

Notwithstanding the opinion of the hon. member for L'Islet, there can be no doubt that the policy of the Government was the correct one. I will quote the authority of one who is very familiar with the Indian question. I refer to Hon. Mr. Laird. In an interview with a reporter of the *Montreal Daily Witness* the following appears in the issue of that paper on 19th June. Mr. Laird says:

"It is hardly my place to give the Government an Indian policy; but the only course, in my opinion, that can be adopted, is to patiently go on instructing and encouraging them to be farmers. In ten years many of them have made greater progress towards civilisation than any of the Indians on the reserves in Ontario have in a hundred; and in 1882, when I retired from office, the settled bands were, by their crops, reducing the cost of supporting them at least one-half. If in one generation, or even in two, you raise men from the level of savages to civilisation you are doing more than has ever been done in any other country. Many of the older men can never, I fear, be taught to work steadily or make provision for future needs, but the young men, who have never been on the war path or on the buffalo hunt, soon learn to look to their crops and take care of them. To the old Indians it is almost an impossibility to wait three months for a crop to grow. For instance, we had a good deal of difficulty in preventing them from digging up the potatoes as soon as the young plants show above the ground. On the whole, they made wonderful progress, from 1878 onward—well worth all the labor it cost."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have closed with the Indian question. I believe I have said enough to show that the policy of the Government in the treatment of the Indians in the North-West and Manitoba has been most liberal, and has produced good results. Now, let us see where are the complaints of the half-breeds, of which so much has been said by hon. gentlemen opposite. I do not intend to enter into that question at very great length. I will take them exactly as they appear from the last meetings of the half-breeds and the white settlers in the North-West. Let us take in the first place the grievances of the half-breeds as laid down in the Bill of Rights, which was adopted at the meeting at Prince Albert, on the 5th of September, 1884. I have not been able to obtain an English copy of it, but I find the original published in *Le Manitoba*. The first demand which they asked for is "the inauguration of responsible government." Now, I ask if the members for the other Provinces to-day are willing to create new Provinces in the North-West. I say that under the constitution of the North-west council they enjoy virtually all the liberties and privileges of responsible government. In 1870—I am speaking as a member from the Province of Quebec—we had a great deal to do with the establishment of the Province of Manitoba. Then the question was only one of paying \$43,600, to give the population of that country the privileges of popular government. Well, where are we now? The subsidy to the Province of Manitoba amounts to something like \$440,000, and if we are going to give Provinces to the North-West, then we must make up our minds to allow those new Provinces a few hundred thousand dollars more each. Sir, I do not believe that the people of the old Provinces are willing that they should be taxed to that extent, especially when no good result can be obtained. I ask, if you give them Provinces, will they be in any better position than they will be when a North-West council will be established for the different districts? I say no. A Legislature sitting in Regina will not be in any better position to know the wants of that Territory than the North-West council sitting to-day. When the time will come when a change in the constitution in the North-West will be necessary, when the council will have twenty-one members, when they will be entitled to become *ipso facto* Provinces, with an Assembly, then will be the time to consider the constitution of the whole North-West, and instead of giving them the expensive machinery of a Legislature, give them a council, for each district, such as they have to-day, which will be more beneficial to that country and more satisfactory to the older Provinces. I say that the desire for responsible government and a Legislature, as enjoyed by the older Provinces, is not shared in by all the

people of the North-West. The *Saskatchewan Herald*, of the 23rd of August, 1884, says:

"It cannot be long before Assiniboia will have the population necessary to set it up as a Province, and then the opportunity will be afforded of modernising the constitution of the remaining Territories."

The next grievance of the half-breeds is, that they want "the same guarantees to be allowed to the old settlers of the Territories as were allowed in 1870 to the settlers of Manitoba; that a certain area of land, to-day in the possession of the half-breeds, should be left to them, and that on application patents should be granted to them; that the half-breeds of the North-West shall receive each 240 acres of the land, as the half-breeds of Manitoba received; that 2,000,000 acres of land should be set aside by the Government for the benefit of half-breeds, Protestants and Catholics; that the Government should sell these lands, deposit the money in the bank, and that the interest of that money should be used for the maintenance of schools of instruction, industrial schools and hospitals, and for the purpose of procuring ploughs for the half-breeds, at least every spring, to enable them to sow their lands; that about 100 townships be taken, of the swamp lands of the North-West, which do not appear to be open for settlement for a long time; that these lands be set apart by the Government, and that they be distributed by the Government, every 18 years, among the children of the half-breed population. They say that the Province of Manitoba has been enlarged since 1870, and that the rights of the Métis to the titles of these lands have not been recognised. They, therefore, ask that these titles should be extinguished in favor of the half-breed children at the time of the transfer, and of such children as may be born for four generations." With regard to these lands and the grievances of the half-breeds, there is one point worthy of remark. A great deal has been said by the member for Quebec East (Mr. Laurier) about the lots at St. Laurent, on the river, not being divided into river lots of 10 chains by 2 miles. It is strange, indeed, that at this meeting, which took place on the 5th of September, 1884, there is not a single complaint about that—no complaint that the lands of the half-breeds have been badly surveyed or divided; that anyone has been evicted, or that even an attempt at eviction has been made. There are some items in these resolutions which are most unreasonable—some things which have not been demanded even by the half-breeds of Manitoba. There are some, however, which require a little explanation. As to the demand that lands should be set apart for educational purposes, it is well known that by the Dominion Lands Act two sections in each township are set apart to provide for the education of children; and, indeed, the half-breed and white population of the North-West have no reason to complain of being neglected by the present Government so far as schools are concerned. The number of schools in the North-West receiving Government aid was 19 in 1883 and 28 in 1884—17 Protestant and 11 Roman Catholic. With regard to the half-breed claims to the Indian title, I have already shown what the late Government have done. The Minister of the Interior said the half-breeds were not entitled to anything more than the white settlers, that is to say, a free homestead. The present Government, as I have also mentioned, immediately after they came into office, in 1879, changed that policy, and went back to their policy of 1870, with regard to the half-breeds of Manitoba, and asked this Parliament to give them power to deal with the half-breed claims as they might deem expedient. But it is said: Although you declared your policy, although you intended, evidently, to satisfy the claims of the half-breeds to the Indian title, you have done nothing since 1879. Well, as the hon. Premier explained last night, the Government had to face a great many difficulties. In the first place, on the one hand, Archbishop Taché, no doubt, having before