

So that there was even then complaint of the neglect of petitions which were forwarded to Ottawa. On the 19th of May, 1880, Mr. Thomas McKay, I believe a very respected resident of Prince Albert, transmitted to the Minister of the Interior a petition in this letter:

"I herewith forward you petition from the half-breeds of Edmonton and Prince Albert, North-West Territories. As we have no representative for the North-West Territories through whom we could make our wants known, the petition is forwarded to you, trusting it shall receive your early and special attention."

The petition is signed by 102 names, and, amongst other things, it contains these statements:

"And whereas the half-breed heads of families, and the children of the same, born or resident in the Territories previously to July 15th, 1870, have not yet had their claims to equal rights and privileges with their brethren in the Province of Manitoba, investigated, as is justly due to them, and as is provided for by sub-section 'E' of clause 125, 42 Victoria, Chapter 31; and whereas the continued delay in ascertaining and investigating said claims, is creating great and general dissatisfaction throughout the Territories; we your petitioners do humbly pray that you will cause a commission to be issued at an early date to enquire into and confirm the said claims, not only with regard to scrip, and allotments of land as provided for in Manitoba, but, moreover, to confirm the titles to land occupied by or purchased by parties from occupants of claims taken previously to the transfer of the Territories to the Dominion of Canada."

On the 10th of July, 1880, Mr. McKay's letter was acknowledged, and he was informed that it would receive due consideration on the return of the Minister from England. It was under consideration till 1885. I come to the year 1881; nothing was done in the year 1881, but the pressure went on. In the summer of 1881, there was a petition to the Governor General from the half-breeds of Qu'Appelle, with 112 signatures containing these statements:

"That owing to their being temporarily absent from the now Province of Manitoba, at the time of the transfer of the said Province and the North-West Territories to the Dominion of Canada, they have been deprived of, and debarred from, several advantages which were accorded to their confères who were residents in the Province of Manitoba at the time of the aforesaid transfer, and that your petitioners are of opinion that they have been unjustly treated, as their conduct and actions at the time referred to deserve the kind consideration of the Government. Therefore your petitioners humbly pray that they be dealt with and treated similar to the half-breeds of Manitoba, and the Government will grant scrip to the heads of families and grants of land to the children of the heads of families in the North-West Territories, in like proportion as was granted to half-breeds and old settlers in the Province of Manitoba."

That petition was acknowledged on the 20th of September, 1881, by direction of the Minister of the Interior, and the parties were informed that the petition would be duly considered. It was considered up to 1885. On the 7th of June, 1881, the district of Lorne having in the meantime acquired representation in the North-West Council, a memorial was presented to that council by Mr. Lawrence Clarke, member for Lorne, in these words:

"The undersigned has the honor to represent—

"That a feeling of dissatisfaction and discontent exists among the half-breed element of the North-West Territories.

"That such feeling has arisen from what these half-breeds consider a disregard of their rights, and in the opinion of many whose standing in the country gives such an opinion weight, has, to some extent at least, increased the difficulties encountered by the Dominion Government in their dealings with the Indians, between whom and the whites the half-breeds form a distinct class, possessing, as a rule, great influence over the Indians.

"That the half-breeds have always been recognised as possessing rights in the same soil, subject to which the Dominion accepted the transfer of the Territories, and while ample provision has been made for those resident in Manitoba, on the 15th July, 1870, nothing has been done towards extinguishing that portion of the Indian title to lands and territories outside the Province of Manitoba, as originally formed by the Act of 1870.

"The undersigned further draws attention to the fact, that, by law, the half-breeds are excluded from the benefit conferred upon the Indians.

"That the undersigned has been given to understand several petitions from various quarters have been presented to the Dominion Government on the subject of the half-breeds, particularly referred to, but no notice taken thereof.

"That the undersigned knows that a considerable portion of these half-breeds were and are still residents of the electoral districts of Lorne, and feels it his duty as the electoral representative of that district, to bring under notice, their grievances, in the hope that some action may

be taken at an early day, towards removing what seems to be just cause or complaint.

"The undersigned recommends that through your honor in council the attention of His Excellency be respectfully drawn to the subject, and he be memorialised to direct the attention of his Ministers to the position of the half-breeds who at the transfer to Canada, were and still are residents of the North-West Territories, and have not become parties to Indian treaties, and the taking of such steps as may lead to a speedy adjustment of the grievances they labor under."

On the 14th of June, 1881, the Lieutenant Governor transmitted a copy of this memorial to the Government, adding:

"I was requested by a resolution in council, passed on the 10th inst., to transmit copies thereof to be laid before His Excellency the Governor General, and to express the hope that His Excellency may be pleased to draw the attention of his Ministers to the grievances complained of.

"I trust you will have the goodness, at an early day, to bring these subjects to which these memorials refer, under the consideration of His Excellency the Governor General."

On receipt of these papers, it seems from the papers which were brought down, that the Deputy Minister felt it needful to make another effort, and he made up a file which contained his memorandum of December, 1878, the letter of Archbishop Taché, the letter of Bishop McLean, the letter of Bishop Macrae, the letter of Governor Laird, the letters of Colonel Richardson, the memorial of Mr. Clarke, and the letter of Governor Laird, which I have just read, and he laid it before Sir David Macpherson, then Acting Minister of Interior, with this memorandum:

"The undersigned submits for the information of the Acting Minister the file herewith on the subject of the claims preferred by the half-breeds of the North-West Territories to lands or scrip following upon the grants in this behalf made to the half-breeds of Manitoba."

It is clear, even from that memorandum and its submission at that date, that up to that time no progress had been made in the solution of the question since the period of the passage of the Act, and it was then laid before the Minister for further consideration. It remained under consideration until the year 1885. On the 4th of September, 1881, the Governor General, Lord Lorne, visited the North-West Territories and these regions. A joint address was presented to him by the Hudson Bay Company, the settlers, and the Indians, on the Saskatchewan, and in reply he used this language:

"In cementing the friendship which, thank God, has reigned between the white and the red man, the Metis has been the valued confidant as he is the brother of both. He has aided in the perfect understanding which exists."

Thus was evidenced the opinion of the executive of the country, as to the importance of the half-breed element, in confirmation of the correspondence I have already read, as to the need of preserving a good understanding between the white and the half-breed with a view to the maintenance of good relations with the Indians. But instead of those good terms being maintained, the half-breeds' petitions were disregarded, he was not vouchsafed a reply, he was despised, and neglected, and he became, as Archbishop Taché indicated in his letter he might become, a scourge instead of a help. On the 8th of October, 1881, there was a meeting at Prince Albert, largely attended by persons representing the entire district of Lorne, who passed a series of resolutions, of which the third is as follows:—

"Whereas the Indian title in this district or territory has not become extinct, and the old settlers and half-breed population of Manitoba were granted scrip in commutation of such title, and such allowances has not been made to those resident in this territory, resolved that the Minister of the Interior be requested to grant such scrip to such settlers, thus placing them on an equal footing with their confères in Manitoba."

These resolutions were ordered to be presented by Mr. Lawrence Clarke, the member for the district, and he was directed to obtain a reply. From the correspondence it appears that he visited Ottawa, and he received a letter after that visit, dated the 22nd of November, 1881, in which, by the direction of the Minister, the Deputy acknowledges the receipt of the memorial and resolutions of the Prince Albert meeting, and says: