

own convenience alone being consulted, and their whole time being counted as if that time had been spent after the entry was made. Then, as to the surveys, the principle has been adopted that wherever a considerable number of settlers were on the land at the time the survey was made, that survey should be made according to the principle required by the settlers; but when the surveyor went into a district where there were no settlers, or where, as in the case of the parish of St. Louis de Langevin, there were but two settlers, the system adopted all over the North-West was followed; but even in such cases, these people were told that they could have their patents upon the principle of the river lot survey if they chose to take their land upon that principle, and to make the necessary sub-division. Then, as to the Indian title, we know that the Government as far back as 1883 passed an Order in Council that Mr. Russell should go to the North-West, and being on the spot, should enquire into and make a report upon all these claims. The difficulties that existed in dealing with that question were difficulties arising out of a conflict of opinion between those parties who were, from their position, supposed to be best able to judge of the necessities of the half-breeds in the North-West, and not from the Government refusing or ignoring their just rights. As to the general treatment of these people by the Government, it has been of the most kindly nature, and for the very best of all reasons, that being the original inhabitants of the country, having been there in advance of our occupation of the country, they were entitled to the greatest possible consideration; and that consideration has been given to them in every respect. I am perfectly satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that the attempt made by hon. gentlemen opposite to make out that the Government were in any way responsible for the outbreak of last spring, or that the refusal of these claims for the extinguishment of the Indian title had anything to do with it, will utterly fail. In fact, the hon. gentleman himself, in his closing remarks, practically admitted as much by pointing out that the people in the district in which the outbreak took place, in their petition did not ask for the extinguishment of the Indian title, but asked for other things, some of which are asked for by white settlers in the North-West as well—all matters of public policy relating to the interests of the whole country, and not to be dealt with exclusively for any one section. Sir, I leave the matter entirely in the hands of the House, and I am perfectly satisfied that the verdict of the House—sustained as I believe that verdict will be by the country—will be that the so-called grievances of the half-breeds of the North-West had no basis to justify, or even to palliate the troubles that occurred last spring, still less, Sir, to justify or palliate the language which has been used in this House in relation to those supposed grievances, and in relation to those who took up arms ostensibly to redress them. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the House for the attention you have given me.

Mr. DAVIES. I very much fear, Sir, that the hon. Minister of the Interior has delivered the wrong speech. The hon. gentleman has the reputation of being somewhat of a skilled debater, and no one knew better than he did that the issue that was tendered for the consideration of the House by my hon. friend from East Quebec was a single issue, clear, definite, and distinct. The hon. gentleman has not attempted to grapple with that issue at all, except in a very limited degree, to which I will refer directly. In fact, in his opening remarks he told the House that it was not his intention to do so, that he intended to deal with the whole question of the North-West grievances. Well, Sir, I for one regret very much that the hon. gentleman took that course. I regret it because the question is so large and intricate that the discussion of one point at a time,

such as that tendered by my hon. friend, will vastly facilitate the arrival at just conclusions on the part of members of the House and the country. Hon. members will remember well that last year, when the leader of the Opposition presented a resolution to this House on the general topic of the North-West grievances, and when he delivered a luminous, lengthy and able speech, in which he massed all the evidence together, and submitted a resolution based on his conclusions, he was reprimanded by the leader of the Government, who complained bitterly that all these matters had been mixed together, so that it was impossible to answer them in detail. Why, he asked, does the hon. gentleman mix up the question of civil rights with those of colonisation companies, surveys of land, the Indian title and others? It is impossible for anyone to answer him on all these points in one speech, and the result will be the public mind will be so perplexed as to be unable to draw any fair conclusions from the debate. My hon. friend from Huron (Mr. Cameron) initiated the other night a new policy. He tendered a distinct issue to the House as to the manner in which the Government dealt with the Indians, and that question was discussed separately from other questions. The hon. member for Quebec East (Mr. Laurier) has tendered a distinct issue to-night, namely:

"That it was the duty of the Government to proceed with diligence, under the authority they obtained from Parliament in 1879, to settle the claims arising out of the Indian title of the half-breed claims of the North-West Territories, and also to settle the claims of those of the Manitoba half-breeds who were temporarily absent during the enumeration."

And concluding that the Government has been guilty of neglect, delay and mismanagement in that regard. Here was a clear, definite issue presented to the House. How has that been met? My hon. friend (Mr. White), in his speech an hour and a half long, treated the House to a dissertation on the claims of the settlers, and the action of colonisation companies, and claims he has proofs that no settlers were dispossessed of their lands,—questions altogether alien to that before the House. But those who have watched the hon. gentleman for some time will understand why he took this course. He did so, evidently, because he was not able to answer the indictment presented upon this issue. The evidence introduced by my hon. friend from Quebec East (Mr. Laurier), in support of his resolution, was overwhelming, and the hon. Minister knew that the only course open to him in his defence, was to distract the minds of the members, if possible, from that issue by mixing it up with others. The hon. gentleman brought down a number of affidavits to which I will not refer now. We made a short time ago serious complaints that we were not furnished with proper information, and the hon. gentleman then contended that we had all the information necessary on which to base an opinion; yet we see him here, day after day, as the political exigencies of the case require, bringing down to this House just such papers as suit him. I ask if this is a fair way of dealing with the House? The hon. gentleman referred to the report of Mr. Pierce, a report, I understand, prepared at his instigation, and the instructions for the preparation of which have been withheld, but that report does not deal, directly or indirectly, with the proposition now before the House, nor, if every word of it were true, and if the inferences to be fairly derived from all the facts it states were massed together, would they enable us to form a conclusion bearing on the resolution my hon. friend has submitted. It has nothing to do with the extinction of the Indian title: it has nothing to do with this great grievance which the hon. gentleman knows tended to bring about very largely the insurrection. The hon. gentleman has referred to the Order in Council made in 1883, and the report directing that the office of which he is now the head should be sub-divided in a certain way, so that Mr. Lindsay Russell might be appointed Surveyor-General and proceed to the North-West. Why did the hon. gentleman make that