

useful purpose, and one by which the total fund destined for the support of man is increased a hundred-fold. The Indian sells the land, which indeed he could not withhold from the white man, and attempts to live on the slender annuity which he accepts as payment, together with the diminished supply which the chase affords, and what the soil will yield to the fitful exertion of labour carried on under the pressure of poverty to which the most expert agriculturist might succumb, an effort which at best promises a return months hence to supply a want which is active to-day and will be more keenly felt to-morrow. He sold the land which nurtured the game, and the white man was the purchaser. The treaty bears the marks of his totem, and the payments which it calls for are regularly made; the Indian gets his own, if the agents be honest. Whatever answer must be given to the "if," the fact is certain that the Indian shivers on the brink of starvation. Is it certain that the white man does his whole duty when he pays the annuities stipulated for in return for the surrender of the land? Has he no moral obligation outside the four corners of the bond? The Indian is his ward, but this consideration did not prevent the trustee buying the property of his ward; he probably, in addition, put his ward under some duress for the purpose of forcing him into the bargain. The result of the dealing between the nation as trustee and the Indian as a ward of the nation is disastrous to the Indian, who is thereby brought to the verge of starvation. It is undeniable that, under the circumstances, we owe him some consideration which there is no treaty or bond to enforce. But the difficulty of paying it in a way that will be satisfactory and effective has often perplexed the best disposed of governments towards savage races with which they have had to deal, and of that difficulty there is no clear and absolute solution applicable to all cases which arise under varying circumstances.

THE Half-breeds of the North-West were not made parties to the treaties between the Indians and the Government, by which the former disposed of their right of occupation of the soil. From this it seems to follow that intermarriage and adoption into a tribe are not held to confer on the children of a white father and an Indian mother the common property rights of the tribe. By the Indian Act a Half-breed may elect to rank as Indian; but even then for the land he gets the Indian must be paid in one form or another. And the exclusion is founded in reason; for to the Half-breed a common property right is not sufficient. Half farmer and half hunter, he marks the advance to that stage where an individual right in some separate portion of the soil becomes indispensable. When the Government becomes owner of all the land, the last process in the acquisition of which is the purchase of the Indian's right of occupation, to the Government the Half-breed looks for a grant of so much as will supply his needs. His title is complex, if not absolute. When free grants are offered to all comers, he has as good a right to a grant of land as any other intending settler, if he be in a position to reclaim it from the wilderness of the prairie. If he had no other right he might be required to accept the conditions to which other recipients of free grants are required to submit, the first and most important of which are fixed settlement and a stipulated rate of improvement. But in Manitoba settlement was not required from the Half-breed, and as a matter of fact he often—it might be safe to say generally—sold his claim for what it would bring, and this, in a majority of cases, was very little. But the Half-breed has other claims, though they may be of a shadowy character, than that of a free settler. He was among the first men to roam over the solitudes of prairie in whose veins the blood of the white man runs. He was the companion, the friend, the relative of the Indian, when the Indian right of occupation was undisputed. When he becomes a settler he has a double claim to the land he cultivates, though his right of unlimited selection, at the present day, would be difficult to make out, and its universal concession might lead to great inconveniences. His right to select all the prominent points on the great navigable waters, such as those which command important river crossings, like those which go by the name of Batoche's and Clarke's, the possession of which may be necessary for the safety of the settlements, is certainly not clear. But this would not interfere with the admission of the general rule that he might be allowed to have proved his right to possession by reclaiming a distinct portion of the soil from its primitive state and devoting it to cultivation. And this claim there never was any intention to deny. The Red River Half-breeds who parted with their land grants in Manitoba could not make good a claim to new grants in the North-West. But that is no reason why the various claims should not before now have been examined, and such as were found to be unobjectionable admitted. The sagacity of the Half-breeds seized on the fact that what had been admitted as a ground of concession in Manitoba could not be denied in the North-West; and though the concession was not intended to be withheld, great

delay was allowed to occur. The admissible claims should have been separated from the others, and admitted with reasonable promptitude: the delay in beginning the process will be one of the things in connection with the North-West troubles which will be difficult to defend.

