

tion at issue and to eliminate those side issues which the hon. gentleman (Mr. White), for a purpose of his own, has introduced into this discussion. I wish to do this in order that we may come to a clear and intelligent conclusion upon the clear issue which is presented to us. We know that in 1870, 1,400,000 acres were set apart to settle the Manitoba half-breed claims under the Administration of the present leader of the Government. Only the children of the half-breeds of Manitoba were to participate in that grant. From 1870 to 1873, when the hon. gentleman went out of power, nothing whatever was done to carry out the law. We find that, when the hon. member for East York (Mr. Mackenzie) came into power in 1874, he introduced a Bill extending to the heads of families as well as their children the right to participate in these grants; and in April, 1875, the Dominion lands agent at Winnipeg, and Messrs. Ryan & Machar, the commissioners, were appointed to take the census of the unenumerated half-breeds. We find that, in 1876, they reported, and reported that their work was still incomplete, and Mr. Ryan was ordered to take evidence anywhere in the Territories within two years. I understand the hon. gentleman to complain that there was inaction on the part of the Government of the hon. member for East York. There may have been inaction; I am not sufficiently well acquainted with the facts to undertake to reply on that point; but, from reading the papers which have been brought down, it appears to me that all that was ever done in the matter was done by those gentlemen before they went out of power. They appointed these commissioners to take evidence in order to carry out the law; they directed them to take the evidence wherever they went, and they did more than that, and that is what the hon. gentleman complains of. At that time remember that the half-breeds had not settled in settlements as they did later. The buffalo were not all gone from the plains then. Many of the half-breeds were engaged in buffalo hunting; and the only complaint the hon. gentleman makes is that the Government did not order these commissioners to follow the buffalo and to follow the half-breeds with the buffalo, and to take their evidence as they roamed about the plains. But they did order them, and it seems to me reasonable, wherever they were, in the discharge of their duties, when a half-breed offered his evidence to take it. And they did take it. In 1877 Newcome and Mills, at Emerson and Portage la Prairie, were ordered to take evidence, and in June, 1878, the then Minister of the Interior announced that he had appointed Duck to make an investigation, and I believe in February, 1878, he reported that he had made that investigation. Hon. gentlemen may ask was this matter of the half-breeds' grievance in relation to the extinguishment of the Indian title brought to the notice of the Government? Was there not neglect on their part in lying by? Did they not, by allowing it to lay in abeyance, almost waive their claim? If you look at this mass of papers, which I say, after a thorough examination of it, is a disgrace to the Department which brought it down—

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). Why?

Mr. DAVIES. Because the papers are so inextricably mixed up that it is impossible to find what you require.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). After they had been handled by your leader, and tossed about.

Mr. BLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I must not allow that observation to go without an immediate challenge. I answered it before, and I say it is indecent for the hon. gentleman to repeat it. I got those papers as they were sent to me by the directions of the Clerk of this House, and they reached the printers in the precise form and order in which they were brought down to the House. I state that now, Sir, upon my responsibility as a member.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). How does the hon. gentleman know that they reached the printers as he carried them away?

Mr. BLAKE. I know how they were when I handed them back to the Clerk.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). They were handled by him and others, and I know, as former chairman of the Printing Committee, that we used to have the greatest difficulty in getting papers that went into his hands, because they used to be handled by him in such a way and kept back until we had to send for them.

Mr. DAVIES. This insinuation of the hon. member only makes the matter worse, in my opinion. The hon. gentleman knows that these papers are arranged with no order. I looked through them myself. When he was in a calmer mood the other day he distinctly acknowledged in this House that the arrangement of the papers was disgraceful.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). I say so now.

Mr. DAVIES. Notwithstanding this disgraceful arrangement, notwithstanding the almost—I was going to say—design apparent on their face, by which they are so arranged that nobody could understand them, I have taken a good deal of trouble in going through them, and I have no hesitation in saying that from 1878 down to 1885, not a year went by without petitions being forwarded from those half-breeds, and those who represent them, to the Department of the Interior, praying that they would take up this question and settle it. We find in June, 1878, a petition from Prince Albert, forwarded through Captain Moore, and signed by 151 of these half-breeds, as I find it upon page 29 of these precious papers. These petitioners represent:

"Your petitioners would humbly represent that their rights in the participation in the issue of half-breed or settlers' scrip are as valid and binding as those of the half-breeds and old settlers of Manitoba, and are expected from them to be regarded by the Canadian Government as scrupulously as in that Province, and with a view to the adjustment of the same, your petitioners would humbly request that a census of said half-breeds and old settlers be taken, at as early a date as may conveniently be determined upon, with a view of apportioning to those of them who have not already been included in the census of Manitoba, their just allotment of land and scrip."

In February, 1878, Gabriel Dumont and John Fisher, chairman and secretary respectively of a public meeting of half-breeds held at St. Laurent, presented another petition to the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West, praying for similar treatment as that accorded to the Manitoba half-breeds. This is found on page 28, and reads as follows:—

"That there be granted to each half-breed head of family, and to their children, who have not participated in the distribution of scrip and lands in the Province of Manitoba, a like amount of scrip and like land grants as in Manitoba."

Then in April, 1878, Lieutenant-Governor Laird forwards a petition of the half-breeds of Prince Albert, praying for similar treatment; to be found on page 25, wherein they pray:

"That all the heads of families of half-breeds and their children who have not participated in the distribution of scrip and lands in the Province of Manitoba, to allow such like scrip and grants of lands to those allowed in the said province, at least that bush land be granted to them."

Then we find in August, 1878, the North-West Council passing a resolution, praying that the half-breed claims be granted—to be found on page 36. I will read that resolution, because I deem it of more than ordinary importance. It is a resolution of the only representative body that these poor people possess; it is a resolution of intelligent, educated men, men who felt their responsibility in making their statements; and we may assume that the North-West Council would not put upon record statements of that kind unless they personally knew them to be true. They say: