

nesses, we included certain ambassadors, we had decided in advance not to call them. Our boldness has provoked smiles. But I do not think that there was any real smiling in our Foreign Office, for there they must have understood! We intended to say to those who know the whole truth that we also know it. This truth is gossiped about at the embassies; to-morrow it will be known to all, and, if it is now impossible for us to seek it where it is concealed by official red tape, the government which is not ignorant—the government which is convinced as we are—of the innocence of Dreyfus, will be able, whenever it likes and without risk, to find witnesses who will demonstrate everything.

Dreyfus is innocent. I swear it! I stake my life on it—my honor! At this solemn moment, in the presence of this tribunal which is the representative of human justice, before you, gentlemen, who are the very incarnation of the country, before the whole of France, before the whole world, I swear that Dreyfus is innocent. By my forty years of work, by the authority that this toil may have given me, I swear that Dreyfus is innocent. By all I have now, by the name I have made for myself, by my works which have helped for the expansion of French literature, I swear that Dreyfus is innocent. May all that melt away, may my works perish if Dreyfus be not innocent! He is innocent. All seems against me—the two Chambers, the civil authority, the most widely-circulated journals, the public opinion which they have poisoned. And I have for me only an ideal of truth and justice. But I am quite calm; I shall conquer. I was determined that my country should not remain the victim of lies and injustice. I may be condemned here. The day will come when France will thank me for having helped to save her honor.

SIR ADOLPHE CHAPLEAU



HON. SIR JOSEPH ADOLPHE CHAPLEAU, K.C.M.G., LL.D., an eminent Canadian politician and orator, was born at Ste. Thérèse de Blainville, Terrebonne Co., Quebec, Nov. 9, 1840, and died at Montreal, June 13, 1898. He was called to the Bar in 1861, and practiced at Montreal, being made a queen's counsel by Lord Dufferin in 1873. In 1867, at the Confederation of the Provinces, he entered the Quebec legislature as member for Terrebonne; became solicitor-general in the Ouimet administration, in February, 1873; and was subsequently Provincial Secretary under M. de Boucherville, January, 1875. This position he retained until March, 1878, when Lieutenant-governor Letellier de St. Just dismissed the ministry. Sir Adolphe was then chosen leader of the Conservative Opposition in the Quebec Assembly, and acted as such up to the period of his appointment as Provincial Premier in October, 1879. In July, 1882, he exchanged places with the late M. Mousseau, who was then Secretary of State at Ottawa. After Sir John A. Macdonald's death, in June, 1891, Sir Adolphe continued in the Abbott ministry, first as secretary of state, and afterwards, for a short time, as minister of customs. He was appointed to the office of Lieutenant-governor of the Province of Quebec in December, 1892, a position he held until February, 1898, when he retired, being replaced by the Hon. Judge Jetté. In 1884, he served as a commissioner for the purpose of investigating into and reporting on the subject of Chinese immigration into Canada. In 1881, Sir Adolphe received at Rome the decoration of St. Gregory the Great, and in 1882 was made a member of the Legion of Honor of France.

THE EXECUTION OF RIEL

SPEECH BEFORE THE CANADIAN HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 11, 1886

MR. SPEAKER,—A newspaper having announced last evening, that I had become suddenly a penitent, that I was very near abjuring the errors which, with my colleagues in the government, I had been suffering under of late, and that I was, in the near future, going to bid adieu to political life—I only wish that could be true—and that I would retire repenting; and as the paper wished I should employ the last days of my life in prayer, so as to be forgiven by God and man, I thought I would take this first opportunity of making my last confession of the great crime of which I

have been accused during several months past, and I hope I shall make it as plain, as complete, as full as possible, so as to satisfy both friends and foes.

I do not know, Mr. Speaker, whether I can do justice to this debate. I know it is, perhaps, out of place for me to apologize for not speaking in the language which is my mother tongue; but every time I rise in this House, every time I have to express what I feel deeply and vividly in my heart, I have to express it in a language which is not my own, I think it is necessary for me to apologize; for the English language, that has taught the world the great lessons of liberty, does not give me that full freedom of expression which I would have in my own language.

