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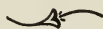
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THE CLARENCE WALWORTH ALVORD
MEMORIAL COMMISSION
of the
MISSISSIPPI VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



PUBLICATIONS

I

Documents Relating to
NORTHWEST MISSIONS
1815 - 1827



Edited with notes and an introduction by
GRACE LEE NUTE
Curator of Manuscripts, Minnesota Historical Society

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Preface

This volume of documents relating to the Upper Mississippi Valley is issued in accordance with a long-delayed plan. When Clarence Walworth Alvord died in 1928, many of his friends, colleagues, and students felt that a series, bearing his name, of publications of documentary material relating to the Mississippi Valley would be a most appropriate memorial. Such a tribute was planned, but only now is it beginning to be realized.

Alvord's life (1868-1928), at least in its most productive years, was concerned mainly with the history of the great valley and with its documentary data and their publication. Though a New Englander by birth and training, he had established himself in Illinois by the end of the last century; and, though his early teaching field had been European history, he had begun to turn his attention to Middle Western history by 1905. In that year he examined certain old French documents of local interest for the Illinois State Historical Library. The venture led him almost at once into local studies based on early French, English, and American manuscripts. The result was an ambitious program of publication of those manuscripts by the Illinois State Historical Library. Alvord became the editor and soon had a wide reputation as a scholar and an editor. Perhaps it is fair to say that from these publications there developed in America — and one might even go beyond this continent — an appreciation of the true value of scientific and far-visioned study of local history. Alvord himself proved that the really excellent local historian eventually shows the relation of local history to larger fields, particularly to national history. Out of his early studies in Illinois local history grew his Mississippi Valley in British Politics, a work that won the Loubat prize awarded by the trustees of Columbia University in 1918, and brought him recognition throughout the world of historians.

After 1918 honors came to Alvord thick and fast. He published other books of documents, wrote articles, and gave lectures both in the

United States and England. He was the first American to be appointed Creighton lecturer at the University of London. His later years, 1923-28, were spent in England, France, and Italy.

In 1907 Alvord had helped to organize the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, and his interest in it and his concern for its development and well-being continued unabated to his death. It was he who proposed the establishment of a quarterly by the association, and the first issue of the Mississippi Valley Historical Review came out in 1914, with Alvord as the managing editor. He proposed also that the association undertake the systematic publication of documentary material, but he did not live to see that project carried out. The publication of this volume marks the beginning of its realization.

The Clarence Walworth Alvord Memorial Commission of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association was established in December, 1928. Its purpose was to raise ten thousand dollars as a revolving fund for the publication of documentary material on the history of the Mississippi Valley. Though the full amount was not obtained, nearly half of it was subscribed immediately, and ambitious plans were laid for the publication of several volumes. Unfortunately, documentary material must first be gathered, and in the process the gatherer learns of more and more data. These take time to acquire, interpret, and edit. They often change the editor's original point of view. This has been the story since 1929. Two chairmen of the commission, the present writer and Lester B. Shippee, have struggled to bring scholars to the point of production — all in vain. The present chairman, Grace Lee Nute, despairing of getting anyone else to produce a volume of edited documents ready for publication, finally adopted Benjamin Franklin's advice and did the work herself. In the task of gathering and editing the manuscripts for the volume, which began long before publication in this series was contemplated, she has had the support of the Minnesota Historical Society. The society's superintendents between 1924 and 1935, both disciples of Alvord, supplied encouragement and the necessary material assistance. In 1940 the society agreed to do the editorial work on the volume and to see it through the press. The work was placed in charge of Mary Wheelhouse Berthel, who served her apprenticeship with Alvord himself.

Now that the first goal has been achieved, the commission is looking for other marks to reach. Already a second volume is under way: Jesse Douglas' collection of early inspection reports on Mississippi Valley

military posts, selected from records of the War Department in The National Archives. It is hoped, too, that some of the earlier projects will be revived and eventually will result in publications.

Concerned as I have been for over thirty years with the persons, institutions, and projects mentioned above, I take great pride in writing these introductory remarks for the first volume of the Clarence Walworth Alvord Memorial Commission Publications.

SOLON J. BUCK

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES
September, 1942

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Introduction

This volume inaugurates the series of documentary volumes named "in memory of a learned and able American editor, professor, and scholar, Clarence Walworth Alvord." He was especially interested in the documentary history of the Mississippi Valley, and the series aims to deal with that area, interpreted broadly.

Professor Alvord would have been pleased to see the series open with a book of documents depicting relations between the upper Mississippi Valley and Canada as revealed in Indian affairs, Indian missions, and the fur trade. These were topics in which he was perennially interested. Add to them the piquant charm of French Canadians, priests, *voyageurs*, and *habitants*, who are the principal actors in the volume, and no one with any knowledge of Professor Alvord's tastes will deny the appropriateness of the subject matter.

The documents cover a brief period — from 1815 to 1827. They tell the story of the resumption of Catholic missions among the Indians of the Northwest of that day. During the French regime, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Catholic missionaries visited the upper Mississippi Valley by way of the Mississippi River and the lakes that now form the northern boundary of Minnesota. Their efforts have the aura of romance and adventure about them, and they have been studied and reported again and again. Less spectacular, but much more effective, were the humble efforts of the men who unostentatiously picked up the broken threads at the close of the War of 1812 — Joseph Norbert Provencher, Sévère Joseph Nicolas Dumoulin, Thomas Ferruce Destroismaisons, and several others. These were the missionaries whose letters and reports fill this volume, along with the letters of the two men whose vision and statesmanship made the whole venture possible, Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk, and Joseph Octave Plessis, Bishop of Quebec.

Lord Selkirk's motives in establishing a colony in the Red River Valley just before the War of 1812 have been much in question in his-

torical discussions of the subject. Some writers have claimed that Selkirk's intention was to provide homes and a better way of life for evicted tenants in Scotland and Ireland, who, with reinforcements from Switzerland, came out in the years after 1811. Others have insisted that the philanthropic aspects of the colony were merely a blind to conceal the aims of the Hudson's Bay Company in its bitter struggle for control of the western fur trade. Selkirk, one of the chief stockholders in that corporation, could hardly be expected not to reflect his company's point of view. The company's chief rival was the North West Company, whose headquarters were in the heart of French Canada — Montreal, in the province of Quebec. As the North West Company employed thousands of canoemen, guides, and interpreters from the province of Quebec, the *habitants* of that region were overwhelmingly on the side of the local company when the struggle between the two organizations began to enter its final and bloodiest stage, between 1815 and 1818. A battle was fought near the present city of Winnipeg. The governor of the colony, Robert Semple, was killed. Lord Selkirk engaged De Meuron troops to go with him to seize the North West Company's chief inland headquarters at Fort William, on Lake Superior, and another post on Rainy Lake. And guerilla warfare about the headwaters of the Mississippi on American soil led to consideration at Washington of the possibility of establishing military posts at Fond du Lac, now a suburb of Duluth, and at the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Peter's rivers, where Fort St. Anthony, now Fort Snelling, was actually founded in 1819.

The leading figures in the struggle, including Lord Selkirk, were called to trial at York, now Toronto, and Montreal, and the relations of the warfare to the delicate matter of British control of French Canada were soon perceived. Bitter resentment of the conquest still burned in the bosoms of the proud descendants of the first settlers of Canada. In addition to being obliged to submit to British rule, they found themselves in an empire with an established Protestant church. As though that were not sufficient, the head of that church was in England and no provision was made for even an archbishop in Canada. How could Catholics hope to have an archbishop when even the established church was denied one? And without an archbishop there could be no Catholic hierarchy in Canada. French Canadians resented deeply such curtailment of their religious freedom. As the church was the center of life for them, to an extent unknown to Englishmen and especially to English colonials, there was a menacing impasse in Canada.

The missionary venture to the Red River colony solved the problem and relieved the strain. Lord Selkirk was clever enough to realize that priests could save his colony from the destructive blows that the North West Company was leveling against it. The destruction was being accomplished by French-Canadian *engagés* of the North West Company, directed by English and Scotch partners, factors, and traders of the company. Selkirk calculated shrewdly that priests would be on the side of law and order. Therefore he must have priests to tie the hands of his rivals. Moreover, priests would give permanence to his colony, and would encourage agricultural pursuits for his colonists. His company needed food for its men en route to far western posts, food which could be raised by French-Canadian farmers permanently settled up and down the long Red River Valley. His grant of land from the Hudson's Bay Company extended well south of the forty-ninth parallel, even to the height of land between Lake Traverse and Big Stone Lake, which today form part of the boundary between Minnesota and North and South Dakota. Though eventually the center of his colony became Winnipeg, Selkirk himself seems to have planned it to be Grand Forks. There, he figured, families would come from Canada, provided always that parish priests came with them or were sent to them.

Bishop Plessis saw in a western mission his opportunity to effect what hitherto had been denied the Catholic Church in Canada—the formation of a hierarchy, which would result in the effectual recognition by the British government of the Catholic Church in Canada. For the area between Lake Superior and the Red River Valley was too far distant for a bishop in Quebec to make confirmations and ordinations. Without these necessary parts of Catholic religious life, the Church could not persist. Therefore, since Selkirk and the English company he represented wanted priests, they could be counted upon to use their powerful influence with the British government to provide what alone would keep priests in the Red River Valley—a bishop. But two bishops require eventually an archbishop to decide between them in matters of controversy and to serve other purposes of the Church. An archbishop for Canada was Plessis' aim in all this complicated and subtle game.

Bishop Plessis knew the traditions of his church and the people with whom he was dealing well enough to place his purpose on much higher and broader grounds than the ones that influenced him for the moment. Therefore he stressed what would appeal to Catholics and humanitarians everywhere, particularly in England. England was in the throes of a surge of idealism and humanitarianism; reform was in the wind.

The fate of distant Indian tribes would appeal powerfully to influential men in England. Thus the Christianization and civilization of the long-forgotten children of the forests and plains were made the great aim of this new venture. The second objective was stated to be the reclamation of "lost" *voyageurs* and traders for the Faith.

The priests came and after them many French-Canadian families; Selkirk's colony became permanent and eventually raised much food; and settlements were made at Pembina and other places up the valley as far as points in present southwestern Minnesota. But the United States protested settlement south of the forty-ninth parallel and in 1823 won its point. So Selkirk's original plan was altered somewhat.

The history of the Red River colony is not the concern of this book, though much of it is necessarily included. Bishop Plessis sent out his missionaries, led by Provencher as vicar-general; and Provencher soon became a titular bishop and Plessis himself soon became an archbishop, though in deference to the wishes of the British government he waived the use of his title. Thus his real purposes were fulfilled. But, unexpectedly, his stated purpose was also carried out. Dumoulin became deeply interested in the Indians and half-breeds of the region and began to minister to them. The main purpose of the documents of this volume is to tell the story of this Indian mission. The documents here printed were collected originally as part of a much larger work, still awaiting publication — a series of volumes containing the correspondence, reports, and diaries of missionaries to Northwestern Indians as well as pertinent papers from the records of the boards that sent out the missionaries. It chances that for the far American Northwest of the period from 1815 to 1827 the mission at Red River was the only one.

The documents in this volume were secured over a period of many years' search on this continent and in Europe. Most of them were found in the archiepiscopal archives in Quebec, where the Reverend B. P. Garneau, vicar-general, archivist of the archdiocese, had certified copies typewritten and collated under his personal supervision. The Alvord Memorial Commission and the editor are under great obligation to him.

Many of the letters were written by Provencher in French. These, as well as some others by Provencher, which do not relate to the Indian mission, appear as *Lettres de Monseigneur Joseph-Norbert Provencher, premier évêque de Saint-Boniface* (*Bulletin de la société historique de Saint-Boniface*, volume 3 — St. Boniface, 1913). For that reason it has seemed wise to save space in this volume by including only translations

of the letters printed in the *Bulletin*. Translations of excerpts from some of the letters may be found also in the magazine section of the *Winnipeg Free Press* from January 6 to February 17, 1940, in a series of articles entitled "Bishop Provencher, Pioneer," and written by Mrs. Margaret A. MacLeod. Mrs. MacLeod includes translations of excerpts from Provencher's letters to a friend in Kamouraska, Amable Dionne. These letters were originally printed in the issues of *Les Cloches de St.-Boniface* (St. Boniface), for April, May, and June, 1932, and cover the entire period of Provencher's residence in the Red River Valley. For the most part they duplicate the information afforded by Provencher's letters to his ordinary. An inventory of Bishop Plessis' papers by Ivanhoë Caron appeared in 1933 as "Inventaire de la correspondance de M^{sr} Joseph-Octave Plessis, Archevêque de Québec," in *Rapport de l'archiviste de la province de Québec pour 1932-1933*, 3-244 (Quebec, 1933).

After the preliminary work of securing permission to found the station, of making the arduous journey in 1818, and of actually beginning the establishment is described, Provencher's letters are only occasionally of value for the history of Indian missions. It was Dumoulin who maintained the work among the natives and half-breeds, much of the time at the cost of some misunderstanding and even resentment on the part of his immediate superior, Provencher. Provencher's task was to plant Catholicism in the Red River colony and to maintain it. He built a residence, a church, and other buildings at its center, "The Forks" so-called, where St. Boniface has developed across the river from Fort Douglas — later called Fort Garry and now Winnipeg — at the junction of the Assiniboine with the Red River of the North. Therefore his point of view was quite different from that of Dumoulin, who followed the half-breeds and settlers to their outpost at Pembina, now in the extreme northeastern corner of North Dakota, at the junction of the Pembina River with the Red River of the North.

Pembina had long been a fur-trading center when in 1818 it began to assume a new importance. One plague or misfortune after another attacked the main colony at The Forks, and Pembina, closer to the plains and thus to the buffalo, managed to supply food to the distressed colonists. There some regular colonists and many half-breed families settled, forming quite a community. Dumoulin built a residence, a church, and a store and ministered to whites, half-breeds, and Indians. His heart was in his work with the natives, and he was bitterly disappointed when it was decided to withdraw the mission in the spring of 1823. He soon returned to Canada, discouraged and disillusioned after

seeing his efforts of five years apparently come to naught; but not many years later his place was filled by Father Georges A. Belcourt. The latter's work, out from Pembina and adjacent places to the Indians as far east as Rainy Lake and as far west as the plains of the Saskatchewan, is told in later documents, beyond the limits of this volume.

At the outset another mission also was planned, but it proved a disappointment to Bishop Plessis. When he first gave thought to the matter of missions beyond Sault Ste. Marie, he planned to make a trip in 1816 to the western end of Lake Superior and to Rainy Lake. He was unable to go eventually, but he sent a priest of his diocese, Pierre Antoine Tabeau, in his stead. This man made a tour of observation, but apparently got caught in some fashion in the maelstrom that had Fort William as its vortex in that fateful summer of struggle between the North West and Hudson's Bay companies. He had been instructed to go to Red River, choose a place for a mission site, and return, making missionary stops at Rainy Lake and Fort William. How much he accomplished is uncertain, for available documents only hint at the course of events; probably he got only to Rainy Lake. In 1817 no attempt was made to defy the deadly rivalry of the two companies. Probably this was at Tabeau's suggestion, for in 1818, when Bishop Plessis wrote him about attempting the trip again, he appears to have replied that nothing could be done so long as the dangerous rivalry continued. Tabeau was obviously extremely partisan. He wished to prevent Selkirk from getting priests for his colony, but he was in favor of a mission to Fort William and Rainy Lake, where North West Company *voyageurs* assembled every summer.

Bishop Plessis finally decided on two mission journeys in 1818—one to Red River to found a permanent mission, and the other, a traveling mission, to Fort William and other points on Lake Superior and Lake Huron. Tabeau and a companion, Abbé Joseph Crevier, made the trip in 1818 and spent a few weeks at Fort William. The mission was carried on for a few years and then seems to have been given up completely. Dumoulin, on his return journey to Quebec in 1823, stopped along the way to give missionary succor. He reported spiritual matters at a low ebb at the earlier stations of the traveling mission. Probably the union of the two rival fur companies in 1821 explains the failure of this traveling mission, for in the beginning its support had come largely from the North West Company. After 1821 the influence of members of that organization, though part of the new company, waned and eventually ceased altogether. It is not strange that the Lake Superior

missions were practically abandoned for many years. When they were resumed, their priests came from the United States, not from Canada.

Likewise the priests at Pembina were destined eventually to be American. After Selkirk's death in 1820 the directors of the colony looked with a cold eye on Pembina, as having caused a weakness in the colony through the dispersion of its inhabitants. Finally, after the terms of the Convention of 1818 became known, they demanded that one concentrated settlement be made at The Forks and that Pembina be abandoned. The treaty provided for a boundary line between British and American territory on the forty-ninth parallel west of a point on Lake of the Woods. It was suspected, and rightly, that the mission station at Pembina was south of that parallel. Even before an American military expedition under Major Stephen H. Long arrived at Pembina in the summer of 1823, the mission and many of the inhabitants had been withdrawn by order of Bishop Provencher.

Pembina was not really abandoned, however. The letters of the missionaries at The Forks, or St. Boniface, as it came to be known increasingly, tell of the first despair of the settlers after the withdrawal of the mission, of the settlement of many of them on the Assiniboine River to the west of St. Boniface, of efforts by the Bishop of Louisiana to send a missionary to the general region about Fort Snelling, of the need for another missionary for Pembina and for a new settlement at Grand Forks, and of the migration of many settlers from the Red River Valley after the great flood of 1826. These migrants, like others before them, went up the valley and across the prairies to Fort Snelling—a route that had become increasingly popular since Selkirk used it in 1817. Thereafter mail began to be carried over it; then cows, sheep, chickens, and other livestock were taken that way to the Selkirk colony. Carts are not mentioned specifically by the missionaries' letters, but the Red River cart had already come into being. That indigenous product of the colony became famous in the next thirty years. Eventually hundreds of carts made the trip annually from St. Boniface and Fort Garry to Fort Snelling and, after St. Paul was founded in 1841, to that place.

Thus the missionary letters and reports constitute excellent source material for the history of the beginning of settlement in northwestern Minnesota and northeastern North Dakota. They also show the commencement of a famous transportation line. They refer to the semi-annual excursions of whites and half-breeds on to the Dakota prairies to hunt the buffalo. They even give facts in the careers of men like Charles Bruce and Benjamin Gervais, who, like scores of other former parish-

ioners of Provencher and Dumoulin, became pioneer settlers at Stillwater, St. Paul, and other places in Minnesota. Here then, between 1815 and 1827, are the faint beginnings of settlement in the upper Mississippi Valley. The settlers came not from the South and East, as one would expect, but from the North and West; not up the mighty Mississippi in steamboats, but over the rolling prairies in crude handmade carts, which announced their arrival by ear-splitting shrieks from ungreased axles.

The Rainy Lake mission of Dumoulin and others was the precursor of well-known Catholic, Anglican, and Methodist, or Wesleyan, missions of the thirties, forties, and fifties on that lake or near by. The Fort William mission was followed up in the same decades by such famous Catholic missionaries as Franz Pierz and Friedrich Baraga, by a contingent of Jesuits, and by a band of Wesleyans, of whom James Evans was the renowned leader.

This volume has a distinct *raison d'être* from the standpoint of Minnesotans, North Dakotans, Catholics, and all who are interested in the civilization of the native tribes of North America. Of how much more interest must it be to the residents of Manitoba. It is to be hoped that sometime those letters and documents that had to be omitted from this volume will be published. Both the archiepiscopal archives in Quebec and the Selkirk collection at St. Mary's Isle, Scotland, will yield many an important document for the history of the Red River settlements. Here let it be acknowledged gratefully that the owner of the Selkirk Papers, Sir Charles Hope-Dunbar, was most obliging, even sending to the editor certain documents that she needed to use when she found that many of the transcripts of Selkirk letters in Ottawa were not accurate copies.

The editor has been aided in her work of translation by the Reverend William Busch and Alice Fitch Pfeiffer. Other assistance has been supplied by Gertrude Ackermann Ogden. The Minnesota Historical Society has given time and means for the editor to make many trips afield—to Montreal, Three Rivers, Quebec, Winnipeg, Detroit, and St. Boniface—to gather data. It has also made available the assistance of members of its editorial staff in seeing the volume through the press.

At best translations are unsatisfactory substitutes for original documents. Therefore French and Latin originals have been included for the most part. Every effort has been made to perform translation accurately, but a literal rendering has always been sacrificed to an idiomatic one. All translations but one, which is indicated by a footnote, are the

final work of the editor. Colloquial expressions such as *piastre, livre, louis*, and the like have been translated by the current English expression, not by the ordinary translation of those terms as used in classical French.

With a few exceptions, which are indicated by footnotes, the documents are reproduced below as they were written, with the spelling, capitalization, and punctuation unchanged. In a few instances omitted words, letters, and punctuation have been supplied in brackets as an aid to readability. Omissions of material not pertinent to the subject matter of the volume have been indicated by dots. Footnote references in the original documents are repeated in the translations, but in every case the footnote itself appears at the bottom of the page where the first reference occurs, that is, in the original document. To save space, a bar has been used in addresses, salutations, and endings to indicate short lines in the original documents which have been run together in this volume. A glossary on page 447 explains words and phrases used in canoe travel, as well as terms used in a special sense in the Catholic Church. The documents are not listed separately in the table of contents, but they may be found by consulting the index under the names of both the author of the letter and the person addressed.

GRACE LEE NUTE

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ST. PAUL

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NORTHWEST
MISSIONS, 1815-1827

Documents Relating to Northwest Missions, 1815-1827

SHAW¹ TO [BISHOP PLESSIS],² NOVEMBER 7, 1815
[Quebec Archbishopal Archives. ALS]

Montreal 7th Nov. 1815.

MY LORD,/ The last time I had the honor of waiting upon you at the General Hospital you told me you purposed making a tour next summer as far as Lac de la Pluie [*Rainy Lake*]. I have mentioned this to Mr McGillivray³ & the other Gentlemen Agents of the North West Co. and I have now the pleasure to assure you from those Gentlemen that they will be happy to do every thing in their power to render the voyage comfortable and safe. It remains only to intimate the same in due time to Mr McGillivray who will take upon himself the care of providing a canoe and men &c. and special care shall be taken that Your Lordship meets with that respect at all the posts and stations which is due to your rank and character. Good order and subordination to the proper authorities being the means by which the North West Co have secured the confidence of the Canadians, They cannot consider your Lordship's visit other way than as tending to promote those great objects.⁴

I shall leave this on Saturday for England via New York and expect please God to be at Quebec in the first week in May.

I have the honor to remain with the most perfect respect and esteem My Lord your Lordship's mo. obt servt.

ANGUS SHAW.

¹ Angus Shaw was a veteran wintering partner of the North West Company and a partner of the prominent fur house of Montreal — McTavish, McGillivrays, and Company. Sir George Simpson, *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department, 1820 and 1821, and Report*, 465 (Toronto, 1938).

² See *ante*, pp. xi-xvi.

³ Probably William McGillivray. See *post*, p. 21, n.

⁴ This was the period when the rivalry between the great fur companies, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company, was displaying itself in bitter recrimination and actual warfare. The reader will note in succeeding correspondence that Bishop Plessis had to act with the utmost discretion in order not to prejudice one of the rival companies by seeming to favor the other. There is a shadow of warning in the last sentence of the paragraph.

Montreal 4th Apl 1816.

MY LORD,/ I have the agreeable [*sic*] intelligence to communicate to your Lordship that Providence has watched over the safety of an infant colony on Red R., which is yet in existence, notwithstanding the unparalleled barbarities practiced [*sic*] to effect its annihilation. The arrival home of one of the Honble Hudson's Bay company's ships & of his Majesty's convoy Frigate, brought us in London the accounts of the safety of the settlers for whose fate I was so anxious last fall, who had fled towards Hudson's Bay to save their lives with the colonial stores & property from the N. W. Co. their having returned back to the settlement reinforced by the emigrants sent out last year, & some men who had gone up from here along with Mr Robertson.⁶ On reaching this place I found an express had arrived two days before me, direct from Red R., giving the most flattering accounts of the crops which were supposed to have been destroyed, their having secured about *fifteen hundred* bushels of wheat & provisions of all kinds being in great abundance, their superiority over the enemy who appears to be weaker this year in that quarter than our people.

The Earl of Selkirk intends going this summer to Red R. to see the foundation of his colony laid on a permanent basis; with authority civil & military from the Crown & a force sufficient, I trust, to put down all opposition to his just rights.

You know, Monseigneur, that there can be no stability in the government of States or kingdoms unless religion is made the corner stone. The leading motive of my first undertaking the management of that arduous tho laudable enterprise was to have made the catholic religion the prevailing faith of the establishment, should Divine Providence think

⁵ Miles Macdonell was the governor of the colony established on the Red River by the Earl of Selkirk in 1811. Macdonell took a party of settlers to the colony in 1812. Lawrence J. Burpee, *The Oxford Encyclopædia of Canadian History (Makers of Canada Series, vol. 12 — New York, 1926)*.

⁶ On June 11, 1815, Macdonell and his men were attacked in the fort of the colony by a force of men in the interests of the North West Company. To avoid bloodshed Macdonell surrendered and was taken to Montreal for a trial that never took place. Reinforcements arrived in the colony in 1815 with Robert Semple, who had just been appointed governor of the factories and territories of the Hudson's Bay Company, and Colin Robertson, a former North Wester, who took out a large force of experienced men, many of whom were former employees of the North West Company. Robertson's objective was to capture the Athabaska trade for the Hudson's Bay Company. See Donald Gunn and Charles R. Tuttle, *History of Manitoba from the Earliest Settlement to the Admission of the Province into the Dominion, 89-173* (Ottawa, 1880). Brief sketches of Semple and Robertson may be found in Burpee, *Oxford Encyclopædia*.

me a worthy instrument to forward the design. The Earl of Selkirk's liberal mind readily acquiesced in bringing out along with me the first year a priest from Ireland. Your Lordship already knows the unfortunate result of that first attempt.⁷

Our spiritual wants increase with our members: we have many catholics from Scotland & Ireland, & besides those Canadians already with us, we are to have a vast accession from here. There are hundreds of free Canadians wandering about our colony who have families with indian women, all of whom are in the most deplorable state for want of spiritual aid. A vast religious harvest might also be made among the natives round us, whose language is that of the Algonquins of this country, and who are very tractable & well disposed considering the corruption of morals introduced among them by opposition traders in the free indulgence of spirituous liquors & other corruptive habits.

I have learnt with great pleasure that you are sending two missionaries this year as far as Lac à la pluie. I shall be happy to afford a passage from here in my canoe to one of these gentlemen as far as Red R. which is only six days journey farther, & should he remain permanently with us, the concern shall furnish him a suitable conveyance once a year to meet his fellow labourer in christian Vineyard at La pluie.

Your Lordship's zeal for the propagation of the catholic Faith will, I doubt not, afford every facility in your power to extend the blessings of religion to an infant colony. The very liberal mind & philanthropic views of the Earl of Selkirk merit the cooperation of the chief pastor of the catholic Church of British North America to carry the standard of Christ to that part of it which is yet in a state of barbarous idolatry.

I have the honor to be, Monseigneur, your most obedient & most humble servant.

MILES MACDONELL at Dillans

A Monseigneur/ l'Evêque catholic de Québec.

⁷ Abbé Charles Bourke accompanied the first contingent of colonists in 1811 and returned by the next vessel. It appears that he had left Ireland without the sanction of his ordinary, the Bishop of Killala, and that he spent his time in the colony gathering stones that he believed were precious. Macdonell wrote to Lord Selkirk that Bourke "was only an encumbrance" to him, and that he was "irregular & eccentric in his conduct as a clergyman." In the same letter Macdonell declared that another priest was essential. See Adrien G. Morice, *Histoire de l'église catholique dans l'ouest canadien du Lac Supérieur au Pacifique, (1659-1915)*, 1:104-108 (Winnipeg, 1928); and Macdonell to Selkirk, July 4, 1812, in the Selkirk Transcripts, 2:413, in the Public Archives of Canada at Ottawa. The original Selkirk Papers are in the possession of Sir Charles Hope-Dunbar of St. Mary's Isle, Scotland.

Montreal April 4th 1816.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ I have been informed by Mr M. McDonell late governor of the settlement on Red River that he had some conversation with your Lordship last autumn, to recommend that a missionary should be sent into that country, to give spiritual aid to a great number of Canadians who have established themselves there, & who lead a wandering life, in the manner of the savages, with whose women they have formed irregular connections. I am fully persuaded of the infinite good which might be effected by a zealous & intelligent ecclesiastic among those people, among whom the sense of religion is now almost entirely lost. It would give me very great satisfaction to cooperate to the utmost of my power in so good a work; & if your Lordship will select a suitable person to undertake it, I can have no difficulty in assuring him of every accom[m]odation & support which your Lordship may judge necessary.

I have been lately informed, (tho' not with absolute certainty) that your Lordship has it in contemplation to send two ecclesiastics this summer to pay a visit to Lake Superior & Lake La Pluie during the season when the voyageurs in the service of the North West Company resort there from the interior. As these people also are very much in want of wholesome advice, I am happy to hear of such a plan being in agitation. If however I may presume to offer an opinion, it would be that a Missionary permanently resident on Red River would accomplish your pious object in a more effectual manner: for from his ordinary winter residence he could very easily visit the trading posts on Lake LaPluie & Lake Superior, during the period of the year, when the voyageurs are assembled; but on the other hand a Missionary sent from Canada on a summer visit to these posts, would have no intercourse with the great body of the vagabond canadians, to whom I have alluded, who are not in the service of the North West or any other company, & who having renounced all idea of returning to their native places are more particularly in want of spiritual aid.

⁸ A copy of this letter is in the Selkirk Transcripts, 7:2164. It is obvious from this letter and other data that the struggle between the two rival companies was now displaying itself in the matter of missions. Neither could bear the thought of seeing missionaries established at its rival's posts. So Selkirk urged Bishop Plessis to send missionaries to Red River; and the North West Company refused to subscribe to the fund for missionaries unless Fort William should be recognized as the central station of the mission. See *post*, p. 22. There can be little doubt that Selkirk's interest in having Roman Catholic priests in his colony was due partly to a shrewd design to win favor in the enemy's own ranks — among the French Canadians and their families and friends in Quebec.

If however your Lordship does not find it practicable to make immediate arrangements for a permanent mission, I believe that some good might be done if one of the gentlemen whom you mean to send to Lake La Pluie, could be ready to set off on the voyage as soon as the navigation of the St Lawrence is open. Mr McDonell is to set out as soon as the ice will permit, in a light canoe, with which he expects to reach Red River about the end of May, or in the very beginning of June. He would be happy to have the company of the Missionary, who would thus have an opportunity of being for several weeks among the wandering canadians of Red River before the period when any great number of the North West Company's voyageurs can be expected at Lake La Pluie, or Lake Superior.

I have the honor to remain Monseigneur your very obedient servant.

A Mgr l'Evêque de Québec.

SELKIRK.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO SELKIRK, APRIL 8, 1816
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 8:508]

Québec, 8 avril 1816.

Au Lord Selkirk,/ à Montréal.

MYLORD,/ Rien ne saurait être plus flatteur pour moi ni plus conforme à mes désirs que les ouvertures que Votre Seigneurie a la bonté de me faire. Je désire de tout mon coeur entreprendre la culture des pauvres peuplades de toute nation, répandues dans l'immense pays qui se trouve entre le Lac Supérieur et la Baie d'Hudson. C'est dans cette vue que j'avois d'abord projeté d'y aller moi-même. D'après quelques observations qui m'ont été faites, je me suis décidé à y envoyer des prêtres; il y en a un ici (Mr P. A. Tabeau⁹ canadien) tout préparé à cette mission. Il pourra, suivant le désir de Votre Seigneurie, profiter du canot de Mr M. McDonell et faire route avec lui jusqu'à la Rivière Rouge. Santé robuste, solidité de caractère, intelligence remarquable, zèle et bonne volonté, tout se réunit dans cet ecclésiastique en faveur de l'oeuvre projetée. Etranger à toute vue temporelle, il ne se propose que le salut des âmes et le doux plaisir de seconder les louables intentions de Votre Seigneurie en faveur de pauvres créatures dont les vices doivent croître

⁹ On Tabeau, see *ante*, p. xvi. At the time of this letter he was the curé of Boucherville. He is mentioned in Bishop Plessis' letter of May 6, 1816, to Angus Shaw as the chaplain of the General Hospital of Quebec. See *post*, pp. 13, 14. In his *The Shoe and Canoe, or Pictures of Travel in the Canadas*, 130 *et passim* (London, 1850), Dr. John J. Bigsby, who traveled with Tabeau on one of his trips to the interior, leaves a picture of the priest as a genial, interesting man.

en proportion de la profonde ignorance où ils sont de Dieu et de la religion.

Ce premier voyage ne sera proprement qu'un voyage d'observation. Mr Tabeau aura ordre de prendre sur les lieux toutes les informations possibles touchant les dispositions, les moeurs, le caractère des habitans, leur dispersion, les moyens de les réunir, de les mettre à portée des secours spirituels &c. Ce n'est qu'après son rapport que l'on pourra prendre des mesures plus étendues et traiter finalement de l'établissement d'une mission stable. J'espère qu'il sera de retour ici avant la fin de septembre.

Quelle que soit l'issue d'une entreprise dont le succès est entièrement abandonné aux vues de la divine providence, il sera toujours également honorable et consolant pour Votre Seigneurie d'avoir concouru si essentiellement et de si bonne grâce à l'exécution d'un projet qui a pour but de procurer, tant à votre colonie naissante qu'aux peuplades nomades qui l'environnent, le plus précieux avantage auquel les hommes puissent prétendre sur la terre.

J'ai l'honneur &c.

† J. O. Ev de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, April 8, 1816.

Lord Selkirk, Montreal.

MY LORD, Nothing could flatter me more nor accord more completely with my own wishes than the proposals that Your Lordship has had the goodness to make to me. I wish with all my heart to begin the civilization of the poor people of every nation scattered over the immense region between Lake Superior and Hudson Bay. It was in that expectation that I planned first to go myself. After certain representations were made to me, I decided to send priests there. There is one here, Mr. P. A. Tabeau,⁹ a Canadian, who is admirably fitted for this mission. He will be able to take advantage of Mr. Macdonell's canoe, in conformity with your wish, and to travel with him as far as Red River. A robust physique, a strong character, a remarkable intelligence, enthusiasm, and good will are all qualities possessed by this ecclesiastic that will be favorable to the undertaking. Being wholly unworldly he plans only the salvation of souls and the sweet pleasure of seconding Your Lordship's excellent proposals in favor of poor creatures whose vice must increase in proportion to their profound ignorance of God and of religion.

This first trip will be, properly speaking, but a tour of observation. Mr. Tabeau will be asked to get all firsthand information possible on the

dispositions, customs, and characters of the people, their habitat, the means of getting them together, of giving them spiritual aid, etc. Only after he has made his report can we take further steps and arrange definitely for the establishment of a stable mission. I hope that he will return to this place before the end of September.

Whatever be the outcome of an undertaking whose success rests only with Divine Providence, it will be equally as honorable and consoling to Your Lordship to have concurred so faithfully and with such good grace in the performance of a project that has in view the securing for your young colony, as well as for the nomadic peoples round about, of the most precious advantage to which mankind can aspire on this earth.

I have the honor etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

FACULTIES GRANTED TO TABEAU, APRIL 20, 1816

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, H:119]

JOSEPHUS OCTAVIUS PLESSIS

miseratione Divina et Sanctae Sedis Apostolicae gratia Episcopus Quebecensis &c. &c.

Dilecto nobis in Christo Magistro Petro Antonio Tabeau Dioecesis nostrae presbytero ad occidentales et septentrionales nostrae Dioeceseos partes Missionario Salutem et Benedictionem in Domino.

Amplissimam tuae sollicitudini messem committentes aequum est ut amplis te instruamus facultatibus quarum ope Christianis simul et Infidelibus in vastissima ista ad quam properas regione utilem quantum fieri poterit te praebeas. Quapropter tibi dedimus, permisimus et concedimus, tenoreque praesentium damus, permittimus et concedimus ut possis et valeas

1° Sacramenta omnia, Ordine et Confirmatione exceptis, administrare.

2° ab haeresi casibusque et censuris sive nobis, sive S. Sedi Apostolicae reservatis absolvere.

3° super juramentis, legitima existente causa, dispensare.

4° item super votis, (exceptis votis castitatis et religionis ingredientibus) dispensare vel ea commutare.

5° omnes omnino benedictiones quae ordinem episcopalem non requirunt facere.

6° super bannorum proclamatione ac super prohibito nuptiarum tempore dispensare.

7° dispensare cum conjugibus super impedimento matrimonio supervenientibus, ipsiusque usum auferentibus.

8^o super impedimentis publicae honestatis, criminis (netro tamen conjugum machinante) cognationis spiritualis praeterquam inter levantem et levatum, item affinitatis et consanguinitatis in quarto et tertio gradu et a secundo ad tertium dispensare, ea tamen lege ut in registris seu actibus publicis exprimas te dispensare vi facultatis nobis a Sta Sede Apostolica per Indultum diei 29 maii 1808 concessa, tibi que per nos communicata.

9^o matrimonia celebrare et nuptialem benedictionem conjugibus (in casibus tantum necessariis) extra missam impertiri.

10^o missam una hora ante auroram et una hora post meridiem eandemque in domibus privatis, vel sub tentoriis vel etiam sub dio celebrare.

Denique praedictas facultates in omni regione quae ad Occidentem vel ad Septentrionem nostrae Dioecesis extenditur incipiendo a pago nuncupato *le lac des deux montagnes*, erga cujusvis nationis populos indiscriminatim exercere. Praesentibus ad nutum revocabilibus.

Datum Quebeci sub signo sigilloque nostris ac sub-secretarii nostri subscriptione die vigesima aprilis anno millesimo octingentegimo decimo sexto.

† J. O. Epus Quebecensis.

L. S. De mandato Illmi et Revmi D. D./ Quebecensis Episcopi.

CL. GAUVREAU, Acol. S. Secr.

[*Translation*]¹⁰

JOSEPH OCTAVE PLESSIS

By the mercy of God and the favor of the Holy Apostolic See, Bishop of Quebec etc. etc.

To our beloved in Christ Master Pierre Antoine Tabeau, priest of our diocese and missionary to the western and northern parts thereof, greeting and benediction in the Lord.

Since we have entrusted to your care a broad field of harvest, it is meet that we should endow you with ample faculties by virtue of which you may render the best possible service both to Christians and to infidels in that vast region toward which you hasten. Wherefore we have given and granted and conceded to you, and do by these presents give and grant and concede to you permission and power:

I. To administer all the sacraments except those of orders and confirmation.

¹⁰ The translation of this document was made by the Reverend William Busch of the St. Paul Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota.

2. To absolve from heresy and from cases and censures reserved either to us or to the Holy Apostolic See.
3. To dispense from sworn promises where there is a legitimate cause.
4. Likewise to dispense from vows or to commute them, excepting vows of chastity and of entering the religious life.
5. To confer absolutely all blessings that do not require the episcopal order.
6. To dispense from the proclamation of the bans and in the matter of the time when marriage is prohibited.
7. To dispense in regard to married couples from impediments arising after matrimony, and taking away the use thereof.
8. To dispense from the impediments of public honesty, of crime (where neither party is guilty of malicious design), of spiritual relationship except between sponsor and person baptized, as well as of affinity and of consanguinity in the fourth and third degrees and from the second to the third, but subject to the obligation of recording in the registers or in the public documents the fact that you have dispensed by virtue of the faculty granted to us by the Holy Apostolic See through the indult of May 29, 1808, and by us communicated to you.
9. To celebrate marriages and to bestow the nuptial blessing outside of Mass, but only in cases of necessity.
10. To celebrate Mass at a time between one hour before dawn and one hour after noon, and this also in private homes, or in tents, or even in the open air.

Finally, to exercise these said faculties in the whole region extending to the western and northern limits of our diocese, beginning at the village called *Lake of Two Mountains*, in regard to the people of any nation whatsoever. These presents being revocable at our will.

Given at Quebec under our sign and seal and under the signature of our subsecretary on the twentieth day of April, 1816.

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

(Seal) By order of the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend D. D. Bishop of Quebec.

CL. GAUVREAU, Acol. S. Secr.

BISHOP PLESSIS' INSTRUCTIONS TO TABEAU, APRIL 22, 1816

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, H:120]

INSTRUCTIONS POUR Mr TABEAU

prêtre missionnaire du Nord et de l'Ouest du diocèse de Québec.

1^o Réciter tous les jours l'itinéraire et la prière de St François Xavier pour la conversion des infidèles.

2^o Tenir registre de tous les baptêmes, mariages et sépultures.

3^o Choisir une place aussi avantageuse et aussi centrale que possible dans les propriétés de Lord Selkirk pour y établir par la suite l'Eglise principale. Si ce Seigneur projette une ville, y placer le chef-lieu de la mission et y réserver à cet effet un vaste emplacement.

4^o Obtenir pour des objets religieux un millier d'acres et plus, s'il est possible, en concession gratuite.

5^o Bénir et planter des croix simples et hautes dans les lieux les plus remarquables, comme pour en prendre possession au nom de la Religion Catholique.

6^o Faire espérer une mission stable dans les établissemens de Lord Selkirk: rien autre chose au Lac de la Pluie & au Grand Portage qu'une mission annuelle et passagère.

7^o Donner par des lettres suivies un récit détaillé de son voyage.

8^o Prendre des notes sur lesquelles on puisse dresser un mémoire de ce que la Religion peut espérer et des obstacles qu'elle peut rencontrer dans le pays où il s'agit de l'introduire.

9^o Quoique les pouvoirs donnés à Mr Tabeau, en date du vingt du courant, semblent borner sa juridiction aux parties du Diocèse de Québec qui sont au Nord et à l'Ouest du Lac des deux Montagnes, il est néanmoins autorisé à exercer partout où il se trouvera d'ici à la fin de sa campagne, depuis son départ de Québec jusqu'à son retour à Québec.

10^o il pourra même communiquer ses pouvoirs en tout ou en partie à tout prêtre actuellement en fonction, qu'il trouveroit occasion de s'adjoindre pour ce voyage.

Québec, 22 avril 1816.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

INSTRUCTIONS for Mr. Tabeau,

missionary priest to the north and west of the diocese of Quebec.

1. To recite every day the itinerary and prayer of St. Francis Xavier for the conversion of the infidels.

2. To register all baptisms, marriages, and interments.

3. To choose a place on Lord Selkirk's land as desirable and as central as possible for the establishment hereafter of a principal church. If His Lordship establishes a town, to place there the center of the mission and for that purpose to reserve there a large terrain.

4. To secure for religious purposes a thousand or more acres of land, if possible, as a free concession.

5. To bless and plant simple, high crosses in the most prominent places, as an indication of possession in the name of the Catholic religion.

6. To give hopes of a permanent mission within Lord Selkirk's colony; but of nothing more than an annual itinerant mission at Rainy Lake and Grand Portage.

7. To give in consecutive letters a detailed narrative of his trip.

8. To take notes from which may be prepared a memorandum of what religion can hope for and of the obstacles it may meet in the region where its introduction is proposed.

9. Although the faculties given to Mr. Tabeau under date of the twentieth instant seem to limit his jurisdiction to the parts of the diocese of Quebec to the north and west of Lake of Two Mountains, he is nevertheless authorized to minister everywhere he shall find himself from now until his journey ends, from his departure from Quebec until his return to Quebec.

10. He may even communicate his faculties wholly or in part to any priest actually in service whom he may join for this trip.

Quebec, April 22, 1816.

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO SHAW, MAY 6, 1816

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 8:521]

Québec, 6 mai 1816.

A Mr Angus Shaw, Esqre/ à Québec.

MONSIEUR,/ J'ai été extrêmement flatté de la lettre pleine d'honnêtetés que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'adresser avant mon départ de Montréal l'automne dernière. Puisque vous devez arriver à Québec de bonne heure en mai, je veux que vous y trouviez, du moins, ma réponse et mes remerciemens, puisque je n'aurai pas le plaisir de vous y rencontrer.

Vous apprendrez que des affaires plus urgentes m'ayant appelé à Kingston, à Niagara et au Détroit, je n'ai pu remplir mon projet d'aller d'abord visiter le Grand Portage et le Lac de la Pluie, comme je me l'étois proposé. En ma place j'y ai envoyé un excellent sujet de mon clergé, Mr Tabeau, chapelain de l'Hopital Général de Québec. Lord Selkirk informé de ce projet, a désiré que ce missionnaire visitât aussi le Lac Winipick et la Rivière Rouge, et j'y ai accédé, en lui prescrivant de visiter à son retour le Lac de la Pluie et le Fort Williams. Mr M'Gillvray auquel j'en ai donné avis, m'a laissé entrevoir que la rivalité existante entre les deux compagnies pourroit empêcher que mon plan

ne fût exécuté dans toutes ses parties. Quoiqu'il en soit, l'ange de paix que j'envoie a pour objet de se rendre utile à tout le monde sans prendre aucun parti. Son caractère personnel doit lui concilier le respect et l'affection de tous les individus qu'il rencontrera. A son retour nous déciderons de la manière de faire la mission de l'année suivante.

J'ai l'honneur d'être &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, May 6, 1816.

Mr. Angus Shaw, Esquire, Quebec.

SIR, I was indeed flattered by your excellent letter that you did me the honor to write before you left Montreal last autumn. As you are to arrive in Quebec early in May, I want you to find there at least my reply and my thanks, since I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you there.

You will learn that very urgent affairs have called me to Kingston, Niagara, and Detroit. Consequently I could not carry out my plan to go first to Grand Portage and Rainy Lake, as I had expected. In my stead I have sent an excellent member of my clergy, Mr. Tabeau, chaplain of the General Hospital of Quebec. Lord Selkirk, who has been informed of this project, asked that this missionary might also go to Lake Winnipeg and Red River and I granted his request, telling Mr. Tabeau to visit Rainy Lake and Fort William on his return. Mr. McGillivray, to whom I have spoken, has told me that the present rivalry between the two companies may prevent the execution of my plan in all its details. However that may be, the angel of peace that I am sending has for his object to make himself useful to all without taking sides. His personality ought to win for him the respect and affection of all persons whom he will meet. After his return we shall decide upon the manner of performing the mission of the following year.

I have the honor to be etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Québec.

PETITION OF THE RESIDENTS OF THE RED RIVER COLONY, [1817]¹¹

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

A Monseigneur l'Evêque de Québec.

Les soussignés habitants de la Rivière Rouge exposent très humblement:

¹¹ The petition was probably presented with Samuel Gale's letter of January 29, 1818. See *post*, p. 23. Some light is thrown on its origin and contents by the deposition of John

Qu'il y a une population chrétienne établie dans ce pays, et qui se propose d'y faire leur demeure; que cette population est composée en partie de Canadiens qui ayant été autrefois engagés au service des traiteurs, et ayant achevé le terme de leurs engagements, sont connus sous le nom de Canadiens libres, et en partie de nouveaux colons qui sont natifs de différents pays en Europe.

Que les Canadiens depuis leur résidence ici ont toujours été sans aucune instruction religieuse, sans aucun pasteur pour les diriger au bien par ces conseils, ou leur administrer les secours salutaires de l'Eglise.

Que quoique ils portent le nom de libres, ils n'avoient pas assez d'influence pour empêcher que leurs enfans ne fussent pris et forcés d'obéir à ceux qui ont souillé les plaines de ce beau pays du sang de leurs semblables et de leurs concitoyens. Mais que cette influence ne leur auroit assurément pas manqué, et même qu'il n'auroit pas été nécessaire d'en faire usage si la connoissance de leurs devoirs envers Dieu et envers la société eut été plus répandue. Que les enfans des chrétiens qui sont natifs de ce pays, et qui sont vulgairement connus sous le nom de métifs ou bois brûlés, ne montent qu'à trois ou quatre cents hommes dans une étendue de plusieurs cents lieues. Que ces métifs sont presque tous bien disposés et d'un caractère doux et paisible, et n'auroient pas eu part dans les malheureux événements qui ont eu lieu l'année dernière, s'ils n'y avoient pas été poussés par leurs supérieurs. Mais qu'ayant été informés par des personnes mal disposées qu'ils étoient les maîtres absolus du sol que c'étoit de leur devoir de chasser les gens qu'on nomme ordinairement les anglois,¹² et ayant reçu des promesses d'être soutenus et récompensés, ils ont cru qu'en les expulsant du pays ils fesoient un acte glorieux et méritoire. Que si aucune preuve pouvoit être nécessaire pour démontrer qu'il n'existe pas parmi les métifs aucune inimitié contre les blancs, il suffiroit de considérer qu'ils ont été presque toujours engagés au service des blancs, et que ceux qui sont connus exclusivement sous le nom des anglois sont les seuls qui ont essayé des mauvais traitements à leurs mains.

Que presque toute la population chrétienne tant canadiens libres que nouveaux colons sont de la religion catholique romaine. Que tout est à présent tranquille ici, et que les soussignés croient fermement qu'avec le

Pritchard, sworn at Montréal on February 18, 1817, in which Pritchard declared that he wrought on the half-breeds till they requested him "to draw up a petition to the Catholic Bishop at Quebec, that a priest might be sent amongst them to give Instructions." The deposition is in the Public Archives of Canada, series Q, 143:341, 342.

¹² The Hudson's Bay Company was often spoken of as "the English," especially by the *voyageurs* of the North West Company.

ministère d'un prêtre catholique, rien ne leur manquera pour rendre cette tranquillité parfaite et durable, et pour conserver à l'avenir le bonheur du pays.

A ces causes, les soussignés supplient au nom de leurs espérances d'une vie à venir, de vouloir leur accorder le secours d'un prêtre de leur sainte religion; secours que leur conduite aura mérité si elle est regardée comme irréprochable, et qui ne leur sera que plus nécessaire si elle est regardée comme fautive.

J. Bte × Marsellois, père	François Ens dit Delorme
Augustin × Cadotte	Jacques × Amelin
Angus × McDonell	Pierre Brassel
Charles × Bousquet	Jean Rocher
Jacques × Amelin, fils	Ant. Latmer
J. Bte × Amelin	Jaques Bain
Louis Nolin	Pierre × Souci
Augustin × Poirier dit Desloges	Louis × Blondeau
Michel × Monet dit Bellehumeur	Joseph × Ducharme
Louis × Lépiciier dit Lanois	Joseph × Bellegarde
Charles Boucher	× Fraser.
Louis Nolin	
Pierre Chris. Pambrun	

} témoins.

[*Translation*]

His Lordship the Bishop of Quebec.

The undersigned, inhabitants of the Red River colony, state very humbly:

That there is a Christian population established in this part of the country, where they propose to make their home; that this population is composed in part of Canadians, who, having been formerly engaged in the service of traders and having finished the term of their engagements, are known by the name of free Canadians; and in part of new colonists, natives of different countries of Europe.

That the Canadians, during their residence here, have always been without religious instruction, and without a pastor to direct and counsel them wisely and to administer to them the saving help of the Church.

That though they are called free, they have not enough influence to keep their children from being taken and forced to obey those who have soiled the plains of this beautiful country with the blood of their friends and of their fellow citizens. But that this influence never would have failed them, and never would have been necessary, if they

had had better knowledge of their duty toward God and society. That the children of Christians born in this country and commonly known by the name of *métis*, or *bois brûlés*, number only three or four hundred men in an area of several hundred leagues. That these *métis* are nearly all well disposed and of a gentle and peaceable character, and would not have taken part in the unhappy events of last year, if they had not been influenced by their superiors. But, having been informed by ill-disposed persons that they were the absolute masters of the land, and that it was their duty to expel the people usually known as the English;¹² and having received promises to be sustained and rewarded, they believed that by expulsion they were doing a glorious and meritorious act. That if any proof were necessary to show that no enmity exists against the whites, it would be sufficient to consider that the *métis* have nearly always been engaged in the service of the whites, and that of the latter those known exclusively as the English are the only ones that have suffered ill treatment at their hands.

That nearly all the Christian population, free Canadians as well as new colonists, are of the Roman Catholic religion. That all is now peaceful here, and that the undersigned firmly believe that with the services of a Catholic priest nothing will be lacking to render the present tranquillity perfect and durable, and to preserve in the future the happiness of the country.

For these reasons the undersigned beg you, for the sake of their hope in a future life, to accord them the help of a priest of their holy religion—help that their conduct will have deserved, if it is regarded as innocent, and that will be only the more necessary if it is considered guilty.

J. Bte × Marsellois, Senior	François Ens alias Delorme
Augustin × Cadotte	Jacques × Amelin
Angus × McDonell	Pierre Brassel
Charles × Bousquet	Jean Rocher
Jacques × Amelin, son	Ant. Latmer
J. Bte × Amelin	Jacques Bain
Louis Nolin	Pierre × Souci
Augustin × Poirier alias Desloges	Louis × Blondeau
Michel × Monet alias Bellehumeur	Joseph × Ducharme
Louis × Lépicier alias Lanois	Joseph × Bellegarde
Charles Boucher	× Fraser.
Louis Nolin	
Pierre Chris. Pambrun	

} witnesses.

DECHAMBAULT¹³ TO [BISHOP PLESSIS], JANUARY 9, 1817
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montréal, le 9 janvier 1817.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Permettez-moi de vous réitérer de la part du Lord Selkirke la prier et la demande d'un prêtre au printems pour la rivière Rouge, sa présence s'il pouvoit passer un hivers avec le lord ne peut faire que l'effet le plus certin de ramener à la Religion les Métifs, lady Selkirke se joint fortement à vous suplier de l'accorder — et moi prends cette occasion à vous souhaiter une bonne et heureuse année, et je suis et serai pour la vie avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur,/ votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

F. DECHAMBAULT.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, January 9, 1817.

MY LORD, Permit me to repeat for Lord Selkirk the request for a priest in the spring at Red River. If he could pass the winter with the Earl, his presence could not fail to have a very favorable influence toward leading the *métis* back to religion. Lady Selkirk joins heartily in making this request to you, and I take this occasion to wish you a happy and prosperous year. I am and shall be forever, most respectfully, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

F. DECHAMBAULT.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO DECHAMBAULT, JANUARY 23, 1817
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 9:10]

Québec, 23 janvier 1817.

Au Lieut. Col. Deschambault,/ à Montréal.

MONSIEUR,/ Je vous prie de vouloir bien faire agréer mes humbles respects à Madame la Comtesse de Selkirk et de lui faire savoir, ainsi qu'à Mylord, si vous êtes dans le cas de lui écrire, que je suis parfaitement disposé à procurer à la Rivière-Rouge toute l'assistance spirituelle qui dépendra de moi, aussitôt que les troubles qui divisent en ce moment les deux sociétés laisseront quelque espoir de le faire avec fruit. Ce ne sera pas un seul, mais deux missionnaires qui y seront envoyés. Mes mesures sont prises à cet effet. Les événemens décideront du temps où il faudra les faire partir.

J'ai l'honneur &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

¹³ Georges Fleury Dechambault, or Deschambeault, was an official of the Hudson's Bay Company. Adrien G. Morice, *Dictionnaire historique des Canadiens et des métis français de l'ouest* (Quebec, 1912).

[*Translation*]

Quebec, January 23, 1817.

Lieutenant Colonel Dechambault, Montreal.

SIR, I beg you to present my humble respects to Lady Selkirk and to inform her, as well as milord, if you chance to be writing him, that I am heartily disposed to secure for the Red River colony all the spiritual assistance that is at my disposal, as soon as the troubles, which at this moment are dividing the two companies, leave some hope of doing so with appreciable results. Not one, but two missionaries will be sent there. I have taken steps in this direction. Events will decide the time when they will leave.

I have the honor etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

GALE¹⁴ TO [COLTMAN],¹⁵ JANUARY 1, 1818
[Selkirk Transcripts, 18:4303-4305. C]

Montreal 1st Jan'y 1818

DEAR SIR,/ On my leaving Red River last summer various individuals of the class commonly known by the name of half breeds or bois brulés, the sons of Roman Catholics by Indian women expressed to me an earnest desire that some Priests of the Religion of their fathers should become residents in that country to instruct them in the principles of Christianity. This desire was warmly repeated by a number of the white people Roman Catholics at that place of whom some even of the class usually called Free Canadians & others were Colonists more recently arrived. By all these, while they regretted having omitted the opportunity of applying for your support, I was requested to make their wishes known if it should be in my power to do so where it might be hoped they would produce any effect, & I did not hesitate to assure them that to endeavour to promote their laudable views, however feeble the power to assist them would always be considered a sacred duty.

Since my arrival in Montreal many Gentlemen of respectability have also expressed their earnest wishes for the establishment of resident

¹⁴ Samuel Gale, Jr. (1747-1826), was a loyalist who fled from New Hampshire to Canada during the American Revolution and there became provincial secretary. He was Lord Selkirk's counsel. Burpee, *Oxford Encyclopædia*.

¹⁵ William Bachelor Coltman was a merchant of Quebec and a lieutenant colonel in the militia. In 1816 he was sent by Sir John Sherbrooke, governor in chief of Canada, to the Red River to investigate the dispute between the Hudson's Bay and the North West companies. Upon his return to Quebec the following year he made a report to Sherbrooke on the relations between the two companies and general conditions in the West. Burpee, *Oxford Encyclopædia*.

clergymen in that Country & have declared a willingness to contribute by pecuniary assistance to the promotion of that object, assistance which it seems highly desirable to render for the double purpose of manifesting a grateful approbation of those whose piety should prompt them to undertake so laborious a mission & of lessening the pressure of the expence upon the clergy which however great their liberality could not bear heavily upon them.

Several persons had come forward to sign a subscription for the furtherance of this object, which they thought likely to produce consequences eminently beneficial, & which alone seemed calculated to introduce permanently the principles of peace & order into regions so extensive & remote, & to deffuse the light & consolations of religion over those parts of his Majestys dominions into which its influences has never penetrated. But while almost in the act of setting down their contribution, it was suggested by the most considerate, that it might seem departing from the respect due to his Majestys Representative in this Province if an opportunity were not afforded to His Excellency¹⁶ to offer the example of his benevolence in the encouragement of a measure wherein public utility & the interests of humanity were deeply concerned.

I therefore take the liberty of applying to you on this subject & solicit your recommendation to His Excellency in favor of the subscription of which I enclose the Heads. Your visit to that Country cannot fail to have convinced you of the necessity of such a measure to prevent the recurrence of evils which can never cease to be lamented.

As soon as His Excellency's approbation or dissent shall be made known, those whom respect has hitherto induced to defer the execution of their intentions will come forward with their contributions.

I have the honor to be/ Your very obdt servt.

(signed) SAM^l GALE JUN^r.

SHERBROOKE TO COLTMAN, JANUARY 19, 1818

[Selkirk Transcripts, 13:4384. C]

Castle of St Lewis Quebec 19th Jan'y 1818

SIR,/ I have had the honor of receiving your letter of the 17th instant with the inclosure from Mr Gale to you which contains a satisfactory explanation of the views with which the subscription for the establishment of a mission at Red River has been commenced; and I have now

¹⁶ Governor Sherbrooke.

to return you the subscription list with my name set to it and also that of the Roman Catholic Bishop.¹⁷

I have the honor to be/ Sir,/ Your most obedient humble servant

The Hon^{ble} W. B. Coltman Esq. (signed) J. C. SHERBROOKE

P.S. In reply to what you have stated as to the prospect of your return to Quebec, I have only to express to you my anxiety that it may be as soon as possible that I may be enabled to make a further report to the Kings Gov^t on the subject of your mission.

(signed) J. C. S.

COLTMAN TO [GALE], JANUARY 23, 1818

[Selkirk Transcripts, 13:4386. C]

DEAR SIR,/ I have just received the subscription list with the inclosed letter from Mr. McKenzie¹⁸ who yesterday gave me what I understood to be a promise to subscribe himself and added a request that I would leave it for him to show Messrs McGillivray Thain Rocheblave & Forsyth.¹⁹ Judge Ogden I have called upon but not found at home, and as I cannot now see him today I am unwilling to detain the paper but will wait upon him any morning you may think proper. Judge Foucher begs to be considered a subscriber but as his subscription will be less than he wishes declines for the moment inserting his name.

To satisfy any reasonable scruples of the North West Gentlemen I have communicated to them Sir John Sherbrooks letter of the 19th instant.

¹⁷ Sherbrooke wrote to Lord Bathurst, secretary for war and the colonies, on April 29, 1818: "As . . . Coltman recommended it [*the subscription 'for the erection of a church and the Establishment of a missionary at Red River'*] as likely to have beneficial effects on the partizans and engagés of both the contending parties, I have given the support of my name and my personal contribution." He goes on to remark that he has withheld "formal sanction" till he shall have heard from Bathurst. He explains in the same letter why Bishop Plessis was chosen to administer the subscription: "That it might be perfectly independent of either party, it has been agreed that the management of the funds raised,— and the outfit of the mission should be wholly at the controul of the Roman Catholic Bishop in whose discretion I have the fullest confidence." Public Archives of Canada, series Q, vol. 148, part 1.

¹⁸ Henry Mackenzie was a member of McTavish, McGillivrays, and Company.

¹⁹ These men were all prominent partners of the North West Company, an organization that professed to see a menace in permanent institutions, such as churches, at Red River. See Mackenzie's letter on page 22, *post*. Simon and William McGillivray were brothers and partners of rank in the company. Thomas Thain was one of the partners of McGillivrays, Thain, and Company, prominent in the fur trade. Pierre de Rastel, sieur de Rocheblave, was one of the agents of the North West Company at Montreal. He took an active part in the opposition to Lord Selkirk and in 1817 secured his arrest. Probably the fourth name was that of John Forsyth of the firm of Forsyth, Richardson, and Company, a trading firm of Montreal, which in 1805 became the Montreal agent of the North West Company. Burpee, *Oxford Encyclopædia*; Gordon C. Davidson, *The North West Company*, 184, 187 (University of California, *Publications in History*, vol. 7 — Berkeley, 1918).

This and Mr. McKenzies you will return at your first convenience.

I trust it is unnecessary for me to say how sincerely I regret my want of success on this occasion whilst I renew the assurance of my anxious wish to do any thing in my power to promote the object in view.

Believe me always/ My Dear Sir/ Your obedit Humble servant.

(signed) W. B. COLTMAN

Montreal 23rd January 1818

MACKENZIE TO COLTMAN, JANUARY 25, 1818

[Selkirk Transcripts, 13:4387-4389. C]

Mr. Henry MacKenzie has the honor to return the subscription list & regrets that in its present shape he is under the necessity of doing so without any addition. He begs to assure Colonel Coltman that he and his partners are as anxious to encourage the propagation of religion and morality both amongst the Canadians resorting to, and the native inhabitants of the Indian Territories as any other persons can be, since not only their inclination but the safety of their extended commercial pursuits prescribe the inculcation of the moral duties in those who are under their control, and around them; yet however wishful they are to cooperate in such objects they conceive that the erection of a church at Red River could afford very little even local improvement from the small numbers that would be within its reach, and the premature establishment of an hierarchy in that quarter would be both impolitic in its nature, and from its novelty *perilous* in its execution. Doing Justice however to the laudable intentions of the Gentlemen who patronize the list, and solicitous to join in their pious design Mr. McKenzie begs to suggest Fort William the grand rendezvous for the whole communication with the interior Country as a naturally progressive station and obviously the most advisable spot where a church could in the first instance be of any utility[.] upwards of two thousand Canadians pass and repass that place every season, and the numerous resort to it from all the adjacent parts is so well known to Col: Coltman that it is not necessary to be enlarged on[.] should it be deemed expedient to erect the projected church at Fort William or in its vicinity, Mr Kenzie is persuaded that the North West Co. will subscribe liberally, and will afford every facility in their power in promoting an object so extremely desirable.

Montreal 25th January 1818.

[*In pencil:*] The list was presented/ to Mr. McGillivray/ Mr. Thain/ Mr. Rocheblave/ Mr. Forseyth/ Mr. H. McKenzie

GALE TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JANUARY 29, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]²⁰

Montreal, 29th Jan. 1818.

MY LORD,/ While I was at the settlement at Red River in the summer of 1817, a number of the inhabitants consisting of Canadians who had long resided in the country, metifs who had been born there, and Colonists who had more recently arrived, expressed their earnest wishes that Priests of the Roman Catholic Religion should be permanently established in that country. A day or two before my departure from Red River, I was requested to be the bearer of a petition²¹ from them for this object. This petition has been entrusted to the Honble Chartier de Lotbinière²² by whom it will be delivered to you.

The Canadians in this Province to whom the subject has been mentioned appear universally desirous to promote the views of their countrymen & others at Red River, not only as a benefit to which as christians they are entitled, but as the means of introducing the influence of religion and the principles of morality and peace throughout the country. To enlarge upon the benefits to be expected from the settlement of resident clergymen in that country would be superfluous. If in countries where the inhabitants enjoy the advantages of an established government and a regular administration of the laws, the influence of religious institutions be requisite for the well being of society, such influence must be far more essential, and humanly speaking, far more beneficial where the advantages of a Government and of laws are as yet unknown.

Very liberal contributions have already been made to the subscription for the permanent establishment of a Roman Catholic Church at Red River which received in its commencement your approbation & support. But as it is wished to afford to all persons throughout the Province an opportunity of aiding in the promotion of so desirable an object, I have to solicit your permission in the usual & accustomed manner that the subscription may be carried on in the different parishes of your diocese.

I have the honor to be with great respect/ your most obdt & humbl. servt.

SAM. GALE.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis,/ Evêque cathol. de Québec.

²⁰ A copy of this letter is in the Selkirk Transcripts, 13:4391.

²¹ See *ante*, pp. 14-17.

²² Probably Eustache Gaspard Michel Chartier de Lotbinière, who was elected speaker of the Assembly in 1793. Burpee, *Oxford Encyclopædia*.

Québec, 11 février 1818.

A Samuel Gale, Junr, Ecuyer/ à Montréal.

MONSIEUR,/ J'ai reçu par Mr de Lotbinière la requête que vous avez eu la bonté de me transmettre de la part des habitans de la Riv.-Rouge. Nul n'est plus convaincu que moi des avantages incalculables qui peuvent résulter de l'établissement d'une mission permanente dans cet endroit abandonné, jusqu'à présent, à tous les désordres qu'engendrent l'ignorance et l'irréligion. Je suis donc décidé à seconder de tout mon pouvoir un projet aussi louable et auquel vous avez bien voulu prendre une part aussi active. Il se trouvera des prêtres dans mon clergé qui se consacreront à cette bonne oeuvre sans autre motif que celui de procurer la gloire de Dieu et le bonheur de ces pauvres peuples. Sur les sommes qui se souscrivent ils prendront les frais de leur voyage et d'un modique entretien. Tout le reste servira à établir la mission, à construire une chapelle, un presbytère et autres dépendances.

Vous avez, je suppose, été informé que Mr Desrivières consentoit à prendre en dépôt l'argent perçu ou à percevoir pour cet objet dans le district de Montréal. Je me propose d'écrire en peu à Messrs les curés pour les engager de contribuer à cette oeuvre religieuse par eux-mêmes et par leurs paroissiens. On ne doit s'attendre qu'à de bien légers secours de la part du district de Québec. La misère y est grande dans une partie des paroisses, et l'argent rare dans toutes. Les autres parties suppléeront, j'espère, à l'insuffisance de celle-ci.

Il me reste à vous remercier de l'encouragement que vous donnez à cette entreprise et à me souscrire bien parfaitement &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, February 11, 1818.

Samuel Gale, Jr., Esquire, Montreal.

SIR, I have received from Mr. de Lotbinière the petition that you have had the goodness to transmit to me from the residents of Red River. No one is more convinced than I of the incalculable benefits that might result from the establishment of a permanent mission in that place, which up to now has been abandoned to all the disorders that ignorance and irreligion foster. I have decided to second with all my power such a laudable enterprise and one to which you have de-

²³ A copy of this letter is in the Selkirk Transcripts, 13:4524.

cided to lend such active assistance. There are priests among my clergy who will consecrate themselves to this good work with no other motive than that of winning glory for God and happiness for these poor people. From the sum which is subscribed they will take the cost of their trip and a small living expense. All the rest will be used to establish the mission and to construct a chapel, a presbytery, and other buildings.

Doubtless you have been informed that Mr. Desrivères will hold as a deposit on trust the money that has been received or that will be subscribed for this object in the district of Montreal. I propose to write to the clergy to induce them to subscribe to this religious work for themselves and for their parishioners. We can expect only slight support from the district of Quebec. Misery is widespread there in a part of the parishes and money scarce in all of them. I hope that other places will make up for its shortcomings. It remains for me to thank you for the encouragement that you have given to this undertaking and to subscribe myself, etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

Quebec, February 11, 1818.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO PROVENCHER,²⁴ FEBRUARY 21, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 9:329]

Québec, 21 février 1818.

A Monsr Provencher,/ curé à Kamouraska.

MONSIEUR,/ La lettre pastorale ci-incluse remplira, j'espère, vos désirs, s'il est vrai, comme vous croyez, que les complaignans aient jetté leur dernier feu. Du calme et de la patience est ce qu'il faut en pareil cas. Ces petits orages regardés de loin se réduisent à très peu de chose. Si vous en souffrez un peu, tant mieux pour vous; il est doux pour un disciple encore plus pour un ministre de J. C. d'avoir quelque chose à souffrir pour son amour. Les complaignans ne peuvent pas dire que je les ai ni bien, ni mal reçus, ni que je leur ai exprimé le désir qu'ils eussent la majorité. Je n'ai vu d'eux tous que Mr Chs Taché qui me remit leur requête en disant: voilà une requête, après quoi nous parlames de toute autre chose. Je ne la lus qu'après son départ et n'ai revu personne depuis.

²⁴ Joseph Norbert Provencher, the founder of the Red River mission, was born in Nicolet, Canada, on February 12, 1787. In 1811 he was ordained to the priesthood. He was appointed to the parish of Pointe Claire in 1814 and two years later to that of Kamouraska. See Adrien G. Morice, *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada from Lake Superior to the Pacific (1659-1895)*, 1:95 (Toronto, 1910), and *ante*, pp. xi-xv.

Lord Selkirk est à Montréal où une cour d'oyer et terminer siège maintenant sur les accusations de meurtres portées contre ceux de son parti. Une semblable cour doit aussi avoir lieu à York, Haut Canada, pour juger les sujets appartenant à la comp. du Nord-Ouest, prévenus de mêmes crimes.²⁵ Qui sait s'il n'y voudra pas aussi assister? Car les voyages ne coutent rien à Sa Seigneurie. Ce n'est qu'après tout cela qu'on pourra l'attendre à Québec où je ne manquerai pas de le voir. Ce qui retarde mes opérations est l'attente d'une réponse de Mr Tabeau auquel j'ai donné le défi.²⁶ Ajoutez que je voudrais avoir des nouvelles de l'état de la souscription à Montréal. La maladie de Son Excel. le Gouverneur en chef pourrait en ralentir le succès dans cette capitale, lorsqu'elle y sera rendue.

Je suis toujours d'avis que vous ne mettiez pas au jour le projet dont je vous ai parlé.²⁷ A tout événement, vous ne serez troublé qu'après vos pâques faites.

Croyez-moi &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, February 21, 1818.

Mr. Provencher, Curé of Kamouraska.

SIR, The pastoral letter herewith inclosed will, I hope, fulfill your wishes, if it is true, as you believe, that the opposition have fired their last round. Calmness and patience are needed in such a case. From a distance these small storms appear very insignificant. If you are troubled a little because of it, so much the better for you; it is sweet for a disciple, still more for a minister of Jesus Christ, to have something to endure for His sake. The opposition cannot say that I have received them well or ill, nor that I have expressed to them the wish that they might be in the majority. Of all of them I have seen only Mr. Chs. Taché, who presented me with their petition, saying: "Here is a petition." Thereafter we talked of something quite different. I read it only after he had departed, and I have seen none of them since that time.

Lord Selkirk is in Montreal, where a court of oyer and terminer is

²⁵ Probably the most exact and readable discussion of the suits brought against Selkirk by the Colonial Office and the North West Company, and against the North West Company by Selkirk, is that by Chester B. Martin in his *Lord Selkirk's Work in Canada*, 141-159 (*Oxford Historical and Literary Studies*, vol. 7 — Oxford, 1916).

²⁶ For an explanation of this reference see *post*, pp. 27-30.

²⁷ It is obvious from Provencher's reply of March 15 that the Bishop had already broached to his subordinate the matter of going as a missionary to the Red River colony. See *post*, p. 31.

sitting in the matter of the accusations of murder with which the members of his company are charged. A similar court is also to sit at York, Upper Canada, to try the members of the North West Company charged with the same crimes.²⁵ Who knows but that he will also wish to be present there? For trips mean nothing to His Lordship. It will be after all this that we can expect him in Quebec, where I shall not fail to see him. What retards my work is my waiting for a reply from Mr. Tabeau, to whom I have thrown down the gauntlet.²⁶ In addition I should like to have some news of the condition of the subscription at Montreal. The sickness of His Excellency, the Governor in Chief, when it is known, may detract from success in that capital.

I am still of the opinion that you should not mention the matter of which I have spoken to you.²⁷ In all events, you will not be bothered till after your Easter communion.

Believe me etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO TABEAU, MARCH 8, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 9:329]

Québec, 8 mars 1818.

A Monsieur Tabeau, / curé à Boucherville.

MONSIEUR, / Votre voyage de 1816 ne devoit être qu'un voyage d'observation. On ne demandoit pas davantage. Vous aviez des moyens et pouviez revenir la même année, sans être à charge à personne. Ce coup est manqué: voilà deux ans d'écoulés. Si l'on se contente encore d'aller observer pour revenir immédiatement, la mission est retardée d'une année de plus. Ce que demandent cette fois les colons de la Rivière Rouge et les Canadiens répandus dans toute cette région, c'est une mission à poste fixe, et il me paroît difficile de s'y refuser, surtout y ayant urgence pour des gens qui s'en vont par centaines en enfer, faute de secours spirituels. Si pour travailler au salut de ces pauvres chrétiens il faut attendre que les deux compagnies aient cimenté une paix que l'une et l'autre se croit peut-être intéressée à reculer, on ne fera rien avant dix ans et peut-être davantage. Le Gouverneur de cette Province en se mettant à la tête de la souscription pour l'établissement d'une mission catholique et permanente dans cette vaste région, n'a assurément pas songé à favoriser une des parties contendantes au préjudice de l'autre. En le suivant immédiatement je n'ai pas plus songé que lui à aucune préférence, mais au bien de l'établissement religieux, et c'est là qu'il s'en faut tenir. Je suis bien loin de mépriser les obser-

vations que présente votre lettre du 19 février.²⁸ Il y en a de très sages. Je ne serois pas éloigné d'établir deux missions au lieu d'une. Les âmes du Fort William et du lac de la pluie ne me sont pas moins chères que celles de l'Ossiniboia. La première mission s'étendrait depuis le Sault Ste Marie et le Grand Portage jusqu'à l'endroit où les eaux cessent de couler de ce côté-ci et prennent leur cours vers le lac Winipic. Elle pourroit n'être d'abord qu'une mission passagère faite par un prêtre partant d'ici ou de Montréal chaque printemps, passant par Sandwich, s'adjoignant un des deux prêtres de cet endroit, et arrivant au Grand Portage et dans les postes voisins de manière à s'y trouver lorsque les hyvernans descendent des terres. Lors même qu'elle auroit pris de la stabilité, il ne seroit pas impossible que les prêtres s'y succédassent comme ils font dans les missions du Golphe, parce que la communication peut se faire de là ici avec assez de rapidité et sans frais considérables en s'abonnant avec les canots qui partent de Montréal au printemps, ou qui y reviennent l'automne. Si celle-la vous convient, vous n'avez qu'à la prendre: elle continuera de dépendre du diocèse de Québec. Mais il n'en sauroit être ainsi de l'autre; il faut que ceux qui l'entreprendront s'attendent à y rester ou à n'en venir que très rarement. Les frais énormes qui occasionneroient de fréquens voyages à cette distance, la privation où demeurerait le troupeau pendant ces longues absences, la juste inquiétude qu'éprouveroit un prêtre demeurant là seul pendant l'absence de son collègue, en supposant que l'on n'en pût trouver que deux, tout cela rend nécessaire de prendre des mesures pour y établir un clergé qui puisse se soutenir et perpétuer par lui-même, et former enfin une église distinguée de celle de Québec. Voilà jusqu'où va mon plan, et j'ai la confiance qu'on trouvera dans le clergé canadien des hommes assez généreux pour se mettre à la tête de cette entreprise. N'est-il pas honteux que par le seul motif d'un gain temporel, des marchands nous aient devancés dans ces pays lointains? Je ne serai pas fâché si vous trouvez l'occasion de faire parvenir à la connoissance des associés du Nord-Ouest que leurs postes ne sont pas

²⁸ A thorough search for this letter has been fruitless. It is possible to reconstruct some of it, however, through the Bishop's letter printed herewith. Obviously it recommended another temporary mission, similar to Tabeau's mission of 1816, which halted at Rainy Lake. There is a strong suggestion in Bishop Plessis' letter that he believed that Tabeau was more than willing to stop short of Selkirk's colony. Throughout Tabeau's correspondence, it is obvious that he was believed to favor the North West Company. It is unfortunate that the correspondence concerning Tabeau's earlier trip cannot be found. Since he must have reached Rainy Lake about the time of the murder of Governor Semple at the colony, he probably used the resulting turmoil as an excuse for going no farther. In 1818 he was still recommending delay till peace between the two companies should be assured. See Morice, *L'Eglise catholique*, 1:116.

exclus de mes projets. Si la seconde des deux missions ci-dessus mentionnées, ne vous convenant pas, vous voulez accepter la première, faites-le moi savoir et préparez-vous y. Mr Paré consentira bien à laisser quelques mois la Longue Pointe pour vous remplacer à Boucherville.

Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, March 8, 1818.

Mr. Tabeau, Curé of Boucherville.

SIR, Your trip of 1816 was supposed to be merely a reconnaissance. We expected no more. You had the means and could return the same year without being a burden to anyone. That attempt failed and two years have gone. If we content ourselves again with going for observation and returning immediately, the mission is delayed still another year. What the colonists of the Red River and the Canadians spread out over this region demand this time is a mission at a fixed point, and it is difficult for me to deny them, especially as I feel responsible for a people who are going to perdition by hundreds through lack of spiritual aid. If, in order to labor for the salvation of these poor Christians, we must wait until the two companies have made a peace, which either one, perhaps, believes itself justified in deferring, then nothing will be done for ten years and perhaps more. The Governor of this province assuredly did not dream of favoring one of the contending parties to the prejudice of the other when he put his name at the head of the subscription list for establishing a permanent Catholic mission in this vast region. No more did I dream of any preference when I wrote mine immediately below his, but of the good of religion, and it is to that we must hold. I am far from undervaluing the remarks in your letter of February 19.²⁸ It contains some good advice. I should not be opposed to establishing two missions in place of one. The souls at Fort William and Rainy Lake are not less dear to me than those of Assiniboia. The first mission would extend from Sault Ste. Marie and Grand Portage to the region where the streams cease to run in this direction and take their courses in the direction of Lake Winnipeg. There could be at first only a temporary mission superintended by a priest leaving here or Montreal each spring, journeying by way of Sandwich, taking one of the two priests from that place and arriving at Grand Portage and the neighboring posts in such a way as to be there when the winterers come down from the interior. Even

though it should become somewhat fixed, it would not be unlikely that the priests would succeed there as they are doing in the missions on the Gulf, because communication is possible from there to this place with some speed and without great cost, if we join forces with the canoes that leave Montreal in the spring or that return thither in the autumn. If this plan suits you, you have only to begin it. The mission will continue to depend on the diocese of Quebec. But it should be understood that it is not like the other; it will be necessary that those who undertake that shall stay there or return only very infrequently. The enormous expense that frequent trips of such length would occasion, the loss that the flock would sustain during such long absences, the reasonable anxiety that a priest remaining there alone during the absence of his colleague would experience—supposing that there could be only two priests—all these facts make it necessary to take steps to establish a clergy there that can be self-sufficient and able to continue of itself, and at last form a church distinct from that at Quebec. That is the extent of my plan, and I am confident that we shall find among the Canadian clergy men generous enough to put themselves at the head of this enterprise. Is it not humiliating that solely for the purpose of temporal gain merchants have preceded us into this distant region? I shall not be displeased if you find opportunity to let the people of the North West Company know that their posts are not excluded from my plan. If the second of the two missions mentioned above does not suit you, and you prefer the first, let me know and prepare yourself for it. Mr. Paré will be willing to leave Long Point for a few months to take your place at Boucherville.

I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

PROVENCHER TO [BISHOP PLESSIS], MARCH 15, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]²⁹

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, The trouble caused by the presbytery rooms has calmed a little. There is talk still, but it is decreasing steadily. Your pastoral letter, by angering those against whom it was directed, has succeeded in recalling a great many who always follow the crowd without knowing why. To be without a curé was what frightened them. One of my

²⁹ The French text of this letter may be found in Joseph N. Provencher, *Lettres*, 5 (*Bulletin de la Société historique de Saint-Boniface*, vol. 3—St. Boniface, Manitoba, 1913).

churchwardens is still very much incensed at me and threatens still to make a scene when his chance comes, but since he no longer will have followers, he will have to keep quiet. Of course such a brisk fire cannot be extinguished all at once.

Easter sacraments are over. The parish troubles prevented some irritated persons from appearing for confession. Many appeared this year, however, who did not come last year.

We had a thaw last week that melted much of the snow and made the roads impassable. If it were already spring, many would rejoice, because fodder is becoming very scarce.

I have always kept the Red River mission a secret. But I must confess that my present uncertainty is a trifle galling. I must live a day at a time. I can plan nothing. There are repairs and building to be done this summer. This is the time for me to make preparation for them. If Your Lordship has definitely decided on someone, I should be happy to be informed of what is of moment to me.

Reflecting on the magnitude of the work proposed in this difficult mission, it seemed to me that I was not the man needed for it. Nevertheless, I do not defy Heaven. I fear that by accepting this mission, if it nevertheless devolves upon me, I shall obstruct or retard its progress by my incapacity. This incapacity may be considered under two heads: spiritual and physical. The spiritual is well known to Your Lordship: my slight stock of learning, etc., etc., my lack of knowledge of the language of the country, at least of the English language, and a very annoying infirmity, especially for much travel, i.e., a hernia, or false hernia, with which I have been afflicted these many years. Another reason is that I am considerably in debt in these years of distress for the revenues that I collect. This year's tithe will not pay my debts. I must have more.

Such are my objections; if the reasons that Your Lordship has for this mission are greater than my objections, I am always ready. What makes me state them is, if this mission were delayed or hindered in any other way by my fault, I should fear the reproaches of men and of God. May Heaven direct this momentous affair now as It pleases; I shall obey, sure that in doing God's will I shall have nothing to fear.

I am, My Lord, with the utmost respect, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

PROVENCHER, Priest.

Kamouraska, March 15, 1818.

Québec, 16 mars 1818

Au Très Honble Lord Selkirk/ à Montréal.

MYLORD,/ Rien ne pouvoit mieux entrer dans mes vues que la requête que Mr Gale me fit parvenir au mois de janvier dernier de la part des habitans de la Riv. Rouge. Je suis rempli de consolation dans l'idée de l'établissement solide d'une mission catholique qui peut devenir d'une importance incalculable au vaste territoire qui l'environne. La protection de Votre Seigneurie, l'intérêt qu'y met Son Excellence le Gouverneur en Chef, le zèle des plus respectables citoyens de Montréal, les souscriptions déjà reçues, tout cela me persuade que la divine Providence veut favoriser cette entreprise. Pour ma part, je ne saurois voir avec indifférence un si grand nombre d'âmes rachetées au prix du sang de Jésus-Christ se perdre tous les jours, faute d'avoir quelqu'un pour former leur foi et diriger leur morale. Voilà ce qui m'avoit décidé d'envoyer, en 1816, un missionnaire chargé de remplir ces importans devoirs auprès de ces pauvres abandonnés. Des obstacles qui ne sont pas inconnus à Votre Seigneurie s'opposèrent au succès de cette première tentative. Mon désir est de la renouveler cette année et d'envoyer deux prêtres et un jeune ecclésiastique pour travailler, à poste fixe, à l'avancement de cette bonne oeuvre. Aucun d'eux n'y sera conduit par des vues d'intérêt temporel. Ils s'estimeront très heureux si le Père des miséricordes daigne avoir leurs services pour agréables et répandre quelques bénédictions sur leurs travaux. Cependant il est indispensable qu'ils aient des moyens de se rendre à leur poste et d'y subsister lorsqu'ils seront rendus. C'est sur quoi je désirerois qu'il plût à Votre Seigneurie vouloir bien me faire savoir si elle a quelque plan d'arrêté, car je conçois qu'il faut ménager autant que possible les deniers de la souscription principalement destinés à procurer la construction d'une chapelle et d'un logement pour les missionnaires. Il auroit sans doute été plus aisé de traiter de vive voix cette question qui conduit nécessairement à des détails. Si je prends la liberté de la faire par écrit, c'est que la saison est avancée, qu'il y a peu d'apparence que Votre Seigneurie se propose de venir à Québec, et que les affaires me rendent le voyage de Montréal impossible.

J'ai l'honneur &c.

† J. O. Ev. Cath. de Québec.

⁸⁰ A copy of this letter is in the Selkirk Transcripts, 14:4673.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, March 16, 1818.

The Very Honorable Lord Selkirk, Montreal.

MY LORD, Nothing could accord more perfectly with my plans than the petition of the Red River settlers that Mr. Gale transmitted to me last January. I am greatly pleased with the idea of establishing a permanent Catholic mission, which may become of incalculable value for the wide region round about. Your Lordship's support, the interest that His Excellency, the Governor in Chief, has shown, the enthusiasm of the most respectable citizens of Montreal, the subscriptions already received — all these persuade me that Divine Providence is favorable to this undertaking. On my part, I could not watch with indifference while so many souls, bought with the blood of Jesus Christ, are being lost daily through lack of someone to establish their faith and direct their morals. It was that which decided me in 1816 to send a missionary to perform these important duties for those abandoned wretches. Obstacles that are not unknown to Your Lordship opposed the success of that first attempt. This year I desire to renew it by sending two priests and a young ecclesiastic to labor at a fixed station for the advancement of this good work. None of them will be moved by considerations of temporal interest. They will count themselves fortunate if the Father of Mercy deigns to accept their services and to shower a few blessings on their labors. Nevertheless, it is essential that they have ways by which to reach their station and to exist, once they are there. It is on this point that I should like, if it please Your Lordship, to be informed whether you have some fixed plan, for I believe that it will be necessary to husband as far as possible the money of the subscription, which was intended chiefly for the construction of a chapel and a residence for the missionaries. It would have been easier, no doubt, to talk over this matter together, which is necessarily somewhat detailed. If I take the liberty of writing, it is because the season is advanced, there is small prospect that Your Lordship plans to come to Quebec, and business affairs prevent me from going to Montreal.

I have the honor etc.,

† J. O., Catholic Bishop of Quebec.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MARCH 27, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Boucherville, 27 mars 1818.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec. Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR, / J'ai reçu ce soir tard l'honneur de vos deux lettres; j'y répons immédiatement suivant votre désir, quoiqu'il soit onze

heures et par delà. Si votre grandeur a fait part de mes observations au milord, il s'imaginera peut-être que je suis devenu *northwester*; mais il se trompera. du reste, sa Seigneurie a des sentiments trop nobles et trop généreux pour en prendre de l'humeur; et l'opposition que j'ai montrée servira peut-être à consolider le plan davantage, en faisant prévoir tous les obstacles; et alors je ne regretterai rien puisque j'aurai contribué en quelque chose à la dureté de l'établissement projeté. Que Dieu soit connu et adoré, voilà dans le fonds tout mon désir. Votre grandeur prévoit bien ce que dira *certain corps*; et je me flatte qu'elle n'aura pas cru que j'étois l'organe de ces sentiments dans mes lettres; je me suis toujours bien expliqué là dessus quand l'occasion s'est présentée, et on sait que je ne suis pas toujours de l'avis du Sanhédrin.

Le choix que fait Votre grandeur des missionnaires de l'ossiniboia auroit été bon sans que je l'approuvasse, mais je le trouve excellent. Pour moi je m'accommoderai très bien de Mr Crevier;³¹ comment et où irai-je le prendre? C'est sur quoi je ne peux rien dire avant d'avoir vu les Messrs du nord-ouest. De quelque manière cependant que la chose s'accommode, il y a cet embarras à prévoir: Que faire si Mr Crevier ne peut pas laisser son poste, parce que Mr Marchand³² seroit malade, infirme &c.? J'irai à Montréal dimanche soir ou lundi matin; malheureusement la saison va rendre les traverses difficiles; mais j'avertirai Mr Deguise, et son vicaire pourra voir à ma paroisse dans le cas où la glace s'échapperoit pendant deux ou trois jours que je passerai en ville; de là j'informerai votre grandeur de ce qui sera fait. Il seroit bien moins dispendieux de faire monter les missionnaires sur les canots de chaque compagnie; mais, Monseigneur, le désagrément est extrême dans ces sortes de voiture, quand on s'y trouve adjoint à des gens qui ne conviennent pas. Voilà pourquoi il est à désirer que les missionnaires aillent seuls avec leurs gens, sans commis, sans bourgeois &c. Si l'une et l'autre compagnie se charge de ce voyage pour leurs missionnaires respectifs, tant mieux: il restera plus de moyens pécuniaires pour le nouvel établissement. Mais s'il faut former un canot pour nous quatre, nous aurons peut-être besoin d'un grand canot, appelé canot du maitre, lequel demande 14 hommes pour être navigué. Dans ce cas nous nous procurerions au Fort William deux canots du nord,³³ dont l'un avec 6 hommes iroit à la Rivière Rouge, et

³¹ Joseph Crevier was vicar at Detroit at this time. Morice, *L'Eglise catholique*, 1:139.

³² Jean Baptiste Marchand, a Sulpician, was in charge of the parish of Sandwich, near Detroit, from 1796 till his death in 1825. H. A. Scott, "The Roman Catholic Church East of the Great Lakes, 1760-1912," in Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty, eds., *Canada and Its Provinces: A History of the Canadian People and Their Institutions*, 11:25 (Toronto, 1914).

³³ For this and other terms used in canoe travel, see the glossary, *post*, p. 447.

l'autre avec 8 me ramèneroit. Il en couteroit gros: aussi je chercherai bien à me contenter d'un canot du nord en partant de montréal, et nous l'armerions pour aller de suite à la Rivière Rouge, il ne faudra que 10 hommes. Je serois obligé alors de me mettre passager dans quelque canot du nord-ouest pour descendre à montréal. En toute supposition, j'entrerais pour un quart des déboursés nécessaires à l'équipement du canot. Mais il faudra faire bien des avances, plus du double de mon quart, avant de partir; c'est pourquoi il sera nécessaire de trouver où prendre au besoin.

Nous n'avons rien dit jusqu'à présent de Drummond's Island où il y a plus de monde qu'au Sault Ste Marie, où les gens m'ont témoigné grand désir de voir un prêtre passer chez eux; il faudra, je suppose, faire aussi là quelque séjour. Ce sera le moins embarrassant pour moi, car j'y serai en pays de connaissances. Le plus grand nombre des sauvages du Sault Ste Marie se trouve sur le côté américain, où il y a aussi quelques canadiens. Votre grandeur pourra sans doute donner la juridiction nécessaire. Il y auroit une infinité de questions à faire de vive voix, et qui demandent trop de temps pour être écrites.

Mr Paré, qui entend dire depuis longtemps que je dois aller là haut, est inquiet de savoir s'il viendra pendant mon absence desservir Boucherville; parce qu'il ignore *en quelle qualité il y pourroit venir maintenant*, le bonhomme devenu curé croit qu'on ne peut plus être vicaire; eh bien! on l'appellera *desservant*. Votre grandeur voudra me dire ce que je dois lui offrir d'honoraire, ou le lui dire à lui-même, et j'en passerai par sa décision. Il me seroit difficile de lui promettre la part des revenus correspondante au temps qu'il sera ici, à cause des frais que demandera ma mission et qui emporteront tout le numéraire dont je pourrai disposer cette année; la dixme n'est pas si abondante que l'année dernière et se vend beaucoup moins cher. Je n'ai jamais été chipotier, et je ne veux pas l'être, mais je ne veux pas m'endetter.

Je ne dirai rien de tout ce qui concerne les nouvelles missions, jusqu'à ce que votre grandeur elle-même le rende public.

Vous voyez, Monseigneur, que j'accepte volontiers la mission dont vous me chargez, et cela pour tout le temps que vous jugerez nécessaire. Je m'y employerai de mon mieux. Puisse le ciel répandre ses bénédictions sur tous les moyens que vous prenez de gagner des âmes à Dieu!

Huit hommes pourroient mener un canot du nord avec quatre passagers et le guide, pourvu qu'il n'y eut que peu de bagage, et qu'on pût se procurer des provisions sur la route deux ou trois fois. Mais deux bouts de canot ne suffiroient pas: il faudroit au moins quatre bons voyageurs

au fait, et les quatre autres novices. J'aurai l'honneur d'écrire de nouveau à votre grandeur au commencement de la semaine prochaine, et nous saurons mieux à quoi s'en tenir.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus grand respect, Monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

P. S. Demain je compléterai un millier de pénitens confessés depuis le temps paschal et passerai au-delà.

[*Translation*]

Boucherville, March 27, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, I have received the favor of your two letters rather late this evening. I am replying immediately according to your wish, although it is eleven o'clock and more. If Your Lordship imparted my remarks to milord, he will imagine perhaps that I have become a *North Wester*; but he will be mistaken. However, His Lordship has too noble and too generous a character to take it amiss. The opposition that I have shown will serve perhaps to consolidate the plan a little more, making it necessary to envisage all the obstacles. In that case I have no regrets, since I have contributed in some measure to the permanence of the projected mission. That God may be known and adored — that is my chief desire. Your Lordship anticipates, no doubt, what a *certain body* will say; and I flatter myself that you will never believe that I was the organ of those sentiments in my letters. I have always been quite explicit on that point when the occasion presented itself. And it is known that I am not always of the opinion of the Sanhedrin.

The choice that Your Lordship makes of the missionaries for Assiniboia would have been good without my approval, but I find it excellent. For my part I shall get along well with Mr. Crevier;³¹ how and where shall I find him? It is on that matter that I cannot say anything without having seen the gentlemen of the North West Company. Nevertheless, in whatever way the matter is disposed of, there is this problem to be faced: what shall I do if Mr. Crevier cannot leave his post, because Mr. Marchand³² is ill or weak? I shall go to Montreal Sunday evening or Monday morning. Unfortunately the season is going to make traveling very difficult, but I shall let Mr. Deguise know, and his vicar can see to my parish in case the ice melts during the two or three days that I spend in town. From there I shall inform Your Lordship what is done. It would be much less expensive to let the missionaries go up in the canoes of each company; but, My Lord, disagreement is extreme in this sort of

conveyance, if one finds oneself with uncongenial people. For that reason it is desirable that the missionaries should go alone with their own people, without clerk, without *bourgeois*, etc. If each company takes care of its own missionaries, so much the better. There will remain more money for the new establishment. But if there must be a canoe for us four, we shall perhaps need a large canoe, called a *canot du maître*, which requires fourteen men to paddle it. In case we secure two north canoes³³ at Fort William, the one with six men will go to Red River, and the other with eight will bring me back. It will cost a great deal. I will try hard to content myself with a north canoe when leaving Montreal, and we shall supply it well that it may go on to Red River. Only ten men will be required. I shall be obliged then to become a passenger in whatever North West Company canoe is going down to Montreal. However the matter is settled, I shall engage myself to pay a quarter of the necessary expense for equipping the canoe. But some advances, more than double my quarter, will be necessary before leaving. That is why it will be necessary to learn where these can be obtained in case of need.

We have said nothing until now of Drummond Island, where there are many more people than at Sault Ste. Marie. The residents there have expressed a great desire to see a priest amongst them. It will be necessary, I think, to stop a little while also at that place. It will be the less displeasing for me, since I am already acquainted in that region. The larger part of the Indians at Sault Ste. Marie are on the American side, where there are also some Canadians. Your Lordship doubtless can give the necessary faculties. There will be a great many questions to ask you orally, which take too much time to write.

Mr. Paré, who understood me to say some time ago that I was going to the upper country, is disturbed to know whether he will come, during my absence, to Boucherville, because he does not know *in what capacity he will serve there now*. The good man, having become a curé, believes that he can no longer be a vicar; oh, well, he may be called the *officiating* priest. Your Lordship will be good enough to tell me what I shall offer him as an honorarium, or will tell it to the man himself, and I shall abide by that decision. It will be difficult for me to promise him a portion of my revenue commensurate with the time that he will spend here, because of the expenses that my mission will demand, which will require all the funds that I can spend this year. The tithe is not so abundant as last year, and is selling much less dearly. I have never been a haggler, and I do not wish to be one, but I do not wish to be in debt.

I shall say nothing of all that concerns the new missions until Your Lordship himself has made it public.

You see, My Lord, that I accept willingly the mission that you give into my charge, and that for as long a time as you think necessary. I will conduct it to the best of my ability. May Heaven pour Its blessings upon all the means that you take to win souls for God.

Eight men could manage a north canoe with four passengers and a guide, provided there was not too much baggage and provisions could be obtained two or three times on the way. But two *bouts* would not be sufficient. At least four experienced *voyageurs* would be necessary, as well as four other new hands. I shall have the honor of writing again to Your Lordship at the beginning of next week, when we shall know better what to do.

I have the honor of being most respectfully, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

P. S. Tomorrow I shall complete more than a thousand confessions of penitents since Easter.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO THE CLERGY OF CANADA, MARCH 29, 1818

[Quebec Archbishopal Archives, Letter Books, H:182]

Québec, 29 mars 1818.

Lettre circulaire à M.M. les curés/ au sujet de l'établissement d'une mission/ à la Riv. Rouge.

MESSIEURS,/ Il en est peu parmi vous qui n'aient déjà entendu parler du projet de l'établissement prochain d'une mission permanente à la Rivière Rouge. Dès le mois de janvier il a été ouvert pour cet objet une souscription générale. Elle a été puissamment encouragée par un nombre de Protestans. J'ai une pleine confiance que les catholiques seront jaloux de les surpasser dans une oeuvre tendante à répandre graduellement notre sainte foi sur l'immense territoire de l'Ouest qui sépare l'Amérique Septentrionale d'avec la mer Pacifique. Dans cette ferme persuasion je me flatte que vous regarderez comme un devoir d'engager vos fidèles paroissiens à seconder cette entreprise par des aumônes proportionnées à leurs moyens, et qu'y ajoutant ce que vous pouvez fournir par vous mêmes, vous vous empresserez de faire parvenir le tout d'ici au 15 mai prochain à Messieurs les Grands Vicaires des districts auxquels vous appartenez respectivement. Je suis avec une parfaite considération &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, March 29, 1818.

Circular letter to the curés on the matter of the establishment of a mission at Red River.

SIRS, There are few among you who have not already heard of the proposal to establish soon a permanent mission at Red River. Since January a general subscription for this object has been opened. It has been greatly encouraged by a number of Protestants. I have a deep confidence that Catholics will be eager to surpass them in an undertaking looking to the gradual spread of our holy faith over the immense western region, which separates North America from the Pacific Ocean. In this firm conviction I flatter myself that you will regard it as a duty to persuade your faithful parishioners to support this enterprise by gifts proportioned to their means; and, adding thereunto what you yourselves can furnish, that you will hasten to dispatch the total before the fifteenth of next May to the vicars-general of the districts to which you respectively belong. I am most respectfully etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MARCH 31, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montréal, 31 mars 1818.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec. Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR, / Je suis venu en ville hier matin, comme je le marquois dans une lettre que j'avois écrite aussitôt après la réception des deux vôtres de la semaine dernière, et que j'ai trouvée ici, n'ayant pas été remise à la poste à temps. J'appris en arrivant en ville que Mr McGilvray étoit à Québec; je cherchai Mr Rocheblave et je l'ai rencontré au bureau du nord-ouest, où j'écrivis un petit mot à votre grandeur pour l'insérer dans la lettre ci-dessus mentionnée. On m'a communiqué au bureau une lettre de Mr McGilvray qui rend compte de l'entrevue qu'il a eue avec votre grandeur. D'après tout ce que me dit Mr Rocheblave, il nous sera libre d'aller ou tous quatre dans un canot fait exprès, ou deux à deux sur les canots de chaque compagnie. Je crois que le premier parti est le meilleur pour mettre les missionnaires plus libres et plus indépendans: le lord Selkirk fournira de son côté et la compagnie du nord-ouest de l'autre; tous deux secrètement. Il y auroit peut-être de l'inconvénient à attacher certains missionnaires désignés à certaine compagnie: l'esprit de parti en seroit peut-être la suite, soit parmi les commerçans et les engagés, soit parmi les prêtres eux-mêmes;

et il seroit extrêmement désagréable de donner lieu à une semblable division. Mr Rocheblave m'a offert ou de monter avec lui dans les premiers jours de mai, ou de pourvoir à l'armement d'un canot pour tous les missionnaires ensemble et à leurs ordres; il n'en a excepté que les hommes qu'il a voulu laisser à notre choix, par honnêteté. Je prendrai là-dessus le parti que Votre grandeur elle-même trouvera le plus convenable; peut-être même a-t-elle déjà pris tous les arrangemens nécessaires avec Mr Mcgilvray; et c'est pourquoi nous n'avons rien décidé ici; je m'attends à recevoir des nouvelles demain par la poste partie hier de Québec; et d'après les informations que votre grandeur me donnera, j'agirai.

On se récrie beaucoup à certain quartier contre l'envoi de tant de prêtres à la fois: *c'est une grande inconséquence d'oter tant de sujets de l'intérieur d'un diocèse où il y a plus de besogne qu'il n'est possible d'en faire, des paroisses vacantes, des anciens établissemens à soutenir &c, et où Monseigneur trouvera-t-il des prêtres assez fervens, assez solides; il faut qu'ils soient jeunes d'age, vieux de vertus, à l'épreuve de tout, grands talens, sagesse consommée &c. Il n'y a qu'un corps qui pourroit faire une telle entreprise:* cent et cent autres observations dont on ne veut pas démordre. Quoiqu'il en soit, nous essayerons. Il paroît qu'il sera nécessaire d'envoyer des ordres à Mr Crevier de se rendre au Sault Ste Marie par Michilimakinac ou Drummond's Island, si Votre grandeur persiste à me l'adjoindre. Au reste j'attends demain matin des explications détaillées de tout ce qui aura été conclu entre votre grandeur et Mr Mcgilvray, et dès la semaine prochaine je m'occuperai de former ma chapelle.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

P. S. Si votre grandeur trouvoit bon que je fusse jusqu'à la Rivière Rouge, après la mission du Sault et du grd Portage, Mr Rocheblave n'y voit rien que de très facile; dans le cas où vous voudriez avoir des nouvelles promptes et sûres, je suivrai mes directions.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, March 31, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, I came into town yesterday morning, as I remarked in a letter that I wrote as soon as I received your two letters written last week. I found my letter here, which had not been posted in time. I

learned when I reached the city that Mr. McGillivray was in Quebec. I hunted up Mr. de Rocheblave and met him at the office of the North West Company, where I wrote a little note to Your Lordship to be inserted in the letter that I have just mentioned. At the office I was handed a letter by Mr. McGillivray telling of the interview he had had with Your Lordship. According to what Mr. de Rocheblave tells me, we shall be at liberty to go, either all four in an express canoe, or two and two in the canoes of each company. I believe that the former plan is the better for keeping the missionaries free and independent. Lord Selkirk will furnish the one canoe and the North West Company the other, both secretly. It would be unwise perhaps to attach certain designated missionaries to each company. Partisan spirit would perhaps follow such a course, either among the traders and *engagés*, or among the priests themselves, and it would be extremely disagreeable to allow such a division to take place. Mr. de Rocheblave has offered me either the privilege of going up with him during the first days of May, or the equipment of a canoe for all the missionaries together under their orders. Quite honestly he has excepted only the men, whom he wishes to leave to our choice. In all this I shall follow the course that Your Lordship finds best. Perhaps you have already made all the necessary arrangements with Mr. McGillivray. That is why we have not decided anything here. I expect to receive news tomorrow by the post that left Quebec yesterday. After receiving the news that Your Lordship gives me, I shall act.

There are many outcries in a certain quarter against the sending of so many priests at one time. [It is said that] *it is very absurd to separate so many persons from the center of a diocese where there is more work than it is possible to accomplish, as well as vacant parishes, old establishments to keep up*, etc. [Again it is asked] *where My Lord will find priests sufficiently zealous, sufficiently capable. They must be young in age, old in virtue, experienced in all things, of great talent, of consummate wisdom*, etc. *Again they say that only an organization could undertake such an enterprise.* Hundreds and hundreds of other observations reach me, and will not be put down. However that may be, we shall go on. Apparently it will be necessary to send word to Mr. Crevier to go to Sault Ste. Marie by Michilimackinac or Drummond Island, if Your Lordship still wishes me to join him. For the rest I expect tomorrow morning detailed explanations about all that will have been decided between Your Lordship and Mr. McGillivray. Next week I shall begin to assemble my chapel.

I have the honor of being most respectfully, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

P.S. If Your Lordship wishes me to go as far as Red River, after the mission at the Sault and at Grand Portage, Mr. de Rocheblave believes that I may easily do so, in case you would like to have prompt and certain news. I shall follow my directions.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, APRIL 7, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Boucherville, 7 avril 1818.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec, Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR, / Hier matin je me décidai à aller à Montréal dans la confiance d'y trouver quelques lettres de votre grandeur qui y seroient demeurées à défaut d'occasion. Je n'en reçus qu'une, qui n'étoit pas la principale. Revenant aussitôt par la Longue Pointe, j'entrai chez Mr Paré qui venoit de m'envoyer à Boucherville plusieurs dépêches que j'ai maintenant devant les yeux pour répondre. Je n'ai vu hier ni Mr Mcgilvray, ni le comte: le premier n'étoit pas arrivé de Québec, le second étoit malade; j'aurois cependant insisté à voir celui-ci si alors j'avois connu le nouveau plan adopté. Mr McDonell est dans les états unis, et Mr Rocheblave est le seul que j'aie pu voir. Il est toujours dans les mêmes dispositions favorables. Depuis plusieurs jours, il pleut continuellement, et il n'est plus de la prudence de traverser le fleuve que lorsque le canot pourra voguer, surtout après avoir été calé deux fois, comme j'ai fait hier.

Il n'y a pas de temps à perdre pour envoyer des ordres à Mr Crevier. Mais je ne saurois déterminer maintenant à quelle date, ni même à quel endroit il pourra me rencontrer. Si Mr Rocheblave veut toucher à l'île Drummond, ce seroit le meilleur point de rendez-vous. je trouverois ensuite facilement le moyen de me rendre de là au Sault Ste Marie et de passer le lac Supérieur assez à bonne heure pour donner trois semaines au Fort William, s'il le faut. Dans le cas où Mr Rocheblave n'arrêteroit pas à Drummond's Island en montant, mon compagnon ne pourra me joindre qu'au Sault ou à Makinac. Peut-être seroit-il bon que votre grandeur m'envoyât ici les dépêches nécessaires non cachetées, et j'y ajouterai la date et le lieu de réunion quand je les saurai; ou bien, écrivez à Mr Crevier de se tenir prêt, et renvoyez-le à moi pour savoir le temps et le lieu, et je l'en informerai aussitôt que possible. Je crains de manquer sa rencontre parce qu'il est difficile, à

l'époque où nous sommes, de lui faire parvenir à temps les ordres nécessaires. Il n'entre point du tout dans mon plan de passer par le Détroit ni en allant, ni en revenant, à moins que je n'eusse beaucoup de temps à moi, parce qu'il faut certainement plus de loisir pour faire cette route que celle de la grande rivière. Mais j'aiderai volontiers aux frais de voyage de Mr Crevier. La Providence, qui sait que je n'aime pas à m'endetter, vient de me faire gagner un petit procès qui met quelques piastres à ma disposition et sans lesquelles j'aurois été embarrassé même pour former ma chapelle.

Mr Paré s'attend à me remplacer pendant mon absence d'après ce que je lui ai dit hier. J'aimerois bien que votre grandeur ne le fît pas biner aucune fois. Le bonhomme est extrêmement peureux sur l'eau, est sujet à de violentes migraines quand il jeûne trop longtemps, et les paroissiens de la Longue Pointe peuvent facilement aller à Montréal et à la Pointe aux Trembles pour les offices. Qu'il aille une fois par semaine à sa paroisse, c'est tout autant qu'il en faut; elle a moins de communians que mon village seul. Votre grandeur semble me désirer à Québec avant mon départ; mon inclination m'y porte fortement, mais la besogne que vous m'avez taillée demande d'être suivie de près et m'empêchera peut-être de satisfaire là-dessus et mon coeur et mon besoin. Je le ferai très certainement si je le peux. La paroisse de Boucherville oblige à une résidence bien stricte; je ne la quitte que par moments, et ce n'est pas sans inquiétude. Le vicaire de Varennes pourrait venir dans le besoin, si je vois jour à m'embarquer pour Québec.

J'en viens maintenant à parler du nouveau plan conclu entre votre grandeur et les chefs des deux compagnies. Pour ce qui me concerne personnellement, je suis très bien pourvu; je serai à l'aise avec Mr Rocheblave, et je ne doute pas que tous ces messieurs du nord-ouest ne soient jaloux de m'avoir plutôt qu'un autre, parce que j'ai manqué mon coup avec la compagnie d'Hudson ci-devant. Ils feront de leur mieux pour rendre ma situation aussi commode que possible. Mais, Monseigneur, il n'en sera pas ainsi des missionnaires de la Rivière Rouge; et je m'intéresse à eux pour le moins autant qu'à moi-même. Si j'eusse voyagé avec eux et partagé par cette saison l'équipement du canot, j'aurois pu leur promettre un passage assez heureux. Des hommes, et des hommes excellens, sont venus m'offrir leur service de toutes parts; je les ai remerciés jusqu'à nouvel ordre, mais maintenant où entravera-t-on pour hyverner? Vous en demandez sept; il en faudroit au moins neuf pour un canot du nord, le guide inclus; et

ce guide ne voudra pas hyverner; alors comment reviendra-t-il? Il pourroit, il est vrai, revenir sur quelque canot que le Lord attendra sans doute cet automne. Mais les autres hommes ne se trouveront pas comme vous les désignez: les charpentiers et les menuisiers ne savent pas descendre ni monter un rapide; il est essentiel de donner aux missionnaires des voyageurs habiles dans ce métier, et composer leur équipe mieux que ne l'étoit le mien il y a deux ans. De plus, de quarante hommes il n'y avoit pas six novices, et cependant nous allions mal. Que sera-ce donc le cas présent où l'on paroît ne vouloir que des novices pour mener un canot d'écorce à travers des milliers de danger? Il faut avouer que Lord Selkirk, après avoir tant travaillé pour l'établissement d'une mission à la Rivière Rouge, est un peu serré maintenant qu'il en faut venir à l'exécution; avec £50 il va se tirer d'affaire et aura en sus dans sa colonie des ouvriers, des outils &c, tout cela au compte du fonds de la mission. ce n'est pas honnête. Ce seroit à Sa Seigneurie à transporter sur ses canots les ouvriers et les outils nécessaires à l'établissement, et à débarrasser les missionnaires de ce soin; ils auront assez et trop d'embarras sans cela; je ne manquerai pas de le lui faire entendre à ma première entrevue, et d'essayer à ne donner que des voyageurs aux missionnaires, et des effets pour la mission seulement, sans pelles ni pioches, sans coutres ni charrues. L'intention des souscripteurs qui contribuent à la batisse de l'église n'est pas d'encourager l'agriculture ni même de fournir aux frais du voyage; la plupart ne veulent donner que pour l'église, parce qu'ils supposent que la compagnie fera davantage pour le transport des personnes et des effets; ils seront trompés, du moins en grand nombre, si on employe leur argent à d'autres objets.

Voici ce que je proposerai pour former le canot des missionnaires: d'engager neuf hommes, le guide compris, quatre hyvernans au plus, et cinq voyageurs de profession qui pourront revenir sur les canots de la compagnie cet automne. Il en restera assez de quatre à la charge des missionnaires qui doivent être chargés de les nourrir; ce seroit peut-être même trop pour leurs moyens; car sur quel fonds prendre quand la souscription sera épuisée? Il faut nécessairement avoir ici quelqu'un qui puisse faire face aux déboursés, et pour cette année et pour l'année prochaine. Au nom de qui passera-t-on les engagements? C'est ce que j'ignore entièrement. Je verrai là-dessus Mr Forest, qui est le pourvoyeur du Lord à Montréal, et il prendra peut-être la responsabilité pour la sureté des hommes que j'aurai engagé. Je voudrois bien ne pas exposer les missionnaires au trouble, ni au danger; et pour cela il faut penser à tout; le plan proposé les soumet à beaucoup de difficultés.

Le devis de l'équipement d'un canot du nord, tel que votre grandeur me l'envoie, est assez exact, s'il y avoit plus d'hommes, il approche £380. on peut mettre aisément £50 de plus pour frais imprévus; on me dira sans doute où prendre cette somme, si je suis chargé de l'employer. Il est fâcheux que la saison actuelle ne permette pas d'aller en ville immédiatement; je pourrois répondre à votre grandeur avec plus de précision sur tout ce qu'il y a à faire, j'aurai peine demain à envoyer quelqu'un à pied porter mes dépêches à la poste, car il est fort douteux qu'on puisse traverser. Je m'efforcerai de le faire moi-même au plutôt, afin de me concerter avec les différens agens des compagnies pour les objets dont il faut pourvoir la *sainte canotée*. Attendez-vous, Monseigneur, à un peu plus de frais, et à un peu de différence dans le choix des hommes; je ne voudrois avoir que de bons *canoteurs*; la chose en vaut la peine. Puisqu'on s'est déterminé à séparer les missionnaires, il faut que chaque compagnie pourvoie aux siens d'une manière un peu plus généreuse que ne le fait Lord Selkirk. Je ne vois pas l'avantage que votre grandeur tireroit en disant que sa seigneurie n'a rien mis du sien dans l'établissement de la mission; il n'y aura que les personnes raisonnables qui vous l'entendront dire à vous même qui le croiront; dans l'opinion générale, mylord passera pour en avoir fait davantage; et il me paroît qu'il devoit en faire davantage, surtout si on lui monte des agriculteurs, des charpentiers et des menuisiers.

J'espère que votre grandeur ne me voudra pas de mal de m'opposer quelquefois à certaines dispositions de ses plans de voyages dans les pays-hauts. J'ai été à portée de connoître bien des détails sur ces sortes d'arrangemens; je cherche à améliorer autant que possible la situation des missionnaires, et vous trouverez bon, j'en suis certain, tout ce que je pourrai faire dans cette vue. Je ne doute pas qu'une heure de conversation de vive voix expliqueroit au net bien des difficultés qui obligent d'écrire au long, et sur lesquelles on a toujours peine à s'entendre par écrit. C'est bien ce qui m'engageroit davantage à visiter votre grandeur, s'il y a moyen.

J'écrirai de nouveau à mon retour de Montréal, mais je ne sais pas quand. En attendant, je prie Dieu qu'il bénisse tous vos efforts pour la connoissance de son nom; qu'il vous accorde une bonne santé et de longues années: nous avons besoin de tout cela pour notre propre bien et pour l'intérêt de la religion.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

[*Translation*]

Boucherville, April 7, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, Yesterday morning I decided to go to Montreal, hoping to find there some letters from Your Lordship, which might have remained there for lack of an opportunity to forward them. I found only one, and that not the main one. Returning immediately by way of Long Point, I visited Mr. Paré, who had just sent me at Boucherville several communications, which I now have before me for answering. I saw neither Mr. McGillivray nor the Earl yesterday. The first had not arrived from Quebec, the second was ill. Nevertheless, I would have insisted on seeing the latter, if at that time I had known of the new plan that has been adopted. Mr. Macdonell is in the United States, and Mr. de Rocheblave is the only one I have been able to see. He is always of the same favorable disposition. For several days it has rained continually, and it is no longer wise to cross the river, until a canoe can float, especially after having been immersed twice, as I was yesterday.

There is no time to be lost in sending orders to Mr. Crevier. But I do not know how to determine at what time, or even at what place he can meet me. If Mr. de Rocheblave wishes to touch at Drummond Island, that will be the best place to meet him. Then I could easily find a way to get from there to Sault Ste. Marie, and to pass through Lake Superior sufficiently early to give three weeks to Fort William, if it is necessary. In case Mr. de Rocheblave could not stop at Drummond Island as he goes up, my companion could not join me until he reached the Sault or Mackinac. Perhaps it would be wise for Your Lordship to send me here the necessary communications unsealed. I will add to them the date and the place of meeting, when I know them. Or, write to Mr. Crevier to be ready, and send back to me instructions concerning the time and the place, and I will forward them to him as soon as possible. I fear that we may miss each other, because it is difficult at this time of year to get the necessary instructions to him in season. It does not enter at all into my plans to go by way of Detroit either going or coming, unless I should have a good deal of time on my hands, because more time certainly is required by that route than by way of the Ottawa River. But I shall assist Mr. Crevier willingly in defraying the expenses of his trip. Providence, aware that I do not like to get into debt, has just made me win a little case, which puts several

dollars at my disposition, without which I would have been embarrassed even in assembling my chapel.

Mr. Paré is expecting to take my place during my absence, as a result of what I said to him yesterday. I should prefer that Your Lordship should not at any time ask him to say Mass twice on the same day. The good man is extremely fearful of the water, is subject to violent headaches when he fasts too long, and the parishioners of Long Point could easily go to Montreal and to Pointe aux Trembles for services. If he goes once a week to his parish, that will be sufficient. It has fewer communicants than my village alone. Your Lordship seems to wish me to go to Quebec before I leave. My inclination urges me strongly in that direction, but the work which you have given me to do needs to be done at once, and will prevent me perhaps from satisfying both my wish and my need in this matter. I will most certainly go if I am able. The parish at Boucherville requires a very strict supervision. I leave it only for short periods, and that not without anxiety. The vicar at Varennes can come if necessary, if I see a way to get to Quebec.

I come now to the new plan decided upon by Your Lordship and the chiefs of the two companies. As far as I am concerned personally, I am very well. I shall be happy with Mr. de Rocheblave, and I do not doubt that all the gentlemen of the North West Company will prefer to have me rather than another, because I missed my mark recently with the Hudson's Bay Company. They will do their best to make me as comfortable as possible. But, My Lord, it will not be so with the Red River missionaries, and I am as much interested in them as in myself. If I were to travel with them and share the expenses of the canoe for this season, I should be able to promise them a relatively happy journey. Men, excellent men, have come from all directions to offer me their services. I put them off with thanks, awaiting later orders. But now where can one find winterers? You ask for seven. At least nine will be necessary for a north canoe, including the guide. The guide will not wish to winter. How then will he return? It is true he may be able to return by some canoe that the Earl doubtless expects this autumn. But the other men will not be just as you expect. Carpenters and joiners do not know how to go down nor to go up rapids. It is essential to give the missionaries *voyageurs* skilled in their trade, and to supply them with equipment better than mine was two years ago. Moreover, of forty men only six were new ones, and yet we traveled with difficulty. What then will be the present case, when,

apparently, new hands will be expected to take a bark canoe through thousands of dangers? It must be admitted that Lord Selkirk, after having worked so hard for the establishment of a mission at Red River, is a little niggardly now that it is time to put his plan in execution. He is getting out of the affair for fifty pounds sterling, and he will have for use in his colony workmen, tools, etc., all at the expense of the mission. It is not honest. It should be His Lordship's business to transport in his canoes the workmen and the tools necessary for the establishment, and to rid the missionaries of this care. They will have enough and too much trouble without that. I shall not fail to make him understand this point when I see him again, and to attempt to give only experienced *voyageurs* to the missionaries, with only the goods for the missions—no spades, pickaxes, colters, and ploughs. The intention of the subscribers who contributed to the fund for the building of the church was not to encourage agriculture, nor even to furnish funds for the trip. Most of them gave only for a church, because they supposed that the company would provide for the transportation of men and goods. They will be betrayed, at least a large part of them, if their money is used for other purposes.

