

was in 1870. Aye, Sir, it is so; there is no pretence that there has been any oppression or any eviction; there is no pretence that there has been any ousting of any man, woman, or child in the great North-West by the action, direct or indirect, of the Government. Mind you, we only got the Province in 1870; we have only been able to introduce, by small degrees, anything like government or organisation since 1870. The thing was going on quietly but slowly, I must say, between 1870 and 1873, when the responsibility of the Government of that country devolved on hon. gentlemen opposite. From 1873 to 1878 that country was stagnant; from 1873 to 1878 not one single step was taken to vindicate the rights of the Indian or the half-breeds, or to assert the rights of the white man; from 1873 to 1878 is a blank leaf in the history of Canada. What step did that Government take in order to assert the rights of the half-breeds? What step did they take, in order to settle the boundary question of the boundary between man and man? What step did they take to survey the lands along the rivers? Look at that plan, and it will show what they did in their five years, and it will show what we did since we came back to office. They did nothing; they took no steps whatever. To be sure, the people went on, and they went on happily, and they would have gone on happily to this moment, had it not been that after the Conservative Government came in the whole end and aim of the Opposition was to excite and arouse those people. During five years they were quite ignorant of their wrongs; during five years they did not know they were suffering; they lived under their own roof-tree; they had their house, be it a humble turf house, or a wooden house, or be it a tent; and during the five years those hon. gentlemen were in they did not complain; they did not know they were wronged; they did not know they were trodden down and oppressed. It required the teaching of hon. gentlemen opposite and the radical press that they were going to lose their property, that they were oppressed, downtrodden, and I charge distinctly upon the Grit party and their associates in this House and out of the House, not only the responsibility but all the consequences. Why should the people, from 1878 to 1884, be more unhappy than were the people from 1873 to 1878? Was there any difference in their circumstances? Was there any attempt made to deprive them of the land and to change their position for the worse. No, they stood exactly, in March, 1885, as they did in the hon. gentleman's time. They were happy, peaceful and contented, until they were told by political agitators for political purposes—and for more sordid purposes than political purposes. In the great game of politics, parties some times go to great extremes; parties on both sides do what may not be considered within the strict lines of rectitude.

Mr. MILLS. Hear, hear; Franchise Bill.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I hear the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) talking about rectitude. I have shown him up a little. The hon. gentleman who comes here to support the hon. member for the west riding (Mr. Blake), and who, from the beginning of his administration, tried to keep down and crush and destroy the interests and the rights, or, rather, the claims, of those people which he is now advocating. But I say that both political parties may exceed the rules of rectitude. There is something large in the ground; something large in the political field. But there is not that excuse in this case. The game is not so much for political advantage, but it is for the purpose of enabling the land grabbers and speculators, who have a hold on these poor people, to make the most out of them. I believe the most of the claims of these poor people in the North-West are now mortgaged; I believe they have made assignments of them to white men, and that these people

will not be any richer by their claims being allowed. Perhaps the hon. member for Huron knows something about buying these claims?

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). Ask the hon. member for Hastings (Mr. White) and the hon. Minister of Customs.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. My hon. friend near me (Mr. Bowell) just puts me in mind of a circumstance *a propos* of the frequent interruptions of the hon. member for Huron (Mr. Cameron). The hon. member for the west riding (Mr. Blake) complained of the delays in issuing the patents, and the hon. member for Huron (Mr. Cameron) will, I dare say, make a speech about the delay in issuing patents. Well, in the office of the Department of Interior there is a letter from the hon. gentleman, insisting that no patent shall issue to a certain man, because the hon. gentleman has a claim against him of \$3,000.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). Why should he not?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. It is men like him whom we charge with the disturbance, whom we charge with all the discontent and all the effect of the discontent in the North-West: men who have gone there to make their fortune by some means or other; men who get hold of the people—and when they say: Oh, the patents ought to be issued; we ought not to allow speculators to hold the country; we ought to have the patents issued on the very day; we ought to protect the settlers against the speculator and the shaver, the people going in with money to fleece the settlers—when this cry is raised we find it raised by men like the hon. gentleman, who will vote and attack the Government for delay in issuing patents, and who, yet, is one of those who will ask that a patent be delayed in order that he may get his pound of flesh. When we took office, in 1878, we had to consider this question. The Government before us had altogether ignored the rights of the half-breeds; they had refused to listen to the representations of their own agent, Mr. Matthew Ryan, made under his own hand. Until 1879 there was no legal power, and the Government before us did not ask that power to deal honestly or fairly with the claims of the half-breeds. We only came in in November, 1878, but in the Parliament of 1879 we took power to deal with that subject, according to the best of our discretion. We wished to do the best for the North-West; we wished to do the best for the half-breeds and the country generally; we could have no other object in view. We had just come into power, after a defeated, a discredited Administration had gone out, with the united voice of the majority of the people. We had everything to gain by doing what was right, and we attempted to do what was right. What did we do? We wrote to the leading men of the North-West. We wrote to Archbishop Taché and to the other bishops, of whom the hon. gentleman has spoken; we wrote to Mr. Laird, and we got their opinions, and their opinions were united against the granting of scrip; their opinions were united against giving patents to the half-breeds. The hon. gentleman did not read that Col. Denis, my respected, and worthy, and able deputy, who now, I am sorry to say, is retired, wrote that remarkable despatch to which the hon. gentleman alluded, a despatch creditable to him and in some degree creditable to me, as sanctioning every word he wrote, asking the best advice we could get as to what we would do with these people, to save them from their own improvidence and grant them their rights, so far as was consistent with the general prosperity of the country. At the expense of being a little tedious, I will look over what these hon. gentlemen have said. The confidential despatch or letter of Col. Dennis I need not read, because it has been alluded to with sufficient fulness by the hon. gentleman, but let us take the answer of Archbishop Taché. Nobody can doubt that he was a