

"The nomadic half-breed, who had been brought up to hunt, having had merely his shanty to repair to in the dead season when there was no game—what advantage was it to him to give him 160 or 240 acres more? It was of no use to him whatever, but it would have been of great use to the speculators who were working on him and telling him that he was suffering."

The Government knew what would be the result; they knew of the existence of speculators:

"Oh! how awfully he was suffering, ruined, destroyed, starving, because he did not get 240 acres somewhere else, or the scrip for it, that he might sell it for \$50! No, Sir; the whole thing is a farce."

Yes, it is a farce from beginning to end. It is a farce to say that you have fulfilled your obligation by giving scrip to the half-breeds. We know that following the commission which was distributing the scrip, there were land speculators, finely dressed, with money in their pockets, and whiskey, that they might, the moment the half-breed got the scrip, give him liquor and pay him \$3 or \$4 or \$5 and get his scrip. That is the way the Treasury has suffered, and the way the half-breeds have lost their scrip and remain poor without that paternal protection to which they are entitled:

"Now, Mr. Speaker, we, at the last moment, made concessions, and we did it for the sake of peace."

Well, Mr. Speaker, it was too late to make concessions for the sake of peace; we should have done it before, we should have seen to their grievances before. When we saw that there were complaints, that petitions were pouring in constantly, the Government should have sent some friends to them, as it does to-day. If the Government had done then what it is now doing, there would have been no war, and if, instead of the police, we had sent to the half-breeds people who spoke their language and were not looked upon as their enemies, we would have been saved the expenditure of \$10,000,000 and the loss of 200 or 300 valuable lives:

"The Government knew, my hon. friend, Sir David Macpherson, the Minister of the Interior, knew that we were not acting in the interests of the half-breeds in granting them scrip, in granting him the land. We had tried, after consulting man after man, expert after expert, to find what was best for the country, and we found, without one single exception, they were all opposed to granting unlimited scrip and immediate patents to the half-breeds. But, Sir, an agitation arose, and the hon. gentleman has rung the changes on Biel being brought into that country."

I take it, as admitted by this Government, that no justice has been given to the half-breeds, and I consider it is an obligation on their part that they should see that the half-breeds are better treated, and that a fair compensation be given them for the land from which they have been evicted. This is the meaning I intend giving to my vote. The fault of the Government consists in having chosen too many strangers to deal with the Indians and half-breeds. If they had chosen, instead, some of the employees known to the country, and in whom the country would have had confidence, the atrocities we have witnessed in the North-West would not have occurred. I believe the Government really intend to do justice to the Indians; I believe they understand the white population cannot take possession of the North-West without giving in return some compensation; I believe in the sense of humanity the Government have been most unfortunate in their choice of employees. The consequence was the rebellion occurred and the half-breeds were either killed or ruined. I can prove that, and that is the meaning I intend to give to my vote. I do not intend blaming the Government for all they have done in the North-West. We have taken possession of the country and opened it up as fast as possible. I have often heard the Opposition blame the Government for having opened it too quick; but I think the Government acted wisely in so doing. On the question of the Pacific Railway and the general system of surveying—I except the application of the system to those who are already on their lands and had vested rights—I approve of the general policy of the Government in the North-West, and could not approve any

Government which would not follow a similar policy. But, as far as I have stated, and for the reasons I have given, I will vote in favor of the motion.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. At this late hour, I will not detain the House more than two or three minutes. If I understood the Minister of the Interior correctly he stated that, as regarded the claim of the half-breeds to these surveys in narrow frontages of ten chains in width along the river, the Government had granted the survey required?

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). Wherever there were settlers occupying land in that form, the river system was given. Wherever there were no settlements practically, as in the case of St. Louis de Langevin, for a large number of those who petitioned did not live there at all, we made the ordinary surveys.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. That is exactly as I understood the hon. gentleman. One of the great grievances these half-breeds complained of was that their claims to have their lots surveyed, in the same manner as they were in Manitoba and Prince Albert, were not attended to. Whether they were right or wrong in that system of surveying, it was the one they had always followed, and it ought to have been recognised in their case by the Government, and their titles to the land given accordingly. The hon. Minister says that wherever they had established settlements, their claims were respected and their surveys made in that form. I would direct the attention of the House to a report made to the Department in March, 1882, by Mr. Duck, the agent of Dominion lands. He wrote as follows to the Government:—

"Sir,—As the majority of the settlers on the south branch of the River Saskatchewan, in the vicinity of the parish of St. Laurent, have taken up their lands previous to the survey, with narrow frontages, similar to those river claims in other parts of this district, and in view of the difficulty likely to be experienced in this office in adjusting the boundaries of these claims in accordance with the section survey, I have, at the request of several of the settlers so situated, the honor to request information as to the possibility of re-surveying these sections into river lots on a similar plan to that adopted in Prince Albert settlement, none of these claims having as yet been entered in this office."

On the 4th September of the same year, Gabriel Dumont and forty-six others sent a petition to the Department of the Interior, in which they say:

"In our anxiety we appeal to your sense of justice as Minister of the Interior and head of the Government, and beg you to reassure us speedily, by directing that we shall not be disturbed on our lands, and that the Government grant us the privilege of considering us as occupants of even-numbered sections, since we have occupied these lands in good faith. Having so long held this country as its masters and so often defended it against the Indians at the price of our blood, we consider it not asking too much to request that the Government allow us to occupy our lands in peace, and that exception be made to its regulations, by making to the half-breeds of the North-West free grants of land. We also pray that you would direct that the lots be surveyed along the river ten chains in width by two miles in depth, this mode of division being the long-established usage of the country. This would render it more easy for us to know the limits of our several lots."

Here are the answers from the Department to Mr. Duck's letters. First of all, this letter was written on the 21st September of the same month in which that petition was sent into the Department:

"Sir,—I have the honor, by the direction of the Minister of the Interior, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th March last, stating that you had been requested by several of the settlers in the vicinity of the parish of St. Laurent to obtain information from the Department as to the possibility of there being a re-survey of their river claims by the Government, and to inform you that it is not the intention of the Government to cause any re-surveys to be made. Of course, any sub-division differing from the regular survey they may desire they can procure for themselves when the lands come into their possession. You will please, therefore, communicate this decision to the persons interested."

"I have the honor to be, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"A. M. BURGESS,
"Secretary."