

21

arose chiefly from procrastination at Ottawa and the apparent inability of eastern statesmen to recognize the gravity of the situation.

However, in the fall of 1870 Lieutenant-Governor Archibald promised certain Indians who made application to him that the initial treaty would be made the following year. Accordingly, the Secretary of State, the Honourable Joseph Howe appointed Mr. Wemyss Simpson to the office of Indian/p.208/ Commissioner with instructions to arrange for the session of Indian lands. In July, 1871, he commenced his negotiations. In these he was assisted by the Lieutenant-Governor, Messrs. S. J. Dawson, Robert Pether, and the Honourable James Mackay, to whom special reference has been made in a preceding chapter. To Mr. Mackay's knowledge of Indian languages and mode of thought, and to the confidence which the Indians reposed in him was due a large measure of the success which attended the subsequent negotiations.

A Proclamation was issued by Mr. Simpson summoning the Indians to meet him, and after some delay more than one thousand chiefs and warriors assembled at Lower Fort Garry in July 1871. The Commissioners were hampered by instructions from Ottawa unduly limiting their power to meet the just demands of the Indians. Moreover, the redmen states that there was a cloud before them which made things dark and that they did not wish to commence the proceedings until the cloud was dispersed. The Government ultimately found that this meant that they would do no business until four Swampy Crees, who were in gaol for breaking contract with Hudson's Bay Company should be released; and Mr. Archibald thought it discreet to exercise his power of executive clemency by the pardon of these offenders. This produced an excellent effect, and Treaty Number One was presently concluded.

It was followed very shortly by Treaty Number Two. These two surrenders covered a very large part of the Province of Manitoba and considerable adjacent territory. Efforts to conclude a treaty with the tribes between