Here is what I propose to do for a canoe for the missionaries: to engage nine men, including the guide, four winterers at most, and five skilled *voyageurs* who can return in the company's canoes this autumn. Four will be enough to remain in the charge of the missionaries, who will be expected to provide food. Perhaps four will be too many for their funds, for on what can we draw when the subscription has been spent? It will be necessary to have someone here to meet expenses both this year and next. In whose name shall the engagements be made out? That is something about which I am totally ignorant. I shall see Mr. Forest on the subject. He is Lord Selkirk's agent at Montreal. Perhaps he will take the responsibility for the surety of the men whom I shall engage. I should not like to expose the missionaries to trouble, nor to danger; and for that reason it is necessary to consider all points in advance. The proposed plan submits them to many difficulties.

The estimate of the equipment of the north canoe, which Your Lordship sends me, is sufficiently exact. If more men are added, it will approach three hundred and eighty pounds sterling. Fifty pounds may be added easily for unexpected expenses. Doubtless I shall be directed where to obtain this sum, if I am expected to use it. It is too bad that the present season does not permit my going to town im-

mediately. I could reply to Your Lordship with more exactness upon everything that must be done. Tomorrow I shall attend to sending someone by foot to carry my dispatches to the post, for it is very doubtful whether one can cross the river. Later I shall do so myself, in order to get in touch with the different agents of the companies to settle matters for which it is necessary to provide in equipping the *holy canoe*. Be prepared, My Lord, for a little more expense, and a great difference in the choice of the men. I should not like to have any but good *canoemen*. It will be well worth the trouble. Since it is determined that the missionaries are to be separated, it is necessary that each company should provide for its own men in a somewhat more generous manner than Lord Selkirk has done. I do not see the advantage that Your Lordship will gain by saying that His Lordship has put nothing of his own into the establishment of the mission. Only reasonable persons will believe you when you say so. In the general opinion milord will pass for having done more, and it seems to me that he should do more, especially if farmers, carpenters, and joiners are sent up for him.

I hope that Your Lordship will not think ill of me for opposing sometimes some of your plans for the trip to the interior. I have had occasion to get acquainted with many of the details of this sort of arrangement. I am trying to better the situation of the missionaries as much as possible, and you will regard favorably, I am certain, all that I can do in this respect. I have no doubt that an hour's conversation would explain completely all the difficulties which oblige me to write at such length, and about which it is always so difficult to make oneself understood in a letter. It will be well for me to visit Your Lordship if possible.

I shall write again upon my return from Montreal, but I do not know just when. Meantime I pray God that he may bless all your efforts for the recognition of His name, that He will grant you good health and long years. We have need of you for our own good and for the interest of religion.

I have the honor to be most respectfully, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, APRIL 10, 1818
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Boucherville, 10 avril 1818.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis,/ Evêque de Québec. Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ On ne peut plus sortir du village ni y entrer sans s'exposer à quelque danger; la glace du fleuve tient encore, mais elle est fort mauvaise; et nous sommes ici environnés d'eau et de glaces à demi fondues. Je suis donc retenu malgré moi au presbytère. Outre les obstacles de la saison, j'ai des malades, des mourans et des morts; j'en ai enterré trois cette semaine, et mes voisins ne seroient pas bien aise de voyager pour moi dans les chemins que nous avons. Il suit de tout cela que je n'ai pu rien faire pour avancer l'équipement des missionnaires depuis la dernière lettre que j'ai eu l'honneur de vous écrire; et Dieu sait quand je pourrai agir. Cependant j'ai vu dans mon village et aux environs quelques gens qui savent manier la hache et ont un peu voyagé, et qui s'engageroient volontiers pour un an, mais pas plus; je crois que ce seroit assez, sauf aux missionnaires de continuer leur engagement s'ils s'y trouvoient contens. J'insiste de plus à avoir neuf hommes au lieu de sept; ce n'est pas trop pour un tel voyage; et après avoir bien tout calculé pour le mieux, voici ce que je tâcherai de faire: j'engagerai un bon guide, un bon gouvernail et deux bons bouts de canot qui ne seront pas tenus d'hiverner, et cinq hommes hyvernans qui sachent travailler la charpente et la menuiserie. J'attendrai les missionnaires pour passer tous les engagements en leur nom; et une fois que ces cinq derniers auront hyverné, ils continueront leur engagement pour plus longtemps, et à telle condition que les missionnaires et eux agréeront alors. Les quatre autres seront libres de descendre s'ils le veulent. Ce sera une assez grande charge pour les missionnaires d'avoir cinq hommes à nourrir avec eux pendant un an, dans un pays qu'ils ne connoissent pas, et où les ressources, quelque'abondantes qu'elles soient, doivent être prévues et pourvues d'avance. Voilà ce qui me paroît de mieux à faire, si je n'ai pas de contre ordre; aussitôt que la glace sera partie, je me mettrai en route pour Montréal.

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Mes argumens ou plutôt mes *parlotes* sur les missions du nord-ouest vous ont occasionné plusieurs frais de poste dont je n'ai pas été libre de vous décharger; j'envoie mes lettres par des gens qui ne sauroient pas les affranchir, ou qui ne s'en donneroient pas la peine; ensuite je crois que votre grandeur affranchit toutes les siennes, et à ce compte elle ne peut pas y gagner. Mais je trouverai probablement occasion de

rembourser tout cela et au-delà; je ne voudrais pas demeurer en arrière: car avec moins de revenus que vous je sais que je suis plus riche.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

[*Translation*]

Boucherville, April 10, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, It is not possible to leave the village nor enter it without exposing oneself to considerable danger. The ice on the river still holds, but it is very bad. Here we are surrounded by water and half-formed ice. Thus I am held a prisoner in the presbytery in spite of myself. In addition to these obstacles of the season I have the sick, the dying, and the dead. I have interred three this week, and my neighbors would not be willing to travel for me with the roads as they are. Consequently, I have been able to do nothing toward furthering the equipment of the missionaries since the last letter that I had the honor to write you, and God knows when I can get at it. Nevertheless, I have seen in my village and its environs several men who know how to use the ax and who have paddled a little. They would engage themselves willingly for one year, but not for more. I believe that would be sufficient, except that the missionaries might continue their engagement, if they found them worth while. Moreover, I insist on having nine men instead of seven, which is not enough for such a voyage. Having calculated everything as best I can, here is what I shall try to do: I shall engage a good guide, a good steersman, and two good *boutes*, who will not be required to winter, and five winterers, who can work as carpenters and joiners. I am waiting for the missionaries to make all engagements in their name. Once these last five men have wintered, they will renew their engagements for a longer time, and under such conditions as the missionaries and they agree upon at that time. The four others will be at liberty to come down, if they wish. It will be a sufficient responsibility for the missionaries to have five men to supply with food, as well as themselves, for a year in a country that they do not know, and whose resources, however abundant, should be foreseen and provided for in advance. That is what seems to me best to do, if I do not have contrary orders. As soon as the ice has left, I shall set out for Montreal.

.....
My argument, or rather my *gossip*, on the Northwest missions is

going to occasion you considerable expense for postage, which I am not at liberty to pay you. I send my letters by people who do not know how to prepay, or who do not wish to take the trouble. I believe that Your Lordship prepays all letters, and consequently gains nothing thereby. But I will probably find an opportunity to reimburse you for this and more. I should not like to be in arrears, for with less revenue than you, I know that I am richer.

I have the honor to be most respectfully, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO CREVIER, APRIL 13, 1818
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 9:352]

Québec, 13 avril 1818.

A Monsieur Crevier, ptre,/ Vicaire au Détroit.

MONSIEUR,/ Vous êtes destiné à faire prochainement une excursion au Sault Ste Marie & au Fort William pour le salut des sauvages, Canadiens, Anglois &c répandus dans ces quartiers. Mr Tabeau qui est le chef de cette mission vous fera savoir le lieu et le temps où il faudra que vous l'alliez joindre. Il se rendra par la Riv. des Outaouais, et vous par le Lac Huron à la faveur de quelque bâtiment partant du Détroit pour Michillimakinac ou pour Drummond's island. C'est vraisemblablement à un de ces deux postes qu'il fixera le rendez-vous. Faites tout au monde pour vous y trouver à point. Les occasions ne sont pas rares au Détroit. Votre absence sera de deux ou trois mois, pendant lesquels Mr Marchand se tirera seul, sauf à moins donner aux missions de la Riv. à la Tranche et de Malden. Mr Tabeau pourvoira aux frais de votre retour au Détroit. Les dépenses raisonnables de votre voyage du Détroit au lieu où vous devez le rencontrer, seront payés par Mr Marchand, en déduction des componendes³⁴ dont il m'est comptable. Vous lui ferez mes compliments et lui demanderez cet argent. Vous exercerez dans le cours de cette expédition, tant à l'égard de mes diocésains que de ceux de l'évêque de Bardstown,³⁵ tous les pouvoirs dont vous usez à Sandwich, en observant que pour ceux qui s'exercent dans le for extérieur, tels que la dispense de certains empêchemens de mariage, l'absolution des hérétiques qui se réconcilient à l'Eglise, la célébration des mariages, lors que vous serez seul, vous en

³⁴ See the glossary, *post*, p. 447.

³⁵ Benedict Joseph Flaget was the first bishop of Bardstown, Kentucky. His diocese at the time of this letter included most of the old Northwest Territory.

userez; mais lorsque Mr Tabeau sera sur les lieux, vous les lui renverrez. Ce sera lui qui décidera de la liberté de ceux qui ayant été mariés en d'autres pays, prétendent que leurs femmes sont mortes et demandent à être joints en secondes noces. Vous pouvez compter que tout ce ministère vous présentera beaucoup de cas embarrassans. Heureusement pour vous, vous serez compagnon d'un homme capable de décider une grande partie de vos doutes.

Priez Dieu de répandre ses bénédictions sur vos travaux et croyez-moi &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, April 13, 1818.

Mr. Crevier, Priest, Vicar at Detroit.

SIR, You are to make a trip very soon to Sault Ste. Marie and Fort William for the salvation of the Indians, Canadians, English, and others scattered over that district. Mr. Tabeau, who is the leader of this mission, will acquaint you with the place and the time for meeting him. He will go by the Ottawa River, and you by Lake Huron on some vessel leaving Detroit for Michilimackinac or Drummond Island. It is likely that he will fix the rendezvous at one of these two posts. Do your utmost to be there in plenty of time. Opportunities [for transportation] are not rare at Detroit. You will be absent two or three months, during which time Mr. Marchand will get along by himself, except possibly in giving missions at Thames River and Malden. Mr. Tabeau will provide for the expense of your return to Detroit. The reasonable costs of your trip from Detroit to the place of rendezvous will be defrayed by Mr. Marchand from the *componenda*³⁴ in his charge. Present him my compliments and ask for this money. In the course of this voyage you will exercise for my parishioners and for those of the Bishop of Bardstown³⁵ all the faculties that you use at Sandwich, observing, however, that in the case of those exercised within the temporal jurisdiction of the Church, such as the dispensation of certain impediments to marriage, the absolution of heretics reconciled to the Church, and the celebration of marriages, you may use them when you are alone; but when Mr. Tabeau is present, you will defer to him. It is he who will decide as to the liberty of those who have been married in other countries, who claim that their wives are dead and ask to be married a second time. You may count on it that your mission will present many embarrassing cases to you. Hap-

pily for you, you will have as companion a man capable of solving a large part of your problems.

Pray God to bless your work, and believe me etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

SELKIRK TO BISHOP PLESSIS, APRIL 16, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

A Montreal, ce 16 avril 1818.

MONSEIGNEUR, J'ai eu le plaisir d'apprendre de Mr Gale que M. Provencher et M. Dumoulin³⁶ ont été nommés pour la mission de la Rivière Rouge, et qu'ils doivent se rendre à Montréal vers le 1 mai pour prendre leurs arrangemens pour le voyage. J'espère qu'alors j'aurai le plaisir de faire leur connoissance. En attendant il convient de penser aux précautions qu'il faudra prendre pour lever les obstacles qui pourroient les contrarier dans le bon oeuvre qu'ils ont entrepris. En réfléchissant à ce sujet, il me paroît qu'il seroit d'une très grande utilité que la mission fût accompagnée par un officier du gouvernement, du département des sauvages. Il n'y a pas à douter que cela auroit sur l'esprit des voyageurs et des sauvages un effet très important; et j'oserai recommander à Votre Seigneurie de demander à Son Excellence le Gouverneur en chef que Mr le Capitaine de Lorimier³⁷ fut appointé pour accompagner la mission jusqu'à la Rivière Rouge. Ce monsieur est d'une grande expérience dans les voyages, et entend parfaitement la manière de se prendre avec les voyageurs. Son activité empêcheroit les délais et avanceroit de beaucoup le progrès du voyage, en même tems que sa société y ajouteroit un grand agrément. Il est connu et respecté des sauvages aussi bien que des Canadiens du nord, de manière qu'il pourroit déjouer les intrigues par lesquelles on pourroit tenter d'incommoder le voyage des missionnaires. Sa situation dans le service du gouvernement le met au-dessus des tracasseries des traitants, ce qui s'accorde avec l'indépendance dans laquelle il convient de tenir la mission. Quoique j'estime beaucoup son caractère, et que je crois posséder son amitié personnel, il n'a jamais pris aucune part dans les disputes qui ont eu lieu avec le Nord-Ouest, de manière que Mr Colman a trouvé occasion de faire, auprès du Surintendant des Affaires sauvages, un éloge non équivoque de sa conduite sage et impartiale.

³⁶ Sévère Joseph Nicolas Dumoulin was born at Ste. Anne on the island of Montreal in 1793. He was educated at Nicolet Seminary and was ordained a priest in 1817. See Morice, *Dictionnaire historique*, and *ante*, pp. xi, xiv-xvi.

³⁷ Jean Baptiste, chevalier de Lorimier, had already been in the interior in 1816, when he accompanied Lord Selkirk's expedition against Fort William. A rather full account of his career is given in Morice, *Dictionnaire historique*.

Mr Gale m'a fait part aussi des observations de Votre Seigneurie au sujet des Trustees.— Il n'y a pas à douter que MM. les Missionnaires doivent être du nombre; et je crois qu'il conviendra d'y ajouter quatre ou cinq des Catholiques les plus distingués, soit ecclésiastiques, soit laïques, à Québec ou à Montréal. Ces Trustees premièrement nommés auront le pouvoir de s'associer d'autres à leur gré, quand ils le jugeront convenable. Aussitôt que la population sera multipliée à la Rivière Rouge, au point qu'on y trouvera des individus d'un rang et d'une éducation convenables, on pourra nommer d'autres Trustees résidants à la colonie, en tel nombre que les circonstances pourront le demander. Mais je ne crois pas que Mr Lacroix conviendrait pour une telle charge. C'est avec regret qu'il m'est nécessaire de dire que le fond du caractère de ce jeune homme ne répond pas à ce qu'il y a de prevenant dans son adresse. Il manque absolument de stabilité, et même de quelques qualités morales dont Votre Seigneurie ne voudrait pas se passer dans ceux qui doivent être chargés d'un devoir aussi important.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec la considération la plus parfaite, Monseigneur, votre très obéissant serviteur

SELKIRK.

A Monseigneur l'Evêque Catholique de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, April 16, 1818.

MY LORD, I have had the pleasure of learning from Mr. Gale that Mr. Provencher and Mr. Dumoulin³⁶ have been chosen for the Red River mission, and that they are to betake themselves to Montreal about the first of May, in order to make arrangements for the trip. I hope that at that time I shall have the pleasure of making their acquaintance. In the meantime it will be advisable to be thinking of precautionary measures that it will be necessary to take to offset obstacles that might hinder them in the good work that they have undertaken. With this in mind I believe it will be very practical for the mission to be accompanied by a government officer from the Indian Department. He would have without doubt a very salutary effect on the minds of *voyageurs* and Indians, and I shall take the liberty of recommending to Your Lordship to petition His Excellency, the Governor in Chief, that Captain de Lorimier³⁷ be appointed to accompany the mission as far as the Red River. This gentleman has had wide experience in such trips and understands perfectly the way to handle *voyageurs*. His services would prevent delays and would help the progress of the trip very

much, at the same time that his company would be most agreeable. He is known and respected by the Indians, as well as by the Canadians of the North, so that he could foil intrigues, which might be attempted to embarrass the missionaries' trip. His position in the government's service places him above the chicanery of the traders, and this would be in accord with the independence in which it will be wise to maintain the mission. Although I esteem him highly, and though I believe I have his personal friendship, he has never taken any part in the disputes that have taken place with the North West Company, so that Mr. Coltman has made, according to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, an unequivocal testimonial of his wise and impartial conduct.

Mr. Gale has also informed me of Your Lordship's remarks about trustees. There is no question but that the missionaries must be included; and I believe it will be advisable to add to them four or five of the most distinguished Catholics, whether religious or lay, in Quebec or Montreal. These first trustees will have the right to add others as they wish, when it seems advisable. As soon as population has increased at Red River to the point where individuals of suitable rank and education can be found, other resident trustees of the colony can be appointed in such numbers as the circumstances require. But I do not think that Mr. Lacroix would be a wise choice for this position. It is with regret that I must say that fundamentally this young man's character does not correspond with his pleasing address. He totally lacks stability and even some moral qualities with which Your Lordship would not care to dispense in men who are to be responsible for so heavy a charge.

I have the honor to be most respectfully, My Lord, your very obedient servant,

SELKIRK.

His Lordship the Catholic Bishop of Quebec.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE MISSIONARIES
TO RED RIVER, APRIL 20, 1818

[Quebec Archbishopal Archives, Letter Books, H:191, 192]⁸⁸

JOSEPH OCTAVE PLESSIS par la miséricorde de Dieu et la grâce du St Siège Apostolique, Evêque de l'Eglise catholique de Québec, &c., &c., &c.

A tous ceux qui les présentes verront savoir faisons que par un effet du désir longtemps entretenu de procurer aux nations sauvages de la partie de l'Amérique Septentrionale située au Nord et à l'Ouest des deux provinces du Haut et du Bas Canada, la connoissance de l'Evan-

⁸⁸ A contemporary translation of this document is in the Selkirk Transcripts, 14:4816.

gile comme le plus puissant moyen de hâter leur civilisation, et encouragés à cette oeuvre importante par le désir et le zèle de Son Excellence Sir John Sherbrooke Gouverneur en chef de ces Provinces au nom de Sa Majesté Britannique, nous avons nommé et appointé Messrs Joseph Norbert Provencher et Sévère Joseph Nicolas Dumoulin, tous deux prêtres de notre diocèse, à l'effet de se transporter en qualité de missionnaires dans la dite partie de l'Amérique Septentrionale située au Nord et à l'Ouest des dites deux Provinces du Haut et du Bas Canada, les avons revêtus de tous les pouvoirs spirituels qui leur sont nécessaires pour remplir leur mission, et avons déterminé que leur principale résidence seroit sur la Rivière-Rouge, près du lac Winipic. C'est pourquoi nous exhortons en Notre Seigneur tous les chrétiens, de quelque dénomination qu'ils soient, qui auront occasion de rencontrer les dits missionnaires, de ne leur porter aucune nuisance et de ne mettre nul obstacle à l'accomplissement de leur mission, mais de leur rendre le respect dû à leur caractère et de se montrer dociles aux paroles de paix qu'ils ont ordre de porter dans ces régions lointaines, persuadés que de leur côté ils ne prendront aucune part aux intérêts politiques qui peuvent diversement affecter certains esprits et que leur unique objet sera toujours de travailler au maintien de la concorde entre les frères et à la sanctification des âmes rachetées au prix du sang de Jésus-Christ.

En foi de quoi nous avons délivré les présentes sous notre seing le grand sceau du diocèse et le contre seing de notre secrétaire le vingtième jour d'avril mil huit cent dix-huit.

J. O. Ev. Cath. de Québec.

(Seal)

Par MONSEIGNEUR, / P. F. TURGEON, ptre, Scret.

[*Translation*]

JOSEPH OCTAVE PLESSIS, by the grace of God and the favor of the Holy Apostolic See, bishop of the Catholic Church of Quebec, etc., etc., etc.

Know all men by these presents that as a result of a desire long entertained to carry to the Indian nations of that part of North America situated to the north and west of the two provinces of Upper and Lower Canada the knowledge of the Gospel as the most certain means of hastening their civilization, and encouraged in this important work by the wish and zeal of His Excellency, Sir John Sherbrooke, governor in chief of these provinces in the name of His Brittanic Majesty, we have named and appointed Messrs. Joseph Norbert Provencher and Sévère Joseph Nicolas Dumoulin, both priests of our diocese, to the end

that they may betake themselves in the office of missionaries into the said part of North America situated to the north and west of the said two provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, that we have clothed them with all spiritual faculties necessary for the fulfillment of their mission, and that we have determined that their principal place of residence shall be on the Red River near Lake Winnipeg. It is for that reason that we exhort in the Lord all Christians of whatsoever denomination, who shall have occasion to meet the aforesaid missionaries, to do them no harm and to put no obstacle in the way of the accomplishment of their mission, but to render them all respect due to their character and to show themselves obedient to the words of peace that they are commanded to bear into those distant regions, being persuaded that for their part they will not take sides in political affairs that can affect certain individuals in different ways, and that their sole object will be ever to work for the maintenance of peace between brothers and for the sanctification of souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

In faith whereof we have delivered these presents under our signature, the great seal of the diocese, and the countersignature of our secretary, this twentieth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and eighteen.

J. O., Catholic Bishop of Quebec.

(Seal)

By MONSEIGNEUR P. F. TURGEON, Priest, Secretary.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PRIESTS OF THE RED RIVER MISSION, APRIL 20, 1818
[Quebec Archbishopial Archives, Letter Books, 4:190, 191]³⁹

Québec, 20 avril 1818.

Instructions pour MM. J. N. Provencher/ et J. N. S. Dumoulin,⁴⁰
nommés missionnaires/ pour les territoires indiens situés/ au Nord
et à l'Ouest du Canada.

1^o. Ils doivent considérer comme le premier objet de leur mission de retirer de la barbarie et des désordres qui en sont la suite, les nations sauvages répandues dans cette vaste contrée.

2^o. Le second objet est de porter leurs soins vers les mauvais chrétiens qui y ont adopté les moeurs des sauvages et vivent dans la licence et dans l'oubli de leur devoir.

3^o. Persuadés que la prédication de l'évangile est le moyen le plus assuré d'obtenir ces heureux effets, ils ne perdront aucune occasion d'en inculquer les principes et les maximes, soit dans leurs conversations particulières, ou dans leurs instructions publiques.

³⁹ A copy of this letter is in the Selkirk Transcripts, 14:4818-4821.

⁴⁰ There seems to be some confusion regarding Dumoulin's initials. See *ante*, p. 57.

4°. Afin de se rendre plus promptement utiles aux naturels du pays où ils sont envoyés, ils s'appliqueront, dès le moment de leur arrivée, à l'étude des langues sauvages et tâcheront de les réduire à des principes réguliers, de manière à pouvoir en publier une grammaire après quelques années de résidence.

5°. Ils prépareront au baptême, avec toute l'expédition possible, les femmes infidèles qui vivent en concubinage avec des chrétiens, afin de substituer des mariages légitimes à ces unions irrégulières.

6°. Ils s'attacheront avec un soin particulier à l'éducation chrétienne des enfans, établiront à cet effet des écoles et des catéchismes dans toutes les bourgades qu'ils auront occasion de visiter.

7°. Dans tous les endroits remarquables, soit par leur position, soit par le passage des voyageurs ou par des rassemblemens de sauvages, ils auront soin de faire planter de hautes croix, comme pour prendre possession de ces divers lieux au nom de la Religion catholique.

8°. Ils répéteront souvent aux peuples vers lesquels ils sont envoyés combien cette religion prescrit sévèrement la paix, la douceur, l'obéissance aux loix tant de l'Etat que de l'Eglise.

9°. Ils leur feront connaître l'avantage qu'ils ont de vivre sous le gouvernement de S. M. B., leur enseigneront de parole et d'exemple le respect et la fidélité qu'ils doivent au Souverain, les accoutumant à adresser à Dieu de ferventes prières pour la prospérité de Sa Très Gracieuse Majesté, de son auguste Famille & de son Empire.

10°. Ils maintiendront un parfait équilibre entre les prétentions réciproques des deux compagnies du Nord-Ouest et de la Baie d'Hudson, se souvenant qu'ils sont exclusivement envoyés pour le bien spirituel des peuples, de la civilisation desquels doit résulter l'avantage de l'une et l'autre compagnies.

11°. Ils fixeront leur demeure près du Fort Douglas sur la Rivière Rouge, y construiront une église, une maison, une école &c. tireront pour leur subsistance le meilleur parti possible des terres qui leur y seront données, et quoique cette rivière, ainsi que le lac Winipic où elle se décharge, se trouvent dans le territoire réclamé par la compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, ils n'en seront pas moins ardens pour le salut des commis, engagés et voyageurs qui sont au service de la compagnie du Nord-Ouest, ayant soin de se porter partout où le besoin des âmes les appellera.

12°. Ils nous donneront des informations fréquentes et régulières de tout ce qui peut intéresser, retarder ou favoriser le progrès de la mission; et si nonobstant la conduite la plus impartiale, ils se trouvent

troublés dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions, ils n'abandonneront point leur mission avant d'avoir reçu nos ordres.

Donné à Québec le 20 avril 1818.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, April 20, 1818.

Instructions for Messrs. J. N. Provencher and J. N. S. Dumoulin,⁴⁰ missionaries assigned to the Indian country situated to the north and west of Canada.

1. They are to consider the first object of their mission to be to reclaim from barbarism and the disorders that result from it the Indian nations scattered over that vast country.

2. The second object is to carry assistance to delinquent Christians, who have adopted there the customs of the natives and who live licentiously, forgetful of their duty.

3. Persuaded that the preaching of the Gospel is the most certain means of obtaining these happy results, they will lose no occasion for inculcating its principles and maxims, whether in their private conversations or in their public offices.

4. In order to make themselves most speedily of use to the natives of the regions to which they are sent, they will apply themselves from the moment of their arrival to the study of the Indian languages and will endeavor to reduce them to rules, so that a grammar may be published after a few years of residence.

5. They will prepare for baptism, with all possible speed, the infidel women who live as concubines of Christian men, in order to substitute legitimate marriage for those irregular unions.

6. They will apply themselves with particular care to the Christian education of the children, establishing for that purpose schools and catechisms in all the settlements that they shall have occasion to visit.

7. In all spots that are outstanding, whether from position, or from the fact that *voyageurs* pass there, or that the Indians gather there, they will take care to plant high crosses, as an indication that these several places have been taken possession of in the name of the Catholic religion.

8. They will repeat often to the people to whom they are sent that that religion strictly prescribes peace, good behavior, and obedience to the laws both of state and church.

9. They will cause to be known the advantages that the inhabitants have in living under the government of His Britannic Majesty, teach-

ing them by word and deed the respect and allegiance owed to the sovereign, and accustoming them to address to God fervent prayers for the well-being of His Most Gracious Majesty, of his august family, and of his empire.

10. They will maintain absolute impartiality toward the respective claims of the two companies, the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, remembering that they are sent solely for the spiritual good of these peoples, whose civilization should result in advantages to both companies.

11. They will fix their residence near Fort Douglas on Red River, and construct there a church, a dwelling, a school, etc. They will draw their living as much as possible from the land that will be given to them there. And although that river, as well as Lake Winnipeg, into which it discharges, are within the territory claimed by the Hudson's Bay Company, they will not be less zealous for the salvation of the clerks, *engagés*, and *voyageurs* in the service of the North West Company, taking care to go to all places where the need of souls shall call them.

12. They will make frequent and regular reports of all that can interest, retard, or favor the progress of the mission; and if, notwithstanding a very impartial conduct, they find themselves troubled in the exercise of their duties, they will not abandon their mission before receiving our orders.

Given at Quebec this twentieth day of April, 1818.

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, APRIL 22, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montréal, 22 avril 1818.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec. Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR, / Après avoir essayé plusieurs fois de venir à Montréal, j'ai enfin réussi hier, ayant fait la route tantôt à pied, tantôt à cheval, tantôt en cariole, tantôt en canot. C'est maintenant que nous ressentons davantage le dégat que les glaces ont fait cet hiver à Boucherville. Le village est dans une ile, et les ponts ne se rétablissent pas, ce qui rend les communications extrêmement difficiles. J'appris à Longueuil que Mr Deguise avoit éprouvé une longue et forte révolution de son mal d'entrailles et n'en étoit pas encore délivré. Le docteur auguroit mal de son état; comme notre chenail est libre depuis deux jours, je me propose d'aller en canot demain ou après demain voir

ce brave voisin, dont je suis inquiet. La nouvelle de la mort de Mr Vinet nous est venue hier, ainsi que celle du rétablissement du vicaire de l'Assomption.

Je n'ai reçu qu'ici vos deux dernières lettres du 11 et du 15. Je suis content de l'aise où votre grandeur me met par rapport à l'arrangement du canot des missionnaires. J'en ferai usage. J'ai vu le Comte hier à mon arrivée, mais un moment; nous sommes convenus de nous revoir ce matin, et après cette entrevue je continuerai cette lettre présente que je ne fais que commencer. J'écrirai à Mr Crevier par la poste de demain; l'occasion de Mr Oliva nous est inutile: il part trop tard. Mr De Rocheblave m'assure qu'il ne partira pas avant le 15 mai. Tant mieux; j'aurai le temps de mettre les missionnaires en route avant mon départ, et je craignois ne le pouvoir pas faire. Mr Mcgilvray est dans le haut-canada. Je ne peux pas avoir plus de trois semaines d'ouvrage à Fort William parce que les gens n'y passent pas plus de temps; mais j'aurai plus à faire à l'Île Drummond et au Sault Ste Marie, quoique j'aye moins de temps à donner à ces deux derniers postes; les premiers sont des allans et venans avec lesquels il sera difficile de faire quelque chose de bon; au lieu que la plupart des autres sont demeurans, et il y a plus à espérer; nous sèmerons, et Dieu donnera l'accroissement qui lui plaira. Il seroit bon que votre grandeur envoyât à Mr Desrivières les ordres nécessaires pour la livraison des deniers; je crois que cinq ou six cens louis y passeront dès maintenant. Au reste, il sera tenu compte de tout.

La visite qui vient à Boucherville pendant mon absence me contrarie beaucoup; le curé a toujours bien plus d'affaires à régler que ne le pourroit faire un prêtre desservant en passant; je crains aussi que Mr Paré ne passe plus de temps à la Longue Pointe qu'à Boucherville; et ma paroisse souffrira, car elle demande une résidence bien suivie. Une autre année, si Dieu me ramène, j'espère que les choses s'arrangeront mieux. Je ferai part aux cousins germains de la décision de votre grandeur, à laquelle je m'attendois. Je pars à l'instant pour aller voir Mylord, et reprendrai ensuite.

J'ai enfin vu Lord Selkirk, toujours aimable, mais toujours serré pour les dépenses à faire; il est vrai qu'il en a beaucoup faites. Il m'a dit qu'il se proposoit d'envoyer un canot de compagnie avec celui des missionnaires, et par cette raison seule j'ai cru devoir convenir avec lui que sept ou huit hommes suffiroient pour mener les prêtres, parce qu'en cas de besoin l'autre canot qui servira de cortège lui sera utile; l'interprète Mr Lorimier sera dans ce second canot; c'est un bon garçon, bon

voyageur &c. J'ai livré à Mr Forest les mémoires de fourniture qu'il m'a promis de remplir; les pièces seront marquées au nom de *M missionnaires*. Nous n'avons pris aucune mesure décisive sur les hommes à choisir; si je peux en trouver qui veulent s'engager pour trois ans, je les retiendrai; mais la plupart ne veulent se lier que pour un an; et il est difficile de croire qu'ils aient tort. J'ai cependant un bon guide qui se charge de mener les prêtres à la Rivière Rouge, et qui veut être déchargé là même, libre de rester ou d'en revenir, et c'est précisément ce qui faut; il doit venir me voir pour conclure. Nous attendons les missionnaires avant de régler la disposition des hommes, pièces, canots &c. Mais comme les canots du lord partent vers le 4 ou 5 mai, il seroit bon que les missionnaires arrivassent ici avant, ou du moins envoyassent les articles qu'ils ne veulent pas avoir dans leur canot, et qu'ils se contentent du moins possible à emporter avec eux.

Mylord assure que ces messieurs auront du vin par les batimens de la baye d'HUDSON bien plus facilement que par le transport intérieur; je lui ai fait promettre cependant d'en emporter sur ses canots dix-huit gallons, et avec cela ils pourront aller loin. Mylady a des ornemens, un calice, &c, je ne sais pas si ces articles doivent entrer dans la composition des chapelles portatives des missionnaires. Pour cela, ainsi que pour bien d'autres choses, il faudra attendre ces messieurs. Il y a deux canots du nord préparés pour l'expédition; je suis certain que les canots (appelés communément bâtards) auroient beaucoup mieux fait; dix hommes avec les passagers y auroient été à l'aise; mais on ne veut pas adopter ce plan; s'il y a des contrariétés dans le voyage, je n'en répons plus.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

P. S. Il n'y a pas de missels chez Mr Bossange.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, April 22, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, After having tried several times to get to Montreal, I at last succeeded yesterday, having come partly on foot, partly by horse, partly in a cariole, and partly by canoe. Now is the time that we realize the extent of the damage that the ice made this winter at Boucherville. The village is on an island, and the bridges are not rebuilt. Consequently, communication is extremely difficult. I learned at

Longueuil that Mr. Deguise had experienced a long and serious change in his bowel trouble, and is not yet out of danger. The doctor augured ill from his condition. Since our channel has been free for two days, I plan to go by canoe tomorrow or the next day to see this good neighbor, about whom I am uneasy. News of the death of Mr. Vinet reached us yesterday, as well as that of the re-establishment of the vicar of L'Assomption.

I did not receive your two last letters of the eleventh and the fifteenth until I reached here. I am glad that Your Lordship has put me at my ease with reference to the arrangement for the missionary canoe. I shall take advantage of it. I saw the Earl yesterday on my arrival, but only for a moment. We agreed to meet this morning, and after this interview I shall continue this letter that I am but commencing. I shall write to Mr. Crevier by tomorrow's post. The opportunity [offered] by Mr. Oliva is of no use to us, for he leaves too late. Mr. de Rocheblave assures me that he will not leave before the fifteenth of May. So much the better. I shall have time to see the missionaries off before I leave. I feared that I should not be able to do so. Mr. McGillivray is in Upper Canada. I shall not be able to do more than three weeks' work at Fort William, because the people do not stay there longer. But I shall have more to do at Drummond Island and at Sault Ste. Marie, although I have less time to give to these last posts. At the first [*Fort William*] there are the comers and goers, with whom I shall have difficulty in doing anything worth while; whereas the larger part of the others are residents, and there is more to hope from them. We will sow, and God will give the increase that pleases Him. It will be well for Your Lordship to send to Mr. Desrivères the necessary orders for delivering the money. I believe that five or six hundred pounds will be sufficient for the present. As for the rest, he will render an account of everything.

The care of Boucherville during my absence irks me considerably. The curé has always more affairs to supervise than a nonresident priest could attend to. I fear also that Mr. Paré will pass more time at Long Point than at Boucherville, and my parish will suffer, for it demands a continuous residence. Another year, if God brings me back, I hope that things will be better arranged. I shall inform the cousins of Your Lordship's decision, which I was expecting. I am leaving this moment to go to see milord, and I shall resume this letter later.

At last I have seen Lord Selkirk, who is always amiable, but always niggardly where expenses are to be made. It is true that he has done

a good deal. He tells me that he plans to send a canoe in company with that of the missionaries, and for that reason alone I thought that I should agree with him that seven or eight men would be sufficient to take up the priests, because in case of need the other canoe in their company could come to their aid. The interpreter, Mr. de Lorimier, will be in the second canoe. He is a fine fellow, a good traveler, etc. I have given Mr. Forest the memorandum of the supplies, and he has promised to fill it. The *pièces* will be marked *M* for missionaries. We have taken no final step in the matter of choosing the men. If I can find some who are willing to engage themselves for three years, I shall secure them. But most of them will be willing to bind themselves only for a year, and it is hard to believe that they are wrong. Nevertheless, I have a good guide who will take upon himself the responsibility of conducting the priests to Red River, and who will be discharged there, free to remain or to come back. That is precisely as it should be. He is to come to see me to settle the matter. We are awaiting the missionaries before settling the matter of men, *pièces*, canoes, etc. But as the Earl's canoes are leaving about the fourth or fifth of May, it will be well for the missionaries to arrive here before that time, or at least to send the articles that they do not wish to have in their canoe and that they need least to take with them.

His Lordship assures me that the missionaries will be able to get wine by the Hudson's Bay Company's vessels much more easily than by inland transportation. Nevertheless, I have made him promise to carry eighteen gallons in his canoes, and with that they can get along for some time. Milady has some vestments, a chalice, etc. I do not know whether these articles are to form a part of the traveling chapels of the missionaries. Concerning that matter, as many others, it will be necessary to wait for those gentlemen. Two north canoes are ready for the trip. I am certain that the canoes commonly called bastard canoes would have been much better. Ten men could have been placed in them, together with the passengers, quite easily. But that plan was not acceptable. If there are difficulties on the trip, I shall not take the responsibility for them.

I have the honor to be most respectfully, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

P. S. Mr. Bossange has no missals.

Boucherville, 24 avril 1818.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis,/ Evêque de Québec. Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Je réponds immédiatement à l'honneur de votre lettre du 20, et ferai même une occasion demain matin pour envoyer la présente au cas qu'elle soit nécessaire pour décider votre grandeur à obtenir l'assistance de Mr Delorimier dans le voyage des missionnaires. Assurément ce plan est excellent, et mylord me l'a communiqué dans le dernier entretien que j'ai eu avec sa Seigneurie, suivant que je vous l'ai marqué dans ma lettre de mercredi. C'est là ce qui m'a déterminé à consentir au petit nombre d'hommes que l'on propose pour le canot apostolique; car autrement j'aurois insisté à prendre un grand canot du maitre, ou du moins un canot appelé bâtard, parce qu'il est de grandeur mitoyenne entre les grands et ceux du nord. J'en avois même presque retenu un et me serois chargé d'avoir à Fort William's une autre voiture plus commode pour entrer dans l'intérieur du pays; le tout sur la parole de l'officieux Mr de Rocheblave, qui est franc et loyal.

J'ai compris de la conversation du Comte que le canot de Mr Delorimier seroit séparé de celui des missionnaires et qu'ils marcheroient ensemble et s'entr'aideroient dans le besoin. Si le plan s'exécute ainsi, il n'y a pas de doute que tout n'aille bien; et le fonds de la mission n'en sera pas plus chargé; il le sera moins au contraire puisque nous n'aurons que sept hommes à engager, au lieu de dix ou neuf.

Mylord Selkirk m'a dit que les deux canots étoient prêts pour cette expédition; ainsi voilà toujours la voiture. Il y a maintenant les provisions des missionnaires et des engagés à trouver; et Monsr Forest, à qui j'ai livré les mémoires que votre grandeur m'a envoyés, doit s'en occuper, en y faisant quelques petits changemens dont nous sommes convenus. Il reste les hommes à engager. J'en trouve de bons, mais qui ne veulent que d'une année, et le Comte presse de les avoir pour trois ans. J'attends à un nouveau voyage de ville pour tout régler. La gêne que j'éprouve en tout cela, c'est que je ne peux pas quitter longtemps ma paroisse: de nouveaux besoins m'y rappellent à chaque instant. Si j'avois le temps d'aller à St Philippe ou à Berthier, Lanoraye &c, je trouverois bien vite ce qui faut. A plus forte raison n'oserai-je pas m'embarquer pour Québec, quelque besoin que j'aye d'être muni de la bénédiction épiscopale pour la mission dont je suis chargé; j'aime à croire, et j'en suis convaincu, que votre grandeur la remplacera par

quelques souvenirs au saint autel; et à mon retour je gagnerai le Père Paré une semaine de plus pour aller rendre compte de mon voyage.

J'ai oublié de marquer à votre grandeur que je n'ai reçu aucun argent de mylord; il n'en a point parlé et je ne le lui ai pas demandé. Il est vrai que je n'en ai pas encore eu besoin. Le Comte m'a paru surpris que les missionnaires dussent s'arrêter au lac Lapluie; il s'attendait qu'ils se rendroient en prompte et droite ligne à la Rivière Rouge; j'ai cru lire dans sa pensée que cette pause lui déplaisoit; mais il ne s'en est pas expliqué ouvertement.

La compagnie d'un interprête est nécessaire aux missionnaires, et je crois que le guide qu'ils auront pourra en faire la fonction, ou à son défaut quelqu'autre vieux voyageur que j'espère trouver. Je ne me rappelle pas du nommé Perrault⁴¹ que votre grandeur me cite; mais je connois très bien Charles Brousse;⁴² et si nous pouvions l'avoir, ce seroit une excellente acquisition; mais il est probablement engagé à mylord. Au reste nous nous informerons de l'un et l'autre et tâcherons de suppléer à leur défaut au désir de son excellence qui a bien raison de craindre les *mistakes*.

Je désirerois bien savoir que penser des canadiens qui ont des femmes sauvagesses: que faut-il pour que leur mariage soit réhabilité, dans le cas où il y auroit moyen de le faire? Peut-on regarder leur alliance comme lien naturel? quelle des femmes devrait garder celui qui en ayant plusieurs voudroit se marier avec une? &c. L'opinion de votre grandeur sur ces matières me seroit absolument nécessaire; et Mr Provencher avec son compagnon en auront aussi besoin; je profiterai de ce que vous leur aurez dit à ce sujet si votre grandeur ne s'exprime pas au long dans ses lettres.

Monsr Desjardins doit remonter ma chapelle; il s'y entend bien à cela comme à bien d'autres choses. Pour moi, j'ai réellement trop peu de temps pour penser à beaucoup de choses hors celles de ma paroisse. Tous les jours encore, quand je reste ici, je confesse des trois et quatre

⁴¹ It is possible that the Perrault mentioned was that Jean Baptiste Perrault whose "Narrative of the Travels and Adventures of a Merchant Voyageur in the Savage Territories of Northern America" is translated in *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, 37:513-619. He was in Montreal in May, 1818. See page 616 of his "Narrative." He had been a trader in the region between Lake Superior and the Red River during a large part of his active career.

⁴² This may be Charles Gaspar Bruce (often spelled "Brousse" by French-speaking persons), a half-breed who was born near Red Lake and settled at Stillwater, Minnesota, in 1838. His interesting story is told by the missionary priest, Flavien Bonduel, in a report of November 15, 1847, to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. The report is in the archives of that society in Paris. An imperfect translation is in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society. See also *Minnesota History*, 7:178 (June, 1926).

heures de temps; le reste de la besogne va son train: malades, baptêmes, enterremens, prônes, &c, c'est toujours à mon tour.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, de votre grandeur le très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

P. S. Je n'ai point trouvé de missels chez Bossange; il en attend dans le mois de juin. De quel format votre grandeur les veut-elle?

A. T.

On m'a rapporté 50 piastres, dont la moitié d'une seule personne, pour la nouvelle mission. Je ne m'attendois pas à recevoir autant de mes paroissiens à raison des travaux nombreux qu'ils ont à faire cette année. Mais Dieu a des âmes fidelles partout. Mr Deguise a du mieux depuis quelques jours; je n'ai pas eu le temps de l'aller voir; les fréquentes rechutes me font craindre pour un si respectable ami.

A. T.

[*Translation*]

Boucherville, April 24, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, I am replying at once to your favor of the twentieth. I shall even make an opportunity tomorrow morning to send this letter, in case it should be necessary for determining Your Lordship to secure Mr. de Lorimier's presence for the missionary trip. Certainly this plan is excellent, and milord described it to me in the last conversation that I had with him, after which I mentioned it to you in my letter of Wednesday. It is that which decided me to consent to the small number of men that is proposed for the apostolic canoe. Otherwise I certainly should have insisted on a large *canot du maître*, or at least one called a bastard canoe, because it is of a size midway between the large canoe and the north canoe. I have even practically hired one, and have engaged to have at Fort William another conveyance better adapted to traveling in the interior, all on the word of the obliging Mr. de Rocheblave, who is both honest and loyal.

I understood from the Earl's conversation that Mr. de Lorimier's canoe would be separate from that of the missionaries, and both will travel together and aid each other in case of need. If that plan is carried out, there is no doubt that all will go well. Moreover, the mission fund will not be taxed anything in addition. On the contrary, the expense will be less, since we have only seven men instead of nine or ten to engage.

Lord Selkirk has told me that both canoes are ready for the trip. Thus transportation is already taken care of. Now we have to take care of food for the missionaries and the securing of *engagés*. Mr. Forest, to whom I have delivered the memorandum that Your Lordship sent me, is to take care of this matter, making a few little changes that we have agreed upon. It remains to secure men. I have found some good ones, but they wish to engage themselves for only one year. The Earl insists on having them for three years. I expect to go to the city again to take care of all these matters. The trouble that I am experiencing in all this is due to the fact that I cannot leave my parish for any length of time. Every instant new needs call me back. If I had time to go to St. Philippe, Berthier, Lanoraie, etc., I could find very quickly what I need. All the more reason, therefore, that I should not go to Quebec, however much I need to be supplied with the episcopal benediction for the mission with which I am charged. I should like to believe — in fact I am convinced of it — that Your Lordship will replace this benediction with some prayers at the holy altar. On my return I shall secure Father Paré an extra week, in order that I may go to render an account of my trip.

I have forgotten to tell Your Lordship that I have received no money from milord. He has not spoken of it, and I have not asked him for it. It is true that I have not as yet had any need for it. The Earl seemed to be surprised that the missionaries were to stop at Rainy Lake. He expected them to go direct to Red River. I thought I could detect that this stop did not please him, but he did not express his mind.

The presence of an interpreter is necessary for the missionaries. I believe that the guide that they will have will fill the requirement, or if that is not the case, some other old *voyageur*, whom I expect to find. I do not remember the name Perrault⁴¹ that Your Lordship mentioned to me, but I know Charles Brousse⁴² very well indeed. If we can get him, he will make an excellent acquisition. But he is probably engaged to milord. As for the others, we shall keep each other informed and shall try to supply those that will be acceptable to His Lordship, who has very good reason to fear mistakes.

I should like to know how I am to act in the case of Canadians who have taken Indian women. What will be necessary for marriage, in case they should be able to undertake it? Can their unions be regarded as a natural bond? Which woman may a man keep who has had several and who wishes to be married to one? The opinion of Your Lordship on these matters will be absolutely necessary for me.

Mr. Provencher and his companions will also need to know your opinion. I shall profit from what you have told them on this subject, if Your Lordship does not take up the matter at length in your letters.

Mr. Desjardins is to resupply my chapel. He is an expert in this matter, as in many others. As for myself, I have actually too little time to think of hardly anything beyond the activities of my parish. Every day when I am here I confess for three or four hours. The rest of my work follows the usual course: the sick, baptisms, interments, sermons, etc. There is always something for me to do.

I have the honor to be most respectfully, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

P.S. I have not found any missals at Bossange's. He expects some in June. What size does Your Lordship wish them? A. T.

Fifty dollars have been brought to me for the new mission, of which half came from one person. I did not expect to receive so much from my parishioners, because of the numerous enterprises that they have had to undertake this year. But God has faithful souls everywhere. Mr. Deguise is reported to be better the last few days. I have not had time to go to see him. Frequent relapses make me fear for such a worthy friend. A. T.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO ROUX,⁴³ APRIL 25, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Québec, 25 avril 1818.

A Monsieur Roux, / Vic. Gén. à Montréal.

MONSIEUR,

Voilà nos missionnaires de la Rivière-Rouge qui commencent à se mettre en route. Mr Dumoulin est parti d'hier. Mr Provencher en fera autant lundi par le stage, s'il n'ya a pas de steamboat prêt à le recevoir à bord. Je bénis Dieu de l'alacrité avec laquelle partent ces deux bons prêtres. Le petit Edge⁴⁴ les suit. Je suis bien aise d'apprendre que le jeune Asselin montre des dispositions pour cette mission; avec le temps on pourra les mettre à profit. Quatre autres se sont mis ici sur les rangs, mais par diverses raisons convenoient moins

⁴³ Jean H. A. Roux, vicar-general at Montreal, was one of the trustees of the Red River mission. See *post*, p. 102.

⁴⁴ William Edge, or, to use his French name, Guillaume Etienne Edge, was a young ecclesiastic chosen from several applicants to accompany Provencher and Dumoulin to the new mission.

que Mr Edge qui sait un peu d'anglois et pourra, après tout, suffire pour les deux premières années.

.....
Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[Translation]

Quebec, April 25, 1818.

Mr. Roux, Vicar-General at Montreal.

SIR,

.....
And now our Red River missionaries are starting on their trip. Mr. Dumoulin left yesterday. Mr. Provencher will do likewise Monday on the stage, if there is no steamboat ready for him. I praise God for the speed with which these two good priests are leaving. Little Edge⁴⁴ will follow them. I am happy to learn that the young Asselin shows some leanings for this mission; with time we can use them advantageously. Four others have come forward here, but for various reasons are not so well adapted to the work as Mr. Edge, who knows a little English, and who, after all, will do for the first two years.

.....
I am etc.

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS' PASTORAL LETTER TO THE RED RIVER COLONISTS,

APRIL 25, 1818

[Selkirk Transcripts, 14:4836. C]

Joseph Octave Plessis by the mercy of God and the Grace of S^t Siege [Holy See] Apostolic Bishop of Quebec &c, &c, &c. To the Colonists of the Red River in l'Ossinaboia Salvation and Benediction

We have received my very dear children your request of last autumn urgently demanding that we should be pleased to establish a permanent mission amongst you. Nothing could better meet our inclination and desires than such a request We are therefore eager to acquiesce therein especially in choosing from our clergy two priests equally commendable by their zeal their piety and the purity of their doctrine.

These two Missionaries devote themselves to the salvation of your souls and those of our Brethren separating themselves to that effect from their friends from their families from all the hopes and consolations they might be able to find in Canada if they should have re-

mained there. Thank God my very dear children for the acquisition you make of these two estimable subjects. Endeavour to sweeten their ministry amongst you by your docility your obedience and your eagerness to profit from their instructions and good examples. Regard them as your spiritual Fathers charged to speak to you from God and to speak to God for you.

They will reckon [as] nothing neither their fatigues nor their labours if they find amongst the flock confided to them the desire of knowing the true Religion of practicing and honoring it which has without doubt been the motive of your request. Put them in the state of giving us a pretty advantageous testimony of you to induce us to add in a short time another cooperator.

Let the present pastoral Letter be read and published in an assembly of the Colonists of the Red River whether it be by one of the Missionaries or by the Ecclesiastic who accompanies them or by such other person as they shall be pleased to appoint.

Given at Quebec under our hand the seal of our Arms and the Countersign of our Secretary the 25th April 1818.

(Sig) J. O. Bp of Quebec

By Monseigneur/ (Sig) P. F TURGEON P^{tre} Secr

(true Copy) P. F TURGEON P^{tre} Secr.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO SELKIRK, APRIL 27, 1818

[Selkirk Papers. ALS] ⁴⁵

MY LORD/ il n'y a qu'un moment que j'ai reçu de Son Excellence le Gouverneur en Chef l'agrément nécessaire à ce que le Capt. Delorimier entreprît le voyage de la Riviere Rouge pour la protection des missionnaires. D'après tout le bien que Votre Seigneurie m'a dit de cet officier, je me persuade que ces messrs se trouveront fort bien de sa compagnie. Le Gouverneur doit envoyer ses ordres à ce sujet, aujourd'hui même, au surintendant général du Département Sauvage.

Messrs Provencher et Dumoulin sont tous deux en route pour Montréal avec espérance d'y être rendus dimanche prochain. J'ai lieu de croire que Votre Seigneurie sera contente du choix qui a été fait d'eux pour le ministère auquel ils sont destinés. Leur bagage montera par le premier Steam-boat accompagné du jeune ecclésiastique (Mr Edge) qui doit leur aider dans la mission. L'observation de Votre Seigneurie sur le caractère du jeune L-c-x, démontre sans réplique qu'il ne sauroit

⁴⁵ The Minnesota Historical Society has a photostatic copy of the original letter in the Selkirk Papers. A copy is also in the Selkirk Transcripts, 14:4847.

convenablement être mis au nombre des trustees que vous voulez investir de la propriété destinée à l'entretien de la mission. Je n'avois pris la liberté de l'indiquer dans ma lettre à Mr Gale, que parce qu'il m'avoit dit qu'il vouloit se fixer dans la colonie et que personne ne m'avoit encore rien dit à son désavantage.

Son Excellence le Gouverneur en chef fait préparer sur parchemin muni du grand sceau de la Province une espèce de déclaration⁴⁶ qui sera envoyée à Montréal avant le départ des missionnaires et pourra leur servir de protection auprès de tous les sujets de S. M. et même des étrangers qui seroient tentés de donner quelque trouble à leur voyage ou à leurs fonctions lorsqu'ils seront rendus.

Mr Gale aura apparemment la complaisance de me faire savoir les progrès de la souscription à Montréal, sur laquelle je donne aujourd'hui une lettre de crédit à Mr Tabeau à l'adresse de Mr Desrivières.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec beaucoup de respect, / My Lord / De Votre Seigneurie / Le très humble et / très obéissant serviteur

† J. O. Ev. Cath. de Québec

Québec, 27 avril 1818

Au très Honorable / Comte de Selkirk

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, Only a moment ago I received from His Excellency, the Governor in Chief, the requisite authorization for Captain de Lorimier to undertake the trip to Red River for the protection of the missionaries. After all the fine things Your Lordship has told me of this officer, I am convinced that those gentlemen will feel well satisfied with his presence. The Governor is to send his orders on this matter this very day to the Superintendent General of the Indian Department.

Mr. Provencher and Mr. Dumoulin are both on their way to Montreal. They hope to be there by next Sunday. I have reason to think that Your Lordship will be pleased with the choice of these men that has been made for the ministry to which they are destined. Their baggage will go up by the first steamboat, accompanied by the young ecclesiastic (Mr. Edge), who is to help them in their mission. Your Lordship's observation on the character of young L-c-x shows conclusively that it would not be wise to add him to the trustees that you wish to invest with the property set aside for the maintenance of the mission. I took the liberty of mentioning him in my letter to Mr. Gale only because he had told me that he wished to establish himself

⁴⁶ See *post*, p. 74, for Governor Sherbrooke's declaration.

in the colony and because no one had yet told me anything to his detriment.

His Excellency, the Governor in Chief, is having made on parchment, stamped with the great seal of the province, a sort of declaration, which will be sent to Montreal before the missionaries leave.⁴⁶ It will serve as a protection among all His Majesty's subjects, and even among strangers that might be tempted to give them some trouble on their trip or in the performance of their duties after they reach their destination.

Mr. Gale presumably will have the goodness to let me know the progress of the subscription at Montreal, on which I am giving a letter of credit today to Mr. Tabeau addressed to Mr. Desrivères.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

† J. O., Catholic Bishop of Quebec.

Quebec, April 27, 1818.

The Very Honorable Earl of Selkirk.

SHERBROOKE'S CREDENTIALS TO THE RED RIVER MISSIONARIES,

APRIL 29, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

His Excellency Sir John Coape Sherbrooke G. C. B. Captain General and Governor in Chief in and over the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada and Commander of His Majesty's Forces therein &c., &c., &c.

To all to whom these presents shall come.

Whereas the Reverend Joseph Norbert Provencher, Severe Joseph Nicolas Dumoulin, and Guillaume Etienne Edge, have been appointed by the most Reverend the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec to proceed as Missionaries to the Red River and the Adjacent Indian Territories there to disseminate the Christian Religion and to afford to the inhabitants the benefit of the Rites thereof Now know ye that being desirous of furthering so pious and useful work and of affording the fullest protection and support in my power to the persons engaged in it, I do hereby call on all His Majesty's subjects civil and military and do request all other persons whomsoever to whom these presents shall come not only to permit the said Missionaries to pass without hindrance or molestation but to render them all good offices assistance and protection wherever they shall find it necessary to go in the exercise of their holy calling.

Given under my hand and seal at arms at the Castle of St Lewis

in the city of Quebec this twenty ninth day of April, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighteen and in the fifty eighth year of His Majesty's Reign.

By His Excellency's command,

J. C. SHERBROOKE

ANDREW WM COCHRAN, Secretary.

HENEY TO GALE, APRIL 30, 1818⁴⁷

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

30 Avril 1818.

MON CHER MONSIEUR,/ Si je ne me trompe, vous m'avez dit que vous vous proposiez d'écrire à Monseigneur l'Evêque au sujet de l'emploi projeté de la souscription de la Rivière Rouge. Je prends la liberté de vous presser de le faire si vous ne l'avez pas fait déjà; car je suis informé que Mr Tabeau se propose de partir vers le dix de Mai. J'ai pour vous faire cette prière quelques raisons particulières que je ne suis pas libre de communiquer maintenant.

J'ai déjà entendu dire que plusieurs souscripteurs se refuseroient à payer leur souscription, parce que leur objet se trouve entièrement manqué. Ils ont souscrit pour un objet fixe et déterminé aux termes mêmes de la souscription, et n'ont jamais eu intention de contribuer à envoyer des Missionnaires au Fort William, c'est-à-dire chez des gens qui ont refusé de souscrire eux-mêmes. Ils sont peut-être assez amis des gens du Nord-Ouest pour souhaiter leur conversion, mais ils ne sauroient en conscience contribuer à y envoyer des prêtres qui y perdroient leurs peines, et qui se trouveront nécessairement leurs ennemis.

Excusez je vous prie la liberté que je prends et croyez-moi bien sincèrement votre tout ce que vous voudrez.

S. Gale Er

H. HENEY

[*Translation*]

April 30, 1818.

MY DEAR SIR, Unless I am mistaken, you told me that you planned to write the Bishop on the subject of how the Red River subscription money is to be used. I take the liberty of urging you to do so, if you have not yet done it; for I am informed that Mr. Tabeau plans to leave about the tenth of May. I have special reasons for making this request, which I am not at liberty to disclose at present.

I have already heard that several subscribers refused to pay their

⁴⁷ Enclosed in Gale to Bishop Plessis, May 1, 1818. Heney was one of the trustees of the Red River mission. See *post*, p. 102.

donations, because the [original] object was entirely changed. [They said that] they subscribed for a certain object set forth in the very terms of the subscription and that they never had any intention of sending missionaries to Fort William, that is to say, to people who themselves have refused to subscribe. [That] there are, perhaps, enough friends of the employees of the North West [Company] to wish for their conversion, but that the subscribers themselves cannot in conscience contribute to sending thither priests who will have their labors for their pains and who will find themselves necessarily [considered] enemies.

Excuse, I beg you, the liberty I take and believe me very sincerely all that you wish,

S. Gale, Esquire.

H. HENEY.

GALE TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 1, 1818
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montreal, 1st May 1818.

MY LORD,/ I communicated your letter to the Earl of Selkirk immediately after receiving it, as he has no doubt informed you; & I should have had the honor of writing to you long before now, if I had not understood from the Earl of Selkirk that he would give your Lordship an answer.

At the time that your Lordship's letter was received Mr Desrivieres mother was on her death bed & she died a few days after. These circumstances prevented my having any immediate communication with Mr Desrivieres as I thought at such a season of distress an address upon business would wear a very ungracious appearance [*sic*]. I have been since indisposed myself which has prevented my carrying about the subscription paper as I fully intended doing, and but few additions have been [made] to it since I left this for Quebec. It is not without pain that I am even now able to walk; yet I shall endeavor to take round the subscription paper as your Lordship has recommended.

Several of the canadian gentlemen here have expressed their fears lest a considerable portion of the money which they intended for a fixed and permanent establishment at Red River should be employed in only transitory missions, as that of Fort William. I received a note on this subject from one of them, which I take the liberty of forwarding for your inspection.⁴⁸ I regret that such an idea should have been formed. I have however labored to remove it and have also stated to

⁴⁸ See *ante*, p. 75.

these gentlemen that they were mistaken in their estimate of the amount of the expense from this place to Fort William because it could not be necessary to engage a canoe at Montreal for that purpose. The voyage might be performed much more conveniently & cheaply as far as the Sault Ste Marie in the vessels that navigate the lakes, and I believe [*sic*] that at the Sault there would be no difficulty in engaging canoeemen to go from thence as far as Fort William.

These canadian gentlemen are also fearful that the North West Company (whose interests they know to be incompatible with the introduction of order in the country) should endeavor to counteract in some measure the effects of the mission by representing it to the Indians, at their head quarters at Fort William, as proceeding from themselves and as intended to promote their purposes.

But I think that these gentlemen are unnecessarily apprehensive, and that even if the North West Company possess the malice and duplicity which these gentlemen attribute to them, yet no misrepresentation (if the mission continues) can long prevent the benefits expected from it. But if the mission were only temporary I think it might be so misrepresented as to produce injury.

I am desired by the Earl of Selkirk to make out deeds of land to trustees for the Roman Catholic Church at Red River & shall lose no time in completing the documents.

I heart[i]ly congratulate your Lordship upon your having obtained credentials from his Excellency the Governor for the missionaries to Red River. A more judicious or beneficial measure could not have been adopted. These credentials will ensure them respect & attention on their journey & will give them weight & influence wherever they remain.

I have the honor to be with sincere respect/
Your Lordship's obdt
servt.

SAM. GALE jun

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis,/ Evêque cathol: de Québec.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 6, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montréal, 6 mai 1818.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ En arrivant en ville hier, j'ai trouvé trois ou quatre lettres de Votre Grandeur qui attendoient quelques occasions de Boucherville qu'on ne trouve pas facilement à cause de la difficulté des communications. Je suis venu par voiture d'eau, c'est la seule admissible dans la mauvaise saison que nous avons ici. Mr Provencher et moi

avons été presque aussitôt pour saluer Mylord que nous n'avons pas trouvé chez lui; à sa réquisition je l'ai vu ce matin seul, et il est venu voir Mr Provencher au séminaire sur le midi; nous devons aller dîner avec lui demain et nous terminerons toute la disposition du voyage. Il est certain que Mr De Lorimier accompagnera dans son canot particulier la mission apostolique; il est appelé avec nous demain pour concerter les choses tous ensemble; le guide servira aux deux canots et les autres hommes, presque déjà engagés, resteront au service des missionnaires les uns un an les autres trois. Je vous donnerai tout le détail quand tout sera réglé.

L'argent de la souscription de Montréal n'est point recueilli; Mr Gale que j'ai vu cet après midi m'a promis de presser Mr Desrivières d'en faire le recouvrement et qu'au pis aller ce dernier feroit les avances pour le montant quand on le lui demandera. Soyez persuadé, Monseigneur, qu'un grand nombre de souscripteurs sont frustrés dans leur intention, comme j'ai eu l'honneur de vous le marquer précédemment. Ici, le foyer des discussions et divisions, l'esprit de parti joue tout son rôle des deux côtés, et le personnage que nous avons à faire, nous missionnaires, est assez drôle et difficile. Le comte, tout dévot qu'il paroît à l'établissement religieux, a insisté longtemps pour m'empêcher de faire route avec Mr De Rocheblave; il voit toutes sortes de mauvaises conséquences dans ce procédé; j'ai essayé de lui faire entendre qu'il valoit mieux, même pour sa politique, qu'il eut un ami avec les messieurs du nord-ouest, qu'un étranger neuf dans les affaires actuelles et qui pourroit être influencé dans son opinion particulière par les préjugés; il n'en veut rien croire. Cependant je veux toujours aller mon train avec les Hudsoners comme avec les North westers. Mylord objecte à l'engagement de plusieurs hommes que je lui ai proposés; il sera difficile d'en compléter le nombre à son goût; il craint l'influence de ses ennemis, qui se fait sentir partout, et je suis arrêté dans beaucoup de mes arrangemens.

Il seroit nécessaire d'avoir ici un agent des Missionnaires pour répondre aux besoins des missionnaires par la suite, au payement des gages des hommes qui se fait par terme ou en marchandises prises dans les postes, et par conséquent cet agent devroit être un marchand qui a affaire avec les commerçans de la Baie d'Hudson. D'ici à ce que ce règlement soit pris, nous serons obligés de prendre le bureau de la Compagnie, parce que c'est là que nous ferons maintenant tous les préparatifs. Mr Provencher me paroît bien neuf dans toutes ces sortes d'affaires, et il est embarrassé de ce qui n'est pas toujours le plus em-

barrassant. J'ai quelque idée que Mr Dumoulin se tirera mieux que lui dans le voyage.

Mylord paroît inquiet de loger tout le bagage qui formera au moins quatorze ou quinze pièces; il désireroit qu'on les partageât entre le canot de Mr Delorimier et celui des missionnaires; ce qui feroit un encombrement peut-être pire que celui que nous avions il y a deux ans. Je tâcherai de faire de mon mieux pour oter autant d'embarras que possible. Il ne m'a pas encore parlé de ses £50; mais probablement il les fera entrer en compte dans le mémoire des frais que nous avons à payer au bureau.

Il y a plus de trois semaines que je n'ai vu Mr Deguise; j'en ai eu nouvelle plus favorable depuis huit jours. Je prie Dieu qu'il nous conserve ce brave et digne curé.

Cette lettre parviendra à Votre Grandeur par la voie du Steamboat; c'est l'organiste de votre cathédrale qui en sera chargé. Le pauvre enfant voudroit faire un voyage d'Europe aux dépens de ses amis, et je me suis contenté de lui payer son voyage de Montréal, croyant ne pouvoir ni devoir faire plus. Je vous écrirai de nouveau par la poste de samedi, s'il y a quelque chose de nouveau.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, May 6, 1818.

MY LORD, When I arrived in this city yesterday, I found three or four letters from Your Lordship that were waiting some opportunity [to be sent] to Boucherville, which was not to be found easily on account of the difficulty of communications. I came here by water, the only possible way this bad season. Mr. Provencher and I went almost immediately to pay our respects to milord, whom we did not find at home. At his request I went alone this morning to see him, and he came to see Mr. Provencher at the seminary about noon. We are to dine with him tomorrow, and shall complete all our arrangements for the trip. It is certain that Mr. de Lorimier will accompany the apostolic mission in his own canoe. He has been asked to be with us tomorrow in order that everything may be planned in unison. The guide will serve both canoes, and the other men, who are almost all engaged already, will remain in the missionaries' service, some for one

year and the rest for three years. I shall give you details when everything has been settled.

The subscription money has not been collected in Montreal. Mr. Gale, whom I saw this afternoon, has promised me to urge Mr. Desrivères to collect it, and, if worse comes to worst, to advance the sum when asked to do so. Be assured, My Lord, that many subscribers have been frustrated in their plans, as I had the honor of telling you earlier. Here, the center of discussions and strife, party spirit is found on all sides, and the role we are to play, we missionaries, is rather awkward and difficult. The Earl, though apparently devoted to the project of a religious establishment, has been insisting for a long time that I must not go with Mr. de Rocheblave. He sees all sorts of evil consequences in this procedure. I have tried to make him understand that it would be better, even for his plan, to have a friend among the gentlemen of the North West Company rather than a complete stranger to affairs as they stand, and one who could be influenced in his own opinions by their prejudices. He does not wish to believe so. Nevertheless, I always wish to get on well with the Hudson's Bay Company's men as well as with the North Westers. His Lordship objects to engaging several of the men that I have suggested. It will be difficult to complete the list to his liking. He fears the influence of his enemies, which is making itself felt on all sides, and I am much embarrassed in my arrangements.

There should be here an agent for the missionaries, who will attend to their needs as they arise and pay the men's wages, which will be either according to agreement or in goods at the posts. Consequently this agent should be a merchant who has dealings with the Hudson's Bay Company's traders. From now until such an arrangement is made, we shall be obliged to do business with the company's office, because it is there that we are making all our arrangements at this time. Mr. Provencher seems to me to be new at this sort of thing, and he is troubled at what is not always most troublesome. I have a notion that Mr. Dumoulin will get along better than he on the trip.

His Lordship seems uneasy about taking on all the baggage, which will amount to at least fourteen or fifteen *pièces*. He would like to have it divided between Mr. de Lorimier's canoe and that of the missionaries. The result would be a freight perhaps heavier than that which we had two years ago. I will do my best to avoid as much difficulty as possible. He has not spoken to me as yet of his fifty pounds sterling; but probably he will enter the amount on the books to offset the expenses we have to settle with the office.

It is more than three weeks since I have seen Mr. Deguise. I have had more favorable news from him within the week. I pray God that this honest, worthy curé may be spared us.

This letter will reach Your Lordship by the steamboat. I am giving it to the organist of your cathedral. The poor child would like to make a trip to Europe at the expense of his friends. I have been content to pay the expenses of his trip from Montreal, believing that I have neither the power nor the right to do more. I will write you again by Saturday's post, if there is anything new.

I have the honor to be, most respectfully, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec.

PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 7, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁴⁹

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, I arrived at Montreal on the evening of the fourth of May, having come by the following route: I slept at Pointe aux Trembles after leaving Quebec; from there I went to Batiscan; from Batiscan I proceeded to Nicolet where I passed Ascension Day; thence to St. François on Friday; and on Saturday to Sorel, where I took the steamboat Sunday evening.

I saw Mr. Tabeau on Tuesday, the day after my arrival. No arrangements had been made when I arrived, at least for the *voyageurs*, who had not yet been engaged. Mr. Tabeau with his work and the difficulties of present means of communication could not concern himself much about our trip. Everything is ready for him, but very little for us. Perfect accord does not exist between Lord Selkirk and Mr. Tabeau. His Lordship takes it amiss that Mr. Tabeau, who is all for the North West Company, is put in charge of the preparations for a voyage that he believes is all for him. On the other hand, Mr. Tabeau hardly approves of the plan for a permanent mission in the Red River country; he would doubtless have liked to have had the honor of exploration without the inconvenience of permanence. He would also have wished us to go up in a *canot du maître*, seeing to it that a north canoe was provided for us at Point Meuron. But this north canoe would of necessity be provided by the North West Company and that was an arrangement not at all pleasing to His Lordship. Finally, we

⁴⁹ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 6.

are to go in a north canoe and Captain de Lorimier, whom I hope to see today, is to accompany us.

Lord Selkirk would like to delay the plans for a mission at Rainy Lake till another year, for the time that we would pass there would be just so much lost of the best period for building.⁵⁰ I know that after all your arrangements made with Mr. McGillivray Your Lordship will be embarrassed. Nevertheless I believe that it will be well to show His Lordship some marks of preference instead of the North West Company, which is doing absolutely nothing for us. Therefore I think it would be better for me to stop only as briefly as possible at Rainy Lake, even though the *voyageurs* are assembled there, giving orders for a longer mission to be made there next year. Moreover, there is little to be done there. I will do the best I can. His Lordship has perhaps already written you on this subject. I had not seen him for any considerable length of time till yesterday at the seminary. I am to dine with him today along with Mr. Tabeau and Mr. Edge; but I am certain that Mr. Tabeau's presence will embarrass him. Mr. Tabeau has written Your Lordship giving you details about matters in his charge; I will say nothing about them. A rumor has been going about that Mr. Tabeau was going up by means of the subscription, and this rumor offended the subscribers, who did not pretend to favor the traveling mission for Fort William. I believe that in all this Mr. Tabeau was charged with too many conflicting duties, especially in the present feeling between the two parties, to be able to succeed everywhere. However, everything will work out with a little patience.

The Countess has a consecrated chalice. I shall leave our large one here. She has some vestments and linen and a lot of other supplies that will not prevent us from carrying along all that we already have. I have communicated to His Lordship the patents made out by His Excellency and the other papers that concern our mission. He appeared to be well satisfied. Sister Lepailleur told me that the Countess proposed to supply all the sacred utensils of the mission, but many of them can be procured only in England; that will have to be as it may.

Your Lordship would do well to say nothing to Mr. Tabeau of what I have written; to do so would be useless, since all is done or to be done in a short time. We shall hardly leave before the twentieth. Mr. Dumoulin has not arrived; I expect him by the first steamboat. I shall write to Your Lordship between now and my departure, if anything

⁵⁰ It is perhaps unnecessary to point out that there was a very important post of Selkirk's rival, the North West Company, at Rainy Lake.

of importance occurs. I believe that His Lordship will unbosom himself more easily to me than to Mr. Tabeau.

I am with the deepest respect, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

PROVENCHER, Priest.

Montreal, May 7, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 9, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Je me hâte de remplir l'obligation de vous écrire que vous m'avez imposée en partant de Québec. Je suis parti des Trois-Rivières le 7 à une heure et demi du matin et n'ai pu me rendre à Montréal que le 8. J'y ai trouvé les affaires bien peu avancées, ou plutôt le départ fixé bien plus tard qu'il n'étoit nécessaire, c'est le 18 du courant, encore Mr Provencher ne pensoit-il pas ne pouvoir partir que le 22 ou 23. J'ai pressé les préparatives, et il s'est trouvé que c'est les hommes qui nous retarderont le plus. Nous allons tâcher de les faire avertir mais ce sera un peu difficile.

Le Lord persiste à vouloir que nos hommes soient engagés pour 3 ans, il a envoyé hier le Cap. Lhaurimier pour nous dire que quoique ça lui fut assez indifférent pour lui, il vouloit toujours nous avertir que d'engager des hommes pour 3 ans étoit un profit tout clair et que [si] nous persistions à vouloir ne les engager que pour un an, il arriveroit que ces hommes là nous quitteroient précisément au moment où nous en aurions le plus de besoin; et que d'ailleurs si Mr Tabeau disoit qu'il n'en peut trouver, il en trouveroit lui-même. Je dois aller chez M. Tabeau afin qu'il puisse venir arranger tout cela à Montréal pendant les fêtes. il paroît que le Lord s'en défie un peu, neuf hommes de plus pendant deux ans avanceroient un peu l'établissement de la Rivière Rouge.

Mr Roux m'a dit que les gens de Montréal et lui-même entendoient que nous étions principalement pour les terres appartenant au Lord, et c'est si bien cela, dit-il, que les Messrs du Nord-ouest n'ont rien mis à la souscription, et que plusieurs m'ont dit que si les Missionnaires n'étoient pour l'établissement de la Rivière Rouge ils retiroient leur argent.

Le Lord persiste à dire que si nous arrêtons au Lac Lapluie, ça nous retardera trop pour bâtir la maison &c. mais nous avons répondu à Mr Laurimier que nous en subirions les conséquences. Nous avons

été voir le Lord, il veut nous faire nommer ceux que nous désirerions avoir dans le trostee; nous ne déciderons rien, je crois, avant une réponse de votre Grandeur. Mr Provencher l'a proposé à ces Mrs du Séminaire qui l'ont refusé.

Je suis parti assez content de Nicolet et des 3-Rivières. Maman et le reste de la famille me paroissent assez raisonnables. Il me reste à vous assurer de mes plus profonds respects restant de votre grandeur le très humble &c. serviteur

SEV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Montréal le 9 mai 1818.

Mgr J. O. Plessis, Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, I hasten to fulfill the obligation of writing to you that you placed on me when I left Quebec. I left Three Rivers on the seventh at half past one A.M., and I was not able to get to Montreal until the eighth. There I learned that matters were progressing but little, or rather, that our departure had been fixed for a much later date than is necessary, *i.e.*, the eighteenth of this month. Still Mr. Provencher did not think he could leave earlier than the twenty-second or twenty-third. I urged expedition and discovered that it is the *engagés* that will retard us most. We are going to try to have them notified, but that will be a little difficult.

His Lordship persists in wanting us to hire men for three years. Yesterday he sent Captain de Lorimier to tell us that though it is a matter of indifference to him, he wishes to inform us that a three years' engagement is a clear gain and that [if] we persist in engaging the men for one year, they will leave us just when we shall have most need of them; moreover, that if Mr. Tabeau said he could not find them, he himself would find them. I am to go to Mr. Tabeau's in order that he can come to Montreal to arrange everything during the feast days. It appears that His Lordship suspects him a little. Nine additional men for two years would help a little toward the growth of the colony at Red River.

Mr. Roux has told me that the people of Montreal and he himself understood that we were bound mainly for the lands belonging to the Earl, and it was for that reason, he said, that the North West Company would not add to the subscription. Several have told me that if the missionaries were not bound for the Red River colony, they would recall their money.

His Lordship persists in saying that if we stop at Rainy Lake, we shall be too late to build a house, etc., but we have replied to Mr. de Lorimier that we are ready to take the consequences. We have called on the Earl. He wishes us to name those whom we wish to have as trustees. We shall decide nothing, I think, until you reply. Mr. Provencher has submitted the matter to the seminary, but they refused to act.

I left Nicolet and Three Rivers quite happy. Mamma and the rest of the family appear quite reasonable. In closing let me assure Your Lordship of the deepest respect of your very humble etc. servant,

SEV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

Montreal, May 9, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 9, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Boucherville, 9 mai 1818.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec. Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR, / Je suis revenu hier matin de Montréal où j'ai passé deux jours à préparer le départ des missionnaires et le mien; les choses vont doucement parce qu'il y a trop de monde qui s'en mêlent. Mylord semble avoir pris de l'ombrage de mes démarches depuis qu'il sait que je dois monter avec Mr De Rocheblave, et Mylady s'en est expliquée plus ouvertement. Cependant nous avons diné ensemble avant hier Mr. Provencher, Mr Edge et moi avec Mr Delorimier qui avoit été appelé pour nous concerter tous ensemble sur les voies et moyens. J'ai engagé quelques hommes, après en avoir refusé plusieurs qui n'étoient pas du gout du Comte; j'en envoie d'autres aujourd'hui pour achever la canotée qui consistera en huit hommes, inclus le guide. Ils sont tous à un haut prix, parce que ce sont des anciens voyageurs; j'espère qu'il n'y aura pas un seul novice dans le canot des missionnaires; ils doivent tous hyverner un an, après quoi ils seront libres de continuer ou de revenir. Nous les appelons pour le 18 à Montréal, en sorte que le départ de la chine ne sera pas avant le vingt.

Je crois avoir déjà dit à votre grandeur que Mylord m'avoit pressé de ne pas faire route avec les canots du nord-ouest. Outre que la voie des lacs est certainement très longue, celle de notawasagua très incommode, surtout pour un homme seul comme je serois, je manquerois probablement aux engagements que vous avez pris avec Mr Mcgilvray, que je n'ai pas encore rencontré, si j'accédois à la volonté de mylord.

Ainsi je persiste à suivre vos instructions, et je ne m'ingère pas trop maintenant de l'arrangement des missionnaires pour ne pas trop fatiguer ceux qui veulent les mettre entièrement sous leur contrôle. D'ailleurs le capt. Delorimier est aussi capable qu'aucun de les mettre en bonne route, et il y a tout à espérer qu'ils seront bien; le bagage embarrassera nécessairement soit les canots chargés, soit ceux de la mission; on a promis là-dessus plus qu'on ne pensoit.

Je n'ai pas encore fait usage de la lettre de crédit que votre grandeur m'a envoyée; le bureau de Mr Forest fait toutes les avances, et le compte sera présenté, je suppose, au dépositaire des argens de la souscription, et je me servirai alors de ma lettre pour le faire payer. Peut-être même faudra-t-il que vous en donniez une autre à quelqu'un après mon départ si les frais n'étoient pas encore remboursés, et dans ce cas la mienne me devenant inutile je la brûlerai. Mr Gale m'a assuré que la souscription de Montréal compléteroit £700. J'ai reçu près de £25 de mes paroissiens, et je trouve cela bien raisonnable, d'autant plus que je n'ai fait aucune demande particulière à raison des déboursés considérables qu'ils ont à faire cette année.

Je m'attendois que votre grandeur m'envoyeroit, sinon de nouveaux pouvoirs, du moins une nouvelle mission pour m'autoriser à me servir de ceux que j'avois il y a deux ans; si elle le trouve bon, il y a encore du temps. Il n'y a encore aucun canot chargé qui ait pu partir; la saison est extraordinairement mauvaise; les semences ne se font pas; les chemins sont partout impraticables; heureusement ceux qui sont sur le fleuve ont le canot pour ressource, et c'est la voiture dont je me suis servi depuis qu'on ne va plus en cariole. Mr Deguise, que je n'ai pu voir depuis quatre semaines, est décidément mieux depuis plusieurs jours.

Le retardement de notre départ me fait espérer de rencontrer Mr Crevier; il trouvera à l'Île Drummond des braves gens qui sont avertis de le recevoir en m'y attendant; car je suis assuré d'y toucher. J'écris à Mr Provencher de m'envoyer ici Mr Dumoulin, s'il est à Montréal, pour m'aider à faire descendre le St Esprit sur ma paroisse; il y verra un frère en même temps.

Je ne fais pas encore mes adieux; j'aurai sûrement occasion d'écrire encore à votre grandeur; si je n'en avois pas, j'en ferois. J'espère aussi avoir un mot sur l'état de vos jambes, dont vous ne dites plus rien.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, de votre grandeur le très humble et très obéissant serviteur

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

[Translation]

Boucherville, May 9, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, I returned yesterday morning from Montreal, where I passed two days in preparing for the departure of the missionaries and myself. Things are going slowly because too many people are assisting. Milord seems to have taken offense at my conduct, since he learned that I am to go up with Mr. de Rocheblave, and milady has expressed herself more openly on the matter. Nevertheless, Mr. Provencher, Mr. Edge, and I took dinner the day before yesterday with him along with Mr. de Lorimier, who had been asked to get concerted action by us on ways and means. I have engaged several men, after having rejected several that did not please the Earl. I am sending others today to complete the crew, which will consist of eight men, including the guide. They are all engaged at a high price, because they are old *voyageurs*. I hope that there will not be a single new hand in the missionaries' canoe. They are all to winter for one year, after which they will be free to stay or to return. We have told them to be at Montreal on the eighteenth, though the departure for Lachine will not be before the twentieth.

I believe that I have already told Your Lordship that milord urged me not to go up with the North West Company's canoes. In spite of the fact that the route by way of the lakes is certainly very long, that by way of Nottawasaga is wholly inconvenient, especially for a man alone, as I shall be. I should probably miss the engagements that you have made with Mr. McGillivray, whom I have not yet met, if I acceded to milord's wish. So I persist in following your instructions, and I am not meddling too much in the arrangements of the missionaries, in order that I may not weary too much those who wish to keep the matter under their own control. Moreover, Captain de Lorimier is as capable as anyone to start them out right and there is every reason to hope that they will be well taken care of. The baggage will necessarily be an impediment whether in the loaded canoes or in those of the mission. Greater promises have been made on that score than were intended.

I have not yet made use of the letter of credit that Your Lordship sent me. Mr. Forest's office is making all the advances, and the account will be presented, I suppose, at the place of deposit of the subscription money. At that time I shall make use of my letter to settle the account. It may even be necessary for you to give another letter

to someone after I leave, if the settlement has not been made. In that case my letter will be useless, and I shall burn it. Mr. Gale assures me that the subscription at Montreal will amount to seven hundred pounds sterling. I have received in the neighborhood of twenty-five pounds from my parishioners, and I find that very good, the more so as I have not made any particular request, because of the considerable expenditures that they have had to make this year.

I was expecting Your Lordship to send me, if not new faculties, at least a new commission authorizing me to make use of those that I had two years ago. If you think that advisable, there is still time. Not a single loaded canoe has been able to leave as yet. The season is extraordinarily bad. No sowing has been made. The roads are impassable everywhere. Fortunately those who live on a river can use canoes, and that is the conveyance that I have been using since I could no longer go by cariole. Mr. Deguise, whom I have not been able to see for four weeks, is very much better the last few days.

The delay in our departure makes me hope that I shall be able to meet Mr. Crevier. He will find at Drummond Island some good people who have been notified to receive him, while he is awaiting my arrival, for I am sure that I shall stop there. I am writing Mr. Provencher to send Mr. Dumoulin to me here, if he is at Montreal, in order that he may assist me to celebrate Pentecost in my parish. He will be able to see a brother at the same time.

I have not yet made my farewells. I shall surely have another occasion to write to Your Lordship. If I do not find one, I shall make one. I hope also that I shall have a word about the condition of your legs, of which you have told me nothing more.

I have the honor to be most respectfully, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

SELKIRK TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 9, 1818

[Quebec Archbishopial Archives. ALS]²¹

Montréal ce 9 mai 1818.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ J'ai eu le plaisir de recevoir la lettre que Votre Seigneurie m'a adressé dernièrement, et j'ai eu aussi le plaisir de voir M. Provencher et un de ses compagnons de voyage. Je viens d'entendre que M. Dumoulin est aussi arrivé.

M. Provencher m'a communiqué les instructions et autres docu-

²¹ A copy of this letter, badly transcribed, is in the Selkirk Transcripts, 14:4871.

ments dont il est muni, qui paroissent remplir tout ce qu'on pourroit désirer. J'oserai demander à Votre Seigneurie une copie de votre lettre pastorale aux habitants de la Rivière Rouge, ainsi que de vos instructions &c. aux Missionnaires. Je croirois qu'il seroit utile de les envoyer en Angleterre, où je ne doute pas qu'on trouveroit beaucoup d'hommes bienveillants qui voudroient aider à soutenir le bon oeuvre que ces Missionnaires ont entrepris.

La déclaration sous le sceau de la Province, que Son Excellence le Gouverneur en Chef a accordé, aura certainement un excellent effet dans l'intérieur, & rien n'auroit pu être mieux imaginé que cette demande.⁵²

Parmi les détails des instructions verbales que M. Provencher a reçu de votre seigneurie, il m'a communiqué ce que peut-être il conviendrait de modifier, ou du moins de laisser à sa discrétion. M. Provencher me dit qu'il doit s'arrêter une quinzaine de jours au poste du Lac La Pluie, pour y établir une mission passagère auquel il reviendra chaque année. Je crains que ce délai en route ne soit d'un grand inconvénient, en retardant l'arrivée des missionnaires à l'endroit de leur destination ultérieure; où ils auront besoin de tout ce qui restera de la belle saison pour se faire construire une habitation convenable, et faire les autres arrangements nécessaires pour leur hivernement. Pour cette raison, il vaudroit peut-être mieux de référer à l'année prochaine l'établissement de cette mission secondaire, et que Messieurs les Missionnaires ne s'arrêtassent au Lac La Pluie qu'un jour ou deux, seulement pour annoncer leur intention de faire leur visite l'année prochaine, afin que les voyageurs soient préparés à profiter de leurs secours spirituels.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec la plus grande considération, Monseigneur, votre très obéissant serviteur.

SELKIRK.

A Monseigneur/ l'Evêque Catholique de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, May 9, 1818.

MY LORD, I have had the pleasure of receiving the letter that Your Lordship sent me recently and I have also had the satisfaction of seeing Mr. Provencher and one of his traveling companions. I have just learned that Mr. Dumoulin has also arrived.

Mr. Provencher has communicated to me the instructions and other documents with which he is supplied. These are all that can be desired. May I ask Your Lordship for a copy of your pastoral letter to

⁵² See *ante*, p. 74.

the inhabitants of Red River, as well as of your instructions etc. to the missionaries? I believe that they would be useful to send to England, where, I have no doubt, we could find many philanthropic persons who would be willing to help sustain the good work that these missionaries have undertaken.

The declaration under the seal of the province that His Excellency, the Governor in Chief, has issued will certainly have a salutary effect in the interior, and nothing better could have been imagined than this request.⁵²

Among the details of the verbal instructions that Mr. Provencher has received from Your Lordship he has spoken to me of one that it may be better to modify, or at least leave to his discretion. Mr. Provencher tells me that he is to stop a fortnight at the fort on Rainy Lake to establish there a temporary mission, to which he will return each year. I fear that this delay en route will not be without serious inconvenience in detaining the missionaries from their final destination. There they will need to use all that remains of the good weather to build a suitable residence and to make other necessary arrangements for spending the winter. For this reason it would perhaps be better to put off till next year the establishment of this secondary mission and allow the missionaries to pause only a day or two at Rainy Lake, only long enough to announce their purpose of making a visit there next year, so that the *voyageurs* may be prepared to profit by their spiritual assistance.

I have the honor to be with the utmost respect, My Lord, your very obedient servant,

SELKIRK.

His Lordship the Catholic Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO SELKIRK, MAY 12, 1818

[Selkirk Papers. ALS]⁵³

MYLORD/ Rien n'est plus aisé ni ne sera plus agréable pour moi, que de faire tirer une copie des instructions et autres papiers confiés à Messrs les missionnaires de la Rivière Rouge. Dès qu'elle sera prête, j'aurai l'honneur de la transmettre à Votre Seigneurie. Sir John Sherbrooke m'a fait une semblable demande pour l'information des ministres de S. M.

Les missionnaires n'ont ordre de s'arrêter au Lac de la Pluie qu'autant qu'il s'y trouveroit quelqu'un qui eût besoin de leur ministère. Dans le cas contraire ils n'y feront qu'une légère pause. Mais s'ils ont

⁵³ A copy of this letter is in the Selkirk Transcripts, 14:4875.

occasion de s'y rendre utiles à quelques pauvres chrétiens ou de se montrer aux sauvages, il n'entre assurément ni dans l'intention de Votre Seigneurie, ni dans la mienne, que ces gens soient privés de leur secours, quand même il en devrait résulter que ces messieurs arrivassent une ou deux semaines plus tard à leur destination finale. Je serois très affligé qu'ils perdissent de vûe que le salut des ames est leur premier objet et que toute considération temporelle doit être subordonnée à celle-là.

Je ne doute nullement de l'attention de Votre Seigneurie de remettre à ces messieurs, avant leur départ, le *deed* des terres qu'ils doivent posséder dans l'Ossiniboia. Mr Dumoulin m'a donné lieu de croire par sa lettre du 9 que Votre Seigneurie étoit embarrassée dans le choix des trustees. Je présume qu'outre les deux missionnaires, il ne sera pas difficile de trouver, entre les catholiques de Montréal, deux ou trois citoyens respectables pour faire partie de la corporation. Si mon nom peut y donner quelque crédit, Votre Seigneurie peut en disposer librement.

Permettez, Mylord, que Lady Selkirk trouve ici l'expression de mon respect et ajoutez y la faveur de me croire sans réserve,/ My Lord,/ De Votre Seigneurie/ Le très humble &/ très obéissant serviteur

† J. O. Ev. Cath. de Québec

Québec, 12 mai, 1818

Le très Honorable/ Comte de Selkirk/ A Montréal

[*Endorsed:*] 1818 May 12/ J. O. Duplessis/ Bp of Quebec/ copies

Instr^{ns} &c

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, Nothing would be easier or more agreeable for me than to have copies made of the instructions and other papers entrusted to the missionaries bound for the Red River. As soon as they are ready, I shall have the honor of transmitting them to Your Lordship. Sir John Sherbrooke has made a similar request for the information of His Majesty's ministers.

The missionaries have been instructed to stop at Rainy Lake only in case they find someone there in need of their ministration. If such is not the case, they will make only a brief pause. But if they have occasion to be useful to any poor Christians or to make themselves known to the Indians, it assuredly would not enter into Your Lordship's thought nor mine that these people should be deprived of their services, even though the missionaries should arrive at their destination a week or two later because of this delay. I should be deeply affected if they

should lose sight of the fact that the saving of souls is their first object and that every temporal consideration ought to be subordinated to that.

I do not doubt that Your Lordship will attend to granting to these gentlemen before they leave the deed to the lands that they are to have in Assiniboia. Mr. Dumoulin has given me to understand in his letter of the ninth that Your Lordship was embarrassed in the choice of trustees. I presume that, besides the two missionaries, it will not be difficult to find among the Catholics of Montreal two or three respectable citizens who will become members of the corporation. If my name will aid, Your Lordship is at liberty to use it freely.

Permit Lady Selkirk, My Lord, to find here the expression of my respect and add to it the favor of believing me unreservedly, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

Quebec, May 12, 1818.

† J. O., Catholic Bishop of Quebec.

The Very Honorable Earl of Selkirk, Montreal.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 13, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montréal, 13 mai 1818.

Monseigneur l'Evêque de Québec, / Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR, / J'ai enfin obtenu la close de ma requête et l'adresse à votre grandeur pour y répondre quand bon elle jugera; la réponse ne peut pas me venir avant dimanche; et le jour de la Fête-Dieu, j'espère que nous serons tous quatre au lac des Deux montagnes, en sorte qu'il faudra probablement attendre mon retour pour procéder aux formalités ultérieures, à moins que Mr Paré ne voulût s'en mêler.

J'ai eu Mr Dumoulin pour les fêtes de la Pentecôte; il a officié, prêché, &c, et mêmement remercié mes paroissiens de leur généreux concours à la mission de la Rivière Rouge pour laquelle ils m'ont remis environ vingt-sept louis courant; j'y ajouterai quelques oboles, quoique votre grandeur m'en ait préalablement exempté, mais moins que je n'aurois fait, à raison des dépenses que je supporte seul pour ma mission particulière, et de l'aide qu'il me faudra peut-être donner à Mr Crevier. Mr Dumoulin reste à Boucherville pendant ces deux jours-ci que je passe à Montréal; nous désirons partir tous ensemble mardi ou mercredi prochain pour célébrer la Fête-Dieu au lac; de là ces messieurs continueront leur route, et moi j'attendrai Mr De Rocheblave qui suivra de près. Cependant je n'ai rien d'assuré à dire là-dessus à votre grandeur parce que je n'ai encore vu personne; avant la fin de la semaine je vous en donnerai nouvelle plus certaine.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, de votre grandeur le très humble et très obéissant serviteur

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

P.S. Il paroît que la cour criminelle qui tient actuellement aura la même issue que celle de Québec; elle suit la même marche. J'ai vu Mr Deguise lundi soir: très bien portant.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, May 13, 1818.

His Lordship, the Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, At last I have reached the end of my request, and am addressing it to Your Lordship, in order that you may reply to it when you think best. The reply cannot reach me before Sunday. On Corpus Christi Day I hope that all four of us will be at Lake of Two Mountains. Thus it will probably be necessary for you to await my return before proceeding with the final formalities, unless Mr. Paré is willing to interest himself in the matter.

I had Mr. Dumoulin for the celebration of Pentecost. He officiated, preached, etc., and even thanked my parishioners for their generous contributions to the Red River mission, for which they have given me about twenty-seven pounds. I am adding to that sum a few coins, although Your Lordship previously exempted me, but fewer than I should have given because of the expenses that I am undertaking alone for my own mission and because of the assistance that I may be obliged to give to Mr. Crevier. Mr. Dumoulin is remaining at Boucherville these two days that I am passing in Montreal. We want to leave together Tuesday or Wednesday, in order to celebrate Corpus Christi Day at the lake. From there those gentlemen will continue on their way, and I shall await Mr. de Rocheblave, who will follow soon. Nevertheless I have nothing certain to say on these matters to Your Lordship, because I have not yet seen anyone. Before the end of the week I shall give you more certain information.

I have the honor to be most respectfully, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

P.S. It appears that the criminal court, which is holding session here, will have the same result as that of Quebec. It is following the same course. I saw Mr. Deguise Monday evening. He is doing very well.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO SELKIRK, CA. MAY 15, 1818

[Selkirk Transcripts, 14:4672. C]⁶⁴

MY LORD,/ Conformément aux désirs de Votre Seigneurie & à l'engagement pris dans ma dernière lettre, j'ai l'honneur de vous transmettre des copies de ma lettre pastorale aux colons de la Rivière Rouge, ainsi que des instructions données aux missionnaires et de la recommandation dont j'ai eu devoir les munir. On m'informe de Montréal que ces messrs ne sont pas encore partis, mais qu'ils doivent se mettre en route ces jours-ci. Daigne le Seigneur bénir leur entreprise.

Mr Coltman que j'ai eu l'honneur de voir aujourd'hui applaudit beaucoup à l'envoi de Mr Delorimier avec les missionnaires et se flatte qu'aucun obstacle ne sera mis à leur établissement.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec respect/ My Lord,/ de Votre Seigneurie/ le très humble & très obéissant/ serviteur,

† J. O. Ev. Cath. de Québec.

Le très Honorable/ Lord Selkirk

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, In accordance with Your Lordship's wishes and my promise in my last letter, I have the honor to send you copies of my pastoral letter to the Red River colonists, as well as of the instructions to the missionaries and the credentials which it was my office to furnish. Information from Montreal states that these gentlemen have not yet left that place but that they are to leave in the immediate future. God prosper their enterprise.

Mr. Coltman, whom I had the honor of seeing today, was delighted that Mr. de Lorimier had been sent with the missionaries and is confident that no obstacle will interfere with their project.

I have the honor to be respectfully, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

† J. O., Catholic Bishop of Quebec.

The Very Honorable Lord Selkirk.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 17, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montréal, 17 mai 1818.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis,/ Evêque de Québec. Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Une lettre d'avis que j'ai reçue vendredi dernier à Boucherville m'a obligé de revenir en ville hier avec tout mon bagage

⁶⁴ The French text, as found in this copy, is practically unintelligible. The editor, therefore, has attempted to restore it to its original form.

comme pour partir; Mr Deguise qui étoit alors chez moi eut la bonté de m'offrir son vicairie pour l'office d'aujourd'hui, et là dessus je me suis mis en route; peut-être vous expliquera-t-il lui-même le petit tour qu'on vouloit nous jouer et que j'ai heureusement prévenu; il seroit trop long d'entrer ici dans le détail. Toujours les affaires s'arrangent pour partir d'ici mardi prochain, c'est-à-dire après demain. Nous attendons nos hommes demain; ils monteront les canots à la chine après demain matin au plus tard; aussitôt là, je les livrerai aux missionnaires qui s'y embarqueront mercredi et feront route. Pour moi, je ne m'arrêterai à lachine que le temps nécessaire pour m'assurer de tout l'équipement et de l'équipage; car je dois être à Ste Anne le soir même avec Mr De Rocheblave dont le canot nous attend à la Pointe-Claire depuis le matin.

Quand j'ai dit à votre grandeur que Mr Provencher n'étoit pas voyageur, ce n'est pas que je le croye dépourvu de mérites; je le connois assez pour voir en lui la preuve de l'éloge que vous en faites. Mais si Mr Dumoulin n'étoit plus hâté que lui, le voyage ne seroit plus qu'un problème. Mercredi et jeudi dernier, j'ai emballé devant lui onze cassettes que j'ai envoyées à la chine, et Sévère a emballé les deux dernières depuis; pour lui il ne savoit en tout cela que donner de sa main les articles qu'on lui demandoit. Demain nous avons une assez forte journée à faire; ce sera la dernière, et il reste encore plusieurs choses à régler, entre lesquelles est le titre des missionnaires pour le terrain qui leur est promis. Il paroît qu'on a de la peine à trouver le tour de le rédiger d'une manière solide. Tout la bagage embarqué sur les canots déjà partis se réduit à 16 pièces; il en reste environ quatre; ce qui rendra le voyage de ces messieurs assez commode.

J'ai livré à Mr Provencher quarante louis courant, montant de la souscription de Boucherville pour la Rivière Rouge; je crois qu'il sera plus que suffisant de faire emporter aux missionnaires 50 louis pour leur voyage; ils n'en auront pas besoin dans l'ossiniboya où on ne voit jamais un copre, les vivres et les marchandises étant la seule monnoye du pays. Ils se serviront de lettres de change sur le bureau de la compagnie d'Hudson à montréal, avec lequel il faudra finir par en faire leur agence.

Je ne connois pas encore le montant des dépenses faites, ni celui de l'argent qui est entre les mains de Mr Desrivières; j'espère pourtant n'avoir pas besoin de tirer vos £200 dont je ne demanderois que la plus [petite] partie possible et seulement dans la nécessité. Je saurai ce qui en est quand j'aurai réglé avec le bureau, ce que j'espère faire demain.

Les gages des huit hommes se montent à £341-13^s-4^d, à part de l'équipement; ils sont tous anciens et bons voyageurs, engagés pour un an seulement, quoiqu'en dise le mylord. Il auroit fallu être assuré d'un plus grand fonds pour contracter plus en avant, et avoir plus de données sur la solidité de l'établissement pour espérer de faire face aux engagemens; c'est du moins ma manière de voir. Je ne vous cache pas qu'on craint de nouveaux troubles; l'acharnement des partis y donne lieu.

J'ai vu aujourd'hui Mr Miles McDonald arrivé depuis deux jours des Etats unis.

Je termine ici ma lettre toute barbouillée; je dors si peu depuis plusieurs jours que j'ai peine à tenir. Je ne crois pas avoir le temps de rien vous écrire demain, mais je ne laisserai pas lachine ou mont-réal sans vous dire que je pars.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, May 17, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, Notice which reached me by letter last Wednesday at Boucherville obliged me to return yesterday to the city with all my baggage as though for departure. Mr. Deguise, who has been at my house, had the goodness to offer me his vicar for the office of today, and at that I started out. Perhaps he himself will explain to you the little trick that someone wished to play on us and that I happily prevented. It would take too long to go into the matter now in any detail. Matters have shaped themselves for departure from this place next Tuesday, that is to say, the day after tomorrow. We expect our men tomorrow. They will take the canoes to Lachine the day after tomorrow morning at the latest. As soon as they get there, I shall turn them over to the missionaries, who will embark there on Wednesday and go on their way. As for myself, I shall stop at Lachine only long enough to assure myself of the men and the equipment, for I am to be at Ste. Anne the same evening with Mr. de Rocheblave, whose canoe will have been waiting for us at Pointe Claire since that morning.

When I told Your Lordship that Mr. Provencher was not a good traveler, it was not because I believed him devoid of merit. I know him sufficiently well to see in him the proof of the choice that you have made. But if Mr. Dumoulin did not have more speed than he, the

voyage would no longer be anything but a problem. Last Wednesday and Thursday I packed in front of him eleven cases that I sent to Lachine, and Sévère packed the last two later. He on his part could do nothing but hand us articles as we asked for them. Tomorrow we shall have a long day. It will be the last, and there remain still many things to attend to, among them the title of the missionaries to the land that is promised them. It appears that trouble is being experienced in finding a way to draw it up in a satisfactory manner. All the baggage that was sent by canoes already dispatched was reduced to sixteen *pièces*. There still remain about four. Thus the missionaries' trip will be rendered more comfortable.

I have given to Mr. Provencher forty pounds, the amount of Boucherville's subscription for the Red River mission. I believe that fifty pounds will be more than sufficient for the missionaries to take with them for their trip. They will have no need of money in Assiniboia, where one never sees a sou, food and merchandise being the only currency in the country. They will use letters of exchange on the Hudson's Bay Company's office at Montreal. In the end we shall be obliged to make it their agent.

I do not yet know the amount of our expenditures, nor that of the money that is still in Mr. Desrivières' hands. Nevertheless, I hope that I shall have no need to draw on your two hundred pounds, of which I shall use only the smallest portion possible and only in case of necessity. I shall know what the sum is when I have gone over the matter with the office, which I expect to do tomorrow. The wages of the eight men amount to £341 13s. 4d., apart from their equipment. They are all old and good *voyageurs*, engaged for a single year, whatever Lord Selkirk may say about the matter. It would be necessary to be assured of greater funds, in order to contract more in advance; and to have more information on the permanence of the establishment, in order to hope to contract engagements. At least that is the light in which I see the matter. I do not hide from you my fear that new troubles are expected. The bitterness of partisan spirit gives me reason for thinking so.

Today I have seen Mr. Miles Macdonell, who arrived two days ago from the United States.

Now I shall close my very confused letter. I have been sleeping so little recently that I can scarcely finish it. I do not believe I shall have the time to write you tomorrow, but I shall not leave Lachine or Montreal without telling you that I am departing.

I have the honor to be, My Lord, most respectfully your very humble
and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 18, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montréal, 18 mai 1818.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec. Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR, / J'écris à votre grandeur sur la fin du 18 et je crois qu'il sera le 19 quand je terminerai; voilà bien des nuits de suite que je fais ce métier. Mais nous touchons au moment du repos, car le voyage sera un délassement des tracasseries fatigantes qui nous occupent depuis si longtemps, et pour vous, Monseigneur, un débarras de mes épistoles. Nous serons en route demain à une heure après midi, à moins d'obstacles que je ne peux deviner. J'espère même que nous quitterons tous la chine, les missionnaires avec leur canot, et moi avec la calèche qui me conduira à Ste Anne où Mr De Rocheblave me prendra dans le sien. La chose sera certaine si la poste d'après celle-ci ne vous donne aucune nouvelle de moi. Dieu veuille répandre ses bénédictions sur les efforts de votre zèle et sur les moyens que nous prendrons pour y correspondre.

J'ai vu aujourd'hui Mr Desrivières avec qui je me suis arrangé pour le remboursement de nos dépenses. Il y aura certainement plus d'argent qu'il n'en faut pour les acquitter, mais je ne saurois dire combien il restera. Les comptes ne pourront se régler que dans quelques jours, et les missionnaires seront informés du reliquat, afin de ne pas outrepasser les fonds par leurs lettres d'échange. L'agence de la mission sera finalement la maison de la compagnie d'Hudson à Montréal, à la tête de laquelle est Mr garden;⁵⁵ Vos 200 louis resteront donc intacts pour le présent. Le st Père Robitaille a apporté aujourd'hui £57, 10 dont 40 sont de ses paroisses, et 17, 10 de St Antoine. Tout cela aide; la souscription de la ville qui ira à £700, avec £380 que Mr Desrivières a en caisse, voilà de quoi mettre au large; l'équipement des missionnaires ne devant pas monter au-delà de £600, tout compté, du moins ce que j'en ai fait, et c'est le plus gros lot puisqu'il renferme le canot, les hommes et les provisions &c., &c., &c.

Mr. Dumoulin et moi avons été prendre congé de mylord et de mylady; ils sont tous deux toujours aimables et m'ont paru un peu revenus de leur crainte sur mon compte; nous avons eu long entretien

⁵⁵ The name of the agency was Maitland, Garden, and Auldjo.

qui a fini par des souhaits mutuels de prospérité, succès, santé &c. On est convenu à la fin que l'engagement des hommes pour une année seulement étoit le meilleur plan. L'acte de donation des terres aux missionnaires a dû s'achever ce soir, et s'ils ne l'emportent pas eux-mêmes, Mr Robinson qui les suivra de près en sera chargé. Mr. Provencher a peu sorti ces trois jours-ci; il a été indisposé: coliques, dysenterie, et je ne sais quoi. Il a pris un petit remède ce matin, et il sera en état de faire route demain.

Oui, Monseigneur, je prie Dieu pour votre grandeur; non parce qu'elle en a plus besoin que moi, si vous connoissiez mes misères vous penseriez autrement, mais parce que je regarde cela comme un devoir, quelque mal que je m'en acquitte, et que d'ailleurs la surveillance générale et laborieuse qu'il a plu au Seigneur, heureusement pour nous, de confier à vos soins, demande aussi plus de secours. Il est très rare que cette idée m'échappe au *memento*.

Je termine ici en vous faisant mes adieux de voyage; je baise votre main et reçois votre bénédiction paternelle; puisse-t-elle sanctifier toutes mes démarches et les diriger vers la plus grande gloire de Dieu.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect et le plus sincère attachement, Monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

Si je trouve occasion d'écrire/ en route, j'en profiterai.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, May 18, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, I am writing to Your Lordship at the close of the eighteenth, and I believe that it will be the nineteenth before I finish. That is the way my nights have been spent since I began this business. But we are reaching the moment when we may rest, for the trip will be a relaxation from the wearying annoyances that have been occupying us for so long a time. For you, My Lord, it will mean deliverance from my letters. We shall be on our way tomorrow at one in the afternoon, unless obstacles present themselves which I cannot foresee. I even hope that we shall all be leaving Lachine, the missionaries in their canoe, and I in the calash that will take me to Ste. Anne, where Mr. de Rocheblave will take me in his canoe. All will go as I have indicated, if the post after this one does not bring any news from me. May God shower His blessing upon the efforts of your zeal and upon the means that we are taking to emulate them.

I have seen Mr. Desrivières today, with whom I have made arrangements for reimbursing you for your expenses. There will certainly be more money than is necessary to do so, but I do not know how much will remain. Account cannot be rendered for several days, and the missionaries will be informed of what remains, in order that they may not exceed their assets by letters of exchange. The agency for the mission will be eventually the Hudson's Bay Company at Montreal, at the head of which is Mr. Garden.⁵⁵ Your two hundred pounds, then, will remain intact for the present. Father Robitaille has brought me today £57 10s., of which 40 are from his parishes and £17 10s. from St. Antoine. All this helps. The subscription from the city will amount to £700, with the £380 that Mr. Desrivières has in hand. With this we shall be at our ease. The missionary equipment will not surpass £600, everything included, at least everything that I have done, and that is the largest part, since it includes the canoe, the men, the provisions, etc., etc., etc.

Mr. Dumoulin and I have taken leave of milord and milady. They were both quite amiable and seemed to me to have recovered a little from their fear on my account. We had a long talk, which ended in mutual wishes for prosperity, success, health, etc. At the end it was agreed that the engagement of men for one year only was the better plan. The deed of donation of land for the missionaries was to be completed this evening, and if they do not bring it themselves, Mr. Robinson, who will follow them shortly, will take charge of it. Mr. Provencher has not been out much the last three days. He has been indisposed: colic, dysentery, and I know not what. He took some medicine this morning, and will be in condition to travel tomorrow.

Yes, My Lord, I pray God for Your Lordship, not because you have greater need of it than I (if you knew my difficulties you would think otherwise) but because I regard it a duty, however badly I acquit myself of it, and also because the general and wearisome supervision that it has pleased God, fortunately for us, to confide to you also requires greater reinforcements. It is seldom that this idea escapes me in my Memento.

I will close this letter now, making my adieus. I kiss your hand and receive your paternal benediction. May it sanctify all my acts and direct them to the greater glory of God.

I have the honor to be most respectfully and sincerely, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

If I find an opportunity to write on the way, I shall profit by it.

PROVENCHER TO [BISHOP PLESSIS], MAY 18, 1818
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁵⁶

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, I received at noon your favor of the sixteenth. The zeal with which it is replete has affected me to the bottom of my heart and has served to nourish my own enthusiasm. I bear on my heart the poor infidels to whom I am sent. Count on me to do all in my power to procure for them a knowledge of the Faith. But what am I for such a tremendous undertaking? The misdeeds of my foolish youth and of all my years, will they not be an insuperable obstacle to the grace of God? Another Francis Xavier, another Boniface were needed to go out to cause God's word to be heard to the ends of the earth. But when I recall that it is I who am sent to follow in the footsteps of these great men, I am tempted to expect no success for such a great undertaking. But at least God has deigned to choose me (for in spite of my unworthiness I consider my call divine) as the most vile instrument for adding greater luster to His grace; and it can be seen from the outset that it is not the work of man but of the all-powerful Grace. It is in this confidence that I am departing.

I leave without regret (but for God alone) my relatives, my friends, my hopes, and, above all, the country that gave me birth, to go to gather far from her more abundant riches. I feel that it would be unworthy of a minister of Jesus Christ to fear to go and win with the sweat of his brow and that the love of material gain has opened up long since to a host of traders. My eyes overflow as I write this letter, which will be the last that I shall have the honor to address to Your Lordship before leaving my native land. But I am not cast down. I rely implicitly on Heaven and on the prayers of the good souls of Canada. It is to the deep sighs uttered before the throne of God by Your Lordship, all the clergy, the religious communities, and all the faithful, that I shall ever attribute the success of our mission. Heaven grant that through our efforts all peoples in those distant lands may come to know and worship the true God and rejoice to serve Him. The crown that awaits us at the end, if we labor like good servants, is so beautiful that, having it ever in mind, we cannot fail to attain our goal.

I shall do as best I can at Rainy Lake. I have not committed myself to His Lordship on that point. I have always told him that I cannot derange your plans for this project.

⁵⁶ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 8-11.

But Mr. McGillivray believes that we shall arrive too early and that the *engagés* will not yet have come down. If such is the case, we shall go on at once, leaving word that we shall return next year. Milord has not made strong objections to this plan.

I shall carry out Mr. Coltman's ideas. I was edified by his letter, which I shall deliver in due season.

I shall miss no opportunity that may come to write to Your Lordship on the way and at the fort.

I am delighted with the interest that His Excellency takes in all that concerns our mission. If Your Lordship agrees, I beg you to convey to him our sincerest thanks for the special protection he has granted us till now, in the hope that he will wish to extend that protection even when he is in contact with the ministers in England; at the same time expressing our best wishes for the recovery of his health and the sorrow that we feel to learn that he is about to leave this province and thus deprive us of our firmest support.

The deeds to the church land and the lands granted for the support of the missionaries are completed, but we shall not take them with us because they have not been signed by Your Lordship. Mr. Robinson, who will go up in June, will take them to us. We shall take only a rough draft of them. The members [of the body of trustees] are: Your Lordship and Messrs. Roux, Saveuse de Beaujeu, Heney, Provencher, and Dumoulin.

I have delivered to Mr. Perrault today the two hundred pounds sterling that I brought from Quebec. He gave me a receipt for £253, since he added thirty received from his brother and twenty-three that his son obtained in goods from my effects at Kamouraska, according to a letter from Mr. Dionne. Thus there remains due £147 without interest, for which he will obtain payment, I think, within a year or two at the most. He is always away and I saw him only for a moment. Mr. Dionne tells me that he has sold the tithe and effects for £203 and that he still has for sale more than one hundred pounds' worth. I owe from this amount about £253, so that he cannot depend on the guarantee money for more than about a hundred pounds when everything is completed. Mr. Perrault asked for some security for the remainder of his debt and I am to give him a draft on Your Lordship tomorrow. But he has promised me to give quite ungrudgingly the time that you may wish to have. He is a good man; nevertheless, I think he has need of his money. I left at Kamouraska some outstanding accounts that I hope Mr. Dionne will settle in part. These will

augment the capital. I have written to him to render his account to Your Lordship, when everything is sold.

We are to leave Montreal tomorrow at noon to embark at Lachine. Everything is ready. The preparations are, I think, more annoying than the trip itself. Our baggage left recently with a brigade of the company's canoes.

Mr. Dumoulin and I have interviewed Mr. McGillivray. He received us well and renewed to us the promise that he made you last winter to protect us as far as it lies in his power to do so. God grant that all may go well in consequence. You will see him doubtless, for he is at Quebec for the session of the court. Mr. Gale is also in Quebec.

There will be with Mr. Desrivères more money than will be necessary for the expenses of our trip, especially when the subscription returns of the parishes have been added. These will probably amount to four or five hundred pounds in this district. Thus there will be in reserve in Canada quite a considerable sum, which can be used later for the expenses of the mission. We have had a little bell cast, weighing about fifteen pounds, which we are taking with us. It will serve to call the inhabitants of the vicinity of our little Meuron chapel to Mass, to catechism, etc. I am told that milord proposes to have a large bell sent by way of Hudson Bay. But in the meantime we shall make shift with this one. There are some good founders in Ste. Anne des Plaines. They had success with two that they made for Lake of Two Mountains, one of which weighed three or four hundred pounds. This will be an advantage for the region.

I learned today of the death of Mr. Pouget. That will be a considerable gap to fill. I sang Mass and preached on Pentecost at Pointe Claire. I observed that I was not yet forgotten there. They have a curé who is worth more than I; they are having difficulty in liking him, according to what I could see and what was told me. And Mr. Fortin is not passionately fond of Pointe Claire.

Now I have only to express to you my best wishes for the preservation of your health. Preserve it for your diocese. I ardently hope that you may live to see religion planted and well rooted in our mission. Few others could do as well as Your Lordship. I should like to see all the present plans that you have been good enough to impart to me carried out. I do not doubt that you will obtain in England and Rome all that you ask for the advancement of religion.⁵⁷ I do not know

⁵⁷ Reference is made here to Bishop Plessis' trip to England and Rome in 1819 to complete the organization of the Canadian church. See Scott, in Shortt and Doughty, eds., *Canada and Its Provinces*, 11:45-47.

that there is any likelihood that the government will allow anything for the maintenance of the mission. I think I remember hearing something about it. Providence is more powerful than all the gold in the world. It will do all for the best.

I do not know when I shall receive your letters. They will always succeed in edifying and encouraging me. You will receive letters from me at Red River this autumn through the courtesy of Mr. de Lorimier. I hardly expect a similar favor [from you].

While I think of it, it may not be inappropriate to remark that I should like very much to have the priest and the ecclesiastic that will go up in two years take a complete and successful course of study and apply themselves to astronomy, both practical and theoretical, and to everything that concerns this subject. I am embarrassed in that I have never had the opportunity of studying this science. It would serve me well now. By choosing these men a little in advance, they could brush up on this subject. For, although the salvation of souls may be our purpose, it would not render our reports less pleasant or useful to add to them remarks that could be advantageous later. Your Lordship will do as pleases you best in this matter. Between now and then much may happen.

I ask for your blessing on myself and my coworkers.

I forgot to say that I sent Mr. Dionne a list of the persons to whom I am in debt. I hope that my letter will reach him. For the rest, I have given a *bon*, or acknowledgment of indebtedness, to each of my creditors, for whom they will be valid.

Believe me, most respectfully, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,

Montreal, May 18, 1818.

J. N. PROVENCHER, Priest.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 19, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

MONSIEUR, / Dans trois heures nous serons enfin parti de Montréal. il faut avoir aidé autant que nous l'avons fait à préparer les choses nécessaires au voyage pour concevoir combien c'est fatigant et tracassant. mais j'espère que nous allons enfin nous délasser.

La santé de Mr Provencher m'inquiète un peu. Cependant j'espère que l'indisposition qu'il éprouve ne durera pas. De tous les adieux que j'ai fait jusqu'à présent, il n'en est pas un qui m'ait tant coûté que

celui que je vous fis à mon départ de Québec, et j'espère me rendre à la Rivière Rouge sans en faire d'aussi couteux.

Milord Selkirk paroît toujours content des Missionnaires, et nous l'a témoigné bien souvent. Je n'ai encore jamais vu de Dame aussi savante, spirituel, et prévenante que Milady Selkirk. elle a fait l'imaginable pour nous procurer tout ce dont nous pouvions avoir besoin, et toujours de si bonne grâce qu'elle augmentoit de moitié le prix de toutes ses attentions. il paroît que Milord ne fait rien sans la consulter, et je la crois plus capable, en quelque sorte, de voir bien les choses que sa Seigneurie elle-même.

Nous emportons avec nous le titre du trostess. Mr Roux a consenti en être un des membres, ainsi que Mrs De Beaujeux et Ené. Tous nos hommes ne sont engagés que pour un an, avec le droit cependant de les louer pour leur descente l'année prochaine. Nous partons sans carte absolument, Mr Provencher ayant, par inadvertance, emballé dans une des valises envoyées cette méchante carte de Mr Bouchette.

Permettez-moi, Monseigneur, de vous demander de nouveau votre bénédiction avec l'assistance de vos prières. pour moi je pars résolu de ne rien épargner de ce qui dépend de moi pour la réussite d'une mission dont, sans doute, je n'ai jamais mérité d'être un des membres.

De votre Grandeur le très humble et dévoué serv.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Montréal 19 mai 1818.

Mgneur J. O. Ev. Québec.

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, In three hours we shall have departed at last from Montreal. It would have been necessary for you to assist in making the requisite preparations for this trip in order to realize how tiring and irritating it has been. But I hope that at last we are going to relax.

Mr. Provencher's health troubles me a little; yet I hope that this indisposition will not last. Of all the farewells I have made up to the present time none has cost me so much as the one I took of you on my departure from Quebec. I hope to arrive at Red River without such another.

Lord Selkirk seems quite satisfied with the missionaries and has often signified as much to us. I have never seen a lady so intelligent, spiritual, and prepossessing as Lady Selkirk. She has done her utmost to secure for us everything that we need, and always so charmingly that she has increased by half the value of all her assistance. Milord seems unable to do anything without consulting her, and I believe in

some respects she is able to understand things better even than His Lordship.

We take with us the title of trustees. Mr. Roux has consented to be one of the members, as well as Messrs. de Beaujeu and Heney. All our men are engaged for a single year, but with the privilege of being engaged for their return trip next year. We are leaving without a single map, Mr. Provencher having inadvertently packed in one of our valises that wretched map of Mr. Bouchette's.

