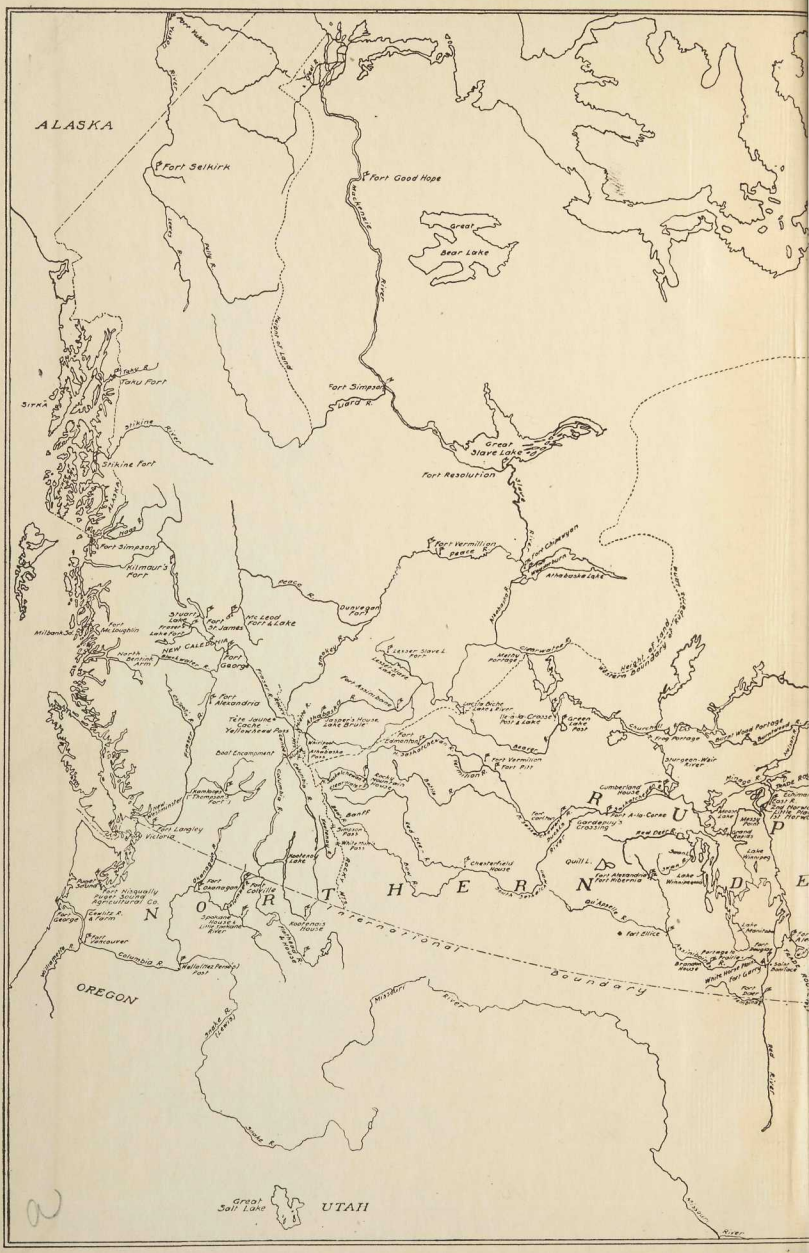
ALASKA
Fort Selkirk
Fort Good Hope
Great Bear Lake
Fort Simpson
Liard R.
Great Slave Lake
Fort Resolution
Fort Vermilion
Lake Athabasca
Dunvegan Fort
Fort Chipewyan
Sitka
Tongass Fort
Stikine Fort
Fort Simpson
Kilmaurs Fort
Milbank Sd.
Fort McLoughlin
Stuart Lake
Fort James
McLeod Fort & Lake
NEW CALEDONIA
Fort George
Fort Alexandria
Tête Jaune Cache
Yellowhead Pass
Boat Encampment
Kamloops (Thompson's Fort)
Fort Langley
Victoria
Fort Nisqually
Puget Sound Agricultural Co.
Fort George
Fort Lewisham
Fort Okanogan
Colville
Spokane House
Kootenay House
Kootenay Lake
Banff
Fort Edmonton
Fort Assiniboine
Fort Vermilion
Fort Pitt
Green Lake Pass
Cumberland House
Fort Carlton
Fort Pelly
Fort Alexandra
Fort Hibernia
Quill L.
Lake Winnipeg
Fort Ellice
Brandon House
Fort Garry
Pembina
Fort Snelling
Fort Union
Fort Pierre
Fort Laramie
Fort Bridger
Salt Lake City
Fort Hall
Fort Boise
Fort Walla Walla
Fort Vancouver
Fort Umpqua
Fort Jacksonville
Fort Yuma
Fort Tejon
Fort Mohave
Fort Kearny
Fort Leavenworth
Fort Atkinson
Fort Dodge
Fort Gibson
Fort Smith
Fort Towson
Fort Jesup
Fort Brown
Fort Duncan
Fort Ringgold
Fort Clark
Fort Bliss
Fort Davis
Fort Chadbourne
Fort Mason
Fort Inge
Fort Lyon
Fort Bent
Fort Pueblo
Fort Massachusetts
Fort Defiance
Fort Fillmore
Fort Craig
Fort Stanton
Fort Selkirk
Fort Yukon
Fort Kenai
Fort Tanana
Fort Nulato
Fort Kolmakof
Fort Alexander
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Fort Norman

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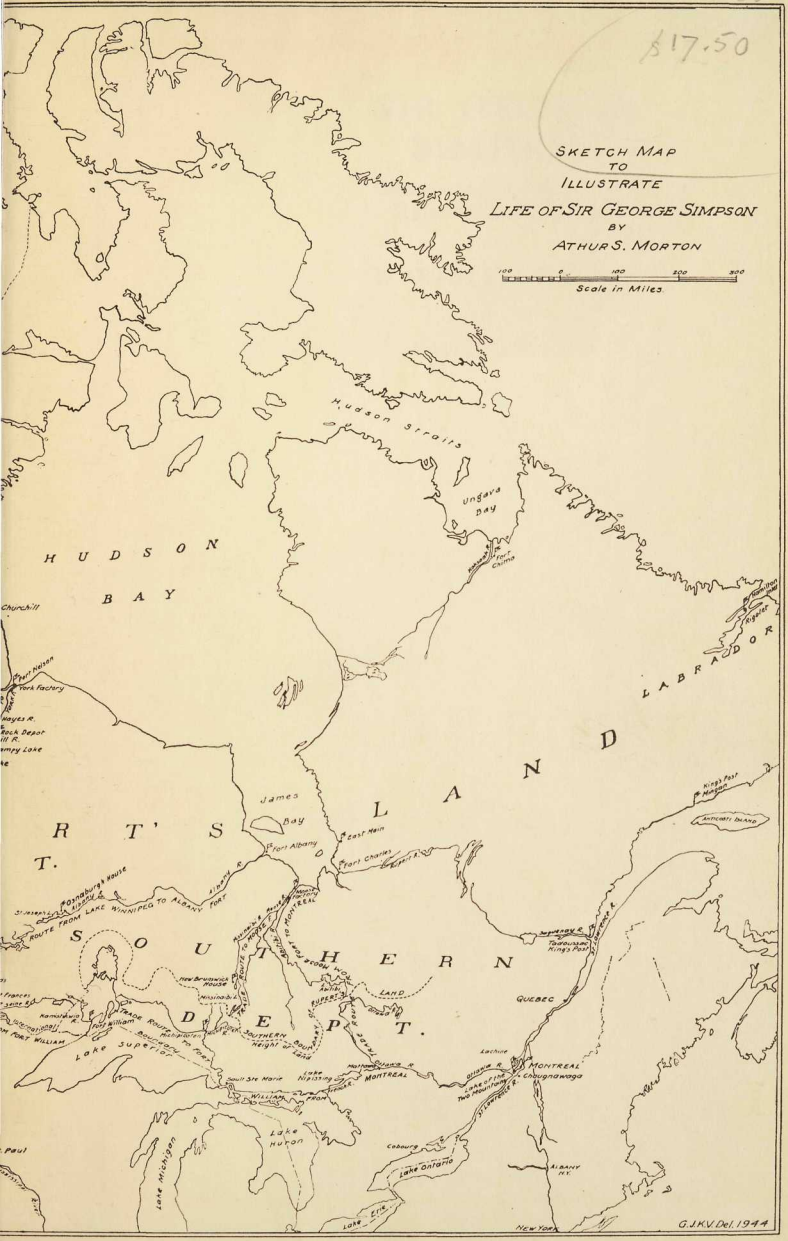
SKETCH MAP
TO
ILLUSTRATE
LIFE OF SIR GEORGE SIMPSON
BY
ATHUR S. MORTON
100 0 100 200 300
Scale in Miles
Hudson Straits
Ungava Bay
Fort Chimo
HUDSON
BAY
Churchill
Fort Nelson
York Factory
Hayes R.
Rock Depot
Hill R.
Empty Lake
LABRADOR
Rupert's House
Moose Factory
Mattagami
Abitibi
Kaministiquia
Fort Frances
Rainy Lake
Lake Winnipeg
Red River
Fort Garry
Pembina
Fort Alexander
Fort Albany
James Bay
East Main
Fort Chester
Kings Post
Mistassini
Anticosti Island
Tadoussac
Kings Post
Quebec
Lachine
MONTREAL
Chaugnawaga
Ottawa R.
Lake of the Two Mountains
St. Lawrence R.
Lake Nipissing
Sault Ste Marie
Lake Huron
Lake Michigan
Lake Superior
Kaministiquia
Fort William
Nipigon
Rainy Lake
Lake of the Woods
Red River
Winnipeg
Fort Pembina
Fort Alexander
Fort Frances
Hamilton
Lake Ontario
Cobourg
Lake Erik
ALBANY
N.Y.
New York
SOUTHERN
DEPT.
LAND
G.J.K.V. Del. 1944

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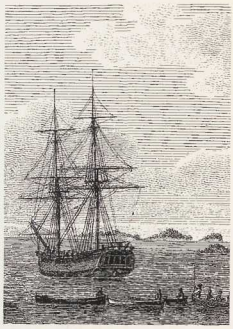

SIR GEORGE SIMPSON

OVERSEAS GOVERNOR OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY.

by ARTHUR S. MORTON

By the Same Author

UNDER WESTERN SKIES
(THOS. NELSON & SONS, LIMITED, TORONTO, 1936)

A HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN WEST
(THOS. NELSON & SONS, LIMITED, EDINBURGH AND TORONTO, 1939)

Courtesy of the Hudson's Bay Company

SIR GEORGE SIMPSON, GOVERNOR OF RUPERT'S LAND FOR THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY, 1821-1860.

SIR GEORGE SIMPSON

OVERSEAS GOVERNOR OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

A Pen Picture of a Man of Action

by

ARTHUR S. MORTON

Sometime Professor of History, the University of Saskatchewan

TORONTO VANCOUVER

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RICCARDO H. LEVESON GOWER

Oceano diviso studiis conjuncto auctor.

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Preface

TO write the life of George Simpson is no easy task. There can have been few men who identified themselves with their office and its duties more than. he Though there are thousands of letters from his hand (or in the hands of his successive secretaries) in the Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company—a precious store, surely —there are in them but rare sentences in which the personal note is struck. His communications to the Governor and Committee of the Company are sheer business. The Minutes of the Councils of the Northern and of the Southern Departments are naturally impersonal. His "dispatches" explaining and commenting on the "Resolves" of the Council and describing the "Districts" into which the country was divided are scarcely less so. Even his letters marked "Private", as we would say, personal, are rarely allowed to escape from the factual and objective. The same is true of those superscribed "Confidential". One would expect to get a sight of the man in his private letter-books, in which there are probably more than two thousand letters, but these also are business, almost nothing but business. Purely personal letters to friends, chatting about his and their interests are few and far between; from time to time sentences of personal import appear at the beginning, or it may be at the end of a letter, but the occasion of the writing is business—the business of the Company or the private

business concerns of Simpson or his correspondent. It follows, then, that a Life and Letters of George Simpson in the fashion of Victorian times would pass out of the domain of biography and become history of the Hudson's Bay Company. No such thing is contemplated here. The Company has taken the happy decision to publish its documents through the Hudson's Bay Record Society in conjunction with the Champlain Society of Toronto. When these are published in their plenitude, the time will have come for a comprehensive Life of Simpson, but even then the personal element will be far from what one would desire.

Yet as one looks through the mass of the Simpson papers, one becomes sensible of his personality. The clerkly handwriting, the crisp sentences rarely ever corrected, betray a trained mind, endowed with a singular clarity of vision, with unhesitating will, and well-defined purposes. Reading between the lines of his letters to his friends one perceives great kindliness, service for friendship's sake, at times almost an affectionate concern for the welfare of his correspondent, expressed however in formal terms befitting a Governor. It is this Simpson concealed, so to say, beneath the mass of his correspondence that this pen-picture of the man aims at revealing. It is time that this great administrator should be seen in action and as he was. The public is aware of his character in the vaguest of outlines—mostly thinks of him as a furious traveller, a sort of Jehu in an express canoe. Dr. George Bryce's *Sir George Simpson*, while giving an interesting picture of his physical appearance and preserving valuable traditions current in the Red River Settlement, dwells long on his feats as a traveller and on his love of the pomp and circumstance of his journeys. Apart from

these, there is either vagueness or an elaborate description of his surroundings. The aim here is rather to show the man in action and to bring one who may well have been the greatest administrator which the country which is now the Dominion of Canada has seen, out from the wings of the stage of history nearer the limelight—to let him be seen in the plenitude of his capacities, while pointing out such shortcomings as may be seen in his character and methods.

One of the difficulties of the task lies in that by far the greatest part of the evidence comes from Simpson's own pen and must inevitably be favourable. This is discounted, however, by the fact that his letters are extraordinarily impersonal. There is no self-exaltation; no "ballyhoo" for himself or the Company. To some extent a check on his doings and his methods may be found in the "Private" letters to him from the Governor and Committee. Reference will be made to controversies in which attempts were made to show him in unfavourable lights; for example, in John M'Lean's *Notes of a twenty-five years' service in the Hudson's Bay Territory*. When all has been done to get as true a perspective as may be, the fact remains that the hand that guided in the ways of peace and prosperity the government of more than half of the present Dominion of Canada for well-nigh forty years, that ruled over a fretful realm of Indians and half-breeds without serious clash and with scarcely an occasion of bloodshed, that gave to the Hudson's Bay Company what may be described as in more senses than one its golden age, was skilful beyond the ordinary; was a hand directed by nothing short of a far-seeing and masterful mind.

The author is under great obligation to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, not only

for access to its Archives, but for the perfect freedom to explore granted him. Their Archivist, Mr. R. H. Leveson Gower, has earned his gratitude by discussing freely with him bibliographical and other problems, and very especially so by placing most generously at his disposal material on Simpson gathered by himself. He has done much to keep this sketch accurate, especially in its bibliographical references.

A grant-in-aid from the Social Science Research Council, 230 Park Avenue, New York, has contributed greatly to my gathering the material for this sketch, and is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

Acknowledgement must also be made of valuable suggestions offered by Mr. Clifford Wilson editor of *The Beaver*, Hudson's Bay Company, Winnipeg.

All quotations from documents in the Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company are by the kind permission of the Governor and Committee.

Finally, a grant from the Social Science Research Council of Canada has made the publication of this volume possible, and has accordingly placed the author under great obligation.

I

Early Days, 1787-1820

I

Early Days

IN 1787, in wild and for the most part desolate Ross-shire, Scotland, and there on its isolated western coast in the secluded parish of Loch Broom, where the arm of the sea bearing that name opens out into the broad Atlantic, George Simpson the future Governor of Rupert's Land was born. He was the illegitimate child of George, the eldest son of Rev. Thomas Simpson, minister of the parish of Avoch on the east coast of the county lapped by the waters of Moray Firth. If there is any truth in the claim of the bastard Edmund in Shakespeare's *King Lear* that a son born out of wedlock takes "more composition and fierce quality" than the child of the "dull stale" marriage bed, here is an example. For forty years George Simpson, described in his sixty-second year by the Hudson's Bay Company's Secretary as "stout as a Turk", traversed the wilds of north and north-west America, as the occasion arose, from Lachine hard by Montreal and from Moose Factory on James Bay to the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Coast, all the while governing his savage realm with a masterly mind and will. At the last he was able to say with evident satisfaction, and really with but little exaggeration, that he had not been one week off duty.

The blood of the Mackenzies flowed strong in Simpson's veins. His grandmother, Isobel Mackenzie, was the daughter of George Mackenzie, laird of Gruinard (Greenyard), an estate on the shores of Loch Broom. She was one of the laird's second family of twelve, or counting the children by his first wife, one of a family of thirty-two. Through her the blood of the Mackenzies came to flow in the veins of the Simpsons. Those who lay stress on heredity might well say, to use the terms of that day, that the "spirit" and "enterprise", the overmastering will that forces its way to great and distant goals, exemplified in Sir Alexander Mackenzie, explorer to the Polar and Pacific seas, came to Simpson through the Mackenzie strain derived from his grandmother.

But there was that in George Simpson which Sir Alexander lacked—the perception of the hard facts of a situation issuing in an Anglo-Saxon sobriety of judgment, and the self-discipline, the restraint, and the subtlety by which great ends can ultimately be attained. If there is anything in heredity, this would come from the Simpson side of the house—from the lowland Teutonic blood to be inferred from the name Simpson. The main features in Sir George Simpson's career are the blending of the two strains, the combination of the enterprising spirit and the sight of distant objectives characteristic of Mackenzie with the clear and disciplined vision, the patient bending of the means to hand to great ends which marks the Saxon mind. Add to these a subtlety which was all his own.

But heredity counts for little compared with the atmosphere of the home, with education, and with opportunity, if only there is a response in the individual to these, which in the sum constitute his environment. What chances were there that an illegitimate child, of

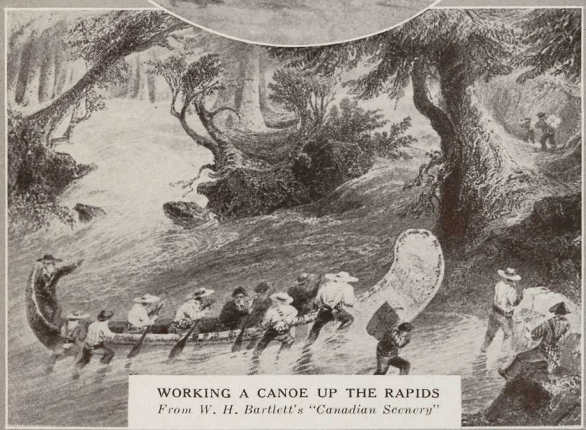
whose mother nothing is known and whose father never abandoned isolated Loch Broom—that the unwanted child in one of the most secluded valleys in Scotland would find a place in the great world? The probability was indeed slight; the onlooker might well say: "Nil". But this child was extraordinarily fortunate. At some stage of his infancy or boyhood not ascertainable, he was taken across the wild mountains of Ross-shire some forty miles to the quiet parish of Avoch into the home of his grandfather, Rev. Thomas Simpson. There he grew up in the manse, very much the youngest of a family of eight.

The atmosphere of the manse of Avoch can only be surmised. The head of the house would have entered the ministry through the doorway of a university, as was usual in the Kirk of Scotland; he would be, if in a narrow sense, a cultured man, and would lay stress—a Scottish stress—on education. Something is known of the antecedents of the mistress of the manse, Isobel Mackenzie that was. She had come from that hive of Mackenzies at Gruinard on Loch Broom. Her mother, the second queen of the hive, must have been a remarkable woman. She was the illegitimate daughter of Duncan Forbes, a dissolute but distinguished lawyer who ultimately rose in his profession until he became President of the Court of Session, the supreme court of appeal in Scotland.[2] Somehow the secret of her birth had been well kept, and she received in Edinburgh an education befitting her father's position. At the early age of eighteen, she passed out from her social position in the capital to lonely Loch Broom to mother such of the twenty children of the laird of Gruinard, "a scion of the house of Seaforth", as had not left the home—and there must have been a goodly group of them—and from her

own womb she added twelve to the number. A courageous woman, surely, and what the Scots call majorful. "Forgetting the gaieties of Edinburgh", her great grandson Alexander Simpson wrote, "she devoted herself heart and soul to the duties of her new and embarrassing situation; was a kind and dutiful mother to her husband's first numerous family; acquired in a short time the [Gaelic] language and became acquainted with the character, habits, and feelings of the tenantry, and was one of the first to expound to them the Scriptures in their native tongue." It may be inferred that her daughter Isobel Mackenzie was cast in the same mint, and took to the manse at Avoch something of the devotion, the intelligence, and the initiative of her mother. Though her husband the parson may be described as "passing rich" on £260 a year, there were nine children to launch upon the world; and thrift must have been a distinguishing mark of the family of the manse. Yet Isobel stretched out her hand and drew the forlorn child of Loch Broom under her roof. The little George Simpson must have responded to the happiness of the home, for he grew up with no sense of inferiority such as the infelicity of his birth might have burned into his soul, but was by nature merry and always at his ease with his fellows.

Mary Simpson, the fifth child of the family, senior to her nephew George by nineteen years, took him under her special care. To her "he owed . . . much of his education."[3] There was also the parochial school, at which he could be educated for from six to eightpence per month.[4] At some time unknown, Mary moved to the diminutive "Royal Burgh of Dingwall" ten miles away in her own interest, or perhaps for the further education of George. At any rate, in 1807 she married Alexander Simpson,[5]

SIR GEORGE SIMPSON ON A VOYAGE
Courtesy of the Hudson Bay Company



WORKING A CANOE UP THE RAPIDS
From W. H. Bartlett's "Canadian Scenery"

the "dominie" in the parish school there, and George is reported as a schoolfellow of Aemilius Simpson, the son of Alexander by his first wife. Aemilius entered the Navy, and finally was captain in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Pacific coast, thanks to the kindly offices of his former schoolmate then governor of Rupert's Land. He died in 1832 at a post being established at Nass River. His body was removed two years later to the new site of the post, where his name survived in Fort Simpson at the present Port Simpson, British Columbia. If George Simpson went with Mary into the dominie's home, he was there when Thomas Simpson the explorer of the Polar Shore of North America was born of his devoted foster-mother in 1808. He acknowledged his indebtedness to her by drawing Thomas also into the Company's service. As George seems to have gone to London in 1809, Alexander Simpson, the biographer of Thomas and also in the service of the Company, was not yet, for he was not born till 1812.

The curriculum of the parish schools of Avoch and Dingwall was far from broad. While Latin and Greek might be studied, it is evident that writing, grammar, arithmetic, and book-keeping overshadowed all other subjects. In these the training must have been very thorough. By this time George Simpson must have developed that copy-book handwriting of his that only began to break down when he was deep in the busy life of governor and that simple direct and swift style which remained with him to the end, and must have acquired enough commercial arithmetic and book-keeping to commend him to any business firm.

Through all these years when the sunshine lay on his path, the lad George must have shown that likeable

nature which was his through a long career, and must have commended himself greatly to his benefactress and her family, for Mary's brother, Geddes Mackenzie Simpson, took him as clerk into the firm of which he was partner, Messrs. Graham, Simpson & Wedderburn of 73 Great Tower Street, London.[6] Their warehouse was but a few hundred yards from the Tower, and would have been in sight of it but for a slight bend in the street. All credit to the kind hearts who paved the way for the forlorn child of Loch Broom to a counting-house in the city of London. Credit, too, to the boy who awoke and kept alive the affection and generosity of those who befriended him.

For about ten years Simpson played the part of clerk in his uncle's firm on Great Tower Street. From his earliest extant letter, written in 1815, it can be seen that he was of a happy spirit and endowed with that delight in friendship with which tradition credits him.

To Mr. Richard Pooler, Reigate, Surrey[7]

"London, 5th Oct. 1815.

"I have frequently had it in view to avail myself of your repeated Friendly & Polite Invitations, but hitherto some unfortunate circumstance has always intervened to prevent my accomplishing that much desired object. I have at length, however, determined on doing myself the pleasure of paying my best respects to you, Mrs Pooler & Family, next Saturday (barring all the dangers &c. to which you know I am Daily & Nightly so much exposed) and propose starting from here by the Brighton 3 o'clock Coach, which will take me into Riegate [sic] in the Eveng. when I will call on you and have a Gossop for an hour or two, take up my quarters at the Inn for the Night and all Day Sunday will take the liberty of making Your House my Home, and either that Eveng. or early Monday Morning will make the best of

my way to Tower Street. You see I make all my arrangements in my usual unceremonious way and have only to request that You will stand upon as little Punctilio with me, but in the interim will be obliged by the favor of a Note sayg. whether or not you are to be at Home.

"I will endeavour to Coil out a few *tough* Yarns at meeting. Meanwhile please make offer of my most Sincere regard to Mrs. Pooler Miss Helen my old Friend Dick and Believe me always to be with much esteem, my Dear Sir,

"Yours mo: truly and Sincerely,

GEORGE SIMPSON."

With his happy disposition and his talent for business Simpson might have trodden the monotonous path by which many a clerk in London has risen to affluence. He might have married Miss Helen Pooler, and might have slowly attained to a partnership in the firm which he served. But fortune continued to shine on him, and it decreed otherwise. It beckoned him out to a career in a wide world.

The Wedderburn in the firm of Graham, Simpson & Wedderburn was no less a personage than Andrew Wedderburn[8] whose sister Jean had married Lord Selkirk, the founder of the Red River Settlement where now the city of Winnipeg stands. He was born in 1779 to a sturdy and well-to-do Scottish family with aristocratic connections, hailing, perhaps, originally from Wedderburn in Berwickshire, but certainly latterly from Forfarshire, where during two centuries there was never a town clerk of Dundee who was not a Wedderburn. For taking part on the side of the Pretender during the rebellion of 1745, Andrew's grandfather, Sir John Wedderburn, paid the penalty of death on the scaffold. The son, Andrew's father, was exiled to Jamaica. From his connection with

the West Indies arose the firm of Wedderburn & Co. into which George Simpson's uncle Geddes Mackenzie Simpson was taken, making it Graham, Simpson & Wedderburn, West India Merchants. Andrew Wedderburn was the principal partner. About the time when George Simpson entered the service of the firm as clerk, Wedderburn and his relatives had their interest turned towards the Hudson's Bay Company. In its long struggle with the North West Company the Company of Merchant Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay was being worsted. It was now paying no dividends, and its £100 stock, which used to sell at £260, was going at £60. Selkirk, who had married Jean Wedderburn in 1807, began to buy stock, and a purchase on May 24, 1809, brought his holdings up to £4087, 10s.[9] Wedderburn now began to purchase. On June 22, he took no less than £2166, 13s. 4d. of stock, and added £507, 10s. worth on July 9th. In August, John Halkett, Selkirk's sister's husband, joined in the game and secured stock to the value of £3717, 10s. What with the large stock held by the family and Andrew Wedderburn's talent for business, he was almost immediately elected to a position on the Committee or Board of Directors.[10] He devoted himself at once to the reorganization of the Company, and the scheme which promised to set it on its feet, adopted in 1810, was his.[11] When the Company decided, as a part of the scheme, to ask Lord Selkirk to establish an agricultural colony on the Red River, it was Wedderburn who was deputed to arrange the terms with his Lordship.[12] All through the trials of Selkirk's colony he stood beside his brother-in-law. When the end of the struggle with the North West Company was drawing near, it was the part of Andrew Wedderburn, who had now changed his name

by license to Andrew Colvile,[13] to receive separately on behalf of Lord Selkirk, then sick unto death, the overtures looking to union both of the Wintering Partners and of the Agents of the rival company (1820).[14] When finally the terms of the union were being drawn up, it was Andrew Colvile who represented the Hudson's Bay Company.[15]

All through these years up to 1820 George Simpson was playing the part of clerk—it must be assumed a very efficient clerk and one endowed with initiative—in the firm at 73 Great Tower Street. In the last phase of the struggle with the North West Company, when it seemed probable that overseas Governor William Williams of the Hudson's Bay Company might be arrested and taken to Montreal for trial thus leaving Rupert's Land without its administrative head—when there was thus sudden need to send out a "governor locum tenens,"[16] Andrew Colvile chose Simpson for the difficult task. If Simpson's services were to prove unnecessary and he were to return by the ship in the autumn, he was to receive £400 and his reasonable expenses. If he remained as Governor, the salary was to be £600 and expenses.

The sudden elevation to a position of such importance, not to speak of the rise in his pay (for those sums would represent much more in our money) almost turned the head of the humble clerk of thirty-three years of age. The letter written by Simpson to his friend Richard Pooler, perhaps not without the consciousness that it would come under Miss Helen's eyes, is bursting with delight and self-satisfaction.

"London, 23 Feby., 1820

"Since I last had the pleasure of seeing you an unexpected circumstance has occurred which renders it necessary for

me to leave old England for a time, and at the short notice of 5 Days. I was most anxious to shake hands with you and my highly valued Friends at Nutley Lane previous to my departure but my time is so much occupied in winding up publick & private affairs that I have not one hour to spare and to visit Riegate is utterly impracticable.

"On Sunday afternoon I leave Town for Liverpool, embark in the Packet for New York on Tuesday; from thence I proceed direct for Montreal and afterwards take an inland Rout [sic] by the St. Lawrence Lakes Ontario Huron Superior and Winipeg to Hudsons Bay and afterwards thro Athapascow to Slave Lake and Coppermine River. The Journey is rather a Serious undertaking and the Mission is important Connected with the affairs of Lord Selkirk, the Hudsons Bay & North West Compys. Travellers you know meet with extraordinary adventures. I shall therefore have some wonderful Tales to relate when I again have the pleasure of visiting You.

"I expect to return by the Hudsons Bay Ships in November but if they are gone before I arrive at the Bay I must just take up my quarters for the Winter in the Northern Regions. The short notice I have had and the multiplicity of my arrangements have so completely occupied my attention that I have scarcely had an opportunity of thinking seriously of the task I am about to undertake and the difficulties I am likely to encounter; Yet in the midst of all my hurry & bustle I must admit that as the time of my departure approaches I begin to feel a certain depression at the idea of leaving my Native Land and so many near relations and sincere Friends; amongst the latter Your good Self and Family stand prominent.

"Pray offer my affectionate regard to Mrs. & Miss Pooler Dick & the children as also to Mrs. Palmer and with unfeigned esteem believe me always to be, My Dear Sir,

Yours most truly,

GEORGE SIMPSON."

That Simpson expected to pass in the spring from Montreal to Lake Winnipeg and York Factory on Hudson Bay (which he would reach in July) and thence to Lake Athabaska, Great Slave Lake, and the Coppermine River, and yet possibly be back at York Factory in time to catch the autumn ship for England, which would sail in September, shows that he was in very truth a greenhorn, with much to learn of the geography and distances of the North-West which would not see aeroplanes for another century, and in which canoes were and would remain the swiftest mode of travel for many a day.

George Simpson left London on the 27th of February, and on the 4th of March sailed from Liverpool on the good ship *James Munro*, with a passenger list of thirteen gentlemen and two ladies. John George McTavish, a prominent Wintering Partner of the North West Company whose machinations against the Hudson's Bay Company Simpson was going out to counter, was a fellow passenger. It says much for Simpson's worldly wisdom and for his talent for friendship that they became interested in one another and, when the troubles between the companies became a thing of the past, that they became the closest of friends. The ship arrived in New York on the 4th of April, after a passage of thirty-one days. In Montreal, on April 28th, Simpson wrote his friend Richard Pooler a letter which almost deserves the epithet prodigious, for it extended to nearly fifteen hundred words. His description of the voyage, of his fellow passengers, including the two "precious nymphs who were confined to their cabins the greater part of the Voyage", and his picture of New York and the Hudson River as far as Albany must be passed over. As this is one of the small store of personal letters from the hand of Simpson,

or at least of the letters before he adopted the formality becoming in a governor, his description of the journey from Albany, N.Y., to Montreal may be given. It is interesting in itself.

"Montreal, 28th Apl., 1820

" . . . Albany is a neat pretty Town where I merely remained an hour to get Horses and proceed direct for this place, thro' boundless Forests, extensive plains and over some stupendous Mountains; an interesting Country at any other Season of the Year but covered with Snow, the Roads one continued morass so that it was necessary to keep my eye fixed on them to avoid getting drowned in the Sea of Mud, and the weather so bad that I had no opportunity of devoting much of my attention to the surrounding Scenery; my Vehicle was nothing more than an open Cart drawn by 4 animals unworthy of the Name of Horse and after about 50 Spills in which I had numberless bruises & contusions was compelled to have recourse to the Marrow bone stage the greater part of the Journey; my time being limited I found it necessary to Travel by forced marches 19 hours out of the 24 and got here the seventh Day nearly worn out with fatigue; had the credit of opening the St. Lawrence being the first Boat that crossed this Season; the floating Ice made it a source of some danger but the soaking I had will teach me to be more cautious in future. Here I am in excellent quarters and quite at Home with many of the first Families in Town, my time pleasantly devoted between business and amusement; Dinner parties, Tea Squalls, Cards, Balls, Theatres & Masquerades occupy my Evenings and I assure you the representative of the Hudsons Bay Coy. & Lord Selkirk is looked upon as no inconsiderable personage in this part of the World."

Simpson knew that he was going to a wild country distraught by the want of scruples and by the violence of the North West Company. Writing for the innocent

Pooler family in the placid village of Reigate of those times, he minimized neither the dangers of his journey nor the courage with which he intended to face them. His letter ran on:

> "The serious differences between the Hudsons Bay & North West Compy. are the cause of my mission and from the preparations making by both parties I suspect [I] shall have some hard Blows; I am not however paid for fighting, will therefore keep my bones whole if possible, yet show my Governors that I am not wanting of Courage if necessity puts it to the test. There is a possibility that I may be obstructed in my Rout [sic.] as the N.W.Coy. a band of unprincipled Lawless Maraunders stick at nothing however desperate to gain their ends; I am however armed to the Teeth, will sell my Life if in danger as dear as possible and never allow a North-Wester come within reach of my Riffle, if Flint Steel and Bullet can keep him off."

With his courage properly screwed up, Simpson closed his letter with friendly greetings. "Also with kind remembrances present my warmest acknowledgements to Miss Ellen for her highly valued Postscript" to Mr. Pooler's letter received before leaving England. So far the Simpson of the counting-house in Tower Street, London. The Governor Simpson who next saw London in October 1825, five years later, was in many ways a very different man.

II

The North-West, a Scene of Violence, 1804-1821

II

The North-West, a Scene of Violence 1804-1821

THE Hudson's Bay Company was formed in 1670 upon a certainty and upon a hope. The certainty was a profitable fur trade, evidenced by the successful voyage in 1668 of the ketch *Nonsuch* to Rupert River on James Bay under the guidance of the Sieur de Groseilliers. The hope was due to the statements of the Frenchmen, on whom the company was relying, the Sieur de Groseilliers and Pierre-Esprit Radisson, that a way would be found by broad rivers to the Pacific Ocean.[1] Hence, the Charter granted by Charles II on May 2, 1670,[2] provided for a colony [on the supposed route to the Western Sea, and thence to the rich marts of China]. It sketched a constitution not only for the Company, but for its territory overseas described as one of "our Plantations and colonies in North America" and named Rupert's Land. At home, there was the General Court or meeting of the stockholders, and the Executive or Board composed of the Governor, Deputy-Governor, and the Committee. Overseas, governors and councils were entrusted, subject to the control of the Governor and Committee, with the

task of government, with the defence of the colony, and, acting as courts, with the duties of administering justice and maintaining law and order.

While the area granted was necessarily vague, for the country was unknown, it was prescribed that it was to be reached through Hudson Strait and was to include all the rivers and straits which the Company should come to through that strait, along with the lands about them. When the region came to be known, this was interpreted as the basin of Hudson Bay, the boundaries being the heights of land marking off that basin from its neighbouring watersheds. Thus the boundary between the Company's territory and the French colony of La Nouvelle France or Canada on the St. Lawrence was, roughly, the Laurentian Range. As the French considered the region from their great river to James Bay as an indivisible unit, and as some Indian traders had brought down to the settlements of the St. Lawrence furs from "the Bay of the North", though no Frenchman had as yet penetrated beyond the height of land, they regarded the Hudson's Bay Company as intruders. This led to a struggle for the possession of Hudson Bay, marked by a succession of picturesque events associated with the names of Groseilliers and Radisson (who had returned to their allegiance to the French King) and of Iberville. The struggle was closed by the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713, which required the posts captured by the French and the land upon the rivers flowing into Hudson Bay to be surrendered to the English, in the issue, to the Hudson's Bay Company.

In the next phase, which is signalized by the name of the Sieur de la Vérendrye, the French occupied the hinterland of the English posts, and their forts on the upper waters of rivers flowing into Hudson Bay were

diverting the furs down to the St. Lawrence. This may be thought of as the earliest phase of the competition of the direct and cheap route by Hudson Strait to the European market with the long and costly haul to Montreal and thence overseas—a competition of routes which is with us to this day. The French phase of this rivalry closed with the Treaty of Paris, 1763, by which the English came into the possession of Canada.

But the possession of the North-West and Canada alike by the English, so far from ending the rivalry of the routes, accentuated it. Eager and aggressive British subjects from Montreal followed in the footsteps of the French and were so successful in diverting the peltries of the great fur forest of the North-West to the St. Lawrence that the Hudson's Bay Company itself had to come into the interior to maintain its trade. It built Cumberland House close to the lower Saskatchewan River in 1774. Thereafter, all the great rivers of the North-West, at one time or another, at one spot or another, saw rival posts, mostly within a stone's throw of each other, outbidding one another for the furs of the Indian hunters. The success of the men from Montreal has with reason been ascribed to their pushful character, to their enterprise and courage, but it should be noted that a phenomenal rise in the price of peltries enabled both companies to maintain expensive posts in the interior reached by costly transportation. The advantage, however, still remained with the English company using its direct and cheap route by Hudson Strait to the fur market of England.

The competition of the individual fur-traders from Montreal with one another, and, it must not be forgotten, with the Hudson's Bay Company, made union a simple

measure of self-protection. Thus the North West Company, the most powerful business organization in North America of that time, was formed. For our purposes, two of the features of that company must be mentioned. The shares were not sold on the open market, but were reserved as the reward to able and aggressive clerks. Thus, the ambition of the young men in the service was stimulated to do their utmost for the concern, by honesty or by craft, by hook or by crook, that the day might come when they would be received among the lucky partners. Next, this great advantage to the company was offset, as against the Hudson's Bay Company which enjoyed a remarkable stability based upon its perpetual Charter and upon the great wealth of its stockholders, by the fact that the North West Company was held together by no more than a temporary agreement—an agreement which had to be renewed from time to time. Thus, enterprising and experienced clerks and even partners could leave the concern at the end of their individual or the general agreement and, without loss of honour, form a rival interest.

While he was in the North West Company, Alexander Mackenzie, whose department was distant Athabaska, sought to escape from the long and costly haul to and from Montreal and to enter the fur trade of the Pacific Slope by the discovery of a route to the Pacific Ocean where a depot could be formed for goods brought round Cape Horn to supply the trade. His first voyage, in 1789, was down the great river which bears his name, but it brought him not to the Western but to the Polar Sea. He called the magnificent stream which he had followed, today the course of many a steamer, the River Disappointment. His next expedition explored the route up

Peace River, over the height of land of the Rockies, down the Fraser River and by the Blackwater to the Pacific Ocean at the North Bentinck Arm (1793). Mackenzie returned from this last expedition with the grandiose scheme of uniting the North West Company with the Hudson's Bay Company, of using the Hudson Strait route to reduce the costs of the trade of the more distant North-West, and of participating in the profitable trade in the peltries of the Pacific coast with China. Simon McTavish the agent of the North West Company saw that this would divert the furs of the North-West to the Hudson Bay route, and stood to defend Montreal as the outlet of that trade. In the issue, at the end of his agreement, Mackenzie left the North West Company and became the central figure of a rival concern nicknamed the XY Company. This quarrel, so to say within the family, was of the bitterest. It habituated both parties to all sorts of chicanery, and even led to bloodshed. A murder in the valley of the Saskatchewan attracted the attention of the government, and the Canada Jurisdiction Act was passed by the Imperial Parliament to deal with the lawlessness of the North-West (1803).[3] It provided, among other things, for Justices of the Peace in the "Indian Territory" with power to arrest malefactors and bring them to trial in the courts of Canada. By force of its wealth and its overpowering numbers, not to mention its utter unscrupulousness, the North West Company brought the XY concern to its knees and a union was effected in 1804.

The united company now turned against its only remaining opponent, the Hudson's Bay Company, and practised against it all the chicanery and violence which had successfully disposed of the rivalry of the XY Com-

pany. News of the union of the two Canadian companies reached Fort Chipewyan, the North West Company's post on Lake Athabaska, on May 6, 1805. On May 19th,[4] Peter Fidler of the Hudson's Bay Company's Nottingham House on an island opposite, was invited over to a friendly cup of tea over which he was told that the proprietors of the North West Company would show the English company the greatest rigor with the aim of driving them out of that region. Thus began a bitter struggle which lasted well-nigh a score of years. The last phase of this fierce struggle saw George Simpson, for the time being in the role of Chief Factor, in charge of Fort Wedderburn on an island in Lake Athabaska opposite Fort Chipewyan.

In his *Sketch of the British Fur Trade in North America with Observations relative to the North West Company* (1816)[5] Lord Selkirk calls attention to the policy of deliberate violence adopted by the North West Company, and gives a series of instances of robberies, so to say at the mouth of the pistol, which can be substantiated from the journals of the posts of the English company. After mentioning an incident in which the Northwester John Duncan Campbell figured, he goes on:

> "On another occasion at Isle à la Crosse Lake, (in the year 1805) the same Campbell attacked two of the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, and took a parcel of furs from them in the same way: some of the men from the Hudson's Bay House came out to assist their fellow-servants, but were attacked by superior numbers of the Canadians, and beat off with violence and bloodshed.
>
> "In the year 1809, Mr. Fidler was sent with a party of eighteen men, from Churchill Factory, to establish a trading post at Isle à la Crosse, near the borders of the Athabasca

country, but within the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company. He remained there for two years, sending a detachment of his people to Green Lake and Beaver River. During the first winter he had some success, but afterwards he was effectually obstructed. On many former occasions, the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company had attempted to establish a trade in this place, which is in the centre of a country abounding in beaver; but they had always been obliged to renounce the attempt. The methods used with Mr. Fidler may explain the causes of the failure.

"Mr. John McDonald had been Mr. Fidler's competitor during the earlier part of the winter, but (not being inclined to set all principles of law and justice at defiance,) was removed and relieved, first by Mr. Robert Henry and then by Mr. John Duncan Campbell. The North-West Company having been established at Isle á la Crosse without any competition, had obtained what they call the *attachment* of the Indians, that is to say, they had reduced them to such abject submission, that the very sight of a Canadian was sufficient to inspire them with terror. In order that this salutary awe might suffer no diminution, the post at Isle à la Crosse was reinforced with an extra number of Canadians, so that the natives might be effectually prevented from holding any intercourse with the traders of the Hudson's Bay Company, and that the appearance of so very superior a force, ready to overwhelm and destroy him, might deter Mr. Fidler from any attempt to protect his customers. A watch house was built close to his door, so that no Indians could enter unobserved; a party of professed batailleurs [bullies] were stationed here, and employed, not only to watch the natives, but to give every possible annoyance, night and day, to the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. Their fire-wood was stolen—they were perpetually obstructed in hunting for provisions—the produce of their garden was destroyed—their fishing lines taken away in the night time, and their

nets cut to pieces. The ruffians who were posted to watch Mr. Fidler proceeded from one act of violence to another, and in proportion as they found themselves feebly resisted, they grew bolder, and at length issued a formal mandate, that no one of the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company should stir out of their house; and followed this up with such examples of severity, that Mr. Fidler's men refused to remain at the post. They were compelled to leave it, and the Canadians immediately burnt his house to the ground."

It seems unbelievable that such wrongs could be perpetrated under the flag by British subjects on fellow British subjects. The explanation probably lies in the fact that the North West Company had become a predominantly Highland company, marked by a loyalty to the concern comparable to the old loyalty to the clan. The M'Gillivrays, the Mackenzies, the Macdonalds, the McTavishes, and the McLeods, and with them the Camerons, the Campbells, and the Frasers but two generations back had, on occasion, fought one another, and at times engaged in sheep and cattle stealing at the expense of the Sassenachs, the Lowlanders— all for the success and the glory of their respective clans. Now, in the unpoliced wilds of the North-West, their hoary antipathies were sunk in a common loyalty to the North West Company, but their practices were not greatly changed. The English Hudson's Bay Company, the Sassenachs, were their legitimate prey. In the course of a few years these Highlanders, on whose consciousness law and order had had but little time to make an impression, discovered that the Canada Jurisdiction Act was a precious weapon in their hand, rather than a means to bring criminals to justice. Mr. Justice of the Peace Archibald Norman McLeod could issue a warrant

against the English company's factor, and on some more or less fictitious charge arrest him and, perhaps, carry him off to Canada, not to prosecute him there, but merely to get him out of the country and disorganize the service of the rival company. Once, when Peter Fidler appealed to McLeod as Justice of the Peace for a warrant against Northwesters who raided his fishing nets—appealed on the ground that his (Fidler's) servants had a few days before been arrested on the charge of carrying out a similar raid on the North West Company's nets, the brazen-faced McLeod replied: "Yesterday I was a judge, today I am an Indian trader."

The objectives which these men of violence had before them were, by bringing the Hudson's Bay Company, like the XY Company, to its knees, to secure control of the cheap and direct route to England through Hudson Strait, and to enter into the fur trade of the Pacific Slope. When Sir Alexander Mackenzie was in the XY Company, Edward Ellice, his agent in London, tried to buy up controlling stock in the Hudson's Bay Company. With the same object in view, in the season of 1804-5 Duncan M'Gillivray and Mackenzie tried to secure a transit for the goods and furs of the North West concern through Hudson Bay.[6] All was in vain, but the violence so far succeeded that in 1809 and subsequent years the English company was paying no dividends. To stand up against the men of violence, its forts had to be kept garrisoned by large bands, and the costs ate up the profits of the trade. The £100 stock, which had formerly sold at £260, was now going at £60. It was at this point, as has been said, that Lord Selkirk and his two brothers-in-law, Andrew Wedderburn and John Halkett, purchased their interests in the Company. In 1810 Wedderburn,

elected a member of the Board, carried through a reorganization. Points emphasized in his circular[7] to the factors were, that the instructions to avoid clashes with the Northwesters must not be interpreted as an injunction to remain passive when the Company's property was attacked; that the law would protect them if they fought the aggressors; and that the cost of provisioning the forts crowded with men to face the enemy was equivalent to a satisfactory dividend on the year's operations. Orders were given to establish farms at the posts, and to grow enough provisions for the garrison. It was but a step farther to ask Lord Selkirk to establish an agricultural colony (on the Red River) to provide cheap provisions for the English forts.

Selkirk's colony was established to provide the Company with provisions, cheap because grown in the country, and to become a retiring ground for the factors with half-breed families, the sons of which would enter the lower orders of the service, affording cheap labour and efficient because brought up in the ways of the trade and equipped with the languages of the natives—all to enable the Hudson's Bay Company to hold its own against the Northwesters.[8] But there was more in it than that. The grant of land for a colony would show that the Company owned the land in virtue of its charter, and the day might come when the Northwesters might be turned out of the country as tresspassers. Consequently, all the fury of the North West Company was turned against the colony. When Miles Macdonell, Governor of Assiniboia, as the colony was called, placed an embargo on the exportation of pemmican, that indispensable form of provision, from the colony, promising however to pay for all that he took, the Northwesters refused to give it up. Macdonell,

as Governor, seized it, but paid for it with good drafts on London. Yet Mr. Justice McLeod issued a warrant against him on the charge of robbery. Macdonell finally surrendered himself in the face of a superior force, but when he was taken to Montreal, he was set free. The real object of the Northwesters was attained; with the capture of their governor, the loyal settlers, that is those who had not been enticed off to Canada, abandoned the colony (1815). The courageous remnant, however, returned to it in the following autumn.

By this time, a further reorganization of the Hudson's Bay Company's system had been put through, and a Governor-in-Chief had been appointed to care for its interests in the whole of its territory. Robert Semple was appointed as such. He proved unable to fathom the depth of the iniquity of the Northwesters and in an encounter with an armed band of their half-breed servants under Cuthbert Grant to meet whom he went out unprepared, he was shot down along with twenty of the settlers. This is known as the "Massacre of Sevenoaks." Again the colony was dispersed.

