

close of the work the Deputy Minister formally reported that "it was satisfactory to see how much had been done in so short a time, to the satisfaction of all parties in the Province, and without, as far as he knew, a single instance of complaint."

Having been appointed on the 1st of January, 1876, a stipendiary magistrate for the Northwest Territories, I was also informed by the Minister of Justice that my commission to investigate land claims was to be considered intact for another year, in order to allow of half-breeds of the Northwest 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 the "transfer," 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. At length, on the 2nd August, 1879, the Northwest Council, of which I was then a member, ex officio, adopted a resolution urging, inter alia, upon "the early and earnest attention of His Excellency the Governor-General in Council" :—

"That in view of the fact that grants of land, and 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 said territories unless they receive some like consideration.

"That this consideration would most tend to the advantage of the half-breeds were it given in the form of a non-transferable location ticket for, say, one hundred and sixty acres to each half-breed head of a family and each half-breed child of parents residents in the said territories at the time of the transfer thereof to Canada,—the ticket to be issued immediately to any half-breed, eighteen years of age or over, on furnishing evidence of claim, and to every child on arriving at that age and furnishing the necessary evidence.

"That each half-breed holding such a location ticket should be allowed to locate it upon any unoccupied Dominion lands, but the title of the land so entered should remain in the Crown for ten years; and if after the expiration of three years after such entry the half-breed locatee have made no improvements on the land his claims thereto shall be subject to forfeiture.

"That in order to induce those half-breeds who now procure their livelihood by hunting on the plains to abandon their present mode of life and settle on their locations, by which course it alone appears possible to avert the great destitution with which they are threatened, owing to the imminent early extinction of the buffalo, aid in agricultural implements and seeds be allowed them for three years."

These recommendations were so far effectual that in the Dominion Lands Act of 1879—42 Vic., chap. 31—power is delegated to the Governor-in-Council: "To satisfy any claims existing in connection with the extinguishment of the Indian title, preferred by half-breeds resident in the Northwest Territories outside the limits of Manitoba, on the fifteenth day of July, one thousand eight hundred and seventy, by granting land to such persons, to such extent, and on such terms and conditions as may be deemed expedient."

This sub-section appears, also, in the Lands Act of 1883, 46 Vic., chap. 17, but nothing further has yet been done in the premises. In a letter which I have lately received from a gentleman in high position in the Territories, it is written: "For what reasons the Government has not so far done anything in the direction indicated is a mystery to me. The half-breeds feel that they are slighted, and the feeling of discontent is daily growing among them."

In November, 1878, I was interviewed at Ottawa by a member of the Globe staff, and having informed him of the then recent action of the Northwest Council, as told above, I added: "If the half-breeds are induced to take up land and settle, they will become, because of their kindly nature, and temperate and active habits, a good population, and be very valuable as neighbors and assistants to new settlers from the older Provinces and countries. There can be no greater mistake than to underrate the qualities of the half-breed to the extent now somewhat prevalent."

What I then said was founded upon an extended experience, and is still my conviction. I cannot therefore feel otherwise than desirous that the movement in the West in behalf of the deserving half-breed population may soon result in the largest success.

15th July, 1884.

MATTHEW RYAN.

*My last letter to the Hon. Secy. of the Interior, Ottawa, 15th July, 1884.*