Permit me, My Lord, to ask once more for your benediction and the help of your prayers. As far as I am concerned I am leaving resolved to spare myself no pains to make successful a mission of which, doubtless, I have never deserved to be a member.

Your Lordship's very humble and devoted servant,

Montreal, May 19, 1818.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 24, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Nous voilà rendus sans accident à la petite nation chez Mr Papineau⁵⁸ où nous avons dit la messe ce matin. Nous avons été retardé au lac, il nous a fallu changer de canot et il a fallu en faire achever un, ce qui nous a mené à vendredi à six heures du soir que nous avons quitté le lac et sommes venus coucher dans Rigaud. Là nous avons engagé un jeune homme auquel nous donnons 500 *ll* pour un an sur le même pied des autres, il a remplacé un nommé Labombarde de St Constant qui a manqué de joindre à Lachine. De Rigaud nous sommes venus déjeuner au-dessus des petites écores que nous avons passé à pied. De là nous nous rendimes pour diner à 2 h. au dessus du long sault que nous avons passé à pied. Il faisoit très chaud et le chemin est dans le bois de sorte que nous n'avions point d'air. Il est inutile de dire que je suai de la belle manière; cette marche est fort longue. Mr Dumoulin qui est léger de graisse en a été quitte pour un peu de fatigue, mais peu de sueurs. Du haut du long sault que nous quittames entre quatre et cinq heures nous couchames à une pointe nommée cipaye d'où nous partimes vers quatre heures et arrivames chez Mr Papineau à 6 h. Nous y avons dit la messe, déjeuné & nous allons nous mettre en route.

⁵⁸ Louis Joseph Papineau is remembered chiefly for his leadership in the rebellion of 1837 in Canada. His home on the Ottawa, known as the "Manor of la Petite Nation," is now a part of the village of Montebello. Quebec Department of Highways and Mines, *Along Quebec Highways*, 352 (Quebec, 1930).

Au lac nous avons eu de Mr Roupe les prières et le catéchisme en Algonquin, et Mr Roupe va achever de copier ou faire copier un examen de conscience dans la même langue, ce qui pourra nous aider par la suite. J'aurais bien voulu avoir la grammaire de Mr Thavenet, mais il auroit fallu la copier. Mr Dumoulin a écrit à Votre Grandeur du lac des deux montagnes et vous a donné notre route jusque là. Voilà la suite par celle-ci; le reste viendra à mesure que l'occasion s'en présentera. Mr Tabeau a dit la messe ici le jour de la fête-Dieu à 2 heures du matin; il avoit fait une fameuse journée la veille, étant parti de Ste Anne du bout de l'Isle il vint coucher à la petite nation à 7 h.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, votre très humble et très ob.

PROVENCHER, ptre.

Petite Nation./ 24 mai à 8 h. 1818.

A Monseigneur J. O. Plessis/ Evêque de Québec, à Québec.

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, Here we are at last at Petite Nation, at Mr. Papineau's,⁵⁸ whither we have come without accident. We said Mass here this morning. We were delayed at the lake, since it was necessary to change canoes. In fact we had to buy one, so that it was six o'clock Wednesday evening before we left the lake and went to pass the night at Rigaud. There we engaged a young man, to whom we are giving five hundred livres per year with the same arrangements that we have with the others. He takes the place of a man named Labombarde of St. Constant, who failed to join us at Lachine. We left Rigaud and breakfasted above *Petites Écores* [*little bluffs*], which we had crossed on foot. Thence we journeyed to dine at two o'clock above the Long Sault Rapids, which we had passed on foot. It was very warm and the path lies through a wood, so that we did not have a breath of air. Needless to say, I perspired profusely. This is a very long walk. Mr. Dumoulin, who is not so heavy, got through with a slight weariness and but little perspiration. Above the Long Sault, which we left between four and five o'clock, we spent the night at a point called Sepoy. We left about four o'clock and arrived at Mr. Papineau's at six. We have said Mass, breakfasted, and are about to leave.

At the lake we secured from Mr. Roupe prayers and catechisms in Algonquian. Mr. Roupe is going to finish copying, or have copied, an examination of conscience in the same language. This may help us later. I should have liked very much to get Mr. Thavenet's grammar, but he had not made a copy. Mr. Dumoulin wrote to Your Lordship

from Lake of Two Mountains, giving you our route to that point. You know the sequel from this letter. The rest will reach you as opportunities present themselves. Mr. Tabeau said Mass here on Corpus Christi Day at two in the morning. He had made a remarkable record the preceding day. Having left Ste. Anne on the end of the island he reached Petite Nation at seven o'clock to spend the night.

I have the honor to be, most respectfully, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient

PROVENCHER, Priest.

Petite Nation, eight o'clock, May 24, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JUNE 2, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Sault Ste Marie, 2 juin 1818.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec. Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR, / J'ai quitté les missionnaires de la Rivière Rouge le 19 mai à la chine, suivant ce que j'avois annoncé à votre grandeur, et j'ai fait route immédiatement avec Mr De Rocheblave qui m'emmena coucher au Bout de l'île. Le lendemain de grand matin nous sommes embarqués dans le canot qui nous y attendoit et le douzième jour j'ai dit la messe au Sault Ste Marie. Cette marche est un peu plus expéditive que celle des canots de la baie d'Hudson qui avoient mis trente deux jours, il y a deux ans, à faire le même voyage. Nous serions même arrivés ici un jour plus tôt s'il ne nous eut pas fallu faire trois pauses à différents postes où la présence de Mr De Rocheblave étoit nécessaire. Ce brave homme continue d'avoir pour moi toutes les attentions imaginables; il a détourné sa route pour aller prendre Mr Crevier à l'Isle Drummond, et ce survenant qui m'attendoit depuis deux jours ne pouvoit que beaucoup gêner dans un canot où il y avoit déjà 14 hommes, 4 passagers et mon servent de messe;⁵⁹ mais rien ne lui a paru difficile. Il est parti ce matin pour le Fort William après nous avoir laissé d'abondantes provisions pour les voyages que nous avons à faire avant de nous rendre nous-mêmes à ce dernier poste, et a donné tous les ordres nécessaires pour nous procurer ce que nous demanderions; on ne peut voir un gentilhomme plus honnête, plus attentif, plus prévenant. Ses hommes étoient tous de choix; je n'ai pas entendu dix juremens dans tout le voyage; ses deux commis protestans

⁵⁹ *Servant de messe* conceivably may be used here in the sense of mess servant. It was customary for travelers to take one servant apiece on canoe trips.

se sont tenus aussi respectueusement que possible lorsque je faisais quelque exercice de religion; en un mot rien n'a été négligé pour que je fusse satisfait.

Comme les hyvernans n'arrivent au Fort William que vers le dix juillet, nous nous sommes déterminés à faire quelques jours de mission à l'Isle Drummond en attendant que la barque du nord-ouest vienne nous prendre vers le quinze courant, et nous viendrons en faire autant au Sault après le départ des hyvernans du Fort William. Nous sommes obligés, Mr Crevier et moi, d'aller toujours ensemble, parce que nous n'avons qu'une chapelle; une autre année les choses s'arrangeront mieux parce qu'on pourra s'y préparer de plus longue main, et les missions de l'Isle Drummond et du Sault pourront se faire en même temps, un seul prêtre étant suffisant au peu de monde qui se trouvent dans ces deux endroits. Nous n'avons encore pu rien faire ici depuis deux jours que nous y sommes; le gros vent de nord-est nous empêche de traverser au sud et de passer une baie qui sépare le poste du nord-ouest de quelques habitations où seulement nous aurons peut-être quelque chose à faire. Aussitôt le vent tombé nous nous mettrons en route pour l'Isle Drummond où nous passerons huit ou dix jours. Ensuite nous reviendrons ici prendre passage dans la goëlette qui nous conduira à Fort William, où nous demeurerons trois ou quatre semaines; nous reviendrons au Sault, et en attendant l'occasion de descendre, nous ferons ce qui pourra y avoir à faire. D'après cet arrangement, j'espère que je serai à Montréal assez à bonne heure pour aller à Québec dans le mois de septembre et faire à votre grandeur le rapport de nos expéditions.

Il me coûte de quitter le Sault sans y avoir vu les missionnaires de la Rivière Rouge; je suis inquiet d'eux; quoiqu'ils dussent se mettre en route un jour après moi et battre une marche un peu plus lente, je ne serai tranquille que quand je saurai qu'ils ont passé ici. Mr Delorimier n'étoit pas prêt lorsque je les quittai à la chine, tous les hommes n'étoient pas arrivés parce que mes ordres avoient été contremandés, un canot avoit été maltraité en montant les rapides de la chine; tout cela me déplaisoit; mais je ne pouvois plus retarder; ç'auroit été abuser de la complaisance de Mr De Rocheblave, dont le canot étoit rendu au bout de l'île depuis deux jours. J'espère néanmoins que tout aura été prêt pour le lendemain matin, Mr Forest m'ayant promis de faire toute diligence possible. J'écris cette lettre sans savoir quand elle partira; je ne la fermerai que quand je trouverai une occasion favorable.

4 juin. — Nous sommes partis hier du Sault Ste Marie et arrivons

en ce moment à Drummond's Island; un bâtiment prêt à partir pour le Détroit emportera cette lettre incluse dans une que Mr Crevier écrit à Mr Marchand. Demain nous verrons les gens de l'endroit et leur offrirons nos services.—Point de nouvelles des missionnaires de la Rivière Rouge.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

[*Translation*]

Sault Ste. Marie, June 2, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, I left the Red River missionaries on May 19 at Lachine, as I told Your Lordship that I should do. I started out immediately with Mr. de Rocheblave, who took me to the end of the island to spend the night. The following day very early we embarked in the canoe that was awaiting us, and the twelfth day I said Mass at Sault Ste. Marie. That trip is a little more expeditious than the one [that I took] in the Hudson's Bay Company's canoes two years ago, when thirty-two days were spent on the same route. We should have arrived even a day earlier, had it not been necessary to make three stops at different posts, where Mr. de Rocheblave's presence was necessary. That excellent man continues to pay me all kinds of attention. He turned aside from his route to pick up Mr. Crevier at Drummond Island. The latter, who had been expecting me for two days, could scarcely help but very much discommode a canoe already containing fourteen men, four passengers, and my Mass attendant.⁵⁹ But nothing seems difficult for him [*De Rocheblave*]. He left this morning for Fort William, having given us abundant provisions for the trips that we have to make before we ourselves reach that post. He also left all the necessary orders to enable us to get what we may need. One could not find a gentleman more honest, more attentive, more thoughtful. His men were all picked fellows; I did not hear ten oaths in the entire trip. His two Protestant clerks departed themselves as respectfully as possible when I performed religious services. In a word, nothing was neglected for my satisfaction.

Since the winterers do not arrive at Fort William till toward July 10, we have decided to spend some days conducting a mission at Drummond Island, while we wait for the North West Company's vessel, which is to take us about the fifteenth of this month. We shall do likewise at the Sault when the winterers have left Fort William. We

are always obliged, Mr. Crevier and I, to go together, because we have only one chapel. Another year things will be arranged better, since we can make preparations beforehand and since the missions at Drummond Island and at the Sault can be carried on at the same time, a single priest being sufficient for the few persons who live in these two places. We have not been able to do anything as yet during the two days that we have been here. A stiff wind from the northeast prevents us from crossing to the south across the bay that divides the North West Company's post from some settlements where alone we might possibly have something to do. As soon as the wind has fallen, we shall start for Drummond Island, where we shall spend eight or ten days. Then we shall return here to take passage on the schooner that is to take us to Fort William. We shall remain there three or four weeks and return to the Sault. While we await an opportunity to return, we shall do what there is to be done here.

According to this arrangement I hope that I shall be at Montreal sufficiently early to go to Quebec in September and make a report of our expeditions to Your Lordship.

It disturbs me to leave the Sault without having seen the missionaries bound for the Red River. I am anxious on their account. Although they left a day later than I and took a slower pace, I shall not be at ease till I know that they have passed this place. Mr. de Lorimier was not ready when I left them at Lachine; all the men had not arrived, because my orders had been countermanded; and a canoe had been broken going up the Lachine Rapids. All that displeased me but I could not stop. To have done so would have been to abuse the good nature of Mr. de Rocheblave, whose canoe had been at the end of the island for two days. I hope, however, that all was ready the following morning, for Mr. Forest promised me that he would exercise all possible diligence. I am writing this letter without knowing when it will leave. I shall not close it till I find a favorable opportunity for sending it.

June 4. We left Sault Ste. Marie yesterday and will arrive in a moment at Drummond Island. A vessel ready to leave for Detroit will take this letter enclosed in one that Mr. Crevier is writing to Mr. Marchand. Tomorrow we shall see the people of the place and offer them our services. No news from the Red River missionaries.

I have the honor to be, most respectfully, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

SELKIRK TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JUNE 6, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

A Montreal ce 6 juin 1818.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ J'ai à vous faire mes excuses de ce que j'ai manqué jusqu'ici de vous reconnoître la réception des papiers que Votre Seigneurie a eu la bonté de m'envoyer. Le départ de nos canots pour la Rivière Rouge, et les lettres qu'il m'a fallu écrire par cette occasion, m'ont donné beaucoup d'occupation; et d'ailleurs ma santé n'a pas été des meilleures depuis quelques semaines: ce qui vous portera à excuser quelques négligences.

Quelques jours après le départ des Missionnaires, j'ai appris avec regret que, par quelque malentendu, une partie des articles qu'ils avoient commandés n'avoient pas été expédiés dans leur canot. Pour remédier à cette omission, j'ai prié M. Robertson de s'en charger: j'espère qu'il rejoindra ces messieurs en route, de manière que l'omission ne leur sera pas d'un grand inconvénient. Le tems a été si favorable que je ne doute pas qu'ils auront déjà fait une partie considérable de leur route.

J'apprends que votre Seigneurie se prépare à faire un voyage en Angleterre. Vous ferez grand plaisir à mes amis à Londres en leur accordant l'occasion de faire votre connoissance. Mon beau-frère M. Halkett⁶⁰ demeure à Seymour Place, du côté de Hyde Park; et il s'empressera de vous présenter ses respects aussitôt qu'il pourra être informé de votre adresse.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, Monseigneur, votre très obéis. servit.

SELKIRK.

A Monseigneur l'Evêque de Québ.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, June 6, 1818.

MY LORD, I must offer you apologies for having failed till now to acknowledge the receipt of the papers that Your Lordship had the goodness to send me. The departure of our canoes for Red River and the letters that I was obliged to write by that opportunity gave me much to do. Moreover, my health has not been of the best for several weeks. This will excuse my negligence in part.

Some days after the departure of the missionaries I learned with regret that by some mistake some of the articles that they had ordered were not sent in their canoe. To remedy this omission I asked Mr.

⁶⁰ John Halkett was much involved in Lord Selkirk's colonizing scheme. For his relations with the Earl, see Martin, *Selkirk's Work in Canada, passim*. His later visit to the Red River colony is mentioned *post*, p. 353.

Robertson to take them with him. I hope that he will overtake the missionaries en route, so that the omission may not cause them too much inconvenience. The weather has been so fine that I do not doubt they have already covered a considerable portion of their route.

I hear that Your Lordship is getting ready for a trip to England. You will do my friends in London a great favor by granting them an opportunity to make your acquaintance. My brother-in-law, Mr. Halkett,⁶⁰ lives at Seymour Place toward Hyde Park, and he will hasten to pay you his respects as soon as he is informed of your address.

I have the honor to be, My Lord, your very obedient servant,

SELKIRK.

His Lordship, the Bishop of Quebec.

PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JUNE 8, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁶¹

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, Here we are at last at Drummond Island, where we arrived last night. Our trip so far has been without accident, though we fortunately escaped one, which at first seemed dangerous, at the Allumette Rapids in the Ottawa River. Our canoes, in order to get through quickly, were following each other too closely, when ours struck the end of Mr. de Lorimier's and cut it in two. We escaped with only a delay of a couple of hours. It is a very dangerous passage, especially if the canoes are following one another too closely. For my part, I had a good scare, as we might have smashed both canoes to bits. We have not run any other dangers. We are not traveling very fast. We are short of men—to tell the truth, we have only four good ones. We are very happy to have Mr. de Lorimier; otherwise we should have much to complain of as our people have not much ambition. With our little troop we shall get there eventually. Mr. Tabeau, who left with us, reached Sault Ste. Marie fifteen days before we did. We found him at Drummond Island with Mr. Crevier. Their mission did not seem to me to be exhausting them. They expect to return to the Sault, or rather to Fort William, on Thursday. We had a little trouble with winds in Lake Huron, and without the numerous isles with which it is dotted would have had more.

On the shore of Lake Nipissing we saw a few families of infidel natives. If I remember rightly, they are the first I have seen. We assembled them in the house of Mr. Eustache Laronde, who resides there,

⁶¹ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 12.

and we talked to them, or rather had someone talk to them, of the necessity of baptism for salvation, etc. And we had them promise to go to Lake of Two Mountains to be instructed. We saw others in French River, at Mississagi [Bay], and at Drummond Island. All greeted us, offering us fish and asking for rum.

Lake Nipissing, to my notion, presents a very lovely perspective. I had not thought it was so, because I had never heard it spoken of save by the *voyageurs*. The upper part of this lake, like nearly all those we found on our route, is full of islands, but the lower part presents a beautiful stretch of water, though the waters are not clear like those of Lake Huron and Lake Superior.

My companions are in good health. Mr. Edge is getting fat. Mr. Dumoulin stays *in statu quo*. We have stopped for part of the day to take provisions which are not ready.

Drummond Island is very picturesque. It has a good port; across from it are well-wooded islands between which the boats pass indiscriminately. There is a settlement there which is large for the time. The land is covered with rock, so that it takes much work to get it ready for cultivation. It is said that the interior of the island is better adapted to cultivation. We are pleased with Mr. de Lorimier's company; he is a gay, pleasant, polite, and honest man.

My companions join me in presenting to Your Lordship their very humble respects.

I have the honor to be, with the most profound respect, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

JH. N. PROVENCHER, Priest.

Drummond Island, June 8, 1818.

I wrote Your Lordship from Petite Nation. Mr. Dumoulin is not writing for the present.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JUNE 15, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Sault Ste Marie, 15 juin 1818.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec. Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR, / En attendant le bon vent qui doit conduire le bâtiment sur lequel nous embarquons pour passer le lac Supérieur, je donnerai à votre grandeur quelques détails de nos opérations depuis ma dernière lettre. Nous avons fait une mission de huit jours à l'Isle Drummond, où nous avons baptisé, catéchisé, prêché, confessé, marié

&c. quelques uns de ces ouvrages n'étoient pas bien difficiles, mais d'autres embarrassoient beaucoup. Les mariages surtout présentent dans ces pays de grandes difficultés à résoudre; nous n'en avons fait qu'un; il a suffi pour nous occuper; nous n'avons pas osé en entreprendre d'autres avant de savoir si nous avions bien fait pour celui-là; c'est un coup d'essai. Les baptêmes ont été très nombreux; les confessions peu, et ce n'est pas étonnant pour la première fois; nous étions obligés de faire nos exercices dans une tente ou dans une maison particulière où les gens se sentoient gênés pour leur devoir: les affaires de commerce donnant lieu à des allées et venues continuelles. Il y a toute apparence que les choses iront mieux une autre année. Les gens m'ont témoigné tout le désir possible de bâtir une chapelle et un logement pour les missionnaires; nous avons donné le plan de l'église, obtenu du commandant un lot de terre *ad hoc*, et planté une croix de vingt pieds pour en prendre possession. Le commandant et Mr Lacroix doivent favoriser l'établissement, et tous nous assurent que l'année prochaine nous aurons un *chez nous*.

Nous sommes de retour au Sault depuis trois jours; hier dimanche nous avons célébré deux messes et prêché à chacune; l'une s'est dite au lever du soleil pour les voyageurs de six canots qui étoient en route, et l'autre à 9 hres pour les gens de l'endroit. Quelques baptêmes ont occupé le reste du jour. Il y a peu de chose à faire ici; les gens qui y demeurent sont en très petit nombre, et les autres sont des engagés du nord-ouest qui vont et viennent et continuellement à l'ouvrage quand ils sont dans le poste. Cependant au retour du Fort William, nous leur donnerons quelques jours; j'ai déjà visé une place pour y planter une croix, mais je doute qu'on puisse y bâtir une chapelle. Au reste nous verrons dans le temps.

Le besoin de provisions a heureusement porté les missionnaires de la Rivière Rouge à l'Isle Drummond pendant que nous y étions; nous avons passé un jour et deux nuits ensemble. Ils ont fait un compte de £44 et quelques shellings dont je me suis chargé en vertu de votre lettre de crédit. Nous avons chanté tous ensemble une grand'messe telle qu'on pouvoit le faire dans le pays. Leur cloche a été oubliée dans un campement, et les canots du nord-ouest l'ont ramassée; elle est en route pour le Fort William. Ces messieurs, quoiqu'un peu tardifs dans leur voyage, étoient toujours en bonne disposition *sub omni respectu*. Mr Edge pour qui je craignois un peu les fatigues du voyage, avoit engraisié. Dieu veuille les soutenir et nous aussi pour sa plus grande gloire.

Mr Crevier me charge de vous présenter ses plus humbles respects auxquels je joins ceux avec lesquels j'ai l'honneur de me souscrire, Monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

[Translation]

Sault Ste. Marie, June 15, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, While awaiting a good wind for the vessel that is to take us across Lake Superior, I will give Your Lordship some details of our operations since my last letter. We conducted a mission for eight days at Drummond Island, where we baptized, catechised, confessed, married, etc. Some of our work was not very difficult, but other phases were very annoying. Marriages especially present great difficulties in these regions. We performed only one. It was sufficient to give us pause. We have not dared undertake any others till we learn whether we have done well in this case. It is a test. Baptisms have been very numerous, but confessions few. It is not astonishing that such should be the case the first time. We were obliged to hold our services in a tent or in a private house, where there was much disturbance during devotions. Business affairs caused a constant going and coming. There is every appearance that things will be better another year. The people have evinced every wish to build a chapel and a residence for the missionaries. We made a plan for a church, obtained a lot for this purpose from the commandant, and planted a cross twenty feet high to show that we had taken possession. The commandant and Mr. Lacroix are said to favor the establishment, and all of us can rest assured that next year we shall have a home.

We have been back in Sault Ste. Marie three days. Yesterday, Sunday, we celebrated two Masses and preached at each. One was said at sunrise for the *voyageurs* of six canoes that were on their way; the other was given at nine o'clock for the people of the place. Some baptisms occupied the remainder of the day. There is little to do here. The people who live here are very few in number, and the others are *engagés* of the North West Company, who come and go and are continually at work while they are in the post. Nevertheless, when we return from Fort William, we shall give them several days. I already have my eye on a place on which to plant a cross, but I doubt whether a chapel can be built there. We shall see in time.

Need of provisions fortunately brought the Red River missionaries to Drummond Island while we were there. We passed a day and two

nights together. They have had expenses amounting to forty-four pounds and some shillings, which I undertook on account of your letter of credit. We sang a High Mass all together as best we could in this country. They forgot their bell at an encampment, and the North West Company's canoes picked it up. It is now on its way to Fort William. These gentlemen, though a little slow on their trip, have been fortunate in all respects. Mr. Edge, about whose tiring on the trip I had some fears, has increased in weight. May God support them and us also for His greater glory.

Mr. Crevier charges me to give you his humblest respects, to which I join mine. I have the honor, My Lord, to subscribe myself your very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JUNE 20, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Fort Meuron,⁶² le 20 juin 1818.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Nous sommes enfin rendus à la Pointe Meuron après 30 jours de marche depuis notre départ de Lachine; nous sommes arrivés au Fort William ce matin à 4½ heures. Nous y avons été bien reçu de l'agent actuel qui est Mr De Rocheblave. Mr Lemoine,⁶³ commandant du Fort Meuron, nous a reçu au son du canon. Il n'y a dans le fort qu'environ dix engagés. Il est certain, d'après ce que nous a dit Mr De Rocheblave, que nous ne verrons personne au lac Lapluie; de manière que nous serons rendus à la Rivière Rouge vers le 15 juillet. Depuis notre départ de l'Île Drumond nous avons fait d'assez bonnes journées, excepté dans le commencement du lac Supérieur où nous avons été souvent dégradés. Depuis le commencement du Lac Nepizingue nous n'avons rencontré que des pauvres sauvages infidèles qui ne pensent à rien moins qu'à leur salut, qui ne pensoient qu'à changer leur poisson pour du Rom, et qui étoient fort surpris qu'on ne leur donnât que du biscuit. Un missionnaire qui parcoureroit toutes les rives de ces lacs là n'y perdrait sûrement pas ses peines et viendrait bien

⁶² Fort Meuron was named for a group of disbanded foreign mercenaries from the "Regiment de Meuron" of the War of 1812, whom Selkirk secured for his colony. Point Meuron, where Selkirk's men passed the winter of 1816-17 before continuing their journey to the colony, is about nine miles up the Kaministikwia River from the site of Fort William. George Bryce, *Mackenzie, Selkirk, Simpson*, 233-236 (*Makers of Canada Series*, vol. 9 — New York, 1926).

⁶³ This is probably the "Mons' Lemoine" mentioned by David Thompson in 1798 as the factor in charge of the North West Company's post at Fond du Lac, now Duluth. Joseph B. Tyrrell, ed., *David Thompson's Narrative of His Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812*, 285 (Champlain Society, *Publications*, no. 12 — Toronto, 1916).

vite à bout de faire des chrétiens d'une bonne partie de ces pauvres malheureux; ce qui se feroit sans doute bien plus facilement si l'on pouvoit venir à bout de les rassembler tous en village. Nous nous trouvons fort bien de l'accompagnement de Mr Laurimier. Mr Provencher ne se trouve pas fatigué du voyage. Mr Edge engraisse beaucoup, et moi je suis à peu près ce que j'étois à Québec. Nous sommes rendus ici sans aucun accident absolument, si l'on excepte le canot de Mr De Laurimier qui s'est déchiré un peu sur des roches, encore ce fut très peu de chose. Il paroît qu'il y a dans les terres appelées les Rabaskas et dans les montagnes des environs grand nombre de sauvages infidèles qui n'ont aucune idée de la religion. Je finirai cette lettre en me recommandant de nouveau à vos prières et vous demandant de rechef votre sainte bénédiction.

De Votre Grandeur le très humble et respectueux serviteur

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Monsgr. J. O./ Evêque de Québec.

P.S. Pointe Meuron, 23 juin 1818./ Nos canots vont être prêts pour deux heures après midi; nous partirons immédiatement; nous avons laissé hier le Fort William comblé de politesses, on a tiré trois coups de canon. Depuis que nous sommes à la Pointe Meuron la chaleur a été très grande, le tonnerre a fait un bruit terrible, et les maringouins nous y tourmentent beaucoup.

S. D.

[*Translation*]

Fort Meuron,⁶² June 20, 1818.

MY LORD, We have at last reached Point Meuron after thirty days' travel since our departure from Lachine; we arrived at Fort William at four-thirty this morning. We were welcomed by the factor himself, who is Mr. de Rocheblave. Mr. Lemoine,⁶³ commandant of Fort Meuron, saluted us with a cannon. There are only about ten *engagés* in the fort. It is certain, according to what Mr. de Rocheblave says, that we shall not see anyone at Rainy Lake; thus we shall reach Red River about July 15. Since our departure from Drummond Island we have made very good distances each day, except at the entrance to Lake Superior, where we were often wind-bound. After entering Lake Nipissing we met only poor infidel Indians, altogether heedless of their salvation, who thought only of trading their fish for rum and were greatly surprised that we should give them nothing but biscuit. A missionary who would visit all the shores of those lakes would surely not be wasting his time, for he would soon succeed in making Christians

of a large part of these wretched infidels; this could be accomplished very much more easily, no doubt, if it were possible to assemble them all in villages. We are very fortunate to be accompanied by Mr. de Lorimier. Mr. Provencher is not fatigued by the voyage. Mr. Edge is getting very stout, while I am about as I was at Quebec. Thus far we have met with no accidents whatever, except that Mr. de Lorimier's canoe was damaged a little on the rocks, but that was nothing. It seems that in the lands called the Athabaskas and the surrounding mountains there are a great many infidel Indians who have no conception whatever of religion.

I close this letter once more commending myself to your prayers, and asking once more for your holy benediction.

Your Lordship's very humble and respectful servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

P. S. Point Meuron, June 23, 1818. Our canoes are to be ready at two o'clock this afternoon; we shall leave immediately. We left Fort William yesterday, heaped with kindnesses. They saluted us with three cannon volleys. Since we arrived at Point Meuron the heat has been excessive; there has been terrible rumbling of thunder and the mosquitoes are tormenting us very much.

S. D.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO ROUX, JUNE 21, 1818
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 9:376]

Batiskan, 21 juin 1818.

A Monsieur Roux, / Vic. Gén. à Montréal.

MONSIEUR, / J'espérois qu'une fois délivré de ses occupations du printemps et rendu à une meilleure santé, Lord Selkirk auroit la bonté de m'envoyer le *deed* qu'il a dû donner pour l'établissement et le soutien de la mission de la Riv.-Rouge, et mon intention étoit premièrement de le faire enrégistrer dans les archives de l'évêché, et 2^o d'en remettre une copie authentique entre les mains de Sir John Sherbrooke avant son départ pour l'Angleterre, avec prière d'en obtenir la confirmation par lettres patentes ou de telle autre manière qu'il plairoit au Gouvernement de l'accorder. Par ce moyen l'établissement acquerroit une stabilité à l'épreuve de toutes les révolutions à venir et se trouveroit solidement garanti soit des entreprises de la société du Nord-Ouest, si ennemie de la colonie, soit même des prétentions américaines. Cependant Sa Seigneurie ne m'en dit mot dans une lettre dont elle m'a honoré en date du 6 de ce mois. Comme je suppose que vous avez

quelquefois occasion de la voir, je désirerois que vous voulussiez lui en faire mention en tels termes qu'il vous plaira. Peut-être seroit-ce lui donner quelque ombrage que de lui en écrire directement. Il pourroit soupçonner une défiance que sa manière noble et loyable de procéder ne m'autorise assurément pas. Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec

[*Translation*]

Batiscan, June 21, 1818.

Mr. Roux, Vicar-General at Montreal.

SIR, I had hoped that once Lord Selkirk had completed his spring work and had recovered his health, he would have had the kindness to send me the deed that he was to have given us for the establishment and maintenance of the mission at Red River. My intention was, first of all, to have it registered in the archives of the bishopric, and, second, to put an authentic copy in Sir John Sherbrooke's hands before his departure for England, along with a request to have it confirmed by letters patent or such other method as it might please the government to offer. By this method the mission would secure a stability proof against all future revolutions, and would find itself thoroughly safeguarded both against the schemes of the North West Company, the colony's confirmed enemy, and against American claims. But His Lordship did not say a word about it in his favor of the sixth of this month. Since I suppose that you sometimes have occasion to see him, I should like very much to have you mention it to him in any way that seems best to you. It might offend him if I should write to him directly. He might suspect a distrust that his noble and generous manner of treatment surely would not justify. I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JUNE 23, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pointe Meuron, 23 juin 1818.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Nous sommes partis de l'île Drumond le 10 juin, nous y avons laissé Mrs Tabeau et Crevier qui paroisoient assez occupés, et plus qu'ils ne le seront partout ailleurs, vû qu'il y a plus d'habitants stables. Nous partimes du Sault le lendemain et arrivames à Fort William le 22 [*sic*] à 4¾ heures du matin, ce qui faisoit 30 jours depuis notre départ de Lachine; nous y avons été bien reçu de Mr De Rocheblave commandant actuel du Fort; cependant nous partimes sans rien prendre à cause du jeûne de St Jean, et nous nous rendimes à la

Pointe Meuron croyant continuer notre route sans grand retardement. Mais n'ayant pu changer nos canots à la Pointe Meuron, nous avons été obligés de rebonder les nôtres &c., ce qui nous retardera de trois jours. Mr De Rocheblave qui s'étoit contenté de nous offrir en général de nous donner ce que nous aurions de besoin, envoya après nous un canot dans lequel il nous envoyoit des provisions fraîches en assez grande quantité avec une lettre extrêmement honête, et trois autres lettres pour donner dans les postes que nous rencontrerons appartenant à la Comp: du N. W. C'étoit le samedi. Nous lui écrivîmes que n'ayant [pu] nous rendre le matin à ses invitations réitérées nous nous ferions un plaisir d'aller le lendemain dire la messe à Fort William &c. Nous devons y aller en berge, nos canots étant sur les chantiers, mais il plut tant dans la nuit que tous les canots, les berges &c., qui étoient alors dans le port de la Pointe Meuron furent enlevés. On avoit encore jamais vu monter si vite la rivière de Kamanetickouia. N'ayant plus de moyen de nous rendre au Fort William, Mr Provencher l'écrivit à Mr De Rocheblave qui envoya aussitôt un canot de Maître, mais nous fumes trop retardés de manière que nous dîmes la messe à la Pointe Meuron; ensuite nous fumes diner et passer la valeur d'une journée au Fort William où nous fumes extrêmement bien reçus. Nos canots ne seront prêts que le 23 matin, et nous serons je crois rendus à la Riv: Rouge vers le 15 juillet. Car nous ne trouverons aucun hivernement au lac Lapluie d'après ce que nous dit Mr De Rocheblave. Le seul moyen que nous aurions seroit de revenir avec Mr de Laurimier un de nous, et puis de remonter avec quelque canot passant; car ce seroit trop exiger que de demander un canot de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest. D'ailleurs nous tâcherons d'arranger les choses pour le mieux et d'épargner, s'il est possible, le tems de nos hommes.

Je n'aurois jamais pensé qu'étant rendu à la Riv: Rouge je ne serois pas à la moitié du chemin qu'il faudroit faire pour communiquer avec tous les sauvages qui commercent avec la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest et qui sont très nombreux. Ce n'est pas de dix ans, je crois, qu'il sera possible de voir [*blank in MS*] tous ces pauvres infidèles qui vivent dans l'ignorance, et qui croient que tout ce qu'ils ont à faire dans le monde c'est de chasser afin d'avoir des traiteurs du Rum et quelques autres effets.

Mr Tabeau qui croyoit nous attendre longtems au Fort William n'est pas encore arrivé. Nous sommes, je crois, les premiers qui avons dit la messe à Fort W. Mr Provencher se porte très bien et a soutenu les fatigues du voyage bien mieux que je ne pensois. Mr Edge en-

graisse, et je suis dans le même état où j'étois à Québec. Nous partons sitôt après diner pour nous rendre à la Pointe Meuron.

Il me reste à vous assurer de mes plus profonds respects et à vous demander de rechef votre bénédiction, restant de Votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant serviteur

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis/ Evêque de Québec, à Québec.

[*Translation*]

Point Meuron, June 23, 1818.

MY LORD, We left Drummond Island June 10; Messrs. Tabeau and Crevier, whom we left there, seemed to be quite busy, more so than they will be anywhere else, because there are a greater number of permanent inhabitants there. We left the Sault the following day and reached Fort William the twenty-second [*sic*] at 4:45 in the morning, thus making altogether thirty days since we left Lachine; we were made very welcome there by Mr. de Rocheblave, the present commandant of the fort; however, we left without eating anything because of the fast of St. John, and we went on to Point Meuron, intending to continue our way without any great delay. But being unable to change canoes at Point Meuron, we have been obliged to gum and repair our own, which will delay us three days. Mr. de Rocheblave, who had exerted himself to give us whatever we might need, sent a canoe after us to bring us a great many fresh provisions, together with a very courteous letter, and three other letters for us to deliver at the posts of the North West Company that we are to pass. That was Saturday. We wrote him that not having been able that morning to accept his repeated invitations, we should be very glad to go to Fort William the following day to say Mass etc. We were to go in a boat, since our canoes were on the stocks, but it rained so hard during the night that all the canoes, boats, etc., that were in the harbor of Point Meuron were carried off. The Kaministikwia River had never been seen to rise so fast. Since we now had no way to get to Fort William, Mr. Provencher sent word of our predicament to Mr. de Rocheblave, who immediately sent a *mâitre* canoe to get us, but it was too late by that time; so we said Mass at Point Meuron and then went to Fort William for dinner and to spend the rest of the day, where we were made very welcome indeed. Our canoes will not be ready until the morning of the twenty-third, and we shall reach Red River about July 15, I think. For we shall not find any winterers

at Rainy Lake, according to Mr. de Rocheblave. The only way would be for one of us to come back with Mr. de Lorimier and then to go up again with some passing canoe; for it would be too much to ask the North West Company for a canoe. At any rate we shall try to arrange things for the best and, if possible, to save time for our men.

I should never have believed that once at Red River I should not have covered half the distance necessary to reach all the numerous Indians who trade with the North West Company. I do not think it would be possible in ten years to see all [*blank in MS*] these poor infidels who live in ignorance, and who think that all they have to do in the world is to hunt in order to be able to barter for rum and other things.

Mr. Tabeau, who thought he would have to wait for us a long time at Fort William, has not yet arrived. I believe we are the first to say Mass at Fort William. Mr. Provencher is very well and has withstood the hardships of the journey much better than I had expected. Mr. Edge is gaining in weight, and I am about as I was in Quebec. We leave immediately after dinner for Point Meuron.

Allow me to assure you of my profoundest regard and to ask your blessing once more. I remain Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JULY 6, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁶⁴

[*Translation*]

Rainy Lake, July 6, 1818.

MY LORD, We arrived here the third of this month without accident or misfortune. Mr. Dumoulin wrote Your Lordship from Fort William telling you the news so far, of our arrival, our visit, and the attentions we received from the gentlemen of the North West Company, etc. Mr. de Rocheblave took our letters, giving us hope that they would be forwarded soon. I am writing from here, hoping that my letter will leave by the North West Company's light canoes, which are going to Fort William; and from there Mr. Tabeau will start it on its way to Canada. We shall leave this place this afternoon. We said Mass yesterday at the North West Company's fort. There we baptized nineteen children from the two forts. Today we have said

⁶⁴ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 25.

Mass at the Hudson's Bay Company's post. We gathered the people from the two forts yesterday for the evening service; and we planted a cross yesterday after the evening office. It is the first time so far that we have had an opportunity to plant one. The people from Athabaska are not yet out.⁶⁵ We do not expect them much before the fifteenth or the twentieth. We shall not stop any longer in this place because we have nothing to do here. The Hudson's Bay Company's post is not yet well organized here; everything is in its infancy. It has a beautiful location, but it is not built; it is under construction. The company did not begin to build in this place till this spring. The two forts are fifteen or twenty arpents from each other. Mr. de Rocheblave gave us letters for all the posts by which we are to pass, which give orders to furnish us with all the provisions we shall need. We are very glad of them here, for provisions are not very abundant with the Hudson's Bay Company, so that we shall get everything from the North West Company. All is free.

It has taken us ten days from Point Meuron to Rainy Lake. It is a very bad piece of the way because of the rapids, the portages, rivers without water, etc. We have had some trouble, but none of us has suffered in person. We brought up a crew of poor *voyageurs*. Mr. Tabeau's object was to give us only good *voyageurs*, but he failed to do so. I believe it was not his fault. To accomplish his end he did not want to engage workmen, as milord would have wished, and as a result, we find ourselves frustrated on both sides. Among our men three are not *voyageurs* and count for little; the leader, an old man of fifty-four years, was not capable of carrying the canoe, which should have been his duty as *bout de canot*. He has been obliged to pay some *milieux* to carry it in his place. All this is not done without complaints from the others, who believe they are forced to do the work of men who are paid just as much as they. Our canoe is very heavy for a north canoe, which is another subject of complaint. There has been no way to exchange it here nor at Point Meuron. I very much fear we shall be much worse off when we get there than on the way, because our men seem to me very awkward in what we have to do. I think I shall have to send off two or three from Red River, if I can arrange things as I wish there. That is to say, if I am able to find a few good workers or carpenters.

⁶⁵ The traders and *voyageurs* from Athabaska could not reach Fort William and return to their posts in one season. Consequently their provisions and new men met them at the Rainy Lake post, where the Athabaska House formed a part of the North West Company's fort.

Mr. Tabeau has to reproach himself for having put too much confidence in a man named Ste. Marie, to whom he has given fourteen hundred livres—two hundred more than the others. He is a negligent, cowardly fellow, with little skill, and very insolent. Mr. Tabeau gave him the right to hire two men, and one of these did not show up after having received thirty dollars. The other is a poor *voyageur*, without religion, and has a bad tongue. As a result of all this our trip is expensive and we are badly equipped, with the prospect of being more so. I shall never write anything about this to anyone else, but I am very glad for Your Lordship to know everything.⁶⁶ I suppose we shall get there the fifteenth. Everything is peaceful at Red River. I have seen people from there. It seems from what they say that a good crop has been put in. I will write to Your Lordship by Mr. de Lorimier.

Messrs. Dumoulin and Edge are well and join me in sending you their very humble respects.

I have the honor to be with the most profound respect, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

PROVENCHER, Priest, Vicar-General.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JULY 9, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Fort William, 9 juillet 1818.

A Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec. A Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR, / Depuis que j'ai eu l'honneur de vous écrire au Sault, nous avons traversé le beau lac Supérieur dans le bâtiment de la compagnie du nord-ouest et sommes arrivés au Fort William le 22 juin au soir. Nous y avons été reçus avec toute l'honnêteté ordinaire de la part de ces messieurs; une grande chambre et deux cabinets nous ont été donnés pour logement, et un appartement assez vaste pour notre chapelle. Dès le lendemain nous avons monté notre autel au-dessous du dais que Mr Desjardins avoit mis dans mon équipement sacerdotal, et tapissé l'interval d'une belle nappe ouvrée sur laquelle sont attachées des images et des petites croix en abondance, placées en symétrie sauvage pour se conformer au gout du lieu. Nous avons commencé

⁶⁶ It seems fair to conclude that Provencher is saying indirectly that Tabeau's efforts had tended to cripple and delay the Red River missionaries on their journey. Back of this insinuation lies another, namely, that Tabeau was the tool of the North West Company, which did not propose to avoid any means of hindering the development of Lord Selkirk's colony. It especially wished to prevent any of the missionaries' *voyageurs* from settling there in the capacity of skilled workmen, such as carpenters and masons.

à dire la messe et continuons depuis, une seulement dans les jours de semaine et deux les dimanches et fêtes; tous les soirs nous faisons la prière en commun avec les gens du fort; nous les prêchons de temps en temps et catéchisons tous les jours principalement les jeunes gens qui se disposent au baptême. Nous baptisons les enfants quand on nous les présente; les parrains et marreines ne sont pas tout-à-fait qualifiés selon la rigueur des règles du Rituel, mais enfin nous prenons ceux qui en sont les moins éloignés; et comme ils sont assez rares, les memes servent à plusieurs. C'est ce que j'ai fait à l'Isle Drummond où j'ai baptisé jusqu'à dix-huit enfans à la fois avec les mêmes parrein et marreine. Nous avons exhorté, pressé les gens de profiter de notre séjour ici pour se confesser; quelques-uns le font, d'autres le promettent; mais très peu s'avancent, et moins encore sont capables de le faire avec fruit, la plupart de ceux qui restent dans ces pays étant ou employés à la traite de la boisson avec les sauvages ou liés à des sauvagesses infidelles. Quelques unes cependant qui entendent le français consentent à se faire instruire, et nous avons commencé cette besogne difficile sans voir encore si nous réussirons. Je crois que plusieurs années de mission régulière seront nécessaires avant d'en voir quelques fruits et de faire quelque chose de solide; on ne peut maintenant que préparer les voies à d'autres qui feront mieux que nous.

Les missionnaires de la Riv. Rouge ne sont partis de la Pointe Meuron que le 23 juin; ils vont doucement et ne sont pas très bien équipés. Mr De Rocheblave les a bien reçus au Fort William où ils sont venus dire la messe une fois, et leur a donné quelques provisions fraiches. Nous les aurions vus ici si nous fussions arrivés trois heures plus tôt. J'ai été moi-même à la Pointe meuron, à quatre lieues d'ici, sur la rivière Kaminstiguia, pour y enterrer une petite fille de Bruce l'interprète qui est allé à la Rivière Rouge avec sa famille. Nous avons fait un autre voyage de promenade avec Mr Mcgilvray à l'ancien grand portage, à seize lieues d'ici, sur le lac Supérieur.⁶⁷ Les deux messieurs Mcgilvray, messieurs Shaw, De Rocheblave, Mclouhin, Hughes, Dare, Mctavish et nombre d'autres forment une compagnie déjà nombreuse et qui le sera davantage quand tous les hyvernans seront arrivés.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Grand Portage was the inland headquarters of the North West Company till 1803, when Fort William was substituted. Solon J. Buck, "The Story of the Grand Portage," in *Minnesota History Bulletin*, 5:14-27 (February, 1923).

⁶⁸ James Hughes and John George McTavish were both prominent North Westers, as was also Dr. John McLoughlin, of Oregon fame, who was connected for many years before 1823 with the posts at Sturgeon Lake, Little Lake Vermilion near Rainy Lake, Fort William, and Rainy Lake. See Daniel W. Harmon, *A Journal of Voyages and Travels in the Interior*

Il y a déjà plus de trente canots du nord partis pour le lac Lapluie; un d'eux a malheureusement fait naufrage dans un rapide à quelques lieues d'ici, et un homme s'y est noyé; j'ai profité de cet accident pour le salut des autres; la remontrance a paru attirer l'attention du moment, et c'est là peut-être tout ce qui en résultera.

26 juillet.—Ne sachant quand cette lettre trouveroit une occasion, je l'ai laissée ouverte pour ne la terminer que lorsque je serois certain de son départ, et voici un canot qui s'apprête pour Montréal. Rien d'extraordinaire à marquer à votre grandeur; une grande partie des hyvernans sont venus et repartis sans nous avoir donné beaucoup d'occupations. On attend les dernières brigades aujourd'hui ou demain, et il en sera probablement de même; les raisons s'en donneront mieux de vive voix que par écrit. Notre ministère n'a pas pourtant pas été inutile ici: nous avons catéchisé un grand nombre d'enfans et continuons cette besogne non sans quelque consolation, par l'avantage qu'ils en retirent et la facilité avec laquelle ils apprennent; il y en a qui ont un zèle pour s'instruire et une intelligence remarquables; la plupart ont été baptisés; il en reste encore quelques uns qui ont été plus tardifs à se présenter ou à apprendre, et que nous espérons faire chrétiens sous peu. C'est par là seulement que pourra commencer le bien des missions qu'il y a à faire en ces pays, et que la religion reprendra peu à peu ses droits à mesure qu'ils croîtront en âge: pourvu que cette première semence ne soit pas étouffée par les mauvais exemples des vieux pécheurs de l'endroit.

J'ai reçu une lettre des missionnaires de la Riv. Rouge datée au lac Lapluie d'où ils sont partis le 7 juillet après avoir fait 19 baptêmes, et sans avoir vu les hyvernans du Rabaska, du lac des esclaves &c, parce qu'ils n'y étoient pas encore arrivés. Tous ces pauvres gens se passeront encore de prêtres cette année, car ils ne viennent point jusqu'au Fort William; si j'avois eu deux chapelles, je me serois déterminé à y aller, mais je n'ai pas voulu priver mon chef lieu de mission des exercices que nous pouvions y faire. Nous serons encore ici au moins quinze jours; après quoi je verrai au moyen de retourner à mon poste. Mr Crevier se porte bien et me charge de présenter ses très humbles respects.

of North America, 126 (Toronto, 1911); Edwin James, ed., *Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*, 279 (New York, 1830); a manuscript account by McLoughlin of the region between Lake Superior and Rainy Lake, in the library of McGill University, Montreal; and Nicholas Garry, "Diary," in Royal Society of Canada, *Proceedings and Transactions*, series 2, vol. 6, sec. 2, pp. 77, 78, 81, 113 (Montreal, 1900). Thomas Dears is mentioned in George Simpson's diary of 1824. Frederick Merk, ed., *Fur Trade and Empire: George Simpson's Journal*, 47 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1931).

Nous parlons ici des voies et moyens d'avoir une chapelle au Fort William; et il y a toute apparence qu'on va s'en occuper sérieusement. Je me recommande à vos SS. Sacrifices et suis avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, de votre grandeur le très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

ANT. TABELAU, Ptre.

P. S. Votre ami Mr Shaw va hyverner dans l'intérieur.

[*Translation*]

Fort William, July 9, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, Since I had the honor of writing to you at the Sault, we have crossed beautiful Lake Superior in the North West Company's vessel and have arrived at Fort William, June 22 in the evening. We have been received with all the decorum customary on the part of these gentlemen. A large chamber and two smaller rooms have been given us for lodgings, and a very large room for our chapel. Since the following day we have had our altar mounted beneath the dais that Mr. Desjardins put into my portable chapel, and have hung the intervening space with a beautiful embroidered cloth upon which are hung images and little crosses in abundance, placed in Indian symmetry to conform to local taste. We began to say Mass and have continued to do so once only on week days and twice on Sundays and feast days. Every evening we have prayers with the people at the fort. We preach from time to time and catechize every day, principally the young people who are disposed toward baptism. We baptize infants when they are presented to us. Godfathers and godmothers are not wholly qualified according to the strictest interpretation of the rules of the ritual, but at any rate we take those that are least disqualified; and as they are few, the same ones serve for many candidates. That is what I did at Drummond Island, where I baptized as many as eighteen children at one time with the same godfather and godmother. We have exhorted and urged the people to profit by our visit here to be confessed. Some have done so, others have promised; but very few are coming forth, and even fewer still are doing so with benefit. The majority of those who stay in the country are employed in liquor traffic with the Indians or connected with native women. Some, however, who understand French, consent to be instructed, and we have begun this difficult task without being able yet to see whether we are succeeding. I think that many years of

regular missions will be necessary before we shall see any fruits or do anything permanent. Now all one can do is to pave the way for others, who will succeed better than we.

The missionaries for the Red River did not leave Point Meuron till June 23. They were traveling slowly and were not very well manned. Mr. de Rocheblave received them very well at Fort William, where they came to say Mass once, and gave them some fresh provisions. We should have seen them here if we had arrived three hours earlier. I myself have been at Point Meuron, four leagues from here on the Kaministikwia River, to inter a grandchild of the interpreter Bruce, who has gone to Red River with his family. We have made another trip with Mr. McGillivray to the old Grand Portage, sixteen leagues from here on Lake Superior.⁶⁷ The two Messrs. McGillivray, Messrs. Shaw, de Rocheblave, McLoughlin, Hughes, Dears [?], McTavish and a number of others form a company already numerous, which will be larger still when the winterers have arrived.⁶⁸

Already more than thirty north canoes have left for Rainy Lake; one of them, unfortunately, was wrecked in a rapid a few leagues from here and one man was drowned. I have profited by this accident for the salvation of others, my rebukes seeming to attract attention for the moment. That is perhaps all that will result from the accident.

July 26. Not knowing when there will be an opportunity to send this letter, I have left it open in order to end it only when I should be certain that it can go. Now there is a canoe that is getting ready to go to Montreal. There is nothing unusual to mention to Your Lordship. A large party of winterers have come and gone without having given us much to do. We expect the last brigades today or tomorrow, and the case will probably be the same with them. The reasons can be given to you better orally than in writing. Nevertheless, our ministry has not been useless here; we have catechized a large number of children and will continue that task not without some consolation for the good that they will derive therefrom and the facility with which they learn. There are some among them with a zeal to be instructed and a remarkable intelligence. The majority have been baptized. There still remain some that have been slower in presenting themselves or in learning, and these we hope to make Christians within a short time. It is only thus that the good that missions may do in this country can begin and that religion can regain its rights little by little as they grow older, provided that this first sowing may not be choked by the bad examples of old sinners on the spot.

I have received a letter from the Red River missionaries dated at Rainy Lake, which they left on July 7, having performed nineteen baptisms and without having seen the winterers from Athabaska, Slave Lake, etc., because they had not yet arrived. All these poor men will make shift again this year without priests, for they do not come as far as Fort William. If I had two chapels, I should decide to go there, but I do not wish to deprive my chief mission of the services that we can hold here. We shall be here not less than two more weeks. Then I shall see to means for returning to my post. Mr. Crevier is well and begs me to present his very humble respects.

We are talking here of ways and means to have a chapel at Fort William. There is every appearance that the matter is being considered seriously. I commend myself to your Holy Sacrifices, and am, most respectfully, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

P. S. Your friend, Mr. Shaw, is going to winter in the interior.

ROBERTSON TO SELKIRK, JULY 18, 1818

[Selkirk Transcripts, 15:5182. C]

Fort Douglas 18 July 1818.

To the Right Hon^{ble}/ The Earl of Selkirk.

MY LORD/ I arrived here on the 14th and the Missioners on the 16th and in the course of the day take my departure for Jack River.

I have much pleasure in communicating to your Lordship the prosperous state of your affairs in this quarter. the old Scotch Sentiment of Peace & PLENTY is at last realised on the fertile plains of Ossiniboia. The Missioners are charmed with the fine appearance [of] the crops and the industry of the colonists in particular the MEURONS these men have raised houses and cultivated lands as it were by *magic*; German Street appears to have been settled there ten years in place of ten months

The Highlanders are working and grumbling; but the heavy crops weigh down a number of complaints and grievances, which exist only in their own unhappy dispositions.

The many malicious reports circulated by the North West C^o respecting this country has induced me to send off Captain D' Lorimier sooner than he intended, in order to encourage the Colonial Brigade to proceed to their place of destination for I am convinced that obstacles will be thrown in their way by that association.⁶⁹ they even informed

⁶⁹ Colonists from Lower Canada followed shortly after the missionaries. See *post*, pp. 138, 140, 149.

myself that the Meurons had mutinied and forced their passage to the Bay.

In the hopes of bringing your Lordship a continuation of the happy intelligence I have had the satisfaction of communicating in this short epistle,/ I have the honor to be/ My Lord/ Your Lordships/ Most obedient Servant

COLIN ROBERTSON.

To/ The Right Hon^{ble}/ The Earl of Selkirk/ Montreal.

PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JULY 21, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁷⁰

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, Here we are at last at our destination. We arrived on July 16 at five o'clock in the evening. We were very well received by Mr. Macdonell, governor of the place, who seems to be a good man and is a Catholic. It is said that he is to leave this fall. I shall be sorry, especially if milord sends in his place Captain Matthey,⁷¹ a Meuron, who has already a woman and a child here — a woman whom he certainly would not marry. Such an example would be bad for the colony. We have written to Your Lordship, Mr. Dumoulin and I, from all the places where we thought there was a good chance to forward letters to Quebec. The last one was Rainy Lake, where we arrived on July 3. We stayed there till the sixth. We said Mass there on Sunday at the North West Company's fort, and also baptized nineteen children. We also planted a cross at the Hudson's Bay Company's fort. From there we descended the Rainy River, passed through Lake of the Woods, and entered the Winnipeg River, on one of whose points I saw the spot where Mr. Keveny was killed.⁷² I even saw some of his bones, which are covered only with wood. From Lake of the Woods we entered the Winnipeg River, a river peculiar in its course, its inlets, its bays, its rapids, its falls, its portages, etc. It took us to the entrance

⁷⁰ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 26–28.

⁷¹ Captain Frederick Matthey was sent with a detachment of men to the Red River settlement in 1816. On June 12, 1818, he was entrusted with the management of all that related to the defense and protection of the colony. Later he served as Selkirk's European agent for enlisting settlers for the colony. He appears to have left the Red River settlement finally in 1825. Edmund H. Oliver, ed., *The Canadian North-West*, 1:58 (Canadian Archives, *Publications*, no. 9 — Ottawa, 1914).

⁷² Owen Keveny was the leader of Selkirk's second expedition to the Red River settlement. At the height of the warfare between the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company he was arrested, and en route to Canada he was murdered by Charles Reinhard of the opposing force. See Martin, *Selkirk's Work in Canada*, 128. In a letter to Bishop Plessis dated August 12, 1818, which is not reproduced in this volume, Provencher says, "In my last letter I used 'Lake of the Wood' instead of 'Winnipeg River' in speaking of the murder of Mr. Keveny."

of the lake of the same name. There is a fort of the North West Company at that place.⁷³ We stopped three-fourths of a day, and baptized sixteen children there. Then we made eighteen leagues on the lake and eighteen on the Red River, in order to reach Fort Douglas. At the mouth of the Winnipeg River we met the Athabaska canoes with about a hundred and fifty men. I wish I might have seen them at Rainy Lake, but they would not reach there until fifteen or twenty days after our departure. We have announced to them that we shall go there next year. We have been very well received everywhere. The North West Company's *bourgeois* seem to hold to their promises to protect us in every way possible. Everywhere they have offered us provisions and anything else we might need.

The Red River, or rather, the country which takes its name from that stream, is truly beautiful; the river is quite wide; it is lined with oaks, elms, ivy,⁷⁴ poplars, etc., and back from this fringe of woods are prairies as far as the eye can reach. The soil seems excellent, if one may judge by the harvest of this year; wheat, barley, and potatoes are fine everywhere, especially in ground which has already been cultivated. Milord's grounds will yield a fine harvest of wheat, barley, and especially potatoes. The wheat and the barley are headed. Our land contains a sufficiency of firewood and has prairies back of it. Lumber is scarce, at least that of good quality. We are going to start to build. A chapel is the most pressing need, because there is no convenient place where everyone can gather. The location for the chapel is fine; it is situated across from the forts of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, which are eight or ten arpents apart, and at about fifteen arpents from Fort Douglas. The ground for the church is about twenty or thirty arpents from our land. There are no Indians here at present. Everyone seems pleased at our arrival, and all seem anxious to benefit by our instruction.

I am sending back one of our men named Ste. Marie, who engaged at fourteen hundred livres. I am giving him eight hundred livres and equipment that he received before his departure. We will do the best we can with the others. I would give much to have a good carpenter. There is none here. It would have been easy to get some at Montreal. Provisions are plentiful. Buffaloes have been numerous and close at hand all winter and spring. Now they are straying farther because the hunters are worrying them. There is a calf of eighteen

⁷³ It was known at the time as Bas de la Rivière Fort, and later as Fort Alexander.

⁷⁴ The word is *lières* in the original letter. Possibly the writer intended to use the word for ivy, *lierre*, or he may have been thinking of *liard*, the cottonwood tree.

months which has been raised at the fort. There are also a tamed bull and a cow; no other domestic animals.

There will soon be other opportunities for communication with Montreal, and I propose to write again to Your Lordship and so does Mr. Dumoulin, who is not writing by this opportunity.

I hope that, for the good of the diocese and our mission, your health will be permanently improved. We always count on the help of the prayers of the good souls of Canada for the success of our missions. We are a branch very far from the trunk, but we are nevertheless held to it by strong bonds. We do not forget our mother country, but we may be forgotten. However, what is the remembrance of man if God remembers us? Everything is peaceful here, and has been so all winter. It seems as if the days of trouble have passed.

I am, with the most profound respect, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

PROVENCHER, Priest, Vicar-General.

Red River, July 21, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

SELKIRK TO BISHOP PLESSIS, AUGUST 9, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

A Montreal ce 9 aout 1818.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ J'ai le plaisir d'avertir votre seigneurie que je viens de recevoir des lettres des environs du Lac Supérieur, en datte du 30 juin. J'apprends que Messieurs les Missionnaires de la Rivière Rouge sont arrivés à la Pointe Meuron (proche de Fort William) le 20 juin, et en sont repartis le 23, après avoir reçu des approvisionnement pour la continuation de leur route; j'espère qu'ils sont déjà rendus à la Rivière Rouge.

Par la même occasion j'ai reçu quelques lettres de la Rivière Rouge même, mais ils ne sont que du 24 janvier. Le Capitaine Matthey pourtant m'écrit du Sault Ste Marie qu'il avoit vu un commis du Fond du Lac qui avoit visité notre établissement dans le mois de Février. Il paroît que tout étoit tranquille à cet époque là. Les habitans s'étoient procuré une grande quantité de vivres par la chasse aux boeufs, et ils se préparoient aux travaux du printems. La récolte de l'année passée avoit été très mauvaise, mais il ne paroît pas qu'ils en étoient découragés.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, Monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

SELKIRK.

A Mgr l'Evêque catholique de Québec. &c. &c.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, August 9, 1818.

MY LORD, I have the pleasure of informing Your Lordship that I have just received letters from the vicinity of Lake Superior dated June 30. I learn that the Red River missionaries arrived at Point Meuron (near Fort William) June 20 and left on the twenty-third, after having received provisions for the continuation of the journey. I hope that they are already at Red River.

At the same time I received letters from the Red River settlement itself, but none later than January 24. Captain Matthey, however, writes me from Sault Ste. Marie that he has seen a clerk from Fond du Lac who visited our colony in February. Everything seemed peaceful at that time. The colonists had secured a great quantity of food by their buffalo hunt and they were preparing for their spring work. Last year's harvest was very bad, but they do not appear discouraged.

I have the honor to be, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

SELKIRK.

His Lordship, the Catholic Bishop of Quebec, etc., etc.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, AUGUST 14, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Riv: Rouge, le 14 aout 1818.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Voilà, dans deux jours, un mois que nous sommes résidents au lieu que la Providence nous a destiné. Notre plus grande occupation, surtout pour moi, a été l'étude, car nous y avons peu d'autre ouvrage, quoique le peu de chrétiens qu'il y a ici paroissent très bien disposés. Notre grande occupation seroit envers les sauvages, mais pour les prêcher il faudroit les poursuivre de campements en campements, ce qu'il n'est guère possible de faire avant de savoir leurs langues. Je me suis occupé jusqu'à présent en partie à apprendre le Sauteux qui, à peu de chose près, est la même langue que l'Algonquin, mais je ne sais qui entreprendra d'apprendre celle des Sioux qui sont extrêmement nombreux et dont la langue est toute différente de la langue des Sauteux et des autres sauvages du Nord; quelqu'un qui sauroit cette langue pourroit se faire entendre de tous les sauvages du Sud. Qui pourroit envoyer un des deux Messieurs qui doivent venir ici au Lac des Deux Montagnes pour y apprendre l'Algonquin, ce seroit un an de gagné pour les pauvres sauvages de la Riv. Rouge. Il y a dans l'Athabaska et même à la Riv: au Brochet, qui est à huit lieues

de marche au plus d'ici, des Montagnais qui parlent exactement la même langue qu'en bas. Les gris et les Asniboynes s'entendent bien avec les Sauteurs. Quand nous sommes passés au Lac des D: M: une vieille sauvagesse de la Riv: Rouge qui probablement y avoit été descendue par quelque concubinaire, s'y étoit fait instruire et baptiser et y vivoit d'une manière très régulière; lorsqu'elle apprit notre arrivée au Lac, elle vint nous recommander ses pauvres parens qui sont tous infidèles. Arrivés à la Riv: Rouge un sauvage vint un soir au Fort et nous dit par hasard qu'un petit enfant de sa cabane alloit mourir. J'y fus aussitôt, je le baptisé avec la permission du père, et 24 heures après l'enfant étoit dans le ciel; cet enfant étoit précisément la nièce de cette vieille sainte qui sans doute avoit obtenu cela du ciel; tant il est vrai que Dieu se plaît à exaucer les prières des personnes qui très souvent paroissent le moins à l'extérieur.

Nous nous sommes vus à la veille de perdre notre récolte en un instant; des sauterelles sans nombre sont venues fondre sur tout le grain de la colonie, mais heureusement elles n'ont pas fait grand mal au bled et aux patates; de manière que nous en mangerons presque tout l'hiver. Il est presque certain que je serai obligé d'aller hiverner à Painbinat, car il y aura plus de monde là cet hiver que dans notre poste actuel. Nous nous contentons de bâtir la maison. Mr le Grand Vicaire vous écrira dans huit jours. L'unique lettre que nous ayons reçue à Riv: Rouge vient de ma tante Dumoulin; nous n'avons eu aucune autre lettre du Canada. Nous n'avons pas pu aller encore à Painbinat, qui est à 30 lieues d'ici, faute de chapelle, car il y manque encore deux caisses qui ne sont pas encore arrivées. Nous chantons la messe et les Vêpres tous les dimanches et fêtes. Mr le Grand Vicaire et Mr Edge vous présentent leurs respects les plus profonds. L'occasion presse. Je suis, Monseigneur, de Votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant servit.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Mgr J. O. Plessis/ Evêque de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Red River, August 14, 1818.

MY LORD, In two days now we shall have been in residence for a month in this place where Providence has sent us. Our main occupation, especially for me, has been study, for we have very little else to do here, even though the few Christians that there are seem to be well disposed. Our great work should be among the Indians, but in order to preach to them it would be necessary to follow them about from

camp to camp, and this is hardly possible before knowing their languages. I have been partly occupied up to the present time in learning the Chippewa language, which is practically the same as the Algonquian, but I do not know who will undertake to learn the language of the Sioux, who are very numerous and whose language is entirely different from that of the Chippewa and other Indians of the North; anyone who knew this language could make himself understood by all the tribes of the South. If it were possible to send one of the two gentlemen promised for this place to Lake of Two Mountains in order to learn the Algonquian speech, it would be a year saved for the poor Indians of Red River. In the Athabaska region and even on Jack River, which is not more than eight leagues' journey from here, there are some Montagnais who speak exactly the same language as is spoken down there. The Cree and the Assiniboin understand the Chippewa easily. When we were at Lake of Two Mountains an old Indian woman of Red River, who had probably been taken there by some man as his concubine, had received instruction and baptism there and was living a very moral life; when she learned of our arrival at the lake, she came to us to plead for her poor relatives, who are all infidels. When we reached Red River an Indian came to the fort one evening and just happened to tell us that a little child in his lodge was about to die. I went there immediately; I baptized her after getting the father's permission, and twenty-four hours afterward the child was in heaven; this child happened to be the niece of this saintly old woman, who, no doubt, had obtained this from Heaven; so true is it that God is pleased to answer the prayers of persons who often seem the most insignificant.

We have found ourselves on the verge of losing our crops in a single moment. Innumerable grasshoppers came to settle on all the grain of the colony, but fortunately they did not do much harm to the wheat and potatoes, so that we shall have enough of them to furnish us with food nearly all winter. It is almost certain that I shall be obliged to spend the winter in Pembina, since there will be many more people there this winter than at this post. We are indulging in building a house. The Vicar-General will write you next week. The only letter we have received at Red River came from my Aunt Dumoulin; no other letter has come to us from Canada. We have not yet been able to go to Pembina, which is thirty leagues away, on account of having no chapel, for there are still two cases that have not arrived. We celebrate Mass and Vespers every Sunday and on feast days. The

Vicar-General and Mr. Edge send you their profoundest regards. The express is leaving. I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec.

PROVENCHER TO [SELKIRK], AUGUST 14 AND 27, 1818

[Selkirk Transcripts, 16:5282-5284. C]⁷⁵

MY LORD/ Je n'ai pas écrit à Votre Seigneurie par le Capitaine de Lorimier parce que je voulois auparavant prendre quelque connoissance sur l'état des choses; d'ailleurs Mr de Lorimier étoit capable de rendre compte à Votre Seigneurie de la bonne tournure que paroît prendre votre nouvelle Colonie, et de l'apparence magnifique que presentoit alors la récolte. Vous aurez sans doute été satisfait du récit qu'il vous en aurez fait. Depuis son départ cette belle récolte a beaucoup souffert par des legions de Sauterelles, qui sont venues fondre sur elle, du fond des vastes prairies qui nous environnent. Le bled a pourtant peu souffert; l'orge a été presque entièrement détruite, surtout celle qui étoit verte et tendre. Il y en avoit un peu qui approchoit la maturité qui suffira pour la semence. Tous les jardinages ont été mangés à net; les patates ont beaucoup souffert; on craint qu'une partie ne produise rien. Il en reste cependant encore beaucoup qui sont peu endommagées. Ce fléau a commencé le trois aout et a duré près de huit jours. Il a bien diminué la récolte, mais si elle n'éprouve pas d'autre accident, elle sera encore passablement bonne—le sol me paroît excellent et propre à porter toutes sortes de grains, et je ne doute pas que cette Colonie qui a éprouvé tant de difficultés dans son établissement ne devienne un jour très florissante: elle ne fait que de naître et elle se montre déjà bien.

Nous sommes en frais de bâtir une maison pour nous loger cet hiver, et nous servir de Chapelle. Je ne suis pas bien monté pour bâtir; je n'ai point de charpentier, et je n'en peux point trouver ici; il y a de plus bien peu d'outils, de sorte qu'il faudra faire les choses miserablement pour cette année. J'ai remis à l'année prochaine la construction de notre Chapelle; j'en ferai préparer tout le bois cet hiver; j'ai espérance d'avoir des charpentiers et menuisiers de Montréal l'été prochain. J'ai écrit à Monseigneur l'Evêque de Québec pour cela. Je pense qu'il prendra des mesures avec Votre Seigneurie sur les moyens de nous les faire parvenir un peu à bonne heure. Nous sommes logés dans le

⁷⁵ The editor has revised the French of the poor copy of this letter in the Selkirk Transcripts to a form as readable as possible without having access to the original.

fort Douglass, où nous avons le second étage d'une maison pour logement, et pour Chapelle: nous y sommes assez commodes.

La terre que Votre Seigneurie a assignée pour placer l'Eglise est dans une jolie position; on peut y faire un bel établissement.

Mr de Lorimier aura dit a Votre Seigneurie que notre voyage a été sans accident quelconque; nous n'avons pas marché bien vite; mais nous avons été heureux; nous avons mis près de deux mois, avec le tems perdu par dégrats et autrement. Nous avons espérance de tirer bon parti de tous les gens qui habitent cette contrée; ils paroissent desireux de profiter de nos soins et instructions. Nous ferons au moins de notre côté tout ce qui dépendra de nous pour en faire de bons chrétiens.

Tout est en paix ici, et je ne doute pas que les tems des querelles et d'orages ne soient entièrement finis, et que les colons tranquilles sur leurs terres vont en tirer abondamment leur subsistance. Cependant tant qu'il n'y aura pas d'animaux domestiques des différentes espèces, ils seront toujours malheureux pour cultiver: les animaux qui servent le plus à la culture manquent: il y a même très peu de chevaux, et il n'y a que les anciens colons qu'en ont.

Permettez je vous prie, que mes respects les plus profonds pour My Lady trouvent ici leur place, avec mes remercimens les plus sincères, pour toutes les peines qu'elle a eu la bonté de se donner pour nous avant notre départ, et particulièrement du soin qu'elle a pris pour préparer notre Chapelle.

Je me souscris avec le plus profond respect/ De Votre Seigneurie/
Le très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

(Signé) PROVENCHER, ptre V. G.

Rivière Rouge./ 14 aout 1818.

P. S. On a commencé hier a couper le bled; il est mûr et très beau et bon; il n'a en aucun autre accident que les Sauterelles qui lui ont très peu fait dommage. Le Capitaine Matthey est arrivé ici hier avec les familles dont il étoit conducteur.

R. R. 27 aout 1818.

(Signé) PROVENCHER ptre V. G.

The Grasshoppers injured the crops about 10 years ago & have not made their appearance since then, till the [*sic*] 1818. The cause is unknown.

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, I did not write to Your Lordship by Captain de Lorimier because I wanted, before doing so, to take a look around. Moreover,

Mr. de Lorimier was able to give you an account of the turn for the better that your new colony seems to be taking and of the excellent appearance of the crop. You have been pleased, no doubt, with the account that he has given you of it. Since he left, this beautiful crop has suffered much from myriads of grasshoppers that have settled down upon it from the heart of the extensive prairies that surround us. The wheat, however, has not suffered much; the barley has been almost entirely destroyed, especially that which was green and tender. There was a little that was just reaching maturity that will do for seed. All the garden stuff has been completely devoured. The potatoes have suffered much; we fear that a part will produce nothing; yet a good deal remains that has not suffered very much. This scourge began on August 3 and lasted eight days. It has reduced the harvest materially, but if it does not experience further damage, it will still be passably good. The soil seems excellent to me and adaptable to all sorts of grain. I do not doubt that this colony, which has experienced so many troubles in getting started, will one day be in a thriving condition. It has just begun and already it is making a good showing.

We are in process of building a house as our lodging for the winter as well as for our chapel. I am not well supplied for building; I have no carpenter and I cannot find one here. Moreover, there are very few tools, so that we shall have to get along miserably this year. I have left the building of our chapel for next year. I shall prepare all the wood for it this winter. I hope to get carpenters and joiners from Montreal next summer. I have written to His Lordship, the Bishop of Quebec, on that subject. I think that he will make arrangements with Your Lordship so that the men will reach us rather early. We are lodged in Fort Douglas, where we occupy the second floor of a house, which serves for home and chapel. We are quite comfortably situated.

The land that Your Lordship granted for the church is in a pretty location. A fine establishment can be made there.

Mr. de Lorimier will have told Your Lordship that our trip was made without the least accident. We did not travel very fast, but we were content. We took nearly two months, counting the time lost by being wind-bound and otherwise delayed. We hope to make the most of the people who inhabit this region; they seem desirous of profiting by our attentions and instruction. At least, for our part, we shall do all in our power to make good Christians of them.

Everything is peaceful here and I do not doubt that the period of quarreling and fighting is quite past and that the settlers, living peace-

fully on their lands, are going to draw an excellent livelihood from them. Nevertheless, as long as there are no domestic animals of various kinds, they will always be unsuccessful in farming. The animals most useful in farming are lacking. There are even very few horses, and only the old colonists have those.

I beg you to grant a place here for my deepest respects to My Lady with my sincerest thanks for all the trouble she took for us before we left, and particularly for the pains she took in preparing our chapel.

With the deepest respect, I am Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

(Signed) PROVENCHER, Priest, Vicar-General.

Red River, August 14, 1818.

P.S. We have begun to cut our wheat. It is ripe and very fine and good. It had no other accident than the grasshoppers, which did it very little damage. Captain Matthey arrived yesterday with the families which he was conducting.

Red River, August 27, 1818.

(Signed) PROVENCHER, Priest, Vicar-General.

[*In English:*] The Grasshoppers injured the crops about 10 years ago & have not made their appearance since then till the [*sic*] 1818. The cause is unknown.

PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, AUGUST 15, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS] ⁷⁶

[*Translation*]

Fort Douglas, August 15, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, In my last letter, which perhaps will reach Your Lordship at the same time as this one, I asked for several things that might better be asked of an agent, if we had one. Perhaps one has been named now. You will fulfill my requests by whomever you wish. In the case of the men for whom I ask, there might be a way of getting them here at a low price. Every year the Hudson's Bay Company engages men who come and go in the summer from Red River, and some from an even greater distance. Our men could take their places in coming up and would be paid by the company for their trip hither; the rest of the engagement would be paid by us. The company needs men only for the trip to this region — there are always too many going back. Next year if the company engages men to come and go, we might

⁷⁶ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 23.

make that arrangement. I see as much advantage on one side as on the other. I have written to His Lordship [*Lord Selkirk*]. I told him that I was asking for men for next year, but without entering into this detail. Your Lordship will enter into it, if you judge best. When sending workmen, do not forget an assortment of tools, for that would be a year lost. There have been some here, but they are lost or broken.

I saw Mr. Shaw today. He is to winter in the North, but he cannot say at exactly which post. He spoke much of Your Lordship, whom he was unable to see in Quebec because you were away on a visit. All the *bourgeois* passing here visit us and in turn we are on friendly terms with them. He begged me to present you his respects. He says that he is having a pleasant trip because you gave him your benediction when he saw you the last time. He says that he is here to establish peace everywhere in this region. He is a *voyageur* of distinction in his expedition.

Red River is by no means a place for trade. There are no furs here. The largest trade would be in buffalo robes, but the companies do not take them and our Chippewa are too lazy to do so. They are a miserable people, who go almost naked and who do nothing. They do not live in numerous bands. All that the North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company obtain from this area is provisions, which consist of dry meats, for their *voyageurs* along the route to their scattered posts in the North and elsewhere.

I have engaged as a carpenter a young man from Three Rivers named Dugré, who was to have gone down to Montreal. I am giving him eight hundred livres. There was no choice in the matter; he was the only one. However, he is not very skillful. At present I have nine men, for the payment of whom eight thousand and fifty livres will be needed next autumn, besides the accounts that we are running up at the colony store. We need large sums of money. There will be great expenses the first years, because everyone must have money with which to build. We must try to understand each other, so that we may not spend more than we shall be able to pay for. Everything is very dear here because the merchants overcharge.

I do not know whether there is any hope for government aid for this mission. I believe I heard something of the sort before I left. It is necessary, it seems to me, especially at the beginning. If you carry out your plan of going to London and Rome, you can arrange all these matters better.

This country is still pretty young to have a bishop. There are few people—I mean whites, for the Indians are numerous—but they occupy an immense territory. They will become Christians quite readily, unless I am mistaken. God doubtless has His plans of mercy for these poor infidels. Perhaps, too, the presence of a shepherd might spread the faith more quickly. Do as you think best in this matter, but one thing it might be well to consider. That is, that the choice of this first shepherd might fall upon someone more appropriately than upon me. You will easily find in your diocese a priest more capable than I to fill this great dignity. I am already quite high. Nevertheless, it is impossible to tell whether it is disrelish or another human point of view that makes me speak. I do not refuse the work, but consult God in an affair so delicate. I recognize that I am unworthy and incapable of this position. I leave Providence to act. I am always at Its service. It has taken such good care of me to the present that I should be the most ungrateful of men to resist It. I wish you a prosperous journey, if, indeed, your health permits you to undertake it. I shall look for your letters in the spring. They will have much for me.

Proceed in your Holy Sacrifices.

I have the honor to be, most respectfully, your very humble servant,
PROVENCHER, Priest, Vicar-General.

DUMOULIN TO LADY SELKIRK, AUGUST 27, 1818

[Selkirk Transcripts, 16:5314. C] ⁷⁷

MY LADY,/ Permettez-moi de vous donner à notre arrivée dans votre nouvelle Colonie des nouvelles directes des chûses qui peuvent vous interesser d'avantage. Le Capitaine De Lorimier doit vous avoir donné la plus belle idée de notre recolte, mais malheureusement elle a été un peu gâtée par un grand nombre de Sauterelles qui sont venues fondre dans un instant sur tout ce qui étoit le plus tendre; elles ont cependant epargné le bled et les patates en bien des endroits: c'est l'orge qui a le plus souffert ainsi que les jardinages. Nous avons reçu hier par le Capitaine Mathey le reste de nos effets en très bonne ordre; dans ces deux dernières Cassettes étoient les ornements que votre générosité nous a procurés, et qui paroissent encore plus beaux à la Riv: Rouge qu'à Montreal. Grace à votre attention et à vos soins, My Lady, nous avons été très bien tout le voyage, surtout depuis la Pointe Meuron où vos ordres ont été mieux exécutés. Après tant de peine, il seroit sans

⁷⁷ This letter exists only in copy, even in the original Selkirk Papers in Scotland. Several misreadings are obvious, even in the better of the two copies; and the editor has used her discretion in the matter of accents, periods, and unmistakable errors.

doute pour nous, nous nous trouvons à la Riv: Rouge mieux que je n'aurois pensé. Mr McDonell en consequence surement de vos ordres et de ceux de my Lord s'est extrêmement bien montré. Nous sommes déterminés à ne bâtir que la maison cette année, et point de Chapelle. Nos engagés n'étant point des hommes à bâtir des Eglises, nous ferons l'office divin dans la plus grande partie de la maison que nous réserverons pour cela. Notre maison a 60 pieds de long sur 30 de large. Nous avons commencé hier a couper le bled. Nous avons baptisé 73 petits Bois-brûlés.

Je crois être obligé d'aller hyverner à Pembina, où je serois déjà allé mais malheureusement une partie de notre seconde Chapelle étoit dans ces deux Caisses dernièrement arrivées.

Le domaine que My Lord a donné à la Mission est sans doute un présent digne de sa Seigneurie. C'est une des meilleurs places de la Colonie remplie de bois, et de beaucoup d'autres avantages: mes remerciements pour un don si généreux sont trop insuffisants: c'est le ciel qui doit recompenser de pareilles actions.

Quelle joie pour nous My Lady, si nous apprenions l'an prochain que vous êtes enfin décidée à venir nous honorer de votre présence dans cette contrée lointaine. Mais je n'ose encore m'en flatter. J'ai laissé a Nicolet une mère tendre et chérie, qui désire venir me rejoindre dans ce pays. Elle est prête d'en faire tous les fraix, si l'endroit me plaisoit, mais je n'ose lui dire ce que j'en pense. Si l'an prochain vous manquez de Dames assez fortes pour vous accompagner, vous n'auriez qu'à lui marquer un mot, et je suis persuadé qu'elle seroit à vos ordres. J'en serois le plus charmé du monde, mais je vous prie ne vous gênez en rien. Excusez, My Lady, la longueur de ma lettre, et croyez moi pour la vie, — / [votre] très humble et Devoué Serviteur &°

(Signé) SÉV. DUMOULIN Pretre.

My Lady Selkirk/ Montreal
Le 27. Aout 1818.

[*Translation*]

MY LADY, Permit me on our arrival in your new colony to give you the freshest news of affairs that may be of most interest to you. Captain de Lorimier doubtless gave you a very optimistic account of our crops, but unfortunately they have been somewhat spoiled by a great horde of grasshoppers, which swarmed down in an instant upon all the tenderest vegetation. Nevertheless they spared the wheat and potatoes in many places. The barley suffered most, as well as the garden stuff. Yesterday we received by Captain Matthey the rest of our goods,

which came through in good condition. In these last two boxes were the vestments that your generosity obtained for us; they seem even more beautiful at Red River than at Montreal. Thanks to your attention and forethought, My Lady, we fared very well throughout our trip, especially after leaving Point Meuron, where your orders were carried out better. After so much forethought, which surely was on our account, we find ourselves at Red River in much better condition than I should have believed possible. Mr. Macdonell, in consequence, surely, of your orders and those of milord, was extremely obliging.

We have decided to build only the house, and not the chapel, this year. Our *engagés* are scarcely the men to build churches. We shall perform divine office in the larger part of the house, which we have reserved for that purpose. Our house is sixty feet in length by thirty in width. Yesterday we began to cut the wheat. We have baptized seventy-three little *bois brûlés*.

I think that I shall have to spend the winter at Pembina, where I should have been by now, except that a part of our second chapel was, unfortunately, in the two crates that arrived last of all.

The land that milord has given the mission is without a doubt a present worthy of His Lordship. It is one of the best places in the colony, well wooded, and with many other advantages. My thanks for a gift so generous are too inadequate. It is Heaven that will recompense for such good deeds.

What joy for us, My Lady, if we learn next year that you have definitely decided to honor us with your presence in this distant region. But I dare not be too optimistic. I left at Nicolet a fond and beloved mother, who wants to join me in this country. She is ready to pay all her expenses, if the place pleases me, but I dare not tell her what I think of it. Next year, if you need some capable women to accompany you, you would have only to say the word to her, and I am sure that she would be at your command. I should be extremely well pleased, but I beg you not to put yourself to any bother. Excuse, My Lady, the length of my letter, and believe me, always your humble and devoted servant, etc.,

(Signed) SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

Lady Selkirk, Montreal.
August 27, 1818.

MARCHAND TO BISHOP PLESSIS, AUGUST 29, 1818
[Quebec Archbishopal Archives. ALS]

assomption le 29 aout 1818.

au révérendissime joseph octave plessis/ Evêque de Québec, à québec,
Bas-Canada.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Mr Bertrand de la suite de Mgr Flaget que j'ai eu
l'honneur de voir ce matin, m'a remis la lettre dont votre grandeur a
eu la bonté de le charger pour moi.

j'ai reçu trois lettres de Mr Crevier depuis son départ le 24 mai
dernier les deux premieres de l'isle Dromon et la dre du fort Wouilam,
le gd portage ⁷⁸ en date du 26 juillet der. dans ces trois lettres j'y vois
que lui et Mr Tabeau se portaient bien qu'ils avoient du succès et que
sous trois semaines selon la dre, il se flattoit d'être ici lui seul, Mr Ta-
beau étant déterminé à descendre par la grande Rivière; et il ne me dit
pas un mot des messieurs qui sont partis pour la mission de la Rivierre
Rouge, ce qui me surprend[.] je l'attends de jour en jour. . . .

Je suis avec respect &c.

MARCHAND ptre.

[Translation]

Assumption [Parish], August 29, 1818.

The Most Reverend Joseph Octave Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec,
Lower Canada.

MY LORD, Mr. Bertrand of Bishop Flaget's party, whom I have had
the honor of seeing this morning, has handed me the letter that Your
Lordship had the kindness to give to him for me.

I have received three letters from Mr. Crevier since his departure on
last May 24, the first two from Drummond Island and the last from
Fort William, Grand Portage,⁷⁸ dated last July 26. From these three
letters I see that he and Mr. Tabeau were well, that they had had some
success, and within three weeks from the date of the third letter he
expected to be here himself, Mr. Tabeau having decided to descend by
the Ottawa River. But he does not mention the gentlemen who left
for the Red River, which surprises me. I expect him daily. . . .

I am respectfully etc.,

MARCHAND, Priest.

⁷⁸ For some years after the headquarters of the North West Company were changed
from Grand Portage to Fort William, confusion persisted between the two places in the
minds of many individuals.

Riv: Rouge, 30 aout 1818.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Enfin le Capitaine Mathé, qui est maintenant notre gouverneur, est arrivé le 25 du courant. Nous avons reçu par lui le reste de nos effets en très bon ordre. Son arrivé m'a causé bien de l'embarras. Il avoit ici une femme qui montrait de grandes dispositions pour le bien, elle se confessoit déjà et apprenoit une des mieux; mais l'arrivée de son ancien époux étoit pour elle une épreuve terrible; le capitaine fut voir son enfant et dit à la mère de venir faire sa chambre &c; je m'en doutois; je fis venir la femme, et j'ai sçu depuis que le Cap: devoit m'en parler, et qu'il consentiroit à ne pas la prendre et à la laisser instruire; mais je n'ose pas encore chanter victoire, je crains que par ruse il attende que tous les canots soient partis. D'ailleurs je suis prêt de tout faire et de tout souffrir pour empêcher un mal qui en produiroit tant d'autres; et j'espère que Dieu ne le permettra pas.

Je pars lundi pour la mission de Pimbina; j'y serois déjà allé, mais notre seconde chapelle étoit dans ces deux caisses nouvellement arrivées. Il est certain que je serai obligé d'y aller hiverner, car il y aura là cet hyver beaucoup plus de monde qu'ici.

Le bled est très beau ainsi que les patates, au moins en général; le reste a été bien gâté et presque entièrement perdu par les sauterelles. Nous nous portons tous très bien étant cependant réduits pour le moment à manger des barbues sans sauce et sans pain, et à boire du thé sans sucre et sans lait.

Le Mylord en se servant de nos ouvriers l'an prochain pourroit nous épargner 100 louis; et voici comment: Sa Seigneurie a toujours engagé des voyageurs pour aller et venir, et bien qu'il prenne pour milieu de canots, s'il faut, les 4 ouvriers qui doivent nous venir, on leur donne toujours au moins 600 livres ancien cours, ce qui feroit justement les 100 louis. Pour retourner il y a toujours du monde de reste, et nous pourrions lui donner 4 et 5 de nos hommes dont nous serons en peine dans ce tems-là. Les bouts de canots ont 800 livres.

Je voudrois bien être plus près de Votre Grandeur, j'aurois bien des consultations; telles que par exemple: si l'on doit obliger un ancien voyageur à restituer la valeur de dix à douze piastres qu'il auroit pris en effets à une compagnie qui lui a vendu souvent des 800 et 100 frends une bouteille de rome &c.

Nous n'avons encore reçu aucune lettre de votre Grandeur; avant

hier j'en ai reçu une de maman qui parle toujours de venir me rejoindre. Il ne se passe pas de jours que je ne pense à mon beau tems de Québec; il n'y a que la religion qui puisse faire que je sois content d'être ici; j'éprouve cependant moins d'ennuie et de chagrin que je ne pensois. Pour civiliser et convertir les sauvages il faudroit que le gouvernement prit des moyens de les réunir en vilages; sans cela il sera très difficile de les instruire, surtout les Sauteurs. Il nous seroit très commode d'avoir un ornement commun qui pût se plier facilement, car nous sommes obligés de nous servir des deux beaux de Mylady lorsque l'un de nous va en mission. La maison va bien doucement, j'espère pourtant qu'une partie sera prête pour notre hyvernement. Les terres que Mylord a données à la mission sont tout à fait avantageuses; mais tout cela ne peut servir que pour les blancs qui sont établis ici, au moins pour le présent.

Je suis pour la vie de Votre Grandeur le très humble et respectueux serviteur

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Ora pro nobis &c.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis/ Evêque de Québec,/ à Québec. Bas-Canada.

[*Translation*]

Red River, August 30, 1818.

MY LORD, Captain Matthey, who is now our governor, finally arrived on the twenty-fifth of this month. He brought us the rest of our luggage in very good condition. His presence has caused me considerable trouble. He had here a woman who had been showing decided inclination toward righteousness; she was already coming to confession and was one of the best at learning, but the arrival of her former husband was a terrible ordeal for her to bear. The captain went to see his child, and told the mother to come to take care of his room, etc.; I feared the worst. I sent for the woman, and I have since been told that the captain would talk the matter over with me and that he would consent to leave her alone and to allow her to be taught; but I do not yet dare to proclaim victory, for I fear lest he be cunningly waiting till all the canoes have left. At any rate, I am prepared to do anything, and to suffer anything to prevent a sin which would set an example for so many others; and I hope that God will not permit it to occur.

I leave Monday for the Pembina mission; I should have gone before this but for the fact that our second chapel was in the two crates which

just arrived. It is certain that I shall be compelled to spend the winter there, for there will be many more people there this winter than here.

The wheat looks fine, also the potatoes, at least in general; everything else was badly damaged and almost entirely lost because of the grasshoppers. We are all very well in spite of the fact that we are reduced, for the present, to eating catfish without sauce or bread and to drinking tea without sugar or milk.

The governor could save us one hundred pounds next year by employing our workmen. This is how it could be done: His Lordship has always hired *voyageurs* to go and come, and so if he employed the four workmen due to come to us, even as *milieux*, who always get at least six hundred livres in old currency, that would come just to the one hundred pounds. For the return there are always extras, and we could give him four or five of our men who would be in the way here at that time. The *bouts de canots* get eight hundred livres.

I wish I might be nearer Your Lordship, for I would have much to consult you about; such things as, for instance, whether a former *voyageur* should be obliged to repay the sum of ten or twelve dollars which he had taken in goods from a company which had often charged him from eight hundred to one hundred francs [?] for a bottle of rum, etc.

We have not yet received a letter from Your Lordship; day before yesterday I had one from Mother, who is still talking of coming out to join me. Not a day goes by but I think of my happy days in Quebec; nothing but religion could make me contented to remain here; however, I am not as unhappy as I thought I should be. In order to civilize and convert the Indians it will be necessary for the government to take steps to bring them together in villages; without that it will be very difficult to teach them, especially the Chippewa. It would be very convenient to have an ordinary vestment, which could be folded easily, for we are obliged to use milady's two very fine ones when one of us goes out on a mission. The house is progressing very slowly; I hope, nevertheless, that a part of it will be ready for us to winter in. The lands that milord has given to the mission are altogether excellent; but for the present, at least, they can be of benefit only to the white settlers here.

I am ever Your Lordship's very humble and respectful servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

Ora pro nobis [Pray for us], etc.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec, Lower Canada.

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, This goes by our last opportunity for sending mail to Montreal, by one of the canoes that brought the families here. By it I am sending Your Lordship three letters of different dates. Captain Matthey, conductor of this brigade, arrived yesterday with all the families. They are going at once to Pembina River, where the colony has a fort.⁸⁰ It is there that they will be able to make a living. Buffaloes are not far away ordinarily and living is easier than at Fort Douglas, where provisions are scarce, because they have to come from Pembina, a distance of twenty or thirty leagues. One goes thither by water in boats. Most of the people will winter there. They live in abundance there and procure provisions so that they may cultivate the ground in summer.

It looks as though Mr. Dumoulin will spend a part of the winter there; we should have been there already, but we lacked a chalice, which arrived only yesterday. All our belongings have reached us in good condition.

Mr. Dumoulin has received a letter from his aunt Dumoulin by a canoe that came from Fort William to get witnesses for York in Upper Canada.⁸¹ Yesterday he received a letter from his mother, who expresses a desire to come to him next summer; it is a very long trip for a woman of her age. I think, nevertheless, that she would be useful here. Our harvest, though diminished by the grasshoppers, will still be passably good. The wheat is ripe and we have begun to cut it; it is beautiful and good; there will be enough to make good seed for next year and flour for bread.

Until we begin to harvest for ourselves, we shall always be embarrassed, as it will be necessary to buy everything, and here money has no currency; the result is that one does not know how to pay. We have to get our provisions at the colony's store, which, most of the time, is empty. What we have to have is expensive, because it is bought for merchandise, but it will be necessary to pay with good dollars at Montreal, and our funds will soon be exhausted. I wish very much that next year assorted articles might be sent us with which to barter for what we need.

⁷⁹ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 30-32.

⁸⁰ This was Fort Daer. Martin, *Selkirk's Work in Canada*, 53.

⁸¹ Reference is made here to the trials proceeding at York, now Toronto. See *ante*, pp. 26, 26 n., 27.

The articles of most use would be many pieces of cotton for shirts, silk and cotton handkerchiefs, shawls, gingham, ribbons, muslins, and other articles that are not heavy, and that are nearly always lacking here; with these we could get meat, etc. I believe that this means would be economical, if all these articles were well assorted. I think that there would be no difficulty in putting some boxes for us in the company's canoes; nearly always they come up without loads, because everything comes through Hudson Bay. This would be the shortest way, but the thing does not seem well organized; the ones at the head do not seem to understand the matter well. A clever man would save much expense and do much better; one does not see in the Hudson's Bay Company the energy noticeable in the North West Company; this comes about, without doubt, from the fact that the Hudson's Bay Company trades through hired clerks and the members do not participate. The North West Company, on the other hand, conducts the business itself, and the *bourgeois* are at the head, and are everywhere.

The lumber for our house is being cut. It will be fifty feet by thirty. We shall finish only a part of it this fall for our residence. The rest will stay undivided, to be used as a chapel; a small house built near ours will serve to lodge our men. We found it already constructed.

It is hard to find good wood for lumber; for pine is very far away, and it is necessary to make some from poplar wood. I think I shall roof it next year with these poor boards. Shingles, which could be easily made from oak and cedar, but which would have to be brought from far, are what is needed over these poplar boards, but we have no shingle nails and there are none at the Bay. It would take two years to get some, because there will not be a canoe this year. If you could send us some next summer, you would render us a great service; you know the size of the house, and it would be well to send too many rather than too few. If this shipment is not attended with too great difficulty, they can be used for the chapel. I do not yet know its height; but it will be necessary to make it seventy to eighty feet, in order that it will be big enough to accommodate everyone for many years to come.

I am writing to Mr. Roupe to ask him for data on the Algonquian language. If one could get a copy of the grammar by Mr. Thavenet it would be very useful to us; it would teach us in a day what we otherwise would take a month to learn.

Everything is peaceful here; there is no longer an appearance of trouble. I am hoping for the complete recovery of your health, a

happy trip to Europe, and success for the projects that you have conceived for the glory of God. Do not forget that a bishop at Red River needs very extensive powers; make ample provision for them while you are at the source; Your Lordship knows better than anyone what is necessary in this matter.⁸²

Do not forget the poor missionaries of Red River in your prayers during the long space of time that will separate them from all communication with their mother country and their friends.

I am with the profoundest respect, My Lord, your very humble and obedient servant,

PROVENCHER, Priest, Vicar-General.

Red River, August 30, 1818.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, SEPTEMBER 10, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Riv: Rouge, le 10 septembre 1818.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Je regrette souvent de n'avoir plus comme autrefois le loisir de vous consulter si facilement et d'aller vous demander, comme Votre Grandeur le disoit très bien, de quel saint on feroit demain. Il n'y a qu'en Dieu et pour Dieu que l'on puisse se consoler d'être si éloigné d'un supérieur dont j'avois encore tant de besoin, et auquel, sans m'en appercevoir, j'étois déjà si attaché. Oui, Monseigneur, je ne le peux écrire qu'en pleurant, jamais sacrifice ne m'a tant couté; cependant je suis prêt de la continuer autant que la volonté de Dieu l'exigera de moi, et que je reconnoitrai toujours dans la volonté de mes supérieurs. Tout ce que je crains c'est que vous ayez mis en moi trop de confiance, car je ne reconnois pas encore en moi ce véritable zèle apostolique prêt à faire les plus grands sacrifices, et à se contenter, par exemple, de la vie des sauvages ce qui me paroitroit nécessaire pour le moment, car sans cela il sera bien difficile d'apprendre leur langue et de les instruire de sitôt. Jusqu'à présent nous n'avons été utiles qu'aux gens de la colonie, et nous ne voyons que les sauvages qui de tems à autre viennent au Fort; ainsi vous voyez qu'il est même difficile d'apprendre la langue. J'espère cependant avoir cet hyver des sauvages dans les environs de Pinbina; j'en profiterai pour apprendre leur langue.

Le Capitaine Mathé m'a enfin déclaré qu'il étoit parfaitement décidé

⁸² Bishop Plessis' plan was, in part, to erect several dioceses in British North America, including one at Red River. There had been much opposition to this plan, especially in Great Britain. Scott, in Shortt and Doughty, eds., *Canada and Its Provinces*, 44-47.

à ne point reprendre son ancienne femme, et en prendra soin jusqu'à ce qu'elle soit instruite, et qu'elle ait trouvé à se marier.

Doit-on permettre aux femmes d'ici de coucher avec elles leurs petits enfants qui n'ont pas atteint encore un an? Elles assurent qu'ils souffriroient beaucoup du froid sans cela.

Doit-on faire grande difficulté de baptiser les petits Brulés dont les pères protestants sont absents, mais que les mères non chrétiennes voudroient faire baptiser? Il arrive quelquefois que les pères les descendent pour les faire instruire, alors ils ne veulent pas qu'ils soient baptisés.

Quelles sont les vérités de religion que doivent absolument savoir ces femmes qui vivent ici avec des Canadiens qui les ont prises à la façon du pays avant de pouvoir les baptiser et leur faire contracter de légitimes mariages?

J'aurois bien d'autres questions à proposer à votre grandeur, mais elles ne me paroissent pas valoir la peine d'être envoyées si loin.

Mr le Grand Vicaire se donne beaucoup de peine pour la batisse. Les hommes doivent probablement hyverner à Pinbina et y couper le bois de la chapelle, en ce cas j'en serois chargé. S'il est facile d'aller au Fort appelé *la Riv: à la souri* et à celui de la *Riv: qu'appelle*, je tacherai de m'y rendre cet hyver pour y baptiser les enfants &c.

Nous nous portons tous à merveille. Nous avons enterré hier le fils de Brausse l'interprète de la colonie; c'est le premier adulte et le second enterrement que nous faisons à la Riv: Rouge. Je ne sais qui nous a envoyé plusieurs gazettes que nous avons reçues et qui nous ont fait bien plaisir. Nous sommes extrêmement sensibles à l'intérêt que le public continue à prendre à notre mission, et nous nous efforcerons de réaliser tous les bons effets qu'ils en attendent. Nous attendons avec impatience, le printems prochain, l'honneur de quelques unes de vos lettres; car c'est probablement la dernière fois que nous vous écrivons cette année.

Je suis, Monseigneur, de Votre Grandeur le très dévoué et obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec, à Québec.

[*Translation*]

Red River, September 10, 1818.

MY LORD, I often regret that I no longer have the opportunity I once had of going to you for advice so easily, and of asking you, as

Your Lordship was so fond of saying, what saint we were to remember on the following day. It is only in God and for God that I am able to console myself for being so far from a superior whom I still need so much and to whom, without realizing it, I was already so attached. Yes, My Lord, I can only write it with weeping; never has a sacrifice cost me so dearly; nevertheless I am ready to continue it as long as it is the will of God, which I shall recognize always in the will of my superiors. I only fear that you have placed too much confidence in me, for I do not yet feel that I possess that true apostolic zeal that is ready to make the greatest sacrifices, and to be contented, for example, with the life of the Indians. This course seems to be necessary for the present, for otherwise it will be very difficult to learn their language, and hence to teach them. Until the present time we have been of use only to the people of the colony, and we see only those Indians who come to the fort from time to time; thus, you see, it is even difficult to learn the language. However, I hope this winter to have some Indians in the neighborhood of Pembina, and I shall take advantage of this to learn their language.

Captain Matthey has at last assured me that he has definitely decided never to take back his former wife, and that he will support her until she has been taught and has a chance to marry.

Ought we to permit the women here to sleep with their babies that are not yet a year old? They claim that otherwise the children would suffer very much from the cold.

Ought we to object seriously to baptizing the young *brûlés* whose Protestant fathers are absent, but whose infidel mothers wish to have them baptized? It sometimes happens that the fathers send them down [to Canada] to have them taught, when they do not wish to have them baptized.

What truths of religion should unquestionably be known by these women who are living here with the Canadians according to the custom of the country, before they may receive baptism and be legitimately married?

I might ask Your Lordship many other questions, but they do not seem to me worth the trouble of sending them so great a distance.

The Vicar-General is putting himself to a great deal of trouble in the work of building. The men will probably spend the winter at Pembina and cut wood there for the chapel; in that case I shall be put in charge of them. If it is easy to go to the fort called Souris River

post and to that of Qu'Appelle River, I shall try to go there this winter to baptize the children, etc.

We are all very well. Yesterday we buried the son of Bruce, the interpreter of the colony; his is the first adult, and the second burial that we have performed at Red River. I do not know who sent us several newspapers, which we have received and which have given us a great deal of pleasure. We are very grateful for the interest which the public continues to take in our mission and we shall strive to realize all the fine results that they expect of us. We are waiting impatiently for spring to come, when we shall be honored with some letters from you; for this is probably the last time we shall write to you this year.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very devoted and obedient servant,
SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, SEPTEMBER 10, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Riv: Rouge, le 10 septembre 1818.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Déjà nous avons perdu toute espérance de pouvoir vous donner de nos nouvelles cette année, lorsqu'inopinément arriva le canot porteur de cette boîte que Mylady Selkirk achemina vers la Riv: Rouge à la fin de juillet; aussi nous empresserons-nous d'en profiter pour vous donner des nouvelles de notre nouvelle mission. Jusqu'à présent nous n'avons trouvé aucun sauvage ou métis qui ait refusé d'être instruit; tous sont prêts de le faire sans cependant paroître le désirer beaucoup, soit à cause de leur ignorance, soit à cause des grandes difficultés qu'ils y aperçoivent. Il règne moins de crimes parmi tous ces gens-là que je n'aurois pensé; les plus grands sont ceux que les blancs y ont introduits. Ils admirent tout ce que l'on peut dire ou faire devant eux de religieux, et ont une telle confiance en nous qu'ils s'empressent de nous venir chercher lorsqu'il s'en trouve de malades parmi eux; s'imaginant, si vous voulez, que nous les guérirons par notre seule présence, ce qui seroit bien à souhaiter pour eux qui ne voient encore que des yeux de la chair. Les Brulés que nous avons instruits jusqu'aujourd'hui montrent généralement beaucoup d'intelligence et un grand désir d'apprendre et de changer de vie; et déjà on remarque un grand changement, quoique, faute d'instruction, nous n'ayons pas pu encore marier les Canadiens qui avoient pris ici des sauvagesses à la mode du pays, mais qui sont tous décidés à les prendre

légitimement. Dès à présent on auroit honte de prendre une femme à la Riv: Rouge à l'ancienne façon, quoique la chose se fit autrefois sans aucun scrupule. Mais malgré toutes ces bonnes dispositions, il se trouve bien des obstacles à leur prompt instruction; et voici les principaux: Leurs différentes langues que nous n'entendons pas; la mauvaise coutume qu'ils ont de se tenir séparés les uns des autres; l'immense pays qu'il faudroit parcourir pour pouvoir les trouver tous, les détestables boissons que les traiteurs y donnent de tems à autre. Cependant toutes ces difficultés s'aplaniroient en partie si l'on avoit les moyens de bâtir des églises, des vilages où l'on pût les rassembler et y faire demeurer les familles, ce qui ne pourroit se faire qu'en leur montrant à cultiver, et leur donnant les semences nécessaires. Avec tout cela et leurs bonnes dispositions il seroit facile et certain de les civiliser autant qu'ils en sont susceptibles, et pour le moins autant que ceux du Bas Canada. Car ils auroient ici en abondance tout ce qui leur faudroit pour vivre, et il seroit plus facile de leur interdire l'usage des boissons, vu la grande difficulté de les y transporter. A présent même ils n'en peuvent avoir qu'à l'automne, et le reste de l'année il ne se fait plus de ce qu'on appelle boisson; abominable usage établi par Mrs les traiteurs qui, à certains jours, donnent à tout un camp sauvage autant de rum qu'il en faut pour leur faire perdre à tous la raison. Vous pouvez juger des désordres sans nombre qui se commettent alors; souvent il en reste d'estropiés et quelquefois de morts sur le champ.

J'attends de jour en jour la berge qui doit me mener à Pinbina; c'est l'affaire de 4 jours en berge et de deux à cheval; mais Mr Edge n'étant pas encore capable de faire le voyage à cheval, je suis forcé d'y aller en berge qui en revient en deux jours aussi.

Le blé de la Riv: Rouge est coupé, les patates sont bien belles; la terre y est excellente, et je crois que dans 10 ans le blé sera ici en grande abondance; dès l'année prochaine, s'il n'arrive aucun accident, tous les habitants auront du blé pour manger et pour semer plus qu'il ne leur en faudra. Les chevaux sont chers et rares et ne valent pas les nôtres.

Le Capitaine Mathé se comporte en vrai gentilhomme. Mr le Grand-Vicaire a reçu le 8 septembre une lettre de Votre Grandeur; c'est la seule que nous ayons reçue à la Riv: Rouge. Le presbytère, qui servira d'église jusqu'à l'année prochaine, sera levé dans 15 jours.

Je suis, Monseigneur, de Votre Grandeur le très obéissant et dévoué serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre, M.R.R.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis/ Evêque de Québec, à Québec.

[Translation]

Red River, September 10, 1818.

MY LORD, We had already given up all hope of being able to give you any news of ourselves this year, when quite unexpectedly the canoe arrived that was bringing the chest that Lady Selkirk had dispatched to Red River the latter part of July; therefore we are eager to profit by it in order to give you a report of our new mission. Up until the present time we have not found any Indian or *métis* who has refused to receive instruction; they are all willing, without, however, appearing greatly to desire it; this may be on account of their ignorance, or because of the great difficulties which they see in it. There is less crime among all these peoples than I should have thought; the most serious ones are those introduced by the whites. They admire anything we do or say before them which savors of religion, and their confidence in us is so great that they come to us immediately when any one of them happens to be ill; they imagine, if you please, that we shall cure them by our mere presence, which is very well considering that these people still see only with the eyes of the flesh. The *brûlés* that we have taught so far generally show much intelligence and a great desire to learn and reform their lives; already a big transformation has taken place. But because of lack of instruction we have not yet been able to marry the Canadians who have taken Indian wives here, according to the custom of the country. They have all decided to marry these women, however. Now they would be ashamed to take a wife at Red River in the old manner, although formerly they did so absolutely without scruple. But in spite of these good intentions, many obstacles stand in the way of their immediate instruction. Of these I shall name the most serious ones: their diverse languages, which we do not understand; their unfortunate habit of living isolated lives; the vast territory that it would be necessary to cover in order to come in contact with all of them; and the detestable liquor that the traders give them from time to time. Nevertheless all these difficulties would be partially overcome if we only had means to build churches and villages where they might be assembled and family life could be maintained; this could be accomplished only by teaching them to till the soil and giving them the necessary seed. This, together with willingness on their part, would make it both certain and easy to civilize them to whatever extent they are capable of, at least as much so as is the case with those of Lower Canada. For here they would have an abundance of everything necessary for a livelihood, and it would be easier to forbid them the use of

liquor because of the difficulty of transporting it here. Even now they can get it only in the fall, while the rest of the year there is no more of what they call *boisson*, an abominable custom established by the traders who, on certain days, give a whole Indian camp enough rum to make every one of them lose his reason. You can imagine the innumerable brawls that result at that time; often there are wounded and sometimes even dead left on the field.

From day to day I am expecting the boat that is to take me to Pembina; it is a four days' trip by boat and only two on horseback; but since Mr. Edge is not yet able to make the journey on horseback, I am obliged to go by boat, which also returns in two days.

The wheat has been cut at Red River, the potatoes are in fine condition; the soil here is excellent, and I believe that in ten years there will be a great abundance of wheat. By next year, unless some accident prevents, all the settlers will have more wheat than they need, both to eat and to sow. Horses are expensive and rare, and are not as good as ours [in Canada].

Captain Matthey is conducting himself like a real gentleman. On September 8th the Vicar-General received a letter from Your Lordship; it is the only one we have received at Red River. The presbytery, which is to serve as a church until next year, will be finished in two weeks.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and devoted servant,
SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest, Missionary at Red River.
His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

PROVENCHER TO [BISHOP PLESSIS], SEPTEMBER 13, 1818
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁸⁸

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, I received your honored letter of July 18 last night. It gave me all the more pleasure because I was not expecting any more news from Quebec this year. We have received also a letter from Mr. Desrivières, who has informed us that our trip cost us £689 1s. 10d. and that he still has £350 in his possession. I suppose this sum includes the wages of our men, of which they have received only partial payment. He says that as yet he has received nothing from the subscription from Quebec, so it is possible that a respectable amount may be left with which to send us, next summer, the men and the clothing asked for in our last letter. If in my requisitions there are some items that do not receive your approval, you may disregard them; some-

⁸⁸ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 16-18.

times one sees very differently at close range than from a distance. In spite of the fact that everything may seem for the best, it may be that the judgment of those in Montreal will be different. I have written to milord by the last canoes. Mr. Dumoulin has written to milady; we are describing affairs and conditions just as they appear to us.

There was a large package of newspapers for us in the same mail, as well as other papers, in one of which Mr. Dumoulin and I found our names. It appears that one of the defenders of the North West Company wanted to insinuate that self-interest had led us to these far countries. He was surely badly informed. I have found in the papers a thing which interests all the Church. It is the conversion of the Emperor of China to Christianity. At last we have brought into the bosom of the Church a kingdom that St. Francis Xavier wished to water with the sweat of his brow, but his time had not yet come. May we, poor sinners that we are, be the weak instruments whom God may use for the propagation of this same religion in the far countries of North America. There are in these vast regions a great many nations of Indians whom it will be difficult to civilize and to instruct, because they live apart from one another. I believe that one could say, without fear of making a mistake, that their commerce with the whites, far from bringing them closer to civilization, has kept them from it, because the whites have spoiled the Indians' characters with strong drink, of which the natives are extremely fond, and by their example have taught them debauchery. Most of the *engagés* keep women, by whom they have children, who, like the mothers, are left later to the first comer. It is said that it is the policy of the *bourgeois* to make their men take women, and so give them a chance to spend their earnings by buying clothing at high prices in order to dress their wives and children. All the clerks and *bourgeois* also have wives. And what is worse, no one bothers any more with the children born from these pretended marriages than as if they had no souls. All these children, who have been called *bois brûlés* for many years, have no more idea of God and of religion than the other natives. However, these children are very intelligent; they learn with great facility the prayers and the catechism that we teach them, as well as reading.

We are very thankful for the continued interest in our holy mission. We pray God for all our benefactors. It seems that it is going to become necessary to build a chapel at Pembina River, about thirty leagues from Fort Douglas. Many of the colonists and other freemen have decided to establish themselves there. The climate is said to be more

favorable, which seems true from what one hears of the fruits that can be grown there. There is about the same difference that exists between Quebec and Montreal. I think that the place will grow more quickly than this settlement, because, apart from the advantages of climate, there is an abundance of provisions, buffaloes being always in the neighborhood. Mr. Dumoulin leaves soon to go to spend a few weeks there with Mr. Edge. I think they will spend the winter there, if they find lodging accommodations. It will be at least a mission to visit from time to time. It seems useless to me to make the trip to Hudson Bay, because there are only a few people there, that post not being a place of rendezvous, nor the seat of the company's business. Jack River, eight or ten days' march from here at the foot of Lake Winnipeg, is the central point. It would be more profitable to go there. I shall get information on this point. There are in the department of the Red River other posts of the two companies that it would be well to visit at the first opportunity. Nearly all the Europeans in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company are Protestants. Everything is peaceful, but without cordiality; for reasons of expediency the English and the French (for thus the two organizations are called) keep the peace. If one believes the *voyageurs*, the Indians of the Athabaska country, who are Montagnais, are the most peaceful tribe.

I am sending Your Lordship an account of our trip with a few observations on the new country in which we live. I have made it accord with your plans and answer to the requests of your last letter. I had thought of making these observations in separate letters; then, fearing that I might not attain my object, I gave up the idea in the hope that Your Lordship would have the kindness to extract them from our letters if you judge it proper to publish them. I do not flatter myself that I have attained the object I had in view. The country does not furnish as many opportunities for observations as one might think, especially to persons who have been here only a short time. I do not think that I have made any rash statements. It might be better for Your Lordship to put my observations into form. Coming from your pen they would be more apt to be presentable to the public. Perhaps you fear that a strange hand might take away some of their force by such a selection.

The Meurons who are here are from all countries and of all religions, and behave themselves pretty well. They cannot get rum easily. They are not married. Three or four have taken native women; there is one who is preparing himself to marry a *métis* who is one of our

catechumens. The wives of the Canadians learn slowly, partly because they are adults and partly because they do not understand French well; but they have good will and steadfastness.

If you could easily send us for our distant missions some vestments of all colors, which would be easy to roll, having no stiffening, it would save those we have, which will soon be spoiled and broken because they are too stiff. It is not necessary that they be expensive.

Mr. Dumoulin is starting today with Mr. Edge for Pembina. I should like to know the amount specified in the diocese for *componenda* for different degrees. There are people from whom we could exact some. I believe that this is the last letter that I shall have the honor to address to Your Lordship this year.

The canoe that is about to depart will be late in arriving.

I am, with the most profound respect, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble servant,

PROVENCHER, Priest, Vicar-General.

Red River, September 13, 1818.

CREVIER TO [BISHOP PLESSIS], SEPTEMBER 26, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Je serois fâché de laisser ignorer Votre Grandeur plus longtemps de mon arrivée à Sandwich qui a été le 19e du présent; pendant ces quatre mois je n'ai pas eu une heure de maladie. J'ai beaucoup à vous remercier, Monsgr de l'honneur que vous m'avez fait en m'acceptant au nombre de vos missionnaires & surtout de m'avoir donné un compagnon si aimable. Je rends grâces au ciel d'avoir béni nos travaux & dis souvent à Dieu: *Non nobis, Domine* &c.

Depuis que Mr Tabeau m'a laissé j'ai fait deux mariages et 53 baptêmes. Je lui envoie ces actes pour les mettre sur son registre. Je ne vous fatiguerai pas d'aucun détail particulier. Mr Tab. qui a eu l'honneur de vous voir, m'a promis de s'en acquitter, ainsi que des difficultés que nous avons rencontré dans l'exercice du ministère. Mr Marchand se porte bien, excepté la toux. J'arrive d'administrer deux malades à Malden. je pars lundi pour la rivière à la Tranche pour y faire faire la rière communion. Monsgr Flaget n'est pas encore de retour d'un conseil où il est allé assister dans une partie des E. U.

C'est avec respect, Monsgr que je me dis un de vos Ptres

Jos. CREVIER, Ptre, Vicaire.

Sandwich le 26 sept. 1818.

[Translation]

MY LORD, I should be sorry to leave Your Lordship longer in ignorance of my arrival at Sandwich the nineteenth of this month. During the past four months I have not had an hour of sickness. I owe you many thanks, My Lord, for the honor of having been accepted among the numbers of your missionaries and especially for the favor of so agreeable a companion. I return thanks to Heaven for having blessed our efforts and often say to God, *Non nobis, Domine*, etc.

Since Mr. Tabeau left me I have performed two marriages and fifty-three baptisms. I will send him a record of these for inserting in his register. I shall not weary you with details. Mr. Tabeau, who has had the honor of seeing you, has promised to tell you of them, as well as of the difficulties we have encountered in the performance of our ministry. Mr. Marchand is well, except for a cough. I have just come from attending two sick persons in Malden. Monday I leave for Thames River for a first communion class. Bishop Flaget has not yet returned from a council that he attended somewhere in the United States.

Most respectfully, My Lord, I subscribe myself one of your priests,
JOS. CREVIER, Priest, Vicar.

Sandwich, September 26, 1818.

SELKIRK TO BISHOP PLESSIS, OCTOBER 17, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

A Montréal ce 17 octobre 1818.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Pendant le voyage que je viens de faire dans le Haut-Canada, j'ai eu le plaisir de recevoir des lettres de la Rivière Rouge qui m'ont annoncé l'heureuse arrivée de Messrs Provencher et Dumoulin. Ces lettres, ainsi que le rapport verbal que j'ai reçu de Mr De Lorimier en arrivant ici, me marquent que les habitans, et surtout les Canadiens anciens voyageurs, avec leurs familles métives, avoient témoigné la meilleur disposition à profiter des instructions des Missionnaires; et que les sauvages aussi leur avoient témoigné ce respect qui donne lieu à croire qu'ils montreront aussi de la docilité. J'espère que cet heureux présage sera confirmé par le rapport que ces Messieurs n'auront pas manqué de faire à votre Seigneurie.

En réfléchissant sur les circonstances qui m'ont été communiquées, il me paroît que si elles étoient connues en Angleterre, on pourroit y obtenir des secours qui donneroient un appui plus solide à l'établissement de la mission. Il y a beaucoup de catholiques des familles les

plus distinguées de l'Angleterre, et je ne doute pas qu'on trouveroit aussi des Protestants qui se feront gloire de contribuer au maintien d'une mission de cette nature, dès qu'ils seront assurés du bien qui doit en résulter. Si j'étois autorisé à communiquer cette assurance de la part de votre Seigneurie et d'après le rapport des Missionnaires eux-mêmes j'ai pleine confiance qu'en Angleterre on trouveroit le moyen d'en tirer un résultat favorable.

J'ai oui dire dernièrement qu'il y a quelque probabilité que le Haut Canada sera érigé en diocèse séparé. Si ce démembrement doit avoir lieu, j'espère que la Rivière Rouge restera encore dans le diocèse de Québec: j'aurois beaucoup de peine si cet établissement naissant ne restait pas sous la juridiction de votre Seigneurie sous laquelle il a été si heureusement commencé. Je me souviens qu'à Québec, le printems passé, votre Seigneurie a suggéré qu'à la longue ces pays éloignés devroient avoir un établissement indépendant: Mais en attendant que la population ait pris cet accroissement, qui seroit nécessaire pour supporter sans secours un établissement séparé, il me paroît que tous ces pays sauvages devroient relever du diocèse de Québec plutôt que d'aucun autre, vu que les catholiques qui y sont répandus ne parlent que la langue française, et que par cette raison le Haut Canada ne pourroit pas fournir des sujets propres à cette ministère.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec la plus grande considération Monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

SELKIRK.

A Monseigneur/ l'Evêque Catholique de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, October 17, 1818.

MY LORD, During my recent trip in Upper Canada, I had the pleasure of receiving letters from Red River telling me of the safe arrival of Messrs. Provencher and Dumoulin. These letters, as well as the verbal account that I received from Mr. de Lorimier when he arrived here, inform me that the inhabitants, and especially the old Canadian *voyageurs* and their *métis* families, evidenced an excellent disposition to profit by the instructions of the missionaries; and that the Indians also showed that respect that causes one to believe that they also will be disposed to listen. I hope that this happy portent will be confirmed by the report that those gentlemen have not failed to make to Your Lordship.

As I reflect on the information that has been communicated to me,

it seems to me that if it were known in England, assistance could be secured that would prove a surer support in the establishment of the mission. There are in England many Catholics of very distinguished families, and I have no doubt that one could also find Protestants who would pride themselves on maintaining a mission of this kind, as soon as they were assured of the good that will result from it. If I were authorized to communicate this assurance as coming from Your Lordship and the missionaries' own report, I am confident that means would be found in England for securing favorable results.

