

breeds, is calling for the serious consideration of the Government, and measures should be adopted to cultivate and maintain relations with the half-breed population calculated to attract them to us."

"The formidable Indian question has not yet arisen in our midst, owing largely to the influence of the half-breed element. The disappearance of the buffalo, and especially the extension of the settlers in the Indian country, are preparing difficulties which may be avoided, I hope, but which would otherwise involve such terrible and expensive results that it is the duty of all the friends of the Government and of the country to do all in their power to prevent such misfortune.

"The result depends in a great measure on the way the half-breeds would be treated. Friendly disposed, they will mightily contribute to the maintenance of peace; dissatisfied, they would not only add to the difficulty, but render the establishment of the country the next thing to an impossibility.

"2. What ought to be avoided when alluding to HALF-BREEDS—It is important in public documents to avoid comparing the half-breeds with the Indians; and it is not just to say that a certain class of them differ but little except in name from the Indians. They have not the tastes, habits and instincts of the Indians. They are hunters, traders or settlers, but no portion of them can be classified with the savages of the plains."

He proceeds to point out on what the settlements at Edmonton, St. Albert, St. Anne's, St. Laurent and Victoria, depend, and how those at Wood Mountain and Cypress Hills also live. He then adds:

"The half-breeds are a highly sensitive race; they keenly resent injury or insult, and daily complain on that point. In fact they are daily humiliated with regard to their origin by the way they are spoken of, not only in newspapers but also in official and semi-official documents.

"3. GRANT OF LAND—Every one acknowledges the desirability for the half-breeds to settle definitely on lands to cultivate them. Here is a scheme which I take the liberty to propose:

"(a.) I estimate the half-breeds actually in the North-West to number about 1,200 families. Let the Government make 12 reserves for them in the very places the half-breeds themselves will like to have them.

"(b.) Each reserve should be for 100 families at least, and contain an area of 12 square miles of available land, that is to say, the extent of four townships.

"c. All the half-breeds, men, women and children, residing in the North-West on the 1st January, 1879, ought to receive two non-negotiable scrips for 80 acres of land each, to be located by them in one of the above mentioned reserves."

He proceeds to point out that this property should be inalienable for at least three generations, save exchanges of entire lots between half-breeds, which might be allowed.

"In the settlements already formed the half-breeds ought to be confirmed in the possession of the lot or lots they claim, and on which there are improvements, even which is very rare, when they claim more than 160 acres. When the lots claimed are less than 160 acres, scrips for the balance ought to be given."

Then, after entering into further details, he concludes by pressing once again, the importance of an early settlement of the question.

"SPEDDY SETTLEMENT OF THE WHOLE MATTER—It is desirable that the half-breed question should be decided without any further delay. The requisite legislation ought to be passed in the coming Session of the Legislature. Immediately after inspectors ought to be appointed, and I would particularly recommend Mr. Angus McKay as one of the inspectors. Surveyors will have to be sent to the Territories next summer, to mark immediately, at least, the outside lines of the reserves, with one or two rows of lots. Other details may come afterwards, provided they be not delayed unnecessarily. There is no doubt the difficulties increase with delay."

On the 18th January, 1879, Bishop McLean wrote in answer to the letter of Colonel Dennis:

"I thoroughly sympathise with you in the anxiety you show to conciliate the half-breeds of the North-West Territories. The plain Crees and the Blackfeet have been but recently reclaimed from a state of constant warfare between themselves by the introduction of the Mounted Police force; and the presence of large bands of Sioux, renowned for their warlike habits, might at any moment, without any administrative skill on the part of the Government, lead to dangerous outbreaks that would not only be deplorable in their immediate results, but tend to damage the prospects of the country in regard to settlement. In bringing so prominently into the foreground the value of the half-breed element being in sympathy with the Government in dealing with the Indians, I think you have grasped the main point of the whole question. The experience of all the years I have lived in the North-West points to

the conclusion that the Indian has a tendency, in all his dealings with the white man, to consult and largely to be guided by the opinion of the half-breeds. Therefore you have the whole half-breed element in sympathy with the Government in dealing with the plain tribe of Indians. I would express a very hearty conviction in the conclusion that you draw, namely: that we should attract to our side a moral power which, in the present critical relation of the various tribes of Indians towards each other and towards the Government, would prove of the greatest value to the Dominion."

I should have added that another question is touched on by the Archbishop, which is, that in existing settlements all the properties in the reserves should be sub-divided into lots of 10 chains broad by 80 in depth, in accordance with what was the ancient custom of the country. Bishop Macrae's statement is, perhaps, not material to be read; he declares that he has had but very little acquaintance with the subject. Governor Laird, on the 13th March, 1879, says:

If the half-breeds desire to settle down together I most certainly think that land should be for a short time reserved for them; but I believe it would be a mistake to lock up the land for a longer period than two or three years."

He discusses the question of teachers, and also of industrial schools, arguing rather against the practical availability of that proposition in the emergency, and adding these words:

"The wants of the Indians and half-breeds are pressing, and it appears to me that the same money that would support industrial schools could in the meantime be better employed in hiring a few practical men to go at once on the reserves and teach them how to plough, sow and save their crops, in order that, if possible, starvation in its worst form may be averted."

Just about the same time at which these various despatches were being written, there came the rumor that Louis Riel was going to the Saskatchewan—even at that early date. The *Saskatchewan Herald*, of the 24th March, 1879, contains this paragraph:

"The *Emerson International* gives currency to the rumor that Louis Riel intends going to the Saskatchewan next summer with a large French half-breed emigration to take place from settlements on the Red and Pembina Rivers. It is rumored that an agitation is on foot to obtain a reduction of the terms of his banishment, the Hon. Jos. Dubuc being understood to have promised to use his influence at Ottawa with the French Canadian members in support of the application."

On 15th May, 1879, by the Dominion Lands Act brought in during that Session, power is delegated to the Governor in Council:

"To satisfy any claims existing in connection with the extinguishment of the Indian title preferred by half-breeds resident in the North-West Territories outside the limits of Manitoba, on the 15th day of July, 1870, by granting land to such persons, to such extent, and on such terms and conditions, as may be deemed expedient."

So that not having decided upon the precise form of their policy they decided upon a quasi-recognition of the claim, and they asked Parliament to hand over to them absolute power and discretion to deal with it as they pleased, on what terms they pleased and when they pleased; and that power was granted. A question for our consideration from the time of the passing of that Act is, how they used the power which they so asked and so obtained? I will show that from that time up to 1885 they did nothing whatever. I will show they did nothing whatever with a question which had been declared by the Deputy head of the Department, by all persons who had been consulted under the advice of the Minister, to be a present question, a pressing question, a question which had already assumed the form of agitation, namely, public meetings and petitions, a question whose difficulty would be enhanced by time—I will show that having taken from Parliament *carte blanche* they never used their power from that day until the year in which we now are. The difficulties unquestionably were to be enhanced by time. No grievance grows less by time; no just demand diminishes in its intensity by time. The feeling of soreness, of irritation and neglect increases