

It is further resolved, that the half-breeds in these Territories are entitled to, and should receive the same privileges as regards lands as have already been conceded to their brethren in Manitoba.

"I send this by the request of the meeting. A memorandum of grievances goes forward by next mail, with over two hundred signatures. In case of refusal of the demands, the question of resorting to arms and joining the half-breeds was moved. One speaker said that if we are refused we will get behind our Winchesters. The President said the only difference between a settler and a wild animal in this country was that the wild animal had a close season, whereas the settler was hunted at all seasons, either by the police, Government officials, or ranchmen. The half-breeds are greatly pleased with the resolutions, and intend to join the association. A manifesto is to follow the telegram to Sir John. This feeling has been maturing for some time, and it is believed to be more serious than it seems."

Sir, following up the proceedings of that meeting, a petition was prepared and transmitted to the Government at Ottawa, wherein it is urged by the petitioners :

"1. That we, Her Majesty's loyal subjects, residing in the North-West Territories of Canada, are entitled to the same rights and privileges as freemen, both in regard to the tenure of the soil, and representative institutions, as are enjoyed by our brethren in the other colonies of the empire.

"2. That these rights and privileges have hitherto been denied to us for, as we consider, very insufficient reasons.

"3. That some of us have been residing upon our homesteads, and have made improvements thereon, for a much longer period than that required by the provisions of the Dominion Lands Act, and have conformed to all the conditions thereof, but have as yet been unable to procure our patents, the result of which has been that settlers have been debarr'd and discouraged from making on their uncertain holdings the improvements necessary for their comfort and success, and we wish to impress in the most forcible manner upon the Government the irritating and mischievous result of this most unreasonable and unaccountable delay in giving legal ownership to those peaceable settlers who, by their assiduous compliance with the conditions of settlement, are entitled to the same. We require, therefore, from the Government, that patents for these lands be at once issued to those entitled to receive them.

"4. That large tracts of land in the district of Alberta are now nominally under lease (a considerable quantity of which is fit for agricultural purposes) the terms and conditions of which leases have not been complied with. We require that these leases be immediately cancelled, and the lands included in them, and also in all other leases already granted, upon which settlers may wish to locate, should be opened for entry and settlement.

"5. We are of opinion that the half-breeds of the North-West Territories are entitled to the same rights and privileges as have already been conceded to their brethren in Manitoba. And we most earnestly impress upon the Government the necessity of granting these privileges as the only way of removing the present discontent, and of quieting the disturbances which have already unhappily arisen in these Territories.

"6. We have heard with great regret of the rejection of a measure introduced into the Dominion Parliament providing for the representation of these Territories in that body, and we would wish strongly to impress upon the Government the fact that nothing short of immediate representation in Parliament will satisfy the people of these Territories.

Now, Sir, I say that the proceedings at this public meeting, held by British subjects, living under the British flag under the protection which the Government of this country are bound to afford them, are entitled to every consideration at the hands of this Government. So far as appears by the papers brought down, they have received no consideration at the hands of this Government. The Government have been inactive, they have not moved, they have done nothing, they have allowed these grievances to go uninvestigated and these wrongs to remain unredressed. I find that the correspondence of the *Mail* newspaper of the 17th April, 1885, which states :

"By far the most serious complaint, however, is based upon the idea that in some way or other the settler "has no show" with outsiders, who obtain possession of lands which he, as a squatter, has improved and built upon. This, I take it, is the core of all the discontent and disaffection among whites and half-breeds alike; but of the truth or falsity of it I am not in a position to speak from any personal knowledge."

The *Toronto Telegram* says :

"But we may be sure that all those who are discontented in the North-West are not half-breeds with fraudulent claims. Even white settlers have complained that they could not get their land patents, so many officials having fallen victims to the land fever."

