

that ground, then, Sir, I hold that he has no right, as he did at the close of his speech, to claim that these petitions did not at all ask for the extinguishment of that title, but on the contrary, dealt with other grievances, grievances common to all parts of the North-West, so far as complaints are concerned, common, in fact, to new settlements in every country that I have ever heard of. Sir, the hon. gentleman was guilty of what I must regard as great unfairness to the Department over which I have the honor, unworthily, to preside, in saying that the Government had brought down improperly, certain returns which have been laid upon the Table. He referred to one return particularly, in which was stated the number of those whose names were attached to the several petitions who had received their half-breed scrip in Manitoba. Sir, that was the question asked in this House; that was the order given by this House. An hon. member on his own responsibility asked this House to order that the Government would analyse those several petitions and give the House the result of that analysis by stating how many of the petitioners had had their Indian title extinguished in Manitoba. Are we to be told here, especially at a time when so much is being said in relation to the alleged refusal of the Government to bring down returns and information to Parliament, that it was an offence on the part of the Department that it should have done precisely what was ordered to be done; that because the information coming to this House in response to the order does not meet the views of the hon. gentleman, therefore the Department is in the wrong in bringing that information down. Then, the hon. gentleman has referred to the report by Mr. Pearce, which I presented a few evenings ago. I regret very much that the report was not presented some time earlier, as it might have been but for delay in the printing of the schedules by the printers. I can tell the hon. gentleman, so far from the accident, as he calls it, or the indiscretion of a newspaper in publishing in advance certain information contained in that report being the cause of its being brought down, my expectation was that the report would have been brought down at least three days earlier but for the delays in the printing office in connection with the schedules attached to the report. But the hon. gentleman says that was a report prepared expressly, after the event, in order to influence the judgment of Parliament. Whether it was prepared before or after the event, all I have to say is this: It was prepared by the particular officer of the Department who has perhaps had more to do, both under the late Government and under the present Government, with matters in the Saskatchewan district than any other officer in the Department, and therefore the officer who was best qualified to obtain the information which I desired to obtain, and which, in view of all the demands made for information, this House ought to be glad to obtain as well. If that report does not suit the views of hon. gentlemen opposite, it is certainly not my fault; it is their misfortune. And perhaps the further they probe into the actual facts, however they may get them, whether by sending emissaries into the country to enquire, or in any other way, the less cause they will find for the outbreak of last spring arising out of any improper conduct or neglect on the part of the Government of the day. The hon. gentleman has confined himself in his speech largely to the one question of the half-breed claims, the one question of the extinguishment of the Indian title, and he did that notwithstanding the fact that he cited petition after petition in which he pointed out that the extinguishment of the Indian title was not a chief cause of complaint in those petitions. I propose to deal, if the House will permit me, with the whole question of the grievances of those people in the North-West Territories and to point out, as I think I shall be able to point out, that while in the very nature of

things there may have been, and undoubtedly were, some grounds of complaint in the sense in which every settler who goes into a new country, and especially every half-breed, every old settler who finds himself deprived of his usual means of livelihood by the chase, will be almost certain to feel, that so far as the Department was concerned, and so far as regards the treatment of questions connected with the half-breeds, that treatment was one of which no reasonable people could possibly complain, and in relation to which I feel quite satisfied the people of the country will declare the Government are innocent of the charge which has been made against them by hon. gentlemen opposite. This question of the half-breed claims was not altogether a new question. Hon. gentlemen opposite when they sat on this side of the House had to deal with the question. And if I refer to some of their proceedings in connection with it, I desire to say at the very outset that I do not do it for the purpose of justifying or even palliating any neglect of which the Government of the day may have been guilty, but simply for the purpose of showing that the difficulties connected with the subject in the North-West Territories were such as to cause complaint when hon. gentlemen opposite were on this side of the House, and they were such, moreover, as met at their hands certainly not more prompt treatment than has been accorded to them by the hon. gentlemen who now occupy the Treasury benches. In the first place, we know well from what has occurred that the question of the recent troubles in the North-West, which have given rise to these questions in Parliament, was not after all a new question; that Louis Riel did not for the first time last year attempt to raise trouble in connection with the North-West. We know from the statement of Crowfoot given to the *Mail* correspondent, who went through that country during last spring, that long ago, some years ago, Riel attempted to raise the Indians in revolt because, as he declared, the Government had not been treating him properly. And we know after that from a statement made by Mr. Devoy, in an interview with a correspondent of the *New York Sun*, if I mistake not, Riel attempted not only to rouse the Indians into revolt, but also to raise a feeling among the Fenians of the United States with a view, if possible, of enlisting them in his efforts to reconquer the North-West Territories. In that interview Mr. Devoy states that Riel described the frauds and trickery of the land sharks. Recollect this description was given in 1878, certainly not at a time when this Government was in any way responsible for what was going on. The interview reads:

"He described the fraud and trickery of the land sharks, who were protected in their nefarious practices by high officials of the Dominion Government, who were in league with them and profited by their thefts of land belonging to the Metis. The whole administration and system of land management in the North-West he described as rotten to the core. The wrongs of the Metis were intensified by the bitter race hatred of the men who plundered them. Deep-rooted disaffection, he claimed, existed among the whole half-breed population, both in Manitoba and the North-West Territory, and was sustained by strong sympathy on the part of the whole French Canadian population."

And so on with a number of other statements made by Louis Riel at that time to Mr. Devoy, all pointing to the fact that then, in 1878, when this Government was in no way responsible for what had occurred, Riel complained, just as he complained afterwards, of the conduct of the Government in connection with the administration of affairs in the North-West Territories. Now, was there any ground for those complaints at that time? It is well known that petitions and letters were sent to the Government then praying for the settlement of the land claims and for the extinguishment of the Indian title. Mr. Ryan and Mr. Machar had been appointed to settle matters in Manitoba, which would have been settled long before but for the interference of hon. gentlemen opposite with the steps taken by their predecessors, before they went out of office, with a