

This country had been under the sway of the Hudson's Bay Company since 1670, and had been inhabited since 1811 by a colony of Scotchmen, brought over by Lord Selkirk. The population when I went there consisted of 12,000 souls. From 1811 to 1870 the entire white population of the country did not grow to over 2,000, the remainder, about 10,000, being half-breeds. These half-breeds were of two classes, one deriving their white blood from the French and the other from the Scotch settlers. The latter seemed to devote themselves to the cultivation of the land, while those of French descent became hunters, although in either case not exclusively so. Another distinction was that the French half-breeds were Catholics, while the others were Protestants. Well, the Government took over the territory, after paying 300,000*l.* to the Hudson's Bay Company, and were called upon to govern it. The question was how they were to get to it. They tried to send a Governor through the State of Minnesota, but, owing to the trouble in the land itself, and sympathy on the part of the State, he did not succeed in getting to our new province. It then became necessary to make the journey another way, starting from the north shore of Lake Superior. This journey had to be made in a birch bark canoe, with a body of Indians, who had been accustomed to the work during the time of the Hudson's Bay Company. Three weeks and three days were spent before we eventually succeeded in getting into the country. Colonel Wolseley had gone just before with his troops for the purpose of putting down the rebellion. Mr. Begg has alluded to the early history of the government of this territory. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been a mistake to grant responsible government to a people so little accustomed to municipal institutions of any kind. In this case I agree with Mr. Begg that it was right. The country could never have been pacified by the prosecution and punishment of offenders in the troubles of the past. It was clear that the concession of responsible government, which gave the people the power to govern themselves as they pleased, was an implied condonation of the past. They could hardly be expected to take active steps to bring their own trusted leaders and friends to punishment for offences in which they had shared or sympathised. There was therefore nothing to be done but to look steadily forward—to ignore as far as possible the past, to be responsible only for the peace of the present and future. This was done, and, though there had never been an election in the country, and although they knew nothing of the ordinary forms of government, yet, in the course of a few months, or a year or so, things went on pretty much as in any other civilised country, and in the course of a few years our proceedings were conducted with as much regularity and system as elsewhere. (Applause.) It struck me that Mr. Begg did not give the Indians all the credit to which they are entitled. He speaks of their great feature as gratitude. I think they may claim something more. I