It has been reported to me recently that there is some likelihood that Upper Canada will be erected into a separate diocese. If this division takes place, I hope that Red River will still remain in the diocese of Quebec. I should be pained to find that this infant establishment is not to remain under Your Lordship's jurisdiction, under whom its start has been so auspicious. I recall that Your Lordship suggested last spring at Quebec that in the long run these distant regions ought to have a separate organization. But while the population is growing to the point necessary to support the mission without help from outside, it seems to me that all these Indian regions ought to belong to the diocese of Quebec rather than to any other, from the fact that their scattered Catholics know only French, and that for that reason Upper Canada could not furnish candidates suitable for this ministry.

I have the honor to be, My Lord, most respectfully, your very humble and very obedient servant,

SELKIRK.

His Lordship the Catholic Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO SELKIRK, OCTOBER 26, 1818
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 9:455]

Québec, 26 8bre 1818.

Au très honorable Comte de Selkirk/ à Montréal.

MILORD, Je me fais honneur de partager avec votre Seigneurie la satisfaction que lui donne l'heureuse arrivée de nos missionnaires à la Rivière Rouge. Une lettre de Mr Dumoulin du 14 aout, contenant assez peu de détail, m'en annonce une de Mr Provencher de qui j'en attends davantage, comme devant être écrite quelque temps après la sienne. Elle ne m'est pas encore parvenue.

Je ne doute pas de l'assistance que l'on pourroit tirer des bonnes familles catholiques d'Angleterre pour l'encouragement d'une oeuvre qui intéresse si près leur religion, surtout si votre Seigneurie se donnoit

la peine de les solliciter. Mais avant de demander des secours, ne faudroit-il pas attendre des informations plus précises des vues des missionnaires et des besoins de la mission? La souscription n'est pas encore épuisée. Ce qui en reste suffira, j'espère, à couvrir les dépenses qui pourront être requises d'ici à 1820. Il n'entreroit pas plus dans mes vues que dans celles de votre Seigneurie d'annexer aucune partie du territoire de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson à un évêché qui seroit érigé dans le Haut Canada jusqu'à ce que cette région puisse former une église à part; elle demeurera, en ce qui peut dépendre de moi, dépendante du diocèse de Québec comme étant le seul qui puisse subvenir à ses besoins spirituels. Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. cath. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, October 26, 1818.

To the Very Honorable Earl of Selkirk, Montreal.

MY LORD, I do myself the honor of sharing Your Lordship's satisfaction with the safe arrival of our missionaries at Red River. A letter from Mr. Dumoulin of August 14, containing very little detail, prepares me for one from Mr. Provencher, from which I expect more, as having been written some time after Mr. Dumoulin's. It has not yet arrived.

I have no doubt of the assistance that could be obtained from good Catholic families in England for the encouragement of an activity that concerns their religion so closely, especially if Your Lordship should trouble himself to solicit it. But before asking such aid, would it not be better to await more precise information concerning the views of the missionaries and the needs of the mission? The subscription money is not yet exhausted. What remains will suffice, I hope, to cover expenses from now until 1820. It would not enter into my plans any more than into Your Lordship's to annex any part of the territory of the Hudson's Bay Company to a bishopric that should be erected in Upper Canada. Until that region can be formed into a separate establishment, it will remain, as far as the matter rests with me, dependent on the diocese of Quebec, as being the only arrangement that can serve their spiritual needs. I am etc.,

† J. O., Catholic Bishop of Québec.

DICKSON⁸⁴ TO SELKIRK, NOVEMBER 12, 1818

[Selkirk Transcripts, 16:527. C]

Sault St Marys Nov^r 12. 1818.

MY LORD/ I was agreeably surp[r]ised by M^r M^cDonnels & M^r Perins arrival here last evening, they inform me that the dispatches from your Lordship which were lost in a Canoe on Lake Omnipique [*Ouinipique*, i.e., *Winnipeg?*] have been found.

Every person from your Lordships Colony say that every thing is prosperous & that the utmost harmony prevails. A number of settlers will proceed next spring from La Baye [*Green Bay*] Point St Ignace & this place for the Red River. The Establishment of a church there has been attended with the most beneficial consequence. I had the honor of addressing your Lordship by M^r La Croix I every day expect an answer to my Letters from Green Baye. At all events I wish twenty able men to be engaged — & Eighty Beaver traps of the best quality to be made. Any other articles that may be wanted for the spring may be procured at a short notice I have been necessitated for different objects to draw on Mess^{rs} Maitland Garden & Auldjo for £146.. 10/. C^y in four different drafts, — but there is not [*sic*] commencing business in this Country without support in Cash — and I trust in the spring should I require a further Credit on the house that your Lordship will have the goodness to direct it to be given.

The Season being advanced; but the weather since [*severe?*] I have advised M^r M^cDonnell according to appearances at Drummonds Island, to go by Michelemackinac if severe, if otherwise he will be guided by circumstances but as he has no guide I would prefer his going by Mackinac embarking in a vessell & hiring out his men for the winter.

I have the honor to be/ With high respect/ Your Lordships/ Most obedient humble Servant

R. DICKSON.

The Right Honorable/ Earl Selkirk/ Montreal.

Per/ M^r M^cDonnell.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO TABEAU, DECEMBER 7, 1818

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 9:458]

Québec, 7 décembre 1818.

A Monsieur Tabeau/ curé à Boucherville.

MONSIEUR,/ Je viens d'écrire à Mr Marchand et n'ai pas manqué de lui dire, sans mentionner aucune plainte, qu'il devoit donner à son

⁸⁴ Robert Dickson, prominent in the fur trade of the Northwest, was interested at this time, as Lord Selkirk's agent, in the agricultural and economic development of the Red River colony. Grace Lee Nute, "Hudson's Bay Company Posts in the Minnesota Country," in *Minnesota History*, 22:270-289 (September, 1941).

vicaire ses honoraires tout entiers, lors même qu'une mission étrangère l'éloigneroit quelques mois de son poste. Mais tout cela est inutile. L'essentiel lui manque: c'est l'argent; car du reste vous savez combien il aime à donner. A en juger par sa dernière lettre (du 7 nov.) ses finances sont en pire état que jamais, et la dernière récolte très mauvaise. Je ne serois nullement surpris qu'il se trouvât incapable de tenir compte à Mr Crevier du temps même qu'il passe à son service. Tel a été le sort de son premier vicaire qui s'est trouvé, en le laissant, dans la nécessité de lui donner quittance sans rien recevoir de sa dernière année. La mission du Fort William s'engraissera, j'espère, et comme je me propose de la laisser à vos soins et à ceux de Mr Crevier, il y pourra trouver à se dédommager de ce qui lui manque du côté de Sandwich. A vous dire vrai, je loue beaucoup le désintéressement que vous avez montré l'un et l'autre, et je désirerois que l'on vous y fit assez de présens pour vous dédommager, sinon vous du moins votre compagnon, des frais du voyage et du séjour, et de quelque chose en sus. C'est par les offrandes volontaires des fidèles que devraient vivre les prêtres, et il semble que l'on peut compter sur cette ressource dans un lieu où la charité va être progressive. Au reste je vous laisse juge du temps où il faudra exiger quelque chose pour vos fonctions et suis prêt à revêtir de mon approbation tel tarif que vous trouverez bon de dresser d'après la connoissance que vous avez prise des lieux et des gens. Envoyez-le moi aussitôt qu'il vous le plaira et mettez-le en force le plus tard que vous pourrez.

Les missionnaires de la Riv.-Rouge ne paroissent pas très satisfaits des hommes qui sont à leurs gages. Ils en voudroient de plus honnêtes et de plus capables de les assister comme ouvriers. Je ne sais qui se chargera de leur en choisir d'ici au printemps et de les acheminer avec des outils. Avant tout, il faudroit savoir où en sont les finances de la mission à Montréal, et sur quelles ressources l'on peut compter. Je tâcherai de me procurer ces informations d'ici au 15 janvier, temps où il doit partir un exprès pour cette région lointaine.

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Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, December 7, 1818.

Mr. Tabeau, Curé at Boucherville.

SIR, I have just written to Mr. Marchand, and I have not failed to tell him, without mentioning any complaint, that he ought to give to

his vicar all his fees, even when a foreign mission takes the vicar several months from his post. But it is all to no avail. The essential thing is lacking—money. Besides, you know how much he likes to give. By his last letter (of November 7) his finances seem to be in worse condition than ever, and the last harvest was very bad. I should not be in the least surprised if he found himself incapable of rendering an account to Mr. Crevier, even for the time passed in his service. Such was the fate of his first vicar, who found himself, when leaving, under the necessity of giving Mr. Marchand a receipt, though he had received nothing for his last year.

The mission at Fort William will thrive, I hope, and as I propose to leave it to your care and Mr. Crevier's, the latter will find there a way to recoup himself for what he has lost at Sandwich. To tell you the truth, I praise very highly the disinterestedness that both of you have shown, and I could wish that you would be given reparations, if not yourself, at least your companion. It is by the freewill offerings of the faithful that priests should live, and it appears that this resource can be counted on in places where charity is going to be active. But I leave you to judge of the time to ask something for your services and am ready to give my approval to such a rate as you shall see fit to impose according to your knowledge of the places and their people. Send it to me as soon as you wish and put it in force as late as possible.

The missionaries at Red River do not seem well satisfied with the men in their employ. They would like some very honest men capable of assisting them as laborers. I do not know who will take upon himself the task of choosing them here in the spring and starting them off with some tools. Above all, we must know the condition of the funds at Montreal and how much can be counted on. I will endeavor to secure this information by January 15, when an express is to start for that distant region.

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I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

LADY SELKIRK TO [BISHOP PLESSIS, JANUARY, 1819]
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Je prends la liberté de vous adresser pour vous informer d'une occasion d'écrire à Messieurs les Missionnaires. Un courier d'hyver doit partir d'ici le 10 de Janvier et aucune dépêche que vous voudrez bien envoyer sera à tems rendue à Montréal par la poste du dixième.

J'espère que Votre Grandeur a reçu les dépêches qui sont arrivées dernièrement. Mr Provencher dans une lettre du 30 aout marque le besoin qu'il a d'ouvriers, et dit qu'il avoit écrit à ce sujet à Votre Grandeur.

Permettez-moi de vous assurer que les agens du Lord Selkirk se chargeront de vos ordres comme s'il étoit ici lui-même si vous voulez bien les employer là-dessus.

Excusez la hâte que j'ai d'attraper la poste.

Avec beaucoup de respect votre humble servante.

J. SELKIRK.

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, I take the liberty of addressing you to inform you of an opportunity for writing to the missionaries. A winter express is to leave here January 10, and any dispatch that you wish to send should be sent in time to be delivered in Montreal by the post of the tenth.

I hope Your Lordship has received the dispatches that have arrived recently. Mr. Provencher in a letter of August 30 mentions his need of workmen and says he has written Your Lordship on that subject.

Permit me to assure you that Lord Selkirk's agents will carry out your orders as if from himself if you wish to employ them.

Excuse my haste, for I must put this in the post.

Very respectfully, your humble servant,

J. SELKIRK.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JANUARY 4, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pembina, le 4 janvier 1819.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Permettez-moi de recourir à vous pour la décision des cas ci-inclus, d'abord pour plus grande sureté, et ensuite pour la tranquillité de ma propre conscience qui ne peut pas toujours être tranquille sur les décisions d'un théologien de 25 ans d'âge et de deux ans et demi de théologie.

1^o. Que doit-on exiger d'un engagé qui a traité pour son bourgeois de la manière suivante, laquelle est généralement reçue dans ces pays: le traiteur rendu dans un campement donne à boire aux sauvages *gratis*; les ayant enivrés, il traite avec eux, met de l'eau dans le rum, et finit par avoir tout ce qu'ils ont pour très peu de chose, de manière qu'il a payé la pelleterie &c., au-dessous même du bas prix convenu entre les bourgeois et les sauvages. L'engagé n'a fait cela que pour faire plaisir à son bourgeois qui ne lui a pas directement commandé de

mettre tant d'eau, mais qui lui reprochera dans l'occasion d'avoir gaspillé ses effets s'il n'a pas traité de cette manière; d'ailleurs l'engagé savoit bien qu'il ne fesoit pas bien, mais il se rassuroit sur ce que c'étoit la coutume et que le profit n'étoit pas pour lui.

2°. Que doit-on exiger si cet engagé a volé les sauvages, pendant cette même boisson, toujours avec les mêmes raisons?

3°. Cet engagé est le père d'une grosse famille qu'il soutient en travaillant beaucoup.

4°. A qui faudra-t-il restituer? Les dits sauvages sont éloignés, dispersés ça et là; peut-être plusieurs d'entre eux sont morts.

5°. Un engagé a volé une compagnie, mais cette compagnie a refusé de payer toutes ses gages; peut-on et doit-on compenser?

6°. Que faut-il exiger des engagés qui achètent du rum des bourgeois, et qui traitent ensuite, et font un trop fort gagne, v. g. pour un gallon de rum ils auront eu deux chevaux?

7°. Quelles sont les choses qu'il est absolument nécessaire de savoir pour pouvoir être baptisé et marié? N. B. Il seroit peut-être bon de pouvoir ici marier les protestants avec des catholics pour ne pas forcer les gens à demander des prêtres protestants.

8°. Faut-il toujours instruire les femmes des protestants, quand bien même on seroit presque certain qu'ils ne voudront pas se séparer quand on leur dira qu'il faut le faire?

9°. Un Brulé étoit extrêmement porté à la boisson, il se corrige, mais ça lui arrive encore quelquefois, n'ayant pas la grâce sanctifiante; faut-il attendre qu'il l'ait abandonnée tout à fait, et combien faudra-t-il qu'il résiste de fois? car il ne lui est pas possible de boire souvent.

10°. Tous les sauvages d'ici sont prêts à se faire instruire s'ils en avoient les moyens; d'ailleurs ils savent bien qu'une fois leurs enfants baptisés ils sont obligés de les faire instruire, et ont même une certaine crainte de s'y engager; peut-on maintenant baptiser leurs petits enfants, au moins ceux de 4 à 5 ans, qui probablement auront les moyens d'être instruits quand ils en seront capables? Une raison qui pourroit être contre, c'est que si ces enfants devenoient malades leurs pères infidèles leur feroient leurs absurdes médecines qui sont remplies de superstitions, ce qui cependant n'empêcheroit pas ces pauvres enfants d'aller dans le ciel.

11°. Devroit-on même baptiser ceux dont les pères seroient bigames ou ivrognes avérés?

12°. Seroit-il convenable de faire manquer la messe à peut-être 150 personnes les dimanches et fêtes pour aller passer quelques jours ou

semaines chez les sauvages, tant pour commencer à les instruire que pour apprendre la langue, vû qu'il est presque impossible de l'apprendre ici? Pourroit-on le faire quand bien même on sauroit n'en voir que très peu de loges, v. g. dix dans deux semaines?

13°. Des femmes sauvages se sont instruites et seroient prêtes à être baptisées et mariées si elles n'étoient mariées à la mode du pays avec des canadiens ivrognes. Que faut-il faire de ces femmes? Faut-il attendre que leurs maris se convertissent? ou leur conseiller de les abandonner? ce qu'elles ne peuvent faire sans de graves inconvénients, tels que de laisser leurs enfants, ou de retourner peut-être avec les sauvages, où elles ne pourroient être instruites.

14°. Est-il mieux d'attendre que les enfants qui passent 7 ans aient l'âge de faire leur première communion pour leur conférer le sacrement de baptême? ou s'il seroit mieux de baptiser sitôt qu'ils sont un peu instruits de ce qu'ils recevraient?

15°. Nous est-il permis, lorsque nous mangeons chez les autres de manger indistinctement de tout ce que l'on nous présente, quand même on nous diroit que ces viandes ont été traitées des sauvages pour du rum ou illicitement?

Je suis, Monseigneur, &c.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec, à Québec.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, January 4, 1819.

MY LORD, Permit me to appeal to you for a decision of the following cases, first in order to be more sure, and second, to set my conscience at rest, because it cannot always be satisfied with the decisions of a theologian twenty-five years old with only two and one-half years of theology.

1. What should be exacted of an *engagé* who has traded for his *bourgeois* in the following manner, which is the one generally accepted in this country: upon going to an Indian camp the trader gives the Indians liquor gratis; after making them drunk, he trades with them, dilutes the rum with water, and ends by getting all they have for very little, so that he has paid even less for the peltries, etc., than the low price agreed upon by the *bourgeois* and the Indians. The *engagé* has done this only to please his *bourgeois*, who has not actually ordered him to add so much water, but who will reproach him for having wasted his goods if he does not trade in this manner; furthermore, the

engagé knows very well that he has not done right, but he reassures himself by saying that such is the custom, and the profit is not for him.

2. What should be done if this *engagé* has robbed the Indians at the same time, for the same reasons?

3. This *engagé* is the father of a large family whom he supports by hard work.

4. To whom should restitution be made? The Indians mentioned have gone away; they are scattered here and there; perhaps several of them have died.

5. An *engagé* has robbed a company, but this company has refused to pay all his wages; can, and ought, recompense be made?

6. What should be done with *engagés* who buy rum from the *bourgeois* and who then trade it, making too great a profit thereby? Say, for instance, for a gallon of rum they obtained two horses.

7. What is it absolutely necessary to know in order to be baptized and married? N.B. It would, perhaps, be well to be able here to marry Catholics to Protestants in order not to force the people to demand Protestant priests.

8. Is it necessary to teach the wives of Protestants even when it is almost certain that they will not want to be separated when they are told that they must?

9. A *brûlé* was very much given to drinking; he has reformed, but he still drinks occasionally, not being protected by the divine Grace. Is it necessary to wait until he has abandoned it altogether, and how many times must he resist? For it is not possible for him to drink often.

10. All the Indians here would be willing to receive instruction if the means to do so were at hand; furthermore, they realize that once their children are baptized they will be obliged to have them taught, and they are even somewhat afraid to pledge themselves to do so. Can we baptize their small children now four or five years old, who probably will have the means of receiving instruction by the time they are capable of it? One thing which might militate against this course is the fact that should these children fall ill, their infidel fathers would use on them their absurd medicines. These are full of superstition, which, nevertheless, would not keep these poor little ones from going to heaven.

11. Ought one ever to baptize those whose fathers may be bigamists or inveterate drunkards?

12. Would it be right for me to make perhaps 150 people miss

hearing Mass on Sundays and feast days in order that I might go to spend some days or weeks among the Indians, to begin to teach them, as well as to learn their language, seeing that it is almost impossible to learn it here? Might I do such a thing even though I knew it would be possible to visit only a very few lodges—for example, ten in two weeks?

13. Some of the Indian women have been taught, and would be ready for baptism and marriage if they were not already married, according to the custom of the land, to drunken Canadians. What shall be done with these women? Must we wait until their husbands are converted or advise them to abandon them? They can do so only at serious cost, such as leaving their children or perhaps returning to the Indians, where it would be impossible for them to receive instruction.

14. Is it better to wait till children over seven are old enough to make their first communion before conferring the sacrament of baptism on them, or would it be better to baptize them as soon as they have been made to understand something of its meaning?

15. Are we allowed, when eating with others, to partake indiscriminately of everything that is offered us, even when we are told that these meats have been received from the Indians in exchange for rum or otherwise traded in an illegal manner?

I am, My Lord, etc.,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JANUARY 5, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pembina, 5 janvier 1819.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Le grand et presque l'unique obstacle que nous ayons trouvé et qui empêchera toujours l'instruction et la civilisation même des sauvages, c'est la boisson, c'est cette malheureuse coutume établie dans ces pays d'enivrer les Naturels de ces contrées lorsque l'on veut avoir quelque chose d'eux. La colonie le fait avec aussi peu de scrupule que les compagnies; dans les conventions mêmes faites avec les sauvages pour l'achat de l'établissement de la Riv: Rouge, une des principales clauses en est: que tous les ans la colonie délivrera aux principaux chefs tant de rum; de sorte qu'ils en ont beaucoup plus qu'il ne faut pour s'enivrer tous.⁸⁵ Cet automne, une femme indienne a été

⁸⁵ Dumoulin must be in error here, for Selkirk's treaty of July 18, 1817, with the Indians provided only for an annual payment of merchandise and tobacco. Oliver, ed., *Canadian North-West*, 1:1288.

tuée dans une de ces boissons. Mais s'il est impossible de tirer les sauvages de l'infidélité tant qu'il sera permis de leur verser à boire, il ne sera pas moins difficile de tirer de leurs désordres honteux grand nombre de canadiens et de Bois-brulés qui depuis nombre d'années n'ont eu de rum que de tems en tems, dans certains jours de fêtes, de manière que profitant du moment ils s'enivrent presque tous et sont par là même tous ivrognes. Il n'y a point d'autre moyen de nous mettre en état de faire du bien dans ce pays que de retrancher le commerce qui se fait avec des liqueurs enivrantes. D'ailleurs pourquoi le gouvernement ne le pourroit-il pas faire? Les Américains n'ont eu qu'à essayer, et ils ont réussi.⁸⁶ Les bourgeois mêmes admirent la sagesse de cette loi, et un Mr Nord-West m'a dit qu'il seroit content si cette loi étoit passée. Ce sont des coutumes établies de tems immémorial que tous les premiers de l'an, tous les jours de Noel, chaque automne à l'arrivée des berges &c, on fait des boissons dans lesquelles presque tous s'enivrent; le plus souvent les bourgeois donnent le ton. Les Sauteux, qui sont les sauvages qui nous environnent, ne sont pas les plus propres au christianisme; on dit que les Sioux et les sauvages du Large, c-à-d. qui sont en gagnant le Nord-West, sont beaucoup plus humains; tels que: du côté du Nord, les Assniboines, les Panis, les Gros-ventres, les Pieds-noirs, les Sarcis, les Montagnais, les Maskégons, les Loups, les gens des vaches, &c. Du côté Sud, ils ne veulent guère mieux que ceux-ci; ce sont: les Pilleurs, les Folles, les Sâts, les Poun, les Gros-os, les Petits-os, les Cotonohois, les Serpens⁸⁷ &c. Les Mandales, qui sont à 8 jours de marche d'ici, sont remarquables en ce qu'ils ne boivent jamais de rum; s'il étoit facile j'aimerois bien mieux apprendre leur langue et commencer par eux, si surtout on devoit continuer à transporter ici des liqueurs fortes.

Le pays est extrêmement avantageux; il y fait bien moins froid qu'à Montréal, au moins cette année. Le climat est plus doux à Pembina qu'à la Fourche,⁸⁸ il y a autant de différence qu'entre Québec et Montréal. Les sauvages sont disposés à être instruits dès qu'on leur en

⁸⁶ Dumoulin probably refers to the clause in the so-called "Intercourse Act," approved on March 30, 1802, "to prevent or restrain the vending or distributing of spirituous liquors among all or any of the Indian tribes." See United States, *Statutes at Large*, 2:146. In accordance with the act, in that same year Governor William H. Harrison of Indiana Territory issued a proclamation making illegal the sale of liquor to Indians within that territory, which then embraced most of the Old Northwest. Other proclamations and orders followed from time to time. Logan Esarey, ed., *Governors Messages and Letters: Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison*, 1:59, 102 (*Indiana Historical Collections*, vol. 7 — Indianapolis, 1922); Henry Dearborn's "Circular to All Indian Agents," in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 19:303.

⁸⁷ Possibly the Quapaw.

⁸⁸ See *ante*, p. xv.

donnera le moyen; le plus grand moyen, après l'exclusion du rum, c'est de les réunir en villages.

Il y aura beaucoup de bled à semer ce printems, personne n'en mangeant cet hyver, il y aura aussi beaucoup de patates; on en mange à la Fourche, mais nous sommes réduits ici à une fois par jour.

Il seroit essentiel qu'il y eut ici des magistrats; le principal seroit qu'ils fussent gens de bien, vertueux, et catholiques; puisqu'on a préféré la religion catholique aux autres pour propager la foi dans ces contrées éloignées, du moins seroit-il convenable que ceux que l'on y mettra à la tête soient en état d'autoriser cette religion, et par la sagesse de leurs ordonnances, et par le poids de leurs bons exemples. Car que peuvent penser ces pauvres Néophytes en voyant que la religion que nous leur prêchons n'est pas celle de ceux qui leur commandent et qui ont les premières places?

Ce printems nous devons aller, Mr Provencher et moi, l'un à la Baie d'Hudson et l'autre au Lac Lapluie; si je pouvois pénétrer jusqu'à Athabaska avant que je descende, ce seroit très utile, et je le ferois avec plaisir; pour cela il faudroit y hyverner, car autrement on y feroit peu de bien. Les deux compagnies ainsi que la colonie paroissent en assez bonne intelligence, du moins dans ces parties ici; s'il y a du trouble, ça ne pourra être que dans les Athabaskas. Tous sont très portés à nous rendre service.

Depuis le 20 jusqu'au 22 novembre il est tombé un peu de neige qui est restée; il n'y en a, cependant, pas plus d'un bon demi pied à Pembina, et à 8 lieues plus haut presque point du tout. La Riv: a commencé à prendre le 13 novembre; il n'est pas encore venu de froid considérable.

Je suis, Monseigneur, de votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Mgr J. O. Plessis, Evêque de Québec, / à Québec.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, January 5, 1819.

MY LORD, The great and almost the sole obstacle that we have found to stand in the way of teaching and even of civilizing the Indians is liquor; it is the unfortunate custom, established in this region, to intoxicate the natives whenever one wants to get something out of them. The colony is quite as unscrupulous about it as are the companies; even in the agreements made with the Indians for the purchase of the Red River settlement, one of the principal clauses is that each year the col-

ony shall deliver to the principal chiefs so much rum; so that they have much more of it than would be necessary to intoxicate every one of them.⁸⁵ This fall an Indian woman was killed in one of these drunken brawls. But if it is impossible to win the Indians from infidelity as long as it is permissible to give them liquor, it will be no less difficult to win over from their shameful immorality a great many Canadians and *bois brûlés*. These for a number of years have been able to get rum only now and then on certain festival occasions, so that in order to profit by the opportunity they almost all get intoxicated and therefore become drunkards. There is absolutely no other way for us to do some good in this country than to put a stop to the commerce of intoxicating liquor. Furthermore, why could not the government do this? The Americans only had to try it, and they succeeded.⁸⁶ The *bourgeois* themselves admire the wisdom of this law, and a member of the North West Company has told me that he would be glad if such a law were passed. It is the custom, established since time immemorial, that every New Year's Day and Christmas, each fall when the boats arrive, etc., almost everyone gets drunk; it is nearly always the *bourgeois* who start the thing. The Chippewa, who are the Indians living in this locality, are not those most easily adapted to the reception of Christianity; it is said that the Sioux and Natsitkutchin, that is to say, those of the Northwest, are much more humane; such as in the North the Assiniboin, the Pawnee, the Gros Ventres, the Blackfeet, the Sarsi, the Montagnais, the Maskegon, the Skidi, the Arapaho, etc. South of here they are hardly better than those in this region; they are: the Pillagers, the Menominee, the Sauk, the Potawatomi, the Great Osage, the Little Osage, the Kutenai, the Snakes,⁸⁷ etc. The Mandan, who are eight days' journey from here, are exceptional in that they never drink rum; if it were possible, I should much prefer to learn their language and begin on them, especially if strong liquors were to continue to be transported here.

This region has many advantages; it is a good deal warmer here than at Montreal, at least this year. The climate is milder at Pembina than at The Forks;⁸⁸ there is as much difference as there is between Quebec and Montreal. The Indians are ready to be taught as soon as means are given them; the best way, after the exclusion of rum, is to assemble them in villages.

There will be a good deal of wheat to plant this spring since no one is eating it this winter, also many potatoes; they eat them at The Forks, but here we are cut down to once a day.

It is essential that there be some magistrates here; the main requisite is that they be honest, moral, and Catholic; since the Catholic religion has been selected before the others to propagat the faith in these distant lands, it would at least be desirable that those placed in charge be in a position to authorize this religion, both by the wisdom of their decrees and the weight of their good examples. For what must these poor neophytes think when they find that the religion we preach to them is not that of those who command them and who hold the principal offices?

This spring we are to go, Mr. Provencher and I, one to Hudson Bay and the other to Rainy Lake. If it were possible for me to go as far as Athabaska before returning [to Canada], it would be very worth while and I should gladly do so; but it would be necessary to spend the winter there, otherwise I should not accomplish much. The two companies as well as the colony seem to be on pretty good terms, at least in this locality; if there is any trouble it can be only in Athabaska. Everyone seems ready to aid us.

From November 20 to 22 there was a fall of snow, which has stayed on the ground; however, there is not more than a good six inches of it at Pembina, and eight leagues farther up [the river] almost none at all. The ice on the river began to take on November 13; we have not yet had any very cold spells.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,
SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JANUARY 5, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pembina, le 5 janvier 1819.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Privé comme je le suis cette année du plaisir de vous demander en personne votre sainte bénédiction, je me hate de vous la demander au moins par écrit; aussi j'espère que votre Grandeur voudra bien me l'accorder dans toute son étendue, et qu'elle voudra bien en même tems recevoir mes plus profonds respects. Fasse le ciel que je puisse dans quatre ans rendre à votre Grandeur ces devoirs en personne!

J'hiverne à Pembina; j'y ai beaucoup plus de monde que Mr le Grand Vicaire en a à la Fourche, les gens se rendant tous ici à cause de la proximité des animaux. J'ai fait le jour de Noel une assemblée de tous les gens libres et chasseurs qui sont décidés de s'établir à Pembina.

Je leur ai proposé de bâtir une chapelle de 60 pieds sur 30, et un presbytère de 40 pieds sur 27. Je pensois d'abord leur faire équarrir et charrier le bois, mais pendant l'assemblée voyant qu'il seroit peut-être difficile d'avoir le bois également équarri, vû que plusieurs ne le savent faire et qu'ils préfèrent payer pour le faire équarrir, étant sûrs de gagner beaucoup plus à la chasse, je leur proposai de faire équarrir, tailler et de lever le tout moi-même et de mettre le presbytère logeable et capable de servir de chapelle pour l'hyver prochain, la chapelle ne devant être que levée pour cette année; mais que pour cela il falloit qu'ils fissent entre eux une cotisation. Tous se montrèrent aussitôt aussi généreux en cela qu'ils s'étoient montrés l'automne dernier pour réparer la chapelle où je fais aujourd'hui l'office. Je crois que cette souscription montera à près de 350 louis; déjà elle est montée à 1229 piastres, et cela à guère plus de 40 pères de famille, tandis qu'à la Fourche les habitants ont à peine fourni 7 pièces. Le grand secret est que ceux-ci étoient sûrs d'avoir un prêtre, et que les miens le font pour s'assurer d'en avoir un. Mr Provencher paroît ne se prêter à la mission de Pembina qu'avec scrupule; il dit qu'il craint de ne pas entrer dans les vues des souscripteurs qui ont, dit-il, souscrit pour l'établissement de la Riv: Rouge. Je suis presque persuadé que le plus grand nombre a souscrit pour les missions de la Riv: Rouge et même pour les missions en général au moins des parties circonvoisines; c'est d'ailleurs ce que j'ai cru voir dans Québec; d'un autre côté la mission de Pembina sera bien vite, j'espère, un des meilleurs morceaux de l'établissement de la Riv: Rouge. Je prierois Votre Grandeur de donner là-dessus votre décision avec qui nous puissions agir sans crainte.

J'ai beaucoup plus d'occupation que je n'aurois pensé; j'ai près de 300 personnes à Pembina, il faut prêcher les dimanches et fêtes; ça m'a pas mal forcé surtout à Noel. J'ai baptisé à Pembina 52 personnes sur lesquelles il y en a six que j'ai mariées tout de suite, une autre adulte que j'ai baptisée par maladie, et le reste étoit des enfants. J'en aurois bien d'autres à baptiser et marier, mais ils sont tous pour le moment éloignés et extrêmement occupés à la chasse, les animaux s'étant tenus jusqu'à présent plus loin qu'à l'ordinaire. Et puis l'ivrognerie de quelques maris canadiens m'empêche de baptiser et de marier plusieurs femmes qui sont assez instruites, ne pouvant les marier avec des hommes qui sont aussi indignes du mariage.

Mr Edge fait l'école à Pembina, il a eu déjà près de 60 écoliers et en auroit près de 80 si la vache venoit plus proche. Les petits Bois-brulés sont en général extrêmement intelligents; il s'en trouve parmi eux qui

sont très susceptibles d'instruction; on commence déjà à sentir l'avantage qu'il y auroit d'avoir ici des Soeurs ou Religieuses; Mr Edge se donne beaucoup de peine pour l'instruction de tous.

Le ministère est extrêmement difficile dans ces contrées éloignées, tant à cause de la nouveauté des cas qu'à cause de la difficulté qu'il y a de consulter, surtout par rapport à la restitution; je n'aurai pas trop d'une seconde lettre pour les proposer. Cet été Mr Provencher eut besoin de provisions pour les hommes; j'en avertis les chasseurs de Pembina qui me chargèrent aussitôt une berge. A la vérité ces chasseurs sont pour le moment les plus riches de la colonie; ils gagnent considérablement à chasser la vache qu'ils vendent 6 ou plus piastres au Fort, 4 sur l'échafaud et 3 sur le champ. Les personnes que j'ai baptisées et mariées montrent par leur conduite qu'elles étoient vraiment bien disposées.

Je suis, Monseigneur, de Votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Mgr J. O. Plessis, Evêque de Québec, / à Québec.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, January 5, 1819.

MY LORD, Deprived as I am this year of the pleasure of asking in person your holy benediction, I am eager at least to ask you for it in writing; therefore I hope that Your Lordship will be good enough to grant it to me in all its power, and that you will be kind enough to accept at the same time my profoundest regards. Please Heaven that in four years I may pay these respects to Your Lordship in person!

I am wintering at Pembina; I have many more people here than the Vicar-General has at The Forks; the people all come here because the buffaloes are near. On Christmas Day I held a meeting of all the freemen and hunters who have decided to settle at Pembina. I proposed to them the building of a chapel sixty feet by thirty and a presbytery forty by twenty-seven. At first I intended to have them chop and haul the wood. During the meeting, however, I realized that very likely it would be difficult to have the wood cut uniformly, many not knowing the proper method. I also saw that they prefer to pay for having it done, since they are certain to earn much more on the hunt. Accordingly I offered to have it all cut and trimmed and to build the whole thing myself, also to make the presbytery habitable and fit to serve as a chapel for next winter, since only the framework of the

chapel is to be put up this year; but I told them that for this plan they would have to share a part of the expense. Immediately they all showed themselves to be as generous in this instance as they were last fall in repairing the chapel where I am now holding services. I think that this subscription will come to nearly £350; already it amounts to \$1,229, and that from scarcely forty men (heads of families), while at The Forks the settlers furnished hardly seven coins. The secret of the matter is that the latter were sure of having a priest, and mine are doing it in order that they may be assured of having one. Mr. Provencher seems to hesitate somewhat over the mission at Pembina; he says he fears it may not be in accordance with the intentions of those who have given their donations for the Red River settlement. I am quite sure that most of them have subscribed for the missions of the Red River district and even for missions in general, at least in the surrounding territory; it is, furthermore, what I thought I understood in Quebec; I hope, on the other hand, that the mission of Pembina will soon be one of the finest in all the Red River district. I pray Your Lordship to be good enough to give your decision concerning this matter, so that we may act without fear.

I am much busier than I thought I should be; I have nearly three hundred people at Pembina, to whom I preach on Sundays and holy days; this was a considerable strain, especially during the Christmas season. I have baptized fifty-two persons at Pembina, six of whom I married immediately afterward; there was one other adult whom I baptized on account of sickness, and the rest were children. There would be many more to baptize and marry, but they are all away just now, and extremely busy with the hunt, because the animals have remained farther away than usual. Then, too, the drunkenness of some of the Canadian husbands keeps me from baptizing and marrying several women who have received quite a good deal of instruction; for I cannot marry them to men who are so unworthy of marriage.

Mr. Edge maintains the school at Pembina; he has already had sixty pupils, and would have nearly eighty if the buffaloes would come nearer. The little *bois brûlés* are usually extremely intelligent; some of them are proving to be very apt pupils; need is already felt here of having some sisters, or nuns; Mr. Edge is putting himself to a great deal of trouble for the instruction of everyone.

The ministry is very difficult in these distant lands, both because of the novelty of the cases and the difficulty of consulting anyone concerning their disposition, especially with regard to restitution; it would

take another letter to tell you of them. This summer Mr. Provencher was in need of provisions for the men; I informed the hunters of Pembina, who immediately loaded a boat for me. To tell the truth, these hunters are at the present time the richest ones of the colony; they earn a considerable amount hunting the buffalo, which they sell for six or more dollars at the fort, for four on the drying scaffold, and for three in the field. The people whom I have baptized and married show by their conduct that they are serious.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,
SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO PROVENCHER, JANUARY 6, 1819
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 9:469-474]

Québec, 6 janvier 1819.

A Monsieur Provencher, / Vic. Général à la Rivière Rouge.

MONSIEUR, / Lady Selkirk (dont le mari est parti pour l'Europe au mois d'octobre, apparemment dans l'intention de revenir) ayant eu l'attention de m'informer que le 10 du courant il parloit un courier pour le Fort Douglass, je ne veux pas manquer cette occasion de répondre à vos dernières lettres, au nombre de cinq.

Bénissez Dieu, mes chers enfans, des consolations qu'il vous donne par l'abondance des baptêmes que vous avez déjà administrés. Les adultes suivront les enfans, et plus vous vous serez donné de peine à les instruire et préparer, plus les fruits de ces travaux vous paroîtront précieux. Pour amener les noirs à Dieu, il faut commencer par la réforme des blancs. St Frs Xavier étoit persuadé qu'il ne gagneroit rien sur les Indiens si les Portugais établis aux Indes continuoient à leur donner des exemples de dépravation.

Je croyois apprendre par vos premières lettres que Mr Edge avoit assemblé les enfans de la colonie et ouvert son école. Cet objet est d'une nécessité plus grande pour la mission que l'enseignement du catéchisme auquel il peut vaquer dans ses intervalles, et vous en tout temps. Il faut songer à vous former des sujets et vous savez combien il y a de chemin à faire depuis l'alphabet jusqu'à la théologie.

Vous désirez savoir l'état de vos finances. Vous ne devez rien au bureau de la Compagnie à Montréal, et vos hommes sont payés pour un an à dater de votre départ ou de leur engagement. Mr Desrivières a en main ce qu'il vous a écrit, environ £350. A Québec vous avez environ £300 auxquels il faudra ajouter ce que Mr Dionne me trans-

mettra. Dans sa lettre ci-jointe il vous informe apparemment de la difficulté qu'il éprouve à retirer ce qui vous est dû. Cependant il vient de m'envoyer une traite de £100, et de la manière dont il s'exprime je serois porté à croire qu'il vous est encore dû deux fois autant. Sur le tout je me permettrai de prendre ce qu'il faut pour un quartier de la dernière pension de Sauvé, restée en arrière, puis votre contribution à la caisse ecclésiastique pour les deux dernières années, enfin votre contribution et celle de Mr Dumoulin de l'année courante que j'évaluerai à une bagatelle pour pouvoir dire que vous avez payé. Le reste sera mis à la masse et j'espère que vous ne vous trouverez pas fort au-dessous de ce que vous avez payé à Mr Julien Perrault auquel j'ai remis £171 en addition aux £283 que vous lui aviez donné à Montréal, le tout formant £454. Enfin vous êtes quitte avec lui; soyez tranquille sur cet article.

Vous demandez cinq hommes: l'un pour tenir votre maison, deux charpentiers et menuisiers et deux cultivateurs qui sachent aussi manier la hache. Ajoutez qu'il faut que tous ces hommes soient aussi capables de canoter. Enfin vous désireriez avec raison qu'ils fussent des gens de probité et d'assez de conscience pour faire leur besogne sans avoir besoin d'être surveillés. De tels hommes ne sont pas aisés à trouver, à moins de les chercher dans le district de Québec. J'en traiterai avec Mr Dionne qui doit être en ville au mois prochain. Des outils, du clou à bardeaux, des marchandises pour servir de monnaie, des toiles de sas, sont des articles qu'il sera moins difficile de vous procurer. Seulement il y aura à craindre que la Compagnie ne s' imagine que vous faites monter des marchandises pour commercer à son préjudice. Au reste, on peut mettre les marchandises dans des caisses dont la forme ne permettroit pas de soupçonner ce qu'elles enferment. Mais, mon cher abbé, croyez-vous qu'avec des occupations de tant d'autres genres, et à la distance où je suis de Montréal, il me soit possible de me charger de ces détails? *Non est æquum nos derelinquere verbum Dei et ministrare mensis.*⁸⁹ Je rejetterai nécessairement tout cet embarras sur quelque maladroit qui vous servira tout de travers. Tel est le sort de ceux qui sont éloignés. Quant à procurer un passage à ces hommes (si on les trouve) sur les canots de la compagnie, je présume que la chose ne souffrira aucune difficulté.

On peut remplacer un bénitier par un bassin, l'aspersoir par une branche, et se passer d'encensoir tant qu'on n'a pas d'encensoir. Puisque la Comtesse de Selkirk vous a promis ces articles, il faut at-

⁸⁹ Acts, 9:2.

tendre et ménager l'argent. Informé comme vous l'êtes de ce qu'il reste de numéraire à Montréal de la souscription faite en faveur de la mission, bornez-vous à spéculer là-dessus pour cette année, et réservez tout ce qui se trouve ou se trouvera à Québec pour l'année prochaine, 1820, où il faudra nécessairement dépenser davantage tant pour le voyage du nouveau missionnaire qui sera envoyé à la Riv: Rouge que pour votre descente et celle de Mr Edge, à moins qu'il ne désire y rester sans préjudice de l'ecclésiastique qui sera adjoint à l'autre prêtre. S'il faut que vous hiverniez ici, où vous ne pourrez vous rendre qu'après qu'un autre compagnon aura joint Mr Dumoulin, ce sera une augmentation de frais à laquelle il faut être préparé. . . .

Je ne vois pas d'apparence que le Gouvernement soit disposé à faire des frais pour la mission. Il vaudroit peut-être mieux qu'il n'y contribuât point: cela nous laissera plus de liberté et d'indépendance. Sir John Sherbrooke n'est plus avec nous. Il a été remplacé au mois d'Aout par le Duc de Richmond, ci-devant Lord Lieutenant d'Irlande, qui avec beaucoup de bonté n'est pas à beaucoup près aussi ardent que son prédécesseur. Lord Selkirk a proposé d'intéresser les riches catholiques d'Angleterre à cette bonne oeuvre. Je ne l'y ai pas encouragé, ignorant alors qu'il dût faire son voyage qui a surpris beaucoup de monde. On le croyoit allé dans le Haut Canada, et il étoit à New York rendu pour s'embarquer.

Je conçois que la dispersion des Sauteurs doit mettre obstacle à leur instruction. N'importe, il faut sauter comme eux, les prendre au vol et ne jamais vous séparer d'aucun d'eux sans leur avoir fait entendre quelques paroles d'édification. Je compte beaucoup sur l'intelligence des jeunes Bois-Brulés, non seulement pour le catéchisme, mais pour une instruction ultérieure. Ceux qui appartiennent à des associés du Nord Ouest ou à d'autres pères aisés, joueront bientôt un rôle dans votre école, pourvu qu'elle soit tenue sur un pied respectable, surtout si leurs mères revenues aux bonnes moeurs embrassent la religion chrétienne. La paix rétablie dans ces contrées doit être favorable à l'éducation.

Que le Fort Douglass ne soit pas un endroit commerçant, ce n'est pas un inconvénient pour le point central de la mission. Vos engagés et vos élèves n'en vacqueront qu'avec plus d'aisance et moins de distraction à leurs devoirs respectifs. . . .

Une chapelle à la Rivière Pimbina ne peut que servir à la propagation de la foi, et je suis bien aise que Mr Dumoulin y soit allé. J'espère qu'il se transportera au lac de la pluie au passage des hivernans, afin

de réparer le déplaisir que vous avez eu, l'été dernier, de ne les y pas rencontrer. Il ne faut pas que vous entrepreniez le voyage de la Baie d'Hudson s'il doit être sans fruit. Beaucoup mieux vaudroit-il que vous allassiez au fond du lac Winipic dans le temps où les voyageurs s'y réunissent. Je ne doute pas de l'avantage qu'ils y retireront de votre présence, non plus que des informations exactes que vous y pourrez prendre sur les besoins de l'intérieur du pays et sur les moyens d'y pourvoir. Je tâcherai de vous envoyer au printemps un ou deux ornements simples qui puissent se ployer sans inconvénient. Gardez vos plus beaux pour l'église de St Boniface et pour les autres chapelles qu'il faudra desservir à poste fixe. Il paroît que MM. Tabeau et Crevier feront encore cette année la mission du Fort William dont ils sont revenus avec de grandes espérances de recueillir des fruits par la suite. . . .

Le public ne prend plus le même intérêt qu'il montrait d'abord à votre mission. Les affections du peuple n'ont qu'un temps.

Pour moi je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, January 6, 1819.

Mr. Provencher, Vicar-General at Red River.

SIR, Lady Selkirk, whose husband left for Europe in October, apparently intending to return, has had the kindness to inform me of the express that is to leave for Fort Douglas on the tenth of this month. I do not want to miss this opportunity to reply to your last letters, five in number.

Thank God, my dear children, for the reward He has given you in the great number of baptisms that you have already administered. The adults will follow the children, and the more trouble you have in teaching and preparing them, the more precious the fruits of those labors will appear to you. To lead the black ones to God we must begin by reforming the white ones. St. Francis Xavier was convinced that he would never prevail on the East Indians if the Portuguese established there continued to offer such examples of depravity.

I believe I understand from your first letters that Mr. Edge has assembled the children of the colony and opened a school. This object is more to be sought for the mission than the teaching of the catechism. He can attend to that in odd moments and you, all the time. We must be thinking of producing candidates [for the priest-

hood] and you know how long the road is from the alphabet to the study of theology.

You ask to be told the state of your finances. You owe nothing to the company's office in Montreal, and your men are paid for a year from the date of their departure, or from their engagements. Mr. Desrivières has on hand the amount he has written you about, some £350. At Quebec you have about £300, to which must be added what Mr. Dionne will send me. In his letter, which I enclose, he tells you apparently of the trouble he is having in collecting what is owing you. Nevertheless, he has just sent me a draft for £100 and from his mode of expression I am led to believe that there is still due you twice as much. From the total I am taking the liberty of subtracting a quarter's board bill for Sauvez, which was in arrears, next your contribution to the insurance fund for the last two years, and finally, your contribution and Mr. Dumoulin's for the current year, which I am estimating at a bagatelle in order to be able to say that you have paid. The remainder will be kept in a lump and I hope you will not find yourself owing much above what you paid Mr. Julien Perrault, to whom I have remitted £171 in addition to the £283 that you gave him at Montreal. The whole amounts to £454. At last you are out of debt to him; be at rest on that score.

You ask for five men: one to keep house for you, two carpenters and joiners, and two farmers who also can manage the ax. Add also that all these men must be able to serve in a canoe. Then you would like, reasonably enough, that they should be upright men with enough conscience to do their work without being watched. Such men are not easily found, at least in the district of Quebec. I will take up the matter with Mr. Dionne, who is to be in the city next month. Tools, shingle nails, materials to use in bartering, and bolting cloths are articles that it will be less difficult to secure. Only we shall have to watch out lest the company think we are taking up merchandise in order to trade and thus injure them. However, we can put the stuff into boxes whose shape will not arouse suspicion concerning their contents. But, my dear Abbé, do you think that, busy as I am with matters of other sorts and at such a distance from Montreal, it will be possible to take charge of all these details? *Non est æquum nos derelinquere verbum Dei et ministrare mensis.* [It is not fit that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.]⁸⁹ I shall have to put all this bother on some blunderer, who will do everything wrong. That is the fate of those at a distance. As for securing a passage for these men (if they

can be found) in the company's canoes, I presume that will not be difficult.

An aspersorium can be replaced by a basin and an aspergillum by a branch, and one can get along without a censer if one does not have a censer. Since Lady Selkirk has promised you these articles, it will be better to wait and save our money. Informed as you are of what remains at Montreal in hard money of the subscription made for the benefit of the mission, confine yourself to speculating with that for this year, and keep all that there is or may be at Quebec for next year, 1820. Then it will be absolutely necessary to spend more both on account of the new missionary who is to be sent to the Red River and to provide for your return and Mr. Edge's, unless he prefers to remain there without detriment to the seminarian who will go out with the other priest. If you have to spend the winter here, where you can arrive only after another companion has joined Mr. Dumoulin, there will be another expense for which we must be prepared. . . .

I do not see any sign that the government will be disposed to undertake any of the mission's expenses. It would be better, perhaps, if it should not be a contributor. We shall have thus more liberty and independence. Sir John Sherbrooke is no longer here. He was replaced in August by the Duke of Richmond, formerly lord lieutenant of Ireland, who, with much good will, is not nearly as much interested as his predecessor. Lord Selkirk proposed to interest the rich Catholics of England in this good work. I did not encourage him, being unaware at that time that he was to make the journey that has surprised everyone. He was believed to be on his way to Upper Canada but he was en route to New York to embark.

I can see how the nomad life of the Chippewa [*literally, "the leapers"*] sets up obstacles to their instruction. Never mind, you will have to *leap* as they do, taking them on the bound and never abandoning one of them without making them understand a few words of edification. I am banking heavily on the intelligence of the little *bois brûlés*, not only for the catechism but also for later teaching. Those who belong to partners of the North West Company or to other wealthy fathers will soon play a part in your school—provided it is established on a respectable footing—especially if their mothers be reclaimed and embrace the Christian religion. The re-establishment of peace in those countries ought to be favorable to education.

That Fort Douglas is not a trading center is not an objection to its being the center of the mission. Your *engagés* and your pupils will

attend to their respective duties with all the more contentment and less distraction. . . .

A chapel at Pembina River cannot fail to help in the propagation of the Faith and I am very glad that Mr. Dumoulin has gone there. I hope that he will betake himself to Rainy Lake when the winterers pass, in order to remove the bad impression caused by your being unable to meet them there last summer. There is no need of your undertaking the trip to Hudson Bay if it is to be without results. It would be much better for you to go to the end of Lake Winnipeg at the time when the *voyageurs* gather there. I have no doubt of the profit they would find in your presence, any more than I have of your being able to gather exact information on the needs of the interior of the country and the methods for filling them. I will endeavor to send you in the spring one or two simple vestments, which can be folded without injury. Treasure the most beautiful vestments that you have for the church at St. Boniface and for the other chapels that you will serve at fixed points. It seems that Messrs. Tabeau and Crevier will make another missionary voyage this year to Fort William, whence they have returned with great hopes of eventually gathering much fruit. . . .

The public no longer takes the same interest that they showed at first in your mission. The affections of the populace are short lived.

As for me, I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

LADY SELKIRK TO [BISHOP PLESSIS], JANUARY 12, 1819

[Quebec Archbishopial Archives. ALS]

Montreal, 12 janvier 1819.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ J'ai l'honneur d'accuser la réception de la lettre de Votre Seigneurie accompagnée d'un paquet pour la Rivière Rouge. Le courier doit partir jeudi et on aura bien soin de toutes les lettres.

Je n'ai pas le moindre doute qu'une lettre de Votre Seigneurie ne trouve Lord Selkirk à Londres. Si vous voulez bien prendre la peine de lui écrire en duplicata, j'aurai soin d'envoyer l'un par New York, et l'autre pourroit être envoyée par la malle anglaise de Québec.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, Monseigneur, votre très humble servte

Adresse du Lord Selkirk

J. SELKIRK.

The Earl of Selkirk/ care of A. Colville, Esq.⁹⁰/ 35 Leadenhall Street/ LONDON.

⁹⁰ Andrew Wedderburn-Colville was Selkirk's brother-in-law. He was frequently called Wedderburn. Martin, *Selkirk's Work in Canada*, 36 n., 37 n., 40.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, January 12, 1819.

MY LORD, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Your Lordship's letter, accompanied by a parcel for Red River. The express is to leave Thursday and great care will be taken of all the letters.

I have not the least doubt that a letter from Your Lordship will reach Lord Selkirk in London. If you wish to take the trouble to write him in duplicate, I will undertake to send one by New York. The other can be sent by the English mail from Quebec.

I have the honor to be, My Lord, your very humble servant,

J. SELKIRK.

Lord Selkirk's address: The Earl of Selkirk, care of A. Colville, Esq.,⁹⁰ 35 Leadenhall Street, London.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JANUARY 12, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pembina, le 12 janvier 1819.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ La rareté des occasions fera, j'espère, que Votre Grandeur me pardonnera le grand nombre de lettres que j'ai pris la liberté de lui écrire. Outre qu'il m'est survenu quelques cas, j'ai aussi quelques demandes à faire à Votre Grandeur pour des choses qui me paroissent essentielles ici, d'abord pour les cas; les voici:

1°. Est-il permis à un missionnaire qui veut savoir tout ce qui se passe dans sa mission, de demander à un pénitent le nom du complice de son crime pour tâcher d'y remédier?

2°. Deux personnes ont été mariées légitimement; l'épouse déclare à son confesseur qu'elle est impuissante; comment faut-il s'y prendre pour s'en assurer, et que faut-il faire ensuite?

3°. Doit-on se faire beaucoup de scrupule de dire la messe en souliers de chevreuil dans ce pays où l'on ne porte que de ceux-là? Jusqu'à présent, j'en ai changé après la messe, mais il faut aussi changer de bas, &c.

J'aurpis une dispense de consanguinité au premier degré ex copula illicita à demander à Votre Grandeur; mais je crois, sans être absolument certain, que les deux personnes ne se marieront point. Votre Grandeur pourra me la donner si elle le juge à propos.

Voici les effets qui nous seroient très utiles pour ce printemps. Je vais demander pour Pembina d'abord: un encensoir, un ostensoire, des petites couvertures de gradins, des images, des chapelets, des petites croix, des catéchismes, beaucoup d'Abécés, une cloche de 15 à 18 livres,

quelques livres de mathématiques et de physique, un devant d'autel, un petit ornement de voyage, quelques sermonaires, car je n'ai que Chevassu, quelques livres de controverse anglois et françois, un bénitier, des livres de chant, j'ai déjà un petit Bois-brulé qui connoit ses notes. Mr Provencher a accordé pour titulaire St François Xavier; je prie votre Grandeur de vouloir confirmer cette nomination.

Mr le Grand Vicaire est ici; il devoit aller à la Rivière Quappelle et à la Rivière La Sourie, mais il est probable que je vais y aller, car il a été un peu fatigué de son voyage de la Fourche ici, qui n'est rien en comparaison de celui-là. Si j'y vais, Mr Provencher viendra ici pendant ce tems là.

Les sauvages sont superstitieux ici comme partout ailleurs; en voici un exemple assez curieux: Un sauvage ayant sçu que j'avois un peu de farine, que je conserve comme mes yeux pour le carême, vint m'en demander pour sa petite fille qui étoit, me dit-il, bien malade, je lui en fis donner avec promesse de venir me chercher de jour ou de nuit si sa petite fille devenoit dangereusement malade; comme je finissois, on entendit tirer plusieurs coups de fusils; mon sauvage partit aussitôt, et me dit en partant que sa petite fille étoit bien rempirée. Comme je ne me fiois pas trop à lui, je me rendis à la cabane avec un interprète; ils étoient précisément tous en médecine; en arrivant on me fit une place dans le cercle, je m'y plaçai pour voir la fin. L'enfant étoit sans connoissance. Il y avoit dans le rond deux principaux acteurs: l'un étoit un espèce d'Apothicaire, et l'autre Docteur. Le premier ayant devant lui un plat dans lequel il y avoit quelques tuyaux de plumes et de l'eau se chauffoit un peu la main au feu, puis saisissoit une de ces plumes et l'avaloit avec effort. Quand il les avoit toutes avalées, il passoit le plat au Docteur, qui en buvoit une partie, et puis prenant le reste dans sa bouche la souffloit avec une force terrible sur toutes les parties de cette pauvre enfant, et lui ôtoit toujours quelque chose de ses habits; tout ceci se fesoit au son de tous les instruments de médecine: des chichequeois [*jishigwan*], des wabannaux, des tambours, des espèces de marionnettes &c., et ils agissoient avec tant d'action qu'ils étoient tout couverts de sueurs. Indigné de leur folie, je me levai pour m'en retourner, mais ils me prièrent de rester encore un peu, ce que je leur refusai froidement; probablement que c'étoit pour me permettre de faire, comme ils disent, ma médecine; mais j'attends qu'ils viennent me demander afin de leur faire promettre de ne plus lui faire de médecines. Deux jours après ils ont fait une grande *su[e]rie* et il a été décidé que l'enfant ne mourroit pas; cette surie est encore plus absurde que la médecine. Si votre Grandeur le désire, je lui en ferai le détail.

Je suis, Monseigneur, de Votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Mgr J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec, à Québec.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, January 12, 1819.

MY LORD, Because opportunities for sending letters are so rare, I hope Your Lordship will pardon the large number of letters that I have taken the liberty of writing to you. Besides a few cases that have come to my attention, I have some requests to ask Your Lordship concerning matters that seem to me to be of great importance here. First the cases; here they are:

1. Is it permissible for a missionary who wishes to know about everything that takes place at his mission to demand that a penitent name his accomplice in crime in order to attempt to remedy it?

2. Two persons have been legitimately married; the wife declares to her confessor that she is impotent; how can he verify her claim, and what should then be done?

3. Is it necessary to be very particular about saying Mass in mocasins out here where nothing else is worn? So far I have changed after Mass, but it is also necessary to change stockings, etc.

I would have a dispensation for consanguinity in the first degree *ex copula illicita* to ask of Your Lordship; but, although I am not absolutely certain of it, I believe that the two individuals will not marry each other. Your Lordship can give it to me, nevertheless, if he sees fit.

The following are the things that would be particularly useful to us this spring. I am going to ask on behalf of Pembina first: a censer, a monstrance, some small altar-ledge cloths, some images, some rosaries, some small crosses, some catechisms, a great many primers, a bell of fifteen to eighteen pounds, some mathematics and physics textbooks, a frontal, a small traveling outfit of robes, a few books of sermons, for I have only Chevassu, some books of theological disputation, both English and French, a holy-water basin, and some chant books; I already have a little *bois brûlé* who can read his notes. Mr. Provencher has given his permission for the chapel to be consecrated to St. Francis Xavier; I beg Your Lordship to be good enough to confirm this decision.

The Vicar-General is here; he had intended going to Qu'Appelle and Souris rivers, but I shall probably go in his stead because he has been somewhat worn out by the journey from The Forks to this place,

a trip that is nothing compared to the other. If I go, Mr. Provencher will come here during my absence.

The Indians are superstitious here as they are everywhere else. Here is a rather curious example: an Indian, knowing I had a little flour that I was treasuring dearly for Lent, came to beg me for some of it for his little girl, who, so he told me, was very ill. I finally gave him some, at the same time exacting from him a promise to come to me any time of the day or night in case his child's condition became critical; as I finished speaking, several gunshots were fired; my Indian departed immediately, and told me as he left that his little girl was much worse. Since I did not have much confidence in him, I went to his lodge, accompanied by an interpreter; they were employing their medicine rites; they made room for me in the circle when I arrived; I took my place there to see the end of it all. The child was unconscious. There were two principal actors in the center; one was a sort of apothecary and the other, a doctor. The first one, having before him a plate in which there were some quills and water, was warming his hand a little by the fire; then he seized one of these quills and swallowed it with considerable difficulty. When he had swallowed every one of them he handed the plate to the doctor, who drank a part, and then, taking the remaining liquid in his mouth, he blew it with terrible force over every part of this poor child, each time stripping her of another part of her clothing; all this was done to the accompaniment of every sort of instrument of the medicine: gourd bottles, rattles, drums, a kind of puppet, etc., and they were so strenuous in their actions that they were all covered with sweat. Outraged at their folly, I arose to leave, but they begged me to stay a little while longer. I coldly refused to do so. Probably this invitation was given in order to permit me to "make my medicine," as they say; but I am waiting for them to come to ask me in order that I may secure a promise from them not to make any more medicine. Two days afterward they had a big sweating rite and it was determined that the child would not die; this performance is even more absurd than the medicine. If Your Lordship so desires, I will give you a detailed account of it.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,
SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

PROVENCHER TO [BISHOP PLESSIS], JANUARY 15, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁹¹

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, The agents of the colony of His Lordship, the Earl of Selkirk, are sending an express to Montreal one of these days; it is too precious an opportunity not to profit by it to give Your Lordship news of our present situation. When one has been seven or eight months without communication with one's country, one is very glad when an opportunity presents itself to do so. Your Lordship will have received, rather late in the fall, our last letters, in which we informed you of all that we thought would be of interest to you. Since that time we have had little to do with the posts distant from our own, so that I have little to say about the country unless I repeat myself. In the winter season one sees few people other than the colonists, who are almost always out on the prairies in search of a living; they lay in a store of dried meat, in order to be able to live on the land in the summertime. The fine weather, which is milder than we ought to expect at this degree of latitude, is the reason for the remoteness of the buffaloes. Cold and snow would make them seek the streams, which are the only places where there are woods to shelter them. Although they have not been very abundant since last autumn, the meat supply has not been completely lacking, but it has been short at times.

Since I last had the honor of writing you, our work has advanced a little. I have made habitable twenty feet of the large house we have built at St. Boniface; and by dividing this finished part in two, I have a room and a chapel large enough to hold everyone in winter. In the spring I shall lay the floors in the remaining thirty feet, and I shall have a chapel more than sufficient for the summer. In this way I shall not be put to the bother of taking the time necessary to build a chapel of elm. The wood for the work is about squared. It will be entirely of sawed oak and will be eighty feet long. We have much to build next summer; in addition to this chapel we shall have to build one of sixty feet at Pembina River, together with a house of forty feet that must be habitable by next fall. I hope that all this building will have been completed by the time I go down [to Canada] two years hence. We are better satisfied with our men at present than we were last summer; they seem to be disposed to work out their time in a satisfactory manner. Our house, although built with much misery, is,

⁹¹ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 32-36.

nevertheless, the finest in the region. Milord, or rather his farmer, did build one that was two stories high and fifty feet long, but unfortunately it was burned on St. Andrew's Day. It had cost the labor of many men all last winter and summer, but the work had not greatly progressed when it was burned. It is said that the accident was due to negligence, His Lordship's interest not being foremost in the hearts of many of those whom he pays well to watch over them. The machine scarcely runs well because it is not well set up.

Your Lordship can see by my enumeration of the buildings that we have to construct at this time the urgent need we are in to obtain good carpenters, sawyers, etc. I shall await with impatience the two carpenters I requested in my last letters, as well as my two other men. I do not think that they will be sufficient, but I shall re-engage two or three of the best ones I have here, and with those who come from Montreal, if they are skilled and industrious, the work will go along in fine shape. I would ask for more from Montreal, for I think it would be possible to get them cheaper, but they would arrive so late that the good season would be nearly over. It is essential, as I have already remarked to Your Lordship, that you do not forget to send an assortment of carpenter's tools—even two sets, because the men will probably not work together. It is possible to obtain the big tools here; many of them can be transported in pieces and mounted here. These tools, which we shall be buying at a low price, can be sold here after our work is done for twice the amount that they cost. There is one thing that ought not to be omitted by the first light canoe that leaves this spring—that is, some files for the pit saws; there are none to be had here, and although we are much nearer the sea than to Montreal, I find that we can get them a month or two sooner from Montreal than from the sea. There is a great deal of wood to be sawed, and I see that we are going to be forced to stop the work for lack of files. If you send a gross of them we shall have enough for all our building. I did ask for a cook, but I think we can do without one, so do not send any.

To obtain food for ourselves and our men it is necessary to have the wherewithal to pay; goods and merchandise are the medium of exchange in this country. The things that are most in demand are cloth, tobacco, calico, etc. If you could send us three or four bales of well-assorted merchandise, we should be able to pay for a great many things here. Cloth at three or four dollars is what we need; tobacco is sold here to the freemen at two dollars a pound. One gets good money for a roll of tobacco, cloth, calico, handkerchiefs, thread; these

are the things that are almost always needed. All the goods that come from the sea are gone within two weeks, and the rest of the year there is nothing left with which to pay.

Mr. Dumoulin brings to Your Lordship's attention several questions of morals that I shall not repeat to you.

If Your Lordship leaves in the spring for London, and from there for Rome, it will perhaps not be useless to explain to the Holy See the advantages of being able to marry Protestants with Catholics for the sake of retarding the introduction of Protestant ministers into the region. The Scotch who are here often live together in concubinage that is often incestuous, because they are, it is said, all of the same family, and they marry among themselves without ministers. The faculty of dispensing to the second degree of legitimate kinship and to the first of illegitimate kinship will be necessary for us, the one for the sake of legitimately marrying people who have been living together for a long time; the other may become necessary because of the restricted area.

If the chalice that I let Mr. Bédard take is not sold, it would be better not to sell it, as it would serve us here if we had it. It ought to be reserved for the priest who will come up in two years, for each chapel should be complete, and I shall need one to take down [when I go]. I have already asked for some vestments for traveling. You would do us a service if you would send some this spring; ours are most inconvenient.

We are on very good terms with the Hudson's Bay and North West companies. The latter are always ready to render us any service in their power. The people of the Hudson's Bay Company are not as obliging as they, and they also fail to understand the trade of the country as well. These good Scotchmen are always contented, they are never in a hurry, and they are often disgruntled with everyone and everyone with them.⁹² But, however that may be, we do not fail to get assistance from them, if it is only the chance of having them bring up goods in their canoes, which come up without freight from Montreal; that is a great deal. Your Lordship will perceive that this statement ought never to be repeated to anyone.

If we had some nuns for the instruction of the girls, they would already find work to do. The parents here would be more enthusiastic than in Canada, as far as I can now judge; but it would be a mystery [how] to draw on the Convent of the Congregation of Montreal for

⁹² The original French reads: *Ces brave Ecossais sont toujours contents, ils ne sont d'expédition en rien, ils ne sont assez souvent contents de personne et personne n'est content d'eux.*

it. I do not think that it is too early to be thinking of this subject. Doubtless Your Lordship already has some views concerning the matter.

My health remains good; but although I do not feel any change in my condition, I have become considerably thinner. My double chin has melted away, as well as my fat stomach, but I am not sorry for the loss; I shall, in fact, be only the better off.

Mr. Dumoulin is better than he was at Quebec, without, however, having gained weight. Mr. Edge has gained. For myself, indeed, I am not badly off for food. I cannot complain. I attribute my loss rather to the exercise I had in the work of building last autumn; I was so badly equipped with everything. I shall not lack occupation of this sort here for the next two years; if the carpenters I am expecting from Montreal are trustworthy men, I shall be relieved. But it is always necessary to look after and follow the work oneself, or else everything slows up. My lumber camps are to be some thirty leagues apart, a fresh necessity for traveling. Everything comes at once. I shall not find it difficult if only everything I have asked for is sent for the work. I shall get the rest from York, the post nearest us on Hudson Bay, where I expect to go this spring. But the things will hardly come before September, because the boats will be late on account of the ice.

To complete our demands, we shall need a considerable sum of money. I do not know how much money we can count on; we shall have three or four hundred pounds here that will serve as a stopgap. We shall have to strain a little from now on for about two years, but once we are lodged, we shall no longer need men, and we shall find means to live. We are going to do a little sowing this spring, especially some potatoes, which will be a great help in wintering the men, as we shall not be obliged to buy so much meat. Our men are established in a lumber camp near the fort at Pembina, where they are squaring and sawing wood for our buildings; this wood will be sent down by water.

I have, at Pointe du Lac, a brother named Raphael, who has the reputation of being a skilled workman in his trade of cabinetmaker and carpenter. If he is not married since my departure, I think he will consent to do the work for us. Your Lordship could find out from Mr. Joyer, his priest, whether or not he would come to this country. I think he is provided with the tools of his trade; he is an honest lad; and, since he is my brother, I could entrust to him the direction of the lumber camp, and the other men would find it less difficult to take or-

ders from him. Do as you think best with regard to this matter; perhaps you will already have others engaged by the time this letter reaches you.

I think I have said everything. There remains only for me to express to Your Lordship my most sincere wishes for the preservation of your health and the accomplishment of your projects for the good of the Church; and to ask for myself your episcopal benediction.

I am, with profoundest respect, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

PROVENCHER, Vicar-General.

Fort Daer or Pembina, January 15, 1819.

I have named as patron of the mission at Pembina St. Francis Xavier, as Mr. Dumoulin requested. Your Lordship will indicate your approval in this matter if you deem fit. I recall that you once suggested this saint for Rainy Lake, but that will be for some time only a temporary mission, whereas the other is already permanent.

The commercial cloth in this region is by preference red, green, and blue; little black is used. We should like to have a bill of the prime cost in Montreal. Mr. Amiot, at the auctions, might get a good many things cheap.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO TABEAU, JANUARY 17, 1819

[Quebec Archbishopal Archives, Letter Books, 9:482]

Québec, 17 janvier 1819.

A Monsieur Tabeau/ curé à Boucherville.

MONSIEUR,/ Je n'ai nulle répugnance à donner un meilleur traitement à Mr Crevier, non en comptant sur Mr Marchand pour lui faire une plus grande portion de son revenu, mais en l'établissant à Malden dont j'apprends que les habitations catholiques augmentent par des défrichemens nouveaux à l'entrée du Lac Erié. Avec son industrie il y pourroit vivre dans une indépendance qui seroit de son gout, et Mr Marchand resteroit seul chargé de Sandwich et de la Riv. à la Tranche dont la petite population peut se contenter de visites plus rares. Peut-être même pourroit-on mettre cette chrétienté sous la conduite du curé de Malden, y ayant par les terres une communication assez facile, qui est la corde de l'arc formé par l'avancement de Sandwich vers le Nord-Ouest. De manière ou d'autre, la séparation des deux prêtres s'opérera à votre prochain retour du Grand portage.

Je vous autorise dès maintenant à recevoir dans ce poste 2 piastres par mariage la messe comprise, autant par grand'messe, autant pour

sépulture d'adulte, la messe aussi comprise, une piastre pour sépulture d'adulte sans messe, une demie piastre pour messe basse et autant pour sépulture d'enfant. Je consens même que hors de là vous continuiez d'acquitter sur le même pied les messes basses que vous n'auriez pu célébrer pendant la mission, pourvu qu'elles n'excèdent pas le nombre de 50 par chaque prêtre; car enfin il ne faut pas vous mettre hors d'état d'acquitter celles qui vous seroient demandées à votre retour par des fidelles de vos paroisses. Du reste nous sommes bien d'accord à ce que rien ne soit exigé tant que les voyageurs vous assisteront suffisamment et volontairement de leurs offrandes. C'est ce que je laisse à décider à votre conscience, tant pour vous que pour votre compagnon.

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Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, January 17, 1819.

Mr. Tabeau, Curé of Boucherville.

SIR, I have no objection to giving Mr. Crevier a better stipend, not by counting on Mr. Marchand to give him a greater portion of his revenue, but by establishing him at Malden, whose Catholic population is increasing because of the new settlements at the entrance of Lake Erie. With his industry he could make a living there in an independent way that would suit his taste, and Mr. Marchand could remain alone at Sandwich and Thames River, whose small population can be content with more infrequent visits. Perhaps even that little piece of Christendom can be placed under the charge of the curé of Malden, since it has a very good land communication along the span of the arc formed by Sandwich's advance to the northwest. In one way or another the separation of the two priests will have taken place at the time of your next return from Grand Portage.

I authorize you henceforth to receive at that post two dollars for a marriage including the Mass; the same amount for a High Mass; the same for the burial of an adult, including a Mass; a dollar for the burial of an adult without a Mass; half a dollar for a Low Mass; and the same amount for the burial of a child. I consent even that beyond this you put on the same footing the Low Masses that you might have celebrated during the mission, provided that they do not exceed fifty for each priest; for it surely is not necessary to deprive you of those that would have been required of you by the time of your return by the faithful of your parishes. Nevertheless we have agreed that nothing

shall be exacted as long as the *voyageurs* help you sufficiently and voluntarily with their offerings. I leave that to your consciences, yours and your companion's.

I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO SELKIRK, JANUARY 26, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 9:486]

Québec, 26 janvier 1819.

Au très honorable Comte de Selkirk.

MY LORD,/ Les dernières nouvelles de la mission de la Rivière-Rouge, venues vers la fin de l'automne, y annoncent un si grand besoin d'argent que je crois indispensable de recourir dès maintenant à une mesure que votre Seigneurie avoit proposée dans la lettre dont elle m'honora en date du 17 8bre dernier, savoir, de solliciter, en faveur de cet établissement, la générosité des bonnes familles d'Angleterre. Votre Seigneurie étant sur les lieux voudra bien, j'espère, mettre sur pied une souscription à cette fin et en confier la direction à telle personne qui voyant la bonne oeuvre sous son véritable point de vue, celui de propager le royaume de Jésus-Christ parmi des nations barbares, aura en outre assez de crédit pour en inspirer le zèle et le désir d'y contribuer. Cette mission étant toute catholique, je désirerois pour des considérations que votre Seigneurie aura occasion de connaitre en temps et lieu, que la souscription ne circulât que parmi ceux de cette religion.

Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. cath. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, January 26, 1819.

The Very Honorable Earl of Selkirk.

MY LORD, Our last news from the Red River mission, which came about the end of last autumn, announces such a great need of money that I think it necessary to have recourse from now on to a measure that Your Lordship proposed in a letter to me of October 17 of last year, that is, to ask for contributions for it from respectable families in England. Your Lordship, being on the spot, will be good enough, I hope, to start a subscription for that purpose and confide the superintendence of it to a person who, perceiving the true purpose of this good work, the spread of Christ's kingdom among uncivilized peoples,

will, in addition, have the prestige necessary to inspire enthusiasm for it and a desire to contribute to it. This mission being wholly Catholic, I should prefer, from considerations which Your Lordship will have occasion to know at the proper time and place, that the subscription should circulate only among people of that faith.

I am etc.,

† J. O., Catholic Bishop of Quebec.

PROVENCHER TO [BISHOP PLESSIS], JANUARY 31, 1819
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁹³

[*Translation*]

St. Boniface, Red River, January 31, 1819.

MY LORD, A few days ago an express left for Montreal by which I addressed a long letter to Your Lordship. I thought at that time that it would be the only opportunity this winter; but here is another, of which I shall not fail to take advantage. There will be many letters on the way, all of which will arrive in due season and afford some information.

The last letters started only from Red River; these come from Athabaska. It appears that there has been more trouble in that distant region. The bearer of the letters from Athabaska says that Mr. Colin Robertson has been seized by the North West Company and put in prison. It will be fortunate if nothing more happens this winter.⁹⁴

When I wrote last I was at Pembina River, whither I had gone to visit Mr. Dumoulin and, at the same time, to write when he did. I was to leave, immediately on my return, for Souris River and Qu'Appelle River, but snow fell, choking roads already difficult, and, more than that, a bilious attack, brought on by the fatigue of my journey, delayed me several days and made me miss that trip, which is not easy to make in winter. It will be undertaken another time in a better season. A good purge set me right. This is my only indisposition since my arrival.

Since my last letter a marriage has been contracted here about which I am perplexed. A young woman, who came up from Montreal last summer and whose reputation is not of the best, suddenly married a

⁹³ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 37.

⁹⁴ A contemporary description of the strife in the Athabaska department between the two rival companies is given in a letter from Willard F. Wentzel to Roderic Mackenzie, dated April 5, 1819, in Louis R. Masson, *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*, 1:122-124 (Quebec, 1890). See also E. E. Rich, ed., *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book, September 1817 to September 1822, passim* (Champlain Society, *Publications: Hudson's Bay Company Series*, no. 2 — Toronto, 1939).

Swiss Protestant Meuron. Captain Matthey, who is in charge here, spoke to me rather vaguely about it the previous evening. I did not believe the wedding would take place. I did not see the girl. The next day, accompanied by witnesses, the two went to give their mutual consent before this very Captain Matthey. Since the succeeding day the girl has not wished to live with her husband. She is with him at present. It is doubtful whether she will remain. It is but four or five days since the wedding was thus performed. How shall I regard it? I do not recall having seen such cases in Canada. I even do not know how to act as to the decree of the Council of Trent, clandestinity, and the presence of a priest. I do not know whether it [*the decree of the Council of Trent*] is published in Canada. I think so. In that case would it be void? But I could not celebrate the marriage ceremony and there is no Protestant minister here. Is that a sufficient reason? What shall I do with this Catholic girl thus married? What would be necessary to make this marriage canonically valid? How do the laws and courts of Canada regard such marriages? The Conferences of Paris and Angers, treating of marriage, do not satisfy me because they apply their principles to countries in which individual permissions or decisions might be had which are not legal in Canada. While awaiting your decision I shall deny the sacraments to this girl. Please be sure to inform me exactly on this matter, for it is a case which will probably recur often. If we had permission to celebrate such marriages, we should avoid much embarrassment. I begged Your Lordship in my last letter to request this faculty from the Holy See. You will do as you think best in the matter. I believe that this faculty is granted. I am told here that the Scotch clergy have this faculty as well as the bishops of the United States. I am not thoroughly familiar with all that.

There is nothing else; everything is peaceful here.

I am, most respectfully, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

PROVENCHER, Priest, Vicar-General.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, FEBRUARY 5, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pembina, le 5 février 1819.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Un exprès arrivant des Athabaskas et poursuivant jusqu'à Montréal, me procure de nouveau l'honneur d'écrire à Votre Grandeur. Il paroît d'après le rapport de ce courrier qu'il y a encore

beaucoup de trouble dans ces parties lointaines. Pour nous, nous sommes tranquilles autant que possible. Ce qu'il y a de malheureux pour ces endroits ici c'est que la vache se tient bien éloignée, ce qui fait que les gens ne peuvent venir aux instructions et qu'il sera difficile d'y vivre ce printems. Cependant j'espère qu'avec mes neuf chiens je pourrai faire assez de provisions pour que les travaux n'arrêtent pas cet été.

Il y a déjà trois mois que le courrier dont j'ai parlé est parti de son poste, et il a encore à faire le petit trajet de la Riv: Rouge à Montréal, ce qui n'est pas, à la vérité, la moitié de sa route.

Je suis parti précisément le jour du Sacre de votre Grandeur pour aller chez Mr Péronne⁹⁵ afin d'y avertir quelques gens libres que je me propose de marier dans les jours gras; le long de mon chemin je rencontraï un messager qui venoit chercher des forces, disant que les sauvages des environs vouloient piller le dit Mr Péronne, je ne fus pas plus loin, heureusement nous eumes le tems d'y envoyer quelques hommes qui arrêterent tout.

Je marquois à Votre Grandeur dans ma dernière lettre que Mr le Grd Vicairé partoît pour la mission des Rivières à la Sourie et Qu'Appelle; mais son occasion ayant manqué, il y a renoncé.

Je proposerai encore quelques cas à votre Grandeur, si elle veut bien me le permettre:

Doit-on faire difficulté de laisser séparer des ménages qui ne s'accordent pas avant leur légitime mariage, quoiqu'ils aient des enfants? Les gens ici, qui sont mariés illégitimement, attendent que je les avertisse de se marier pour le faire. Puis-je dire à des ivrognes qui commencent à se corriger de mettre leurs bans à l'église, quoique je prévoie qu'ils ne pourront pas être absous par leurs confesseurs?

Je dois marier 8 de mes gens libres dans les jours gras, ce qui me fera neuf baptêmes de grandes personnes à faire. Nous n'avons eu aucune nouvelle de Québec depuis le mois de juin. Je crois que nous n'en aurons jamais la moitié autant de Québec que Votre Grandeur pourra en avoir de la Riv: Rouge. J'attends celles de ce printems avec un empressement que je ne peux exprimer.

Je suis, Monseigneur, de Votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre

Mgr J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec, à Québec.

⁹⁵ This may be Pierre Perronne, who, according to Oliver, ed., *Canadian North-West*, 227, was living in Pembina in 1823.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, February 5, 1819.

MY LORD, An express coming from Athabaska and bound for Montreal permits me once more to have the honor of writing to Your Lordship. It appears, according to reports brought by this express, that there is still a good deal of trouble in those distant regions. As for ourselves, we are as peaceful as can be. The trouble here is that the buffaloes are staying very far away, a circumstance that prevents the people from coming to receive instruction, and that will, furthermore, make it difficult by spring to obtain a livelihood. However, I hope with my nine dogs to be able to lay in sufficient provisions that the work will not have to be discontinued this summer.

The express to which I have referred left its post three months ago, and still has to make the little trip from Red River to Montreal, which is in reality not one half the entire voyage. I left on the very anniversary of Your Lordship's consecration to go to Mr. Péronne's⁹⁵ to inform some freemen that I intend to perform some marriages during Shrovetide; on the way I met a courier who was coming for help, saying that the Indians of the neighborhood wanted to attack the said Mr. Péronne; I did not go any farther; fortunately we had time to send some men there who put a stop to the affair.

I remarked in my last letter to Your Lordship that the Vicar-General was leaving for the missions on the Souris and Qu'Appelle rivers, but having missed his opportunity to go, he has given up his project.

I shall submit some more cases to Your Lordship, if you will permit me to do so:

Ought one to object to allowing couples to separate if they do not get along before their legal marriage, even though there be children? The people here who are illegitimately united are waiting for me to tell them to marry before doing so. May I tell drunkards who are beginning to reform to publish their banns in the church, even though I know that they cannot receive absolution from their confessors?

I am to marry eight of my freemen at Shrovetide, thus having nine adult baptisms to make. We have had no news from Quebec since June. I think that we shall never receive half so much from Quebec as Your Lordship will get from Red River. I am looking forward to this spring's mail with an eagerness impossible for me to express.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

Pembina, 14 février 1819.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Les occasions ont coutume d'être si rares dans ces endroits que je ne puis me résoudre à en laisser passer aucune sans vous donner de nos nouvelles. Mr le Grand Vicaire et moi avons écrit à Votre Grandeur par deux exprès envoyés par les Anglois, et je profite de l'exprès du Nord-ouest pensant qu'il pourra peut-être se rendre plus vite que ceux qui le devanent, quoiqu'ils aient 10 et 20 jours sur lui. Il paroît que les désordres qui ont eu lieu à la Riv: Rouge il y a trois ans se sont presque renouvelés dans les Athabaskas cette année. Il n'y auroit là rien de surprenant, car ce sont les plus coupables de la Riv: Rouge qui sont aujourd'hui à la tête des Forts des Athabaskas.

Je ne marierai que cinq de mes gens libres; je baptiserai leurs femmes dimanche prochain. J'ai assez de peine à les faire consentir à se marier, ils aiment cette liberté qu'ils ont de renvoyer leurs femmes; aussi faut-il avouer que la plus grande partie ont des femmes extrêmement jalouses et qui les tourmentent continuellement. Elles sont accoutumées à cela aussi bien qu'à se faire donner des coups qui leur font perdre quelquefois connoissance. Je crois que tous les désordres des plus grandes villes se trouvoient dans ce petit réduit, et les canadiens surtout y sont si bien livrés qu'il sera très difficile de les en retirer, du moins pour quelques uns. Il ne faut pas parler des Meurons, et de ceux qui sont à la tête de la colonie qui, excepté Mr McDonell, n'ont pas plus de religion que les sauvages qui nous environnent. Je ne sais si Mylord désire attirer les bénédictions de Dieu sur sa colonie. Si c'est le cas, je crains fort que son espérance soit vaine, car il n'est guère probable que Dieu bénisse un pays conduit par des gens qui le reconnoissent à peine. J'ai hâte d'apprendre si la chambre s'est occupée des moyens de rendre les sauvages chrétiens et de les civiliser;⁹⁶ il y a en cela plus de difficultés que je m'imaginerois dans le principe; cependant si on nous en fournissoit les moyens, je ne doute pas qu'avec le secours de Dieu et l'aide de quelques prêtres généreux et zélés on ne pût en venir à bout.

J'ai ici un jeune homme nommé Lagassé à qui votre Grandeur a donné dispense de trois bans de mariage il y a quelques années, et qui ayant mal versé dans ses affaires, a laissé sa femme chez son père, et s'est déterminé à se retirer dans ces endroits ici. Ce jeune homme

⁹⁶ For previous references to government aid for the Red River mission, see *ante*, pp. 104, 141, 182, 185.

ne sachant que faire cet automne, j'ai conseillé à quelques gens-libres de le prendre pour instruire leurs enfants, et il est allé passer l'hiver dans un camp, où il a plus d'écoliers que Mr Edge, et réussit mieux en quelque sorte, de manière qu'il instruira peut-être 50 personnes cet hiver. Il a aux environs de 40 enfants, et presque la moitié sauront tout le petit catéchisme à Pâques. Je suis extrêmement content de cette école; un bon nombre sauront lire ce printemps; et ce qui la rend encore plus précieuse c'est que tous ces enfants n'auroient pu avoir aucune instruction pendant le cours de cet hiver, la vache se tenant toujours beaucoup plus éloignée que les autres années. J'ai fait tendre une raie, je prends quelques poissons, mais il faudra les manger comme nous avons déjà fait, c-à-d. à l'eau, et faire du bouillon la Sauce. Je crois que le carême que je ferai cette année sera bien différent de celui de l'année dernière; mais qu'importe, nous nous portons tous à merveille, c'est le principal; ces choses-là ne m'ont jamais effrayé et ne m'effrayeront jamais.

Je suis, Monseigneur, de Votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis,/ Evêque de Québec, à Québec.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, February 14, 1819.

MY LORD, Opportunities for sending letters are usually so rare out here that I cannot resign myself to letting a single one pass without giving you some news of ourselves. The Vicar-General and I wrote to you by two express canoes sent by the Hudson's Bay Company, and I am now taking advantage of the North West Company's express, thinking that perhaps it will arrive before the others, even though they are ten and twenty days, respectively, ahead of it. It seems that the disturbances which took place at Red River three years ago have been renewed in Athabaska this year. There is nothing surprising in this, for those who were the most culpable at Red River are now in charge of the Athabaska forts.

I shall marry only five of my freemen; I am going to baptize their wives next Sunday. I am having quite a good deal of difficulty in getting them to consent to marriage, because they like this liberty of being able to get rid of their wives; it must be confessed that most of the wives are extremely jealous, and torment them continually. The women are accustomed to such treatment, as well as to being beaten until they are sometimes unconscious. I think that all the vices of the

largest cities can be found in this little retreat, and the Canadians especially are so given to sin that it would be extremely difficult to reform them, at least some of them. It is not necessary to speak of the Meurons and those in charge of the colony, who, with the exception of Mr. Macdonell, have no more religion than the natives of the region. I do not know whether milord desires to obtain God's blessing for his colony or not. If such is the case, I fear very much that his hope is in vain, for it is hardly probable that God would bless a land governed by men who scarcely recognize Him. I am eager to learn whether the Assembly has considered the means of converting and civilizing the Indians; ⁹⁶ in realization this is more difficult than I imagined it in theory; nevertheless, if means are given us, I do not doubt that by the help of God and the aid of a few generous and zealous priests we may succeed.

I have here a young man named Lagassé, to whom Your Lordship granted exemption from three marriage banns a few years ago, and who, having failed in business, has left his wife with her father and has come here determined to make good. Since this young man did not know what to do this fall, I advised some of my freemen to engage him as a teacher for their children; and he has gone to spend the winter in a camp, where he has more pupils than Mr. Edge and is, in a way, more successful; so that he will teach perhaps as many as fifty people this winter. He has about forty children, and nearly half of them will know the short catechism by Easter. I am extremely well pleased with this school; several will know how to read by spring; what makes it even more valuable is the fact that none of these children would otherwise have been able to receive any instruction during the whole winter, since the buffaloes have remained so much farther out this year than usual. I have set a line and am catching a few fish, but we shall be obliged to eat them as we did before, that is to say, boiled, making the sauce out of the juice. I think that the Lent I shall keep this year will be very different from the one last year; but what difference does it make—we are all very well, and that is the main thing! Things of that sort have never daunted me and never will.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

Québec, 11 mars 1819.

A Monsieur Tabeau/ curé de Boucherville.

MONSIEUR,/ J'ai reçu en son temps votre lettre du 27 et du 29 janvier. Elle a eu le sort de beaucoup d'autres même plus anciennes qui encomrent mon bureau, sans que je puisse trouver le moment de répondre. On m'a informé de votre maladie, de votre séjour à l'Hopital, de votre mieux, de la résidence de l'abbé Clément à Boucherville et de votre prochain retour.

Ce qui me détermine à vous écrire aujourd'hui, est l'espérance que vous me ferez savoir dans le plus court délai quel prix il est raisonnable d'allouer pour l'année à des hommes qui seraient envoyés à la Riv. Rouge pour y travailler au service de la mission, l'un comme serviteur dans l'intérieur de la maison, les autres comme ouvriers ou cultivateurs au service des missionnaires. Ces Messrs ne paroissent pas contens de ceux qu'ils ont, trouvent qu'ils manquent du côté de la probité et des moeurs, et qu'ils ont besoin d'être surveillés comme des enfans. Je voudrais faire un marché avec leurs successeurs, au nombre de cinq jolis garçons, tous de la paroisse de Kamouraska, choisis par Mr Dionne l'estimable ami du P. Provencher. On suppose qu'ils monteroient comme milieux dans les canots de la comp. de la Baie d'Hudson qui ferait les frais de leur voyage. Il faut donc savoir encore à combien seroient estimés leurs services depuis Montréal jusques là où les bourgeois cessent d'en avoir besoin.

Autres questions: Quelles dimensions faudrait-il donner à des caisses de marchandises ou autres effets pour les adapter aux portages? Quel est le pois ordinaire dont on charge un seul homme?

Le traité du 20 octobre dernier présente une question encore plus sérieuse, savoir si les terres données à la mission par le *deed* du 19 mai sont au nord ou au sud du 49e degré de latitude. Dans ce dernier cas, elles feraient partie du domaine des Etats-Unis et suivraient en cela le sort de la bonne moitié de la propriété de Lord Selkirk.⁹⁷ J'espère avoir là-dessus des informations justes de Mr Coltman ou de Mylady, les deux personnes qui connaissent mieux les localités.

Reste à savoir si le Comp. de la Baie d'Hudson fera partir des canots au printemps. Je le présume, quoique les affaires de Mylord paraissent

⁹⁷ According to the Convention of 1818 between Great Britain and the United States, the forty-ninth parallel became the northern boundary of the United States between the Lake of the Woods and the Rocky Mountains.

généralement prendre une mauvaise tournure. Le Duc de Richmond n'est pas pour lui, il s'en faut!

Je compte toujours sur vous pour la continuation de votre mission de l'année dernière, et sur Mr Crevier pour vous y accompagner. Les dernières lettres de Mr Marchand n'annoncent rien de pire ni au physique, ni au moral, que ce que vous avez vu en 1816. Le vicaire est peut-être intéressé à exagérer les infirmités du bonhomme. Je leur écrirai bientôt à tous deux et mettrai du beaume dans le sang de Crevier en lui apprenant qu'à son retour du Fort Williams il sera curé de Malden et de la Riv. à la Tranche. Il serait fâcheux de priver cette partie du diocèse de ses services. Graduellement il pourra succéder à Mr Marchand qui restera chargé de la seule paroisse de Sandwich.

Mr M'Gilvray n'avait fait aucune réponse à la lettre que je lui écrivis l'automne dernière à votre demande. L'ayant rencontré cet hiver à Québec où il ne m'en parlait pas davantage, je l'ai mis à diverses reprises sur le chapitre de la mission du Fort William, sans avoir pu discerner s'il étoit content ou fâché qu'elle se fit. Apparemment il y a des membres de la comp. du N. O. qui se prononcent là-dessus d'une manière plus satisfaisante.

Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, March 11, 1819.

Mr. Tabeau, Curé of Boucherville.

SIR, I received your letter of January 27 and 29 in due time. It suffered the fate of many other even older letters that clutter up my desk without my being able to find time for replying to them. I have been told of your sickness, your stay at the hospital, your recovery, the sojourn of Abbé Clément at Boucherville, and your own approaching return.

My reason for writing to you today is the hope that you will let me know at the earliest possible moment what will be a reasonable amount to give per year to the men who are being sent to Red River to work there for the mission, one as a domestic in the house, the others as laborers or farm hands in the service of the missionaries. These gentlemen do not seem satisfied with the men they have, finding them lacking in honesty and good habits and needing surveillance like children. I should like to come to an agreement with their successors, to the number of five fine fellows, all from the parish of Kamouraska,

chosen by Mr. Dionne, Father Provencher's excellent friend. It is supposed that they will go up as *milieux* in the canoes of the Hudson's Bay Company, who will defray the expenses of their trip. It is necessary therefore to know how much their services are worth between Montreal and the place where the *bourgeois* no longer have need of them.

Other questions are: What should be the dimensions of the cases for goods and other articles in order that they may be right for portaging? What is the ordinary weight that one man carries?

The treaty of last October 20 presents a question still more serious: whether the lands given to the mission by the deed of last May 19 are to the north or the south of the forty-ninth degree of latitude. If south, they form a part of the domain of the United States and will suffer the fate of a good half of Lord Selkirk's grant.⁹⁷ I hope to get definite information on this point from Mr. Coltman or milady, the two persons who know the locality best.

I have still to learn whether the Hudson's Bay Company will send canoes this spring. I presume so, though milord's affairs seem in general to have taken a turn for the worse. The Duke of Richmond is opposed to him, I suppose!

I am still counting on you to carry on your last year's mission, and on Mr. Crevier to accompany you thither. Mr. Marchand's last letters tell nothing worse as to physical or moral conditions than what you saw in 1816. Perhaps the Vicar intends to exaggerate the good man's infirmities. I shall write to both soon and put some steel in Crevier, telling him that when he returns from Fort William he shall be curé of Malden and Thames River. It would be too bad to deprive that part of the diocese of his services. Gradually he can take the place of Mr. Marchand, who will remain in charge of the single parish of Sandwich.

Mr. McGillivray made no reply to the letter that I wrote him last autumn at your request. When I met him last winter in Quebec, he said nothing more to me; accordingly, I directed the conversation repeatedly to the Fort William mission without being able to discover whether he was satisfied or angry that it was established. Apparently there are some members of the North West Company who speak their feelings more satisfactorily on the subject.

I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP FLAGET TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MARCH 16, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

(de chez Mr Marchand, 16 mars 1819)

Rt Rd Joseph Octavius Plessis/ Bishop of Quebec, Canada.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Depuis trois jours je suis chez votre curé et mon cher confrère, l'humble et zélé Mr Crevier fait le *trio* ce qui selon les règles de musique, si bien me souvient, forme un des accors parfaits; au moins selon les divins préceptes de notre religion nous vivons dans la plus parfaite union et charité. J'ai grand plaisir à être avec ces deux Mrs, et ils me témoignent tant de respect et tant d'amitié que très certainement ils sont bien contents de me voir. Conversant avec Mr Crevier sur son expédition apostolique du grand Nord j'ai vu qu'il a acquis une expérience locale extrêmement avantageuse pour le succès des missions; c'est pourquoi si vous étiez dans la résolution de le renvoyer dans ces parages aussitôt que les chemins seroient libres, je vous prierois de me laisser jouir de sa compagnie pour les missions de Makina et de Green Bay où j'espère me rendre dans le cours du printemps, et ces missions achevées je le renverrois sur vos terres pour y remplir la tâche que vous lui auriez imposée, tandis que de mon côté en compagnie de mes bons Anges Gardiens j'irois faire ma dernière excursion à la Prairie du Chien, de là je descendrois à St Louis, passerois ensuite par le Poste Vincennes pour me rendre enfin à Bardstown après seize ou dix-sept mois d'absence. Si je vous demande Mr Crevier pour m'accompagner dans ces deux Missions ce n'est que dans la supposition que Mr Bertrand qui est toujours malade ne sera pas rétabli à cette époque; car si sa santé lui permettoit d'exercer le St Ministère je le laisserois au Détroit pour aider à Mr Richard et je prendrois avec moi Mr Janvier pour lui faire connoître ces pays; parce que pendant plusieurs années, il sera le seul qui pourra les visiter de tems en tems pour y administrer les secours spirituels dont ces pauvres gens ont tant de besoin. En homme prudent je désire avoir deux cordes à mon arc afin que je puisse me servir de l'une au défaut de l'autre. Si cet arrangement ne contrarie pas trop les vôtres, en me laissant cette disposition conditionnelle de Mr Crevier, vous ajouteriez une nouvelle marque d'amitié à toutes celles dont vous m'avez déjà comblé et pour lesquelles je sens la plus vive et la plus sincère reconnaissance avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être Monseigneur de votre Grandeur le très humble et très dévoué serv. et ami

† Benoit Joseph Evêq. des marais et des lacs.

[*Translation*]

At Mr. Marchand's, March 16, 1819.

The Right Reverend Joseph Octavius Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Canada.

MY LORD, For three days I have been at the home of your curé and my dear confrere. The humble and zealous Mr. Crevier makes up the trio, which according to the rules of music, if I recall correctly, forms a perfect harmony. At least according to the divine precepts of our religion, we are living in the most perfect union and charity. I am greatly pleased to be with these two gentlemen, and they show me so much respect and friendliness that almost certainly they are happy to see me. While talking with Mr. Crevier about his apostolic visit in the far North, I have seen that he has acquired a local experience that will be extremely advantageous for the success of the missions. That is the reason, if you are planning to send him back into the region as soon as the routes are open, that I should like to ask you to let me enjoy his company for the missions at Mackinac and Green Bay, where I expect to go in the course of the spring. Once these missions are finished, I will return him to your jurisdiction, in order that he may fulfill the task that you have given him to do. Meanwhile, for my part I shall be going in the company of my good guardian angels on my last trip, to Prairie du Chien. From that point I shall go down to St. Louis, and then go by Vincennes, to arrive finally at Bardstown after an absence of sixteen or seventeen months. If I ask you for Mr. Crevier, in order that he may accompany me on these two missions, it will be only on the supposition that Mr. Bertrand, who is still sick, has not recovered at that time. For if his health permits him to exercise the holy ministry, I shall leave him at Detroit to assist Mr. Richard, and I shall take with me Mr. Janvier, in order that he may become acquainted with those regions. For several years he will be the only one who will be able to visit them from time to time to administer spiritual help there, of which the poor people stand in so much need. Being a prudent man, I wish to have two cords to my bow, in order that I may make use of one if the other fails. If this arrangement does not contradict your plans too much by letting me have Mr. Crevier in this conditional fashion, you will add a new mark of friendliness to those favors with which you have already showered me, and for which I feel the keenest and sincerest gratitude. In this same spirit I have the honor to be, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and devoted servant and friend,

† BENEDICT JOSEPH, Bishop of the Swamps and Lakes.

Québec, 20 mars 1819.

A Madame la Comtesse de Selkirk/ à Montréal.

MADAME,/ Le traité du 20 octobre dernier entre S.M.B. et les Etats Unis, laissant à ceux-ci tout le territoire qui se trouve au sud du 49e degré de latitude, depuis l'angle du Lac des Bois le plus à l'ouest jusqu'aux montagnes de roches (rocky mountains), il m'est venu une inquiétude au sujet des terres que le Comte de Selkirk a eu la bonté d'accorder à la mission de la Riv.-Rouge, savoir si elles ne se trouveroient pas comprises dans le terrain cédé. Voici comment ces terres sont désignées dans le *deed* de Mylord du 19 mai.⁹⁸

All that certain tract, piece or parcel of land situate, lying and being on the East Side of Red River, and bounded by a line beginning on the right bank of Red River aforesaid at the mouth of a small river known by the name of the Riviere de la Seine, and running in an Easterly direction, for the distance of one hundred English Statute chains along the southern boundary of a lot of land laid out and assigned to Jean Baptiste la gimoniere, and thence running due East for the further distance of five English Statute miles, thence due South for four English Statute Miles, thence due West until the said line shall reach the said River de la Seine, and thence in a Northerly direction along the stream of the said River de la Siene to the place of beginning. Also that certain other piece or parcel of land lying, being and situate on the Right bank of Red River aforesaid and nearly opposite to the mouth of Assiniboyna River, bounded on the Westward by the said River and extending in front along the same for the space of three hundred and thirty yards or fifteen English Statute chains, northward from the boundary of a lot of lands assigned to Frederick Damien Huerter, bounded on the southward and northward by lines running at right angles to the Shore of the River and extending for the space of fifteen statute chains, and bounded on the Eastward by a line parallel to the course of the River.

Si j'en crois Mr O'Sullivan,⁹⁹ vous avez, Madame, acquis une connoissance très particulière et très détaillée de tout ce territoire et vous êtes plus en état que qui que ce soit de donner les éclaircissemens dont j'ai besoin: c'est ce qui m'enhardit à vous les demander. Permettez que je vous prie aussi de vouloir bien me faire savoir s'il doit partir des canots, ce printemps, pour la Rivière-Rouge, et dans le cas où il en partiroit

⁹⁸ The extract that follows, from the English text of the deed, is inserted at this point in the copy of the letter in the Selkirk Transcripts, 18:6003, but was not copied in the archiepiscopal letter book. This deed and another conveying land to the mission are printed in Archer Martin, *The Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures and the Occupation of Assiniboia by Lord Selkirk's Settlers*, 36-42 (London, 1898).

⁹⁹ One M. O'Sullivan was a witness to the deed of May 19, 1818, between Lord Selkirk and the trustees of the mission. Martin, *Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures*, 42.

s'il seroit possible d'y trouver place pour cinq hommes que je me propose d'envoyer à la demande de Messrs les Missionnaires et pour le service de la mission. Ces hommes pourroient être employés dans les canots, comme milieux, pour aider à les conduire.

Continuant, Madame, d'user de vos bontés, je vous prierai encore de savoir des agens de Mylord, quel prix ou salaire il seroit raisonnable d'allouer, par an, à chaque homme envoyé à la Riv. Rouge, soit comme cultivateur, soit comme charpentier, et s'il est d'usage qu'un paiement se fasse d'avance à Montréal, ou seulement sur les lieux et après l'année expirée. Ces connoissances me sont devenues nécessaires pour conclure un engagement avec des hommes du district de Québec choisis pour ce voyage d'après les directions de Mr Provencher.

Enfin, au risque de devenir importun, j'oserai encore à vous demander si dans la supposition d'un envoi de canots, on y pourroit trouver place pour une douzaine de caisses enfermant des articles demandés par les Missionnaires.

Voilà, Madame, beaucoup de questions que je ne saurois à qui m'adresser si vous n'aviez eu précédemment la complaisance de m'inviter à recourir à vous dans les choses qui concernent ce nouvel établissement. Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. cath. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, March 20, 1819.

The Countess of Selkirk, Montreal.

MADAME, The treaty of last October 20 between His Britannic Majesty and the United States, leaving to the latter all the territory south of the forty-ninth degree of latitude between the westernmost angle of the Lake of the Woods and the Rocky Mountains, has caused me much disquietude in the matter of the lands that the Earl of Selkirk had the goodness to grant the Red River mission. I am concerned to know whether these are included in the ceded territory. This is the description of the land in the deed from milord, dated May 19:⁹⁸

[*In English:*] All that certain tract, piece or parcel of land situate, lying and being on the East Side of Red River, and bounded by a line beginning on the right bank of Red River aforesaid at the mouth of a small river known by the name of the Riviere de la Seine, and running in an Easterly direction, for the distance of one hundred English Statute chains along the southern boundary of a lot of land laid out and assigned to Jean Baptiste la gimoniere, and thence running due East for the further distance of five English Statute miles, thence due South for four English Statute Miles, thence due West until the said line shall reach the said River

de la Seine, and thence in a Northerly direction along the stream of the said River de la Siene to the place of beginning. Also that certain other piece or parcel of land lying, being and situate on the Right bank of Red River aforesaid and nearly opposite to the mouth of Assiniboyna River, bounded on the Westward by the said River and extending in front along the same for the space of three hundred and thirty yards or fifteen English Statute chains, northward from the boundary of a lot of lands assigned to Frederick Damien Huerter, bounded on the southward and northward by lines running at right angles to the Shore of the River and extending for the space of fifteen statute chains, and bounded on the Eastward by a line parallel to the course of the River.

If Mr. O'Sullivan⁹⁹ is to be believed, Madame, you have acquired a minute and very detailed knowledge of all that territory and you are in a better position than anyone else to give me the information that I need. It is that which induces me to ask you. May I also beg to be informed whether there will be canoes leaving for Red River this spring and if so whether it will be possible to find room in them for five men that I plan to send at the request of the missionaries and for the service of the mission. These men could be employed in the canoes as *milieux*.

Continuing to impose on your good nature, Madame, I beg you to ascertain from milord's agents what price or salary will be reasonable to allow per year to each man sent to the Red River, whether as farmer or carpenter, and whether it is customary to pay them in advance at Montreal or only on the spot and after the year is up. This information is necessary for me to conclude an engagement with some men of the district of Quebec who have been chosen for this trip according to Mr. Provencher's directions.

Finally, at the risk of becoming importunate, I have still to ask you whether, supposing canoes are to be sent, place could be found in them for a dozen cases containing articles requested by the missionaries.

There, Madame, are the many questions that I would not know whom to address if you had not previously had the kindness to invite me to refer to you in all things that concern this new project. I am etc.,

† J. O., Catholic Bishop of Quebec.

LADY SELKIRK TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MARCH 27, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]¹

Montréal, 27 mars 1819.

MONSEIGNEUR, / J'ai l'honneur d'accuser la réception de votre lettre du 20, et j'ose vous rassurer à l'égard de la situation du terrain appar-

¹ A poor copy of this letter is in the Selkirk Transcripts, 18:6025.

tenant à la mission. Je ne peux pas dire exactement où la ligne 49 doit tomber: si Pembina se trouvera du côté des Américains ou de notre côté, mais je sais que le terrain en question est situé sur les Fourches de la Rivière Rouge dans le voisinage du Fort Douglass au moins un degré au nord de la ligne 49e.

Je me réjouis beaucoup de ce que votre Seigneurie propose d'envoyer les ouvriers demandés par Mr Provencher, et qu'ils doivent être choisis du district de Québec. Mr Garden m'apprend que le salaire ordinaire pour les cultivateurs est de 600*ll* à 800*ll* par an, pour les charpentiers 10 à 1200*ll*. Il est d'opinion que les meilleurs ouvriers peuvent être trouvés pour ces salaires. Il a pour principe d'avancer le moins possible, ayant éprouvé que ceux qui avoient déjà reçu le plus se sont ordinairement conduits le plus mal. L'engagement doit être passé à Québec et Mr Garden recommande fortement de les fournir entièrement là, et d'arranger de telle manière que les hommes n'aient rien à recevoir de qui que ce soit à Montréal, seulement que leurs dépenses seront payés à tant par jour, pendant le tems qu'ils y resteront en attendant le départ des canots. Comme c'est à Montréal qu'ils pourront apprendre beaucoup de méchanceté, ce seroit important de les garder là très peu de tems. Mr Garden aura soin d'avertir votre Seigneurie quand le jour du départ des canots est fixé, et les hommes peuvent se rendre aisément par les steamboats au jour qu'il marquera. Il recommande aussi qu'il soit mis dans les engagements que les hommes s'obligent de faire le devoir de voyageurs et obéir au commis et aux guides pendant le voyage. Les douze caisses trouveront place dans les canots et votre Seigneurie peut se fier entièrement à l'attention de Mr Garden pour remplir ses vues. Pendant que les hommes sont en haut ils sont fournis de tout dont ils ont besoin, cela est porté à leurs comptes, les comptes sont balancés à la fin de leurs engagements, et le surplus est payé en argent au retour des hommes en Canada.

J'ai peur que je ne m'explique pas clairement sur ces affaires et surtout en françois, mais votre Seigneurie aura la bonté de pardonner les fautes en faveur de la bonne intention, et de prendre la peine d'écrire encore une fois pour demander les explications qui peuvent se trouver nécessaires. A la première occasion que je peux trouver pour Québec, je prendrai la liberté d'envoyer à votre Seigneurie quelques grains de bled de froment de la dernière récolte à la Rivière Rouge. Je regrette de ne pas y avoir pensé quand Mr O'Sullivan est descendu la dernière fois. Je crois que cela peut faire plaisir à votre Seigneurie étant comme on dit d'une qualité excellente.

Je suis Monseigneur avec la plus grande considération votre très humble servt.

J. SELKIRK.

A Monseigneur/ Mgr Du Plessis, Evêque de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, March 27, 1819.

MY LORD, I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the twentieth, and I am able to reassure you with regard to the location of the land belonging to the mission. I cannot say exactly where the line at 49° should fall—whether Pembina will be on the American side or ours, but I know that the land in question is situated at the forks of the Red River in the neighborhood of Fort Douglas at least one degree north of the forty-ninth parallel.

I am very glad that Your Lordship is planning to send the workmen requested by Mr. Provencher, and that they are to be chosen from the district of Quebec. Mr. Garden tells me that the regular wages for farmers are from six hundred to eight hundred livres per year, and for carpenters, from ten to twelve hundred livres. He is of the opinion that it is possible to get the best of workmen for these wages. His principle is to advance the least possible, having learned by experience that those who have received the most usually conduct themselves the worst. The contract should be made at Quebec, and Mr. Garden strongly advises that they be fully equipped there, and the affair arranged in such a manner that the men will not have to get anything from anyone in Montreal, except for their expenses, which will be paid so much a day during the time they stay there awaiting the departure of the canoes. Since it is at Montreal that they might fall into evil ways, it would be best to detain them there as short a time as possible. Mr. Garden will let you know when the day is set for the departure of the canoes, and the men can easily go by steamboat on the day he sets. He advises also that it be included in the contracts that the men shall agree to perform the duties of *voyageurs* and to obey the clerk and the guides during the voyage. Room for the twelve cases will be found in the canoes, and Your Lordship can rely entirely on Mr. Garden to carry out your intentions. During the time the men are in the upper country, they are provided with all necessities and the expenses are placed to their accounts. The accounts are balanced at the end of their time, and the difference is paid in money upon their return to Canada.

I fear that I do not express myself very clearly concerning these matters, especially in French, but Your Lordship will be good enough to pardon the errors in view of my good intention, and take the trouble to write again to ask for any further explanations that may be found necessary. The first opportunity that presents itself to send to Quebec, I shall take the liberty of sending Your Lordship a few grains of wheat of the last harvest in the Red River [country]. I regret not having thought of it when Mr. O'Sullivan went down the last time. I think it may please Your Lordship, since it is said to be of an excellent quality.

I am, My Lord, with the greatest respect, your very humble servant,
J. SELKIRK.

My Lord du Plessis, Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO MARCHAND, MARCH 27, 1819
 [Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 9:516]

Québec, 27 mars 1819.

A Monsieur Marchand,/ curé à Sandwich.

MONSIEUR,

.....

Personne ne sait mieux que vous ce que vous me redeviez de composandes en sus des 300*ll* que Mr Borneuf me fit tenir en novembre dernier. Si Mr Crevier retourne au Fort William, vous prendrez sur le même fond de quoi le défrayer jusques là. Or je crains qu'il n'y retourne pas cette année, car il y a peu d'apparence que Mr Tabeau soit du voyage, et au point où en sont les choses, la mission ne peut être agréable à Messrs du Nord-Ouest qu'en autant qu'elle auroit Mr Tabeau à sa tête.

.....

Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, March 27, 1819.

Mr. Marchand, Curé at Sandwich.

SIR,

.....

No one knows better than you what you still owe me over and above the 300*ll* of *componenda* that Mr. Borneuf left me last November. If Mr. Crevier returns to Fort William, you will draw on the same source for his expenses. But I fear that he will not return there this year, for there is little likelihood that Mr. Tabeau will go, and, at the present

junction, the mission will not be pleasing to the North West Company unless Mr. Tabeau is at its head.

I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, APRIL 3, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pembina, le 3 Avril 1819.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ La Providence se sert encore aujourd'hui du Nord-ouest pour me procurer le moyen de donner à Votre Grandeur des nouvelles de nos missions. Mr le Grand Vicaire est allé aux Rivières Quappelle et La Sourie, il doit être de retour à Pâques. Mr Provencher peut avoir 50 ou 60 pénitents à la Fourche, et je crois qu'à Pembina j'aurai près 150. J'espère faire faire la 1ère communion à une trentaine de personnes sitôt après Pâques. Je m'étois chargé de prêcher tous les jours pendant le carême; je l'ai fait, mais ça m'a forcé. Nous avons fait le carême jusqu'à présent il n'y a que nous qui avons pu faire maigre; les autres ont jeûné, en général; j'en ai [vu] même qui n'ont fait qu'un repas pendant la plus grande partie du carême.

Le presbytère est équarri et en partie rendu sur la place, ainsi qu'une autre petite maison. La chapelle de Pembina est aussi équarrie, et j'ai envoyé avant hier deux de nos hommes pour commencer à équarrir celle de la Fourche, sur la Rivière Salle à environ 5 lieues de la Fourche. Mais je crains bien qu'on ait de la peine à les faire tirer ce printems. Je pense faire commencer, lundi ou mardi, à lever la petite maison pour les hommes, le bois de la grande n'étant point encore tout rendu. Je crois qu'à 7 hommes que nous avons il a été mangé près 50 vaches; c'est extraordinaire de voir ce que l'on mange de viande lorsqu'on a que cela seul à manger.

Les Sioux doivent venir ce printems nous voir; j'en suis content, c'est la nation la plus nombreuse qu'il y ait dans ces endroits ici; ils veulent, disent-ils, venir voir ceux qui sont comme le maître de la vie.

J'ai reçu le 19 Février une lettre de Mr Hudon datée du mois d'octobre le 2, et une de Mr Lefrançois avant son départ pour Halifax. Ce sont les seules nouvelles que nous ayons eues du Bas-Canada. La lettre de Mr Hudon nous a fait plaisir car elle étoit remplie de nouvelles ecclésiastiques.

Il y a 15 jours m'étant couché à 10 h. passées, je ne fesois que de m'endormir lorsque je fus éveillé par la fumée; cherchant d'où elle pouvoit venir, je m'apperçus qu'un charbon parti de la cheminée avait

fait prendre en feu ma soutanne quoiqu'elle fût à plus de 12 pieds de la cheminée. Ainsi je crois qu'il sera nécessaire que la Tanyer m'en fit une; elle a ma mesure, elle demeure au-dessous de chez Oneille. C'est une soutane de drap.

J'ai enfin tout ce qui nous faut de provisions pour ce printemps; si nos hommes pouvoient venir dans les premiers canots, ça nous accommoderoit bien mieux par rapport à nos batisses. Je vais faire demain la bénédiction des rameaux, ou plutôt des branches de chêne, car il n'y a ni olivier, ni palmier, ni cèdre, ni sapin, mais seulement du bois franc. Je suppose que c'est aussi bon.

Je suis, Mongr, de votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis/ Evêque de Québec, à Québec.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, April 3, 1819.

MY LORD, Once again Providence employs the North West Company to furnish me the means of sending Your Lordship a report of our missions. The Vicar-General has gone to the missions of Qu'Appelle and Souris rivers; he should be back for Easter. Mr. Provencher may have fifty or sixty penitents at The Forks, and I believe I shall have nearly one hundred and fifty at Pembina. I hope to administer first communion to about thirty people immediately after Easter. I undertook to preach every day during Lent; I have done so, but it was a strain. We have kept Lent thus far; we are the only ones who have been able [merely] to abstain; most of the others have fasted; I have even known some of them to eat only one meal [a day] during the greater part of Lent.

The lumber is all ready for the presbytery, and a part of it is hauled, as well as that for another small house. The logs have also been squared for the Pembina chapel, and day before yesterday I sent two of our men to Stinking River, some five leagues from The Forks, to start work on those for the church at The Forks. But I am very much afraid that it will be difficult to have them hauled this spring. Monday or Tuesday I expect to put up the small house for the men, since the wood for the large one is not yet here. I believe that the seven men we have here have consumed almost fifty buffaloes; it is remarkable to see how much meat one eats when there is nothing else to live on.

The Sioux are to come to see us this spring; I am glad, for they are

the largest tribe in this region; they wish, so they say, to come to see those who are like the Master of Life.

On February 19 I received a letter from Mr. Hudon, dated October 2, and one from Mr. Lefrançois, written before his departure for Halifax. This is all the news we have had from Lower Canada. Mr. Hudon's letter brought us much joy, because it was filled with ecclesiastical news.

One night two weeks ago, having retired a little after ten o'clock, I was just going to sleep when I was awakened by smoke; on looking to see whence it might be coming, I discovered that a spark from the hearth had set my cassock on fire, although it was lying at least twelve feet away from the fireplace. Therefore I think Madame Tanyer will have to make me one; she has my measurements; she lives below Oneille's [*O'Neill's?*]. It is a woolen cassock.

At last I have all the provisions we need for this spring; if our men could come on the first boats, it would be more convenient for us with regard to building. Tomorrow we celebrate Palm Sunday, or rather Oak Sunday, for there is neither olive, nor palm, nor cedar, nor fir, but only hardwood. I suppose its branches will do just as well.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,
SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO CREVIER, APRIL 6, 1819
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 10:4]

A Monsieur Crevier/ Vicaire à Sandwich. Québec, 6 avril 1819.

MONSIEUR,/ Je ne croyois pas vous écrire, & puis m'y voilà engagé par la demande que Mgr de Bardstown fait de vous pour l'accompagner à la Baie des Puans & à Michillimakinac. Je consens de bon coeur à cette demande à condition que de là vous vous rendrez à Drummond's Island de manière à arriver au Fort William avant le 15 juillet. Si vous n'y rencontrez pas Mr Tabeau, j'espère que vous y trouverez un autre prêtre; du moins vous trouverez une chapelle portative à Drummond's Island dont vous pourrez vous servir. Je viens de prier Mgr de Bardstown de vous donner les pouvoirs dont vous auriez besoin pour cette dernière partie de votre excursion; mais en relisant ma lettre du 13 avril dernier, à votre adresse, je me trouve vous les avoir donnés moi-même. Vous prendrez sur les componendes de Mr Marchand l'argent nécessaire pour votre voyage.

Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, April 6, 1819.

Mr. Crevier, Vicar of Sandwich.

SIR, I did not think that I should write you again, but I must do so because of the request of the Bishop of Bardstown that you should accompany him to Green Bay and Michilimackinac. I consent willingly to this request on condition that from there you will go to Drummond Island in season to arrive at Fort William before July 15. If you do not meet Mr. Tabeau there, I hope that you will find another priest at that place; at least you will find a portable chapel at Drummond Island for your use. I have just asked the Bishop of Bardstown to give you the faculties that you will need for this last part of your trip; but, on re-reading my letter to you written on last April 13, I see that I gave you those faculties myself. You will draw on Mr. Marchand's *componenda* for the money necessary for your trip.

I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO TABEAU, APRIL 6, 1819
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 10:2]

Québec, 6 avril 1819.

A Monsieur Tabeau/ Curé à Boucherville.

MONSIEUR,/ Voilà Mgr de Bardstown qui m'écrit de Sandwich demandant Mr Crevier pour l'accompagner dans ses missions de Green Bay & de Makinac, après quoi, dit-il, demeurant en la compagnie de ses anges gardiens pour son excursion de la Prairie du Chien, de S. Louis & du Poste Vincennes d'où il doit regagner Bardstown qu'il a perdu de vue depuis plus de 16 mois, il laissera Mr Crevier en liberté afin qu'il puisse atteindre Drummond's Island & le Fort William dans la saison où il faut que la mission se fasse. Si vous ne vous sentez pas capable de le joindre à ce dernier poste, indiquez moi un prêtre qui puisse vous y remplacer et qui a du zèle, & à de la bonne volonté réunisse assez d'aisance temporelle pour pourvoir à ses petits besoins sans être obligé de tendre la main à Messieurs de la Compagnie. En admettant qu'ils fassent pour lui tout ce qu'ils ont fait pour vous, il lui restera encore quelques petites dépenses à faire à son compte. Cela doit être inévitable. Peut-être que les premières chaleurs du mois de mai vont achever de vous dérhumer & que vous sentirez renaître votre ardeur pour ces lieux déjà parcourus. Ce seroit bien le moyen le plus efficace de continuer avec succès tout le bien que vous y avez entamé. Mais je ne le vous commande pas. Si vous y allez, Mr Clément gardera votre

cure. Si vous en trouvez un autre, il ira suppléer à celui-là. A tout événement je vais écrire à Mr Crevier de s'y rendre, en même temps qu'il me semble cruel de l'envoyer seul, sans trop savoir ni comment il sera vu, ni comment il pourra se décider dans les cas embarrassans que présente cette mission. Du moins faut-il avoir soin de lui envoyer votre chapelle toute garnie & la confier, soit à Mr Rocheblave, ou à quelqu'autre qui vous promette de la déposer à Drummond's Island.