Meanwhile, Lord Selkirk was spending the winter in Canada, devising means to save his threatened colony. He appealed to both the Imperial and the Canadian Governments to send out troops to ward off the impending attack, but in vain. He was forced, at his own expense, to retain a band of soldiers of the De Meuron regiment, being disbanded after the war with America, to go out with him as potential soldier settlers. On his arrival at the Red River Settlement, he found his colonists newly returned. His visit and the De Meuron soldiers gave quiet to the colony. It was never attacked again. This

may be regarded as the first real victory for the English party (1817).

In the meantime, the centre of violence had moved north-westward beyond the Hudson's Bay Company's territory into the Athabaska region. Part of that company's plan for its rehabilitation was to enter once more into the rich fur region of the valleys of the Athabaska and Peace rivers, which, of course, it was entitled to do, for the North West Company had no grant of the monopoly of the trade of those parts, and had no right to exclude fellow British subjects from it. However, the partners of that company affected to believe that it was their sacred precinct and that the English company was an intruder. The Hudson's Bay Company's expedition was recruited in Montreal. Many of its officers and men were old Northwesters whose knowledge of the country and of the Indian languages gave promise of success to the enterprise. John Clarke, an old Northwester and latterly with John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company, was in supreme charge. But the very size of the expedition proved it undoing, for the call for provisions for the men was great. Conscious of this, the Partners of the North West Company went in early and got the Indians who might trade meat with the English expedition away from the water-way. On Peace River, where Clarke expected to "live on the country" that notable Northwester John M'Gillivray preceded the English brigade and frightened the animals away from the river. In the final issue twelve men of Clarke's party were starved to death, and all the rest, including Clarke himself, had to give up their goods to their rivals in return for sufficient provisions to carry them through the winter.

The English expedition of the following season, 1816-1817, was scarcely less fortunate from the point of view of trade. Mr. Justice of the Peace Archibald Norman McLeod issued a warrant against John Clarke for refusing to obey a summons, and when Clarke went over from his island post, Fort Wedderburn, to Fort Chipewyan opposite to secure the release of some of his men taken prisoners, McLeod arrested him. There was, however, no intention to take him to Montreal for trial. Rather he was carried away from justice to the desolate region of Great Slave Lake to the north, and finally back to Peace River. The object of the Northwesters was achieved. With no one to lead another expedition for the Hudson's Bay Company during the next season, 1817-1818, the North West Company obtained the trade of the Athabaska region undisputed. . With a truly British refusal to accept defeat, the Hudson's Bay Company organized another expedition for the season 1818-1819. Colin Robertson, its leader, was seized by the notorious Northwester Samuel Black when attending the funeral of one of his men. Once more the English company went down to defeat.

Up to this time the Hudson's Bay Company (with its servants) had played a comparatively passive part, and to an astonishing degree had kept its hands free from violence. With its back up against the wall, it had now so far changed its policy as to send out a fighting Governor in the person of William Williams. He had been the captain of an East-Indiaman, ready to give pirates upon the eastern seas their due. In contrast with Governor Semple, he believed the Northwesters to be no better than pirates and was ready to inflict their own methods on them. In the spring of 1819, with a band of De Meuron

soldiers from Lord Selkirk's colony, he faced the northern brigades of the North West Company at the portage of the Grand Rapids of the Saskatchewan, a mile and a half from Lake Winnipeg, and arrested six of their leaders.[9] When challenged for thus acting in spite of the Proclamation of Governor Sir John Sherbrooke in the name of the Prince Regent requiring all parties to desist from hostilities, he is reported to have said: "I care not a curse for the Prince Regent's proclamation; Lord Bathurst [the Colonial Minister] and Sir John Sherbrooke by whom it was framed are d—— rascals. I act upon the Charter of the Hudson's Bay Company, and as a governor and magistrate in these territories I will do as I think proper." Needless to say, the North West Company secured warrants in Montreal for the arrest of Governor Williams. In the knowledge of this, the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company decided to send out a governor *locum tenens* in case Williams might have been apprehended. Andrew Colvile, acting for them, chose George Simpson.

Such was the situation in the North-West into which the clerk of peaceful 73 Great Tower Street was suddenly launched. It shows that it was not sheer swagger when Simpson wrote to the quiet circle at Reigate that the North West Company, a band of unprincipled lawless marauders who stuck at nothing, however desperate, to gain their ends, might obstruct him on his way; that, however, he was armed to the teeth, and would, if in danger, sell his life as dear as possible.

III

Simpson's Year as Fur-Trader, Athabaska Department, 1820-1

III

Simpson's Year as Fur-Trader, Athabaska Department, 1820-1

WHILE George Simpson was in Montreal events were shaping his future. On February 19, 1820, six days before Simpson left London, Lord Bathurst, the Colonial Minister, had written to Joseph Berens, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, requiring him to instruct the Company's servants overseas to obey strictly the proclamation issued by Sir John Sherbrooke, Governor-General of Canada, in May 1817, calling on the rival companies to keep the peace.[1] His lordship entrusted a similar letter of instructions to Simpson to be delivered to the North West Company at Fort William. Had Simpson, when in Montreal, sent this letter up by the North West Company's canoes the course of events might have been very different. He acted, however, on the understanding that he was to deliver it in person at Fort William where the annual meeting of the company would be held. This he did on May 28th. A few days before and therefore unaware of the Colonial Minister's injunctions, a force of sixty men had left that rendezvous to reply to Governor William's coup of the year before at the Grand Rapids of Saskatchewan by arresting him and

Colin Robertson at that strategic spot. The Governor, however, was forewarned and reached York Fort safely by the old Indian track through Moose Lake and by the Minago River which Matthew Cocking and Anthony Henday had followed, and which had been abandoned because it admitted only of small canoes. To disorganize the Hudson's Bay Company's expedition of 1820-21 to Athabaska the Wintering Partners of the North West Company's post, Fort Chipewyan, had arrested Colin Robertson. However, he managed to give them the slip at Cumberland House. He attempted to follow Governor Williams, but failed to secure a guide at Moose Lake. It is in keeping with the self-confidence of the man that he risked the passage by the Grand Rapids, only to fall into the Northwesters' hands and to be spirited off to Fort William and Montreal. Thus when Simpson arrived at the Rock House on Hayes River the depot of the Athabaska brigade, he found Governor Williams still at the head of the Hudson's Bay Company's trade, but the Athabaska Department, in the absence of Colin Robertson, like to be wholly disorganized for lack of a competent man to be put in charge. He willingly offered himself for the post. Thus he spent his first year in the country not as Governor, but as supervisor of the whole business of the Company in the Athabaska-Peace River district with headquarters at Fort Wedderburn on Lake Athabaska.

Further, before Simpson left London negotiations were afoot which were to affect his whole career. On September 29, 1819, Samuel Gale junior of Montreal, an intimate friend of Lady Selkirk, wrote her ladyship conveying secret enquiries from a Wintering Partner of the North West Company, as it proved through a Mr.

George Moffat of Montreal, looking to the abandonment of the agents of his "concern", McTavish, M'Gillivrays & Co. of Montreal, by the Wintering Partners in favour of the Hudson's Bay Company. This they were free to do in 1821 because the agreement which constituted their company was about to lapse and would have to be renewed. The question was: Would the Hudson's Bay Company be willing to become their agent in place of the McTavish firm.[2] The motives behind this proposal were that the Wintering Partners had reason to believe that the McTavish company was on the verge of bankruptcy; that there was on the part of many a disgust at the campaign of violence of which their agents were the insistent instigators; and finally, that many were anxious to acquire the use of the short and cheap transportation route by Hudson Strait. On December 24th, Andrew Colvile replied for his sister suggesting a close union and sketching generous terms.[3] Meanwhile Edward Ellice, of the London agency of the North West Company, had approached Lord Selkirk with an offer to buy his stock in the Hudson's Bay Company, ostensibly with a view to ending the period of violence and securing a monopoly of the trade by getting a controlling interest in the Company.[4] Colvile replied on December 21st that he had word from his lordship, who was sick in France, that he could not accede to a plan by which "the North West Company were to acquire a preponderating influence in the management of the Hudson's Bay Company, his property in the Settlement, and the people who have settled on his lands under his protection," thus leaving them "completely at the mercy of that association."[5] On January 10th Colvile wrote to Samuel Gale, reporting the rejection of Ellice's offer: "I think

it possible that one of Mr. Ellice's objects may have been to use the negotiation as a means of influencing the Wintering Partners and of inducing them to agree to a renewal of the partnership as they would have been at the mercy of the Agents had he acquired a majority of the H. B. stock."[6] On February 23, 1820, Colvile wrote to Gale concerning Simpson, then on the point of leaving for Montreal, that he was being "sent out by the H. B. Co. to take charge of their affairs in case Governor Williams should be dragged away. I have long known him and have perfect confidence in his honor and discretion in case you find it desirable to have any confidential communication with him; he is active and intelligent with sufficient promptness and determination." In view of this it seems fair to assume that Simpson, when he left London, knew of the discussions looking towards the union of the rival companies and that Gale would inform him of the situation as it was when he was in Montreal. This may be inferred from the fact that the letter of George Moffat, the go-between of the North West Wintering Partners with Gale, to his correspondent, as it proved Dr. John McLoughlin, was to the effect that it would be delivered to him along with Lord Bathurst's "despatch" by "G. Simpson Esqr." Gale forwarding a copy of Moffat's letter added that it was thought prudent to send it rather by a Wintering Partner of the North West Company, while giving a letter of introduction to Simpson who would enquire if the other missive was safely received. That Simpson was aware of what was afoot seems to be proved by Gale's letter to Colvile of October 28, 1820: "I am happy to find from a letter received from Mr. Simpson dated at Rock depot on the 1st August that he was going into

Athabasca in consequence of the H. B. Co. being deprived of Mr. Robertson's Services. Mr. Simpson's presence in that Quarter from his prudence and his knowledge of *certain topicks*[7] will be highly advantageous." Apart from the high character ascribed to Simpson at the outset of his career, this correspondence shows the implicit trust placed in him. Moreover, it helps to explain why, though he was supposed to return to England by the ship that autumn if Governor Williams was on duty, he so willingly offered himself for the hardships and dangers of the post in Athabaska. A man of his perspicacity and with his knowledge of the trend of affairs towards union could hardly fail to see that his chances of rapid advance lay not in London but in the service of the Company overseas and in his acquiring at once a mastery of the system of the fur trade.

Simpson passed from Montreal to Fort William by the route which he was to trace again and again in subsequent years—up the Ottawa River and its tributary the Mattawa, over the height of land to Lake Nipissing, down French River first travelled by a European in the person of Samuel Champlain, along the north shore of Lake Huron to Sault Ste. Marie and Lake Superior, whose shaggy north coast he would trace to Fort William. There he would deliver Lord Bathurst's injunctions to the assembled partners of the North West Company, and assure himself that Mr. Moffat's letter had come to the hand of his correspondent Dr. John McLoughlin. Otherwise, he would devote himself to acquiring relations with one and all, assuming the innocent air of a mere passer-by.

From Fort William he followed the main water-way, so often travelled afterwards by him, the Kaministikwia

River, over the height of land to Seine River leading to Rainy Lake, down Rainy River and through Lake of the Woods to Winnipeg River by which he would reach the south shore of Lake Winnipeg. On Mossy Point at the outflow of the lake he would visit the Norway House of that time. Thence he followed the water-way through Little Playgreen Lake and down East River, really a branch of the Nelson, as far as Echimamish River which he would ascend to the height of land. Crossing this, he entered the upper waters of the Hayes River, and passed through its expansions Oxford and Knee and Swampy lakes. On that part of the river, then called Hill River from an eminence of six hundred feet, and beyond Rock Portage, the last carrying-place on the way to York Fort, he came to Rock House, then being established as the depot of the Athabaska brigade. Here he met Governor Williams with whom he came into very happy relations.

Rock Depot stood at the end of that part of the water-way from York Fort which was comparatively deep and easy of ascent. Goods could be brought up to it in greater than the usual bulk. Moreover, it enabled the Athabaska brigade to get the season's "outfit" and return to its distant posts as soon as, if not before the North West Company's craft. Here, as has been said, Simpson decided to undertake the supervision of the Athabaska Department, and began to engage his voyageurs and assemble his goods. It would be here that he took into his personal service Tom Taylor the half-breed son of George Taylor, the commander of the schooner at York Fort, a man who had taken considerable care in the education of his "bits of brown", as Simpson would have called his half-breed children. Tom acted as servant and interpreter for Simpson for about nine years. It would

be here also that Simpson met Margaret, Tom's sister. As all the menial work in Indian lands was done by the women, she was probably taken on in the double capacity of cook and wife as the saying was, *en façon du nord.* Between October 20th and November 2nd of the following year, she bore to Simpson his first child,[8] baptized Maria by the Rev. John West, the Company's chaplain, on August 27, 1822.[9]

From its inception the executive of the Hudson's Bay Company had aimed at securing an adequate supervision over its more responsible officers by requiring them to keep a journal in which they entered from day to day their own doings and the conduct of the servants under them. Simpson was to be no exception. His *Journal* of *Occurrences in the Athabaska Department,* 1820 *and* 1821,[10] written in his clear, business-like and at times pungent style, affords a remarkably intimate picture of his year as a humble fur-trader, in charge not only of his own brigade and post but of the extensive Athabaska district. At the beginning he was an utter novice to the trade.[11] He had to be assisted in engaging the men for his brigade and in selecting his goods. The pretentious John Clarke was told off to initiate him. "To this Gentleman I am patricularly indebted for his polite attentions; he has given me much useful information, and his influence over the [French] Canadians has been exerted with great success, as notwithstanding the exorbitant Wages they have now exacted, I am confident that they are lower by one fourth than any other Gentleman in the service could have engaged them at,"[12] wrote the unsuspecting novice. But he soon discovered that Clarke's ostentatiously generous assistance was wholly self-regarding. "Clarke has got nearly all the best hands for Isle

ala Crosse [his department]. I expostulated with him on the impropriety of selecting the most useful men for any particular District without avail. He does not seem to take a general view of the Company's Interests, but confines his attentions to the District which he individually superintends."[13] Such had too often been the case with the Company's officers in the past. It ceased to be so when Simpson became Governor. "Clarke has nearly as many goods for the District of Isle ala Crosse as we have for the whole Department [strictly "District"] of Athabaska I sincerely trust he may bring them to a good Market; those who know his character as a Trader have their doubts on that head."[14] Not only had Clarke got more than the goods due his District, he had more canoes than were his share, and Simpson had to leave a hundred "pieces" of goods of ninety pounds weight at Norway House and found himself with an empty shop long before the winter was over. Moreover, two of the Athabaska "Gentlemen" had to be embarked in Clarke's canoes. At Cumberland House Clarke made a readjustment of his brigade that he might pass through his District and arrive at his post in the lordly style which he affected. He left behind goods which Simpson was in need of for his great District. "Mr. Clarke converted one of the canoes of his Brigade into a Light Canoe with eight men *for the better* accommodation of his Woman and her Servant; taking the *Ladies* into his own, and turning Messrs. McDonald and Pensonnant into the other, the Cargo left at Cumberland; this measure is somewhat extraordinary, as I have repeatedly intreated him to bring on some pieces for the use of the Athabaska Department, which he knows is very inadequately supplied with goods, but he uniformly replied: that he requires all his supplies

and accommodation for the use of his own District. The Committee may well be displeased when they learn that one of their Officers deliberately puts them to an expense of about £500, exclusive of the injury their business may sustain by the want of the goods *merely for the accommodation of an Indian Mistress*!! Mr. Clarke daily loses ground in my estimation, yet he has some good qualities." He would endure any hardship when necessary, and was a man of great courage in facing the Northwesters.[15] A final example may be given of Clarke's disregard not only of the interests of Simpson's Department and of the Company's "general interests" but of his own promise made. At Isle-à-la-Crosse it was agreed between the two men "That on my arrival at Fort Wedderburn, I should dispatch a canoe to Isle àla Crosse for 3 rolls Tobacco, 3 Kegs spirits, 1 Keg and 11 lbs. Powder, 8 or 10 bags Pemican, a Seine Net and Mr. O'Doherty & Cochrane passengers. The canoe not to be detained more than one day at Isle àla Crosse in order that it may get back by open water."[16] Clarke proved indifferent to his given word, and Simpson wrote on November 30th: "Neither the Canoe nor the people which I sent to Isle ala Crosse on the 22nd September have yet returned, which puts this District to a most serious loss and inconvenience as we have not a Particle of Goods in the Store."[17] Simpson attributed this mismanagement to "Mr. Clarke's inattention to his business."[18] The goods did not reach Fort Wedderburn till the end of January, and the men not till somewhat later. Meanwhile Clarke with his ample supply of goods drew three-quarters of the Indians of Athabaska Lake to Isle-à-la-Crosse by his "unbounded extravagance" in the goods which he offered for their furs.

This sketch of the relations between the neighbouring districts of Isle-à-la-Crosse and Fort Wedderburn will enable the reader to understand the disorder which at times appeared in the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company when each Factor was his own master, and to appreciate the discipline and co-ordination imposed on the posts after the union by the council of the Northern Department over which Simpson presided as Governor. It will also make it possible for him to estimate the impartiality, and at the end the generosity of Governor Simpson's treatment of the grasping, self-important, and all too extravagant John Clarke.

From Isle-à-la-Crosse Simpson followed the traditional route upstream to Methy Portage and over the height of land, and downstream by the Clearwater River and by the magnificent Athabaska River into the lake of that name. This he crossed north-westward to its northern shore at the narrowing outlet of the lake. There, on September 20th, he reached the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Wedderburn, on the present Coal Island, a mile and a half south from the North West Company's Fort Chipewyan which stood on the mainland on a promontory east of the outlet.

An interesting feature of Simpson's Journal is the art with which the novice at the fur trade managed the men under him—the "Gentlemen" and the Servants. On his arrival at Fort Wedderburn his first duty was to get the canoes off with the "outfits" for the several subordinate posts under him. By these he introduced himself to the men in charge of those posts during the summer. The difference in the letters indicated his approval or otherwise of their conduct in the forms employed and in the general tone, rather than in the specific statements. Mr.

Robert McVicar who had done very well at the post on Great Slave Lake he addressed both at the beginning and at the end with "Dear Sir."[19]

"Fort Wedderburn, 24th Sept., 1820

Robt. McVicar, Esqre.,
Gt. Slave Lake.

Dear Sir,

I did hope to have had an opportunity of introducing myself to you on my arrival here, but supposed the heavy and important charge with which you are invested, did not admit of your undertaking so long a Journey, yet in the course of next season I expect to have the pleasure of seeing you, when we shall be better acquainted. In consequence of Mr. Robertson's unexpected visit to Canada, the Govr. in Chief has thought proper to appoint me to the charge of the Athabasca Department, he might no doubt have found many Gentlemen of experience in the country better qualified for the duties of the Office, I cannot however learn earlier, and with the assistance and advice of my Friends at Gt. Slave Lake and elsewhere, trust to get through it with some little credit altho' yet a 'Pork Eater' [greenhorn].

. . . By the Canoes I will have the pleasure of addressing you fully and officially meantime, I remain,—Dear Sir—
Your most Obedt.

[signed] GEO. SIMPSON."

Compare with this the crisp note beginning and ending with "Sir" addressed to Mr. Charles Thomas who had mismanaged St. Mary's House on Peace River during the summer.[20]

"Fort Wedderburn, 26th September, 1820

Mr. Charles Thomas,
St. Marys.

Sir

I beg leave to inform you that in consequence of Mr. Robertson's unexpected visit to Canada, the Govr. in Chief

has appointed me to the charge of Athabasca Department. —This will be handed to you by Mr. Finlayson, to whom you will be pleased to deliver up the charge of the Peace River District; he is a stranger in your part of the country, and I trust you will render him every assistance by your council and advice in the management of the business, which from your judgement and experience cannot fail to be of the most essential importance to him. I intend visiting St. Marys in the course of the Winter when I shall have the pleasure of introducing myself personally to your acquaintance, meantime, I remain, Sir,

Your Obedt. Servt.

[signed] GEO. SIMPSON."

An illustration of the care with which he watched the conduct of his subordinate officers is provided by his letter to Mr. Joseph Greill at Berens House, Athabaska River, who had been drinking to excess.

"It has been hinted that you are rather addicted to the Bottle; this report I cannot believe until it is substantiated on conclusive evidence, and I trust your conduct will be so perfectly correct as to challenge the strictest examination; a Drunkard you are aware is an object of contempt even in the eyes of the Savage race with whom we have to deal in this country."[21]

One of the ill consequences of the fierce competition with the North West Company was that the master of a fort walked in fear of his servants, for they might rat to the rival concern at the least act of discipline. Many of the underlings made the most of this situation and were lazy, disobedient, and arrogant. Simpson at Fort Wedderburn was in no wise less subject than his predecessors to the whims of his men, but he knew the value of a just discipline in enhancing the respect of the men for their master. He succeeded in asserting his ascendency in the

fort, apparently by no more drastic means than a public reprimand. "Bouche the Interpreter objected to accompany the Indians to the Big Island and bring back a load of Fish; a severe reprimand, however, convinced him of his error; this fellow with his associates Lamallice & Grignon formed a league against Mr. McDonald last year, and carried their intrigues such lengths as to keep him in corporal fear the whole Winter; they now find the system is altered, and I think will not attempt a repetition of such flagrant misconduct."[22]

But Simpson did not rely wholly on the firm assertion of his authority. Politeness, flattery, and above all justice were not lost sight of. An officer by name William Brown managed the fort under Simpson. Somewhat of a martinet, he ordered the men about without the slightest regard for the terms of their contracts or the customs of the service. Getting into difficulties with the men and finding them unmanageable, he appealed to Simpson. He received in reply a letter which reveals eloquently Simpson's system of handling those with whom he had to deal—observe the contracts even when they are bad; be just; but by friendship and flattery get from them the service you want. The letter may well be given *in extenso*.[23]

"With reference to the verbal communication with you this morning on the subject of your Note, I beg leave to point out what I conceive to be the duties of those Officers who from the injudicious phraseology of their engagements consider themselves exempt from certain offices. Lamalice is specifically engaged in the capacity of a Brigade Guide, and exempt from every other duty; it is not therefore in our power to compel him to do the duty which usually attaches to men in his situation, vizt. raising Bark, building Canoes,

cutting Sleigh Timber, and making Sleighs and Snow-shoes, I am however of opinion that if he were requested politely to perform those services, he will cheerfully comply. He possesses great influence over the Canadians [in the service], and his Wife (who is the best Interpreter about the Fort) is much respected by the Indians, it would therefore be highly impolitic to have any misunderstanding with him, and as flattery is a very cheap commodity, and greatly esteemed by such people, I would recommend your bestowing a sufficient quantum on them, and rendering a few trifling indulgences in order to ensure their good offices and attach them to the Interests of the Company. With regard to Grignon he is engaged as a Clerk altho' he can neither read or write; both he and those who employed him are no doubt highly culpable in placing him in a situation for which he is in no way qualified, we must not however allow him to remain idle about the Fort; he has not I believe absolutely refused to work in canoes altho' from the tenor of his engagement I consider him exempt from that Duty, and if *asked* instead of being *ordered* I have reason to believe that he will either work in a canoe on short voyages, draw fish, make snow shoes, or do any other duty about the place, the menial offices excepted: If he does not he must take up his abode at the Fishery, as we cannot maintain drones here in the present state of our provisions. Bouche is engaged as a 'Runner and Interpreter' and in every respect qualified for his situation, but conceives himself, and I suspect is from the terms of his contract exempt from voyaging except after Indians; at this season of the year he is not required in that capacity, we cannot however afford to allow him loiter his time away, and if he absolutely refuses to do the duties which I have assigned to Grignon he must be sent to attend a band of Indians or live at the Fishery, he will not however I am persuaded object to the offices in question if asked in civil and polite terms. The other Gentlemen appear so deeply

interested in the welfare of the general cause, that if it is possible for them to anticipate your wishes, they will not give you the trouble of pointing out their several duties, and I take this opportunity of expressing my unqualified approbation of their conduct. With regard to the people your orders must be implicitly obeyed, and every instance of disobedience of orders, impertinence, neglect of duty and dishonesty should be visited with an exemplary punishment. Permit me now to remark that the zeal you have uniformly manifested in the service merits the highest encomiums and it is extremely satisfactory to me that the charge of Fort Wedderburne District is in such competent hands."

All through his career Simpson based his actions on what he felt was just and reasonable, and he had the art of administering a more or less direct rebuke in so doing, as in this letter to Brown. Where he could, he expressed his complete satisfaction with his men's conduct, often spicing it with a modicum of flattery highly acceptable to the recipient.

The liveliest passages in Simpson's Journal have to do with the North West Company. It will be remembered that Fort Wedderburn was on an island opposite Fort Chipewyan, and that the Northwesters had come across and built a blockhouse, as Simpson puts it "about twelve yards distant from our corner Bastion and [it] projects about five yards beyond the front of our Fort towards the Lake, so that from their back windows they command a full view of all our proceedings which is extremely unpleasant." This, of course, was to enable them to note the Indians entering Fort Wedderburn that they might in due time visit them with punishment. In former times a line of demarcation had been drawn between the forts. Simpson decided to build a palisade shielding his front

gate from the view of the Northwesters. Simon M'Gillivray, whom Simpson unhesitatingly calls a "murderer", with an armed band of "bullies" who were installed in the blockhouse, bade the workmen be off. Within Fort Wedderburn Simpson gathered his men to his support if called on. He then cooly went out and informed M'Gillivray that he intended to see that the palisade was erected. Meanwhile his terrier ran over into the North West Company's area. His master called him back saying: "Come here Boxer, you do not seem to be aware that you are committing a trespass." "M'Gillivray with a good deal of asperity observed 'We have no intention to molest your dog, Sir', to which I replied: 'Nor shall you his Master with impunity.' "[24] Though the bullies had Simpson at their mercy, so far as they knew, they hesitated and ended by retiring to their blockhouse.

Soon the Northwesters began to extend the watchhouse beyond the recognized boundary into the ground of the Hudson's Bay Company's fort. But let Simpson tell the story in his very lively style.[25]

> "About eight O'Clock A.M. Mr. Brown came into my room and informed me that the N.W. were digging the foundation of a Bastion, at the distance of two feet from our Bastion, and immediately in front of it, thereby encroaching about three feet within the line that was acknowledged by Mr. McGillivray on the 19th Inst. to be the boundary of the two establishments. I immediately determined on resisting this encroachment, and being desirous if possible to avoid hostilities requested Mr. Brown to go out alone to the side of the Stockades, and caution Mr. McGillivray not to attempt building on our ground. He accordingly went but Mr. McGillivray treated his remonstrance with a most ineffable contempt, and intimated his intention of erecting the building on the site lined out, as he now recollected

that the boundary line was within the Stockades of our Fort; at this time he was superintending the Workmen employed. Upon Mr. Brown's informing me the result of the interview, and after ascertaining that the boundary line acknowledged on the 19th was correct, I resolved that they should not thus invade the Company's rights with impunity and forthwith to resist the encroachment by force if necessary. While conversing with the Gentlemen of the subject, Mr. Grignon (a Constable for the District of Montreal who had been absent since the 18th Inst.) unexpectedly arrived, on learning the circumstances of the case he informed me that he had a Warrant in his possession against the said Simon McGillivray and would by virtue of that instrument apprehend him:[26]—in reply, I told him (through Messrs. Chastellain, Oxley, Clouston & Brown as Interpreters and Witnesses to guard against misunderstanding) that I could not interfere or give sanction or instructions to him in his Official capacity as a Constable, that whatever was done in that way must be on his own responsibility, but that it was my province to protect the Company's rights and that I was now about to act in conformity: he rejoined, that he intended to do his duty, and that he would call upon those around him to assist in the Kings-name if necessary; I then said, that if Legally called upon for protection or assistance, we had no alternative. Breakfast being announced the conference broke up. When the cloth was removed, I called the Gentlemen and several of our people together; requested they would support me if necessary, and that all should be furnished with the means of defence; they unanimously agreed to act in strict obedience to my directions: arms and ammunition were brought into the Hall, and I shewed the example by loading my double barrel'd gun and pistols with Ball; when in readiness I ordered a few men into the Bastion and directed the others to accompany me, but gave positive orders that no gun should be fired until I gave the signal,

which was only to be the case in the event of my being attacked. I then proceeded attended by Messrs. Brown, Oxley, Clouston & Grignon with about half a dozen men to the ground which the N.W. had prepared as the foundation of the Bastion outside the Stockades. Mr. McGillivray and several people armed immediately joined us, he came up to the spot where I stood with his hand on the hilt of his Dagger, and when close to each other I said, 'Mr. McGillivray I shall be glad to have some further conversation with you on the subject of this boundary line,' he was about to reply when Mr. Grignon collered him and said 'I arrest you in the Kings name,' he made some resistance and the Officer called out 'I demand your assistance in the Kings name,' on which two of our people rushed upon the prisoner and disarmed and conveyed him into Fort Wedderburne. Some of the N.W. people were about to fire, but on seeing us prepared to return the complement, they made a precipitate retreat. . . . On my return into the Fort I found Mr. McGillivray venting his spleen in a torrent of abuse, he inveighed against me with much warmth, declared that the arrest was illegal, and that [Warrants] would be issued against the whole party forthwith. I replied, that the Officer had acted on his own responsibility and could alone be liable for the consequences. . . . "

The Northwesters at Fort Chipewyan howled at the arrest as an outrage on British Justice, though they had done the like many a time. They appealed to Simpson to release M'Gillivray, but that wily gentleman's reply was based on the sound legal principle that it is against the law to interfere with a constable in the performance of his duty. M'Gillivray was made as comfortable as might be and his squaw and her "bits of brown" were brought over from Fort Chipewyan to console the husband and father and to break the monotony of the

days in prison. Ultimately M'Gillivray managed to escape in the cloak of his squaw. Plans were more than once mooted by the Northwesters to attack Fort Wedderburn, but they came to nothing, to all appearance more because the servants were unwilling to attempt an assault which they were certain would be resisted with arms than because any respect was being paid to the injunctions of the Colonial Minister to keep the peace. Throughout Simpson stood up to the Northwesters without flinching and showed that his statement to the Pooler family in his letter of farewell that if attacked he would sell his life dearly was by no means sheer braggadocio.

In the spring Simpson left for York Fort with the furs of his District. When on Lake Winnipeg he got first word that the rival companies had come to an agreement to unite. The score of years of violence in the fur trade now passed into the realm of history.

For George Simpson, now well versed in the business of his company, the union opened up a long vista of power and honour. The child born thirty-four years before in the isolated glen of Loch Broom was about to find his place in a wide world.

IV

Governor Simpson and the Governor and Committee

IV

Governor Simpson and the Governor and Committee

Simpson and the Union, 1821

THE union of 1821 imposed upon all parties many difficult problems. The most obvious one at the outset was in the domain of the mind—psychological. How could men like the Highlanders of the North West Company, who had despised the passivity of the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, and not only played wild pranks on them, but inflicted insults, injuries, and even wounds, treat them now with the cordiality required of colleagues? Put it the other way, how could the men of the English company receive as their fellows in the reconstituted concern those who had injured them and whose violence was recorded in scars upon their bodies? John Tod's description of the first meeting at a banquet (at York Factory) of the principal men on either side as Factors of equal standing in the new company, though doubtless overdrawn, will give a clear view of the psychological problem involved in the union, and indicate Simpson already at work solving it. It should be said that Simon M'Gillivray, agent for the North West Company, and Nicholas Garry, a member of the Committee

of the Hudson's Bay Company, were present, their mission being to bring the men of their several companies cordially to accept the union:

"At length the bell summoned us to dinner when forthwith in walked the heterogeneous mass of human beings, but in perfect silence & with the most solemn gravity. . . . The Nor-Westers in one compact body kept together & evidently had no inclination at first to mix up with their old rivals in trade. But that crafty fox Sir George Simpson coming hastily to the rescue with his usual tact & dexterity on such occasions succeeded, though partially, somewhat in dispelling that reserve in which both parties had hitherto continued to envelope themselves; it was to say the least of it a critical moment requiring reconciliation & union of two irritable & powerful bodies of men thus suddenly brought face to face after many long years of strife, violence & fierce contention, & although now united in interest were yet evidently adverse in feeling. Had that old bluff "salt" Gov. Williams been then at the helm in place of his more skillful successor, it is hard to say what turn affairs might have taken at that particular juncture. The rough sailor was known to have a peculiar relish at all times for a good hard fight, more especially when there seemed certain prospect of one of the parties being 'well licked', which he used to say was the most legitimate way of ending disputes. But such summary proceedings however suitable to the commander once of an East Indiaman, were altogether contrary to the usually pacific policy of Sir George Simpson; accordingly it soon became evident that his stratagems in bows & smiles alone would eventually succeed in producing the desired effect on the exterior appearance of his haughty guests. Their previously stiffened features began to relax a little, they gradually but slowly mingled together, & a few of the better disposed throwing themselves unreservedly in the midst of the opposite party mutually shook each other by

the hand. Then, & not till then were they politely beckoned to their appointed places at the mess-table. . . . [There were] one or two awkward mistakes which it had evidently been the Governor's intention from the first to prevent by every possible means; for instance he whom they called blind McDonnel all of a sudden found himself directly in front of his mortal foe of Swan River the vivacious Chief Factor Kenedy . . . [Kennedy] & he who now sat opposite to him had hacked and slashed at each other with naked swords only a few months before their present unintentional meeting. One of them still bore the marks of a cut on his face, the other it was said on some less conspicuous part of the body. I shall never forget the look of scorn & utter defiance with which they regarded each other the moment their eyes met. The highlanders nostrils actually seemed to expand, he snorted, squirted, & spat, not on the table, but between his legs & was as restless as if he had been seated on a hillcock of ants; the other looked equally defiant, but less uneasy &, upon the whole, more cool. I thought it fortunate that they were without arms . . . it seemed not improbable they might yet renew the combat, which probably was only prevented in time by a side movement from the upper end of the table, where sat that plausible & most accomplished gentleman Simon McGilliavery who used to talk of the 'glorious uncertainty of the law' & the 'nulity of the H.B.C. Charter'; he, seeing the state of affairs near my quarter sent a request couched in the most gracious terms to McDonald to be allowed to take wine with him, which by the bye had to be repeated more than once before the latter could be induced to remove the glare of his fierce eye from the person of his adversary. . . . Kenedy too, by similar means, put in operation by one of his friends at hand, was also induced to adopt the appearance of peace & tranquility. Immediately on the right of McGilliavary sat that flexible character McIntosh; his ever shifting countenance & restless

black eye might seem that nature had designed him the harbinger of plots, treasons & stratagems. I allude to the same who, some years before, in Peace River tried to poison poor little Yale, but could not succeed, so invulnerable had the integuments of the latter's stomach become by long acquaintance with the rough fare of that inhospitable stepmother New Caledonia, that the diabolical attempt failed. Directly in front of McIntosh sat his gallant enemy of the preceding winter, the pompous but good natured John Clark, . . . During the rivalship of the two companies Clark & McIntosh, now confronting each other at the same table, were for many years close neighbours & in fact, always considered as forming part of the advance guard of the two opposing bodies which had kept the country in a state of civil war so long, consequently they had unavoidably come often in collision together & it was only some time during the winter immediately preceding the period now referred to & at the close of a long day's march together on snow-shoes that they agreed to end a dispute which had arisen between them on the way by a round of pistol shots, which they actually & deliberately discharged at each other over the bright blaze of a winter night's camp fire, separated merely by the burning element; Clark, it was said, cheering on his antagonist all the while to continue the combat until either one or both should fall. But these were the rugging & the riving times when might was right & a man's life was valued at naught."

But the antipathies bred by half a century of competition and the bitter animosities created by a faction fight of a score of years could not be healed by Governor Simpson's social tact and by his kindly smiles alone. The union must be based on essential justice to all and must be blessed with manifest success. This had practically been achieved before the Governor was installed into his exalted office.

The credit of it lies with the Governor and Committee in London, and in particular with Simpson's former chief, Andrew Colvile. Care was taken that the terms of union were humiliating to none, and that the reorganized Hudson's Bay Company had its monopoly unassailed. True, the final arrangements did not give the Wintering Partners the full half of the profits of the trade as sketched at first. For this, Dr. McLoughlin and probably one or two others of the Northwester Wintering Partners harboured a quiet resentment against the Governor and Committee, oblivious of the fact that neither did the old Hudson's Bay Company enjoy their proposed full half of the profits of the trade. In the height of the negotiations with the Wintering Partners of the North West Company represented by McLoughlin and Angus Bethune, there appeared in London also suing for union, Simon M'Gillivray as agent of that company and Edward Ellice its London representative. The final terms were based on the inclusion, not of two parties sharing equally in the trade, but three. Andrew Colvile had two sound reasons for including the agents of the rival company, although they had been the arch-conspirators in the plot to destroy Lord Selkirk's colony, and had egged the service on against the Englishmen. To begin with, they were the *legal* representatives of the North West Company, and it remained uncertain whether all the Wintering Partners who had given powers of attorney to McLoughlin would, in the issue, come into a union.[1] In the next place, had the agents been left out, they would have formed a new, if much weaker, North West Company, and the rivalry would have been renewed. By including both the Wintering Partners and the agents, Colvile secured a complete union, at the price of a tripartite division of the

profits, it is true, with all parties acclaiming the monopoly. Moreover, Parliament had become conscious of the misfortune of the faction fight in the North-West and was anxious to end it. To a concern that included all parties, it gave its blessing, and in 1821 passed an Act[2] offering a license for twenty-one years conferring the monopoly of the Indian trade of the vast region beyond Rupert's Land, which later came to be known as the North-West Territory in distinction from the chartered territory. Thus at one stroke the new Hudson's Bay Company secured a parliamentary recognition of the Charter which had been granted to it by Royal Prerogative in 1670, involving the monopoly of the trade and the ownership of the soil of Rupert's Land; and now with it the monopoly of the Indian trade beyond to the shores of the Pacific, the sole limiting proviso being the equal freedom assured by the so-called Treaty of Joint-occupancy of 1818 to American citizens to trade within the Pacific Slope. The advantages of such a complete union were so full of promise, and in the issue proved so great that the old enmities speedily disappeared, and all parties learned to sing the praises of the New Hudson's Bay Company and to exalt its monopoly. Northwesters, who all their lives had been proclaiming from the housetop the nullity of the Charter, now joined their old opponents in a vociferous chorus emphasizing its validity.

Further, it contributed to a speedy harmony that the terms of union inflicted humiliation upon neither company. Each made its important contribution to the united concern. The Hudson's Bay Company brought to it its hoary Charter and the monopoly of the trade of Rupert's Land. It also gave its matchless handling of the fur trade in London and the solidity of a company whose

stockholders were wealthy men looking on the fur trade as a good investment rather than as a means of acquiring a fortune. A century earlier, the Company had survived a period of twenty-eight years without paying a dividend. Its ability to finance the trade was certain, whereas the suspicions of the Wintering Partners of the North West Company that their agents in Montreal, McTavish, M'Gillivrays & Co., had been bankrupted by the ruinous strife in the North-West were verified within three years. Finally, the Hudson's Bay Company gave to the union the use of the short and cheap route by Hudson Strait to the English market, and Lord Selkirk's colony providing cheap provisions grown in the country and cheap labour brought up in the conditions of the fur trade.

The North West Company made a comparable contribution of its own to the united concern in a splendid band of winterers, in its valuable trade in the Pacific Slope, as yet out of the reach of the English company. Finally, the constitution of the New Hudson's Bay Company incorporated in a more active form than the English concern had hitherto done the system of the Wintering Partners assembling in a council to consider the arrangements for the coming trading season, and to co-ordinate district with district.

Not the least important influence in securing happy collaboration of the former rivals was the dividends increasing as the years passed until what may be described as the Golden Age of the fur trade was reached —in 1822, 4 per cent.; in 1825, 10 per cent. and a bonus of 10 per cent. Of course, this must largely be credited to Governor Simpson, for it was the result of his good management.

It should be noted that the Hudson's Bay Company did not throw into the united concern what may be described as its private assets, its property in London or the possession of the soil in virtue of the Charter. The terms of the union contemplated simply the profits of the trade of each successive season. These were divided by the Deed Poll[3] and allied documents between the three parties to the union. The former agents of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, now agent, each got thirty shares. The winterers of the two companies, as the third party, got forty shares. For the purpose of distribution among these winterers, the forty shares were subdivided into eighty-five shares, and the winterers—approximately an equal number from each company—were separated into two ranks, Chief Factors and below them Chief Traders. Twenty-five Chief Factors were given each two shares; twenty-eight Chief Traders received one share each. Seven shares were reserved as allowances to be enjoyed by retired Officers, according to their rank and service.

In the area within which the Company enjoyed a monopoly (that is outside of the Department of Montreal, which included the open trade of the valley of the St. Lawrence) there were to be two Departments, each with its Council. The Southern Council supervised the trade of the basin of James Bay, its chief centre being the depot Moose Factory. The Northern Council watched over the trade of York and Churchill Factories with their hinterlands and of the North-West and the Pacific Slope. The Chief Factors constituted the members of the respective Councils, having each a vote, while it was later arranged that Chief Traders present at the scene would be invited to sit at the meetings, but without

a vote. The president of the Council was an agent of the Company, bearing the title of Governor, the term used in the Charter. He was appointed by the Governor and Committee in London.

At the union two Governors were appointed, both already in the country, Governor William Williams and George Simpson. The Governor and Committee felt that Governor Williams, the fighting Governor, who had executed the dramatic stroke of arresting the Partners of the North West Company at Grand Rapids on the Saskatchewan, would not be a healing force at the head of the Northern Department, the scene of the violences of the past. His feelings were considered by giving him precedence over Simpson whenever the two were together,[4] but he was persuaded to take the Southern Department, while the suave Simpson became Governor of the Northern Department, incomparably the more extensive and more valuable of the two.

On receiving his commission, Simpson wrote to Andrew Colvile: "To you I owe everything". When Governor Williams retired in 1826, Simpson acted as Governor in the Southern Department. In 1839 he was made Governor-in-Chief. By this time, in fact in 1831, the King's Posts on the lower St. Lawrence were leased by the Company and in 1836 forts were established in Labrador. Governor Simpson thus held sway from the Atlantic to the Pacific over a truly continental domain.

Such was the stage on which George Simpson was to play his part during thirty-nine years. It has been necessary to picture it with care, so as to be able to estimate the man. At the very outset, then, it is clear that George Simpson did not create the realm over which he ruled. It was the work of the hands of the Board in

London, led by Andrew Colvile, and Colvile chose him as gifted with the business habits, and the capacity for governing, to play his double part, as Servant of the Company, and as Governor in its territories.

The Company's "Faithful Obedient Humble Servant"

It is natural that writers unfamiliar with the relations of Governor Simpson with the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company in London and able to see the policy of the Company only in Simpson's acts should have made him, as it were, the embodiment of the Company and should have attributed to him plans which really emanated from the Board. The result is that they have drawn a picture of the man somewhat larger than life. The truth is that the Governor and Committee in London have always been the predominant influence in the policy pursued, and its personnel in Simpson's time was such as to preclude any possibility of its becoming a mere machine registering the will of the governor overseas, no matter how able a man he might be.

Andrew Colvile was, to all appearance, the most potent influence on the Board from 1810 on to the union, and, though the evidence is less patent thereafter, right through to the end of his life. The reorganization of the Company in 1810, which began its recovery, was the product of his mind, as also the establishment of Selkirk's colony, so far as the Company was concerned. From their beginning to their end, the negotiations for the union were in his hand, and they only finally came before the Committee and the General Court. Simpson had been but a clerk in Colvile's counting-house, and was

chosen by him to be Governor overseas, *locum tenens*. It is not conceivable that the relations of the two men should have been suddenly reversed, and that Simpson should have become the dominating mind, with Colvile his passive instrument. Moreover, Colvile remained on the Committee without break to within four years of the death of Simpson himself in 1860; in 1839 he became Deputy-Governor, and in 1852 was elected Governor of the Company, dying in 1856.

Similarly, John Henry Pelly, member of the Committee from 1806, Deputy-Governor from 1812 to 1822, and finally Governor for the thirty years from that date to 1852, when he died, was not the type of man which simply registers other men's views. He had served in the Navy, and became Elder Brother and finally Deputy-Master of Trinity House; he became a Commissioner of Lieutenancy for the City of London, and acted in a similar capacity and as a magistrate for the County of Essex; he engaged in business in a large way, and became a director of the Bank of England in 1840. Towards the end of his life, Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, conferred a baronetcy on him "in recognition of his distinguished career." Governor Pelly's letters to Simpson show that he never took his hand off the steering-wheel of the Company.

Nicholas Garry did not play so conspicuous a part, but he was nonetheless an active member of the Board. He came to it in 1817, and was deputed in 1821 to visit the Company's territory to inaugurate the union. He travelled from Montreal by the old route of the North-westers to the Red River Settlement, where he enquired carefully into the Company's business and into Selkirk's colony.[5] (Fort Garry was named after him). On his

return from the first councils of the union held at Norway House and York Fort, he was elected Deputy-Governor and acted as such till 1835.

Benjamin Harrison, Pelly's brother-in-law, though a less conspicuous member of the Board, was a formative influence within the ambit of his own ideals. He was treasurer of Guy's Hospital, London, from 1797 on till his death fifty years later, in 1856. He was Deputy-Governor of the South Sea Company, and Chairman of the Exchequer Loan Board; and he was selected as one of the three Appeal Commissioners for the City of London on the first imposition of an income tax. As a member of the Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1807 to 1854, and as Deputy-Governor from 1835 to 1839, his knowledge of the Company's business, acquired by assiduous attendance, must have been great. He was a member of the group of earnest Evangelicals known as the Clapham Sect, among whom Lord Selkirk was numbered. His special interest lay in the Company's religious policy. Lord Selkirk had brought the Catholic Mission to the half-breeds on the east side of the Red River, at the present St. Boniface. Harrison was the chief mover in securing the support of the Church Missionary Society for the Mission of the Church of England on the west bank, and in having Rev. John West appointed as chaplain of the Company at Fort Garry and as its clerical visitor at such posts as were convenient on a summer's journey which brought him to York Fort—this before Simpson became Governor. Simpson initiated nothing here, nor was it in his nature so to do. His conception of religion probably went no farther than the conventional view of his time, that the Church was an excellent institution for teaching the lower orders to

respect and obey their superiors. There is distinct evidence that he saw no good in the policy advocated by Rev. John West, the Company's chaplain, and by Benjamin Harrison the religious enthusiast. He wrote confidentially to Andrew Colvile on May 20, 1822:[6]

> "Mr. West has some idea that through the interest and exertions of Mr. Harrison a fund may be raised or got from some of the Charities to open schools for the instruction and maintenance of Native Indian children; he takes a very sanguine view of this scheme which is to diffuse Christian Knowledge among the natives from the shores of the Pacific to those of the Bay and will no doubt on paper draw a very fine representation of the advantages to be derived therefrom, which may attract the attention of Philanthropists, but in my humble opinion will be attended with little other good than filling the pockets and bellies of some hungry missionaries and schoolmasters and rearing the Indians in habits of indolence; they are already too much enlightened by the late opposition and more of it would in my opinion do harm instead of good to the Fur Trade. I have always remarked that an enlightened Indian is good for nothing; there are several of them about the Bay side and totally useless, even the half Breeds of the Country who have been educated in Canada are blackguards of the very worst description; they not only pick up the vices of the Whites upon which they improve but retain those of the Indian in their upmost extent. The Indians of the Country are certainly quick of apprehension and have a thirst for knowledge; they would gladly be relieved of the burthen of maintaining their children, but I suspect the plan would not be productive of any real good."

No better evidence could be adduced to show that Simpson did not hold the reins of authority in his hands than that the religious and educational policy pursued

by the Company during his career as Governor awoke little or no enthusiasm in his breast. At the same time, the fact, that throughout, he faithfully carried out the plans of the Committee and at times enlarged them, as when he was the means of introducing the Methodist missionaries into the country, shows that he was their dutiful servant. Consequently, his attitude to the clergy in public was respectful; in private he considered them meddlesome, and he referred to some of their doings with what may be described as little short of scorn.

Similarly, the policy of supporting schools in the Red River Settlement was not Simpson's but Pelly's, as Simpson himself asserts.[7] Accordingly, Simpson, as a servant of the Company, paid due attention to its furtherance, and sought to bring success to the schools. Pelly's interest in education is evidenced by his endowing a school in Upton, Essex, the parish in which he lived.

Another feature in the Company's system with which Simpson had nothing to do in the way of its initiation was its currency. This scheme had been inaugurated at the instance of Governor William Williams, and the Company's one pound and five shilling notes had been sent out the year before Simpson entered into his governorship, and 4,000 one shilling notes arrived at York Fort just as he was entering into his office.

