

RIEL'S own version of the grievances on which he founds his revolt is, that promises to deal with the claims of the Half-breeds have repeatedly been made since 1871. If these claims had been such as equity required the Government to admit, as a whole, the delay would have been altogether inexcusable. When the treaties were made with the Indians of the plains for the surrender of their lands, the claims of the Half-breeds were brought before Governor Morris, who was concerned in the negotiations. When he found that some of them who had received allotments of land on Red River put in a second claim in the North-West, he told them that they could not take with both hands. Still the delay in investigating claims which are said to have been first made fourteen years ago will, we imagine, be difficult to defend. Before the investigation is closed it will be pertinent to inquire whether the agents of the Government, whose duties bring them into direct contact with the Indians, have always done their duty, and have not sought to exact illegal gains from the misery of tribes who would necessarily be more or less helpless in their hands. All the world knows that, in spite of the good intentions of the Government, much wrong has been done by like agents in the United States. It has been our boast that we have done these things in a better way in Canada; and while the care of the Indians remained under the control of the British Government, the boast was true. Whether it remains equally true under Canadian control, it deeply concerns the honour of the Canadian name to inquire; and there will be just cause for congratulation if the answer should be in the affirmative.

ONE lesson which the insurrection in the North-West will teach is the danger of settlers spreading themselves sparsely over a vast extent of country, far from the great lines of permanent communication; but if we judge by experience, it is a lesson which is likely to be taught in vain. When Canada was under the French Dominion, the policy of the Government was to give the settlements a compact form, for the purpose of making them self-protecting against the hostility of the Iroquois; but in spite of the ever-present danger, which was daily brought home to them by the massacre of isolated settlers, the wild and untamable spirit of adventure constantly brought the French immigrants and their descendants into the very jaws of danger. In spite of all checks which it was possible to impose, the colonists continued to spread themselves, and massacres in the woods, the fields and the houses were common. In the North-West the same restless spirit has seized on the settlers; individuals are to be found scattered here and there all the way from the Red River to the Rocky Mountains, far north of the railway, which forms the only means of communication open at all seasons. Complaints have even been made that land has been taken up by cattle ranches, as if outside the ranches there was not another quarter section which the settler could appropriate. The massacre at Frog Lake comes as a warning not less than as a surprise. There is no doubt that Riel is responsible for that massacre; it is the direct consequence of the insurrection which he has excited. This event, since the offending Indians must be called to account by the troops, may lead to a conflict such as usually goes by the name of an Indian War. But an Indian war, with the Crees for an enemy, cannot now be what an Indian war was when Canada was under the French Dominion. The Crees have surrendered certain lands to the Government, for which annuities are payable so long as any of the tribe survives. They cannot afford to lead a life of perpetual hostility to the whites, by which their annuities would be forfeited. Individuals of the tribe guilty of murder, if not captured or surrendered, may become outlaws who may seek occasion to wreak their vengeance on the border settlers; but the great body of the tribe must return to their allegiance after the more guilty among them have been punished, and it will be the interest of the tribe to stop the depredations of outlaws. A discharge from Champlain's arquebuse brought on the French in Canada the perpetual hostility of the Iroquois, which for a century and a-half was satiated in fire and blood. But these were foreign Indians under the patronage of the neighbouring colonies of New England, though they claimed a right to hunt north of Lake Ontario. The Crees are Canadian Indians, and are in receipt of annuities from the Government which they cannot, by taking up a position of permanent hostility, afford to jeopardize. Happily, an Indian war in perpetuity is something which, as an outcome of this North-West trouble, we need not fear.