SETTLERS in the North-West are not held back by the existence of the insurrection from pressing upon the Government various demands in their own interest. A list of measures demanded is conveyed in a document, which cannot be called a petition, sent from the District of Alberta and addressed to the members of the Executive Council at Ottawa, and signed by two hundred and fifty persons. The formula is unusual, the words "we require" such and such things to be done being repeated in almost every paragraph. The imperative tone assumed, however, adds nothing to the force of the document, in which reference is made to a previous petition, and which some unskilled draughtsman probably thought would derive importance from its being made to sound like an ultimatum. In turning from the manner to the matter, it is impossible not to recognize the justice of some of the demands. The representation of the territories is not unreasonably asked for; but, that for this purpose the existence of a given population should be assumed without an actual count is not at all clear. For the Half-breeds the settlers ask the same "rights and privileges," which presumably means so much land, "as have already been conceded to their brethren in Manitoba." The Government is quite willing to grant these terms, but it seems to think it its duty to try, though late, to ascertain how many of the Half-breed claimants are not Manitoba repeaters. If there be any Half-breeds who were in Manitoba in 1870, and who got no land, they will, official returns contain the assurance, get it now. The recognition of squatter sovereignty is sure to lead to trouble sooner or later. No individual has a right to assume that he is at liberty, without express authority, to appropriate to himself any portion of the public domain; but, when substantial improvements have been made under a loose system of semi-licensed individual appropriation, it is very difficult to refuse the settler the land which he has improved. An official return shows that three hundred and twenty of these claims in Alberta have already been settled; every colonist who had made the necessary improvements getting a free grant of 160 acres and the right to pre-empt 160 more. The withdrawal from entry of two townships in the neighbourhood of Calgary would be an undoubted grievance, if land in the North-West were scarce, but the reverse of this is true. The scattering of settlements may create a real peril for the settlers, whose protection may have to be undertaken at great cost to the State. The demand for the cancellation of leases to cattle-breeders is most unreasonable, and is not likely to be granted; large cattle ranches, at present, afford the best means of utilizing wide areas which could not otherwise, for a long time, be productively employed. That farmers as well as graziers should be allowed to bring in their stock free of duty is a reasonable demand. A Bill of Rights, as this professes to be, should be founded in reason, and parts of this are not; and it would be none the less effective if it did not carry the air of desiring to intimidate in presence of actual insurrection.

ARCHBISHOP TACHÉ complains that the French Canadians are suspected of sympathizing with Riel, and he appeals to history to show that to the action of his race in this country is owing the fact that to-day Canada counts among the British possessions. But if the suspicion of which he affirms the existence be unfounded, it is at least not quite unnatural. The cry raised by his compatriots for an amnesty for Riel, after the Red River insurrection, was purely national; and, such was its intensity, it rose to the height of a national frenzy. Riel, if the letter published in his name be genuine, alleges that he found sympathy in the Province of Quebec when he was there six weeks ago; and, always supposing the letter to be genuine, he appeals to French Canadians not to join the volunteers who may be sent to put down the insurrection. A missionary priest in the North-West, whose letter is published in *L'Etendard*, practically makes the same appeal. The plea in favour of the insurgents that they are acting on the defensive, because, it is alleged, the Mounted Police fired the first shot at Duck Lake, urged in the organ of the Métis, finds acceptance almost exclusively among the French Canadians. If the police fired the first shot, they were fully justified by the fact that their lives were menaced by a band of armed men who had undoubtedly been sent to the spot where the encounter took place to attack them. From the same quarter we hear that the ardour of the Ontario volunteers is largely made up of a desire to avenge the murder of Scott. They are represented as a band of Orange fanatics, whose mission is to exterminate the Half-breeds, destroy their altars, and set up "meeting-houses" in their place. If Archbishop Taché will calmly survey the whole situation, with these and kindred