived Riel in a different way -- and both, no doubt, differently from the Metis and the Indians of the West -- need not surprise us. In a country so large, so diverse in point of region and culture, language and tradition, such misunderstandings are only natural -- and all the more so in view of the history of French-English mistrust. Lord Durham had noted the effect of that as early as 1839:

The entire mistrust which the two races have thus learned to conceive of each other's intentions, induces them to put the worst construction on the most innocent conduct; to judge every word, every act, and every intention unfairly; to attribute the most odious designs, and reject every overture of kindness or fairness, as covering secret designs of treachery and malignity.⁶³

Indeed, he went on, French and English Canadians were divided "not only by diversity of feelings and opinions, but by an actual belief in an utterly different set of facts."⁶⁴

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

NOTES

¹ Or three months, if you include the month and a half spent in building a road from Thunder Bay to Lake Shebandowan.

² Benjamin Sulte, L'Expédition militaire de Manitoba, 1870 (Montreal: Senécal, 1871), pp. 49-50.

³ Eg., The London Advertiser, 22 September, 1870.

⁴ One has only to think of the reports that were printed about the fates of Mrs. Delaney and Mrs. Gowanlock, who were successively reported to have been murdered by the Indians, subjected to a fate worse than death, found alive and well, found mutilated at the bottom of a well, found in good health and having been well treated by the Indians ...

⁵ Reports of conflicts between Americans and the Indians of the U.S. West appeared frequently in Quebec papers, and were no doubt an important reason why many French-Canadians feared it would be necessary to "repulse the savage tribes" before Canada could annex the West (Le Canadien, Québec, 22 May, 1868), or why an early report on the Metis move to stop William McDougall spoke of them going "to scalp the new lieutenant-governor" (La Minerve, Montreal, 15 November, 1869).

⁶ Though not for the same reasons. See A.I. Silver, The French-Canadian Idea of Confederation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 68-73.

⁷ Eg., Le Journal de Québec, 4 & 9 December, 1869; La Gazette de Sorel, 24 November; Le Courrier du Canada, 24 November, 6 & 27 December; Le Nouveau Monde, 27 November, 1869; La Gazette des Familles Canadiennes (Québec), 28 February & 1 June, 1870; Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe, 28 April & 7 May, 1870.

⁸ Eg., Le Journal de Québec, 11 January, 1870; L'Opinion Publique (Montreal), 12 February & 7 April, 1870.

⁹ Eg., Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe, 21 December, 1869, 7 May, 1870; L'Ordre (Montreal), 25 November, 1869; Le Journal de Québec, 30 December, 1869; L'Opinion Publique, 28 April, 1870; Le Nouveau Monde (Montreal), 14 April, 1870.

¹⁰ This view was spread particularly by William McDougall, who returned to Canada in early 1870, and by the Canada Firsters, whose comrades Mair and Schultz arrived later in the spring. In his pamphlet, The Red River Rebellion (Toronto: Hunter, Rose, 1870), McDougall accused "foreign Jesuits," including "Bishop Taché and his co-conspirators," of engineering the uprising to turn the North-West into a "French Catholic Province" (pp. 7, 46, 50). Some Ontario newspapers picked up the idea that clerical ambitions were involved in the uprising. Eg., The London Advertiser, 2, 8, 13, 16, 20 April, 1870; The Ottawa Citizen, 4 January, 1870.