What a change a year can make in the ideas of men, in the feelings of men! What differences do we remark when we look over the proceedings of last session, as I did yesterday! Read over "Hansard" and compare dates with this year. The 19th of March last year, St. Joseph's Day, the day named after that great saint whose name is synonymous with fidelity and loyalty, was chosen by Louis Riel for the outbreak of his rebellion in the Northwest. On the 19th of March Louis Riel inaugurated his revolt, in acts, in his official declaration, in his open opposition to both civil and spiritual power in the Northwest.

On the following days the rebellion was in full blast, and the day after to-morrow will be the anniversary of one of the sad events of our history—the anniversary of the Duck Lake fight—when some of our bravest soldiers, some of the good men of the Northwest, fell under the bullets of traitors and rebels, led by Louis Riel, fell victims to the treachery of a criminal band, who, after destroying government property, after ransacking and plundering the stores of industrious

citizens, after having seized and taken prisoners the men who were doing their duty under the laws of their country, in the protection of the Canadian and the British flag, had torn down the flag of her Majesty and had begun that rebellion of which I hope we will have to-day the last recollection. I hope that the memories of men will not recollect it, after we have done our duty to-day and said that the country cannot countenance those who would like this House—representing the interests, the desires, and the wishes of the people,—to say that that event was one which would be excusable and justifiable in the eyes of true Canadians.

We all remember the feeling that pervaded this House when, on the 22d, 23d, and 24th of March, the news arrived that really a rebellion was existing in the Northwest, and that the agitation which had begun many months before had taken the form of an open revolt. We remember the feeling that existed in this House.

It is true that then, as since the beginning of this session, some gentlemen on the other side, exercising their rights as members of Parliament, had been asking for information, had been clamoring for papers, but still the House went on with the performance of its duties until the day we heard the sound of rebellion, and learned that the sons of Canada, at the call of the government, had to go up and fight that revolt.

Sir, when the news of the Duck Lake fight arrived, there was not one man to be found here who would not have said frankly and openly that those who had commenced that rebellion, those men who were ignoring the laws of the country and rebelling against them, were deserving the severest punishment of the law.

I remember a few days later, when a newspaper in Ontario had had the audacity, as it was then styled, to say that my

honorable friend sitting on our left had been actually giving countenance to the rebellion, that he had been aiding the conspirators against the peace and integrity of the country, that the honorable members sitting on that side of the House were accomplices of those in the Northwest who were trying to take those large territories away from their allegiance to our Sovereign, I remember what took place in this House.

I remember seeing the honorable leader of the Opposition rising in his seat, his features altered, trembling with emotion and saying, with tears in his voice, that there never was such a slanderous insinuation cast upon him and his party as to say that he and they might be called accomplices or even sympathizers with the rebellion in the Northwest. We all remember the honorable member for West Durham [Mr. Blake] stating that he had a relation whose blood had already stained the snow of the prairies, that he had a nephew whose life was in danger, that his son and his brother's son were ready to shoulder their muskets and go to the Saskatchewan and fight against those who wanted to commit that attempt against the liberties of the empire and the good name of the people of Canada.

At that time we responded to the expression of those feelings; and I remember the right honorable Premier in this House getting up in his seat and saying that whatever differences of opinion there might be between him and honorable gentlemen opposite, he thought the article in question was an ill-advised one—that we all here in this House sympathized together in supporting the laws of our Dominion, and keeping in its integrity the fine country which we are now administering to the glory of those who acquired it, and the glory of the Sovereign who rules over us.

Who would have said then a word of justification of that criminal band that was beginning a rebellion on the shores of the Saskatchewan? Who would have thought, when the honorable gentlemen who left this House to take upon themselves the arduous task of leading their men to the field of battle,—who would have thought when we were all shaking hands with them,—who would have thought when we said good-bye and farewell to the late lamented and regretted member for East Durham, whose name has been revered and cherished, and loved amongst us, since he lost his life in the defence of his country,—who would have thought then that in this House, twelve months afterwards, we would have been asked to vote regret for the lawful execution of the leader of that rebellion?

