

quences of discontent? Sir, this was in effect the course of the Government; their course was not calculated to bring harmony and peace into the land, but was eminently calculated to create discontent and all those consequences which have actually taken place, and the consequences of that discontent was rebellion. It is said that this was a small grievance. Sir, this question is irrelevant. What may be of small value to you may be of great value to me; what may be of small value to the rich man in the east may be of great value to the poor man of the west, and moreover, whether it was of great value or small, did the half-breeds claim anything unfair, unjust, or unreasonable? What the half-breeds claimed was so just, so fair and so reasonable, that their claims had actually been guaranteed by a Statute of this Parliament. What the half-breeds claimed was nothing but what the Parliament of this country contemplated giving them. It is a thing of small value, they say. Sir, nothing is of small when it is granted by law. The half-breeds broke the law at last, but I charge against this Government that they themselves broke the law for six long years, when the Government failed to solve this question, when they failed to exercise the power which was vested in them by Parliament, I charge against them that it was an actual breach of the law. But as soon as the half-breeds broke the law the Government then complied with the law. What a sad commentary it is upon their conduct that after having for long years denied what had been claimed by constitutional prayers they should at last give to violence. But the Prime Minister said that at last he yielded for the sake of peace, that he made concessions. I say, on the contrary, that the Government made no concessions whatever. What the Government gave to the half-breeds was not a concession; it was simply the rights which had been guaranteed them by Parliament, and it is manifest—it must be manifest to every one—that any settlement of that question which would not have given to the half-breeds of the North-West the same privileges that had been given to the half-breeds of Manitoba would have been no settlement whatever. As my hon. friend beside me (Mr. Blake) said last Session, it was a matter of justice. He put it in a way which was forcible, and should be recalled to the House. He said:

"Justice is the same everywhere, justice is the same whether it be on the banks of the Saskatchewan, or on the banks of the Red River; justice demands that the same treatment which has been extended to the half-breeds on the banks of the Red River shall also be extended to the half-breeds on the banks of the Saskatchewan."

Certainly no one can take exception to that justice demanded that those people should receive the same treatment as the half-breeds of the Red River. Why was this not done? It was said that it would not be for the benefit of the half-breeds. The point may be well taken, but surely the only solution which could have reached the objection was to do as was suggested by Archbishop Taché—to enable them to legislate in such a way that the benefits given to the half-breeds should remain in their hands. It would have been quite easy to put in the law a small paragraph by which all sales of lands by half-breeds to white speculators should be null, and if that had been done it would have met the requirements of justice. I say that the Government were bound to act by the very letter of the law; and apart from any question of positive law they should have remembered those principles of humanity and prudence which are the basis of English law in this respect, as I have shown already. They should have acted in the spirit which is indicated by the 'expounders of the law; they should have acted in a conciliatory manner, for fear of the Indians—or, in this instance, let us say the half-breeds—should have destroyed the first planters, who are usually too few to defend themselves, or refuse all commerce and conversation with the planters. Those are the reasons

which should have induced them to act. There is something more which must have been extremely galling to these people, and that is the contempt with which all their demands were met by the Government. They petitioned time after time, and all their petitions remained unanswered. Archbishop Taché had told the Government that the half-breeds are a highly sensitive race; that they keenly resent injury and insult, and that they make daily complaints on that point. When they had thus been warned by Archbishop Taché, was it not enough to drive them into the unfortunate course which was at last adopted when they were treated in such a manner. I say that there is no race of men under heaven which values its own dignity and suffered the indignities that those people suffered, without resenting them in some manner. Sir, the conduct of the Government is absolutely indefensible. So indefensible is it that the ministerial press, at the outset of the rebellion, more than once admitted that the half-breeds had serious grievances to complain of, and I need not say that the case must be desperate indeed if any organ of the Administration could admit the possibility of wrong on the part of the Government. But the attempt of the Government has been to minimise their own wrong, by saying that in the great majority of individual cases no just demands had been presented to the Government, but that those presenting such demands were not acting *bona fide* but were speculators who having once obtained their rights in Manitoba were attempting to obtain another grant in the North-West Territories. We find the Government presented papers or suppressed papers, accordingly as the presenting or suppressing would lead to the end in view. They refused to bring down papers which were asked for and they brought down papers which were not asked for. They refused to bring down the files of the Department which would have given a consecutive and complete history of the matter, but they bring down reports prepared after the event and prepared to suit the event. There is in connection with this matter a most important report which we should have had on the Table of the House long ago. I refer to the report of the commission appointed during the month of March last year to investigate the claims of the half-breeds of the North-West Territories. This report should have been on the Table of the House upon the very opening day of the Session; and I say this to the majority of this House, that if they had not abdicated their power and right of supervision over this Government, this report would have been upon our Table at that time. Why, Sir, here was a commission appointed to investigate a most important public matter. This commission has sat, and its report has been presented to the Government for more than six or seven months now; and yet the Government still retain the report and refuse to bring it down. At the opening of the Session I myself enquired of the Government whether it would be brought down, and the answer given to me was that I might move for it. I did move for it on the 4th of March; and now we are at the 20th April, in the eighth week of the Session, and that report has not yet been laid up on the Table. This delay is not the result of accident or of circumstances; but it is wilful and deliberate. No man in his senses will pretend that the Government have not had the time or the means, if they had so chosen, to obtain the information contained in that report. Sir, it is no wonder to me that the petitions of the half-breeds should have met with such contempt as they met with at the hands of the Government when the very mandates of this House are thus disregarded. The majority in this House can excuse and tolerate such abuses; but the majority in this House should not forget that such abuses against constitutional Government always rebound in some way or other against the people who are guilty of them. If such abuses are tolerated by an assembly of a