In his *Sir George Simpson*,[8] Dr. George Bryce suggests that it was Simpson that brought cosmos out of chaos at the union: "With great rapidity and yet with business tact Governor Simpson reduced to order the chaotic affairs of the two companies. Learning from the assembled chief factors at Norway House the nature of the trade at every point, a radical policy was pursued of cutting down establishments, withdrawing from unre-

munerative points, distributing the money influence to better advantage, and encouraging the discouraged." This is ascribing too much to the Simpson who, but a little more than a year before, was but a clerk in a London counting-house, and entered his office as Governor with no more than a season's experience of the fur trade. That every superfluous fort where there was opposition was to be abandoned was a prime condition of union as laid down by Andrew Colvile at the very beginning of the negotiations,[9] in his reply to the Wintering Partners of the North West Company who had asked whether the Hudson's Bay Company would be willing to become their agent. That superfluous officers and servants, who might desire it, should find land in Selkirk's colony was one of the conditions of the grant to his lordship in 1811.[10] That the incoming servants should be cared for by the Catholic and Anglican missions was the logical issue of Selkirk's and of Benjamin Harrison's plans and of Pelly's interest in education. The whole Union Settlement, as it may be called, was worked out, first of all, at a Council of the Northern Department held at Norway House on August 11th to 13th, at which, it is true, George Simpson, Governor of but a few weeks, was present, but over which Nicholas Garry, sent out on purpose to effect the settlement, presided. Simpson may have made some suggestions, but the arrangements were the result of the collaborations of Garry with the sixteen Chief Factors present. The "Resolutions" of this Council dealt chiefly with the forts and the fur trade. The arrangements looking to assisting the retiring servants to some place "where they can maintain themselves" were first sketched in the "Public Letters" of the Governor and Committee to Governor Simpson dated February 27th and March

8th, 1822.[11] A plan was to be drawn up for their settlement in the Red River Colony. On February 26th, Mr. Harrison had written in this sense to Rev. John West, the Company's chaplain, and the details of the plan were due to this gentleman. When Simpson met with his Council on July 8, 1822, the plans were discussed, but no formal resolution was adopted. They were put through by the Council held at York Fort on August 20th,[12] at which, not Simpson, but John Halkett, Selkirk's sister's husband, an executor of Selkirk's estate who had recently been at Red River and in communication with Governor Bulger of the colony and with Mr. West, was in the chair by special commission issued by the Governor and Committee in London.

Finally, the policy of eliminating liquor from the trade as far as should prove possible, was due, in part to certain groups in England anxious to see it so, in part to a clause in the Act of 1821 offering a license granting the monopoly of the trade of the farther West, in part also to genuine convictions held by members of the Committee. Simpson's views appear to have been, not so much humanitarian, as those of a keen business man. With liquor at the forts, the Indians would break off hunting beaver as soon as a few furs were secured and would waste time travelling far to enjoy the unprofitable delights of intoxication. Let there be no liquor, and they would devote themselves to the chase.

In the sum, the most intelligent Committee, perhaps, that the Hudson's Bay Company ever had, created the framework within which Governor Simpson was to spend his years, and his greatness as an administrator must be gauged by his success in playing the part on the stage which was set for him. That he satisfied his masters is

evidenced in many a sentence in the letters of the Governor and Committee. His success is registered in the big dividends of the Company, and in the admiration and esteem of the officers under him, as will be seen in due time. Much would depend on his ability to perceive the real desires of the Governor and Committee and his willingness to be the instrument in accomplishing the ends they had in view. In this matter he left nothing to be desired.

It was natural, however, that the newly fledged Governor should make some blunders before he became aware of the full intentions of his masters, and became intimately acquainted with the geography and the resources of the country, and with the problems of the trade. It is a source of wonder that he came so soon to realize the traditions and to himself breathe the spirit of the Company. His greatest blunder came at the very beginning. It was due to his not appreciating the blend of philanthropy and good business which led to the foundation of Selkirk's colony.

The Company enjoyed the monopoly of the trade with the Indians in its own chartered territory. The license of 1821 gave it a like monopoly, without the possession of the soil, in the far west. It was its aim to have this absolute control of the trade a reality. Powers of attorney were sent out in the spring of 1822[13] for all the Commissioned Officers to act in defending it, and formal notices were also forwarded to be served on "every British Subject entering the Territory." Governor Simpson duly passed these on to the men in charge of the posts, among others to John Clarke in command of Fort Garry in the heart of Selkirk's colony. The self-important Clarke was unwilling to recognize Captain

Bulger, the newly appointed Governor of the colony, as having jurisdiction of any kind over the Company and over him, not even within the limits of Assiniboia itself. He interpreted the formal notice about the monopoly as applying to the settlers in the colony in all their dealings with the natives. They must have no trade of any kind with the Indians or half-breeds, but must supply their wants from Fort Garry. He had authority from Simpson for this stand. Moreover, Resolution 69 of the Northern Council held at York Factory on July 8th, 1822, Simpson in the chair, ran: "Mr. Clarke be permitted to furnish Pemican for the People of the Colony at a price not less than 10d p. pound."[14]

But the grant to Selkirk, while precluding the colonists from engaging in the fur trade as a business, envisaged a colony with an economic life within itself. Provision was made for exports to England—presumably wool, hemp and the like, easily carried over the portages. The Hudson's Bay Company was to convey the goods at the usual rates and these were to be deposited in the warehouse of the Company in London on arrival, no doubt, to prevent an illicit trade in furs. The question whether the colonists could trade with the Indians and with the half-breeds for provisions, leather, and furs for their domestic use was not touched on. That much can be said for Simpson's and Clarke's denial of the right of the colonists to traffic with the natives.

But pemmican could be bought of the half-breeds and Indians at the settlement at a lower rate than that fixed at Fort Garry. Clarke treated purchases by the settlers of the colony as a breach of the Company's monopoly, and made proclamation accordingly. It was fortunate for the economic freedom of the settlement that Bulger

was an irascible man and as an officer in the King's army (with a large vocabulary of oaths) not accustomed to submit to nonsense, least of all from a common trader. He sent an express canoe to Montreal with an appeal to be forwarded to Colvile, executor of Lord Selkirk's estate, in London. In the ordinary course of things the matter came to the notice of the Company. The Governor and Committee conveyed their mind to Governor Simpson on May 21, 1823.[15] Clarke's action was condemned as "tending to bring into contempt the authority and privileges of the Company and to throw the whole settlement into confusion." He totally misconceived his rights and powers as Chief Factor and seemed to think he was superior to the Governor (Bulger). "There never was such a mistake." His assertion that the Company had the right to prevent the Indians from trading in provisions was totally unfounded. "The Company has no such right. It never was the Company's intention to prevent settlers from procuring skins for their own use"—only from entering the fur trade as a business. In his reply, dated August 25, 1823,[16] Simpson rode off by deploring "the unfortunate differences which took place last winter at Red River between Mr. Bulger and Mr. Clarke." In other letters he relieved his feelings by pointing out the private vices of Bulger and by abusing Clarke roundly.

There was that in George Simpson's cast of mind which fitted in with the methods of the Company to a remarkable degree. The Governor and Committee in London kept themselves aware of the course of things in the territory by an elaborate system of written reports. Captains of ships accounted for themselves in the logs of their ships. Officers in charge of forts in their journals

indicating the doings at the post from day to day. Governors and their Councils made their annual reports, with criticisms and suggestions about their work. Simpson's reports took the forms of a copy of the minutes of the Council, and of his letters "public" and "private" which explained very succinctly yet in the bulk at great length the purport of the "Resolves", the conduct of the several districts in turn beginning with "Mackenzie River" in the far North-West, the desires of the Councils, and the plans of the future. These documents would be carefully studied by members of the Committee and by the Secretary in particular, and all important points would be discussed at the Board and commented on in their "Public Letter" out. That this was not done in a perfunctory manner is manifested by the comments and enquiries, at times, for explanations. On one occasion, Governor Pelly pointed out the date of a letter by Simpson to a correspondent, the suggestion being that there was room for an explanation of the delay, possibly needless, in taking the matter up. The unbroken harmony of Simpson's relations with the Board must be attributed to the careful and detailed statements sent in about his doings and about the proceedings of the Councils, and not less to the factual element in his reports, which must have given the Board the feeling that they saw the whole situation. To this add the remarkable soundness of Simpson's judgment.

Further, the practices of the trade were cast into a series of "Regulations", a sort of code of laws to which, not only the servants, but the Company and Simpson alike adhered. The spirit in which these were enforced may well be illustrated by an incident in connection with which James Douglas, afterwards Governor of

British Columbia, rebuked Mr. A. C. Anderson, a clerk under Dr. John McLoughlin and himself, for an ill-mannered and ill-tempered letter to McLoughlin, out of keeping with the "Regulations" which commanded subordination and polite obedience on the part of the lower servants to their superiors. To Anderson's subsequent plea that it was a trifling deviation from orders that he had been guilty of, Douglas wrote: "We hear of trifling deviations from orders; now there can be no such thing as trifling deviation, for whether in trivialities or in grave matters, the principle in question is, in both cases, equally endangered and equally outraged; therefore all that can be heard in extenuation of such offences is a simple statement of facts, which may be approved or not, according to circumstances."[17] This may be taken as the spirit in which Simpson, not only ruled his officers, but acted himself.

Yet, given adequate reasons, the Officer could ignore the "Regulations". For example, no Officer could leave his District and "come out" to the depot without the permission of Governor Simpson. If he did so he must justify himself. Even Simpson could not go to England without the consent of the Governor and Committee.

On February 15, 1837, the Governor and Committee wrote Governor Simpson that, if not injurious to the business of the Country, his presence in London during the following winter would be useful. Probably they had in mind certain negotiations with the Russian Fur Company in the interests of which he visited Russia and later met Baron Wrangell at Berlin. But as it proved, a situation threatened to emerge in Canada which would have justified his crossing to England, permission or no permission. From the point of view of the Com-

pany, it was a weakness that the license by which it enjoyed the monopoly of the trade with the Indians beyond the chartered territory had to be renewed at the end of each period of twenty-one years, for the expiry of the current license was sure to become the signal for an agitation against the monopoly conferred by it upon the Company. The first license would have to be renewed in 1841. The question of its renewal would become a matter of discussion in the years immediately previous. On Simpson's return to Lachine, then his headquarters, in September 1836, he happened on the Hon. George Moffat, a member of the Legislative Council of Lower Canada. This gentleman informed him that it was intended to bring a resolution into the Assembly of the Province praying the Imperial Government to abolish the monopoly by refusing to renew the license.[18] Of course, such a plea from Canada would have great weight with the Home Government. To a man like Simpson, the bare knowledge of the possibility of the scheme, so imprudently revealed by Moffat, meant action. He immediately took ship and arrived in London in December. It may be taken for certain that had he appeared on the scene without leave, he would have been nonetheless welcomed. Actually, he was set to prepare a report of the administration of the Company since the union. It was written in glowing terms, but, it must be admitted, in keeping with the actual case, as compared with the chaos which preceded the union. This the Governor and Committee laid before the Colonial Minister, Lord Glenelg, with the plea that the license be immediately renewed.[19] As his lordship was greatly interested in the welfare of the natives throughout the Empire and would be particularly pleased at

the extent to which liquor had been eliminated from the trade, he proved not only a willing but an ardent supporter of the Company's petition. The Treasury demurred at renewing the license before it had expired and demanded a yearly payment for its renewal. To all appearance, the plea of Spring-Rice, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in favour of the Company settled the matter. The license was renewed in 1838, three years before its expiry was due.

In general, it may be said that, while Simpson knew how to be an obedient servant of the Company, he had the judgment to perceive when he could set aside the "Regulations". Throughout, there was nothing supine in his service. He never forgot that he was Governor as well as servant. His was the responsibility of keeping the Board well-informed, and even of urging them, if need be, to do what they might be unwilling to contemplate. Of Anglo-Saxon sturdiness of character, he was not afraid to voice his opinions. Yet he knew that he could only win their support by a reasoned argument supported by an array of facts. Take as an example his plea on behalf of Cuthbert Grant, the half-breed son of the redoubtable Norwester of that name, and leader of the band of half-breeds which perpetrated the Massacre of Sevenoaks, and who was, in a sense, the cause of the second destruction of Selkirk's colony. If there was any individual concerned in the violences of the past whom Andrew Colvile, Lord Selkirk's brother-in-law, could not forgive, it would surely be this young man, whose band shot down the Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land and twenty colonists, and brought sorrow and a fierce indignation to his lordship. Yet Simpson ventured to write him urging that Grant be taken into the service of

the Company. As an example of his manner of dealing with a subject which he must have known would be distasteful to his correspondent, the passage may well be given. It was written at Fort Garry on May 20, 1822,[20] on Simpson's arrival there during his first inspection of the posts.

"Here [at Fort Hibernia] I met the celebrated Cuthbert Grant who altho' out of the Service was by Mr. Garry allowed to remain with Mr. McDonald last winter; this young man I met as if a stranger to his character, and had occasion to see a good deal of him as he attended me to Brandon House being apprehensive that the Assiniboines knowing my quality might be inclined to avenge their imaginary wrongs on my person. In the course of our Journey, Grant opened his situation to me, but no fresh light could be thrown on the unfortunate affair of the 19th June, [1816]; He denied in the most solemn manner any previous intention of Collision, and assured me that the melancholy catastrophe was entirely the result of the imprudent attack made upon them by Mr. Semple's party, and once the Indian blood was raised, his utmost efforts could not arrest the Savage Revenge of his associates: whether this be true or not, I am unable to determine, but from his feeling to the McGillivrays I am satisfied he would come out with all he knew if he had anything of importance to say. Grant is now about 25 Years of Age, an active clean made fellow, possessing strong natural parts and a great deal of cool determination; his manners are mild and rather pleasing than otherways. He admits that he was made a tool of by A. McDonell and being a very young man at the time thought it his duty to execute or even anticipate the wishes of his Superior whether right or wrong, and from that mistaken notion of Duty or Loyalty was the person selected for all desperate undertakings. That he is a man of good disposition at bottom I have no doubt, but has been really

misguided which he now seems to feel sensibly. He says, and John McDonald assures me it is correct, that the McGillivrays have £14,000 belonging to him in their hands, altho' they admit no more than from 4 to £5,000; he has never had any statement of his Father's affairs from them, and they have evaded every application he has made on that score and is now going to Canada and from there to England for the purpose of getting them settled. He is most anxious to be again admitted into the Service and I am satisfied that it would be highly gratifying to all the North West party in this Country if it could be effected as he is a general favourite and they feel that he has been badly used by those whose business it was to have protected him. The Young Man I believe has no inclination to be troublesome, but with his means he could be very much so; in this Country he will pass the remainder of his Days as he is attached to it and will find his way back as early as possible; the half-breeds and Indians of this part of the country look up to him with great respect; indeed there is not a Man in the Country possesses half the influence over them, and if pushed to desperation by neglect of his superiors, or the taunts of his inferiors he might be a dangerous character; I am therefore of opinion that it might be policy to overlook the past and if you did not object to it [he] might be smuggled quietly into the Service again or might be imployed as a leader of halfbreed hunters in the projected expedition to the South branch of the Saskatchewan. Several of the North West Gentlemen and Grant himself did solicit that I would intercede for him, but my reply was that I could not attempt it with the Committee, but might sound some Member thereof upon the subject."

In the following spring the Board gave Simpson authority to take Grant into the service. The young man was, however, of too restless a disposition for the monotonous life of a fur-trading post. With the Com-

pany's permission, he settled in the following year at White Horse Plain, at the "crossing-place" of the Assiniboine River about sixteen miles west of Fort Garry, with the prevention of illicit trading on the part of his fellow half-breeds with the Americans as his principal duty. In 1828 he was formally appointed Warden of the Plains, with the additional position of leader of the buffalo hunt, conferred on him each year by his fellow hunters. In the course of years it became evident that Simpson's judgment of his character was correct. He was made Justice of the Peace and magistrate and sheriff for his district under the Council of Assiniboia. In 1839 he was placed on the council itself, and acted as a member of the Board of Works of the colony.

Simpson, then, was much more than "most obedient and humble servant" to the Governor and Committee. He was at the same time their adviser and guide. He proved a frank and courageous counsellor and leader, seeking to keep his masters in the way of wisdom and efficiency.

V

Governor Simpson and His Councils

V

Governor Simpson and His Councils

GOVERNOR SIMPSON'S powers were limited on the one side by the active supervision of the Governor and Committee in London; they were checked on the other in the Company's territories by the existence of a constitution of a kind, manifested in the annual meetings of Councils.

The territories were divided into two great "Departments". There was no very definite dividing line between them. Roughly, the Indians of the border who took their furs into the western watershed, that of the broad Hudson Bay, were counted as in the Northern Department, while those who took their peltries towards the valley of the Albany and James Bay were in the Southern. The Northern Department included not only the pertinent part of the chartered territory, but also the valleys of the Athabaska, Peace, and Mackenzie rivers, and what was called "The West of the Mountains", namely the Pacific Slope. Of this wide domain from Hudson Bay to the Pacific Ocean George Simpson was Governor from the inception of the union. He was present at the first Council of the union, held at Norway House on August 11, 1821, as has been seen.

The Southern Department was confined more to the chartered territory, but it included the posts on the Great Lakes, Fort William, Michipicoton, and Sault Ste. Marie, which were strictly in Upper Canada; also the east shore of Hudson Bay, the "East Main" of the documents including Fort Chino on Ungava Bay established in 1830. When Governor Williams retired from this Department in 1826, it was finally decided that Simpson should act as Governor in his place, and after his first inspection should pass the winter in Montreal.[1] The first Council presided over by him was held at Moose Factory on James Bay in the days before September 5, 1827.

Beside the area covered by the Councils there was the line of fur trade posts in the valley of the St. Lawrence, brought into the union by the North West Company. To these must be added the King's Posts, fur trade areas leased, during the French regime and after, by the respective Crowns; they were on the lower St. Lawrence from Tadoussac at the mouth of the Saguenay seaward. After a period in which the lease lapsed, the Hudson's Bay Company secured them once more in 1831. In subsequent years the operations of the Company were extended to Hamilton Inlet at Esquimaux Bay in Labrador (1836). This expanding trade area was the Department of Montreal. As the Company had no rights of government, there was no Council in it. Here at least Governor Simpson's word was law, subject to the Board.

In 1836 the District of Assiniboia, that is Selkirk's colony, was transferred back to the Company.[2] It continued to have its own Council, however.

Thus, when Simpson was made Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land in 1839 with authority over all the terri-

tories and interests of the Hudson's Bay Company for judicial and other purposes, he ruled from the Atlantic coast at Labrador to the Pacific shore from the mouth of the Columbia River northward to the Russian territory of Alaska—a truly princely domain. Yet it was only in the Montreal Department that he could play the part of autocrat, under the Board in London. Elsewhere, once a year, he had to face the Chief Factors in Council. It is eloquent of the judgment and insight, of the tact and subtle manipulation of the man that he ruled over this wide, this continental domain for a long succession of years with never a breach with the Board in London, on the one side, and on the other never a break with the Chief Factors assembled as a group in Council. What is not less remarkable is that all through these long years, when there was many a clash between White Men and Red Men staining the soil south of the International Border with the blood of both races, in the vast and lonely lands to the north, where the lives of the Europeans, so to say, lay in the hands of the natives, there was profound peace. Any troubles there were, may be termed local and almost individual instances. Under the Hudson's Bay Company and under Governor Simpson White Men and Red Men lived together in quiet and traded with a justice that brought honour, not simply to the Company, but to the British flag and to the name of Britain.

This great record was partly due to the men of the Great Company, but much credit must be given to the system.

The Northern and Southern Departments were divided roughly into "Districts"—regions marked out, not by boundaries, but by the natural means of communication, and by the convenience of the traders and the Indians

alike. There were the Columbia District, comprising the valley of the Columbia and the Pacific Coast, and later made to include the District of New Caledonia, the shaggy north interior of the present British Columbia; the Mackenzie River District, expanding into the valley of the Yukon; the Athabaska District, including Peace River; the "English River" District, comprising most of the Churchill ("English") River; the Saskatchewan District. These great and well-defined regions may be said to have been permanent. Districts east of them were subject to readjustments.

At the head of each District would be, almost always, a Chief Factor. In the largest, there might be a Chief Factor his junior and Chief Traders, each occupying in the eyes of the Indians something like a throne in his own post. All of these Officers, but especially the Chief Factor at the head of the District, while subject to the Council, to Governor Simpson, and to the Board in London, had a freedom of action and a control within his charge which brought him the obedience of the Service and the reverence of the natives. This was greatly enhanced by the ceremonial with which the Chief Factor's position was exalted. Even in the old days the Indians' arrival at a post in a band was marked by solemn procedure—the salutation of the fort with a volley from the visitors; a return salute from the fort, in these times at Edmonton with a salvo from the old guns in the bastions more dangerous to those who served them than they could ever be to any enemy that might attempt an assault. Then came the procession through the gate and the open yard to the quarters of the Chief Factor in charge, ending with a solemn council with him about the happenings in the trade, and the hunt for furs and provisions.

Sir George Simpson, from the picture in his "Narrative of a Journey Round the World, 1842."

Similarly, the movements of the Chief Factor abroad were attended with practices devised to enhance his importance. J. W. McKay of the Company's service has described the picturesque journeys of a Chief Factor:[3]

> "This exalted functionary was lord paramount; his word was law; he was necessarily surrounded by a halo of dignity, and his person was sacred, so to speak. He dressed every day in a suit of black or dark blue, white shirt, collars to his ears, frock coat, velvet stock and straps to the bottom of his trousers. When he went out of doors he wore a black beaver hat that was worth forty shillings. When travelling in a canoe or boat, he was lifted in and out of the craft by the crew; he still wore his beaver hat, but it was protected by an oiled skin cover, and over his black frock he wore a long cloak made of Royal Stuart tartan lined with scarlet or dark blue bath coating. . . . He carried with him an ornamental bag, technically called a 'fire-bag', which contained his tobacco, steel and flint, touchwood, tinderbox, and brimstone matches. In camp his tent was pitched apart from the shelter given his crew. He had a separate fire, and the first work of the boat's crew after landing was to pitch his tent, clear his camp, and collect firewood sufficient for the night, before they were allowed to attend to their own wants. Salutes were fired on his departure from a fort and on his return. All this ceremony was considered necessary; it had a good effect on the Indians; it added to his dignity in the eyes of his subordinates."

Picture, then, the Chief Factors journeying with elaborate ceremonial from their several Districts to Council at York Fort, or as oftenest happened after 1833 at Norway House, and finally sitting at the great table described by Simpson as the "Green Board", at the head of which the Governor presided. Accustomed to command in their Districts, and surrounded on the journey

with the pomp and circumstance due to their office, these Commissioned Officers would scarcely be found plastic in the hands of the Governor. Indeed, all through the history of the Hudson's Bay Company the respectful frankness of the chief officers to the Governor and Committee is a marked feature. In Simpson's day and to him, it was not otherwise. It may be taken for certain, then, that it was not by brute power that the Governor controlled his Councils, but by his business efficiency, by his insight and breadth of view, by his sound judgment and by the appeal of his personality to a sturdy race of men.

In the first few years the situation must have been difficult for the new Governor. He had had but a year's experience as a Factor in command of a post. There faced him men like Colin Robertson and John Clarke who had been a quarter of a century and more in the trade, and who felt that their knowledge and experience were such that the Governor should be pliant in their hands. Moreover, in those first years, Simpson made mistakes which show that he was still unacquainted with the physical features of the country, and with the mental make-up of the servants of the lower order. At the Council held at Norway House on June 24th, 1822, eleven Chief Factors being present, he induced them to occupy the Southern Saskatchewan with the view of drawing the American Indians of the Missouri River northward across the border into trade with the Company. On account of a deficit of £4,000 in the trade of the North Saskatchewan region, it was proposed to abandon it, at least for a number of years, in favour of the South Branch, should the expedition to try the matter out prove successful. While to draw the Missouri Indians north ward was an object to be desired, the whole plan was

based on ignorance of the resources of the South Saskatchewan in the matter of furs and provisions. That river takes a great sweep out into the bald prairies where there was no food for beaver in the form of poplar, aspen and willow, and even the buffalo were scarce during the winter, for they needed the protection of the clumps of bush found in the north in the midst of good prairie grazing ground. Thus, the South Saskatchewan expedition was doomed to failure. Twenty years before, the resources of the region had been tested by the establishment of Chesterfield House at the junction of the Red Deer River of Alberta and the South Saskatchewan. Donald McKenzie, the officer placed in charge of the expedition of 1822-23,[4] built near the old site, but again the result was failure. With it, the plan to abandon the North Saskatchewan was dropped. The truth is that the North Branch, flowing south of a vast bush country the natural home of the beaver and of other fur bearing animals, and at the same time near or mostly actually in the prairie and the wintering ground of the buffalo, was the ideal water-way for the fur-traders. All along, the forts had been on its banks. They got their provisions from the prairies to the south and most of their furs from the forest to the north. So far was the country from being exhausted, under Simpson's supervision it became one of the most profitable Districts in the Northern Department. For the moment, ignorance of the country led to the Governor's ill-fated plan.

A second scheme of the early years which proved ill-judged was Simpson's plan to bring the brigades of distant Athabaska, Peace River, Mackenzie River, and even transmontane New Caledonia by the Churchill River and by Burntwood Portage and River directly east

to Split Lake on the Nelson, and even to York Fort. On August 5, 1822, he reported to the Board that an Indian guide had passed over this water-way and had asserted that it would save from eighteen to twenty days' travel; and he had hopes that the Mackenzie River brigade could be brought that way to York Fort. Simpson was acquainted with the customary route—southward by the Hayes River and Oxford Lake to its sources; westward through difficult country to East River, a branch channel of the Nelson which flows from Winnipeg Lake; then by that lake and the Saskatchewan to Cumberland House; now back northward by the wretched course up the Sturgeon-Weir (justly named by the voyageurs La Rivière Maligne) to Portage du Traite (Frog Portage) by which Churchill River was reached. In view of this round-about route, he was attracted by the direct course of the Burntwood River route[5] westward from Split Lake on the Nelson to the Churchill not far below Portage du Traite. Arrangements were made for the New Caledonia and the Mackenzie River furs to be brought by the Athabaska brigade to Split Lake, where the several inward outfits would await them. But, as will be seen, the voyageurs objected to the route, for there were no posts on it at which they could taste the gaieties of so-called civilized life. They pined for the flesh-pots of the posts on the old route. Moreover, though the Burntwood River was suitable for small canoes, it was difficult for the large freighters. Accordingly, the route was speedily abandoned in favour of that magnificent water-way the Saskatchewan, with its cheerful forts by the way, and abundant fresh meat after the prairies were reached. This became the route to the Columbia and New Caledonia; the Athabaska brigade returned to its old course.

Simpson was quick to perceive his failures and to find satisfactory alternatives to his unfortunate schemes. But, if he was to attain to an ascendancy in the Council, there must be few misjudgments, if possible none at all. He must therefore get an intimate knowledge of the different Districts and of the conditions under which their trade could be made a success. Moreover, he was well aware that one of the most pressing problems of the trade—indeed, it will remain for all time a conspicuous problem of the North-West—was that of transportation. Accordingly, he devoted himself to acquiring an intimate knowledge of his realm by an interesting and spectacular series of voyages, during which he inspected the posts under his charge.

Obsessed by the apparent attractiveness of the Burntwood River route, he first explored the Nelson River down from Norway House, which then stood at its outflow from Lake Winnipeg, doubtless with the view of taking pemmican for the northern brigades to Split Lake, where their depot would be placed. On August 5th, 1822,[6] he was able to report on it from personal observation to the Board; there could not be a finer communication; the portages were few and short; no dangerous rapids and the water abundant; from Split Lake, however, the discharge of the water was immense; there was therefore little danger or trouble descending, but the labour of tracking upstream would be very great; there were seventeen portages to York Fort, mostly less than 500 yards long; during early summer there was danger from ice and snow at these in some places; with high water, there was little to choose between the customary Hayes River route and the Nelson; but if the water were low, the Nelson would be the better route.

That winter the Governor took his first journey of inspection.[7] He left York Fort early in December, therefore, travelling up the Hayes on the ice. He spent the New Year at Norway House, visited Cumberland House during ten days towards the end of January, and, in early February, its outpost on Moose Lake. Then crossing the valleys of the Saskatchewan, the Red Deer and the Swan rivers, he visited Fort Hibernia, near the site of the former North West Company's Fort Alexandria on the upper Assiniboine,[8] finally reaching Qu'Appelle Fort (then situated near the later Fort Ellice[9]) and Brandon House, both on the middle Assiniboine. It was on the last part of the course that he travelled with Cuthbert Grant, as above. He was in the Red River Settlement for three days, when he went south to the Pembina River, where Fort Daer was being abandoned. Here he met the Sioux, who were on the war-path against the half-breed buffalo hunters. With a sufficient force hastily gathered to overawe them, he secured without bloodshed a long peace with that fierce tribe.[10] Returning down the Red River, he paid a visit of six days to the Settlement, and passed to Norway House by way of Fort Alexander at the mouth of Winnipeg River and possibly of any small outposts on the shore of Lake Winnipeg. He met with Council at York Fort on July 8th, 1822. This may be described as a journey round the inner circle of the Company's posts.

In the following year (1822-23), Simpson visited what might be described as the outer circle of posts.[11] He left York Fort on September 9th by the customary route, and visited Norway House, Cumberland House and the post on Isle-à-la-Crosse Lake. So far by canoe. When the ice on the water-way was strong enough for travel he re-

sumed his journey. He crossed from the valley of the Churchill to that of the Athabaska by the beautiful Methy Portage, and arrived at Fort Chipewyan on the shore of Athabaska Lake, opposite his old post Fort Wedderburn, which had been abandoned at the union. Hence, in December and therefore on the ice and probably on foot, he followed Slave River down to Great Slave Lake, where he visited Fort Resolution. Possibly some of the Commissioned Officers of the Mackenzie River District met him here. Returning, he passed up Peace River to Fort Vermilion and Fort Dunvegan. He struck thence southward to the post on Lesser Slave Lake. Making now for the Saskatchewan, he crossed the Athabaska River west of Lac la Biche and reached Fort Edmonton on February 28th. There he remained till the brigade left for the depot (York Fort) on May 10th. Simpson was absent from Edmonton House for a week between March 10th and 17th, 1823, during which time he paid a brief visit to Rocky Mountain House on the north Saskatchewan River within sight of the great range.[12] It was probably during his somewhat long stay at Fort Edmonton that his warm friendship with the genial John Rowand began. Now also, he would learn of the failure of the expedition to the South Saskatchewan and become apprized of the manifold resources of the region drained by the North Branch. At any rate, there was no more thought of abandoning this field even temporarily. Simpson went down to Council at York Fort by that magnificent water-way the Saskatchewan, doubtless enjoying fresh buffalo meat from the prairies to the south and getting glimpses of the rich fur region to the north. As he journeyed he visited Fort Carlton and again Norway House.

In two years the Governor had seen nearly all the posts in the Northern Department east of the Rockies, the conspicuous exceptions being the posts on Mackenzie River and Churchill Fort at the mouth of the Churchill River. Everywhere he had met the Officers in charge in a much freer and more leisurely way than was possible at the scene of the Council, where the business had to be rushed through that the brigades might reach their wintering grounds before the water-ways froze. Doubtless, many life-long friendships were formed. Moreover, the Governor now knew his kingdom, and the problems of its several parts.

But it was not only by his travels that the Governor won a familiarity with his domain. He was kept informed of the doings and of the problems of the Districts, and in contact with their officers, by the system of correspondence and the like which had prevailed with the Company from the beginning. Conformably to the directions of the Board, the Council required daily journals to be kept at the posts, annual reports to be rendered by the Districts[18]—to be placed in the hands of the Governor within forty-eight hours of the arrival of the brigade at the place of Council. It was not possible for the members of the Council to study these during the short period of their stay at the depot, but Governor Simpson with exemplary industry went through them, sooner or later, and mastered the accounts. When he met with the Council, none had the information or the grasp of the business that was his; none could propose the re-adjustments necessary for improvement as he could. Moreover, he had before him the "Public Letter" and the "Private Letters" from the Board embodying the will and the plans of his masters. Because of his knowledge of the

facts, as well as his capacity for business, his insight and his judgment, and finally because he represented the Governor and Committee in London, he gained and maintained his ascendancy over the Council.

Simpson's control over his Councils was further due to his superb business methods. The minutes were kept with the utmost care. Each motion was entered as "Resolve, no. 1", or whatever the number was, and in correspondence was referred to by its number. (Similarly, Simpson's letters to the Board and theirs to him were paragraphed with numbers.) Copies of the minutes were given to the members of the Council, so that all chiefly concerned secured exact information as to the decisions made.

Then too, everything that lent itself to it was reduced to writing in the form of a "Regulation", and exceptions to these regulations could only be made by a resolution of Council, the reason for the exception being embodied in a clause beginning with the "Whereas" dear to the heart of lawyers. For example, there was a regular system of "rotation" by which the Commissioned Gentlemen enjoyed in their turn a year's leave of absence. When any Gentleman declined to accept his "rotation", the next on the list could enjoy it in his stead; or it might be transferred to one who was ill and needed to visit England or Canada or, it might be, Red River Settlement for medical attention. The reason for the transfer was carefully entered along with the statement that a certificate had been produced signed by the doctor nearest to his post.

A matter in which the clerks and Chief Traders were deeply interested was promotion to the rank above them —described by Simpson as "the most important duty we have to perform". The question of procedure first came

up in connection with the election of two Chief Traders in 1824. Simpson proposed[14] that, instead of ballotting, each should transmit to the Board the names which he (the member of Council) should recommend, and all should remain ignorant of the result till the commissions [which gave them their legal authority under the Charter] should be sent out by the Board. In view of a possible tie in the vote, which might be awkward for the Board, and for all, it was moved in amendment that each member of Council should write down the names of his candidates in confidence for the Governor, and that he should declare the names of those who had the greatest number of votes. This course was adopted. Simpson, however, seems to have felt that there were shortcomings in this method. There might be no more than six or eight Chief Factors present at the Northern Council, or even no more than three at the Southern body; their knowledge of the clerks and Chief Traders in the whole service of the Company would necessarily be but slim, and how could they promote the men on their merits? The system ultimately adopted was for all the Chief Factors in the service, whether at the Council or not, to send in their votes to the Governor in confidence, and he transmitted the result to the Board, who issued the commissions according to the result of the voting.

As has been said, it was in keeping with the genius of Simpson and, it must be added, of the Company to lead the Councils to lay down rules for the guidance of the Trade, as it was called. Once laid down, these rules and regulations became, so to say, the law and Simpson could bring the Council to his support in punishing breaches. "The Tariff", that is the rates at which goods were to be traded for skins was fixed—not arbitrarily, but on the

basis of the initial cost, plus transportation and similar expenses. The rate of wages to the servants was also fixed, and when any Officer exceeded them at his post, the excess was charged against his personal account. The rule was that each Commissioned Officer going to the Council must travel with his brigade and supervise its journey. When John Clarke left his brigade working its way up the Hayes River, and went forward in a light canoe to Norway House, apparently simply to enjoy the ease and gaieties of that post, the cost of the canoe was charged to his personal account by a Resolve of Council. "Resolve 87" of the Council held at York Fort on July 8th, 1822, tells its own story: "That a Mulct of one years salary be deducted from the Monies of Mr. Henry Sayer, in the Company's hands, in consequence of his disobeying orders to attend this season at York Factory, and appropriating to his own use the Services of five of the Company's most useful Servants for purpose of conveying him to Fort William."

Further illustration is needless. The old free and easy practices of the time before the union, and especially the unrestraint of the old North West Company, gave way to a reign of law and order. Extravagances passed away under a system of planned economy embodied in a code of rules. When the old Northwester Ferdinand Wentzell of the Mackenzie River District in 1824 said: "the North West Company is now beginning to be ruled by a rod of iron", he was not referring, as some have thought, to the autocratic ways of Simpson, but to control over the Officers which came with the rules and regulations. These rules first appear as individual "Resolves". The progress towards gathering them into something like a code can be seen in Resolve 99 of the Council held at

York Factory on July 1st, 1824,[15] which gathered into a group of seventeen consecutive resolutions the findings of previous Councils, the same "to be considered till rescinded as forming part of the General regulations for the management of trade." They were circulated as part of the minutes. They appear at the end of the minutes of the Council of 1836 as "Standing Rules and Regulations".[16]

Recall the situation before the union when, as John Tod put it, "Might was right", when too many of the traders did "that which was pleasing in their own eyes", and compare it with the well-regulated trade of 1825 and the achievement of George Simpson in the short space of four years can be estimated. There must have been many a tussle in Council, especially with men like John Clarke, Colin Robertson, and William McIntosh who gloried in the liberty of former times, but the equal temper and genial ways of Simpson, and the essential reasonableness of his regulations carried the Council with him. His method of managing the Council may be gathered by his recommendation to Chief Factor John George McTavish when he was to act as Simpson's substitute for the occasion as chairman at the Southern Council.[17] "Let me entreat that you keep temper and do not allow yourself [to] be drawn into altercation with any of those who may be there; you can gain neither honour nor glory by quarrelling with them but can twist them round your finger by setting about it properly." By living up to these principles Simpson, so far from losing control of the Council, won its admiration and loyal following. On July 9th, 1825, at the close of the meeting of the Northern Council of that year held at York Factory, fifteen Chief Factors and seven Chief Traders appended their signatures to an

address to their Governor,[18] congratulating him upon his presiding over Council "so ably" and expressing their "most grateful acknowledgements for the devoted attention and unremitting exertions . . . so uniformly evinced throughout [his] whole management, more particularly for the great retrenchment and amelioration introduced by [his] trip of 1822," and on the results of his visitation of the District of Columbia (which is described below).

The Governor, in reply,[19] expressed the deep satisfaction which the appreciation expressed by the Council gave him. "My humble exertions to promote the general interests, which you are pleased to estimate so highly, could have done little towards attaining the object in view had I not been favoured with your liberal and Friendly support and uniformly steady co-operation for which my most grateful acknowledgements are due, and to *our joint* endeavours and the enlightened direction of the Honourable Committee can alone be ascribed the present flattering appearance of our affairs. The toils of business are to me a pleasure, situated as I have the good fortune to be, in the confidence of Employers whose high respectability, honour and talent are so eminently conspicuous, and in the estimation of coadjuters who from possessing every good quality I shall ever be proud to call Friends, and I trust you will believe me sincere when I assure you that I am at the summit of my ambition in the place I hold in their confidence and your esteem; which I shall endeavour to retain by the utmost exertions of which my body and mind are capable to promote the general interests."

The Governor and Committee in London contributed largely to a series of regulations reflecting the humanitarian sympathies of Benjamin Harrison and almost

certainly also Andrew Colvile. Of course, these sympathies may have been stimulated to some extent by the desire of the Board to win the approval of certain circles in England. That cannot take away from the fact that the regulations mark a great contrast with what prevailed in the era of violence which preceded the union. At the instance of the Board it became a regulation, oft repeated, "that the Indians be treated with kindness and indulgence, and mild and conciliatory means resorted to in order to encourage industry, repress vice and inculcate morality".[20] On February 27th, 1822, the Governor and Committee wrote to Simpson: "In the course of 2 or 3 years at farthest we think the use of spirits among the Indians of all the best fur countries may be entirely given up, and that the quantities given to them may safely be reduced immediately to 1-3d."[21] On July 8th of that year the Northern Council[22] directed the servants "conformable to the directions of the Honourable Committee" to give no more than half of the quantity of spirits which they had been accustomed to receive as presents, and that no furs were to be traded for that article. A further representation from the Board led the Council of the Northern Department of June 28th, 1826, in order to wean the Indians from the use of spiritous liquors to resolve (no. 130): "That none of that article, either for Trade, Sales, or gratuituous indulgences to Servants or allowances to Officers be imported into English [Churchill] River, Athabasca or Mackenzie River Districts for the current outfit, and that such deficiency be made up by a proportional increase in the Supplies of ammunition and Tobacco." On August 20th of that year Simpson wrote the Board (par. 31) that the quantity of spirits had been gradually reduced and that that season no liquors of any

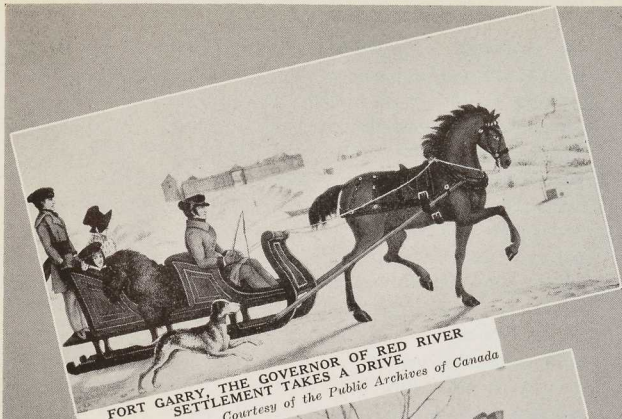
description had been sent north of Cumberland House. It should be said that exceptions to this were the Districts where there was competition with American fur-traders, at Rainy Lake north of the border, and on the Saskatchewan whose Indians might ride over to the American posts on the Missouri. Here the natives could only procure spirits twice in the year, in the autumn when they came to the posts to equip themselves for the hunt, and in the spring when they brought their furs in.

It has been already said that Simpson's view of the trade in spirits was that of a hardheaded business man; it demoralized the Indians, and drew them away from hunting to travel to the posts for a carouse. Quite apart from that, as a good servant of the Board he would exert every effort to have its will registered in resolutions of Council. More than that, as supervisor of the trade he was determined to have regulations once adopted observed strictly, as the following incident recorded in Henry Moberley's reminiscences[23] shows. In the spring of 1857 Moberly was summarily summoned from the upper Saskatchewan River to Norway House. There he was called into the private office of Sir George Simpson, for such was his title by this time. "Young man," the Governor said sharply, "what's this I hear about your being in the habit of drinking with the Indians?" Moberley flared up and said it was a lie, asking the Governor for the source of his information. It appeared that it was the new Chief Factor at Edmonton, whom Moberley had told that he was going to "'drink with the Indians." Moberley explained that now "drinking with the Indians" meant no more in the parlance of the Saskatchewan (come down from wild days of the past)

than trading with them. Sir George laughed heartily, and dismissed the young man.

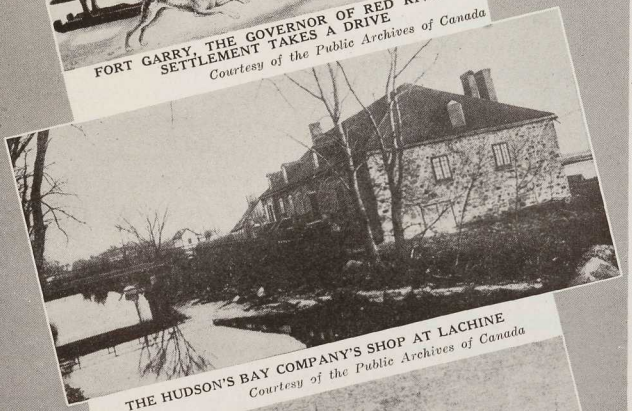
At the end of the Standing Rules and Regulations stood a series entitled "Regulations for Promoting Moral and Religious Improvement." These required the holding of a service every Sunday to be attended by one and all; that books for this purpose be furnished from time to time; that during the week vicious, immoral, and indolent habits be checked and good conduct be encouraged; that all children at the posts be taught their A B C and catechism and suitable prayers; and that the Officer in charge see to the observance of these regulations. From what is known of Simpson it can be assumed that he would not have initiated these himself. They expressed the sentiments of certain members of the Board, possibly not without some consideration of the ideals of a religious element in England. They were, of course, put through the Council by Simpson, and as a faithful servant he would take occasion from time to time to encourage their observance. They cannot be taken as an expression of his genius, except in so far as he may have regarded it as good business to encourage morality and religion. That there was improvement in the servants and even the Indians about the posts is evidenced by the statement of Sir John Richardson before the Select Committee of the House of Commons enquiring into the administration of the Hudson's Bay Company (1857):[24]

> . . . "In 1819, when I accompanied Sir John Franklin out upon his first expedition, the two companies, which were then opposed to each other, the Hudson's Bay and the North West Company, were at war. . . . We found both parties supplying the Indians liberally with spirits. The Indians were spending days in drunkenness at the different



FORT GARRY, THE GOVERNOR OF RED RIVER SETTLEMENT TAKES A DRIVE

Courtesy of the Public Archives of Canada



THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S SHOP AT LACHINE

Courtesy of the Public Archives of Canada

GRAND CANOE RECEPTION TO THE PRINCE OF WALES

Courtesy of Hudson's Bay Company, from "The Beaver"

posts, and a contest altogether shocking to humanity was carried on. At that time it scarcely appeared that the Indians had any capability of being civilised at all. When we went out upon the second occasion, the Hudson's Bay Company having the sole trade of the country, and the sole management of the Indians, there was an improvement; spirits were no longer carried to the north, or they were carried in small quantities then. I think at that time the traders themselves were supplied with a little spirits for their own use; but there was a manifest improvement, although none of the natives of pure blood had become Christians. . . . Upon the last occasion in 1848 a generation of Crees had passed away, 25 years having elapsed, and the new generation were mostly able to read and write (all those that I came in contact with); many of them were labouring for wages for the Hudson's Bay Company, and altogether the country was peaceable from one end to the other."

In the early times the Hudson's Bay Company saw to it that life at their posts on the Bay, for example at York Fort and Albany Fort, was ordered to some extent on the example of military garrison. Prayers were read on Sunday, and all trading was prohibited on that day. Through the week law and order prevailed. The men who in later times went into the interior after being trained in the posts by the Bay kept up the traditions of the depots to a very considerable extent. In this the English posts stood in sharp contrast with those of the North West Company. Then came the score of years of chaotic competition and violence to which Sir John Richardson referred. After the union, the traditions of the Hudson's Bay Company prevailed over the whole area, and the posts to a large extent took on again the orderliness of garrison life. The chief credit for this must lie in the first place with the Governor and Com-

mittee, but some credit must be given to Governor Simpson for carrying the Councils with him in establishing the "Regulations", in upholding the early ideal of orderliness, and in instilling a fine spirit of discipline through the whole service, even though his point of view may have been no more than that of good business.

VI

Governor Simpson and the Selkirk Colony (Red River Settlement), First Phase October 1823 to June 1824

VI

Governor Simpson and the Selkirk Colony

(RED RIVER SETTLEMENT), FIRST PHASE OCTOBER 1823 TO JUNE 1824.

AS Governor of the Northern and Southern Departments, Simpson found the business machine and the traditions associated with it practically in existence; his task was to adjust these to definite objectives and to get the utmost service out of the personnel. In this he succeeded and thereby showed his gifts as an administrator. As will be seen, in the Pacific Slope he had a freer hand. Traditions had to be instilled; a business machine recreated, while the policy had to be sketched and, as occasion called for it, readjusted in keeping with a changing scene. In this also he was successful, and thereby showed that he had a talent for business of the highest order. In the sphere of the Selkirk colony foundations of government had to be laid; governmental institutions had to be established on a firm basis; the loyalty of a population, which might almost be described as a heterogeneous concourse of atoms, had to be won. In this, in reality, his most difficult task, he likewise succeeded, and he thereby showed that he was endowed with the gift of statesmanship.

Selkirk's colony had taken ten years to come into being. The settlers who came in during the governorship of Miles Macdonell were Scottish and Irish. With the arrest of the Governor by the partners of the North West Company in 1815, the colony was dispersed and only a remnant returned to occupy their homes. When Governor Semple and twenty settlers were massacred in 1816 by the band of half-breeds led by Cuthbert Grant in the pay of the North West Company, the colony was once more uprooted. In the following spring the prospect of the arrival of Lord Selkirk himself gave them the courage and the hope needed for the re-establishment of the settlement. As now constituted it was predominantly Scottish. But his lordship introduced two diverse elements into Red River society. For the safety of the colony, he brought in a band of soldiers demobilized from the Swiss De Meuron regiment which had taken part in the war of 1812. They were to be soldier settlers and to constitute a military force ready to defend the colony against possible assault by the Northwesters and their myrmidons. Then, to bring the half-breeds under religious and civilizing influences, his lordship had arranged for the establishment of a Catholic Mission from Quebec on the east side of the Red River, opposite the mouth of the Assiniboine. A migration from French Quebec followed and settled about the church built by the missionaries. But the French half-breeds were disinclined to occupy the site, preferring the confluence of the Pembina River with the Red, about sixty miles upstream, as being nearer the wintering grounds of the buffalo whose meat was their mainstay. After Lord Selkirk's death and at the consumation of the union, his brother-in-law, John Halkett, visited the colony to bring such order

out of the reigning chaos as a visit of inspection might give. Father Dumoulin, doubtless to keep his half-breed flock from the infection of Protestantism, had built a chapel at Pembina and was really founding a little Catholic colony there. Halkett's threat to withdraw from the Mission the support of the Selkirk estate brought the good father and his people back to the site opposite to the Forks. In the year of the union, 1821, a band of Swiss from the cities and even the poorhouses of Switzerland came in. They were craftsmen, watchmakers, and the like, and totally unsuited for an agricultural colony. Finally, as a result of the economies introduced at the union, retiring servants of the Hudson's Bay Company of all ranks came drifting in to add to the medley which soon began to be called The Red River Settlement.

