

statement? Did he wish us to conclude from it that the Government or Mr. Russell had done anything? Does he state that in that Order in Council the Government showed any evidence of a disposition to settle the Indian title question? Did Mr. Russell proceed to the west to make an enumeration of the half-breeds? or did he act on the power which, in 1879, the Government took from the House? No; when the hon. gentleman drags this into the debate, he does it for the purpose of inducing those who have not carefully studied the question, to believe that the Government really took some steps to mitigate this great grievance. Why, their action had nothing more to do with the matter than have the affidavits the hon. gentleman referred to. The hon. gentleman stated further that, as regards the point where the rebellion rose, the major part of those who took part in it had their Indian title already extinguished, and that therefore that grievance was not the cause of the rebellion. The hon. gentleman must surely have listened to the argument, he did not attempt to controvert it, presented by the mover of the resolution, in which the latter showed that if it was only the local grievance existing in the minds of the leaders of the rebellion, that they were the main spring of the revolt, it would have been a mere riot and not a rebellion. No; it was the moral effect those insurgents derived from the existence of great grievances throughout the country that gave force to the rebellion, and no man knows better than the hon. gentleman that if it had not been for the existence of those grievances, for the removal of which the half-breeds had petitioned year after year, and to facilitate the removal of which the hon. gentleman and his friends never, until the last moment, raised a finger, the rebellion never would have assumed greater proportions than those of an unlawful assembly or riot. The hon. gentleman went to the North-West last year, as the Minister of the Interior. I think he did right. I think it is a matter for regret that his predecessors had not taken the same course years ago. It was their duty to have informed themselves, personally, with reference to the facts of the grievances stated in the petitions which, year after year, poured into the Department, and which were pigeonholed with that masterly inactivity that characterised the Department in the past five or six years. But when the hon. gentleman returned, after having saturated his mind with the facts, did he arrive at the conclusion that it was because of the settlers' grievances alone the rebellion assumed the important proportions it did? He knows well that the conclusion he formed in his mind was, that had the grievances of the North-West half-breeds, relative to the extinguishment of the Indian title, been removed years ago, there never would have been a rebellion at all. He stated when he returned from his trip, in a speech he delivered on 16th December, at Weston, that the very action taken by the Government, the tardy incomplete action in January, 1885, when the rebellion was almost under way, precipitated the rebellion itself. What action? The action taken to settle the North-West half-breed grievances in relation to the extinguishment of the Indian title alone. That the hon. gentleman said was the backbone of the rebellion, and it was, he said, their efforts to settle that, their tardy efforts to extend the right hand of fellowship to the half-breeds, that precipitated the rebellion; because the leader of the rebellion knew that if we settled that question, we would have removed many grievances and taken from him the support of a large number of his followers. What did the hon. gentleman say?

"Now then, gentlemen, it will be asked, how then did the rebellion occur? How was it that, if these things were settled, this rebellion broke out? I believe it broke out because of the action of the Government, and not because of its inaction. It broke out, as Mr. Astley has stated in his letter, and which information he got from Riel himself, because Riel, seeing that the Government had taken action and that the half-breed claims, such as they were, were about to be settled, believed that his little game will be spoiled."

Mr. DAVIES,

The hon. gentleman, remark you, had come back from the North-West, he had acquired personal knowledge of the facts, he knew that these grievances had rankled in the breasts of these unfortunate people for years and years, and he knew, when he stated that, that if they had taken time by the forelock, if they had moved a year, or even six months earlier than they did, the cause of the rebellion would have been removed, and we never would have had a rebellion at all. I think I am justified in making the charge, and basing it upon the hon. gentleman's own evidence, that, if it had not been for the delay and inaction of the Government, and for their subsequent ill-advised action at the wrong time, the rebellion would never have taken place. So much for that point. Then the hon. gentleman went on to show that certain Qu'Appelle half-breeds were not influenced by any grievances of their own as to the extinguishment of the Indian title, but that their object was to get possession of the whole of the lands of the North-West. But did the hon. gentleman state when that mind took possession of the half-breeds? Was that their mind before Riel rose and before the Duck Lake tragedy? No, but it was their mind after the success of Riel had induced those unfortunate people to believe that he was going to be successful all around, and so their heads were turned. That was their state of mind after the rebellion broke out, but it was not their state of mind when the rebellion broke out, and it was not that which induced the rebellion. Let us look for a few moments—I promise the House not to be very lengthy upon the subject—at one or two prominent facts in connection with this particular question now before the House, in order that we may judge whether or not this question entered largely into those motives which induced the North-West half-breeds to rebel. How many half-breeds do we find there are in the North-West? I think I am speaking correctly when I say something about 4,800. If I am incorrect, I will thank the hon. gentleman to correct me. Of those 4,800, it appears by the evidence produced by the Government themselves that their own commissioner has reported that 2,000 had just claims which were unredressed. The hon. gentleman shakes his head. I think I am not far astray. I am speaking, of course, with reference to the whole question of the half-breeds of Manitoba and the North-West.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). Dead and alive.

Mr. DAVIES. I think Mr. Street reports that he has settled nearly 2,000 claims.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). He settled 1,710 claims, and that includes the dead whose heirs were settled with.

Mr. DAVIES. Does the hon. gentleman say that these were all that were settled? There were 300 settled besides, making about 2,000. I may be a few astray, but I am approximately near the truth, so near it that I may say there were nearly 2,000 settled with. So that out of 4,800 half-breeds, nearly 2,000 were shown to have real grievances which were acknowledged by the Government commissioner and reported upon. That was an enormous proportion, and I think I shall be able to show that these were not grievances of a day, but, as shown by my hon. friend who moved this resolution, were of long-standing, and had been presented to the Government not once or twice but scores of times, not by the half-breeds alone, but by all those who had knowledge of the matter and who lived in that country, by their priests, by their bishops, by their magistrates, by the only body they had to represent them, the North-West Council, by the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West, by the members of the North-West Council individually and by the council collectively, and by all those whose duty it was to bring this matter to the notice of the Government. Let me for a moment go back to the inception of this matter, and I will rapidly run over the historical points. I wish to call attention to the real ques-