

PROCLAMATION TO THE PEOPLE OF CANADA, 1st June 1866.

*Taken from Troublous Times in Canada: A History of the Fenian
Raids of 1866 and 1870 by John A. MacDonald.*

To the people of British America:

We come among you as the foes of British rule in Ireland. We have taken up the sword to strike down the oppressors' rod to deliver Ireland from the tyrant, the despoiler, the robber. We have registered our oaths upon the altar of our country in the full view of heaven and sent up our vows to the throne of Him who inspired them. Then, looking about us for an enemy, we find him here, here in your mindset, where he is most vulnerable, and convenient to our strength... We have no issue with the people of these Provinces, and wish to have none but the most friendly relations. Our weapons are for the oppressors of Ireland. Our bows shall be directed only against the power of England; her privileges alone shall we invade, not yours. We do not propose to divest you of a solitary right you now enjoy. We are here neither as murderers, nor robbers, for plunder and spoliation. We are here as the Irish army of liberation, the friends of liberty against despotism, of democracy against aristocracy, of the people against their oppressors. In a word, our war is with the armed power of England, not with the people, not with these Provinces. Against England upon land and sea, till Ireland is free . . . To Irishmen throughout these Provinces we appeal in the name of seven centuries of British

iniquity and Irish misery and suffering, in the names of our murdered sires, our desolate homes, our desecrated altars, our million of famine graves, our insulted name and race - to stretch forth the hand of the brotherhood in the holy cause of fatherland, and smite the tyrant where we can. We conjure you, our countrymen, who from misfortune inflicted by the very tyranny you are serving, or from any cause, have been forced to enter the ranks of the enemy, not willing to be instruments of your country's dead or degradation. No uniform and surely not the blood-dyed coat of England can emancipate you from the natural law that binds your allegiance to Ireland, to liberty, to right, to justice. To the friends of Ireland, of freedom, of humanity, of the people. we only offer the olive branch of peace, and the honest grasp of friendship. Take it Irishmen, Frenchmen, American, take it all and trust it . . . We wish to meet with friends; we are prepared to meet with enemies. We shall endeavour to merit the confidence of the former, and the latter can expect from us but the leniency of a determined though generous foe and the restraints and relations imposed by civilised warfare.

(Signed) T.W. SWEENY

Major-General Commanding the Armies of Ireland.