

of the Saskatchewan, he would have taken up his gun and fought side by side with the half-breeds (cheers and hisses). The half-breed trouble began soon after we obtained possession of the Territory. They were the descendants of French-Canadians who had gone up there in connection with the trading companies, and when the Government took over the country they found it necessary to extinguish the Indian title in these half-breeds by giving them certain concessions. Governor Archibald, the Governor of Manitoba at the time, was instructed to make an enumeration of the half-breeds, as a preparation to decide how their interests should be protected, and their welfare looked after. At this time 1,400,000 acres of land was set aside for the purpose, and when Governor Archibald had finished the enumeration, the Government decided to give each man 140 acres. Subsequently a different method of dealing with the families was adopted, and they were to have 190 acres each instead of 140. The Government was engaged in settling this matter when, Sir John Macdonald being defeated, his Government went out and Mr. Mackenzie came in. It was the bounden duty of Mr. Mackenzie's Government to have gone on and settled the matter. They did not do so, and the preparations made fell through. Instead of neglecting it altogether, Mr. M. Ryan, of Montreal, was employed by the Government of Mr. Mackenzie to make the enumeration. When he had finished that, it was supposed that 225 acres of land would be given to each half-breed. But in the meantime, the half-breeds of St. Laurent, Qu'Appelle, and other places, had moved off their reservations, and became scattered through the Territories, and this fact greatly embarrassed the question, and made it almost impossible to follow out the division agreed on. Afterwards the half-breeds who had moved off asked to have their land allotments too. On June 14, 1878, Mr. Mills, who was the Minister of the Interior, wrote to Mr. Ryan, asking him if he would accept a commission to settle these claims. Mr. Ryan received no other instructions. On the 3rd of March following he wrote to the Minister that the half-breeds were scattered all over the North-west, and unless he went after them and settled their grants there would be great difficulty in the matter. He apprehended that if he must trust to the coincidence of meeting with those who had claims, the result would not be satisfactory, nor would the work of distribution be finished for many years. To this letter no answer was sent for some time, and I submit that if Mr. Mills was as anxious to have the claims settled as he now pretends to have been, he ought to have instructed Mr. Ryan to make the trip and settle the claims. He did not do that. Here is Mr. Mills' direction to Mr. Ryan in answer to that letter, and to appreciate its full significance you must remember that he is one of the most bitter opponents we have, and in his newspaper and on the stump attacks the Government day after day, in season and out of season, for our indifference and neglect of this very thing. Here are his words to Mr. Ryan:—

"It is not necessary to look up the proofs to the half-breeds' claims. If they care for their interests they will themselves come forward and establish their claims.—D.M." (Laughter.)

That was how "D. M." regarded their claims. Nothing more was done for two years, when Mr. Ryan wrote to the Minister recommending an extension of time for one year to give these people a chance to present their proofs. Again, Mr. Ryan writes:—"The half-breeds are pressing me for an answer. Will the time be extended?" To this Mr. Mills answers with a statement that "the matter is under consideration, and Mr. Duc will probably be authorized to extend the time, and that it was their purpose to appoint his Dominion Land Agent to investigate the claims." That was how Mr. Mills acted. Five years after he appoints a gentleman to investigate these claims, he refuses him the means to do so, and two years later he tells him in reply to an urgent communication that he has the matter of the extension of time under consideration, and is about to appoint a Dominion Land Agent to investigate. Well, Mr. Ryan went to Qu'Appelle on this business and sent in the bill. It was for honest work done, yet Mr. Mills was so indignant that he should attempt to hunt up the men and the proofs that he refused to pay the bill of \$75, and it was paid by the Conservative Government on their return to power, and the man Ryan was a bitter opponent of Sir John Macdonald; but he deserved to be paid for his honest work. We have no records in the Department to show the course of the Government, except such scraps of memoranda on the backs of letters such as you are familiar with; and a report prepared by Col. Dennis under instructions, which may be taken probably to indicate pretty clearly the mind of the Minister. According to the report of Col. Dennis, the mode proposed for a settlement was to give to the half-breeds the lands on which they had located—unless it had been taken by settlers or for speculative purposes—in full settlement of their claims. This policy our Government carried out (cheers). Not a single person has ever been