

to settle those grievances and entertain the claims of the half-breeds? No. But a recommendation that a commission issue to take evidence of the unenumerated half-breeds of Manitoba and confining it to them alone, repudiating by inference the claims and rejecting by inference the claim of all the half-breeds of the North-West outside of Manitoba to be treated in the same manner as the Manitoba half-breeds were. When hon. gentlemen opposite say they moved before the rebellion, let us understand clearly what they did do. I refer to the report of the Minister, to be found on page 17. I want to place it on record, because I have heard it stated more than once by leading members of the Government that they did not wait till after the rebellion took place to meet the grievances, but they had taken steps months before the rebellion broke out; and I say that statement is not in accordance with the record. The report of the Minister is as follows:—

"Certified copy of a report of a Committee of the honorable the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General in Council on 28th January, 1856.

"On a memorandum, dated 26th January, 1856, from the Minister of the Interior, submitting that it is desirable, with a view to 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 not residing in Manitoba and equitably entitled to participate in the grant, but 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 committee concur in the foregoing recommendations, and they advise that the requisite authority be granted."

So this recommendation, meagre as it was, short as it was, did not go further than the Manitoba half-breeds. It did not touch the half-breeds of the plains; and it did not say what the policy of the Government was. It held out no promise; it did not point out to what extent the Government would yield, whether it would grant certain parts of the petitions or the whole. It is merely a recommendation of one part of the claim and one part only. Then we find nothing more is done. We find events moving very rapidly, reports tumbling in on the Government that their inaction, their criminal inaction, is bearing its legitimate fruit. We find the Government being told that the half-breeds, despairing of redressing by petitions and by legitimate means their grievances, are unfortunately rising in arms. We find a telegram coming in on 11th March, from Superintendent Crozier, stating that the half-breeds are excited, that they are moving about more than usual and are preparing arms. On 11th March there was another despatch from Superintendent Crozier, stating:

"Half-breeds greatly excited; reported they threaten on Carleton before 16th. Half-breeds refuse to take freight or employment for Government; will stop all freight coming into country after 16th of this month; getting arms ready; leader will not allow people to leave home as they may be required."

On 14th March, Lieut.-Colonel Irvine telegraphed:

"Lieutenant-Governor received telegram, dated Carleton, to-day, from Crozier, saying half-breed rebellion may break out any moment, and joined by Indians, and asking that his division be largely increased. Would recommend that at least 100 men be sent at once, before roads break up. Please instruct."

We find a telegram to Colonel Irvine, dated Ottawa, 15th March:

"Start for the north, quickly as possible, with all available men up to 100. Telegraph marching out; state and report when passing telegraph stations."

On 19th March there is a telegram from Superintendent Deane, dated Regina:—

"The following received from Superintendent Crozier: 'Rumor to-night Indians being tampered with; large force should be sent without delay that arrests may be made if necessary to prevent further and continuous trouble from Riel and followers.'"

In a word, we find that the Government policy of masterly inactivity had borne its legitimate fruit, that their policy of criminal inaction had borne the only legitimate fruit

that could be expected from it. We find that these people took up arms, and then only action was taken by the Government. On 30th March, after the rebellion had broken out, we find a report of the Committee of the Privy Council acknowledging that their previous report of January, to which I have referred, was altogether incomplete, and reciting that it was necessary to go much further.

"The Minister of Interior, on representations made that it was desirable to have made an enumeration of the 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, was authorised by Your Excellency in Council, under date the 28th of January last, to appoint commissioners and the following gentlemen were accordingly appointed to carry into effect the said order of Your Excellency in Council, namely: William Purvis Rochford Street, of the city of London, in the Province of Ontario, one of Her Majesty's counsel learned in the law, who is to be chairman of the commission; Roger Goulet of the town of St. Boniface, in the Province of Manitoba, domain lands surveyor; and Amedée Edmond Forget, of the town of Regina, in the Provisional District of Assinaboia, clerk of the North-West Council and barrister-at-law.

"The Minister of Interior is of opinion that the scope of the enquiry to be made by the commissioners appointed under the authority of the order of Your Excellency in Council above mentioned should be enlarged."

The rebellion had changed their position. It had enabled them to grasp things which they should have grasped months and years before; it enabled them to see that the policy of inaction and delay would not do any longer, because we find the Minister recommending the enlargement of the scope of the commission, so as to include the half-breeds of the plains outside of Manitoba, as well as the others. That is what we have, on the 30th day of March, after the rebellion is in full force, and, therefore, when the Government claim that they took action which ought to have prevented the rising, we appeal to the record and let it show that their action was taken long after the rebellion broke out. Even on the 4th of April, 1885, the authority which they gave was not complete; they had not fully mastered the subject yet, and the commissioner appointed to take evidence, telegraphed them on the 4th of April, to the following effect:—

"SOUTH CENTRE, MANITOBA, 4th April, 1885.

"If desired by half-breeds, would it not be advisable to grant scrip one sixty or two forty dollars, permitting them to acquire title to lands in occupation through possession? Otherwise Government really gives nothing for Indian title."

That telegram is explained by a letter forwarded by the commissioner next day. The Minister and his Deputy evidently did not understand the question. It is true that some years previously, when a petition came from the half-breeds setting forth their grievances, the Deputy Minister said that he could not understand the petition and Mr. Lawrence Clarke came to his rescue, and pointed out what the Minister and his Deputy evidently did not know that an Act of Parliament had provided the means whereby this claim of the half-breeds to the Indian title should be extinguished—pointed out that it was the duty of the Government to act in that way, and if they were ignorant of their own Acts they were to blame and not the half-breeds. There appears to have been a repetition of this state of things in 1885. They did not seem to know then, and Mr. Street follows up the telegram I have already read with the following:

"Commission agree in recommending that power be granted them to deal with occupying half-breeds in the manner summarised in my message of yesterday; also, if possible, to enable commission to settle claims of supplementary Manitoba half-breeds by allowing them the same terms as North-West half-breeds."

That was followed the next day by this letter to the Minister:

"WINNIPEG, 5th April, 1885.

"MY DEAR SIR DAVID,—We arrived here early this morning. I met my fellow-commissioners at the Dominion Land Office at ten o'clock. They introduced the subject as to which I telegraphed you yesterday, and spoke very strongly as to its being one which was likely to be a