

as being a high officer in the Government and anxious to convey all the information within his power. But, Mr. Speaker, he had no authority, he had nothing to do with the land grants, he had nothing to do with the claims of the Indians, he was not called upon to make a single report, and he could not have the means of making a report, as to the justice or injustice of the claims of these half-breeds, or any of them; and, therefore, I say again, that I regret the attack made upon my hon. friend. Now, as the debate has gone on, I may state the reason of the appointment. My hon. friend was selected to take his present position from his long acquaintance with that great country west of the Province of Ontario. Those hon. gentlemen who have sat in Parliament for some time remember my hon. friend as a British Columbian, representing a British Columbia constituency. He represented that country for some time, and he was resident in that Province for many years, and held a very high professional position as civil engineer and surveyor before he came here. He knew that Province thoroughly. He had been appointed by the Government, of which I was the head, as Indian Commissioner, and he had been in the North-West for some time. He knew the Indian tribes, he knew the Indian habits, he knew the best mode of dealing with the Indians, from his long experience as Indian Commissioner; and if any hon. gentleman will make enquiries, from the great chief of the Blackfeet, Crow Foot, down to the smallest chief in the North-West, these will answer without a single exception that they look up to him, and did look up to him, as their father and as their chief. I say this, that from every one, from one end of the North-West to the other, there have been unanimous expressions from the Indians of their confidence in him as the head of the Indian Department, and as Indian Commissioner. Then, with respect to his conduct as Lieutenant Governor of the North-West. Sir, he has been, I was going to say, smothered with roses. All kinds of compliments have been paid to him by those who knew what his conduct was as Lieutenant Governor of the North-West, from Bishop Grandin, whom the hon. gentleman quoted, from Archbishop Taché, and Father Lacombe, and all those who knew what his conduct had been—they all, without exception, congratulated him on his appointment to the office he now holds, and which I believe he holds to the satisfaction of the country. Every one knows the straightforward, clear, single-mindedness of the apostle to the Blackfeet, Father Lacombe, and in his letter he says to him:

"I congratulate you on getting your present office because you are the right man in the right place."

And so did Bishop Grandin say; so did the Catholic clergy say; and they were men who at first, before they knew the value of my hon. friend, might have raised an objection to his appointment. They have as one man stated that he was the right man in the right place. In the first place, my hon. friend was thoroughly acquainted with British Columbia, he was thoroughly acquainted with the North-West, he was thoroughly, and is thoroughly, acquainted with the Indian character, and the Indian wants, and the Indian frailties, and the best mode of managing the Indians; and, besides that, he is a man that I, who am responsible for the choice of my colleagues, have every confidence in, and I am quite satisfied that he will justify—aye, and more than justify—his selection. It was of very great importance that there should be a selection made from those portions of the Dominion lying west of the four old Provinces. A feeling of dissatisfaction had arisen, and was being rather loudly expressed, that the four old Provinces should control the whole of this vast continent, and there was no representative man from west of the western boundary of Ontario; and in the selection of my hon. friend, beside his personal qualifications, which, I think, as I have stated, fully justify his appoint-

ment—the fact of his being a British Columbian, the fact of his having had a long experience in Manitoba and British Columbia, and the fact of his coming here as a representative of a North-West constituency—went far to allay that dissatisfaction and to introduce the practice of having all portions of this vast Dominion represented in the government of the country.

Mr. SPEAKER. I may mention that, in my opinion, this debate is somewhat irregular, because there is no motion before the House. Although this is a very important discussion, it would be better to have a formal motion to adjourn so that the debate could be regularly continued.

Mr. MITCHELL moved the adjournment of the House.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Although, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to question your ruling, I may remark that, on all occasions on which I have been present, debates arising on ministerial explanations, have proceeded without the necessity of a formal motion being made; still, I daresay, you, Sir, are correct, technically at all events, in deciding that a motion should be before the Chair. Now, with respect to the question, I am bound to say that I think if the First Minister had taken the trouble to examine the newspaper criticisms made on the appointment at the time, he would have noticed one thing at all events, that a very large percentage of the newspapers on both sides of politics regarded the present appointment as a very extraordinary one indeed. But I do not myself regard the appointment as half so extraordinary as some of the propositions that have been put forward by the right hon. gentleman in defence thereof. The right hon. gentleman was good enough to tell us that all we have to do is to look to the Government of the day. No doubt he is right this far, that they are primarily responsible beyond all question for the good government and good administration of this country. But I take it that this House and this country, too, have a right to examine and to criticise, with the utmost possible freedom, the conduct of the agents, whomsoever they may be, who may be employed by the Government of the day, and I think I am most strictly in accord, not only with Canadian but with British precedent, in saying that on all occasions, on every occasion, the House of Commons here and elsewhere has reserved to itself the very fullest right to criticise the conduct of agents of the Government, even when, for reasons which have very little to do with the merits of the case, it may have appeared fit to a majority of the Government supporters in the House or out of it to sustain, on the whole, the Government of the day. There is but one point on which I disagree a little with my hon. friend, the leader of the Opposition, and that is this: the hon. gentleman, if I took down his words correctly, declared he held the present Minister of the Interior to be the man of all others in Canada who was most responsible for the rebellion, for the civil war which lately broke out in the North-West. I differ from my hon. friend. I think the First Minister, for once in his life, was correct: he, and not the Minister of the Interior, was the man who before heaven was most responsible for the lives that were lost, who was most responsible for the mischief done to this country, who was most responsible for the irritation between the two races inhabiting this country which was created. To his negligence, to his scandalous malfeasance of office, to his criminal negligence of the plainest duties which appertain to his office—to those more than to any other thing else was due the late rebellion, and he was right in taking on his own shoulders the chief burden and responsibility for that event. But it does not at all follow that the man appointed by the Government of the day, who was paid a large salary out of the funds of the people of this country to watch over the events occurring in that region, to report to the Government what was going on in the district which he