Lady Selkirk et Mr Coltman m'assurent uniformément que toute la terre donnée par Lord Selkirk à la mission reste chez nous parce qu'elle est certainement au nord du 49^e degré de latitude qui vient d'être fixé par le traité du 20 octobre dernier pour ligne de séparation entre les Etats-Unis et nous, depuis l'angle du Lac des Bois le plus à l'ouest jusqu'aux montagnes de roches.

Je vous remercie des proportions que vous m'avez envoyées pour les caisses. Je les ferai faire d'après votre direction; mais que faire des outils plus longs que les boîtes, par exemple, d'une bisaguë, d'un sergent, d'une longue égouine, d'une scie de long? Comment transporter une grande quantité de cloux à bardeaux, par exemple, 80 ou 100 milliers? Faut-il aussi les mettre dans des caisses de mêmes dimensions? Vous voyez qu'il est nécessaire que vous m'écriviez encore pour résoudre ces dernières questions.

L'abbé Clément pourra vous communiquer ce que je viens de lui écrire. Personne ne l'affectionne plus que moi, ni ne rend plus de justice à son petit mérite. Nonobstant cela il faut qu'il sache modérer ses désirs et les empressemens de sa pauvre mère. Assurément il ne sera pas placé en cure avant l'automne.

Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, April 6, 1819.

Mr. Tabeau, Curé at Boucherville.

SIR, Here is His Lordship of Bardstown writing to me from Sandwich asking for Mr. Crevier to accompany him on his missions to Green Bay and to Mackinac; after which, says he, relying on the company of his guardian angels for his excursions to Prairie du Chien, St. Louis, and Vincennes (whence he will return to Bardstown, from which he will have been absent more than sixteen months), he will leave Mr. Crevier at liberty to get to Drummond Island and Fort William in season to undertake the necessary missionary activities there. If you do not feel able to join him at this last post, let me know of a

priest who can take your place and who has zeal and willingness, together with enough worldly goods to be able to provide for his own little needs without being obliged to hold out his hand to the Honorable [North West] Company. Admitting that they might do for him all that they have done for you, it will still be necessary for him to stand some slight expense on his own account. That is inevitable. Perhaps the first warm days of May will put an end to your rheumatism and you will feel your ardor burn again for these places that you have visited. That would certainly be the most efficacious way of continuing successfully all the good work that you have begun there. But I do not so command you. If you go, Mr. Clément will take care of your parish. If you find someone else, he will take that person's place. At all events I am going to write to Mr. Crevier to be there; at the same time it seems to me cruel to send him out alone, without knowing adequately how he will be received nor how he can decide the embarrassing cases that this mission presents. At least it will be necessary to see to it that your chapel is sent to him, well stocked, and in the care of either Mr. de Rocheblave or someone else who will promise to get it to Drummond Island.

Both Lady Selkirk and Mr. Coltman assure me that the land given by Lord Selkirk to the mission remains ours, because it is certainly north of the forty-ninth degree of latitude, which has just been fixed by the treaty of last October 20 as the line separating the United States and Canada from the westernmost angle of the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains.

I thank you for the dimensions of the cases, which you sent me. I will have them made according to your directions. But what to do with tools that are longer than the boxes, for example, a twilbil, a cramp, a long hand-anvil [?], and a pit saw? How are we to transport a great quantity of shingle nails, for example, eighty to a hundred thousand? Must we put them into cases of the same dimensions? You see that it is necessary for you to write me again to answer all these last questions.

Abbé Clément will be able to tell you what I have just written him. No one is fonder of him than I, nor anyone more just to his small deserts. Nevertheless he must learn to moderate his desires and the eagerness of his poor mother. He certainly will not be given a benefice before autumn.

I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

LADY SELKIRK TO [BISHOP PLESSIS], APRIL 24, 1819
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montreal April 24th 1819.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ J'ai eu l'honneur de vous adresser une réponse au sujet de l'information que vous cherchiez afin d'envoyer les hommes à Messrs les Missionnaires.

J'ai omis de vous marquer que les caisses ne doivent jamais peser plus que 90 livres chaque. c'est le poids établi de chaque pièce par rapport aux portages. Les canots doivent être dépêchés entre le cinq et le dix de mai. Mr Garden se charge de vous avertir à tems quand le jour sera fixé, mais il croit nécessaire que les hommes se tiennent tout prêts à partir au premier avis.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec la plus grande estime &c. &c.

J. SELKIRK.

[Translation]

Montreal, April 24, 1819.

MY LORD, I have had the honor of sending you a reply to your request for information about sending men to the missionaries.

I omitted to mention that the cases must not weigh more than ninety pounds each. That is the established weight for each *pièce* because of the portages. The canoes are to be dispatched between May 5 and 10. Mr. Garden will undertake to inform you in season of the day, but he believes it necessary for the men to hold themselves in readiness to set out on the first notice.

I have the honor to be, with the greatest esteem, etc., etc.,

J. SELKIRK.

LADY SELKIRK TO BISHOP PLESSIS, APRIL 29, 1819
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montreal April 29 1819.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Je viens de recevoir dans le moment votre lettre du 27e. Mr Garden m'assure qu'il trouvera moyen de disposer les quinze caisses dans les canots. Il vous prie de tâcher de faire en sorte que les hommes soient rendus le 12e ou 13e. C'est un commis fiable de la compagnie de H. B. qui doit surveiller tous jusqu'à la Rivière Rouge, et Mr Garden a peur que les hommes ne se dépêchent pas beaucoup s'ils ne partent pas tous ensemble. Comme il envoie peu cette année pour Lord Selkirk il a cru mieux faire en mettant tous sous la conduite d'un M. McKenzie de la Baie d'Hudson.

Il y a plusieurs familles qui montent pour s'établir, mais ils se char-

gent de gréer leurs canots eux-mêmes et monteront tout doucement dans le beau tems. Je n'ai pas pu trouver jusqu'à présent le moyen d'envoyer le froment à votre Seigneurie, mais je me promets bien de le faire par le premier steamboat. Je ne sais pas si les grains pousseront bien, n'en ayant pas eu tous les soins nécessaires pour les empêcher de devenir trop sec. Je l'ai gardé dans un petit sac dans le salon qui peut-être étoit trop chaud, mais vous aurez toujours le plaisir de voir que c'est d'une bonne qualité.

Il y a déjà un canot allège parti, mais je n'ai pas eu le tems d'avertir votre Seigneurie après qu'on me l'a annoncé. J'ai cru que Messrs les Missionnaires auroient pu trouver extraordinaire de ne rien recevoir et j'ai osé en conséquence adresser quelques lignes à Mr Provencher pour expliquer la circonstance. Nous avons envoyé d'excellentes semences de jardin arrivé dernièrement des Etats Unis.

J'ai eu le plaisir de recevoir des lettres de Lord Selkirk du 27 février. Il se portoit bien, étoit à Londres et très occupé comme vous pouvez bien imaginer. Vous devez connoître comme la marche est lente de toute affaire avec le gouvernement en Angleterre. Il me marque qu'il ne peut pas espérer de quitter l'Angleterre pendant l'été et me permet de le rejoindre avec les enfans. Il compte cependant qu'il peut se rendre à la Rivière Rouge dans le cours de l'année prochaine. Je crains beaucoup que mon départ ne me prive du plaisir de vous voir, mais ce n'est pas encore décidé si je dois aller par New York ou attendre les vaisseaux de Québec. Je désirerois fortement vous voir auparavant de partir à beaucoup d'égards. J'espère qu'avec un peu de patience et de persévérance pour deux ou trois ans que nous aurons tous le succès possible dans les entreprises humaines, et que même à Kamouraska un bois brûlé ne pourroit faire peur aux ouvriers. L'effet déjà produit par Mrs les Prêtres dans ces contrées est étonnant. La mission du Fort William a fait beaucoup de bien, et si on peut seulement poursuivre le même système le peu quantité d'êtres perdus seront réclamés.

Ayez la bonté d'excuser la hâte dans laquelle j'écris et de me croire toujours avec toute l'estime possible,

J. SELKIRK.

A Monseigneur, / Mgr Du Plessis, Evêque de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, April 29, 1819.

MY LORD, I have just this moment received your letter of the twenty-seventh. Mr. Garden assures me that he will find a way to put the

fifteen cases in the canoes. He asks that you try to have the men there by the twelfth or thirteenth. A trustworthy clerk of the Hudson's Bay Company is to superintend the voyage as far as the Red River, and Mr. Garden is afraid that the men will not hurry very much if they do not all leave together. As he is not sending much for Lord Selkirk this year, he has thought it best to put everything in charge of a Mr. Mackenzie of the Hudson's Bay Company.

There are several families who are going out to settle, but they agree to supply their own canoes, and they will go up slowly during the good season. I have not yet found a way to send the wheat seed to Your Lordship, but I shall certainly do so by the first steamboat. I do not know whether the seed will grow well, in view of the fact that it has not had the care necessary to prevent it from becoming too dry. I have kept it in a little bag in the living room, which was perhaps too warm, but at least you will have the pleasure of seeing what a good quality it is.

An express canoe has already left, but I did not have time to let Your Lordship know after I found out about it myself. I thought that the missionaries might think it strange if they did not receive anything, and I therefore ventured to address a few lines to Mr. Provencher to explain the circumstances. We sent some excellent garden seed, which had recently arrived from the United States.

I have had the pleasure of receiving some letters from Lord Selkirk dated February 27. He was in London, well and very busy, as you may well imagine. You must know how slow it is to do any business with the English government. He says he cannot hope to leave England this summer, and gives me permission to rejoin him with the children. He counts, however, on being able to return to the Red River in the course of next year. I fear very much that my departure will deprive me of the pleasure of seeing you, but it is not yet decided whether I am to go by way of New York or await the Quebec boats. I should like very much for many reasons to see you before leaving. I hope with a little patience and perseverance for two or three years that we shall have every success humanly possible, and that even at Kamouraska a *bois brûlé* will not be able to frighten the workmen. The effect already produced by the priests in that region is astonishing. The mission of Fort William has done a great deal of good, and if it is only possible to continue the same system, the few lost souls will be redeemed.

Be good enough to excuse the haste in which I write you, and believe me ever with utmost esteem,

J. SELKIRK.

My Lord du Plessis, Bishop of Quebec.

LADY SELKIRK TO [BISHOP PLESSIS], APRIL 30, [1819]

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Friday Eveng, April 30th.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Je vous envoie avec un vrai plaisir le froment. Vous verrez par les deux petits paquets qu'il y en a aussi du Laç La Pluie. Ceci fait voir que ces contrées pourroient fournir d'autres choses que les Pelleteries.

J'ai reçu aujourd'hui une lettre de N. York qui recommande fortement le *packet* de Liverpool qui doit partir le 10 de mai. le tems est si beau et les chemins à ce qu'on dit sont excellens dans le moment. tout ceci me porte à décider pour le départ lundi. C'est plus soudaine que je n'aurois souhaité mais on peut rarement choisir, il faut se contenter des choses comme on les trouve.

Peut-être nous pourrons espérer d'avoir le plaisir de vous voir en Angleterre. si vous entreprenez ce voyage nous espérons que vous nous permettrez de montrer le respect et l'estime avec lesquels Lord Selkirk aussi bien que nous tout.

Votre fidèle servte

J. SELKIRK.

[*Translation*]

Friday Evening, April 30.

MY LORD, I send you the wheat with real pleasure. You will see by the two little packages that there is also some from Rainy Lake. This goes to show that these regions can supply something besides furs.

Today I received a letter from New York recommending very strongly the Liverpool packet, which is to leave May 10. The weather is so fine and the roads so excellent just now, according to what I am told, that I have decided to leave on Monday. It is more sudden than I should have wished, but one can rarely choose. One must be content with things as one finds them.

Perhaps we may hope to have the pleasure of seeing you in England. If you make that journey, we shall hope that you will let us show you the respect and esteem in which Lord Selkirk, as all of us, [holds you].

Your faithful servant,

J. SELKIRK.

Québec, 1 mai 1819.

A Monsieur Roux/ Vic. Gén. de Mgr l'évêque de Québec,/ à Montréal.

MONSIEUR,

.
Mr Tabeau ne pouvant aller pour cette fois au Fort William, m'a proposé de l'y remplacer par Mr St-Germain dont l'abbé Clément tiendrait la cure pendant l'intervalle. La saison pressant, je l'ai chargé de négocier lui-même cette affaire avec lui, afin qu'il pût partir sans délai. Il est essentiel que cette mission ne soit pas interrompue. Mr Crevier doit s'y rendre après avoir reconduit Mgr de Bardstown à la Baie des Puans. Mais il ne sauroit suffire seul. Il lui faut un compagnon plus exercé que lui.

Je verrai comment accommoder l'affaire de S. Paul.

Mes complimens à vos Messieurs. Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[Translation]

Quebec, May 1, 1819.

Mr. Roux, Vicar-General of the Bishop of Quebec, Montreal.

SIR,

.
Mr. Tabeau, who is not able to go to Fort William this year, has proposed to me that his place be filled by Mr. St. Germain, whose abbé, Mr. Clément, will care for the parish during his absence. Since the season is advancing, I have told him to make the necessary arrangements himself, so that Mr. St. Germain can leave without delay. It is essential that this mission should not be interrupted. Mr. Crevier is to go there as soon as he has taken the Bishop of Bardstown back to Green Bay. But he cannot take care of it alone. He must have a companion more experienced than himself.

I shall see what can be done about the St. Paul matter.

My compliments to your priests. I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 6, 1819
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montréal, 6 mai 1819.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec, &c., &c., Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR, / Je suis parti de Boucherville avant hier dans le dessein d'aller jusqu'à Terrebonne, si je ne rencontre pas Mr St Germain ici; et je renonce à cette seconde partie. Mr le Supérieur me dit qu'il est inutile d'aller à Terrebonne; plusieurs raisons détournent Mr St Germain de cette entreprise; Mr Clément qui l'a vu la semaine dernière m'avoit dit presque la même chose, et l'entrevue que j'ai eue avec Mr Mcgilvray et Mr De Rocheblave achève de me déterminer. Il paroît que ces messieurs n'aimeroient pas autant un nouveau missionnaire dans leur poste; j'en devine presque les raisons; ils me font de nouvelles protestations de leur bienveillance et de leur protection, assurant que rien ne peut les flatter autant que ce qui peut contribuer au bon ordre; qu'il est de leur intérêt même d'avoir à leur service des gens sobres, honnêtes &c. *va-t-en voir s'ils viennent Jean*. Votre grandeur n'a pas pu découvrir cet hyver dans les discours de Mr Mcgilvray si la mission lui faisoit plaisir ou non; et néanmoins il m'a répété qu'il étoit fâché de voir qu'on vous faisoit entendre que la compagnie regardoit une mission comme contraire à ses intérêts, et qu'elle ne demandoit pas mieux qu'elle en eût; mais qu'il ne faudroit pas les changer si souvent. Là dessus, Monseigneur, je me décide presque à retourner; tous s'y opposent ici; j'y éprouve en particulier bien de la gêne; mais il seroit vraiment malheureux d'interrompre si vite une oeuvre qui ne fait que commencer, et qu'il seroit peut-être bien difficile de reprendre après une interruption.

Mon Docteur est raisonnable: il me dira franchement ce qu'il pense de mon voyage par rapport à ma santé; je l'attends à tout moment pour savoir son avis. Ces messieurs voyageurs répondent de moi pour le temps du voyage: avec le flanelle, disent-ils, et de la prudence je me sauverai. Si je n'avois pas tant d'envie de continuer cette oeuvre, je me contenterois bien des obstacles que j'ai à surmonter pour me dispenser d'aller. Le départ est fixé au 17 ou 18 du mois; par la poste de lundi, je vous ferai connoître définitivement ce qui en sera. Je suis fâché d'avoir arrêté ma chapelle nouvelle que Mr Desjardins me formoit. Dans le cas où je ne rencontrerois pas Mr Crevier, elle me seroit nécessaire de nécessité absolue. L'heure de la poste arrive, et je ne pourrai pas lui écrire aujourd'hui. Votre grandeur aura peut-être la bonté de lui envoyer ma lettre, et il connoitra mon désir; il faudroit que le tout

fût arrivé ici le 15, de samedi en huit, par la voie du steamboat; il adresseroit la caisse à Mr le Saulnier et je serai en ville pour la recevoir.—L'évêque de Bardstown est parti du Détroit pour son siège épiscopal et a renoncé pour le présent aux missions de Makinac et de la Baie verte. Mr Crevier n'en sera que plus libre à temps convenable.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

[*Translation*]

Montreal, May 6, 1819.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, etc., etc., Quebec.

MY LORD, I left Boucherville day before yesterday planning to go as far as Terrebonne, if I should not meet Mr. St. Germain here. I am abandoning this second part of my plan. The Father Superior has told me that it is useless to go to Terrebonne; several matters are deterring Mr. St. Germain from this enterprise. Mr. Clément, who saw him last week, has told me almost the same thing, and the interview that I have had with Mr. McGillivray and Mr. de Rocheblave has decided me. It seems that these gentlemen would not be pleased with a new missionary at their post. I can almost surmise the reasons. They renew their professions of good will and protection, assuring me that nothing can please them so much as what can contribute to good order; that it is to their advantage to have in their service sober, honest men, etc. *Go out, John, to see if they are coming.* Your Lordship was not able to learn this winter in conversation with Mr. McGillivray whether the mission pleased him or not. Yet he repeatedly told me that he was displeased that you had been led to believe that the company regarded a mission as contrary to their interest and that it asked no more of the mission than it was doing; but that it was not necessary to change so often. That, My Lord, practically decided me to return. Everyone is opposed to that plan here. I in particular experience much annoyance. But it would be truly unfortunate to interrupt so soon a work that is but commencing and that might be rather difficult to take up once more after an interruption.

My physician is reasonable; he will tell me frankly what he thinks of my trip as far as my health is concerned. I am expecting him any moment to learn his advice. These voyaging gentlemen answer for my health during the trip: with flannel and caution, they say, I shall be quite all right. If I did not have so deep a wish to continue this work, I should be content to let the obstacles that I have to surmount excuse

me from going. Departure is set for the seventeenth or eighteenth of the month. By Monday's post I will inform you definitely which it will be. I am sorry that I stopped the arranging of my new chapel, which Mr. Desjardins was preparing for me. In case I should not meet Mr. Crevier, it would be absolutely necessary. The hour for the post is at hand and I cannot write to Mr. Desjardins today. Perhaps Your Lordship will have the goodness to send my letter to him; he will understand what I wish done. It will be necessary for everything to be here by the fifteenth, a week from Saturday, by steamboat. He should address the case to Mr. le Saulnier and I shall be in the city to receive it. The Bishop of Bardstown has left Detroit for his episcopal seat and has given up for the present the missions of Mackinac and Green Bay. Mr. Crevier will be all the more at liberty at the proper time.

I have the honor to be, most respectfully, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

TABEAU TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JUNE 11, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Drummond's Island, 11 juin 1819.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec. Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR, / Nous avons fait un pénible voyage dans la grande rivière cette année; les eaux extrêmement hautes ont donné beaucoup de misère aux hommes et nous ont mis quelquefois en grand danger. Mais enfin nous sommes arrivés au Sault Ste Marie après quatorze jours de marche, trois de plus que l'année dernière; j'y suis resté quatre jours et suis venu à l'Isle Drummond, où j'espérois trouver Mr Crevier, et je n'en ai aucune nouvelle. Tous les batimens du détroit qui ont coutume de fréquenter ce poste sont venus, et il lui faudra probablement attendre leur second voyage pour s'embarquer, ce qui me laissera longtemps seul, à moins qu'il ne s'abonne avec quelque petit bâtiment américain qui vienne à Michilimakinac. Après mon ouvrage fait ici, je prendrai peut-être le temps d'aller à Makinac pour m'assurer de ce qui en est, avant de m'embarquer sur le lac Supérieur, que j'aurois certainement répugnance de traverser seul prêtre. J'attends toujours quelque information qui me fasse espérer d'avoir mon compagnon.

Mon rhumatisme me fatigue quelquefois, sans cependant m'arrêter; mais je me sens bien plus pesant qu'à l'ordinaire; je vieillis avant le temps, et je m'attends à payer bien cher mon excursion actuelle. Dieu soit béni! je suis dans l'ordre de sa providence.

J'envoie avec la présente des lettres de la Rivière Rouge à votre grandeur par la voie du Détroit, parce que les occasions d'ici ne partiront pas de longtemps. Il paroît que tout a été bien tranquille dans cette partie, et que ces messieurs ont passé un assez bon hyver. Il n'en est pas ainsi dans l'Athabasca où les deux compagnies ont encore fait du bruit.

Comme je crains beaucoup de passer l'été seul dans ces pays sauvages, je ne ferai certainement pas autant qu'avec un compagnon, et je descendrai le plus tôt possible. J'ai été même déjà tenté de retourner, comme j'ai fait il y a trois ans, et j'ai à combattre pour continuer mon voyage; car un seul prêtre dans ces pays n'a pas de quoi se consoler.

Je me recommande de nouveau à vos SS. Sacrifices, et suis avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, de votre grandeur le très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

ANT. TABEAU, Ptre.

[*Translation*]

Drummond Island, June 11, 1819.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, We had a rather difficult trip up the Ottawa River this year. The water, extremely high, caused the men much difficulty, and at times we were in great danger. Finally, however, we arrived at Sault Ste. Marie, after fourteen days of travel, three more than last year. I remained there four days and came to Drummond Island, where I hoped to find Mr. Crevier. I have no news of him. All the vessels from Detroit that usually visit this post have arrived, and he will probably have to wait for their second trip to embark. Thus I shall be left alone a long time, unless he entrusts himself to some little American vessel that comes to Michilimackinac. After I have completed my work here, I shall probably take the time to go to Mackinac, to assure myself on the matter, before I embark on Lake Superior. I certainly dislike very much to cross that lake alone. I keep waiting for some information that may give me hope of having my companion with me.

At times my rheumatism bothers me, without causing me to stop, however. I feel much more sluggish than usual. I am growing old before my time, and I expect to pay dearly for this present excursion. God be praised! I am under the direction of His care.

I am sending the present letter, with some communications from

Red River, to Your Lordship by way of Detroit, because there will be no opportunity to send one from this place for a long time. Everything seems to have been very quiet in that region, and the missionaries have passed a rather good winter. Such has not been the case in Athabaska, where the two companies have made further disturbance.

As I fear very much that I shall pass the summer alone in these wild countries, I shall certainly not accomplish as much as I would have achieved with a companion, and I shall go down as soon as possible. I have even been tempted to return already, as I did three years ago, and I have to struggle continually to continue my trip, for a single priest in these regions has no way of securing any comfort.

I recommend myself again to your Holy Sacrifices, and am most respectfully, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

ANT. TABEAU, Priest.

GALE TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JUNE 22, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montreal, 22d June 1819.

MY LORD,/ I have recently received from the Earl of Selkirk a few lines dated the 28th April last. In this communication Lord Selkirk mentions that he is in very bad health, & has requested me to acquaint you with that circumstance as his apology for not having yet answered a letter of the 26th Jan, which he had the pleasure of receiving from you relatively [*sic*] to a subscription for the Red River mission. The indisposition which has occasioned his delay in answering your Lordship's letter has also prevented his acting upon the business to which it relates, but he adds that he shall not fail to attend to it as soon as his health will allow, and that he has good hopes of it[s] success. Lord Selkirk likewise states that he has ordered a bell for the church at Red River which will be consecrated by the Roman Catholic Bishop at London and will be sent out this summer by the route of Hudson's Bay.

A few days ago we had intelligence at Montreal from Red River, by which it appears that the settlement has not yet been molested and is likely to do well. We have also heard that the inhabitants including Metifs & Freemen have been making a subscription for another church at Pembina on the Red River and that they have raised for that purpose some hundred pounds.

I should have done myself the honor of waiting on your Lordship when you last visited this city, but an unfortunate accident confined me to my room during the whole time you remained here.

I am with sentiments of great respect Your Lordship's faithful & obedient servant.

SAM GALE,

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis,/ Evêque de Québec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO PROVENCHER, JUNE 28, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 10:24]

Québec, 28 juin 1819.

A Monsieur Provencher,/ Miss. et Vic. Gén. à la Riv.-Rouge.

MONSIEUR,/ Ce printemps je n'ai écrit qu'à vous. Aujourd'hui c'est au tour de Mr Dumoulin de recevoir une longue lettre. Je me bornerai dans celle-ci à ne vous dire que ce qu'il y a de plus essentiel pour répondre aux vôtres du 15 & du 31 janvier.

Il n'est plus temps de me faire savoir au mois de juin qu'il ne vous faut plus de cuisinier, lorsqu'il y en a un de parti au mois de mai.

On m'a dit qu'un de vos frères (je ne sais si c'est celui que vous mentionnez ou celui qui vous a déjà couté cher) étoit en route pour vous aller joindre. Je ne vous en félicite pas. Nos anciens prêtres disoient: *longe a parentibus salus*, et je crois qu'ils avoient raison. Les parents ne servent qu'à embarrasser: on croit leur devoir des égards: ils trouvent qu'on n'en a pas assez, et les autres en sont jaloux. D'ailleurs les frères de prêtres deviennent souvent des paresseux qui croient avoir droit de vivre de l'autel. Ajoutez que s'ils font des sottises, elles retombent souvent sur le clergé.

Mon frère a eu la délicatesse de remplir quelques unes de vos caisses de ripes ou de papier brouillard au lieu de marchandises, parce que ces marchandises sortoient de sa boutique. Je lui en ai fait des reproches. Il ne sera peut-être pas aussi aisé, une autre année, de vous en envoyer. Lady Selkirk est partie, comme vous savez, pour l'Angleterre où le Comte est bien malade. Il ne faudroit qu'un accident pour paralyser le commerce tout net, et quelque honnêtes que soient envers vous les associés du Nord-Ouest, il n'est pas à présumer qu'ils transportassent des effets à cette distance pour l'encouragement d'une mission qui leur semble déplacée. Quoiqu'il en soit, j'ai pris note de tous les articles désirés tant par vous que par Mr Dumoulin; le tout se préparera d'ici au printemps, & vous sera porté, s'il y a moyen, par le prêtre qui doit être ajouté à votre mission & que Mgr de Saldae² a ordre de vous envoyer avec un ecclésiastique. Ce n'est qu'après que ce prêtre sera

² Bernard Claude Panet was appointed bishop of Saldæ, a titular see, and coadjutor to Bishop Plessis in 1806. He was consecrated in 1807 and became archbishop upon Bishop Plessis' death in 1825. See Shortt and Doughty, eds., *Canada and Its Provinces*, 23:352, and Scott, in the same work, 11:93.

rendu à la Rivière Rouge que vous pourrez descendre ici; et comme il y sera, j'espère, au mois de juillet 1820, vous pourrez venir dans l'automne. C'est à peu près le temps où je reviendrai d'Europe. Mon départ d'ici doit avoir lieu dans 3 jours. Mr Turgeon m'accompagne. Si Mr Edge avoit le zèle de rester à la Rivière Rouge, il ne faudroit pas lui faire violence, et je conçois qu'un second ecclésiastique trouveroit à s'y occuper. En ce cas vous descendriez seul & trouveriez bien quelqu'un pour remonter avec vous le printemps suivant.

Les Soeurs de la Congrégation sont trop serrées pour s'attendre qu'elles envoient jamais de leurs sujets à une pareille distance. Il faudra donc vous tourner d'un autre côté & trouver pendant votre séjour parmi nous quelques veuves ou saintes filles qui veuillent se consacrer à cette bonne oeuvre. Mais avant d'entreprendre cet établissement, vous aurez besoin de sonder vos fonds & de savoir si vous êtes capable de les soutenir. La souscription n'est pas inépuisable & il y a longtemps que l'on prend dessus.

Benoît XIV, à l'occasion des mariages de Hollande, a décidé que les protestans n'étoient pas soumis au décret irritant du Conc. Trid., comme n'ayant pas été publié chez eux, d'où il s'ensuit que le mariage d'un protestant et d'une catholique *extra praesentiam parochi et testium* en souroit être taché de nullité, parce que la partie protestante communique son exemption à la partie catholique. De là vous conclurez que vous ne devez pas troubler l'union du Suisse protestant et de la fille catholique contractée devant le Capt. Matthey. Ce mariage est assurément valide, la cour de Rome ayant déclaré, depuis la conquête du Canada, que l'on devoit appliquer à ce Diocèse le décret rendu pour la Hollande où l'empêchement de clandestinité n'existe pas par rapport aux protestans. Vous demandez si le décret du Conc. de Trente a été publié dans ce pays. Non, il ne l'a pas été, non plus qu'en France. Néanmoins la même discipline s'y est établie comme en France par les Ordonnances Royaux, de sorte que le mariage de deux catholiques hors la présence du curé et des témoins y a toujours été considéré comme nul. Ces principes vous pourront servir de direction dans tous les cas de cette espèce. Vous voudrez bien vous rappeler que les mariages mixtes, quoique valides, n'en sont pas moins illicites. . . .

C'est par oubli que je n'ai pas fait entrer d'ornement de voyage dans mon envoi du printemps dernier. Lord Selkirk m'a fait savoir qu'il vous enverroit, cet été, par la Baie d'Hudson, une cloche qui aura, dit-il, été consacrée par l'Evêque catholique de Londres. Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

Quebec, June 28, 1819.

Mr. Provencher, Missionary and Vicar-General of Red River.

SIR, This spring I wrote only to you. Today it is Mr. Dumoulin's turn to receive a long letter. I shall confine myself in this to telling you only what is necessary to reply to your letters of January 15 and 31.

It is hardly the proper time in June to let me know that you no longer need a cook, when I have already sent you one in May.

I am told that one of your brothers (I do not know whether it is the one you mention or the one that has already cost you dear) is on his way to join you. I do not felicitate you. Our old priests said: *Longe a parentibus salus* [*Salvation lies far from one's relatives*] and I believe that they were right. Relatives succeed only in embarrassing one; it is believed that you owe them consideration; they think that they do not get enough; and others are jealous of what they get. Moreover, the brothers of priests often become lazy, believing that they have a right to live from the altar. Add to this that they make foolish mistakes that often reflect upon the clergy.

My brother has had the delicacy to fill some of your cases with scrapers or blotting paper instead of merchandise, because the merchandise came from his shop. I have reproached him for it. It will not be so easy, perhaps, to send material to you another year. Lady Selkirk has left, as you know, for England, where the Earl is very ill. All that is necessary is an accident for the trade to be entirely disrupted, and however honest the gentlemen of the North West Company may be toward you, it is not to be presumed that they will transport articles such a distance to encourage a mission that seems misplaced in their eyes. However that may be, I have made note of all the articles that both you and Mr. Dumoulin wish. They will be ready to leave here in the spring and will be taken, if possible, by the priest that is to be added to your mission and whom the Bishop of Saldæ² has instructions to send to you along with an ecclesiastic. Not till that priest reaches Red River will you be able to come down; and as that will be, I hope, in July, 1820, you can arrive in the autumn. It is about that time that I shall return from Europe. I am to leave here in three days. Mr. Turgeon will accompany me. If Mr. Edge should have enthusiasm enough to remain at Red River, it would not be necessary to force him to leave; I believe that a second ecclesiastic could find enough to keep busy. In that case you would come down alone and yourself find someone to go back with you the following spring.

The sisters of the Congregation are too conservative to be expected ever to send any of their number to such a distant place. So it will be necessary to look elsewhere during your visit and to find here some widows or pious girls who will be willing to consecrate themselves to this good work. But before undertaking such a project, you should examine your funds and learn whether you can maintain them. The subscription is not inexhaustible, and long ago the cream of it was used.

Benedict XIV, referring to marriages in Holland, decided that Protestants were not subject to the irritating decree of the Council of Trent, since it had never been proclaimed among them; whence it follows that the marriage of a Protestant with a Catholic, without the presence of the parish priest and witnesses, is not marred by nullity, because the Protestant party communicates his exemption to the Catholic. Thus you will conclude that you are not to disturb the marriage of the Swiss Protestant and the Catholic girl, which was contracted before Captain Matthey. That marriage is surely valid, the Court of Rome having declared, since the conquest of Canada, that we shall apply to this diocese the Dutch decision, where the impediment of clandestinity does not apply to Protestants. You ask whether the decree of the Council of Trent has ever been published in this country. No, it has never been published, no more than in France. Nevertheless the same discipline is established here as in France by royal proclamations, so that the marriage of two Catholics without the presence of the parish priest and witnesses has always been considered invalid. These principles will aid you to solve all cases of this sort. But you must remember that mixed marriages, though valid, are none the less illicit. . . .

It was through forgetfulness that I did not put a traveling outfit in what I sent last spring. Lord Selkirk informs me that he will send you this summer, by way of Hudson Bay, a bell consecrated, so he says, by the Catholic Bishop of London.

I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO DUMOULIN, JUNE 30, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 10:22]

Québec, 30 juin 1819.

A Monsieur Sév. Dumoulin/ Missionnaire de la Riv. Rouge.

MONSIEUR, CHER SÉVÈRE,/ Ce n'est pas trop d'un in-folio pour répondre à vos cinq lettres reçues presqu'en même temps dans le cours

de ce mois, je veux dire celles du 4, 5, 12 janvier et du 5 février; encore ferai-je dresser une liste à part de tous vos cas de conscience pour les faire résoudre par quelqu'autre: la proximité de mon départ pour l'Europe ne me permettant pas de le faire par moi-même.

Il paroît évident que l'établissement de Pembina vaudra bien mieux que celui de la Fourche sous tous les rapports. Mais 1^o- les propriétés de la mission sont à la Fourche; 2^o- un traité dont vous n'avez peut-être pas connoissance, parce qu'il n'a été fait que le 20 octobre dernier entre l'Angleterre et les Etats Unis, donne à ceux-ci tout ce qui est au sud du 49^e degré de latitude, depuis l'angle du lac des bois le plus à l'ouest jusqu'aux montagnes de roches. Or la Fourche est certainement au nord de ce degré, et il est probable que Pembina en est au sud, par conséquent aux Etats Unis et hors de ma juridiction. Voilà qui doit modérer votre ardeur, quoiqu'en vertu des pouvoirs que j'ai reçus de Monsgr l'évêque de la Louisiane, je puisse vous autoriser, comme je le fais par la présente, ainsi que Monsr Provencher et ceux qui se joindront à vous par la suite, à exercer dans ce territoire. Mais ces pouvoirs ne sont pas définis; par conséquent il n'y faudroit pas donner de dispenses d'empêchemens dirimans. J'approuve le choix fait de St François Xavier pour titulaire de cette mission. Quant à l'intention des souscripteurs, ce n'est pas ce qui devrait vous gêner puisque Pembina fait partie de la région vers laquelle vous deviez porter les lumières de l'Evangile.

L'explication de la doctrine chrétienne d'une manière plus étendue pour les adultes que pour les enfans vaudroit mieux que des sermons élaborés. C'est dans votre théologie et non dans des sermonnaires qu'il faut puiser vos instructions. Ajoutez-y l'étude quotidienne de l'Écriture Sainte et la méditation.

Le nombre de baptêmes et de mariages que vous avez faits doit vous paroître suffisant. Mettez en prières les braves femmes dont les maris sont ivrognes, afin qu'elles obtiennent de Dieu leur conversion et puissent parvenir à de légitimes mariages.

Il faut profiter des dispositions des petits Bois-Brulés pour les avancer dans leurs études. Encouragez Mr Edge à les bien former à la science et à la vertu. Qu'il leur inspire surtout beaucoup de respect pour le lieu saint.

Faire cesser la traite du rum, réunir les Indiens dans un village, avoir des magistrats catholiques, sont trois articles aussi désirables que difficiles à obtenir: 1^o- dès l'établissement du Canada, on a porté des loix contre la traite des boissons enivrantes, et on les a souvent réitérées,

mais toujours inutilement. La cupidité a trouvé le secret de les éluder, comme elle fait encore. La crainte de Dieu est le seul moyen de remédier à ce désordre; tâchez de l'inspirer à ces pauvres gens en leur faisant toucher du doigt les suites malheureuses de ces excès. *Argue, obsecra, increpa* &c. 2^o- Il a été reconnu dans le Bas Canada que la réunion des Indiens en village leur étoit plus funeste qu'utile, à moins que la puissance publique ne donnât sur eux une autorité sans bornes aux Missionnaires, et qu'il n'y eut pas de Blancs mêlés parmi eux. C'est ce qu'on ne sauroit espérer dans les circonstances où vous vous trouvez. 3^o- il faudroit qu'il se trouvât sur les lieux des catholiques instruits, honnêtes et intègres comme vous les supposez, et que leurs noms fussent envoyés ici pour qu'on pût leur obtenir des commissions de juges de paix. Mais outre qu'une partie de ces magistrats seront inévitablement protestans, il seroit à craindre que les catholiques appelés à cette fonction ne fussent pas aussi exemplaires que vous avez raison de le désirer; et la mauvaise conduite des catholiques dans ces places donneroit beaucoup plus de scandale que celle des protestans.

Je souhaite bien que dans le cours de l'été vous puissiez exécuter, Mr Provencher et vous, les voyages que vous vous êtes respectivement proposés.

Puisque vous aviez tant fait que d'assister aux actes superstitieux des sauvages pour la guérison d'un enfant malade, il auroit mieux valu et il auroit été plus digne de votre ministère d'investiver fortement contre et d'éclairer ces pauvres aveugles par quelque raisonnement à leur portée, que de refuser froidement de rester jusqu'à la fin. Une guérison miraculeuse opérée par un saint missionnaire auroit été encore un meilleur argument. Que n'avez-vous arrêté tout ce tapage? Que ne vous êtes-vous jeté à genoux? Que n'avez-vous invoqué avec larmes le nom du Seigneur sur cet enfant? Il n'est pas sans exemple que Dieu ait exaucé ses fidèles ministres en pareil cas pour le salut des barbares. *Si habueritis fidem sicut granum sinapis, dicetis huic monti, tollere* &c. Au reste je ne serois pas éloigné de lire dans quelqu'une de vos lettres un récit de la suerie des sauvages.

Mr Roux est chargé de résoudre tous vos cas et de vous en envoyer la solution. Je vous dirai en général que des ivrognes sont une pauvre acquisition pour l'Eglise.

Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

Quebec, June 30, 1819.

Mr. Sévère Dumoulin, Missionary at Red River.

MY DEAR SÉVÈRE, I should need a whole folio to reply to your five letters received almost at the same time this past month, that is to say, those of January 4, 5, 12, and of February 5. I shall have a list made, therefore, of all your cases of conscience, in order that someone else may solve them. The date of my departure for Europe is too close for me to undertake them myself.

It would seem evident from all reports that the establishment at Pembina is more advantageous than that at The Forks. But, in the first place, the property of the mission is at The Forks; in the second place, a treaty between England and the United States, of which you probably have no knowledge, since it was not made until last October 20, gives to the latter all the territory south of the forty-ninth degree of latitude from the westernmost angle of the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains. Now The Forks is certainly north of that degree, and it is probable that Pembina is south of it, and consequently within the United States and beyond my jurisdiction. So you must dampen your ardor, though by virtue of powers that I have received from the Bishop of Louisiana, I am able to authorize you, as I hereby do for the present, as well as Mr. Provencher and those who will join you shortly, to labor in that territory. But these powers are not defined; consequently dispensations for impediments invalidating marriage should not be given. I approve your choice of St. Francis Xavier as the name of this mission. As to the intent of the subscribers, you need not bother about that, since Pembina is a part of the region to which you were to bear the light of the Gospel.

The explanation of the Christian doctrine in a more detailed manner for the adults than for the children would be better than elaborate sermons. It is from theology and not from books of sermons that you will get your instructions. Add daily study of the Holy Scriptures and meditation.

The number of baptisms and marriages that you have celebrated ought to appear sufficient to you. Have the good women whose husbands are drunkards pray that they may obtain from God their mates' conversion and that they may be legitimately married.

It is necessary to take advantage of the aptitudes of the little *bois brûlés*, in order to improve them in their studies. Encourage Mr.

Edge to ground them well in knowledge and in virtue. Especially urge him to inspire in them great respect for the holy place.

To stop the sale of rum, to gather the Indians in one village, to have Catholic magistrates are three matters as desirable as they are difficult to obtain. As to the first: from the settlement of Canada laws have been passed against the sale of intoxicating liquors, and they have often been re-enacted, but always to no purpose; cupidity has found a way to evade them, as it does at the present time; the fear of God is the only means of remedying this fault; try to instill it in these poor people, pointing out to them the unhappy consequences of this excess. *Argue, obsecra, increpa* [*Speak, exhort, rebuke*], etc. As to the second: it has been acknowledged in Lower Canada that the gathering of Indians in villages is more disastrous than beneficial to them, unless the civil authorities give the missionaries boundless authority over them, and unless whites are not allowed among them. We could not hope for such conditions under your present circumstances. As for the third: it would be necessary to find on the spot Catholics who are well educated, honest, and upright as you suppose, and to send their names here, in order that they might obtain their commissions as justices of the peace. But in addition to the fact that some of these magistrates would inevitably be Protestants, it is to be feared that the Catholics named for these posts would not be as exemplary as you would wish them to be; and bad conduct on the part of Catholics in such positions would make much more scandal than would that of Protestants.

I hope indeed that you and Mr. Provencher will be able during the summer to make the trips that each of you has proposed.

Since you went so far as to be present at the superstitious rites of the Indians in their attempt to heal a sick child, it would have been better and it would have accorded better with your pastoral dignity to have inveighed against the performance and to have enlightened those poor blind ones by some argument within their comprehension, rather than to have refused coldly to remain to the end. A miraculous healing performed by a holy missionary would have been a still better argument. Why did you not stop all that uproar? Why did you not throw yourself on your knees? Why did you not with tears call on the name of the Lord for this child? Instances are not lacking when God listened to His faithful ministers in such cases for the redemption of the savages. *Si habueritis fidem sicut granum sinapis, dicetis huic monti, tollere* [*If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain: Remove*] etc. As for the rest, I should not be

averse to reading in one of your letters an account of the sweating rites of the Indians.

Mr. Roux is to solve all your problems and to send you his decisions. I will say to you as a general rule that drunkards are a poor acquisition for the Church.

I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JULY 27, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]³

[*Translation*]

St. Boniface, Red River, July 27, 1819.

MY LORD, I received the honor of your letter of Epiphany on June 13, and that of May 8 on July 24;⁴ with the latter I received a dozen cases of tools, nails, merchandise, etc., and, more particularly, four of the five men Your Lordship is sending to me. Everything was in good condition.

What you say concerning the boundary lines of this region, which place Pembina in foreign territory, upsets my plans somewhat with regard to that station. We have there, already finished, a store twenty-four by eighteen feet; a presbytery forty by twenty-seven feet, which is in process of construction, but which the shortage of nails has prevented from advancing more rapidly; and material on the spot for a chapel sixty by thirty feet. Fortunately this work, though being done by our men themselves, is financed by means of contributions made by the residents of the place. Thus the money subscribed in Canada will be used on the lands of milord. The place is important, at least for the present, because it is from there that this post gets all its provisions. There are many people [there]. I shall continue the building there—at least finish the presbytery—because it is necessary that Mr. Dumoulin spend the winter there; and if the people are determined to remain there in spite of the change of government, we shall probably build the chapel also. Furthermore, I am told here that milord has come to an agreement with the United States with regard to the lands that may fall within their republic. In this way, as far as temporal matters are concerned, there will be no change. I know that it will not be the same with the spiritual, for the post will be outside the diocese. I am going there, and then I shall see what the residents say.

We have spent the winter peacefully and without hardship. Since

³ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 38-40.

⁴ Apparently no copy of the letter of May 8 has been preserved.

my last letters I have made the journey to Souris River and Qu'Appelle River. I left St. Boniface the Tuesday before Mid-Lent, and I was back with Holy Thursday and the end of the snow, which was all gone by Easter. It is a journey of eight or nine days in carioles or trains with sides made of dressed skins, which are drawn by dogs. Three dogs can go at a great rate with a fairly heavy load, or better, a man. The winter, which had been felt but little up until that time, appeared to have saved all its severities for my journey; nevertheless, although one is always outdoors, one does not suffer as much as may be imagined. I should have thought myself lost, had I been obliged by such means to make the journey from Kamouraska to Quebec.

In these two posts I saw about two hundred and sixty persons, both *voyageurs* and freemen belonging to the two companies. I confessed all the Catholics and baptized forty-one children. The logs for the chapel of The Forks, or St. Boniface, eighty by thirty-five feet, are squared, and I shall have it put up as soon as the workmen have made the presbytery habitable for Mr. Dumoulin; that is to say, a part of it, for the other will serve as a chapel. Mr. Dumoulin is at Rainy Lake. According to the information I was able to get, I saw that it would not be worth the trouble to make the trip to the end of Lake Winnipeg; for the post where I was going is to change this year, it is said, so that I should have found no one there. I doubt if this company has a post where all the Canadians in its service come together. Furthermore, in absenting myself from this place, I should have disappointed a large number of persons who come from neighboring posts for instruction during the summer. Mr. Edge is at Pembina, where there is a great deal of work at this season.

The Hudson's Bay Company, provided with warrants from Montreal, took a number of *bourgeois* and *engagés* of the North West Company last June, thirteen in all, and sent them to England. This affair does not please the North West Company, and they are becoming heated over it. I hope that we shall be left in peace, for we are on good terms with both parties.⁵

Last year I asked for some bolting cloth, but it was forgotten; perhaps it was divined that we should have no crop this year; the grasshoppers have completely destroyed everything. Thus we shall not

⁵ An account of the Hudson's Bay Company's seizure of prominent North Westers at the Grand Rapid in the lower Saskatchewan River in June, 1819, may be found in Samuel H. Wilcocke's "Narrative of Circumstances Attending the Death of the Late Benjamin Frobisher, Esq., a Partner of the North-West Company," in Masson, *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*, 2:181-196. Trial took place in Lower Canada the following October.

have bread to eat, and we shall have difficulty in getting seed for next year. It is a shame for, according to appearances and the season thus far, there would have been a good harvest. The whooping cough and measles have reigned here this summer, and have taken a number of children.

It would be very desirable that the priest and seminarian who come up next year be able to speak English, a language that we all three understand a little, but which we can scarcely speak. Another thing even more desirable would be that one of the two spend the winter at Lake of Two Mountains, to study the Indian language and transcribe many things that we shall not easily procure here. He would learn more there in three or four months than here in two years, for we have nothing concerning this language. Perhaps for the glory of God and the advancement of religion the gentlemen of the seminary will be willing to oblige us. It is a matter of importance.

According to the letter of the Bishop of Quebec, I suppose that this one will be communicated to the Bishop of Saldae. I hope that his trip to Europe will be a pleasant one.

There are still very few animals in the colony: three cows, two calves, one ox, some sixty hogs — no other domestic animals. There is also a buffalo cow that is very well tamed.

I shall have the honor of writing to Your Lordship by other canoes that will leave the last of August. Although my health is not so good as at Kamouraska, I am not sick. I think that Mr. Dumoulin will write to Quebec. Mr. Edge will not be able to profit by this opportunity, not being here.

I have the honor to be, with profoundest respect, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,

PROVENCHER, Vicar-General.

His Lordship J. O., Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JULY 27, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Lac Lapluie, 27 juillet 1819.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ J'ai eu l'honneur de votre lettre datée du mois de janvier, et Mr le Grand Vicaire doit avoir reçu celle que votre Grandeur lui a écrite dans mai. Nous avons été bien fâchés d'apprendre que toutes nos lettres de l'hyver dernier ne se sont rendues que ce printems; cependant nous espérons que votre Grandeur aura eu le tems de répondre avant le départ des derniers canots. J'ai laissé St

Boniface (vulgo La Fourche) le 22 juin. J'ai baptisé 11 enfants au Bas de la Rivière Winipic, et ici 10; J'attends les Athabaskas qui probablement m'en amèneront plusieurs pour être baptisés. J'ai fait à Pembina 30 à 36 baptêmes de grandes personnes, dont les uns ont fait leur rère communion, les autres ont été mariés; je dois en marier une dizaine à mon retour. Votre Grandeur marquoit à Mr Provencher que Pembina se trouvoit hors de son diocèse; Mr l'honorable McGillvray ici présent m'assure que les lignes passeront vers l'embouchure de la petite Rivière Pembina, et en ce cas la chapelle, le presbytère, &c., se trouveroient dans le diocèse de Votre Grandeur puisqu'ils se trouvent à une ½ lieue en deça. Je ne pense pas être de retour à St Boniface avant la fin d'Aout. Votre Grandeur entendra sans doute parler des prises de corps qui ont eu lieu au Grand Rapid, de l'autre côté du lac Winipic. Les N: W: en paroissent extrêmement outrés; ils répètent sans cesse que c'est recommencer les anciens treins [*sic*]; pour moi il me semble que ce n'est pas les recommencer, mais que c'en est une suite licite et permise; ils ont député à sa grâce le Gouverneur⁶ qui doit retourner à l'île Dromon[.] les plus coupables d'entre les N: W:; ont évité ceux qui les attendoient au Grand Rapide, et un de ceux qui avoit été pris est arrivé ici ce matin comme déserteur, après avoir passé plusieurs jours dans les bois sans manger.⁷

Mr le Grand Vicaire et Mr Edge se portent à merveille. J'ai laissé la colonie infectée de petites sauterelles, triste génération de celles de l'année dernière qui vont nous ôter non seulement le pain de la bouche pour cette année, mais encore presque toute la semence. Dieu soit loué! nous mangerons encore de la viande. Toutes ces privations nous paroissent actuellement bien moins dures.

Je suis presque persuadé, d'après ce que votre Grandeur a écrit, que ce n'est pas elle qui lira cette lettre; cependant je vais toujours proposer quelques cas. Mais avant tout j'ai une demande à faire. J'ai ici un mariage à faire contracter, mais les partis se trouvent précisément liés de l'unique (du moins je le pensois, mais maintenant j'en doute) empêchement dont Mr le Grand Vicaire ne peut dispenser, c-à-d. que le futur époux a connu, copula illicita, la soeur de sa future épouse. J'attendrai la réponse pour les marier, sans pouvoir les séparer, je crois, car les partis ont déjà plusieurs enfants ensemble.

Par rapport, Monseigneur, aux Messieurs que votre Grandeur se

⁶ The governor at that time was William Williams.

⁷ See *ante*, p. 241, for another reference to the Grand Rapid incident. The refugee was probably William McIntosh. Rich, ed., *Robertson's Correspondence Book*, 289.

propose de nous envoyer l'an prochain, d'après la connoissance que j'ai du sujet et d'après ses lettres, je penserois que le jeune François Xavier Drolet seroit très propre à venir ici comme ecclésiastique. Il seroit extrêmement important qu'il fit une bonne physique. Vous me pardonnerez, j'espère, Monseigneur, cette recommandation. Je me suis cru obligé de la faire, bien persuadé cependant que Votre Grandeur n'en fera que ce que l'Esprit de Dieu lui inspirera.

Cas de conscience.

1°. Peut-on admettre aux sacrements les engagers [*sic*] des compagnies qui, sans traiter personnellement avec du rum, vont cependant à ce qu'on appelle en *Droïnes* [*dérouïnes*], c-à-d. portant les effets et le rum, et rapportent les pelleteries qui ont été traitées par le comis ou interprète? pourroit-on au moins les admettre s'ils promettoient de ne plus s'engager, leur tems fini?

2°. Peut-on, ici où il n'y a point de ministre protestant, baptiser les enfants nés de pères protestants, sans leur faire promettre formellement de les faire élever catholiquement, vû que ça achemineroit dans la foi catholique et les enfants et les mères?

3°. Doit-on permettre bien facilement que des personnes qui déjà ont plusieurs enfants ensemble se séparent et se marient avec d'autres en face de l'église? Quelles pourroient être les raisons de le faire?

4°. Nous, missionnaires, qui très souvent sommes obligés de manger chez autrui, nous est-il permis de manger d'une chose que nous saurions avoir été traitée avec du rum, et des sauvages? ou d'acheter un cheval d'un traiteur qui le plus souvent les a avec du rum?

5°. Un homme est sujet à une mauvaise habitude, v.g. à l'ivrognerie; la femme qu'il a avec lui est disposée au baptême et à un légitime mariage. Le missionnaire qui connoit la mauvaise habitude du pénitent peut-il lui dire de se marier, ou prendre ses bans? car cet homme n'attend que l'ordre du missionnaire pour se marier; sa femme ne peut le laisser sans de grands inconvénients; l'ivrogne promettra de ne plus boir, mais promesse d'ivrogne. *Quid in praxi?* La même décision pourra sans doute servir à l'égard des femmes mariées à des comis et interprètes qui sont les traiteurs directs avec du rum.

6°. Quelle restitution faudroit-il exiger des gens qui se sont trouvés dans l'affaire du 19 juin 1816, et qui avouent avoir tué quelque personne dans l'action? ⁸ quoique le plus grand nombre assure y avoir été de bonne foi, et parce qu'il pensoit qu'on avoit droit de les y contraindre;

⁸ The reference is to the Battle of Seven Oaks, when Governor Semple and others were killed by agents of the North West Company.

il peut cependant s'en trouver qui ait eu assez connoissance des affaires pour s'être rendus bien coupables.

J'ai eu le plaisir encore plus grand que peu espéré de voir Mr Tabeau au Lac Lapluie; l'entrevue que j'ai eu le plaisir d'avoir avec lui pourra mettre Votre Grandeur au fait de bien des choses qu'il n'est ni commode ni possible souvent de pouvoir écrire.

Il y a à présent plus d'un mois que j'ai quitté St Boniface. J'ai reçu une lettre de Mr Provencher qui me marque que les choses vont toujours assez bien.

Je suis, Monseigneur, de Votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec, à Québec.

[*Translation*]

Rainy Lake, July 27, 1819.

MY LORD, I have had the honor of your letter of January, and the Vicar-General has no doubt received the one that Your Lordship wrote him in May. We were very sorry to learn that all our last winter's letters did not arrive until this spring. However, we hope that Your Lordship will have time to reply before the departure of the last canoes. I left St. Boniface (commonly called The Forks) June 22. I baptized eleven children at Bas de la Rivière, and ten here; I am expecting the Athabaskans, who will probably bring several for me to baptize. At Pembina I performed from thirty to thirty-six adult baptisms, some of whom made their first communion, while others were married; I expect to marry about ten of them upon my return. Your Lordship indicated to Mr. Provencher that Pembina was outside your diocese; the Honorable Mr. McGillivray, who is here now, assures me that the boundary is near the mouth of the little Pembina River, and in that case the chapel, presbytery, etc., are in Your Lordship's diocese, since they are situated a half league this side. I do not expect to return to St. Boniface before the last of August. Your Lordship has no doubt heard of the arrests made at the Grand Rapid, on the other side of Lake Winnipeg. The North West Company seem to be very indignant over this action. They keep insisting that it means a recommencement of the old process; personally I feel that it is not a recommencement, but a consequence that is natural and only to be expected; they [*the aggressors*] were deputies of His Honor, the Governor,⁶ who is to return to Drummond Island. The guiltiest of the North Westers evaded those who were waiting for them at the Grand Rapid, and one

of those who had been captured arrived here this morning, a fugitive, after having spent several days in the woods without food.⁷

The Vicar-General and Mr. Edge are very well. When I left, the colony was overrun with little grasshoppers, lamentable progeny of those of last year, which are not only going to take the very bread out of our mouths this year, but even almost all of the seed. God be praised! We can still eat meat. These hardships do not seem so unendurable now.

I am almost convinced, from what Your Lordship has said, that it will not be you who reads this letter; nevertheless, I am going to submit a few cases. But first of all I have a request to make. I have here a marriage to be contracted, but the individuals happen to be connected by the only (at least so I thought, although now I doubt it) impediment for which the Vicar-General cannot give a dispensation: that is to say, the future husband has had illicit intercourse with the sister of his future wife. I shall wait for a reply before marrying them, although I believe it would be impossible to separate them, since they have already had several children.

With regard, My Lord, to the gentlemen whom Your Lordship proposes to send out next year, from my knowledge of the matter and from his letters, I should think that young Francis Xavier Drolet would be quite well fitted to come here as an ecclesiastic. It is of utmost importance that he have a strong physique. I hope that you will pardon me, My Lord, for making this suggestion. I considered myself obliged to do so, even though I am perfectly sure that Your Lordship will only do that which the Holy Spirit prompts you to do.

Cases of Conscience

1. May we admit to the sacraments the *engagés* who, although not independently trading in rum, nevertheless do go on what is known as *dérouines*, which means that they deliver merchandise and rum, and bring back the peltries that the clerk or the interpreter has bargained for? Might we at least admit them if they promise not to hire out any more after their contract is fulfilled?

2. Since there is no Protestant minister here, may we baptize the children born of Protestant fathers, without requiring a formal pledge to bring them up in Catholicism, since this course would tend to bring both the children and the mothers into the Catholic faith?

3. Ought we to be lenient about allowing individuals who have already had several children together to separate and marry others in the face of the Church? Under what circumstances might we do this?

4. Is it permissible for us missionaries, who are often obliged to eat in the homes of others, to partake of something which we know to have been traded for rum from the Indians, or to buy a horse from a trader who most likely got it in exchange for rum?

5. A man has a bad habit, that is, drunkenness; the woman he has with him is willing to be baptized and legitimately married. Can the missionary, knowing this bad habit of the penitent, tell him to get married, or to publish his banns, for this man is only waiting for orders from the missionary in order to be married; his wife cannot leave him without serious difficulties; the drunkard will promise not to drink any more, but a drunkard's promise, *Quid in praxi?* [*What comes of it?*] The same decision can no doubt be used in the case of women married to clerks and interpreters, who are direct traders of rum.

6. What penalty should be imposed on the men who were involved in the affair of June 19, 1816, and who admit having killed some one in that engagement?⁸ Most of them, however, insist that they were there in good faith, because they thought that others had the right to coerce them. There may be some, however, who were sufficiently familiar with the situation to be held guilty.

The joy I experienced on seeing Mr. Tabeau at Rainy Lake was all the greater because it was unexpected; the conversation I had the pleasure of having with him will be a means of acquainting Your Lordship of many things which it is often neither convenient nor possible to write.

It is almost a month now since I left St. Boniface. I have received a letter from Mr. Provencher, which indicates that everything is going along smoothly.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,
SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

PROVENCHER TO LADY SELKIRK, JULY 29, 1819

[Selkirk Papers. ALS]⁹

MYLADY./ J'ai reçu, le treize juin, L'honneur de votre lettre datée de Mont-réal, le 28 Avril. Sans cette lettre, j'aurais été étonné de ne recevoir aucune nouvelle de Mont-réal et de Québec. Je vous prie de recevoir mes remerciemens les plus sincères, pour cette marque de votre attention. votre lettre à Mr Dumoulin du mois de janvier n'est arrivé ici qu'un jour après celle du 28 Avril. le courier d'hiver ayant été

⁹ There is a poor copy of this letter in the Selkirk Transcripts, 19:6372-6374.

arrêté au Sault Ste Marie, par les glaces du Lac Supérieur. celui de la Rivière Rouge parti à peu près dans le-même, pour Mont-réal a passé l'hiver à la Pointe Meuron.

J'ai reçu le vingt quatre juillet les hommes et les effets pour les quels Monseigneur vous avoit demandé passage. les familles ne sont pas encore arrivées ici. il en monte bien trop, dans les circonstances présentes, mais il faut espérer que la providence qui nous a privés de récolte nous enverra abondance d'animaux. Je ne vous détaillerai pas le fléau qui a ravagé notre moisson. M^r M^cDonell que je vois partir avec peine pourra vous le dire; il retarde le progrès de la colonie; parce que la semence manquera ou sera en petite quantité[.] c'est un malheur; tout paroissoit assez bien parti. Malgré cela nous ne sommes pas découragés, nous en serons quittes pour être privés plus longtems des douceurs que procurent [*sic*] la culture de la terre.

Monseigneur m'a écrit de Québec qu'il le proposoit de passer cet été à Londres pour de là aller à Rome. Son projet n'étoit encore connu de personne au moment qu'il m'écrivoit. Je pense que vous aurez occasion de le voir dans ce voyage qu'il projette depuis longtems. il me dit aussi que les vaisseaux arrivés à Québec au printems ont rapporté que Mylord Selkirk étoit attaqué d'une maladie dangéreuse. cette nouvelle que je souhaite n'être pas véritable, ne laisse pas que nous inquiéter grandement.

Votre présence au milieu de nous ne pourroit que faire un grand bien. elle encourageroit nos nouveaux colons; mais pour ne pas vous tromper, je ne vous y encourage guere; pour ces années ci, vous trouveriez dans ce voyage beaucoup de fatigues et des privations aux quelles vous êtes bien loin d'être accoutumée.

Nous avons passé l'hiver tranquilles et le sommes encore. la prise de plusieurs bourgeois et engagés du Nord-ouest échauffe un peu les esprits de ceux qui tiennent à leur parti. mais je présume que cela ne tournera à rien de sérieux. d'ailleurs je pense qu'on ne feroit pas faire aux Bois brulés et autres à présent ce qu'on leur à fait faire ces années dernières. au moins dans ces postes ci nous travaillerons toujours pour le maintien du bon ordre.

Mr Dumoulin est en ce moment au Lac Lapluie occupé à faire une mission aux engagés du Nord ouest sortis de L'Athabasca. cette mission en éclairant un peu les gens et leur rappelant leurs principes religieux ne peut que faire du bien à des hommes dont on se sert quelque fois pour faire bien du mal. J'aurois désiré en faire une moimême aux engagés de la compagnie de la Baye d'Hudson; mais les

circonstances n'ont pas paru s'accorder avec mon projet, pour cette année. Mr Dumoulin et Mr Edge ont hiverné à Pembina l'an passé et y hiverneront encore cette année. on y a bâti une boutique de 24 pieds sur 18, une maison de 40 pieds sur 27, et il y a une chapelle de 60 pieds sur 30, sur la place. malheureusement Monseigneur m'informe que ce poste tombe chez les Américains ce qui le fait sortir du diocèse de Québec et tomber dans celui de Bardstown ou de la Nouvelle Orléans, ce qui dérange nos plans. je suis en frais de bâtir ici une chapelle de 80 pieds sur 35. les ouvriers et outils venus cette année me seront bien nécessaires. nous n'abandonnerons pas pourtant Pembina. il y a trop de monde pour les abandonner. Monseigneur me dit de n'y établir qu'une mission passagère. on me dit ici que Mylord a des arrangemens avec le gouvernement américain au sujet des terres qui pourroient tomber sous sa puissance. je n'en connois rien.

Nous sommes assez contents des progrès que fait la religion parmi les gens dont nous sommes chargés. puissent-ils [*MS. torn*] toujours croissans. les moeurs n'y sont pourtant pas bien [*MS. torn*] le concubinage est ici, (et encore mieux dans les postes éloig[nés la] mode. plus de régularité détourneroit sans doute de dessus nos [têtes] les fléaux qui nous accablent, mais souvent on attribue au hazard ce que l'on devoit avec trop de raison attribuer à les crimes.

Mr Dumoulin étant absent est privé de l'honneur de vous écrire Mr Edge est à Pembina. tous deux sont très reconnoissans de votre gracieux souvenir et en présumant leur intention je vous prie de recevoir leurs très humbles respects. permettez que j'y joigne les miens pour votre Seigneurie, Mylord Selkirk et toute votre interrassante famille.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect/ De votre Seigneurie/ le très humble et très/ obéissant/ serviteur

PROVENCHER, v. g.

St Boniface/ de la Riviere Rouge/ le 29 juillet 1819.

My lady Selkirk

To the most honourable Countess of Selkirk/ London.

[*Translation*]

MY LADY, On June 13 I had the honor of receiving your letter dated from Montreal on April 28. Without that letter I should have been at a loss to comprehend why I had received no news from Montreal and Quebec. Please accept my most sincere thanks for this mark of your interest. Your letter of January to Mr. Dumoulin did not arrive here until one day after that written on April 28. The winter express was obliged to stop at Sault Ste. Marie because of the ice in Lake Superior.

The courier from Red River, who left for Montreal at almost the same time, passed the winter at Point Meuron.

On July 24 I received the men and the goods for which His Lordship asked you for passage. The families have not yet arrived. Under present circumstances there will be too many of them, but we must hope that Providence, which has deprived us of a harvest, will send us plenty of buffaloes. I shall not describe to you in detail the plague that has spoiled our harvest. Mr. Macdonell, whose departure I see with pain, will tell you all about it. It will retard the progress of the colony because we shall have no seed for sowing, or we shall have only a small amount. It is too bad; everything seemed to be going so well. In spite of all we are not discouraged. We shall merely be for a longer time without the comfort that the cultivation of the soil provides.

His Lordship wrote me from Quebec that he expected to pass the summer in London and to go from there to Rome. His purpose was known by no one when he wrote. I think that you will have an opportunity to see him on this trip that he has had in mind for so long. He also wrote me that the vessels that had arrived in Quebec in the spring brought news that Lord Selkirk had been attacked by a dangerous illness. This news, which I trust may prove untrue, cannot but disquiet us greatly.

Your presence in our midst could not but be a great help to us. It would encourage our new colonists. But in order not to deceive you, I can hardly encourage it; for during these present years you would find the trip hither full of weariness and privations to which you are not at all accustomed.

We have passed the winter peacefully and are still in that condition. The seizure of several *bourgeois* and *engagés* of the North West Company somewhat angers those who belong to that party, but will prove nothing serious, I presume. Moreover, I think that now the *bois brûlés* and others will not be induced to do those things that they were led to do in recent years; in these missions, at least, we are constantly working for the maintenance of good order.

Mr. Dumoulin is at Rainy Lake just now, conducting a mission among the *engagés* of the North West Company from the Athabaska country. That mission, in enlightening those men a little and recalling to them some religious principles, cannot help but do some good to men who at times have been used to do much evil. I should have liked to make a similar mission myself to the men of the Hudson's Bay Company; but circumstances have not seemed propitious for this year.

Mr. Dumoulin and Mr. Edge wintered last year at Pembina and will do so again this year. They have built there a store twenty-four feet long by eighteen wide, a house forty feet by twenty-seven, and there is material for a chapel sixty feet by thirty on the spot. Unfortunately His Lordship has informed me that this place falls within the American lines, thus becoming a part of the diocese of Bardstown or New Orleans instead of that of Quebec. This fact will upset our arrangements. I am building a chapel here eighty feet by thirty-five at considerable expense. The workmen and material that came this summer will be very essential to me. Nevertheless, we shall not abandon Pembina. There are too many people there for it to be abandoned. His Lordship told me to establish only a temporary mission there. Here I am told that milord has made arrangements with the American government on the subject of the region that might lie within its jurisdiction. But I know nothing about this.

We are quite satisfied with the progress that religion is making among the people who are under our charge. May it continue to prosper. Nevertheless the morals are not [*MS. torn*]. Concubinage is rife here and still more so at outlying posts. More regularity in this respect would probably have diverted the plagues that have overwhelmed us; but often one attributes to chance what with more reason should be attributed to wrongdoing.

Mr. Dumoulin is absent and so is deprived of the honor of writing to you. Mr. Edge is at Pembina. Both are very grateful for your kind remembrances. Presuming that they would so wish, I beg you to accept their very humble respects. Permit me also to add mine for Your Ladyship, His Lordship, and all your interesting family.

I have the honor to be, with the deepest respect, Your Ladyship's very humble and very obedient servant,

PROVENCHER, Vicar-General.

St. Boniface, Red River, July 29, 1819.

Lady Selkirk.

To the most Honorable Countess of Selkirk, London.

PROVENCHER TO [BISHOP PANET], NOVEMBER 24, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]¹⁰

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, By the canoes that arrived here last July, I sent a letter to the Bishop of Quebec, which I think will have been received by Your

¹⁰ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 40-44.

Lordship, as I expected would be the case when I wrote, in view of what His Lordship had written by the same canoes concerning his trip to Europe. Since these letters came, I have learned of his departure and of his elevation to the archiepiscopate, without, however, learning whether any other possible change accompanied this new dignity.¹¹ At the beginning of October I received His Lordship's letters dated five days before his departure. At the same time I received one from Lord Selkirk by way of Hudson Bay, in which His Lordship [tells me that he] is sending me some things, especially a bell of about a hundred pounds, which was consecrated in London. It will not come this year, as well as a number of other things sent for the colony that it was impossible to bring for lack of York boats. There was also some wine sent by milord that would have been sufficient for Mass (for here one does not drink it [as a beverage] at all); but as it is, we have received only a seven-gallon keg, and that is about all we shall have for the entire winter and even until the end of July. Thus, being two, we must not be too devout if we wish to have any left for Sundays and feast days. We also came very near not having flour enough left to make the altar bread. I was grateful, indeed, that the colonists who came up this summer donated a few pounds to me. Your Lordship can see by this little detail that we are far from having bread to eat and any comforts. I sent to the Bay for several things that would have aided us for days of abstinence, such as oil, vinegar, and butter, but nothing came, so we shall be obliged to keep Lent with buffalo meat, the only provision the country affords. It is a good meat. We live in hopes of better things another year, if only it may be possible for us to procure seed, which is not a very easy thing to do. We are planning to get some from the Americans by way of Prairie du Chien; the thing seems possible. We shall be fortunate if it succeeds.¹²

¹¹ Bishop Plessis was in England when he received news that Quebec had been raised to the rank of an archbishopric with two suffragan sees, New Brunswick and Upper Canada. At first he feared that the news might prejudice the English ministry against his plan for obtaining bishops for Montreal and the Northwest, one of the primary purposes of his trip; and he wrote to Rome of his regret that bulls appointing him archbishop of Quebec had been sent to Canada before the British cabinet had been apprised of the fact. The colonial office consented to his plan, provided that the new prelates should be only titular bishops and subordinate to the bishop of Quebec. In Rome, Pious VII permitted Bishop Plessis to waive the title of archbishop until England should have no objections. An account of these events is given by Scott, in Shortt and Doughty, eds., *Canada and Its Provinces*, 11:45-47. See also Ivanhoë Caron, "Inventaire de la correspondance de M^{re} Joseph-Octave Plessis, archevêque de Québec, 1816 à 1825," in *Rapport de l'archiviste de la province de Québec pour 1928-1929*, 130-132 ([Quebec], 1929).

¹² This appears to be the only known record of an attempt as early as 1819 to get seed grain by way of Prairie du Chien. An account of a later and successful attempt made in 1821 is given by Gunn and Tuttle, in their *History of Manitoba*, 214. Fort St. Anthony,

His Lordship told me in his last letter that Your Lordship is charged with sending a priest and an ecclesiastic to us next spring, in order that Mr. Edge and I may go down [to Canada]. They must not leave too late; it would be best if they arrived here about the middle of July, so that I can go down before the bad season. The journey is difficult in cold weather. His Lordship says also that he made a memorandum of different things requested in our letters of January, 1819, which did not reach him until June, and that he will have them sent out with the missionaries. I suppose all this has been arranged. We have received no holy oils this year; these gentlemen must be sure not to forget to bring some. We also need a complete chapel; there is a chalice of ours at the Seminary of Montreal. I am very desirous that these two who are coming out should be the sort of men that one can use everywhere and in all capacities. It is necessary here to act both as Mary and as Martha: that is to say, to conduct both the temporal and the spiritual. If they are men who do not understand anything about building, directing workmen, etc., they will hardly do. Just anybody is not suited to do the work here. We must have serious men who are absolutely above suspicion. In short, we must have intelligent men who are at the same time animated with zeal and devotion. I consider Mr. Dumoulin a good missionary. Mr. Edge is not at all the man we need. His Lordship writes that I am to go down alone, providing Mr. Edge does not object too seriously to remaining here alone. This plan would please me, and if this young man were fit for the work he would willingly remain, but very certainly he will go down with me. Mr. Roux said before we left Montreal that this young man was not the person we needed; I am sorry that he was not mistaken.

It is desirable that the men you are sending should be able to speak English, for it is a necessary language here. I further proposed in my letter of last July a plan that would be of great advantage to this mission, that is, that either the priest or the ecclesiastic coming out spend the winter at Lake of Two Mountains, in order to get some knowledge of the Algonquian language, which is that of our Indians here. I spoke of the matter to Mr. Roux in a letter I addressed to him by the last canoes. In September I received a copy of Mr. Thavenet's grammar, which Mr. Roupe had had copied for me. I was certain that there would be other canoes going down, but I was mistaken. It is for

later Fort Snelling, had just been established in 1819 at the mouth of the St. Peter's, now the Minnesota, River. The route thither became well traveled after 1819. In Provencher's letter of May 23, 1820, it will be noted that cattle as well as grain were expected. It is possible that Gunn and Tuttle's date of 1821 is wrong. See *post*, pp. 267, 268.

this reason that Your Lordship did not receive letters from me written at the same time as those I wrote to Mr. Dionne and Mr. Taché. I am now writing by an express that is to go by way of Prairie du Chien, and from there by way of the United States. It is a route with which I am not very familiar; I hope that my letters will arrive at least before the end of the winter.

The shortage of crops greatly retards the progress of this colony; everyone is busy trying to find a living. Every autumn there is an emigration movement from the post of The Forks, or St. Boniface, to the Pembina River, the residence of Mr. Dumoulin, all the families going to the latter place to be nearer the buffaloes. We are obliged to go to considerably more expense because of the necessity of feeding the workmen exclusively on meat. It has to be bought, and even though it is not very dear, expenses count up when that is the only item of diet. Furthermore, time is lost in carting the meat in from the prairies; a great deal of work is under way, and there are not enough men to do it quickly. Soon our funds will be depleted, and then it will be still more difficult. Thus far the herds of the prairie have not been very far out. The fire went pretty well all around, but fortunately it did not burn the prairies in the neighborhood of Pembina, whence the colony gets all its meat. Now that there is snow on the ground, there is nothing more to fear. Wherever the fire passes there can be no animals for the entire winter. It is a dreadful sight to see the fire start in the dry grass, and then be swept along by a strong wind. It travels with astonishing rapidity, and even though there is little to feed it, it is sufficient to burn herds of considerable numbers, which cannot escape its velocity, and which, if they do not die on the spot, survive but a short time.

I have here an old *voyageur*, who has taken to wife a girl with whose mother he has had illicit intercourse; the affair is a secret. He has several children; he would like to marry legitimately, and appears willing to leave her. I even published the banns once, being ignorant of this impediment. He wishes a dispensation. I do not know whether Your Lordship can grant it to this degree, but, supposing the thing possible, I beg you to grant it. It is an impediment that is not very rare here, and one for which I cannot give a dispensation.

For next year we shall need some dozens of catechisms of the diocese and some French primers. It would also be well if the missionaries would bring out a few hundred altar breads with them, for we can make them here only with extreme difficulty.

We are trying to instruct the people with whom we are living. They seem to be profiting fairly well. A considerable number of them are baptized and married. We also maintain a school but it progresses but slowly, the children being too irregular. They come, for the most part, from parents who live entirely by the hunt, and are thus obliged to follow them out on the prairies. If the country became more settled, and if the people were able to get their living by cultivating the soil, I think we could draw a better part of the children. Until such time as this condition is realized, I count on them very little. They would be especially valuable for supplying candidates for the priesthood, but as it is, the diocese will have to continue to furnish these for a long time.

I do not know if His Lordship has given orders with regard to the course to be followed by the missionaries of next year. Here is the plan I think best for them: that is, to come up by canoes that milord's agents usually send in May, directly to Red River, where they will arrive about July 15 or 20. The mission at Rainy Lake, which they *could* serve on the way, would probably not work into the itinerary they will have to follow, for they would arrive there too early. Furthermore, it would be better for the people themselves that it be the same missionary who goes there several years in succession; thus Mr. Dumoulin will go there next June, as he did this year. I say this because it may be that His Lordship has given orders for the priest who is coming up to take care of that mission. If Your Lordship wishes to adhere to his orders in this respect, it would be well that the seminarian come on directly to Red River. In any case, it would be necessary that Your Lordship write me by the first canoe, which arrives here about June 12, in order that I may know from your letter what we are to do before Mr. Dumoulin's departure. Since this canoe usually leaves without announcing its departure, it would be well, in order not to miss it, that the letter be sent and delivered to Montreal to the office of Messrs. Garden, Maitland, and Auldjo, agents of the Hudson's Bay Company, about April 20.

We have received this year twelve cases of tools and merchandise, but altogether worth only about seventy-three pounds. I regret that this shipment was so badly arranged; such a number of cases encumber the canoes, and might cause the agents to object to shipping them. If anything is sent to us next year, it ought to be packed in bales, which take up less room and hold more things than a *cassette*. There will be enough missionary articles that it will perhaps be necessary to put them

in cases. I am sorry to give you all these details; if I knew the missionary I should have written them to him.

We do not possess the sheet that contains the Mass of the priesthood [*la messe du Sacerdoce*]; I have always forgotten to ask for it; thus up until the present time we have been deprived of the offices for that day. While I think of it, we need three or four of them. Also, if you have a missal in quarto of the new edition, the missionaries would do well to bring one along. Mr. Dumoulin has a small one, but so old that all the Masses for the new saints are lacking. It would be useful for temporary and distant missions.

I am still at St. Boniface, but I shall leave soon for the Pembina River, where I expect to spend the winter for the purpose of studying the Indian language with the aid of Mr. Thavenet's grammar and the interpreters whom I shall surely find there. The post here does not require the residence of a priest during the winter. I shall come back in the spring when all the people return to do their little planting.

Since the conveyance by which I am sending this will be crossing almost the entire extent of the United States, I am writing to only Your Lordship in Canada in order to save postage. Besides, I am not too sure that my letter will arrive without delay. I hope so. If it reaches you in time, I beg of you not to miss the first opportunity to give me some information concerning the route the missionaries are to take next year and the Rainy Lake mission.

The country is at peace, and I have nothing interesting to say on that subject. One of these days an express is to leave for Prairie du Chien to try that means of getting some seed for the spring's planting. It is this conveyance that will carry the messages for Canada, England, etc.

I beg you to recall me to the remembrance of Madame Besançon, the Casgrain family, and my friends of Kamouraska, when the occasion presents itself. I commend myself to your Holy Sacrifices, and beg you to believe me, with most profound respect, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

J. N. PROVENCHER, Vicar-General.

St. Boniface, Red River, November 24, 1819.

SELKIRK TO BISHOP PLESSIS, DECEMBER 30, 1819

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pau, 30th Dec. 1819.

MONSEIGNEUR, / J'ai eu l'honneur de recevoir dernièrement la lettre du 26th nov. que Votre Seigneurie a eu la bonté de m'écrire de Rome,

et j'ai bien des remerciements à faire de l'intérêt que vous témoignez pour ma santé. Elle a été passablement bonne pendant tout le tems que j'ai mis au voyage d'Angleterre jusqu'ici; et quoique j'ai été assez incommodé depuis que je suis ici je me remets pendant quelques semaines dernièrement; et à tout prendre j'espère profiter beaucoup de mon hivernement méridional. Les avis que nous avons reçus en route nous ont décidés à venir le faire ici dans le Béarn plutôt qu'à Toulouse; et quoique nous sommes arrivés précisément au commencement de la saison pluvieuse, nous avons eu beaucoup de tems bien délicieux.

J'écrirai sous peu de jours à mon beau-frère Mr Colville, et je ne manquerai pas de lui faire sentir l'importance de communiquer aussitôt que possible à Messrs Garden & Cie à Montreal, l'intention que Votre Seigneurie me marque au sujet du missionnaire qui va faire cette année-ci le voyage à la Rivière Rouge, et de prévenir ces Messieurs qu'ils doivent faciliter de toutes manières cette expédition, et en régler les détails d'après les instructions de Monsgr l'Evêque de Saldes.

Je regrette beaucoup le contretems qui m'a fait manquer à Paris le plaisir de vous voir; et d'autant plus que je désirois profiter de cette occasion pour vous communiquer quelques circonstances qui sont arrivées depuis que j'ai eu le plaisir de vous voir à Londres; surtout que les Directeurs de la Baie d'Hudson, en coopération avec une société à Londres, qui s'occupe des missions de l'Eglise Anglicane, se sont déterminés à envoyer un ministre Protestant à la Rivière Rouge pour l'instruction spirituelle des habitans Anglois et des Protestants qui sont au service de la Compagnie. On a même fait choix d'un sujet pour cette mission, dont on me fait un grand éloge. Il doit s'embarquer dans les batiments de la Compagnie l'été prochain de manière qu'il pourra arriver à la Rivière Rouge sur la fin de l'automne.¹³

Votre Seigneurie connoit bien l'importance d'empêcher la discorde dans une colonie naissante, surtout quand elle est entourée, comme celle de la Rivière Rouge, de jaloux et de malveillans; et vous sentirez combien le maintien de l'union entre les habitans doit dépendre d'un bon accord, et d'une coopération franche pour le bien public entre les pasteurs de différentes communions. Vous sentirez aussi que dans la situation actuelle de la colonie de la Rivière Rouge, composée d'habitans de différentes langues, entre lesquels il y a eu de tout tems des préjugés

¹³ John West went to Lord Selkirk's colony in 1820 as chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company and, to use his own words, "under the encouragement and aid of the Church Missionary Society." His experiences as an Anglican churchman among Presbyterian settlers are described in his diary, *The Substance of a Journal during a Residence at the Red River Colony, British North America* (London, 1824).

nationaux, et parmi lesquels les malveillans avoient réussi dernièrement à exciter un violent esprit de parti qui n'est encore qu'à moitié éteint, il seroit du plus grand danger de laisser naître des sentimens de jalousie et de haine au sujet des différences de religion. C'est presque entièrement de la conduite des pasteurs qu'il dépendra d'éveiller ou d'éteindre ces sentimens: et j'ai grande confiance dans la sagesse des Missionnaires que Votre Seigneurie a choisi et qu'elle pourra choisir, pour la mission de la Rivière Rouge, qu'ils ne trouveront aucune difficulté à maintenir dans les Catholiques un attachement sincère à la foi qu'ils professent, sans leur faire envisager leurs voisins protestants comme des ennemis de Dieu, pour lesquels il ne peut y avoir de salut. Les suites malheureuses d'une conduite différente ne se virent que trop dans une partie du Royaume Britannique, où il y a beaucoup de prêtres plus animés par l'esprit de parti que de religion, qui ne savent entretenir le zèle de leurs paroissiens qu'en leur faisant haïr tous ceux qui sont d'une autre communion, en prêchant à une auditoire ignorante et fanatique d'une manière tranchante sur les doctrines les plus abstraites et les moins à leur portée, et en les dénaturant même, au point qu'on ne peut plus y connoître les mêmes principes qui ont été développés dans l'Exposition de l'illustre Bossuet. Cette conduite irréfléchie a beaucoup ranimé l'esprit d'intolérance parmi leurs compatriotes protestants, et rien n'a plus contrarié les efforts qu'on a fait et qu'on fait encore dans le Parlement Britannique pour le rappel des lois qui ont été portées contre les Catholiques d'Angleterre et surtout d'Irlande.

Quoique je n'ai pas vu personnellement l'Ecclésiastique Anglois qui doit aller à la Rivière Rouge, j'ai parlé d'une manière instante à un de mes amis, qui est aussi des siens, pour lui recommander fortement la modération dans ses discours au sujet du Catholicisme, et de ne pas s'entremêler dans les affaires qui ne regardent que les Catholiques; et on m'a rapporté qu'il a paru sentir l'importance de ces conseils; qu'il avoit seulement exprimé quelques craintes au sujet de l'esprit remuant pour faire des prosélytes sur les autres communions qu'on attribue ordinairement en Angleterre aux Prêtres Catholiques. Mais je ne manquerai pas de lui faire remarquer qu'à son arrivée à la Rivière Rouge il trouvera que les Missionnaires Catholiques y ont bien assez d'occupation à instruire les sauvages et à réclamer leurs propres ouailles de leurs habitudes irrégulières et scandaleuses, et que les devoirs essentiels de leur mission ne leur laissent pas le tems, s'ils avoient même la disposition, de troubler la conscience des chrétiens d'une autre communion. Dès qu'il sera rassuré sur ce point-là, je ne doute pas que les

missionnaires ne trouvent en cet Ecclésiastique une disposition sincère à tout ce qui peut avancer le bon oeuvre dans lequel ils sont engagés, et resserrer parmi tous les habitans de la Rivière Rouge les liens de la charité chrétienne.

Nous avons reçu dernièrement, par les Batimens de la Baie d'Hudson, une lettre de M. Provencher en date du 29 juillet qui marque qu'il venoit de recevoir les hommes et les effets que Votre Seigneurie lui avoit expédié le printems: il avoit reçu la lettre dans laquelle votre seigneurie lui marquoit l'intention de passer en Europe. Le rapport qu'il fait sur la situation actuelle de la colonie est bien rassurante, quoique les habitans ont encore cette année à soutenir le fléau des sauterelles.

Mr McDonell mon agent principal à la Rivière Rouge est arrivé en Angleterre, et il repart dès le mois de mars en passant par New York au Canada, pour retourner à la colonie par la première navigation. Il se chargera avec plaisir des lettres que Votre Seigneurie voudra bien lui confier.

J'aurai grand plaisir d'apprendre que les affaires qui ont déterminé Votre Seigneurie à faire le voyage en Europe se sont arrangées d'après vos désirs. Quand vous serez de retour en Angleterre, j'espère que vous aurez la bonté d'avertir Mr Halkett et M. Colville de votre arrivée. Ils s'empresseront de vous marquer combien ils seront heureux de pouvoir vous être de quelque utilité.

Lady Selkirk vous prie d'agréer ses respects, et j'ai l'honneur d'être avec les sentimens d'une parfaite estime/ de Votre Seigneurie le très obéissant serviteur.

SELKIRK.

P.S. Mr Walcott ne se trouvera plus à Seymour Place, mais au Spring Gardens, No 10, au West India Office.

A Monseigneur l'Evêque de Québec,/ Via di Poli, No 8, à Rome.

[*Translation*]

Pau [France], December 30, 1819.

MY LORD, I have had the honor of receiving recently the letter of November 26 that Your Lordship had the goodness to write me from Rome, and I have many thanks to express for the interest that you have shown in my health. It has been passably good during my entire journey hither from England. Although I have been indisposed since I arrived here, I have been recovering the last few weeks. All in all I hope to profit a good deal from my winter in the South. News that we have received en route has determined us to spend it here in Béarn rather

than at Toulouse. And although we arrived just at the beginning of the rainy season, we have had a good deal of fine weather. I shall write in a few days to my brother-in-law, Mr. Colvile, and I shall not fail to make him realize the importance of communicating as soon as possible to Messrs. Garden and Company of Montreal the plan that Your Lordship communicates to me on the subject of a missionary that is going this year to Red River. I shall inform these gentlemen that they are to facilitate in every possible way the sending of the missionary and to be governed in the matter of details by the instructions of the Bishop of Saldae.

I regret very much the mischance by which I missed an opportunity of seeing you in Paris; all the more so because I wished to profit by the occasion to tell you of some events that have occurred since I had the pleasure of seeing you in London; especially that the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, in co-operation with a society in London interested in the missions of the Church of England, have decided to send a Protestant minister to Red River for the spiritual instruction of the English and Protestant colonists that are in the service of the company. A choice has even been made of the candidate, who is praised very highly to me. He is to sail in the company's ship next summer so that he can arrive in Red River by the end of autumn.¹³

Your Lordship knows full well the importance of preventing discord in a young colony, especially when it is surrounded, as is the Red River, by jealousy and ill will; and you will appreciate how much the maintenance of union between the colonists will depend upon good will and generous co-operation for the public good between the pastors of different sects. You will realize also that in the present state of the Red River colony, composed of persons of different languages—between whom there have always been national prejudices and among whom ill-disposed persons have lately succeeded in exciting a violent partisan spirit that is not yet extinguished—there will be all the more danger from allowing sentiments of jealousy and hatred on the subject of religious differences to develop. It will be almost entirely the conduct of the pastors that will decide whether these feelings shall be rekindled or extinguished. I have the greatest confidence in the wisdom of the missionaries that Your Lordship has chosen and will choose for the Red River mission, believing that they will not find any difficulty in maintaining in the Catholics a sincere attachment to the faith that they profess without making them picture their Protestant neighbors as enemies of God, for whom there is no hope of salvation. The unfortu-

nate results of a different course are seen only too well in a group in the British realm, where there are many priests animated more by a partisan spirit than by religion. They do not know how to nurse the devotion of their parishioners in any way other than by making them hate all those of a different faith, preaching to ignorant and fanatical listeners in a peremptory manner upon the most abstract doctrines, which are quite beyond their hearers' comprehension. They even distort these principles to a point where one could no longer recognize them as those developed by the illustrious Bossuet in his *Exposition*. This heedless conduct has done much to rekindle the spirit of intolerance among their Protestant compatriots, and nothing has militated so forcefully against the efforts that have been made and that are still being made in the British Parliament for the repeal of discriminatory laws against the Catholics of England and especially of Ireland.

Although I have not seen personally the Anglican clergyman that is destined for the Red River, I have spoken very urgently with one of my friends, who is also a friend of the clergyman, asking him to recommend strongly to him to use moderation in his remarks on Catholicism and not to become involved in matters that concern only Catholics. I have been informed that he appears to appreciate the weight of this advice, only expressing fears of the proselyting spirit that in England is usually attributed to Catholic priests. But I shall not fail to tell him that on his arrival in Red River he will find that the Catholic missionaries are busy instructing the Indians and reclaiming their own stragglers from their irregular and scandalous ways, and that the fundamental duties of their mission do not allow them time, even if they had the disposition, to trouble the consciences of Christians of other sects. As soon as he is reassured on this point, I do not doubt that the missionaries will find in this clergyman a sincere willingness to further as far as possible the good work in which they are engaged, and to restrain within the bounds of Christian charity all the colonists of Red River.

We have received lately by the Hudson's Bay Company's ships a letter from Mr. Provencher dated July 29 and announcing that he had just received the men and goods that Your Lordship sent to him in the spring. He had received the letter in which Your Lordship informed him of your plan for a trip to Europe. The report that he makes on the present status of the colony is very reassuring, although the colonists are this year once more afflicted with a scourge of grasshoppers.

Mr. Macdonell, my chief agent at Red River, has arrived in Eng-

land. He will leave in March, going by way of New York to Canada, in order to return to the colony with the first canoes. He will be happy to carry any letters that Your Lordship would like to confide to his care.

I shall learn with great pleasure that all the matters that have decided Your Lordship to make a trip to Europe have been arranged to your satisfaction. On your return to England I hope that you will be good enough to let Mr. Halkett and Mr. Colville know of your arrival. They will hasten to inform you of their pleasure in being able to serve you.

Lady Selkirk sends her regards and I have the honor to be most respectfully, Your Lordship's very obedient servant,

SELKIRK.

P. S. Mr. Walcott is no longer at Seymour Place, but at number 10, Spring Gardens, at the West India Office.

His Lordship the Bishop of Quebec, 8 Via di Poli, Rome.

[BISHOP PLESSIS] TO SELKIRK, JANUARY 25, 1820
[Quebec Archbishopal Archives, *Rivière Rouge*, 3:53]

Rome, 25 janvier 1820.

Au très Honorable/ Comte de Selkirk.

MYLORD,/ J'ai reçu le 18 du courant l'honneur de votre lettre du 30 décembre. Rien ne pouvoit m'être plus agréable que les bonnes nouvelles que votre Seigneurie y donne de sa santé. Si elle se répare aux pieds des Pyrénées, combien se seroit-elle amélioré davantage dans un climat aussi doux que celui où vous deviez hyverner d'abord!

Devant passer tout le mois de mai en Angleterre, je ne désespère pas d'y rencontrer de nouveau Votre Seigneurie. J'aurai plusieurs choses à lui observer relativement à la mesure prise par les directeurs de la compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, dont il lui a plu me donner avis. En attendant, elle voudra bien me permettre de lui dire que, dans ce nouvel ordre de choses, je ne reconnois point les premières dispositions qu'elle a manifestées pour la mission établie à la Rivière Rouge.

Permettez que Lady Selkirk trouve ici l'expression de mon respect inviolable et veuillez bien être persuadé que personne n'est plus véritablement que moi, de Votre Seigneurie, Mylord, le &c.

[*Non signée*]

[*Translation*]

Rome, January 25, 1820.

The Very Honorable Earl of Selkirk.

MY LORD, The eighteenth of this month I received your favor of December 30. Nothing could be more agreeable than the good news concerning your health that Your Lordship gives in it. If it has improved so much at the foot of the Pyrenees, how much more it would have been bettered in the fine climate where you thought first of passing the winter.

Before spending the whole month of May in England, I hope once more to see Your Lordship there. I shall have many comments to make to you about the measure taken by the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, of which you were pleased to give me warning. In the meantime you will permit me to say that under the new regime I do not recognize the first attitude that they manifested toward the mission established at Red River.

Permit Lady Selkirk to find here the expression of my deepest respect, and rest assured that no one is more truly than I, My Lord, Your Lordship's etc.,

[*Unsigned*]

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PANET, JANUARY 30, 1820

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pembina, 30 janvier 1820.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Toute la mission continue toujours à bien aller, du moins quant aux blancs établis dans ce pays, ainsi que leur génération; mais pour les sauvages, nous n'avons pas encore fait grand chose avec eux; nous nous appliquons cependant à leur langue dans l'espérance de pouvoir mieux réussir dans la suite. Mr le Grand Vicaire hyverne ici, ainsi que Mr Edge; nous nous portons tous bien. J'espère achever ce printemps de marier les canadiens qui étoient ici avec des femmes sauvages, et dont le nombre n'est pas moins de 50 à 60. J'ai pour cela une dispense à demander à Votre Grandeur; la voici: Dispense du 1er degré d'affinité, ex copula illicita, in linea collateralis.

Mr Provencher donnera à Votre Grandeur des nouvelles plus détaillées. Permettez-moi de demander à Votre Grandeur, au commencement de cette nouvelle année, sa sainte bénédiction et de la prier de me croire son très humble et obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

A Sa Grandeur Mgr de Salles/ à la Rivière-Ouelle.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, January 30, 1820.

MY LORD, Everything at the mission continues to go smoothly, at least as far as the white settlers and their children are concerned; but we have not yet done very much for the Indians; we are studying their language, however, in the hope of having better success in the future. The Vicar-General is spending the winter here, also Mr. Edge; we are all well. This spring I hope to finish marrying the Canadians who were living here with Indian women; they number not fewer than fifty or sixty. To this end I must ask Your Lordship for a dispensation: a dispensation for the first degree *ex copula illicita, in linea collateralis* [*of illicit affinity in the collateral line*].

Mr. Provencher will give Your Lordship more detailed news. Permit me to beg Your Lordship at the beginning of this new year to give me your holy benediction, and to believe that I am your very humble and obedient servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship, the Bishop of Saldae, Rivière Ouelle.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 17, 1820

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pembina, le 17 mai 1820.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Comme Mr Provencher doit aller rendre compte à Votre Grandeur de l'état de la mission, je ne vous en dirai rien pour cette fois, seulement que tout va passablement bien, que nous nous portons tous bien, et que les sauterelles ne paroissent pas devoir nous faire tort cette année, quoiqu'il y en ait en petit nombre. Je pense aller à la Baie d'Hudson cette année; il est probable que Mr Edge restera encore à la Riv: Rouge, du moins il le désire beaucoup.

J'ai encore une dispense à demander à Votre Grandeur, qui est: Dispense du premier degré d'affinité en ligne collatérale. Comme cette dispense est si nécessaire que sans elle les parties demeurent dans le crime, il faudroit tâcher que le porteur de la présente (Jacques Lorente) pût rapporter la réponse lui-même, car il ne doit être que 15 jours à Montréal et doit remonter immédiatement.

J'ai aussi un cas à présenter à Votre Grandeur: Supposons que cet homme veuille faire tout ce qu'on lui ordonnera et qu'il demande ce qu'il y a à faire là-dessus, faudroit-il lui dire de laisser sa femme et ses enfants, puisqu'ils ne sont pas capables de vivre comme frère et soeur? Mais voici quels seront les inconvénients: Il est dans l'impossibilité de

pouvoir les soutenir sans que sa femme lui aide dans la prairie; cette femme sera peut-être forcée d'aller rejoindre ses parents sauvages, et peut-être de s'embandonner avec eux ainsi que ses enfants. Que faudroit-il lui ordonner?

Ajoutons encore un cas: Est-il permis d'admettre aux sacrements un engager des compagnies dont le devoir est d'aller chez les sauvages avec l'interprète, d'y porter ce qui est nécessaire pour la traite, le tabac, la poudre, le rum &c., qui ne verse pas aux sauvages et se contente de prendre sur sa traine la pelleterie traitée et de l'apporter au Fort?

En voici encore un qui me vient en ce moment: Un infidèle est dans de mauvaises habitudes, il est cependant assez instruit pour être baptisé, il demande le baptême et le mariage; peut-on le refuser?

Permettez-moi, Monseigneur, de vous demander votre sainte bénédiction et de me dire pour toujours de Votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Archevêque de Québec.

P.S. C'est la troisième dispense que je demande à Votre Grandeur depuis l'été dernier et dont je n'ai pas encore reçu aucune réponse.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, May 17, 1820.

MY LORD, Since Mr. Provencher is to give Your Lordship a report of conditions at the mission, I shall not say anything at this time further than that everything is going passably well, and that we are all in good health; and that the grasshoppers will probably not do any damage this year, although there are a few about. I am planning to go to Hudson Bay this year; it is probable that Mr. Edge will remain at Red River. At least he would like very much to do so.

I have another dispensation to ask of Your Lordship, which is the following: a dispensation of the first degree of affinity in the collateral line. Since this dispensation is so necessary that without it the individuals concerned are living in sin, I hope that it will be possible for you to send back a reply by this same messenger (Jacques Lorente), for he is to remain in Montreal only two weeks and then come back here immediately.

I also have a case to submit to Your Lordship: Let us suppose that this man is willing to do everything as directed, and that he wants to know what he should do in this case; should I tell him to leave his wife and children, since they are not capable of living together as

brother and sister? But here is the difficulty: It is impossible for him to support them unless the wife helps him on the prairie; this woman will perhaps be forced to return to her Indian parents, and possibly to abandon herself, as well as her children, to them. What ought I to do?

One more case: Is it permissible to admit to the sacraments an *engagé* whose job is to accompany the interpreter on his visits among the Indians, and carry all that is necessary for trading — tobacco, powder, rum, etc. — yet who does not offer liquor to the Indians, and is satisfied to load his sledge with the traded peltries and bring them back to the fort?

Here is another which has just come to my attention: An infidel has bad habits; he has been sufficiently taught, however, so that he is ready for baptism; he demands baptism and marriage; can they be refused him?

Permit me, My Lord, to pray you for your holy benediction and to declare myself always Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Archbishop of Quebec.

P.S. This is the third dispensation I have asked for since last summer, and I have not yet received a reply.

PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PANET, MAY 23, 1820

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Riv: Rouge, 23 mai 1820.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Je ne laisserai pas partir, sans écrire à Votre Grandeur, un canot qui descend d'ici à Montréal. Je ne doute pas que vous ne soyez satisfait d'apprendre des nouvelles des missions les plus reculées du diocèse. Un mot de notre part peut d'ailleurs servir beaucoup à rassurer contre des bruits qu'on est toujours prêt à répandre touchant ces contrées lointaines.

J'ai adressé à Votre Grandeur une lettre du mois de novembre, si je m'en rappelle, et qui n'est partie qu'en janvier; elle devoit passer par la prairie du Chien, St Louis sur le Mississipi, et les Etats-Unis, avant que d'arriver à Montréal. Je ne sais si elle se sera rendue avant le départ du missionnaire qui me doit remplacer.

Nous avons passé l'hiver sans accident; tout le monde de St Boniface ayant émigré à Pembina, je m'y suis rendu aussi moi, et ne suis descendu qu'après Pâques. La vache des prairies a été constamment

abondante et proche de l'établissement de Pembina. Tout le monde y a vécu, n'y ayant point autre chose.

Plusieurs nations sauvages de nos environs menacent de se faire la guerre. Je ne sais pas bien sur quelle nation ils dirigent leur marche; on pense que c'est sur les Sioux, ce qui pourra devenir funeste pour cette colonie, car nous attendons de la prairie du chien des vaches une centaine; on a aussi envoyé sur la neige ce printemps des hommes pour en amener du grain qui n'est pas encore arrivé; on attend de plus par là Mylord Selkirk ou son beau-frère; il faut que tout cela traverse les terres des Sioux, desquels on ne craint rien ou peu, mais il y a beaucoup à craindre des partis de guerre qui iront les attaquer; leur usage est de tuer tout ce qu'ils rencontrent. Heureux si rien de tout cela n'arrive, car ce seroit un mauvais coup. Le peu de semence qu'on a mis en terre cette [année] a bonne apparence; il n'y a point de sauterelles.

Il y a eu, la semaine dernière, une grande épouvante à la Rivière Pembina; un jeune homme d'une quinzaine d'années encore catécumène a été tué à quinze ou vingt arpents du Fort, et a eu la chevelure levée; on n'a pas pu découvrir de quelle nation étoient ces ennemis. C'est un endroit où il y a de tems à autre de semblables coups. Mr Dumoulin étoit ici, et il y est encore; il ne doit pas aller au Lac Lapluie cette année, on a présumé que peut-être le prêtre qui monte pour me remplacer aura été chargé de cette mission. Je dois lui écrire là pour le charger de s'y arrêter. L'ecclésiastique qui l'accompagne passera outre pour se rendre ici. Mr Dumoulin ira, je pense, à la Baie d'Hudson. Je partirai probablement d'ici à la fin de juillet ou le commencement d'aout. Je resterai ici jusqu'à ce moment. Mr Dumoulin et Mr Edge se portent bien. Ce dernier, qui a droit de descendre avec moi, ne paroît pas s'en soucier; Monseigneur m'a écrit l'année dernière de le laisser s'il n'y avoit pas trop de répugnance. Je crois qu'il finira par rester jusqu'à nouvel ordre. Ainsi il paroît que j'arriverai seul en Canada. Nous sommes toujours en batisse, je doute que nos finances permettent d'achever ce qui seroit au moins de nécessité dans les deux postes de notre résidence.

Je ne m'étendrai pas davantage, les nouvelles de ce petit pays sont peu abondantes.

Je suis avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, de votre Grandeur le très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

J. N. PROVENCHER, V. G.

A Monseigneur l'Evêque de Saltes/ à la Rivière-Ouelle.

[*Translation*]

Red River, May 23, 1820.

MY LORD, I shall not allow a canoe bound for Montreal to leave without a letter from me to Your Lordship. I have no doubt that you will be glad to hear some news of the most distant missions of the diocese. A word from us may serve, furthermore, to reassure you greatly concerning the rumors that constantly circulate with regard to these distant lands.

I wrote a letter to Your Lordship in November, if I am not mistaken, but it was not sent till January; it was to go by way of Prairie du Chien, St. Louis on the Mississippi, and the United States before arriving at Montreal. I do not know whether or not it will be delivered before the departure of the missionary who is to take my place.

We have spent the winter without mishap; since every one from St. Boniface migrated to Pembina, I went there also, and did not come down here until after Easter. The buffaloes were numerous at all times and close to the settlement of Pembina. Everybody lived on the meat, there being nothing else.

Several tribes of Indians in this vicinity are threatening to make war. I am not sure upon which nation they will fall; some say upon the Sioux, which may prove disastrous to this colony, for we are expecting about a hundred cows to be sent from Prairie du Chien. Moreover, while the snow was still on the ground this spring, some men were sent to bring seed from that place, and they have not yet returned. In addition we are expecting Lord Selkirk or his brother-in-law to come from that place; they will all have to cross the territory inhabited by the Sioux, from whom there is little or nothing to fear; but there is a great deal to fear from the war parties who will go to attack them. These are in the habit of killing everyone they encounter. We shall be fortunate if nothing of the sort happens, for it would be a bad blow. The little seed we planted this year is looking fine; there are no grasshoppers.

Last week a dreadful thing happened at Pembina River; a young lad of perhaps fifteen years, who was still a catechumen, was killed and scalped not more than fifteen or twenty arpents from the fort; it was impossible to learn to which nation the enemy belonged. Similar incidents have occurred from time to time at the same place. Mr. Dumoulin was here and still is; he is not going to Rainy Lake this year, since we have taken it for granted that the priest who is coming up to take my place may, perhaps, attend to that mission. I am to

write him to ask him to stop there. The seminarian who accompanies him will not stop at that place but will come directly here. Mr. Dumoulin will go to Hudson Bay, I think. I shall probably leave here the latter part of July or the first of August. I shall remain here until that time. Mr. Dumoulin and Mr. Edge are both well. The latter, whose turn it is to go down [to Canada] with me, does not seem at all anxious about it; His Lordship wrote me last year to leave him behind unless he objected too much. I think in the end he will stay until he receives further orders. So it looks as though I shall go to Canada alone. We are still in the process of building. I doubt if our funds will permit finishing even the most necessary things in our two places of residence.

I will elaborate no further, as the news of this little settlement is not abundant.

I am, with the profoundest respect, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,

J. N. PROVENCHER, Vicar-General.

The Bishop of Saldae, Rivière Ouelle.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JULY 3, 1820

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

St Boniface, 3 juillet 1820.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Etant sur mon départ pour la Baie d'Hudson, je n'ai le tems que de vous présenter mes plus profonds respects, laissant à Mr le Grand Vicaire à vous donner les détails de nos missions; j'ai cependant deux dispenses à demander à Votre Grandeur. La rière est: dispense du premier degré d'affinité en ligne collatérale ex copula illicita; le mariage est déjà contracté il y a trois ou quatre ans.

2de dispense du premier degré d'affinité en ligne collatérale ex copula illicita; le mariage n'est pas même contracté à la coutume du pays, mais mettroit une fille hors du danger où elle est de se faire prendre par quelque bourgeois à la façon illicite de ce pays.

Il y a ici un homme qui a pour épouse illégitime une femme que l'on a lieu de penser être sa soeur; le père même de cette femme ne peut en rien dire; je ne sais ce qu'il faudroit faire dans ce doute.

Il y avoit à Pembina deux personnes ensemble qui avoient entre eux un empêchement d'affinité au troisième degré; le mariage étoit à la veille de se contracter lorsque je l'ai découvert. Des personnes qui ont pris la hauteur à Pembina assurent que cette mission est chez les Anglois. J'ai accordé la dispense *in quantum potui*. Que faut-il faire? que faut-il en penser?

Est-il permis pour le bien de la religion d'exhorter un pénitent à déclarer son complice ailleurs que dans le tribunal?

Qu'il seroit consolant et réjouissant pour moi de pouvoir, à son retour d'Europe, rendre à Votre Grandeur mes devoirs et mes respects les plus profonds! Mais la Providence ne le veut pas. Fiat! Mr le Grand Vicaire a grand' hate de voir arriver le jour de son départ, et ce n'est pas sans raison, comme Votre Grandeur le verra. J'ai baptisé 60 personnes adultes dernièrement à Pembina.

Je suis, Monseigneur, de Votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre

Mgr J. O. Plessis, / Archevêque de Québec, à Québec.

P.S. J'avois demandé une dispense l'an dernier: 1er degré d'affinité ex copula illicita en ligne collatérale. Mgr de Saldes ne l'a accordé qu'à condition que le crime seroit caché; il ne l'est pas tout à fait, et je crois même qu'un bon nombre de personnes en parle. Votre Grandeur en jugera. Les deux époux ont plusieurs enfants.

S. D.

[*Translation*]

St. Boniface, July 3, 1820.

MY LORD, As I am leaving shortly for Hudson Bay, I have time only to send you my profoundest respects, leaving it to the Vicar-General to give you the details of our missions. I have, however, two dispensations to ask of Your Lordship. The first is a dispensation for the first degree of illicit affinity in the collateral line; the marriage was contracted three or four years ago.

2nd. A dispensation for the first degree of illicit affinity in the collateral line; the union has not been contracted even in the manner customary in the country, but marriage would obviate the danger of the girl's being taken by some *bourgeois* in the usual illicit way.

There is a man here with an unlawful wife, whom we have reason to believe his sister; even the father of this woman does not know the facts of the matter. I do not know what to do in such an uncertain case.

There was a couple living together at Pembina between whom there was an impediment of affinity in the third degree; I discovered it just as the marriage was to be contracted. Some people who have taken the latitude of Pembina declare that this mission is under English jurisdiction. I have granted the dispensation *in quantum potui*. What should be done? What am I to think about it?

Is it permissible for the good of religion to exhort a penitent to name his accomplice elsewhere than in court?

How comforting and gratifying it would be to me to be able to pay my homage and profoundest respects to Your Lordship upon your return from Europe! But Providence does not so will it. Well, so be it! The Vicar-General is very anxious for the day of his departure to arrive, and not without cause, as Your Lordship will see. I have recently baptized sixty persons at Pembina.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,
SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Archbishop of Quebec, Quebec.

P.S. I asked for a dispensation last year for the first degree of illicit affinity in the collateral line. The Bishop of Saldae granted it only on condition that the misdeed should be kept concealed; this has not been done altogether, and I even believe that quite a number of people are talking about it. Your Lordship will be the judge. The couple have several children.

S.D.

DESTROISMAISONS¹⁴ TO BISHOP PLESSIS, AUGUST 4, 1820
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

St Boniface, le 4 aout 1820.

A Sa Grandeur Mgr Jos. Oct. Plessis/ Archevêque de Québec, à Québec.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Je suis arrivé très heureusement au lieu de ma mission après environ deux mois et demi de navigation. Je n'ai éprouvé aucun dégoût, ni ennui durant ce temps, et j'espère qu'il en sera toujours de même. Quoique je susse bien que la volonté de mes supérieurs fût celle de Dieu même, cependant je n'ai pu accorder la charge difficile qui m'étoit confiée avec l'incapacité où j'étois de la remplir; mais j'ai obéi dans l'espérance que Dieu ferait ce dont j'étois incapable. Je sens tout le besoin que j'ai du secours de vos lumières, j'ose espérer que vous m'en ferez quelque part. De mon côté je ferai tous mes efforts pour me rendre capable d'exercer le mieux qu'il me sera possible le saint ministère dont je suis chargé.

Je suis avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, de votre grandeur le très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

DESTROISMAISONS, Prêtre, Missionnaire.

¹⁴Thomas Ferruce Destroismaisons was born at St. Pierre, Canada, in 1796, and was ordained in 1819. After spending seven years at Red River, he returned to Canada in 1827. Morice, *Dictionnaire historique*.

[Translation]

St. Boniface, August 4, 1820.

His Lordship Joseph Octave Plessis, Archbishop of Quebec, Quebec.

MY LORD, I have arrived at the place of my mission very well after about two and a half months of travel. I have not experienced either indisposition or weariness during that period, and I hope such will always be the case. Although I knew that the wish of my superiors was that of God Himself, nevertheless I was not able to reconcile the difficult burden confided to me with my incapacity for sustaining it. But I obeyed in the hope that God would do what I was unable to accomplish. I feel the utmost need for the help of your wisdom. I am hoping that you will impart some of it to me. For my part, I shall put forth every effort to make myself capable of exercising to the best of my ability the holy ministry with which I am charged.

I am, most respectfully, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

DESTROISMAISONS, Priest, Missionary.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, AUGUST 25, 1820

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

St Boniface, 25 aout 1820.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Je me suis [*serois?*] estimé heureux d'être du nombre de ceux qui eurent les premiers l'avantage de vous voir reparoitre à Québec; qu'il m'auroit été doux de faire éclater ma joie en m'unissant à tous les amis de la religion qui se sont empressés de vous la témoigner! C'est sans contredit la plus dure privation que je puisse éprouver dans ces pays stériles. Votre Grandeur voudra bien me pardonner cet épanchement de mon coeur peut-être trop divulgué.

Je suis de retour de mon voyage à la Baie d'Hudson après un mois et 22 jours d'absence. Mr le Grand Vicaire étoit parti depuis 7 jours. Ma mission a été comme une nouvelle mission; beaucoup de politesse de toute part, tout bien pour le temporel, mais peu de succès dans le spirituel. J'ai, comme au Lac Lapluie, peu fait de bien mais empêché beaucoup de mal. Cette mission n'a pourtant pas été aussi avantageuse à la religion que celle du Lac Lapluie, et cela vient principalement de ce que le fort Roch¹⁵ où s'assemblent les gens des Athabaskas est un nouveau poste où il y a peu de batisses, de manière que je n'avois point

¹⁵ Rock House appears to have been established by Lord Selkirk about 1812 on the Hill River, about a third of the distance from York Factory to Lake Winnipeg. A reference to it may be found in Martin, *Selkirk's Work in Canada*, 60.

de chambre pour y exercer mon ministère, et puis les engagés des Anglois sont des jeunes gens encore dans la plus grande force de leurs passions. Mrs les Agents et comis ne se sont pas soucié de faire baptiser leurs enfants, excepté Mr McKenrey; je n'ai fait que six baptêmes dans mon voyage. Les Mrs de la Compagnie d'Hudson m'ont demandé à aller passer l'hyver prochain dans les Athabaskas; un Mr du Nord-ouest m'en a demandé autant. Il paroît que par vues d'intérêt les deux compagnies seroient disposées à en faire complètement les frais, car les sauvages demandent depuis que nous sommes ici à voir *les enfants de Dieu*, c-à-d. des prêtres; on trouveroit près de 400 enfants à baptiser, tous métis et la plupart chez le Nord-ouest, un grand nombre de vieux voyageurs qui ne sont plus capables de *sortir des terres*, un plus grand nombre encore de femmes mariées à la façon du pays à des canadiens à qui j'ai donné des catéchismes et qui doivent faire instruire un peu leurs femmes. Outre cela par cette mission la religion prendroit possession de ces pays barbares, et le missionnaire qui en reviendrait pourroit donner une juste idée du bien qu'on y pourroit faire. Je laisse le reste à votre Grandeur. Si le voyage se fesoit, il faudroit que les deux compagnies donnassent pour un an chacun 3 hommes, un canot, une douzaine de pièces, enfin se charger des frais du voyage. Pour lors celui qui seroit nommé partirait d'ici dans le commencement de juillet, se rendroit au Fort Gamberland [*sic*], puis à l'Île à la Crosse, et se rendroit dans l'automne au premier fort des Athabaskas; dans le mois de mars il se rendroit à pied à la rivière de la Paix d'où il partirait par les premiers canots pour revenir aux Athabaskas, et passeroit ensuite par un autre chemin qui lui feroit voir plusieurs autres forts et le conduiroit au fameux Fort des Prairies où il y a peut-être plus de 80 enfants.¹⁶ Si Votre Grandeur le juge à propos, elle pourra en écrire à Mr McGilvray et aux Agents de la Baie d'Hudson. Pour moi je ne refuse pas le travail, quoiqu'il soit bien dur de passer tant de tems sans pouvoir se confesser. Si j'y allois, il me faudroit une soutane d'été et une autre petite soutane de voyage de même étoffe. Il seroit peut-être important que Votre Grandeur fût informé de l'abus qu'il y a de donner à Montréal des warrents des deux côtés pour se prendre les uns les autres. Si le gouvernement ne pourvoit au plus tôt à cela, il y aura, avant qu'il soit 2

¹⁶ The route suggested by Dumoulin would take him up the Saskatchewan to the portage, from Cumberland House to the Churchill and up that stream, via the customary trading route to the Athabaska River system and Lake Athabaska, into which Peace River flows. His return trip would, presumably, take him up the Athabaska River and by portage to the North Saskatchewan, to the vicinity of Edmonton, where Fort des Prairies was located.

ans, bien du sang de répandu au Grand R[a]pide; et s'il n'y [en] a pas eu les 2 années dernières, ce n'est que par accident.

Mr le Grand Vicairé pourra donner à Votre Grandeur de plus grands détails sur ce sujet et sur tout ce qui regarde notre pauvre mission que les sauterelles semblent vouloir dévorer.

Je suis, Monseigneur, de votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

A Sa Grandeur Mgr J. O. Plessis,/ Archevêque de Québec, à Québec.

P. S. Les infidèles nouvellement convertis ont-ils été capables de contracter des empêchements qui sont de droit divin ou ecclésiastique?

[*Translation*]

St. Boniface, August 25, 1820.

MY LORD, I should have been happy indeed to have been among those who had the first opportunity of seeing you return to Quebec; how happy I should have been to have given expression to my joy by uniting with all the friends of religion who eagerly hastened to welcome you! This is without exception the severest privation that I must endure in this barren land. Your Lordship will pardon me for this perhaps too frank outpouring of my heart.

I have returned from my journey to Hudson Bay after a month and twenty-two days' absence. The Vicar-General had left seven days before. My mission was like a new one; a great deal of courtesy was shown me; all well in the temporal, but little success in the spiritual. As at Rainy Lake, I accomplished little good but prevented much evil. This mission was not, however, so profitable to religion as that of Rainy Lake, the principal cause being the fact that Rock House,¹⁵ where the Athabaska traders gather, is a new post where there are very few buildings, so that I had no room in which to perform my ministerial functions; moreover, the Hudson's Bay Company's employees are young men still at the height of their passions. The agents and clerks did not take the trouble to have their children baptized, except Mr. McKenrey [*McHenry?*]; I performed only six baptisms on the trip. The Hudson's Bay Company has asked me to spend next winter in the Athabaska department; a gentleman of the North West Company has asked me to do the same. It seems that for their own interests the two companies would be willing to pay all expenses, for the Indians have been asking ever since we came here to see *the children of God*, that

is, the priests; there would be nearly four hundred children to baptize, all *métis*—most of them of the North West Company—a large number of old *voyageurs* who are no longer able to leave the country, and an even greater number of women married to Canadians in the usual way. I have given catechisms to these Canadians and they are to teach their wives a little. Furthermore, religion would take possession of that wild country through such a mission; a missionary returning from there could give a definite idea of the good that could be accomplished. I leave the rest to Your Lordship. If the journey were undertaken, it would be necessary that each of the two companies furnish for a year three men, a canoe, a dozen or so *pièces*, and, finally, be responsible for all traveling expenses. Then the one commissioned to go there would leave here the first part of July, going to Fort Cumberland, then to Ile-à-la-Crosse, and by fall he would reach the first fort in the Athabaska department; in March he would go on foot to Peace River, whence he would go back to [Lake] Athabaska by the first canoes, and then, by another route that would take him to several other forts, he would finally reach the famous Fort des Prairies, where there are perhaps over eighty children.¹⁶ If Your Lordship thinks it advisable, he can write to Mr. McGillivray and the agents of the Hudson's Bay Company. As for myself, I would not refuse to do this work, even though it would be very hard to go so long without confession. If I go, I shall need a summer cassock and another light cassock of the same material for traveling. It might be important to inform Your Lordship of the abuse that there is in giving warrants at Montreal to the contestants of both parties to seize those on the other side. If the government does not interfere immediately, a good deal of blood will be shed at the Grand Rapid before two years are up; it is purely accidental that nothing of the sort has happened during the last two years.

The Vicar-General will be able to give Your Lordship further details concerning this matter and all that relates to our poor mission, which the grasshoppers seem inclined to devour.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,
SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Archbishop of Quebec, Quebec.

P. S. Are newly converted infidels subject to impediments of divine or ecclesiastical law [because of their morals before conversion]?

APPOINTMENT OF BISHOP PLESSIS AS BISHOP DU BOURG'S¹⁷

VICAR-GENERAL, AUGUST 26, 1820

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. DS]

LUDOVICUS GUILLELMUS VALENTINUS DU BOURG

miseratione divina et Sanctae Sedis Apostolicae auctoritate Episcopus Ludovicensis in America septentrionali, omnibus praesentes inspecturis, Salutem et Benedictionem in Domino Jesu.

