

Territory had grievances which existed for years, grievances which the Government of this country had over and over again neglected to redress; grievances which the Government knew had existed for at least seven long weary years; grievances which the Government had promised, over and over again, to redress, until hope deferred had made the heart of the half-breed sick, until, despairing of getting redress at the hands of hon. gentlemen opposite, the half-breeds took up arms against the sovereign power of the Dominion; grievances which the Government neglected to investigate until that neglected culminated in open rebellion. It is true the hon. the Secretary of State, in his letter of the 6th of June last, addressed to the Frenchmen of Fall River, in the State of Massachusetts, contained this declaration:

"If the half-breeds had serious grievances against the Canadian Government the ordinary channel of petition was open to them as to all free citizens. They did not avail themselves of it. If their petitions were not listened to by the Government, they had the right, as free citizens, to enter upon a constitutional agitation, and to induce their friends in Parliament to make known their grievances, their abandonment, their protestation. They did not do this. They knew they had devoted friends in the Privy Council, in the House, in the press; they did not appear to apply to them, nor for their support."

In this letter the Secretary of State exhibits an extraordinary—an unpardonable amount of ignorance, with respect to the condition of the half-breeds in the North-West Territories, with respect to their claims, with respect to their grievances, with respect to their long and persistent efforts to induce the Government to investigate their grievances and to redress their wrongs. The Secretary of State is steeped to the very lips in ignorance on this subject, in ignorance as to the countless petitions, remonstrances and memorials that the half-breeds of the North-West Territories had, for the period of seven years, presented, year in and year out, in season and out of season, to the Government of Canada. The hon. gentleman, in his letter, part of which I have just read, poses as a friend of the half-breeds. He said that in the Privy Council there are friends of the half-breeds, that he himself is a friend of the half-breeds; and yet that hon. gentleman, up to the 6th of June last, knew absolutely nothing of the condition of the half-breeds, his own friends, knew absolutely nothing of the grievances of the half-breeds, his own friends, knew absolutely nothing of the demands of the half-breeds, his own friends, knew absolutely nothing of their claims, petitions and memorials, many of which have been submitted to Parliament, and all of which are teeming with petitions unanswered, memorials treated with contempt remonstrances unheeded wrongs unredressed. This friend of the half-breeds, this hon. gentleman, high in the council of his Sovereign, who ought to know something of the condition of public affairs, and who was bound to listen to the complaints and the grievances of his friends the half-breeds, knows absolutely nothing about their condition. He says there were no petitions, no memorials, no agitation. This young, aspiring, ambitious, Minister of the Crown, who abandoned the politics of his own native Province to obtain a seat in the Parliament of Canada and a seat at Her Majesty's Privy Council Board in the Dominion, was too careless, too neglectful of the interest of his friends to examine the mass of documents, petitions, memorials and remonstrances which were to be found in the office of his own chief in order to make himself conversant with the claims of the half-breeds of the North-West Territories; he was too careless, too neglectful, too indifferent to their claims, to master the mass of documents dealing with this question which have been submitted to Parliament by the First Minister. When we find this trusted friend of the half-breeds so ignorant as to their claims and grievances; when we find him so reckless and careless as to their wrongs, need we be at all surprised that the half-breed should have taken up arms against the constituted authorities of the Dominion. As I pointed out the half-breeds of the North-West Territories had grievances which ought to have been considered and

Mr. CAMERON (Huron).

redressed. The hon. member for Jacques-Cartier, in his 6½ hours speech, admitted in the opening sentences, that the half-breeds had grievances; the leader of the Government admitted that they made many complaints, some of which were well founded. It has been established, as a fact, by a mass of testimony simply startling, that the half-breeds had grievances, the redress of which they have been persistently demanding and demanding in vain for seven long years. Passing from the half-breeds, I say that the white settlers had grievances which remained unredressed, and many of which were similar to the grievances of the half-breeds. They complained that their rights as settlers were not recognised by the Government; secondly, that settlement and improvements made prior to 1881, when the land office was opened in Prince Albert district, were not recognised by the Government; thirdly, they complained that for years, after all the settlements duties far in excess of the requirements of the law had been performed by the settlers, they could not get their patents; fourth, that their petitions and remonstrances and demands for redress were treated with indifference and silent contempt; fifth, they complained of the uncertain and vacillating and extraordinary policy pursued by the Department with reference to the claims of the settlers. Let us see what those claims were. I regret that I cannot gratify the hon. member for Centre Wellington; it is necessary, in the discussion of a case of this kind, to read extracts. I propose to read but few, taken from the public documents submitted to Parliament. I find, with respect to the claims of the white settlers in the Prince Albert district, in the Saskatchewan Valley and the neighboring districts, that the following facts exist. Prior to 1876, a large number of immigrants had settled on the lands in the Prince Albert district. Mr. Pearce, one of the Land Commissioners for the North-West, estimates the number at 300 settlers. Many of these settlers, if not all of them, settled upon their land in 1876, and between 1876 and the opening of the land office at Prince Albert in the middle of 1881. According to law, these settlers were entitled to have their claims recognised and their patents issued to them three years after they had occupied the land as actual and *bona fide* settlers. On the 29th November, 1879, Mr. Lindsay Russell, the Surveyor General, wrote to George Duck, the land agent at Prince Albert, directing him to post up a notice that squatting on land and improvements made on land should not precede entry in the land office, and that such squatting would not be recognised—in other words, that entry in the land office only would constitute a claim that the Government were bound to recognise. On the 12th September, 1881, two years after this order was posted up by Mr. Duck at Prince Albert, Mr. Burgess, now Deputy Minister of the Interior, wrote to Mr. Duck that the notice of the 28th November, 1879, was a mistake, and ought not to have been issued. It appears, on some incomprehensible reason known to no man, the law on the subject was misread and misunderstood in the Department of the Interior, and hence the issuing of the Order of the 29th November, 1879. This notice of the 12th September, 1881, that is the notice countermanding the notice of the 29th November, 1879, never reached the agent, or, if it did reach him, it was mislaid, and therefore he was not in a position to countermand the notice issued two years before. On the 25th October, 1882, exactly three years after the notice prohibiting settlement was posted up, the agent wrote to the Minister of the Interior that no settler had made application to him for a patent, because he would not be entitled to a patent under the Order of the 29th November, 1879, under which occupation only counted from the day upon which the entry was made. Under these absurd orders issued by the Department, no settler could obtain a patent for his