

"That it would be injudicious to set apart reserves of land for the half-breeds of the North-West Territories, to give them negotiable scrip.

"That in view, however, of the fact that grants of land or issue of scrip were made to the half-breeds of Manitoba towards the extinguishment of the Indian titles to the lands of that Province, there will undoubtedly be general dissatisfaction amongst the half-breeds of said territories, unless they receive some little consideration."

The Government here are informed, on the responsibility and the authority of the only representative body in that country, that there will be general dissatisfaction until they take this matter up and grant some relief to the half breeds. Then they go on to suggest a form in which that grant should be given; but I need not trouble the House with it because the Government were bound to act under the authority they took from Parliament in 1879. They did not suggest a particular plan for settling these grievances; they only asked Parliament to give them power to deal with them. They were then bound, after taking that power, to take proper evidence and to find a proper way to act upon the evidence so as to remove the grievances, but they did not do it. Going on with the record, we find that in August, 1878, a petition from the Cypress Mountain half-breeds was forwarded to the Government, to be found at page 32, in which they also set forth their grievances, and state:

"That the majority of us, upon the cession of the Province to the Canadian Government, were temporarily absent, and were thereby deprived of the benefits of the scrips given to those half-breeds who were at that time present in the Province."

Then we have Mr. Laird's despatch, in which he urges the Government to take action upon it. We have that despatch acknowledged, and on the 28th December, 1878, we have Col. Dennis submitting that celebrated memorandum to the Minister, and asking his immediate attention to it. That memorandum was read by the mover of the resolution, and I need not read it again. The Deputy-Head of the Department was fully apprised of the importance of this question and of the necessity of dealing with it immediately. He was informed, that if they did not deal with it immediately, it would be a cause of general dissatisfaction, natural dissatisfaction, which we would feel ourselves, had we been some of those unfortunate half-breeds. Well, Sir, what was done with that memorandum of the Deputy-Head? It was very properly, I think, submitted to Archbishop Taché, to the Bishop of the Saskatchewan, to Lieut.-Governor Laird and to Mr. Richardson, the magistrate, to obtain their opinions upon it. They made each of them their reports, and the Government are in possession of the suggestions they made with respect to that memorandum. I charge, Mr. Speaker, that although they were in possession of these, although they had got, ostensibly, all the information they asked for, and although they were in a position to deal exhaustively with the question, they followed that policy of masterly inactivity for which they are so much renowned—they did nothing. Now, let us look for a moment at the powers this Government took from Parliament. Section 125 of the Dominion Lands Act, 1879, enacts:

"The following powers are hereby delegated to the Governor in Council:—

"(c) To satisfy any claim existing in connection with the extinguishment of the Indian title, preferred by half-breed residents in the North-West Territories outside of the limits of Manitoba, on the 15th day of July, 1870, by granting lands to such persons, to such extent and on such terms and conditions as may be deemed expedient."

Now, Sir, the Minister of the Interior has criticised at some length the reports made to the Deputy Minister, to whom those suggestions were sent. He has shown that in some particulars the suggestions made by Archbishop Taché and some others were not prudent suggestions. But are we here to discuss at this late day whether the suggestions were prudent or not? Why the Government should have determined in 1879 what portions of these suggestions were prudent, and they should have acted upon

Mr. DAVIES,

them. The petitions should have been taken out of the pigeon-holes, and the Minister instead of hiding away to England and other parts should have hied himself away personally to the North-West and should have enquired into the facts connected with the grievances, and have put forward his hand and dealt with them, remedied them and removed them. But he did not do it, and we have sad results in 1885. But the matter did not end there. In the spring of 1880 the half-breeds in Manitoba village, in the North-West Territory, petitioned Sir John A. Macdonald again. That petition is to be found on page 41. They are getting restless; they are wondering that the petitions forwarded by them and endorsed by their priests, bishops and magistrates, by the North-West Council and all the legally constituted authorities of the country, should have been treated with contempt, and they are forwarding other petitions in which they set forth at still greater length their grievances in this regard. They state:

"And whereas the continued delay in ascertaining and investigating said claims is creating great and general dissatisfaction throughout the Territories, we your petitioners do humbly pray that you will cause a commission to be issued at an early day to enquire into and confirm the said claims, not only with regard to scrip and allotments of land as provided for in Manitoba, but, moreover, to confirm the titles of land occupied by or purchased by parties from occupants of claims taken previously to the transfer of the Territories to the Dominion of Canada."

The Government were not only aware of the existence of those grievances, the fact had been pressed on them time and again, month after month, but there was the further and important fact, which had been pressed on them, that the existence of those grievances and the delay in their removal were causing great and general dissatisfaction from one end of the Territory to the other. What, then, is the use of the hon. gentleman urging to-day, in the face of facts so plain and palpable, that those grievances had nothing to do with the outbreak in 1885. Following in the same string we have the petition of a large number of residents near Edmonton. I am afraid to say how many; I did not count them, but their names covered two columns of a whole page and must number 100. I will not trouble the House by reading them. They repeat the statements in a previous petition respecting delay. I will read some of their own words:

"And whereas the continued delay in ascertaining and investigating said claims is creating great and general dissatisfaction throughout the Territories."

I will not weary the House by reading further from the petition. So the record goes on; month after month, year after year, these poor people petitioning the authorities at Ottawa, praying and begging for some relief in this regard, and receiving in return the stereotyped reply that the Government will take the matter into consideration, or that it will be submitted to the Minister for his consideration. But nothing is done. I say, therefore, the mover of the resolution was right in arraigning the Government and in charging them with neglect, grievous and criminal neglect, towards those poor people, and with having waited, before entertaining their grievances, until those people rose in rebellion when it was too late. The Government thus adopted the vicious system followed by all tyrants throughout the world—refusing to concede what is right at the proper time, and yielding to force when it is too late, and that in the wrong manner. I will not weary the House by going through the events of 1853-84.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. DAVIES. I do not wonder at hon. gentlemen cheering. It is a record of shame and disgrace to hon. gentlemen opposite. But we come down to the action which hon. gentlemen opposite did take. The hon. Minister has said they moved. When was the first record of their motion? In January, 1885, the Minister of the Interior came down with a recommendation of what? That a commission issue