When Colonel Williams left us here, shaking hand with us, and telling us: "Yes, gentlemen, I am going, and I am proud and happy to perform my duty to my Queen and country, proud to leave you while you are doing your duty here," who would have said to him, "Oh! yes, you are going there to risk your life, but twelve months after this, from his seat in Parliament, a member will rise and say: "I want to declare by my vote that those who killed you and your brothers deserve the sympathies of Canada, and that we regret their punishment!"

Mr. Speaker, I regret the execution of the late rebel leader, Louis Riel, because I cannot find in my heart a place for a feeling of pleasure or rejoicing at the ignominious death of a fellow being. I regret the execution of Louis Riel as I regret those painful occasions when a sacrifice of human life has to be made for the vindication of the law or for the protection of society. I regret, sir, the execution of Louis Riel because of the unhappy trouble he has caused in one of the

finest Provinces of this Dominion. I regret the execution of Louis Riel because of the occasion it has given, for discussion in this House, in which, to use the expression of the honorable member for West Durham [Mr. Blake], "words have been said that should not have been said, things have been uttered that should not have been uttered, and sentiments have had room for expression which should not have been expressed in this House." I regret the execution of Louis Riel for those reasons; but I cannot condemn the punishment of his crime.

Providence, sir, suffers the mysterious agencies of human passions and the free will of men to mark dark hours in the history of nations. Louis Riel has written with his own hand and with his own deeds the darkest pages in the history of the Northwest of this Dominion; he has signed those bloody pages, and sealed them with his blood on the scaffold.

Outside of the insurrection, one of the reasons that prevented clemency being exercised in Riel's case, was his inciting the Indians to warfare. Upon that I might also claim the authority of my honorable friend from West Durham, who said that there was a most aggravating character to the rebellion in the fact that Riel had incited the Indians to warfare.

That aggravating feature, the greatest of all the crimes that Riel has committed in the Northwest, has not been answered by anyone in this House except the leader of the Opposition. He said, also, that we should not hold our heads very high with regard to that accusation of inciting the Indians to warfare, because the Indians had been pressed into war centuries ago to assist brave soldiers and humane men in wars against other nations.

I would ask, however, if there is any similarity between the

case of soldiers fighting in the citadel of Quebec, the walls of Montreal, or of the forts of the old Province of Upper Canada, having Indian allies in their struggles, and the case of Louis Riel? No, sir, there is not, and we have proof of it.

Let me remind the House of the letters which Riel wrote to the Indians telling them to come and plunder, as was stated in the case of the Indians who were put on trial before Judge Rouleau, and that before the 1st of June the order was given to the Indians to rise, and the whole of the white race was to be exterminated in the Northwest. What is the answer of the Indians to the messengers that Louis Riel sent to them? Their answer proves the demand, and proves the intent of the man who sent these messengers with presents to the Indians.

Here is a letter which was written by a number of Indians to Louis Riel:

"Mr. Louis Riel:

"I want to hear news of the progress of God's work. If any event has occurred since your messengers came away let me know of it. Tell me the date when the Americans will reach the Canadian Pacific Railway. Tell me all the news that you have heard from all places where your work is in progress. Big Bear has finished his work; he has taken Fort Pitt. 'If you want me to come to you let me know at once,' he said, and I sent for him at once. I will be four days on the road. Those who have gone to see him will sleep twice on the road. They took twenty prisoners, including the master of Fort Pitt. They killed eleven men, including the agent, two priests and six white men. We are camped on the creek just below Cut Knife Hill, waiting for Big Bear. The Blackfeet have killed sixty police at the Elbow. A half-breed who interpreted for the police, having survived the fight though wounded, brought this news. Here we have killed six white men. We have not taken the barracks yet, but that is the only entire building in Battleford. All the

cattle and horses in the vicinity we have taken. We have lost one man, a Nez-Percé, killed, he being alone, and one wounded. Some soldiers have come from Swift Current, but I don't know their number. We have here guns and rifles of all sorts, but ammunition for them is short. If it be possible, send us ammunition of various kinds. We are weak only for the want of that. You sent word that you would come to Battleford when you had finished your work at Duck Lake. We wait still for you, as we are unable to take the fort without help. If you send us news, send only one messenger. We are impatient to reach you. It would encourage us much to see you, and make us work more heartily."

