

time of perusing the statements which have been made by the hon. member for Lincoln in his own defence, with the view of arriving at a proper judgment, deliberately and calmly, and free from the passions with which the hon. gentleman who moved the resolution sought to blind the judgment of the House; and with that purpose, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). I should like to address to the House a few observations with reference to what the hon. Minister of Justice has said, and the allusions made by the hon. member for Lincoln, but as I shall not be able to finish before six o'clock, and as I shall not continue very long, I hope the House will be willing now to call it six o'clock, and permit me to make my observations afterwards.

It being six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). Mr. Speaker, we have before us, in the resolution submitted by my hon. friend from South Oxford—one question, but we have had in the discussion, in addition to that, the question of the relative merits or demerits of the policy of the present Administration and that of the Administration which preceded it, with regard to the granting of timber licenses. Now, I think it is to be regretted that questions of public policy should be mingled with questions affecting the personal integrity and conduct of a member of the House. But as these questions have been raised by the hon. member for Lincoln in his defence, and by the hon. Minister of Justice in defending the conduct of the Administration—

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. The other way.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). Well, perhaps I should more correctly say, in censuring the conduct of the preceding Administration, I shall be permitted to make some reference to this question. If any hon. gentleman on the Treasury benches should dissent from the statement of facts I make or the views I enunciate, I trust that that dissent will be expressed, but I trust that that will be an end of the discussion of these questions of policy, and that we shall have an opportunity of returning to the consideration of the very serious question involved in the resolution of my hon. friend from South Oxford. Now, Sir, shortly after the acquisition of the North-West Territories and the establishment of the Province of Manitoba, the Government which was led by the present Prime Minister introduced and carried into law an Act relating to Dominion lands, especially those situated in the North-West Territories, in which Act provision was made for the leasing of timber limits. The 50th section of that Act provided that the right of cutting timber on such timber limits should be put up at a bonus per square mile, varying according to the value of the limit, and sold to the highest bidder on competition, either by tender or at public auction. However, when timber limits came to be leased, the right hon. gentleman's Government found it impossible to give effect to that provision, and a number of licenses were granted—amongst others, to Macaulay and Ginty, Buchanan and Green, Fowler, and Fuller—for I think a period of 21

years, for tracts of land as large as 100 square miles, from which the mills of those parties were to be supplied with timber, and from which lumber was to be cut for the people of the North-West Territories and the Province of Manitoba. Now, the right hon. gentleman's Government did not comply with the provision of the statute which I have quoted. Those limits were not put up at public auction, nor were tenders sought for the sale of them. The sales were made, not under the statute, but wholly regardless of its provisions; I suppose the hon. gentleman found it quite impossible to comply with them. At all events they were not complied with; and I make this statement, not by way of censure at this moment—for I think if I were disposed to do that, it ought to be dealt with by a proper motion and not incidentally on the motion now before us. I say further, that when the Government of my hon. friend from East York (Mr. Mackenzie) came into power, they repealed this provision—not because they considered it an improper provision, under circumstances where it could be practically given effect to, but because they found it impossible to act upon it in the condition of things then existing in Manitoba and the North-West Territories. There was carried through the House in 1874, during the régime of Mr. Mackenzie, an Act providing that:

"In cases where applications may be made for limits on which to give timber, after a survey of the territory had been made, the Governor in Council may, on recommendation of the hon. the Minister of Interior, authorise the same to be leased for such bonuses as he may deem fair and reasonable."

Now, the reason of that was, that after the Government came into office they found it impossible to act under the law as it then stood. It was before I was a member of the Administration that this change was carried through the House without any opposition. I think the hon. gentlemen who are now sitting on the front benches were members of the House, and they did not oppose the change; and, by giving their assent to the operation of the law which was carried through Parliament, they, as members of Parliament, assumed the responsibility, along with the Government, of the change which was actually made. That change, I say, was made because it was found impossible to give practical effect to the law as the right hon. gentleman had submitted it, and as Parliament had adopted it. It was impossible to get tenders; it was impossible to make a sale in the way proposed; there was no competition. The difficulty was to get lumbermen to erect mills in that section of the country, and to manufacture lumber for the use of the settlers, because, as every hon. gentleman knows, the population there was still very scanty in numbers; it was not exactly known what the future might be; it was, to some extent, a leap in the dark on the part of any lumbermen to make a very large investment in the country, under the circumstances; and so the Government, anxious to supply building material for the population, found it necessary for that purpose, rather to persuade those engaged in the lumbering business to erect mills there than to keep them in restraint by any law requiring competition for the purchase of timber limits. Now, it has been said, and said, no doubt, truly, that we, in this particular case which has been referred to—and which I will discuss more at length soon, the sale of