

# MANITOBA'S FIRST LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

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NO Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba has ever had, or ever will have, such a task to face as Adams George Archibald faced, said the venerable Sheriff Inkster one afternoon over the tea-cups. The country was in a state of chaos. Riel had been in possession for nine months with the absoluteness of a Czar; and while he posed as a Napoleon, law and order were for the time being extinguished. Governor McTavish and his Council of Assiniboia, the civil authority of the Hudson's Bay Company, had ceased to act when the Company had transferred their Charter rights to the Dominion Government. When he arrived at the Red river of the north, the new administrator knew nobody, unless it was Donald A. Smith who had come to the West in the interests of his Company, Riel and the rebels having looted and lived in its stores during those nine months. And the heavy losses through that predatory pillage were never paid for.

Sheriff Inkster pointed out that the choice of Archibald as first Governor was on grounds not of party service but of statesmanship; and that no Governor since had been appointed on that basis. His career, which warranted the choice, may well be recalled. For by honorable service he had won a high place in the political counsels of his province.

The Archibalds descended from one Samuel Archibald, a Scot from the North of Ireland who settled in Colchester County in 1761. His grandfather was a Judge, Court of Common Pleas for Colchester. His father was Samuel, and his mother Elizabeth, of the same patronymic. He was thus a double Archibald. Born at Truro in 1814, he was educated at Pictou Academy, then as now a collegiate school of the first rank; studied law in chambers at Halifax, passed as Attorney of Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, and in 1839, being twenty-five years old, began practice in his native village. Elected to the House of Assembly in 1851, as Liberal member for Colchester, he took an active part in the country's affairs, notably in measures for free education, in restriction of franchise to rate-payers, and in provincial rights against a Gold Mining Association. In 1856 he was Solicitor-General, and the next year he went to London, representing the province

against the exploiting General Mining Association and its monopoly of the coalfields. A second mission was to ask assistance for the projected Intercolonial Railway; and a third was to discuss with the British Government the proposed union of the three maritime provinces. In 1860 he was Attorney-General, and two years later Advocate-General in the Vice-Admiralty Court at Halifax. He took part in the Conference on Maritime Union at Charlottetown in June, 1864, and a few months later was in Quebec at the Conference on the larger movement. He was in London again at the Conference which completed the Terms of Confederation, and became Secretary of State for the Provinces in Sir John Macdonald's first Dominion Cabinet. Defeated in that famous election in which the only Nova Scotia Confederate returned was Dr. Tupper, he lost office; but the next year, 1869, he was elected member for Colchester. Such was his apprenticeship in statecraft.

On September 2, 1870, Archibald arrived at Fort Garry just as Colonel Wolseley was moving out on his Red river expedition. He travelled by the water-route, and entered "a sea of troubles," one said who feared greatly for the delicacy of statecraft needed. The first Governor appointed had been the Hon. William McDougall, who never reached Fort Garry at all, but attempted efforts at administration of the North-West Territory from Pembina, the rebels having forced him back when he crossed the frontier. He was the wrong man, and returned by the way he came. Archibald was then selected for the critical business of setting up government and restoring the peace. Fully aware of the extreme difficulty of trying to affiliate the loyal settlers and the *métis* so lately in possession, he was relieved to find that the rebel leaders had fled. He wrote Sir George Cartier at Ottawa, that as warrants for their arrest were in the constables' hands, and as their presence here would have been a source of incessant trouble, it was the best solution in the meantime. For the *métis*, disappointed about an amnesty promised by Bishop Tache in the name of the Federal Government, were sullen and ready for an outbreak.<sup>1</sup>

On the arrival of the Lieutenant-Governor, September 2, a "royal salute" was fired, but the reception was not enthusiastic, owing to a suspicion that he sympathized with the French element, says Begg. On September 6, he held a levee in the house within the Fort which had been occupied by Governor McTavish of the H. B. C., and which became Government House in the new régime; but in summer Donald A. Smith lent his residence at Silver Heights, some eight miles from the Fort. The only members of the Govern-

