

the North-West Council which I have read, in a despatch which contains these words:

"I feel it my duty to ask you to urge upon the Dominion Government the necessity of taking early action with respect to the claims set forth by the half-breeds of the Territories, either in the direction indicated by the resolutions of the North-West Council, or in such other manner as the Government may deem meet. The half-breeds of Manitoba—the heads, of families as well as the children—having received either script or land, I may remark that from what information is within my reach, I have no doubt the half-breeds of the Territories who think they have as good a claim to consideration as their compatriots in Manitoba, will be very much dissatisfied unless they are treated in a somewhat similar manner."

By the time that reached Ottawa the Government had changed, the hon. gentleman had assumed the reins of office, and, with the reins of office, he had accepted the Department of the Interior and the Superintendency General of Indian Affairs, thus identifying himself in both those aspects with the questions which are involved in this controversy. On the 20th November, 1878, his Deputy Minister acknowledged the despatch of Governor Laird, the resolution and the petition, and stated that that despatch, with its enclosures, would be brought under the consideration of the Minister on his return to the seat of Government. About the same time at which that despatch was written, the Lieutenant Governor visited this section of the country, and I quote from the newspaper the account of his visit:

"While the Lieutenant Governor was at Duck Lake, a deputation of half-breeds from the St. Laurent waited on his honor, and, in most respectful terms, urged him not to allow Chief Beardy's reserve to surround their claims or encroach upon the lands where they had been accustomed to cut hay. They also desired to be informed if any reply has been received to the petition forwarded, through his honor, to Ottawa, respecting the half-breeds in the territories. The Lieutenant Governor thereupon explained matters to them as fully as was in his power. When he had concluded Norbert Laurance, Esq., cordially thanked him for the obliging manner in which he had replied to their enquiries."

I have now shown you as clearly as I could what the position of this question was at the time when hon. gentlemen opposite commenced their dealing with it, in the fall of the year 1878. I have read you the petitions which had already been presented from the locality, the resolution of the council, the despatch of the Lieutenant Governor, all indicating that the question was one for early solution, the North-West Council being of opinion that modified compensation ought to be given in a different form from that which had obtained in the Province of Manitoba, for reasons which were sufficiently obvious; and the case being presented to the Government by the Lieutenant Governor as one for early action, either in the method devised by the council, or in some other method, at the peril of dissatisfaction. I have no complaint to make of the expedition with which the then Deputy Minister of the Interior, Mr. Dennis, grappled with the question. On the 20th December, 1878, Mr. Dennis presented to his Minister a very long memorandum dealing with the case of those claims, and from it I extract some passages. He submits to the Minister "that it is expedient with as little delay as possible to deal with the claims to consideration preferred by the half-breeds of the North-West Territories." He describes the half-breeds as of two classes, those of the plains, and those who, while spending part of the year in hunting the buffalo, possess settled homes. He says:

"The second-class may be illustrated by reference to those half breeds who are found at Edmonton, St. Albert, St. Laurent, St. Anne's, Victoria, etc., who have habitable and in some cases, good houses, where they reside and cultivate the soil to a greater or less extent, but still mainly depend for their means of living upon the buffalo."

He adds:

"Some uneasiness is felt by the half-breed element in the Territories in consequence of no steps having yet been taken towards the recognition of the demands put forward on their behalf. It must be freely admitted they have a claim to favorable consideration, and the question is, how is that claim to be satisfied so as to benefit the half-breeds, and at the same time benefit the country?"

MR. BLAKE.

He discountenances the absolute grant of lands, or treating them as wards and making Indian treaty with them. He proposes to offer them certain inducements to settle on land, and to learn to farm, especially to raise cattle, and of this plan he says:

"The immediate effect would be, assuming that the half-breeds themselves are willing to give it a trial, that we should have the whole of this element in sympathy with the Government in dealing with the plain tribes of Indians. In this way we should attract to our side a moral power which in the present critical relations of the various tribes of Indians towards each other and towards the Government, would prove of the greatest value to the Dominion."

He refers to the petition of the Cypress Hills half-breeds and the resolution of the North-West Council, and says he "is of opinion that encouragement additional to that recommended by the council would be required to induce the half-breeds to become settlers, and he fully believes that it would be in the interest of good government in the North-West to grant the same." He suggests "that the half-breeds, where wished for, should be permitted to take up their lands in such a way as to enable them to settle together in bands, and, wherever a band of 50 or more families form themselves into one community or settlement, they should be provided with a school or teachers for a term of years, such teachers to be selected with a view to being able to instruct them in the raising and care of stock, also in practical agriculture, including the use and care of implements." He adds:

"The undersigned regards the state of affairs in the Territories in relation to the Indians and half-breeds as calling for the serious consideration of the Government, in view of additional complications which are not unlikely to arise owing to the presence on our soil of large numbers of armed Indians, refugees for the time being from the seat of war in the adjoining territory. He is of opinion that further means should be adopted to cultivate and maintain relations with Indians and half-breed populations calculated to attach them to us and to convince them that the Government is desirous of fulfilling its obligations to them in the utmost good faith."

He suggests a scheme of industrial schools, and he closes thus:

"The undersigned respectfully requests for the whole question discussed in this memorandum the early consideration of the Minister of the Interior, in order, if thought desirable, that a measure may be prepared embodying such policy as may be decided upon in good time for the ensuing Session of Parliament."

The action which appears to have been taken on that memorandum was, first, the appointment of Mr. N. F. Davin as a commissioner to enquire into the industrial school question, both in the Territories and in the United States, upon which, so far as I can apprehend, no final report has been brought down; secondly, to send the memorandum for the consideration and advice of Archbishop Taché, Bishop McLean, Bishop Macrae and Governor Laird. On the 23rd of December, 1878, three days after the date of the memorandum, Colonel Dennis writes to Archbishop Taché, transmitting the paper, in this language:

"As you will see by the tenor of the paper, I am fully impressed with the justice as well as the expediency of disposing of the question at the earliest possible period."

On the 29th January, 1879, Archbishop Taché replied in a very long letter to Col. Dennis' communication, and from that I shall make some extracts. Amongst the headings which the Archbishop treats is one "Importance of the Half Breed Question."

"It must be freely admitted that the half-breeds of the North-West have a claim to favorable consideration. Great uneasiness is felt by them in consequence of no steps having yet been taken in their behalf. A liberal policy on the part of the Government would attract to its side a moral and physical power which in the present critical relations of the various tribes of Indians towards each other and towards the Government, would prove of the greatest value to the Dominion. On the other hand the half-breed element dissatisfied would form a standing menace to the peace and prosperity of the Territories. There is no doubt that the state of affairs in the Territories in relation to the Indians and half-