it is to the credit of England that she is the one of all civilised nations which gave the fullest development to the doctrine that the Indians were not to be ruthlessly thrown back before advancing civilisation without some fair and adequate compensation. That doctrine was based, not so much on principles of abstract justice as on motives of humanity and prudence. I hold in my hand the opinion of eminent counsel, some of whom have a name in English history, by whom this doctrine is compressed into a few short sentences. It is not dated, but the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) informs me that it is about the date of 1685. It is to the following effect:—

"By the law of nations, if any people make discovery of any country of barbarians, the Prince of the people who make the discovery hath the right of soil and government of the place, and no people can plant there without the consent of the Prince, or of such persons to whom his right is devolved and conveyed; the practice of all nations has been according to this, and no people have been suffered to take up land but by the consent and license of the Government or proprietors under the Prince's title, whose people made the first discovery, and upon their submission to the laws of the place, and contribution to the public charge of the place, and the payment of such rent and other value for the soil as the proprietors for the time being require; and though it hath been and still is the usual practice of all proprietors, to give their Indians some recompense for their land, and so seem to purchase it from them, yet it is not done for want of sufficient title from the King or Prince who hath the right of discovery, but out of prudence and Christian charity, lest otherwise the Indians might have destroyed the first planters, who are usually too few to defend themselves, or refuse all commerce and conversation with the planters."

This opinion is signed, amongst others, by William Williams, Joseph Holt and Henry Pollexfeu. The principles here recorded have hitherto been acknowledged and acted upon by all British Governments on this continent; and I may say that they became at an early date standard principles of our policy; and when the North-West Territories were acquired by this Government, these principles were part of the unwritten law of this country. It is not to my knowledge that at the date of that important transaction the future of Indians in the territory was debated at all between the purchaser and the vendor; but if it was not debated, it was not because the Indians were ignored. It was because the principle was admitted without being mentioned, that the Indians should be treated as all Indians under British rule had been treated. But if the Indians were not ignored, there was in the territory another population, the half-breeds, who were totally and completely ignored by the Government of the time. They were sprung from European hunters and the Indians, and their character partook of the character of both nations; but in point of education and experience, though vastly inferior to the whites in point of intelligence and adaptability to civilisation, they were far superior to the Indians. Amongst other advantages which they possessed over the Indians, they had a better conception of their own rights, and greater ability to proclaim and defend them. What their conception of their rights was, is well put by Mr. Tuttle in his history of Manitoba:

"The feeling of the French half-breeds may be briefly expressed as this: that they questioned the right of the Dominion Government to take possession of what they considered their country without their consent."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to set forth here, or to recall, all the different rights claimed at the time by the half-breeds. I confine myself simply to one point, that is to say, the extinguishment of the Indian title in so far as the half-breeds were concerned. They rebelled; they objected to the further progress of the Canadian Government into what they considered their country, until their rights were recognised and guaranteed; and, after the rebellion, the Government had to admit, and did admit, that the same prudent principles that applied to the Indians should apply to the Half-breeds. The Government admitted that as the original possessors of the soil they were entitled to the same compensation as the Indians, and that since they were to be deprived henceforth of the rights of the soil, they should be treated by the Government as the Indians had been treated. Though the principle was the same, its application in the two cases could not be identical, because of the difference in the state of civilisation of the two races. The rule universally applied to the Indians has been to put them upon reserves, and there to protect and defend them against white encroachments, and to assist them by money and otherwise during their advancement from savage to civilised life. In the case of the half-breeds this rule could not be applied, for the simple reason that they were too far advanced towards civilisation to require it. They were more ignorant and less civilised than the whites, but their minds were adapted to civilisation, and the decision arrived at by the Government was to give them a grant of land. This grant of land has been the object of two different Statutes; and it may be well here to recall the terms of those Statutes, in view of the further discussion of this subject. The first was the Act of 1870, which provided as follows:—

"And whereas it is expedient, towards the extinguishment of the Indian title to the lands in the Province, to appropriate a portion of such ungranted lands, to the extent of 1,400,000 acres thereof, for the benefit of the families of the half-breed residents, it is hereby enacted that, under regulations to be from time to time made by the Governor General in Council, the Lieutenant-Governor shall select such lots or tracts in such parts of the Province as he may deem expedient, to the extent aforesaid, and divide the same among the children of the half-breed heads of families residing in the Province at the time of the said transfer to Canada."

In 1874 a similar Statute was passed, extending to the heads of families those provisions which had been previously applied to minors alone. It has often been stated, and perhaps stated with truth, that this settlement had been in some respects injudicious—that it had proved to be of scarcely any benefit to the half-breed population, as they had been almost wholly deprived of the soil by the cunning and dishonesty of white speculators. These reports, as I have said, have not been without foundation; and experience has shown that it would be more conducive to the interest of the half-breeds if some restrictions were provided in our legislation which would secure to them the advantages which it was the intention of the law to give them. But however satisfactory the settlement may have been from the philanthropic point of view, it had this effect, that it gave protection to the half-breeds of Manitoba, and secured the peace of Manitoba, which has been observed since. It does not require argument to prove that the same treatment should be extended to the half-breeds of the North-West Territories as was extended to those of Manitoba—that the half-breeds of the North-West are entitled to the same rights as were acknowledged and granted to the half-breeds of Manitoba; and it is acknowledged as a consequence that long, long ago the claims of the half-breeds of the North-West Territories should have been settled in a manner similar to that in which the claims of the half-breeds of Manitoba were settled. It has been made a reproach against the Mackenzie Administration that during the time they were in power they had not settled that question. Sir, the Mackenzie Administration is not here on trial, and all the reproaches which can be made against them, if proved to be true, would rebound against the present Administration with tenfold increased force. If the Mackenzie Administration was at all deficient in its duty, which I do not admit, the present Government were ten times more guilty of negligence of not having, up to the year 1885, settled that question. But there was a paramount reason, it seems to me, one which must commend itself at once to the attention of the House, why this question was not settled during the Mackenzie Administration. As long as Mr. Laird was not appointed Governor, and up to the time he reached the Province, there was practically nothing in the territories to show the half-breeds there had