

Erratum

In the article, "The Trial of Louis Riel: a Study in Canadian Psychiatry" (Vol. 37, No. 3, May 1992, p. 852), I erred in stating that Valentine Shortis was found not guilty of homicide, a verdict supported by the cabinet. In actuality, the insanity defense failed and Shortis was sentenced to death. The cabinet was evenly split over a recommendation for clemency. The Governor General, Lord Aberdeen, then commuted Shortis to "imprisonment for life as a *criminal lunatic* (italics mine), or otherwise as may be found fitting." This action exacerbated the discontent of French-Canadians over the Riel case. This decision in the Shortis case may have been a factor in the election of a Liberal, Wilfrid Laurier, who became the first French-Canadian prime minister of Canada in 1986.

Shortis remained incarcerated for 42 years; in the earlier years, he was frequently described as mentally ill. In his later years, he apparently functioned quite well and was released at age 62 in 1937; in 1941 he died suddenly of a heart attack.

Both the Jackson and Shortis cases reflect the fact that Canadian authorities were not adverse to considering the impact of mental illness in deciding the disposition of offenders, a step that was rejected in the Riel case.

I wish to thank Abraham L. Halpern, M.D., for bringing this error to my attention.

Irwin N. Perr, MD, JD

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The articles that appeared in the May issue of the journal under the Psychiatry and Behavioral Science Section Awards were erroneously labeled Case Reports on the title page.