1. The historian Kegg gives the correspondence with Howe at Ottawa, on the matter of amnesty.

or's family who came to Manitoba were Mrs. Archibald and the second daughter, Lily, who later married the Bishop of Newfoundland. Sheriff Inkster recalled the dignified hospitality dispensed at that vice-regal residence within the Fort—the right service, the best wines, the Highland welcome that always had been characteristic of the Red river of the north. I remember hearing how Lady Archibald, long years after, had told in Halifax about the peculiar tails of Donald Smith's dinner coat—a reminiscence given to me, second hand, after that eminent man had become a peer of the realm. She thought that the coat had been made by a local tailor who did not know right from left in "tails". But there had long been an excellent and knowing tailor at the Red river. Indeed, in the fifties and sixties, the boys attending MacCallum's Academy wore Eton suits made in the settlement. The Sheriff explained the "tails" that amused the Chatelaine of Government House. The morning coat was so constructed that the skirts in front could be detached and hooked back under the tails. A friend, who has been much in Scotland, tells me that it was an old tailoring trick for thrifty Scots, and not an original dodge of the Red river settlement.

The initial task for the Governor was a census of the province pursuant to electing a Legislature; and also the organizing of a mounted constabulary of twenty men to maintain order in the community. By instruction from Ottawa, he appointed two members of an Executive Council as immediate advisers: Alfred Boyd, an English gentleman in business, and popular with English-speaking residents; and Marc Amable Girard, lately from Quebec, who became a favourite with the French at once, and who served the west country long and honorably. The province was divided, equally to French and English, into twenty-four constituencies. There was no election-law and no voters' list, but it was required of every voter that he be a resident of the constituency and a householder. Was the man living in a tent a householder? The decision reached gave the tent a vote. By a curious irony, four candidates, who had hitherto been opposed to the H. B. C. and its civil régime, were defeated. One of these, Dr. Schultz, an active politician, was beaten by Donald A. Smith. (Ultimately Schultz was awarded the Governorship for party-service, and received a knighthood.) The English-speaking party was divided, while the French party was at one. The Canadian faction (led by Schultz) and also the Orangemen watched Archibald's every move, suspicious of leniency towards the métis. It was such as these, *plus* a political faction at Ottawa, that impelled this con-

structive and impartial and open-minded Governor to resign in the second year of his office.

To return to the election, several French members were returned by acclamation, but only one Protestant and English-speaking, John Norquay, born at the Red river and educated at the school and the college of St. John's. Of unusual political talent and remarkably eloquent, a man of strict integrity, he is remembered to this day as "honest John Norquay". In 1878 he won the premiership, and he retained the office for thirteen years. He was often asked to Government House by His Honour, for informing talk on provincial affairs.

The first session of the first Legislature was opened with imposing ceremony, on March 15, 1871—the Ides of March—the Governor and his party, with a military guard of one hundred men, driving through the village in a handsome sleigh behind gaily caparisoned horses to the residence of the Hon. A. G. B. Bannatyne, which had been remodelled to accommodate Upper and Lower House, the Council and Assembly of Parliament. The appropriate number of guns were fired; the Speech from the Throne was read in French and in English, and all proceedings were in both languages. All the members had well-sounding names, cognomens betokening the type of families that held these lands and laid foundations for the host of newer settlers. It is worth noting that the Upper House was shortly abolished as unnecessary. The session lasted one month, two weeks, and three days. Forty-three Acts were passed, which was certainly despatch of political business. Courts of Law were set up, and the Governor was ready for his next task of importance, the inauguration of Indian treaties and a sound Indian policy. An Indian Commissioner, Hemyss Simpson, was sent from Ottawa; a mass meeting of certain tribes was called at the Stone Fort, some twenty miles down the Red river from Fort Garry. The Governor made a speech as simple, sincere, and concisely eloquent as famous speeches of Indian chiefs. So does its full text read. He then introduced the Commissioner, whose part was to explain details of the first treaty. Mrs. Archibald's name was among those appended as witnesses when the treaty was signed.

