

refrained from making any remarks with respect to Riel which might injure his position. I do not make any special appeal, but on behalf of all those prisoners I ask that the Government should exercise clemency. We have a good example of clemency in a Government which has not so well treated the Indians as has the Canadian Government or the British Government. Some few years ago, when Sitting Bull was induced to return with his warriors to his reserve in the United States territory, what was done? A Métis—Jean Louis Légaré—for it is always known that half-breeds have great influence over all Indians—was charged by the United States Government to bring back the Sioux Indians who had committed so many depredations, murders, assassinations and massacres; and not only were the members of Sitting Bull's band pardoned, but Sitting Bull himself was pardoned, without any condition. And to-day he is on his reserve in American territory, an Indian just as peaceful as any citizen in the American Union. To sum up the facts of this case: We are asked to vote non-confidence in this Government in regard to its policy in the North West. We are asked to vote that hon. gentlemen opposite shall come to this side of the House and manage the affairs of the country. In other words, we are asked to condemn the policy of the Government in its treatment of the Indians. We are also asked to condemn the Government and its policy with regard to the half-breeds and the white settlers. Mr. Speaker, I cannot give my vote in favor of that motion. I believe the Government deserves great praise for having established law and order in such a large Territory, which only fifteen years ago was almost a wilderness. They deserve the thanks of the country for having achieved such a great result without shedding a drop of blood. The events of the last few months, which we all deplore, should not alarm us. The rebellion has been confined to a small portion of the French half-breeds and of the Indians; it has been limited to a small area, some 20 or 25 square miles. The rebels have been subdued after great loss of property and life, it is true, but law and order have been re-established, and I would say to the Government: Continue your policy of instructing the Indians of the North-West; continue to give them farm instructors, common schools and industrial schools. But I would venture, in that respect, to make one suggestion. I think it is of the greatest importance that all those instructors should have something in common with the Indians who are confided to their charge, and therefore I would say, if it is at all possible to find farm instructors or school teachers who speak the language of the Indians who are placed under them, preference should be given to them. I would go further. I would take the advice given by the First Minister in 1883, when he said:

"Well, I think I may almost ask the hon. gentleman to look into the report on these schools, where he will find their success more or less alluded to. I believe, however, that these schools are fairly successful, especially those under the charge of religious bodies, Catholic or Protestant. These are, I believe, more successful than the merely secular schools, where the schoolmasters, who are honest men and who do their duty, are actuated, of course, by a desire to support themselves and their families. The moral restraints of the clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, are greater. They are actuated by higher motives than any secular instructor can pretend to. Secular education is a good thing among white men, but among Indians the first object is to make them better men, and, if possible, good christian men, by applying proper moral restraints, and appealing to the instinct for worship which is to be found in all nations, whether civilised or uncivilised."

I hope that the commission which is just now sitting in the North-West, entrusted with the work of satisfying the half-breed claims as to land, will not only satisfy these claims, but will also examine into the amount of indemnity which is to be paid to the settlers who have suffered in consequence of the rebellion, and ascertain the amount of damages which has been sustained by the white population, so that it may be

known next Session, and a vote of Parliament given next Session. Further, I would say that I do not quite agree with the view that the half-breed must be considered either as an Indian or a white man. I believe that he should be considered as he is, as the connecting link between the Indian and the white; and therefore I hope the Government will see fit to give to these half-breeds some of the advantages which have been given to the Indians—some of the grain and seeds and agricultural implements which they require, in order to become familiar with agriculture. Now, I have only one more remark to make. It may be said that the half-breed families in the distressed districts are not worthy of consideration. Mr. Speaker, I believe there are many half-breeds in that district who were loyal to the Dominion Government and to Dominion institutions; but I say, whether they were or not, I hope the Government will not forget the women and children who are homeless in that district, but will do something to save them from actual starvation. A letter has just been published in the *Mail*, by Father André, who says:

"What a sad sight met my eyes the other day, when I visited this same parish of St. Antoine! The cottages which I had admired so much last year were most of them burned down to the ground; those standing were nothing but a wreck, with windows and doors broken. The fields and gardens lay waste and uncultivated; cattle and horses were gone; a few only remained, as the taking of them away was not worth the trouble. Everywhere I went I met with fearful evidence of wretchedness and poverty. It was a hard trial for me to bear. A good many houses were tenantless; the owners were dead or gone away; and as I saw all the ruins about me, I could not stop my tears, so heavy was my heart with grief. Who could help not to be moved with compassion in seeing those poor and unfortunate women, surrounded by their children, coming to meet me and to shake hands with me? They formed a perfect picture of squalor and desolation, in tatters, and broken hearted. The little children did not present a less pitiable appearance. They were there standing before me, crying to their full heart, and telling me all the sad misfortunes which had befallen them. They had lost all their clothes at the sack of Batoche's, and when they came back home they found all their furniture smashed in pieces and their dwellings left with the bare walls. There they were, destitute, and starvation staring them in the face, unless help be near at hand. Add to this that these poor women were most of them mourning for their dead sons or husbands, or for husbands and sons lying in prison at Regina, waiting for trial, and you can conceive how much these unfortunate people deserve our compassion."

Now, I have only to state what appears to me to be a necessity in the North-West. The Mounted Police force have shown its usefulness; no doubt a guard of some kind is necessary for the protection of the white settlers against the attacks of the Indians; but I question whether we could not really form a better body of men than the Mounted Police force, composed of picked men from the Mounted Police, the militia of the country, and, I would also add, from the half-breeds. In a recent correspondence to the *Mail* newspaper from St. Boniface, I read:

"What a pity it is that the Dominion Government cannot see its way to forming a corps of Métis for service as police on the plains! General Middleton can bear testimony to their valor and endurance; and I am sure the gallant troops also will give them a just measure of praise. At Edmonton a small force of loyal half-breeds, organised under the direction of Bishop Grandin, is doing splendid work, the men being unequalled as scouts. A division or two of Métis would greatly strengthen the North-West Mounted Police, and help to restore the prestige of that body among the Indians. The question is certainly worth the consideration of the Government. Father Dugast, of this archdiocese, has collected, in book form, many admirable stories about the Métis, which the Ottawa officials in charge of the police should read. They would convince them, if, after recent experience, they need convincing, that there is no better raw material for a mounted infantry man than the half-breed."

Now, I would ask the white settlers to have a little patience. They should not forget all the sacrifices the old Provinces have been making for them; they should not forget that for the last ten years all the resources of the country have been devoted to the development of that country; they should not forget that we have spent millions and millions for the purpose of building the Pacific Railway, for carrying on surveys throughout that vast territory, and for opening up registry offices and land offices; they should not forget that we have suspended the great public works