

"The application of the petitioners to be aided by the Government with seed and agricultural implements in their farming operations, I confess I am not disposed to view favorably. I do not see upon what grounds the half-breeds can claim to be treated in this particular, differently from the white settlers in the Territories.

"The half-breeds who have, in some respects, the advantages over new settlers in the Territories, should be impressed with the necessity of settling down in fixed localities and directing their energies towards pastoral or agricultural pursuits, in which case lands would, no doubt, be assigned to them in the same way as to white settlers. But beyond this they must not look to the Government for any special assistance in their farming operations."

So that this paper of my hon. friend from Bothwell did not at all apply to the question of the lands and the extinguishment of the Indian title, but it applied to the treatment of the half-breeds and their claim to be aided by being furnished seed, and agricultural implements. That was all, and yet during the whole of the speech of the right hon. gentleman, he insisted that the Mackenzie Government had denied the claims of the half-breeds to a special grant of land in extinguishment of the Indian title. Then again, continuing in the same strain, the right hon. gentleman charged his predecessors with dereliction of duty, because they had failed, while in power, to settle the land claims of the half-breeds. Sir, is it possible that the right hon. gentleman had the courage to advance such a plea as this in justification of himself? How long is it since the Mackenzie Administration has fallen from power? It is six full years; nearly seven years have elapsed since then. Well, Mr. Speaker, if it was a crime in the Mackenzie Administration to have failed to settle those claims, how can the hon. gentleman defend himself when he has allowed nearly seven years to elapse without doing so either? The charge against the Mackenzie Administration is perfectly groundless, as I shall demonstrate before I take my seat, but if that pretended excuse be the only justification which the right hon. gentleman can urge in his behalf, I leave it to the judgment of this country to say whether it is a sufficient justification or not. Now, the hon. gentleman proceeded very exultingly to declare that there had been no case of oppression, that there was not even a pretension that the people had been oppressed, that not a single half-breed had been removed from his holding. No cause for oppression! Why, Mr. Speaker, was it not oppression when men had long been settled upon their lands, even before the country was transferred to Canada, when they had made homes for themselves, when they had put buildings upon their lands, and when, under the policy of the present Government, land surveyors were sent among them, who ran lines across their fields, splitting up farms and fields, who ran their lines so as to put the buildings on one side and the field on the other; and after these people had sent delegation after delegation to this Government for redress, had been constantly refused redress. If this was not a case of oppression, I would like to know what can constitute oppression in the eyes of the right hon. gentleman? The homes of these people were invaded—not accidentally but deliberately—under the policy of the Government for the survey of that country; and yet, the hon. gentleman says there was no case of oppression. Sir, what was it then that Father André protested against when he wrote to the Government in the following manner, first setting forth that settlers there have settled according to the old customs, ten chains fronting on the river; and trusting the Government would survey accordingly, he adds:

"Their surprise may be imagined when they saw the lands along the Saskatchewan measured off into squares of forty chains, without heed being given to their just claims and protests."

What is it that Father Vigreville protested against when he wrote to Captain Devile, chief of the surveys:

"I, myself, caused Mr. Duck, the Dominion land surveyor, to write several times to Ottawa, and always without success, until finally I became discouraged myself, and several people were obliged to leave the settlement, some selling their land for a nominal price, and others abandoning it without any compensation.

Mr. LAURIER,

"In February, 1883, the Rev. Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney were deputed by the settlement to set forth our complaints and present our demands to the Government. They were given a written promise that the lands we occupied should be surveyed in river lots of 10 chains frontage by 2 miles in depth, and that this survey should take place in the autumn following (1883). I understand you to tell me to have patience; that everything will come out right in the end. Those are words which, permit me to say, I cannot accept; the time is past.

The hon. gentleman then proceeded to say that no half-breed had ever been molested, that no half-breed had ever lost his holding. In an organ of the Government, *Le Manitoba*, of 13th May last, I find the following letter from half-breeds, which was first published in English in the *Edmonton Bulletin*. I have it here in French, and I will re-translate it into the original English. This is what the paper goes on to say:

"Far from obtaining liberal terms, we have not even obtained justice. Last summer we had the agent of the Government to settle all questions relating to lands in this locality. If the agent's only object had been to provoke the half-breed rebellion, he could not have done better than by following the course he has done, and giving the decision he has recorded, which decisions are always characterised by the most manifest injustice. It would be impossible to state a case of a section of land in dispute between a half-breed and a stranger where the half-breed has not been sacrificed. In many instances half-breeds who for a long time have been in possession of these lands, have had their lands taken away from them and divided among strangers newly arrived; and these unfortunate half-breeds have been thereby forced to leave the place and go and settle elsewhere, where the same fate perhaps awaits them in the future. Is it believed we have no grievances? We have grievances and we feel them deeply.

"Signed,
SAMUEL CUNNINGHAM,
OCTAVE BELLEROSE,
JOHN CUNNINGHAM,
BAPTISTE COURTEPATTE,
JOHN ROWLAND,
O. ROWLAND,
L. CHASTELLAIRE,
L. GORIVEAU."

Then the hon. gentleman proceeded to say that the whole blame of the rebellion and its consequence must be cast upon the Grit party. When the hon. gentleman has made such a statement as I have just referred to, that there are no grievances among the half-breeds in the North-West, he may as well say that the Grit party is responsible for the rebellion and all its consequences. Such rant—for such language is nothing more than rant—is unworthy of him. Yet, such language is quite in keeping with the language which the hon. gentleman has used ever since the opening of these troubles. Ever since these North-West troubles arose the tactics of hon. gentlemen have been to wash their hands of all responsibility and proclaim themselves quite innocent of the blood shed, and lay all the blame on the insurgents. To every enquiry made, as to the origin of these troubles the same answer is given: The half-breeds have no cause, they have no grievances. Such has been the language of the hon. gentleman all through. Speaking on a recent occasion on the same subject, he stated, what he repeated again yesterday, that the half-breeds had no cause, that the rebellion was a causeless rebellion; and he concluded in the following language:—

"We believe, with all the consciousness of being right, that the judgment of the country will be that we have acted well, that we have acted to the best of our abilities, and that, in this case, our abilities have not been wrongly directed."

And again, speaking on the same subject on another occasion, he made another declaration. At that time he believed that the rebellion was not due to the Grit party—that is a new thought, a new grievance—but was due to Louis Riel. He said:

"From former occurrences in the North-West, he (Riel) is considered a sort of martyr in the cause—a sort of half-breed Mahdi—and they look up to him with a sort of superstitious regard, and from that feeling he is able to act upon these poor people."

Such was the language of the hon. gentleman. The only explanation he could give of the rebellion has been this: That the insurgents have no grievances, but that they had been the victims and dupes of Louis Riel. Such an expla-