

"That the population of the North-West Territories is mostly composed of French half-breeds without any stipendiary magistrate understanding or speaking their language."

And later on, there was a public meeting of indignation against the ruling of stipendiary magistrate Richardson who refused to allow the attendance of French half-breeds who had come from long distances to attend the criminal courts, on the ground that they did not understand English and he did not understand French and that he would simplify the matter very easily by telling them to go back home. There was immediately an indignation meeting held, and the people complained: That is the kind of magistrates they give; they are not only taken from outside the country, but they are men who do not even understand the language of the majority of the people. The petitioners continue to allege:

"Without any stipendiary magistrate understanding their language, and without any person of their own origin to represent them in the deliberations of the council of the North-West Territories, it is therefore resolved that a humble petition be addressed to his Excellency the Governor General praying that the two members of the council remaining still to be appointed under the authority of the Act of 1875 and its amendments be selected from the old residents of French origin, and, in order to give full and entire justice to the nationality of your petitioners, that the nomination of a stipendiary magistrate equally of French origin be proceeded with."

You would perhaps imagine that the reason why these half-breeds were not represented in the council was because the number was complete. No, there were six members to be appointed—I am sure of five—and they could easily have appointed one or two French half-breeds; but no, they did not do it. What was the answer of the Minister of the Interior, of date the 18th March, 1878? It is addressed to the Governor of the North-West Territories, through whom the petition of the people of St. Laurent and St. Albert had been sent to Ottawa.

"You are requested to inform the petitioners that I shall have much pleasure in submitting their petition for the consideration of His Excellency the Governor General in Council.

"In the meantime you may intimate to the petitioners that should it be thought desirable to appoint additional members to the council of the North West, I shall be prepared to recommend to His Excellency's consideration their application that such members should be selected from the old residents in the Territories and that if possible one of them should be of French Canadian origin."

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I have said, the late Administration did nothing with the exception of creating this new constitution for the North-West, and appointing this half-breed in 1878; they did nothing to give to the population of the North-West any representation or any part in the government of that country, either legislative or judiciary. Other important matters came to their attention, but they had a very simple policy—they told the half-breeds that they were to be considered as white settlers. I will not refer again to that statement made by the Minister of the Interior. It is made in such clear language that no ambiguity is possible. The principle is laid down that the half-breeds must be treated like white settlers, and so they have been treated. Nothing was done towards the extinguishment of the Indian title; and if hon. gentlemen opposite are so anxious of benefiting from the experience of past Administrations, why did they not take the principle of the Administration which left office in 1873? Why did they not say to the half-breeds of the North-West: You shall be treated in the same way as the half-breeds of Manitoba? When they constituted their council in 1875 was the proper time, rather than in 1879, to declare what their policy was to be with reference to the half-breeds. When they sent their Governor up to the North-West and made four new treaties with the Indians, they ought to have laid down their policy in regard to the treatment of the half-breeds. But nothing was done concerning the half-breed claims and the Indian title; nothing was done concerning the surveys which affected not only the half-breeds but the white population as well. My hon. friend

Mr. GIROUARD.

from Quebec East stated that he did not think that any complaints came from the half-breeds of the North-West previous to 1877 or 1878. Perhaps he was like myself, and did not have occasion to look over all the papers which were brought down four or five weeks ago, and which were inaccessible to certain members of the House—at least to myself. But I will call his attention to the resolutions, which were in effect petitions, of the half-breeds, not only of Qu'Appelle but of the whole North-West, dated the 5th May, 1873 and which were transmitted on the 5th June following by Governor Morris. All the half-breeds of the North-West joined in that petition, their votes having been taken at a council as was then customary; and they say:

"We also ask of you, the Lieutenant Governor, to give us lands in compensation of our rights."

They received an answer from Governor Morris to the effect that their request would be transmitted to the Government. But the Government then in office left to make room for the hon. gentlemen opposite, and up to the present time there has been no answer given to that petition.

Mr. MILLS. Hear, hear.

Mr. GIROUARD. I mean up to 1878—when they left office. On the 1st of October, 1874, I find a letter from Father Decorby to the Honorable Mr. Laird on the same subject; in this he says:

"As the Government has entrusted the conduct of the affairs of the North-West to you, I take the liberty of addressing you a few explanations concerning Lake Qu'Appelle and the half-breed population settled there. The spirit of justice which animates you and the desire you have shown to contribute to the welfare of those whose interests have been confided to you, lead me to hope that you will kindly take them into consideration and bring them to the attention of the Government in order that it may treat the half-breeds of Lake Qu'Appelle with justice and generosity, according to the kind words of His Excellency, our Governor, Alexander Morris. I may remark at once that the half-breeds have a right to some privileges in this place. It was they who made a kind of conquest of it by obliging the Indian nations who formerly warred here to keep the peace. It is they who still keep them off, and it is to their presence that is due the honor of peace and the security which is enjoyed all around.

"I cannot state the exact period when the half-breeds began to winter at the Lake Qu'Appelle, but having explained to his Lordship the Bishop of St. Boniface, the wish to have a Catholic priest among them, my Lord Taché, now Archbishop of St. Boniface, went there himself in 1865 and chose the present site of the mission, gave orders for the erection of a chapel, and took for the requirements of the mission all the points comprised between the two streams called the Mission Streams, that is to say, of the extent of about a mile of front. The half-breeds then established there promised to respect the land reserved by His Lordship. * * * Now, the half-breeds desire and ask the Government to leave their lands as they took them, that is, that they will not force them to exact lines."

Now take the petitions of the half-breeds of St. Laurent and St. Albert, transmitted by Mr. Laird on the 13th February, 1878, to which reference has so often been made:

"It is of immediate necessity that the Government cause to be surveyed within the shortest possible delay those lands occupied and cultivated by the half-breeds or former residents upon those lands.

"That the sudden change from a prairie life to an agricultural life brought about by the rapid disappearance of the buffalo and the hunting regulations of the council of the North West Territories have reduced your petitioners to a state of want and obliges them to address the Federal Government in order to obtain assistance in seed, grain and in agricultural implements. The same as has been given to certain foreign immigrants in the Province of Manitoba. The implements of agriculture always extremely rare are sold at so high a price that your petitioners are unable to purchase them."

Governor Laird accompanied the transmission of those two petitions with a recommendation or a report, which was sent on 13th February, 1878, as follows:—

"It is important that the land policy of the Government towards old settlers and others living for many years in the Territories should be declared. It appears to me that they have a claim to some more speedy means of acquiring a title for settlement purposes than the homestead provisions of the Dominion Lands Act.

"To prevent disputes between neighbors, it is highly desirable that the survey of lands settled upon along the principal rivers should be prosecuted with all convenient speed.

"With respect to the prayer for assistance in procuring seeds and implements to commence farming operations, it is similar to the request made to me by the half-breeds of Bow River during the Blackfoot treaty