Cum ea sit relatio inter provincias Canadiensem et Ludovicensem, ut quotidie eveniat incolas utriusque, huc illucve, negotiorum causa, transmeare, ideoque peroptabile visum fuerit, ut inter ambarum dioeceseon Antistites mutuae existat spiritualis jurisdictionis intermutatio; NOS, virtute praesentium, Illmum et Revmum Fratrem et Dominum nostrum D.D. J. O. Duplessis Quebecensem Episcopum, Vicarium nostrum Generalem constituimus, plenitudinem nostrae potestatis ipsi tribuentes, quâ, pro data occasione, sive per se, sive per Vicarios suos, in Dioecesanos nostros, cum ecclesiasticos tum seculares, tanquam jure suo, uti valeat.

Datum Sti Ludovici, in Statu Missouriiano, sub signo sigilloque nostris et pro-secreatarii nostri subscriptione, die augusti 26a 1820.

† LUD. GUIL. Epus Ludov.

(L. S.) De mandato Illmi et Revmi D. D. Episcopi.

F. NIEL, pter, Sec.

[*Translation*]

LOUIS WILLIAM VALENTIN DU BOURG

by the grace of God and the authority of the Holy Apostolic See, Bishop of Louisiana in North America, to all to whom these presents shall come, greeting and blessing in the Lord Jesus.

Since there exists between the provinces of Canada and Louisiana a daily migration of the inhabitants of both regions to this place and that for the sake of trade, therefore it will be recognized as necessary that there be between the bishops of both dioceses a mutual interchange of spiritual jurisdiction: wherefore, WE, by virtue of these presents, con-

¹⁷ Louis Guillaume Valentin du Bourg, a Sulpician, was the second bishop of Louisiana and the Floridas. He was ordained in Paris in 1788, and six years later he came to the United States. He was president of Georgetown College from 1796 to 1799, and he founded St. Mary's College in Baltimore, acting as its first president. In 1812 he was appointed apostolic administrator of Louisiana and the Floridas, and in 1815 he was consecrated bishop. He made his residence in St. Louis until 1823, when he removed to New Orleans. His see was an especially difficult one to administer, and he resigned in 1826. He was transferred to the diocese of Montaulan, France, and was named archbishop of Besançon in 1833. He helped to organize the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in 1822. *New Catholic Dictionary* (New York, 1929).

All the trans-Mississippi portion of modern Minnesota, as well as all the Red River

stitute our most reverend brother, His Lordship, J. O. du Plessis, D. D., Bishop of Quebec, our vicar-general, granting him the plenitude of our power, by means of which, for the said purpose, he may utilize it either himself or by means of his vicars, amongst our diocesans, whether ecclesiastical or secular, as if it were his own.

Given at St. Louis, in the state of Missouri, under our sign and seal and with the signature of our subsecretary, this twenty-sixth day of August, 1820.

† LOUIS WILLIAM, Bishop of Louisiana.

(Seal) By authority of the Most Illustrious and Reverend Bishop, D. D.

F. NIEL, Priest, Secretary.

CREVIER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, SEPTEMBER 6, 1820

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Trois missions de Malden à la Riv. à la Tranche depuis mon arrivée du Fort-William m'ont empêché de donner avis de mon retour qui a été le sept d'Aout. J'aurais bien désiré, Monsgr me joindre à tant de respectables prêtres qui vous ont félicité sur votre heureux retour; mais n'osant pas me mesurer avec eux, je me contente de les admirer & de répéter dans le fond de mon coeur les compliments & éloges qui vous auront été faits à si juste titre.

J'ai fait la miss. seul, plutôt bien accompagné du secours d'en haut; la lettre de Mr Tabeau à cette occasion étoit si emphibologique qu'elle me faisoit espérer un compagnon. Arrivé à l'Isle Drummond une autre lettre de Mr Tab. me parla plus clairement; enfin arrivé au Sault Ste Marie, une autre de Monsgr Panet m'apprit tout au net que je serois seul. J'étois trop avancé pour reculer. Je m'effrayois moi-même en pensant que je devois me trouver exposé à tant de dangers spirituels et corporels. Enfin je fermai les yeux à tout, pris l'obéissance pour bouclier & m'embarquai. Mon voyage fut des plus heureux jusqu'au Détroit où je jouis maintenant de la santé la plus parfaite.

Mon Eglise de la rivière à la Tranche, qui à mon départ étoit sur Valley, including Pembina, were parts of Louisiana Territory from 1805 to 1812 and of Missouri Territory from 1812 to 1821; thereafter, till 1834, their political affiliation was uncertain. The Roman Catholic residents of the region were under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Louisiana until 1826, and thereafter of the bishop of St. Louis until the bishopric of Dubuque was established in 1837. Because of the indefiniteness of the boundaries of the dioceses in the United States, arising in part from a similar vagueness concerning the lines of demarcation of the Louisiana Purchase, Rome advised all bishops in the United States and Canada to constitute their neighboring bishops their vicars-general. Consequently the Bishop of Louisiana constituted the Bishop of Quebec his vicar-general and vice versa; and the Vicar-General at the Red River settlement, uncertain of his jurisdiction in the vicinity of Pembina, was anxious at the period of this document to have adequate faculties for that region, from the Bishop of Louisiana, if necessary.

le point d'être taillée, a resté *in statu quo*. Ces jours passés, j'ai encore remué les esprits & j'espère après les semences d'automne mettre hache en bois. Celle que je mis sur pied l'automne passée à l'Isle Drummond n'est pas encore levée. on y travailloit à mon départ. le commandant, Major Weinet, a eu la bonté de tripler le lot que Mr Tab. & mois avions eu, il y a trois ans. Il a fait faire, par la troupe, les deux rues qui l'environnent.

Les gens du Sault, assez nombreux & jaloux des progrès de l'Isle D. se sont assemblés & m'ont demandé la permission de bâtir une chapelle, permission que j'ai accordée avec le plus grand plaisir, vû combien ce dimanche là j'avois souffert à célébrer les S.S. mystères dans un appartement très concentré où je faillis plusieurs fois me trouver mal.

Je les ai laissé avec le désir d'avoir chacun l'Eglise chez soi, & se partageant entr'eux les bois, charpente & main d'oeuvre; enfin elle étoit déjà faite en promesse.

Au Fort William, le Docteur McLaughlin, que votre Grandeur verra probablement à Québec cette année, me dit que les bois étoient tout coupés pour en faire aux frais de la société N. W. Là nous étions assez bien logés.

Dans tous ces différents Postes je n'ai fait que deux mariages après avoir instruit & baptisé les deux femmes. J'en ai refusé un grand nombre d'autres à raison d'embaras & complications. Je désirerois beaucoup d'avoir l'honneur d'un entretien avec votre Grandeur pour avoir la satisfaction que bien des lettres ne pourroit pas me donner. Si au cas je puis lever, cette automne, l'Eglise de la riv. à la tranche je vous demande la permission d'aller vous voir dans le cours de cet hiver. ce voyage me fourniroit l'occasion de présenter une petite souscription à ces M.M. les Ptres faiseurs d'argent, pour achever mon église de la riv. à la tranche qui n'est pas encore commencée. Votre avis là dessus me flatteroit beaucoup.

Quant à Malden elle sera finie dans quelque tems, la voute s'achève demain, & ensuite les renduits. là il y a assez de moyens.

Pour ce qui est de ma contribution à la caisse ecl., j'ai eu honte de me voir curé de deux cures & de n'avoir qu'une piastre à envoyer. les frais de poste l'auroit mangé. Quant aux grains de la riv. Tr. les habitants ne me l'ont point encore remis n'ayant point de place pour le loger; d'ailleurs il n'est ni vendu ni vendable, chacun en ayant.¹⁸ dans le cours de l'automne je saurai régler cette affaire & m'acquitter.

¹⁸ The tithe, one twenty-sixth part of the grain harvested, was collected in Canada for the support of the parish priest and church. Jean C. Bracq, *The Evolution of French Canada*, 259 (New York, 1924).

J'ai vu à F. William Mr Destroismaisons & Sauvez Eccl.¹⁹ Ce premier n'est pas suivant moi l'homme qu'il falloit, il ne me paroissoit pas avoir assez de résolution, rapides, traverses & vents tout l'effrayoit. Il est vrai que souvent c'est assez terrifique. Il ne me sembloit pas assez mûri dans le ministère pour faire le bien qui peut être espéré. Mais Dieu coopérant cette science peut s'acquérir assez vite.

Mr Marchand a une pauvre santé, quoique cela il est assez vigoureux. Il devient vieu et assez incommode. Il me donne de la peine partant. Il m'est regardant jusqu'à une épingle. Il me semble qu'il ne sent pas les services que je lui rends & que je suis toujours prêt à lui rendre. la moindre bienveillance qu'on a pour moi l'offusque. pardonnez moi, Monseig. Je ne voudrois pas dire ce que je sais.

Je reviens aux succès des missions. J'ai été fort étonné de voir combien certains enfans, surtout au F. W. ont fait de progrès dans le catéchisme. J'ai vu des enfans de dix ans rendus à l'Eucharistie, chantant par coeur plusieurs cantiques, des femmes de plusieurs maris Protestans déjà instruites de même & qui me demandoient à les marier. Peut-être là dessus que vous accorderiez quelques permissions particulières.

Si j'ai l'honneur de vous voir dans le cours de l'hiver j'exposerai au long plusieurs cas dont je ne puis trouver aucune solution.

Je termine, Monseigneur, en vous priant de vous ressouvenir de moi, un de vos pres missionnaires,

Jos: CREVIER Ptre, M.

Détroit le 6ème 7bre 1820.

A Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, Evêque de Québec.

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, Three missions between Malden and Thames River since my arrival from Fort William have prevented me from apprizing you of my return on August 7. I should have liked, My Lord, to join with the many worthy priests that have felicitated you on your happy return; but not daring to count myself among them, I am glad to admire them and repeat from the depths of my heart the compliments and praises that have been offered you on acquiring a title so well deserved.

I performed the mission alone, or rather, accompanied by help from

¹⁹ The little that is known of the career of Jean Baptiste Sauvez is contained in ensuing letters. Bernard Benjamin Decoigne was expected to go to Red River, but illness prevented his going. Sauvez went in his place. Roux to Bishop Plessis, May 23, 29, June 3, 1820, Quebec Archbishopal Archives.

on high. Mr. Tabeau's letter on the matter was so ambiguous that I believed I should have a companion. When I reached Drummond Island, another letter from Mr. Tabeau represented the situation more clearly. Finally, on my arrival at Sault Ste. Marie, another from Bishop Panet told me quite distinctly that I should be alone. I had gone too far to turn back. I was terrified when I thought how I should be exposed to so many spiritual and physical dangers. Finally I closed my eyes to everything, took obedience as my shield, and embarked. My journey was very satisfactory as far as Detroit, where I am now enjoying perfect health.

My church at Thames River, for which the wood was about to be hewed, has remained *in statu quo*. These past days I have once more agitated the matter and I hope after the fall sowing to put ax to wood. The church that I started last autumn at Drummond Island is not yet up. Work was going on when I left. The commandant, Major [James] Winnett, has had the kindness to triple the lot that Mr. Tabeau and I had three years ago. He has had the troops construct two streets past it.

The people of the Sault, as numerous as those of Drummond Island and jealous of their progress, congregated and asked my permission to build a chapel. I granted it with the greatest pleasure, since I had suffered so much there that Sunday while celebrating the Holy Mysteries in very restricted quarters, where several times I nearly became ill.

I left them each with the desire for a church and dividing among them the wood, carpentry, and hand work. Indeed, it was already constructed in promises.

At Fort William Dr. McLoughlin, whom Your Lordship will probably see in Quebec this year, told me that the wood [for a chapel] was all cut ready for construction at the expense of the North West Company. There we were pretty well lodged.

In all these different posts I performed but two marriages, having instructed and baptized the two women. I refused to marry a great many others because of complications and difficulties. I should like very much to have the honor of an interview with Your Lordship in order to have the satisfaction that letters cannot give me. In case I can erect the church at Thames River this autumn, I shall ask your permission to visit you during the course of the winter. This trip would furnish me the opportunity for presenting a little subscription to the priests who are silversmiths, in order to finish my church at Thames River, which is not yet begun. Your advice in this matter will flatter me greatly.

As to the Malden church, it will be finished in the course of time. The vaulted roof will be finished tomorrow, and then the plastering. There is an abundance of funds there.

As for my contribution to the church insurance fund, I have been ashamed to be the curé of two parishes and to have but one dollar to send. The cost of sending it would have devoured it all. In the matter of the grain at Thames River, the settlers have not yet supplied me with any, for I have no place in which to keep it. Besides, it can neither be bought nor sold, as everyone has it.¹⁸ During the autumn I shall discover a way of settling this affair and clearing myself.

At Fort William I saw Mr. Destroismaisons and the seminarian, Sauvez.¹⁹ In my estimation the first is not the man for the place. It seems to me that he has not enough resolution. Rapids, traverses, and winds all terrify him. It is true that often they are quite terrifying. I thought that he did not appear sufficiently matured in the ministry to do the good that is hoped for. But God helping him, he can acquire the necessary equipment very quickly.

Mr. Marchand has poor health. Aside from that he is vigorous enough. He is getting old and rather tiresome. Therefore he causes me a lot of trouble. He watches me to the last pin. I think he does not realize the services I render him and that I am always glad to render him. The least kindness to me offends him. Pardon me, My Lord, I prefer not to tell what I know.

I come back now to the success of the mission. I was astounded to see how much progress in the catechism certain children, especially at Fort William, have made. I saw children of ten years ready for communion singing several hymns by heart, and wives of several Protestant men already instructed in the same way and asking me to marry them. Perhaps for these you can accord some special dispensations.

If I have the honor of seeing you in the course of this winter, I will explain in detail several cases for which I can find no solution.

I close, My Lord, by begging you to remember me, one of your missionary priests,

Jos. CREVIER, Priest, Missionary.

Detroit, September 6, 1820.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec.

DESTROISMAISONS TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JANUARY 3, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

St Boniface le 3 janvier 1821

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Je profite de l'occasion de Mr Lacroix qui part pour Québec pour vous écrire quelque chose touchant les missions de la

Rivière Rouge auxquelles je sais que vous vous intéressez beaucoup. Je me trouve présentement à St Boniface avec un très petit nombre de paroissiens. Ils sont presque tous allés à Pembina et dans les prairies pour y passer l'hiver, et le petit nombre de ceux qui hivernent ici sont presque toujours en voyage pour se procurer des vivres qui sont maintenant très difficiles à avoir. C'est ce qui m'engage à me rendre au désir de Monsieur Dumoulin qui voudroit que je fusse passer une partie de l'hiver à St François-Xavier. D'ailleurs c'est là où j'aurai le plus de facilité d'étudier la langue sauvage que je désirerois apprendre, mais en laquelle je crains bien de ne pouvoir réussir, faute de moyens suffisans. Je comprends néanmoins combien il est nécessaire de la savoir; car ce n'est pour ainsi dire qu'avec les femmes métives et plusieurs enfans qui comprennent très peu le françois qu'on peut avancer l'oeuvre de Dieu. Pour la plus grande partie des Canadiens et des anciens métifs, ce sont malheureusement de bien pauvres chrétiens.

La traite des pelleteries, qui continue à se faire en grande partie par le moyen de la boisson, retardera beaucoup le progrès de la religion parmi les sauvages. Monsieur Dumoulin travaille à en réunir un certain nombre dans un endroit fixe, afin d'avoir plus de facilité pour y faire des missions de tems en tems; mais je crois qu'il sera bien difficile d'y réussir vû leur penchant naturel pour la vie errante.

Le Ministre Anglican qui est arrivé l'automne dernière, se donne beaucoup de peine pour ramener dans la voie ses ouailles qu'il a la douleur de voir s'en être beaucoup égarées. Il est affligé, et nous le sommes plus que lui, d'être témoin de tant d'ivrognerie, et de plusieurs autres désordres, malgré la rareté et le prix excessif des liqueurs enivrantes.

Monsieur Dumoulin vous dira sans doute où en sont nos travaux temporels, car il en est plus au fait que moi.

Je désirerois, Monseigneur, d'être admis, si cela est possible, dans la société ecclésiastique de St Michel. En cas que je puisse y être reçu, je vous envoie la formalité requise pour cet effet.

Je suis avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, de votre Grandeur le très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

THS DESTROISMAISONS, Ptre.

A Monseigneur J. O. Plessis/ archevêque de Québec.

[*Translation*]

St. Boniface, January 3, 1821.

MY LORD, I am taking advantage of Mr. Lacroix' departure for Quebec to send you a few words regarding the Red River missions, in

which I know you are very much interested. At present I am at St. Boniface with a very small number of parishioners. The people have nearly all gone to Pembina and out on the prairies for the winter, and the few that remain here are away almost continuously in search of food, which is now extremely difficult to get. It is this circumstance that persuades me to yield to Mr. Dumoulin's desire that I go to St. Francis Xavier to spend a part of the winter. Furthermore, there I shall find greater opportunity to study the Indian language, which I should like to learn, but which I fear very much I never shall succeed in doing because of the lack of sufficient means. I recognize, nevertheless, how very necessary it is to know this language, for it is only, so to speak, through the *métis* women and several children, who understand French only very imperfectly, that it is possible for us to advance the work of God. As for most of the Canadians and old *métis*, unhappily they are very weak Christians.

The trading of furs, which is still carried on largely by means of liquor, will seriously retard the progress of religion among the Indians. Mr. Dumoulin is trying to get a certain number of them to settle in one place, in order to make it possible to carry on missions among them from time to time; but I fear it will be very difficult to succeed in doing so, because of their natural inclination for the nomadic life.

The Anglican minister who came here last autumn is going to a good deal of trouble to bring his flock back to the fold. Unfortunately, he finds them far astray. He is troubled, and even more are we, to see the amount of drunkenness and many other disorders even in spite of the scarcity and exorbitant cost of intoxicating liquors.

Mr. Dumoulin will no doubt tell you of the progress of temporal matters, since he is better informed than I.

I should like, if it is possible, My Lord, to be admitted to the Order of St. Michael. In case I may be admitted, I am sending you the form required for this purpose.

I am, with profoundest respect, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

THS. DESTROISMAISONS, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Archbishop of Quebec.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JANUARY 6, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pembina, le St jour de l'Epiphanie 1821.

MONSEIGNEUR, / Permettez qu'en esprit je me prosterne aux pieds de Votre Grandeur pour lui demander sa sainte bénédiction; ah! qu'il me

seroit bien plus doux de pouvoir la demander en personne! Mais la Providence le veut autrement. Fiat.

Les progrès spirituels de la mission vont toujours à l'ordinaire; il y a sur le registre de Pembina 267 baptêmes, 45 mariages et 23 sépultures; à St Boniface il n'y en a que peu depuis le départ de Mr le Grand Vicaire. Je pense que Mr Destroismaisons ira ce printems au lac de la pluie; c'est le seul moyen que cette mission ne manque pas, car chaque fois qu'elle a dû être faite par les missionnaires de Montréal elle n'a pas eu lieu. Pour moi, malgré le grand besoin qu'il y auroit de rester un ici, j'irai pourtant encore à la Baie d'Hudson: ces missions-là, quoique sans grandes consolations, sont trop propres à arrêter le mal pour se permettre de les négliger. J'ai parlé cet automne à Votre Grandeur d'une mission dans les Athabaskas. Cette mission est aussi importante que difficile à faire; il faudroit nécessairement que les agents des deux compagnies à Montréal fussent d'accord au moins pour cette bonne oeuvre et qu'ils promissent d'en faire les frais; ce que les N. W. surtout ne refuseront pas. J'ai cru cet automne être obligé d'informer Votre Grandeur du bien que procureroit cette mission; si elle me tomboit sur le dos, *non recuso laborem*; mais il est dur d'exercer pendant un an les fonctions d'un ministère aussi saint, et de n'avoir pas la consolation d'aller une seule fois à confesse. Si cette tâche tomboit sur un plus avancé que moi dans la vertu, j'en serois content.

Le ministre protestant qu'il y a à St Boniface est, selon les apparences, doué de beaucoup de vertus morales; il a de grands encouragements de la compagnie des missions en Angleterre, il peut, dit-on, tirer sur elle pour 10,000 louis par an. Le plan qu'il a mis au jour en arrivant est de prendre jusqu'à 500 pensionnaires auxquels il donnera gratis l'instruction, la vie, et l'habit. Mais il falloit faire quelques promesses pour rendre son arrivée plus intéressante. Je ne l'ai pas encore vu, je lui ai cependant fait dire beaucoup de choses, je le crois content de moi. Il m'a fait demander par le Gouverneur de prier Mr Destroismaisons de vouloir bien lui montrer le françois, et qu'en revanche il lui montreroit l'anglois. J'ai conseillé à Mr Destroismaisons de tâcher qu'il lui fût utile pour apprendre l'anglois, de manière cependant à ne pas lui montrer le françois qu'il ne saura que trop vite peut-être; il étudie aussi le sauvage.

J'ai marqué bien des choses à Mr le Grd Vicaire Provencher; comme je suppose qu'il communiquera cette lettre à Votre Grandeur je ne les répéterai point. Les deux églises sont bien levées, j'espère qu'elles seront logeables l'été prochain. Notre récolte, malgré les sauterelles, a été bien raisonnable. Nous avons recueilli 34 barils de blé,

8 barils d'avoine, 3 barils de pois, 7 barils d'orge et 80 minots de patates. Je me propose de faire semer beaucoup cette année. Mais c'est triste d'être tout à la fois prêtre, missionnaire, conducteur de bâtisses, comis pour avoir la viande et payer les hommes. Il est difficile d'avoir ce recueillement intérieur si nécessaire à un missionnaire, mais difficile à conserver et encore plus à acquérir dans les embarras sans nombre des affaires temporelles. *Non est æquum nos relinquere verbum Dei et ministrare mensis.*

Les protestants d'ici sont extrêmement contents de la mission catholique; ils paroissent y prendre le plus vif intérêt, particulièrement le colonel Dickson; il est, dit-il, enchanté de nos travaux, et en écrit souvent en Angleterre. J'ai fait faire le jour de Noel la rère communion à sa fille aînée, et à Melle Powell née aussi d'un père protestant.

Mr Sauvez fait l'école très régulièrement; il a 6 écoliers qui sont dans les éléments de la grammaire latine et françoise, et une dizaine d'autres apprennent à lire et écrire. Nous devons leur faire subir dans 15 jours un examen public auquel les notables seront tous priés d'assister. Nous nous portons tous trois très bien; je suis cependant fatigué des fêtes dernières, mais ça ne sera rien j'espère. Je dois aller après l'examen passer trois semaines ou un mois avec les sauvages; fasse le ciel que je sache parler de leur langue quand j'en reviendrai. En attendant nous attrapons de tems en tems de leurs enfants que nous leur fessons apporter au baptême, ce que plusieurs refusent. Cependant avec peu de choses on peut gagner cela sur ces pauvres aveugles jusqu'à ce qu'ils en connoissent eux-mêmes les grands avantages.

Mr Lacroix, par qui j'écris à Votre Grandeur, pourra aussi informer Votre Grandeur de bien des petits détails. Il doit aller lui-même donner à Votre Grandeur des nouvelles de nos pauvres missions et de nos misérables travaux.

Nous attendons avec hâte notre cher Grand Vicaire, heureux s'il peut dans son hyver reprendre à Québec un embonpoint qu'il ne perde pas si vite à la Riv: Rouge. Mr Destroismaisons ne se plait pas trop à la Riv: Rouge; je ne crois pas qu'il fasse jamais un grand voyage, il a un peu de misère à prendre ici. Un Mr Roupe, un Mr Hudon, un Mr Dufresne ou un Mr Lefrançois nous auroit, ce semble, bien mieux accommodé. Mais il faut croire que c'est celui-là que la Providence vouloit.

Cas de conscience.

Un homme engagé pour la traite sauvage est-il par cela même indigne de l'absolution?

Peut-on et doit-on baptiser un interprète qui demande à se marier légitimement?

Des gens ont surmêlé le rum aux sauvages quand une fois ils étoient enivrés, ou les ont même pillé; ces sauvages sont en partie morts depuis ce tems, d'autres sont dans les Athabaskas, ou bien éloignés. A qui faut-il faire restituer? Peut-on user de compensation en disant qu'ils étoient obligés de leur en donner beaucoup pour rien?

Il me reste à prier Votre Grandeur d'intercéder sans cesse pour son indigne mais dévoué et obéissant serviteur

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

A Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Archevêque de Québec, / à Québec.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, the Feast of the Holy Epiphany, 1821.

MY LORD, Allow me to prostrate myself at least in spirit at Your Lordship's feet to ask your holy benediction; oh, how much sweeter it would be to ask for it in person! But Providence wills otherwise. So be it!

The spiritual progress of the mission is about as usual; on the Pembina register there are 267 baptisms, 45 marriages, and 23 burials; at St. Boniface there have been few since the departure of the Vicar-General. I think that Mr. Destroismaisons will go to Rainy Lake this spring; that is the only way to prevent that mission from failing, for every time the missionaries from Montreal have intended to go there, the visit has not been made. As for myself, in spite of the fact that the presence of one of us is greatly needed here, I shall nevertheless go to Hudson Bay again. We cannot afford to neglect these missions, which, although yielding no very great returns, serve nevertheless to arrest the progress of evil. Last fall I spoke to Your Lordship about a mission in Athabaska. This mission is as important as it is difficult; it would be necessary that the agents of the two companies at Montreal be in accord, at least concerning this good work, and that they promise to pay the expenses; the North West Company especially will surely not refuse to do so. Last fall I felt obliged to inform Your Lordship of the benefits that would result from this mission; if it falls on my shoulders, *non recuso laborem* [*I do not object to the labor*]; but it is hard to perform the functions of such a holy ministry for a year, and not have the consolation of going to confession a single time. If this task fell to one more virtuous than I, I should be happy.

The Protestant minister who is at St. Boniface is apparently en-

dowed with many moral virtues; he receives considerable encouragement from the society of missions in England; it is said that he can draw as much as ten thousand pounds a year from it. His plan, as he announced it upon his arrival, is to take in as many as five hundred boarding-school pupils, to whom he would give instruction gratis, as well as food and clothing. But it was necessary to make certain promises in order to make his arrival more noticeable. I have not yet seen him, but I have heard quite a good deal about him; I think he is pleased with me. He sent me word by the Governor to ask Mr. Destroismaisons to be good enough to teach him French, promising to teach him English in return. I have advised Mr. Destroismaisons to try to make use of him to learn English, but in such a way as not to teach him French, since he will know it only too soon, no doubt. He is also studying the Indian language.

I have written the Vicar-General, My Lord Provencher, quite at length and, since I suppose he will pass the letter on to Your Lordship, I shall not repeat any of it. The two churches have been begun, and I hope that they will be habitable by next summer. Our harvest was quite abundant in spite of the grasshoppers. We gathered in thirty-four barrels of wheat, eight barrels of oats, three barrels of peas, seven barrels of barley, and eighty minots of potatoes. I am planning to sow a great deal this year. But it is hard to be at once priest, missionary, building overseer, and clerk to obtain the food and pay the men. It is difficult to have that inner composure that is so necessary to a missionary, but difficult to keep and even more so to acquire in the midst of the innumerable difficulties that arise in temporal affairs. *Non est æquum nos relinquere verbum Dei et ministrare mensis.*

The Protestants here are very much pleased with the Catholic mission; they appear to take the keenest interest in it, particularly Colonel Dickson; he says he is delighted with our work and often writes of it to England. On Christmas Day I administered first communion to his eldest daughter and to Miss Powell, who also has a Protestant father.

Mr. Sauvez conducts the school very regularly; he has six pupils who are studying elementary Latin and French grammar, and about ten others who are learning to read and write. In two weeks we are going to give them a public examination, which all the notables will be invited to attend. We are all three very well; I am, however, somewhat fatigued from the last feast days, but I hope that this weariness will prove to be of no consequence. After the examinations I am going to spend three weeks or a month with the Indians; please Heaven that

I may know their language when I come back. Meanwhile we now and then get hold of their children, whom we try to have them bring here to receive baptism. Many of them refuse. However, it is possible with very little to win over these poor blind people until they themselves may know the great benefits to be derived therefrom.

Mr. Lacroix, by whose courtesy I am writing to Your Lordship, will also be able to give you many details. He is to go himself to take Your Lordship news of our poor missions and humble efforts.

We are anxiously awaiting our dear Vicar-General, happy if in the course of the winter he may regain at Quebec an *embonpoint* that he will not lose so quickly at Red River. Mr. Destroismaisons is not very contented at Red River; I do not think he will ever go on a long journey. It is a little difficult for him here. A Mr. Roupe, a Mr. Hudon, a Mr. Dufresne, or a Mr. Lefrançois would have suited us better, we think, but we must believe that it is he whom Providence wished instead.

Cases of Conscience

Is a man employed as a trader with the Indians unworthy of absolution on that account?

Can and ought we to baptize an interpreter who wishes to be legitimately married?

Some men once diluted the Indians' rum when they were drunk, or even robbed them; some of these Indians have died since then, others are in Athabaska, or far away. To whom should restitution be made? Can we have recourse to compensation, saying that they were compelled to give them [*the Indians?*] a great deal of it for nothing?

I have only to beg Your Lordship to intercede continually for your unworthy but devoted and obedient servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Archbishop of Quebec, Quebec.

PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MARCH 1 AND 2, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]²⁰

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, I have received from Mr. Crevier your esteemed letter informing me that our affairs do not improve much. I suspect that the North West Company will not make any advances for the Red River mission, especially as it is opposed to all their ideas and to their inter-

²⁰ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 50-52.

ests. As their business is somewhat shady, they do not wish for light, and missionaries are directly in opposition to them. It is a disgrace for them to confess it, but it is easily understood by those who are on the ground.

Mr. Garden, being only a simple agent, will not incur any expense without orders from England, and I doubt whether he will receive any for my benefit. I believe he is in league with the North West Company; it is by their influence that he was elected representative this year, if I may judge from what I heard at Montreal this fall. One must be careful not to be too frank with foxes. However, I do not know where you stand in this matter at present. I am assured that the mission at Fort William is now a load on the shoulders of those who seemed to wish it at first. If it had been established at the expense of the one on the Red River, these fine gentlemen would have seen their best wishes accomplished.

I believe that the project that I disclosed in my last letter by Mr. Dionne is not bad. It is to abandon my trip thither this year; the mission will not suffer. I imagine that Mr. Dumoulin's project will not be realized for want of accord between the companies. During that time we shall receive news. The Parliament of England may come to some decision in the famous trial; the colony will grow or will perish; the grasshopper plague will cease; things will finally be better; and we shall be able to write to England about the matter. Perhaps Lord Selkirk's representatives will wish and ask for my return as bishop. It is a sure support of their colony. I do not think them enemies of the mission. They have been given a high idea of it, as far as I can see.²¹

(March 2)

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I am with the deepest respect, My Lord, Your Lordship's most
humble and obedient servant,

J. N. PROVENCHER, Priest.

Yamachiche, March 1, 1821.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

²¹ When Provencher arrived in Canada in the fall of 1820, he found awaiting him bulls naming him titular bishop of Juliopolis and coadjutor to the bishop of Quebec in the Northwest. He hesitated long before accepting the new honor, but in May, 1822, he was consecrated. Meantime, Lord Selkirk had died in France in April, 1820; and the way was being paved for the union of the two rival companies. The consolidation took place in 1821, and thenceforth the Hudson's Bay Company was practically in charge of the colony. These events and the atmosphere of uncertainty and suspense account for the unsettled frame of Provencher's mind. He was given the parish of Yamachiche and remained in Canada till the spring of 1822.

MONSIEUR,/ Quoique je n'aie point l'honneur de vous connoître, vous me permettrez de m'adresser à vous pour une chose extrêmement importante pour la Mission de Pembina. Cette Mission est composée d'une grosse portion de la Colonie de la Rivière Rouge. Le nombre de ces habitants peut monter à 500 personnes, hommes, femmes, et enfants. Un grand nombre ont des maisons, et ont semé autant qu'il leur a été possible. L'église y sera logeable dans huit jours. Il y a une école très réglée. Le Cap. Matthey pourra vous donner une idée du progrès que les enfants y ont fait. Il y a sur la place de l'église maintenant bâtis, 2 autres bâtimens et je désirerois y faire aussi bâtir une autre maison pour une école. Mais je me trouverois gêné par le terrain si on ne donnoit à cette mission que ce que prétend Mr Macdonell, qui m'a dit qu'il n'avoit ordre d'en donner que la même quantité donnée au premier particulier. Ce n'est sans doute par là se régler sur la générosité de My Lord Selkirk qui a donné à la Mission de la fourche 5 arpents quarrés pour la place de l'église et 2 lieux quarrés pour le soutient de la dite mission. Pour ma part, ma pleine charge des intérêts d'une Mission que je viens d'ouvrir peu demanderoit autant pour la place de l'église, et comme je n'ose obtenir d'avantage, je demanderois aussi une terre de cinq arpents de front située vis à vis de la terre où l'église est bâtie, mais de l'autre côté de la Riv. Rouge. Pour plus ample information je vous prie d'enquêter au Capt. Matthey qui doit vous remettre cette lettre. Je suis, Monsieur, avec toute la considération possible,

Votre très humble et obéissant serviteur,

SÉV. DUMOULIN Miss.

29th March 1821.

M^r Andrew Colvile Esq^r/ London

[*Translation*]

SIR, Although I do not have the honor of knowing you, permit me to address you on a matter very important to the Pembina mission. This mission is composed of a considerable part of the Red River colony. The number of these residents is, perhaps, as many as five hundred men, women, and children. A large number have houses and have made gardens in so far as they are able. The church here will be ready in a week. There is a regular school. Captain Matthey can give

²² The editor has revised the French of the copy in the Selkirk Transcripts to a more readable form, with as close an adherence to the original as possible.

you an idea of the progress that the children have made in it. On the church land we have already built two other buildings, and I should like also to build another house for a school. But I should find myself embarrassed for land, if there were given to the mission only what Mr. Macdonell claims can be given. He tells me that no one has given him orders to give more than the same amount that is given to the first individual. In this respect he is not being guided by the generosity of Lord Selkirk, who gave the mission at The Forks five square arpents for the church property and two square leagues for the upkeep of that mission. For my part, charged with the interests of a mission just begun, I should ask for the same amount for the church land, and, as I do not hope to obtain more, I would ask also for land of five arpents frontage, located opposite the spot where the church is built, but on the other side of the Red River. For fuller information I beg you to inquire of Captain Matthey, who is to hand you this letter.

I am, Sir, respectfully, your very humble and obedient servant,
SÉV. DUMOULIN, Missionary.

March 29, 1821.
Mr. Andrew Colville, Esquire, London.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO DUMOULIN, APRIL 10, 1821
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 10:188]

Québec, 10 avril 1821.

A Monsieur Dumoulin,/ Missr à la Riv. Rouge.

MONSIEUR,/ A mon retour d'Europe, j'ai trouvé ici votre lettre du 17 mai dernier à mon adresse, et ai depuis reçu celles du 3 juillet et du 25 aout. Dans le désir de vous satisfaire sur tous les articles, je vais les prendre de suite, selon l'ordre de vos lettres:

1^o- Mr Edge ne retournera pas à la Rivière-Rouge. Vous n'en devez pas être mortifié ni surpris.

2^o Je ne puis dispenser d'un empêchement d'affinité au premier degré, à moins que cette affinité ne soit secrète et ne provienne *ex copula illicita*. Dans ce dernier cas, je vous communique jusqu'au 20 janv^r 1823 l'indult ci-inclus du 20 janv^r 1820. Il vous servira pour tous les cas de cette espèce, qui se présenteront d'ici à cette date. J'en ai aussi fait part à M.M. Provencher et Destroismaisons.

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10^o Il faut prendre pour principe que le mariage entre un chrétien et une infidèle est toujours nul *propter disparitatem cultus*, mais qu'après que l'infidèle est devenue chrétienne, il faut la marier avec le

même époux, à moins qu'ils ne soient liés d'un empêchement dirimant dont nous n'ayons pas le pouvoir de dispenser.

11^o- C'est une bonne chose d'avoir été à la Baye d'Hudson. C'en seroit une meilleure d'aller visiter l'Atabaska. Ne vous flattez pas qu'il y ait assez de concert entre les deux compagnies pour qu'elles vous forment un canot à frais communs. Je crois que le plus sûr seroit de vous adresser à MM. du Nord-Ouest exclusivement. J'en touchai quelque chose, l'hyver dernier, à Mr de Rocheblave, et Mgr Macdonell (l'évêque de Rhésine)²³ en parla, de son côté, à Mr M'Gilvray. Le premier me parut disposé à effectuer la chose, en ce qui pouvoit le concerner: le second répondit qu'elle ne pouvoit se décider que l'été prochain, au Fort William, lorsque les membres de la société y seroient réunis. Mais comme il est vraisemblable que ces Messieurs ne prendront pas la peine de vous notifier leur décision, à moins d'y être provoqués, je vous conseille, aussitôt la présente reçue, d'écrire vous-même au Fort William, à Mr de Rocheblave, dans les termes suivans, ou à peu près:

Monsieur, Ayant été informé que le ministère d'un prêtre étoit désiré par les sauvages et les Français du pays des Athabaskas et me sentant assez de courage pour leur aller porter les secours de la religion après lesquels ils soupirent, je désirerois qu'il plût à Messieurs de la Compagnie du Nord Ouest de vouloir bien favoriser ce voyage en me procurant un canot et des hommes pour l'effectuer. Sur l'avis qu'il vous plaira m'en donner, je serai prêt à partir immédiatement. Dans mon humble opinion, il ne doit pas être indifférent à la Compagnie que l'on inspire des principes de religion et de probité aux différentes sortes de gens qui sont dans sa dépendance. J'ose me flatter que comme catholique vous sentirez mieux que personne les avantages qui en peuvent résulter et que vous daignerez me croire avec respect, Monsieur, votre &c.

Si Dieu permet ce voyage, j'espère qu'il servira beaucoup à sa gloire, et que sa bonté vous soutiendra dans la privation de confesseur, que Monsieur Destroismaisons éprouvera aussi de son côté, car il y a peu d'apparence que Mr Provencher puisse rejoindre la mission cette année, faute d'occasion pour y parvenir. Il faudra peut-être que j'écrive en Angleterre pour lui procurer un passage l'année prochaine. La mort de Lord Selkirk a occasionné du dérangement dans la compagnie d'Hudson qui n'est pas très favorable à la religion catholique, et (entre nous) celle du Nord Ouest l'est encore moins. J'ai plus d'une raison d'en être convaincu. Les associés de Lord Selkirk dont j'ai vu les chefs à Londres sont néanmoins convaincus des excellens effets produits par les missionnaires.

²³ Alexander Macdonell was consecrated titular bishop of Resaina in 1820.

Je n'ai pu obtenir du St Siège le pouvoir que vous demandiez de marier des protestans entre eux ou avec des catholiques, quoique j'aie insisté sur l'importance qu'il y avoit d'ôter tout prétexte à l'introduction des ministres d'une religion étrangère dans la colonie; tandis que je sollicitois inutilement cette grâce, j'appris par une lettre de Lord Selkirk du mois de décembre 1819 que la Compagnie avoit retenu un ministre protestant qui devoit vous aller joindre au printemps de 1820. S'il n'y est pas rendu, il s'y rendra. Quoique Mr Halkett, beau-frère de Lord Selkirk, m'ait assuré qu'il avoit ordre de se borner aux protestans, sans se mêler en aucune manière des Français, ni des sauvages, ni des Bois-Brulés, je crois cependant que vous feriez bien de vous tenir en garde contre un zèle fanatique dont ces sortes de gens sont quelquefois saisis, et qui pourroit se développer au préjudice de votre troupeau.

Soixante adultes baptisés à Pembina, voilà pour des missionnaires un de ces succès qui soutiennent l'ardeur d'un ministère pénible. Je vais prier Dieu qu'il vous [envoie] encore de temps en temps des consolations aussi propres à vous délasser.

Plus je vas, plus je me persuade qu'il faut que cette mission se procure par elle-même des ouvriers évangéliques pour succéder à ceux qui la remplissent présentement. Voilà pourquoi vous devez avoir soin de former une classe d'enfans choisis, remarquables par leur intelligence et par leur inclination pour la piété. Confiez la aux soins de l'abbé Sauvé. Quand Mr Provencher sera de retour à son poste, il donnera les ordres nécessaires pour la continuer. Ce sera beaucoup d'avoir pris de l'avance. Mon avis seroit que cette éducation se fît à St Boniface plutôt qu'à Pembina qu'il faudra peut-être abandonner. Suivant une carte de 1817 que je viens de consulter, ce poste me paroît être de 30 minutes au sud du 49e degré de latitude.

Le retard très probable de Mr Provencher m'engage à vous donner, ainsi qu'à votre compagnon, une liste de pouvoirs extraordinaires dont vous pouvez avoir besoin en son absence. Vous vous conformerez aux restrictions y apposées.

Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, April 10, 1821.

Mr. Dumoulin, Missionary at Red River.

SIR, On my return from Europe, I found here your letter addressed to me on last May 17; and since that time I have received those of July

3 and August 25. In an endeavor to satisfy you on all the points, I am going to take them up one by one, according to the order of your letters:

1. Mr. Edge will not return to Red River. You will not be vexed nor surprised at this news.

2. I cannot issue a dispensation for an impediment of relationship of the first degree, at least unless that relationship is secret and originates in an illicit union. For the latter case I am sending you, as valid until January 20, 1823, the enclosed indult of January 20, 1820. It will serve you for all cases of this nature which may arise from now until that time. I have also informed Messrs. Provencher and Destroismaisons of it.

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10. It must be taken as a rule that marriage between a Christian and an infidel is always null *on account of difference in civilization*, but that after an infidel woman has become a Christian, she must be married to the same spouse, at least unless the couple is bound by an impediment preventing marriage for which we do not have power to give dispensation.

11. It is a good thing to have been at Hudson Bay. It would be even better to visit Athabaska. Do not deceive yourself that there will be enough harmony between the two companies for them to co-operate in outfitting a canoe for you. I think the surest way is to appeal to the gentlemen of the North West Company alone. I said something of this last winter to Mr. de Rocheblave, and His Lordship, Bishop Macdonell of Resaina,²³ on his part, spoke of it to Mr. McGillivray. The former seemed to me to favor it, in so far as he was concerned; the other replied that he could not decide until the next summer at Fort William, when the members of his company should be assembled there. But as it is likely that these gentlemen will not take the trouble to notify you of their decision, at least until urged to do so, I should advise you, as soon as you receive this letter, to write to Fort William yourself, to Mr. de Rocheblave, in the following terms, or very like them:

SIR, Having been informed that the ministry of a priest has been requested by the Indians and French [*Canadians*] of the Athabaska country, and being willing to go to them bearing the help of religion, which they crave, if this project pleases the gentlemen of the North West Company, I should like them to be so good as to secure a canoe for me, and the men to manage it. Upon word from you that you are willing, I will be ready to leave at once. In my humble opinion it ought not to be a matter of indif-

ference to the company to inspire the principles of religion and morality in the various classes of persons under its control. I dare to flatter myself that as a Catholic, you will perceive better than others the advantages that may result and that you will condescend, Sir, to believe me, respectfully yours etc.

If God allows this trip, I hope that it will redound much to His glory, and that His grace will sustain you in your lack of a confessor. Mr. Destroismaisons will experience this lack also in his turn, as there is little likelihood that Mr. Provencher will be able to get back to the mission this year, for lack of an opportunity to get there. It will perhaps be necessary for me to write to England to procure a passage for him next year. The death of Lord Selkirk has resulted in much confusion for the Hudson's Bay Company, which is not very favorable to the Catholic religion, and, between ourselves, the North West Company is still less so. I have more than one reason to be convinced of this. The associates of Lord Selkirk, whose chiefs I saw in London, are nevertheless convinced of the excellent results secured by the missionaries.

I have been unable to obtain from the Holy See the power that you asked for marrying Protestants to one another or to Catholics, although I insisted upon the importance that it had for removing all pretext for introducing ministers of a strange religion into the colony. Even while I was unsuccessfully urging this favor, I learned by a letter from Lord Selkirk written in the month of December, 1819, that the company had engaged a Protestant minister, who was about to go to join you in the spring of 1820. If he is not already there, he will go. Although Mr. Halkett, Lord Selkirk's brother-in-law, assured me that this man had orders to confine himself to the Protestants and not to meddle in any manner with the French, the Indians, or the *bois brûlés*, nevertheless I believe that you will do well to be on guard against the fanatical zeal with which this kind of person is sometimes seized, and which could do much detriment to your flock.

Sixty adults baptized at Pembina! That is one of the rewards that sustain the zeal of missionaries in their arduous task. I shall pray God that in the future He send you from time to time consolations as suitable for your refreshment.

The longer I consider the matter the more I am convinced that it will be necessary that this mission shall produce its own evangelical workers to succeed those who are laboring there at the present time. For that reason you ought to be taking thought for the formation of a class of chosen children, outstanding for their intelligence and for their

inclination toward piety. Confide them to the care of Abbé Sauvez. When Mr. Provencher returns to his post, he will give the necessary orders for its continuance. This will be considerable preparation made in advance. My advice would be that this work of education should be undertaken at St. Boniface rather than at Pembina, which it may be necessary for us to abandon. According to a map of 1817 that I have just consulted, this station appears to me to be thirty minutes south of the forty-ninth degree of latitude.

Mr. Provencher's probable delay obliges me to give you, as well as your companion, a list of special faculties, which you will need in his absence. You will conform to the restrictions inserted in them.

I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO BISHOP MACDONELL, APRIL 13, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 10:199, 200]

Québec, 13 avril 1821.

A Monseigr l'Ev. de Rhésine/ à S. Raphael, Haut-Canada.

DEAR AND R. R. LORD,/ T'is true I should have wished that the Revd Mr Provencher, where [*sic*] he to do the mission at Fort William this year with Mr Crevier, could have and [*sic*] opportunity of proceeding thence to Red River; but knowing the hostility of the North West Company towards that settlement, I scarcely entertained any hopes of their concurrence in forwarding a mission which they as falsely as obstinately consider as having for its aim the concerns of a rival company. If therefore no other means occur of conveying Mr Provencher to Red River than through the Gentlemen of the N. W. I am quite decided, agreeable to his own wishes, to postpone his consecration and his return to the ensuing year.

What I then desired Yr Lordship to hear from Mr M'Gilvray and what I myself proposed, last winter, to Mr de Rocheblave, was to know whether these gentlemen would consent to forward the Revd Mr Dumoulin, one of the missionaries of the Red River, to the country called Athabaska where he has reason to hope that many both indians and canadians would profit of his presence for the salvation of their souls. Now Athabaska is under the controul of the N. W. the concerns of which could be bettered by an apostolical man inspiring to those people principles of religion and probity. But he cannot reach that place unless he obtains a canoe and men to carry him to such a distance, and

this is the true object I am anxious to know whether the N. W. would yield to.

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I remain &c.

† J. O. Cath. Bp of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO HALKETT AND COLVILLE, MAY 1, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 10:208]

Québec, 1 mai 1821.

A Messieurs Halkett & Colville/ Ecuyers, à Londres.

GENTLEMEN,/ The chief Missionary of Red River (Revd Mr Provencher) having been called down, last fall, to this province on the general business of his mission, I am anxious to send him up again, in order to pursue the great enterprise began in behalf of the colony and of the half-breed[s] and indians of that country. To have him carried back, requires that he may find a passage in some of the canoes used to be loaded with goods and sent up for the trade of the Hudson's company. But as far as I understand, the Company's agent at Montreal, Mr Garden, has received no orders as yet for the usual sending of goods to Red River, nor does he feel authorized to fit out a canoe purposely for carrying back that gentleman who is therefore detained here with no small prejudice to the mission. Now from the advantageous accounts which came these three years from Ossiniboia, you had, Gentlemen, an opportunity to conceive how essential it is to encourage an establishment in which are involved not only the particular concerns of the Hudson's company, but also those of all the population scattered over the immense territory which extends from the 49th degree of latitude to Hudson Bay on one side, and the Rocky Mountains on the other. Hence I dare to hope that you'll be so kind as to give Mr Garden the most positive orders to fit out a canoe, if necessary, for the speedy return of the Revd Mr Provencher to his flock.

It has been of late spoken here of an agreement entered into and almost concluded by the two companies of the Hudson's Bay and the North-West. Whatever steps may be taken to put an end to their former rivalry, I have every reason to believe, Gentlemen, that at all events you'll lose no sight of a deed of the late Earl of Selkirk, dated 19th May 1818, by which two certain lots of land therein mentioned have been granted, bargained and sold to a number of trustees for the benefit of the aforesaid mission. In any subsequent transaction, a due respect must be paid to that one, about which a proper information

may be had from Lady Selkirk. I beg leave to herein enclose a letter for her Ladyship, not knowing where she has fixed her abode.

I have &c.

† J. O. Plessis, cath. Bp of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO LADY SELKIRK, MAY 2, 1821
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 10:209]²⁴

Québec, 2 mai 1821.

A My Lady Selkirk/ à N. Brighton, en Ecosse.

MY LADY,/ Je désirois beaucoup avoir l'honneur de vous rencontrer en Angleterre le printemps dernier à mon retour d'Italie. Mes recherches furent inutiles, et je conçois que dans la douleur profonde où vous étiez alors plongée, la vue des amis de feu Lord Selkirk n'auroit pas manqué de vous rappeler des souvenirs affligeans. Pardonnez au désir de conserver votre précieuse connoissance la liberté que je prends de vous écrire aujourd'hui.

Vous avez pris, Madame, un si grand intérêt à l'établissement de la mission catholique de la Rivière Rouge, que je me persuade que vous apprendrez avec plaisir des nouvelles de ses succès. La connoissance de Dieu, la réformation des moeurs, un certain gout pour l'éducation des enfans, voilà une partie des fruits retirés des travaux de nos missionnaires. Mr Dumoulin m'écrivoit l'été dernier que dans le seul poste de Pembina il avoit conféré le baptême à 60 grandes personnes. Grâce à vos généreuses offrandes, les chapelles se trouvent garnies de linge et d'ornemens; le service divin s'y fait avec beaucoup de décence, et les Bois-Brulés ont appris à chanter les louanges du Dieu qui, peu d'années auparavant, leur étoit inconnu.

Mr Provencher est descendu en Canada, l'automne dernière, pour les affaires de la mission, dans la confiance qu'il remonteroit, ce printemps, par les canots que la société de la Baye d'Hudson avoit coutume d'expédier pour porter des marchandises à la Riv. Rouge. Malheureusement Mr Garden n'a pas encore reçu d'ordres à cet effet et n'ose prendre sur lui de fretter un canot exprès pour reconduire ce missionnaire, de sorte que ne pouvant pas se flatter que la compagnie du Nord-Ouest s'occupe de favoriser son retour, il est retenu ici, au grand préjudice de la mission, jusqu'à ce que Mr Garden soit autorisé à pourvoir à son voyage. J'écris aujourd'hui à Messrs Halkett et Colville pour les informer de cette circonstance, et j'ose me flatter, My Lady, que vous voudrez bien vous joindre à moi pour obtenir que les ordres nécessaires soient envoyés à Mr Garden immédiatement.

²⁴ A copy of this letter is also in the Selkirk Transcripts, 23:7246-7248.

Le bruit court ici qu'il y a un traité de paix et d'union qui se négocie entre les deux compagnies. Je ne sais quel crédit mérite cette nouvelle. Ce que je désire très fort est que par respect pour la mémoire de Lord Selkirk, on ait soin de réserver à la mission les terres que Sa Seigneurie lui a données et assurées par ses actes du 18 et du 19 mai 1818 dont vous avez connoissance, puisque c'est sur le défrichement de ces terres déjà commencé à grands frais que repose toute l'espérance temporelle de la mission pour l'avenir. J'ai toute raison d'espérer, My Lady, que dans l'occasion vous ne dédaignerez pas de donner aux membres de la compagnie d'Hudson les informations relatives à cette concession dont les titres sont entre mes mains.

Si vous me faites l'honneur de me répondre, veuillez bien me donner l'adresse de Mr Halkett que je ne sais plus depuis qu'il a changé sa demeure de Seymour Place, et d'y ajouter la vôtre.

J'ai l'honneur &c.

† J. O. Ev. Cath. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, May 2, 1821.

Lady Selkirk, North Brighton, Scotland.

MY LADY, I should have liked very much to have had the honor of meeting you in England last spring on my return from Italy. My attempts were in vain and I concluded that in the deep sorrow in which you were plunged at that time, the sight of one of the friends of the late Lord Selkirk would not have failed to recall to you unhappy memories. Please ascribe to a desire to preserve your valued friendship the liberty that I now take in writing to you.

You have taken such a deep interest in the establishment of the Catholic mission at Red River, Madame, that I am persuaded that you will learn with pleasure the news of its success. Knowledge of God, reformation of customs, a certain relish for the education of the young — these are a part of the fruits of the labors of our missionaries. Mr. Dumoulin wrote me last summer that in the single station of Pembina he had baptized sixty adults. Thanks to your generosity, our chapels are supplied with linen and vestments. Divine services are held there with much propriety, and the *bois brûlés* have learned to sing God's praises, which a few years ago were unknown to them.

Mr. Provencher came down to Canada last autumn on the mission's business, confident that he could return this spring in the canoes that the Hudson's Bay Company was in the habit of sending with supplies to the Red River. Unfortunately Mr. Garden has not yet received or-

ders to that effect and does not dare to take it upon himself to send an express to take the missionary back. So, unable to flatter himself that the North West Company will take the trouble to arrange for his return, he is held here, to the great detriment of the mission, until Mr. Garden shall be authorized to provide for his trip. I am writing today to Messrs. Halkett and Colville to inform them of this matter, and I dare to flatter myself, My Lady, that you will be so good as to assist me in obtaining immediately the necessary orders for Mr. Garden.

It is rumored here that a treaty of peace and union is being negotiated between the two companies. I do not know how much credit this rumor deserves. What I wish very heartily is that, in respect to the memory of Lord Selkirk, the lands that His Lordship granted to the mission and secured by his acts of May 18 and 19, 1818, of which you are aware, shall be reserved for the mission; for it is upon the clearing of those lands, already commenced at great expense, that all the temporal hope for the mission rests for the future. I have every reason to hope, My Lady, that on the proper occasion you will not refuse to give to the members of the Hudson's Bay Company information relative to that concession, the deeds for which are in my hands.

If you do me the honor to reply to me, be so good as to give me Mr. Halkett's address, which I no longer know since his change of residence from Seymour Place. Please add to it your own.

I have the honor, etc.,

† J. O. PLESSIS, Catholic Bishop of Quebec.

CREVIER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 9, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

MONSEIGNEUR,/ J'avoue ma négligence. J'aurois dû plutôt vous informer de mon retour à Sandwich; mais comme il m'a été si pénible, j'ai toujours cherché à l'oublier. Je suis heureusement arrivé à tems pour faire la besogne. Nos gens, surtout ceux de Sandwich, paroissent moins assidus à leurs devoirs que les années précédentes. Peut-être y a-t-il de notre faute.

Au cas que Mr Tabeau n'ait pas informé votre Grandeur qu'il prêteroit une de ses chapelles pour les missions du Nord, je vous en informe. Il est impossible d'en composer une ici. d'ailleurs ce auroit été des frais inutiles dans l'incertitude où je suis si Mr Provencher doit monter ou non. Si Votre Grandeur désire que je l'accompagne, je désirerois savoir le tems, afin de me tenir sur mes gardes.

.

Une lettre d'avis pour les Missions, Monseig. flatteroit beaucoup votre très humble & obéisst serviteur

JOS. CREVIER, Ptre.

Amherstburg, le 9e Mai 1821.

A Monseig. J. O. Plessis Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, I acknowledge my negligence. I should have informed you earlier of my return to Sandwich, but as it was very painful to me, I have tried to forget it. Fortunately, I arrived in time to do what was necessary. Our people, especially those at Sandwich, seem less assiduous in their duties than in preceding years. Perhaps it is our fault.

In case Mr. Tabeau has not informed Your Lordship that he will lend one of his chapels for the missions in the North, I will do so. It is impossible to assemble one here. Moreover, it would be a useless expense in the uncertainty in which I find myself as to whether Mr. Provencher is to go up or not. If Your Lordship wishes me to accompany him, I should like to know the time, in order to hold myself in readiness.

.
A letter informing me about the missions, My Lord, would flatter very much your very humble and obedient servant,

JOS. CREVIER, Priest.

Amherstburg, May 9, 1821.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 25, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pembina, 25 mai 1821

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Les progrès de la mission sont à peu près les mêmes qu'ils ont été depuis que nous y sommes tant pour le spirituel que pour le temporel. Nous sommes rendus à Pembina à 313 baptêmes, 53 mariages et 31 sépultures; à St Boniface le nombre est moindre; je pourrai dans une autre lettre le noter à votre Grandeur. J'espère que l'église de la Fourche sera logeable à l'arrivée de Mr le Grand Vicaire. Le bois et le bardeau sont prêts. Celle de St François Xavier sera logeable dans huit jours. J'ai été obligé de commencer par celle-ci par rapport aux ouvriers qui hyvernent ici, et qui ont eu le tems d'y travailler beaucoup avant que de pouvoir descendre le bois à la Fourche. Je ferai crier les bancs de dimanche en huit, et je crois que le

moins cher sera vendu plus de 15 piastres, les premiers passeront 15 louis, ce qui j'espère donnera à l'église les moyens de s'orner assez vite. Le même sauvage qui, l'an dernier, a tiré sur moi en a encore été tenté ce printems. Les gens l'ont pris, mis au fer &c; un bon nombre vouloit le tuer, mais heureusement qu'il s'est échappé. On me dit qu'il y a encore beaucoup de sauterelles à la Fourche; Mr Destroismaisons pourra en donner des nouvelles plus sûres à votre Grandeur. Pour les gens de Pembina ils n'en ont pas eu l'an dernier, et il n'y a aucune apparence qu'il y en ait cette année.

Les affaires entre les deux compagnies rivales ont été très pésibles cette année dans la Riv: Rouge; il n'en a pas été ainsi dans les Athabaskas: on a fait des prisonniers de côté et d'autre, on s'est tiré au pistolet, et le commerce a été fait avec autant de monopole que possible. Les Sioux sont au moment d'arriver ici; nous craignons qu'il y ait quelque massacre entre eux et les Sauteux, car les premiers ont dernièrement massacré un François engagé aux Américains et 5 Pilleurs presque tous parents des Sauteux d'ici.

Je sens la nécessité qu'il y a que les missions de la Baie d'Hudson et du Lac Lapluie ne manquent jamais, mais d'un autre côté le tort, tant spirituel que temporel, que les deux missions d'ici éprouvent est plus grand qu'on ne pourroit l'imaginer. Cependant je croirai remplir d'avantage les intentions de Votre Grandeur en faisant celle de la Baie et réservant l'autre à Mr Destroismaisons. J'attends les nouvelles du printems pour en écrire d'avantage.

Je suis, Monseigneur, de votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant serviteur,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

A Sa Grandeur Mgr J. O./ Archevêque de Québec, à Québec, Bas-Canada.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, May 25, 1821.

MY LORD, The mission is progressing about the same since we have been here with regard to both spiritual and temporal matters. At Pembina we have had 313 baptisms, 53 marriages, and 31 burials; at St. Boniface there are not so many; I can enumerate them for Your Lordship in another letter. I hope that the church at The Forks will be habitable by the time the Vicar-General arrives. The lumber and shingles are ready. St. Francis Xavier will be habitable next week. I was obliged to begin with the latter for the sake of the workmen who winter here, and who had plenty of time to work on it before it was possible to take the wood down to The Forks. I shall place the pews

on sale next Sunday; I think that the least expensive ones will go for more than fifteen dollars, while the highest will sell for fifteen pounds, which will, I hope, provide sufficient funds to decorate the church before long. The same Indian who shot at me last year again attempted to do so this spring. He was seized, put in chains, etc.; quite a number wanted to kill him, but fortunately he escaped. I am told that there are many grasshoppers at The Forks again; Mr. Destroismaisons will be able to give Your Lordship a more accurate report than I. As for Pembina, there were no grasshoppers last year, and there are no indications of any this year.

Relations between the two rival companies have been very peaceful at Red River this year, but such has not been the case in Athabaska, where prisoners have been taken on both sides. There have been pistol fights, and trade has been monopolized as much as possible. The Sioux will arrive here any time; we are fearing that there will be bloodshed between them and the Chippewa, because the Sioux recently killed a Frenchman employed by Americans, along with five Pillagers, almost all of whom were related to the Chippewa here.

I realize how important it is that the missions to Hudson Bay and Rainy Lake should never be given up, but on the other hand, the disorder, spiritual as well as temporal, with which the two missions here have to contend is much worse than it is possible for one to imagine. However, I feel that I shall be carrying out Your Lordship's intentions better by going up to the Bay and leaving the other mission to Mr. Destroismaisons. I am waiting for spring to bring news before writing anything further concerning this matter.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,
SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O., Archbishop of Quebec, Quebec, Lower Canada.

SAUVEZ TO RAIMBAULT,²⁵ MAY 28, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pambina, 28 mai 1821.

A Messire Raimbault,/ Supérieur du Séminaire de Nicolet.

CHER MONSIEUR,/ Il y a longtemps que je désire le printemps pour vous donner & recevoir des nouvelles. Je me figure d'avance le plaisir

²⁵ Jean Raimbault, a native of France, migrated in 1795 to Canada. He was curé of l'Ange-Gardien (1797-1805), of Pointe aux Trembles, Montreal (1805-06), and of Nicolet (1806-41), where he was also superior of the seminary. That institution owed its existence largely to Bishop Plessis and from it were secured several of the missionaries to the Northwest Indians. Joseph E. Bellemare, *Histoire de Nicolet, 1669-1924*, 1:189 (Athabaska, Quebec, 1924).

que me procureront les lettres que je recevrai de mes amis et particulièrement de Nicolet. C'est alors que je lirai avec intérêt et satisfaction les nouvelles ecclésiastiques et politiques qui vous ont occupés pendant plusieurs mois. Pour moi, relégué dans l'autre bout du monde, ignorant tout ce qui se passe dans le reste de l'univers, j'attends avec impatience cet heureux moment.

Peut-être êtes-vous surpris de ce que je ne vous ai pas écrit, car si je ne me trompe je crois que c'est la première fois. J'aurais dû commencer par vous; pardonnez-moi s'il vous plait cette négligence. Si on vous a communiqué les lettres que j'ai adressées à Mr le Directeur, vous avez vu que je marquois assez au long les progrès tant spirituels que temporels de la mission, et mes occupations quotidiennes avec mes Bois-brûlés; les choses sont à peu près les mêmes. La chapelle de Pembina sera logeable dans 15 jours; celle de la Fourche sera prête à recevoir Mr le Grand Vicaire à son arrivée. Depuis quelques jours je suis occupé à la culture d'un petit jardin que je remplis de toutes sortes de graines. Nous avons outre cela une bonne semence de bled froment, bled'inde, pois, orge, avoine, patates &c. Si les sauterelles ne nous persécutent point cette année, nous serons plus à l'aise l'année prochaine. Cependant il paraît qu'il y en aura plus que jamais, car la terre est remplie d'oeufs qui éclosent à la moindre chaleur; comme il n'y en a pas eu l'année dernière à Pembina, on espère que la même chose aura lieu; au moins elles n'ont pas déposé d'oeufs comme à la Fourche.

On est pas tout à fait si mal pour la vie que je me l'étais figuré dans les commencements; nous avons de la viande et du poisson autant qu'il nous en faut; la vache a été très abondante et très proche cet hiver. J'ai eu occasion de la voir de près et même de la tirer, mais comme je n'étais encore qu'un mangeur de lard je n'ai pas su prendre le bon endroit pour la coucher à bas.

Jusqu'à présent tout a été bien tranquille dans nos endroits, excepté du côté de l'Athabaska où les deux compagnies rivales se sont escarmouchées comme à l'ordinaire. On y a fait des prisonniers de côté et d'autre, on s'est tiré au pistolet &c.

Depuis quelques mois, il s'est élevé quelque trouble parmi nos Anglois à la tête des affaires de la Colonie, on se bosque, on écrit les uns contre les autres en Angleterre: tout cela joint aux brouilleries et aux chicanes qui sont ordinaires dans un pays sans lois et éloigné de toute justice, a porté les gens de la première classe et tous les colons en général à adresser à Sa Majesté George Quatre une pétition tendant

à demander une force militaire avec une cour de justice pour le maintien, le soutien et la protection de cette naissante colonie établie dans le nord de l'Amérique, éloignée de près de huit cents lieues de toute administration de justice, et de toute communication.

On a lieu d'espérer que cette pétition sera bien reçue en Angleterre, car on a là une grande idée de la Riv.-Rouge. En effet ce pays est des plus fertiles, d'un climat sain, couvert d'animaux et de gibiers de toutes espèces; on y trouve des salines d'où l'on tire du sel aussi bon que celui qui vient d'Angleterre; ses rivières abondent en poissons de toutes sortes; il faut qu'il ait de telles ressources pour soutenir les fléaux de plus d'une sorte qui sont venus fondre sur lui; il ne lui manque qu'une petite garnison et une magistrature pour le maintenir et pour éviter toutes les hostilités de la part de ses ennemis les N. O. et des tribus sauvages qui l'environnent.

Le printemps a toujours été une saison assez dangereuse pour les colons et les habitans de ces pays barbares. Tous les ans apportent des exemples de cruauté exercées entre les différentes nations établies dans ce vaste continent de l'Amérique du Nord. On a plus lieu de craindre cette année pour les raisons que je vais dire: Lors de l'établissement de cette Colonie, Mylord Selkirk se trouva obligé, (pour éviter les poursuites du N. O.) de passer par la Prairie du Chien; pour aller en Angleterre il fallait nécessairement passer chez les Scioux ennemis jurés des Sauteurs. Cette nation exigea des présents de Mylord qui n'hésita point de leur en faire afin d'obtenir un heureux passage. Cette promesse ne sera effectuée que dans quelques jours; ce qui a causé un mécontentement général parmi les Scioux qui tous les printemps sont venus sans rien recevoir, et la jalousie parmi les Sauteurs qui sont déterminés à ne point laisser enlever les présents; ces deux nations quoiqu'en paix depuis quatre ou cinq ans n'ont cessé de faire des chevelures tous les printemps de part et d'autre. Il y a environ un mois que six Pilleurs (sauvages du fond du lac Supérieur) tous parents des Sauteurs ont été rasés avec deux français par un parti Scioux, sur la rivière Chayenne, à quelques journées d'ici. Depuis ce temps les Sauteurs n'ont cessé de chanter la guerre; ils s'assemblent à cet effet en attendant les Scioux qui viennent quérir leurs présents qu'on leur a promis en dernier ressort. On ne sait quelle sera la fin de ce manège. En attendant les gens libres de la Fourche et de Pembina prennent les moyens de défense en cas de quelque attaque de la part de ces indiens. Je ne crois pas, pourtant, qu'ils en aient la tentation, car ils craignent

les Bois-brulés et surtout les gros fusils. On a ici tout ce qu'il faut en fait de munition et d'armes.

J'aurais voulu vous parler d'un sauvage du nom de Monteur de Courant qui a tiré sur Mr Dumoulin l'automne dernière, et qui a voulu renouveler la même chose ce printemps, mais le papier me manque; vous en verrez le détail dans la lettre de Mr Dumoulin.

Comme Mr le Directeur pourrait avoir changé de nom, je ne lui écris point; vous pourrez lui faire part de cette lettre ainsi qu'à Messieurs les Régens qui voudront se donner la peine de la lire et auxquels je vous prie d'adresser mes respects et amitiés en les priant de vouloir bien se souvenir devant Dieu d'un pauvre voyageur. Des compliments affectueux aux écoliers de ma connaissance.

Il ne me reste plus, Monsieur, qu'à me recommander à vos SS. Sacrifices en l'union desquels je suis, Monsieur,/ Votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

J. SAUVEZ, Eccl.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, May 28, 1821.

The Honorable Mr. Raimbault, Superior of Nicolet Seminary.

DEAR SIR, For a long time I have been wishing that spring would come in order that I might write to you and receive news from you. I am imagining even now the pleasure I shall have in the letters I shall receive from my friends, and particularly from Nicolet. Then I shall read with interest and satisfaction of the political and ecclesiastical affairs that have occupied you for several months. For myself, relegated to the other end of the world, ignorant of all that goes on in the rest of the universe, I await this happy moment with impatience.

Perhaps you are surprised that I have not written you, for if I am not mistaken I think that this is the first time. I ought to have begun with you; please forgive me for this neglect. If my letters to the director have been communicated to you, you have seen that I told at some length of both the spiritual and the temporal progress of the mission, as well as of my daily occupations among the *bois brûlés*; things are about as usual. The chapel of Pembina will be habitable in two weeks; that of The Forks will be ready to welcome the Vicar-General upon his arrival. For the last few days I have been busy working on a small garden, which I am stocking with every sort of seed. In addition we have sowed a good quantity of wheat, Indian corn, peas, barley, oats, potatoes, etc. If we are not afflicted this year by the grasshoppers, we shall be better off next year. However, it looks as though

they would be more numerous than ever, for the earth is filled with eggs, which hatch with the slightest warmth; since there were none last year at Pembina, we are hoping that the same will be true this year; at least they have not left any eggs as at The Forks.

Life is not so meager here as I had thought at first; we have meat and as much fish as we need; the buffaloes have been very abundant and near this winter. I had an opportunity to see them at close range, and even to fire at one, but since I was still only a pork-eater, I did not know how to aim at the proper place to kill.

Thus far everything has been peaceful in our neighborhood, except in the Athabaska region, where the two rival companies have been fighting as usual. Both sides have taken prisoners, there has been fighting with pistols, etc.

For some months there has been trouble among our Hudson's Bay Company men [*literally, "the English"*] in charge of the affairs of the colony; they defame one another; they complain of one another to the English government; all this, together with the quibbling and quarrelling usual in a land that is without law, and far from every form of justice, has prompted the people of the upper class, and all the colonists in general, to address a petition to His Majesty, George the Fourth, asking for a military force and a court of justice for the maintenance, support, and protection of this young colony established in the northern part of America, at a distance of nearly eight hundred leagues from any administration of justice or means of communication.

There is reason to hope that this petition will be well received in England, for people there seem to have a very favorable idea of the Red River. In truth, in this region the soil is exceedingly fertile; it is possessed of a healthful climate, filled with animals and wild game of every sort; there are salt licks to be found here, the salt of which is as good as that which comes from England; there are streams abounding in fish of every sort; without such resources the colony could never have endured the plagues of many kinds that have beset it. A small garrison and magistrates are all that are lacking to maintain it and to prevent all hostilities on the part of its enemies, the North West Company and the neighboring Indian tribes.

Spring has always been a season of considerable danger to the colonists and settlers of these wild regions. Each year brings acts of cruelty on the part of the different tribes that inhabit this vast continent of North America. There is even more reason to be fearful this year, for the following reasons: at the time of the establishment of this

colony Lord Selkirk found himself obliged (in order to avoid pursuit by the North West Company), to go by way of Prairie du Chien; en route to England one necessarily had to pass through the Sioux, who are the sworn enemies of the Chippewa. This tribe demanded presents of milord, who did not hesitate to grant them for the sake of a safe passage. This promise finally is to be fulfilled within a few days, and this circumstance has given rise to a general feeling of discontent among the Sioux, who have come each spring without receiving anything, and of jealousy among the Chippewa, who are determined not to be deprived of gifts; these two tribes, even though they have been at peace for four or five years, have not ceased to engage in scalping expeditions against each other every spring. About a month ago six Pillagers (Indians dwelling at the head of Lake Superior), all relatives of the Chippewa, together with two Frenchmen, were scalped by a band of Sioux on the Cheyenne River a few days' journey from here. Since that time the Chippewa have not ceased their war songs; they are assembling for this purpose while waiting for the Sioux to come in quest of the presents that were promised them as a last resort. It is impossible to predict the outcome of this maneuver. Meanwhile the freemen of The Forks and Pembina are providing themselves with means of defense in case the Indians make some attack. I do not think, however, that they will be tempted to do so, for they fear the *bois brûlés*, and above all the big guns [*i. e., the whites*]. We have all that is necessary here in the way of ammunition and arms.

I rather wanted to tell you about an Indian by the name of Monteur de Courant [*He who Mounts while Running*], who aimed at Mr. Dumoulin last autumn, and who tried to renew his efforts this spring, but space is lacking; therefore you will learn the details in Mr. Dumoulin's letter.

Since the director may have changed his name, I am not writing him; you can share this letter with him as well as with the regents, who may care to take the trouble to read it, and to whom I beg you to transmit my respects and expressions of friendship, asking them to be kind enough to remember a poor *voyageur* in their prayers. Affectionate regards to the students of my acquaintance.

I have only to commend myself to your Holy Sacrifices, Sir, in the union of which I am, Sir, your very humble and obedient servant,

J. SAUVEZ, Ecclesiastic.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, [JUNE, 1821]

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

MONSEIGNEUR,/ La présente sera remise à Votre Grandeur par Louis Haudet dit Lapointe, notre meilleur ouvrier, qui n'a jamais voulu consentir d'achever son tems par rapport à la mort de son père, quoique je lui ai offert 25 louis plus que ses gages, tant la mission en avoit besoin. Il lui revient sur ses deux années 86 louis 5 schelings. Les Missionnaires de la Riv: Rouge se portent bien et se recommandent aux pieux souvenirs de votre Grandeur. J'ai baptisé aujourd'hui 15 grandes personnes et ferai demain trois mariages. Les bancs de l'église de Pembina ont été vendus hier et donnent 236 louis 15 schelings de rente à l'église de cette mission. Le plus grand nombre des protestants qui sont établis ici ont des bancs dans l'église pour leurs enfants qui se sont faits catholiques. Nous avons sur les registres de Pembina 326 baptêmes, 56 mariages et 31 sépultures. Le jour de la Pentecôte nous chanterons pour la rière fois la messe dans l'église.

Nous avons eu beaucoup de peine à empêcher les Sauteurs de massacrer 15 Sioux qui sont venus dernièrement accompagner leurs traiteurs; ils ne sont pas encore hors de danger, car c'est le départ qui sera le plus critique; cependant nous espérons les faire échapper.

J'attends avec la plus grande hâte Messire le Grand Vicaire.

J'ai réussi cette année à faire semer un bon nombre de sauvages qui se sont mis par petits vilages. Nous attendons le canot alège dans huit à dix jours. Je pense partir sitôt après pour la Baie d'Hudson.

Je finis, Monseigneur, en priant Votre Grandeur de ne pas oublier dans ses prières celui qui est son très humble et obéissant serviteur,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

P. S. Lapointe a eu de ses confrères 13 louis 15 schelings qui ont été portés à leurs comptes. Total 100 louis.

S. D.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis,/ Archevêque de Québec, à Québec.

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, This letter will be delivered to Your Lordship by Louis Haudet, called Lapointe, our best workman, who was never willing to consent to finish out his time on account of the death of his father, although I offered him twenty-five pounds over and above his wages, so greatly did the mission need him. His two years of service come to eighty-six pounds, five shillings. The missionaries of Red River are well and commend themselves to the holy remembrances of Your

Lordship. I baptized fifteen adults today, and tomorrow I shall perform three marriages. The pews of the church of Pembina were sold yesterday, yielding two hundred and thirty-six pounds and fifteen shillings income to the church of this mission. Most of the Protestants who live here have taken pews in the church for their children, who are being brought up as Catholics. We have on the Pembina register 326 baptisms, 56 marriages, and 31 burials. On Whitsunday we shall say Mass in the church for the first time.

We had a great deal of difficulty to keep the Chippewa from killing fifteen Sioux who came here recently with their traders; they are not yet out of danger, for it is the departure that will be the most critical time of all; however, we hope to help them to escape unharmed.

I am eagerly awaiting the Vicar-General.

I have succeeded this year in getting a good many Indians to plant; they have settled in small villages. We are expecting the light canoes in eight or ten days. I shall leave for Hudson Bay immediately afterward.

I close, My Lord, begging Your Lordship not to forget in his prayers the one who is his very humble and obedient servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

P.S. Lapointe received from his comrades thirteen pounds and fifteen shillings, which have been credited to their accounts. Total one hundred pounds.

S. D.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Archbishop of Quebec, Quebec.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JUNE 5, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pembina, 5 juin 1821.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Les colons de la Riv: Rouge ont adressé au Roi une requête pour demander de la justice et une petite force militaire pour notre propre sureté. Ils m'ont prié aujourd'hui de prier Votre Grandeur de s'y intéresser surtout auprès du Gouverneur qui pourroit en écrire au Ministre.

J'ai encore un plan qui ne me paroitroit pas désavantageux pour cette mission: Les sauvages de ce pays sont accoutumés d'être con vaincus plutôt par les présents que par les raisons. On réussiroit bien plus facilement à les mettre en vilage, les civiliser et les instruire si on avoit quelques avantages à leur faire. C'est surtout avec eux que l'on peut dire: avec rien on ne fait rien. Ne seroit-il pas possible de faire venir par la Baie d'Hudson une portion de ces présents considérables

que l'on donne aux sauvages du Bas Canada, et même du Haut Canada, qui pourroient sans doute s'en passer bien plus facilement que ceux-ci, ou du moins qui pourroient en avoir moins et être consentant. Votre Grandeur pourra examiner la chose, et si elle le juge bon elle trouvera plus facilement que nous les moyens de pouvoir procurer aux pauvres sauvages d'ici un avantage dont ils ont tant de besoin. Le ministre d'ici veut en écrire au Bishop de Québec et paroitroit vouloir en avoir la régence, ce qui sans doute feroit beaucoup de tort à la religion catholique. Je remets le tout entre les mains de Votre Grandeur et me souscris avec le plus grand respect de votre Grandeur le très humble et ob. serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis,/ Archevêque de Québec,/ à Québec, Bas Canada.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, June 5, 1821.

MY LORD, The colonists of the Red River have petitioned the King for courts of justice and a small military force for our own security. They have now requested me to ask Your Lordship to intercede in the case, especially with the Governor, who might write to the Minister concerning the matter.

I have a new plan that I feel might be of benefit to this mission: the Indians of this region are accustomed to being won over with gifts rather than with logic. It would be much easier to get them to live in villages, and to civilize and teach them, if we had some advantages to offer them. The saying "with nothing one can do nothing" is particularly applicable to them. Would it not be possible to send by Hudson Bay some of the many presents that are given to the Indians of Lower and even of Upper Canada, who could no doubt do without them much more easily than the natives of this region, or who would at least be satisfied with less? Your Lordship might consider the matter, and if you think best, be able more easily than I to find the means of procuring for the poor Indians of this locality a benefit that they need so much. The minister who is here wishes to write to the Bishop of Quebec about it; it would seem that he is seeking control of the matter, which would no doubt be very injurious to the Catholic Church. I leave it all in Your Lordship's hands, and close with the greatest respect, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Archbishop of Quebec, Quebec, Lower Canada.

HALKETT TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JUNE 26, 1821

[Quebec Archbishopal Archives. ALS]

London June 26th 1821.

MY LORD,/ Your letter (jointly addressed to Mr Colville and myself) of the 1st of May only very recently arrived here, and I am anxious that the Liverpool Packet of July should not sail without my availing myself of that opportunity to write a few lines to your Lordship.

Previous, however, to your receiving this I have no doubt that Mr Garden of Montreal has fully communicated with you on the subject of Mr Provencher's return to Red River, because Mr Colville has ment^d to me that Lady Selkirk (who is now in Scotland) had written some time ago to Mr Gale on the subject; so that I trust every arrangement in that quarter has taken place which could be adopted under the circumstances of Lord Selkirk's affairs. Mr Provencher's return to the Red River cannot but be of great importance to the general prosperity of the Settlement; and no one is more fully sensible than I am of the good which has already arisen from the Roman Catholic mission in that quarter, with respect particularly to the class of persons who had repeatedly been employed to drive away the Colonists.

On the subject of the conveyance of the lands from Ld Selkirk to the Mission (mentioned in your Lordship's letter) I conceive there can be no ground for any difficulty whatever. I think you told me, when I had the pleasure of seeing you in London, that Lord Selkirk had made a regular and legal conveyance of the lands in question, but if anything should be wanting to complete those deeds, Lord Selkirk's executors will most willingly do what may be required to effect their completion. I am not however aware that any act will be required on their part relative to the lands alluded to. If there should, they will be happy to hear from you on the subject.

We have had no accounts for the Settlement this year, nor do I now think we shall receive any until the arrival of the ships from Hudson's Bay. I trust however that every thing is going on prosperously in that quarter, and that nothing will again occur to molest the settlers, or retard the improvement of the Colony.

I remain, My Lord, your faithful and obed. servt.

J. HALKETT.

The R. C. Bishop of Québec.

LADY SELKIRK TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JULY 27, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

St Mary's Isle — Kirkcudbright, N. B./ 27 July 1821.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ En même tems que j'ai eu l'honneur de recevoir votre lettre, mon frère m'a fait savoir que M. Halkett se chargeoit de vous écrire. J'espère qu'il vous a tranquilisé sur tous les points qui vous ont causé quelques inquiétudes, et que l'arrangement dernièrement fait par la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, au lieu de nuire aux intérêts de la mission, lui donnera beaucoup de facilités, en améliorant la manière de conduire le commerce avec les sauvages.

Les nouvelles que Votre Seigneurie a eu la bonté de me communiquer des progrès de Messieurs les Missionnaires m'ont causés une grande satisfaction. Vous me faites justice en croyant que je prendrai toujours le plus vif intérêt aux travaux de ces Messieurs, et je me flatte que leurs succès augmenteront tous les jours.

J'espère que M. Halkett vous trouvera en bonne santé quand il aura l'honneur de vous remettre la présente.²⁶

Faites-moi la justice de me croire, Monseigneur, avec une véritable estime votre humble et obéiss. servte.

J. SELKIRK.

A Monseigneur Du Plessis/ Evêque de Québec.

[*Translation*]

St. Mary's Isle, Kirkcudbright, North Britain, July 27, 1821.

MY LORD, At the time when I received the favor of your letter, my brother informed me that Mr. Halkett was undertaking to write to you. I hope that he has put your mind at rest on all the points that were disturbing you, and that the arrangement lately made by the Hudson's Bay Company, instead of injuring the mission, will give it aid through bettering the manner of trading with the Indians.

The news that Your Lordship had the goodness to send me concerning the progress of the missionaries caused me great satisfaction. You do me justice in believing that I shall always take a keen interest in the labors of those gentlemen, and I trust that their success will increase daily.

I hope that Mr. Halkett will find you in good health when he shall have the honor of handing you this letter.²⁶

Favor me by believing, My Lord, that I am most respectfully, your humble and obedient servant,

J. SELKIRK.

My Lord du Plessis, Bishop of Quebec.

²⁶ See *post*, p. 333.

St Boniface, 16 aout 1821.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ A mon arrivée de Pembina, le 25 juin, je trouvai à mon adresse cette longue et intéressante lettre de votre Grandeur datée du 10 avril 1821. Ce fut les seules nouvelles que nous eumes jusqu'au 8 d'aout où je reçus une longue lettre de Mr le Grand Vicaire Provencher et quelques lettres de ma famille. Votre Grandeur me permettra de rentrer aussitôt en matière, car j'ai bien des choses à dire.

Quant à ma dispense accordée à Pembina, heureusement que les pauvres gens n'en avoient point besoin, n'étant liés qu'au 3e degré d'affinité ex copula illicita.

Il est actuellement bien difficile de communiquer avec Mgr Dubourg; les marchands américains ne s'avançant plus aussi loin qu'ils le fesoient à cause des troubles qu'ils éprouvent avec les Sioux.²⁷ Je tâcherai cependant de lui faire tenir une lettre. Heureux si Sa Grandeur trouve le moyen de me répondre, car j'ai des gens qui en ont grand besoin à Pembina.

D'après la décision de votre Grandeur on peut dans la pratique regarder les hyvernants comme non admissibles aux sacrements étant tous obligés à porter le rum aux sauvages sous peine de perdre leurs gages, ce à quoi ils ne consentiront certainement pas. Votre Grandeur me marquoit dans sa lettre d'écrire au Fort William pour demander un canot pour me rendre à l'Athabaska; je l'aurois fait sans doute, mais bien des raisons m'en ont empêché. L'occasion que j'ai eu étoit trop tardive, la réunion des deux compagnies fesoit que je ne savois pas trop à qui m'adresser, car on nous assuroit que les parteneurs du N: W: n'avoient plus rien à faire dans le commerce. Mr Destroismaisons ne vouloit pas consentir à rester seul, ce qui auroit été bien dure à la vérité dans notre situation.

Pour l'école de Pembina, il y a là 15 enfants à l'école assidûment et un grand nombre enfants de protestants qui se font catholiques; ici, dans l'été même, il y en auroient peut-être 4 à 5 et encore moins l'hyver. J'ai offert cependant à Mr Sauvez de venir faire son école à St Boniface, mais il ne paroît pas s'en soucier. C'est un abbé qu'il faut épargner jusqu'à nouvel ordre. Rien de plus affligeant, Monseigneur, que le

²⁷ Bishop du Bourg's jurisdiction in 1821 extended to Pembina, which lay south of the forty-ninth degree of latitude and so beyond Bishop Plessis' diocese. The American traders were chiefly the fur traders of the valley of the St. Peter's, or Minnesota, River. It will be noted that one of the chief traders there at that time, Alexis Bailly, was at Pembina in 1821. See *post*, p. 338.

peu de réussite que l'on a avec les Ecclésiastiques envoyés à la Rivière Rouge. Il paroît que Mr Sauvez a dessein de jeter le froc, malgré les grands besoins que la mission en a. Sa conduite extérieure, quoiqu'il en dise, n'est point scandaleuse, si on en excepte son éloignement de la Ste table à laquelle il ne participe que très rarement; depuis l'autonne dernier je ne l'ai vu communier, autant que je m'en puis rappeler, qu'au tems de Pâques et à la Pentecôte. Je vais donner à Votre Grandeur un extrait d'une lettre qu'il m'adressa le 20 juillet 1821 :

St Frs Xavier. Monsieur, Je ne puis plus vous dissimuler mes sentiments dans la situation où je me trouve depuis quelque tems. Plusieurs fois j'ai été tenté de vous en parler confidemment, mais la timidité ou plutôt la honte m'ont fermé la bouche sur ce sujet. Vous n'ignorez pas qu'il s'agit de mon état que je déshonore, et tout ce qui le concerne. Hé, faut-il vous le dire, mon peu de religion, ma conduite extérieure, mon peu de gout pour le St état, tout vous prouve clairement que je médite un changement d'état. J'ai eu à soutenir à ce sujet bien des combats antérieurs, mais depuis que j'ai lu les conférences d'Angers (pour m'éclairer) je n'ai plus de doute et je suis pleinement convaincu que je me suis trompé dans le choix de mon état, et que faute de consulter mes inclinations et de suivre les avis de mes directeurs je me suis engagé témérairement dans un état pour lequel je n'étois pas décidé entièrement. Dans le volume qui traite de la vocation ecclésiastique j'ai trouvé pour mon compte de quoi me décider sûrement, et comme le mal n'est pas encore sans remède, je me vois obligé en conscience de me retirer pour la gloire de la religion et le salut de mon âme en laissant la place à de plus dignes. . . . Si j'en agit ainsi aujourd'hui c'est pour éviter de plus grands maux. Car, je vous le demande, quel malheur pour cette mission d'avoir un inconstant et peut-être un mauvais prêtre? Si déjà n'étant que simple tonsuré je suis incapable de remplir comme il faut les devoirs de mon état que dois-je penser pour l'avenir si non que je serai le même et peut-être pire encore. Voilà, Mr, une raison plus que suffisante. Au reste, ne pensez pas que j'agisse de la sorte inconsidérément. . . . telle est, Mr, ma situation présente. . . . Quoiqu'il en soit vous pouvez être assuré que je n'agirai en aucune manière inconsidérément et que j'en passerai à ce que votre conscience en décidera devant Dieu.

Je suis &c. Ph. [*sic*] Sauvez.

Mr Sauvez m'a de plus prié d'en informer votre Grandeur. Je lui ai conseillé d'attendre à l'année prochaine; il y est décidé, mais il ne faut pas se fier sur lui. Je l'ai mis depuis à un réglemant strict et à apprendre régulièrement ses trois pages de conférences; je ne fais cependant plus aucun fond sur lui. Rien de plus triste, car ce Monsieur étoit capable d'apprendre le sauvage, et a d'ailleurs beaucoup de qualités pour faire un missionnaire. Personne n'a rien à dire contre lui, et quoiqu'il ne soit pas aussi zélé et aussi aimé que Mr Edge on le considère cependant beaucoup dans le public.

Nous sommes à la veille de dire la messe dans l'église de la Fourche, elle est presque couverte en bardeau, les planchers sont faits, nous pourrions même dire la messe le jour de l'Assomption, mais il nous manque des peaux pour les chassis. La vente des bancs ne montera pas à la moitié si haut que celle de Pembina. La couverture en bardeaux de chêne ne paroît pas être bien *étanche* quoiqu'elle coute plus cher que si c'étoit du cèdre; je suis indécis de faire couvrir celle de Pembina avec du bardeau de cette espèce, quoiqu'il soit presque tout fait de l'hyver dernier. Nous avons dit la messe dans l'église de Pembina le grand jour de la Pentecôte.

J'ai, à Pembina, un Mr Jiasson ci-devant officier qui épousa à Montréal une Delle Thomson née d'un père protestant mais devenu catholique à sa mort. Cette pieuse personne, à l'exemple de son père, se fit catholique et eut pour parrain Mr Lesaulnier curé de Montréal. Quelques années après elle se maria avec le dit Mr Jiasson devant un ministre protestant et déréglé qui, contre les ordonnances, maria ces deux catholiques, peut-être ignorant que la fille le fût. Cette alliance criminelle fut funeste dans ses suites; les parties se brouillèrent tellement qu'elles se séparèrent. La fille est actuellement, à ce que l'on pense, à Halifax; le garçon est à Pembina et remarié à la façon du pays, depuis deux ans, avec une Delle Ménidier instruite et chrétienne qui a déjà un enfant avec ce Mr Jiasson, qui me prie instamment de les marier. Que dois-je faire? Je vais écrire à Mr le curé de Montréal pour m'assurer que la dite fille étoit encore catholique, et puis je crois, d'après une réponse faite par votre Grandeur à une question proposée par Mr le Grand Vicair Provencher, qu'il me seroit permis de les marier. J'attendrai cependant une réponse de votre Grandeur dans un cas aussi important.

J'ai à Pembina un mariage contracté il y a plusieurs années avec un empêchement diriment; j'en avois écrit à Votre Grandeur, mais je ne puis me servir des pouvoirs que nous avons, les partis connoissent l'empêchement et sont par là même dans un grand danger pour leur salut; si votre Grandeur pouvoit avoir une dispense de Mgr Dubourg pendant le cours de l'hyver ce seroit bien plus sûr que de ce côté ici, en ce cas je lui demanderois ainsi que pour deux autres mariages qui ne sont pas encore contractés. Ce sont tous trois des empêchements au 1er degré d'affinité *ex copula illicita in linea collateralali*.

Je suis résolu de mettre fin aux batisses faute de moyens pour les poursuivre; mais, en revanche, je vais faire quelques dépenses pour instruire quelques enfants. Je désirerois en prendre 6 des plus in-

struits qui savent lire et écrire, et de les loger aux frais de la mission dans une petite maison que j'ai à Pembina, et de les mettre sous un règlement. Je pourrai d'ailleurs faire aider les parens pour leur entretien; la nourriture, si la vache n'est pas trop loin, ne coutera pas bien cher, car les gens libres m'ont offert de me donner chacun une vache, ce qui nous aidera beaucoup.

Je penserois, Monseigneur, que si votre Grandeur envoye encore quelques ecclésiastiques, il seroit très important qu'ils fussent tout formés et déjà dans les ordres, ou au moins au moment de l'être; car il est presque impossible de se bien former à l'esprit ecclésiastique dans ces endroits, dépourvus pour ainsi dire de tous les moyens dont on regorge dans un séminaire; à peine peut-on conserver les principes ecclésiastiques que l'on a cessé de nous graver dans le coeur pendant le tems heureux de notre séminaire. Je suppose que votre Grandeur n'a pas oublié que c'est en 1822 que je dois descendre. Je n'en ai pas encore parlé, mais je regarde la chose comme assurée. Je suppose qu'en conséquence Mr le Grand Vicaire montera avec lui un prêtre et un Ecclésiastique; ou peut-être seroit-il mieux de monter deux prêtres et professeur laïc. Pour moi je sens mes forces manquer, et je vois que j'ai besoin d'aller reprendre des forces et rallumer mon foible zèle auprès de Votre Grandeur et parmi mes zélés confrères. Je ne partirai pourtant pas avant l'arrivée de Mr le Grand Vicaire.

J'ai réussi cette année à faire semer quelques Sauteurs dans quatre endroits différents. La principale est sur la Rivière aux Roseaux. J'ai baptisé plusieurs petits sauvages enfants de ces nouveaux terriens; il faudroit maintenant pour les encourager que le gouvernement fit pour eux ce qu'il fait pour les sauvages du Bas-Canada. On les contenteroit avec moins, quant on ne leur donneroit qu'une partie des présents que l'on fait aux sauvages des autres parties du Canada.

On a fait cette année à la Riv: Rouge des requêtes au Roi pour avoir la protection du gouvernement, de la justice et des troupes pour nous protéger contre les insultes et injustices sans nombre que nous font les sauvages. Je crois qu'il n'auroit pas été mauvais d'envoyer une copie au gouverneur du Bas-Canada, mais comme elles sont faites par des gens qui ne veulent guère reconnoître la juridiction du Canada, ils n'ont pas trouvé à propos de le faire; il ne seroit cependant pas mauvais que Votre Grandeur en touchât quelque chose au Gouverneur.

Je ne sais pourquoi on s'imagine en Canada que la mission ou colonie ne tiendra pas. Il est vrai que nous avons beaucoup perdu par la mort du Lord Selkirk, et que nous avons à sa place un Monsieur

Colwill qui me paroît bien serré; mais les agents ici n'en paroissent point découragés, et j'ai vu l'autre jour un des principaux agents de la compagnie d'Hudson, Mr Guerry, (si je l'écris bien).²⁸ Ce Monsieur m'a témoigné beaucoup d'estime et de confiance, m'a demandé à me voir en particulier, et j'ai profité de l'occasion pour lui faire beaucoup de demandes par rapport à l'établissement; et il m'a parfaitement convaincu que la colonie n'éprouveroit que du mieux par la réunion des deux compagnies. Il m'a même dit qu'il y avoit dans le dernier arrangement cinq parts qui avoient été réservées pour la famille du Lord Selkirk, et qu'il pensoit qu'elles seroient employées aux intérêts de la colonie. Il a d'ailleurs montré beaucoup d'intérêt pour tout ce qui regardoit le bien de la colonie et a paru me promettre tout ce que je lui ai demandé avec beaucoup de plaisir: tel que de nous procurer un passage quand nous désirerons aller voir les hyvernans à la Baie, et de s'intéresser pour que j'aye les portions de terre que j'ai demandées pour Pembina, &c. Ainsi je pense bien que tous ces bruits qui se répandent en Canada sur la décadence de la colonie sont absolument faux.

Les Agents de la compagnie du N: W: ont paru fâchés de ce qu'il n'y a point eu de prêtre à Fort William. Ils se sont plaints de ce que les évêques et le clergé du Canada étoient mécontents de leur réunion. Voici un extrait d'une lettre de Mr John Duncan Cameron qu'il écrivit à Mr Sauvez en passant au Bas de la Rivière pour se rendre à la Colombie. Cette lettre étoit pour le remercier de la peine qu'il avoit eu pour ses enfans l'hyver précédent:

One would be led to think that the Bishops and clergy in Canada are rather mourned than rejoiced at the Permanent peace that took place between the rival companies, since none came up to absolve us from our past sins, and to put up prayer to heaven to prevent our falling into fresh ones. But, to be serious, the absence of our Reverend friends was very much regretted, nor was it known by our Montreal gentlemen that they were not to come up. Mr Crevier was expected for some time; therefore we think that something new must have taken place to prevent his coming

Je suis parti cette année de Pembina avec tout ce qui m'étoit nécessaire pour le voyage de la Baie, mais malheureusement les berges étoient parties il y avoit trois jours lorsque je me suis rendu à la Fourche. J'avois beaucoup d'ouvrage à Pembina dans ce tems-là tant pour les semences que pour les gens-libres qui reviennent dans ces tems là des prairies.

²⁸ Nicholas Garry, for whom a fort at Winnipeg was named, was one of the agents sent to Red River in 1821 to effect the consolidation of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies.

Nous avons reçu ce printems une longue et insignifiante lettre; l'auteur se nommoit Meanwell, je crois qu'elle est d'un certain révolutionnaire de Paris qui est au service du N: W: Elle étoit cependant écrite en mauvais anglois. J'en donnerois bien quelque'extrait à Votre Grandeur, mais elle n'en vaut pas la peine. L'auteur commence par plaindre beaucoup notre situation, notre peu de ressources, semble croire que nous avons été trompés dans les magnifiques promesses qui nous avoient été faites par le Lord Selkirk; il désireroit à notre place des prêtres choisis parmi le clergé de votre Grandeur, riches, savants, respectables, &c. Il nous reproche ensuite d'être trop facile à accorder la communion et se plaint d'avoir vu une femme débauchée avec une croix dans le dos, et finit par nous donner beaucoup de conseils sur l'administration des sacrements. J'ai montré cette lettre au Colonel Dickson et à un autre protestant qui ont été très indignés de tout ce qu'elle contenoit.

Votre Grandeur dans les pouvoirs qu'elle nous accorde nous a retranché celui d'accorder les indulgences trois fois l'année; j'en suis fâché pour nos âmes pieuses qui les désirent beaucoup. D'après l'indult on seroit porté de croire que votre Grandeur a le pouvoir de dispenser au 1er degré d'affinité *ex copula illicita in linea recta* avec quelque restriction. Cependant Votre Grandeur nous dit le contraire dans les pouvoirs qu'elle nous accorde.

La colonie dans la concession des terres oblige les habitants à nous donner chacun 6 jours de travail à la place des dimes; les habitants ne s'en soucient point et aiment mieux être comme en Canada. Je suppose que se seroit aussi bien pour les missionnaires. Mr le Grand Vicaire arrangera cela à son retour.

Les sauterelles nous font encore un grand tort, cette année, surtout à la Fourche; la plus grande partie des jardinages est mangée. Heureusement qu'elles s'en vont sans laisser d'oeufs. A Pembina nous n'en avons pas ce printems, tout étoit magnifique. Mais le 17 juillet elles sont arrivées en si grande quantité qu'elles auroient en 5 ou 6 jours tout mangé, sans aucun doute. Les gens étoient aux alarmes; ils m'ont sollicité de faire une procession; je leur ai accordé. Ils sont venus tous le lendemain à jeun et se sont comportés avec la plus grande religion. Les sauterelles n'ont pas fait grand mal le restant de cette journée, et le lendemain sont toutes parties, excepté à deux places, d'où elles ne sont parties que le surlendemain. Depuis ce tems, c'est-à-dire depuis près d'un mois on les voye passer tous les jours en très grand nombre, mais elles n'arrêtent plus; elles sont gagnés la Grand-prairie et y brulent

tellement l'herbe que les animaux sont obligés de s'éloigner, ce qui fait que nous allons chercher la viande extrêmement loin. Il paroît cependant qu'elles meurent dans la prairie. Elles nous ont laissé tout notre petit jardin à Pembina et ne nous ont fait que peu de tort, n'y étant restées que 2½ jours.

Les animaux qui devoient venir par la prairie du chien ne viendront probablement pas. Voilà quatre fois que la colonie envoie chez les Sioux au-devant d'eux. Les sauvages continuent toujours à voler les chevaux; ils en ont volé 23 des meilleurs coureurs ce printems. Peut-on dire à un Bois-brulé v.g. qu'il peut tirer sur un sauvage qui emmène malgré lui son cheval, ou qu'il ne pourra ravoïr sans tuer le sauvage, étant impossible de punir ces gens-là selon les lois?

Il est resté l'an dernier deux cassettes appartenant à la mission dans le Fort de la Pointe Meuron. Ces deux cassettes sont actuellement au Fort William. Elles sont bien exposées; Mr le Grd Vicair pourra les monter le printems prochain.

Mr le Grand Vicair me dit que votre Grandeur lui fera passer cette lettre, c'est pour cela que je parle de ces petits détails qui pourront lui servir.

Je finis par me recommander aux prières de Votre Grandeur et de la prier de me croire bien sincèrement, Monseigneur, de votre Grandeur le très humble et obéïss. serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis/ Archev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

St. Boniface, August 16, 1821.

MY LORD, Upon my arrival from Pembina June 25, I found this long and interesting letter from Your Lordship, dated April 10, 1821. This was all the news we had up until August 8, when I received a long letter from the Vicar-General, My Lord Provencher, and some letters from my family. Your Lordship will permit me to plunge into things immediately, for I have much to say.

Concerning the dispensation granted at Pembina: fortunately the poor couple did not need it, being related only in the third degree of illicit affinity.

It is at present very difficult to communicate with My Lord du Bourg; the American traders do not come up as far as formerly, because of the trouble they are having with the Sioux.²⁷ I shall try, however, to get a letter to him, and I shall be happy, indeed, if His

Lordship finds a way to send a reply, for I have some people at Pembina who are greatly in need of it.

According to Your Lordship's decision, practically all the winterers must be regarded as inadmissible to the sacraments, since they are all obliged to take rum to the Indians on pain of losing their wages, which they certainly would not consent to do. Your Lordship recommended in your letter that I write to Fort William to ask for a canoe to take me to Athabaska; I should no doubt have done so, had not many things prevented. The opportunity came too late; because of the consolidation of the two companies, I was not sure whom to address, since I was assured that the partners of the North West Company no longer had anything to do with the trading. Mr. Destroismaisons would not consent to stay alone; to do so would have been very hard, it is true, in our present situation.

Concerning the Pembina school, there are fifteen children in regular attendance, besides a large number of children of Protestant parents who are being brought up as Catholics; here even in the summertime there would not be over four or five, and still fewer in the winter. I suggested, however, to Mr. Sauvez that he come to St. Boniface for his school, but he does not seem interested. He is a priest for whom we must have forbearance until there is a new order of things. There is nothing more discouraging, My Lord, than the slight success we have with the ecclesiastics sent to Red River. It seems that Mr. Sauvez is about to abandon orders in spite of the mission's great need of him. His conduct, whatever he may say about it, is not disgraceful in the least, unless it is the fact that he partakes of the Holy Eucharist very rarely; since last fall I have seen him communicate, as far as I can recall, only on Easter and Whitsunday. I am going to give Your Lordship an extract of a letter that he wrote me on July 20, 1821:

St. Francis Xavier. Sir, I can no longer deceive you concerning the way I feel about the situation in which I have found myself for some time. Many times I have been on the verge of confiding in you, but timidity, or rather shame, has kept me silent with regard to this matter. You are not unaware that that which troubles me is my calling, which I am dishonoring, and all that is connected with it. Alas! I must tell you, the weakness of my faith, my outward conduct, my distaste for the divine calling, everything clearly proves to you that I am meditating a change. I have had to support many an inner struggle because of this thing, but since reading the Conferences of Angers (to enlighten myself) I am no longer in doubt; I am firmly convinced that I have been mistaken in the choice of profession and that, on account of failure to consult my own inclinations and to accept the advice of

my counselors, I have rashly engaged myself in a work for which I was not altogether fitted. In the volume that deals with the priesthood I found what quite settled the matter for me, and, since the wrong is not yet beyond remedy, I consider myself conscientiously obliged to withdraw for the glory of the Church and the salvation of my soul, leaving a worthier one in my place. . . . If I am doing this now, it is in order to avoid further wrong. For, I ask you, what could be more disastrous for this mission than to have an inconstant and perhaps even a wicked priest? If even now, when I am only a simple cleric, I am incapable of fulfilling the duties of my rank in a suitable manner, what must I expect in the future but that I shall be the same or perhaps even worse. Here, Sir, is more than sufficient cause. But do not think that I am acting without due consideration . . . such is my state of mind at present, Sir. . . . However that may be, you can be sure that I shall not act without due consideration and that I shall abide by the decision of your conscience before God.

I am, etc. Ph. [*sic*] Sauvez.

In addition to this Mr. Sauvez has requested that I tell Your Lordship about this matter. I have advised him to wait till next year, and he has decided to do so; but we must not count on him. Since then I have given him a strict regimen and told him to learn his three pages of lectures regularly; I am no longer relying on him, however. Nothing could be more unfortunate, for this man was capable of learning the Indian language, and has, in addition, many of the qualities desirable in a good missionary. No one has anything to say against him, and although he is not as zealous nor as well liked as Mr. Edge, he is, nevertheless, greatly esteemed by the people.

We are nearly ready to say Mass in the church at The Forks; it is almost shingled, and the floors are laid; we might even say Mass on Assumption Day, except that we do not have skins for the windows. The sale of the pews will not amount to half of what it did at Pembina. The roof of oak shingles seems not to be quite rainproof, although it was more expensive than cedar; I am undecided as to whether to have the Pembina church roofed with this kind of material or not, although nearly enough shingles were prepared last winter. We said Mass in the church at Pembina on Whitsunday.

I have, at Pembina, a Mr. Jiasson, formerly an officer, who married a Miss Thomson at Montreal, a girl born of a Protestant father that became Catholic at his death. This devout woman, following her father's example, became Catholic, and had for godfather Mr. Lesaulnier, the curé of Montreal. Some years afterward she was married to the said Mr. Jiasson by an irregular Protestant minister, who married these two Catholics contrary to the precepts of the Church, perhaps not

knowing that the girl was a Catholic. This criminal union later proved disastrous; the couple quarreled so much that they finally separated. It is believed that the girl is now in Halifax; the man is at Pembina, and for two years has been married again after the usual manner of this region to a Miss Ménidier, an educated Christian, who already has had a child by him. He continually pleads with me to marry them. What ought I to do? I am going to write to the Curé of Montreal to make sure that the girl in question is still a Catholic, and then I believe, judging from Your Lordship's reply to a question submitted by the Vicar-General, My Lord Provencher, that I shall be permitted to marry them. Nevertheless I shall wait for a reply from Your Lordship in such an important case.

I have, at Pembina, a marriage that was contracted several years ago despite a relationship that constitutes a diriment impediment; I have already written of it to Your Lordship, but I am not able to make use of the faculties we possess; the individuals recognize the impediment and are for this reason greatly in danger of their salvation. If Your Lordship could obtain a dispensation from My Lord du Bourg during the course of the winter, it would be much more certain than if we tried to do so, in which case I should like also to obtain dispensations for two other marriages that are not yet contracted. All three of these are impediments of the first degree of illicit affinity in the collateral line.

I have determined to stop all building procedure because of lack of means; but in return I am going to spend a little for the instruction of a few children. I should like to take six of the most advanced, who can read and write, and lodge them at the mission's expense in a small house that I have at Pembina, and give them a regular course of study. Furthermore, I can obtain some aid from their parents for their support; if the buffaloes are not far away, their board will cost very little, for each of the freemen has offered to give me one buffalo, a gift that will help considerably.

I should think, My Lord, that if Your Lordship sends out more priests, it would be of utmost importance that they be men of maturity, and already ordained or at least about to be, for it is almost impossible to acquire sanctity out here where one is deprived, as it were, of all the means that abound in a seminary; it is even difficult to keep always before one the ecclesiastical principles that were so graven on our hearts during our happy seminary days. I suppose Your Lordship has not forgotten that I am to go down in 1822. I have not spoken of it

before, but I consider the matter settled. I suppose therefore that the Vicar-General will bring up a priest and an ecclesiastic with him; or perhaps it would be better to bring two priests and a lay teacher. As for myself, I feel my strength waning, and I see that I need to go to regain my strength and to have my feeble zeal rekindled close to Your Lordship, and among my devout colleagues. I shall not leave, however, until the Vicar-General returns.

I have succeeded this year in getting a few Chippewa of four different localities to plant. The chief one is on Roseau River. I have baptized several little Indian children in these new districts; now, in order to encourage them, the government ought to do for them what it has done for the Indians of Lower Canada. They would be satisfied with less, if one only gave them a small portion of the presents that are given to the Indians in other parts of Canada.

Petitions for government protection were sent to the King this year from Red River, asking for courts of justice and for troops to protect us against the innumerable insults and injuries committed by the Indians. I think that it would have done no harm to have sent a copy of them to the Governor of Lower Canada, but since they were drawn up by people who will hardly recognize the jurisdiction of Canada, they did not think best to do so; it would do no harm, however, for Your Lordship to mention the matter to the Governor.

I do not understand why in Canada it is generally believed that neither the mission nor the colony will be permanent. It is true that we have lost a great deal through the death of Lord Selkirk, and that we have in his place a Mr. Colville, who seems to me very niggardly; but the agents here seem not to be at all perturbed over it, and the other day I saw one of the chief agents of the Hudson's Bay Company, Mr. Guerry (if I spell it correctly).²⁸ This gentleman has manifested a good deal of interest and confidence in me; he asked to see me privately, and I profited by the opportunity to make several requests with regard to the settlement, and he completely convinced me that the colony would experience only the best of results by the consolidation of the two companies. He even told me that in the final arrangements five shares had been reserved for Lord Selkirk's family, and that he thought that they would be used in the interests of the colony. Furthermore, he seemed to take a great deal of interest in all that concerns the welfare of the colony, and appeared quite willing to promise me everything that I asked him; such as to procure us passage whenever we may wish to visit the winterers on the Bay, to undertake to obtain

the lands for me that I have asked for Pembina, etc. Thus I think that all these rumors that are being spread in Canada concerning the dissolution of the colony are absolutely false.

The agents of the North West Company have seemed to be angry because no priest has visited Fort William. They have complained that the bishops and priests of Canada were displeased because of their consolidation. Here is an extract of a letter which Mr. John Duncan Cameron wrote to Mr. Sauvez at Bas de la Rivière on his way to the Columbia. This letter was to thank him for the trouble he had taken for his children the winter before.

[*In English:*] One would be led to think that the Bishops and clergy in Canada are rather mourned than rejoiced at the Permanent peace that took place between the rival companies, since none came up to absolve us from our past sins, and to put up prayer to heaven to prevent our falling into fresh ones. But, to be serious, the absence of our Reverend friends was very much regretted, nor was it known by our Montreal gentlemen that they were not to come up. Mr Crevier was expected for some time; therefore we think that something new must have taken place to prevent his coming

I left Pembina this year with everything necessary for the journey to the Bay, but unfortunately the boats had left three days before I reached The Forks. I had a great deal of work at Pembina at this time, both with planting and caring for the freemen, who return from the prairies at this time.

We received a long and silly letter this spring from a man who signed himself Meanwell; I believe it is from a certain Parisian rebel who is in the employ of the North West Company. It was written in bad English, however. I would quote some of it to Your Lordship, but it is not worth the trouble. The writer begins by criticizing our location, our want of resources; he seems to think that we have been deceived in the wonderful promises made to us by Lord Selkirk; he would like in our stead priests chosen from among Your Lordship's priests, who would be rich, learned, distinguished, etc. He then reproaches us for being too ready to grant communion, and complains of having seen a debauched woman, with a cross [branded] on her back, and ends by giving us a great deal of advice concerning the administration of the sacraments. I showed this letter to Colonel Dickson and to another Protestant, both of whom were very indignant over all that it contained.

In the faculties that Your Lordship accords us you have eliminated that of granting indulgences three times a year; I am sorry for the sake of devout souls who greatly desire them. According to the indult, one

would be led to believe that Your Lordship has the power to grant a dispensation for the first degree of illicit affinity in direct line with some restriction. Yet Your Lordship tells us the contrary in the powers that you grant to us.

In granting land the colony requires each of the settlers to give us six days' work to take the place of the tithe; the settlers do not care for this arrangement, preferring to do as in Canada. I suppose that this would be as well for the missionaries. The Vicar-General will attend to this matter when he returns.

The grasshoppers are again doing a good deal of damage this year, especially at The Forks; most of the garden stuff has been eaten. Fortunately they are going away without laying eggs. We did not have any at Pembina this spring; everything was excellent. But on July 17 they arrived in such swarms that in five or six days everything would no doubt have been devoured. The people were alarmed; they begged me to have a procession; I agreed. They all came fasting the following day, and conducted themselves in a most reverent manner. The grasshoppers did not do much harm the rest of that day, and by the day after they had entirely disappeared, except from two places, which they did not vacate until two days afterward. Ever since then, that is to say for nearly a month, we have seen great swarms of them pass daily but they no longer alight; they have reached the great prairie, where they have consumed the grass to such an extent that the buffaloes have been obliged to leave; this will make it necessary for us to go great distances in search of meat. It appears, however, that they are dying on the prairie. They spared all our little garden at Pembina, and did us very little harm, having stayed only two and one-half days.

The cattle that were to come to us from Prairie du Chien will probably not arrive. This makes four times that the colony has sent into the country of the Sioux to meet them. The Indians continue to steal horses; they stole twenty-three of the finest horses this spring. Is one justified in telling a *bois brûlé* that he may shoot at an Indian who is making off with his horse in spite of all protests, when the only possible way of retrieving the horse is to kill the Indian, since it is impossible to punish these people according to law?

Last year two cases belonging to the mission were left at Fort Meuron. These cases are now at Fort William and are liable to considerable risk; the Vicar-General can bring them up with him next spring.

The Vicar-General says that Your Lordship will pass this letter on to him; it is for this reason that I speak of these minor details, which may be of interest to him.

I close in commending myself to Your Lordship's prayers and begging you, My Lord, to believe me sincerely Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Archbishop of Quebec.

DESTROISMAISONS TO BISHOP PLESSIS, AUGUST 30, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

St Boniface le 30 aout 1821.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Je n'ai reçu votre lettre circulaire que le quatre du présent, et je n'ai trouvé d'occasion pour y répondre qu'au commencement de septembre; ainsi ma réponse sera trop tardive d'au moins un mois.

Le nombre des catholiques de cette mission se monte à environ trois cent cinquante, et celui des cathécumènes à quarante-six. A pembina, il y a environ quatre cent cinquante catholiques et cinquante cathécumènes. Nous ne pouvons en préciser le nombre précisément, vû la grande quantité de personnes qui voyagent. Il serait encore plus difficile d'assigner le nombre des engagés des deux Compagnies dans les différents postes du Nord. On croit qu'il se monte à plus de mille catholiques, la plupart ayant femme et enfants.

Les sauterelles ont encore beaucoup affligé cette colonie cette année. On ne recueillera guère plus du quart de ce qu'on pouvait espérer. Si, néanmoins, nous n'avions à craindre la disette que du côté de la récolte, et que les prairies pussent nous présenter un moyen aussi facile d'y suppléer que ces dernières années, notre condition ne serait pas beaucoup à plaindre. Mais, outre l'éloignement très considérable des animaux, on pense que les Sioux pourraient bien s'opposer aux chasseurs. Voici pourquoi: Ces sauvages se sont rendus ici au nombre de cinquante. Le but de leur voyage étoit d'emmener un traiteur avec eux et d'avoir les présens promis par Milord Selkirk. Le commis du fort Douglas, vainement effrayé de l'approche de ces gens, a donné des munitions à quelques Sauteurs qui ont tué deux Sioux et blessé un autre. Ceux-ci avertis du procédé du commis lui attribuent la mort de leur camarade. Dans une de leurs harangues, ils ont dit, entre autres choses, qu'ils empêcheroient les blancs de manger. Ils sont cependant partis aujourd'hui comme amis, paroissant bien satisfaits des présens

qu'ils emportent. Malgré cela, nous ne laissons pas de craindre la vengeance de ceux qui n'ont point de part à ces présens. Mais notre confiance est en Dieu qui peut faire servir à notre avantage les choses mêmes qui nous paroissent y être contraires.

Par la réunion des deux compagnies, le fort de la Baie d'Hudson va demeurer vacant; on dit qu'il va être donné au ministre protestant. Si la chose arrive, il y a beaucoup à craindre que cela ne nuise un peu au progrès du christianisme. Nous ferons cependant tous nos efforts pour empêcher ce mal autant que possible.

Depuis le commencement de juin, la chaleur a été bien grande; ce qui a causé des orages très fréquens et très abondans, toujours accompagnés de tonnerres horribles.

Je suis avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, De Votre Grandeur le très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

THS DESTROISMAISONS, Ptre.

A Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Archevêque de Québec.

[*Translation*]

St. Boniface, August 30, 1821.

MY LORD, I did not receive your circular letter until the fourth of this month, and since there will be no opportunity to answer it until the beginning of September, my reply will be at least a month too late.

The Catholics in this mission number around three hundred and fifty, and the catechumens forty-six. At Pembina there are about four hundred and fifty Catholics and fifty catechumens. We cannot reckon the exact number on account of the many who are *voyageurs*. It would be even more difficult to determine the number of *engagés* of the two companies in the various posts of the North. It is generally believed that there are somewhat over a thousand Catholics, most of them with wives and children.

The grasshoppers have again greatly troubled the colony this year. We shall harvest scarcely over a fourth of what we had hoped. If, however, we had only to fear shortage in the harvest, and if the prairies offered as easy a means of supplementing it as in these past years, our condition would not be serious. But not only are the buffaloes very far out, but it is feared also that the Sioux may attack the hunters. This is the reason: fifty of these Indians came here. The purpose of their visit was to take a trader back with them, and to get the presents promised by Lord Selkirk. The clerk at Fort Douglas, being unnecessarily frightened by the advent of these people, gave some ammunition to some of the Chippewa, who killed two of the Sioux and wounded

another. Having been told about the action of the clerk, the Sioux attribute the death of their comrades to him. In one of their harangues they said, among other things, that they would keep the whites from eating. However, they left today on friendly terms, and seemingly satisfied with the presents that they were taking away with them. Nevertheless, we do not cease to fear the vengeance of those who had no share in the presents. But our trust is in God, who is able to turn to our benefit even those things that seem to us quite the contrary.

Because of the consolidation of the two companies, the Hudson's Bay Company's fort is to be left vacant; it is said that the Protestant minister is to have it. If such a thing does occur, it is greatly to be feared that it will retard the progress of Christianity somewhat. We shall do everything in our power, however, to guard against this evil.

The intense heat we have had since the first of June has been the cause of very frequent and abundant storms, always accompanied by terrible thunder.

I am, with profoundest respect, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

THS. DESTROISMAISONS, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Archbishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO HALKETT, SEPTEMBER 17, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 10:236]

Québec, 17 septembre 1821.

A J. Halkett, Ecuyer, / à Londres.

SIR, / With a sense of gratefulness I received your favour under the date of June 26th, from which I understand that the executors of the late Lord Selkirk are disposed to do whatever may be wanting to complete the deeds made by his Lordship in behalf of the catholic mission at Red River. The only remaining formality was to have those deeds duly enregistered in the court of Chancery at home. Lord Selkirk had brought them with him for that purpose. If he did not performed [*sic*] the same before his death, I flatter myself that his executors will be so good as to comply with that formality without any loss of time, and your kindness towards me makes me expect that you'll take the trouble to acquaint me with the date of the registering.

Neither Mr Garden nor Mr Gale mentioned [to] me as yet the measures adopted by Lady Selkirk as to the conveyance of the Revd Mr Provencher. I expect Her Lordship will do me the favor of an answer to my letters of last spring and throw some light on that head.

The last news which reached me from Red River were of the 10th of June. Every thing was going on very well.

Being no[t] certain of your present dwelling place, I enclosed a duplicate of this letter under the cover of Capt. Matthey formerly governor of Ossiniboia, now in London. You may learn from him how it should be desirable that if any presents are to be sent to the indians of that quarter, the distribution of the same be entrusted to our missionaries.

I have the honor &c.

† J. O. cath. Bp of Quebec.

GALE TO BISHOP PLESSIS, SEPTEMBER 24, 1821
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montreal, 24th Sept. 1821.

MY LORD,/ I have had the honor of receiving your letter of the 17th instant. Some time previously I had received a letter from Lady Selkirk on the subject to which yours refers, but I had deferred addressing you, in the hope that some opportunity of personal communication might occur.