As one came up the Red River from Lake Winnipeg, one passed an Indian settlement at Netley Creek on the right. Farther upstream and again on the right, at St. Andrew's Rapids where Lower Fort Garry now stands, the retiring Officers of the Hudson's Bay Company were gathering. They were well-to-do and naturally amenable to authority. South of these and on the same side, in Kildonan were the Scottish settlers, engrossed in their little farms, hardworking individualists who figured but little in the general life of the community. Presbyterians of the deepest dye, they harboured a grudge against Lord Selkirk's executors and the Hudson's Bay Company for belying the promise of what they considered a regularly ordained minister of their own, and for subjecting them to the ministrations of the clergy of the Church Missionary Society and the ritual of the Book of Common Prayer. Opposite these, that is on the east side of the river the

French half-breeds of the service were beginning to settle. Of these Simpson said:[1] "The Coys old servants, Canadians, are the least troublesome and most attached to us . . . in fact consider themselves under the Coys protection and look up to their representatives as Fathers." At Fort Douglas and Fort Garry, respectively, the administrations of the Colony and the active Officers of the Company were lodged. Opposite them and east of Red River was the Catholic Mission nestling among the homes of the French-Canadians and French half-breeds. On the outskirts of this group and to the north, opposite Fort Douglas headquarters of the colony, and within easy call in case of danger were the De Meuron soldier settlers and the Swiss, whose daughters were largely taken into the soldiers' homes as wives.

It can readily be seen that it would be long before anything like cohesion would appear, if it ever could appear, in such a population, diverse in its racial origins, and nursing wholly diverse traditions. The Selkirk executors decided, and with some reason, that what was needed was a military Governor. They chose Captain Bulger, who had distinguished himself in managing certain groups of Indians during the war of 1812. If Bulger ever cherished dreams of a happy chapter in his career as Governor of Assiniboia, they were soon dispelled. He wrote:[2]

> "By far the greater part of our population . . . are sunk in vice and depravity, and daring enough to despise our laws, and openly to defy our magistrates. The well-disposed part of the community have seen with sorrow and alarm the march of wickedness among them, but could not, without endangering their persons and property, attempt to arrest its course. Even now, no one can be found to interpose and act as magistrate, to such a frightful height has the evil

grown. In short, it is useless to attempt to evade the question. Nothing but the presence of a military force to aid the civil power can prevent the country from becoming very soon a den of thieves, for no honest man will remain in it."

Governor Bulger, in his military way, tried to establish something like law and order, and with some success when he acted in person. He summoned the Council of Assiniboia to meet as a governing body and to dispense justice, but he was innocent of business habits, and, while he gathered a following, it was personal. A military man, he was unconscious of the value of civil institutions in building up an orderly community. The finest thing he did was his attainment of economic freedom for the colony in the face of John Clarke Chief Factor at Fort Garry, who, with the support of Simpson was for preventing the settlers from having any commercial dealings whatever with the Indians and the half-breed buffalo hunters, for furs for domestic use or for provisions for their tables. As has been already indicated, he appealed to the Selkirk executors and these to the Governor and Committee of the Company, and Simpson suffered a great rebuke at the hand of his masters:[3]

"We are sorry to see you have taken a narrow and erroneous view of the relative situation of the Colony and of the Fur Trade. Under proper management the Colony will be of essential use and assistance to the trade, but if mismanaged it will be a constant Source of trouble and vexation. . . . All Monopolies are extremely unpopular at this time, and it is for the interest of all concerned, that no just ground should be afforded for an attack upon the Company. It is upon this account only that we have been so pointed in our instructions as to your Conduct towards the Colony. We do not think that the Fur trade should look to making profits out of its transactions with the Colony."

In the autumn of 1823 Captain Bulger shook the dust of Red River off his feet, leaving Mr. William Kempt in charge in the mean time. The situation seemed to the De Meurons to offer the opportunity to plunder the colony's store and to decamp with the booty across the border into the United States. Only disagreement among the plotters saved the day. The Selkirk executors sent out Robert Parker Pelly, cousin of J. H. Pelly, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, to be Governor of Assiniboia, duly commissioned by the Governor and Committee of the Company. He arrived by ship at York Factory and was followed by Governor Simpson to the colony, whither Donald McKenzie, "a liberal minded honourable man possessing no vain empty dignity"[4] had been sent to take charge of the Company's affairs in the place of John Clarke, and to watch over the colony. Both Pelly and Simpson held powers of attorney from the Selkirk executors to act on their behalf in the management of the settlement.[5]

Governor Pelly was a young man, apparently not without parts, but wholly without experience. According to the decision of the General Court of the Company on May 29, 1822, regulating the government of the country after union,[6] "when either of the Governors of the Company's Territories shall be present [at the Council of Assiniboia] he shall preside and the power of the Governor of Ossiniboia shall be suspended when either of the said Governors shall be actually present for Judicial purposes." In view of this, Governor Simpson planned to keep away from the Council, for "in order to command due respect he [Pelly] must on all occasions be the great man and head of the Colony."[7] But, at Pelly's earnest behest, he presented himself, presided at

the Councils, and really took charge of the colony, during that winter when he was in residence. Thus, the organization of the Settlement was the work of Governor Simpson's hands.

Simpson put his finger at once on the Council, that is the governing body provided by the Charter for the Company's territories overseas, the Governor being its chairman. "The Councils in my opinion ought to sit at Fort Douglas [the centre of the colony's administration] and the more form that is observed, the greater weight it will have."[8] Accordingly, a grand banquet was held before the first meeting. At this Captain Matthey, the officer at the head of the De Meurons, spoke disrespectfully of the Selkirk executors and of the Hudson's Bay Company. Simpson, whose fine instinct told him when to be angry, demanded an immediate apology. Matthey gave it, and, crestfallen, made thereafter no show of opposition. The stress which Simpson laid on the Council was due to the perception of the statesman in him that a dignified governmental institution alone could win the steady loyalty of the people. This is all the more remarkable because he held the personnel of the Council in contempt:[9]

> "Our councils are really worse than nothing. McDonell is disaffected and the bitterest enemy to the Executors in this place; Thomas is timid and weak as a child; Cook is like Thomas, but drunken and without either body or mind; Pritchard is froth; Matthey is discontented and designing, wishes to be popular among his countrymen and hostile to the Company and Executors; Logan has been associated with McDonell in his peculations while in power; indeed they are nothing more or less than a pair of thieves and stick to each other like wax; and [Rev.] Mr. Jones altho' well disposed

wants experience; in short there is not one man among them who has any pretensions to the title which he bears; they have no public spirit nor general view towards the welfare and good government of the place, but are entirely influenced and actuated by self in every thought word and action."

It is remarkable that in spite of his contempt of the characters of the Councillors, Simpson laid a statesman's stress on the function of the Council in the government of the colony. Now, and on certain subsequent occasions, to add dignity to that body, or to silence discontent, he stood for its enlargement, until at the last it was practically representative of every group of settlers in the region. His immediate suggestion was that as the Chief Factor of the District [Lower Red River, its chief post Fort Garry] and Rev. Mr. Jones, the Anglican clergyman, were of the Council, the Catholic bishop should be added to its membership. So he was in due time.

But Councils were not to be simply a central institution around which the people were to gather. They were to be an instrument moulding the life of the settlement; they were to pass ordinances by which one and all must abide and to create the machinery for enforcing law and order and creating those habits of co-operation which mark a civilized community. At the first Council,[10] both Simpson and Pelly being present, their Commissions and the Resolutions of the General Court of the Hudson's Bay Company of May 29, 1822, defining the powers of the several Governors and establishing law courts, along with the letter from Lord Bathurst, Colonial Minister, putting the imprimatur of the Imperial Government upon them, were read. The pertinent part of the Company's Charter giving it the power to administer oaths also was quoted. The Council accepted the form of the oath of secrecy

presented, and the Councillors forthwith took the oath. Then, in keeping with the above documents, the office of sheriff was created, and William Kempt sworn into its duties. A resolution followed providing for the inhabitants to be enrolled in a militia. Fifty gentlemen were appointed special constables, and Chief Factor Donald Mackenzie was placed at their head as "High Constable". Bailiffs were appointed, and an oath drawn up to be taken by all holding office in the government's service. Finally a series of resolutions fixed the rates of wages in the community. It is astonishing that the colony had existed for a dozen years without these, the primal institutions of government being brought into play.

The Councils might pass the laws, and the police might watch to see them observed, but there must be law courts before which delinquents could be haled. The constitution prescribed by the Charter provided that the Governor and Council could sit as a law court; this naturally applied also to the colony. There had been such sessions in Governor Bulger's time, but they had been held only as the Governor thought fit to so ordain, and, to all appearance, then in most informal manner. Simpson was of opinion that the effectiveness of a court lay in its being held at regular times, and of its being open for any one to bring his cause before it. He wrote that the Court assembled at its stated time every week (for there were no petty courts yet) even if there appeared to be no cases to come before it. On October 28, 1823, a case involving robbery at Fort Garry was tried. On November 18th a civil suit. On November 20th, a case involving a breach of the peace at the home of a half-breed. In the course of the winter two cases in which the Selkirk Estate was

involved as the defendant were tried. This was the beginning of the end of individuals getting justice for themselves by threats of brute force, or by actual recourse to brute force. It is surprising that the colony had drifted along for twelve years without a regular system of justice, and it is scarcely less surprising that a settlement made up of every grade of humanity from the savage Indian to the law abiding Scottish farmers should have been so trained to law and order that the Select Committee of the House of Commons enquiring into the Hudson's Bay Company in 1857 found it difficult to believe that there was so little crime in it as reported. In this matter Simpson built on a sure foundation, and he lived to see the structure which he erected a refuge to the oppressed and a protection to the community at large.

The Council of November 11th ordered that the substance of certain parts of a letter of May 21st, 1822, from the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company "relative to the peace and welfare of Red River Settlement be published"; that prices which the Company was prepared to pay for farm produce should be declared standard, and that such as lighted fires on their lots and allowed them to pass over into the property of their neighbours should be punished. For the information of the public, an account of the proceedings of the Council were to be placed on the gates of Fort Garry and of Fort Douglas. Later, the summary of the proceedings and the ordinances of Council were affixed to the doors of the churches, as in the home land.

Further detail is unnecessary. It is enough that Governor Simpson, in his short sojourn of but one winter in the colony and then when it was not strictly within the ambit of his duties, started the Council on its career

as a legislative body voicing not simply the will of the Governor of the Colony or the decisions of the Company, but the consensus of opinion in the settlement; and that by the central court and the sheriff and police, he made it clear that there was law in the land, and that one and all, from the Governor to the humblest, must abide by it.

In this first phase of Simpson's labours for the Red River Settlement, he more than made amends for his ill-advised attempt to keep it cramped and confined within the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company.

VII

Simpson and "West of the Mountains"

VII

Simpson and "West of the Mountains"

Simpson the Furious Traveller

AT the end of the trading season 1823-4, when Governor Simpson had brought his great work for the Selkirk colony to a close for the time, he was contemplating a visit to England. It is typical of the close relationship existing between him and Andrew Colvile that he had written to him that he hoped to be married while at home. (Of course, there is no means of knowing whether Miss Ellen Pooler was in his mind.) He added, however, that, if the Governor and Committee desired him to visit the Columbia District, he would do so. Colvile's reply[1] diverted the ambitions of his protégé from the rose-strewn path of matrimony to his arduous duties as Governor.

"As to your coming home, particularly with the object you have in view, I think it will be better to postpone it both on your own account & that of the Company. A wife I fear would be an embarrassment to you until the business of those distant journies is over & if it be delayed one or two years you will be able to accumulate something before the expences of a family come upon you. I think that having taken the Settlement in hand that you should not leave it until you see it in the right road—then the Columbia & McKenzie's river will require your examining & arranging, particularly the former, where improved management might do a great deal; perhaps in McKenzie's river and New

Caledonia it is only necessary to direct active and discreet chief factors or traders to push their Examination of the Country & to extend the trade. As soon as you are satisfied that the business of the home country including the Settlement will admit of your absence, I think you ought to visit the Columbia, but it appears to me that your plan of starting on 10 Sept. & making the whole from Cumberland [House] a winter journey is exposing yourself to needless inconvenience & fatigue & your life & health to needless risk. Perhaps it would be better to delay the journey until Summer 1825, when you may have your business & correspondence in such a state that you may leave it to Mr. McTavish [in charge of York Factory] to ship the furs & finish other details & start with the light canoe for Columbia, say 20 June or 1 July, pass the winter there & come out as early as possible in the light canoe of 1826. You might then, after arranging the business of the Season, proceed to Montreal by the return express to Canada."

Up to Simpson's generation marriage was, to some extent, looked on more as a business. The day when sentimental novels had got their work in and taught people to think of love supremely as a passion was not yet. Be this as it may, Simpson turned his thoughts away from England and from Miss Ellen Pooler or whoever he may have had in his mind, if he had any one in particular. The only suggestion which can be traced of his being eager to get back to the home land lies in the fact that he advanced Colvile's time by a year and began his journey across the continent within a few weeks after the receipt of his letter.

Simpson's turning away from the delights of England and from the delights of marriage is only one of many indications that he lived wholly and solely for the advancements of the interests of the Company. There was

something of the spirit and the devotion of the Jesuit in the man. The Jesuit believed in implicit obedience to his superiors and had for his motto *Pro Gloria Dei, For the Glory of God.* Substitute "The Company" for "God" and you have Simpson's compelling motive. All his life was lived for the interest and glory of the Hudson's Bay Company, and to that end, when necessary, all personal delights were eschewed. At any rate he turned his face from the east to the west, and took the arduous path leading to that part of his domain which passed in those days under the term "West of the Mountains".

John M'Lean in his *Notes of a Twenty-five Years' Service in Hudson's Bay Territory*[2] asserts that there were four Departments in the administrative scheme of the Company—the Montreal, the Southern, the Northern Departments and the Columbia. This is inaccurate, for the Western Department with its own Board of Management was not established until 1855, and even then the Pacific Slope was not wholly withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Northern Department. The River Columbia and New Caledonia, separate or united, were no more than among the Districts under the Northern Council. As such they were subject to the visitation and control of Governor Simpson. Thus, it was in order for him to turn his attention to the Pacific Slope. He had visited the posts east of the Rockies, the inner circle in 1821-2, and the outer circle in 1822-3; and during eight months of the season 1823-4 he had devoted much needed attention to Selkirk's colony on Red River, bringing order out of chaos in that distracted Settlement. The season 1824-5 was given to getting a personal knowledge of the Columbia and to introducing something like economy and discipline into that District.

The Journal kept by Simpson while on his journey[3] and during his visit is a most interesting document. Though the daily entries were often made in the most trying circumstances, and it was never revised, so far as one can see, the Governor's gifts shine through its pages, in its great factual detail, and in its direct and at times pungent style. It is of the greatest value as displaying Simpson the tireless traveller, and Simpson the stern disciplinarian. James McMillan was his companion throughout the journey and this probably helps to explain the close friendship of the two men.

Simpson left York Factory on August 15, 1824, John McLoughlin, who was to take charge of the Columbia District, having left twenty days before by the Hayes-Lake Winnipeg-Saskatchewan route. The Governor had determined to take the Burntwood River route to the Churchill River on which he expected to pick up to McLoughlin.

Throughout his course to the Rocky Mountains Simpson devoted himself to a careful study of the problem of transportation. The Athabaska District had been ordered to take its own returns and those of New Caledonia by the Burntwood River from the Churchill to Split Lake on the Nelson. There it was to procure its outfit for the following season. Possibly the Officer in charge of it, Mr. George Keith, was none too enthusiastic in his report of that water-way. Simpson wrote:[4] "In order to acquire a more perfect knowledge of the Navigation of Nelsons River and the route from Split Lake to Frog Portage, [Portage du Traite], likewise conceiving it to be the shortest track I determined on proceeding by that communication." At the end of the first two miles of his journey, at the mouth of Hayes River, he came on the

first short-coming of that route. When rounding the point into the estuary of the Nelson "we were obliged to put ashore, the surf running so high that, in order to save the Canoe, it became necessary to get into the water up to our Necks and there hold our weak bark until the Lading was taken up to the Beetch when she was carried ashore." The party carried the canoe fifteen long miles over a wretched road, and even then had to wade through the surf to launch it in the waters of the Nelson. They camped for the second night after leaving York Fort, at Seal Island, still within sight of the smoke of the Factory —all of which was a bad blow to the scheme of the Nelson-Burntwood River route.

At two o'clock of the next morning the journey up the Nelson was begun. Split Lake was reached on the third day. The Jehu of a Governor kept the *voyageurs* at the paddle eighteen hours of the twenty-four as they travelled up the Burntwood. In spite of delay due to the want of a guide familiar with the route, he reached Frog Portage on the 30th, fifteen days after leaving York Factory. John Clarke had left the Fort on the 28th of July with the Lesser Slave Lake brigade taking the round-about route by the Hayes and Lake Winnipeg. It had taken him thirty-four days to reach the point to which the Governor had come in fifteen. Simpson, in spite of his mishaps, still regarded the Burntwood route, "much spoken against" as feasible, but he belied his words by giving up all thought of making it a customary route for the brigades. The readiness of the man to accept the facts of a situation in spite of his predilections is manifest.

Simpson passed up the Churchill to the Ile-à-la-Crosse post and thence took the Beaver River route of the

Northwesters leading westward to Athabaska River by Lac la Biche and its outflow bearing the same name. The Beaver River is a small quiet stream, but it called forth the maledictions of travellers by its incessant winding from one side of a marshy valley to the other. It was late in the season, after the middle of September, and the many tributary streams were already freezing. Thus, the water was very low. The tribulation of the journey was extreme. Simpson abandoned the river and took to a track:

> "The 18th, likewise the 19th and until the Eveng. of the 20th was occupied in passing through the track in which we had a Portage of 7 Miles, then a Lake of about 8 Miles where we had much difficulty in embarking and Lading on account of a great depth of soft Mud at the edges in which it was scarcely possible to drag the Canoe and through which the people had the utmost difficulty in Wading; indeed one poor fellow was nearly drowned having sunk up to the chin, but saved by timely assistance of one who had got ashore. . . . "[5]

Needless to say, the Governor condemned the Beaver River route for all time. But what alternative could be offered?

Dr. McLoughlin's party had no less a distressing voyage through these parts.

> "On the 26th at 7 O'Clock A.M. came up with the Dr. before his people had left their Encampment altho we had by that early hour come from his Breakfasting place of the preceding Day; Himself and people were heartily tired of the Voyage and his Surprise and vexation at being overtaken in Rivière la Biche notwithstanding his having a 20 Days start of us from York is not to be described; he was such a figure as I should not like to meet in a dark Night in one of the bye lanes in the neighbourhood of London, dressed in

Clothes that had once been fashionable, but now covered with a thousand patches of different Colors; his beard would do honor to the chin of a Grizzly Bear; his face and hands evidently Shewing that he had not lost much time at his Toilette; loaded with Arms and his own herculean dimensions forming a tout ensemble that would convey a good idea of the high way men of former days."[6]

Simpson slackened his speed that the Doctor's party might keep up with him. Thus they travelled together to the mouth of the Columbia.

When Simpson arrived at Fort Assiniboine on the 2nd of October, the alternative to the Beaver River route presented itself. John Rowand, Chief Factor at Edmonton House on the North Saskatchewan, had left York Fort about a fortnight before Simpson and had proceeded to his post with his comparatively slow-moving freighted brigade. There he doubtless attended to the business incident to his arrival with the goods for the season. Taking horse as soon as might be, he left for Fort Assiniboine on the Athabaska for a conference with Simpson. From the 28th of September till the 1st of October he waited for him in vain. The pressing needs of his post made him impatient at a delay which he could not measure before hand. He left on his return journey the day before the Governor arrived. The entry in Simpson's journal[7] indicates his conclusions:

"The circumstance of Mr. Rowands having got to this place from Edmonton after accompanying his loaded Brigade from York thereby performing the Voyage in . . . Days shews how much shorter the route is by the Saskatchawaine than by the Beaver River and accounts for some arrangements I am about to suggest and have taken steps for carrying into effect without further delay which I have no doubt the Honble. Committee & Council will approve.

> . . . [Here he sketches the transportation scheme then being followed] For this purpose I would recommend that the route by the Beaver River be abandoned altogether and by forming one Brigade of Seven Boats to start from York at the usual time say about the 20th July Forty Five men instead of Seventy Nine will do the transport business of those Districts as follows . . . "

Simpson had passed down the lordly Saskatchewan in the spring of 1823 and knew its advantage as a water-way. Among other things, he decreed that the Columbia brigade (and the Lesser Slave Lake brigade) should use the Saskatchewan to Edmonton House; that their goods should be transported thence to Fort Assiniboine "about fifty miles." This became the first pack-horse route in British territory east of the Rockies. Local river craft would take the outfit for the Columbia up the Athabaska to Jasper's House, and thence pack-horses would, as of old, carry it across the pass of that name to the boats on the Columbia. Simpson counted that he could save £1,000 a year by this rearrangement of the transportation scheme. The new route to the Columbia held the field until the Panama route and steamers on the Pacific put it out of use.

As he passed up the Athabaska River to the Pass, Simpson, like many others who have viewed the scene, was greatly moved. He enlarged on the wild and romantic beauty of the neighbourhood of Jasper's House, where the horses and the provisions for the journey across the Rockies awaited them. McMillan went on with the pack-horses, while the Governor passed upstream in a canoe to "William Henry's old House" (opposite the mouth of Miette River and Yellowhead Pass) and beyond. Then came the traverse. "The mountains now

increase to a stupendous Size; the summits of many obscured from our sight by Clouds and others covered by eternal Snows." At the Great Divide, Simpson noted a little lake (really two lakelets side by side) from which the overflows ran down, from the one to end in the Arctic Ocean, from the other in the Pacific. He named the spot The Committee's Punch Bowl. He reached the Columbia River by the Wood River, and embarked at the appropriately named Boat Encampment, where the Canoe River flows in.

A band of free Iroquois, who were here, raised in the Governor's mind the problem of the best route to the Fraser and New Caledonia, hitherto reached by the round-about route of Peace River. The issue was the use of the Yellowhead Pass to the Fraser River at Tête Jaune's Cache, thence by canoe to Fort George on the Fraser, and then north to Fort St. James, which may be considered the centre of New Caledonia. The Canadian National Railway's transcontinental line follows the early part of the route.

The Columbia River afforded an easy water-way, interrupted occasionally by falls, to the shore of the Pacific Ocean. On his way Simpson visited Spokane House, on the river of that name and near its confluence with the Little Spokane; Fort Okanagan at the confluence of the Okanagan and the Columbia; Fort Nez Percés or Walla Walla "about 3 or 4 Leagues" below the Lewis or Snake River and near the mouth of the Walla Walla. On November 8th, the party arrived at Fort George (Astoria that was) near the mouth of the Columbia and almost within sound of the breakers of the Pacific. Eighty-four days were spent on the journey, twenty days less than the previous record.

It will be well to leave Simpson's visitations of the forts for future discussion, and to trace his return trip here. On April 13th, 1825, he left the Forks of the Columbia and the Spokane River, and next day selected the site for a post in substitution of Spokane House, naming it Fort Colvile. Alternately paddling and poling, the Governor's party found the course upstream very arduous, for the river was rising with the spring flood. On April 22nd, they reached Boat Encampment. On the traverse an Iroquois servant had managed to dip into a rum keg and had become so far irresponsible as to relieve his shoulder of his burden of provisions by throwing it into a stream which was being crossed. Forthwith, Simpson took an axe, broke up the keg, and put its tempting liquid beyond the reach of all and sundry. Through mismanagement horses had not been sent to meet the Governor, and the party had to make its way on foot across the mountains. Climbing up to the height of Athabaska Pass they crossed Wood River seventeen times. "Some of the people were so numbed with the cold [for the river was in spate with the melting of the snow] that on getting out of the Water they actually could not stand." Twenty-seven times was the Whirlpool River on the eastern decline crossed. Come what may, the Governor must push on, for he was due for Council at Norway House early in June. Fort Assiniboine was reached from Jasper's House in a canoe; Edmonton House on horseback (May 2); and Fort Carlton, about 45 miles west of the present Prince Albert, by boat. Here Simpson's news led him to fear that Governor Pelly of the Selkirk colony might not meet him at Norway House, as arranged, for Mrs. Pelly was ill; moreover, he was now aware that there was a scarcity of provisions

from the Saskatchewan for the brigades and that a compensating supply must be got from the Red River Settlement. He therefore decided to go overland to Fort Garry. The people at Fort Carlton thought him bereft of his senses, for the Fall Indians were reported to be on the war-path out on the plains. Simpson rode past Duck Lake, crossed the Saskatchewan at Gardepuy's Crossing of after times, near the present Macdowall, ascended the Birch Hills, and passed by the Quill and Fishing Lakes to the neighbourhood of the old North West Company's Fort Alexandria on the upper Assiniboine. Here he made the mistake of not taking the crossing-place where the river was but a small stream and following the left bank which was the higher and drier one. In his desire for speed, he cut across the sodden plains, often at a loss for his way, and ultimately found himself in the angle of the Assiniboine where it could not be crossed and the Qu'Appelle, both streams in full flood. At last the party found what appeared to be a possible crossing-place at the Qu'Appelle (May 22, 1820).

"The Water was too Deep to Wade; there was no wood of any kind to make a Raft; several of our people could not Swim and the bottom & banks so soft that there was the utmost danger of drowning or miring our Horses; in this Dilemma we had nearly resolved on killing our Horses & making Skin Canoes of their Hides for the purpose of going down to the Settlement by Water. I however being more at home in the Water than any of my fellow travellers and anxious to save the lives of the poor animals, stripped & Swam across with a few things; 3 others followed my example and by making several crossings in this way we got the whole of our little Baggage over; the Horses were driven across, those people who could not Swim holding on by their Tails and with the assistance of cords we hauled the

poor Animals out of the Mud; in like manner we got across the Assiniboine River, having occupied 5 hours in effecting our passage over these two Rivers, nearly the whole of which time myself and those with me being naked in Mud and water exposed to the blood thirsty attacks of Miriads of Muschetoes; in short, I believe there never was an unfortunate Govr. in such a woeful plight as that of the Northn. Departmt. of Rupert's Land this Day."[8]

Passing by the former site of Brandon House and by Portage-la-Prairie, the party reached Cuthbert Grant's house at White Horse Plain on Saturday, May 25th, at dusk—every man with the notable exception of the Governor so exhausted as to be unable to proceed farther. The sixteen miles to Fort Garry, the first goal of his furious journey lay before him, and he was still going strong.

"I got on my old charger "Jonathan", gave him the Rein with a smart cut across the haunches and commenced a furious attack on the Gates of Fort Garry at 12 P.M., which was immediately answered by a most hearty welcome from Mr. McKenzie and every person at the Garrison, and here I purpose taking a rest for Eight Days after having performed one of the most dangerous and harrassing Journeys ever undertaken in the Country through which, thank God, I have got with no injury or inconvenience worthy of Notice."[9]

Simpson arrived in due time for Council at Norway House, in spite of his having extended his journey to include Red River Settlement.

Governor Simpson's reputation as a furious traveller was firmly established by this voyage. His dominance over the Council was now based, not so much on the power residing in his office, rather in the admiration of the Chief Factors freely given to him as an efficient

administrator and as one who shunned no hardships in the execution of his duty. As has been already stated, they greeted him at Norway House with a warm address of appreciation. It is, however, worthy of note that they placed along side of this spectacular voyage that of 1822-3, when he passed, apparently on foot, from Fort Chipewyan to Great Slave Lake and back, and up Peace River to Fort Dunvegan, and by Lesser Slave Lake to Edmonton House, arriving there in February in the depth of winter.

Simpson the Stern Disciplinarian

Simpson's Journal of his voyage to the Columbia is invaluable for the insight which it affords into his methods as a disciplinarian and into his manner as a business-manager. He did not wait till he reached the Columbia to busy himself in the interests of economy and efficiency. At Split Lake John Scott, the servant in charge, came under his eye:[10]

> "a plain stupid aeconomical Man but competent to the management of a small post in this part of the Country; he is at the height of his ambition on a Saly. of £40 p Annum and it is to be regretted we have so few of his description in the Service instead of Young Gentlemen of higher expectations who can never be provided for by shares in the concern and to whom the business cannot afford such Salys. as their qualifications and respectability might appear to entitle them and who consequently become dissatisfied and disaffected . . . at the small outposts such men as Scott before alluded to who have risen through good conduct from the rank of common labourers answer the purpose better than more dignified people as they are not above

putting their hands even to menial offices when necessary, require no establishment of Domestic Servants, do not load the Craft with Luxuries and Families, and who consider themselves well paid at £40 p Annum, which in my opinion ought to be the ultimatum of their prospects and emoluments."

At the post Simpson noted one Brown, a clerk of three years' standing:

"altho' he has had the advantages of a good Education (being the Son of Professor Brown of Aberdeen) he possesses neither mental nor corporal abilities for the line of life in which he has been placed; his memory is so defective or he is so extremely inattentive that no duty can be entrusted to him; the very sight of an Indian he detests; he cannot live on the ordinary provisions of the Country; he cannot even keep the common accounts or Memoranda of a Trading Post; he cannot command the people; he can neither venture on Snow Shoes nor in a small canoe, cannot provide a Meal for himself with his Gun, and it would be certain Death to trust him out of Doors in the severity of the Winter; I therefore in justice to the Young Man as also to the concern recommended his giving in his resignation, as he is in no way adapted for the Country, which he did, and a passage was immediately provided for him to York [Factory] for the purpose of going home by the Ship of this Season." (pp. 7-8).

Making all allowance for the fact which can be amply proved that the Governor was needlessly harsh in his judgments as expressed in his private letters, and here in the privacy of his Journal, it is safe to conclude that young Brown got no more than his deserts.

The next to suffer at the hand of the stern Governor was the pretentious John Clarke. To his surprise, Simpson found Clarke no farther on his way towards Lesser

Slave Lake than Frog Portage. It appeared that instead of watching over his brigade to urge them on, the pompous Chief Factor had gone on in a light canoe to Norway House on "Domestic affairs", and the brigade had dawdled on its way. "This breach of one of our most important regulations I mean to bring under the consideration of the Council and to move that the loss and expense occasioned thereby shall be placed to his private account" was Simpson's determination (pp. 11-12). So it was decided by Resolve 77 of the Council of July 2, 1825, at Norway House, when Simpson returned from the Columbia.

As the Governor passed up the Churchill River and was nearing Isle-à-la-Crosse, he came on a band of Indians "nearly starving being destitute of ammunition. This says little for the management of affairs in English [Churchill] River and will render it necessary for me to give Chief Factor [George] Keith a rub, which I would not willingly do having generally found his Department well regulated" (p. 16). Elsewhere Simpson says that Keith's great fault was fear of making a mistake, resulting in an extreme caution, which was hurtful to the concern. Evidently, rather than risk a loss, Keith had been too sparing of his ammunition.

But it is "West of the Mountains" that the clearest view of the Governor in action can be obtained. He did not find the District a testimony to the enterprise and efficiency on which the partners of the North West Company prided themselves:

> "From the Day of its Origin to the present hour [the District] has been neglected, shamefully mismanaged and a scene of the most wasteful extravagance and the most unfortunate dissension. It is high time the system should be

changed, and I think there is an ample Field for reform and amendment" (p. 43).

Simpson put his finger on the large expenditure for provisions. This was due to the fact that the goods for the region were brought out by ship round Cape Horn, and there was ample space for provisions from Europe. The Officers therefore luxuriated on English diet, transported up the Columbia to the most distant post. Here was a sharp contrast between the Columbia and all the Districts "east of the Mountains", where they lived "on the country"—fish in the wooded north, and buffalo meat and pemmican at the prairie forts. Now the characteristic feature of life in the Pacific Slope was the abundant food to be procured in the rivers in the form of salmon passing upstream to spawn. Simpson wrote:

> "Those Fish ascend the Stream from the Sea in immense shoals in the month of July for the purpose of Spawning." And again: "Throughout the Summer [the Indians] remain about the Banks of the River collecting Fish for immediate use and Winter stores [dried] and at the close of the Fall they go inland in search of Roots and in order to pick up a few Skins to enable them to purchase the triffling articles of British manufacture they require, but these are very few indeed." [chiefly arms and tobacco] (pp. 40 and 42).

Simpson could not see why the Officers and servants of the Company should not live on the produce of the country instead of on costly imported fare from England. Then too, he was pleased with the mild climate and with the fertile soil, a combination which suggested potatoes to him. He must have known that dried salmon was almost repulsively tasteless, but this was offset in his mind by its cheapness. His policy was speedily framed—live on the country, on fish and potatoes.

At Spokane House, the first post subject to his visitation, Simpson wrote:

> "The good people of Spokane District, and I believe of the interior of Columbia generally, have since its first establishment shown an extraordinary predilection for European Provisions without once looking at or considering the enormous price it costs; if they had taken that trouble they would have had little difficulty in discovering that all this time they may be said to have been eating Gold; such fare we cannot afford in the present times; it must therefore be discontinued and I do not see why one oz. of European Stores of Provisions should be allowed on one side of the Mountains more than the other; its great distance from the Seat of Government has of late been the only cause—no other can be assigned" (p. 47).

Two boats navigated by sixteen men would be ample to bring up goods and supplies to the post,

> "but for these three years past Five and sometimes Six Boats have been annually sent and these principally loaded with Eatables Drinkables and other *Domestic Comforts*. . . . I do not know any part of the Country on the East side of the Mountain that affords such resources in the way of living as Spokane District; they have abundance of the finest Salmon in the World besides a variety of other Fish within 100 yds. of their Door, plenty of Potatoes, Game if they like it; in short every thing that is good or necessary for an Indian trader; why therefore squander thousands uselessly in this manner," (p. 48).

At Okanagan, the next post visited, Simpson wrote that it was situated in a fine plain and that the soil produced "the finest of potatoes." Grain in any quantity might be raised,

> "but those in charge have preferred the less troublesome more costly mode of Importing [provisions] from England

> Boston or California and employing extra men to deliver it into their Stores. It has been said that Farming is no branch of the Fur Trade but I consider that every pursuit tending to leighten the Expence of the Trade is a branch thereof" (p. 50).

This dictum is worth recalling when we read that the Hudson's Bay Company was hostile to agriculture.

At Walla Walla, in former times, in three years 700 horses had been slaughtered for food. Simpson, on his return voyage wrote: "the River with a potatoe Garden will abundantly maintain the Post" (p. 128). When he selected the site for Fort Colvile, in place of Spokane House which was to be abandoned, he traced the bounds of the garden and ordered potatoes to be planted.

Another feature which called for action on the part of the Governor in the interest of economy was the too large body of servants at some of the posts and the incompetents in charge. To one and all Simpson prescribed "East of the Mountains". So for "several old favourite Canadian Servants and useless Iroquois about this Establishment [Fort George] who we must get rid of altogether as they are merely a burden on our hands; I shall therefore take them out with me this Spring for the purpose of being sent either to Red River Colony or to Canada" (p. 89). So for the interpreter who was in love with the squaw of the Officer in charge of Spokane and, with a considerable following among the Indians, had hatched a plot to seize the post: "by fair promises and flattering hopes, however, I have succeeded in enticing him away and he accompanies us under the impression that he is to return in the Fall, but while I am in the Country he may consider himself a Rupert's Land Man" (p. 137). So for

the Officer in charge of the post at Kamloops, so careful for the chastity of his squaw that he never left the fort or allowed her out of sight: "I have therefore given him permission to recross the Mountain with his Family in the Fall" (p. 137).

The same fate, "East of the Mountains", was meted out to Alexander Ross, later author of two most interesting books on the Oregon and one on the Red River Settlement. He had been placed in charge of the Snake Expedition, but allowed the American traders to carry off furs from under his nose, because, Scotsman that he was, he refused to lose money by reducing his prices. Finally, he made the unpardonable mistake of allowing Americans to accompany him to his charge, the Flathead Post. Simpson commented on the Snake Expedition:

> "This important duty should not in my opinion be left to a self sufficient empty headed man like Ross who feels no farther interest therein than in as far as it secures to him a Saly. of £120 p Annum and whose reports are so full of bombast and marvellous nonsense that it is impossible to get at any information that can be depended on from him" (p. 46).

Making due allowances for the undue harshness of Simpson's judgments when being expressed in private, we may still be satisfied that Ross was not cut out to be a fur-trader, least of all at the head of the Snake Expedition for which only a man with superabundant authority was suited. Simpson's contempt for Ross as a fur-trader did not prevent him from writing to him a letter of thanks for the success of his Expedition, and giving a sugar coating to his prescription for the incompetent. "Finally Settled with Mr. Ross that he should undertake charge of the Missionary Society School, Red River, at a

Saly. of £100 p. Annum and he accompanies me out for that purpose" (p. 136).

Simpson's method in these cases was in keeping with his advice to his friend John George McTavish, not to allow himself to be drawn into altercation with any one, but by setting about it properly to twist them round his finger.

Simpson's Policy for the Pacific Slope

One change in policy connected with the fur trade of the Far West may be mentioned at the outset. Governor Simpson had set his heart on the use of the Burntwood River route for the Athabaska and New Caledonia trade. Before he had reached the Rockies, he had abandoned the project. When passing over the Athabaska Pass the possibility of opening communications with New Caledonia by Yellowhead Pass or from the Columbia by Canoe River was envisaged. This, as has been seen, issued in the use of the Yellowhead. Such goods, mostly leather products from the prairies of the Saskatchewan District, as were needed in New Caledonia were sent in by this route by the annual express. But when on the Columbia, Simpson saw the advantage of the route discovered by John Stuart of the North West Company's Fort St. James in 1813. It was accordingly arranged that the furs of New Caledonia, that is of the northern interior of the present British Columbia, should be taken by canoe to Fort Alexandria on the Fraser River, a post established as part of the transportation scheme, and there find pack-horses to carry them overland to Fort Okanagan on the Columbia. Thence they would be taken downstream to the depot, to go to England by ship. The return freight

would be the outfits for the New Caledonia forts. This is but one of many instances which might be adduced, showing that Simpson was always noting the hard facts of a situation, and that he found no difficulty, no humiliation, in casting aside favourite schemes at the dictation of circumstances.

The most interesting feature of Simpson's sojourn on the Columbia was the dispositions which he made with the view of meeting American competition and of preparing for the possible occupation of a part at least of the Oregon by the United States—this when all the while consulting the essential interests of the trade of the Hudson's Bay Company. At the beginning four peoples were interested in the trade of the north-west coast of America, the Spaniards, the Russians, the English and the Americans. The Spaniards were gradually eliminated. The Nootka Sound Convention of 1790 gave Britain at least the right to trade in territory unoccupied by them. When France ceded such rights as she had in Louisiana to Spain, the Spaniards gained the undisputed advantage of holding the Territory contiguous to their claims on the Pacific coast, but this was lost by the retro-cession of Louisiana to France in 1800. When this last country transferred Louisiana to the United States in 1803, the Americans gained the undisputed advantage of holding the hinterland of the territory on the Pacific claimed by them, including, in particular, the valley of the Columbia River in which in 1811 they built Astoria on the south bank of the river ten miles from the sea. Settlement of the rival claims of Great Britain and the United States was postponed by the so-called Treaty of Joint Occupancy of 1818. The final elimination of the Spanish claims to the area in dispute came with the Florida Treaty of the

following year. A boundary line was drawn which reached the Pacific Ocean on the forty-second parallel of latitude. By this treaty the Spanish King ceded to the United States "all his rights, claims and pretensions to any territories north of the said line". All the Spanish rights of this coast were now claimed by the American Republic. Russian progress southward was stayed when a treaty of 1824 with the United States, and another of 1825 with Great Britain placed the southern boundary of Alaska at 54° 40′ North Latitude. There thus remained only the conflicting claims of the United States and Britain. There is no occasion to discuss here the foundations of the respective claims of these powers in the previous history. By the agreement of 1818 each side recognized the other's equal right to trade in the region, this for a period of ten years, in this way postponing the question of sovereignty. Two facts dictated the policy of the Hudson's Bay Company as sketched by Simpson in 1824-25. First, the existence of this agreement; secondly, the knowledge conveyed to the Company by the British Government that negotiations on the conflicting claims were on foot and that the Foreign Office was proposing a division of the territory and requiring the Columbia and Kootenay rivers as the natural and reasonable boundary. Accordingly, Simpson's policy as seen in his Journal of 1824-25, if we read between the lines, was devised with remarkable astuteness to dove-tail the interests of the Company's business with those of Great Britain.

First of all, he acted on the terms of the agreement of 1818 that Americans and English had equal rights of trade in the area in dispute. It was only south of the Columbia, so far as the trade of the interior was

concerned, that had experienced and would continue to feel the competition with the Americans. Here the policy which Simpson inaugurated was that to which he resorted wherever his Company met opposition—for example, in the valley of the St. Lawrence, where the competitors were traders from Montreal, and in the Rainy Lake District, so near to the International Boundary, where the American Fur Company was the competitor—namely, to clear out the fur-bearing animals, so that the competitors would assuredly meet with losses in coming into the region. The peripatetic Snake Expeditions, so-called because the first parties went to the valley of the Snake (Lewis) River, were continued as in the previous regime and denuded the country of its furs all the way from the sources of the Missouri to Utah and the borders of California. They lived up to the injunction of the Governor and Committee "to work the southern portion of the Country as hard as possible, while it continues free to the subjects of both nations."[11] In the end, the Hudson's Bay Company dominated the region—this not that they desired or intended to keep it for Britain; rather to diminish American rights in the Oregon and bring about what the English would regard as an equitable division, namely, with the Columbia for the boundary.

In the second place, Simpson took steps, so to say, to dig the English in on the north bank of the Columbia. At the time of his visit, Fort George (the Astoria that was) on the south bank of the river and near its mouth was the depot for the trade of the Pacific Slope. It was conveniently situated for the shipping, but Simpson's policy for the District was that the traders must live on the country—on fish and potatoes—and he did not regard

the soil at the Fort as suitable for farming. In the interest of the trade a better site must be found for the depot; and in keeping with the compromise proposed by the British Government it must be on the north bank of the river. An excellent site was chosen for the new post, Fort Vancouver, "about 75 Miles from the mouth of the River, at a place called by Lt. Broughton Belle Vue Point." Simpson wrote in his Journal:

> "The place we have selected is beautiful as may be inferred from its name and the country so open that from the Establishment there is good travelling on Horseback to any part of the interior; a Farm to any extent may be made there; the pasture is good and innumerable herds of Swine can fatten so as to be fit for the Knife merely on nutricious Roots that are found here in any quantity and the Climate so fine that Indian Corn and other Grain cannot fail of thriving; it is much better than that of the Coast say [namely] at Point George being less exposed to the Sea Air. The distance from the harbour is the only inconvenience but that is of little importance being now a secondary establishment; the small Vessel however can run up a considerable way and a Leighter or large Batteaux can work or drift down in a couple of tides" (p. 87).

The whole development of Fort Vancouver, its farm, its herds of cattle, its flocks of sheep, its flour-mill and its saw-mill in the skilled hands of Dr. McLoughlin was the natural outcome of Simpson's policy for the trade of the Company.

At the same time, the Company and Simpson were aware that the actual occupation of the country must strengthen the claims of Great Britain to the north bank of the Columbia. On March 12,1824, the Governor and Committee wrote to Governor Simpson: ". . .the actual occupation by traders will go far to establish the rights

of the respective nations which is an additional inducement to extend the Posts westward towards the coast from New Caledonia and if possible to establish upon the Coast as far North as may be practicable."[12] In view of this, it is natural to take it that the more elaborate the post, the more convincing the evidence that the country was occupied. Thus the elaboration of Fort Vancouver, its farms, its cattle grazing over a wide area, its flour-mill, all were a proclamation of the claims of Britain to the north bank of the Columbia. So too the occupation of the south shore of Puget Sound by the post Nisqually, and the establishment of the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company there (1839) and on the Cowlitz. The farms and herds of cattle and flocks of sheep all proclaimed the British occupation, while they played a material part in the development of the trade along the Pacific Coast. It was all the logical outcome of Simpson's visit of 1824-25, and the policies then drafted.

It strengthened the American claim to the North-West Coast that the marine fur trade as far north as the Russian settlements was exclusively in American hands, even though that trade had declined somewhat by the year of Simpson's visit. The trade depended on its elaborate connections more than on the profits got from peltries. The ships from Boston enhanced their returns by bringing out provisions and goods to the Russian settlements. They then went with the furs to the profitable market at Canton, and there took cargoes of tea, porcelain and other Chinese goods which were in demand in the American world. If the Hudson's Bay Company could push them out of this trade, they would weaken the American claims, strengthen those of Britain, while all the while increasing their own profits. Practically all that was

needed was to win from the Americans their trade with the Russians, to make their ventures profitless. This Simpson saw clearly.

> "The Russian Settlements have hitherto been principally supplied with goods for their trade by the American adventurers on this coast payable by Bills on St. Petersburg or in Furs; but if we conduct our business with good management according to the present plan that channel will be shut up as we ought to be able to put down all competition on the Coast in which case 'tis probable we should be enabled to do business with the Russians on advantageous terms; it would be with a view to see what could be done in that way I should propose visiting the Director Von Baranoff at their principal establishment of New Archangel in Norfolk Sound" (p. 86).

The expansion of the Hudson's Bay Company's business up the coast began while Simpson was on this visit. Chief Trader James McMillan was sent to explore the lower Fraser River. This was with a double objective in view—the establishment of a depot at its mouth preparatory to opening up a water-way to and from New Caledonia on which the English trade could retire if it were forced to retreat from the Columbia before the Americans; and secondly, the commencement of an offensive against the American marine trade. In the following year (1827) Fort Langley was built on the Fraser about eighteen miles above the present New Westminster. Peltries, salted salmon and potatoes contributed to the success of the post. The appointment of Aemilius Simpson, a naval officer, as "hydrographer and Surveyor" and Aemilius's visit in the sloop "Cadboro" to the Russian post New Archangel, were the next steps in the same direction.

So much was Simpson captivated by the possibilities for his Company on the Pacific Coast that he almost forgot his desire to go to England. He wrote in his Journal, and thereby reported to the Governor and Committee: "In order to see the whole machine put in motion I should wish to pass one or two Winters on this side" (p. 84).

It will be remembered that on Simpson's return from the Columbia the Chief Factors assembled in Council presented their address to him. The Board was equally elated at the results of his organization of the trade "West of the Mountains". They wrote:[13]

> "45—Having taken into consideration the important service which you have rendered to the Fur Trade more especially your arduous Journey in 1822/23 and the advantages derived from it in the shape of the great and immediate improvement in the arrangement of the Posts and Establishments for carrying on the trade, considering also the very spirited manner in which you last year undertook the Journey to the Columbia at so late a period of the season when very great personal fatigue and privation, as well as some risk, was to be encountered, and that we may reasonably expect much benefit will be derived to the Trade of that district, we have voted you a Gratuity of Five hundred Pounds and resolved to increase your salary two hundred Pounds per annum, to commence from 1st June next, and which we feel satisfied will meet with the unanimous approbation of every Chief Factor and Chief Trader in the Country."

Simpson left Dr. McLoughlin in charge of the Columbia District and the success of its trade was largely due to the doctor's genius, but it must be remembered that the general lines of the policy adopted for the Pacific Slope were marked out rather by the Governor

and that, while McLoughlin was given a somewhat free hand in his District, he was always subject, like any other head of a District, to the control, under the Board, of the Governor and his Northern Council. The exact position is shown by Resolve 133 of the Council held at Norway House on July 2nd, 1825, at Simpson's return:

> "That John McLoughlin [Chief Factor] be authorized to assume the direction of affairs in the Columbia and issue such orders and instructions for the good government and successful management of the Trade thereof as to him from time to time appear expedient to which every attention and conformity is required from those to whom such orders and instructions are addressed, and that the same exercise of authority and compliance therewith be extended to every other District in this Department to which two or more Commissioned Gentlemen are appointed."