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- 11 La Minerve, 8 April, 1870.
- 12 Le Canadien, 15 March, 1871. Also Sulte, L'Expédition, p. 43; Le Franc-Parleur (Montreal), 6 October, 1870; L'Ordre, 18 March, 1871; Le Journal de Québec, 13 April, 1871.
- 13 Eg., The London Advertiser, 9 October, 1870; The Canadian Statesman (Bowmanville), 13 October, 1870.
- 14 L'Opinion Publique, 13 October, 1870; Le Journal des Trois-Rivières, 6 October; Le Journal de Québec, 23 & 28 September, 1870; Ontario et Manitoba; La Vérité (n.p., n.d.), pp. 2, 5.
- 15 L'Union des Cantons de l'Est (Arthabaskaville), 15 February, 1872. Also, Le Pionnier de Sherbrooke, 2 February; Le Journal de Québec, 24 January; Le Courrier du Canada (Québec), 24 January; La Gazette de Sorel, 14 February, 1872.
- 16 In Report of the Select Committee on the Causes of the Difficulties in the North-West Territory in 1869-70 (Ottawa, Taylor, 1874), p. 29.
- 17 Au Piloni (Québec, L'Événement, 1874), p. 9. Also, Le Journal des Trois-Rivières, 20 August, 1874; L'Union des Cantons de l'Est, 20 August; Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe, 20 August & 1 September, 1874.
- 18 Luther Holton to Alexander Mackenzie (Montreal, 27 January, 1875), in PAC, Mackenzie Papers, mfm no. M-197, pp. 735-6.
- 19 Holton to Mackenzie (Montreal, 17 January, 1875), in Ibid., p. 723.
- 20 La Patrie (Montreal), 28 March, 1885. Also, Le Pionnier de Sherbrooke, 2 & 9 April; Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe, 31 March, 23 April, & 21 May; Le Canadien, 27 March; La Vérité (Québec), 4 April; La Presse (Montreal) 24 & 27 March; Le Nouveau Monde, 31 March; L'Union des Cantons de l'Est, 11 April, 1885.
- 21 Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe, 2 April, 1885. Also, 7 April & 16 May; La Minerve, 4 April; La Revue Canadienne (Montreal), XXI (1885), p. 256, p. 316; Le Courrier du Canada, 20 May; Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe, 16 May; La Presse, 15 & 16 May, 1885; Lt.-Col. G. Amyot to Henri-Gustave Joly de Lobinière (n.p., n.d.), in PAC, Joly Papers, mfm no. M-791.
- 22 E.V. Lachapelle to Adolphe Caron (Montreal, 28 March, 1885), in PAC, MG 27, I, D3, Vol. 192.
- 23 La Revue Canadienne, XXI (1885), p. 447. Le Monde Illustré (Montreal) 4 April, 1885.

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- ²⁴ Eg., Le Courrier du Canada, 14 & 18 April, 1 May, 1885; La Patrie, 15 May; La Vérité, 4 April; L'Etendard (Montreal), 1 April, 1885.
- ²⁵ Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe, 23 May, 1885.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 21 May, 1885.
- ²⁷ La Patrie, 18 May, 1885. Also, La Presse, 31 July, 1885; L'Union des Cantons de l'Est, 30 May; Le Pionnier de Sherbrooke, 30 July, 1885.
- ²⁸ La Revue Canadienne, XXI (1885), p. 316.
- ²⁹ L'Union des Cantons de l'Est, 13 June, 1885. Also, Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe, 23, 28, 30 July; La Patrie, 28 July; Le Canadien, 17 June, 1885.
- ³⁰ Desmond Morton, Introduction to The Queen vs. Louis Riel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974; Thomas Flanagan, Riel and the Rebellion: 1885 Reconsidered (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1983), CH. 6.
- ³¹ Wilfrid Laurier to Edward Blake (Arthabaskaville, 31 December, 1885), in PAC, Edward Blake Papers, mfm no. M-240.
- ³² Eg., La Patrie, 5 August, 1885; L'Electeur (Québec), 4 August; Le Monde Illustré, 8 August; La Presse, 3 August; L'Etendard, 8 August, 1885; Epitome des documents parlementaires relatifs à la rébellion du Nord-Ouest (Ottawa: Maclean, Roger, 1886), p. 245.
- ³³ Arthur Dansereau to J.A. Chapleau (Montreal, 5 August, 1885), in PAC, Chapleau Papers (MG 27, I, C3), Correspondence.
- ³⁴ G. Amyot to Sir John A. Macdonald (Québec, 12 November, 1885), in PAC Macdonald Papers (MG 26, A, Vol. 108), Correspondence relating to the execution of Riel, 1885. Also, La Presse, 4 August, 1885; La Patrie, 5 August; L'Union des Cantons de l'Est, 8 August; Le Canadien, 11 August; Le Monde Illustré, 15 August, 1885.
- ³⁵ Eg., Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe, 15 August & 12 September, 1885; L'Union des Cantons de l'Est, 14 November; Le Courrier du Canada, 5 August, 28 October, & 10 November; Le Nouveau Monde, 15 September & 22 October; La Minerve, 10 September, 1885.
- ³⁶ Epitome des documents parlementaires, p. 262. Also, Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe, 15 August & 17 November; Le Nouveau Monde, 3 August; La Presse, 3 August, 1885.
- ³⁷ Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe, 15 August, 1885.

