

existed in connection with the surveys. All I have to say about this is that whatever just complaint may be made against the Conservative Government, they were at all events not responsible for delays or laxity in the matter of the surveys. (Applause.) During the whole time the Mackenzie Government held office there were surveyed throughout the whole of the Northwest territories only about two millions of acres. And since the Mackenzie Government went out and the Macdonald Government came into office, upwards of

#### SIXTY-FIVE MILLIONS OF ACRES

have been surveyed. (Applause.) When those half-breeds petitioned Mr. Mills on the matter of surveys his answer was:—"As regards the application of the petitioners for an early survey of the settled lands along the principal rivers, I have to request you to inform the petitioners that the surveys of such land has been carried out to some extent,"—only to some extent, mark you, and I have told you to what a small extent—"and will be prosecuted as rapidly as the funds at the disposal of the department will permit." That was the answer of Mr. Mills to the half-breeds when they asked to have the lands surveyed. Two million acres was the extent of their surveying enterprise for five years. So much for surveys; and now as to the matter of the lands. The lands to which those half-breeds were entitled were lands under what we call the extinguishment of the Indian title. Those people would not be entitled to lands, except as ordinary settlers taking up homestead and pre-emption titles like any one else, except for the fact of their having Indian blood in their veins. The Government held they were entitled to have their Indian title extinguished. The policy of Sir John Macdonald, when he acquired possession of the territory in 1870 from the Hudson's Bay company, was to extinguish this title at once, and as there were only in the Northwest the few half-breeds I enumerated, viz: about forty, he laid out 1,400,000 acres of land for the extinguishment of the Indian title in the half-breeds of Manitoba. A good deal of discussion, you will remember, took place in Parliament at the time, and the opponents of the Government censured them for setting aside so much for this purpose. The Riel trouble of that day had just taken place. Mr. Blake had secured the reins of office in Ontario by declaring

that Mr. Sandfield Macdonald, who had no more to do with the matter than the man in the moon, had not hanged Riel. Mr. Blake succeeded in arousing the feelings of the people by portraying the iniquities of the half-breed leader, and when the Conservative Government proposed to lay aside 1,400,000 acres for the extinguishment of the Indian title in those men who were denounced as rebels, they were attacked in Parliament by the leaders of the Liberal party as guilty of an act wholly indefensible in its character. Sir John Macdonald recognized that these people, whether favorable to the connection with Canada or not, had a right to this 1,400,000 acres. But he proposed to extinguish

#### THE INDIAN TITLE OF THE HALF-BREEDS

at the same time that the treaties were being made with the Indians themselves. If the policy of Sir John had been pursued the whole question of lands to the half-breeds would have been settled in 1875 and we would have heard nothing about it since that time. (Hear, hear.) But Mr. Mackenzie had a little game of his own. He wanted to give office to a couple of gentlemen—Mr. Matthew Ryan, of Montreal, and Mr. Machar, of Kingston. He set aside the enumeration of Governor Archibald, stopped all proceedings taken by him under the authority of the Conservative Government, and brought about all those difficulties which have resulted in such delay and embarrassment since that time. There were some difficulties in the way of getting rid of this Indian title, and I notice that the Northwest council have recently passed a resolution, embodied in the address in answer to the speech of the Lieutenant-Governor from the throne, in which they censure the Government for not having paid more earnest attention to the suggestions made by them in previous representations to the Government. Gentlemen, I have the highest possible respect for the Northwest council as a representative body which is becoming more representative every day. It is the only body which in any true sense can speak for the whole of the Northwest Territories. I sincerely hope that the growth of population in that country will be such that in a short time, under the operation of the law and in the interests of the people, the Northwest council will be wholly representative, and that there will be no person in it except those