

"Moved by Mr Miller, seconded by Mr. Spencer, and carried unanimously:—'Whereas the Indian title in this district or territory has not become extinct, and the old settlers and half-breed population of Manitoba were granted scrip in commutation of such title, and such allowance has not been made to those resident in this Territory—Resolved, that the right hon. the Minister of the Interior be requested to grant such scrip to such settlers, thus placing them on an equal footing with their *confrères* in Manitoba.'"

This resolution simply asked that the half-breeds of the North-West should be treated just as the half-breeds of Manitoba were treated—just as the hon. member for Provencher said they should have been treated; and what was the answer of the Department? The answer of the Department will show precisely what I have stated, that the Department at that time, in 1831, had forgotten the tenor of the statute they had placed on the Statute-book before. Here is the answer, addressed to the Hon. Lawrence Clarke, who had transmitted the petition:

"DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, OTTAWA, 22nd Nov., 1831.

"SIR,—By direction of the Minister of the Interior, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of memorial handed in by you, of certain resolutions passed at a meeting of the inhabitants of the district of Lorne (which you represent in the North-West Council), held at Prince Albert on the 18th October, 1831.

"In reply to the questions involved in the several resolutions contained therein, I am to say as follows:—

"Resolution No. 3. As by treaty with the Indians their title to any portion of the territory included within the district of Lorne has been extinguished, this resolution would need explanation."

Here was a resolution calling upon the Government to give effect to a law passed by themselves—to give the half-breeds the special rights to which by law they were entitled to, and yet the Government declares that this resolution requires explanation. Well, the explanation came, and it was not long in coming. Mr. Clarke answered as follows:—

"CARLTON, N.W.T., 25th January, 1832.

"SIR,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd November last, embodying the reply of the right hon. the Minister of the Interior to a memorial, handed in by me, of certain resolutions passed at a meeting of the inhabitants of the district of Lorne, held at Prince Albert on the 18th October, 1831.

"With regard to resolution No. 3, it is remarked that:

"As by treaty with the Indians, their title to any portion of the territory included within the district of Lorne has been extinguished, this resolution would need explanation."

"I would respectfully submit that the Indian title, no doubt, has been extinguished, but evidently not that of the half-breed residents of the North-West Territories.

"The Government of the Dominion of Canada have repeatedly acknowledged the right in the soil of the half-breed inhabitants, as is proved by the Parliament of Canada, in 1870, 33 Vic., chap. 3, section 31, as follows:—

Then he recites all the acts by which the Parliament of Canada had declared, time and again, that the half-breeds were entitled to for their Indian title; and goes on:

"It will be seen, therefore, that from the first enactment, in 1870, to the last, in 1879, the rights in the soil of the half-breeds, have been recognised by the Government, and provision made for the extinguishment of their title."

This explanation was certainly clear enough, but the Government at once fell again into the state of immovability in which they had been living, and the Minister fell again into the state of repose in which he had been living for so many years before. The half-breeds petitioned again; they sent their friends upon delegations to Ottawa; they sent the hon. member for Provencher; yet the Government never took any action in the matter until the 28th of January, 1835, when the Minister felt his seat shaken by the tempest that was threatening to sweep over the country. But it was then unfortunately too late. When the seeds of discontent have long been germinating, when hearts have long been swelling with long accumulating bitternesses, and when humiliations and disappointments have made men discontented and sullen, a small incident will create a conflagration, just as a spark on the prairie, under certain circumstances, will kindle a widespread and unquenchable

fire. Then the Government moved, but it was too late. The incident occurred—what was it? The hon. member for Provencher told us what it was. After the Government had sent a commission, a man had the imprudence to say that a commission would not come, but that bullets would come instead; and this statement of the hon. gentleman is corroborated by a statement of Archbishop Taché in a letter published in December last, in which, speaking of the commencement of the rebellion, he said:

"The assurance that a commission would be sent was not accepted. People preferred to believe a rumor which went to show that instead of granting them their rights, the authorities were to send irons for their leader, and bullets for those who would protect him. That conviction produced the result which was to be expected. The half-breeds thought they would resist and defend themselves. Badly armed, without ammunition or provisions, they took possession of the stores in the vicinity. The unfortunate attack made against them at Duck Lake was a declaration of war."

It will strike many minds now that there is a great analogy between the origin of this rebellion and the origin of the rebellion in Lower Canada in 1837. An agitation had been going on in Lower Canada for many years, as it had been going on in the North-West for many years, and it was when the Government attempted to arrest the leaders of the movement that the rebellion broke out; and without going any further, I am glad to recall the fact that, deplorable as was this rebellion in Lower Canada, it secured at once to the Lower Canadians the rights which they had been vainly seeking for so many years, and secured this further result: that although the population had been hitherto in favor of rebellion they at once became the most faithful subjects England ever had. In the same manner, though the last result has not been obtained, it may be and will be obtained, I have no doubt, in the North-West, because the immediate result of the rebellion there has been to secure to the half-breeds the rights which had been denied to them up to that time. I have charged the Government with not only having been negligent in the duty they owed to the half-breeds, but with denying to the half-breeds the rights to which they were entitled. I charge them with, not ignoring only, but actually refusing, of design aforethought, the rights to which the half-breeds were entitled. The first order the Government passed under the statute was that of the 23th January, 1835. What was that order? Its provisions are important to consider, in view of the charge I have just preferred against the Government. The order runs as follows:—

"On a memorandum dated 26th January, 1835, from the Minister of the Interior, submitting that it is desirable, with a view of settling equitably the claims of half-breeds in Manitoba and the North-West Territories, who would have been entitled to land had they resided in Manitoba at the time of the transfer and filed their claims in due course under the Manitoba Act, and also of those who, though residing in Manitoba and equitably entitled to participate in the grant, did not do so, to ascertain the number of such half-breeds, and recommending that he be authorised to obtain an enumeration of them, and to employ three persons to make such enumeration."

The provisions of the order, you see, were, first, to cause an enumeration to be made of the half-breeds who were entitled to compensation, in order to settle equitably the claims of those half-breeds. What was to be that equitable settlement? The order is vague upon that point; it is not only vague, it is silent. Was the settlement to be that which was granted to the half-breeds of Manitoba, as was insinuated the other day by the hon. member from Provencher (Mr. Royal)? I say no; I say that the settlement that the Government then contemplated, and which is called equitable, was not the settlement which had been made in favor of the half-breeds of Manitoba. I may here recall what was the latter settlement. The half-breeds of Manitoba were given, first, a free grant of the plots of land which they occupied, to the extent of 160 acres each, as whites; they were given, in the second place, in extinction of the Indian title, land to the extent of 160 acres for each head of family, and