

serious stumbling-block in our dealings with the half-breeds. Lest you should not fully have understood my telegram, I will shortly state the point. Suppose we find that a half-breed has been, upon and since 5th July, 1870, in occupation of a parcel of, say 160 acres, under circumstances which, if he were a white settler, would entitle him to a grant of the land under the homestead clauses of the Dominion Lands Act: under the authority we now possess we could, if he were the head of a family, allow him nothing more than 160 acres; we could allow him nothing for his claim as a half-breed; and, inasmuch as the Government has all along been purporting to deal with the half-breeds as if they had some general rights beyond those of ordinary incoming settlers, my fellow-commissioners say that great dissatisfaction and disappointment will be created if we give to these occupying half-breeds only that which any ordinary settler can claim, and nothing for the extinguishment of his Indian title."

This shows to me that this matter had never received from the Government of the day and from the Minister in charge, that consideration and examination which it ought to have had, or else we must accept the other proposition which is probably the correct one, that the Government did not desire and never intended to give to these half-breeds any of the concessions which they were authorised and directed to give by Statute, and had taken power to give as far back as 1879. They led these poor people to believe, by passing a Statute enabling them to confer on these half-breeds the same rights as had been conferred on the half-breeds of Manitoba—they led them to believe that these same rights would be granted them; they kept that hope dangling before them for five or six years; they worked them up to a state of dissatisfaction and discontent, and as the mover of the resolution said to-day, even when the rebellion was on the verge of breaking out the real meaning and intention of the Government can be gathered from the speech made by the leader of the Government in this House, on, I think, the 26th day of March, wherein he stated that the half-breeds must make their choice between the rights which the Indians could get and the rights which white men could get, but that they had no other rights. Well, Sir, it is known that they had other rights. Those rights had been conceded to the Manitoba half-breeds; those rights had been ratified by Parliament in 1879, and recognised by the authorities time and again, and on the 26th of March, he comes in and gives you the key to the meaning of the Order in Council of the 26th of January in the following words:—

"As a whole the half-breeds have been told that if they desired to be considered as Indians there are most liberal reserves that they could go with the others; but that if they desired to be considered as white men they would get 160 acres of land as homesteads. But they are not satisfied with that; they want to get land scrip of equal quantity—I think upwards of 200 acres—and then get, as a matter of course, their homesteads as well."

That is the conclusion of the whole matter. After five or six long weary years, after money has been spent by the half-breeds in their efforts to get their rights, after petitions and delegations had been sent to Ottawa in their efforts to get their rights, after memorials from the North-West Council, and from individual members of that Council had been forwarded begging that those rights should be given, when the whole country is in a state of turmoil, and the half-breeds are on the verge of rising to get by force that which is denied to them by peaceable measures, the hon. gentleman rises, and practically he says: You have no rights except as Indians or as white men, and those rights, which as half-breeds, the Parliament of Canada has guaranteed to you time and again, I for one do not recognise. That then is the conclusion of the whole matter, and if it did not bring about the rebellion, it contributed largely to bringing it about, and I say that hon. gentlemen can fairly be arraigned, and I charge them before this Parliament, and before this country, of having, by their inaction, by their cold, cruel and callous neglect, by what they are pleased to term their masterly inactivity, with having contributed to drive those people into a state of desperation, when the only conclusion to their ignorant minds was that redress which they could not get by peaceable mea-

Mr. DAVIES.

asures they could get by a resort to arms. Unfortunately they resorted to arms, and that unfortunate termination resulted, it is true, in their getting their rights; but it resulted, also, in the expenditure of vast millions of money by the taxpayers of this country, and the shedding of the blood of many of our fellow countrymen. I say the Minister of the Interior has evaded the charge made by my hon. friend; that he has not dared to come forward and state that anyone of those petitions were not forwarded; that any one of the facts on which he based his charge were not true, but he evades it, and he talks about settlers' rights and colonisation companies, and affidavits, and other subjects altogether foreign to the one before the House, in the attempt to lead the House and the country to believe that there is nothing in this motion. Believing as I do, that the statements made in that motion are not over-charged, and believing that the Government are directly and criminally responsible for the rebellion—responsible for their neglect, for their indifference, and for the contempt with which they treated all the petitions of these men, I will cordially second the motion and give my vote in favor of it.

Mr. FOSTER. My hon. friend who has just sat down has given a good illustration of how natural it is to magnify the particular topic on which for the time being one chooses to enlarge. I have often remarked, in listening to preachers, that one will take, for instances, in the morning, a particular text; and after reading his text, he will preface his remarks by saying that this is the most important portion of Scripture that there is between the two lids of the Bible. In the afternoon, I have heard the same preacher take another text, and forgetting what he said in the morning, preface his remarks by saying, "there is no more important portion of Scripture in the whole Bible than this of which I am to speak this afternoon." Now, my hon. friend illustrates this. We have found to-night a new emphasised cause for the rebellion. We have heard a great many reasons given why the rebellion took place. We have heard that the rebellion took place because of certain colonisation companies' schemes; and for quite a long period, the country resounded from one end to the other, with the allegation that it was these terrible colonisation companies, and the very bad policy of the Government in reference to them, to which was due, and entirely due, this unfortunate and lamentable rebellion that took place in the North-West. That was when they were preaching from the colonisation text. Then, Sir, the papers and the speeches would take a different turn, and it would be: "Oh, this favoritism in the North-West; men are sent from the Eastern Provinces—carpet-baggers with their carpet bags—and it is from the speculations and the favoritism, and the wrong actions of these office-seekers and carpet-baggers that all the troubles have arisen, and that the country was driven to rebellion in order to purify itself from them." And so, text after text, on which for the time being hon. gentlemen were preaching, was stated, to furnish the sole cause of the rebellion. To-night a new cause has sprung up. It is now because the half-breeds, forsooth, did not get—in addition to the 160 acres of land that each one of them could have, more than they ever cultivated, more than they could cultivate, more than they are cultivating to-day—another 160 acres to tack on to that; or, forsooth, a small quantity of scrip which they could sell for ready cash and speedily dissipate. It is because they did not get that that the rebellion sprang up, and that these people ran to arms for their rights. Now, it rests with us to find out whether or not this was the potent cause of the rebellion. My hon. friend said that the issue had been presented to night in a single form, but that the Minister of the Interior had tried to distract the attention of the House by taking up other and different subjects. I will leave the House to judge whether or not my hon. friend from Quebec East did not, before he finished his speech on the