

gress and prosperity of that country. Those grievances were drawn to the attention of this Government over and over again. In every way known to the people of any country, by petitions, by memorials, by remonstrances, by delegations, by resolutions passed at public meetings convened for the purpose of considering these grievances; and they were unheeded. What was the result? Those complaints, those grievances grappled with and settled? No, Sir, they were treated with indifference and contempt. Hon. gentlemen never moved, never took the first step, never paused to consider the dangerous condition in which the country was then placed, and so these unreasonable, these unjustifiable delays ended in bloodshed and loss of human life, neither of which would have happened had hon. gentleman been alive to the gravity of the situation, neither of which would have happened if hon. gentlemen had only paused to consider the brink upon which they were standing. The First Minister of this Dominion knew, or ought to have known, the temper, the peculiarities of the French half-breeds; the First Minister ought to have known the danger of trifling with the grievances of that element in our population; and the First Minister, knowing all this, recklessly, indifferently, and carelessly abstained from this investigation; and, if life has been lost and blood has been shed, upon the shoulders of hon. gentlemen opposite must rest the responsibility.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh.

Mr. CAMERON. Hon. gentlemen howl and express their disapproval. We know that in ancient times when an ancient city was being reduced to ashes, the ruler of the country danced and fiddled. We know that on more than one occasion when the great interests of this country were being imperilled and voted away, they were imperilled and voted away amid the cheers of hon. gentlemen opposite. And now, Sir, when we point out that hon. gentlemen opposite are responsible for the terrible consequences that have succeeded their misconduct, they howl and cheer again. I propose to point out as shortly as I can, and chronologically, that this Government was thoroughly aware of the difficulties in the North-West Territories. In 1878, 122 half-breeds petitioned the North-West Council for a fair consideration of their grievances. They pointed out, among other things, that owing to the disappearance of the buffalo they had no means of subsistence, except a resort to tilling the soil. They pointed out that many of them were absent on the plains when the half-breeds of Manitoba were settled with, and that therefore they obtained no scrip entitling them to land; and praying for a redress of the wrongs complained of. On the 20th September, 1878, this petition was sent by Governor Laird to the Minister of the Interior. On the 20th November, the Deputy Minister of the Interior acknowledged the receipt of the document. In 1878 the half-breeds of St. Albert petitioned the Government for a survey of their lands according to their old holdings. I am not giving you the words of the petition, Mr. Speaker; I only give you the substance of these documents. On the 10th April, 1878, this petition was transmitted to the Minister of the Interior. In the same year the half-breeds of St. Laurent petitioned the Government to the same effect. On the 10th May, Mr. Mills, then Minister of the Interior, acknowledged the receipt of the petitions, and said they would receive consideration. Mr. Mills having resigned his office shortly afterwards, they could receive, of course, no consideration at the hands of the then Government. Upon the 2nd August, 1879, Mr. Ryan published a letter in a Winnipeg paper, pointing out clearly the grievances complained of by the half-breeds. On the 10th March, 1880, the Saskatchewan *Herald* pointed out to the Government the complaints made and the grievances complained of. On the 28th of February, 1880, the Saskatchewan *Herald*

published another article on the same subject. In the summer of 1881, the half-breeds of Qu'Appelle petitioned the Government that they should be treated in the same way as those of Manitoba had been. On the 20th September, Mr. Russell, Acting Surveyor General, acknowledged the receipt of that petition. In 1883, a delegation of half-breeds came all the way from the Saskatchewan Valley to visit the city of Ottawa and present their grievances and ask for redress at the hands of this Government. When the hon. member for West Durham drew the attention of the Government to the complaints of the settlers in the North-West Territories the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Royal) said:

"We must remember that in 1870 nearly all the troubles that arose in the Red River settlement were due to the instructions or want of instructions given to surveyors who went out to survey the country, without taking into consideration that that country had been settled some five or six years before. Of course the population then became naturally suspicious as to what was taking place, and about the transfers of their lands, as well as the whole territory, to the Dominion Government without their being consulted. They naturally became excited over this bargain and stopped the surveyors. It is but natural that these half-breeds of the same stock, and sometimes of the same parentage, in the North-West, may have been a little suspicious about what was taking place during last summer in the Dominion surveys. But history is always of great assistance to Government, and in this case, I am happy to say, that the rights of these pioneers who have kept the country to Canada are being fully recognised by the Dominion Government."

Sir, for two years the Government of this Dominion did nothing to settle these claims. In June, 1884, Riel's letter acceding to the request of the half-breeds of Manitoba to place himself once more at their head, was published in a Winnipeg paper. In July, 1884, Mr. Isbister, a prominent and intelligent half-breed, published a letter, I think, in the *Winnipeg Sun*, pointing out the grievances of the half-breeds. On the 12th June, 1884, the Saskatchewan *Herald* pointedly drew the attention of the Government to the fact that Riel was again among the half-breeds of the Saskatchewan valley, and that there were breakers ahead. On the 9th August, 1884, the Saskatchewan *Herald* again discussed the claims of the half-breeds and the presence of Riel, and warned the Government of impending dangers. On the 22nd July, 1884, the Qu'Appelle *Vidette* pointed out that Riel was then among the half-breeds and that they would undoubtedly resort to arms unless their wrongs were promptly righted. On the 2nd June, 1885, Sir Alexander Campbell, in the Senate, admitted that between the 1st of January, 1879, and the 1st of March, 1885, Archbishop Taché, Bishop Grandin, and others in the North-West Territory, were in communication with the Government on the subject of these half-breed claims. On the 8th July, 1884, Captain Crozier telegraphed to the Controller of the Mounted Police at Ottawa, that Riel had arrived and was the leader of the half-breeds. On the 27th of July, 1884, Superintendent Crozier wrote to Colonel Irvine, who on the 2nd of August, 1884, sent this letter to the controller at Ottawa:

"1. That meetings held by Riel at Battleford and Duck Lake, at which half-breeds and Indians were present.  
2. That Riel told the Indians that they had rights as well as half-breeds.

"3. That the Indians sympathised with half-breeds.  
4. That precautionary measures should be taken by the Government as the Indians sympathised with the half-breeds, as was to be expected from their blood relationship.

"5. That such precautionary measures should be such as would prevent these turbulent spirits from carrying their schemes to an extreme, but prevent both the Indians and half-breeds even making an attempt to resist authority or organise for illegal purposes.

"6. That Big Bear and his followers would have remained on his reserve but for Riel."

On the 9th August, 1884, Crozier again wrote to the Controller that the Indians were in an uncertain condition, and this letter, on 21st August, was transmitted to the Department at Ottawa. On the 14th August, 1884, Crozier again writes:

"But there are a great many people through the country who have what they call grievances, and seem to agree with Riel."

On the 3rd July, 1884, the *Winnipeg Sun* pointed out to the Government that the Indians were becoming restless