

for those resident in Manitoba on the 15th July, 1870, nothing, so far, has been done towards extinguishing that portion of the Indian title to lands in the territories outside of 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 benefits conferred upon Indians.

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

"That the undersigned knows that a considerable portion of these half-breeds were and are still residents of the electoral district of Lorne, and feels, as the electoral representative of that district, his duty to bring under notice their grievance in the hope that some action may be taken at an early day towards removing what seems to me to be just cause of 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 of Canada were and still are residents of the North-West Territory, 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."

That petition was forwarded to the Government by Mr. Laird, then Lieutenant-Governor, and in an accompanying letter he specially drew attention to this subject in the following words:—

"These memorials were presented to the Council of the North-West Territories at its recent session, and as they relate to subjects exclusively within the control of the Dominion Government and Parliament, I was requested, by a resolution of Council passed on the 10th instant, 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."

Then, Sir, this subject also attracted the attention of the council. On the 8th October, 1881, there was a meeting of the settlers of Prince Albert in which this very subject was taken into consideration, and at which the following resolution was passed:—

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

Ten days later there was another meeting at the same place, and a similar resolution was passed. Then, as the subject did not receive any consideration from the Government, though their attention had been so often called to it, the North-West Council again took up the matter, and at a session of Council held in the month of October, 1883, the following resolution was passed, addressed to the Government at Ottawa:

"Your memorialists further pray that those half-breeds in the Territories who have not participated in the arrangement to extinguish the half-breed claims in Manitoba, should enjoy the same rights as accorded half-breeds in that Province."

And, Sir, as late as the month of December, 1883, Mr. Jackson, whose name is well known now in this House, and who is a member of the North-West Council, addressed a communication to the Minister of the Interior (Sir David Macpherson), in which he said:

"You will pardon the liberty I now take in addressing you privately, when I tell you that it is at the special request of a large deputation of half-breeds that I do so. They, in common with the country, have heard of the generally satisfactory settlement of the 'mile belt' and reserve question, and urge, perhaps with reason, that if their own grievances, upon which the Government have been repeatedly petitioned and memorialised, were brought personally to your notice, some immediate action would be taken. Under any circumstances there would not be very many to deal with, and the settlement of their claims need not be a troublesome one. But there are half-breeds in the Territories who have never received anything from the Government, and who, it has been admitted, are entitled to some consideration."

Besides all these representations, Father Vegreville, Father André, and several other persons in the North-West, wrote letters of remonstrance to the Government. Besides all these, Father Leduc, Mr. Maloney, Bishop Grandin and several others had interviews with the Government upon this. Besides all these, my hon. friend from Huron (Mr.

Cameron), in 1884, brought this matter to the consideration of this House. Besides all these, and notwithstanding all these, the Government, though thus pressed, harassed, and besieged, never lifted a finger towards the solution of that question. During all these years, while the Department was thus filled up with letters, petitions, resolutions and representations, the Minister always remained silent, calm, majestic, but as immovable as an Egyptian sphinx while it is covered up by the sand of the desert. Furthermore, at last, in 1884, the half-breeds, despairing that they would ever get redress of their grievances by any petition that they could send to Ottawa, by any delegation which they could send to Ottawa, by any remonstrances and representations which they could make to Ottawa, finally sent for Louis Riel. Still the Government took no notice and took no action. The Government, if they were blamed at all, were blameable then. They knew that Riel had an uncontrollable character, they knew that his presence must prove dangerous to the public peace. They were warned of his doings; they were warned by their own officers of the agitation that was then taking place, but still they never lifted a finger towards solving that question. What is the reason, Sir, of that long persistent inaction? Was it simply apathy? No; if it had been merely apathy, the unceasing torrent of complaints and remonstrance which deluged the Department of the Interior, would at last have moved them to action. It was not apathy. I say that that inaction was wilful and designed; it was because the Government had come to the conclusion that they would not give to the half-breeds of the North-West the same treatment, the same favors, the same rights and privileges which had been granted to the half-breeds of Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, I arraign the Government for this, I charge this upon the Government, that though they asked advice as to the best manner of dealing with that question, though they had been told by all those whom they had consulted that these half-breeds must have the same privileges as the half-breeds of Manitoba, that such precautions should be taken as would place their grants beyond the reach of the white speculator, the Government had come to the conclusion that they would not follow the advice given to them, that they would not give the half-breeds of the North-West Territories the same privileges which had been given to the half-breeds of Manitoba. The Government had come to the conclusion that the half-breeds should not be treated as a special class, should not be treated as half-breeds, but that they would have to make their choice as to whether they should be treated like Indians or white men. On a former occasion, speaking on this subject, I quoted the language of the Prime Minister, which made that point perfectly clear, and it can bear repetition here. On 26th March, 1885, the Prime Minister, in speaking on this question, expressed his opinion in this way:

"As a whole the half-breeds have been told that if they desire to be considered as Indians, there are most liberal reserves, that they could go with the others; but that if they desired to be considered white men, they would get 160 acres of land, as homesteads. But they are not satisfied with that; they want to get land scrip of equal quantity—I think upwards of 200 acres—and then yet as a matter of course, this homestead as well."

Why they wanted to get as a matter of course their homesteads as well. The half-breeds of Manitoba had been given free grants of land in which they were in possession, and besides that a lot of land had been given to every head of a family amongst them, 160 acres, and the half-breeds of the North-West claimed absolutely the same privileges as had been given to the half-breeds of Manitoba. But on 26th March last the policy of the Dominion Government was that they should not be treated as had been the half-breeds of Manitoba. They should not be treated as half-breeds; they would have to make choice either one way or the other; they would have to be either Indians or