

interview I have read from the columns of the *Mail*. It is true, he says, there is a disturbance at Carlton and Battleford, but it is one of the periodical disturbances which are always going on there. According to him, that country is in a condition of chronic disturbance, and we know there was some trouble, not with the half-breeds, upon the occasion to which I am about to refer, but with the Indians, during the last summer. The *Saskatchewan Herald*, of the 26th June, 1884, gives an account of the trouble that then arose with the Indians, which appears to have been for a short time a critical state of affairs. We had, of course, some information from the ordinary sources of public information of trouble brewing in the North-West in this quarter. We were aware from the newspapers of the visit of Louis Riel to those quarters. The newspapers informed us, in the month of July last, that, at the request of some of the inhabitants of those quarters, Riel had gone into the North-West, and then spoke thus:

"Considering, then, that my interests are identical with yours, I accept your very kind invitation, and will go and spend some months amongst you, in the hope that, by petitioning the Government, we will obtain the redress of all our grievances."

The committee say:

"Mr. Riel comes to help us without any pretensions. He hopes that before long the North-West will be quite united, and that the Government will see its way to do what is right towards every class of our people."

At a meeting afterwards held at Prince Albert, at which Riel was the chief speaker, he said:

"He knew that his hearers were laboring under Government difficulties, and urged that they should seek the proper remedy, suggested that instead of petitioning for each of their rights, severally, and struggling for each in turn, they should apply for them all at once. The three districts of Assiniboia, Alberta and Saskatchewan should apply for admission to the Confederation as Provinces, ask for Legislatures of their own, and responsible government, and take all the steps within constitutional limits to secure their rights. If the people were denied some of their rights, they should take all they can gain, without yielding the rest, and they would thus keep in their hands the key needed to open future difficulties."

Then the newspaper from which I have made these quotations, the *Globe* newspaper, adds:

"There can be no doubt that this invitation of Riel by the half-breeds to return to Canada, resume the leadership of them, and guide their efforts for the redress of the grievances of which they complain, is a serious matter. They declare that their purposes are peaceful, and Riel talks peace. We are willing to believe that they mean what they say. But they must have regarded the grievances of which they complain as very grave indeed, and must almost have despaired of obtaining justice from the Dominion Government by ordinary means, when they resolved to invite the man who led them in rebellion to return to Canada and place himself at their head."

That was the state of things with reference to Riel last summer, and the hon. gentleman has informed us, within a day or two, that the Government thought it so serious that they thought it necessary to obtain the permission of the Hudson's Bay Company to occupy Fort Carlton, which is a defensible post, with 100 men of the Mounted Police, in view of what was then going on. I observe an interview reported in the *Globe* newspaper, of the 3rd of January last, with Mr. S. E. Chapleau, sheriff of the North-West, a Government official:

"Mr. Chapleau states that Riel has been, to all appearances, very quiet during the summer, but it is well known that he is secretly advising the half-breeds to make a demand upon the Government for compensation for the whole North-West. Riel's argument is, that the whole country belonged to the half-breeds and Indians before the Canadian Government took possession, and that, to extinguish the half-breed claim, a sum equal to 25 cents for every acre of land sold by the Government should be paid to them."

There is the condition of affairs, as far as we are informed. You find it stated in various Government organs that there have been complaints and dissatisfaction amongst the half-breeds for several years. You find it stated by the *Mail* newspaper, the principal organ of the Government, that these complaints, or some of these complaints and griev-

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ances, are well founded and ought to be redressed. You find it apparent that they called upon Louis Riel to come and help them and lead them last summer. You find it apparent that he came. You find it clear that, although he was talking peace, as the newspaper I have quoted says, the situation was somewhat critical. You find the Government recognising that fact in one sense, by taking precautionary steps with reference to the occupation of Fort Carlton, but you find no active step taken, that we can see, to prevent this long-continued condition of dissatisfaction from coming to that head to which it appeared to have been coming. I have looked at the reports of the Minister of the Interior for the last few years, with a view to seeing what their views were. It is almost worth while perhaps to advert to some of these reports, first of all with reference to the claim of those who are actually settled along the river banks in that quarter of the country, and who had taken up their lands according to the French fashion—a long, narrow frontage lot. That claim appears to have been recognised as a reasonable one a long time ago, because I have before me a map of the surveys that have been made under the new system, and in those parts I find out of the regular rectangular system of survey, those lots which fronted upon the river. One would almost suppose from some portion of these complaints that that policy had been departed from since. But I am loath to believe it; I do not say it; I should be very glad to have a distinct assurance upon this point; but I can hardly conceive that anything so unreasonable should have been done.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. As what?

Mr. BLAKE. As to depart from the policy which was arranged in 1878, of leaving the lands which were actually occupied by these people in long and irregular lots, to be occupied by them, and their titles to be settled according to their occupation practically, instead of insisting upon the rectangular system of survey to the disturbance of their homesteads. I do not charge the Government with having come to this conclusion, because we have no information, but it is one of the things upon which we ought to have information, and if in that there is nothing, then one of the alleged causes of grievances could not have had any effect at all. Now, then, in the year 1881, I find His Excellency informed, in the report of the Department of the Interior, as follows:—

"Your Excellency will be pleased to learn that the white and half-breed population of the Territories have, throughout the past season, enjoyed complete immunity from contagious and epidemic disease, that their crops have been good, that commerce has been brisk, and that altogether they have experienced during the year the inestimable advantages of peace, confidence and prosperity."

Then I come to the report of the next year, and I find it stated:

"The condition of the half-breed population of the Territories, and the claims which have been preferred in their behalf, to be dealt with somewhat similarly to those of the half-breeds of the Red River, have been receiving careful consideration, with a view to meeting them reasonably."

Then, in the year 1883, I find it stated:

"In the Edmonton district, surveys of lands settled on have been completed; and when the report of the surveyors, to whom the duty was entrusted, has been examined and approved in the usual way, the claims of actual settlers at that point will be considered and disposed of."

I find also the report of the Chief Inspector of Surveys, who says:

"A survey has been made of the old settlement at Edmonton. The adjustment suggested of the claims between the settlers seems to have been made to the general satisfaction of the parties concerned."

Then I turn to the report for the year 1884, and I find only one statement, so far as I can see, which bears upon the case, and that is the report of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territory, who says:

"In conclusion, I may state that there is a general contentment throughout the Territories and great confidence in the future. My