

such men as Louis Riel, of evil example, and Gabriel Dumont, a man brave but brave in a bad cause, where bravery is but reckless rashness. Though it were proved that the half-breeds had an indefeasible right to the extinguishment of the Indian title, you must prove that the keeping from them of this right infringed upon their essential liberty, that they were maltreated in person, robbed of their liberty, interfered with in their homes. All this was recklessly stated at the outset of the agitation, but these statements have simmered down, until to-night we have got to the bed rock of what hon. gentlemen opposite will rest their case on in future, namely, that the right to the extinguishment of the Indian title of the half-breeds was not granted immediately. I have nothing more to say, except that I have been saddened more than I can express to find in this country, free as it is, with its constitutional methods, men who will take up the time of the country in trying to glorify into a just and laudable rebellion the paltry, miserable rising which has taken place in the North-West, and to dignify into a hero one who lacks all the essential qualities of heroism.

Mr. MILLS. The hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat seems to think that the motion which is placed in your hands is a motion of commendation of the half-breeds of the North-West for having taken up arms. The hon. gentleman surely could not have read the motion. He must be aware that it is quite possible to condemn the rebellion, and, at the same time, not to approve of the course the Government has taken. That motion relates to the conduct of the Government in reference to the extinguishment of the half-breed title in the lands of the North-West. We have before us, so far as that resolution is concerned, no other proposition than that one, but the hon. gentleman who is at the present time the Minister of the Interior has seen proper to go beside that question and refer to the conduct of the Administration which was in office some ten years ago. Supposing the Administration of the hon. member for East York (Mr. Mackenzie) had been all that the hon. gentleman who is now Minister of the Interior represents it, supposing they were derelict in their duty, supposing their conduct had been such as to have justified the country in expelling them from office, what, I would like to know, would that have to do with the merits of the present Administration, with the efficiency of their conduct, or with their energy in dealing with the important questions that have arisen in the North-West Territories? I think the House will pardon me if I depart from the questions involved in that resolution, and give some little attention to the charges that have been made by the hon. the Minister of the Interior now, and by his leader last year, against the Government which preceded them in office. The hon. gentleman forgets that this half-breed question arose in 1870, that the Government of the Minister who is now at the head of affairs was then in office, and that the rebellion then in a large degree arose from the claims put forward by the half-breeds and the failure of the Government to recognise those claims. The hon. gentleman knows that there were certain parties who were delegated from the people of the North-West Territories to represent their views, and that they entered into an arrangement with the Government, which was given effect to by the Manitoba Act of 1870, one of the provisions of which was the setting apart of 1,400,000 acres in the Province of Manitoba for the purpose of extinguishing the Indian title of the half-breed population. The hon. gentleman also knows that a census was taken in 1870 under the direction of the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, Mr. Archibald; that census included not only the half-breed children who were entitled to share in the 1,400,000 acres, but also the half-breed heads of families and the old settlers of the Province of Manitoba. The

Mr. FOSTER.

hon. gentleman, too, is aware that the people who were enumerated embraced nearly double the population of the Province of Manitoba who were entitled to share in the 1,400,000 acres under the Manitoba Act. After that census was taken, the opinion of the law officers of the Crown was had upon the construction of this 31st section of the Manitoba Act. The Prime Minister was at that time Minister of Justice, and he and the Deputy Minister advised that the half-breed heads of families were not entitled to share in this 1,400,000, that it was to be distributed amongst the children of the half-breeds alone. Hon. gentleman no doubt are conversant with the fact that a very considerable number of the half-breeds has been dealt with as Indians. The Indians or the so-called Indians, on the St. Peters' reserves are, or a majority of them are, half-breeds; and these were included in the enumeration made by Mr. Archibald in 1870. It will be seen that the census which was taken by Mr. Archibald did not afford any basis for the distribution of the 1,400,000 acres. I may mention, among other things that were done in regard to the Province of Manitoba at that time, that an Act was introduced by the Government, I think in 1873, providing that 140 acres should be given to each of the original white settlers and the descendants white of settlers, who had come into the Territory between 1813 and 1835. There was no further legislation by the Government of that day either with reference to the half-breeds or with reference to the white settlers of the Territories. There was a law introduced providing for the half-breeds heads of families, but that was introduced in May, 1874, by the Government of the hon. member for East York. I wish to call the attention of the House to this fact—and I am stating these facts with as much briefness as I can—that, during the three years that the Government was in power from 1870 to 1873, no step was taken for the purpose of distributing the 1,400,000 acres among the half-breed children who were entitled to it under the Manitoba Act. Before I proceed further, let me make a quotation from the speech of the First Minister here last year, referring to the census taken by Mr. Archibald. The Prime Minister said:

"If this census had been adhered to there would have been no difficulty. It was accurate, as accurate as a census can be taken in a new country without municipal institutions and means for enumerating the people one by one. But it was a correct census, and for it 1,400,000 acres had been assigned to meet the half-breed claims; and if that census had been adhered to, there never would have been any trouble. But the truth of the matter is, that the moment we went out of power it was necessary that everything we had done should be reversed, and the Government of the day chose to say that there were not 10,000 half-breeds in the Province of Manitoba, and they appointed Mr. Matthew Ryan and Mr. Machar, the latter a gentleman whom the hon. member for South Huron knows something about, for the purpose of undoing—I will not say for the purpose of undoing but of disregarding the census previously taken. That is the fact. If the census that had been taken and returned by Governor Archibald had been accepted there would have been land enough in the appropriation to have settled all trouble as well for the half-breeds who happened to be away on the plains at the time the final adjudication was made. But it did not suit the Government of the day to accept that. Oh, no. The claims of the half-breeds of Manitoba were bought up by speculators. It was an unfortunate thing for those poor people; but it is true that this grant of scrip and land to these poor people was a curse and not a blessing. The scrip was bought up; the lands were bought up by white speculators and the consequences are apparent. I am told that even at this moment, in the vicinity of Winnipeg instead of the surrounding country comprising smiling farms, settled with industrious people, the land is unsettled in consequence of the scrip having been bought up for a song by speculators."

Now, it will be remembered that the Government of the present Prime Minister was in office from 1870, when the enumeration was made by Mr. Archibald, until November, 1873, for a period of three years, and yet no distribution was made, no action was taken, not the first step was made towards the settlement of this half-breed question. The truth was that the census was of no use. No distribution could be had upon it. As I have already stated, a very considerable number of the half-breeds were dealt with as Indians, and a large population were embraced that were