There is the demand and the answer. It is a proof that the Indians were asked to rise, and that all the white settlements should be defaced from the prairie and the white men exterminated.

The laws of nations have declared within the last century that alliance with Indian was not only unwise and imprudent but inhuman and outside the pale of international law.

The United States government, which has been quoted as a model for us, have decided it very quickly because of the risings in their Northwest, the risings near Mexico, and the risings during the building of their railways. There they have given fomenters of Indian wars and hostile Indians no kind of trial except the bringing them before the military authorities, shooting them, or hanging them by the dozen or the four dozens, as was done after the Custer massacre. The government of the United States, that model government, do not allow any scruple to interfere; but when an Indian war is raised, the law of the land is enforced and executed by the military hand.

It is useless for my honorable friends on the other side to try to make of this rising, as my honorable friend from Quebec-East has been trying to make it, an insurrection that might

be justified and excused. It is of no use for them to try to make of Riel a martyr, as my honorable friend from Maskinongé [Mr. Desaulniers] said he did, or a hero, as my honorable friends opposite have tried to prove him, or even an insane man, as some of my friends on this side have been disposed to think him, giving the benefit of any doubt they had, not to the law, but to that humane tenderness which exists for a man who is condemned to the gallows.

No, sir, history in its impartiality, shall not decree him a hero. The *bonum commune*, the interest of the nation was not the motive of his actions. He had dreamed of being a Napoleon, but he was ready and willing to be the chief of a guerilla band, ruling by violence and terror over the region of his exploits, living on plunder and waiting for the accident of a fortunate encounter to secure a heavy ransom with the safety of his own life.

Here is my opinion, and I speak with the sincerity of my heart and of my conscience, here is my opinion of Louis Riel's campaign, surrender, and death. Riel was not an ordinary criminal, who, under the impulse of strong ruling passions, and for lucre, lust, and revenge, committed murder, arson, and pillage, with "malice aforethought." Riel has been an unscrupulous agitator, getting up a rebellion against the Sovereign for the sake of personal ambition and profit under the color of redressing public grievances. Riel was a born conspirator, a dreamer of power and wealth, frustrated in his design but not subdued by his former defeat, which had shaken his brains without eradicating the germ of his morbid ambition, he had been patiently watching his opportunity to come to the surface, until that opportunity came to him; fully cognizant of the nature of the insurrection he was planning and preaching; fully aware of the grave consequences of that

movement, ready to accept the full responsibility of the loss of his life in the prosecution of his design.

He considered the alleged grievances of the Half-breeds more in the light of the opportunities it would give him to resume power in the Northwest, than with the view of redressing those wrongs. He had always advocated that the Hudson Bay Company's privileges and government were an usurpation, and, as a consequence, that the Canadian government, who had acquired them from the Hudson Bay Company, were not the legitimate rulers of the Northwest and the Half-breeds. He was a convinced, although an extravagant, pretender. He believed in his mission, and to accomplish it, he wilfully agreed, with his conscience, to kill or to be killed.

He measured the distance between his ambition and the success that could crown it, and he deliberately consented to fill the gap, if necessary, with the corpses of his enemies or even of his friends. Devoid of the courage of a soldier, he believed in his own shrewdness as a plotter. He expected success by a surprise, not from a regular battle. He was a wilful and dangerous rebel. If rebellion, with the sacrifice of human life, with the aggravating circumstance of having incited to an Indian war, deserves the penalty of death, Riel deserved it as a political offender in the highest degree.

It has been pretended that, in his extravagant career, Riel was not sound in his mind and could not reason, although he accepted the responsibility of his actions. After the most careful examination of all the evidence which came before us, I cannot help saying that Riel, from the moment he left his home in the United States for the avowed purpose of assisting the Half-breeds in their demands for redress of alleged grievances, until the end of the Northwest insurrection, has deliberately pursued the object he had in view, namely,

to obtain full control of the Northwest Half-breeds and Indians. To obtain this object, he aroused in himself, and communicated to others, to an intense degree, a sort of national and religious fever. This was a comparatively easy work with an excitable and credulous people. Having thus subdued the Half-breeds, his next effort was directed toward alienating them from the government and from their clergy. When he had succeeded in doing this, he sought the alliance of the Indians and of the American sympathizers.