Lady Selkirk's communication was not quite so explicit as to enable me exactly to determine what was to be done, and I therefore wrote to her immediately requesting more precise information: sufficient time has not yet elapsed for the receipt of an answer from her Ladyship.

I am however of opinion that the Trustees of Lord Selkirk's Estate do not possess authority to remit any considerable sum to this country. In the mean time I should be very anxious to learn from Your Lordship what may be the least amount which it is expected will be required to be furnished by the Trustees of Lord Selkirk's Estate towards the expenses of the mission to Red River next year, including expenses for canoes, men, &c., &c. and also how often, or within what intervals, it is contemplated that an expedition will be required for the missionaries to that country.

I have not received any communication from the Hudson's Bay Company on the subject of the missionaries, and it therefore appears to me likely that such portion of the expence, as may be furnished from England, will fall upon the Trustees of Lord Selkirk's Estate.

I have the honor to be with great respect &c.,

SAM. GALE.

To the Cath. Bishop of Quebec.

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, Last fall I entrusted to Mr. Fortier, to be repaired, a chalice, of which the screw was bent, and two cruets, both of which leaked. He promised me to have the work done, and probably has done so. I pray you to send them back while navigation is open. He also had a tin box for holy oils; that he may keep till spring, and then send it back with fresh oils for my trip. If, however, you need the chalice, keep it, as I do not need it this winter. I do not remember whether I left anything else at the secretary's office.

I am finishing the reading of the duties of the episcopate, which I will send to the Bishop of Telmessus³⁰ at the first opportunity. That treatise is calculated to give a true idea of the high dignities of the Church, an idea more just than the usual impression. God grant that I may be guided by it in the future.

I have not yet received Benedict XIV; I have written to Mr. Manseau to have it kept for me at Mr. Cadieux'; in the meantime I do not fail to instruct myself.

I suppose you are a little relieved by the reports of the nominations; I have learned of a few. I believe that no one had thought of Mr. Demers for St. Grégoire. I hope he will be an angel of peace, as I wish will be the case.

Has Abbé Edge returned to the Seminary, or did he decide on some other vocation? I think he will give up the cassock with difficulty; he is a man who wanted to be a priest at any price without troubling himself with preparations, and, one might add, with consequences. I have tried several times to discourage him from this state, but he did not heed.

If you happen to meet some priest who finds himself overloaded with books, be they either of history, or of devotion, I shall willingly accept them for the Red River mission, which does not have a sufficient number.

Would a ceremonial of St. Lazarus be of any use to me? I do not know it. Would it not be an advantage if I could see in advance the pontifical, or ceremonial for bishops, in order to study the rubrics and

²⁹ The French text of this letter is printed under date of September 1, 1821, in Provencher, *Lettres*, 57.

³⁰ Jean Jacques Lartigue was consecrated as bishop of Telmessus, a titular see, in 1821. Scott, in Shortt and Doughty, eds., *Canada and Its Provinces*, 11:46.

perhaps ask some questions? Have you any of these books that you could secure for me? I have no idea about them, having never had occasion nor need to investigate them; it would be easier to send them now than in the winter.

Have you had an answer from Lady Selkirk? Are you expecting more letters from England before the winter? Ought you to write about the Red River colony in order to have an answer before my departure? Excuse all these questions; I notice that they are many.

I am with the most profound respect, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

PROVENCHER, Priest.

Yamachiche, October 1, 1821.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO GALE, OCTOBER 13, 1821
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 10:276]

Québec, 13 octobre 1821.

A Samuel Gale, Ecuyer, / à Montréal.

MONSIEUR, / En réponse à l'honneur de votre lettre du 24 septembre, je vous dirai que la mission catholique de la Rivière Rouge ne se croit autorisée à prétendre quoi que ce soit sur la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, ni sur la succession de Lord Selkirk. Ma seule demande est de savoir si Mr Provencher peut espérer passage sur les canots de la compagnie pour retourner à son poste le printemps prochain. J'ai fait une autre question à Mr Halkett dans ma dernière lettre, savoir si les deeds des terres accordées à la mission par feu Lord Selkirk ont été enrégistrés dans la Chancellerie d'Angleterre, comme Sa Seigneurie se proposoit de le faire. Depuis peu Mr Garden m'a appris que Mr Halkett étoit en Canada. Si vous avez connoissance qu'il doit venir à Québec, veuillez bien lui exprimer le désir que j'ai de le rencontrer pour traiter avec lui de cette dernière affaire. Quant à la première, je me flatte que vous pourrez me donner dans le cours de l'hiver prochain l'information que je désire.

Au cas que Mr Halkett se décide à quitter le pays sans visiter Québec, veuillez bien lui faire tenir la lettre ci-incluse. C'est un duplicata de la dernière que j'ai eu l'honneur de lui adresser en Angleterre. Ajoutez à cette faveur celle de me croire &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, October 13, 1821.

Samuel Gale, Esquire, Montreal.

SIR, In reply to your favor of September 24, I may say that the Catholic mission at Red River does not pretend to the slightest claim on the Hudson's Bay Company nor on the estate of Lord Selkirk. My sole request is to be informed whether Mr. Provencher may hope for a passage next spring in the company's canoes in order to return to his mission. I asked Mr. Halkett another question in my last letter, that is, whether the deeds to lands given to the mission by the late Lord Selkirk have been registered in the court of chancery in England, as His Lordship proposed to do. A short time ago Mr. Garden informed me that Mr. Halkett was in Canada. If you know that he is to come to Quebec, will you be so good as to tell him of my wish to meet him in order to discuss with him this last matter? As to the first, I flatter myself that during the course of the coming winter you will be able to give me the information that I wish.

In case Mr. Halkett decides to leave this country without visiting Quebec, will you be so good as to get the enclosed letter to him? It is a duplicate of the last one that I had the honor of addressing to him in England. Add to this favor that of believing me, etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

HALKETT TO BISHOP PLESSIS, OCTOBER 19, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montreal, Oct. 19th 1821.

MY LORD,/ It was my intention of delivering in person the inclosed letter from Lady Selkirk,³¹ and also to have conversed with you on the subject of a communication which I received from your Lordship here a few days ago, dated the 17th of September. A circumstance however has occurred in this place (the purport of which it is not necessary for me to trouble you with) which may keep me so long at Montreal as not to leave me time to visit Quebec during my short stay in Canada.

If this should prove to be the case, I shall write fully to your Lordship before my departure, and I trust every thing will be done with respect to the Roman Catholic mission at the Red River which, under the circumstance of Lord Selkirk's affairs, can be properly adopted by his Executors.

On the subject of the confirmation by them of Lord Selkirk's grant

³¹ See *ante*, p. 313.

of land to the R. Catholic mission, you may also depend upon it that every thing will be done on their part that your Lordship can wish for. I should scarcely suppose however that the registering of the Deeds in the court of Chancery is legally required; But of this, and of every other part on the subject, I shall endeavour to make myself master, and communicate to you the result either in person or by letter.

I have the honor to remain, My Lord, your Lordship's sincere and obedt servant.

J. HALKETT.

R. C. Bishop of Quebec.

PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, OCTOBER 22 AND 23, 1821
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]³²

[*Translation*]

Yamachiche, October 22, 1821.

MY LORD, I have here a couple who have not been blessed according to the forms of the Church. He is a young man of this parish, who has been gone for years, and who took refuge at Petite Nation. There he was married to a Catholic by a minister (Mr. Lechasseur). The woman was a minor, only fifteen years old. She says that her uncle, with whom she lived, forced her to contract this marriage, not wishing to await the arrival of Mr. Roupe. She was an orphan, without father or mother since three or four weeks after her birth. She would like to straighten out her affairs; I have not seen her husband, who has been at the Baie du Febvre for some time. She appears well disposed to do everything that she should. She is soon to give birth to her first child, her marriage having taken place about a year ago. She has been here but a few days. Nobody knows of the irregularity of her marriage. She was reared at the Grande Brûlé, having been born at Lake of Two Mountains, where her father and mother, who were Protestants, were both drowned. I pray you to give me instructions as to what course I should follow in regard to them. Could one put in the certificate of baptism, "Born of legitimate marriage," as long as no one knows that this marriage was not valid?

Do Protestants recognize the marriage of two Catholics performed by a minister? In that case, it would be necessary in the eyes of the civil law to put "Born of legitimate marriage." I have received the Benedict XIV from Mr. Manseau, which consists of eleven duodecimo

³² The French text of this letter is printed under date of September 23, 1821, in Provencher, *Lettres*, 58.

volumes, to wit: two of *De festis*, four of *De Synodo*, two of *De sacrificiis missae*, and three of *De institutionibus*. It appears that many treatises are missing, the cases of conscience and the canonization of the saints, which I believe are contained in other editions. I have commenced to read the ecclesiastical institutions.

I sent the three volumes of the duties of the episcopate to Mr. Cadieux' home to be confided by him to safe hands for the address of the Bishop of Telmessus. I do not know whether he has received them.

Mr. Jean Caron is going to spend the winter at Mr. Lebourdais', where he will be better satisfied, no doubt, than at St. Thomas, where he would be away from his parents and from his native soil. He gave me your letter and the work of Beauldry on the ceremonies, for which I give you my most sincere thanks. There are some ceremonials of St. Lazarus at Montreal, at Mr. Bossange's, according to the reports of Mr. Leprohon, who has received one for Nicolet, if I am not mistaken.

I am finishing this letter at Three Rivers, where I am to stay over night. They told me when I arrived that My Lord du Bourg had passed through on his way to Quebec; then Mr. Coffin told me that it was the Bishop of Philadelphia. I should have been very well pleased to see My Lord du Bourg, because he is to be my nearest neighbor.³³

I begin to wish impatiently to see letters from Mr. Dumoulin. I have written to Mr. Forest in order to have news from the department of Assiniboia, and to know if he expects more canoes. I have not had any answer as yet. God grant that the news may be a little reassuring.

I have learned tonight that Mr. Gauvreau is curé at Ste. Anne, since Mr. Morin has resigned, and that Mr. Jean has done the same. It is easier to leave one's parish than to find a successor. Has Mr. Halkett appeared at Quebec? If it is possible, it would be wise to make provision for my return, and for the return of other priests who in the future will be obliged to travel from here to the Red River, and also farther into the interior of the country; if he himself could settle all that, it would be an excellent arrangement. I do not know whether he is to spend the winter in Canada, and perhaps go to the Red River in the spring.

I wish you good health, and above all, good legs.

³³ By this statement Provencher means that Du Bourg's diocese will touch his own, as soon as he (Provencher) has been consecrated.

I am with the most profound respect, My Lord, Your Lordship's
very humble and very obedient servant,

J. N. PROVENCHER, Priest.

Three Rivers, October 23, 1821.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO PROVENCHER, NOVEMBER 9, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 10:297]

Québec, 9 gbre 1821.

A Monsieur Provencher, / Curé à Yamachiche.

MONSIEUR,

.....
Mr Halkett a fait ici un acte d'apparition, m'est venu voir lundi
dernier & s'est embarqué mardi soir pour Montréal. Il va passer
l'hyver à Washington, apparemment pour y traiter de la portion des
terres de Lord Selkirk qui se trouve sur les États-Unis. Il doit m'écrire
avant de laisser Montréal. Inutilement attendroit-on de cette société
qui doit faire tous ses envois par la Baie d'Hudson, qu'elle se chargeât
de faire des exprès pour transporter les missionnaires. Pour votre
transport même, le seul qui m'intéresse, j'ai déclaré à ce Mons^r que je
ne comptois pas sur un exprès, mais que si la compagnie devoit envoyer
quelques canots, le printemps prochain, pour ses propres affaires, je le
priois de me le faire savoir d'ici au mois de mars, afin que vous pussiez
en profiter pour votre retour. A tout événement, ménagez vos deniers
afin de pouvoir armer vous-même un canot. Il en faudra peut-être
venir là, ces Mess^{rs} étant persuadés qu'un exprès ne couteroit pas moins
de £500. Je crois qu'en achetant un canot & en choisissant bien votre
monde, vous pourriez réduire cette dépense à £300. Il faut les
trouver dans les revenus de votre cure. S'il y avoit un courier, cet
hyver, pour la Rivière Rouge, vous pourriez écrire à Mr Dumoulin
de vous envoyer chercher à Drummond's Island, comme l'a suggéré
Mr. Lacroix, lorsqu'il m'écrivit avant de laisser Montréal; le canot qui
vous auroit mené jusques là, s'en reviendrait, & ceci diminueroit
notablement les frais du voyage. Mais pour se fier à une telle chance,
il faudroit des mesures bien prises, car tout seroit perdu si la rencontre
n'avoit pas lieu. Je vois venir le temps où pour aller de la Riv. Rouge
ici, ou d'ici là, il faudra passer par l'Angleterre, peut-être par l'Ecosse.
Tout cela prouve combien il étoit essentiel d'établir cette mission de
manière à éviter le transport des prêtres qui deviendra de plus en plus

difficile. Et l'argent, et l'argent, où en prendre pour payer vos engagés de 1819 qui vont descendre l'été prochain?

Je suis &c,

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, November 9, 1821.

Mr. Provencher, Curé at Yamachiche.

SIR,

.

Mr. Halkett has put in an appearance here, having come to see me last Monday. He left Tuesday evening for Montreal. He is going to spend the winter at Washington, apparently to negotiate there for the portion of Lord Selkirk's land that lies within the United States. He is to write to me before leaving Montreal. It is useless to expect this organization that is to send all its goods by way of Hudson Bay to burden itself with expresses for the purpose of transporting missionaries. Even for your transportation, in which alone I am interested, I have declared to this gentleman that I shall not count on an express, but if the company is to send some canoes next spring on their own account, I should like to be informed of the fact in the month of March in order that you can profit by it for your return. In any case, guard your pennies that you may be able to supply your own canoe. It will perhaps be necessary to come to that, these gentlemen being persuaded that an express will cost not less than five hundred pounds. I believe that if you buy a canoe and choose your own *engagés* carefully, you can reduce this cost to three hundred pounds. It will be necessary to secure this sum from the revenues of your parish. If there is a courier to Red River this winter, you can write to Mr. Dumoulin to meet you at Drummond Island, as Mr. Lacroix suggested when he wrote me before leaving Montreal. The canoe which took you to that place could then return, and thus the cost of the trip would be much diminished. But to rely on such a chance it will be imperative that all arrangements shall be carefully made, for all would be lost if the meeting did not occur. I foresee the time when, to make the trip to or from Red River, it will be necessary to go by way of England, perhaps even by Scotland. All this goes to prove how necessary it was to establish this mission in such a way as to avoid the transportation of priests, which will become more and more difficult. And the money, the

money! Where are we going to get it to pay our *engagés* of 1819, who will come down next summer?

I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

SAUVEZ' BILL TO BAILLY, NOVEMBER 20, 1821

[Bailly Papers. ADS] ³⁴

Doit M^r Bailly à la Mission de Pembina

Pr 1 grande Messe	£ 15 ⁰⁰	0 ⁰⁰	0 ⁰⁰
" 2 Basses messes —	5 ⁰⁰	0 ⁰⁰	0 ⁰⁰
	1 ⁰⁰	0 ⁰⁰	0 ⁰⁰ ³⁵

Pembina 20 Nov. 1821.

J^B SAUVEZ E. s. [?]

[Translation]

Mr. Bailly, Dr., to the Pembina mission

To 1 High Mass	£ 15	0s.	0d.
" 2 Low Masses	5	0	0
	£ 1	0s.	0d. ³⁵

Pembina, November 20, 1821.

J. B. SAUVEZ, Ecclesiastic.

HALKETT TO BISHOP PLESSIS, NOVEMBER 24, 1821

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

New York, Nov. 24th 1821.

MY LORD,/ After my return to Montreal I consulted on the subject of Mr Provencher's passage up to Red River next spring, and I am in hopes that an opportunity will occur of giving him one. This however I cannot positively at present assert, as it depends upon the agents for the new Company, and not upon the executors of the late Earl of Selkirk. If two canoes go up next spring, which probably is all that will be sent up by the Lakes, I should suppose that Mr Provencher will obtain a passage; but I was informed at the same time that it would be absolutely necessary that very little baggage should accompany him.

³⁴ The original of this document is in the Bailly Papers in the possession of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. The Minnesota Historical Society has a photostatic copy. For an account of the fur-trading family of which Alexis Bailly of Minnesota was an outstanding member, see Warren Upham and Rose B. Dunlap, *Minnesota Biographies, 1655-1912*, 28 (*Minnesota Historical Collections*, vol. 14 — St. Paul, 1912), and Pierre-Georges Roy, *La Famille Bailly de Messein* (Lévis, Quebec, 1917). See also *ante*, p. 314 n.

³⁵ From the addition it would appear that the High Mass cost fifteen shillings and the Low Mass five, making a pound sterling in all.

However I mentioned to Messrs Garden and Auldjo of Montreal that it would be very advisable that your Lordship be informed as early as possible in the spring, or even in the winter, whether Mr P. can be accommodated; and I requested them to communicate with the Company's agents on the subject. Perhaps as the season advances your Lordship will apply to these gentlemen, and I trust that your wishes on the business in question will be carried through.

Since I had the honor of seeing you at Quebec, I have written to Mr Colville requesting him (as I conclude the counterpart of the Deed relative to the grant at Red River to the Roman Catholic Mission is in his possession together with Lord Selkirk's other papers) to make enquiry as to the registering the conveyance in the Court of Chancery, and that he will communicate to you the result. He will be easily enabled to ascertain what is requisite to be done, and will conclude all the necessary forms that may be proper to adopt on the subject.

I proceed from hence to Washington in a few days; but Messrs Garden and Auldjo of Montreal will always forward any letter that there may be for me at that place.

I have the honor to remain Your Lordship's faithful and obedient servant,

J. HALKETT.

P.S. Mr Alex. Macdonald (late of the Glengarry Regiment) goes up in one of the canoes. I think your Lordship knows him, and he will be happy to do every thing in his power to forward your wishes about Mr Provencher.

Mr Macdonald's address is at Messrs Garden and Auldjo also.

J. H.

The R. C. Bishop of Quebec.

HALKETT TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MARCH 15, 1822

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Philadelphia, March 15th 1822.

MY LORD,/ I wrote some time ago to Mr Gale at Montreal on the subject of the Red River Settlement, and requested him to inform you that it appeared to me that it would be absolutely requisite to have the settlers at Pembina removed from that station to the colony at the forks of that river where the other colonists are established. Your Lordship is aware that Pembina is to the south of the 49th degree of north latitude, and therefore, by the late treaty, within the jurisdiction and law of the United States. As, however, that portion of the country is certainly at present beyond the reach of the *american laws*, and

now taken out of the controul of the *British law*, it would probably become in time a nest of outlaws, to which persons of the worst description might repair, and evade the reach of justice. The possibility of this ought to be prevented.

Under these circumstances, I informed the Government of the United States, before I left Washington, that the settlers to the south of 49 should probably, for the present, be entirely removed.

This being the case, it certainly appeared to me to be unnecessary that there should be more than one Roman Catholic Priest at the settlement upon the Forks of the Red River, and this circumstance, I should hope, would make Your Lordship decide not to send up any priest this spring. Indeed as I have not heard from Montreal for a very considerable period, I am not aware that the agents there have found it in their power to offer a passage into the interior to the clergyman whom you proposed to send up.

I have thus taken the liberty of expressing my sentiments to your Lordship, and I have no doubt but the other executors of the late Earl of Selkirk will fully concur with me on this subject.

I hope your Lordship has experienced good health throughout the last winter, and I remain, My Lord,/ your sincere and obedient servant.

J. HALKETT.

To the Roman Catholic Bishop/ of Quebec, at Quebec.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MARCH 20, 1822

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pembina, 20 mars 1822.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Je profite de l'occasion d'un marchand américain, Mr Dausman,³⁶ pour me rappeler au souvenir de Votre Grandeur. Cette lettre doit passer par la Prairie du chien. J'écris à Monseigneur DuBourg pour la troisième [fois] sans avoir eu de réponse.

Nous avons eu beaucoup de misère à vivre cet hyver, et le printems sera encore pire, du moins jusqu'à ce que nous prenions du poisson. La vache n'a pas été à beaucoup près aussi loin de nous depuis que nous sommes ici. Nous n'avons pu faire aucune provision. 150 Suisses arrivés de l'automne dernier ont eu beaucoup de misère et de jeûnes à souffrir dans le court [*sic*] de l'hiver; malheureusement ils mangent une bonne partie des semences. Les fatigues et les travaux pénibles pour se procurer la vie ont paralysé les progrès temporels et spirituels de la mission et de toute la colonie.

³⁶ Probably this was Hercules L. Dousman, who established himself at Prairie du Chien about 1825 and became the chief trader there.

Mr Destroismaisons hiverne à la Fourche et est ici depuis près d'un mois, mais en bonne santé. Mr Sauvez est toujours dans les mêmes sentiments et fait l'école sans faire faire de grands progrès à ses écoliers. Mr Destroismaisons et moi en avons pris chacun un, ils expliquent passablement bien l'Építome et savent la première partie de la grammaire.

Tous les nouveaux habitants suisses sont protestants, à l'exception de sept. Un bon nombre sont assez disposés à laisser mettre catholiques les enfants qui n'ont pas encore fait leur première communion; car il paroît qu'à cette époque on leur fait faire serment de ne point changer de religion. Le ministre anglican en a marié un bon nombre avec des Meurons catholiques, il s'est même trouvé un canadien. Ces mariages ont cependant été faits de manière à révolter les assistants et à attirer peu le respect pour le ministre et ses fonctions.

"Ille fanaticus in sua Hudsonensis sinus visitatione Negotiatoribus "cum Indianis ad Biblias distribuendas societatem auxilem laudibus "haereticis ad coelum elatam, attamen abjecto et fundamento haereticam et perversam, suggestit et fanatico zelo incensus ut aliquid darem "ad me illam misit."³⁷

J'ai écrit bien au long l'automne dernier à Votre Grandeur; entre autres choses je lui disois que l'abbé Sauvez vouloit cesser de l'être et qu'il étoit décidé à descendre l'été prochain ou à passer par l'Amérique.

J'attends avec la plus grande hâte les nouvelles du printemps, et l'heureux moment où je pourrai donner de bouche toutes les nouvelles bonnes et mauvaises d'une mission qui est l'objet de votre sollicitude paternelle, et qui est infiniment chère à celui qui se souscrit, Monseigneur, de votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Monsgr J. O. Plessis, / Archevêque de Québec, à Québec.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, March 20, 1822.

MY LORD, I am profiting by the opportunity offered by an American merchant, Mr. Dousman,³⁶ to recall myself to Your Lordship's mind. This letter is to go by way of Prairie du Chien. I am writing to My Lord du Bourg for the third [time] without receiving any reply.

³⁷ This bit of Latin seems to read: "That fanatic on his visit to Hudson Bay with Indian traders established an auxiliary Bible society, recommended highly in heretical praises, but nevertheless fundamentally heretical and subversive, and, in his fanatical zeal sent it [*a copy of its constitution?*] to me, in order that I might contribute something." The topics mentioned in this letter are discussed in West's *Journal*.

We have suffered much hardship this winter, and spring will be still worse, at least until we catch some fish. In all the time we have been here the buffaloes have never stayed so far out as they have this year. We have not been able to lay in any provisions. One hundred and fifty Swiss who came last fall had to endure terrible misery and privation in the course of the winter; unfortunately they are eating most of the seed. The severe toil and fatigue of procuring a living have paralyzed the temporal and spiritual progress of the mission and of the whole colony.

Mr. Destroismaisons is wintering at The Forks, but he has been here for nearly a month. He is in good health. Mr. Sauvez is still of the same mind, and conducts the school without making much progress with his scholars. Mr. Destroismaisons and I have each taken one of them; they are able to explain the Epitome quite well, and they know the first part of the grammar.

All the new Swiss settlers, with the exception of seven, are Protestants. Many of them are quite willing to allow their children to be brought up Catholics, if they have not already made their first communion, for it seems that at that time they are obliged to swear never to change their religion. The Anglican minister has married many of them to Catholic Meurons, and there was even one Canadian among the number. These marriages, however, were performed in a manner to disgust those who witnessed them, and to leave small room for respect for the minister and his functions.

*"Ille fanaticus in sua Hudsonensis sinus visitatione Negotiatoribus cum Indianis ad Biblias distribuendas societatem auxialem laudibus haereticis ad coelum elatam, attamen abjecto et fundamento haereticam et perversam, suggestit et fanatico zelo incensus ut aliquid darem ad me illam misit."*³⁷

I wrote to Your Lordship at great length last fall; among other things I told you that Abbé Sauvez wished to abjure his vows and that he had decided to go [to Canada] next summer [either by the canoe route] or via America.

I am waiting with the greatest eagerness for the spring news and the happy moment when I may tell you by word of mouth all the news, both good and bad, of a mission that is the object of your paternal anxiety, and that is infinitely dear to the one who signs himself, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Archbishop of Quebec, Quebec.

Québec, 8 avril 1822.

A Monsieur J. Halkett, Ecuier,/ à Montréal.

SIR,/ I had the honor of receiving in due time the two letters you favored me with: the one dated New York, November 24th; the other from Philadelphia under the date of the 15th of last month.

According to your directions, I wrote in February to Messrs Garden and Auldjo of Montreal to know whether any canoes of Hudson's Bay were to be sent next spring to Red River, hoping that the Revd Mr Provencher could find a passage through them. Their answer of February 28th was that they expected orders from home, and that as soon as such orders arrive, they would not fail to acquaint me with [them]. But I heard none of them since.

However, not only the colony of Red River, but also the North West countries at large are interested in the maintenance of that mission, where one or even two clergymen should be too far under the wants of a numerous population of half breeds and scattered Canadians to whom may be added several tribes of Indians, who, by the grace of God and by the exertions of the Missionaries, begin to open their eyes to the light of the Gospel. So I am informed by letters therefrom of the 16th August last, received in the course of this winter. Therefore if no conveyance may be had from Hudson's Company for the Revd Mr Provencher's return to his post, which is at the forks of Red River, he must resolve to go at his own expense, which shall be no less than £4 or 500.

I have always considered that spot as the center both of the mission and of the Colony. If, contrary to my wishes, a part of the settlers have preferred Pembina, it has been in the hopes of procuring themselves a more comfortable livelihood, that place being nearer to the hunting fields. However be persuaded that I'll do my utmost to discredit that settlement and to have the inhabitants removed thence to the forks, much more so because their reunion on the same spot shall facilitate the spiritual administration and the education of their children.

The kindness, Sir, shewn by you on every occasion embolders [*sic*] me to desire that you be so good as to choose and indicate me a benevolent person in England who may forward from Red River to Quebec and from Quebec to Red River my future correspondance with the catholic missionaries of that place, since it must go, hereafter, as I conceive, through the way of Hudson's Bay.

I am much indebted to you for the attention you had, last fall, to write to Mr Colvill respecting the forms (if there be any) which may be necessary to secure the deed of late Lord Selkirk in behalf of the catholic mission at Red River, although I did not as yet receive any information from that gentleman.

The success already obtained by the missionaries give[s] the greatest hopes for the future welfare of the poor abandoned people of that interesting part of North America.

Add to your former favors, when returned home, to remember me respectfully to Mrs Halkett and to send me your address, as I shall be always proud to correspond with you and to renew the expression with which I am &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO BISHOP DU BOURG, APRIL 13, 1822

[Quebec Archbishopial Archives, Letter Books, 10:395]

Québec, 13 Avril 1822.

A Monsgr l'Evêque de la Louisiane, / Nouvelle Orléans.

MONSEIGNEUR,

Mgr l'Ev. de Juliopolis qui va partir pour la Riv. Rouge recevra avec reconnoissance les lettres de Grand Vicairé que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'adresser en blanc. Savez-vous de quoi je vais les remplir? De la communication des pouvoirs extraordinaires du St Siège en 29 articles, qui apparemment vous ont été donnés ainsi qu'à moi *ad decennium*, en sorte qu'il puisse en user librement & déléguer ceux qui sont de nature à l'être, aussi bien au sud qu'au nord du 49e degré de latitude qui nous sépare de vous. Ayez la bonté de ratifier cette communication, ou, si vous ne jouissez pas de cette faculté (ce que je ne puis supposer), ou si elles devoient bientôt expirer sans qu'il eut été pris des mesures pour les faire renouveler, vous auriez la complaisance de le faire promptement savoir, soit à lui, soit à moi, pour prévenir les nullités. . . .

Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, April 13, 1822.

His Lordship the Bishop of Louisiana, New Orleans.

MY LORD,

The Bishop of Juliopolis, who is leaving for the Red River, will re-

ceive gratefully the powers of vicar-general that you have done me the honor to address me in blank. Do you know how I am going to fill them? By communicating the extraordinary powers in twenty-nine articles from the Holy See, which apparently have been given you as well as me for ten years, so that he may use them freely and delegate those that may be delegated, to the south as well as to the north of the forty-ninth degree of latitude, which separates us from you. Have the goodness to ratify this communication, or, if you do not enjoy that faculty (as I cannot believe) or, if it is to expire soon without measures having been taken to renew it, have the goodness to state so promptly, either to him or to me, so that nullity may be avoided. . . .

I am etc.,

J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO LADY SELKIRK, APRIL 20, 1822

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 10:396]

Québec, 20 avril 1822.

A Mylady Selkirk/ St Mary's Isle, North Britain.

MYLADY,/ Votre faveur du 27 juillet dernier apportée par Mr Halkett, n'a servi qu'à me donner de nouvelles preuves de l'intérêt que vous daignez prendre à la mission de la Riv. Rouge. Cet établissement, dont les dernières lettres de Mr Dumoulin donnent les récits les plus satisfaisans, continue d'être l'objet de ma sollicitude. Voilà pourquoi j'avois prié Mr Halkett de savoir si, pour fortifier le deed accordé par feu Lord Selkirk il falloit qu'il fût enrégistré dans la Cour de Chancellerie. Après son retour de Québec à New York, au mois de novembre dernier, il me fit l'honneur de m'écrire qu'il avoit chargé Mr Colville de prendre les informations nécessaires à ce sujet & de me les transmettre. Cependant nous voici à la fin d'Avril, et je n'ai encore reçu aucune information.

Je m'étois flatté que la Compagnie d'Hudson enverroit, ce printemps, quelques canots par les lacs et que Mr Provencher pourroit y trouver passage. Cette espérance s'étant évanouie, il devient indispensable qu'il fasse lui-même un canot à ses frais, dépense de £3 à 400, parce qu'il ne peut différer plus longtemps son retour sans préjudice de la mission.

Vous apprendrez, je pense, avec satisfaction que, d'après des mesures prises dans mon voyage d'Europe, Mr Provencher, avant son départ d'ici, doit être revêtu du caractère épiscopal, en sorte que rendu chez lui il pourra non seulement donner la confirmation aux nouveaux chrétiens, mais encore, avec le temps, y ordonner des prêtres du pays

pour y perpétuer la mission, sans qu'il faille davantage en envoyer d'ici.

Etant vraisemblable que tous les envois pour l'Ossiniboia se feront à l'avenir par la voie de la Baie d'Hudson, j'ose vous prier, Mylady, de vouloir bien m'indiquer dans quelqu'un des ports d'où les vaisseaux sont expédiés, une maison de commerce à laquelle on puisse adresser, pour les missionnaires, quelques caisses de livres ou autres effets qu'il pourroit être occasionnellement nécessaire de leur envoyer, avec espérance qu'elles seroient fidèlement transmises à leur destination.

Mr Halkett m'a exprimé le désir que le poste de Pembina fût abandonné comme étant au sud du 49e degré de latitude & conséquemment dans le territoire des Etats Unis. Je lui ai promis de faire, à cet égard, ce qui dépendroit de moi, sans me flatter d'y réussir complètement, les colons y étant attirés, surtout en hyver, par la proximité d'une chasse plus abondante en cet endroit qu'elle ne l'est au Fort Douglass. Au reste, si ce poste fait partie de votre domaine, vous trouveriez peut-être à propos de le laisser subsister, même de l'encourager. C'est sur quoi il me feroit plaisir de connoître vos intentions. Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, April 20, 1822.

Lady Selkirk, St. Mary's Isle, North Britain.

MY LADY, Your favor of last July 27, which Mr. Halkett brought to me, gives me new proof of the interest that you deign to take in the Red River mission. That station, of which Mr. Dumoulin's last letters give the most satisfactory accounts, continues to be the object of my care. That is the reason for my having asked Mr. Halkett to determine whether the validity of the deed granted by the late Lord Selkirk required that it be registered in the court of chancery. Upon his return to New York from Quebec last November he honored me by writing that he had asked Mr. Colville to secure the necessary information on this subject and forward it to me. Yet it is already the last of April and I have received no word.

I had hoped that the Hudson's Bay Company would send some canoes this spring by the lakes and that Mr. Provencher could get a passage by them. That hope having vanished, it becomes necessary that he secure a canoe at his own expense (which will amount to from three to four hundred pounds), since he can no longer defer his return without injury to the mission.

You will learn, I think, with satisfaction, that as a result of measures

taken on my European trip, Mr. Provencher will be clothed with episcopal dignity before he leaves, so that at the mission he cannot only confirm new Christians, but also, in time, ordain priests of the country in order to make the mission self-perpetuating instead of its continuing to be dependent upon priests from this region.

Since it is likely that all articles for Assiniboia will be sent by way of Hudson Bay in the future, I am taking the liberty of begging you, My Lady, to be so good as to inform me of a firm in one of the ports from which vessels are sent, to which I can send to our missionaries (with confidence that they will be faithfully shipped to their destination) some boxes of books or other articles that it may be necessary occasionally to send them.

Mr. Halkett has expressed to me a wish that the post at Pembina might be abandoned, since it is south of the forty-ninth degree of latitude and consequently within the territory of the United States. I promised him to do in this matter what I could, without any assurance of being able to succeed completely, the colonists being attracted to that place, especially in winter, by the nearness of game, which is more abundant in that spot than at Fort Douglas. At any rate, if this station is within your grant, you might possibly find it expedient to let it continue, perhaps even to encourage it. On this point I should be pleased to know your plans.

I am, etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

HALKETT TO BISHOP PLESSIS, MAY 5, 1822

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montreal, May 5th 1822.

MY LORD,/ Upon arriving here a few days ago I found your letter of the 8th ult^o, and am happy to find that you also received mine of the 24th of Nov. and 15th of March.

I have not had the pleasure of seeing Mr Provencher, and therefore do not know what his plans are on the subject of proceeding to the Red River, or the time when he intends going. He is not at present in this place. There have been, I understand, several communications upon the subject from the agents here, but I cannot take upon myself to interfere in their canoe arrangements further than I already did at Montreal last Nov. After Monday next, I believe there is only one canoe to be sent up this season on the part of the Company. It is my own intention at present to go up to the Red River and return to England by the way of Hudson's Bay. If I go there, I shall do every thing

in my power to facilitate on the spot the removal of those settlers who had, I find, established themselves at Pembina, and I am glad to find that Your Lordship's views on that subject coincide with mine.

From a letter I received a considerable while ago from Mr Colvile, it appears that he could not then find the Deed relative to the grant of land to the Roman Catholic Mission at Red River. But he mentioned that if you were still of [the] opinion that the form of registration alluded to by you ought to be followed, that, as you were in possession of one set of the Deeds, you could adopt that measure in any mode that you might think most advisable; but, I presume, in that case it would be requisite for you to transmit to some person in London whom you might entrust well the document for the purpose of the registration. My own opinion always has been that the step was unnecessary in any legal view, but as I am not master of the subject, I should be very sorry to mislead you respecting it.

With respect to the request made in your letter relative to the mode henceforward of sending up to, and receiving from Red River, letters respecting your mission &c. I am confident that if they are transmitted through Mr Colvile in Hudson's Bay house London, they will be safely conveyed. But before this mode is resorted to, it will be always best to make enquiries whether or not there may be a conveyance to the interior every season from this place, which I should suppose would be the case. It will be very easy to learn this by making some of your friends here apply to the Company's agents for information.

By recent letters I have received from England I find that Lady Selkirk and her family were all well. She was in London during the winter, but I believe proposes to return to Scotland in the present spring.

I remain with much regard Your Lordship's sincere and obedt servant.

J. HALKETT.

R. C. Bishop of Quebec.

HALKETT TO McLOUGHLIN, MAY 8, 1822
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Montreal, May 8th 1822.

DEAR SIR,/ I received yesterday a letter from the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec, written, I presume, before the delivery of that which I sent to his Lordship by you. By the Bishop's letter it would appear that he considers it was intended that the proposed passage of Mr

Provencher to the Red River should be at the expence of the Hudson's Bay Company; now in fact it appears by a letter received by Messrs Maitland, Garden & Auldjo that Mr Colvile stated to them that Mr Provencher's passage would be attended with a considerable expence to the *estate of the Earl of Selkirk*.

In the letter which I received several days ago from the R. Catholic Bishop, he informed me that Mr Provencher was willing to go up to Red River *at his own expence*, and I mention to you the circumstances in the hope that as both you and I have important and pressing business in the interior, and that we ought to get to *Norway House* as soon as possible, any circumstance that might at all tend to delay us a moment in our journey, would be extremely vexatious. The same circumstances would in some degree affect our fellow passenger Captain Bulger.³⁸ I have been informed that Mr Provencher is extremely limited as to the quantity of baggage he can be permitted to take with him by the Company's canoe, and that he proposes to send the remainder by the circuitous route of England for Hudson's Bay. Of course I presume he will have to pay freight for this conveyance, as the company are quite distinct in these concerns from the Red River Settlement. How also Monsr P. is to get his baggage up from York Factory, without running the risk of it remaining there (as I have known to happen in several similar cases) for one or two years after its arrival in the Bay I know not.

The young ecclesiastic who was to have gone up with the canoe (which left this place the day before yesterday) was too late for his passage by that conveyance, and it appears to me that it would be extremely advisable that Monsr Provencher should go in a canoe of his own as was recently intended, in which case such hurry would not be required, and his whole baggage and the young gentleman alluded to might accompany him. Were this plan adopted I have no doubt but that the Executors of the late Lord Selkirk would allow to Mr Provencher whatever sum they may have proposed to pay of the expence that might be chargeable to them for his proportion of the outfit & of the canoe which positively leaves this on the 15th instant. What that might amount to I cannot, of course, take upon me to say.

As I suppose this will find you still at Quebec, will you be so good, immediately on the receipt of it, as to wait upon the Bishop and fully

³⁸ Andrew Bulger, a native of Newfoundland and an officer in the War of 1812, arrived in the colony as governor of Assiniboia in June, 1822, and left in August, 1823, after a stormy incumbency. His papers in the Public Archives of Canada give intimate details of the colony in the early twenties. Oliver, ed., *Canadian North-West*, 1:43, 219.

explain all these matters to him from me, with my best regards and respects, and I sincerely trust that his Lordship will see the propriety in every view of this arrangement.

I remain, Dear Sir, your faithful and obedt servant

J. HALKETT.

P.S. Mr Thain assures me that he will do every thing in his power to assist Mr Provencher in being forwarded in a separate canoe as suggested.

If Mr McLaughlin has left Quebec, this letter ought to be taken without delay to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec who is requested to open and peruse it; and, in that case, it may remain in his Lordship's hands.

John C. McLaughlin, Esq. Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO BISHOP DU BOURG, MAY 10, 1822

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 10:402]

Trois-Rivières, 10 mai 1822.

A Monseigneur L. N. Dubourg, Ev. de la Louisiane,/ à la Nouvelle-Orléans.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Conformément à vos désirs, j'ai rempli le blanc des lettres de Grand Vicaire que vous avez eu la bonté de m'adresser pour Mgr l'Evêque de Juliopolis qui sera consacré en cette ville dimanche prochain, 12 du courant, et doit partir aussitôt après pour la Rivière Rouge. Mais, Monseigneur, ces pouvoirs vagues ne suffisent pas à un Grand Vicaire qui se propose de donner des dispenses à vos diocésains de Pembina, si le cas échet. Il faut qu'il connaisse en détail la date & l'étendue & la durée des pouvoirs que vous avez reçus du St Siège. Il en est sans doute que vous ne pouvez communiquer. Tel étoit pour moi celui de dispenser au 1^{er} degré d'affinité *ex copula illicita*. J'ai demandé, étant à Rome, qu'il me fut permis de le communiquer, & on a eu la mesquinerie (pardonnez moi le terme) de me le permettre que pour trois ans qui vont expirer en Janvier prochain. Pour tranquilliser la conscience du nouvel Evêque, je lui ai promis de lui transmettre les renseignemens nécessaires sur l'étendue des pouvoirs que vous lui donnez, aussitôt que vous auriez eu la bonté de me les faire parvenir.

.
Recevez &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[Translation]

Three Rivers, May 10, 1822.

His Lordship L. N. du Bourg, Bishop of Louisiana, New Orleans.

SIR, In conformity with your wishes, I have filled out the blank in the powers of vicar-general that you have had the goodness to send to me for the Bishop of Juliopolis. He will be consecrated in this city next Sunday, the twelfth of this month, and is to proceed at once to Red River. But, My Lord, these vague faculties are not sufficient for a vicar-general who plans to give dispensations to members of your diocese at Pembina, if the case arises. He should know exactly the date, the extent, and the duration of the faculties that you have received from the Holy See. Doubtless the reason is that you cannot communicate them. Thus I could not communicate that of the first degree *ex copula illicita*. Being at Rome, I asked that I should be allowed to communicate it, and they had the shabbiness (excuse my use of the term) to allow it to me for only three years, which will end next January. In order to ease the new Bishop's conscience, I promised him to send to him the necessary instructions on the extent of the powers that you are giving him, as soon as you should have the kindness to send them to me.

.

Receive, etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JULY 8, 1822

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]³⁰

[Translation]

MY LORD, I did myself the honor of writing to Your Lordship from Drummond Island June 24, if I remember correctly. From Sault Ste Marie I wrote to Mr. Caron, my old landlord. From this place I am writing to Mr. Raimbault and to you. I left the Sault June 27 and arrived here before noon on July 6 without accident. I left at the Sault Michel Trudel, from St. Grégoire, who was sick; he was to come only to Fort William. My Iroquois guide will return from here. He hurt himself falling from the rafters of a canoe shed where he went to choose one. Happily I shall be able to continue my route with another of the men, who knows the way; I shall keep in the place of the Iroquois one of those who was to stay here. I shall leave tomorrow with

³⁰ The French texts of this letter and that by Provencher of June 24 are printed in his *Lettres*, 71-74. The latter has been omitted from this volume.

a single canoe and seven men. I shall be very heavily loaded with my belongings and food, some of which it is necessary to take as far as the Red River. There is none at Rainy Lake. There has been a famine at Red River; however, no one died of hunger.

At the entrance of Lake Superior I received a letter from Mr. Dumoulin, brought by a canoe of freemen who had come out from the Red River. He was in good health, as well as his companions. He says that Mr. Sauvez is still of the same mind, but he says nothing further. They have not been exposed to suffering from hunger. No grasshoppers had appeared; the crops looked well. The Sioux have killed a Canadian and wounded two others in the prairies above Pembina; two others have disappeared; they are believed to have been killed by the whites or the *métis* (an affair of jealousy or of a quarrel). Mr. Dumoulin complains that the mission has suffered from scandals this winter. The dispersing of his flock has been the main cause; he told me that he was to spend part of the summer with them on the prairies, and that Mr. Picard was to go to Hudson Bay. He was awaiting about forty families from Fort des Prairies.⁴⁰

So far I have baptized seventy-seven children en route; I shall have reached the hundredth, I hope, before I arrive. Twenty-three at Drummond Island, forty-one at the Sault, twelve at Fort William, and one at the Pic. It is very necessary that a priest should be sent to the Sault, Drummond Island, and Michilimackinac. Instruction is needed there, which one who is merely passing by is never able to give. The Americans are going to build a fort at the Sault, which will attract many people. I suppose that you can authorize a priest for both sides [of the river]. I have already talked to you of this urgent need in my first letter. I am not writing about it to the Bishop of Resaina, who, I believe, would find it difficult to offer someone. It is necessary to have a Canadian; a priest speaking both French and English would be better still. Dauphiné went to the Sault, and there his men have left him; he must return [home] without knowing what to do with his belongings. Mr. Harper⁴¹ doubtless would have stayed there also. Loranger is entering the interior; between this post and Rainy Lake

⁴⁰ Destroismaisons was called Picard — an instance of the French-Canadian practice of giving sobriquets to distinguish persons with identical names. See Morice, *L'Eglise catholique*, 1:174 n. For a discussion of the numerous posts that bore the name "Fort des Prairies," see Tyrell, ed., *Thompson's Narrative*, 88 n., and Masson, *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*, map frontispiece.

⁴¹ Jean Harper, who became one of the Red River band of missionaries in this year, remained till 1832, serving his new bishop and teaching. After his return to Canada he served the parish of St. Grégoire at Nicolet until his death in 1869. Morice, *L'Eglise catholique*, 1:206 n.

one of his men was mortally wounded by a gun accidentally discharged. He runs the risk of having his effects confiscated by the company.

Your Lordship will receive letters from me from time to time from now till fall; I wish very much to receive some from you, but I shall have to wait a long time yet.

Kindly give my regards to the people to whom you think they should go. I share always, I hope, in your Holy Sacrifices, etc., as well as in the prayers of the good souls who have the kindness to be interested in the poor Bishop of Juliopolis and his co-workers. May the God of mercy use him to do some good for His glory.

If I have a chance to send down some letters to Montreal before the return of my canoe, I will write on the way.

I have the honor to be, respectfully, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

† J. N., Bishop of Juliopolis.

Fort William, July 8, 1822.

P.S. I do not think I should find an episcopal seal useless. If there were a way to get one to me next year, I should be pleased. I believe that Mr. Caron will have enough money left to pay for it.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

HALKETT TO BISHOP PROVENCHER, JULY 20, 1822⁴²

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. C]

Forks, Red River, July 20th 1822.

SIR,/ I regret exceedingly that it will not be in my power to have the pleasure of seeing you here before I leave this part of the country, but it is impossible for me now to remain longer at the Red River, as I am exceedingly anxious to join Gov. Simpson⁴³ at York Factory, having much important business to transact with him before the arrival of the ship from Europe at Hudson's Bay.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec would doubtless have communicated to you, previous to your departure from Lower Canada, the subject which I had repeatedly the honour of writing to you about a considerable time ago; I mean the proposed removal of the settlers who had, of their own accord, occupied lands at Pembina. This intention I

⁴² This letter was enclosed in Halkett's to Bishop Plessis, August 30, 1822.

⁴³ George, later Sir George, Simpson became governor of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories in 1821 and remained in charge of the trading district until his death in 1860. Probably his tact and discretion were responsible for the successful amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay and North West companies. Burpee, *Oxford Encyclopædia*.

stated last winter to the Government of the United States when I was at Washington. The Bishop informed me, in a letter which I received at Montreal, that he would direct you on your arrival at Red River to afford every facility in carrying through that arrangement. It is evident that it has proved a very injurious measure towards Lord Selkirk's plans of settling this part of the country, that its early population should have proceeded in so struggling and dismembered a manner, & his executors have decided that every thing in their power shall now be done to prevent the same practice from being continued in future. It is not only probable that Pembina will be locally situated within the American lines as settled by the late treaty, but the occupation of Lord Selkirk's land at that place has, I have no doubt, been the cause of the mischief lately committed by the Indians, & there is not the slightest doubt that the circumstance of the Free Canadians & others resorting in such numbers to that neighbourhood operates constantly in preventing the Herds of cattle from approaching the plains that are nearer the Forks of the Red River.

It is therefore determined that no grant of land whatever shall be now made at that place, nor any legal title made over to those who have placed themselves at Pembina. It were certainly much to be wished that the Roman Catholic Mission had not extended itself so soon into that country under the circumstances of the Red River settlement, but that the great expense incurred by it at Pambina [*sic*] ought to have been rather laid out in improving & rendering more comfortable their present residence & possessions at the Forks, & in encouraging the cultivation & peopling of their large property at that place & in adding by that means to the strength & prosperity of this infant colony. I trust however that it is not too late to remedy the evil, & have no doubt that by your personal assistance & good efforts much may in this respect be done to insure its permanent success.

You see I have stated my sentiments very frankly on this important subject & shall only therefore repeat my expressions of regret at not having had the opportunity of personally paying my respects to you & of conversing with you fully on those matters.

I remain, Sir, your faithful & obedt servant

HALKETT.

To Mr Provencher.

[*Translation*]

Rainy Lake, July 24, 1822.

MY LORD, At last I have arrived at Rainy Lake. I got here today after noon and I shall leave tomorrow morning. Everywhere there is complaint of hard times. Scarcity of foodstuff has been felt throughout the North; we ourselves have not more than enough to take us to the Red River. The Indians stole from us at Cross Lake a sack of Indian corn and about sixty pounds of flour. This unexpected loss leaves us short. There is nothing here. All the canoes that we have met have told us that all their men were on rations. They say that the grasshoppers are still at Red River. All this bad news is not calculated to make us forget the fatigues and the discomforts of the trip. God be praised! One must abandon oneself to Providence. Nobody has yet died from hunger; and if such is to be the case this winter, at least we will try to die well. Perhaps there has been exaggeration. Letters from there will tell the whole story. I despair of seeing Mr. Halkett, who expects to go by way of the Bay and who will have left Red River when I arrive. I am sorry. I am so loaded that I can go only a little way each day; I shall arrive the first part of August. I will thank God with all my heart if the rest of the way, like the beginning of it, is traveled without accident. I hope that God will continue to listen to the fervent prayers of all those who pray for us.

I fear that Mr. Dumoulin may not have been able to secure provisions for the return trip of our canoe, though I wrote to him about it by Mr. Halkett.

I have baptized twelve children here; these make ninety since I left Drummond Island. To your fervent prayers I recommend myself and those who have been put under my charge.

I shall stop here for today. I will write again from Red River of all that may be of interest. Mr. Dumoulin, better informed than I, will give a more satisfactory report.

I have the honor to be, with the most profound respect, My Lord, your very humble and very dutiful servant,

† J. N., Bishop of Juliopolis.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec.

⁴⁴ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 74.

Rivière Rouge, 10 aout 1822.

J. Halkett, Esq.

MONSIEUR,/ A mon arrivée à la Rivière Rouge, qui a eu lieu le sept du présent, j'ai reçu l'honneur de votre lettre du vingt juillet. J'ai plus de raisons que vous de regretter la privation de l'honneur de vous voir à ce poste, car les affaires se traitent avec plus d'expédition dans les conversations que par lettre quoiqu'elles se fassent avec plus de solidité par les écrits qui restent.

Monseigneur l'Evêque de Québec m'a mis au fait de vos intentions au sujet de Pembina avant mon départ de Montréal. Je vois bien que les raisons que vous avez d'abandonner ce poste sont bonnes, mais l'exécution n'en est pas aussi facile que vous pensez au moins subitement; mais on en viendra peut-être à bout par degré; cette émigration est absolument impossible cette année parce que personne ne sera pressé de venir s'établir à la Fourche pour évidemment y mourir de faim. Car bien loin que la Fourche soit capable de nourrir des émigrés de Pembina il faudra qu'une partie des habitans de la Fourche aille encore cet hiver chercher la vie à Pembina. Nous ne pouvons pas laisser cette place cet automne. Le plus vite que nous puissions l'abandonner sera le printems prochain. D'ici à ce temps nous tâcherons de faire comprendre aux gens de l'endroit la nécessité de quitter ce terrain américain et si maltraité par les Sioux; quand nous nous y sommes établis nous ne pouvions pas prévoir qu'un traité entre l'Angleterre et les Etats Unis mettrait Pembina du côté américain. Sa seigneurie, feu Lord Selkirk, en demandant des prêtres catholiques entendait sans doute que ce serait pour instruire les catholiques de l'endroit et surtout les métifs canadiens; or la plus grande partie des catholiques et tous les métifs étoient à Pembina, et ne pouvoient absolument quitter ce poste pour venir à la Fourche où ils n'auroient pu vivre; il fallait bien aller les trouver. Les agents de la colonie alors approuvoient ce plan ouvertement; nous devions les supposer assez instruits des intentions du feu Lord pour nous en rapporter à eux. Nous y avons fait de grandes dépenses parce qu'on nous donnoit à entendre que Pembina seroit autant soutenu que la Fourche; depuis quatre ans on n'a jamais dit un mot contre cet établissement. Voilà ce que y a attiré tant de gens qui auroient pu s'établir à la fourche aussi bien que là, et qui en quittant à présent se trouveroient plus au dépourvu qu'en arrivant dans le pays.

⁴⁵ This letter was enclosed in Halkett's to Bishop Plessis, August 30, 1822.

Je conviens avec vous qu'il aurait été mieux de dépêcher [?] bâtir à la Fourche qu'à Pembina, mais alors il nous étoit impossible de la faire faute de provisions qu'il étoit très difficile de se procurer à la fourche; pour ne pas laisser nos engagés à rien faire, nous les avons employés là. Malgré cela, avec nos faibles moyens, nous avons des batisses et de la culture qui valent quelque chose dans ce pauvre pays où l'on bâtit à très grands frais des édifices insignifiants.

Je crois qu'il auroit été mieux de faire connaître vous même vos intentions aux gens de Pembina. Pour moi je ne fais que les engager à quitter l'endroit; le plus que je puisse faire sera de retirer le missionnaire, ce que je ferai le printemps prochain. Je désirerois qu'ils fussent réunis en quelque place peu éloignée de la fourche, où ils cultiveroient et pourroient aller à la chasse pour vivre en attendant que leurs terres leur fournissent de quoi vivre. Le Lac Manito-ba, que je n'ai jamais vu, pourroit, me dit-on, être propre à réaliser ce projet. Vous en pouvez juger puisque vous y êtes passé. Car je doute que l'on réussisse à les réunir à la fourche. Je serois content de connaître vos vues sur ce projet, ce que vous pouvez faire avant votre départ pour Londres. Je ne voudrais pas qu'ils s'établissent dans une place d'où il faudroit encore partir dans quelques années. Ces changements tendent à la destruction de la colonie qui verra tels colons se disperser de tous côtés, ce qui a déjà commencé cette année.

Soyez assuré que je ferai tout en mon pouvoir pour faire prospérer la colonie; pour cela je n'ai que les armes de la religion qui sont les plus fortes, à la vérité; j'en ferai le meilleur usage possible.

Voilà à peu près tout ce que je puis dire pour le moment; je ne suis pas assez au courant des affaires du pays pour faire d'autres observations.

Si vous n'approuvez pas le projet d'établir sur le Manito-ba, je présume qu'il n'y aura pas d'objection à attirer les gens de Pembina sur la Rivière Rouge mais au-dessus de toutes les habitations qui se trouvent plus haut que le fort Douglass; ayez la bonté de donner quelque chose de sure et de déterminé. Je suppose de plus qu'en les rangeant au nombre des habitans ils seront traités sur le même pied que les autres; car pour encourager ces gens à quitter leurs petites possessions, il faut bien dire quelque chose de plus que des mots qui servent à les mettre de mauvaise humeur, sans rien faire de plus; il y a déjà assez de mécontents dans le pays sans en faire d'autres. Si vous pouvez envoyer vos instructions de la Baie avant votre départ, nous pourrons travailler ensuite avec sûreté.

Je vous souhaite un heureux passage et je demeure avec respect,
Monsieur, votre très humble & très obéissant serviteur.

J. N. Evêque de Juliopolis.

[*Translation*]

J. Halkett, Esquire.

Red River, August 10, 1822.

SIR, Upon my arrival at Red River the seventh of this month, I received your favor of July 20. I have more cause than you to regret being deprived of the honor of seeing you at this post, for matters are attended to with more dispatch by conversation than by letter, in spite of the fact that they are made more definite by a written record, which is lasting.

The Bishop of Quebec informed me, before my departure from Montreal, of your intentions with regard to Pembina. I realize that the reasons which you have for abandoning this post are good, but the thing is not so easily put into execution as you think, at least all of a sudden; however, perhaps it can be done by degrees; such a migration is utterly impossible this year, because no one will be in a hurry to come to settle at The Forks, when it is evident that he will die of starvation there. For, far from The Forks being capable of furnishing a living for emigrants from Pembina, it will rather be necessary that some of the inhabitants of The Forks go again this winter to Pembina in order to live. The earliest we can leave here will be next spring. From now until then we shall try to make the people of the place understand the necessity of leaving this American territory, so harassed by the Sioux. When we settled here we could not foresee that a treaty between England and the United States would place Pembina in American territory. His Lordship, the late Lord Selkirk, in sending for Catholic priests no doubt intended that they would be for the purpose of instructing the Catholics of the region, and above all the Canadian *métis*; however, the majority of the Catholics and all the *métis* were at Pembina, and absolutely could not leave that post to come to The Forks, where they would not have been able to get a living. It was necessary, therefore, that we go to them. The agents of the colony frankly approved of this plan at that time; we naturally supposed them to be sufficiently acquainted with the intentions of the late Lord that we might leave the matter to them. We went to a great deal of expense because we were given to understand that Pembina would be supported as well as The Forks. For four years nothing has been said against this settlement. There you have the reason why so many

people were drawn there, who would have been able to settle at The Forks just as well, and who, leaving now, would find themselves worse off than when they arrived in the country.

I agree with you that it would have been better to have hastened building at The Forks instead of at Pembina, but at that time it would have been impossible to do so on account of lack of provisions, which were very difficult to obtain at The Forks. Therefore, in order not to leave our men idle, we employed them at Pembina. In spite of this fact, with our humble means, we have buildings and cultivated fields that are worth something in this poor country, where it is very costly to construct even the humblest of buildings.

I think that it would have been better for you yourself to have made your wishes known to the people of Pembina. As for myself, I can only urge them to leave the place; the most I can do will be to take the missionary from them, and I shall do so next spring. I wish that they could be assembled not far from The Forks, in a place where they could farm and hunt for a living while waiting for the soil to furnish them a livelihood. Lake Manitoba, which I have never seen, might serve as a place for the realization of this project, I am told. You can be the judge of the matter since you have been there. For I doubt if we shall succeed in getting them to go to The Forks. I should be glad to know your opinion of the plan, if possible before your departure for London. I should not want them to establish themselves in a place which they would be obliged to leave again in a few years. These changes, which cause such settlers to scatter in every direction, lead to the disintegration of the colony—which has already commenced this year.

Be assured that I shall do everything in my power to make the colony prosper; to do so I have only the weapons of religion, but they are in truth the strongest of all; I shall make the best possible use of them.

That is about all I can say for the present; I am not sufficiently familiar with the affairs of the country to make other remarks.

If you do not approve of the plan to settle on Lake Manitoba, I suppose that there will be no objection to getting the people of Pembina to go to the Red River, but higher up than all the habitations that are above Fort Douglas. Be good enough to reply with something fixed and definite. I suppose, furthermore, that if they are counted in the number of the inhabitants, they will be treated on the same basis as the others; for, in order to persuade these people to leave their small possessions, it will be necessary to say more to them than words that serve

only to make them ill humored; there are already enough discontented ones in the country without making others. If you can send your instructions to the Bay before your departure, we shall then be able to go on with certainty.

I wish you a pleasant journey, and remain respectfully, Sir, your very humble and very obedient servant,

J. N., Bishop of Juliopolis.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, AUGUST 11, 1822

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

St Boniface, 11 aout 1822.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ J'ai reçu le 8 de ce mois une lettre de votre Grandeur datée du 2 mai 1822. Cet acte du parlement dont parle votre Grandeur ne servira que pour l'établissement de la Fourche et ne sera, je crois, d'aucune utilité pour préserver les gens de Pembina et pour forcer les Sioux de cesser de nous massacrer comme ils font depuis 4 mois surtout. Nous n'avons pas encore rien vu de cette justice que votre Grandeur nous annonce, mais j'espère qu'elle viendra cet automne.⁴⁶

Si le gouvernement n'est point disposé à étendre les présents sauvages, la Société biblique est assurément bien disposée à faire des largesses aux sauvages d'ici par le canal de Mr West ministre protestant qui a reçu cette année 350 louis pour l'instruction des sauvages. Il veut prendre 25 garçons et 25 filles et en faire des cultivateurs. Il a eu de plus £150 pour un autre ministre qui vient ici, £100 pour un maître d'école, £1000 pour commencer à bâtir une église, £200 pour lui-même, sans compter £200 qu'il a de la compagnie d'Hudson. Voilà, Monseigneur, des armes contre nous; mais que seront-ils contre Dieu et la véritable religion! Mr Sauvez a fait l'école ici depuis le printemps et n'a eu que très peu d'écoliers qui ont fait peu de progrès.

Je n'ai seulement pas osé dire un mot à Mr Halket pour le maintien de la mission de Pembina, mais j'ai voulu lui exposer le triste état de la mission en général et combien on étoit gêné pour faire tout le bien que l'on désireroit faire; il faisoit semblant de ne pas voir ce que j'avois attention de dire et finissoit par dire: *il faut descendre*.

⁴⁶ Lord Bathurst, British colonial secretary, in a letter to Joseph Berens dated May 31, 1822, wrote: "His Majesty does not deem it expedient to issue an immediate Commission under the Act of the 1st and 2nd Geo. 4th Cap. 66 entitled 'An Act for regulating the Fur Trade and establishing a Criminal and Civil Jurisdiction within certain parts of North America'; and until action should be taken, Bathurst believed the provision made by the Hudson's Bay Company on May 29, 1822, was sufficient. This provision was the establishment of two governors and a council for the company's territories and a governor and council of Assiniboia — all with certain powers "for the administration of justice." Oliver, ed., *Canadian North-West*, 1:219-221.

Quant aux engagés qui ont fini leur tems pour la mission Moisan d a avec lui le montant de ce qui leur revient. S'il a payé des vivres pour descendre, c'est un peu sa faute, car il auroit pu attendre à descendre un peu plus tard. Pour Lapointe il lui revient ici £86, 5, 0 Mongnr Provencher ne peut se rappeler de ce que votre Grandeur n'a pu entendre dans ma lettre; ce qu'il y a de certain c'est que Lapointe est parti malgré moi et m'a forcé d'accepter à sa place un homme qui ne le valoit pas. Peut-être que Votre Grandeur pourroit compenser le tort qu'il a fait à la mission, ce qui seroit difficile de faire au juste.

Bolduc est sorti cet hiver par une mauvaise porte: il disoit qu'il en feroit tant que je serois obligé de le renvoyer. Il a réussi et est passé par la Prairie du chien; il a même fait quelques petits vols que j'ai chargés sur son compte. Il lui revient malgré sa dernière mauvaise conduite £128, 10, 0.

Je souhaite que la Riv: Rouge tienne et prospère, mais je ne le crois guère du moins si tous les autres sont comme Mr Halkett. Mr Macdonell est mis à côté et le Capt: Bulger a pris sa place; je ne sais si on aura plus de sujet d'être content de ce dernier.

Les conditions, Monseigneur, que votre Grandeur a mis à mon retour en Canada équivalloient à un ordre et c'est ainsi que je l'ai pris, car quand bien même j'aurois eu un passage assuré pour mon retour à la Riv: Rouge je n'aurois pu descendre, car c'est ce que je ne voudrois jamais. Si je descends je désirerois que ce fût pour toujours, et c'est ce que je demande instamment. Car il n'est pas possible de faire à la Riv: Rouge plus qu'en Canada ce que je me proposois lors de mon départ, qui étoit la conversion des infidelles. D'ailleurs ma tâche doit être faite, et Mgr Provencher pourra s'accommoder de Mr Picard lorsqu'il aura repris le cours des affaires. Je ne voudrois pas résister à votre Grandeur, mais je voudrois qu'elle eut égard à la bonne volonté que j'ai montrée jusqu'ici. Ainsi j'espère apprendre par le premier canot à lège l'heureuse nouvelle que je dois aller revoir ma patrie et des personnes qui me sont si chères.

Je suis, Monseigneur, de votre Grandeur le très humble et obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Evêque de Québec, Québec.

[*Translation*]

St. Boniface, August 11, 1822.

MY LORD, On the eighth of this month I received a letter from Your Lordship dated May 2, 1822. This act of Parliament, which Your Lord-

ship mentions, will benefit only the settlement at The Forks, and will not be of any use, I think, either in protecting the people of Pembina, or in forcing the Sioux to cease the massacres which have taken place particularly during the past four months. We have not yet seen anything of that justice that Your Lordship announces to us, but I hope that it will come this autumn.⁴⁶

If the government is not willing to increase the Indian presents, the Bible Society is certainly willing enough to be generous with the Indians here through Mr. West, the Protestant minister, who has received £350 this year for the instruction of the Indians. He wants to take twenty-five boys and twenty-five girls and make farmers of them. In addition he has received £150 for another minister who is coming here, £100 for a schoolmaster, £1000 to begin to build a church, and £200 for himself, not counting the £200 that he gets from the Hudson's Bay Company. These, then, are the odds against us, My Lord; but what will they be against God and the true religion! Mr. Sauvez has been conducting the school here since last spring, but he has only a few scholars, and they are making very little progress.

Not only did I venture to speak to Mr. Halkett about the support of the Pembina mission, but I tried to show him the sorry state of the mission in general, and how much we are hindered from doing all the good that would be desirable; he pretended that he did not understand what I was trying to tell him, and ended by saying: "It is necessary to go down."

As for the *engagés* who have completed their time with the mission, Moisand has with him the amount due them. If he paid for food on the return trip it is rather his own fault, for he could have gone a bit later. As for Lapointe, £86, 5s. is due him here. My Lord Provencher cannot recall what it was you did not understand in my letter; it is certain, however, that Lapointe left in spite of my efforts, and compelled me to accept in his place a man who was not nearly so competent. Perhaps Your Lordship could compensate for the loss he has caused the mission, although this would be difficult to estimate exactly.

Bolduc has caused us a good deal of trouble this winter as he said he would until I let him go. He succeeded, and went by way of Prairie du Chien; he even committed some petty thefts, which I have charged to his account. In spite of his recent bad conduct we owe him £128, 10s., 10d.

I hope that the Red River mission may carry on and prosper, but I

hardly think it will, at least not if all the others are like Mr. Halkett. Mr. Macdonell has been discharged, and Captain Bulger has taken his place; I do not know whether the latter will prove any more satisfactory.

The conditions, My Lord, that Your Lordship has attached to my return to Canada would seem to be the equivalent of an order; therefore I have taken them as such. For even though I had had a passage assured for my return, I should not have been able to go down — for that is something I never wanted to do. If I go back to Canada I shall expect to stay there forever and that is what I most earnestly request of you. For it is not possible to accomplish at Red River, any more than in Canada, what I had expected at the time of my departure; that is, the conversion of the infidels. Furthermore, I must have done my share of the work, and My Lord Provencher will be able to get along with the aid of Mr. Picard once he has gotten back into the run of things. I do not wish to oppose Your Lordship's will, but I should like you to consider the willingness which I have shown up to the present time. Therefore, I hope the first light canoe will bring me the good news that I may return to my home and loved ones.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,
SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, AUGUST 11, 1822

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS] ⁴⁷

[*Translation*]

Red River, August 11, 1822.

MY LORD, Here I am once more at my post. I am content, since Providence wills that I should be here; and I am convinced that you are even more so. I hope that all this great work may endure to the glory of God; continue to ask Him that it may be so.

I arrived here August 7; the canoe will leave again tomorrow. I have found all the gentlemen in good health. Mr. Dumoulin, who did not come down here until two days after my arrival, had already decided to remain, as I had given him advance notice in my letters last spring. Yet he would willingly have embarked on my boat, but it was not difficult to persuade him to stay. I hope that homesickness will not claim him for a long time. He is still in the same condition in which he left Quebec. His family will protest a little, but they will be

⁴⁷ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 75-78.

consoled in time. I believe that having failed in his first hope or desire he will go far.

Mr. Halkett had been gone from the Red River for two weeks when I arrived; he has gone to the Bay. Mr. Dumoulin was not very well pleased with Mr. Halkett's visit to Pembina, which was entirely for the destruction of a place that is very dear to Mr. Dumoulin. Mr. Halkett has left me a letter devoted entirely to this subject.⁴⁸ I sent him a reply at York Factory telling him that I would do everything in my power to persuade the people of Pembina to leave, but that I could do nothing for the present because it is not likely that they would come here only to die of hunger, the harvest having been insufficient for them to live on; and that it would not be until next spring that I should withdraw the missionary. For he knows well that it is the mission that has attracted the people there. I doubt if we shall succeed in getting them to come here. I am suggesting to Mr. Halkett that they be established on Lake Manitoba, which I have never seen, but by which he passed on his way to York. This lake is not far from here, and it affords fishing and hunting, which suit *bois brûlés* better than the pickax. I cannot say what the outcome will be, but we shall do the best we can. Without considering ourselves at all, there are several persons established at Pembina who have gone to a great deal of expense there, because until now the question of abandoning it had never been thought of. These persons are going to find themselves worse off than when they arrived, which is the case with us. The establishment at Pembina is a great deal more valuable than this one. If the people would consent to go down the Red River a little distance from there, it would be possible to move the chapel thither. But I doubt if they would wish to do so because they fear lest they may be once more disturbed by the boundary line, and still more by the Sioux, who seem to be very much irritated at the present time. They have killed ten people since spring on the plains above Pembina. Their continual migrations make the hunt dangerous, and this in turn makes food scarce. This has been particularly true all winter and summer. The river with its abundance of fish has been the only resource. For a short time now they have been getting some meat, but they are obliged to go out in great bands in order to protect themselves against the Sioux.

The harvest bids fair to be excellent this year. The grains and garden truck are as fine as could be desired. There have been no grasshoppers. The harvest will almost provide sufficient food for the

⁴⁸ For this letter and Provencher's reply, see *ante*, pp. 353, 356-360.

colonists, so that it will be less necessary for them to get meat from Pembina. Mr. Halkett arrived here in the midst of the famine. I am glad it happened so, for he will thus be better able to judge of the state of things. Mr. Dumoulin did not find him greatly disposed to favor the mission, although he made no active opposition. He says that he appeared very favorable toward Mr. West, an Anglican minister sent out for the Presbyterians, who hardly ever attend his meetings. The Swiss do not recognize him either. I hope that with time we shall be able to win over some of these lost sheep. There is a Scotch girl married to an Irish Catholic who is going to abjure after a time. Another minister is coming, I do not know of what faith. Famine has discouraged several people, who have departed; but there are plenty left.

I am sending down Mr. Sauvez, who offers little hope for the future. Mr. Picard would have been only too glad to go, but he is staying nevertheless. If all the people of Pembina come here, there will be no need of three priests to minister to them. We could perhaps devote our efforts to teaching the Indians, as the minister West is doing or trying to do. But if they establish themselves at [Lake] Manitoba, a priest will be needed there. Before disposing of those I now have, it will be necessary to see a bit more distinctly what turn affairs are to take, and in the meanwhile keep reliable men to face the enemy. It is always easy to leave a country and not so easy to go back.

I have sent all my accounts to Mr. Thain. I remained indebted to him for thirty pounds, including a keg of Madeira wine furnished by Mr. Forest which I never received. I told Mr. Thain about it; it will be well to notice whether it has been subtracted. I think it cost hardly less than ten pounds.

Account of the Men

	Remuneration	Advances	Owed
Michel Trudel	150 <i>ll</i>	100 <i>ll</i>	50 <i>ll</i>
Jh Desfonds	200	60	140
Louis wataratiron	300	162	138
Léonard Vandal	600	72	528
J. Bte Potvin	400	60	340
Pierre Aucoin	400	48	352
Pierre Saint-Martin	400	63	337
Jh Aucoin	600	138	462
		Total	2347 <i>ll</i>
Provisions taken to Drummond Island			228 3 <i>s</i>
Provisions taken to Fort William			285 4 <i>s</i>
		Total	2860 <i>ll</i> 7 <i>s</i>

Thirty pounds must be added that remained due at the time of my departure, and also the provisions for going down [to Canada]. I am giving [the account of] some of them here—those used in going as far as Drummond Island.

I have written to Mr. Caron for my accounts. He will perhaps have some difficulty. If Your Lordship can help him by leaving to him only the trouble of payment it would be best. You did not have to pay as much as you thought to our *engagés*, especially to Mr. Moisan, for the two others have nearly their full wages. Mr. Dumoulin is sending you their accounts.

The school is not much at the present time. The people have no food and are obliged to seek it wherever they can. There are two children that show some promise. One of them is a *métis* and is very talented according to Mr. Dumoulin, who has him at his home.

I wrote you from Drummond Island, from Fort William, from Rainy Lake, and from here. Taking all my letters together you will have all that can be said for this year. I have no time to write to others in Quebec; Your Lordship will make known whatever he deems necessary.

I remain, in the union of your Holy Sacrifices and good works, My Lord, your very humble and very obedient servant,

† J. N., Bishop of Juliopolis.

P.S. There are twenty-one livres to be deducted from the account of the *engagés* for advances made after my letter was written.

To the Bishop of Quebec.

HARPER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, AUGUST 12, 1822

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Conformément aux ordres de votre grandeur je prends l'honneur de lui écrire quelque'indigne que j'en sois.

Monseigneur, je n'ai pas trouvé le voyage si pénible que je l'imaginois avant de l'entreprendre; eut-il été mille fois plus long et plus pénible je ne l'aurois pas trouvé tel à la compagnie trop honorable pour moi de Monseigneur de Juliopolis; cet aimable prélat loin de me traiter en serviteur me considéroit et me traitoit comme son compagnon de voyage, tellement que j'en étois souvent couvert de confusion, ne sachant comment témoigner à sa grandeur ma reconnaissance pour ses bienfaits envers moi.

Je suis dans les mêmes sentimens que lorsque je quittai votre grandeur; mais plus j'envisage de près l'auguste ministère auquel j'aspire,

plus je tremble à la vue de mon indignité et de mon incapacité; cependant rassuré par les paroles de votre grandeur, je me jette, les yeux fermés, entre les mains de la Providence, résolu de faire tout mon possible pour accomplir la volonté de Dieu qui me donnera les secours nécessaires pour l'exécuter.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec respect et soumission, Monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

J. HARPER.

Rivière Rouge, le 12 aout 1822.

A Mgr J. O. Plessis, Evêque de Québec, à Québec.

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, In conformity with Your Lordship's orders, I do myself the honor of writing to you, unworthy as I am.

My Lord, I did not find the trip as difficult as I had expected before undertaking it. Had it been a thousand times longer and more difficult I would not have found it so in the company, too honorable for me, of the Bishop of Juliopolis. This charming prelate, far from treating me as a servant, considered and treated me as a traveling companion, so much so that I was often covered with confusion, not knowing how to express to His Lordship my gratitude for his kindness toward me.

I am of the same mind as when I left Your Lordship; but the closer I view the august ministry to which I aspire, the more I tremble at the thought of my unworthiness and my incapacity; however, reassured by Your Lordship's words, with my eyes closed I place myself in the hands of Providence, resolved to do all possible to accomplish the will of God, Who will give me the necessary help to execute it.

I have the honor, My Lord, to be with respect and submission your very humble and very obedient servant,

J. HARPER.

Red River, August 12, 1822.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

HALKETT TO BISHOP PLESSIS, AUGUST 26, 1822

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

York Factory, Hudson's Bay, / August 26th 1822.

MY LORD, / I do not wish to leave this place, on my return to Europe, without first writing to Your Lordship by a canoe which takes its departure for Montreal in a few days.

When I left the Red River, about a month ago, I was not so fortunate as to have seen Mr Provencher who had not then arrived from Canada. But I requested Captain Bulger, who has the present charge of the Settlement, to deliver a letter from me to Mr Provencher (on the subject, chiefly, of the Pembina establishment), a copy of which letter I take the liberty of enclosing for Your Lordship's information.

Having myself recently visited Pembina, and being too well aware of the mischiefs & murders that have lately occurred at that place & in its neighbourhood, I have no hesitation in again pressing upon Your Lordship's mind the necessity of putting an end to every encouragement to uphold that station.

It has been determined both by those who have the management of the Hudson's Bay Company's affairs, and also by the executors of the late Earl of Selkirk, that their respective forts or buildings at Pembina should be immediately and totally abandoned. Upon this subject I may also be permitted frankly to express my opinion, that the Roman Catholic Mission at the Red River, having so long left unfinished their church at the Forks, having permitted their intended house of residence there to continue incomplete and dismantled to the present moment, having established no schools, nor attempted any improvement or settlement of the extensive grant of lands given them by Lord Selkirk, they ought never to have set about building and completing a distant church and residence at Pembina. The measure which they thus hastily and prematurely adopted has unfortunately tendered [*sic*] to unhinge and disperse the Red River population, and it has evidently served but to encourage half-breeds and others to continue in that idle and disorderly mode of life to which I am sorry to say they are at present but too generally addicted.

I trust most sincerely that Mr Provencher will turn his most serious attention to this subject, upon which I have reason to believe that Your Lordship did not receive very accurate information. It will be the duty, and ought to be the most earnest endeavour of every one who is a well wisher of the Red River Settlement, and of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories in general, to form a compact and strong population at the Forks of that River. The inhabitants there cannot fail to be more under the eye, direction, and controul of those whose province it is to instruct and assist them and to promote the cultivation of their lands to which they ought to be encouraged by the favourable and abundant harvest of the present season. If, on the other hand, a large portion of them are permitted to continue to scatter themselves in

every quarter they chuse to resort to, they will soon exceed the Indians in every savage and barbarous propensity.

I have the honor to be, My Lord, your faithfully [*sic*] & obed. serv.
J. HALKETT.

To the R. C. Bishop of Quebec.

HALKETT TO BISHOP PLESSIS, AUGUST 30, 1822

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

York Factory, Hudson's Bay./ August 30th 1822.

To the Roman catholic Bishop of Quebec,/ &c., &c., &c.

MY LORD,/ Since I wrote to your Lordship the accompanying letter (dated 26th instant) I have received one from Monsr Provencher, who, I observe, is now constituted bishop of Juliopolis. His letter is in answer to mine of the 20th ultimo, and he appears to think that the Executors of the late Earl of Selkirk are expecting too much when they propose that the Pembina Establishment should be immediately given up. In no communication, I think, have I ever mentioned or proposed any specific period for this relinquishment as far as the R. C. Mission at that place was concerned.

Lord Selkirk's Executors indeed have ordered the colony Fort there to be immediately dismantled. The Hudson's Bay Company have also ordered their trading post there to be immediately abandoned; but what the Roman Catholic mission there propose to do, or when they mean to carry their intentions into effect I know not. It appears to me at all events that early next year they should show their determination to support your Lordship's wishes as this subject is expressed in the letter I had the honour of receiving from you (dated 8th April last) in which you informed me that "you would do your utmost to discredit the settlement at Pembina, and to have the inhabitants removed from thence to the Forks, the more so because their re-union on the same spot would facilitate the spiritual administration, and the education of their children."

In this opinion I most sincerely and cordially join with your Lordship, and have, therefore, informed the Bishop of Juliopolis that no new settlers will be permitted to locate themselves at present at the Lake Manitoban as applied for in his letter; and I am very much concerned to find that there should exist any wish to extend british settlements in that country, until the colony at the Forks of the Red River be rendered sufficiently populous, and strong enough to defend themselves, and until these establishments both civil and religious which

Lord Selkirk was so anxious to encourage at that place should be in a state of far greater advancement than they are in at this moment.

I have the honor to be with great regard,/ Your Lordship's obedient servt.

J. HALKETT.

P.S. It appears to me to be the most eligible mode to send to Your Lordship a copy of the letter I have received from the Bishop of Juliolis, together with that of my answer to him; and these documents are accordingly transmitted with this.⁴⁹

J. H.

HALKETT TO [BISHOP PROVENCHER], AUGUST 30, 1822

[Quebec Archbishopial Archives. C]⁵⁰

York Factory, 30th August 1822.

MY LORD,/ I had the honor of receiving your letter of the 10th of this month by the boat which arrived here yesterday from the Red River, and I was happy to find that you had safely reached your destination at that place. Permit me also to congratulate you upon the professional advancement which I observe you have attained. I hope you will long enjoy it to the advantage and improvement of those over whom you may be placed.

I am very happy to find that you agree with me as to the good reasons there exists for giving up our present Pembina establishments. On this subject, however, I must be permitted to say that [there] never was any wish on the part of Lord Selkirk's Executors to carry through that measure in a hurried and premature manner, although they were well aware of the necessity of having it put a stop to as speedily as could reasonably be effected, and had therefore determined to bring about that result by every means in their power.

Upon this subject, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec wrote to me (on the 8th of April last) that "he would do his utmost to discredit the establishment at Pembina and remove the inhabitants from that place to the Forks, the more so because their re-union on the same spot would facilitate the spiritual administration, and the education of their children."

I am happy to have fully and cordially agreed with the Bishop of Quebec upon these important points. In fact it has appeared to me to be very evident that unless the R. C. Mission determine to improve

⁴⁹ See *ante*, pp. 356-360.

⁵⁰ Probably Halkett included this copy in his letter of August 30 to Bishop Plessis.

their property at the Forks, and put the whole of their possessions, their establishment and domain on a more fixed and improving arrangement at that place, I conceive that the views of Lord Selkirk in the general advancement and civilization of his colony cannot fail to be much retarded, if not totally obstructed.

With respect to Pembina, the Hudson's Bay Company have recently come to the determination of immediately relinquishing their trading post at that place. The Executors of Lord Selkirk have also decided upon immediately abandoning their Fort at the same station. It is sincerely hoped that no un[n]ecessary delay will take place in the R. C. Mission adopting the necessary steps towards a similar arrangement. Nor can I, for a moment, admit that it will require the great degree of trouble or persuasion (as apprehended in your letter) to prevail upon the Canadians and Half-breeds at that place to remove to the Forks; because they will speedily find that, after the abandonment of the place by the Catholic Mission and by the Company's and Colony's establishments, those who persist in remaining will not only be more alarmed at the visits of the Sioux Indians (and in fact by their residing at Pembina they have been the principle cause of these bands coming so far down the river) but that they will no longer receive from the colony at the Forks the aid & assistance they might otherwise look for. It cannot be expected that Lord Selkirk's family is to be put to the slightest expence in assisting those who, after the establishments at Pembina are broken up, choose, of their own accord, to remain at that place in opposition to his Lordship's views, and to the decided opinion of those whom he has intrusted with the management of the affairs of his infant son.

I must also beg to refer to that part of your letter in which it is mentioned that the establishment of a R. C. Missionary at Pembina was fully permitted by those who had the management of the Red River Colony. How far this is the case I know not; but Mr McDonell has assured me that he never gave any encouragement to the measure, and that he never, upon any occasion, gave the slightest hope, or made the slightest promise, that any land would be granted to the mission at that place. If they therefore voluntarily and improvidantly incurred a great expence at Pembina, which it would have been far more advisable, and for the good of the colony, to have laid out upon their own regular establishment at the Forks, the circumstance is certainly much to be regretted.

It would appear also that you are of [the] opinion that I ought to

have informed the resident inhabitants of Pembina, when I was there, of the intentions respecting that place; but I conclude that you have not been informed that (if the matter was not misstated to me upon the spot) many of the individuals who usually reside there, had, and very wisely I think, withdrawn from the place, from apprehension of the Indians, and that almost all the rest had gone out in their usual irregular and disorderly manner to hunt the Buffaloe, and drive them from the plains adjoining the Red River. The principal individuals of Pembina however were made fully aware, when I was at the Red River, of my own sentiments upon the subject in question, and these sentiments have been strengthened and confirmed by every gentleman of knowledge and experience in this country whom I have since conversed with on the matters alluded to, and, I am happy to think, by the opinion expressed to me by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec himself. My sentiments respecting Pembina are by no means founded on the circumstance of the chance of that place being considered hereafter within the territory of the United States. Whether this will, or will not, be the case I cannot foretell. But, be that as it may, the result of that station being encouraged to go on, will probably be the means of increasing a population which will for a length of time be entirely out of the reach or controal of law and good order.

These are matters of much too serious a nature to continue to overlook; and for the same reasons which have determined Lord Selkirk's Executors to afford no further encouragement at present to the settlement at Pembina, I may, on their behalf, without hesitation take upon me to answer that part of your Lordship's letter containing the suggestion respecting the Lake Manitoban. In the present state of the Red River colony it cannot be permitted that any new settlement be made on the country bordering upon that lake.

I am not aware that I ought to trouble your Lordship further upon this occasion, except to express my confidence in your aiding as much as in your power the general objects which the late Earl of Selkirk had in establishing an agricultural colony in the Red River country, and that you will direct those under your controal and management to support the opinion, and cooperate in the views of the Bishop of Quebec as above mentioned.

I have the honor to be Your Lordship's faithful and obedient servant.

J. HALKETT.

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, When I said good-by in my letter, which left with my canoe August 12, I certainly thought that it would be till spring, as I did not suspect then that another opportunity would present itself this fall; but here is one less than three weeks later, and I must not miss it. A company canoe is supposed to pass Bas de la Rivière about the eighth of this month. One of our canoes will leave here tomorrow for that place. In my letter dated from here and in those dated from different posts on the route I have told you nearly all that I had to say.

We are all well. Mr. Dumoulin is on the prairies above Pembina. He is following the *bois brûlés*, who almost entirely abandon the post when they leave for the hunt, being obliged to go in large bands to protect themselves from the insults of the Sioux, who have not done any harm since I wrote last. He is busy instructing them how to prepare the infants for baptism; he also says Mass on Sundays. I have not yet made the trip to Pembina. The journey is not without danger; perhaps I shall spend the winter, or part of it, there. Life is easier there. Then Mr. Harper, who is tonsured, will follow me. I will endeavor to carry out Mr. Halkett's views in getting the people to come and establish themselves at The Forks, or in its neighborhood. I think the departure of Mr. Dumoulin, and the consequent prospect of being without a missionary, will make them abandon it [*Pembina*] easily enough. It appears from this project that we shall be reunited next spring, unless the people of Pembina establish themselves so far that it will be impossible to minister to them from here. On that point I am still ignorant.

From Illinois have come 150 to 160 cows and bulls, which are to be distributed to the colonists.⁶² Nearly everyone will be able to have some, allowing for those who received some last year.

When leaving, my men took on board an *engagé* of the company, named Dupra, who left as a deserter. We did not know anything about the matter till a few days later. I was willing to give passage

⁶¹ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 78-80.

⁶² In a footnote appended to "A Letter from John Pritchard to Miles Macdonell, June 16, 1825," in the *North Dakota Historical Quarterly*, 5:174 (April, 1931), John Pritchett gives a résumé of the cattle taken to the Red River colony during its early years, but does not include those mentioned in Provencher's letter of May 23, 1820, and in the present letter. In Oliver, ed., *Canadian North-West*, 248, there is a reference to William Dickson's and Lewis Musick's cattle imported from "the states" in 1823.

only to those who would furnish their own food, and the said Dupra did not do so, as far as I know; consequently it will be necessary to feed him as far as Montreal, or to Sault Ste. Marie. I do not know where he is to stop. Everything was done secretly between the men and him. They waited till they were below the fort before they took him on, so that no one would know about it. I do not know what tale they could have told to Mr. Sauvez, since the latter did not object. Now we are being accused, as if all this had been done with our connivance; and that is not pleasant. This Dupra is a carpenter and is needed by the company; I think that his passage was procured by Joseph Aucouin from Sorel, the *devant du canot*, with the other Sorel men. It might be possible to have them attended to by means of Mr. Kelly.

Concerning the case set forth in the indult which will expire in February, these gentlemen tell me that you told them not to make use of this faculty—that you even told them to be careful, as you do not have the power of dispensation in cases of direct line. This restriction has prevented them from going on with the marriage. It was expressly for that purpose, as far as I can remember, that I had asked you to request this faculty from the Court of Rome. I have not seen your letter, which is at Pembina. I do not know whether you have put this restriction on them alone; at least, you did not mention it to me when communicating the indult. Mr. Dumoulin asked you for an explanation, and you have not answered his question. I do not know what to do. The faculty is to end soon. Try to send it to me by next spring in case I do not proceed [in the case], or that other cases should come to light.

The harvest is about finished; it is plentiful, if one considers the seeding that was done; however, these are still small harvests. There will be many potatoes and other vegetables; we shall have about forty minots of wheat. Pembina will yield as much, and more; at least there was more planted there. They will have an abundance of potatoes, Indian corn, and plenty of garden stuff there, for Mr. Dumoulin has a famous gardener. He has a cow which he bought last fall for twenty-five pounds. She is a very beautiful animal, it is said, but does not give him any milk, unless she is doing so lately, for they say here that she has aborted. As for us, we are supposed to get a cow tomorrow. It will cost us at least twenty pounds, which will augment the sum of our debts, already more than four hundred pounds. If people would pay us, we would pay, but there is no money.

Everyone owes at the colony store. It will accept the notes of those who are indebted to us only when the latter themselves do not owe anything. Consequently, we cannot pay; however, we will try to have some grain, etc., which it will take as payment. Mr. Dumoulin has also a hen and a rooster, which gave him thirteen pullets in two settings. He is the only one in this country who has any. There are also a few sheep, which came last year, but they have not multiplied rapidly.

Have the kindness to remember me, when the occasion presents itself, to the people who in your judgment should not be forgotten. I recommend myself very strongly to your Holy Sacrifices.

Do not ever forget, before God, the one you have promoted so far in the dignities of the Church, so that he may not dishonor them by his life nor by his errors.

You understand the feelings with which I subscribe myself, your very humble and very obedient servant,

† J. N., Bishop of Juliopolis.

September 1, 1822.

SAUVEZ TO BISHOP PLESSIS, OCTOBER 15, 1822

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Votre Grandeur ne sera point surprise d'apprendre mon retour de la Rivière-Rouge. Je suis arrivé à Vaudreuil le 1er du courant sans accident Dieu merci. Vous recevrez par le steamboat la lettre de Monseigneur de Juliopolis ainsi que celles de M M. Dumoulin & Destroismaisons.

Avant la réception de la lettre de Mr Dumoulin de l'automne dernier, Votre grandeur ne devoit certainement pas s'attendre à un encouragement de ma part; Je ne m'y attendois pas moi-même, autrement j'aurois laissé la place à un autre qui auroit mieux répondu à la grâce de l'Etat ecclésiastique. Les doutes sur ma vocation & le dérangement dans ma conduite intérieure n'ont point permis à Monseigneur de Juliopolis de me garder auprès de lui; Sa Grandeur vous en parle certainement dans la [lettre] qu'elle vous écrit. Quoiqu'il en soit je ne veux rien faire par moi-même, car ce seroit être juge dans sa propre cause, ce qui n'est pas le plus sûr dans une affaire de cette nature. J'accepterai avec humilité & confusion tel lieu qu'il plaira à Votre Grandeur de désigner pour le temps de mon épreuve, bien résolu de suivre les avis qu'on aura la charité de me donner. J'attendrai avec empressement la réponse de Votre Grandeur, si toutefois elle daigne répondre

à cette lettre. En attendant je retournerai à Vaudreuil voir ma famille que je n'ai vue qu'en passant.

Oserois-je me recommander à vos prières et me dire pour la vie Monseigneur de Votre Grandeur le très humble & très obéissant serviteur

J^b SAUVEZ Eccl.

Montréal 15 octobre 1822.

Monseigneur J. O. Plessis/ Evêque de Québec, à Québec.

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, Your Lordship will not be surprised to learn of my return from Red River. I arrived at Vaudreuil the first day of the month without accident, thank God! You will receive by the steamboat the letter from the Bishop of Juliopolis, as well as those from Messrs. Dumoulin and Destroismaisons.

Before the reception of Mr. Dumoulin's letter of last fall Your Lordship certainly should not have expected that I would be discouraged. I did not expect it myself, otherwise I would have left the place to another who could have made a better response to the grace of the ecclesiastical calling. Doubts as to my vocation and an upheaval in my inward life have not permitted the Bishop of Juliopolis to keep me with him. His Lordship certainly will speak to you of this matter in the letter he writes you.

However, I will not make any decision myself, as I should then be judging my own case, a course which is not advisable in an affair of this nature. I will accept with humility and shame whatever station it may please Your Lordship to designate during the time of my probation, fully resolved to follow the advice that may be given me in charity. I am awaiting with anxiety Your Lordship's answer, if, indeed, you will be kind enough to reply to this letter. While waiting I shall return to Vaudreuil to see my family, whom I saw only in passing.

May I dare to recommend myself to your prayers and call myself for life, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

J^b. SAUVEZ, Ecclesiastic.

Montreal, October 15, 1822.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

Pembina, 13 novembre 1822.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Persuadé que Monseigneur de Juliopolis donne à Votre Grandeur toutes les nouvelles de la mission, je me crois dispensé d'écrire aussi au long. La plupart de mes chers métis sont partis depuis trois jours pour aller prendre leurs quartiers d'hiver. Depuis la Toussaint à leur départ il y a eu parmi eux 50 communions. J'ai à présent à Pembina 394 baptêmes, 68 mariages et 49 sépultures. Le spirituel de la mission de Pembina va assez bien, mais le temporel va très mal. Les Sioux en ont tué 12 de parmi nous depuis un an, en 4 coups différents. Les habitants sont très mécontents d'abandonner les travaux qu'ils ont faits. Je leur ai dit, dimanche dernier, qu'ils y seroient cependant obligés ce printems. Les prairies sont presque toutes brulées; la viande sera bien rare cet hiver; heureusement qu'il y a une bonne quantité de jardinages. La Compagnie a fait cesser nos petits marchands de commercer et donne mains aux gens-libres qu'elle ne donnoit ci-devant, ce qui les mécontente fort. Le prix de ce qu'elle donne est même augmenté, et on les menace de ne rien leur donner l'an prochain. Assurément s'il n'y avoit pas de prêtres à la Riv: Rouge, il y auroit encore quelque coup d'éclat.

Pour moi, Monseigneur, plus je vais, plus je désire d'en sortir. D'ailleurs il est absolument inutile d'être trois ouvriers pour si peu d'ouvrage, puisqu'il est comme impossible d'entreprendre pour le présent l'instruction des infidelles, il faudroit absolument pour cela des moyens que nous n'avons pas.

Ainsi j'espère, Monseigneur, que par le 1er canot du printems j'aurai ordre de profiter du tems de la grande instabilité où sont les choses pour aller revoir ma patrie. Ca fera 5 ans et demi, c'est suffisant il me semble. J'envoie tous mes cas à Monseigneur de Juliopolis; je suppose que Sa Grandeur en enverra quelques uns à Québec.

La colonie ne veut presque rien faire pour la mission; nous ne pouvons pas avoir un sol payable à Montréal. J'ai été obligé de courir la prairie tout l'été dans les plus grands dangers pour avoir de la viande pour faire l'argent nécessaire pour payer un homme de confiance qui nous est extrêmement utile. Je crains que Monseigneur ne puisse le garder l'an prochain faute de le pouvoir payer, car il demande son payement à Montréal.

Je suis, Monseigneur, de votre Grandeur le très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

A Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Archevêque de Québec, à Québec

[*Translation*]

Pembina, November 13, 1822.

MY LORD, Since I am certain that the Bishop of Juliopolis is giving Your Lordship all the news of the mission, I think I may dispense with a long letter. Most of my dear *métis* left three days ago for their winter quarters. From All Saints' to the time of their departure fifty of them communicated. At present there are at Pembina [records of] 394 baptisms, 68 marriages, and 49 burials. The spiritual welfare of the Pembina mission is prospering, but temporal affairs are going very badly. The Sioux, in the past year, have attacked us at four different times, killing twelve of our number. The settlers are very unwilling to abandon the fruit of their labors here. I told them last Sunday that they would, nevertheless, be obliged to do so this spring. The prairies are nearly all burned; meat will be very scarce this winter; fortunately there is a good deal of garden stuff. The company has put a stop to our small traders and is giving aid, which it has never done before, to the freemen; this greatly displeases the former. The price of what the company does give has even been increased and there are threats of not giving anything next year. It is certain that if there were no priests at Red River, there would be another outburst of some sort.

As for myself, My Lord, the longer I remain, the more I desire to give it up. Besides, it is absolutely useless to have three workers for so little work, since it is practically impossible, for the present, to undertake the education of the infidels; to do so it would be necessary for us to employ means which we do not have.

Thus I hope, My Lord, that the first canoe this spring will bring me orders to profit by this period of unrest to return to my home. It will be five and a half years, and it seems to me that that is sufficient. I am referring all my cases to the Bishop of Juliopolis; I suppose that His Lordship will send some of them on to Quebec.

The colony is willing to do almost nothing for the mission; we cannot get a sou payable at Montreal. I was obliged to scour the prairie all summer in the face of the gravest dangers in order to get enough meat to obtain the money necessary to pay a trusty servant who is extremely useful to us. I fear that His Lordship may not be

able to keep him next year on account of not being able to pay him, for he is asking for the money at Montreal.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Archbishop of Quebec, Quebec.

BISHOP PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, NOVEMBER 29, 1822

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁵³

[*Translation*]

St. Boniface, Red River, November 29, 1822.

MY LORD, YOUR LORDSHIP should have received two letters from me, one by Mr. Sauvez and a second by one of the company's canoes, which left Hudson Bay late in order to take the last news. There is an express that is about to leave here in the hope of reaching Montreal soon enough for the dispatches it is carrying to get to London before the departure of the parcels, which are usually sent in March, and which arrive here by the first canoes from Montreal. I hope that the plan may be realized. I shall profit by the opportunity to inform you of our present situation.

Nothing out of the ordinary has occurred since my last letter. The season has been so dry that the prairies are burned almost completely, a condition which will probably cause us to experience famine, at least as far as meat is concerned. Fortunately the harvest was quite abundant; but without meat one has a poor livelihood. The fire not only traversed the Red River area, but also all the prairies as far as Fort des Prairies, whence the company gets much of its supplies. I received by the last boats from the Bay Mr. Halkett's reply to my letter of last August. This reply was four pages long and entirely concerned with Pembina. He endeavors to refute all the arguments set forth in my letter; otherwise it is very courteous. He congratulates me on my promotion, and says that he has great confidence in my ability to promote the welfare of the colony. He seems to want us to evacuate Pembina immediately, as the company is doing; for the post has been abandoned by the company by a resolution taken at the Bay after Mr. Halkett's arrival. It was unable to carry out this plan this autumn because the season was already too far advanced. We shall do likewise. I did not receive his letter until the day before All Saints', and even then the rivers had for some twelve days been frozen solid enough in spots to

⁵³ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 80-86.

carry men and even horses; it is true that subsequent mild weather has caused the ice to melt, and the rivers are now open. We are not housed well enough to spend the winter all together, having only one building twenty-four feet by eighteen. Mr. Harper, who is wintering at St. Boniface, conducts his school in another house, which serves as kitchen. We have a large house fifty feet by thirty, which has been built and roofed for three years, but which time has not permitted us to finish, and our lack of means will prevent our doing so at present. Manual labor is very high out here. We need one more workman for a few years to finish this house, the chapel, and many other things; but lacking the wherewithal we must remain as we are. Once settled, we should be able to live by our harvests and the offerings of the faithful.

I regret the keg of wine that was left at Montreal; I have been able to obtain only one keg here, and that of poor wine, so it will be impossible for us to say Mass every day. Mr. Destroismaisons will, I hope, go on a mission this winter as far as Swan River, which is the third post from here. He was on the point of setting out, but we learned that these posts were suffering famine, which delayed his departure until the receipt of better news.

Mr. Dumoulin is still at his post. I propose to have him make the journey to the Bay next summer. Mr. Halkett does not want any other establishment made than the one on the Red River, as a continuation of the one already begun. This is assuredly the best plan. It seems that the company is going to gather together its former employees, who are scattered throughout the North, at a place called "Lapresse" on this river, five or six leagues below The Forks. It is there also, I presume, that the people of Pembina will take refuge.⁵⁴ In this event the chapel and presbytery can be brought down easily from Pembina, for the distance will be too great to minister to them conveniently from here. This settlement, which is an outgrowth of the old one, will be better than Pembina because of its proximity, and because it will unite all the people in a vicinity remote from the Sioux. The company seems to be desirous of the colony's prosperity; it also appears that the colony is to fall entirely under its administration. I cannot say whether this will be for the best. There has been a little

⁵⁴ The Pembina settlers did not migrate to Lapresse, as Provencher predicted. Instead, many of them removed to Whitehorse Plain. See Provencher's letter of June 1, 1824, *post*, p. 418. A part of the plan for Lord Selkirk's colony was to make it a retiring ground for the superannuated servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. Arthur S. Morton, "The Place of the Red River Settlement in the Plans of the Hudson's Bay Co., 1812-1825," in Canadian Historical Association, *Annual Reports*, 1929, pp. 103-109; Oliver, ed., *Canadian North-West*, 232-252.

misunderstanding between Captain Bulger, the governor of the colony, and Mr. Clarke,⁵⁵ the company's agent. I think that the cause is chiefly the express that is about to leave. There is dissatisfaction generally over Mr. Halkett's trip through the colony. He appears to be very devoted to the interests of the company, as is Mr. Colville, without apparently paying much attention to those of the colony. But perhaps their intentions are not yet well known, for in so remote a place things move slowly. I have no doubt that Mr. Halkett, upon whose report the company will doubtless rely, will cause some bad impression. He will be thought to be well informed concerning the affairs of the region, which is not the case, according to the report of those who were here at the same time he was. Captain Bulger, who claims to have been greatly deceived, is writing at considerable length, and is said to be telling him that he would have done better never to have come here. As for ourselves, we are awaiting developments, and in the meantime we shall endeavor to do good.

I beg of you not to forget to send us a copy of the deed of the lands given to the mission by the late Lord Selkirk, in order that we may have its boundaries established by a surveyor, who has come this year. I do not know whether Your Lordship has in your possession any paper with regard to the chapel site, which is twenty-five arpents in area; we are in possession of it but without title. It would be well if all were arranged on a more secure basis.

No other minister has come, as I wrote you would be the case, according to current rumors. The one who is here does not seem to be held in very high esteem, a fact which renders him less dangerous. He has no chapel as yet, but only a schoolhouse where he has a master and a dozen scholars. He also has one or two little Indians, but they are not from this vicinity. He has, it is said, ample means for working evil, which I hope he will not resort to; that is to say, he has the possibility of drawing money for the maintenance of his school. God grant that his doctrine may not take root in the hearts of the Indians!

I am writing as things come to my mind. Here are some cases that have come up since my arrival here:

A *métis*, still an infidel, has been married for several years to a *métis* woman, who is also an infidel; some time ago he left this wife in the hope of finding another. He had taken her in the manner of the

⁵⁵ John Clarke was at this time the chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Red River district, after an adventurous career as one of the Astorians and as one of the bitterest opponents of the North Westers during their struggles with their English rivals after 1814. For comments on his career, see Oliver, ed., *Canadian North-West*, 236-241.

country, without much ceremony. For the Canadians at least are content to ask a girl or her father if she wishes to go with them; once the consent is given the marriage is accomplished. This man, being the son of a Canadian, doubtless did likewise. The woman is quite willing to be converted and remain with him; it is he who no longer wants her. There are children. This case having been referred to me by Mr. Dumoulin, who had already spoken to me of it on the occasion of my visit to Pembina, I pronounced myself in favor of the marriage, which I considered as valid as the marriages of the infidels are. I have been unable to find in the different theologians that I have here, and especially in Benedict XIV, anything that could lead me to render a contrary judgment. The only thing that could lead me to another decision, I believe, would be the manner in which the marriage was contracted, that is to say, if, in taking each other they did not intend to bind themselves forever, but only for so long as they should be contented together, a circumstance it would not be easy to determine now. The man says that such was the case, but the woman claims that he promised her never to leave her. This, then, is what I thought the decision should be. But now this woman finds it possible to become the wife of a Christian by becoming Christian herself; is it possible to marry her after she has summoned her first husband to take her and he has refused? Supposing that this could be done, could he then not marry also after becoming Christian, since his marriage would have been dissolved by that of his wife? It seems to me that I saw a similar case in Benedict XIV, in his treatise *De Synodo Dioecessana*, on the subject of marriage. This would be the means of assuring the salvation of these two souls who do not appear to be disposed to live together.

An Indian reared by the French and speaking French was married to a squaw who spoke only her own language. This man was ill for a long time, and desired and requested baptism; his wife had not received the proper instruction for baptism and marriage, nor, scarcely, had the man himself, though he was easily capable of receiving instruction. Would it be possible to baptize him and leave him with his wife still an infidel, especially in the supposition that the man, already ill, would not live very long? The belief that this could not be done did, I think, prevent this man from receiving baptism and he died in this state, having left this place before his death. We should have liked to wait until he was dying. It seems to me that this attitude to the question threatens, and perhaps loses, the salvation of a soul. Would it not be

possible to give baptism without awaiting the end of life? It seems to me that this decision conforms with the doctrine of St. Paul, who permits the faithful party to remain with the unfaithful if this cohabitation can be continued without danger of corruption. This case may present itself more than once. The woman did not refuse to become Christian, but could be taught only in her own language.

A believer has an infidel for his wife. The woman wishes to become Christian in order to marry the man. The son of this man, born of another mother, declares in confession that he has had sexual relations with this woman, who will become his stepmother by marrying his father. Mr. Dumoulin, who proposed this case to me at the same time as the first, asked whether he ought to require the young man to reveal his turpitude if this woman, who ignores the fact that it constitutes an obstacle, really contracted the relationship, since she is an infidel. I replied that this young man was not obliged to reveal his crime, that this woman was bound by a relationship of the first degree with her late husband, which I could not dispense at Pembina; that if this obstacle became known to the priest through confession, the woman should be given to understand that he could not marry her validly and should be induced to pledge herself either to become separated or at least to wait; that I would be able to give dispensation here after a year of domicile, provided my faculties are continued; and that if she wished to proceed, he could not refuse to marry and baptize her; all this under the supposition that the secret be kept.

Here, then, are the cases and my replies. I am no great casuist, and I have little confidence in my decisions. I should feel much better to have your opinion in the matter; these are difficulties that will often arise in this country where debauchery has been unchecked.

Mr. Harper continues to do well; he devotes himself to his school, without, however, neglecting the study of theology, of which he has already covered the treatises on the sacraments, on baptism, and the Eucharist, and has commenced the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Mr. Picard is studying the Indian language with success. Mr. Dumoulin is by no means applying himself to learning it for fear of being in some way compelled to remain too long; he often speaks of returning to Canada for good. He would be very ready to leave next summer, a proposition which I could scarcely allow. But I think he will not have the courage to sacrifice himself for many years. Few students have presented themselves who give any hope of making good. There are two in preparation, but no ready material.

I hope that Bishop du Bourg has sent you more details with regard to his faculties, in order that we may be less restricted, especially in dispensation of the first degree, for such cases come up and will continue to come up often if the company assembles here all of its former *voyageurs* from the North.

Upon seeing your letter of 1821 to Mr. Dumoulin, I found quite the contrary of what he had told me: that you had not at all suspended the use of the indult, which is to end with next January, and consequently he had postponed for more than a year a marriage that he could have performed, but which took place only a little while ago, because I did not dare to grant the dispensation before seeing your letter. I mentioned the case to you in my last letter.

I return to the marriage of the infidel woman whom I mentioned above. The reason that I doubt the possibility of marrying either of them after their baptism is that the only reason for separating is that they have tired of one another, and not because one refuses to be converted or because there is danger of corruption, which circumstances appear to have always formed the basis of the decisions at the Court of Rome. Is it possible to say that the danger of making an unhappy home is a sufficient reason? I see that other commentators consider mortal sin as a reason. Furthermore, is it possible for a bishop without special powers to pronounce judgment on such a matter, and permit marriage with another woman? Supposing the case to be such as it is ordinarily stated in the problems addressed to Rome: that is to say that one of the parties is unwilling to be converted and that there is danger of corruption. This case will probably present itself, and it would not be without advantage to submit it to the Court of Rome. The indult that I have empowers one to permit a choice of several wives, but if there is only one? Here then are my problems. I presume that Your Lordship will understand what I mean.

I am writing only this one letter to Canada, and I think that none of the others are writing, unless it is Mr. Dumoulin, whose intentions I do not know. We all enjoy good health. Your Lordship will be good enough to take the trouble to make known our present condition in such places and to such persons as he shall think best.

I have written by the same opportunity to Mr. Colville and to Lady Selkirk. I am discussing with Mr. Colville the manner of letting our lands, the rent to charge, and the persons to whom we can rent them. All this in order to guard against making rental terms that can not be upheld. It appears that only those who hold land of Lord Selkirk

will be considered as having a right to get supplies from the colony store. In this case we shall never, or at least not for a long time, draw any profit from our estate. I should like to get Mr. Colvile's opinion. The rents that he fixed are too high for the country. Mr. Halkett cut them down by more than half, but they are still too high. All the rents are redeemable for a sum of money. I should like to let the land on permanent leases in order to fulfill the purpose of the concession: that is, to maintain the mission. I am mentioning this matter to Mr. Colvile also. Perhaps the title given by Lord Selkirk prescribes the manner in which they shall be rented; I do not now recall the matter nor the dimensions, at least not exactly.

Here is Mr. Dumoulin sending me some letters for Your Lordship, for his mother, and for Mr. Tabeau. At the same time he proposes two cases to me, which I am going to submit to you. It is again a question of the marriage of infidels.

1. An infidel woman has formerly had an infidel husband, whom she left in order to go to a Christian whom she would like to marry now, becoming herself a Christian. Her first husband is not in these parts. Is it possible to marry her? I see in Benedict XIV some decisions of Rome that permit this marriage, but it seems that it is necessary to have this faculty specifically, and I have not.

2. A man has an infidel wife, with whose first cousin he has had illicit intercourse; he is thus related in the second degree. Mr. Dumoulin asks whether it is possible for me to grant the dispensation at Pembina. I cannot, neither there nor here; my extraordinary faculties extend to the second degree only when the marriage has already been contracted. However, could one call this illicit union a contracted marriage? I do not think so. The other short brief that Your Lordship brought from Rome refers only to the first degree. I think that we must adhere to the regulations, and that one does not more or less draw one's own conclusions in such a matter.

At the end of the sixth article of the extraordinary faculties, it is stated that the power of dispensation may extend to the second degree provided that it does not reach to the first. Is it possible to apply this statement to Catholics as well as to heretics and infidels, to whom the clause seems to refer exclusively? Furthermore, is it necessary that both parties be heretics or infidels? If only one should be, would the dispensation be possible? As the decisions of several of the cases will be important as a guide to us later on, I beg of you to be good enough to have the question placed opposite your reply.

Case:— An infidel woman has been living for several years with a Protestant, who is unwilling to become Catholic, but who does not object to the woman's doing so. May she be baptized after she has received instruction, in order that she may afterward be married to the very Protestant that she already has as husband? If we do not baptize her a Protestant minister will do so; in this case ought he to be made to abjure, for she wishes to be a Catholic? The case has not yet presented itself, but it will, for women especially who have had Catholic fathers will hardly be willing to become Protestants.

It is already almost three weeks since this letter was begun, and I am finishing it only the last of November; the express does not leave until the first of December. I doubt very much that we shall have a reply from England by the first canoe, but I shall at least have a reply from Your Lordship. I shall await it anxiously; news of one's country is always of great interest. Indeed I think many years will have to go by before I shall be indifferent to it.

Your Lordship sees by this letter that this country furnishes subject for writing, especially concerning some perplexing cases, which are never met with in Canada. Thus it is not necessary to ask if they worry me; I have enough trouble getting out of ordinary difficulties, and it is much worse in the exceptional ones. I lack some of the faculties for the infidels that are granted at Rome; be good enough to request those that I am in want of, in order that I may act in the cases proposed in this letter. Also be so kind as to give me all the explanations you can so that I may commit as few errors as possible. The responsibility for them would perhaps fall in part on you for having elevated me to a dignity of which I was incapable and unworthy. Pray God that He may vouchsafe to employ me for His glory, and that at least I may not place obstacles in His way.

I have the honor of being, with most profound respect, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

† J. N., Bishop of Juliopolis.

His Lordship J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, DECEMBER 13, 1822

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Pembina, 13 décembre 1822.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Votre Grandeur ne sera peut-être pas fâchée que je profite encore du même exprès pour lui dire quelque chose sur les mariages sauvages, ce qui pourra être de quelque utilité pour la déci-

sion des cas de Monseigneur de Juliopolis. Je raconterai d'abord la manière dont ces mariages sont contractés, car ils ne me paroissent guère des alliances indissolubles, ce qui nous tireroit de bien des embarras.

Le père d'un garçon désirant faire épouser une fille à son fils, en parle aux parents de la future épouse; ayant eu une réponse favorable, il fait quelques petits présents aux parents de la fille qui, quand ils le jugent à propos, vont mener leur fille à son futur époux, et tout est fait. Si on ignore la cause qui fait séparer dans la suite ces deux époux, on les blamera tous deux et toute la Nation les méprisera. Mais si tout le monde sait que l'un des deux force l'autre partie de le quitter par quelque raison que ce soit, la partie innocente pourra, sans que personne le trouve mal, convoler à un autre mariage, si surtout son premier époux est déjà remarié; ce qui pourroit être, ce me semble, contre l'indissolubilité des mariages entre sauvages.

Les sauvages croient qu'il y a aucun cas qui puisse faire dissoudre les mariages contractés devant nous, et n'ont pas la même idée de leurs alliances. Ne pourroit-on pas dire que la dureté de leurs coeurs a toléré et permis de répudier son épouse en certains cas. Ces Nations ont d'ailleurs plusieurs coutumes qui ressemblent assez aux coutumes des Juifs; par exemple: C'est un grand mal chez [eux] d'épouser sa parente, mais c'est un moindre mal d'épouser sa belle soeur veuve. Si ces mariages de sauvages sont valides et par là même indissolubles, les missionnaires rencontreront toujours des difficultés presque insurmontables à les faire chrétiens. Nous avons ici des Canadiens mariés avec des esclaves qui ont été retirées des autres tribus sauvages et ont été données en mariage pendant cette captivité; depuis ce tems elles ont été les femmes des engagés des compagnies, et cela depuis 20 et 30 ans. Faudra-t-il les séparer si elles désirent d'être baptisées, et leur faire abandonner leurs enfants? et s'il arrive que déjà elles le soient et qu'elles aient contracté mariage en face de l'Église, comment faudra-t-il se comporter à leur égard?

Nous avons deux petits écoliers qui commencent à donner quelque espérance; ils savent les éléments de la grammaire et la syntaxe, ils font des versions dans l'Építome et expliquent probablement dans *De viris*. Monseigneur a oublié d'apporter des auteurs plus difficiles; s'il étoit possible de nous en procurer ce seroit très utile à la mission.

Il paroît que les animaux de prairie ne nous abandonneront pas encore cette année; nous mangerons encore de la viande. Les gens de Pembina tâcheront, je crois, d'avoir des Américains pour ne pas aban-

donner ce poste. Je leur conseillerai pourtant le contraire pour me conformer aux intentions de Monseigneur de Juliopolis qui désire, ou plutôt qui est forcé de se conformer aux véhéments désirs de Mylord Halkett.

Je vous demande, Monseigneur, votre sainte bénédiction de la nouvelle année en attendant que j'aie la véritable satisfaction de la demander en personne.

Je suis, Monseigneur, de votre Grandeur le très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

A Mgr l'Archevêque de Québec, / à Québec.

P. S. Ma rétribution à la caisse ecclésiastique ne peut aller à plus de deux piastres pour Pembina, et Mr Destroismaisons dit que pour le présent ça pourra monter à un écu pour la Fourche. Je crois que les Messieurs curés du Canada seroient fort en peine s'ils en avoient si peu à donner.

S. D.

[*Translation*]

Pembina, December 13, 1822.

MY LORD, Your Lordship will perhaps not object if I take advantage once more of the same express to tell him something about marriage among the Indians, which might be of some service in deciding the cases of the Bishop of Juliopolis. First I shall tell how these marriages are contracted, for they hardly seem to me to be indissoluble unions, and this fact might help us out of a good many difficulties.

If the father of a boy desires to have his son marry a certain girl, he discusses the matter with her parents; on receiving a favorable reply, he offers some small gifts to the girl's parents, who, at the proper time, take the girl to her husband and that is the end of it. If the cause of a subsequent separation of the couple is unknown, both parties are condemned and despised by the whole tribe. But if it is generally known that one of the two is forcing the other to leave him for any reason whatever, the innocent one may marry again without risk of blame, especially if the former partner has already remarried; this would seem to me to be against the permanence of marriages among the Indians.

The Indians believe that under no circumstances can a marriage contracted by us be dissolved, while they do not have the same idea of their own unions. Could we not say that in some cases the hardness of their hearts has made divorce permissible? These nations have, in addition, many customs which more or less resemble those of the Jews;

for example, they consider it very wrong for one to marry a blood relative, but it is not so serious to marry a widowed sister-in-law. If these Indian marriages are valid and therefore indissoluble, the missionary will always be faced by almost insurmountable difficulties in converting the Indians to Christianity. We have here some Canadians married to slaves who were captured by other Indian tribes and married during their captivity; since this time they have been the wives of company employees, some for as long as twenty and thirty years. Must they be separated and abandon their children if they wish to receive baptism; and if it happens that they are already separated, and have contracted marriage within the Church, how then should they be dealt with?

We have two small pupils who are beginning to show some promise; they know the elements of grammar and syntax, and are translating the *Epitome*; they also interpret *De Viris* passably well. His Lordship forgot to bring any of the more difficult authors; if it were possible to get some of them for us, they would be very useful to the mission.

It seems that the animals of the prairie are not going to abandon us again this year, so that we shall have meat once more. The people of Pembina will try, I think, to get some Americans in order not to abandon this post. I shall advise the contrary, however, in compliance with the will of the Bishop of Juliopolis, who desires, or rather is compelled, to comply with the insistent wishes of Mylord Halkett.

I beg of you, My Lord, to grant me your holy benediction for the new year until I have the true joy of asking it in person.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship the Archbishop of Quebec, Quebec.

P. S. Pembina's contribution to the church fund cannot exceed two dollars, and Mr. Destroismaisons says that for the present that of The Forks will amount to one *écu*. I think that the clergy of Canada would be sorely grieved if they had so little to give.

S. D.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO HALKETT, JANUARY 23, 1823

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 11:106]

Quebec, 23 january 1823.

Mr Halkett,/ Hudson's Bay Company, London.

SIR,/ I had the honor of receiving, last month, your two letters dated York Factory 26th and 30th August last with their inclosures. I

must own that when the first missionaries were sent up to Red River, in 1818, one establishment only (namely that of the Forks) was in contemplation, and that it was a matter of surprise for me to hear that they had extended as far as Pembina. They however justified that measure by alledging that the settlers had from themselves fled to that new settlement as being nearer to the Buffaloe, that the Forks were infested and impoverished by the unexpected irruption of locusts, that the whole of the colony could not be maintained on the same spot without danger of starving, finally that the then Governors did not object against the division of the colony. But your observations of last spring on the impropriety of maintaining that settlement without injuring that of the Forks, having coincided with my first ones, and your manner of thinks [*sic*], far from being altered since you have been on the spot, being on the contrary strengthened, I do not hesitate to pursue the same place [*plan?*] I had hinted to the Bishop of Juliopolis before his leaving this Province, and sure as I am of his concurrence in every thing which is good and proper, to assure you of the speedy removal of the mission of Pembina as early in the next spring as possible, even, I hope, before my next letters reach the place.

Nothing may be more flattering to me than to hear of your safe arrival into England after so laborious a voyage.

I am &c.

† J. O., Cath. Bp of Quebec.

BISHOP DU BOURG TO CALHOUN, MARCH 10, 1823

[Indian Office Files. ALS]

Monastery of the Visitation/ at George Town March 10th 1823.

The Hon^{ble} J. Calhoun/ Secretary of State for/ the War Department.

