

that we have seen that some of our volunteers have shed their blood in support of law and the constitution of Canada, I believe it becomes the duty of this Parliament to investigate the causes of these troubles. This Parliament is the great enquirer into all the evils of the country, and into all public questions that may arise in the course of our political course; I believe that now is the proper time for this Parliament to investigate the causes of these troubles, and that we, who come from the Province of Manitoba, and who are supposed to know something about the people of the North-West and the causes which may have led to the recent outbreak, may properly be called upon to express our views on the subject. Well, Sir, I deem it my duty to-night to express an opinion on the subject. That opinion is based on some experience which I have gained during some fifteen or sixteen years spent amongst the population of that country. In the course of my residence there, from 1870 to the present time, circumstances have made me intimately acquainted with the feelings of the half-breed population, of which so much has been said in the course of this debate. My own opinion is, that there are causes which have brought about the recent troubles which are of a remote nature—causes over which no Government could have any control. Amongst these, I may cite, in the first place, the non-granting of the amnesty in 1870, and by amnesty I mean a complete amnesty for all that had taken place until the 15th July, 1870. Besides that, I say that the distance which separates that western country from old Canada had a great deal to do with our management of affairs in Manitoba and the North-West Territories. We know very well that at that time communications were very slow. We know that it used to take three or four weeks to reach Winnipeg from this part of Canada, and on that account no sufficient check could be exercised by the heads of the Departments over the subordinates sent to those distant parts to administer laws or see to the carrying out of the policy of the Dominion Government. Another cause, of a remote nature, and over which no Government could possibly have any control, was the insufficient knowledge of the character of the population in the North-West at the time of its transfer to Canada, in 1870. The population was considered of no importance whatever in the transfer; nor even when the whole North-West Territories were bought over by the Dominion of Canada was there any mention made, at least by the Hudson's Bay Company, of the existence of a fully organised population in the North-West, and this, I believe, is one of the causes which led, not only to the troubles in 1870, but the recent ones. I am going to treat this question in as a brief a manner, as this most important question permits. The importance of the question demands forsooth that it be fully discussed, and it is not to be wondered at, in view of its importance, that some of our colleagues should have spent five hours or six hours in discussing it. I intend to treat it from an independent point of view; something may be said by an independent member of the House which may not be said by a member of the Government. I am disposed to give full credit for what has been done for the people and the future prosperity of that distant part of the Dominion; while, at the same time, I am disposed to criticise, independently, the measures which have led to the present troubles. I must say that the policy of the present Administration has led: First, to the organisation of those distant Territories; second, it has induced immigrants to go in there, not only from the eastern Provinces but also from England and other portions of Europe; and thirdly, it has led to the consolidation of the Dominion. Upon these three points I say its policy has been successful. I have stated that the character of the population in the North-West had been ignored by Canada when negotiating for the transfer of

Mr. ROYAL.

those Territories to the Dominion. It was a prevalent idea among us that there were no people in the North-West, except the half-breeds, who were something like the Indians, with no idea of political institutions, no social existence, and no prospect in the future—a population, in fact, who could be ignored without causing the least inconvenience to them, or the Government, or the eastern Provinces. It is my object to-night to show there was a nationality established on the shores of the Red River and the Assiniboine at the time of the transfer of that Territory to Canada. If we look back to the first time these Territories had any political or commercial existence in the history of this part of North America, we see that in 1670 a charter was granted by King Charles II to a certain number of merchant adventurers, who wanted to trade on the shores of Hudson Bay. A monopoly was given them to trade over all that region whose waters flow into Hudson Bay; that trade was carried on successfully for a certain number of years. In 1731 Gauthier Varennes de la Vérandrye, a French Canadian, born in Three Rivers, under a license from the King of France of that day, went westward and discovered the plains lying west of Lake Superior and Red River. Gauthier Varennes de la Vérandrye was accompanied by his sons, and by some of his compatriots from the Province of Quebec, then La Nouvelle France. A few years afterwards, when he saw, and the Government saw, and the merchants saw, that there was a prospect of a highly prosperous trade being got up between those Indian tribes that had been communicated with by Varennes de la Verandrye and his associates, such a trade was established, which grew very prosperous indeed. In the course of events, in 1763, the treaty of Paris took place, by which the whole of the present Dominion of Canada, then La Nouvelle France, was ceded to the Crown of England. It did not stop the traffic that was then being carried on by the traders from the Province of Quebec in those distant Territories; but it was not until 1774 that the Hudson's Bay Company felt that the privileges that had been granted to them had been greatly interfered with by these traders from the Province of Quebec. So far, the Hudson's Bay Company's agents had been trying to get that trade from the tribes trading with them on the waters flowing into the Hudson's Bay. It seems that they had no idea of the possible commerce that might have been made with the tribes of Indians existing on the shores of some of the tributaries of the great rivers that were emptying into the Hudson's Bay; but, in that year 1774, according to the historians, the Hudson's Bay Company saw that they had to deal with a very serious question of competing traders, and, in consequence of the success of those traders in intercepting Indians on their way to the Hudson's Bay Company's factories, they thought it was their duty to protect their interest, by establishing forts inland, on the grounds on which their opponents had, until then, carried on their operations, comparatively undisturbed. This competition grew up into an actual war between them and those independent traders, supplied by merchants from Montreal, Three Rivers and Quebec. In order to be more united and more powerful, these various traders agreed to form a company, which was called the North-West Company, and was organized in Montreal in 1783. To give you an idea of the important traffic that had grown up then, I may say that in that year the number of people that were trading in the interests of that North-West Company in the North-West Territories amounted to 5,000 individuals. We may have an idea of the importance of the trade which had grown up in opposition to the Hudson's Bay Company by this fact, that 5,000 men were employed in trading with the Indians westward of Lake Superior, and this is the most distant origin of the half-breed population. These people were mostly imported from the Province of Quebec, and they gave rise to the well-known class of trappers and