

not been that they are not masters of International Law, and have crossed the boundary wherever buffalo could be found, they would have been reduced to utter starvation. I am glad to say there is no evidence before me that would warrant me to state to the House that any actual deaths have taken place, but there has been great suffering from the famine that has spread over the whole western portion of that country. Public sentiment would not allow it, and no Government would be worthy of their position, if they allowed the Indians to starve as long as we have the means to feed them. The Government adopted the best means for relieving them. We were obliged to find food for them. In some instances, perhaps, the Indians have been fed when they might not have been in an extreme position of hunger or starvation, and I dare say there have been instances of imposition; but as far as I can learn the officers have exercised due supervision over the food supply. I must say, however, that it was a dangerous thing to commence the system of feeding the Indians. So long as they know they can rely, or believe they can rely, on any source whatever for their food, they make no efforts to support themselves. We have to guard against that, and the only way to guard against it is by being rigid, even stingy, in the distribution of food and require absolute proof of starvation before distributing it. I have no distinct information to give to the House, but I understand that a very considerable number of those Indians, who retreated into our country before the American forces, have surrendered and are now surrendering by degrees, and betaking themselves to the reserves provided for them in the United States. I hope it may be so, because those Indians are not only the cause of irritation—which we need not allude to particularly just now—but they interfere very much with our own Indians. They kill the game and occupy the country which belongs to our own Indians. I hope, in another year, we will be able to give a prosperous account of the progress of the Indians, but if not we must meet the case as best we may. We cannot allow those people to starve, and we must continue our efforts to save the Indian from himself.

MR. MILLS: The hon. Minister says

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD.

that fifteen, at least, of the farm instructors are persons trained to farming operations. I have a list of those instructors, in which I find the name of F. L. Hunt, Winnipeg. This gentleman was formerly a resident of Michigan. He went to the North-West some years ago, and up to the time of his appointment was engaged upon some newspaper.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD: Perhaps it was an agricultural newspaper.

MR. MILLS: No, it was not an agricultural newspaper. Then, there is Mr. George Scott, of Georgetown, who, I am informed, was engaged in mercantile pursuits before he went to the North-West. He was a friend of the supporter of the right hon. gentleman, and I suppose he was recommended for this position. Then there is Mr. B. Sharon, of Brantford, whom I think was in a similar position. I am informed that neither of those gentlemen were ever engaged in agricultural pursuits.

MR. ROYAL: I happen to know Mr. Hunt, and the hon. member for Bothwell is rather mistaken when he criticises one of the few appointments, perhaps, that can be well defended, of the farm instructors. Mr. Hunt is a man of intelligence, understands farming, has been a resident of Manitoba for a number of years, is married to an Indian woman, and is familiar with the customs and the language of the tribes as well. I dare say that if there were more appointments like this, the experiment we are making in this direction would probably succeed to a larger extent. The farm instructor who cannot speak to the Indians in their own language, labours under the most serious difficulty; how can the teaching of husbandry, in its numerous and complicated details, be done with proficiency if it has to be done through the slow and incomplete agency of an ignorant interpreter? It is a matter of regret that farm instructors have not been chosen, for the greater part, from amongst the half-breed population in Manitoba and in the North-West Territory. Not that the knowledge of the Indian language is to be the only requirement of a farm instructor, for without strict principles of morality, without liberality and good-will, without the perfect understanding of his duties without the knowledge of intelligent farming, a farm instructor may do