The pre-eminence of McLoughlin lay in his ability and in the size and large returns of his District, especially after the District of New Caledonia was added to it, and not in any legal authority other than that of the head of a large and distant District.

There is no intention to trace here the subsequent working out of Simpson's policy for the Pacific Slope. It is enough that his hand was never off the helm and that his plans were unfolded in an orderly succession of events; likewise that in the final issue the Americans were forced to abandon the marine trade.

Simpson's first return to England (1825) will be treated in another connection. He devoted his energies in 1827 to an extensive tour through the Southern Department, now placed under his supervision.

In 1828 Simpson visited New Caledonia,[14] the only District except Mackenzie's River in his wide domain

that had not as yet come under his eye. Arduous as it proved, this was not such an exacting journey as that to the Columbia, for it was up the comparatively easy route by canoe to Peace River and McLeod Lake. Then he crossed on horseback to Fort St. James on Stuart Lake, which he entered at the head of a picturesque cavalcade, the bagpipes playing, and salutes being fired both within and without the post.

Besides the supervision of the posts, the object of the journey was to test the possibilities of Fraser River as a water-way, of which the Indians had given McMillan, as it proved, a too optimistic report. It was felt to be desirable, in any case, to find an easy communication from Fort Langley as a possible depot into the interior, especially if the Americans got enough of the Oregon to make the Columbia a less satisfactory route than it had proved hitherto. From Alexandria on the Fraser, the Governor took horse to Kamloops on Thompson River. There boats had been prepared for the descent of the Thompson and the Fraser. The bad reputation given to this last stream by Simon Fraser was to be put to the test, and there were high hopes that it would prove a satisfactory route for the trade. As Fraser descended during the Spring flood and, where feasible, in a canoe, while Simpson passed down after its recession and in a large boat, the dangers met were nothing like those of the first explorer. Even so, at one rapid the Governor's party narrowly escaped drowning. It was only too evident that the precipices running down sheer into the river afforded no facilities for "tracking", that is drawing boats upstream from the bank. Long before Fort Langley was reached the Fraser was a condemned water-way.

Simpson was back at Fort Garry in May of the following Spring (1829) and at Norway House for Council on June 2nd. While we have comparatively few particulars of this his second transcontinental voyage, we know that the Chief Factors and Chief Traders viewed it with no less admiration than his first. It surely was unrestrained enthusiasm for them, probably with the co-operation of the Board, to present him with a silver service to the value of £1,500.[15] The Council held, the Governor was off to meet with the Southern Council at Moose Factory in the second week of August.

The subsequent course of Simpson's administration of "West of the Mountains" can be no more than suggested. A landmark was the launching of the steamship *Beaver* on May 2, 1835,[16] Simpson and Council having asked for such a ship by a Resolve of Council of August 10th, 1832. She was sent out under sail to pass round Cape Horn, and her engines were installed in Columbia River. She was the first steamship to churn the waters of the Pacific. The counterpart of the policy which brought in the *Beaver* was the establishment of a series of posts up the coast. In 1831 Fort Nisqually was established on Puget Sound, and in the same year a post was built at the mouth of Nass River by Aemilius Simpson, who died there. In 1834 it was removed to the present Port Simpson, its name Fort Simpson. The year before (1833) Fort McLoughlin was established on Milbank Sound. In 1839 the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, a subsidiary of the Hudson's Bay Company, began its scheme of a farm at Fort Nisqually to supply meat and potatoes for the trade and for the Russian posts. (Another farm was established at the head of the Cowlitz River.) That year also an agreement was made with the Russian Ameri-

can Fur Company by which the Hudson's Bay Company leased the mainland opposite Prince of Wales Archipelago, the region now known popularly as the Alaskan Panhandle. In 1840 Chief Factor Douglas was sent from Fort Vancouver on the *Beaver* to take over Fort Stikine and to establish Taku Fort, also known as Fort Durham.

The earlier of these posts were served by sailing ships. What with the ships calling at vantage points for furs and the existence of the forts all the year round within reach of the Indians who could take their furs to them at their convenience, there was little or nothing left for the American ships when they arrived. This and the increasing agreement with the Russians by which they purchased their supplies from the Hudson's Bay Company robbed the American traders of their profits, and American ships disappeared from the coast north of the Columbia.

In 1841 Governor Simpson arrived at Fort Vancouver on his third visit. He was on his famous journey round the world, during which he crossed Siberia to St. Petersburg and England.[17] The Governor, accompanied by Chief Factor James Douglas, visited the Russian American Fur Company's post at Sitka. With the Americans driven out of the coastal trade and perfect agreement with the Russians, a new situation had been brought about. There was no longer need for a long row of forts. The steamer *Beaver* could call at trading points and gather the furs. But there was need of a suitable base for the steamer. The bar at the mouth of the Columbia was so dangerous in rough weather that ships would be delayed for weeks waiting to get out of the river. A base on the sea was needed. Moreover, as things then appeared in the quarrel between Great Britain

and the United States over the Pacific Slope, the whole valley of the Columbia, including Fort Vancouver, might pass to the Americans. On his return journey from Sitka, Simpson decided that the region for this base was the south end of Vancouver Island. James Douglas was sent to choose the spot, and Fort Victoria was built in 1843.

Thus, Simpson's policy, drafted in the large in 1824-25, at that time an airy nothing, had taken material form and had brought it about that the Hudson's Bay Company and the British were dominant on the northern Pacific Coast. More than that, the Company was, so far as was possible, prepared to face the changes which would come with the settlement of the fate of the Oregon.

When Simpson first crossed the Rockies, "West of the Mountains" was a region to a very large extent unknown to the Governor and Committee. They got their first lessons in its geography and trade chiefly through the medium of their Governor overseas. Simpson therefore had a freer hand here than was his "east of the Mountains." He took the initiative; they supported him, not without at times expressing their opinion. In this phase therefore the real Simpson can be seen.

Under Simpson was Dr. John McLoughlin playing an able part in the District—the part essentially of running the machine. His vision was limited, as was so often the case with an Officer in charge of a fort, to the interests of the fort and to the trade centred at it. For example, he could not see beyond the immediate cost of the steamer *Beaver*. Simpson was identified with no post, nor even with any Department. He was, so to say, General Headquarters surveying the whole scene, from time to time visiting the several fronts, adopting the necessary strategy, and above all perceiving the more distant issues with a clear eye.

VIII

Simpson's Marriage and Its Repercussions---1830 to 1833

VIII

Simpson's Marriage and its Repercussions 1830 to 1833

IT scarcely needs emphasis that society in fur-trading Rupert's Land and even in the Red River Settlement with all its missionaries was of its own cast, uninfluenced by puritan standards or the fervour for the moralities of the Evangelical Revival which did so much to standardize Victorian England. At the beginning the White fur-traders, whether from Hudson Bay or Montreal, could only enjoy something like domestic life by taking to themselves squaws. Their connections with these were, from the point of view of Indian relatives, perfectly formal—as formal as any marriage consecrated in St. Margaret's, Westminster. The chiefs, neighbours to a fort and, be it added, their squaws looked upon the officers at the head of the post as the most desirable of all sons-in-law in sight, and they did not spurn the clerk of to-day who might be Factor to-morrow. They watched over the chastity of their daughter, the proposed bride, with a care quite novel in Indian society, and they brought the chosen one to the desired son-in-law when she was no more than fourteen years of age. The White Man paid the Indian bridal price with a liberal addition worthy of his position, and the young lady entered the society

of the post and secured to it the steady support of her tribe, in the form of peltries.

The squaws thus taken into the affections of the White Men took the rank of their husbands in the service of the fort. Alexander Henry the younger spoke of his squaw as "her ladyship"; the squaw of his clerk as "Madame"; and she of his interpreter was Delorme's "woman". Many a squaw made an excellent wife, devoted at once to her husband and her children, and many a trader cherished his squaw for life, and devoted himself to the upbringing of her children. For example, Alexander Henry took "her ladyship" and the family with him from Red River to Fort Vermilion and later to Rocky Mountain House on the Saskatchewan. Daniel Harmon taught his young family to read and write, and took them with "the mother of my children" into his retirement in the State of Vermont. Thus, the children of such marriages grew up, according to the upbringing given to them by the father, approximating to his culture, or, in case of neglect at the low level of the mother. White officers who retired from the service of the Hudson's Bay Company often took the greatest of care to make happy disposition of the quondam wife and her children. This usually took the form of an ample gift to what Harmon called "an honest man" to take the woman to himself and to care for the family. Some made provision for them long after their retirement. Matthew Cocking was but one of the many servants of the Company who lived up to this practice. He and others instructed the executors of their wills to continue such provision till the children grew of age.[1] Many, like Alexander Ross, took their squaws and children with them into their retirement at Red River Settlement.

Such were the customs of the traders in the generations before that of George Simpson. In his time they continued, with one interesting change. They now rarely took squaws; their choice fell on the half-breed girls, many of whom had had careful upbringing. When Simpson, newly arrived, found Governor William Williams still at large and in charge of Rupert's Land, he accordingly went to Athabaska to act as Factor at Fort Wedderburn (1820-21). He accepted the customs as he found them and took to himself the half-breed daughter of George Taylor, captain of the schooner at York Fort, her brother Thomas being retained as his personal servant. His eldest child Maria, was born probably in October 1821, and was baptized by Rev. John West at Red River in 1822. Other children of this connection, similarly baptized, were George, James, and John.[2] Simpson was moving about the country too much to enable him to watch over his children as he might have done had he been a more or less stationary Factor at a post. He sent Maria to Scotland to be educated, and there at the early age of sixteen, an early age not unknown today in that country, she married one Donald McTavish. The couple emigrated to Upper Canada.[3] When the Governor would pass through Cobourg, where they lived, he would visit her, and he watched over her fortunes, sending money and advising her about her property when she was widowed, until a second happy marriage placed her on Easy Street. She wrote from time to time to her "Dearest Father".[4] The boys likewise were educated as far as their dispositions would allow. They were all given a chance in the service of the Company. That much of favouritism was shown them, but there is evidence that if they expected the disciplinarian of a Governor to promote them in spite of

their demerits, they were mistaken. They never rose in the service. James was the steadiest of the three. He was in charge of a small outpost at Fort Pitt at Frog Lake at the time of the Rebellion of 1885.

It is worthy of note that, while Simpson thus watched over his children with fatherly care, he managed to elude the net cast wide by Rev. John West and his successors to gather cohabiting couples into the sacred fold of matrimony. It must be taken that he being what he was, and his position in the wide world being what it was, and Margaret being what she was, his happiness did not lie with her. He must have decided to do as well by her as any fur-trader had ever done—short of marriage.

It has been seen that, after Simpson had set Selkirk's colony in order, as early as 1823, he wrote to Andrew Colvile, proposing a visit to England during which he might be married. Colvile pointed out the need for his visitations to continue in the several Districts of the Department, and the inconvenience which a wife would be in the meantime. Faithful servant of the Company that Simpson was and devoting his life to his god the Hudson's Bay Company, he went off on his spectacular voyage across the Rockies to the Pacific Ocean at the mouth of the Columbia (1824-25). On his return he received an increase in his salary of £200 per year, and was allowed to visit England. One would suppose that the thought of marriage would be still with him, and one is curious to see whether he renewed his relations with the Pooler family. He arrived in London about the third week of October and on November 11th, 1825, he wrote to his old friend Richard Pooler:[5]

"I am most anxious to have an opportunity of shaking hands with all my kind Friends at Nutley Cottage, but really

[I have been] so much occupied and harassed wth. the affairs of *my Govrs* that as yet I have not been able to command one half holyday, which accounts for my not having the pleasure of seeing you before now & I trust [this] will be a sufficient apology for my seeming neglect; next week, however, I shall assuredly beat up your quarters. Meantime please offer my kindest respects to Mrs. Pooler Miss Eleanor and the rest of your worthy Family,

& believe me always
My Dear Sir
Yours most truly
GEO. SIMPSON."

On February 28th following, a little more than four months later, Simpson was at Liverpool bound for his charge beyond the Atlantic, unmarried and, to all appearance, free of heart. It must be left to the reader, according to his proclivities, to decide for himself whether Simpson ever thought of Miss Ellen, or, if he did, whether he found her fallen off in the five years of his absence, or again, whether the lady who had appeared to the clerk of 73 Great Tower Street all that could be desired, now came short in the eyes of the Governor of the Northern Department. The writer's view is that Andrew Colvile may have pointed out that still other visitations awaited Simpson and that distant and inaccessible New Caledonia remained uninspected. Then too, before he left England, Simpson was told that he was to be acting Governor of the Southern Department. A vast new region awaited his visitation. Not until he had seen the whole of his expansive domain, now running from James Bay to the Western Sea could he, to some extent, rest from his travels or should he think of marriage. At any rate, Simpson passed across the seas and

spent his first summer (1826) meeting with his old Council of the Northern Department at York Factory. He spent the Winter in Montreal and Lachine. The following Spring (1827) he travelled by the usual route to Lake Superior, meeting with the Southern Council at Michipicoton in the fourth week of May, and then proceeded by Rainy Lake and Lake Winnipeg to meet with the Northern Council at York Factory on July 2nd. He then turned to inspect his new charge and to traverse the greater part of the Southern Department. Returning by Winnipeg Lake and up Winnipeg River, he took the customary trade route up English River, a tributary of the Winnipeg, into the valley of Albany River, in which he inspected Osnaburgh House and Albany Fort on James Bay. He then passed, presumably by the Bay, to Moose Factory where he spent the last week of August and the first fortnight of September, presumably mastering the business details of the Department of which it was the centre. He was able to send home an elaborate report on his new charge by the ship of that year. Thence he would take the traditional route up the Abitibi River, through the lake of that name, and down the Ottawa River, visiting such posts as were on his way to the St. Lawrence and civilization. He wintered at Lachine.

Next year (1828), he met with both his Councils and on July 12th left York Factory for his second transcontinental voyage through New Caledonia, down the Fraser, and home up the Columbia River. What room was there for marriage and domestic felicities in a life like that? If the thought of it may have cropped up in his mind on occasion, Simpson, as so often, made the right decision for the Governor of such a continental domain,

and devoted himself to the interests of the Company. But the situation had now changed. Simpson had visited every District in the Company's domain save Mackenzie's River, and the time had come, foreshadowed by Colvile to him, when he could, to a large extent carry on by correspondence. In 1829, on June 22nd, he met with the Northern Council at Norway House, and with the Southern Council at Moose Factory in the middle of August; and forthwith took the ship for England. There can be no mistake about it now. He was a Governor in search of a wife.

Two Chief Factors, James McMillan and John George McTavish, Simpson's two greatest friends, were home on the same gentle errand as he. McMillan had been with Simpson on his transcontinental journey of 1824, but, silent and secretive by nature, he went off on a lone quest to the wilds of Argylleshire, and apparently there, or in Perth, picked up a wife. The friendship of Simpson and McTavish seems to have begun in 1820, when they crossed the Atlantic in the *James Munro*,[6] and though in rival companies were drawn to one another. After the union McTavish was Chief Factor in charge of York Factory, the depot, where Simpson met with his Council oftenest at this time. The frequent association of the two men in business led to an uncommon intimacy. Now in England together, they wrote one another about their common quest, Simpson from his hunting-ground in London, and McTavish from his in Scotland. Fortunately, this correspondence, continued after their marriage, has been preserved in the form of Simpson's letters over the period from 1829 to 1835.[7] The Simpson seen in it is the laughter-loving character of the Pooler letters. The Governor urges his

friend on to the attack with that most serviceable sophism: "Faint heart never won fair lady." At that juncture a Miss Brown was the object of McTavish's attention. Simpson was still coursing in an open field. He wrote: "Let me know if you have any fair cousin or acquaintance likely to suit an invalid like me." On December 26, three weeks later, he wrote still from London: "Would you believe it? I am in love—how I may get rid of it, 'tis probable I may know tonight, but I trust in the proper Legitimate way." Thereafter, he went on a visit to an uncle Duncan Simpson, near Beauley about ten miles from Inverness. While on this visit he must have seen his aunt Mary, who had done so much for him in his youth, and must have drawn Thomas Simpson, who was to figure as Arctic explorer for the Company, into the service of the Company. On his return to London he became engaged to his cousin, Frances Ramsay Simpson, the eighteen years old daughter of Geddes Mackenzie Simpson, who twenty years before had brought him from the north to be his clerk at 73 Great Tower Street. The marriage took place on February 24th, about three months after the Governor landed in England. McTavish's quest had an equally happy ending, the lady acquired being a Miss Turner of Turner Hall, Aberdeenshire. The two couples crossed to America in the same ship. Not only were the two friends happy in their respective brides, but each had a great admiration of the chosen of the other. The forty-three year old Simpson wrote later to McTavish with the exuberance of a bridegroom of twenty: "You may, if you choose, be the happiest fellow on the face of the Earth (myself always excepted) as you have the best wife I ever knew (my own in like manner excepted)." McTavish

and his bride went to his new charge at Moose Factory, while Simpson took his lady on what could scarcely be called a "joy ride" by canoe from Lachine to the Selkirk colony, and thence to York Fort for the Council, and back to the Red River Settlement.

Simpson had what was surely no pleasant task to perform at Red River, where he was to winter. He was commissioned to get McTavish's half-breed "old lady" placated, and he had to see his own "old concern" happily settled. There was no dispute as to the method; it was the usual thing in the country. According to the custom, "dowries" must be provided sufficiently large to promote speedy and satisfactory marriages in either case. In McTavish's business serious obstacles were met. His "old lady" was the niece of Donald McKenzie, Governor of Assiniboia, probably through his first wife's connexions, and Donald, piqued at the slur being cast on one of his family, stood out for a large dowry. In consideration of the fact that his niece had been with McTavish for seventeen years, he considered that she should be given the full year's income of the father of her children. John Stuart, who was Chief Factor at Fort Alexander, at the mouth of Winnipeg River, where the two women were, intruded himself into the discussion for some obscure reason. Stuart finally suggested a compromise on the basis of £100 for each of the two children then with the woman. Simpson found a French-Canadian of good character in the Company's service at Fort Garry, Pierre le Blanc by name, willing to sign a contract with him to take the lady on these terms. (The agreement signed by both parties is among Simpson's papers.) The contracted bridegroom-to-be was given a week's leave of absence to go to Fort Alexander for the necessary courting. Within

a week he was back at the Settlement bringing his betrothed with him. At 6 A.M. of the morning after his arrival a double ceremony took place at the Catholic church in St. Boniface. The bride was baptized, and immediately thereafter married. The bridegroom, who probably had never before possessed a fraction of the £200 now in hand, forthwith got drunk on stout, and the bride perforce spent the afternoon drinking tea with Mrs. McKenzie in the Governor's quarters at Fort Garry. Next day, the bridegroom being sober, friends gathered in the home of the McKenzies to tender their congratulations. One reads later that the woman was at times very jealous of her husband and appropriately lashed him with her tongue. In the course of time, a child was born, and le Blanc sent word to McTavish through Simpson that they were very happy.

There was no occasion for Simpson to make a similar detailed report to McTavish about his own "old concern". Picturesque features are therefore lacking. The dowry required from such a dignitary as the Governor may have been proportionally large. The end appears to have been equally happy. On March 24th Amable Hogue and Margaret Taylor, both of Red River Settlement, were married by Rev. David T. Jones, Chaplain of the Hudson's Bay Company, one of the witnesses being Pierre le Blanc the bridegroom of the previous ceremony, the other William Bruce in whose house the couple were lodged.[8]

The repercussions of these events continued long, and contributed to the isolation of the Simpson couple in a land in which there were none too many with whom they could associate. McKenzie and Stuart could not forgive Simpson. They intrigued and gossiped, and the feeling

engendered made impossible any cordiality in the come and go between the two Governors. Simpson's setting aside of the woman of his first connexion seems to have been taken as casting a slur on those who had half-breed wives, duly married. At Moose Factory, McTavish and his English bride refused to have anything to do with Chief Factor Joseph Beioley's woman, when she came up with her man to the fort with the furs. This was something new in the society of Rupert's Land. Apparently, there was a time when Simpson was hale fellow well met with one and all, for, referring to this, he tells McTavish that once when leaving Moose, Beioley had said to his woman: "You may salute the Governor, my Love." It was no sooner said than done, and "I wished her and her Smokey chimney at old Nick." So probably in Red River Settlement, all was different now that the Governor was married to an English lady, and had shown that a half-breed was beneath him. Troubles similar to those at Moose emerged at Fort Garry and isolated the Governor and his bride. Then too, relations with the puritanical circle made up by the missionaries and their wives were far from easy, and Simpson grew heartily tired of Red River society.

"I am most heartily tired of Red River, or rather of its good inhabitants, and should be delighted to join you [McTavish] at Moose next Fall; indeed my better half is constantly entreating me to take her there, in order that she may enjoy the society of her Friend to whom she is most warmly attached. Here she has formed no intimacies: McKenzie's wife is a silly ignorant thing, whose commonplace wise saws, with which we are constantly persecuted are worse than a blister; Mrs. Jones [the parson's wife] is a good unmeaning woman whom we merely see for half an hour

occasionally, & Mrs Cochrane [another parson's wife] whose assumed puritanism but ill conceals the vixen, shines only when talking of elbow Grease & the scouring of pots and pans."

It should be remembered that Simpson was always much harsher in his private correspondence than in his public utterances, and probably than in his inmost feelings. Lady Simpson, writing to Donald McKenzie in 1846 in retirement in the United States about a letter from him to Simpson which could not be attended to because of the Governor's absence said:[9] " . . . it afforded me sincere [pleasure] to hear of the welfare and happiness of those who in former years showed me much Kindness and for whom I shall never cease to cherish a warm regard—Mrs. McKenzie's kind remembrance of me quite delighted me, for tho' time and distance have long separated us, the recollection of her goodness to me in by gone days can never be effaced from my memory, and often, very often has she been the subject of my thoughts and conversation, and I would give much to see her, and to renew our old friendship." Yet it may be taken as certain that Simpson was ill at ease in Red River society.

Add to this social unhappiness the prolonged and distressing sickness endured by Mrs. Simpson for near nine months before the birth of her child—a sickness which her husband said she endured in utter loneliness; the continuation of ill-health thereafter; and the death of the child. Then there came the menace of a grave illness to Simpson himself, during which he lost heart and seriously thought of retiring. Hard upon this came the loss of £4,000, which, he said, made retiring impossible. Altogether, the three years from 1830-33 spent at Red River were the unhappiest of the Governor's life. His

only consolations lay in the cherished companionship of his wife; in his correspondence with his friend McTavish in which he could discharge his spleen; and in the business of governing in which he never ceased to find satisfaction.

IX

The Vain Search for Exportable Products, 1830-1834

IX

The Vain Search for Exportable Products 1830-1834

THESE years were also the least successful of Simpson's administration. The sense in which this can be said must be carefully defined. As the result of the Governor's organization, of his discipline and economy, the Fur Trade was at the peak of its prosperity. The usual dividend of 10% was being supplemented by a bonus of 10%, so steady as to become almost customary. The policy for the Pacific Slope was bearing its fruit; Fort Langley was developing a trade in salted salmon, in addition to its normal returns in furs, and in vegetables such as potatoes. The Red River Settlement was becoming prosperous, and its people quiet and law-abiding, thanks to the institutions which Simpson had keyed up to a satisfactory regularity and precision. True, there had been the disastrous flood of 1826, but even that had brought its advantages. That part of the population which was ill-adapted by its character, the town-bred Swiss reared to luxury trades, and the De Meurons, professional soldiers who made the poorest of agriculturists and were a constant menace to law and order, migrated across the border into the United States. A number of

discontented French-Canadians returned to their beloved Quebec. So far was Simpson from exerting himself to retain all these in the Settlement, he regarded them as "the very refuse of the Colony . . . their absence a great relief." They were furnished with every facility to get to their destination, and, as Simpson had calculated, the Settlement dropped into law-abiding habits, and quiet prevailed. Thus far and indeed for years to come, he had every reason to congratulate himself on his achievements.

But Simpson was not of those who are satisfied with success and fail to push on to what might probably be more successful. He launched out on the policy already sketched by Lord Selkirk of finding some exportable produce that would bring money into the Settlement and to the Company. With deep insight he observed that the Company's posts would not buy the produce of the colony in sufficient quantity to assure success to it; that if the settlers continued to buy more English goods than they sold of produce to the Company their initial capital would in the end be consumed, and they would come to impoverishment. On August 26, 1830, he wrote to the Governor and Committee:[1]

> "At Red River Settlement I spent a few days on my way from Canada in the early part of June. The Colonists were happy and Comfortable, their means of livelihood were abundant, and their appearance bespoke easy circumstances. The back plains were covered with Cattle; the banks of the River highly cultivated; the river itself almost alive with Fish; and the prospect of crops very flattering; in short, the whole Settlement wore the appearance of peace and plenty. . . . Trade is now alone required to make this a thriving Settlement, and we trust that the establishment of Sheep

Farms, and the preparation of tallow, of wool and of hemp and flax for the *English Market* will be found to answer expectations."

With ample means at the disposal of the prosperous Company, Simpson set himself to solve what is to this day the problem of the prairie west. First, there must be a profitable export of its produce, or rather the produce to export with a profit. Second, there must be facilities for its transportation to the sea-board. Wheat and the various cereals were out of the question, for the bulk was too great to be carried by boats and over portages, and the price obtainable too low to bear the costs of transportation. Further, because of occasional frosts which devastated the late maturing variety of spring wheat (winter wheat could not be grown in that climate) known at that day, it was too precarious a crop. Furs had succeeded as an export, because of their comparatively small bulk and weight, easily carried over the portages in packs of 90 pounds each; and the high prices which they fetched in the English market more than covered the cost. British goods in comparatively small quantities could be carried into the interior, because they brought furs of great price in exchange. But fresh lines of business were needed, especially for the colony on Red River. What commodities could answer such requirements. Simpson, as Selkirk had done, fixed on flax, hemp, and wool. The introduction of steam-driven machinery, what we call the Industrial Revolution, had made it possible to manufacture the different fabrics far beyond the raw material available. Consequently, the prices of flax, hemp, and wool were soaring in the English market. These articles were of light weight and could be easily carried over the portages and transported

to the sea-board at York Factory, and the ultimate prices would easily cover expenses and leave a profit. Tallow seems to have offered the same chance of profit, for the Company kept exporting "grease", that is the fat from the back of buffalo, for a considerable period.

There were two sides to Simpson's scheme—the production of the proper valuable raw materials in the Settlement, and the solution of the problem of transportation by what he, like Selkirk, called "The Winter Road." A large farm was established on the north bank of the Assiniboine a couple of miles above Fort Garry. Houses were built for the Officer in charge, Chief Factor James McMillan, and for the servants. Fields were fenced and flax and hemp planted. Moreover, seed was supplied to the settlers at large. Men were brought out who knew the art of "retting" the flax and preparing it for the market. All in vain. The reasons for the failure do not appear in the documents. It is certain that such flax as was placed on the market did not fetch the price hoped for. In all probability it was ill prepared. To this day, the climate of the prairie region is not fitted—is not damp enough—for the "retting" or rotting of the flax which is necessary if the outer coating is to be beaten off and the threads cleaned for the market. It is probable also that the people of the Settlement, innocent of business on a large scale, had like Alexander Ross who criticized the scheme severely,[2] no great faith in Simpson's plans and never devoted themselves to the solution of the problem of making their produce marketable. Nor was Chief Factor McMillan, a fur-trader pure and simple, though Simpson had great faith in his business ability, the man to prepare his produce for a market which he did not know. Whatever the reasons may have

been, the experiments in flax and hemp were a ghastly failure. So was the venture in wool.

Robert Campbell, a shepherd from Perthshire, in the employment of the colony, was sent into the United States to purchase sheep.[3] He could find them no nearer than in Kentucky. One thousand five hundred and seventy sheep left the banks of the Ohio River for a trek of a thousand miles to Red River Settlement! As things were in those days, open prairie with ample pasture all the way, the journey was feasible enough, provided the animals were not driven too hard. But Campbell was blissfully ignorant of the problem in the form of spear-grass faced by the sheep-rearer in the North-West. At a certain stage the grass develops thorns which enter into the flesh of the sheep and produce festering sores which ultimately bring death. Later in the year, the thorns fall and the sheep are perfectly safe in fields of the grass. All unconscious of this, Campbell entered a wide field of spear-grass, and the sheep were soon covered all over with festering sores, yet he persisted in driving them on. Hundreds perished by the way. About a tenth only reached the Settlement. Even these were not made the most of. The settlers do not seem to have realized the purport of Simpson's scheme, else the prairie region might have developed, parallel with Australia, a great wool producing land. The sheep were not properly cared for, and many were the victims of the numerous savage and ill-fed dogs of a hunting community. Thus, the venture in wool also failed.

So also the attempt to rear large herds of cattle to give tallow for the English market. The cattle were gathered, but it proved a severe winter with heavy snow; hay had not been gathered in sufficient quantity for the size of

the herd and the severity of the season. Moreover, the negligence of the caretakers added to the disaster. Many cattle died of starvation; some fell a prey to wolves. The whole grandiose scheme proved a failure.

Alexander Ross says the policy failed because of the extravagant scale on which it was launched[4]—palatial houses [in the eyes of the humble settlers], elaborate farm machinery, and the like. Certainly, the loss was so great that it was abandoned. In 1833, the Company paid the usual dividend, but for the once the bonus was reduced to 6%, and next year there was no bonus at all. But in truth, many factors were at work—the climate, the technical problem of preparing the produce for the market, the lethargy and lack of understanding and enterprise of a community made up of fur-traders, and of small crofters innocent of big business. Thus, these years saw the greatest of Simpson's failures. Yet had the difficulties been overcome, the insight and the vision of distant possibilities shown by the whole policy would have called for unstinted praise.

Nonetheless there was some gain of the sort that Simpson had in mind. The money brought in from outside and spent in the Settlement increased the purchasing power of the settlers to some slight extent for the time. Sheep added to the well-being of the people. The weavers brought in by the Company taught the inhabitants to weave their own garments, their blankets, and the like, and the community became to that extent more self-sustaining.

"The Winter Road" was entrusted to the pompous and boastful but inefficient Chief Factor Colin Robertson. It was grossly mismanaged, as Simpson thought. The course was, however, surveyed as direct as might be from

a depot to be built on Steel (the present Fox) River to Norway House. Some block-houses were built and hay gathered for the oxen which were to be the draft animals. But after all, the scheme for the road was doomed to be abandoned, for, as it proved, there was no exportable produce to be taken over it.

X

Simpson and the Red River Settlement's Institutions, Second Phase. 1835 to 1839

X

Simpson and the Red River Settlement's Institutions

Second Phase, 1835 to 1839

MUCH happier and of more permanent value to the Settlement than the attempt to find some exportable products for the English market was Simpson's renewed fostering of its institutions. There was a movement on foot for the Company to acquire the Selkirk colony. The Settlement was an open publication of the fact that the Company owned the soil of Rupert's Land. Presumably, it was now thought that this would be even more patent if the Company regained possession of the region—especially in view of its growing prosperity. The then Lord Selkirk, on his part, was not unwilling to be freed of all responsibility for such a distant colony. Thus Assiniboia was transferred by him back to the Company, the consideration being £15,000 of Hudson's Bay Company's stock. The date of the actual transfer was May 4, 1836,[1] but it was known to be coming in 1835. Accordingly, Simpson devoted himself anew to the governmental institutions of the Settlement.

Governor Simpson inaugurated a new era at a Council of Assiniboia over which he presided in his official capacity on February 12, 1835. He greatly enhanced the

importance of that body by adding to its membership of nine five new councillors sitting on that day simply as invited assessors, but soon to receive from the Governor and Committee their patents as members without which they could not legally hold office. These were the Catholic bishop, Donald Ross Chief Factor in charge of Norway House, Alexander Ross later the historian of the Settlement, John Bunn the Company's physician, and Andrew McDermot an early settler and a rising merchant in opposition to Fort Garry. What may be called Simpson's speech from the throne had the following for introduction:[2]

"The population of this Colony is become so great amounting to about 5,000 souls [by the census it was 3,679] that the personal influence of the Governor and Council, and the little more than nominal support afforded by the Police, which, together with the good feeling of the public, have hitherto been its principal safeguard, are no longer sufficient to maintain the tranquillity and good government of the Settlement, so that although rights of property have of late been frequently invaded and other serious offences committed, I am concerned to say we are under the necessity of allowing them to pass unnoticed because we really have not the means at command of enforcing obedience and due respect to the law.

"Under such circumstances, it must be evident to one and all of you that it is quite impossible society can be held together, that the time is at length arrived when it becomes necessary to put the administration of Justice on a more firm and regular footing than heretofore, and the immediate steps ought to be taken to guard against dangers from abroad [Indians, particularly the Sioux] or difficulties at home, for the maintenance of good order and tranquillity, and for the security and protection of lives and property.

Towards these important ends I therefore beg to propose the following Resolutions, which I trust will receive your favourable consideration."

It is not possible here to go in detail into the reforms which were thus placed before the Council. That the initiative came from Simpson is manifest from the simple fact that he presided over six reforming Councils during the following five years.[3] An import duty on goods was levied to secure the money needed to make the institutions inaugurated play their proper part. Of course, the Hudson's Bay Company, as the chief importer, provided the greater part of the money received from customs. The duty proposed by Simpson was 7½ per cent. The Governor and Committee reduced this in keeping with a clause in the Deed Poll to 5 per cent. (Later it was put at 4 per cent.). A gaol was erected. A Receiver of Custom duties, with an appropriate salary, was appointed in the person of James Bird, formerly Chief Inland in charge of the Saskatchewan Factory for the Company. No moneys were to be paid out by him without the proper warrant from the Board of Works, the chief spending body. Five members were appointed to the Board of Works, and the Hudson's Bay Company placed £300 at its disposal for "Public Works", chiefly roads and bridges. Care was taken to establish a more effective police force, always difficult to secure where the constables were members of a small community, and would be required to take action, if not involving their friends, in most cases their friends' friends. The Settlement was divided into Districts, and magistrates, acting as Justices of the Peace, were appointed to try petty cases. The former court, which was really the Council for judicial purposes remained under

the name of the Quarterly Court, and acted as a court for the trial of criminal cases and cases of more importance, and in general as the court of appeal. Ordinances were passed or reaffirmed covering offences such as letting fires run into the lands of neighbours, or allowing pigs or stallions to run loose—with appropriate fines.

When in 1836 the Company actually took over the colony, the Council was further enlarged, and the number of sheriffs increased. Most important of all, in 1839, a lawyer, Adam Thom,[4] was brought in to fill the office of Recorder sitting on the bench of the Quarterly Court as judge, and generally acting as legal adviser to the magistrates and to the Council. Rules of procedure were laid down by him for the several courts.

In all this, Governor Simpson shows himself as much more than a mere fur-trader, rather as a man of initiative and a builder of the institutions of a primitive society. As the Company at this time had complete control of the country, for all its imports and exports passed through York Factory, and its monopoly was in no way threatened, there was no danger that the Governor would cramp the Settlement in the interest of the Fur Trade as he had done in Governor Bulger's time and as he tried to do again at a later juncture. In the issue, the Red River Settlement began to develop a political consciousness. It learned to take pride in its institutions, and, as became apparent when the Dominion of Canada brought the North-West into the union, insisted that it was a colony with its own government and must be consulted as to its future. In a sense, the ultimate development of the colony into a province of the Dominion lay concealed in the institutions prescribed by the Charter and placed on sure foundations by George Simpson.

XI

Simpson and a Changing World, 1840 to 1859

XI

Simpson and a Changing World, 1840 to 1859

BECAUSE of its rapid changes the modern world stands in sharp contrast with the mediaeval. Even in the eighteenth century the system built up by Governor Simpson would have lasted through his lifetime. Not so in the nineteenth. The world in which he built up his successful trade machine lasted but a score of years — years marked by handsome bonuses in addition to the usual dividends. From the early forties a series of transformations, in the face of which both Simpson and the Hudson's Bay Company were powerless, put a severe strain upon his administration and the years of bonuses came to an end. It was the testing time for the great Governor.

Beaver Versus Silk Hats

The first change to be mentioned was in the irresponsible world of fashion. For more than two centuries men and women had taken delight in adorning their heads with beaver hats. By the 1840's the modern silk hat—if it can still be called modern—was displacing beaver

head-dress. Up to this time the skins of the beaver were sought for, not to be worn as furs, but to provide the fluff which, pressed into a basis of felt, made the famous beaver hats. The true meaning of the Hudson's Bay Company's motto *Pro pelle cutem* is "the skin for the fur". The fine inner hairs of the beaver, called in the bulk its wool, were spiccated, and, when pressed into the felt, its barbs held it in, making the finished hat durable, as it was beautiful. Such hats were, of course, costly. Silk hats began to be made about 1824. Despised at first as being shoddy and with too much of a sheen, they made their way slowly into the world of fashion. Because of their cheapness, by the 1840's they were making great inroads. The consequence was a crisis for the beaver trade.

George Simpson must have deplored this all the more because he had, almost from the beginning of his governorship, given the utmost forethought to preserving the supply of beaver for the London hatters. In the old days of fierce competition, the rivalry of the companies made anything like a wise policy of conservation impossible. The beaver were well nigh exterminated in large areas of the country, rather than have them remain to be captured by the Indians of the opposing concern. The rival forts were removed from one beaver region "ruined" to the next as yet untouched. After the union of 1821 the Hudson's Bay Company could carry out an intelligent policy of conservation.[1] A fort in a "ruined" area would be removed to a less depleted part, and the Indians persuaded to follow it. Where the natives refused to leave their ancestral hunting-grounds, to ensure them a living, higher prices were paid for inferior furs like musk-rat, while at the neighbouring post only a

regulated quantity of beaver would be accepted, or none at all.[2] To make up for the reduced volume from the ancient grounds, new regions were explored and occupied. In 1830 Fort Chimo close to Ungava Bay (a southerly expansion of Hudson Strait) was established. In 1840 the upper waters of the Liard, the principal tributary of the Mackenzie; in 1843 the transmontane regions beyond them, down the Pelly River to its confluence with the Lewes, where Fort Selkirk was built five years later. A parallel advance took place from the delta of the Mackenzie, up Peel River to the Yukon, where Fort Yukon was built in 1847; it was really in Russian territory. Similar new regions were exploited on the Pacific Coast.

The opening of these hitherto unknown regions constitutes a chapter of which the Company may well be proud. Credit must be given to Governor Simpson also whose business enterprise it exemplifies. The newly discovered parts kept up the supply of beaver, while the old areas were recruiting. But the cost of operations was increased by lengthening out the lines of transportation. In the midst of this development came the progressive decline in the demand for beaver. Bonuses ceased, and Simpson slaved long over the accounts to reduce costs and to maintain the customary dividend. His labours were not wholly in vain. The tradition that he was ruthless may possibly have originated during these years in which he staved off disaster.

Meanwhile, they were busy in London seeking out new uses for beaver. Edward B. Roberts, son of the Company's treasurer, hit upon the plan of inducing the public to wear garments adorned with finely prepared beaver furs, and to affect coats made of the pelt itself.[3] He began

by offering skins with the wool dyed as well as skins in their natural state. None would buy. The first success was won about the time of the great exhibition of 1851, at which Roberts had a beautiful show of dressed beaver and other skins.[4] Furriers began to take the place of the hatters at the Company's sales. The cold countries on the continent were the market at the outset.[5] In the course of time the demand for beaver skins as furs relieved the strain on the Company. It is safe to say that the efficient management of Simpson, his almost callous enforcement of economy, was a prime factor in tiding the Company over the crisis.

The Half-Breeds Escape from the Company's Monopoly

But the most potent transformations were due to the application of steam-driven engines to various means of transportation such as ships and trains. Steamships on lakes and rivers transformed the American continent in the short period of a score of years. Hard on these came the railways. Had these not come in, the old method of transportation by canoe, by boat, and by portages would have continued indefinitely, and with them the old system of the fur trade. With the union of 1821, all the trade of the hinterland of the broad Hudson Bay passed by river and portage to York Fort and to the Company's ships there. Because the Company thus held its outlet, the trade of the country was in the hollow of its hand. The advent of the railway, so to say, erased the Alleghany Mountains from the map of America; gave transportation to the produce of the Middle States; and what is not less important made it simple and easy for the great

migration to move westward. Then too, from the middle of the century, thanks to the steamships on the Mississippi, the half-breeds were being emancipated from the control of the Company. They could take peltry across the border to men come up with goods from St. Peter's. The structure of the fur trade built up by Simpson was being undermined. In 1860 Simpson himself took advantage of the new transportation by rail to St. Paul on the Mississippi. The Governor himself had abandoned the long and tedious route up the Ottawa and by Lake Nipissing to the Great Lakes, and by Fort William to Rainy Lake and Lake Winnipeg. There was already in 1859 a steamship plying down the Red River to Fort Garry. Had he not been prevented by illness, but gone on and caught it, he would have landed at the Settlement a single passenger lost in the multitude. The day of his arriving with gubernatorial ceremony lifted by his *voyageurs* out of his canoe, as of old, was over. The Governor lived on active duty long enough to see the trade system which he had built up crumbling at the onset of a new age.

There had been American fur-traders south of the border at Rainy Lake and Pembina after the union, but they had been handicapped by the cost of transportation, and Simpson had, from 1836, been able to maintain the monopoly of his Company by buying them off at the price of an annual subsidy of £300.[6] As a consequence, the half-breeds remained under the control of the Company. They could get their supplies only from Fort Garry, and there alone could they dispose of their furs. Accordingly, the Company had been willing to equip them to trap or even to trade with the Indians, for the furs gathered would sooner or later come into its own hands. But with

the movement of American migration westward and with steamships plying on the Mississippi new and aggressive opponents came into the field, less handicapped than their predecessors. With Kittson in charge of a fort at Pembina in the present North Dakota at the International Boundary offering goods cheaper than possible before, the half-breeds could take their furs to him and surreptitiously get the whiskey which gave them a great advantage in the trade with the Indians. Often they continued getting their goods at Fort Garry, because of the advantageous prices there. At the same time, men in the Settlement, like Andrew McDermot and James Sinclair, began to enter into the illicit trade, procuring their goods through the Hudson's Bay Company in London by way of York Fort, but shipping their furs to Kittson and out by St. Peter's and St. Paul, Minnesota. It was a curious feature of this competition that the rivals of the Company could present its own notes to the Chief Factor at Fort Garry and have their bills paid in London at the face value of the notes, thus escaping charges for exchange.[7]

The first definite steps to check the Company's opponents were taken in December 1844 by Alexander Christie, Governor of Assiniboia and Chief Factor at Fort Garry, on his own initiative.[8] In a proclamation he required all who imported goods from England in the Company's ships to make a declaration that they had not been engaging, directly or indirectly, in a traffic in furs, and that their goods being imported were not to be used for such a traffic This was aimed more particularly at McDermot and Sinclair, guilty parties. A second proclamation as good as told the half-breeds (with whom these men were in connivance) that if they refused to pay their

debts due to illicit traders, the traders, being breakers of the law (that is of the Charter) could not get satisfaction of them in the courts for debts incurred in their illegal trade; that the Company would require all traders doing a legitimate business to take out a license, which would be respected in the courts. A third proclamation required all importers using the Company's mails in ordering goods from England either to have made the declaration that they were not engaging in the fur trade, or to present their letters open, if need be for inspection, before the packet was closed. The decrees were really the policy of Adam Thom, Recorder of Assiniboia since 1839. Simpson was, as a matter of course, informed of these proclamations[9] and approved of them. So did the Governor and Committee at the outset.[10]

When Governor Simpson arrived in the Settlement in the following summer, he pushed the policy of harassing the illicit traders. Stringent enactments were passed by the Council of the Northern Department assembled in the Settlement on June 10, 1845.[11] A settler, "not a fur trafficker", was allowed to import certain domestic necessaries, whether from England or the United States, free of a duty about to be imposed. If he accompanied his goods, other than furs, and if he personally brought in goods to the value of £50 for his own use or for settlers other than traffickers in furs, they would be admitted duty free. Manifestly, there was no intention to handicap merchants engaging in what Simpson would have called legitimate trade. All other imports from the United Kingdom would be subject to a duty of 20 per cent. All imports from the United States, apart from the relaxations already mentioned, were to be subject to "the imperial statute for regulating the foreign trade of the

British possessions in North America." No goods were to be delivered at York Factory "to any but persons duly licensed to freight the same." Intoxicating drinks found in the possession of a fur trafficker "beyond the limits of the Settlement" could "be seized and destroyed by any person on the spot."

In this policy Simpson was probably influenced by Adam Thom, who viewed things solely from the legal point of view, or, as he would put it, from the point of view of the law of the land, namely the Charter. Simpson himself saw everything in the light of the interest of the Company, rather than of the colony, and, as the clash with Governor Bulger showed at the beginning of his career, when it came to the need to choose the one or the other, he was more concerned for the Company's monopoly than for the economic freedom of the settlers. Once again he was intent on preventing a trade among the settlers that would infringe upon the monopoly of the concern. He gave no thought to the hardship which a 20 per cent. duty would inflict on the people at large; his whole effort was to crush the illicit trade. But here once more the Governor and Committee, on which Andrew Colvile still sat, now as Deputy-Governor, took a more statesmanlike and juster view, and in so doing administered a rebuke to the Governor. Writing on April 3, 1846,[12] the Board declared that the arrangements proposed for the regulation of the trade of the Settlement and for the suppression of the illicit traffick were "too artificial to be carried into practice and are also, in some respects, erroneous in principle." The imposition of a 20 per cent. duty coming in through York Factory could not discourage importation from the United States through St. Peter's. The duty at York should not exceed 5 per cent.,

and if possible should be less. [It had been 4 per cent. hitherto.] The cheaper the goods coming in from England through York, the less inducement there would be to make connexions with the United States and to import goods from St. Peter's; there must be no discrimination against parties suspected of intending to traffic with the Indians; the duty must be the same for all.

> "Paragraph 23 . . . Such as are guilty of trading illicitly in furs can only be punished by law and in the law courts invoking the Charter and the covenant by which they held their land[13] and had promised to refrain from a trade in furs; any other methods would appear harsh in the eyes of the world."

If the uniform conduct of the Company towards the Settlers be fair and just to all, the feelings of the well-disposed will be with the Company, and you will the more easily obtain respect to the law. [So far from putting obstacles in the way of settlers desiring to enter into an export trade] the best way of protecting the fur trade was to encourage them to prepare tallow, flax, and wool; and every facility should be offered in the form of shipping from York Factory.

> "We think these measures are calculated to get you out of your present or apprehended difficulties and, being fair and liberal to the settlers, to procure the general feeling in favour of the Company."

It may be taken that the constant policy of the Governor and Committee was expressed by Governor J. H. Pelly to Simpson,[14] that he had ever been of the opinion that competitors and smuggling should be met by better prices [even at a loss] making illicit trade unprofitable. These being the principles on which the Board was acting, Governor Christie's proclamations were disallowed.[15]

But Christie's and Simpson's aggressions against the illicit traders, which the half-breeds attributed, not unjustly, to Adam Thom, set a-going a trend of affairs which brought the eyes of the public upon the administration of the Company. On August 29 the half-breeds submitted a paper to Christie and required answers to questions[16] which showed that they had not forgotten the lessons taught them a generation before by the Northwesters. The underlying assumption of the questionnaire was that the half-breeds, as natives of the land, could hunt furs and trade them at will, for the Charter could not take their rights away from them; that they had rights in spite of the Charter, and the Europeans had not. Christie's answers were to the effect that the half-breeds had no special rights in virtue of their birth, that they were like all dwellers in the land subject to the law, namely to the Charter. This failed to satisfy them, and they were stirred up by one John McLaughlin, a relative of Andrew McDermot's and a recent arrival from the United States, to sign a petition, apparently prepared by him, taking what they regarded as their grievances to the foot of the throne. James Sinclair took the petition over to London and secured in its favour the advocacy of A. K. Isbister, son of a former Officer of the Company and educated as a lad in the Settlement and then at the University of Edinburgh. He was now a lawyer in London. Isbister's letter forwarding the petition to the Colonial Minister was dated February 17, 1847.[17] Philanthropists anxious for the welfare of the subject native races in the Empire believed the many charges against the Company and brought pressure to bear on the Colonial Office. There is no need to enter into the details here. For five years there were charges and rebuttals, and a long and

patient enquiry by Lord Grey the Colonial Minister. The Law Officers were consulted and reported on the Charter as valid. But a definite group appeared in Parliament hostile to the privileges of the Company. Lord Grey's decision, however, was that the charges were not proven.