The second treaty for which Archibald was responsible took him north to an H. B. C. post on Lake Manitoba. The names of both wife and daughter were among the signatures. These two treaties paved the way for negotiations with other tribes in the North-West, and facilitated subsequent agreements with various bands of Indians on the prairies.

In this same year, 1871, telegraphic communication began between Manitoba and Ottawa, by way of the U. S. system. The initial telegrams between the Governor-General and the Governor are recorded as after the manner of historic first messages: "from the heart of the Continent," "devout thankfulness to Almighty God for the close of our isolation", and words for posterity's reading. But in this our day, when the air carries messages every minute, what a blessed consummation would isolation be, could we have it again! To adapt a phrase of Mrs. Carlyle's, "And don't you wish you may get it?" But that swifter connection with Ottawa by telegraph was very soon to prove its necessity. The threat of a Fenian invasion from below the line began to look like fulfilment, though Riel was not in it, nor his confrère, Lepine. He had fallen out with leader, O'Donohue, and had returned from self-exile to his home on the Red river, warmly welcomed by his friends. Some thirty Fenians below the boundary expected the métis to join them, when lo! leaders were arrested and followers scattered by U. S. troops. There was great excitement in the province. The Governor had issued a proclamation calling on all residents, irrespective of race or religion, to rally round the flag of their common country. Men of British blood responded first and marched to the frontier. Bishop Tache, who was behind the French, asked the Governor to meet two hundred métis gathered in St. Boniface who offered service, and Archibald went over to welcome their loyalty. His one blunder was in shaking hands with Riel and Lepine. I have been told that he did not know these men by sight. At any rate, his hand was given in good faith; and the situation was precarious, requiring canny handling. That well-meaning act annoyed the English. It was used against him locally, also in the East by political opponents. And, without any pressure but by his own desire, Archibald resigned, much to the regret of the Governor-General.

Many years after, the American Consul Taylor, of blessed memory, gave Sheriff Inkster the true story of how the projected invasion was nipped in the bud. One of his countrymen who, the sequel proved, had come up to Winnipeg to spy out the prospects, used to bore this Consul with long and wearisome visits. He would not suffer time-killers gladly, and one day in desperation took his visitor for a long walk. They called upon the Sheriff's father. Then, according to the hospitalities of the country, Mr. Inkster gave them a glass, and the tippable was largely gin. The bore took one glass, two glasses, three glasses. And they loosened his tedious, circumspect tongue which, after good-bye to their

kindly host, wagged merrily out the whole Fenian plot. Consul Taylor at once saw the Governor, and communicated with Washington while the Governor telegraphed Ottawa. "It was your father's gin that saved Manitoba from invasion," said the Consul.

Space and time would fail to give full texts of the regrets and appreciations of responsible men when Archibald resigned,—from his Excellency the Governor-General, and from knowing public persons in Canada and in the United States. Tributes were paid to the foresight and skill, the patience and fine temper of his so difficult administration, while maintaining his position in relation to the Federal Government and to the people of Manitoba. When he resigned, the office went begging. That his successor's task was so much easier was owing to his industry and to his conciliatory policy towards the rebels.

On returning to Nova Scotia, Archibald was appointed a Judge in Equity. A few weeks after, Howe died in his chair at Government House, Halifax, and Archibald succeeded him, holding the position for ten years. In 1872 he received the C. M. G., and in 1886 a knighthood. In 1888 he re-entered the Federal House, but he resigned three years later. He died at Truro, December 14, 1892.

Sir Adams Archibald married Elizabeth Alice, daughter of the Rev. John Burnyeat, an Anglican clergyman. Their only son died in youth; their three daughters were: Joanna, who married Colonel Laurie, Lily already mentioned, and Mary, Mrs. Heygate, widow of an English clergyman, and the only one living. Though his wife and children were members of the Anglican Church, Sir Adams remained a staunch Presbyterian. I am persuaded that, living to-day, he would be a "continuing" Presbyterian. A monograph, dealing fully with his service to the state, and giving a true portrait of faithful statesman and man is due, that he may come into his own in Canadian political biography.

What tho' assaults run high,  
They daunt not him who holds his ministry  
Resolute at all hazards to fulfil  
Its duties.