

survey the land according to their peculiar method, but refused to grant them greater privileges than the whites in other respects. They continued to agitate and, finally, wearied by their importunity, the government, very injudiciously it seems to me, decided to grant scrip to all half-breeds in the North-west Territories who had not already received it in Manitoba, and on the 4th of February, 1885, notification of the appointment of a commission to settle the claims was forwarded to the half-breeds. There was some delay in sending the commission, and the rebellion broke out in the following March, the first shot being fired at Duck Lake on the 26th of the month. An explanation of the origin of the demand for scrip is necessary to an understanding of the matter. Prior to its annexation to Canada the North-west was a British Territory under the jurisdiction of the Hudson Bay Company, which held its charter from the British Government. Many people suppose that this company sold the lands of the North-west to Canada. This is a mistake. The company never had any title to the lands of the North-west, and the charter by which it secured jurisdiction over the country had expired when the territory was transferred to Canada by the British Government. The company had no legal claim for compensation, but its influence in the North-west was great, and to avoid trouble the Dominion Government agreed to give it £300,000 and a large grant of land. The Indians were recognized to be the real land-owners of the country, and the government negotiated directly with the Indian tribes for the transfer of their title, excepting in the old Red River settlement where the white employees of the Hudson Bay Company had generally intermarried with the Indians, forming a half-breed population. After the suppression of the first Riel rebellion this old district was formed into the Province of Manitoba, and the Indian claim was extinguished by granting to each half-breed scrip for 240 acres of land, those who had settled on farms being also granted titles to them as regular settlers. Many of the half-breeds at once sold their scrip to speculators, and some of them moved north to Prince Albert, in Saskatchewan Territory, where, encouraged by white speculators, they again demanded scrip. The delay in settling the matter, after it was decided to grant scrip to all half-breeds, was partly due to the difficulty expected in distinguishing between those who had already received scrip in Manitoba and those who were in the Territories at the time the Manitoba allotment was made. That is the history of the half-breed question and the second Riel rebellion. It is difficult to understand what excited the sympathies of the French-Canadians in Riel's favor, and yet there is no doubt that the feelings of many were so wrought upon by Rouge orators that for a time they