Meanwhile, in the Red River Settlement, now Simpson's influence was felt, now that of the Governor and Committee. During the Oregon crisis, there was a real fear of American aggression on the border south of the Settlement. But Simpson dreaded equally the growing illicit trade and its consequence, the hostility of the half-breeds to the government of Assiniboia. Stressing the American danger, he prevailed on the Company to urge the Imperial Government to place a body of soldiers in the Settlement to demonstrate to the world that it was British territory, but he wanted the troops also to overawe the discontented. Writing to Governor J. H. Pelly on October 24, 1845,[18] he said of the proposed military establishment:

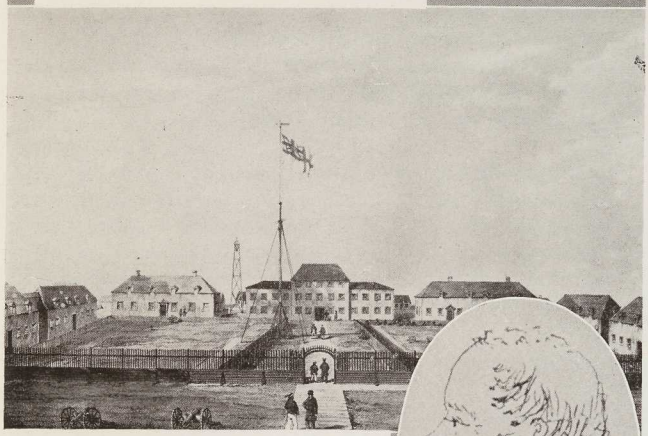
> "[It] is absolutely necessary to the existence of the Fur trade, not in reference to any difficulties with the United States only, but as a means of protection against the inhabitants of the Settlement, as with the feeling at present existing on the minds of the half-breeds it will be quite impossible to protect the trade or enforce our laws without the presence of the military at that point."

The Imperial Government responded to the Company's plea and from 1846 to 1848 sixteen officers and 310 rank and file of the 6th Regiment of Foot[19] were stationed at Red River. There can be no doubt that their presence tended to quieten the spirit of discontent. Moreover, the troops brought money and profits to the isolated colony.

So far Sir George Simpson and the Governor and Committee were in agreement, though their points of view were far apart. To Simpson the colony was the handmaid of the trade, and now that a trade in furs could be carried on by way of the United States, the settlement constituted a danger to the Company's monopoly, in the actual trade and in the half-breeds' appeal to the Imperial Government. He felt that the Catholic priest Father Georges-Antoine Belcourt was promoting the attempt of the half-breeds to free themselves of the monopoly. Accordingly, he made representations to the bishop of Quebec, the result of which was that Father Belcourt, then on a visit in his native province, was prevented from returning to the Settlement.[20] But the good father felt that he had a mission to fulfill towards his followers and had adopted an attitude of persistent hostility to the Company, which was in no way moderated by Simpson's subtle tactics. He returned to his people, stationing himself at Pembina[21] on the American side of the border, from whose neighbourhood the winter hunt of the buffalo started. There, out of reach of the Company, he continued to be the rallying centre of half-breed discontent.

In contrast with Simpson's methods, a combination of force and subtlety, was the liberal policy of the Committee, doubtless adopted under the influence of Andrew Colvile. The Red River Settlement was not just the handmaid of the trade, but a colony which should have life in itself. The existence of the garrison there afforded the opportunity to go some distance in the direction of freeing the settlers from the immediate control of the Company [including Governor Simpson]. The chance came after the 6th Regiment of Foot had been withdrawn,

YORK FACTORY
Courtesy of the Public Archives of Canada



SIR GEORGE SIMPSON
A pen and ink sketch by Sir James Alexander Grant
Courtesy of the McCord National Museum, McGill University

MOOSE FACTORY
Courtesy of the Public Archives of Canada

and when a group of Pensioners was sent out as soldier settlers to protect the settlement. The Company appointed Major Caldwell, in command of the detachment, Governor of Assiniboia. Neither Simpson nor the Chief Factor at Fort Garry was to interfere in the affairs of the Settlement. The Governor and Committee wrote to Simpson and the trade councils:[22]

> "We have considered it expedient that the office of Civil Governor should be united to that of Military Commander at Red River Settlement, and we have therefore appointed Major Caldwell Governor of Assiniboia. As a necessary consequence of this arrangement the duties of the Company's officer in charge of the Settlement will be confined to matters of trade, council and magistracy."

And Archibald Barclay, the Secretary of the Company wrote to Simpson on April 12, 1850:[23]

> "Now that there is a Governor specially appointed for the Settlement, unconnected with the Company's affairs and assisted by a colonial Council, it may be desirable that the Northern Council should not interfere in the concerns of the Settlement beyond passing a Resolution to afford every assistance to the Governor whose hands may be thus strengthened and that you should take no part in their proceedings, except to give advice (if asked) as to administration and legal proceedings."

No stronger evidence is needed to show that the Governor and Committee were the masters, that Simpson was the servant, and that he (and it should be added Governor Christie and Adam Thom) had been pursuing a mistaken policy towards the colony.

Unfortunately for the Board's liberal plans, Major Caldwell was incompetent and irresponsible. In an obscure quarrel he suspended his only subordinate, Captain Foss, from his duties, as it happened, just when

a crisis came up with the half-breeds. The Pensioners were thus left without an officer to command them when the Governor should be on the bench. A half-breed Sayer and two others were accused of having furs traded with the Indians in their possession, in breach of the Company's monopoly. The responsibility for this trial must in the first place rest with Chief Factor Ballenden who had succeeded to Christie at Fort Garry, and with Adam Thom the Recorder; but their action was in line with the policy enunciated as above by the Governor and Committee that men guilty of breaches of the law must not be proceeded against indirectly and on suspicion, but by formal process of law. The half-breeds, after a meeting with Father Belcourt at Pembina,[24] and a second assembly at St. Boniface, appeared on the morning of the trial in arms at the Court House. As Captain Foss was suspended from his duties, and Major Caldwell was on the bench, there was no one to command the Pensioners,[25] and nothing was done to meet the situation. The half-breeds had a free field. It says much for their respect for the Quarterly Court and much for the management of Recorder Thom that the case was ultimately tried.[26] Though, by agreement, half of the jury was nominated by the supporters of Sayer, the verdict was "Guilty". At this point Chief Factor Ballenden on behalf of the Company stated that the aim of the prosecution was rather to have the law declared than to punish the guilty, and asked that the cases be now dropped. The prisoners were accordingly discharged. At news of this the armed crowd outside raised the cry: "La traite est libre"—"The trade is free." Indeed, the trade thenceforth was free—free so far as the half-breeds had the resources to carry it on. The area tapped by them was the region of lakes

Manitoba, Winnipegosis, and Winnipeg; and the Saskatchewan reached by Red River carts travelling across the prairies. They had not the resources to penetrate into the fastness of the north, the Churchill River, Athabaska and the Peace and Mackenzie rivers. That area remained wholly in the hand of the Company. Victory won, the half-breeds returned to a qualified loyalty to the Company. In 1869, Louis Riel, the father of the Louis Riel of the disturbances of that year, himself a prime mover in the affair of 1849, was a firm supporter of the Company against the Canadians.

In this crisis Governor Simpson played no part, for, as has been seen, the Governor and Committee had taken the Settlement out of his control. But it is an interesting fact, and eloquent of the hold he had upon the half-breed element that in the stress of the times, and in the face of the pressure brought on them by Adam Thom, they turned to him to pour out their grievances—"to the only person in whom we have remains of hope."[27] He might possibly have stemmed the tide momentarily, but the whole trend of the times, especially since the advance of American transportation and settlement westward had put the settlement within reach of the market to the south, was against the monopoly—indeed against the fur trade—and later in favour of agricultural development. Not all the ability of Sir George Simpson could stay progress to that end.

Adam Thom, the Recorder, had been so much to the front in the Sayer trial, and had lost the respect of the Colony because of his mishandling of two subsequent cases, that the Company was for discharging him forthwith. It was due to Simpson that he was kept on, no longer as judge, it is true, but simply as legal adviser, and

that he finally resigned and retired, not without financial arrangements which diminished the obloquy of his enforced retreat.

During the troubles, the cry that the Councillors should be elected and the Council be made representative was first heard.[28] Simpson met this by suggesting to the Governor and Committee that leading men from the several half-breed groups in the Settlement should be made of the Council. The Governor of the Company, J. H. Pelly, demurred at what appeared to him the dangerous course of admitting "such uninformed illiterate men to the Council" and refused to adopt the suggestion.[29] But Simpson ultimately had his way. At the request of the new Recorder, who was also Governor of Assiniboia, a nominee of Simpson, commissions were issued and at a Council held on September 19, 1857, Paschal Breland, Solomon Hamelin and Maximilien Genton, French half-breeds, were sworn of the Council. From this time on, the Council, though composed of members who were appointed by the Company, was in a very real sense representative of the various groups in the community, English, French, English half-breeds and French half-breeds. Councillors were important men in the several parts of the Settlement, nominated to the Governor and Committee after informal discussions in the Council and with the group. They were practically co-opted members. To hold office legally, they had to receive patents from the Governor and Committee appointing them of the Council. In the height of the disturbances on the Red River of 1869 Alex. Begg, the diarist, wrote:[30]

"Whatever may have been the faults of the Hudson Bay rule they were light ones and although there was a feeling

in the minds of the settlers that the H.B.C. were not powerful enough to enforce the laws when required, yet there never was a general feeling of discontent towards them or their actions in the government of the settlement. On the contrary we felt ourselves a free people in every respect; we had privileges that in other countries were not enjoyed by the people. Our government was by a council appointed from amongst ourselves; it is true we had no direct vote in their election, but the H.B.C. invariably consulted the opinions of a neighbourhood before choosing a councilman from that part; we therefore to a certain degree had a voice in our own government and were content therewith. Our laws as administered savored more of arbitration than law and in that respect suited our requirements better than if a pack of lawyers had been amongst us urging us with all the quibbles best known to them to eat each other up in useless suits."

To this happy issue the Board and Governor Simpson separately made their contributions. It was due to the Governor and Committee rather than to Simpson that the Colony enjoyed an economic life in itself, subject of course to the restrictions of the Charter in the matter of the trade in peltries. Simpson was twice overruled in his overmastering determination to bend all things to contribute to the prosperity of the Company as a fur-trading concern. Over against this is the fact that he won the reluctant Board to the principle that the Council should include half-breeds among its members, and that it should be in a real sense, if not formally, representative of the people. Thus the community acquired a political consciousness—that political consciousness which resisted the attempt of the Dominion to submerge it in a North-West Territory managed from Ottawa. In 1870, the lively public opinion of the Red River Settlement forced

the Dominion to take it into the Confederation no otherwise than as a Province enjoying representative and responsible government—the Province of Manitoba. This may be regarded as the joint contribution of the Company and Sir George Simpson to the Dominion of 1870.

The Oregon—the Fur Trade Gives Way to Migration

There is no occasion to discuss here the legal claims of Great Britain and of the United States to the Pacific Slope. The arguments on the one side and the other were barrages behind which the decisive forces were at work. Looked at in the broad, the question at issue was which of the two nations would settle effectively the area to which both had some sort of claim, or, more precisely, what would be the boundary line between the actual effective occupation of the one party and the other.

It has been seen that at the time of Simpson's first visitation of the Oregon the British Government was prepared to cede the area south of the main Columbia and the Kootenay to the Americans. Naturally, Simpson accepted this and framed his policy accordingly. He treated the area south of the rivers, so to say, as a skirmishing ground, on which he could meet the enemy and, by the weight of efficient organization and while asserting no more than his company's equal right to trade there in keeping with the agreement of 1818, keep him out of the territory and away from what was now being regarded as the inner fortifications—a sort of Torres Vedras—the north bank of the rivers. By means of the Company's so-called Snake Expedition, which depleted

the land of its furs, he attained to this objective. The American fur trade took no abiding root there.

Next, he proceeded to dig himself in behind the line of the Columbia. This he did by placing Fort Vancouver on the north bank, and by making it much more than the ordinary fur-trading post. It became a centre of agriculture with its farm, its herd of cattle, and its flour-mill. This was not simply good strategy; from the point of view of the fur trade it was good business. A very valuable feature of the country north of the Columbia was Puget Sound with all the facilities it offered for shipping. After a few years of hesitation, in 1839 Simpson led his company to dig in there. This it did in the form of the farms and the cattle and sheep ranges of the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company, a subsidiary of the Hudson's Bay Company in which leading men of the Company like Colvile and Officers in the service took shares. This also was not simply good strategy. It proved in the end good business.

The last item in Simpson's policy was to oust the Americans from the marine fur trade, for in 1824 this was entirely in their hands—one of the reasons for the steadfast determination of the American Government to keep its hold on the Oregon. The Governor's aim was accomplished by the line of forts from Nisqually on Puget Sound and Fort Langley on Fraser River northward to the boundary of Russian Alaska; and by the sailing ships and finally the steamer *Beaver* caring for their trade. The agreement between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Russian Fur Company by which the duty of providing supplies for the Russian posts, which had been a means of bringing profit to the Americans, was passed over to the Englishmen, was shrewd business.

Looked at from the point of view of the occupation of the country it was also sound strategy.

The issue of Simpson's far-reaching policy was that the American shipping disappeared from the Pacific Coast and the whole of "the West of the Mountains" was in the hands of the English company. Simpson had thus greatly strengthened Britain's claim to the part of the country north of the Columbia which she was insisting must be hers. No more could be asked for; no more was possible of accomplishment.

All that could now be done was to await events, and as far as possible stiffen the will of the British Foreign Office to make good the claims it was advancing. To this end, so to say, Simpson took up a position on the watch-tower and kept the Company, and through it the British Foreign Office, aware of the designs and movements of the enemy. That he did not fall asleep at his post is evidenced by his constant communications with the Imperial Government. These began as early as 1825. In the middle of November he arrived in England after his first visit to the Columbia. On December 9th Governor J. H. Pelly wrote to George Canning the Foreign Secretary informing him of the fact.[31]

> "He will remain here until the beginning of February, and will attend any appointment that you may be pleased to make should you wish to be possessed of any further information respecting that Country. . . . In compliance with a wish expressed by you at our last interview Governor Simpson when at Columbia abandoned Fort George on the South side of the River and formed a new Establishment on the North side about 75 miles from the mouth of the River at a place called by Lt. Broughton Belle vue point. Governor Simpson named the new Establishment "Fort Vancouver" in order to

indentify our Claim to the Soil and trade with Lt. Broughton's discovery and Survey."

Canning sent Simpson a series of "Queries", the "Answers" to be made in writing and to prepare himself for the interview.[32] Two may be quoted:

Queries.	*Answers.*
5—Have the Americans any Post or trapping parties on the Columbia or to the West of the Rocky Mountains in that direction?	The Americans have not had a Post on the West side of the Rocky Mountains since the year 1813 and I am not aware that they ever had any Trapping parties on the West side of the Mountains until last year when the Hudson's Bay Company's Snake Country Expedition fell in with five Americans who had straggled across the sources of the Missouri.
7—For what extent of Country does the Columbia River furnish an outlet for Trade? Specify this exactly and according to the latest and most accurate accounts.	The Columbia is the only navigable River to the interior from the Coast we are acquainted with; it is therefore the only certain outlet for the Company's Trade west of the Mountains comprehending that of thirteen Establishments now occupied: 1. Ft. Vancouver 2. Nez Percé. 3. Okanagan. 4. Colvile House.

5. Flat Head.
6. Kootenais.
7. Kilmany. [Kilmaurs].
8. Fraser's Lake.
9. Ft. St. James.
10. McLeod's Fort.
11. Chilcotin "
12. Thompson's Fort. [Kamloops on Thompson's River.]
13. Alexandria Fort."

Governor Pelly answered another series of "Queries" for the Hon. William Huskisson on July 25th, 1826,[33] and added a long argument on August 9th[34] purporting to show that the Americans had no legal claim whatever to the valley of the Columbia.

The renewal in 1827 of the agreement of joint-occupancy of 1818, brought a period of diplomatic inactivity. From the English point of view this was rudely broken by the introduction of a Bill into Congress authorizing the President to establish a series of military posts through the Oregon to the Pacific Coast. The news stirred Governor Pelly once more to action. In a long letter to Lord Palmerston, then Foreign Minister, dated March 9th, 1838,[35] he mentioned Governor Simpson as present in London, and that his knowledge of the country would enable him to speak on the points raised in the letter. On receipt of this, Palmerston called for a memorandum to be prepared by his office showing how things stood in the matter of the conflicting claims to the Oregon, and forwarded Pelly's letter to Mr. [Henry Stephen] Fox the ambassador at Washington. In all probability Governor Simpson was called to the Foreign

Office once more to report on the extent to which the English were predominant in the Oregon.

From its own point of view the American Government was playing a game as wise as it was astute in keeping the Oregon question open, by refusing to agree to any definite division of the territory. The continent was rapidly changing its complexion; its spacious unoccupied areas were filling up; the tide of migration was sweeping westward and would ultimately reach the Pacific Slope; and there was nothing comparable to it in the British region to the north. Time and tide were wholly in their favour. On March 9th, 1839, F. P. Tracy, "Secretary of the Oregon Provisional Emigration Society" wrote to the "Principal Officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, Montreal" (that is to Simpson), to enquire if the Company would treat their "Emigrants in a friendly manner." On May 18th a copy of the letter was placed in the hands of Lord Palmerston by Governor Pelly.[36] Simpson and Pelly were not slow in passing the news of the coming migration to the Government.

In May, 1840, Governor Pelly, on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company, called Lord Palmerston's attention to a report in the "St. John's Courier," which must have been forwarded by Simpson, that resolutions had been introduced in the Senate asserting the right of the United States to the Oregon. Lord Palmerston wrote immediately to Mr. Fox in Washington "to endeavour to ascertain what had been done thereupon."[37]

Sir Edward Belcher in command of H.M.S. *Sulphur*, who had meanwhile visited the Columbia River, had stated in a despatch that the Hudson's Bay Company had brought the American missionaries into that region.

Lord John Russell, Colonial Minister, called the attention of the Company to the statement. Governor Pelly replied on March 18th, 1840, that the statement was "quite erroneous," that the Company viewed with alarm the immigrants who had come in through the missionaries as calculated to give the United States Government a great influence over both the natives and the settlers. In proof that the hospitality accorded to the missionaries in giving them supplies was really to prevent them from creating an American business machine to provide for their wants, the Company's instructions to James Douglas, Chief Factor at Fort Vancouver assisting John McLoughlin, dated November 15th, 1837, were enclosed:[38]

> "We notice the arrival of the American missionaries, and approve their being furnished with such supplies, as they may require at the prices charged, say [viz.] 100 p cent advance on the prime cost on such as may be required for the use of the Mission, and 150 p cent on goods that may be sold to their servants; we are entirely influenced in assenting to this arrangement by its being a means of preventing their obtaining supplies direct by sea, as the presence of strange vessels in the River must necessarily lead to excitement among the Indians, and interfere with the trade; and whilst it is our wish that no encouragement be afforded to those Missionaries to visit our Establishments, you will understand it is not our desire that the rites of hospitality should be witheld from them when circumstances may render their visits unavoidable: were we satisfied that the sole objects of these Missionaries, were the civilization of the Natives, and the diffusion of moral and Religious Instruction, we should be happy to render them our most cordial support and assistance; but we have all along foreseen that the purport of their visit was not confined to those objects; but that the formation of a Colony of United States Citizens

on the Banks of the Columbia was the main or fundamental part of their plan, which, if successful, might be attended with material injury, not only to the Fur Trade, but in a National point of view."

To this was added an extract showing that Governor Simpson had ordered a yearly migration of half-breeds from Red River Settlement to be inaugurated by Duncan Finlayson, who was acting for him during his somewhat prolonged absence in England.

It was not in Simpson's nature to confine himself to forwarding information to the Company and through them to the Government. If there was to be American immigration into the Oregon, there must be British migrants also. He arranged for a band of half-breed settlers to be conveyed at the expense of the Company, to the Columbia, there to occupy farms near the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company's lands. This opens up the vista of a possible rivalry between the two nations in peopling the Oregon.

But there were inherent weaknesses in the position of the Hudson's Bay Company and of the English West of the Mountains. The Company had occupied the country as a fur-trading concern—from that point of view occupied it completely. Yet the land remained empty, and, so far as the Company was concerned, many a potential smiling agricultural region would remain permanently undeveloped. But the whole continent was being transformed by modern means of locomotion, and a great migration from Europe had set in. It was becoming increasingly evident that a great population would occupy the lands of the Republic. There was nothing comparable to this north of the International Boundary. The more severe climate, above all, the

barren wastes—rocky hills and muskeg—for a thousand miles west of the settlements of that day in Canada denied to the north the happy developments experienced by the south. Beyond these wastes lay another thousand miles of prairie with no promise that its transportation problems could be solved and the land filled in anything less than half a century. Beyond the prairies lay the iron-bound barrier of the Rocky Mountains, its passes, save for White Man's Pass, of the shaggiest and most difficult of penetration. In contrast, the passes from the United States into the Oregon were not only direct, but open.[39] The Rocky Mountain country, it is true, was wild and forbidding, but the first American migrants found, to their surprise, that the land was sufficiently open for prairie schooners to be drawn through. Moreover, there was a great and increasing reservoir of population to the south on which to draw. Simpson could conjure up no more than the diminutive Red River Settlement's spare half-breeds, a type of settlers without political experience or national aspirations. There could be no uncertainty about the issue.

For all his efforts to stiffen the will of the British Foreign Office to hold fast to the Columbia as the boundary between the areas to be assigned to the two nations, Simpson was of too perceiving a nature not to be conscious of what was coming. On his visit to the Pacific Coast in the following year (1841) on his journey round the world, he arranged for the transfer of the depot for the coastal trade from Fort Vancouver to some site on the south end of Vancouver Island and Fort Victoria was built. Here also was a combination of good business from the point of view of the Company's trade, and wise

strategy in view of the possibility of Britain not being able to secure the Columbia for the boundary between the two nations.

On March 1st, 1841, before Sir George Simpson started on his world tour in connection with the relations of the Russian American Fur Company with the Hudson's Bay Company, Sir J. H. Pelly informed the Government of Sir George's intended voyage. In reply he was informed that "Her Majesty's Government will be much obliged to Sir George Simpson for any information which he may be able to collect of national Interest during his expedition to the North-West Coast of America." As a result pertinent passages from the Governor's long and unfailingly informing despatches were forwarded to the Government—two letters from Fort Vancouver dated November 25th, 1841, two from Honolulu, dated March 1st and March 19th, 1842, and one from Ochotsk (Siberia), dated July 6th of that year. These letters were simple factual statements of the situation on the whole Pacific Coast as Simpson saw it. On his return to London, Sir J. H. Pelly, in a letter of January 23, 1843, reported his presence to the Foreign Office, and asked for an interview with Lord Aberdeen its head, Simpson to accompany him.

Further information on what was transpiring in the Oregon was conveyed to the Government by Pelly on September 18, 1843,[40] in an extract of a letter from Dr. John McLoughlin to Governor Simpson, in which was engrossed a request from the American missionary Dr. Elijah White "Sub-Agent [of] Indian Affairs for the United States west of the Rockies" asking for a statement of the Hudson's Bay Company's establishments in the region. McLoughlin replied that he could make a report

of the kind only to the Governor and Committee of the Company.

A letter from Simpson dated Red River Settlement, June 20th, 1844,[41] reported an ominous development on the Columbia. The American settlers had made their first attempt to form a provisional government under the protection of the United States.

> "There was a large influx of Settlers (to the Columbia) from the Missouri last year, estimated at from 700-800 Souls, the greater part of whom have established themselves on the south side of the Columbia, principally on or in the neighbourhood of the Willamette, while some restless spirits proceeded to California & the Sandwich Islands. . . .
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> "The American Settlers have had several public meetings for the purpose of forming themselves into something like a provisional Government, & have elected an Executive Board, Magistrates, Sheriff & Constables; they will have little scruple in enforcing their laws, however much at variance they may be with those of any other civilised state or country. They lately called upon the British settlers, say [viz.] the retired servants of the Company, to join them in a petition to Congress, praying it would extend its protection to them, but, from a want of popularity on the part of the person who convened the meeting, the petition was not carried. American influence, however, I am sorry to find, predominates very much, as, out of a population of about 3000 souls, not more than one third are British subjects."

Further news of this purport was conveyed to the Foreign Office in an extract from a letter from Dr. John McLoughlin to Sir George Simpson, dated March 20, 1845.[42] It described the formation of a provisional government with a legislature of eight members, an executive of three, and an elected judge; the region had been divided into districts, each with magistrates, a

INDIAN ENCAMPMENT
Courtesy of the Public Archives of Canada

A BLACKFOOT CHIEF
Courtesy of the Public Archives of Canada

RED LAKE CHIEF AND HIS BAND VISITING GOVERNOR BULGER AT FORT DOUGLAS
Courtesy of the Public Archives of Canada

sheriff, and constables; a scheme of taxation had been adopted; and finally arrangements had been made for a census. Pressure from McLoughlin had secured the concession that inhabitants north of the Columbia River should not be enumerated in the census. [The intention of the promoters of this organization was to place their government under the protection of the United States.]

Things were now moving rapidly to a decision. In 1844, James Knox Polk, the Democratic candidate, was elected president, his election cry having been "Fifty-four forty or fight", that is the whole Pacific Slope to the Russian boundary or war. In the face of the failure of the negotiations of the British Government to get American assent to the Columbia as the boundary, and of the willingness of the American Government oft expressed to accept the 49th parallel as the border, Lord Aberdeen saw that, if he was to secure the north bank of the Columbia one or other of two courses was open to him—arbitration or war. He proposed arbitration. Quite apart from the fact that nations are more prone to prescribe arbitration to others than to accept it for themselves, there can be little doubt but that the arbitrators' tribunal would have accepted the British claim to the north bank as a natural compromise. The Columbia would have been a boundary provided by nature and offering equal rights of transportation to the two nations. Such rights as Britain could assert under international practice, namely the discovery of the upper Columbia and particularly trade and settlement in the region would not have been lightly set aside, not so lightly as they were in the mind of the Americans dominated by the will to possess. The arbitrators would have been compelled to recognize the actualities of the

past thirty years. This probably explains the refusal of the American Government to go to arbitration. But in justice to the Americans, their mental make-up must be considered. While their legal arguments ignored the present and stressed the distant past, their compelling motive was their view of the future. The United States alone could fill the country with a population, and, as far as could then be seen, they and they alone could fill it in the immediate future. With arbitration refused, the alternatives before the British Government were the acceptance of the 49th parallel or war.

The British Ministry must now of necessity weigh in the scales the chances of victory in case of war. Their calculations about the Navy appear to have been comforting. But what about that boundary from ocean to ocean of something like 3,500 miles? On March 29th, 1845, Sir George Simpson, who was in London, wrote a memorandum for Governor Pelly on the possibilities of the defence of the west. This was, of course, sent to Lord Aberdeen at the Foreign Office.[43] Immediately thereafter Simpson was called to a conference with Sir Robert Peel, the Prime Minister, and Lord Aberdeen. Doubtless for the sake of privacy, the conversation took place at the home of Sir Robert. It was arranged to send out an officer from England. This plan was modified immediately, possibly for the sake of secrecy. At any rate, on April 3rd, 1845, Lord Aberdeen, as Foreign Minister, requested Lord Stanley of the Colonial Office to require Lord Metcalfe, Governor of Canada, to send one or two officers "as private travellers to the Oregon Territory" to "examine the important parts of the Country in order to obtain as accurate knowledge of it as may be requisite for the future and efficient prosecutions

of military operations in it, should such operations become necessary. Sir George Simpson the Acting Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company in America who proceeds to Canada in this Mail, will be ready to place himself in communication with Lord Metcalfe and Sir R. Jackson [in command of the troops in Canada] and impart to them his views as to the best mode of efficiently carrying out the object which is contemplated."[44] Lieut. Henry J. Warre and Lieut. M. Vavasour were chosen for the task. They travelled with Simpson as far as the Red River Settlement, and thence went on to the Oregon.

Simpson's amateurish ideas of the means of defending the long border from Lake Superior to the Pacific need not be discussed. It is patent that war over the Oregon would not be confined to that region, but would involve all the British colonies in North America. It could have brought nothing but disaster for them, and consequently for the British Empire. The British North American colonies were but sparsely settled and wholly isolated the one from the other—trackless forested ranges between the maritime colonies and Canada; a thousand miles of mountains and morasses between Canada and the diminutive Red River Settlement, both areas without access to the sea in winter; another thousand miles of practically uninhabited prairie to the Rockies; and but a few bands of fur-traders in the inaccessible Pacific Slope. Lord Aberdeen, of necessity, accepted the American Government's oft repeated offer, and the 49th parallel became the boundary. Such was the agreement registered in the Treaty of Oregon, 1846.

Simpson had done all that could possibly be done to avert this decision. He had made the British interest the sole

actuality in the Pacific Slope. He had kept the Imperial Government informed and warned at every stage, and his knowledge was such that it was sought from time to time. It was through no fault of his that the Oregon was lost to Britain, and that the Company had ultimately to withdraw from it. Something was due to the hostile climate that sent the wave of migration to the south rather than to British territory. More was due to the insuperable physical barriers to movement westward, which cramped and confined the several colonies in pockets in a wide continent. But the most dominant influence was the transformation going on in the part of America south of the British border. Over this neither Simpson, nor his Company, nor the British Government could exercise control. They could not bid the tide of migration to stay in its course; they could not direct it, if they wanted, into the waste areas under the Union Jack. The fur trade was being pushed back beyond the 49th parallel by an eager land hungry generation, cheered on by a government unyielding because its eyes were set on what it considered the manifest destiny of the American people.

But it must be emphasized that, though Sir George Simpson strained every nerve to avert this decision of fate, he saw the final issue from afar, and as a good strategist, while striving for victory, prepared for possible, indeed he would probably have said for almost certain defeat, by making proper dispositions for retreat. It was due to Sir George's foresight and efficient management that the shock of the loss of the Oregon was so minimized that it was in no sense a disaster to the Company, for all was ready for the change.

In subsequent years Simpson made several journeys to Washington, wrote many a wearisome letter, and kept

the Imperial Government pressing for compensation to the Company from the United States for the lands which it had held by common law or squatters' rights around its posts. In the end a considerable sum was granted by way of compensation.

The Continued Retreat of the Fur Trade Before Settlements

The repercussions of the Oregon crisis on what is now the Dominion of Canada were many and far-reaching. To begin with the Pacific Slope—the British Ministry feared that the 49th parallel, the International Boundary as drawn by the Treaty of Oregon, might prove a shadowy line in the eyes of the incoming migrants; that they might settle north of it, create a provisional government of their own, as they had done in the Oregon, and appeal to the American Government to receive them into the fold of the Republic. Earl Grey, the Colonial Minister, said in the House of Lords: "It is obvious, when an eligible territory is left waste, unsubdued to the use of man, it is impossible to prevent persons from taking irregular possession of the land." To forestall such a contingency, the Colony of Vancouver's Island was planned. As the Government could not see its way to assume the burden of its administration, it was to be placed in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company, which could recoup itself for its expenses by sharing in the profits of its natural resources to the extent of 10 per cent. The Grant to the Company (1849) was opposed by a group of brilliant men in the House of Commons, including William Ewart Gladstone, who were opposed to the Company as the survival into modern times of a

vicious monopoly. The Government had its way and the Grant was made. Chief Factor James Douglas became the second Governor of the Colony (1851). The land system, as sketched by Lord Grey and Sir J. H. Pelly, Governor of the Company, was devised to keep out American settlers. It was thought that well-to-do gentlemen from Britain would take up areas of a thousand acres, bring out farm labourers, and make the Colony one of gentleman farmers. As Vancouver's Island was the most inaccessible colony of the Empire and without a suitable market for its produce, for the American market was pre-empted for the Americans by a high tariff, the scheme was doomed to failure—a failure which was accentuated by the gold rush to California which drew population away to it from all parts. But Earl Grey was justified by the subsequent history. The discovery of gold in the bars of the Fraser River brought a rush into the hitherto unpeopled mainland. Many of the miners were Americans from far and near, and especially from California, where the reaction from the first craze was now in full force. To preserve something like order at the several bars of the Fraser, they began to set up provisional executives. The situation anticipated by Earl Grey was an incipient actuality. But, although the mainland was beyond his sphere of government, Governor Douglas of Vancouver's Island stepped in, and took control. The mainland was immediately erected into a colony, British Columbia by name (1858), and the sovereignty of Britain effectually asserted. In all this Sir George Simpson had no part.

East of the Mountains, the great prairie region, even more than British Columbia, could be described in Earl Grey's terms as "eligible territory left to be waste". As

has been seen, when American troops were expected to establish a military post at Pembina, immediately south of the border, Simpson requested the Governor and Committee to apply for a military detachment to be sent out by the Imperial Government to go into garrison at the Red River Settlement. The Americans appeared on the scene in the form of a detachment of cavalry (190 officers and men).[45] They did not build a post, but, meeting the half-breeds of the Settlement on their usual buffalo hunt which extended into American territory, they bade them, if they would continue their hunts, to settle in the United States and become American citizens. The excitement in the Settlement was great. It accentuated the unrest among the half-breeds at the monopoly of the Company. The British troops brought out in 1846 at one and the same time asserted the rights of Britain to the land, overawed the half-breeds, and guarded against their forming a settlement on the border which might have disregarded the 49th parallel of latitude.

Much more far-reaching were the repercussions of the Oregon crisis on Canada and the east. In military circles, brought face to face with the possibility of war with America, the helplessness of the colonies, so isolated from one another, created a profound impression. In a pamphlet published in 1848,[46] Captain Millington Henry Synge, who had been stationed in Canada, placed what he considered as the only safeguard for the future before the public—the construction of a railway from Atlantic to Pacific. Other writers saw in such a railway the means of peopling the gaps between the colonies, and in particular of settling the West. Another group, conspicuous in which was George Brown, editor of the Toronto *Globe*, dreaded the possibility of an American migration

sweeping the West into the Republic, and thereby confining the British North American colonies to the Atlantic coast. Others again, who recalled the wealth brought to Montreal by that famous concern the North West Company hoped to revive the former connexion with the fur-traders' Eldorado. Yet others had seen with envy the wealth amassed in the eastern States during "the roaring 'forties" by exploiting the western areas; they began to dream of the like for Canada.

Such was the general situation when the time approached for the renewal of the licence by which the Hudson's Bay Company enjoyed the monopoly of the vast region beyond the chartered territory. In any case, this would be the signal for a marshalling of the forces in Parliament and in the country hostile to the Company —the men who believed that all monopolies are harmful to the general good, the philanthropists who took the charges advanced by the half-breeds at their face value, and, finally, those who thought that the Company had failed in its duty to colonize the empty prairie spaces. These were sure to demand a parliamentary enquiry before the licence should be renewed. Mr. Henry Labouchere, then Colonial Minister, informed Mr. John Shepherd, Governor of the Company, that such a demand was certain; that the Ministry thought it wise to forestall it by themselves moving for a Committee of enquiry. Hence that Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Hudson's Bay Company, whose report, accompanied by the evidence and pertinent documents, as printed, extends to more than 550 folio pages.

The Committee included some of the most distinguished men in the House of Commons—Mr. Henry Labouchere, the Colonial Secretary, its chairman; Lord John Russell,

the Prime Minister; William Ewart Gladstone, recently Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Aberdeen's ministry; John Arthur Roebuck, a radical independent member, well-versed in the business of the Hudson's Bay Company. For all their talents, the Committee were grossly ignorant of the country involved in the enquiry, of its history, and of the Company's administration. Those who thought that they knew more than the others were primed with the charges and the propaganda launched by Mr. A. K. Isbister ten years before on behalf of the half-breeds intent on escaping from the Company's monopoly.

We are concerned here only with Sir George Simpson's appearance before the Committee. His testimony extends to sixty-seven printed folio pages, and he answered no less than 1545 questions. The one living being who had travelled, as he said, over the whole of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories, except the Mackenzie River District, must have smiled inwardly at many a fatuous question put to him. He had testified to the demoralization of the natives with liquor during the period when the Company was facing the opposition of the North West Company.

Question "1650—Mr. *Roebuck*] Did that take place because the Hudson's Bay Company went to war with Lord Selkirk? [Simpson] The Hudson's Bay Company did not go to war with Lord Selkirk.

1651—Then did Lord Selkirk go to war with the Hudson's Bay Company? No, They were on the best of terms.

1652—They fought, did they not? No. I believe not.

1653—I am making a mistake; the Hudson's Bay Company and Lord Selkirk fought with the North-West Company? There were breaches of the peace very frequently,

from day to day and year to year, and it will be so wherever there is competition in the fur trade, whoever the parties may be."

This passage may also be taken as illustrating Sir George's caution and craftiness as a witness. He answered no more than the actual question asked, and that in short crisp sentences, and he took care not to enlarge upon the subject unless he could make a definite point in favour of the Company. No casual remarks which might tempt his questioners to probe farther into the matter than they knew how. Asked whether the Charter conferred powers of government on the Company, Simpson replied: "I must beg to refer you to the Charter". When asked whether the Canada Jurisdiction Act did not require cases involving felony to be sent to Canada, the reply given was that the ex-recorder of Rupert's Land [Adam Thom] would be there shortly; he preferred that questions of law should be answered by him. When Simpson was too short and restrained in his answers, his ally Edward Ellice, out of the plenitude of his knowledge of the Company's business, would ask him a leading question and bring out important information for the Committee. That Sir George's answers are an indication of caution rather than evasion is evidenced by the straightforward factual statements made in response to all important questions.

The Committee was to enquire into Vancouver's Island as a colony and to give its opinion as to whether it should remain under the management of the Hudson's Bay Company. When asked by the Colonial Minister if he thought that it would do any harm if Vancouver's Island were taken away from the Company, Simpson answered: "I do not". The Committee reported that it would be proper

to terminate the connexion of the Company with the colony.

Another important matter before the Committee was the general administration of the Company. Members of the Committee found it hard to grasp the primitive conditions under which the trade in peltries was conducted with a nomadic people. When the enquiry came to the credit system by which the Indians were equipped in the autumn and brought in their hunt in the spring in return, Mr. Roebuck distinguished himself for obtuseness, as the following questions and answers show:

"1526—I will direct your attention to arms; in what way are they sold by barter or for money? They are sold by barter.

1527—For so many skins?—For so many skins.

1528—When you sell a gun to an Indian, do you ever take inferior skins for that gun?—We outfit the Indian.

1529—Cannot you answer me that question?—We do not sell a gun for skins; we give the gun to the Indian, as everything else, on credit, and he pays for those supplies in the spring of the year.

1530—Supposing a gun is sold to an Indian, would you take in payment an inferior kind of skins?—We take in payment whatever he can give us.

1531—If an Indian had nothing but musk rat skins, you would take those?—Yes.

1532—Do you mean to tell me that?—I mean to say that we would take from an Indian whatever he could give us. The Indian must have certain supplies.

1533—My question is a very plain one; would you take musk rat skins in payment for a gun from an Indian?—Certainly; we take whatever the Indian can give us.

1534—And you mean to state that to me, that guns are sold to Indians with the full understanding that they may pay you back in musk rat skins?—If an Indian has nothing but musk rat skins, we will take musk rat skins.

1535—Supposing that were to occur once, would he be likely to get a second gun?—Yes, decidedly, if he required it."

Evidently, some one had told Mr. Roebuck that the Company would not trade a gun for muskrat skins, and when Simpson said it did, he found it hard to believe.

Asked whether the country was not being depleted of its furs, Simpson said: On the contrary, their system of conservation had made furs more plentiful, except in the areas where there was competition. This was the simple truth.

It was the philanthropists that pressed Sir George hardest. Obsessed with the propaganda that the Company did not spend a penny on education, they drew from Simpson the statement that the Company did not do so directly, but that it made grants to the missions, leaving them to care for the education of the natives.

1720—Will you explain to me the amount of assistance which the Hudson's Bay Company give them?—There is a money grant to the Bishop of 300 *l.* per annum.

1721—What Bishop?—The Episcopalian Bishop of Rupert's Land. There is 100 *l.* in aid of schools; there is 150 *l.* to a chaplain at Red River; 50 *l.* at York; 50 *l.* to a chaplain at Moose; 50 *l.* at East Main; 200 *l.* in aid of the school at Fort Victoria; to the Roman Catholic Mission at Red River, 100 *l.*; to the Roman Catholic Mission at Oregon 100 *l.*; on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, 100 guineas; to the Wesleyan Missionary at Norway-house, 50 *l.*; at Oxford-house; 50 *l.*; Rainy Lake, 50 *l.*; Saskatchewan, 20 *l.*; and the Presbyterian Chaplain at Red River, 50 *l.*

Not appreciating the primitive conditions of the country, nor the Company's methods, they found out by enquiry that the Company had no account devoted to the construction of schools, but Simpson pointed out that the Company's carpenters, paid so much a year for their labour, had built schools, and that therefore the cost did not appear under a separate account for schools.

Pressed to reveal the situation in the use of liquor in the trade, Simpson stated that the average importation was "under 5,000 gallons," two-thirds of it going to the Red River Settlement, and none north of Cumberland House, that is into the great forest region to the north. Mr. Gladstone pointed out that in 1845 the amount had been 9,075 gallons. Simpson's reply was that the increased amount of that year was for the soldiers coming in to garrison the Settlement.

Sir George Simpson's evidence, corroborated by other witnesses must have gone far to satisfy the Committee. In their report they emphasized the following considerations:

"1—The great importance to the more peopled portions of British North America that law and order should, as far as possible, be maintained in these territories;

2—The fatal effects which they believe would infallibly result to the Indian population from a system of open competition in the fur trade, and the consequent introduction of spirits in a far greater degree than is the case at present; and

3—The probability of the indiscriminate destruction of the more valuable fur-bearing animals in the course of a few years. . . .

"12—For these reasons Your Committee are of opinion that whatever may be the validity or otherwise of the rights claimed by the Hudson's Bay Company, under the Charter, it is desirable that they should continue to enjoy the privilege

of exclusive trade, which they now possess, except so far as those privileges are limited by the foregoing recommendations" (p. iv).

That is the withdrawal of Vancouver's Island from their control, and the reservation to Canada of the right to effect settlements in Rupert's Land, as will be seen.

The system inaugurated jointly by the Governor and Committee in London and by Governor Simpson, after being subjected to a most rigid investigation, received the approval of this talented Select Committee of the House of Commons, even of members of the Committee hostile at the outset. It was a triumph for the genius who had presided over that system for the past thirty-six years.

The subject in which the Committee was most interested, and on which they pressed Simpson hardest, was the possibility of peopling the prairie wastes—this, all the more because the Canadians were looking to the West "as a country into which they ought to be permitted to extend their settlements." Fully half of the 1545 questions put to Simpson had to do with this theme more or less directly.

Certain members of the Committee were primed for the attack on the Company's administration of its colony on Red River. The aim appears to have been that of A. K. Isbister and his associates of the last ten years, namely, to show that the Company tyrannized over the colony and was hostile to all colonization, and that therefore its monopoly should be taken away. To this end Mr. Roebuck produced a letter dated 29th December, 1844, from Mr. Lane, clerk at Fort Garry, to Mr. McLaughlin requiring him to send his letters for England to the Fort open, but offering him the concession that they could be

sealed in his presence unread. This was following up one of the proclamations of Governor Christie constituting "new regulations" devised to suppress the illicit traffic in furs. It will be remembered that Simpson approved of these regulations, but the Governor and Committee ultimately disallowed them. Simpson insisted that there was never a regulation of the Company to that effect, as far as he could recollect. "It may have been a local regulation." Edward Ellice came to his rescue by asking if the colony was not "a settlement of itself" with a separate Council, to which Simpson answered "Yes", insisting that he knew nothing of the regulations, "unless my memory be refreshed upon the subject." To Mr. Gladstone he replied, that if there ever were such regulations "They were, very likely, disallowed." He never knew of an instance of the enforcement of the regulation; he was at a loss to conceive how such a regulation as that about sending the letters open could have been made. In a similar way, Simpson's memory failed to recall that there ever had been a system of licensing freighters. Was the memory of the Governor, caught by too searching a cross-examination as so often is the case with witnesses, conveniently defective? Alternatively, did the proclamations of Governor Christie, duly reported to him, make so slight an impression on his mind, especially as they had been disallowed, that he could not recall them at the end of thirteen years?

A more glaring case followed. Mr. Roebuck produced the Resolution of the Northern Council imposing a customs duty of 20 per cent. on goods coming in to York Fort for the Settlement, but empowering the Governor of Assiniboia to exempt from the tariff any party whom he knew would not be engaging in illicit trade. Simpson

replied: "I do not recollect such a resolution; it may have been so." Nor did he remember that it had ever been enforced. It will be remembered that it was passed by the Northern Council, Simpson in the chair, but was disallowed by the Governor and Committee. Was Sir George prevaricating? Or had the intervening years of an intensely busy life written so much of importance on memory's slate that the former writing could not even be perceived? If we emphasize the fact that Simpson was seventy years of age, we may give the doubt in favour of the old man. If, on the other hand, we contrast this vagueness of memory with the clarity of his testimony as a whole, we may give the verdict against him.

If some members of the Select Committee expected to reveal the Red River Settlement as the scene of tyranny exercised by the Company, they were disappointed. It was clearly shown that the colony enjoyed a large measure of self-dependence, that its Council was in no sense the tool of the Company. Similarly, if they expected to find regulations devised to prevent colonization and check the growth of the community in the interests of the fur trade, they were undeceived. They were manifestly surprised that no one was prevented from taking the Settlement as their place of residence. While land was offered for sale at five shillings and at seven and sixpence per acre, if the newcomer was indigent, he was allowed to squat. The servants of the Company might even tell him where to squat. The truth is that, if there was no immigration to the Settlement other than that of Officers and servants of the Company, this was due to its unfortunate isolation, without adequate transportation facilities possible, and no exportable produce yet found. If some members expected to find the colony a scene of lawlessness they must

have been astonished—the gaols almost always empty, said Simpson. When he said that in the thirty-seven years of his tenure of office there had been no more than nineteen cases of crime, Mr. Roebuck said, perhaps with a tone of incredulity: "Do you mean to say that in the 37 years of your government of that country there have been only in fact 19 criminals in that country?" Simpson answered "I think so."

An awkward situation for the Governor came when a passage from his book, *Narrative of a Journey round the world*, was cast up to him just when his questioner drew out of him that no portion of Rupert's Land was favourable for settlement, but that some portions might be settled.

> "From Fort Frances downwards [to Lake of the Woods], a stretch of nearly 100 miles, it is not interrupted by a single impediment, while yet the current is not strong enough materially to retard an ascending traveller. Nor are the banks less favourable to agriculture than the waters themselves to navigation, resembling, in some measure, those of the Thames near Richmond. From the very brink of the river there rises a gentle slope of greensward, crowned in many places with a plentiful growth of birch, poplar, beech, elm, and oak. Is it too much to the eye to discern through the vista of futurity this noble stream, connecting as it does the shores of two spacious lakes, with crowded steamboats on its bosom and populous towns on its borders?"

This placed Simpson in a quandary, because he probably had not written the passage himself. His Journal was handed to Mr. A. Barclay, the Company's secretary, to be put in book form. From him it came to Adam Thom for revision and completion. Thom's criticisms of Barclay's work on it, and his own ideas of what he should

do, at least to the latter part of the manuscript, were conveyed to Sir George in a letter dated July 23, 1845.[47] The beauties of Rainy River are frequently mentioned in fur-traders' journals, and were doubtless extolled in Simpson's. Moreover, Adam Thom had himself travelled down that placid stream, and may well have been impressed. The passage about steamboats plying on its waters and populous towns seated on its banks may be safely taken as a flourish of his imagination and pen. The best that Simpson could do short of revealing its authorship was to admit that he had overrated the importance of the country. In truth, the country today is but little better than as he described it in his testimony. That certain members of the Committee were glad to have got Simpson into a tight place is indicated by the passage being reverted to in two subsequent questions. The phrase "like the Thames near Richmond" was too good not to be cast up to the Governor. Simpson tried to ride off by saying that he referred only to the immediate banks of the river.