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³⁸ L'Union des Cantons de l'Est, 14 November, 1885. Also, Le Nouveau Monde, 21 September & 14 November; L'Electeur, 8 August & 13 November; L'Etendard, 8 August, Le Canadien, 12 November, 1885.

³⁹ The Toronto Evening News, 18 May, 1885.

⁴⁰ The Evening Telegram (Toronto), 4 May, 1885.

⁴¹ Rev. John W. Smith to Sir John A. Macdonald (Grafton, 14 September, 1885), in PAC, Macdonald Papers (MG 26, A, Vol. 108), Correspondence relating to the execution of Riel, 1885.

⁴² On the other hand -- and this has undoubtedly impressed those historians who have read the file -- there are thirty-one letters from English Canadians, mostly Conservative party organisers, giving not merely their own opinions but their impressions of popular opinion in their regions or neighbourhoods. Of these, all but one insisted that opinion was strongly in favour of carrying out the sentence.

⁴³ The Evening Telegram, 2 April, 1885.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 15 May, 1885.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 28 August, 1885

⁴⁶ The Regina Leader, reprinted in The Canadian Statesman, 4 September, 1885.

⁴⁷ Eg., The Acton Free Press, from the beginning to the fall of Batoche.

⁴⁸ The London Advertiser, 3 September, 1885.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 13 August, 1885.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 3 September, 1885. Also, eg., The Ottawa Citizen, 26 October & 29 October; The Huron Expositor (Seaforth), 7 August & 6 November, 1885.

⁵¹ The Evening Telegram, 9 September, 1885. Also 24 October; The Hamilton Spectator, reprinted in The Free Press (Ottawa), 11 November, 1885.

⁵² La Mort de Riel et la voix du sang (n.p., n.d.), p. 4.

⁵³ Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe, 17 November, 1885. Also, L'Electeur, 16 November.

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⁵⁴ La Vérité, 21 November, 1885. Also, La Minerve, 18 November; Le Nouveau Monde, 17 November; Le Monde Illustré, 28 November; L'Union des Cantons de l'Est, 5 December, 1885. In light of La Vérité's contention that if Riel had been English and Protestant, or even Turkish, there would have been no question of hanging him, one can only be struck by this Ontario comment on the French-Canadian reaction: "Had he been a Scotchman, an Irishman or a German, they would never have entered one word of protest against the sentence of the court being carried out. But, because he was a Frenchman these intensely patriotic individuals seemed to think he should be specially favoured no matter how well merited his punishment might be." (The Huron Expositor, 20 November, 1885). Also, The Evening Telegram, 17 November, 1885.

⁵⁵ J.A. Chapleau to W.W. Lynch (Ottawa, 21 November, 1885), in PAC, Chapleau Papers (MG 27, I, C3), Correspondence.

⁵⁶ Robert Rumilly, Honoré Mercier et son temps (Montreal, Fides, 1975) I, 273-4; The London Advertiser, 18 November, 1885; The Free Press (Ottawa), 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24 November; The Sarnia Observer, 20 November; The Ottawa Citizen, 17 & 23 November; The Huron Expositor, 27 November; Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe, 19 November; Le Courrier du Canada, 17 November; etc.

⁵⁷ Laurier to Blake (Arthabaskaville, 31 December, 1885), in PAC, Blake Papers (MG 27, I, D2), mfm no. M-240.

⁵⁸ J.A. Chapleau to Sir John Macdonald (Ottawa, 20 November, 1885), in PAC Macdonald Papers (MG 26, A, Vol. 204) Correspondence from Chapleau.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Rumilly, Mercier et son temps, I, 281-2.

⁶⁰ Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe, 19 November, 1885.

⁶¹ Le Canadien, 17 November, 1885. Also, 16 & 19 November; Le Nouveau Monde, 17, 19, 20, 23 November; La Presse, 16 November; Le Pionnier de Sherbrooke, 19 & 26 November, 1885.

⁶² "Un pardon pour Riel," in L'Express de Toronto, 18-25 October, 1983.

⁶³ Gerald Craig, Lord Durham's Report (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1963), pp. 33-4.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 35.