Sir, it is quite clear from these papers, and from the statements I have read that the half-breeds in the North-West Territories have grievances that have remained unredressed, that settlers have had for a long series of years, grievances of the most important character, that the Government of the country failed to recognise or consider. I now proceed to discuss for a few moments another class of the population in the North-West Territories deserving the careful consideration of the Parliament of Canada—I refer to the Indians. I would not have entered at length upon the discussion of this question had not the hon. member who pre-

Mr. CAMERON (Huron).

ceded me declared in his place in Parliament, that the Indians of the North-West Territories had been treated with the utmost consideration by the Government of this country, that they had no claims, no grievances, nothing to complain of, no wrongs to redress. Sir, I propose to make it abundantly clear that the Indians in the North-West Territories had a cause of complaint, that they did complain to this Government, and that the public press of the North-West Territories, writing in the interests of our common humanity, complained to this Government, that the Indians in many cases were starved to death, and in many cases, frozen to death through the negligence of this Government; that the Indian was neglected, robbed, and cheated, that he was swindled by the employes of this Government appointed to administer the affairs of this country in the North-West Territories, and that this misconduct was connived at by the Government. Sir, on the 14th March, 1884, the *Moose Jaw News*, writing of the condition of the Indians in that neighborhood says :

"In this connection the case of several Indian families in this vicinity may be cited. A friend driving by one, a few days ago, was given to understand that death had been in their midst. On entering the tepee a pitiable sight was discovered. Starvation was visible in their countenances, and a glance sufficed to show the cause of the warrior's death. One can hardly imagine how they had lived at all. The canvas of the tent was old and torn. Not a vestige of anything edible was to be seen, but a few rabbit-skins lying around showed what had composed their last meal. Everything in the way of blankets was under or over the dead braves. Around a cheerless fire were huddled an Indian and three or four squaws. They stated that they had been without food for two days, and appearances would go to prove the truth of their assertion. Can we in this enlightened age, allow scenes like this to take place in our midst without uttering an indignant protest to the proper authorities? Would these Indians have left their reserves, and run the risk of starvation if they were sure of being supplied with the necessities of life there?"

The *Quebec Mercury* says :

"Could this rising of the Indians in the North-West have been prevented? There is, at this early hour of the rebellion, a difference of opinion on the subject; but it does not prevent some from thinking that the Department of Interior at Ottawa, who have charge of the Indian reserves, must have been dreadfully dilatory in their attention to Indian and half-breed matters. * * * In this city there is a feeling among the English and French that the Indians had a grievance, and it should have been settled."

The *Moose Jaw News*, on the 13th June, 1884, discussing the injury inflicted by this Government on Chief Piapot in compelling him to remain on a swampy and unhealthy reserve and declining to change it for one of a more healthy character says :

"But even this will be utterly insufficient to wipe out the past. Its record will remain a foul blot in our history. The sufferings of the Indians in the Assiniboia reserves during the past winter are a burning shame to us, a lasting reproach to our Government. What would be thought of us in England, or in any other christian country, were it clearly understood that for weeks large bands of Indians, the wards of the nation, poor, wretched creatures, whose primitive sources of supply had been cut off by our invasion, and whom we were bound by solemn treaty, as well as by every consideration of justice and humanity, to feed and care for, were dying by scores, partly from semi-starvation and partly from disease resulting from the bad quality of the food supplied by the agents! It is no excuse to say that the facts were not known. Why were they not known? Were there not high officials whose first duty it was to know the facts? If it should prove that the want of knowledge, or to the fearful ravages of scurvy, were due in any degree to a petty economy which dispensed with the services of a competent medical inspector in order to save his fees, this would be an aggravation of the guilt of those responsible for it.

"We write thus strongly because we feel strongly on this subject. It is a subject on which every Canadian and every settler in the North-West in particular, is in duty bound to feel strongly. As we have before pointed out, the gravest issues, involving not only the paramount claims of humanity and right, but also the security of life and property, are wrapped up in the maintenance of friendly relations and good faith with the aborigines.

"We do not remember to have met with a settler from the neighborhood in which those events occurred, who has not sympathized with Piapot and admitted that, however wrong-headed and cantankerous the chief may have shown himself on other occasions, he is, in this instance, the injured party. We have returned to the matter because it is of the first importance that the record of last winter's treatment of the Indians should be thoroughly examined, and such measures taken as will render the recurrence of such scenes impossible."

Let anyone take up the Public Accounts, the report of Indian Affairs and the Mounted Police reports and he will see how those Indians were treated, whom the hon. member for Jacques-Cartier (Mr. Girouard) declared last night were well treated and had no ground of complaint, what will he find? He will find that the Indians were to get beef, for which the Government contracted with responsible men in the