All that, he planned with a great amount of sagacity and with great pains. But the extravagant confidence he showed in his success, the smallness of the means he collected, his absolute impassiveness when reverse came, the unfeigned faith he had in what he called his mission, all point out to the conclusion that he was the prey to exaltation, to hallucination.

Though not insane, in the legal sense of the word, he was, to use a common expression, a "crank," but a crank of the worst kind, knowing well what was good and what was bad, what was wicked and what was kind, what was the value of life and what was death; but his notions of what was right and what was wrong had been distorted and altered by the determination and fixity of his purpose, by an ardent and selfish ambition, leading to injustice and cruelty. He was certainly, and without affectation, convinced that what he did was permitted by divine and moral laws, and that his treason was justifiable.

Up to the last moment he supported himself with the fixed expectation that the heroism of his struggle, the stoicism he had displayed when arraigned by the law, would bring him a timely deliverance. The death knell alone, that supreme shock which usually increases the nervous irritability of the maniac, when not subdued by illness, had the effect to bring

him back from the exalted atmosphere which he had purposely selected for himself. He then seems to have carefully put aside his fantastic character and resumed the collected and solemn demeanor of a Christian at the threshold of eternity.

That kind of delusion is natural to political fanatics and to religious maniacs. It is the paroxysm of a prejudiced mind, which has wilfully distorted in itself the true notions of law and of right. It cannot excuse a criminal act. The perversity of the intelligence is as much punishable as the perversity of the heart in its wrongful direction of the will for the performance of criminal acts. The ruling passion has for its origin the criminal purpose which the perverted intellect has consecrated and transformed into a sense of duty.

In this case the purpose was supreme power, both civil and religious. The redress of grievances on one part, and the desire of personal pecuniary advantages on the other, do not seem to me to have been the principal motives of Riel's actions, though they certainly were important factors in his conduct. But that object, supreme power, was criminal and could not qualify, could not excuse him. It is a wrong theory, and it would be a dangerous doctrine to excuse and leave without punishment crimes committed with the conviction that the act accomplished is one calculated to redress a wrong or to bring good results to the community.

I am not a free thinker. I believe that free thinking is the most pernicious evil of this country. It has engendered the worst utopies against moral, social, and religious order. But those who claim the right to the most absolute liberty for human thought, will restrict that liberty to the theoretical regions, and they are ready to punish it when it comes in con-

flict with existing laws. They will punish the manifestation of the idea after having given to that idea the freedom of the world. I agree with their conclusion in that respect; but I am logical, and I believe in the right, nay in the obligation of punishing the perversity of the doctrine. I believe that a man is guilty when he does not preserve his intelligence from the contagion of false doctrines; in the words of one of the most eminent Catholic writers of this age, in speaking of those whose guilty leniency toward the errors of the mind, gives an excuse to revolution and socialism:

“They go so far as to say that error is no guilt, that man is not bound to search the inmost of his soul to see whether there are not some secret causes that lead him away from the path of truth. They declare that in the spheres of human ideas, all human and divine laws are useless and out of place. What insanity! As if it was possible to exempt from any rule the highest and the most noble portion of human nature! As if the essential element, which makes of man the being of creation could be dispensed from the rules of that divine harmony of the various parts of the universe together and of that universe with its divine maker; as if that sublime harmony could exist or even be conceived with man, unless the first of human obligations be the constant accord with truth, that eternal attribute of divinity!”

This is the solid and only logical foundation for the legitimate punishment of a number of crimes which otherwise would find their excuse in the erroneous but firm convictions of their perpetrators. In such cases the law is at liberty to admit that the criminal was actuated by a wrongful notion of his intelligence, but it declares guilty the idea which has brought that erroneous conviction in them; and if the accused invokes the testimony of his own conscience, the law reminds him that it was his duty to keep his conscience right or to rectify it.