

February 16, 1871

hon. gentleman was as mild as he possibly could be, and although the administrative policy of the Government was so disastrous, and although it was the duty of the hon. member to protest against that disastrous policy, yet he had not condescended to notice the facts he condemned, but he told them exactly that there had been a series of extraordinary statements made by the hon. member for Cumberland, and that to secure his return to this House, the hon. member had been obliged to bring up these statements. The Government considered this and he (Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald) accepted it as the judgment of his hon. friend in favour of the Government. (*Laughter.*) He could not as a consistent member of the Opposition approve of their course, and he could not condemn them, and so was silent. (*Renewed Laughter.*)

The hon. member admitted that the House had met in a season of prosperity, and under prosperous circumstances. It was true, the hon. gentleman remarked that it was so, but then, it was owing to the exertions of the people themselves, and in no degree attributable to the administration of the Government. He (Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald) would admit that it was so, and the Government congratulated themselves that Providence smiled on them while they were in power, and that they had a comfortable majority of the people's representatives with them. He agreed with the hon. member that we all should feel sympathy for the ancient ally of England in her troubles; but he could not agree with the hon. member that this was the day of her greatest humiliation. There never was a time in the history of France when her future appeared brighter. She would rise renovated by her great trial to her old place, and be one of the first powers of Europe, if she had ever ceased to occupy that position; and he had no doubt that England and France would again and again act in concert as the foremost nations of modern civilization. (*Hear, hear.*)

With reference to the remarks of the hon. member respecting the fishery question, he would inform him that the Government were fully aware of their responsibility, and they were pleased to observe that their course in recent events had met with general approval throughout the country; and he would tell the hon. member that he need be under no apprehension, although he had expressed it, that England, our old Mother Land, would ever act the part the hon. member apprehended—to sacrifice our interests for the sake of any advantage to herself, or any desire to settle any question between the United States and herself. That was not the course that Mother England and the people of England would pursue. If any Government in England could sacrifice our interests for their own advantage, the people of England would reject them with scorn. He could assure his hon. friend that he would find that England was now, as she had always been, a fostering mother, careful of our interests and rights, and ready as she had always shown herself in the past, to protect us with all her force and might and power.

(*Applause.*)

He would not make any remarks respecting the observations of his hon. friend on the Fenian invasion, and about the claims which Canada of right had in consequence of the outrages upon our border, and the losses and expenses brought upon our people by those invasions. The hon. member would find that in this, too, the

Canadian Government had taken every step necessary to press our claims to a conclusion. He could only assure his hon. friend that if they were not settled it would not be the fault of this Government. He would not enter into a discussion of the matter just at present, as they had already arranged on the papers that this subject should be taken up hereafter.

His hon. friend had said that he would not join in the congratulations on the state of peace existing in Manitoba. He (Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald) thought that it was a matter of congratulation to every well-ordered mind to see peace, quiet, rule and law brought into a country where all these had been absent. He thought it was a greater matter of congratulation that the accession of that country to the Dominion of Canada had not been made at the sacrifice of a single drop of blood; that the march of the soldiers, both regular and militia, was a peaceable one; that the only difficulties were those offered by the wildness of the country through which they proceeded; and that they were received, as the House had hoped they would be, as friends, brothers, fellow citizens, persons whose advent would be welcomed, and not persons to be feared. It was a matter of great consolation that there had been no blood shed in the acquisition of the North West, and that although mistakes had been made, yet those errors led to no serious consequence, except, perhaps, the expenditure of a little money. The Union had been finally accomplished, and ere long the representatives from Manitoba would take their seats in this House. Granting all that had been said as to the mismanagement of the Canadian Government in consummating the union, to be correct, still it was a matter of congratulation that the union had taken place in harmony and peace, without the loss of one single life in the attempt to effect that union. The hon. member had remarked that he could not enter into congratulations that the murderers of a Canadian subject should have escaped justice. The hon. member was not asked for such congratulations. The Red River country was a British country at the time the crime was committed, although British law was for the time suspended. But British law and institutions existed there, and by the consent and voice of the people of Canada and their Parliament the people of the North West had now got a legislature and Government of their own, on whom were thrown the responsibility of the administration of the laws, and on whom was also thrown the establishment of courts of civil and criminal jurisdiction, and the protection of the life, liberty and property of the people, and the punishment of offenders against them.

He would ask his hon. friend why he had introduced this subject, or why he spoke of it all? Would he point out in what mode the Government of Canada, or the tribunals, or the constituted authorities of Canada could in any way have prevented the act? The hon. member knew that until the 15th of July last, when the act of Union was consummated, the North West was in no way connected with Canada except as a portion of the British Empire. Canada could no more have interfered in Manitoba than in any other colony of Great Britain. Canada had no control, no power, no authority. It was simply this, so long as that colony had its own Government, they were responsible for the protection of life and property, and for the administration of justice; and when that power was overthrown