

## **The Execution of Thomas Scott: Ontario's Reaction**

### **Hon. M. C. Cameron: after a few introductory remarks, said:**

. . . He never could understand how those free men of the North-West, who claimed a right to enjoy their liberties and institutions untrammelled, expected to hold them by trampling on the rights of others; and it did seem to him to be the most gross sort of impudence on the part of these men led by Riel to resort to arms, to control the affairs in Red River, to set the British Government and the people of Canada at defiance, and to take the life of a man who endeavoured to remain true to his colours and allegiance, and who asked merely the rights for himself that Mr. Riel claimed. (Cheers)

. . . Riel at first assumed to stand up for what was termed the attainment of the rights of the settlers of Red River Territory—though the act displayed a great deal of folly, yet at the same time it showed that he and his followers had something of the spirit of men to assert that they had rights and were prepared to take up arms to defend them. But the very moment he went from that position and, instead of standing merely in defence of their rights and property that they might have thought, no matter how foolishly, was being assailed, he overstepped the bounds of reason and showed himself a black-hearted and cruel traitor. (Cheers) It was a matter of regret, and he was sure every heart in the crowd before him would swell with indignation at the thought, that a man who had connections in the city of Toronto—that a courageous, manly, noble-hearted fellow should have been taken out in cold blood while in the height and high-day of life, to be shot like a dog for asserting the very rights and freedom that Mr. Riel claimed he had a right to maintain. (Cheers)

. . . The act which Riel had committed, if it had been done in our midst would have been considered a cold and cruel murder, and it was none the less murder because it was committed in Red River Territory. This man Riel asserted that he had risen in protection of the rights of the people; but instead he despoiled the people of their freedom, seized and confiscated the property of the Hudson Bay Company, and in every respect acted in a manner which, if done here, would consign him to a dungeon as a felon for whom none would feel sympathy.

If he could only see those who were present at this meeting, he would see that there were enough there to sweep the people of Red River from one end of the Territory to the other—(Cheers)—

and if he understood that we had in Ontario a body of men feeling as this meeting did, intense indignation for his bloody act, he would understand that his reign was short, and his rule in Red River of but a temporary character.

**[The meeting ended by resolving:]**

That this meeting expresses the strongest indignation at the cold-blooded murder of poor Scott, and sympathizes deeply with his relatives and friends, and considers that it would be a gross injustice to the loyal inhabitants of Red River, humiliating to our national honour and contrary to British traditions for our Government to receive, negotiate, or treat with the emissaries of those who have robbed, imprisoned and murdered loyal Canadians, whose only fault was zeal for British institutions, whose only crime was devotion to the old flag.

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Source: *Toronto Globe* (April 6, 1870).