

any more than on the Red River, ever had the thought of rebelling against the authority of Her Majesty. It was not against Her Majesty the Queen; they rebelled against the tyranny of the Canadian Government. It is quite possible that the half-breeds just reclaimed from a nomadic life, having practically been under the authority of the British rule not more than 7 or 8 years, have not yet learned to love the British flag, because so far the flag in the hands of hon. gentlemen opposite has not carried that justice which has gone with the British flag everywhere for the last fifty years. But this I say, and I say it coming from a Province where, less than 50 years ago, every man of the race to which I belong was a rebel, and where to-day every man of that race is a true and loyal subject, as true and as loyal as any that breathes—I say give these men justice, give them freedom, give them their rights, treat them as for the last 40 years you have treated the people of Lower Canada, and by-and-bye, throughout those Territories, you will have contentment, peace and harmony where to-day discord, hatred and war are ruining the land.

Mr. GIROUARD. Some two or three months ago, at the beginning of the rising of the North-West, I felt it my duty to look into the facts which were alleged to have been the cause of the uprising. Like the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat, and like every French Canadian, my sympathies were with the so-called rebels. I thought these rebels, the half-breeds of the North-West, had grievances, as the French Canadians had in 1837. Not being familiar with the facts, I had to make a special study of the political history of Manitoba and the North-West. I admit I was ignorant of the facts then. Like a great many others, I thought that my fellow countrymen of that far country were ill-used. But what has been the result of my study, and I have studied the question, not for the purpose of preparing a plea to defend the Government; I have done so as an independent member of the House.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. GIROUARD. Yes; I think there are very few members on the other side who have shown as much independence as I have in the past. I commenced that study for the sole purpose of getting information, as a representative of the people, who cares more for the sake of the country than for the sake of power, and I came to the conclusion that the half-breeds had grievances, undoubtedly, but not grievances of such magnitude as to warrant their resorting to arms. The whole speech of the hon. gentleman who has just sat down can be resumed in two points. He says, in the first place, the policy of the present Government was not to extinguish the Indian title in favor of the half-breeds, and in the second place, he charges this Government with being guilty of gross mismanagement in not dividing the river lots according to the old custom which prevailed on the Red River. It seems to me very astonishing that, in order to find fault with the present Government, the hon. gentleman should be obliged to repudiate the policy of the Government of which he was a member. He tried ineffectually to show that the policy of the late Government was the reverse of what it really was. Its policy was, so far as the treatment of the half-breeds was concerned, not to give them a particle of the Indian title, but to treat them as white settlers. The leader of the Opposition had ample time to make a close examination of all the documents that have been produced, documents which he had, but which a great many other members had not, for this reason, that the moment the return containing these papers was laid on the Table, the papers disappeared without having even been endorsed in the Sessional Papers Office. I applied for them several times, but was unable to get them or any clue to where they were. I do not want to accuse any one; it was undoubtedly the right of the hon. gentleman to take possession of the papers, but I deny his right to exclusive possession. I had the

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right to see them. It was my good fortune, however, to peruse within the last twenty four hours a second copy, which was prepared for the Senate. I was greatly surprised when I heard the leader of the Opposition the other evening, after quoting document after document, after quoting the petition of the half-breeds of St. Albert and St. Laurent to the Government of the hon. member for East York (Mr. Mackenzie) in 1878—I was surprised, I say, that he quoted those petitions without quoting the replies, trying thereby to impress upon the House and upon the country that these were representations made to the present Government which had remained unanswered. I could hardly credit it. I had read enough of those papers to know that the quotations made by the leader of the Opposition were not complete. What is the answer which the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills), the Minister of Interior at that time, gave? And there is no man in this House, or out of it, who can be convinced that the answer of the hon. gentleman had some other bearing than upon the application for assistance for seed grain or agricultural implements; it is an expression of the Government's unwillingness to consider the demands of the half-breeds to the Indian title. What is the answer?

"The half-breeds, who have, in some respects, the advantage over new settlers in the Territories, should be impressed with the necessity of settling down in fixed localities and directing their energies to agricultural pursuits, in which case land would no doubt (not a sure thing it appears) be assigned to them in the same way as to the white settlers."

I am willing to leave it to any independent man to tell me if this means the half-breeds shall have greater rights than the settlers, but this is not all. In order that no doubt should remain in the minds of the half-breeds, the hon. gentleman added: "But beyond this they must not look to the Government for any special assistance in their farming operations." It is really surprising that, in order to obtain a party triumph, the speaker who has just taken his seat should be obliged to repudiate his party, but he has done more, he has been obliged to mis-state the policy of the present Government. He has made special mention of the speech of the Premier in March last, when he said that, according to his own opinion, the half-breeds were not entitled to more consideration than the white settlers, taking the same opinion as was expressed by the Minister of the Interior of the late Administration; but what the Premier did not say on that occasion he said last night, and his policy is there to say that, from 1870 to the present time, sacrificing his own opinion, he has taken the policy of his colleagues and has given to the half-breeds a right to what we call the Indian title. The policy of the Government in this respect was sanctioned in the Manitoba Act of 1870. Hon. gentlemen opposite who pretend that their adversaries are like the Bourbons, that they cannot learn anything, came to power in 1873, and were there for five years, and what have they learned? They even forgot the principle of treating these half-breeds which had been laid down by the present Administration and the present party; and, in 1879, in order to give encouragement to that class of the population of the North-West which had been so grossly ignored by the late Administration, the present Government laid down again its policy to give the half-breed the right to the Indian title in the soil. I think this is about a *résumé* of the first part of the argument of the hon. member. Allow me to say one word *en passant*—I intend to refer to it more fully later on—in reference to the second portion of his plea, or his speech. He says: You have grossly ill-used these half-breeds in not giving them river lots at St. Laurent. Is the hon. member aware that these surveys were made by the late Administration? Is he aware of it? Are you aware that the surveys of the land on the Saskatchewan for the parish of St. Laurent were made in 1878, under the direction of the late Administration? I would like to have an answer.