

North-West where he would have been able to deal with the claims question on the spot and settle them on terms reasonable both to the country and the half-breeds and the other settlers chiefly interested. But, as we all know, an accident befell Mr. Russell. He was detained in his room for a long time, and was unable to go to the North-West, as he had intended to do and as the Government desired. The case was not one of such urgency as to require that a substitute, that a less efficient man, should be sent in his place, and so long as there was any hope that Mr. Russell would be able to undertake the important work, the Government, having regard to his great experience and to his familiarity with the English, French and Cree languages, wisely deferred the appointment of any one else until they had to give up the hope of his being able to go at all. Now, there were several classes of claims presented to the Government in relation to the North-West. There were of course a number of other subjects referred to in the petitions. We have heard them read to-night. There was permission asked to hunt the buffalo, but I am not aware that anyone ever prevented a half-breed or Indian from hunting the buffalo; the misfortune was, there were no buffalo to hunt. There was also the question of fishing rights, but I am not aware—although, I am bound to say, I think it would have been wise if it were otherwise—that anyone ever prevented a half-breed, an Indian, or a settler from fishing as he pleased or where he pleased, at his own sweet will. I think the time, however, is rapidly coming when fishery regulations will have to be adopted in the North-West to protect our valuable fisheries there. But, so far as the principal claims are concerned, they may be reduced to two great classes: First, the extinguishment of the Indian title; and, second, the giving of patents for the lands on which the people were settled. As to the extinguishment of the Indian title, it is well to remember that the rebellion occurred on the Saskatchewan, that there was no rebellion anywhere else, and that, therefore, in so far as the rebellion may have been said to have been caused by the non-extinguishment of the Indian title, we have the right to enquire as to whether the persons who petitioned from the Saskatchewan districts were entitled to have any Indian title extinguished, or whether that particular grievance had not in their case been already removed. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Laurier) has declared that the suggestion that these people had had their Indian title extinguished in the North-West, is an insult to them. He has charged the *Toronto Mail* with having been guilty of the grossest insult towards the half-breeds, by implying that they went into the rebellion for causes which were in fact no causes at all, because the particular grievance in question in their case, had been settled. I have yet to learn that it is an insult to state facts with regard to any people. The particular facts in regard to this case are that the people of the South Saskatchewan, where the troubles arose, had, in the overwhelming majority of cases, their Indian title already extinguished before the rebellion; and that, as to the men engaged as councillors of Louis Riel, a large proportion of them had had their titles extinguished in Manitoba, and, therefore, so far as the extinguishment of the Indian title was concerned, there was no ground whatever for the rebellion which took place on the Saskatchewan, and it took place at that point alone. The place where, perhaps, there had been fewer half-breeds with the Indian title extinguished than in almost any other part of the North-West Territories, was in the Edmonton district at St. Albert; yet, we know that when the rebellion broke out at the Saskatchewan, the young half-breeds of St. Albert enlisted on the side of the Government, and were prepared to do battle for their Queen and their country like the other settlers and volunteers. They did not pretend, that although the Indian title had not been extinguished in their case, they had any ground to rebel, but, on the contrary, recognising that their

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best interest was to be found in the preservation of the peace and in the prosperity of the country, they enlisted on behalf of their Queen and their country, and aided in preventing the success of the rebellion. So far as the half-breeds in the Saskatchewan district were concerned, the Indian title had in fact been extinguished. Now, Sir, as to this question generally, what are the facts? There is no doubt whatever there were great differences of opinion in the North-West as to the best means of dealing with the Indian title. The hon. gentleman has read from the proceedings of the North-West Council, their proposed method of dealing with this matter. I will repeat the resolution of the council, but first let me look at the recommendation of Archbishop Taché than whom, as the hon. gentleman very properly said, no one is in a position to speak with more authority in relation to the North-West matters. Now, his Grace the Archbishop recommended this:

"I estimate the half-breed population actually in the North-West to number about 1,200 families."

The House will excuse my repeating the quotation made by the hon. gentleman:

"Well, let the Government make twelve reserves for them in the very places the half-breeds themselves would like to have them."

"Each reserve should be for 100 families at least, and contain an area of 12 square miles of available land—that is to say, the extent of four townships. All the half-breeds, men, women and children, residing in North-West on the 1st January, 1879, ought to receive two non-negotiable scrips for 80 acres of land each; to be located by them in anyone of the twelve above-mentioned reserves."

You will notice that the Archbishop's suggestion is that they should have 160 acres of land, precisely the quantity of land which the hon. gentleman says was inferior to that which was given in Manitoba, where the children of half-breeds had 240 acres, and for proposing which he condemned the Government—

"Said lands could neither be sold, mortgaged nor taxed before they should have passed through the hands of at least the third generation of those who received them, or of their representatives. I say, at least, because I am strongly inclined to believe that it is desirable that such land be entirely unalienable; and such idea cannot seem unreasonable to those who consider the advantages deriving from a similar policy with regard to real and inalienable estates of noblemen. Raise the half-breeds to the condition of landlords; you will thereby confer a real benefit on them and we will not see a repetition of the regrettable occurrence which took place in Manitoba."

That was the suggestion of His Grace the Archbishop. Looking at it as a practical man, and not pretending for a moment to have anything like the authority in dealing with the affairs of the half-breeds that His Grace has, I think the people of this country, as a whole, would not have favored the setting apart of twelve reserves, which were to be absolutely inalienable, and were not to be subject to taxation, and to establish, in fact, a system of landlordism in the North-West. But, leaving that aside, what had we from the North-West Council? This is a body representing the people of the North-West, a representative body which is supposed to speak for the people of the North-West, and the very first resolution they presented was a condemnation of the policy of His Grace. In their first resolution they declare:

"That it would be injudicious to set apart reserves of land for the half-breeds of the North-West Territory, or give them negotiable scrip."

So you will see that the first people to object to the policy suggested by His Grace were the representatives of the people of the North-West themselves, in council assembled, in the very petition for not obeying which, for not accepting which, for not dealing in accordance with which, this Government has been attacked both in Parliament and in the country. What did they propose? Here was their proposition:

"That in view, however, of the fact that grants of land or issues of scrip were made to the half-breeds of Manitoba towards the extinguishment of the Indian title to the lands of that Province, there will undoubtedly be general dissatisfaction among the half-breeds of the