

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Exactly; but that Government did not choose to apply for the funds; and, if they had applied for the funds, they would have got them. They left the thing alone.

"The application of the petitioners to be aided by the Government with seeds 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."

I agree with the remarks of the hon. gentleman.

"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 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.

"The petitioners are in error in supposing that the Government has given seeds or farming implements, to any other class of white settlers in the North-West.

"Money has been advanced, in some cases, to certain settlers, on the distinct understanding that it would be repaid to the Government by the parties to whom it was advanced. I may add that the result of this experiment has not been such as to induce the Government to repeat it."

There is that despatch, in which the hon. the Minister of Interior, administering the affairs of the North-West, tells the half-breeds of the North-West that they have no greater claims than the white settlers at that period; and what were the claims of the white settlers at that period? They were simply this: that any man going there who was 18 years of age and upwards could settle down on 160 acres of land, and, if he cultivated for three years, he could get his patent for that land. These were the claims and the only claims that the white man going from Ontario or Quebec, or any of the Provinces of Canada, had; he could have 160 acres free, and, if he chose to buy, he could have 160 acres more by preemption; and the hon. gentleman declared that the half-breeds in the North-West should have no other and no greater claims than the white men. Now the hon. gentleman very properly argues that the half-breeds have, in some respects, great advantages over the new settlers going into that country. He says that these half-breeds should be impressed with the necessity of settling down in fixed localities. They know the country; they were born in the country; they were trained in the country. They knew what the conditions of the country were, what the climatic conditions were; they knew what to expect. They knew that if they do not choose to cultivate the land, they must look elsewhere for means of subsistence. Now, Mr. Speaker, the truth is, that the dissatisfaction which has arisen in the North-West has deeper roots than mere discontent by the half-breeds and others who are not getting their patents or getting their claims asserted. From the very inception of the acquisition of this country by Canada from the Hudson Bay Company there was discontent. In the first place, the Hudson Bay subordinates living in the country were very much dissatisfied that the company should be pushed off their throne. They governed that country; they were the sovereigns of that country, and everything that they could do secretly was done for the purpose of preventing the Government getting possession of that country. That discontent was sedulously spread among the whites, and among the half-breeds, and, perhaps, in some degree, among the Indians. That discontent continued, aye, and continues yet. The half-breeds never have been satisfied with the transfer of the country to Canada. They were willing to remain in their semi-free condition under the Hudson Bay Company, but they were not satisfied to come under the Government of the Dominion; and in 1870 this dissatisfaction culminated in an outbreak. That was subdued, but the feeling still lingered. In 1874 Mr. Gabriel Dumont was still a rebel—Mr. Gabriel Dumont—I speak of him with respect, because he was a brave man; although he was a rebel, although he has committed crimes,

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for which, if proved guilty, he would forfeit his life, still, everyone must have respect for him, that certainly they have not for Louis Riel. But in 1874 Gabriel Dumont was forming a Provincial Government. He never was satisfied under the Crown of Great Britain. And there is a letter from Governor Morris, of the 22nd of June, 1874, inclusive of a statement of John McKay, relating to the conduct of Gabriel Dumont. Now, the hon. gentleman has spoken of John McKay as a respectable man. I believe he is a respectable man, and Mr. McKay, at that time, reported that Gabriel Dumont was trying to form a Provincial Government, of which he was to be president. Now, Sir, from that time until now that feeling has been seething. It is there. The claims of the half-breeds are a mere pretext, and the real desire is that that country should sever its connection with the Dominion of Canada, should become independent in some way. All the grievances that have been alleged are merely a pretext to cover that fixed principle that existed in the minds of the people there, or of some of them, that there should be an independent Government established in the North-West. Now, I have spoken about the action taken by the Government of the hon. member for East York (Mr. Mackenzie). I have read a despatch of the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills), when Minister of the Interior, showing that the half-breeds, as half-breeds, had no other claim and had no greater claim than the whites. But, Sir, it has been alleged that the Government had neglected the claims of the half-breeds; it has been alleged that my hon. friend the Secretary of State made an inaccurate statement when he said that the half-breeds had not exercised their right to petition. The hon. gentleman quoted several despatches, several communications from the North-West to the Government here, in 1878, and before that year, and before the late Government went out; and he asked, how could we be so blind as to not know that such things existed? Why, Sir, that was ancient history, as the hon. gentleman said. Those complaints were made before 1878, and the answer was given in the hon. gentleman's statement, that they had no claims whatever, any more than the whites who went in there. The hon. gentleman has read and quoted as if it were a paper condemning the Government, a letter signed by Mr. Matthew Ryan, formerly stipendiary magistrate in the North-West, but who has now ceased to be such. He speaks of the rights of the half-breeds in the North-West, and this is what he says:

"Having been appointed, on the 1st of January, 1876, stipendiary magistrate for the North-West Territories, I was also informed by the Minister of Justice that my commission to investigate the land claims was to be considered in effect for another year, in order to allow of the half-breeds in the North-West, who were unable to attend the sittings of the commissioners in Manitoba, to establish their claims before me. In the discharge of this duty, I found that a large number of half-breeds had no claim under the Act, not having been residents of Manitoba on the date of transfer, the 15th July, 1870. I could also see that this exclusion caused much discontent, and I did not fail to urge, from time to time, that the proper remedy should be applied."

To whom did they appeal? To hon. gentlemen opposite. Through 1876-77-78 they appealed to the Government composed of hon. gentlemen opposite; and he says they appealed again and again. He made repeated applications on behalf of those poor people; but not one step was taken by hon. gentlemen opposite to remedy those grievances. How could the hon. gentleman do it? He declared they had no right and no claim, and therefore he could not, of course, take any step. From 1873-74 to 1878 not one single step was taken by hon. gentlemen opposite in order to relieve the discontent, if it existed, in order to allay grievances if they existed—not one single step was taken to relieve these poor people for whom the hon. member who has just addressed the House has expressed so much sympathy; they were left out in the cold; their claims were not considered, their petitions were not answered. The hon.