WITHIN a little more than two months, the Fishery Clauses of the Treaty of Washington expire; Canadian fish will be subject to a duty on its entrance into the American market, the American consumer will have to pay a higher price for his fish, and the Canadian fisherman will find the demand in that market restricted—a mutual injury which will bring joy to the fishermen of Gloucester if it adds to their profits. Our own fishermen

will have to look for new markets, and among others the home market now largely supplied with fresh fish from the United States. This trade, to which the convenience of the geographical situation gives rise, will be replaced by one which will be forced under the restraint of law. The sixty members of the Canadian Parliament who, in view of these facts, petitioned the Government to adopt a minimum tariff for fish on the Inter-colonial acted more rationally in doing so than in trying to inculcate the belief that we can at any time get a new Reciprocity Treaty for the asking. To proclaim anew the fact that Canada is ready to enter into a Reciprocity Treaty is scarcely necessary for the information of the American Government, and a signal commercial distress would not, in this form, be likely to bring relief. The recent debate in the House of Commons, which Mr. Davis brought on in an irregular way, when the House was moved into committee of supply, showed how deeply the Maritime Provinces feel at being shut out from their natural market; but as a means of forwarding reciprocity the discussion was useless. Reciprocity is not, it is to be feared, at present a vital issue; but the conditions on which Americans may fish on our coasts, within the three mile limit, and the finding of new markets for Canadian fish, are problems with which we shall be forced to deal. The old contention that the line of exclusion should be drawn from the headlands of great arms of the sea to which the name of bays has been given, though technically perhaps maintainable, can never again be insisted on with the consent of the British Government. Practically, the question of fishing rights to be arranged with the American Government is confined to the three mile limit on our coast line. It is capable of several solutions; and if not made subject of stipulation, the rule of exclusion will prevail, and the sole difficulty will be to enforce the rule. Encroachment, experts tell us, has become much more difficult by a revolution in the mode of fishing, which consists of the substitution of the costly purse-seine, difficult to remove without ample time, for the hook and line. But against encroachment, which is sure to come, if in a lesser degree than formerly, it will be costly and nearly impossible to guard, and, what is worse, the exercise of this marine police will occasion continual irritation. It is very desirable that some permanent arrangement should be made by which this question of the inshore fishery should once for all be set at rest. Surely Canada in this fishery privilege possesses a better material basis than any other country for a Reciprocity Treaty with the United States; and yet no movement for the formation of such a treaty is made on either side.

THE defeat of the Conservative candidate in Levis is variously interpreted. While the Opposition claims the victory as its own the Bleus, by whom M. Belleau was supported, attribute his defeat to division among themselves. Probably both causes contributed to the success of the Opposition candidate. The Castors demanded from M. Belleau certain pledges which he declined to give. The *Minerve* is at little pains to conceal its satisfaction with the result. What the pledge was which he refused to give is not stated; but, admittedly, it embraced some conditions which the Senecalists insisted on making. It is doubtful whether the Opposition was strong enough to carry the Division by its own unaided strength; if not, what is the prospect which the division of the Bleus holds out? The *Minerve* says the lesson will have a salutary effect; which probably means that the Senecalists, now that they have shown their power, will be able to get their own way. The Senecalist section of the Bleus, having demanded some pledge which M. Belleau declined to give, is evidently well satisfied with the revenge which it has been able to take. If, as is probably the case, M. Belleau declined to pledge himself to join a combination of Quebec members, such as that which last session made a successful raid on the Treasury, his defeat is the greatest honour which, under the circumstances, could have fallen to his lot.

NOT even yet is the fate of the only Bankruptcy Bill which has any chance of passing—for there are several—at Ottawa at all certain. The committee by which the bill was framed agreed upon one point, a discharge clause, on which ever since the last Bankruptcy Bill was repealed, there has been great difference of opinion. There were many who favoured the passing of a bill for the equal distribution of the assets of insolvents, who were opposed to a discharge clause, and there were others, fewer in number and less persistent in expressing their opinions, who thought the discharge of the insolvent should follow the complete surrender of all his assets. While it was clearly desirable that the obtaining of a discharge should not be a matter of course or even be made too easy, a Bankruptcy Bill which did not provide for a discharge on any conditions would have been an anomaly; and the practical effect of its operation would have been to cause large numbers of insolvents to leave the country. This result could not have