

initials precisely for the same reason that the Dutchman called his son John. He said he did so because that was his name, and I subscribed "D. M." simply because they happen to be my initials. The First Minister last year, and the hon. the Minister of the Interior has to-night repeated it here, as he has repeated it elsewhere, the statement as to the appointment of Messrs. Ryan and Machar. He said that the enumeration made by them was very incomplete. They reported 5,888 half-breeds entitled to share in the grant made by the Manitoba Act, and 226 others were reported by the land agent at different places. Five hundred others were estimated as being entitled, whose names had not been ascertained and who were not reported to the Department at the time the distribution was made. The First Minister said last year that there were 5,000 others on the plains who were under the Manitoba Act entitled to share in this distribution who were not provided for, as it was intended by Parliament they should be in fact. The hon. gentleman has more than once stated that if we had only taken the census provided by Governor Archibald's enumeration, in 1870, none of the difficulties would have occurred; that the distribution would have taken place very much earlier and the half-breed population would have been satisfied. We have a census of the entire half breed population of the North-West. That census embraces something like 4,800, and we find from what was done by the commissioners appointed by the hon. gentlemen that upwards of 1,700 of those were in the North-West Territories at all events before 1870. So that if we take those 1,700 from the 4,800 in the Territories, and if we take also those who shared in the half-breed grants in Manitoba, hon. members will see how very far the Minister was from being accurate in the statement he made. In fact, it seemed to me at the time very much more important that we should be prompt in making a distribution among those people than that we should ascertain the precise number that were entitled to it. Certainly, we are not restricted in the extent of the area of lands at our disposal, and whether they received 240 or 200 acres was a matter of far less consequence to the country than that they should be satisfied with the condition of things that existed. The First Minister stated last year in the same speech that nine-tenths of the half-breeds in the North-West Territories had already shared in the grant; in fact, that enquiry had been made, and in one case fourteen out of seventeen had already received their allotments; and so it was with respect to others whose names he mentioned. The hon. gentleman in making that statement, gave a sufficient answer to the statement made by the Minister of the Interior to-night, and by himself earlier in the debate. If those people had so largely shared in the allotment of 1,400,000 acres to Manitoba, it shows very clearly that the whole population entitled under the Manitoba Act, had been included in the enumeration, and that the Government actually went on distributing the land among the people at as early a period as they could possibly have done. The hon. gentleman has said that we did nothing with respect to the half-breeds in the outlying territories. Well, Sir, the time had not come for dealing with the half-breed population lying beyond the boundaries of Manitoba. We had, first, to extinguish the Indian title; it was not possible to deal with the half-breeds until the Indian population had been dealt with. And it was with a great deal of difficulty, that the Indians were, in some instances, induced to treat with the Government for the surrender of their claims to the North-West. We know that many who were intended to be embraced in Treaty No. 6, did not come in till 1878, and that the whole of the Indians of the south-western country, embracing the Assiniboines, the Blackfeet, the Bloods, and other Indians in that region, were not treated with until 1877; and until those Indians were treated with, it was impossible to undertake to deal with the half-breed population, either by way of

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allowing them land in any particular district, or by way of extinguishing their title. In 1878 the Government did take steps with a view to ascertaining the wishes of the half-breeds. We withdrew temporarily Major Walsh from the force; we gave him verbal instructions; we asked him to visit the Indians in that section with a view to inducing them to choose their places of settlement, in order that the Government might allot them reservations, and also visit the half-breeds and ascertain what their wishes were, and advise them to choose localities in which to settle, as soon as it was ascertained that they were desirous to have reservations. The hon. gentleman has referred to the Act of 1879 as indicating the intention of the Government to deal with the half-breed population. Now, I might say with regard to that Act of 1879, that it was suggested before the preceding Government had retired from office. If hon. gentlemen will look at the despatch which was addressed by the then Minister of the Interior to the Lieutenant-Government of the North-West Territories, on the 18th of March, 1878, he will see this clause:

"The propriety of passing an Act to secure for the half-breeds some more speedy means of securing a title for Homestead purposes than under the provision of the present homestead and Dominion Lands Act has for some time past engaged my attention."

The fact is that we did propose to deal with the half-breed population and it might not be altogether out of place for me to state what I contemplated submitting to my colleagues for their approval if we had succeeded in the elections of 1878. The hon. gentleman has referred to our neglect to make surveys. Well, that is hardly relevant to the motion.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). I did not say anything about surveys.

Mr. MILLS. We sought to satisfy the half-breed population, and to give them the assurance that they would not be disturbed. We informed them that they should have their lands allotted to them at the earliest possible moment. It is true we did not propose to comply with all the requests they made to us. They had asked us for seed grain, for agricultural implements, although some of them had not any particular fixed abode. I might say this, however, with regard to that, that it was a policy which it did not seem unreasonable to me to adopt in the event of a certain place of settlement. The hon. gentleman knows that by the Act of 1870 the children of the half-breeds of Manitoba were to receive 1,400,000 acres of land. He knows that before the distribution took place the majority of those were entitled to have a part of their interest in those lands. He knows that this grant, while it had satisfied them, had conferred on them no permanent advantage. It did seem to me that if we could succeed in securing the settlement and location of the grant to the population, then we might propose to deal with them in some other way than by making immediate grants to their children; and by the Act of 1879 hon. gentlemen took power to deal with the half-breeds of the North-West Territory, to satisfy any clamors in connection with the extinguishment of the Indian title, in reference to the half-breeds of the North-West Territory outside of the limits of Manitoba. Now, hon. gentlemen took that power. It was not necessary that they should adopt precisely the same lines which were adopted in Manitoba. They could have dealt with the half-breeds in another way. They could have dealt with them in a way more advantageous to the half-breed population than that which was adopted; but having taken that power and having in the end dealt with the half-breeds precisely in the same way, there was no reason why that should not have been done at a much earlier period than that at which the distribution ultimately took place. The half-breeds asked that they should not be disturbed in their holdings. We assured them that they would not be disturbed. They asked one of their race should be appointed to the North-