SIR,/ I left, thro' mistake, in Baltimore, the message with which you lately favoured me relative to the Support granted, at my request, by Government to a few Catholic missionaries for the Indian tribes of [the] upper Missouri and Mississippi.⁵⁶ In that message, you had confined encouragement to *Three*: but on a second verbal application from me

⁵⁶ The earlier part of this correspondence appears not to have survived, except for a letter from Calhoun to Bishop du Bourg, dated February 20, 1823, now in Letter Book E, p. 392, in the archives of the United States Office of Indian Affairs. Possibly the arrangements were made verbally in part, as the second sentence of this letter infers. The announcement by Calhoun in 1819 of a new policy for civilizing the Indians of the United States marked the beginning of a definite policy of government aid to Indian missions. Calhoun's letter of February 20 outlines the methods and amounts of pecuniary assistance that Bishop du Bourg might expect from the United States. Correspondence between Bishop du Bourg and Calhoun other than that printed in this volume has been preserved, notably letters by Bishop du Bourg dated March 11 and 21, 1823, and a letter by Calhoun dated March 21, 1823, but the subject matter is not pertinent to Northwest missions.

you were kind enough to promise to *alter* that word into *Four*. Now, Sir, I have to request of your kindness a written authorisation to make that alteration myself, on my return to Baltimore. 2^{ly} a letter for Gen^l W^m Clarke ⁵⁷ of s^t Louis, intimating to him the dispositions of Government respecting those four missionaries, and an invitation for him to assist in conveying them to their respective destinations.

As I intend leaving this place on thursday for Wheeling, via Baltimore, I take the liberty of Soliciting an immediate answer, observing at the same time that in consequence of new arrangements, the departure of the Missionaries will be somewhat retarded, in order to make the expedition more complete, and probably to afford a sufficient number for the three posts designated by you, viz. Council bluffs, River S^t Pierre ⁵⁸ and Prairie du chien. when this latter circumstance is fully ascertained, I will have the honor of adressing you for an extension of patronage.

With great respect/ I remain/ Hon^d Sir,/ Your most hum. Serv^t
† L. W^m DU BOURG.— Bishop of N. Orleans

BISHOP DU BOURG TO CALHOUN, MARCH 17, 1823

[Indian Office Files. LS]

To the Honourable/ J. C. Calhoun State Secretary/ for the War Department.

Conv^t of the Visit^{on} Geo: town, March 17th 1823

SIR!/ The liberal encouragement which the Government has, at my request, consented to extend to Catholic Missions among the remote Indian tribes on the Missouri & Upper-Mississippi, having induced me to bestow upon that important subject all the attention to which it is entitled, I have the honour to submit to your consideration a plan of operation, which the most serious reflections have presented to me as best calculated to insure permanency to that Establishment, and to enlarge its sphere of usefulness.

The basis of that plan would be the formation, (on an eligible spot near the confluence of those two large streams,) of a *Seminary*, or nursery of Missionaries, in which young Candidates for that holy func-

⁵⁷ William Clark was United States superintendent of Indian affairs, with headquarters at St. Louis, from 1807 until his death in 1838. His jurisdiction extended to the Sioux, and for part of the period of his superintendency, to the Chippewa of the upper Mississippi Valley.

⁵⁸ The Minnesota River was still known by its French name, Rivière St. Pierre (St. Peter's River) at this time. The recent establishment of Fort St. Anthony in 1819 at the confluence of the Minnesota and the Mississippi and letters from Dumoulin and Bishop Provencher had doubtless called Bishop du Bourg's attention to the spot as the site for a possible mission.

tion, would be trained to all its duties; whilst it would also afford a suitable retreat for such, as, thro' old age, infirmity, or any other lawful cause, would be compelled to withdraw from that arduous Ministry. The chief studies pursued in that Seminary would be: the manners of the Indians, the Idioms of the principal Nations, and the arts best adapted to the great purpose of civilization. And in order to facilitate the attainment of some of these objects, I would at once try to collect in that Institution some Indian youths of the most important tribes, whose habitual converse with the *Tyros* of the Mission, would be mutually of the greatest advantage for the promotion of the ultimate object in contemplation. The result of that kind of Noviciate would be a noble emulation among the Missionaries, uniformity of System, a constant succession of able & regularly trained Instructors, and a gradual expansion of their sphere of activity.

I am willing to give for that establishment a fine & well stocked Farm of mine, situate in the rich valley of Florissant, about one mile from the river Missouri & fifteen from S^t Louis.

Seven young Clergymen, from 22. to 27. years of age, of solid parts, & an excellent classical Education, are now ready to set off at the first signal, under the guidance of two Superiors & Professors, and with an escort of a few faithful Mechanics & husbandmen, to commence that foundation. I calculate at about two years the time necessary to consolidate it, and to fit out most of those highly promising Candidates for the duties of the Missions, after which they will be anxious to be sent in different directions, according to the views & under the auspices of Government, whilst they will be replaced in the Seminary by others, destined to continue the noble Enterprise.

So forcibly am I struck with the happy consequences likely to result from the execution of that project, that I hesitate not to believe that Government, viewing it in the same light with myself, will be disposed to afford me towards its completion that generous aid, without which I would not be warranted to undertake it. Personal sacrifices to the extent of my very narrow abilities will be cheerfully made. I also depend upon assistance from other quarters. But, besides this being precarious, I hope, that, taking into view the considerable expence attending the voyage to such a distance, of from 12 to 16 persons, the necessary constructions to be made, and the entire support of the Establishment, Government will be induced to assume upon itself a portion of the burden. It has already condescended to allow 800 \$ per annum for four Missionaries: But it was on the supposition that they would

be *immediately* sent to the Mission, and in the proposed plan, the opening of the Mission would take place but two years after the commencement of the Seminary. Yet, tho' not actually employed among the tribes, the Missionaries, whilst yet in their Novitiate, would not be the less profitably engaged in the cause; since, besides having a Number of young Indians to feed, to educate, & maintain, they would be laying the foundation of far more extensive usefulness for the future.

The true object, therefore, of this memoir, is, to demand, that the allowance, granted by Government, [be] increased, if possible, to *one thousand Dollars*, per Annum, (on account of the great additional expence, incident on the present Scheme,) should be paid from the first onset, on my pledging myself, as I solemnly do, that, at latest, in two years from the commencement, I will send out five or six Missionaries, and successively as many more as Government may then be disposed to encourage.

For the attainment of the object of collecting some Indian boys in the Seminary, it would be of great service, Sir, that you should please to invite Gen^l Clarke & Col: O'Fallen⁵⁹ to lend me their assistance.

With great respect,/ I remain,/ Sir!/ your most hum. servant
† L. W^m DU BOURG/ Bp of N. orleans

HALKETT TO BISHOP PLESSIS, APRIL 2, 1823

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

London, April 2d 1823.

MY LORD,/ I had the honor recently of receiving your letter of the 23rd of January last, and it gives me much pleasure to observe that Your Lordship's sentiments respecting the forming a compact and undivided settlement at the Forks of the Red River have been consonant to my own. I was very far from wishing to derange any establishment that had commenced on any part of that River, nor should I have proposed it, had I not been well aware of the unfortunate results which would have arisen from the separation and dispersion of the colonists. I sincerely trust that Your Lordship will, in the course of a few years, be fully satisfied of the advantages which will accrue from the regulations proposed, and I am only sorry that the Roman Catholic mission at that quarter should have experienced any inconvenience on the subject.

⁵⁹ Benjamin O'Fallon was a nephew of General William Clark. He became Indian agent for Missouri Territory after service in the War of 1812 and was at Council Bluffs in 1819 and again in 1825, following a residence at Prairie du Chien in 1816-17. Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., *The Fur Trade in Wisconsin, 1812-1825*, 24 (*Wisconsin Historical Collections*, vol. 20 — Madison, 1911).

With best wishes for your Lordship's health, I remain Your Lordship's obedient and faithful servant.

J. HALKETT.

The R. C. Bishop of Quebec/ &c., &c., &c.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO BISHOP PROVENCHER, APRIL 6, 1823

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 11:160]

Québec, 6 avril 1823.

A Monseigneur Jos. Norbert Provencher/ Ev. de Juliopolis, à la Riv. Rouge.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Ci-incluse la solution des divers cas répandus dans votre lettre du mois de novembre. C'est l'ouvrage de plusieurs mains, car je n'ai osé prendre sur moi de les résoudre seul. Il en est un qu'il faut évidemment référer au St Siège.

Je crois qu'il ne faut pas retenir Mr Dumoulin passé cette année. Je lui écris en ce sens. Le déplacement de sa chère mission de Pembina que vous ne pouvez tarder plus longtemps d'effectuer, doit faire chez lui une révolution capable de le dégouter sans retour.

Le titre de Mr l'abbé Harper a été publié sans opposition dès le mois d'Octobre. Faites mes amitiés à ce cher enfant & ordonnez-le sous-diacre au plus tôt pour le fixer dans sa vocation. Charles son frère est à Nicolet en Rhétorique & y fait très bien sous tous les rapports.

J'ai donné en Décembre un mandement dont je prie Mgr de Tennesse de vous envoyer quelques exemplaires du nombre de ceux qu'il a en sa possession. Il en couteroit trop de les envoyer d'ici dans une saison où les glaces manquent partout & où les steamboats ne marchent pas encore.

Il est temps de vous accuser la réception de vos diverses lettres, savoir: de Montréal du 1 juin, de Drummond's Island du 24 dito, du Fort William 8 juillet, du Lac de la Pluie du 24 dito, & de la Riv. Rouge 11 aout et 1 septembre. Je tâcherai de répondre à toutes par cette occasion, savoir, par un canot qui doit laisser Montréal vers la fin de ce mois & qui, suivant ce que Mr Thain m'a dit cet hyver, sera la seule occasion de cette année.

Mr Halkett m'a aussi écrit de York Factory du 26 aout et du 30, m'envoyant copie de la lettre qu'il vous avoit laissée à Fort Douglass, de votre réponse et de sa réplique. Je lui ai écrit à Londres cet hyver, lui promettant que la mission de Pembina seroit évacuée *early in the spring*. C'est à vous de remplir cet engagement. Il faut avouer que ce second établissement a considérablement nui au premier, le seul qui

fût d'abord en contemplation, parce qu'ayant divisé vos moyens il a été cause que le premier n'a pu se finir.

Vous ne trouverez pas moins de désordre dans ma lettre que dans les vôtres, par la nécessité de mettre toutes les matières à mesure qu'elles se présentent.

Mgr l'Evêque de la Louisiane m'a écrit que ses pouvoirs, qu'il communique tous, étoient *ad decennium*, en date du mois de janvier 1816. Ce sont apparemment les 29 articles que vous avez aussi reçus de moi. Il ne s'est pas expliqué sur le pouvoir de dispenser *in 1^o gradu*; je soupçonne qu'il ne l'a point. Quand même il l'auroit, je doute qu'il pût le déléguer. Vous savez avec quelle épargne on m'a accordé cette délégation.

Je sens tout le besoin de missionnaire qu'auroit l'Ile Drummond et le Sault Ste Marie, & combien d'autres endroits! Mais où prendre des prêtres et de l'argent pour les défrayer chez un peuple qui croiroit leur faire grâce que de les écouter? *Rogate ergo Dominum messis*. Ici les Irlandais abondent. Il n'y en a pas moins de 2,000 qui surchargent la population de Québec. Ils n'amènent pas de prêtres avec eux. Ceux qu'ils amèneraient seroient le rebut du clergé d'Irlande, comme ils sont eux-mêmes le rebut de la populace. Nos Canadiens n'ont nulle ardeur pour apprendre l'anglois, notwithstanding les efforts que l'on fait dans les séminaires pour les initier dans cette langue. La perspective est vraiment effrayante, parce qu'il est très vraisemblable que cette émigration augmentera encore, celle du Cap de Bonne Espérance ayant manqué. Si Mr Dumoulin vous laisse de bonne heure, je désirerois qu'il pût s'arrêter quelques semaines dans les postes dont les urgens besoins vous alarment si justement. Une autre année on pourroit essayer un autre moyen de les assister.

J'ai oublié, et je m'en repens bien, de vous faire faire un cachet épiscopal, n'ayant revu que ces jours-ci vos lettres de l'été dernier que j'avois mises à part en attendant la saison où on pourroit vous écrire. Mr Fortier m'y fera penser pour une autre année.

Il me semble que la Providence vous a traité pendant votre voyage avec un soin particulier, puisqu'obligé d'aller à petites journées à raison de votre forte charge & de la petitesse du canot, vous avez pu vous rendre au terme, notwithstanding le sac de bled d'inde & les 60 livres de farine volées sur vos provisions par les sauvages.

L'abbé Sauvez a laissé la soutane par mon conseil. Si je vous ai bien compris, ce jeune homme avoit besoin de changer d'état.

Je n'ai encore vu ni Bolduc, ni Moisan, ni leurs comptes, ni n'ai entendu parler d'eux depuis vos lettres du mois d'aout.

Mr Caron ne m'a rien écrit au sujet de vos comptes. Apparemment il les a suffisamment compris & s'est trouvé au large pour les payer. Devant écrire aujourd'hui à Mr Thain, je lui ferai mention spéciale de votre baril de vin dont le besoin vous devient pressant.

Peut-être ignorez-vous encore que le S. de Calonne est allé en Paradis au mois d'Octobre; MMrs Jean & Gauvreau l'avoient devancé dans l'éternité: celui-ci le 29 juin, celui-là le 2 juillet. Le mois de janvier vient de nous enlever Messrs Boucherville & Bardy. Mr Jean Caron est curé de Ste Foye & son cousin Thomas vicaire aux Trois-Rivières. Une Ursuline de là & trois d'ici sont allées fortifier le monastère de la Nouvelle Orléans où elles sont arrivées au commencement de Novembre. Quand serez vous en état de songer à un établissement de ce genre? J'ai confiance que les habitans de Pembina une fois transportés au-dessous du Fort Douglass, votre colonie prendra plus d'activité, surtout si vous avez encore quelques bonnes récoltes, & que vous pourrez former, sinon des Religieuses, du moins une école de garçons assez nombreuse pour vous procurer des ecclésiastiques, car il n'en faut pas attendre ici.

Ce n'est qu'à la fin de mars que m'est parvenue votre lettre du mois de Novembre. Il s'ensuit que celles des agens et Gouverneur de la Compagnie arriveront en Angleterre quelques mois trop tard.

Votre lettre à Mr Halkett m'a paru un peu rude: il ne vous a pas répondu aussi sévèrement qu'il semble qu'il auroit pu le faire. Avec moi, il s'est un peu moins gêné & m'a fait voir toute sa mauvaise humeur contre l'établissement de Pembina: "Upon this subject" dit sa lettre du 26 aout, "I may also be permitted frankly to express my opinion, that the Roman Catholic Mission at the Red River, having so long left unfinished their church at the Forks, having permitted their intended house of residence there to continue incomplete and dismantled to the present moment, having established no schools, nor attempted any improvement or settlement on the extensive grant given them by Lord Selkirk, they ought never to have set about building and completing a distant church and residence at Pembina. The measure which they thus hastily and prematurely adopted, has unfortunately tended to unhinge and disperse the Red River's population, and it has evidently served but to encourage the half-breeds and others to continue in their idle and disorderly mode of life, to which, I am sorry to say, they are at present too generally addicted."

Voilà, mon cher Seigneur, une leçon que vous donne ce brave homme & à laquelle je ne doute nullement que vous donnerez pour l'avenir toute l'attention qu'elle mérite. C'est surtout à l'éducation des enfans du pays qu'il faut vous attacher, ainsi qu'au défrichement de vos terres. Ne manquez pas de vous en réserver un millier d'acres dans la partie de votre propriété la plus voisine de votre demeure.

J'ai donné de vos nouvelles à toutes nos communautés. Elles y ont pris l'intérêt que vous pouvez croire & ne cessent de lever vers le ciel leurs mains pures pour le succès de votre mission.

Je suis &c., &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, April 6, 1823.

His Lordship Joseph Norbert Provencher, Bishop of Juliopolis, Red River.

MY LORD, Enclosed are the solutions of the several cases included in your letter of November. They are the work of several hands, for I did not dare take upon myself alone the solving of them. It is obvious that one of them must be referred to the Holy See.

I think that it will not be necessary to keep Mr. Dumoulin after this year. I have written him to this effect. The removal of his dear mission at Pembina, which you cannot longer delay, is bound to work a révolution in him capable of making it forever distasteful to him.

Mr. Harper's title has been published without opposition since the month of October. Present my compliments to this dear child and ordain him subdeacon as soon as possible, in order to establish him in his calling. His brother Charles is at Nicolet in rhetoric and is doing very well there according to all reports.

I issued a charge in December, for which I am asking the Bishop of Telmessus to send you some copies from those that he has in his possession. It would cost too much to send them from here at this season when there is no ice anywhere and while there are still no steamboats running.

It is time to tell you of the receipt of your various letters, to wit, from Montreal on June 1, from Drummond Island on June 24, from Fort William on July 8, from Rainy Lake on July 24, and from Red River on August 11 and September 1. I will try to reply to all of them by this opportunity, that is to say, by a canoe that is to leave Montreal toward the end of this month and that will be the only opportunity of this year, according to what Mr. Thain told me this winter.

Mr. Halkett wrote to me also from York Factory on August 26 and 30, sending me a copy of the letter that he had left for you at Fort Douglas, of your reply, and of his answer. I wrote to him this winter at London promising him that the mission at Pembina would be removed *early in the spring*. It is for you to fulfill this promise. It must be confessed that the second establishment has done considerable injury to the first, the only one that was contemplated in the beginning, because it has divided your means, thus preventing the completion of the first.

You will not find less confusion in my letter than in yours, because of the necessity of taking up all the points as they occur.

The Bishop of Louisiana has written me that his faculties—all of which he sends—were for a decade beginning January, 1816. These are apparently the twenty-nine articles that you have also received from me. He does not explain himself on the matter of dispensations of the first degree; I suspect that he does not have the faculty. Even if he had it, I doubt whether he could delegate it. You know with what sparingness this delegation has been granted me.

I feel the great need of missionaries at Drummond Island and Sault Ste. Marie, and how many other places! But where to get priests and money to support them among a people who would believe that they were doing a great favor to listen to them? *Rogate ergo Dominum messis* [*Therefore beseech the Lord in Masses*]. Here the Irish are numerous. There are not less than two thousand of them overstocking the population of Quebec. They do not bring priests with them. Those whom they would have brought would be the dregs of the Irish clergy, as they themselves are the scum of the population. Our Canadians have no zeal for learning English in spite of the efforts that have been made in the seminaries to induce them to begin it. The prospect is truly frightful, because it is very likely that this immigration will increase still more, since that at the Cape of Good Hope has failed. If Mr. Dumoulin leaves you early, I would like him to stop several weeks at the posts whose urgent needs alarm you so properly. Another year we will try another means of assisting them.

I forgot, and I duly repent, to have an episcopal seal made for you, having reread only these last days your letter of last summer, which I had put aside for a time when I could write you. Mr. Fortier will remind me about the matter for another year.

It seems to me that Providence treated you on your trip with a special care, for, obliged as you were to make short daily advances because of your freight and the smallness of the canoe, you were nevertheless able

to reach your destination in season, despite the Indians' theft of the bag of Indian corn and the sixty pounds of flour.

Mr. Sauvez has left the priesthood on my advice. If I have understood you correctly, that young man needed a change of occupation.

I have not yet seen either Bolduc nor Moisan, nor their accounts, nor have I heard anyone mention them since your letters of last August.

Mr. Caron has written me nothing about your accounts. Apparently he understood them sufficiently and has found himself able to pay them. Before writing today to Mr. Thain, I will make special mention to him of your barrel of wine, which you need so badly.

Perhaps you do not yet know that the Sieur de Calonne departed for Paradise in October; Messrs. Jean and Gauvreau had preceded him into eternity, the latter on June 24, the former on July 2. In January the Abbés Boucherville and Bardy were taken from us. Mr. Jean Caron is curé of Ste. Foye and his cousin Thomas vicar at Three Rivers. An Ursuline sister from that place and three from here have gone to strengthen the convent at New Orleans, where they arrived at the beginning of November. When shall you be in condition to think of an establishment of this kind? I am confident that once the settlers at Pembina are removed below Fort Douglas, your colony will become more alive, especially if you have some more good harvests and if you can establish, if not religious orders, at least a boys' school of sufficient size to supply you with some ecclesiastics. It is useless to expect them from here.

Your letter of November did not reach me till the end of March. It follows that those of the Agent and the Governor of the company will arrive in England several months too late.

Your letter to Mr. Halkett appears to me a little sharp; he did not reply to you as severely as it seems to me he might have done. To me he was less restrained and allowed me to see all his bad humor against the settlement at Pembina. "Upon this subject," says his letter of August 26, [*in English*:] "I may also be permitted frankly to express my opinion, that the Roman Catholic Mission at the Red River, having so long left unfinished their church at the Forks, having permitted their intended house of residence there to continue incomplete and dismantled to the present moment, having established no schools, nor attempted any improvement or settlement on the extensive grant given them by Lord Selkirk, they ought never to have set about building and completing a distant church and residence at Pembina. The measure which they thus hastily and prematurely adopted, has unfortunately tended to unhinge and disperse the Red River's population, and it has

evidently served but to encourage the half-breeds and others to continue in their idle and disorderly mode of life, to which, I am sorry to say, they are at present too generally addicted."

There, my dear Sir, is a lesson that the good man gives you and to which I have no doubt you will in the future give all the attention that it deserves. It is particularly to the education of the children of the country that you must devote yourself, as well as to the clearing of your lands. Do not fail to reserve a thousand acres of them in the part of your premises nearest your dwelling.

I have given news of you to all our communities. They have taken the interest in you that you can suppose and do not cease to lift pure hands to Heaven for the success of your mission.

I am etc., etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO DUMOULIN, APRIL 17, 1823
[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives, Letter Books, 11:175]

Québec, 17 avril 1823.

A Monsieur Dumoulin, / Missre à la Riv. Rouge.

MONSIEUR ET CHER SÈVÈRE, / Le 3 Aout dernier je reçus votre lettre du 20 mars, et vous savez que depuis le départ de Monseigneur de Juliopolis d'ici, il n'y a pas eu d'occasion. En revanche il vous a porté une de mes dépêches, peut-être plus longue que vous ne l'auriez voulue.

Je vous apprend, si vous ne le savez pas encore, que Mr Sauvez, suivant mon conseil, est entré dans l'état laïc après avoir marchandé plusieurs mois.

Il seroit à désirer que le zèle du salut des âmes eût le même empire sur les prêtres catholiques que l'amour du gain en a sur les ministres protestans. Quand on en est rendu à dire: ma tâche est faite, il faut que le zèle soit bien émoussé. Eh! où en seroit le Canada si les missionnaires qui y sont venus planter la foi n'avoient pas eu plus de constance? J'ai fait ma tâche, dites-vous. Je vous en félicite. La mienne n'est pas encore faite. *J'ai fait ma tâche*; mais St Paul n'avoit-il pas fait la sienne, lorsqu'il disoit encore: *Impendam et super impendar ipse pro animabus vestris*.⁶⁰ Notre tâche, à tous tant que nous sommes, ne sera finie que lorsque nous aurons dévoué toute notre vie au salut des âmes, que quand nous nous serons consumés dans la culture de telle portion du champ du père de famille qui nous aura été assignée, & non dans celles que nous aurons choisies nous-mêmes.

⁶⁰ 2 Corinthians 12:15.

Défions-nous de la chair et du sang; sachons dire à nos parens: *Quid est quod me quaerebatis?* Enfin souvenons-nous que ce n'est ni pour eux, ni pour nous, mais pour le salut des âmes rachetées du sang de J. C. et pour l'accroissement de son royaume que nous sommes entrés dans le sanctuaire.

Voilà, mon cher fils, des considérations que j'ai voulu vous mettre sous les yeux & qui ne devoient pas être étrangères à un homme apostolique. Prenez quelques jours pour les méditer, après quoi, si le déplacement inévitable de la mission de Pembina vous affecte au point de vous dégouter du ministère que vous avez rempli depuis plusieurs années, revenez, j'y consens; vous courrez ici votre chance comme un autre; mais en ce cas, prenez vos mesures pour donner en passant quelques semaines aux pauvres chrétiens du Sault Ste Marie & de Drummond's Island. Je ratifie d'avance tous les pouvoirs que Mgr de Juliopolis voudra bien vous donner à cet effet, & il vous en faut de grands.

Je n'ai encore vu ni Bolduc, ni Moisan, ni n'ai entendu parler d'eux.

Dans cette saison, il n'y a que la poste qui marche; par conséquent il n'y a nul moyen de vous envoyer d'ici des livres classiques pour vos deux petits écoliers. Je vais écrire à Montréal afin qu'on vous en envoie de là. Je suis grandement d'avis que ces élèves soient cultivés avec soin pour l'esprit et pour le coeur, puisqu'ils sont l'unique ressource de la mission pour y perpétuer le S. Ministère.

Mgr de Juliopolis m'a proposé vos différentes questions de mariage & en recevra la solution par ce canot.

Je suis &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, April 17, 1823.

Mr. Dumoulin, Missionary at Red River.

SIR, AND DEAR SÉVÈRE, The third of last August I received your letter of March 20, and you know that since the departure of the Bishop of Juliopolis from here there has been no opportunity to send a letter. In return he carried to you one of my letters, perhaps a longer one than you would have wished.

I wish to inform you, if you do not know it already, that Mr. Sauvez, following my advice, has returned to the condition of a layman after having hesitated for several months.

It is to be wished that the passion for saving souls had the same hold on Catholic priests as the love of winning them has on Protestant min-

isters. When one is forced to remark, "My task is ended," it must be that zeal has lost its edge. Ah! where would Canada be if the missionaries who came here to plant the Faith had not had more perseverance? "I have finished my work," you say. I congratulate you. Mine is still not finished. But St. Paul had not finished his when he still said, *Impendam et superimpendar ipse pro animabus vestris.* (*And I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls.*)⁶⁰ Our task, every one of us, will not be finished until we have given our life to the salvation of souls, until we have been used up in the cultivation of that part of the Father's field that has been assigned to us and not that which we would have chosen for ourselves. Let us distrust flesh and blood; let us know how to say to our relatives: *Quid est hoc quod me quaerebatis?* (*What is this that you ask of me?*) Finally, let us remember that it is neither for them nor for ourselves, but for the salvation of the souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and for the increase of His kingdom that we have entered into the sanctuary.

There, my dear son, are some thoughts that I have wished to put before you and that ought not to be strangers to an apostolic man. Take some days to think them over. Then if the inevitable removal of the mission from Pembina affects you to the point of distaste for the ministry that you have filled for several years, come back, I consent. Here you will run your chance with the others. But in that case make plans to give, in passing, several weeks to the poor Christians at Sault Ste. Marie and Drummond Island. I ratify in advance all the faculties that the Bishop of Juliopolis will wish to grant you for this purpose, and you will need wide ones.

I have not yet seen Bolduc nor Moisan, nor have I heard mention of them.

In this season only the post goes; consequently there is no way to send you from this place the classical books for your two little scholars. I shall write to Montreal that they may be sent to you from there. I greatly desire that these students shall be taught with care, mentally and spiritually, since they are the sole hope of the mission for perpetuating there the holy ministry.

The Bishop of Juliopolis has submitted to me your several questions relative to marriage and will receive the answers by this canoe.

I am etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

Québec, 26 Avril 1823.

A Monseigneur l'Evêque de Juliopolis, / à la Rivière Rouge.

MONSEIGNEUR, / Vous trouverez ci-inclus des copies authentiques des *deeds* ou indentures par lesquels feu Lord Selkirk a donné à votre mission, d'une part 25 acres équivalent à plus de 26 arpens au lieu où je conçois qu'est établie votre église de S. Boniface, savoir, sur la rive droite de la Riv. Rouge (la droite d'une rivière est considérée par rapport à la personne qui la descend), & d'autre part le vaste domaine qui doit vous faire subsister, tant par la culture que vous y ferez vous-même que par les rentes payables par ceux auxquels vous en concéderez ou vendrez des portions. Je ne sais pourquoi vous avez consulté Mr Colville sur la manière de faire ces concessions, ou plutôt ces ventes. Ses avis là-dessus, que vraisemblablement il ne se donnera pas la peine de vous envoyer, ne vous seroient d'aucun service. Vous avez toute la liberté nécessaire pour disposer de tout le terrain que vous ne jugerez pas à propos de réserver pour votre usage. N'appellez point cela *seigneurie*, car ce n'en est pas une, mais une propriété, *the Estate of the R. Catholic Mission of Red River*. Vous entendez bien que tous les droits féodaux, banalités, cens & rentes, lods et ventes, sont exclus de vos concessions. Le franc et commun soccage ignore toutes ces réserves. En même temps que vous ferez mesurer votre propriété, faites-en diviser une certaine partie, par exemple un tiers, en lots de 100 ou 200 arpens. Vendez ces lots, si vous trouvez des acheteurs, à un prix fixe qui demeurera sur la terre aussi longtemps que le voudra l'acquéreur, & dont la rente annuelle à 6 pour 100 vous sera payée jusqu'au remboursement du capital. Voilà le meilleur parti & réellement le seul que vous ayez à prendre, en laissant à l'acquéreur la liberté de payer en produits le tout ou partie de sa rente. Comme l'argent est extrêmement rare, surtout dans vos endroits, je vous conseille de ne pas vous presser de faire ces sortes de ventes, dans l'espérance qu'avec le temps vous les ferez plus avantageusement lorsqu'il y aura des moyens d'exportation qui vous apporteront du numéraire. Votre soin le plus pressant doit être de trouver sur ce que vous ferez cultiver vous-même, non seulement votre nourriture, mais encore votre vêtement. Par la culture du lin et du chanvre vous aurez de la toile, et des habits en élevant des moutons, tandis que la viande de vos boeufs et veaux vous donnera de la nourriture. Mais pour élever du bétail et cultiver des champs, il vous faut des hommes, et vous n'en avez pas. Si l'argent de

la mission ici n'étoit pas épuisé, j'esseyerois encore à vous en envoyer; mais pour payer à Moisan £100 & 128 à Bolduc, il faut ajouter £150 à ce qui reste entre mes mains de la souscription de 1818.

D'après ce que j'ai eu l'honneur de vous dire ci-dessus de la manière de concéder les terres, vous concevrez aisément qu'il est impossible de vous créer des rentes non rachetables; mais la chose revient au même parce que les preneurs ne sont presque jamais en état de rembourser le capital & trouvent plus doux de payer une rente annuelle.

Je crois comme vous qu'à raison de la disparité de culte, on ne peut considérer comme mariage déjà contracté l'union d'un chrétien avec une infidèle; que par conséquent dans le cas même de la conversion de la femme au christianisme, votre pouvoir de dispenser *in secundo* ne va pas jusque là; mais comme je puis, par un indult particulier, dispenser de cette affinité, j'adresse à Mr Destroismaisons une dispense en blanc dont vous pourrez faire usage si cette femme se convertit, & cela seulement douze mois après que l'homme aura fixé sa demeure dans votre territoire. Je dis *l'homme*, car la femme ne deviendra sujette aux lois de l'Eglise qu'après son baptême. Peu importe où elle aura demeuré jusqu'alors.

Le 6e article des facultés extraordinaires suppose que ceux qui se présentent pour recevoir la dispense du second degré ont déjà contracté entre eux un lien conjugal quelconque. Par conséquent si tous deux sont chrétiens ou tous deux infidèles, il n'y a nulle difficulté; si l'un est catholique et l'autre hérétique le pouvoir est encore applicable, puisque ce mariage par lui-même n'est pas frappé de nullité, quoique illégitime. Mais on ne sauroit dire la même chose d'un infidèle avec un chrétien, soit catholique, soit hérétique, parce qu'il est impossible qu'il y ait eu entre eux un lien conjugal. Vous verrez par les solutions ci-jointes de vos questions rédigées en latin que vous avez rencontré juste dans le peu de décisions que vous avez données. Vous verrez aussi celles qu'il faut référer au S. Siège où je me charge de les transmettre sans préjudice du compte qu'il faut que vous rendiez vous-même de l'état de vos missions pour répondre aux désirs de la Propagande. A ces résolutions j'en joins d'autres, anciennement données par la Sorbonne, les unes en françois, les autres en latin, sur des questions proposées par Mgr de Saint-Vallier.⁶¹ Je les ai fait manuscire pour vous les envoyer, au cas que vous n'avez pas l'ancien Rituel de Québec, à la fin duquel on les trouve.

J'ai l'honneur d'être &c., &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

⁶¹ Jean Baptiste St. Vallier became the Catholic bishop of Quebec in 1688.

Quebec, April 26, 1823.

His Lordship the Bishop of Juliopolis, Red River.

MY LORD, You will find enclosed herewith true copies of the deeds, or indentures, by which the late Lord Selkirk gave to the mission, on the one hand, twenty-five acres, equivalent to more than twenty-six arpents, at the place where I understand your Church of St. Boniface is established, that is, upon the right bank of the Red River (the right bank of a river is considered in relation to the person who is descending it); and on the other, the vast estate which is to afford your sustenance, not only by your own cultivation of the land for yourself, but also by the rents to be paid by those to whom you will grant or sell parts of it. I do not know why you consulted Mr. Colville as to the manner of making these concessions or, rather, these sales. His advice thereon, which assuredly he will not take the trouble to send you, will be of no use to you. You have all the freedom necessary to dispose of the entire amount of land which you do not judge appropriate to reserve for your own use. Do not call it a seignior, for it is not one, but an estate, [*in English*:] "the Estate of the Roman Catholic Mission of Red River." You will understand well that all feudal rights, banalities, quitrents and rents, and lord's dues are excluded from your grants. Free and common soccage ignores all these reservations. At the same time that you have your estate surveyed, have a certain part of it divided, for example a third, in lots of a hundred or two hundred arpents. Sell these lots, if you can find purchasers, at a fixed price which will remain on the land as long as the purchaser wishes, and of which the annual rent at six [dollars] per hundred [acres] will be paid to you up until the time when the capital sum is repaid. That is the best way, and really the only way, that you can follow, leaving the purchaser at liberty to pay all or part of his rent in produce. As money is extremely rare, especially in your region, I advise you not to hurry in making these kinds of sales, in the hope that in time you will make them more advantageously when there will be means of export which will bring you hard cash. Your most urgent care ought to be to get from the land that you have cultivated for yourself, not only your sustenance, but also your clothing. By the culture of flax and hemp you will have linens, and by raising sheep you will have clothing; while the meat from your oxen and calves will give you food. But, in order to raise cattle and to cultivate the fields, you must have men, and you do not have them. If the mission's money here were not exhausted, I

would try to send you more of them; but to pay Moisan £100 and Bolduc £128, it will be necessary to add £150 to what remains in my hands from the subscription of 1818.

After I have had the honor of telling you about the manner of granting lands, you will easily understand that it is impossible for you to make rents that are not redeemable; but all this amounts to the same thing, because the purchasers are almost never in a position to pay back the capital, and find it easier to pay an annual rent.

I believe, as you do, that because of disparity of religion a union of a Christian with an infidel cannot be considered as a marriage already contracted; consequently even in case the woman is converted to Christianity, your faculty to dispense in the second [degree] does not go to that point; but, as I am able by a special indult to grant a dispensation for that affinity, I am addressing to Mr. Destroismaisons a blank dispensation which you will use if this woman is converted; but only twelve months after the man shall have fixed his residence in your territory. I say *the man*, because the woman will not become subject to the laws of the Church until after her baptism. It does not matter where she shall have lived up until that time.

The sixth article of the extraordinary faculties supposes that those who present themselves to receive the dispensation to the second degree have already contracted between themselves a conjugal bond of some sort. Consequently, if both are Christians or both infidels, there is no difficulty; if one is a Catholic and the other a heretic, the faculty is still applicable, since this marriage by itself is not broken by nullity, however illegitimate. But one could not say the same thing concerning an infidel and a Christian, whether a Catholic or a heretic, because it is impossible that there should be a conjugal bond between them. You will see by the solutions attached to this letter in answer to your questions written out in Latin that you have hit the nail on the head in the few decisions that you have rendered. You will also observe those which must be referred to the Holy See, to whom I undertake to transmit them without prejudice to the account that you yourself will have to render concerning the condition of your missions in response to the wishes of the Propaganda. To these solutions I am adding others, some given long ago by the Sorbonne, some in French and others in Latin, upon some questions proposed by My Lord St. Vallier.⁶¹ I have had them written out to be sent to you in case you do not have the old ritual of Quebec, at the end of which they are to be found.

I have the honor to be, etc., etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JULY 16, 1823

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁶²

[*Translation*]

Red River, July 16, 1823.

MY LORD, Your favors of April 6 and 26 reached me June 15. At the same time I received all the other things you sent, as well as those from the Bishop of Telmessus. I beg you to accept my very humble thanks for them. I am going to reply to your letters with no attempt at order. All that I desire is that I do not forget anything. I know that Your Lordship will easily overlook the rest.

We passed the winter fairly well. Last year's harvest provided some of the comforts (in addition to necessities) that we had not had before. This year the harvest will bring little, drought having killed the grain to some extent and even more the garden stuff, a part of which did not come up until July, when rain finally came to moisten the earth. The slight degree of stability that this settlement appears to be acquiring scarcely encourages the settlers. Most of them lack only the means to leave the country. It is impossible to say how affairs are to be managed from now on. Our governor, Captain Bulger, who is a fine man and much esteemed by everyone, is going to England, and his successor is not yet known. He has received orders to place things in the hands of the company. Are they to be in charge of everything? That is what I do not know. It seems that this point has not been made clear in letters from England, at least not to Captain Bulger. The company, which often is not well represented here, is disliked by the settlers. If the situation is to be as I have intimated, I have no doubt that a good many will go to American soil; some have already gone this spring. In leaving the country they leave their debts to Lord Selkirk's heirs. The company is vested with very considerable powers, which here fall into incompetent hands. Since the committee in England granted an interest to former clerks of the North West Company, they have become very much interested; they want money, never mind the means. I do not think they are very much interested in the colony. Lord Selkirk's executors are being as economical as possible. I believe that if the mission were to ask anything it would be a long time in receiving it. I doubt if they look on us with very much favor; Mr. Halkett has shown this to be true on more than one occasion. He seems to have left in a bad humor.

He wrote to Captain Bulger from York [Factory] instructing him

⁶² The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 87-91.

not to give us any wine, and it seems that he had told the company agent the same thing. I did obtain a keg of wine from Captain Bulger, who told me only the other day of the orders he had received. He did not forbid other advances to us—a singular fact—except in the case of our definitely refusing to leave Pembina, when he threatens to carry his complaints to His Majesty's government. The accounts of the settlers have been reduced twenty per cent because it seems that they had been charged too much, but ours have not been altered. Mr. Halkett has the reputation of being very proud and unwilling to accept anyone's advice. And, what is worse, he appears to be unwilling to take the trouble to enter into details. It is the opinion here that his visit has been harmful. I believe that we shall feel the after effects even more than all the others. I have no doubt that we shall be without wine this fall. The keg that I left at Montreal was sent on by Mr. Thain, and has remained I know not where. I have received the letter announcing that it was sent.

If the company is charged with the entire management of affairs, I doubt if we shall be able to obtain credit; in this case we shall not be very well off. In short, prospects seem to indicate much opposition, but Providence will perhaps find a way. I am not greatly surprised because I foresaw it in part and expected it. May God give me strength to turn the difficulties to account for the life hereafter. Everything appears to be too badly managed to offer much encouragement; no one in the country is interested in the progress of the colony; the agents who come here are hampered by orders received from England. If they are not careful to keep within these regulations, they are docked. Mr. Halkett, after making so much clamor for destroying Pembina, was unwilling to say a word to the Governor about what should be done with the settlers. This spring we sent nearly all of them down, and once at The Forks it was impossible to make them any advances. They ended by camping along the river while waiting for the buffalo to fatten, and then they returned to the hunt. It seems, however, that these people, being accustomed to the country, their native land, ought to be encouraged in preference to those that are brought over from Europe, and who, upon finding that they are mistaken in their expectations, seek only the means with which to leave. Your Lordship will perceive by this survey that our position is not the most pleasant. I do not say all this for the sake of complaining, but rather in order to give you a true idea of our condition. For the rest I shall endeavor to do as much for the souls as possible. The bad habits of all the

members of the company cause one to fear more intentional evil on their part than on that of the settlers. Yet it is, they say, on condition that they civilize the country that they have been granted such great privileges.

I spent a few weeks in Pembina this winter. While I was there Mr. Picard left for Qu'Appelle River to carry spiritual aid to Mr. John McDonald,⁶³ a former *bourgeois* of the North West Company. He stayed there two months, which afforded him the opportunity of performing several baptisms and marriages.

I did not give Mr. Harper minor orders until Whitsuntide, having found it inconvenient to do so before. He does not seem to be a risk to his calling, for fear of which I went cautiously in his case. Furthermore, he has much to keep him busy, and the breviary would consume time that he is giving to theology. It is my intention to make him subdeacon some time around All Saints' Day.

This year several families are to come from different points in the North. They will serve to increase our zeal, for ignorance is not wanting among these poor people.⁶⁴

I had entertained the idea of having Mr. Dumoulin make the trip to the Bay. Several times during the winter I had discussed the matter with Mr. Clarke, who is in charge for the company here and who seemed to approve. Then when it came to departing, I renewed my request to him by letter. He replied that he could not grant me this passage for *reasons impossible to explain at the time*. Mr. Dumoulin, having received permission to go to Canada, wrote to the Governor at Jack River to obtain transportation in the company's canoes. The latter replied on June 27 that a brigade of loaded canoes would pass Bas de la Rivière on July 2 or 3, and that Mr. Dumoulin might take passage with them. But it was necessary for the letter to travel from the end of Lake Winnipeg to the Red River and then for Mr. Dumoulin to get to Bas de la Rivière. It was impossible to do so in so short a time. So it was merely a polite way of refusing. Because of this re-

⁶³ John McDonald was born in Scotland and migrated to Canada in 1786. After service as clerk with the North West Company, he became a partner of the X Y Company, and, in 1798, of the North West Company. In 1816 he was arrested at Fort William by Lord Selkirk and was acquitted at his trial at York. When the Hudson's Bay and North West companies amalgamated in 1821, he became a chief factor in charge of the Upper Red River district (the Assiniboine River area). He died in 1828. He was distinguished from John McDonald of Garth, to whom Astoria surrendered in 1813, by his sobriquet, John McDonald le Borgne, or One-eyed McDonald. W. Stewart Wallace, *Documents relating to the North West Company*, 463 (Champlain Society, *Publications*, vol. 22 — Toronto, 1934).

⁶⁴ See *ante*, p. 380 and note.

fusal, Mr. Dumoulin has been obliged to join forces with others in getting a canoe, which will probably be badly appointed and will not fail to cost him dear. I believe that we must expect nothing of benefit to the mission from men to whom the word Catholic is odious.

Yet we are obliged necessarily to have recourse to them in a land so disadvantageously situated.

On February 12 I received a letter from Bishop du Bourg dated from St. Louis on July 12 of last year. It reached me by way of some American traders who come fairly near us. I replied to him by the same means, but my letter will not have reached him until this spring, when these traders have taken their furs to St. Louis. He tells me of faculties that he has granted you for Mr. Dumoulin, from whom he acknowledges the receipt of one or two letters; and of his letter that I received before my departure making me his vicar-general; but he fails to enter into any detail concerning his faculties. I have written to him at length on the matter, and I think he will reply with greater clarity, though I do not know by what means. If he is at St. Louis perhaps he can do so through the same channels as before; if at New Orleans, he will reply perhaps by Quebec, and in that case the thing will run on until next year.

In vacating Pembina we left a house and chapel, which will perhaps end by being destroyed by fire or otherwise. I had hopes of selling the house to the Governor of the colony. Such a transaction would have reduced our debt by the amount of the sale, but we failed in so doing because of his departure. If possible I shall sell it to some other individual.

Mr. Dumoulin is to leave here the sixteenth of this month. At that time five years will have elapsed day for day since he came. He is leaving the country without much regret and it is better or just as well that he should leave this year, since he cannot make up his mind to stay permanently. His converts are grieved to see him depart, and I am sure that their spiritual welfare will suffer as a result. It is possible that Mr. Dumoulin may not be able to stop for any length of time at Sault Ste. Marie and Drummond Island, because his canoe will not wait, at least not for long. Yet there is great need there; corruption is making great strides. I am not speaking to you of either faculties or cases this time; I have received such solutions as I might expect from the theologians, and I expect the decisions of Rome next year. We are in need here of the faculties formerly accorded by Pius V and Gregory XIII; perhaps Rome will appreciate our need. Nearly all the cases

submitted last year came from Mr. Dumoulin, and he is leaving without putting them into execution.

Your Lordship will be kind enough to receive Mr. Dumoulin as a good worker, who has rendered service to religion here, and who will do the same in Canada. Perhaps he has given in somewhat to nature in urging his return, but I think that we must leave it to Providence to cause him to repent, if in so doing he has obstructed Its plans. His inflexible character may well cause him vexations in his ministry. However, religion may modify it. An atmosphere of confidence would be of service to him and he would pay in return. His health is not very robust; the ministry fatigues him, and he is naturally not very fond of it. Nevertheless I feel sure that his parishioners will not need to complain of him on this score. His family is going to be very happy; if he is placed near them he will be visited often. I believe that it is his intention to make a holy use of the income from his benefice, and that he will not forget the Red River if later he is able to do anything for us. God grant that all these good intentions may not be lost by contact with society.

Mr. Destroismaisons would return to Canada without regret if Providence should open the way for him, but he is very reasonable in this respect. He is filled with good intentions, but he has difficulty in asserting himself and for this reason he is little appreciated. He will find it difficult to act as missionary to the Indians.

Mr. West, who was the Anglican missionary here, left for England this year; another man is to take his place. He has, I believe, two or three little Indians in his school and is in hopes of getting others, but the Indians do not like to give up their children. He has money to provide for their needs.

The secretary of the Bishop of Telmessus has sent out some classics but they have remained at Fort William. God knows whether or not they will ever reach here.

I have written a short account of the mission to send to Rome. I do not know whether I have yet achieved the desired result. I am sending it to you unsealed with every permission to change or eliminate anything; I am not at all familiar with the style suitable for such a report. Benedict XIV indicates certain things of which an account should be rendered, but I have none of the things of which he speaks here, except such as have to do with the people. I have done my best.

Last year Mr. Dumoulin sent the accounts of Moisan and of Bolduc. The latter did not finish out his time and has gone to Prairie du Chien.

Moisan remained at Sault Ste. Marie, and spent the winter there, or at least on Lake Superior. Lapointe has written to Mr. Dumoulin again this year for his account; it seems that he still has something coming to him.

Well I must close, and this will be all from here until June, 1824. I commend myself as well as all my flock to your Holy Sacrifices.

I am with most profound respect, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

† J. N., Bishop of Juliopolis.

P.S. Be good enough to remember me to the [religious] communities of Quebec.

His Lordship J. O., Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

I am rather at a loss as to what I should say to the Propaganda concerning religion in this country; it is maintaining itself with those who have embraced it, and it continues to gain by the return of old Christians and the conversion and baptism of their children, but it has not yet been possible to work directly toward the conversion of the Indians.

DUMOULIN TO BISHOP PLESSIS, AUGUST 24, 1823

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Sault Ste Marie, 24 aout 1823.

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Votre Grandeur voit par le lieu d'où je lui écris que je suis avancé dans mon voyage. Je suis parti le 19 juillet de la Riv: Rouge. J'y ai laissé Mgr de Juliopolis en parfaite santé ainsi que ces autres Messieurs; Sa Grandeur a cependant perdu un peu de son embonpoint. J'ai été obligé de descendre à mes frais; on n'a plus besoin de nous, et en conséquence tout frais pour nous paroitroit superflu. Cependant rendu ici mes hommes se sont déterminés en partie de rester au Sault, de manière que j'ai été forcé d'avoir recours à la compagnie pour avoir un passage, ce qu'elle a paru faire avec bienveillance. J'ai refusé de profiter de cette occasion pour avoir plus de tems à donner aux pauvres gens du Sault Ste Marie qui sont dans le plus pauvre état que l'on puisse imaginer, quant au spirituel. Je rendrai compte de cette mission à mon arrivée en Canada. Je ferai mon possible pour aller à l'Île Drummond, mais je crains qu'il ne soit pas possible de le faire. Mr Richard⁶⁵ est à Michilimakinac. Je ne

⁶⁵ Father Gabriel Richard, "the apostle of Michigan," was born in France in 1761, and was consecrated to the priesthood in Paris in 1791. He was driven from France during the Revolution and sought refuge in Baltimore. After experience in the Illinois country, he was sent to Detroit in 1798. The following year he visited Mackinac Island; but a

pense pas être rendu avant le 15 septembre à Montréal. J'aurais besoin de 15 à 20 louis en arrivant à Montréal, car grâce à Dieu après 5 ans de service je me trouverai dans les dettes à mon retour; ce n'est pourtant pas la façon des Messieurs du Nord; mais je serois fâché d'en avoir plus.

Je me recommande, Mgr, à vos ferventes prières et j'ai l'honneur d'être de Votre Grandeur le très humble et obéis. servit.

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Ptre.

A Monseigneur J. O. Plessis, / Archevêque de Québec, à Québec.

[*Translation*]

Sault Ste. Marie, August 24, 1823.

MY LORD, Your Lordship will see from the place from which I am writing that I am making some progress in my voyage. I left Red River July 19. I left the Bishop of Juliopolis, as well as the other gentlemen, in perfect health; His Lordship has lost a little weight, however. I have been compelled to pay my own traveling expenses; we are no longer needed, and consequently any expenditure on our account seems superfluous. However, on arriving here some of my men decided to remain at the Sault, and consequently I have been forced to fall back on the company for transportation, which they seemed quite willing to grant me. I have refused to go on by this canoe, in order that I may give more time to the poor people of Sault Ste. Marie, who, spiritually, are in the most wretched condition imaginable. I shall give you a report of this mission upon my arrival in Canada. I shall try my best to get to Drummond Island, but I fear it will be impossible. Mr. Richard⁶⁵ is at Michilimackinac. I do not expect to reach Montreal before September 15. I shall need fifteen or twenty pounds upon arriving at Montreal, for thanks to God, after five years of service I shall find myself in debt on my return; but that is not the usual thing with the gentlemen of the North [*i.e., of the fur trade*]; I should be sorry to have any more.

I commend myself to your fervent prayers, My Lord, and I have the honor of being Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,

SÉV. DUMOULIN, Priest.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Archbishop of Quebec, Quebec.

period of unrest in Detroit kept him from further visits until 1821. In 1823 he was elected territorial delegate from Michigan, the first priest to sit in the United States House of Representatives. He died of cholera in the epidemic of 1832. Antoine I. Rezek, *History of the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie and Marquette*, 2:171 (Houghton, Michigan, 1907); *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 18:502, 503 n.

Quebec, 9th January 1824.

John Halkett, Esq.,/ London.

SIR,/ I was honoured, in its time, with your letter of the 2d April last. The object of this is to inform you that agreeable to your wishes and to my engagements, the mission of Pembina has been effectually abandonned early in the spring, and the Missionary thereof is now in the province of Lower Canada. From him I have been sorry to hear that misrepresentations were to be made to Hudson's Bay Company against the Rt Revd Dr Provencher and other catholic missionaries of Red River, although always faithful to their duty, they did harm to nobody and rendered themselves useful to all such as were entitled to their solicitude, namely to the Canadians spread over that immense contry, and to the Indians whose conversion to Faith and civilization as far as may be obtained, are the chief aim of their mission. If, notwithstanding their irreprehensible behaviour, complaints are made against them by individuals, it may be expected from the wisdom and equity of the gentlemen of Hudson's Company that no opinion will be formed on those charges, untill they have been communicated to the Missionaries, and an opportunity afforded them to justify themselves. No doubt that the result shall be that they have incurred no kind of blame and that they are more and more deserving the attention and regard of the Honorable Company.

The late Lord Selkirk had adopted the mark (S.B.) and left the same to the catholic mission of Red River for such goods or any effects which might be sent for the future through Hudson's Bay vessels for the use of the Missionaries. I would feel much indebted had you the goodness to let me know at what port in England the shipping for Hudson's Bay takes place, and to what person such goods and effects must be consigned to take their way, if any are to be sent. Every expence both for shipping and transport may be passed at my account. The only article, to my knowledge, they are in need of for the next season is twenty or thirty gallons of London particular Teneriff. Could that article be procured to them, not only the advance would be reimbursed at the first notice by my agent in London, viz: Mr. Delaporte, 65 Crawford Street, Portman Square, but moreover I should consider that small service as rendered to myself.

I have the honor &c., &c.

† J. O. Cath. Bp of Quebec.

DUMOULIN'S PLEA FOR THE MISSIONS AT RED RIVER AND SAULT STE.

MARIE, MARCH 10, 1824⁶⁶

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. Printed Copy]

[*Translation*]

.....
When I left [Red River], after a residence of five years, 800 persons, both children and adults, had been baptized; 120 marriages had been celebrated or rehabilitated; 150 persons had been admitted to first communion; a still larger number were preparing themselves either for partaking of communion or for baptism; several Protestants had abjured their errors and had returned to Holy Church; divine service was being held in the new Church of St. Boniface; the word of salvation was being preached regularly; and spirits were being lifted, and hearts touched and softened. I have seen examples of a living faith that I have not found here. A good school had been regularly maintained; several children had already advanced in the humanities, and gave hope for the future; finally the cross of Christ had been shown to the Indians and their eyes were beginning to be fixed on this symbol of our salvation.

HALKETT TO [BISHOP PLESSIS], APRIL 14, 1824

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

London, April 14th, 1824.

MY LORD,/ Upon returning a few days ago from France, where I have been resident for some time, and to which place I propose soon to go back, I received your letter of the 9th of January last, and I lose no time in sending a reply to your communication. Having heard of no charge or accusation whatever made against the Rt Revd Dr Provencher, or any of the Roman catholic missionaries of the Red River, I applied to the Committee of the Hudson's Bay company to know if any charges had been made against them, and I am happy to say that the Committee have not received any accusation whatever.⁶⁷ This, I trust, will be perfectly satisfactory to you.

⁶⁶ The translation of this excerpt from Dumoulin's *Notice sur les missions de la Rivière Rouge et du Sault Ste. Marie* is included here as being of special value. The pamphlet was published in 1824, and is dated March 10 of that year at St. Pierre du Sud. It gives a brief summary of the history of the mission, the objections it encountered both from Catholics in Canada and from Protestants (the Hudson's Bay Company and the Anglican missionary, West), and closes with an appeal for funds and a brief description of the deplorable condition of the inhabitants of Sault Ste. Marie.

⁶⁷ Dumoulin's *Notice* makes plain the fact that he believed that West had carried to England malicious stories about the Catholic missionaries.

At the same time I think I ought to mention that by a letter received by the Committee this day from America, it appears that a petition has been laid before the American Congress on the part of about thirty five of the Canadian settlers on the Red River, requesting the government of the United States to take them under their protection.⁶⁸ I have not seen the petition, but I presume, from the names of most of the petitioners, that they are those who had located themselves at Pembina. The commencement of that establishment was a very unfortunate circumstance, and it has been stated to the Committee that the petition must have been done with the concurrence of the Roman Catholic mission. This appears to me to be extremely improbable.

On the subject of that part of your letter regarding the sending of the wine to Hudson's Bay, I consulted with Mr Smith, the Secretary of the Hudson's Bay company, who has since communicated with Mr Delaporte respecting it, and that it will be forwarded to the Bay by the first ships.

I have the honor to be Your Lordship's obed. & faithful servant.

J. HALKETT.

BISHOP PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JUNE 1, 1824

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁶⁹

[Translation]

Red River, June 1, 1824.

MY LORD, I should prefer to write this letter after the arrival of the canoes from Montreal, for then I should probably have things to say that I cannot divine at the present moment; but I must avail myself of opportunities when they present themselves, not possessing the means of choosing more suitable ones. A man by the name of Benjamin Gervais,⁷⁰ one of our settlers and a native of Rivière du Loup, will be the bearer of this letter, and will even be able to afford Your Lordship the means of honoring me with a reply this year; for he is to return immediately. I am asking him to go to the seminary in Montreal at

⁶⁸ In Major Stephen H. Long's manuscript diary, in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society, the following reference to the petition is made under date of August 7, 1823: "The Inhabitants [of Pembina] appeared highly gratified to ascertain that they were included within the U. S. Territory, and steps were immediately taken to make a representation to Congress, in a respectful petition, of their condition, views & wishes." See also Morice, *Catholic Church*, 1:118, 119. For mention of Long's visit to Pembina in 1823, see Bishop Provencher's letter of June 1, 1824, *post*, p. 418.

⁶⁹ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 92-95.

⁷⁰ Benjamin Gervais settled on the Red River in 1812, migrated to Fort Snelling in 1827, was ejected with other squatters a decade or more later, and opened a farm on the site of St. Paul, Minnesota. Upham and Dunlap, *Minnesota Biographies*.

the time of his departure to inquire for letters for the Red River. I fear only lest Your Lordship may be away making a diocesan visit, and that this letter may thus reach you too late. I think, however, that Gervais will stop in Montreal for a time. As usual, I shall scarcely attempt to put any order in this letter, but rather I shall say things as they come to me, knowing your indulgence in overlooking the rest. Once more I have some cases, with which I shall begin.

1. An infidel woman having lived with a Protestant for several years was married last autumn by our new minister, Mr. Jones,⁷¹ without first having been baptized. She did not wish to be baptized by him because she is the daughter of a Catholic father and would prefer to be a Catholic herself. The minister decided that baptism was not necessary. What is your opinion of this marriage? Is it void because of the impediment of difference in religion? And supposing that the faculty of marrying Protestants with converted heathens should come, will it be necessary that they present themselves to us? This case occurs and will occur more and more frequently.

2. A Pembina man married a girl whose aunt he had previously known illicitly. He admitted this crime in confession before his marriage but he denied it afterward when he found out that the dispensation could not be granted him at Pembina. He persisted in his denial and married, being quite aware that he was contracting a marriage that was null. He came to St. Boniface this spring and is seeking to remedy the situation. I have put him off for a year on the grounds of his being a stranger in the diocese, unless Bishop du Bourg sends me some faculties via Montreal, which I have already requested in two letters to him to which I have as yet had no reply.

3. What form should one use in administering provisional baptism to adults, Protestants as well as others? Mr. Harper says he has seen the form for infant baptisms used; but the full form would seem to be the proper one to employ.

4. May one say the dawn Mass immediately after the midnight Mass? May one administer communion at the midnight Mass as well as on Holy Saturday? Benedict XIV is opposed to these three usages, but I have seen them practiced in Canada. Does usage constitute law at present? Whence comes this practice in the diocese?

5. I suppose that Mr. Dumoulin arrived safely last year. Before the close of navigation last autumn I received a letter from him dated from

⁷¹ David T. Jones was sent in 1823 to take the place occupied till that time by John West. He held the double office of missionary to the Indians and chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company. Gunn and Tuttle, *History of Manitoba*, 235.

Sault Ste. Marie, concerning which he speaks in the same tone as I did to Your Lordship the preceding year. Some of his *métis* from Pembina came to establish themselves this year five leagues from here on the Assiniboine River.⁷² I am glad they have done so, for we can minister to them more easily there than at Pembina, where there are still a good number of settlers, who got it into their heads that they were to have a missionary from America. There passed here last August a group of American explorers or engineers, astronomers, etc., commanded by Major Long.⁷³ They took the latitude of Pembina. The forty-ninth degree left the chapel about a mile on their side. The latitude of St. Boniface is 49° 53'. I sent a letter to Mr. Dumoulin by them.

We spent the winter peacefully. The company's governor, Mr. George Simpson, wintered here. Mr. Robert Parker Pelly,⁷⁴ governor of the colony, got along very well with him.

Last year credit was stopped to the colonists, who now buy in the store only for cash. The company has placed paper money in circulation, of which the highest denomination is one pound and the lowest one shilling. This is a great help. Everything is furnished by the company. The colony no longer has any store. Mr. Simpson, with whom I am on good terms, has let me have supplies from the store without immediate payment, which would have been very difficult for us. We shall be able to pay this little account. And we have paid fifty barrels of wheat toward our debt to the successors of the late Lord Selkirk. The price is ten shillings a barrel and twenty per cent rebate [on the debt], according to the notice published by order of Governor Pelly. He has not made an exception of us, as Mr. Halkett or Mr. Colville had done, according to Captain Bulger, as I told you last year. I think that with our money we shall now get what we need, especially wine for Mass, of which we still have some, thanks to Your Lordship's efforts and Mr. Thain's kindness.

⁷² The new settlement was then called Whitehorse Plain. It is now the parish of St. François Xavier, and is sometimes called Grantown. Morice, *Catholic Church*, 1:118; Geographic Board of Canada, *Place-Names of Manitoba*, 76, 92 (Ottawa, 1933); *Les Cloches de Saint-Boniface*, 32:282 (St. Boniface, Manitoba—December, 1933).

⁷³ For an account of the expedition sent out in 1823 under Major Stephen H. Long to determine the exact boundary of the United States in the vicinity of the Red River Valley, see William H. Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River, Lake Winnipeg, Lake of the Woods, &c.* (London, 1825).

⁷⁴ Captain Robert Pelly, a brother of Sir John H. Pelly, the governor of the company in London, succeeded Bulger as governor of Assiniboia. He remained but two years, and was succeeded by Donald McKenzie. Pelly brought with him instructions for abolishing the colony store and credit, for allowing a discount on debts paid promptly, and for making provisions for a local currency. Oliver, ed., *Canadian North-West*, 243, 244, 251, 252.

In spite of last year's drought and hail the harvest yielded considerable grain, and this year's planting is abundant. God grant that nothing may happen to it!

I did not write to England at all last year. The executors of the late Lord Selkirk have made a reply to my letter, or rather to some questions that I had asked Captain Bulger and which he had referred to them.

I am asking six dollars rent annually forever for one hundred arpents of the mission's lands. I shall find a way of disposing of them on this basis. It seems to me that the plan suggested by Your Lordship to sell them *à constitut*⁷⁵ cannot be carried out because, according to the deeds, we are empowered only to draw the income from this land but not to dispose of it, as would be the case in letting them out on redeemable rent. There can be no objection to this other plan.

Mr. Destroismaisons is the same as ever. He has made the Pembina trip several times since Mr. Dumoulin's departure. I conferred the sub-deaconship on Mr. Harper on Ascension Day and it is my intention to ordain him deacon on St. Peter's Day. He expressed a desire last autumn to postpone it and he has profited by the delay to study his theology, of which, up to the present time, he has covered sixteen or seventeen of the longest and most necessary treatises. I myself had not done so many when Your Lordship thought me capable of becoming a priest. He is still assiduously carrying on the work of the school, though it is supplied with but few talented pupils. This winter he sent to me for Latin two lads of fair ability, one of them ten years old and the other thirteen. My two other scholars have thus far studied all of the *Epitome*, *De Viris Illustribus*, Cornelius Nepos, four books of Quintius Curtius, the four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, and half of the *Imitation*; they are beginning to understand versification, have covered a summary of geography and are now copying belles-lettres, in order to be able to study them this summer. I am pushing them as much as possible in order to be able to make use of them. God grant that they may not slip away from me. They are fairly well behaved, which indicates that they are of regular habits.

The buffalo have been plentiful all winter in the neighborhood of Pembina, so that it was easy to get a livelihood. Since the spring breakup there has been considerable fishing. We have salted down some fish and also some meat to guard against famine in the summer.

⁷⁵ Pierre Larousse, in his *Nouveau Larousse illustré: dictionnaire universel encyclopédique* (Paris, [1898-1904]), explains *constitut* as the process whereby the donor or seller reserves for himself the usufruct of the thing sold or given.

We have put in a good planting. We have two cows that are giving milk, two spring calves, and one yearling, twelve hens, some chickens, and some pigs; in short we are beginning to establish ourselves. We are lodged in our house of fifty by thirty feet, which Mr. Halkett complains of having seen dismantled. I had it finished last year, and we took possession of it on All Saints' Day. This year I plan to have some work done on the chapel, which is still in bad condition. I have already begun. The local council, composed of the governors and other notables, has authorized the payment of the year's tithes on the same basis as in Canada; only that potatoes are to be included.⁷⁶ A resolution has been carried to authorize it in both communions. I do not know what the Protestants think about it, but I know that the Catholics prefer to pay it rather than to give six days, which are of little value to us because they are badly given. This resolution is to be referred to England. The executors of Lord Selkirk, in reply to a question proposed to Captain Bulger about the matter, do not wish to authorize it but leave us at liberty to make with the settlers each year whatever arrangement seems best; which was enough after all.

I hope that the letters that are coming to us may not tell us of anything too distressing, though one must be prepared for anything.

I commend myself as well as my colleagues to your prayers.

I am with most profound respect, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

† J. N., Bishop of Juliopolis.

P. S. Of what does the *componenda* for the dispensation of three banns consist? Can it be augmented for this region?

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

BISHOP PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JUNE 13, 1824

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁷⁷

[*Translation*]

Red River, June 13, 1824.

MY LORD, I have received your favors today. I am making haste to let you know of their arrival by a canoe which leaves tomorrow for Sault Ste. Marie, in the hope that my answer may reach you before the autumn letters. I shall not reply this time to the letters of the

⁷⁶ The Council, which met annually, was composed of the governor of Assiniboia and his councilors. At the meeting on May 3, 1823, Governor Bulger, Thomas Thomas, William H. Cook, and John Pritchard were present. Oliver, ed., *Canadian North-West*, 235.

⁷⁷ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 95-97.

Bishop of Telmessus, nor to those of Mr. Mil Caron, A. Dionne, P. Taché, and others; these I shall put off until another time. I had the honor of writing you the first part of this month by a canoe that goes to Montreal with the intention of coming back this year. I wrote also at that time, as I am now doing, to Mr. Dumoulin. I am obliged to him for his circular and for the subscription.⁷⁸ I am going to put this money away against pressing needs. It does not look at the present time as though I should be obliged to use any of it this year. I have given an order to the Governor for some black cloth, some books, slates, etc., for the school. He has undertaken the responsibility willingly. I also asked for some dictionaries and gradus; we shall see whether the things will come next year.

I am very much grieved about the troubles in Montreal.⁷⁹ In the midst of all of it the Bishop of Telmessus is building on a large scale; God will complete his work, I hope. The work of God must of necessity suffer persecution; that is perhaps the most certain proof that it is His work. The world and the Devil would not be in opposition to each other.

I have received nothing from Rome; the death of the Pope, the indisposition of his successor, and, perhaps more than all this, lack of time have prevented or retarded the replies. And they are of the utmost need to us. If I had at least received some faculties from Bishop du Bourg (and these faculties are of the first and second degree, which he perhaps does not have), I should be able to settle some marriage problems in Pembina. So I must wait another year.

I am very glad to see by your letter to Mr. Halkett that Your Lordship is forestalling the accusations that we feared would be made against us. I hardly believe, however, that such will be the case. Mr. Clarke, who appeared the most excited last spring, will have enough to do defending himself without accusing others. Perhaps Mr. West, who has gone to England, might be able to strike a telling blow, though I do not believe that he would wish to engage in an affair that might go to great lengths, and that it would be difficult for him to support while telling the truth.

⁷⁸ On Dumoulin's circular and his plea for a subscription fund for the Red River mission, see *ante*, p. 415, and note.

⁷⁹ The Catholics of Montreal resented the fact that Bishop Lartigue, titular bishop of Telmessus, was a mere auxiliary of Bishop Plessis of Quebec. Failing to see that the latter was acting wisely in adhering to the wish of the English government for only one Catholic bishop in Canada, they felt it an insult to their city to be satisfied with a bishop of Telmessus. Strife and rudeness were the lot of Bishop Lartigue until the independent bishopric of Montreal, which he filled, was erected in 1836. Scott, in Shortt and Doughty, eds., *Canada and Its Provinces*, 11:85-87.

If I succeed in getting a certain girl named Nolin,⁸⁰ I am going to transform her into a Red River nun, and entrust her with the education of the girls. I would not object to having a girls' school on a firm basis before the Protestants establish one. They have been talking for a long time of starting such a school on a large scale, without having yet started the actual work. I built a small house last year which I was planning to devote to this use. It burned down accidentally as soon as it was finished. I still have the one in which we lived before moving into the place we now occupy. It was destined to be a sacristy, but it will make a good schoolhouse until we can get a larger one. The people of Pembina were not willing that the presbytery that Mr. Dumoulin occupied there should be removed, having gotten it into their heads that they were going to have a missionary, presumably from Bishop du Bourg.⁸¹ It will be their fault if the house is destroyed by one of the fires that are frequent there. The chapel will suffer the same fate. Perhaps when their hopes are frustrated, they will give up their claims.

Without going to any trouble or expense, I can dispose of the mission lands, which tempt many because of their proximity to the church, especially just at the present time when there is money in the region and each man is able to provide for his needs by his own labor. Only I should like to know if the plan I proposed to Your Lordship in my last letter is legal, for upon examining the title you will see that we are not permitted to dispose of the lands entirely, but only to draw the income from them for the perpetual maintenance of the mission. For one hundred acres I am asking six dollars rent annually forever. I have rented them on this basis, but without yet having given the contract in due form. I do not intend, however, to collect the full rent for a few years in order to allow time for preparing them for cultivation.

I rejoice at the succor that Your Lordship is going to give to the poor faithful ones of the Sault. I have received nothing from Nicolet. Be good enough to remember me to the holy women of the convents of Quebec and other places when you have the occasion. I have confidence in the fervent prayers of these virgins. I earnestly hope that peace may return to your diocese. These tribulations will serve to

⁸⁰ Angélique Nolin was the girl whom Bishop Provencher had in mind. She opened a girls' school at St. Boniface in 1829. Morice, *Catholic Church*, 1:125.

⁸¹ Doubtless the residents of Pembina had learned of Bishop du Bourg's plea to Calhoun for aid for missionaries among the Indians, one of whom he planned to send to the mouth of the St. Peter's River. See *ante*, pp. 390-393.

purify your last years and enrich your crown. God Who permits them to be will also put an end to them. I hope that you may live long enough to see the end of these troubles, and perfect calm. Tenderness, patience, and charity have always been the portion of the children of God.

I shall refrain this time from sending back the report of my district, for I have not had time even to read the plan that you sent me.

I have the honour of being, with most profound respect, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

† J. N., Bishop of Juliopolis.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

BISHOP PLESSIS TO BISHOP PROVENCHER, AUGUST 21, 1824

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

Québec, 21 aout 1824.

A Monseigneur J. N. Provencher, / Ev. de Juliopolis. A la Riv. Rouge.

MONSEIGNEUR, / J'ai reçu l'honneur de votre lettre sans date, mais assurément du commencement de Juin, et celle du 13 du même mois. Comme vous dites les avoir écrites sans ordre & suivant que les matières se sont présentées, vous ne trouverez pas mauvais que j'y réponde de même.

Les sommes recueillies en conséquence de la Notice de Mr Dumoulin s'élèvent à plus de £600 dont il faut, comme vous savez, retrancher un dixième pour le Sault Ste Marie où Mr Crevier est allé par mon ordre passer deux mois. Le reste est entre les mains du Procureur du Séminaire de Québec.

Je me réjouis beaucoup d'apprendre que vous commencez à secouer un peu la misère. Du bled, des vaches, des veaux, des cochons, des poules, du froment à vendre ou à donner en paiement, voilà de quoi vous rassurer. Les lettres du cher Harper ont un peu exagéré la perte résultante de l'incendie de votre petite maison. Il parle de livres qui y ont brulé. Il me semble que si vous étiez à l'étroit sous ce rapport, vous m'en auriez fait mention & qu'il auroit été aisé d'y pourvoir par cette occasion. Je ne sais si vous serez bien servi en livres du côté de l'Angleterre. Il pourroit arriver que l'on vous envoyât de là des dictionnaires Anglois-Latins et Latins-Anglois, qui ne vous accommoderoient guères. Je vous ai ouvert une correspondance à Londres: c'est celle d'un prêtre françois de mes amis, qui étant fort obligeant, se prêtera de bonne grâce à remplir tels mémoires que vous lui adresserez, et saura faire accepter ses envois par les vaisseaux de la Compagnie

dont il connoit le bureau. Vous pourrez le prier de tirer de l'argent sur moi ou sur Mr Turgeon⁸² aussi longtems que la collection qui vient d'être faite durera. Il connoit personnellement Mr Turgeon devenu, depuis quelques jours, Procureur du Séminaire. Son adresse est comme suit: Mr Delaporte, No 65 Crawford Street, Portman Square, London.

Vous verrez par la copie ci-jointe de la dernière lettre de Mr Halkett qu'on n'est pas aussi fâché là-bas contre vous que je le croyois.

Vous avez bien fait de ne pas donner de titres aux gens qui ont pris des terres de vous, parce que n'étant qu'un membre de la corporation, vous avez besoin, pour agir, de la procuration des autres, que je tâcherai de faire dresser pour vous être envoyée d'ici au printemps prochain. Si par les termes de *Deed* vous ne croyez pas pouvoir vendre ces terres à constitut, comment pouvez-vous les concéder à rente perpétuelle et non rachetable, puisque c'est là une vraie aliénation? En ce cas ne vaudroit-il pas mieux les donner à bail emphytéotique pour 50 ans, auquel terme elles reviendroient à la mission & pourroient être baillées à un plus haut prix? Dans le cas même de vente à rente perpétuelle et non rachetable, est-ce que ce seroit trop d'exiger 2 piastres de rente par chaque 25 acres? Ne pourriez-vous pas, encore, mettre une différence dans la rente des terres qui ne sont pas à plus d'une demie lieue de l'église & de celles qui en sont les plus éloignées? Enfin, si vous pouviez adroitement et sans bruit écarter les Protestans, ne seroit-il pas plus satisfaisant pour vous de n'avoir que des concessionnaires catholiques.

Il seroit bon que vous chargeassiez Mr D'umoulin de remercier les âmes généreuses et compatissantes qui ont contribué au soutien de la Rivière Rouge.

Comme vous n'êtes pas fort pressés de sujets, je vous recommande de bien former & cultiver les quatre que vous destinez à être ecclésiastiques. Plus ils seront solidement établis dans la piété & dans les lettres, mieux ils rempliront les desseins que vous avez sur eux. Comme vous êtes jeune & vos coopérateurs aussi, vous pouvez, ce me semble, prendre votre temps. . . .

Depuis très longtems je n'ai reçu de lettres de Mgr Dubourg. Je doute qu'il suive les choses d'assez près pour savoir jusqu'où ses pouvoirs s'étendent. On m'assure qu'il demeure maintenant à la Nouvelle

⁸² Pierre Flavien Turgeon was secretary to Bishop Plessis from 1808 to 1820. He became coadjutor of Quebec in 1831, titular bishop of Sidyma in 1834, and, in 1850, archbishop of Quebec. *Encyclopedia of Canada*; Shortt and Doughty, eds., *Canada and Its Provinces*, 11:98.

Orléans ou auprès, & que son Coadjuteur Mgr Rosati,⁸³ dont je ne connois pas le titre épiscopal, réside à S. Louis de Missouri. Peut-être qu'en écrivant à celui-ci, vous aurez plus de chance. Au surplus, lorsque des ci-devant habitans de Pembina auront de bonne foi passé une année au nord du 49e degré de latitude, vous n'aurez plus de difficulté à user de vos pouvoirs en leur faveur.

.
Je suis &c., &c.

† J. O. Ev. de Québec.

[*Translation*]

Quebec, August 21, 1824.

His Lordship J. N. Provencher, Bishop of Juliopolis, Red River.

MY LORD, I have received your favor which was undated but certainly was from the beginning of June; and the one of the thirteenth of the same month. As you say you have written without order and according to the way in which the subject matters have presented themselves, you will not find it amiss that I reply to them in the same way.

The sum collected as a result of Mr. Dumoulin's *Notice* amounts to more than six hundred pounds, of which it is necessary, as you know, to withhold a tenth for Sault Ste. Marie, where Mr. Crevier has gone by my order to spend two months. The rest is in the hands of the agent of the Seminary of Quebec.

I am very happy to learn that you are beginning to shake off your extreme poverty a little. Grain, cows, calves, pigs, fowl, wheat to sell or to give in payment, these are the things that can reassure you. Dear Mr. Harper's letters have slightly exaggerated the loss resulting from the burning of your little house. He speaks of books that were burned there, and it seems to me that, if you were on the spot before that report, you would surely have mentioned the fact to me, and that it would have been easy to have made some arrangements by that opportunity. I do not know whether you have been well supplied with books by way of England. It may be that they have sent you from there some English-Latin and Latin-English dictionaries, which would hardly suit you. I have opened a correspondence for you at London with a French priest, one of my friends, who is a very obliging man

⁸³ Joseph Rosati was appointed bishop of Tenagra and vicar apostolic of Alabama and Mississippi in 1822. In 1823 he became coadjutor to the Bishop of Louisiana. He administered both the diocese of New Orleans and that of St. Louis from 1826 to 1830, though he was actually in charge of only the see of St. Louis after March 20, 1827. *Dictionary of American Biography*.

and will graciously undertake to fill such orders as you shall address to him, and you will be able to make arrangements that his dispatches shall be accepted by the vessels of the company, the men of whose office know him. You can ask him to draw on me or Mr. Turgeon⁸² for money as long as the subscription which has just been made shall last. He knows personally Mr. Turgeon, who has become in the last few days the agent of the seminary. His address is as follows: Mr. Delaporte, No. 65 Crawford Street, Portman Square, London.

You will see by the enclosed copy of Mr. Halket's last letter that no one is as displeased with you there as you believed.

You have done well not to give titles to the people who have obtained land from you, because, being only a member of the corporation, you must have, in order to act, the power of attorney of the others, which I will try to have prepared for you to be sent between now and next spring. If by the terms of the deed you do not believe yourself able to sell these lands *à constitut*, how can you grant them by perpetual rent, which is not redeemable, since that is a true alienation? In that case would it not be better to grant them by emphyteutic lease for fifty years, at the end of which they would revert to the mission and could be leased out again at a higher price? In the case even of sale at perpetual and nonredeemable rent, would it not be too much to exact two dollars rent for every twenty-five acres? Could you not, again, make a difference between the rent of the lands which are not more than half a league from the church and those that are farther away? Finally, if you could skillfully and quietly ignore the Protestants, would it not be more satisfactory to you to have only Catholic leaseholders?

It would be well for you to ask Mr. Dumoulin to thank the generous and compassionate souls who have contributed to the upkeep of the Red River [mission].

Since you are not overburdened with candidates, I recommend that you educate well and improve the four that you propose to make ecclesiastics. The more solidly they are established in religion and the humanities, the more they will fulfill the purposes which you have for them. As you are young, and your associates also, you can take your time it seems to me.

.
For a very long time I have received no letters from Bishop du Bourg. I doubt that he is following matters with sufficient closeness to know how far his faculties extend. I am assured that he is now living

in New Orleans or near by and that his coadjutor, Bishop Rosati,⁸³ whose episcopal title I do not know, lives in St. Louis in Missouri. Perhaps by writing to the latter you would have better luck. Moreover, when the former residents of Pembina shall have passed a year in good faith north of the forty-ninth parallel, you will have no difficulty in using your faculties in their cases. . . .

I am, etc., etc.,

† J. O., Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, JUNE 12, 1825

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁸⁴

[*Translation*]

St. Boniface, Red River, June 12, 1825.

MY LORD, I received on June 5 your favor of April 18. The one dated August 21, 1824, reached me in February. As usual, I shall reply to both of them just as things come to my mind.

I conferred orders on Mr. Harper on All Saints' Day. He is still carrying on the work of the school and doing well, but it does not produce many hopeful specimens. He preaches with ease and grace and will be capable of doing everything. I certainly did not think that the *extra tempora* were restricted to certain days. Nevertheless, I have reread my faculties, which are not clear in the matter. I have chosen the most solemn occasions for these ordinations. As for All Saints', concerning which I was somewhat doubtful, I thought I recalled having heard Mr. Roupe say that he had been ordained subdeacon on that day in Quebec in 1803, by the late Bishop Denaut. Another time I shall pay careful attention, though I shall perhaps have time to forget in the meanwhile. I do not know how others in the same situation as myself do, but I have had the *Promitto* made to the Bishop of Quebec.

I am still without a girls' school; old man Nolin, whose daughter is burning with a desire to consecrate herself to God, obstinately prevents her. I believe it will be necessary to wait until he dies—he is eighty-three years old—for she is unwilling to grieve him openly. To be quite truthful, she is essential in the house.

Having heard nothing of Mr. Delaporte except by your letter of August, which arrived this winter, I have not yet been able to write him; I shall do so this year.

I have received all that Your Lordship mentions in his letter, to wit, a ring, a seal, some velvet, silk, etc.; I offer you my most humble

⁸⁴ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 100–105.

thanks therefor. The seal, being just between large and small, will suffice without my having to have another one engraved. I have received the power of attorney from all the members of the corporation. I shall continue concessioning the mission lands on the same basis; that is, six dollars annual rent, to be added to the funds. I have already let out all I wish for the present. I shall keep the rest to supply us with wood and to establish farms, one of which has already been on the way since last autumn and will yield some returns this year, if nothing happens to the harvest.

My order for black cloth, books, etc., went to England; I am expecting the things requested this autumn. We are at the end of everything, especially clothing. I no longer remember for whom the solution of the marriage case is that is mentioned in the indult you have sent me; it is probably one of Mr. Dumoulin's cases, who will doubtless come forward again. But it is only a single dispensation, and it might be needed again. I shall dispose of it only to ask it a second time, and forget it as before.

Last year a hogshead of Teneriffe wine came from York, of which I obtained four kegs; the other three will not come until this year. I believe that we shall be able to procure it hereafter without having to send for it expressly.

I shall see that the decree of the Council of Trent is published and that this publication is enregistered, in order to have it for reference afterward.

The draft for seventy-five pounds given to my brother will come in time; I do not know where he is; I have had no news from him this spring. He wrote me from Sault Ste. Marie last autumn, and he did not know then whether he would go to Montreal or Detroit. I have made out a second draft dated May 13 this year, in favor of the Hudson's Bay Company, for £13 9s. 3d. I did not have enough to pay my debts without having recourse to the subscription money. I had some work done on the chapel in order to make it look a little more decent, and manual labor is dear here. God is lodged respectably for the Red River, and we are fairly well so ourselves.

The council of the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company made me a present last year to the amount of about twenty or twenty-five pounds in wine, sugar, tea, chocolate, raisins, etc., accompanied by a very obliging letter from the Governor, in which he told me, among other things, that he would consider it a pleasure to make known to the London committee the important service that the mission is rendering the coun-

try by our indefatigable zeal, etc. He was then about to leave for the Columbia, where he spent the winter. Contrary to every expectation, he arrived here May 29, after a journey of tremendous length. He left once more for York Factory the seventh of this month.⁸⁵

My letter of thanks written a few days before his arrival was presented to him here. I thought he seemed pleased with it. There is actually in process a thing which is an even better indication of his good will, and the execution of which will prove the attitude of the entire council sitting at York: it is his design to have a small annual income set aside for us. To begin with, he is going to propose it at fifty pounds, with the idea of increasing it in following years. It is Mr. Donald Mackenzie, brother to the Mackenzie of Terrebonne,⁸⁶ member of the council, who has wintered here for two years, who entrusted Mr. Destroismaisons with this confidence before his departure from here for Jack River, whence he is to return the last of this month with the canoe from Montreal that will bring our dispatches. All this indicates that we stand pretty well in the minds of those who know us here; I do not know how it is with those in England.

Messrs. Destroismaisons and Harper would like to know if it is the bishop of Quebec or the bishop of the district that should be named in the Mass and elsewhere. *Quid juris*. For myself I name the bishop of Quebec.

I am sincerely grieved at the lack of harmony prevailing in the district of Montreal. The Bishop of Telmessus tells me a little about it. In spite of everything, he hopes to be lodged in his own home this fall; perhaps when it is seen that he is a little more settled he will be let alone. I hope so and pray to God that it may be so. He will doubtless take up the defense of His own work.

From traveling in Europe the Bishop of Resaina brings home the first time a miter, the second a miter to suit him. I hope that God is inspiring him. The clergy of Upper Canada will hardly be the ones to profit; the good Bishop is already too old to begin.

The two scholars on whom I was somewhat basing my hopes last

⁸⁵ For Simpson's own narrative of this period, including considerable information about the colony, see Merk, ed., *Simpson's Journal*.

⁸⁶ Donald Mackenzie was a brother of Roderic Mackenzie and a member of the North West Company. After a business association of some years with John Jacob Astor subsequent to 1809, he re-entered the service of the North West Company, and upon its amalgamation with the Hudson's Bay Company he was put in charge of the new company's post called Chesterfield House. Later, in 1825, he became governor of Assiniboia, a post that he held for eight years. Roderick Mackenzie, "Reminiscences," in Masson, *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*, 1:56; Oliver, ed., *Canadian North-West*, 1:46; Merk, ed., *Simpson's Journal*, 164, 358.

year are hopeless this year; one has been gone since January, the other, though still here, is entirely unfitted for the Church. Those that are coming after them are still young and but little advanced, so that, wanting resources here and not feeling that Mr. Harper can be kept indefinitely in the school, I am addressing myself to Your Lordship for someone for next year to take his place. Perhaps in the meanwhile, before this newcomer is needed elsewhere, I shall be able to train another. I asked the Governor to obtain transportation for this ecclesiastic, who will come under the title of "teacher." He told me there would be no difficulty in the matter; he is to write to the committee in England and request it to make its reply known to Your Lordship during the course of the winter. I hope that it will be in the affirmative; also, I feel that it is necessary that this opportunity should not be missed. For though we may now all be together, we shall probably have to scatter very soon. For besides Pembina, where the people obstinately remain, and which it is a question of re-establishing, there is, at a distance of five leagues from here, a settlement that must be visited, and which will increase perhaps unless Pembina is re-established. In addition to these there is at a distance of seven or eight leagues from this mission (St. Boniface) another settlement that has already asked for a priest's help, at least temporarily, so that Mr. Picard is often obliged to travel about. If Pembina is re-established, a resident priest will be needed there, and he will find plenty of work to do, for the people there are indeed lost since Mr. Dumoulin's departure. It is the intention of the Governor of the colony, Mr. Robert Parker Pelly, that the settlement of Pembina shall be continued this side of the boundary; he even encouraged the residents of the place to remain there this spring. He is going to England this year with the intention of returning next spring by way of Montreal. If he does not meet with insurmountable opposition there, the thing will be carried out successfully. If it does not succeed, protests will be aroused in Pembina. I do not believe that Mr. Halkett will be the first to approve of his plan. It will be necessary in this event to remove the chapel two or three leagues, in order that it may be situated in the midst of a settlement on British territory. Well, let them arrange it. I am not mingling in the affair, nor shall I until it is a sure thing with the executors of the late Lord Selkirk. I suppose that someone will inform you during the course of the winter; at least I shall beg Mr. Pelly to do so before his departure.

The water has risen considerably this year, as has happened some-

times before. It has almost covered the prairies at Pembina and above, and flooded all the houses of the place, not excepting even the chapel, where it has entered to a height of several feet. If nothing had been said of the project of re-establishing or continuing this settlement, this flood together with the shortage of animals that there was during a part of the winter would doubtless have discouraged most of the people; but this news has persuaded even those who had already abandoned it to return, without any assurance other than words, which one word may also destroy in England.

I have also got Governor Simpson to agree that the company will not use rum for trading any more, at least along the Red River, no more than the other small traders to whom the company has abandoned the traffic in this department, providing that they sell to the company their returns, for which it pays a good price. This prohibition will make for both the spiritual and the physical health of both reds and whites.

When I confirmed at Yamachiche, I supposed that my capacity of vicar-general would suffice to exercise a function which I was not then aware required a special authorization on the part of the diocesan bishop. I found this out shortly afterward in Benedict XIV, but the time was past for me to recognize that I had made a mistake.

It is quite true that when Major Long passed through Pembina the people of the place charged him with a petition to the American Congress, but it is entirely false that it was made at our instigation, for not one of us was there; there had never been any question of that; and we did not know of it until long after the Major's visit. I do not know how this petition, of which little was heard here, was conceived.

In vesting himself, ought the bishop, as he puts on the rochet, to say the prayer that the priests say in donning the surplice? Ought the prayer that he says upon receiving the pectoral cross, when he celebrates with pontifical solemnity, to be said every time that he takes it on occasions other than this particular one?

It is unnecessary to tell Your Lordship that some discrimination must be shown in the choice of the young man I am asking you for; he should be capable of teaching privately and in public, capable of appearing in the world without loving it too well, and should give hope of going into the priesthood at a later time. You anticipated my request long ago by telling me that I should not have anyone else from your diocese; I wish I could do without someone. I had hoped somewhat that I could, but I was mistaken in my first hopes and the second

ones will come up too far in the future. I am not losing sight of an instruction that will be suitable for procuring myself an assistant; I make this almost my sole occupation. I am taking means of procuring myself a better livelihood in order to be able to bring up a greater number; and, lastly, I am praying the Lord of the harvest Himself to send some workers to cultivate His vineyard.

I commend myself, together with my little band of clergy and the faithful and the infidels entrusted to my care, to the prayers of Your Lordship, of the religious communities of Quebec, and of the pious souls of every description that concern themselves with the glory of God. I thank all the benefactors of the mission; I pray God each day for them, and in addition I have a High Mass said for this purpose every year. I have received nothing from Mr. Dionne. Is he dead, or did he miss the opportunity [for sending me a letter]? If Your Lordship has occasion to see him, I should be very glad to have him know that I still think of him. Mr. Dumoulin tells me that Mr. Painchaud has had a quarrel in the newspapers with Messrs. Taché of Kamouraska. They are scarcely friends of the clergy, but what do they gain by stirring up such a racket? Perhaps I shall have some more letters on a canoe that has just arrived after the one already here.

I have the honor of being, with most profound respect, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

† J. N., Bishop of Juliopolis.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

BISHOP PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, AUGUST 8, 1825

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁸⁷

[*Translation*]

St. Boniface, August 8, 1825.

MY LORD, I suppose that by now Your Lordship has received my spring letters, because the canoe was to make the trip with all possible haste in order that the dispatches it bore should reach London before the departure of the vessel that leaves the last of August for the Columbia. Mr. Forrest's son and his lady went down by the same canoe, also my former pupil Sénécal.⁸⁸ Victor Chenier, my other pupil, left a week ago to join his father at Pembina. He had decided a long time ago not to become a priest. I had been keeping him to teach him the

⁸⁷ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 106-108.

⁸⁸ The father to whom reference is made was probably Grant Forrest, an accountant. Oliver, ed., *Canadian North-West*, 260.

rules, but finally, seeing that there was nothing to hope for in him, I sent him to learn to earn his living and help his father, who is very poor. I had planned to entrust him with Mr. Harper's school, but he showed more and more that he was not fitted for the work, so everything went up in smoke — another reason for not missing next spring's boat if the passage comes gratis, as I hope it will, according to what Governor Simpson told me. Since I had the privilege of writing you, I have learned that he went to London this fall on company business, and that he is to return by way of Montreal. I have been told that he is planning to return early this spring in order to have time to go to Quebec. I have asked him in a letter written the latter part of last month to make Your Lordship's acquaintance, and I am sure that if he goes to Quebec he will not fail to do so. He is a very intelligent and amiable man. The Governor of the colony has also left to take his family to England; he says he will return by way of Montreal too, but here it is hardly believed that he will. Probably Mr. Simpson will bring with him the ecclesiastic I am asking Your Lordship to send out.

Mr. Pelly left with the intention of interesting himself in the re-establishment of Pembina; if he were to succeed, I should not be one to regret, for the sake of the souls who live there and who are in a serious state of degeneration. On the other hand, the great distance from here would make it very difficult for the priest residing there. There are as many people there as there were in Mr. Dumoulin's time, or nearly as many — people who run the prairies and who have all the vices that this lazy mode of life induces. A priest in their midst would keep them there, and would persuade them to settle down and farm, and above all would improve their morals. I have asked God, Who looks on from afar, to incline the hearts in England for His glory. I have begged Mr. Pelly and Mr. Simpson to see that Your Lordship is informed what is decided during the course of the winter, as well as the matter of the transportation of a teacher. I think I have already observed to Your Lordship that some discrimination must be shown in choosing whoever is sent. If, together with his other qualities, he had a voice and knew how, or at least could be taught, to sing, it would be an excellent thing for us here. Mr. Harper is not very gifted in this respect. May Your Lordship not regard as lost a person of promise sent here; it is a question of establishing the faith, etc. In Canada it is necessary only to maintain it.

Mr. Picard went on a mission a few days ago among the Indians of the place, who spend the summer at the mouth of this river; he did

not accomplish much, but was listened to. With the aid of an interpreter he explained the principal truths of the Church, sang the canticles for them, and promised them a second visit, to which they agreed.

I spoke to you in my first letter of the disclosure that Mr. Mackenzie had made to Mr. Picard with regard to his plan of having the company give us annually the sum of fifty pounds. He has never mentioned the matter since that time, although the occasion for it has seemed to present itself. Perhaps he wishes to leave to the Governor the pleasure of announcing it in the name of the Council of York.⁸⁹ He sent word to me (in July) by Mr. Nolin, who was leaving for the Bay, that we would receive fifty pounds annually, in addition to the gift I received last year.

I have written to Mr. Delaporte; I did not ask him for any black material, because, if my last year's order has been filled (I am asking him to find out about it from Mr. Smith), I shall have enough for two years. I am asking him for a missal in quarto, the *School of Manners*, some material for alb ends, and some red and white wool moire for some chasubles, a cape, etc. Another year, if my finances are in better condition, I shall order more.

Last week a man by the name of Dickson⁹⁰ arrived here from St. Louis on the Missouri with some cows he wants to sell. I doubt if he will be able to sell them for much this year because of the shortage of money. It might be that I would buy a few of them, if they are cheap, by drawing a draft on Mr. Demers. I have twenty-five pounds coming from Mass fees in Mr. Dumoulin's possession, as well as others that will be coming from here next year. I have asked him to add this money to that already deposited at the seminary. I speak of the matter so that if the draft comes it will not be a surprise. I should have liked to know whether I could count on the fifty pounds from the company, but I do not wish to appear too eager. This information would make me free to buy some animals, of which I should like to have a goodly number in order to be able to do without wild provisions, which are not much to the taste, and which are nevertheless expensive.

The harvest appears good; they are cutting the barley this month. The wheat is ripening well, but there is still a large quantity of rust this year in spots. Mr. Donald Mackenzie is charged with the affairs of the company and of the colony from now until spring. I shall need

⁸⁹ See the extract from the minutes of council held at York Factory on July 2, 1825, *post*, p. 437.

⁹⁰ Probably this was William Dickson, the son of Robert Dickson.

two or three trimmings of purple buttons, and at least one of red, also some cross-bearers, which I asked for last year, but which were forgotten. Your Lordship might transmit this charge or order to Mr. Fortier, who will make it his duty to think of it in time.

This year our people are building a house forty by twenty-seven feet to serve as a public meeting place and school. My school mistress is still waiting and awaited. Some hardship was experienced in securing a livelihood this summer, but now the freemen have returned from the hunt, and have brought an abundance.

My brother Simon spent the winter and also the summer at Sault Ste. Marie. He is to leave in September. It will be upon his arrival at Montreal that he will doubtless present to Mr. Demers the draft, dated July 9, 1824, for £75. He had another dated June 25 for £49. The company had one of May 13 for £31 9s. 3d. (£155 9s. 3d.). This is the extent of the deductions from Mr. Dumoulin's subscription aside from the amount that will have been asked for from England; there will not be a very large sum left over this spring. The Sioux have not shown themselves for two years. The men who run the prairies can very well do without their visits.

This letter, containing nothing in particular, might be communicated to Mr. Dumoulin, who will read it with pleasure. I have nothing further to say to him unless it is that his friend Mr. Augustin Nolin has had a son since he wrote him, as he told Mr. Dumoulin he would have by the time the latter received the letter. Mr. Nolin left a few days ago for the Bay. He was given to hope that he would have the post of Pembina to himself this year, which would be of benefit to him. The rest of the family are well.

I commend myself to your Holy Sacrifices, and have the honor of being, with most profound respect, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

† J. N., Bishop of Juliopolis.

His Lordship the Bishop of Quebec.

BISHOP PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PLESSIS, FEBRUARY 2 AND 3, 1826

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁹¹

[*Translation*]

St. Boniface, Red River, February 2, 1826.

MY LORD, Here is an opportunity for Montreal that I was not expecting this winter, but which I shall not allow to pass without writing

⁹¹ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 109-113.

to Your Lordship. It is Captain Franklin of the Royal Marine who came up last spring to try to discover a passage between the new world and the old, who has sent an express from the far North to carry his dispatches to England.⁹² This man, named Fagoran, after having been on the way since the middle of August, has come only thus far. He will reach Montreal, I think, before the departure of the canoes for the Red River.

Since my last letter I have received by the last opportunities from York Factory a letter from Mr. Delaporte, in which he sends me a good number of classical volumes requested by Your Lordship, and in addition a piece of black cloth of an excellent quality, together with some summer material and some black, red, and purple velvet, all without any bill, which he doubtless sent to Quebec. I also received, in reply to my request to Mr. Simpson, which he transmitted to the committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, some dictionaries, primers, and two pieces of black material of summer weight, so that we now have enough to last for two or three years, at least for the summers. The material is of too fine a quality for everyday wear in this country, where one is seldom subject to formal visits, but only one piece came.

I wrote to Mr. Delaporte, but before having received anything from him. I asked him for some books and the same things, or as nearly the same, as last year, if by any chance my order had not been filled; in case it had, however, I requested him not to send anything, because what I had asked for could do for two years. I referred it to Mr. Smith, the secretary of the committee, so that if both my order and yours have been filled, I shall expect but little this year. I do not know how we stand financially after all these expenditures. I shall probably be obliged to give the company a note again this spring. Your Lordship might add to the account of the mission (Mr. Dumoulin's subscription, of which I have never known the amount) the returns from five hundred Masses, which always amount to a considerable sum in the curacy of Quebec, and let me know by the spring canoes. Up until now I have asked Mr. Dumoulin for them, but the thing can be more easily done at Quebec. This spring there will be a thousand to be paid. This is, I think, all that I have asked in my letters.

I have spoken to Your Lordship about Governor Simpson's project of having the sum of fifty pounds given to the mission annually. The

⁹² This was Captain John Franklin's second expedition to the arctic coast of North America, his first trip having been made in 1819-22.

resolution for it was passed by the Council of York and sent to England for approval. I do not know whether they will decide otherwise there. In sending it to me the Governor accompanied it with a most courteous and obliging letter. He is quite astonished that we should be accomplishing so much good (God does not judge likewise) with so little means, whereas their ministers with so much money do nothing. This is what was reported to me by a member of the company to whom he had made this remark. He had quarreled with the minister, to whom he had written very harshly, according to Mr. Mackenzie, who himself is not very fond of him. There are two of them [*ministers*] at present, but I think one will be leaving this spring.⁹³ I have received the same gift this year as last, and it is included in the resolution of the council, of which I am sending you a copy. Fifty pounds and "luxuries" in addition to this sum will give us a little more freedom in our work, especially as far as clothing is concerned. Counting on this money, after what Mr. Mackenzie had told me, I bought some ten cows from the Americans at four pounds, some of which I have kept for the house and others I have rented out. Mr. Destroismaisons speaks of all this to Mr. Dumoulin in his letter, which I am sending unsealed to Your Lordship.

[*In English:*] Extract from the minutes of the council held at York Factory, July 2, 1825:

Great benefit being experienced from the benevolent and indefatigable exertions of the catholic mission at Red River in the welfare and moral and religious instruction of its numerous followers, and it being observed with much satisfaction that the influence of the mission under the direction of the Right Rev. the bishop of Juliopolis has been uniformly directed to the best interests of the settlement and of the country at large, it is

⁹³ The Church Missionary Society made the Red River one of its missionary stations in 1822 and sent out the Reverend David Jones in 1823 and the Reverend and Mrs. William Cochran in 1825. The excellent Indian school established by West was maintained, and Indians attended it from such distant regions as the Columbia River Valley. Some of the western pupils on returning to their homes evangelized their own people to some extent, and it is likely that from these people came the call of the western tribes for missionaries that reached St. Louis in the thirties. Answering the call were such men as Jason Lee, Marcus Whitman, and Henry Spalding, who planted the Oregon missions and prepared the way for the settlement and ultimate winning of that region by Americans. For accounts of the labors of Jones, Cochran, Abraham Cowley, John Smithurst, and others among the Indians of the Red River settlement and its vicinity, see S. Tucker, *The Rainbow in the North* (London, 1852); William Bertal Heeney, *John West and His Red River Mission* (Toronto, 1920); George J. Mountain, *The Journal of the Bishop of Montreal during a Visit to the Church Missionary Society's North-West America Mission* (London, 1845); Gustav E. Burkhardt, *Die evangelische Mission unter den Indianern in Nord- und Süd-Amerika* (Leipzig, 1876); Johann S. Sondermann, *Die Mission der Kirchlichen Missionsgesellschaft in England unter den heidnischen Indianern des nordwestlichen America* (Nürnberg, 1847); and the organs of the Church Missionary Society, such as the *Church Missionary Record*, the *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, and the *Missionary Register*.

Resolved 9th, that in order to mark our approbation of such laudable and disinterested conduct on the part of said mission, it be recommended to the honble Committee that a stipend of £50 p. annum be given toward its support, and that an allowance of luxuries be annually furnished for its use from the Depot.

I believe that Your Lordship is now better informed of the result of this action on the part of the Council of York in England as well as of other requests I made to the Governor with regard to the settlement of Pembina and the transportation of an ecclesiastic, to which he replied to me before his departure for London in as satisfactory a manner as he was able, promising me to inform Your Lordship of it during the course of the winter. But I have since found out that it was his intention to be in Canada before Christmas, to visit Montreal, Three Rivers, and Quebec, where the company has offices, then to leave in order to reach the Red River in March; to go to York over the snow, and leave for the Columbia by the first canoes. I do not know whether all this plan will be carried out, but I shall not be surprised if it is, for he is an indefatigable traveler. As I had asked him to visit Your Lordship, if he went to Quebec, this is the reply he made:

[*In English:*] "In the course of my visiting Quebec on my way from England next season I shall unquestionably do myself the honor of waiting on his lordship the Bishop of Quebec to express to him the great and important benefits which your numerous followers derive from the most worthy exertions of the catholic mission." As for the transportation of an ecclesiastic, he says that he has no doubt but that the committee in England will be disposed to confirm my wishes. Thus I am waiting to know the outcome either from the Governor this winter or by the first canoes in June. May God grant that all may work out for His glory and for the greatest good.

This autumn I made the trip to Pembina in the hope of having better success in persuading old Nolin to consent to the departure of his daughter, but I took the trouble for nothing. We shall have to wait until it may please God to take the old man from this world. He has all sorts of petty excuses, but above all he does not wish that his daughter should be a servant. It is certainly not the status that I wish to give her.

Our school is still going, but there are few pupils. Our Canadians and the other Catholics are so poor that it would be necessary to make expenditures beyond our means in order to get children. All these folk are too dependent on the prairie for their livelihood, which keeps

them from planting as much as they ought, and upon the store to clothe them, with the result that the women, knowing nothing about cloth-making and the other things that serve to clothe, take but little trouble to learn. This winter I began to have our farmer's wife, who is a Canadian, teach the girls of the school to work the flax and wool, in order that they might inspire in others the idea and desire to do so. They are succeeding fairly well. I had only a little flax this year, but I am going to have some planted and get the others to do likewise; it grows well here. In place of sheep's wool they make cloth out of buffalo hair here; but they lack instruments, principally cards, which I am told are contraband articles in England; that is, it is prohibited to send them out of the country. If there were some way to have them sent from Canada, it would be quicker and easier. Perhaps this letter will arrive in time to have some sent out in the company's canoes, as many as they are willing to bring. I do not know if all these temporal matters enter into the designs of God. I should perhaps think otherwise anywhere else than here; but I think that if the mission does not start the thing going, no one will take the trouble, and poverty will increase continually. What do you think?

Red River, February 3, 1826.

Mr. Destroismaisons is just now at Whitehorse Plain, five leagues away, on a mission. It is a post where he goes from time to time. He spent three or four weeks at Bas de la Rivière, where Mr. John McDonald (the one who is blind in one eye) is quite dangerously ill. He was to come here to find help from a doctor, but he has not yet arrived. He is a Catholic and numbers among our friends, indeed among our benefactors. A part of his family is in Upper Canada, at St. Raphael, and I think that two of his daughters are in the school of Rivière du Chaine. He is a relative, I believe, or a great friend of the Bishop of Resaina (if he has no other title). But here is already too much concerning a man you do not know, but of whom you will perhaps have occasion to speak to his friends, who are all old North Westers. The doctor made a trip to see him, and cut off the finger next to the index finger of the right hand, the disease of which was threatening to gangrene the whole arm.

I do not know what will be decided with regard to the re-establishment of Pembina, but I should prefer that Mr. Halkett's plan be followed, because the post is too distant and is generally flooded in years of high water, which is not the case either here or at Whitehorse Plain. I believe that the hardships that the prairie people are

enduring at this time and the general loss of their horses are going to force them to settle down and farm in spite of their sloth and laziness. This will contribute greatly to their moral welfare, wherein they are very backward.

We now have a windmill built by the colony and sold to an individual. In the contract of sale it was provided that he would take the toll as in Canada, on the terms laid down by the priests of the Catholic mission. I was informed of the matter only after it was too late to send to Canada to find out what the regulations are there. In the meanwhile he is exacting the tenth part, which I believe to be too much; but I have been unable to say anything because I was not sure. I should be very glad to have a copy of this regulation in order to have proof.

The winter began early and has been very harsh both with stormy weather and cold. Forage for the animals, though abundant in our immense prairies, is almost as scarce, because of the lack of foresight, as food for the people. Our habitants generally are but little versed in a manner of living which they did not practice in their youth. Experience will teach them in time. We shall need to have spring by Easter time in order that the animals may get their livelihood from the earth and the men secure theirs from the water.

Your Lordship will no doubt have received since your last letters some replies from Rome, which you will be good enough to share with me. I should be happy indeed to learn that the dissensions have come to an end in Montreal. I suppose that the Bishop of Telmessus is now established at his new St. James Church.⁹⁴ Surely there they will leave him more at peace, or else a greater effort would have been made to prevent him from establishing himself in a city from which they would have desired to keep him at a good distance. How is the new church of Montreal progressing? Are the sentiments of the clergy still divided over it? Mr. Harper continues to enjoy good health; he is writing to his family.

I commend myself as well as the whole mission to Your Lordship's prayers, and to those of all the good souls of Quebec. I hope that you have kept your health this year.

I have the honor of being, with most profound respect, My Lord,
Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

† J. N., Bishop of Juliopolis.

His Lordship J. O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

⁹⁴ See *ante*, p. 421, and note.

BISHOP PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PANET, JULY 15, 1826

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]

MONSEIGNEUR,/ Depuis mes dernières lettres de l'année dernière, il s'est opéré des changemens dans le diocèse de Québec que j'étois bien loin de penser.⁹⁵ Quoiqu'on ne doive jamais beaucoup compter sur la stabilité des choses humaines, j'espérois au moins que ces changemens ne se feroient pas sitôt. Mais enfin il faut adorer la Providence qui agit toujours en tout avec une sagesse au-dessus de notre portée. Je n'ose vous féliciter et vous complimenter sur votre exaltation sur le siège de Québec, quoique votre prédécesseur vous l'ait laissé plus brillant que jamais. A votre âge on ne doit guère être affamé d'honneur et encore moins des charges qui les accompagnent. Je crois bien que vous aimeriez mieux le repos de la Rivière-Ouelle, mais malgré cela j'espère que vous tiendrez par vous-même le timon des affaires le plus longtems que vous pourrez. Je suis bien réjoui d'apprendre par Mgr de Telmesse que votre grandeur soutient de toute son autorité les institutions de son prédécesseur; je crois que l'on peut marcher sur ses traces sans craindre de s'égarer.

J'ai reçu par Mgr de Telmesse, mais comme venant de votre grandeur, votre mandement d'entrée, la décision des cinq cas proposés en cour de Rome il y a déjà plusieurs années, un petit bref pour bénir des médailles; mais je n'ai point reçu de votre part communication des pouvoirs extraordinaires en vingt-neuf articles que je ne tenois de feu Monseigneur que comme délégué; ils devoient aller jusqu'en 1829. Je pense que vous en avez ou aurez avant l'année prochaine d'une date plus récente et qui vous seront communs avec vos suffragans. Enfin si vous avez quelque chose qui puisse m'intéresser je vous prie de m'en faire part.

Notre Rivière Rouge n'est pas trop en ordre cette année. la disette s'est fait sentir cet hiver parce que la chasse a manqué totalement dans la prairie. L'hiver a été très long et très sévère; la glace n'est partie que le cinq de mai, elle étoit encore à cette saison aussi verte qu'en janvier; elle a rasé une bonne moitié des maisons. La grande abondance de neige a causé une inondation comme jamais personne n'en a vu en ce pays. Tous les bords de notre rivière ont été noyés; nous nous sommes sauvés sur les hauteurs où il a fallu aussi transporter les animaux. Je pense que l'eau s'est élevée 30 ou 40 pieds au-dessus du niveau de l'eau basse; elle a enlevé presque le reste des maisons; elle a monté cinq pieds dans la nôtre et dans notre chapelle, et y a causé beaucoup de dom-

⁹⁵ Bishop Provencher is referring to Bishop Plessis' death in 1825.

mages. Nous avons été deux mois sans dire la messe, excepté les dimanches, et un mois hors de notre maison, nous n'y sommes rentrés que vers le quinze de juin. C'est alors que nous avons pu semer de l'orge; il s'est semé très peu de bled, de sorte qu'il y a à craindre la disette, surtout si la chasse manque.⁹⁶

J'ai réitéré à Mr Simpson gouverneur de la compagnie ma demande pour le passage d'un ecclésiastique. il doit hiverner à Montréal. il m'a dit qu'il donneroit le passage s'il n'y avoit pas plus de trois passagers sur le canot. Je vous prie de vous intéresser à ce passage. Probablement que je vous donnerai en échange Mr Destroismaisons dont je pourrai me passer en attendant que le nouveau venu soit ordonné. Notre colonie a perdu à peu près 250 âmes en Suisses Meurons et autres; ils quittent le pays effrayés par les accidents de cette année. J'avois demandé par ma lettre de cet hiver un envoi de cardes; comme il a manqué cette année, il ne faut pas en envoyer, on en aura en Angleterre à meilleur marché. J'avois demandé aussi cinq cents messes dont les rétributions devoient être ajoutées à l'argent de la mission au Séminaire; je me charge encore de les acquitter.

Je vois avec plaisir que Mgr de Telmesse est enfin logé chez lui. Je souhaite que les troubles qui ont agité la fin de l'épiscopat de votre digne prédécesseur se terminent enfin pour la grande gloire de Dieu et l'édification des fidèles.

Je me recommande ainsi que mon petit clergé et mes ouailles à vos ferventes prières et suis dans l'union de vos SS. sacrifices et bonnes oeuvres, Monseigneur, de votre grandeur le très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

† J. N. Ev. de Juliopolis.

St Boniface de la R.R./ 15 juillet 1826.

A Monseigneur B. C. Panet, Evêque de Québec, / à Québec.

[*Translation*]

MY LORD, Since my last letters of last year there have taken place in the diocese of Quebec changes that I was very far from expecting.⁹⁵ Even though one ought never to count on the stability of things human, I was at least hoping that these changes would not come about so soon. But all the same one must adore the Providence that acts always and in all things with a wisdom that surpasses our understanding. I dare not congratulate you upon your promotion to the see of Quebec, though your predecessor has left it to you more prosperous than ever.

⁹⁶ The flood of the Red River in 1826 was probably the worst in historic times.

At your age one scarcely yearns for honors and still less the cares that accompany them. I am sure that you would prefer the repose of Rivière Ouelle, but in spite of this I hope that you will hold the helm in your own hands as long as you can. I am very happy to learn through the Bishop of Telmessus that Your Lordship is upholding with all his authority the institutions of his predecessor; I believe that one may follow in his footsteps without fear of going astray.

I received from the Bishop of Telmessus, but as though coming from Your Lordship, your entry charge, the decision to the five cases submitted to Rome several years ago, and a short brief for the blessing of the medals; but I have not received from you communication of the extraordinary faculties in twenty-nine articles which I held from the late Bishop only by delegation; they were to be valid until 1829. I suppose that you have, or will have before next year, some of more recent date, which you will have in common with your suffragans. Finally, if you have anything that you think might interest me, I beg of you to let me know of it.

Our Red River is not in very good condition this year. Famine made itself felt this winter because the hunt on the prairie was a complete failure. The winter was very long and very severe; the ice did not break up until May 5; it was, indeed, at that season as strong as in January. It demolished a good half of the houses. The great abundance of snow caused a flood the like of which has never been seen in the region. All the banks of our river overflowed, and we were obliged to take refuge with our animals in the high places. I believe that the water rose thirty or forty feet above the low-water mark. Almost all the rest of the houses were carried away. It rose five feet in ours and in our chapel, and caused a great deal of damage. We were two months without saying Mass except on Sundays, and one month out of our house, to which we did not return until about June 15. It was then that we were able to plant barley; but little wheat was sown, so that famine is to be feared, especially if the hunt fails.⁹⁶

I have repeated to Mr. Simpson, the company governor, my request for the transportation of an ecclesiastic. He is to spend the winter in Montreal. He told me that he would grant the passage if there are not more than three passengers in the canoe. I beg of you to interest yourself in this trip. Probably in exchange I shall give you Mr. Desroismaisons, whom I can do without while waiting for the newcomer to be ordained. Our colony has lost about two hundred and fifty souls in Swiss Meurons and others; they are fleeing the country, being

frightened away by the accidents of this year. In this winter's letter I had requested a shipment of cards. As they have not come this year, it is not necessary to send them, for it will be possible to get them cheaper in England. I had also asked for five hundred Masses, the returns from which were to be added to the money of the mission at the Seminary; I will once more undertake to pay for them.

I see with satisfaction that the Bishop of Telmessus is at last lodged in his own home. I hope that the anxieties which agitated the close of the episcopate of your worthy predecessor may be at an end at last to the great glory of God and the edification of the faithful.

I commend myself as well as my little group of clergy and my flock to your fervent prayers, and remain, in the union of your Holy Sacrifices and good works, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

† J. N., Bishop of Juliopolis.

St. Boniface, Red River, July 15, 1826.

His Lordship B. C. Panet, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

BISHOP PROVENCHER TO BISHOP PANET, JANUARY 31, 1827

[Quebec Archiepiscopal Archives. ALS]⁹⁷

[*Translation*]

St. Boniface, Red River, January 31, 1827.

MY LORD, An opportunity presents itself for Montreal, which I shall not allow to pass without giving a sign of life. This opportunity is offered by a canoe bearing dispatches from Captain Franklin, who for the past two years has been on an exploring expedition in the North. He was trying to discover a passage to return by way of Russia. It appears that he has not succeeded, at least not in the latter point. I shall not undertake to go into great detail in this letter because it will not arrive in time to receive a reply by the spring canoe. Your Lordship will doubtless have received a letter sent last winter by an opportunity similar to this one, which I thought should arrive before the departure of Governor Simpson, but it did not.

I did not receive your favor of April 19, 1826, until last December 22; it had missed the only opportunity there was in May, and it was a happy chance that it found another. Your letter was accompanied by faculties of vicar-general granted to me, an indult from the Court of Rome, and the will of the late Bishop of Quebec. By the spring canoe I received some decisions of cases submitted to the Court of Rome sev-

⁹⁷ The French text of this letter is printed in Provencher, *Lettres*, 115-117.

eral years ago. The Bishop of Telmessus had addressed them to me with your inaugural charge, an indult for the blessing of rosaries, etc. All these things were sent me as though coming from Your Lordship, which circumstance led me to believe that you had not written. I was very much astonished at this, as I may perhaps have shown you in my last summer's letter. But I see with pleasure that Your Lordship had attended to everything, not only the necessary things, but also those which were only for mere satisfaction, such as the details concerning the death of the venerable Bishop of Quebec, the copy of his will, and other minor matters that might have been omitted without one's having grounds for complaint. I beg Your Lordship to accept my most sincere thanks for all these marks of consideration for me.

By the same conveyance I received letters from Mr. Raimbault and Mr. Cadieux, both of whom give me details concerning different matters of which I was ignorant—if not totally, at least as to such extensive detail. They will have been surprised perhaps that I did not reply, a thing which I still have not done for lack of time.

I have not received any reply from Mr. Delaporte to my last year's letter; but I have lately learned that there is a box addressed to me from England at New York. I suppose that it contains the things I had asked for in my letter; that is, some material (woolen moire) for the vestments of which our chapel is so sadly in need, especially since they were all in the water last spring. We hope not to have such a flood this year; there is not so much snow, and the winter is much milder.

Our colony is not living any too well this winter, for there was practically no harvest. Most of the people have been compelled to emigrate to fishing grounds, for the buffalo hunt has failed completely this winter, after having yielded fairly well during the summer. I hope no one will die of hunger. As for ourselves, we are fairly well supplied.

During the Christmas holidays Mr. Destroismaisons went on a mission some twenty leagues distant from here on a lake (Manitoba) where a certain number of our colonists had gone to spend the winter. Mr. Harper left at the same time (the week before Christmas) for Pembina and well beyond (Grand Forks), where a greater number of our people are. He has not yet returned. He may not be back before February 15; this is a reason for his not writing to his family.

This spring I am expecting an ecclesiastic. I am not any too sure of his transportation, but I shall probably see about it before Your Lordship receives this.

I am troubled about the people of Pembina, which is on American soil, and reputed to belong to the diocese of the Bishop of Louisiana. I am his vicar-general without knowing of what his faculties consist. I suppose that he has the indult of twenty-nine articles, but that is not enough. I shall [need] some of the faculties that you communicated to me this year and that he probably does not possess, at least not the power of delegating them. Many things are languishing in this corner for want of faculties. Would it not be possible to ask the Court of Rome to extend the faculties that I have or shall have eventually to apply to this part of the diocese of Bishop du Bourg, with his consent, which would not, I believe, be difficult to obtain; but it must be done by way of Canada because communication is not easy this way.

I commend myself together with my small clergy and my flock to your prayers and Holy Sacrifices, and remain, with the most profound respect, My Lord, Your Lordship's very humble and very obedient servant,

† J. N., Bishop of Juliopolis.

His Lordship B. Cl. Panet, Bishop of Quebec, Quebec.

Glossary

- Bastard canoe.* A canoe midway in size between a Montreal canoe and a north canoe.
- Bois brûlés.* Half-breeds. Synonymous with *métis*.
- Bourgeois.* A partner, or investor, in a fur-trading company.
- Bouts de canot.* The two paddlers at either end of a canoe. The *devant du canot* stood in the bow, ready to guide the canoe through dangerous waters, and the *gouvernail*, in the stern.
- Canadians.* A colloquial expression for French-Canadian freemen in the fur trade.
- Canot du maître.* See *Montreal canoe*.
- Cases of conscience.* Problems in the application of Church law to specific, individual human problems.
- Comers and goers.* A colloquial term translated from a French expression meaning, in the fur trade, the rank and file of unskilled *voyageurs*.
- Componenda.* Fines collected by the Church from penitents and used for charitable purposes.
- Devant du canot.* See *Bouts de canot*.
- Engagés.* A general term embracing all the employees of a fur-trading company below the rank of clerks, and including *milieux*, guides, *bouts*, and often interpreters.
- Express.* A special conveyance carrying dispatches. Usually a light, or unfreighted, canoe; sometimes a dog team carrying only a messenger and his personal equipment besides the dispatches.
- Freemen.* Men engaged in the fur trade who were not employed by any fur-trading organization.
- Goers.* See *Comers and goers*.
- Métis.* See *Bois brûlés*.
- Milieux.* Unskilled canoemen who sat in the middle of the canoe, unconcerned with steering it.

Montreal canoe. Synonymous with *Canot du maître*. A large canoe capable of carrying merchandise and men on the Great Lakes.

North canoe. A canoe smaller than a Montreal canoe and used, not on the Great Lakes, but on the smaller lakes of the hinterland and on rivers and smaller streams.

Pièces. The packs as made up to weigh ninety pounds for efficient carriage by canoes in the fur trade.

Pork-eater. An unskilled *voyageur*, especially one who did not winter in the fur country, but helped paddle canoes between Montreal and some post from which he could return the same summer.

Voyageurs. Canoemen in the fur trade.

Winterers. Employees of fur-trading companies, who acted not only as canoemen, but also as laborers at wintering posts.

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