Many enquiries were made about the soil and the climate, and about timber—all to discover whether the country was suitable for settlement. Crucial questions were asked as to the possibilities on the Red River and on the Saskatchewan. Simpson's answers about the Red River were:

> "721. . . . I do not consider it well adapted for settlement
>
> 722. . . . On account of the poverty of the soil, except on the banks of the river. The banks of the river are alluvial, and produce very fair crops of wheat; but these crops are frequently destroyed by frosts. We have been under the necessity of importing grain within these last ten

years from the United States and from Canada, for the support of the establishment

723. . . . [As to the Saskatchewan River] the climate is more rigorous, and the crops are even less certain on that river; the scarcity of timber also is a great bar; there is little or no wood in the country. The present population of Red River have great difficulty in providing wood for their immediate wants."

It has often been taken that Simpson was deliberately misleading the Select Committee, was attempting to stave off settlement in the interest of the fur trade. This is unjust, and is due to ignorance of the agricultural situation in that day and in subsequent times, to ignorance of the conditions in which settlement has been successfully accomplished in recent times. One has only to recall the devastation of the settlers' crops in the 1880's from frost and drought to realize how nearly correct Simpson's judgment was. In the tribulation of the 'eighties almost as many left the country as came in drawn by the glowing accounts of the Government's pamphlets. In 1886, in the Land Agency of Qu'Appelle there were more cancellations of homesteads than there were entries—255 of the one and 149 of the other. In the Dufferin Agency on the Red River, where the climate was the same as in the Red River Settlement, the cancellations were 77, and the entries but 17. What made farming safe, if it can be said to be anything more than precarious even now? In the first place the development of early maturing wheats such as were unknown in Simpson's day. When Captain Palliser passed down the Winnipeg River in 1858, he was told that on the farm at Fort Alexander, only about thirty miles east of the Red River, the wheat of the season before had taken 155 days to be ready for harvest. Two

years before Simpson made his statement about the difficulty of growing wheat successfully on the Saskatchewan, the wheat at Edmonton House had been planted in the last days of April and the first days of May. It was being reaped in the last days of September, 148 days later. On the average, the variety which Simpson knew took from 125 to 135 days to mature. As there are frequently frosts in the last week of August, about 120 days after the first day of May, it will be appreciated how great the risk of damage was. It was the introduction of Red Fife wheat in the 'eighties, and of Marquis in the second decade of this century, maturing respectively ten and seventeen days earlier than the old Red River Settlement variety, that made the crop as sure as it is. Next, there is drought. With all the gains by the application of the principles of dry-farming, introduced during the tribulations of the 'eighties, the wheat crops of the prairie region are still sufficiently uncertain to inflict from time to time grave distress upon the farmers. It follows that Simpson, speaking from the knowledge and experience within his reach, did no more than indicate the actuality of his time.

It may be taken that the Select Committee was not wholly satisfied with Simpson's judgment as to the possibilities of agricultural settlement in Rupert's Land, or perhaps was biased by the desire to meet the aspirations of the Canadians to possess the land. At any rate, their report ran:

> "7. Among the various objects of imperial policy which it is important to attain, Your Committee consider that it is essential to meet the just and reasonable wishes of Canada to be enabled to annex to her territory such portion of the land in her neighbourhood as may be available to her for

the purposes of settlement, with which lands she is willing to open and maintain communications, and for which she will provide the means of local administration. Your Committee apprehend that the districts of the Red River and the Saskatchewan are among those likely to be desired for early occupation. It is of great importance that the peace and good order of those districts should be effectually secured. Your Committee trust that there will be no difficulty in effecting arrangements as between Her Majesty's Government and the Hudson's Bay Company by which these districts may be ceded to Canada on equitable principles, and within the districts thus annexed to her the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company would of course entirely cease" (pp. iii-iv).

On the whole, Simpson and the Company justified their government of their continental domain. Simpson's greatest troubles as a witness arose out of the mistakes of himself and his subordinates in handling the illicit trade in furs of the half-breeds of the Settlement and in adopting measures which ignored to some extent the liberties of British subjects. The wisdom of the Governor and Committee in overruling these ill-advised measures kept the record of their dealings with the Settlement a creditable one. Nonetheless, the report of the Select Committee was the "writing on the wall" to the system under which Simpson had spent his life. The movement of settlement across the Atlantic, and westward over the continent spelled doom to the monopoly enjoyed under the Charter, and to the equally extensive monopoly by which, in virtue of the license, the Company held the great region beyond Rupert's Land in the hollow of its hand. It was no fault of the Company or of Simpson that they had not the resources to build a transcontinental railway or to bring in a great population. Moreover,

such grandiose schemes were beyond the range of vision of their time. It strained the resources even of the great Dominion to secure the prerequisites of a great migration. When this came within sight thirteen years later, the fur trade had to retreat at the onset of the new age.

A change of Government in 1858 placed Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton in the Colonial Office. He did not feel that he could secure sufficient backing to renew the license to the Company for another period of twenty years. He temporized by offering it for but one year. Probably to his surprise, the Company refused to accept this. It was Simpson that influenced the Governor and Committee to take this stand. With an insight justified by subsequent events, he had reported that the license was really of little use. It imposed by the nature of things obligations to the missionaries and the like, from which the Company could escape if the license were not renewed; and as to the trade, the Company would enjoy a *de facto* monopoly, for none other could find the capital or the personnel to win the business of the great forested north from them. That he saw true is proved by the fact that even after the surrender of Rupert's Land in 1870, when the Company became no more than a trading corporation, it enjoyed practically a monopoly of the fur trade for something like another generation.

After the loss of the Oregon, the fur trade continued in full retreat. In 1849 Vancouver's Island became a Crown colony. In 1858, the year after the Select Committee sat, the mainland was organized as another Crown Colony—British Columbia. In the same year the Company declined to accept a renewal of its license, offered but for one year. Twelve years later, and ten years after Sir George Simpson's death, the soil granted

to the Company by its hoary Charter was surrendered to the Queen. Rupert's Land, the chartered territory, and the North West Territory, that is what remained of the area to which the license applied, were transferred to Canada. The new age had come to the Canadian West. However, the Hudson's Bay Company, now no more than a trading corporation, held its own in the fastness of the northern forest. Its adaptation of its business within the area to the south, a land of thriving cities, is beyond the vision of the sketch.

XII

Governor Simpson, the Servant of the Servants of the Company

XII

Governor Simpson, The Servant of the Servants of the Company

Simpson and the Discontented

GOVERNOR SIMPSON came into intimate relations with the most important Officers in the service, the Chief Factors and with a number of the Chief Traders, at the depots when the Councils met for business. As has been seen, clashes were avoided as far as might be by embodying the practices of the trade in "Regulations", to which Simpson himself conformed, and by which he required the Officers and servants to determine their actions. There were, however, items in the business of Council which offered occasion for differences and even for bitter feelings. Probably differences arose oftenest on the quantity of goods required for the trade of the several Districts. Simpson would be determined on its reduction to the minimum. At times he went too far in the direction of economy, and goods were exhausted while the natives were still offering their furs. In contrast, the Chief Factors would insist on ample supplies. Naturally, such controversies as arose would tend to affect the personal relationships existing between the Chief Factors and the Governor. The Company's documents do not

record them. Only occasional hints suggest friction from time to time. But Simpson was frank about it for once in his letter to Colvile of June 24, 1823.[1]

> "Several of our Gentlemen last Season appeared to feel that they possessed more influence and authority in the general arrangements of the business than I consider was their due, which occasionally places me in delicate and unpleasant situations, but I find that by adopting calm and conciliatory measures generally and showing a little firmness when necessary, they are to be managed; thus we go on smoothly; They feel that I am alive to their interests, that none of my proceedings are influenced by Private or selfish considerations, and the example I show them of a total disregard to personal ease and comfort does much good."

The reference in these last words is to the Governor's famous journey to Great Slave Lake and to Edmonton House on the Saskatchewan in the dead of winter.

The period in which difficulties appear to have been greatest was the first ten years of Simpson's rule. There were men on the Council who remembered the expansive days of unrestrained competition and longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt. Such were John Clarke and Colin Robertson of the old Hudson's Bay Company, and William McIntosh and John Stuart, Northwesters. John Clarke, it will be remembered, in 1820 had laid hands on supplies and provisions due to George Simpson's charge at Fort Wedderburn, thus starving its trade, while he played the lord with an unwonted abundance at Isle-à-la-Crosse. It is probable that he continued true to form at the Council, making extravagant demands for supplies for his post. As has been seen, in 1824, in spite of the Resolve 139 of the Council of 1823 requiring Chief Factors to travel on the freight canoes, Clarke hastened

up the Hayes to Norway House in an express canoe, and charged the extra cost to the Company. The Council of 1825 ruled that the bill be charged to Clarke's private account. In connexion with the oxen needed for preparing the Winter Road, Clarke was deriving profit from the sale though the animals had been reared at the expense of the Company. The Council of 1831 required him to render an account of the cost and receipts for the animals, and annulled a corrupt bargain arranged by him with Colin Robertson, who was making the road. Simpson, in his confidential report on the character of the Officers and servants, speaks of Clarke as "a boasting, ignorant low fellow who rarely speaks the truth and is strongly suspected of dishonesty."[2]

Of Colin Robertson Simpson wrote: "He is full of silly boasting & egotism, rarely deals in plain matter of fact, and his integrity is very questionable. To the Fur Trade he is quite a *Burden*."[3] Robertson was a cause of difficulties because of his overweening self-importance. He had been adviser to the Company as early as 1810, had organized the aggressive movement on Athabaska and re-established Selkirk's colony in 1815, and had been in command in Athabaska when it was the centre of the struggle with the North West Company. Moreover, he was in London at the time of the negotiations for the union and had received an award of £1,000 for his services in that connexion.[4] He must have felt that the comparatively young and wholly inexperienced Simpson had managed to step up to the chair at the head of the Council for which he himself was the better fitted. To all appearance this showed itself in his actions in Council. But that the Company had judged wisely in their choice is shown by his mismanagement of the Winter Road.

The grounds for Simpson's antipathy towards William McIntosh cannot be surmised so easily. The man was secretive and deceitful, not to be trusted. The Governor characterized him as "a revengeful cold blooded black hearted Man, whom I consider capable of anything that is bad."[5] In the wild days before the union McIntosh was said to have attempted to poison James Murray Yale. In the manner of Clarke, he took what appears to have been a pleasure jaunt from Dunvegan on Peace River to Fort Assiniboine on the upper Athabaska in an express canoe, charging the wages of the men up to the Company. The Council of 1825 placed the cost against his private account.

Of John Stuart, Simpson reported confidentially: "lavish of his own means, extravagant and irregular in business, and his honesty is very questionable . . . fancies himself one of the leading & most valuable man in the Country, but his Day is gone by, and he is now worse than useless."[6]

Manifestly, business did not always run smoothly in the Northern Council. Some of what may be called the old gang submitted reluctantly to the leadership of Simpson, and were not easily subjected to the rules and regulations, and to the orderly system of business which were characteristic of the Hudson's Bay Company, and which were the expression of the genius of Governor Simpson. But in the early thirties these men, already discredited by their actions, passed off the stage. When Clarke was in London in the winter of 1830, he poured his complaints against Simpson into the ears of the Committee, but was treated with contempt. Simpson, in this connexion, reports a passage from one of that boastful Factor's letters to the Board: "To the joint efforts of Mr. Robertson

and myself are the Hudson's Bay Coy. in a great measure indebted for the splendour and importance of their rank and standing in the great World." Simpson added: "Well done, John!"[7]

By 1832 Clarke's position was becoming untenable.

> "Clarke carried his folly to such a pitch that it became necessary to allow him to go to the Devil his own way, and a visit to Canada, I saw, was the most effectual; he will have cause to repent it—such a fellow must die in a Dunghill."[8]

He was stationed at Mingan, one of the King's Posts on the north shore of the gulf of St. Lawrence and opposite the island of Anticosti. There his failure was so great within two years (1831-1833) that he had to be moved. Offered a return to the interior, he declined and retired from the service. Such wealth as the extravagant man had gathered was soon dissipated. He came to abject poverty. At Simpson's instance, he was given a pension out of a charitable fund devised, not for Officers like Clarke, but for the servants. In his letter of thanks, the humbled Clarke wrote to Simpson:[9] "I consider none but you at present, Sir George, as a friend, for I really would have been reduced to the lowest ebb only that you came forward to my succour, at that very moment when the abyss was open to receive my young and pitiable children." Colin Robertson left the Northern Department in 1832 on furlough, and after two years of service at New Brunswick House, a secluded post in the Southern Department, retired from the service. He also, when in dire distress, was placed at Simpson's instance, on the benevolent fund for servants. At the end these malcontents met with singular generosity at the hands of the Governor whose way had been made difficult by their

demeanour and by their irregularities. John Stuart withdrew in 1835, and William McIntosh in the same year.

Dr. John McLoughlin might have proved a serious difficulty. He had led the Wintering Partners of the North West Company in the revolt against their agents which issued in the union of 1821. In the negotiations for which he went as a delegate to London, he was not accorded a principal part, because the Hudson's Bay Company deemed it wise to bring the agents as well into the union, and because the agents were in law the legal representatives of the North West Company. Then too, because the agents were taken into the union, the terms finally arranged were not as liberal to the Wintering Partners as those sketched. McLoughlin had some reason to be dissatisfied. Had he been in a less distant post and able to attend Council regularly, he might have been a source of difficulty to Simpson, for he was a very able man. Simpson wrote of him as:[10]

> "Very Zealous in the discharge of his public duties and a man of strict honour and integrity, but a great stickler for rights & privileges and sets himself up as a righter of Wrongs. Very anxious to obtain a lead among his Colleagues with whom he has not much influence owing to his ungovernable Violent temper and turbulent disposition, and would be a troublesome man to the Compy. if he had sufficient influence to form and tact to manage a party; in short, would be a Radical in any Country under any Government and under any circumstances."

But McLoughlin had been given a fine, if a distant, sphere of action, which he had already earned by his services and in which he could show his best qualities. He enjoyed a free hand in the administration of the

Columbia District, and only in the wider realm of strategy did Simpson have to assert his will, and that always with the support of the Governor and Committee.

That Simpson was correct in his condemnations of McLoughlin for his violent temper is born out by incidents which called for his intervention as Governor. War broke out between the Doctor and Francis Heron. Simpson wrote:[11] "Gave Heron a Dressing, who is nothing more or less than an indolent Lawyer." Again McLoughlin and the surgeon got into an altercation in which both lost their tempers. Hamlyn ended by kicking his chief. Simpson had no sympathy for McLoughlin's loss of temper, but in the interest of discipline removed Hamlyn.[12]

John George McTavish, because of his very great ability, might have been able to lead a party, and might have occasioned serious faction. Simpson wrote of him:[13]

> "Was the most finished man of business we had in the Country, well Educated, respectably connected and more of the Man of the World in his conversation and address than any of his colleagues—a good hearted man and generous to extravagance."

Probably just because he commanded such great business ability, McTavish could appreciate the like in Simpson. At any rate, as has been seen, they were bound to one another by the strongest of friendships. We shall see the subtle way taken by Simpson as Governor to discipline his best friend.

If there were difficulties between Simpson and some of his Officers in the first decade of his governorship, these disappeared in the second decade. Those of the old gang that were not easily subdued to the orderliness of the Hudson's Bay Company's system retired and there re-

mained those who had either been trained to conformity with it, or who had risen to the commissioned ranks within the traditions laid down. There followed a period of ten years, roughly, in which the machine was running smoothly. The very success of the Governor's administration, patent in the dividends and bonuses, in which, of course, the commissioned Officers shared, made for happy relations.

The happy phase may be said to have culminated in the spectacular completion of the delineation of the Polar Shore of the continent. The explorations were initiated by the Governor and Committee in London, intimately aware of the increasing interest in the discovery of the North-West Passage. Simpson was rather the organizer overseas, and to him must be attributed great judgment in the choice of the men to whom the task was entrusted. That much of the credit of the glory of the thing must go to him. The satisfaction of the Company with their chief servant was registered in his formal appointment as Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land (and, of course, the whole of the Company's sphere of influence) in 1839. In 1841 Her Majesty Queen Victoria added to honour by creating him knight. Simpson went to Buckingham Palace to receive his knighthood at her hands.

Difficulties did not begin to appear again until the 'forties, and then in large measure due to the very success of the Company in the previous years. (Add to this the crisis in the beaver market when beaver hats went out of fashion and the need for economy became great.) There had been expansion on many fronts—on the St. Lawrence the extension of the trade to Labrador at Hamilton Inlet; on the south shore of Hudson Strait, the occupation of Ungava; on the Mackenzie River front, the expansion

beyond the Rockies and into the valley of the Yukon; and finally, the establishment of new posts on the Pacific Coast. This meant, of course, a large increase in the number of clerks open to be promoted to the rank of Chief Trader, and thereafter to the Chief Factorship. But the number of Commissioned Gentlemen was fixed by the Deed Poll. Promotion, therefore, came more slowly. The coveted partnership in the Fur Trade lay long just out of the reach of many an ambitious and efficient clerk's grasp. The result was impatience, and active discontent in some, according to their dispositions. Some clerks and even some Chief Traders, like Francis Ermatinger, left the service rather than wait indefinitely for the prize. In this situation charges of favouritism on the part of Simpson in the promotions to the commissioned ranks began to be heard. The most notorious accuser was John M'Lean, the author of *Notes of a Twenty-five years' service in Hudson's Bay Territory.*[14]

It scarcely needs to be said that even the matter of promotion had been brought under rules and regulations. From the union, the Chief Factors nominated the candidates by secret ballot, and Simpson reported the results to them and forwarded the vote to the Governor and Committee who made the appointments, for the commission of the Board was necessary, under the Charter, to make the authority of Commissioned Gentlemen legal. To all appearance, the Chief Factors were guided in their voting by the principle of seniority. Chief Factor Donald Ross wrote to Simpson: ". . . however much people may talk about the necessity or propriety of sometimes deviating from the rule of "seniority", I never knew an instance of it practiced in the country, without giving rise to much ill feeling."[15] The Board, however, felt that

the early practice was open to the abuses which inevitably creep into a closed corporation. They wrote to Simpson in 1834,[16] that they felt that they should have the power to pass over the nominations of the Councils; it was not reasonable that they should be limited to the nominations of the few Gentlemen who might happen to be at the Council meeting; for example, three individuals at the Council of the Southern Department who might decide the election, though they might have no knowledge of the merits of candidates far afield; that the Company with its knowledge of the whole staff derived from annual Reports (including accounts) "were not at all likely to be influenced in their choice by private feelings of partiality or prejudice, a source of jealousy and consequent dissatisfaction will be removed." Thereafter, it became the practice to send the ballots to all the Chief Factors whether they would be present at Council or not. It is remarkable, judging by the votes among Simpson's papers of the 'forties, for those of the 'thirties are not preserved, how almost unanimous the nominations were. This could only be because the Chief Factors were giving their votes on the principle of seniority, though they may well have passed over the notoriously inefficient. The Governor and Committee made the appointments in harmony with the nominations, but they may have still felt free to act according to their judgment in special cases.

John M'Lean's charge against Simpson ran that, though he had been encouraged to expect it, promotion had been delayed from year to year; that Simpson had written him in 1839 that his promotion to a Chief Tradership depended on his successful management of Fort Chimo in Ungava, a hopeless post off Hudson Strait, to

which he had been, as it were, condemned. "After a painful servitude of eighteen years thus to be compelled to make renewed, even impossible exertions ere I obtained the reward of my toil, while many others had reached the goal in a much shorter time without experiencing either the hardship or privation";[17] and finally, that seven clerks had been promoted since he had left Norway House in 1838 for Ungava constituted injustice to him. The charge was put more pointedly in a letter addressed by M'Lean to Simpson himself on July 18, 1844.[18] M'Lean had been congratulated by nearly every member of the Council meeting at Norway House when he was there in 1837 on his nomination to a Chief Tradership. "Your authority was interposed and I was as a matter of course rejected; you were candid enough, however, to tell me until the two candidates you had then in view [Donald Manson and William Nourse] should be provided for and that it would then be my turn. With this assurance from you, I then prepared for my exile in Ungava; my turn, however, only came after Seven other promotions had been made and I then found myself the last on the list."

In that letter M'Lean also complained that though he had it under the hand of Simpson himself that he was to be placed in charge of Mackenzie's River and Simpson referred to that region as his District, the arrangement had been altered and another [Murdoch McPherson] was placed in charge. He made similar complaints to the Governor and Committee. Their reply through the secretary[19] ran that after careful enquiry they could not see that M'Lean's services had been overlooked; that Servants must hold themselves disposable for any duties they were considered fit to perform; that of that disposi-

tion the Governor and Council are presumed to be the best judges; as their private interests were so deeply involved they would be considering the general good of the Service. As to the delay in his promotion, that on the only occasion when he had had a majority Simpson had, as M'Lean admitted, treated him with candour in saying that he could not be promoted over a gentleman who had a stronger claim both from seniority and service; and finally, that the Governor and Committee disapproved of the unbecoming tone of his letter to Simpson. "When a subordinate officer addresses his superior in command in insulting or discourteous terms, he shows that, however long he may have been in the service, he has an important point of his duty still to learn."

The feeling in the service at large was that M'Lean was in the wrong in the attitude taken up by him about the charge of the Mackenzie's River District.[20] It is pertinent to the issue between Simpson and M'Lean in this matter to point out that M'Lean then a Chief Trader would be enjoying his share in the profits of the year whether he was in charge of the single post, Fort Good Hope, or in charge of the whole District. The matter at stake was no more than one of prestige and whether he should have the chance of distinguishing himself in the management of an important charge. On the other side, it was surely in the interests of the Company at large in which M'Lean himself had a share, that, when unexpectedly McPherson, who had a long and distinguished career as explorer and trader in that District proved available, Simpson should have placed him in the charge over M'Lean, whose knowledge of the region had been gained in but a single year.

M'Lean's charge that others who had been a much shorter time in the service than he, had been promoted over his head, was based on the assumption that the Company and Simpson were bound by the principle of seniority, and that the departure from it was due to favouritism. As the letter of the Board to him shows, during the years when he thought he was being passed over, he had not a majority of the votes of the Chief Factors. Three of the men who got the majority, in spite of shorter service, are worthy of mention. They were Captain William Henry McNeill, Thomas Simpson, and Alexander Simpson. The presence of the names of Governor Simpson's two nephews on the list might lend colour to M'Lean's charge of favouritism. But look at the places these three men occupied in the affairs of the Company. McNeill entered the service an experienced captain of the sailing ship on the Pacific Coast. After several years of approved service, he was placed in charge of the steamer *Beaver*—a skilful navigator, an excellent trader occupying a most responsible position in the trade of the Pacific Coast. To have kept him waiting for the twenty years or thereabouts that young apprenticed clerks like M'Lean had to pass before being promoted to the commissioned rank, would have been to lose him. Thomas Simpson had carried through an exploration on the Arctic coast that caught the admiration of a wide circle in England. Admiralty had awarded him an annuity of £100. Was the Hudson's Bay Company to take no notice of his achievement? The Chief Factors decided to reward him, and gave him the majority over M'Lean. Alexander Simpson may have enjoyed the favour of his uncle the Governor in being taken into Hudson's Bay House at Lachine where he would get ex-

perience in the general business of the Company, such as M'Lean could not get in a simple trading post. After his years of training under the Governor's eye, he was sent to Moose Factory as accountant where his experience must have been greatly broadened. His training now fitted him to hold the isolated and therefore very responsible position of representative of the Company in the Sandwich Islands. Hence his promotion to the Chief Tradership by a majority vote of the Chief Factors. M'Lean had served well according to Simpson's own words, but much more in the routine of the ordinary trading post. There was no injustice on the part of the Chief Factors and Simpson in making him give place to these three men. In any case, his turn came in the following year.

Simpson's Ways With His Men

If there was any one in all the service whom Simpson would have been inclined to show favouritism to, it was John George McTavish. The most gifted with talent for business among the North West Company's Wintering Partners, at the union he was placed by the Northern Council, Nicholas Garry in the chair, in charge of its most important post, the depot at York Factory. He was there for eight years. At times Simpson must have been perturbed at the extravagances which marred his friend's success. The opportunity to dig him out came when he took his furlough in 1829-30 and, as has been seen, took to himself a Scottish bride. The newly married couple crossed the Atlantic with Simpson and his bride, and a long friendship became one almost of affection. Simpson's letters to him, fortunately preserved, show an

intimacy and an effusiveness to be found nowhere else in his writings. "You know my [kind feelings] towards you to be too firmly rooted in my heart to experience blight or diminution by time or distance."[21] But Simpson had rooted him out of York Factory, and placed him at Moose Factory, a much less important post, although it was the depot of the Southern Department. Of course, McTavish would suffer no pecuniary loss by the change, for wherever he went he would enjoy the Chief Factor's share of the profits of the outfit. It remained the duty of Simpson to see that his friend did not repeat at Moose the extravagance of his last years at York depot. It was characteristic of "that crafty Fox" as John Tod called Simpson, that he avoided the frontal attack from which many of the servants suffered. If there was any favouritism towards his most intimate friend, it was in the indirect way in which the rebuke was conveyed. Simpson, in a jocular vein, incidentally detailed in a letter all that was being said at York Factory of McTavish's extravagance while there.[22]

"Your management is the subject of a good deal of animadversion out of Doors, the high Wages & allowances given to Tradesmen and Servants & the large presents and allowances to families. Miles [the accountant] has picked out 20 lbs Tea given to Spencer [the interpreter] in presents in the course of one year & makes no secret of it; he is an open mouthed ill natured idiot and I have some difficulty in keeping him quiet. Measures in the Shops & Stores & false credits to the Depot are likewise talked of; I have contradicted & explained the Weights & Measures reports through Hargrave Harkness and Jeffry [Taylor]. Pray do not alter the System & Scale of allowances & Wages at Moose and follow up the allowances to Gentlemen at Wintering Grounds and on the Voyage. You are moreover

> charged with partiality in giving cases and other articles to one Gentleman with a charge & to an other without, say [viz.] McMillan had one last Year not charged to his Acct. & Finlayson one charged to Acct.; in short anything that ill nature can invent is caught at but will soon blow over. . . . That in the bustle Toil & hurry of Business irregularities may have crept in, likewise for the sake of peace & quietness is possible in some instances, but that they have been intentional I never can and never will believe."

Behind the shelter of friendship the disciplinarian of a Governor shot his shaft at his nearest friend. It went home. Two of the very few opportunities of sending a reply passed without a word to Simpson. Then a friendly, almost affectionate letter from the Governor, from which the sentence quoted above is taken, healed the breach. Simpson had warned his friend faithfully against his shortcomings without losing his friendship. When the Governorship of Assiniboia fell vacant, McTavish was passed over on the ground of a recent illness, but if the Governor and Committee had compared his character with that of Alexander Christie, in either case on record in Simpson's own hand in his report on the "Servants' Character and History", they could scarcely have done otherwise than appoint Christie as they did. McTavish ended his days in 1847, still in the service, at the insignificant post at Lake of the Two Mountains, the first up the Ottawa River.[23] The best that could be said of this station was that it brought the second Mrs. McTavish nearer to civilization. As between the Company and his greatest friend, Simpson served the Company.

In contrast, Simpson was quite capable of the injustice which is so easy for an executive officer of putting the

blame for his mistakes upon his subordinates. This is brought out by an episode in his relations with James Hargrave, McTavish's very efficient successor in the charge of the depot at York Factory. That he appreciated the worth of the man and entertained cordial feelings towards him there is no doubt. Yet in his "Public Letter" to him of June 11, 1849, the Governor, by implication, threw on this faithful servant blame for the niggardly provision of goods for the posts.[24]

> "There are complaints from all parts of the country of a scarcity of goods. These complaints must be removed, by meeting demands for the trade in full, increasing the requisition on England for that purpose, if necessary. Proper care must, of course, be taken to prevent an abuse or waste of goods, by keeping a watch on the inventories, the amount of returns &c. of the various districts, but the trade must be liberally supplied in all essential articles, especially ammunition, fishing tackle, blankets, clothing &c. for the natives—McKenzie River, Athabaska, English River & the Saskatchewan are this season particularly clamorous. The demand for Lac la Pluie must be met in every particular, as Mr. Sinclair understands the business so well that I am satisfied he will apply for nothing that cannot be turned to good account."

This statement in a "Public Letter" nettled Hargrave greatly, for he was under the impression that he was doing no more than obeying the economical Governor's orders. He replied, also in a "Public Letter":[25]

> "I can only say in reply that each of these Districts, as well as all others in the Northern Department were last season furnished with ammunition, fishing tackle, blankets and clothing to the full extent of the demands made by the Gentlemen in charge of them. . . . To a deficiency in the Indents [orders] and not to a deficiency of Goods in Depot

[i.e. ordered from England by Hargrave] is therefore to be attributed any scarcity that may have been experienced by them in the course of last Outfit."

Manifestly, what had happened was that Simpson had carried his insistence on economy in the Council so far that the Factors had reduced their orders below the limits of their actual needs. Then, when this was only too patent in the lack of goods to trade for furs offered, they complained to the Governor. He found it easiest to shelter himself by sending Hargrave a "Public Letter" suggesting that the blame rested on his administration of the Depot. Naturally, this awoke resentment in Hargrave's breast.

Hargrave's resentment was all the greater because he felt that Simpson was not dealing fairly with him in refusing him additional help at the depot, and particularly in not acceding to his request, based on his ill-health and the needs of his growing family, to be removed to healthier quarters and nearer to civilization. Simpson had always replied with complimentary remarks about his efficiency, regretting that he had then no officer capable of taking such an important position as the Depot available, and holding out the promise of a favourable answer to Hargrave's plea in the near future. In fact, the Governor was sacrificing the man to the interests of the Company. At last, in 1851, Hargrave was removed to Sault Ste. Marie, a very comfortable post, but one requiring good business ability, for at it many of the provisions were bought for the Southern Department; he travelled to it by canoe. His wife and family he sent by ship to England, Simpson making happy arrangements for their voyage and for them on

their arrival in London. On July 12 of that year Hargrave expressed his thanks for the arrangements as proposed.[26]

> "Your kind expressions and offers of service relative to my unprotected family going home by ship gratify me extremely. I confess that for some years I feared that I had—I knew not how—forfeited your confidence, and I have suffered much in mind from this suspicion, but I begin to perceive that such thoughts had no real foundation."

So far as can be seen, Simpson was unjust to his men in his harsh words rather then in his deeds. His judgment of John Clarke and Colin Robertson was justified in the issue, but scarcely the biting terms in which he couched it in his confidential communications. His treatment of them in their days of need, that is even after they had left the Company, was nothing short of generous. An interesting example of the difference between his speech and his acts has to do with Roderick Finlayson and Dr. Tolmie. As owners of land, in fact as potential settlers in the colony of Vancouver's Island, they signed a petition to be presented to the Imperial Government praying that the colony be taken out of the hand of the Hudson's Bay Company—this though they were among the principal active Officers of that concern at Fort Victoria. Simpson was furious. He wrote to Andrew Colvile[27] that they must be removed East of the Mountains, and, if they refused to obey that order, they must be discharged. It took no more to appease him than a statement from Governor James Douglas[28] that they had added their signatures to those of the settlers out of fear of ridicule. The men remained at Fort Victoria. Tolmie, already Chief Factor (1843) became a member of the Board of Management of the Western Department

in 1850, as also Chief Factor Finlayson in the same year. Simpson's bark was worse than his bite, as often as not.

Governor Simpson had relations with his Officers otherwise than in the formal meetings of Council—over the accounts, individually; in consultation about the needs of their several Districts; and at the festive board. Moreover, as has been indicated already, they had communication with him as far as was possible during the trading season by what was called the "Winter Express". This took the form of the "Public Letters" indicating how far the arrangements made by the Council had been carried out, and what might be planned for the coming season; and the form of "Private Letters" explaining more intimately the situation in the District. Many a private letter reveals the intimacy which existed between the Governor and the writer, and, not less interestingly, the frankness with which Simpson's instructions were discussed and even criticized. Donald Ross, Chief Factor in charge of Norway House, felt free to write to the great man in these terms:[29]

> "There is one thing, however, which I cannot help noticing—which is that as far as I know the new system in regard to wages is only to be made applicable to Canadians and not European Servants engaged for the Service this season; if such be the case, it requires no prophet to tell that nothing but unmixed evil can arise from such an extraordinary and, to say the least of it, *improper* mode of dealing with men who have to perform the very same duties together and who, consequently by all rule of right and reason, ought to have precisely the same remuneration, nor can I for one moment doubt that they will have it too. So long as different Tariffs [i.e. prices for goods, the Europeans enjoying a more favourable scale] to meet different scales of wages, however undesirable in many points of

view, were permitted to exist, the European Servants endured these distinctions without much real murmuring or discontent; now that they all pay alike and are *paid* differently, it may be well to think, while it is yet time, of the very serious consequence which will most assuredly follow. . . . I must now, however, conclude, having done more than I dare say I ought to have done, but, no matter, you will, I trust, believe me to be, with much respect and esteem, My Dear Sir, Yours very sincerely, Don. Ross."

Simpson took no offence at this searching criticism of his plan. Ross enjoyed his confidence and cordial esteem to the end.

Through his conferences with the Officers and the clerks individually, and through their communications by letter, Simpson acquired a marvellous knowledge of the capacities and characters of his men. His characterizations of the individuals in his confidential reports of the "Servants' Characters and their Histories"[30] from 1822 to 1832, almost yearly, when they ceased because of troubles arising out of leakages, their capacities, their excellencies, and their shortcomings are indicated in crisp sentences, which set the men before the reader in sharp outline. It is clear from them what was the type of man whom the Governor took delight in. Take an illustration or two. Here is the report on the Donald Ross whose frank criticism of a plan of Simpson's has been given above.[31]

"About 40 years of Age. A very steady regular well behaved man, who understands the whole routine of the interior business better than any of his class from the circumstance of his having been my Confidential Clerk or Secy. for Seven Years and a most confidential man I always found him. He writes a good hand, expresses himself tolerably well altho' not correctly on paper and understands

Accounts. Manages Indians and Servants very well and possesses all the System and regularity necessary for the charge of a Depot."

Ross manned the depot at Norway House from 1830 for about twenty years with great acceptance to the end.

By open and by subterranean means which elude research, Simpson acquired a marvellous knowledge of what was going on. For example, he heard, possibly at Red River Settlement, that a half-breed free trader was trafficking successfully at the very gates of Fort à-la Corne. Forthwith a sharp letter sped from Lachine to the distant Saskatchewan to Edward M'Gillivray in charge of the post:[32]

" . . . I understand [Ecapot] boasted that he took furs last winter around the stockades of your post—& that he intended to trade this season under your nose in the square of the fort. I think he had better not try that or I am mistaken in you."

Take an example from a very different sphere—the relations of the men with women. It was a regulation of the Councils that no Officer or servant should "take a woman without binding himself down to such reasonable provision for the maintenance of the woman and children as, on a fair and equitable principle may be considered necessary, not only during their residence in this country, but after their departure hence."[33] Simpson heard of a servant working at Moose Factory who had seduced the daughter of another old servant just retired from Moose to the Red River Settlement. He wrote to his friend McTavish in charge of Moose:[34]

"While it is fresh in my memory let me draw your attention to the case of the old Cooper who was at Moose & who came to Red River last Season; his name I think is

Cromin-Johnston; a Red haired Orkney man got his daughter with child & this poor old creature is allowed nothing for the maintenance of the child. Pray get him [the seducer] to make some provision for it, say about £5 p. Ann. commencing from 1st June 1830, and if the fellow has money & retires from the Service, let part of it be secured for the maintenance of the child, and if he has no money, let this claim be grounds for keeping him in the country—let me know what you do in the business."

Forms of Service, Intimate and Queer

Sir George Simpson's power over his men began in his office as Governor and in his intellectual superiority over them. It grew through his remarkable industry and devotion to duty, and with the efficiency of his management of the business of the Company and with the wealth which it brought to the Commissioned Officers. But the devotion which he awoke in the breasts of a large part of the service, especially that "east of the mountains" with which he was in more frequent and more intimate contact can only be understood when it is seen how deeply he entered into the private lives and interests of those under him. The servants were exiles from what was called "home", and in a great many ways, letters apart, he was the only direct means of contact with the people in the old land. Many a kindly act was performed by him, in getting news of the welfare of cherished ones left behind; in forwarding moneys to relieve their straitened circumstances; even in arranging for tombstones to be placed at the graves of the dead.

The Officers of the Company enjoyed large incomes in the days of its prosperity—all the larger because there was so little in the country on which to spend it. It was a serious concern how to put out to profit money saved. The easiest means was to leave it with the Company at the current interest. Very soon Simpson undertook to invest it for its owners, and that without any charge whatsoever. It required but little perception on their part to make them grateful to the Governor's business talent for the profitable investments made by him. On one occasion he wrote that his investments for his men had not suffered a loss in sixteen years. He put the money out always in Canada, in bank stock and carefully chosen real estate—a good policy in a growing colony.

With the Governor as their friend watching over their investments it appeared natural to many of the Gentlemen to name him executor in their wills. In many cases the beneficiaries under a will executed a power of attorney in his favour to have the will probated and to have him manage the estate. Often the wills were imperfectly drawn up. A will might be no more than a private letter to the Governor; in one case it was not so much as signed. In the Probate Court Simpson and the Company would guarantee its genuineness. In some cases the heirs at law in Britain, eager for a wind-fall, sought to prove the illegitimacy of the children of an informal marriage such as was common in Rupert's Land, where clergymen were few and far between. Simpson and the Company would produce documents assuring the Court of the legitimacy of the relation and of the children its result.[35] An example of a will, no

more than a letter to the secretary of the Company, but duly probated may be given.

"Alexander McTavish by Letter to William Smith, Secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company, dated Nipigon, 12th June, 1832, disposed of his Property as follows: "As life is uncertain and particularly so in this Country, its termination with me may be as sudden as others; therefore I wish to state in case of accident unless cancelled by a subsequent Deed that this shall be considered my last Will and Testament. Two thirds of all I possess now or hereafter will be equally divided between my two sons [half-breeds] in Scotland; the remaining third between my own Mother and the Mother of my children: time and circumstances may induce me to make some alteration, but till then this will stand as good and lawful. I am, Dear Sir, Your most obedt. & very humble Servt.

[signed] ALEX. MCTAVISH"

"Proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury by Commission by Isabel McTavish, Widow, the natural and Lawful Mother and one of the Universal Legatees named in the Will, the 2nd April, 1834."

The anxiety of many an Officer, as his life ebbed, must have had its edge taken away by the knowledge that the superb business ability and experience of the Governor would be devoted to the protection of his wife and young children. This participation of Simpson in the most sacred intimacies of his men's lives, explains, one is forced to believe, the familiarity with which they wrote him, and the naturalness with which they often touched on the intimacies of his own home, and shared in his fears for the health of Lady Simpson. There were religious men in that wild land, especially among the Highlanders religious by nature, and not ashamed to clothe their good wishes and their fears in terms of re-

ligion. Old Roderick Mackenzie at Ile-à-la-Crosse, so old that the Indians teased him, saying that it was long past time for him to go back to his own land, wrote a "private letter" to Simpson frankly telling him that in spite of his disabilities he wished to stay on in the trade.[36]

> "I do not say so, for the love of gain or Money; I love the Indian Trade and Country more than I do either. . . . Nothing is the matter with me, excepting the lame Leg of mine, which makes me appear rather awkward, by falling so often, the least thing that will touch my feet, that people who do not know me would be apt to think that I am tipsy."

From the story of his ailings he turns with perfect naturalness to the Governor's home.

> "I was very sorry to hear that your amiable Lady was in a very delicate State of Health when the ship left England. I sincerely hope the Mighty disposer of all human events will [preserve] and prolong her days to be a Source of happiness to you; that such may be her lot will ever be my most fervent Prayer."

One looks in vain for any such unveiling of his soul in Simpson's letters to his men. Not in words, but in deeds did he show that behind the mask of the disciplinarian and the formal manner of the Governor there was a deep sympathy with them in all the intimacies of their life. Simpson came nearest to unbending when he wrote to congratulate an Officer on the marriage of his son or daughter.

Many Officers were anxious to have their children educated and brought up in the ways of the civilized world. The need was for adequate provision in Red River Settlement, as Simpson saw it. With him deeds followed swiftly on ideas. He arranged for the estab-

lishment of an Academy for boys and a Young Ladies' Seminary—this during his residence in the colony. On July 19, 1832, he wrote soliciting John George McTavish's efforts to secure scholars.[37]

> "We are establishing an Academy at Red River and young Ladies Seminary, the former under [Rev.] Mr. Jones with an assistant in orders to come from England next year & the latter under Mrs. Jones with an accomplished governess from England as an assistant. . . . Pray give publicity to it and endeavour to send Scholars; they will have passages by Canoe from Canada."

That is they would enjoy free passage by the canoes from Canada catching them at Michipicoton or Fort William on Lake Superior.

Parents would have little anxiety in sending their children to the Settlement, where ordinarily friends and relatives were to be found. In any case, the Settlement was somewhat like home to many of the Officers. Real concern was felt by those who, for one reason and another, wished to send their dear ones to Canada or to Britain, or afterwards to bring them back. Special anxieties were felt in the case of young ladies coming home when their education was finished. The parents or guardians would ask permission for them to travel by canoe or ship, as the case might be, and solicit arrangements for them to travel under proper care, or to be cared for on arrival in London. Simpson would choose some respectable person known to him to be going on the voyage, and would have arrangements made for their safety and comfort on arrival in the Thames, and until relatives or friends came to welcome them.

A case somewhat out of the ordinary was that of Colin Mackenzie, thrown upon his grandfather Roderick

Mackenzie of Ile-à-la-Crosse. The lad had chosen to enter the ministry of the Church of England. The old man made himself responsible for the lad's education and appealed to Simpson to find some one who should introduce him to the proper institution and place him in a studious and well-conducted group of students. In the course of time Simpson wrote:[38]

> "You will no doubt have long letters from your Grandson Colin with full details of his travels & adventures since he left Red River [and the Academy there]. He is now resident at Cambridge, a pupil of St. Peter's College in that University. He is under the charge of Mr. Manly Hopkins, the brother of my Secretary, who has experience of College affairs and has seen him fairly established, introducing him to two or three young men of studious habits who will be of service to your Grandson & prevent his feeling lonely. . . . The payments will pass through Mr Hopkins' hands who understands Economy & what a young man at College can live upon, having had one of his brothers there."

No wonder that, in spite of his ailings, old man Roderick openly stated that he found his chief happiness of the year travelling with the brigade to meet his friend the Governor at Council at Norway House.

There were appeals to the Governor in matters of equal if not greater responsibility from which he might well have found means of escape, but which, because they dealt with the gentle sentiments of his men, he seems to have taken special delight in acceding to. For many an Officer in a lonely post the problem of marriage was no less perplexing than that of the parents providing for the education of their children. The Company had to be taken into consideration before marriage, for it was a regulation that no Officer or servant should "take a

woman" without permission given. In view of the frequent removal of the men and their families to distant parts of the continent this is understandable. But the regulation did not contemplate the Governor being asked to secure the wife. It was surely an eloquent testimony to the sanity of Simpson's judgment that Officers turned to him to solve the problem of marriage for them. Here is an instance, a little out of the ordinary, for the Governor was asked to lay hold on the proposed wife and ship her to the distant and desolate Mackenzie River District by the brigade of that season where the would-be bridegroom awaited her in expectation. It was Chief Trader Bernard Ross, in charge of Fort Simpson that solicited the kindly offices of the Governor. True to his instruction, Simpson found time during his hasty visit to Red River Settlement to call on a Mrs. Ross (doubtless a relative of the pining Bernard) and seek out Miss Christiana the proposed bride. But the girl must have surmised the reason of the Governor's condescending call, and was not to be found. The mother explained that "the young lady had an opinion of her own." So Simpson was not able to ship her off that very autumn by the brigade, as requested. Bernard Ross's letter of directions shows that he was not unprepared for such a contingency. It went on to say that Miss Annie Bell, daughter of a Chief Factor in his own District would make a satisfactory alternative. Simpson's advice was not to open communications with the second lady until it was all off with the first. His letter ran on:[39]

> "Failing both those young ladies, I would strongly recommend your opening a communication with your friend and neighbour Mr. [Robert] Campbell of Athabasca. Miss

> Christine is now on her way thither in company with the future Mrs. Campbell. I had the pleasure of seeing the lady at St. Paul, on my way hither and was strongly prepossessed in her favour. She is a very fine handsome young woman, of agreeable manners & good education; evidently amiable and in every way fitted to make an excellent wife. I think you would be fortunate in securing her, and I have little doubt that the Cross between the Irishman and the Highland damsel would be a credit to their parents. I do not, of course, attempt to offer advice in so delicate a matter; but I have given you my own ideas on the subject & should a match be the result, shall be glad to think I was in any way instrumental in bringing it about & thereby, I feel sure, promoting your comfort & happiness."

Manifestly, the Governor did not resent the mission imposed on him. The sequel does not appear beyond that Miss Christine returned to Britain "in single blessedness."

The most curious of all the missions of Simpson was the self-imposed task of fulfilling the dying wish of his old friend John Rowand of Edmonton House. On Simpson's journey round the world, Rowand had travelled with him from his post to the Columbia, and up and down the Pacific Coast as far as Sitka, and finally as far as Honolulu. The two became fast friends. On the day before his sudden death at Fort Pitt when on the way with the brigade to Norway House and to Council, Rowand had instructed his son John, then in charge of Fort Pitt, not to leave him buried in the barbarous Indian country, but to give him his last resting-place beside his father in Montreal. Simpson took it as an act of piety required in him, not to speak of the desire of the family, to fulfill his old friend's last wish. At his command the bones were disinterred and shipped in

some sort of package to Norway House. He reported their course thereafter to Rowand's son Dr. Alexander Rowand of Quebec:[40]

> "I conveyed [the package] . . . in my own canoe to Red River, but some of the crew, having discovered the contents of the package, I was afraid they might (from superstitious feeling) drop it overboard at some time & therefore had it repacked & sent to York Factory for transmission to England by the Ship, from whence it will be forwarded to this place [Lachine]."

After a journey of eight thousand miles, all that was left of kindly John Rowand was placed in a grave in the Governor's family plot in the cemetery in Mount Royal, where the bones of the two great friends now lie together. He had taken great pains to secure the handsome monument desired by the family cut and placed at the grave.

Sir George Simpson was something more than the stern disciplinarian. Beneath the apparently hard surface, there was a man of feeling, whose words seldom revealed him. His deeds did. He was master of the forces of the Hudson's Bay Company, but he was at the same time the servant of the servants of the Company, as tireless in his efforts for them as he expected them to be in their labours for the Company.

XIII

Last Days, 1858-1860

XIII

Last Days, 1858-1860

THE political structure within which George Simpson had governed for near forty years was crumbling to the ground. Not that only; the whole economic organization of the continent was being transformed by steamship and by rail. Steamers had been running on the Mississippi from before the middle of the century, and the first steamer to pass down the Red River to Fort Garry was the *Anson Northup* in 1859. But, so far as Simpson was concerned, the climax came when the railway reached the banks of the Mississippi at St. Paul in 1859. With quick and sure transportation to Rupert's Land by way of the United States, the great day of York Factory and Hudson Strait was drawing to a close. Before the union of 1821, a large part of the trade of the North-West was moving on east and west lines to reach the English market through Montreal. With the union, when Simpson stepped on the scene as Governor, it all went northward to York Factory and by Hudson Bay. So much was this the case that the geographical terms of the North West Company disappeared, save on the lips of the old Northwesters. The North-West became Rupert's Land, or more frequently the more inclusive Hudson's Bay Company's Territories. But the pendulum was now swinging back. Traffic was certain to run east

and west once more, and the Company's posts would be supplied through St. Paul in the first place, and from the middle 'eighties by the Canadian Pacific Railway. In the issue, the last great brigade passed down to York Factory in 1871, eleven years after Simpson's death. Long before that the day of Fort Garry as the port of entry and the centre of distribution of goods for the fur trade had come. Old man as Simpson was in 1858, for he was seventy-one years of age, he might well have been somewhat unconscious of the change, or he might have acted on the assumption that, at least for his few remaining years, the old machine might be left to run on. But that was not the nature of the man. He foresaw the impending changes, and he prepared at once to meet them. In 1858, he travelled by rail, apparently to the neighbourhood of St. Paul, and in that rising city met the Honourable Edward Ellice, but two years younger than himself yet equally perceptive and energetic. These two aged gentlemen explored the situation in the light of the future and recommended the Governor and Committee to open an agency in St. Paul and to prepare for the day when furs and goods would pass through that city and by rail to and from the sea and England. Simpson's perception and insight, his initiative and his will-to-do remained with him to the end.

George Simpson enjoyed the gifts of astonishingly good health and physical vigour. The phrase used in 1846 by Mr. Barclay, the Company's secretary, of the restless traveller, that he was "in league with the Prince of the Power of the Air" might almost be applied equally aptly to the old man of seventy-one. Nature's warning that there must be an end first came in 1855 when he began to suffer from some sort of trouble of the eyes. In 1858 he

wrote:[1] "I am nearly blind." In the spring of 1859, he broached the question of his retirement in a letter to Governor H. H. Berens. There was need for a visitation of the kind that Simpson had thrice made to the Pacific Coast, this time to Vancouver's Island where things were in confusion. Simpson regretted that he was not equal to the mission. He continued:

> "In February next I shall have completed Forty years Service with the Hudson's Bay Compy., I trust creditably to myself and advantageously to the concern. During that very long period I have never been off duty for a week at a time, nor have I ever allowed Family ties & personal convenience to come in competition with the claims I considered the Company to have on me. . . . It is high time, however, I rested from incessant labour. Moreover, I am unwilling to hold an appointment, when I cannot descharge its duties to my own satisfaction. I shall therefore make way for some younger man, who I trust may serve the Compy. as zealously and conscientiously as I have done."

During the following winter he suffered "a serious attack," apparently a slight stroke, and his sight was "much affected"; but he made what must have been a remarkable recovery. In the spring he started on his usual lengthy journey to hold Council at Norway House, this time not by the tedious canoe journey through the Great Lakes, but by rail to St. Paul. He may well have found travelling by train in the stuffy cars crowded with passengers, of which he wrote, not nearly so health-giving as the voyage by canoe. Arrived in St. Paul, he was forced to conclude that he could not face the journey to the Red River. He was not willing, he wrote, to "leave his bones to bleach in the plains of Red River." On his return to Lachine, his health "improved considerably,"

and he hoped soon to be himself again. It was in this spirit that he sent in his resignation from the board of the Bank of British North America on which he had served for many a day. As he and those for whom he was attorney held probably "1-10th of the total stock of the Bank of Montreal," he proposed standing for the directorate of that institution.[2]

Sir George Simpson was now asked to participate in the celebrations of Montreal connected with the visit of the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, to Canada. It was proposed to have a spectacular parade of the Hudson's Bay Company's canoes and voyageurs. After some discussion, it was decided to have it at what Simpson had insisted on as the appropriate scene, the neighourhood of Lachine. The Governor placed his personal home on Isle Dorval three miles upstream from Lachine at the disposal of the reception committee. Sir Fenwick Williams, in command of the troops at Montreal, played the part of host, supported by Sir George himself. The celebration must have delighted the heart of the aged Governor, who had so often arrived at the posts of the distant North-West with paddles marking time for the voyageurs' songs. The parade at Isle Dorval was picturesquely described in the Montreal *Gazette*.[3]

> "At the point opposite Isle Dorval . . . the royal party quitted their carriages to embark in boats sent up for the purpose, from the vessels of war lying in our harbour. The scene at this moment was unrivalled in interest, and the picturesque effect, — one never to be forgotten by those (comparatively few in number) who witnessed it. His Royal Highness, in warm terms, expressed his surprise and gratification at the demonstration, of which we will endeavour to give some faint idea.

"The site was well chosen; the channel, less than a mile wide, flows between fields now ripe for the harvest, sloping to the water's edge, and the dense foliage and verdant lawns of Isle Dorval, fresh with the recent showers and brilliant with sunshine. A flotilla of nine large birch-bark canoes was drawn up in a line close to the head of the island. Their appearance was very beautiful; the light and graceful craft were painted and fitted up with great taste, each having flags at the bow and stern; their crews, composed of 100 Iroquois Indians, from Caughnawaga and the Lake of Two Mountains, being costumed *en sauvage*, gay with feathers, scarlet cloth, and paint,—the crews and craft harmonizing admirably.

"As soon as the barge carrying the Prince pushed off from the mainland, the fleet of canoes darted out from the island to meet him, in a line abreast, and to the inspiriting cadences of a voyageur song. On nearing the royal barge, the line opened in the middle, apparently to let it pass, but, suddenly wheeling round with a rapidity and precision which took every one by surprise, they again formed in line, with the Prince's barge in the middle, and in that form reached the landing-place, when the canoe song ceased, and a cheer, it did one's heart good to hear, burst from the voyageurs, which His Royal Highness, with a face beaming with pleasure, returned, by saluting his Indian escort.

"The Prince of Wales was received on landing by Sir George Simpson; and soon afterwards luncheon was served to a select party, invited to meet His Royal Highness by Lieut. General Sir Fenwick Williams, who at present occupies the Island as the owner's guest. Being a private entertainment, a complete list of the names of those present has not been furnished; but we understand there were about fifty at table. Sir F. Williams, as the host, had the Prince on one side of him, and Sir George on the other. Among the other guests were the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Lyons,

Marquis of Chandos, Earl Mulgrave, Lord Hinchinbrook, Bishop of Montreal, Bishop of Rupert's Land, General Bruce, Mr. Engleheart, Major Teesdale (Equerry), Col. Taché, Col. Bradford, Col. Rolls, Mr. H. McKenzie (H.B. Co.), Mr. Hopkins (H.B.Co.), Admiral Milne, Captain Vansittart, R.N., Mr. Blackwell, Captain Earl, A.D.C., Captain de Winton, &c. &c. No ladies were invited, nor were any present, except three immediately connected with Sir George Simpson, viz. Mrs. Hopkins, and her sister, Miss Beechy, and Mrs. McKenzie.

"Justice having been done to the elegant repast, the party strolled about to admire the beauty of the place, while the band of the Royal Canadian Rifles performed on the lawn, and the birch-bark fleet, in full song, paddled round the island. About half-past four the party embarked in the canoes, and proceeded, in great style and at a rapid pace, towards Lachine; one bearing the royal standard and carrying the Prince, the Duke of Newcastle, and General Williams, taking the lead, while the remainder, in line abreast, followed close behind it. About the centre of the brigade we observed Sir George Simpson (accompanied by the Earl of Mulgrave and General Bruce, both old fellow-voyageurs of Sir George) directing the movements in person."

This picturesque scene, the last public appearance of Sir George, was on Wednesday, August 29, 1860. Three days later, Simpson was stricken with apoplexy when driving from Montreal to his home at Lachine. He was taken to his official residence across the canal from Hudson's Bay House, and there, where he had known much domestic felicity, at any rate until the death of Lady Simpson, where he had entertained many a distinguished traveller in the lordly style of the Company, and where he had toiled ceaselessly for the welfare, not

simply of the concern, but of its humblest servants, he died on September 7th. On the 11th, his body was taken by train for burial in Mount Royal Cemetery beside his wife, who had predeceased him by seven years. The great man was not to pass to his last resting-place without an expression of sorrow on the part of the Indians with whose people from the wilds of James Bay to the deep inlets of the Pacific he had been the Chief of Chiefs.

> "The Caughnawaga Indians escorted the melancholy cortege from the House to the landing where the train was waiting; and as the coffin was placed in the car appropriated for its reception, the red men and their squaws sang a wild and doleful but solemn dirge in commemoration of the departure to "The Great Chief" above the sky of one of their best friends."[4]

The inscription at his tomb runs: "Sacred to the memory of Sir George Simpson, Kt., Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land—Died at Lachine, September 7th, 1860—Aged 73."

Sir George drew large salaries during the thirty-nine years of his Governorship, and invested his savings with wisdom. He died wealthy. It is typical of the justice of the man that he remembered his three half-breed sons in his will, and that he set aside an annuity of £100 for his half-breed daughter, who, when the will was made in 1841 on the eve of his world tour, was the mother of a young family.

Simpson was a faithful, a devoted servant of the Hudson's Bay Company. He was a skilful leader of its Councils, winning the Chief Factors to his will, less by the exercise of his authority than by his masterly management of the business of the Company, in whose annual profits they personally shared—this accompanied by a

well-concealed subtlety. He guarded himself against waywardness on the part of his men by casting the customs of the trade into something like a code. By that very code he protected himself from arbitrary actions, from the temptation to be despot. At the same time, he enforced the "Regulations" with an iron will. Herein lay his success as a ruler of men, the secret of his unchallenged power. In private, he was too prone to harshness in his judgment of his Officers. In his actions he belied his words, and was just. At times he blamed the servants of the Company unfairly, and he was not given to apologizing when he knew he was in the wrong, but he made amends by his deeds and by his friendship. At bottom, he was a devoted friend to his associates, but he did not show it in the terms of his letters to them. He proved it in his actions. Where there was call to build up an orderly society as in Red River Settlement, he is seen as a statesman relying not on the arbitrary will of the ruler, but on institutions which give cohesion to a community and make for law and order. His greatest mistakes were due to his devotion to the interests of his god, the Company, to his readiness to make the colony serve what he took to be the welfare of the Fur Trade. But his masters, the Governor and Committee kept him in the paths of wisdom. When he was given an open field, as in the Pacific Slope, he proved far-seeing, taking steps today to prepare for the contingencies of tomorrow. He was not of those who, having built up a system in their early years, spend the rest of their days maintaining it in the face of odds. To the end of his days he showed himself conscious of the changing world in which he lived, and he was ever ready to readjust his system in

keeping with the needs of the time. The sphere in which he played the part of Governor for well-nigh forty years was indeed vast in space, but in fact comparatively simple. Within that sphere he was a master-builder. As such he may be ranked as among the Makers of Canada.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Journals—Simpson's *Journal of Occurences in the Athabasca Department*, 1820-21, published by the Hudson's Bay Record Society, London, and the Champlain Society, Toronto, 1938, includes his report on the "District" which he managed as a simple officer. Frederick Merk's *Fur Trade and Empire, George Simpson's Journal . . . 1824-1825*, Harvard University Press, 1931, has valuable subsidiary matter in the appendices. There exists no journal of Simpson's voyage "West of the Mountains" in 1828; the journal of his companion, Archibald McDonald, published with notes by Malcolm McLeod under the title of *Peace River*, Ottawa, 1872, is a simple account of the journey westward; one misses Simpson's searching report on the posts, on the officers, and on the trade at large. Simpson kept a journal on his voyage round the world. It was prepared for the press by Archibald Barclay, secretary of the Company, and more particularly by Adam Thom, Recorder of Rupert's Land, and was published as *Narrative of a journey round the world in 1841 and 1842*, 2 vols., London, 1845.

Letters—The earliest and most intimate are to R. Pooler of Reigate; they are in the Archives of British Columbia; all but one have been printed in the British Columbia Historical Quarterly, April, 1937. Simpson's Reports consisted of the minutes of the Councils over which he presided as Governor and one or more letters discussing their "Resolves" of importance; they cover descriptions of the trade and the decisions concerning the several "Districts", and much else; they constitute a splendid series in the Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company, 68 Bishopsgate, London. The answers to these and the instructions to him are in the "London Letter-books" (Out), viz., letters from the Governor and Committee—"Public" to Simpson and the Councils, "Private" and "Confi-

dential" to Simpson personally. In this series are also letters on minor matters written to him by the secretary of the time; occasionally these are more intimate. In the bulk these outletters afford the means of knowing the judgment of the London executive on the policy and actions of their Governor overseas. Simpson's letters to the servants of the Company under him and to his other correspondents are in the series D4; unfortunately they are preserved only from 1853 to 1860. More extensive is the series D5, letters to Simpson; they are preserved from 1843. Very intimate letters to his greatest friend, John George McTavish, when he was Chief Factor at Moose Fort, B135/c, have been happily preserved among the papers of that post. There is much else of a subsidiary nature in the Archives of the Company, for example, the Minutes of the Councils of the Southern Department, of the Northern Department, and of Assiniboia. E. H. Oliver in his *The Canadian North-West, its early Development and Legislative Records* has printed the minutes of the Council of the Northern Department from 1830 to 1843, and the minutes of the Council of Assiniboia. See also *Minutes of Council Northern Department Rupert Land, 1821 to 1831*, Hudson's Bay Record Society, London, and The Champlain Society, Toronto, 1940, with its appendices.

The Selkirk transcripts in the Public Archives of Canada have material bearing on Simpson, particularly Andrew Colvile's correspondence with Northwesters looking to union with the Hudson's Bay Company, and very especially the intimate correspondence between Simpson and Colvile. In the transcripts of the documents in the British Foreign Office bearing on the Oregon in the Archives of British Columbia are letters of Simpson (mostly to the Governor and Committee) which indicate the relations of the Hudson's Bay Company to the Government in matters concerning the international negotiations. Also in the Archives of British Columbia are letters from Simpson, mostly to officers and servants of the Company.

There likewise, in the Donald Ross Papers, are found letters from Simpson to Ross; also a List of Subscribers for a Piece or Service of Plate to be presented to Governor Simpson in 1841.

Comparatively few of Simpson's letters have been printed in the whole or in part. See J. Schafer's article, *Letters of Sir George Simpson, 1841-43*, in the American Historical Review, Oct. 1908; Report of the Archives of the British Columbia, 1913; and Howay and Scholefield's *British Columbia from the earliest time to the present*, Chicago, 1914, vol. 1.

References to Simpson by his contemporaries are to be found in the following: Nicholas Garry's *Diary* in Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 1900; John M'Lean's *Notes of twenty-five years' service in the Hudson's Bay Territory*, 2 vols., London, 1849, reprinted with an index by the Champlain Society, Toronto, 1932; Alexander Ross's *The Red River Settlement*, London, 1856; Alexander Simpson's *Life and Travels of Thomas Simpson*, London, 1845; Thomas Simpson's *Narrative of the discoveries on the north coast of America by officers of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1836 and 1839*, London, 1843; Captain H. J. Warre's *Sketches in North America and the Oregon Territory*, London, 1848; Moberley and Cameron's *When Fur was king*, London and Toronto, 1929.

Secondary works which may be mentioned are: George Bryce's *The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company*,—Toronto, 1900; and his life of Simpson in the Makers of Canada, latest edition, Oxford University Press, 1927; W. N. Sage's *Sir James Douglas*, University of Toronto Press, 1930; Beckles Willson's *The Great Company*, London, 1900; S. A. Clarke's *Pioneer days of Oregon History*, 2 vols., Portland, 1905; Gunn and Tuttle's *History of Manitoba from the earliest settlement*, Ottawa, 1880; Douglas McKay's *The Honourable Company, the history of the Hudson's Bay Company*, Toronto, 1938, the most recent and the best.

Notes

CHAPTER I

[1] The writer is greatly indebted to Mr. R. G. H. Leveson Gower, Archivist of the Hudson's Bay Company, for generously placing at his disposal material collected on the relations of the members of the Simpson family to one another.

[2] See Alexander Simpson: *Life and travels of Thomas Simpson, the Arctic discoverer*, London, 1845, p. 3. The volume tells of the early days of the several Simpsons.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[4] *The New statistical account of Scotland*, Edinburgh & London, 1845, vol. 14, p. 396.

[5] Alexander Simpson, *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[7] Simpson's letters to Pooler are in the Archives of British Columbia; all but one are printed in the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, April, 1937.

[8] Alexander Wedderburn: *The Wedderburn book in the counties of Berwick and Forfar*, 1296-1896, 2 vols. printed for private circulation, 1898, pp. lxxi, 308.

[9] This and the following items, from H.B.C. Arch., Stock Transfer Book.

[10] H.B.C. Arch., Minutes of General Court, Jan. 17, 1810, A1/49, fo. 110d.

[11] *Ibid.*, Minutes of Committee, 1810, Feb. 7, 21, Mar. 7, May 2, A1/49 fo. 115, 122-4.

[12] *Ibid.* Feb. 6, 1811, H.B.C. Arch. A1/50.

[13] The change of name was due to the fortune and estate of Lord Colville of Ochiltree coming to the Wedderburns.

[14] Public Arch. of Canada, Selkirk Transcripts, p. 6500, 6609; 6622-26.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 7093, H.B.C. Arch. Colin Robertson, Folder II, fo. 83 (p. 160).

[16] Minutes of Committee, Feb. 9, 24, 26, 1820, H.B.C. Arch., A1/52.

CHAPTER II

[1] Public Record Office, London, State Papers, Dom. Charles II, No. 251/180.

[2] Conveniently reprinted in *Charters, Statutes, Orders in Council &c.*, London, Hudson's Bay Company, 1931, p. 3; and in E. H. Oliver: The Canadian North-West . . . legislative records, vol. I, p. 135.

[3] Reprinted in Charters, Statutes, Order in Council, etc., London, Hudson's Bay Company, 1931, p. 87.

[4] H.B.C. Arch., Nottingham House Journal, May 19, 1805.

[5] Pp. 67-8.

[6] See the author's article, *David Thompson and the North West Company's Columbian enterprise*, in the Canadian Historical Review, Sept. 1936, XVII, No. 3, pp. 266-288.

[7] H.B.C. Arch., Out Corr. 1810, *Instructions for Conducting the Trade in Hudson's Bay*, 11 pp.

[8] See the author's paper, *The Place of the Red River Settlement in the plans of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1812-1825*, in report of the Canadian Historical Association, 1929, pp. 103-9.

[9] Governor William William's account of the affair is printed in *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book*, ed. by E. E. Rich, Hudson's Bay Record Society, London, and Champlain Society, Toronto, 1939, at pp. 284-90 (in the appendix).

CHAPTER III

[1] Selkirk Transcripts in Public Archives of Canada, p. 6713.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 6500.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 6609.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 6622, 6624, 6626.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 6628.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 6638.

[7] *Ibid.*, 6994; the italics are Samuel Gale's.

[8] The date of the birth is gathered from a letter to her "dear Father", Dec. 22, 1849, stating that her husband had died on "my birthday", H.B.C. Arch., D5/26 under date. J. D. Cameron to Simpson on December 3rd shows that the death took place between October 20th and November 2nd.

[9] The baptism is entered under date in Rev. John West's Register, H.B.C. Arch., E4/1.

[10] Published for the Hudson's Bay Record Society by the Champlain Society, Toronto, 1938.

[11] Mr. E. E. Rich, editor of *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book*, Champlain and Hudson's Bay Record Societies, 1939, at p. cxix stresses the inexperience of Simpson as he began his first year as a fur-trader: "Simpson travelled inland in the same canoe with Miles [his accountant at Fort Wedderburn], used him largely throughout the winter, and reported that he was one of the two men at Fort Wedderburn in whom he felt confidence. But [in contrast with Colin Robertson] he never mentioned any help which Miles might have given him in drawing up his *Journal and Report*. This is the more singular not only because Simpson's Journal is extraordinarily mature right from the very moment when, new to the whole business, he embarked (with Miles) from Rock Depot, but also because there remain in the Hudson's Bay Company's Archives the first twenty days of a Journal kept by Miles on that journey, and not only the sentiments but even the phrases are those of Simpson's *Journal*. The remainder of the pages are (perhaps significantly) cut clean out from the copy-book in which Miles had written."

Mr. Rich is misled by applying the canons of conduct in private authorship to Simpson's official report of his year's management of the Athabaska District. Of course, all the knowledge of his subordinates was at the disposal of the head of the District in reporting to the Company. Moreover, the accountant often kept the Fort Journal under the direction, and no doubt often, the dictation of his Chief. Indeed, the year before Colin Robertson, as Mr. Rich quotes him at p. 67, "requested Mr. Miles to keep a correct account of all proceedings at this post". The probability is that Miles's Journal referred to by Mr. Rich, is the first form of the Fort Journal, discarded, and Simpson's the final copy, and that Miles's information and Simpson's judgment contributed to both.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 8f.
15 *Ibid.*, p. 23f.
16 *Ibid.*, p. 32.
17 *Ibid.*, p. 172.
18 *Ibid.*, p. 249.
19 *Ibid.*, p. 52f.
20 *Ibid.*, p. 55f.
21 *Ibid.*, p. 70f.
22 *Ibid.*, p. 82.
23 *Ibid.*, p. 83f.
24 *Ibid.*, p. 87.
25 *Ibid.*, p. 92ff.
26 The constable, Amable Grignon, had not come in with Simpson's brigade. He was at Fort Wedderburn the year before with his warrants, when Colin Robertson was in charge of the District (*Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book*, Hudson's Bay Record Society and Champlain Society, 1939, p. 269).

CHAPTER IV

Section 1

1 Colin Robertson in letter-book, H.B.C. Arch., folder II, fo. 80-84 (160-162).
2 Printed in *Charters, Statutes* &c. published by the H.B.C., 1931.
3 The *Deed Poll* was adopted at a General Court, March 26, 1821; it is printed in the appendix of *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book*, Hudson's Bay Record Society and Champlain Society, 1939, p. 327.
4 Governor and Committee to Governor Williams, March 28, 1821, A6/19, p. 209.

Section 2

5 His Diary of his journey is printed in Transaction of the Royal Society of Canada, Sect. 2, 1900.
6 Public Arch. of Canada, Selkirk Transcripts, p. 7587.
7 Simpson to H. H. Berens, March 16, 1860, D4/84a, p. 132v.
8 Dr. Bryce's *Life of Simpson* in *The Makers of Canada*, latest edition, Oxford University Press, Toronto, 1927, p. 217.
9 Colvile to S. Gale, Jr., Dec. 24, 1819, Pub. Arch. of Can., Selkirk Transcripts, p. 6609.
10 Printed in Oliver: *Canadian North-West . . . Legislative Records*, vol. 1, p. 156.
11 H.B.C. Arch., A6/20, p. 8, and p. 35.
12 Oliver: *op. cit.* vol. 1, p. 637.
13 H.B.C. Arch. A6/20 p. 68ff; Oliver: *op. cit.*, p. 640.
14 Minutes of the Council of the Northern Department, H.B.C. Arch.
15 H.B.C. Arch. A6/20, p. 206.
16 H.B.C. Arch., D4/86, fo. 36ff.
17 Quoted in W. N. Sage: *Sir James Douglas*, Univ. of Toronto Press, 1930, pp. 111-2.
18 *Ibid.* p. 117, where Sage refers to a statement made by Simpson to Douglas, and reported in Douglas' *Small Note Book*, 1841, p. 18; ms. in B.C. Arch.
19 For particulars see *Return to an Address of the House of Commons* dated 26 May, 1842, for copy of the existing Charter or grant by the Crown to the Hudson's Bay Company; together with copies or extracts of the correspondence which took place at the last renewal of the Charter. . . . Ordered printed 1 August, 1842.
20 Pub. Arch. of Can., Selkirk Transcripts, 7587.

CHAPTER V

[1] H.B.C. Arch., A6/21, fo. 82, Governor and Committee to Simpson, Feb. 24, 1826.

[2] The Deed of reconveyance is printed in part in *Charters and Statutes*, published by the Hudson's Bay Company, 1931, p. 231. The date is May 4.

[3] Quoted from A. G. Morice: *History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia, 1660-1880*, p. 110.

[4] H.B.C. Arch., Min. of No. Council, Resolve 31.

[5] Simpson to the Governor and Committee, Aug. 5, 1822; paragraph 14; and Sept. 8, 1823, par. 7.

[6] *Ibid.*, Aug. 5, par. 14.

[7] Pub. Arch. of Can., Selkirk Transcripts, p. 7587.

[8] The remains of these posts may be seen to-day in SW¼ sect. 33, tp. 32, r. 3, W2. See the author's paper on *The Posts of the Fur-traders on the Upper Assiniboine*, in Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Sect. 2, 1942, p. 107.

[9] See the author's paper on *Five Forts on the Lower Qu'Appelle*, in Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Sect. 2, 1941, p. 91.

[10] H.B.C. Arch., Simpson to the Governor and Committee, Aug. 5, 1822, par. 9.

[11] H.B.C. Arch., Simpson to the Governor and Committee, June 3, 1823, par. 10.

[12] *Ibid.*, Edmonton Journal, B 60/a/4.

[13] *Ibid.*, par. 6; Min. of No. Council, July 8, 1822, Res. 110.

[14] H.B.C. Arch., Simpson to the Governor and Committee, Aug. 10, 1824, par. 6; Mar. 11, 1825, par. 10; Selt. 1, 1825, Governor &c. to Simpson, Mar. 11, 1825, par. 10; Simpson to Governor &c. Sept. 1, 1825, par. 10.

[15] Printed in Frederick Merk: *Fur Trade and Empire, George Simpson's Journal*, 1824-5, Harvard Univ. Press, 1931, p. 237.

[16] Printed in Oliver: *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 743-757.

[17] H.B.C. Arch., B/135/c2, p. 79.

[18] H.B.C. Arch., Simpson's report of 1825, fo. 125.

[19] *Ibid.* fo. 129.

[20] Minutes of No. Council, York Factory, July 1, 1824, Res. 97; printed in Merk; *op. cit.*, p. 236.

[21] H.B.C. Arch., A6/20, p. 8, par. 37.

[22] Res. 97.

[23] *When fur was King*, Toronto, 1929, pp. 88-9.

[24] Parliamentary Paper, *Report of the Select Committee on Hudson's Bay Company*, 1857, pp. 154-5.

CHAPTER VI

[1] Simpson to Andrew Colvile, May 31, 1824, Pub. Arch. of Can., Selkirk Transcripts, p. 8218; printed in Merk: *op. cit.*, p. 209.

[2] Pub. Arch. of Can., Bulger Corr., M.150, II, p. 195.

[3] H.B.C. Arch., Governor and Committee to Simpson, Mar. 12, 1824, A6/20, p. 255.

[4] Simpson to Andrew Colvile, June 24, 1823, Pub. Arch. of Can., Selkirk Transcripts, p. 7922; printed in Merk: *Op. cit.*, p. 197.

[5] Pub. Arch. of Can., Selkirk transcripts, p. 7968; printed in Oliver: *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 254.

[6] Pub. Arch. of Can., Bulger Corr., M 152, I, p. —; printed in Oliver: *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 257.

[7] Simpson to Colvile, Sept. 8, 1823, Pub. Arch. of Can., Selkirk Transcripts, p. 8014 f; printed in Oliver: *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 257.
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] Simpson to Andrew Colvile, May 31, 1824, Pub. Arch. of Can., Selkirk transcripts, p. 8221; Oliver: *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 258.
[10] Oct. 21, 1823, Copies of the Minutes of the Councils of Assiniboia of this winter were all sent home in Simpson's report of 1824. The actual Minute Book is in the H.B.C.'s Archives.

CHAPTER VII

Section 1

[1] Mar. 11, 1824, Pub. Arch. of Can., Selkirk transcripts, p. 8148; printed in Merk: *Op. cit.*, pp. 205-6.
[2] London, 1849; reprinted by Champlain Society, 1932, pp. 2-3.
[3] Published by Frederick Merk under the title *Fur Trade and Empire*, Harvard Univ. Press, 1931; the original is in the H.B.C. Arch.
[4] Merk: *Op. cit.*, p. 5. The following quotations from the journal are referred to under Merk's pagination.
[5] p. 19f.
[6] p. 23.
[7] p. 25.
[8] p. 160.
[9] p. 163.

Section 2

[10] Merk: *Op. cit.*, p. 7; subsequent quotations from the journal are indicated in the text under Merk's pagination.

Section 3

[11] Governor and Committee to Simpson and the Chief Factors of the Columbia District; printed in Merk: *Op. cit.*, p. 252.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 208f.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 251.
[14] The journey from Fort Chipewyan to the Pacific coast is described in Archibald McDonald's journal published under the title *Peace River*, with notes by Malcolm McLeod, Ottawa, 1872.
[15] H.B.C. Arch., Minutes of Committee, Jan. 7, 1829.
[16] H.B.C. Arch., Governor and Committee to Simpson, June 5, 1835, A6/23, p. 238.
[17] Simpson published an account of his journey from London to London in his *Narrative of a Journey round the World*, 2 vols., 1847. The record of his movements is accompanied by ample comments on the passing scenes and made a great impression on the public of his day and after. Perhaps the most notable feature is his journey from Edmonton House to the Columbia by a direct route, hitherto unexplored and arduous in the extreme. From the neighbourhood of Banff he crossed the Rockies by Simpson Pass, named after him, to the upper waters of the Kootenay River. He followed the banks of that stream till he reached Fort Colvile beyond on the Columbia River. The journey across Siberia was new to him, but the route was a customary one to the Russian fur-traders. It provided satisfactory if rough accommodation all the way. Simpson received assistance in preparing the book for the press. See at p. 233f.

CHAPTER VIII

[1] The secretary of the Company sent out by the ship annually a list of the moneys ordered by retired servants or their executors to be paid to their women and children.

[2] Red River Register of Baptisms and Marriages &c. H.B.C. Arch., E4/1.

[3] From a statement procured from one of her descendants by Mr. R. H. G. Leveson Gower, Archivist of H.B.C.

[4] Letters from her found in In-correspondence to Simpson, D5/8ff.

[5] In the Archives of British Columbia, and not among those printed in the British Columbia Historical Quarterly.

[6] For McTavish's passage by this ship see William M'Gillivray to J. G. McTavish, Feb. 26, 1820, London, in folder of Miscellaneous Letters, H.B.C. Arch.

[7] The letters are found among the papers of Moose Factory, McTavish's next charge, where he must have left them, B135/c 2.—They are the source of information for this, the personal side of Simpson.

[8] Red River Register of Baptisms, Marriages, etc., H.B.C., Arch. E4/1.

[9] Cecil W. Mackenzie: *Donald Mackenzie, "King of the Northwest"*, p. 194.

CHAPTER IX

[1] H.B.C. Arch., D4/97, Aug. 26, 1830.

[2] Alex. Ross: *The Red River Settlement, its rise, progress, and present state*, p. 133.

[3] Campbell gives a graphic story of his mission in his journal, a copy of which is in the Public Archives of Canada.

[4] Alex. Ross: *Op. cit.*, p. 134.

CHAPTER X

[1] The Deed of Reconveyance is printed in part in *Charters, Statutes*, &c., published by the H.B.C., 1931.

[2] Oliver: *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 267.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 274-81.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 286.

CHAPTER XI

Section 1

[1] Minutes of Northern Council, June 28, 1826, Res. 131.

[2] Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons on the H.B.C., 1857, questions 551-559, p. 36.

[3] H.B.C. Arch., E. Roberts to Simpson, Feb. 3, 1846, D5/16, p. 176.

[4] London *Daily News* of Jan. 22, 1851, clipping enclosed in Edward Roberts to Simpson, D5/30, p. 118. See also catalogue of the Exhibition.

[5] H.B.C. Arch., Governor and Committee to Simpson, April 17, 1856, D5/41, p. 315v.

Section 2

[6] Min. of No. Council, June 21, 1836; Oliver: *Op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 732.
[7] H.B.C. Arch., Governor and Committee to Simpson, A6/26, Mar. 11, 1845, par. 28.
[8] H.B.C. Arch., Miscellaneous Letters Folder, the date, Dec. 7, 1844.
[9] H.B.C. Arch., Alex. Christie to Simpson, Dec. 31, 1844, D5/12, p. 611.
[10] H.B.C. Arch., A. Barclay, secy. to Simpson, Apr. 18, 1845, A6/26, p. 304.
[11] Printed in Oliver: *Op. cit.*, vol. 2, 1303.
[12] H.B.C. Arch., A6/27, par. 22-27, p. 40ff.
[13] An example of the covenant will be found in Archer Martin's *The Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures*, pp. 71-74, esp. 72.
[14] Sept. 14, 1849, D5/26, p. 45.
[15] A. Barclay to Simpson, A6/27, p. 48.
[16] Printed in Alex. Begg's History of the North-West, vol. 1, pp. 261-4.
[17] For the petition and the long discussions which it occasioned, see the Parliamentary Paper No. 227, (Red River Settlement).
[18] H.B.C. Arch., Simpson's Outward Corr. book, 1845-6, pp. 385-388.
[19] H.B.C. Arch., A. Barclay to Simpson, June 3, 1846, A6/27, p. 60-1.
[20] H.B.C. Arch., Alex. Christie to Simpson, Nov. 30, 1847, D5/20, p. 257.
[21] H.B.C. Arch., Christie to Simpson, Mar. 31, 1848, D5/20, p. 601.
[22] H.B.C. Arch., A6/27, p. 271.
[23] H.B.C. Arch., D5/28, p. 64.
[24] H.B.C. Arch., Ballenden to Simpson, May 29, 1849, D5/25, p. 230.
[25] H.B.C. Arch., Adam Thom to Simpson, Mar. 19, 1850, D5/27, p. 459.
[26] It is reported in the record of the Quarterly Court, Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg.
[27] H.B.C. Arch., D5/28, p. 239.
[28] H.B.C. Arch., D5/28, p. 239.
[29] H.B.C. Arch., Pelly to Simpson, Mar. 8, 1850, D5/27, p. 401.
[30] Pub. Arch. of Can.

Section 3

[31] *Correspondence of the Foreign Office and of the H.B.C. from original documents*, London (compiled by Otto Klotz), printed for private circulation, Ottawa, 1899, part 1, p. 11.
[32] *Ibid.*, part 2, pp. 3-8.
[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 8-11.
[34] Foreign Office transcripts in the Archives of British Columbia, F.O.5, vol. 221, at the date.
[35] *Ibid.*, vol. 328, at date.
[36] *Ibid.*, vol. 341.
[37] *Ibid.*, vol. 355.
[38] *Ibid.*, vol. 356.
[39] See W. T. Marshall: *The Acquisition of Oregon*, vol. 1, pp. 63-5, 73-9.
[40] F.O. Domestic Various, vol. 401, transcript in Archives of British Columbia. They are filed in the Archives of the Foreign Office (copies in the British Columbia Archives, Victoria).
[41] *Ibid.*, vol. 439.
[42] *Ibid.*, vol. 443.
[43] *Ibid.*, vol. 440.
[44] *Ibid.*, vol. 443.

Section 4

[45] H.B.C. Arch., Simpson to Pelly, Oct. 24, 1845, Simpson Outward Correspondence Book, 1845-6, pp. 385-8; Alex. Christie to Simpson, Aug. 12, 1845.

[46] *Britain one Empire: the union of the Dominions with Britain by communications with the Pacific and the East via British North America*, London, 1852.

[47] H.B.C. Arch., D5/14, p. 259.

CHAPTER XII

Section 1

[1] Public Arch. of Can., Selkirk transcripts, p. 7922; printed in Merk; *Op. cit.*, p. 196.
[2] H.B.C. Arch., A34/2, No. 4.
[3] *Ibid.*, No. 1.
[4] H.B.C. Arch., Minutes of Committee, May 21, 1821.
[5] H.B.C. Arch., A34/2, No. 17.
[6] *Ibid.*, No. 8.
[7] Simpson to J. G. McTavish, June 8, 1831, H.B.C. Arch., B/135/c/2, fo. 65.
[8] *Ibid.*, fo. 75.
[9] Feb. 4, 1850, H.B.C. Arch., D5/27, p. 192.
[10] H.B.C. Arch., A34/2, No. 10.
[11] H.B.C. Arch., B/135/c/2, p. 48, Simpson to J. G. McTavish, July 30, 1830.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] H.B.C. Arch., A34/2, No. 3.
[14] London, 1849; reprinted by Champlain Society, Toronto, 1832.
[15] H.B.C. Arch., D5/27, Jan. 9, 1850.
[16] H.B.C. Arch., A6/23, p. 135, Mar. 8, 1834.
[17] John M'Lean's *Notes of a Twenty-five years' service in the Hudson's Bay Territory*, Champlain Society's edition, 1932, p. 235.
[18] John M'Lean to Sir Geo. Simpson, H.B.C. Arch., D5/12, p. 42.
[19] H.B.C. Arch., A/2, 1838-42, under date Feb. 24, 1841.
[20] See John McLean's Notes, etc., Champlain Society's edition, W. S. Wallace, editor, p. xxii, footnote.

Section 2

[21] H.B.C. Arch., B/135/c/2, p. 50.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 46, July 10, 1830, York Factory.
[23] He retired from the service early in 1847 (A6/27/p. 250) and died on July 20, of that year. He was buried in Simpson's family plot in the cemetery on Mount Royal.
[24] H.B.C. Arch., D4/70, p. 449.
[25] H.B.C. Arch., D5/25, p. 521, Nicol Finlayson to Simpson, Aug. 17, 1849.
[26] H.B.C. Arch., D5/31, p. 47.
[27] H.B.C. Arch., D4/82, p. 258, Nov. 4, 1853.
[28] H.B.C. Arch., A11/56, Mar. 15, 1854.
[29] H.B.C. Arch., D5/26, p. 581, Aug. 27, 1849.
[30] H.B.C. Arch., A34/1 and A34/2.
[31] H.B.C. Arch., A34/2, p. 18, No. 22.
[32] H.B.C. Arch., D4/82, p. 100, Sept. 16, 1853.
[33] H.B.C. Arch., Minute of No. Council, resolve 124.
[34] H.B.C. Arch., B/135/c/2, p. 51, Jan. 3, 1831.

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[35] H.B.C. Arch., D4/83, p. 485, Simpson to W. G. Smith, secretary to the Company, April 28, 1854.
[36] H.B.C. Arch., D5/8, p. 94, Feb. 24, 1843.
[37] H.B.C. Arch., B/135/c/2, p. 83.
[38] H.B.C. Arch., D4/82, p. 336.
[39] H.B.C. Arch., D4/84b, p. 42, June 13, 1859.
[40] H.B.C. Arch., D4/83, p. 785, July 29, 1856.

CHAPTER XIII

[1] H.B.C. Arch., D4/84a, p. 594.
[2] H.B.C. Arch., D4/84a, p. 59.
[3] Quoted from *The Tour of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales through British North America and the United States*, by a British Canadian, Montreal, 1860, p. 124f.
[4] Montreal *Evening Pilot*, Wednesday, Sept. 12, 1860.

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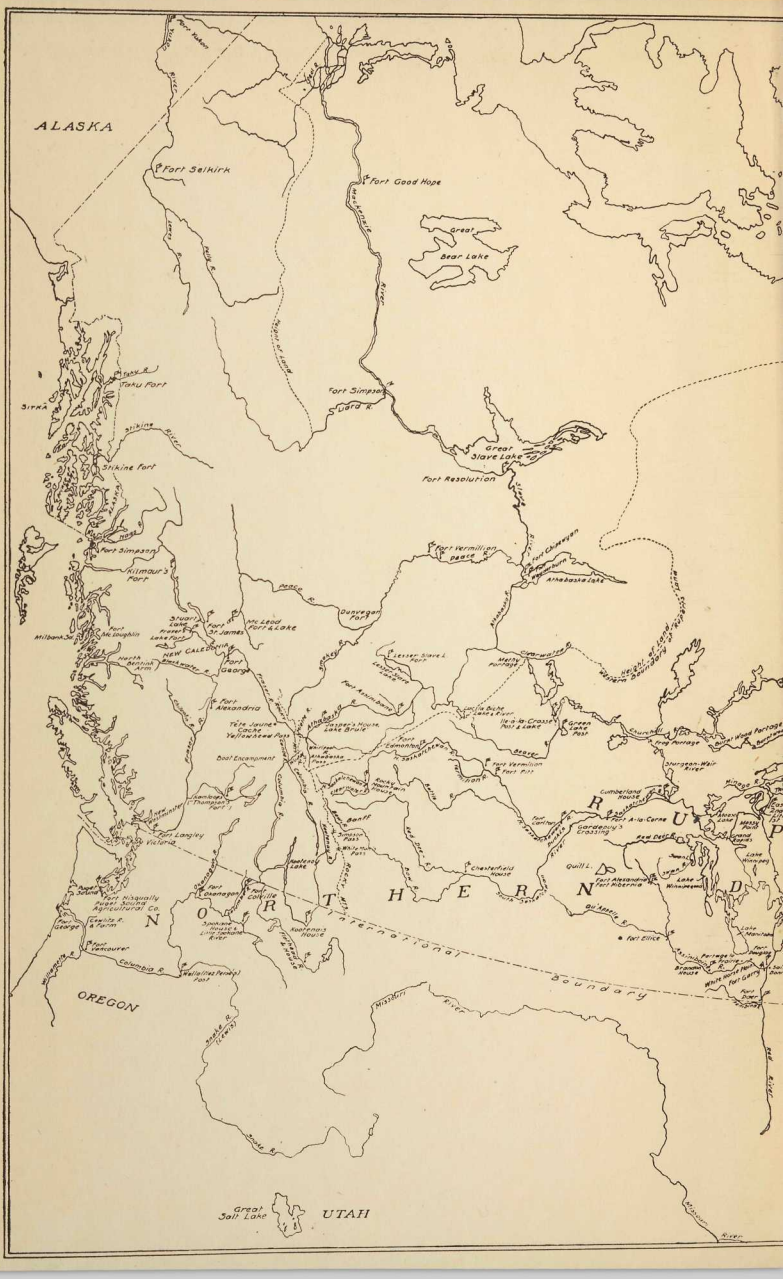
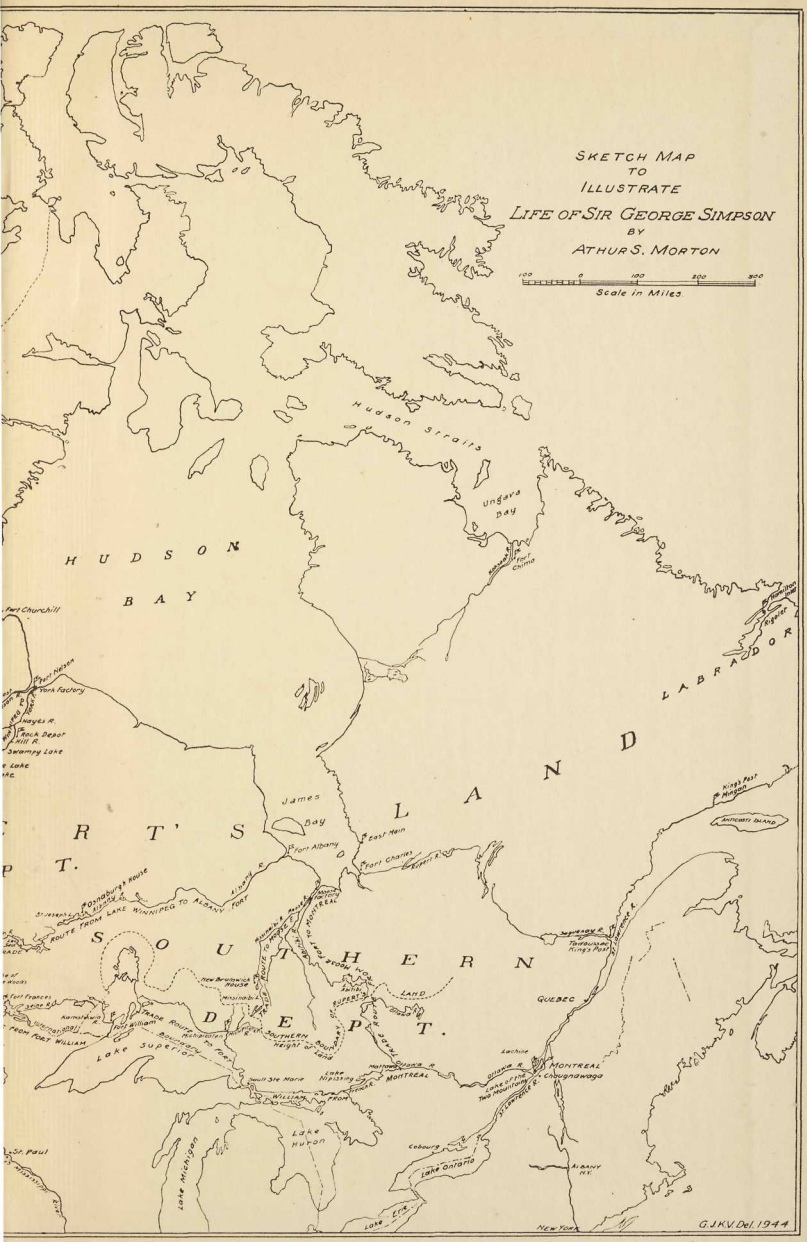

ALASKA
Fort Selkirk
Fort Good Hope
Great Bear Lake
Fort Simpson
Great Slave Lake
Fort Resolution
Athabasca Lake
Fort Vermillion
Dunvegan Fort
Fort Alexandria
Tête Jaune Cache
Yellowhead Pass
Boat Encampment
Fort Langley
Victoria
Fort Hopes
Fort Kamloops
Fort Okanagan
Fort Colville
Fort Vancouver
Columbia R.
Walla Walla Fort
Sitka
Taku Fort
Shakine Fort
Fort Simpson
Kilmour's Fort
Milbank Sd.
Fort McLoughlin
Fort St James
Fort George
Fort Alexandria
Fort Assiniboine
Fort Edmonton
Fort Vermilion
Fort Pitt
Fort Carlton
Fort Pelly
Fort Ellice
Fort Garry
Fort Alexander
Fort Pierre
Fort Hall
Fort Boise
Fort Hall
Fort Laramie
Fort Bridger
Fort Uinta
Fort Mandan
Fort Union
Fort Clatsop
Fort Astoria
Fort Nisqually
Puget Sound Agricultural Co.
Fort Hope
Fort Yukon
Fort Simpson
Fort Liard
Fort Nelson
Fort Chipewyan
Fort Vermilion
Fort Pitt
Fort Carlton
Fort Pelly
Fort Ellice
Fort Garry
Fort Alexander
Fort Pierre
Fort Hall
Fort Boise
Fort Laramie
Fort Bridger
Fort Uinta
Fort Mandan
Fort Union
Fort Clatsop
Fort Astoria
Fort Nisqually
Fort Hope
Fort Yukon
Fort Simpson
Fort Liard
Fort Nelson
Fort Chipewyan
Great Slave L.
Great Bear L.
Athabasca L.
Lake Winnipeg
Lake Manitoba
Lake Winnipeg
Lake Manitoba
Lake Nipigon
Lake Superior
Lake Michigan
Lake Huron
Lake Erie
Lake Ontario


SKETCH MAP
TO
ILLUSTRATE
LIFE OF SIR GEORGE SIMPSON
BY
ATHUR S. MORTON
100 0 100 200 300
Scale in Miles.
Hudson Straits
Ungava Bay
Fort Chimo
HUDSON
BAY
Fort Churchill
Fort Nelson
York Factory
Hayes R.
Rock Depot
Hill R.
Swampy Lake
James
Bay
Fort Albany
East Main
Fort Charles
LABRADOR
LAND
Kings Fort
Hudson
Anticosti Island
R T' S
P T.
Pond's Route
ROUTE FROM LAKE WINNIPEG TO ALBANY FORT
Stanley
Fort Frances
Rainy L.
Fort William
Rainy River
Hudson
Fort William
Lake Superior
Sault Ste Marie
Lake Huron
Lake Michigan
Lake Erie
Lake Ontario
Cobourg
Sr. Paul
Albany N.Y.
New York
Montreal
Lachine
Chaudiere R.
Chaudiere
Chaugnawaga
Quebec
Tadoussac
Kings Port
Saguenay R.
Saguenay
Lake St Peter
Lake St Francis
Lake St Louis
Lake Nipissing
Mattawa R.
Ottawa R.
Ottawa
Rideau
Rideau L.
Kingston
Cataraqui
Cataraqui R.
Trent R.
Trent
Lake Simcoe
Lake Huron
Lake Superior
Lake Michigan
Lake Erie
Lake Ontario
Lake Nipigon
Lake Winnipeg
Red River
Red R.
Assiniboine R.
Assiniboine
Saskatchewan R.
Saskatchewan
Athabasca L.
Athabasca
Peace R.
Peace
Slave L.
Slave R.
Great Bear L.
Great Slave L.
Mackenzie R.
Mackenzie
Yukon R.
Yukon
Lake Athabasca
Lake Winnipeg
Lake Superior
Lake Huron
Lake Michigan
Lake Erie
Lake Ontario
Lake Nipigon
Lake Winnipeg
Lake Athabasca
Lake Great Bear
Lake Great Slave
Lake Simcoe
Lake St Peter
Lake St Francis
Lake St Louis
Lake Nipissing
Lake Cataraqui
Lake Trent
Lake Rideau
Lake Ottawa
Lake Chaudiere
Lake Saguenay
Lake Tadoussac
Lake Kings Port
Lake Quebec
Lake Lachine
Lake Montreal
Lake Chaugnawaga
Lake Albany
Lake Cobourg
Lake Sr. Paul
Lake Stanley
Lake Fort Frances
Lake Rainy
Lake Fort William
Lake Sault Ste Marie
Lake Hayes
Lake Swampy
Lake Rock Depot
Lake Hill R.
Lake Fort Churchill
Lake Fort Nelson
Lake York Factory
Lake Fort Albany
Lake East Main
Lake Fort Charles
Lake Fort Chimo
Lake Hudson Straits
Lake Ungava Bay
Lake Hudson Bay
Lake Kings Fort
Lake Anticosti Island
Lake Hudson
Lake Michigan
Lake Erie
Lake Ontario
Lake Superior
Lake Huron