

Ontario, I fancy, it being the nearest, with regard to provisions, bacon, flour and all the other articles to which the Indians have a right under the seven treaties that exist, and will be freely competed for by the people generally.

Mr. CHARLTON. I am very happy to hear the excellent character which the right hon. gentleman gives to these American dealers at Fort Benton, Montana. I presume it is fortunate for those gentlemen that they have not resided in Canada for twenty-five or thirty years and become British subjects, when, no doubt, their loyalty would be called into question; but as residents of the United States they enjoy excellent reputations and transact a very large amount of business with the Government. I have been looking through the accounts, and it strikes me that the prices paid are, in many cases, higher than one would suppose was necessary. Flour is charged by the sack. I do not know its weight in the North-West.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. 93 lbs.

Mr. CHARLTON. Barley flour at Edmonton is charged at \$6 a sack, and this seems to me excessive. It is on the Saskatchewan River.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. We cannot get it there otherwise.

Mr. CHARLTON. Owen McDonald, at Prince Albert whom I understand is in the midst of an agricultural settlement, makes a charge of the same character. Do they not raise barley there?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. They do not raise enough.

Mr. CHARLTON. On April 23rd, 1881, Mahoney & McDonald were paid 21 cts. a pound for bacon at Battleford. That would represent a good many cents a pound for freight. Is bacon furnished in this case by contract?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes.

Mr. CHARLTON. I am afraid that there are not many competitors.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. All these articles, along the line of the Saskatchewan, are supplied by the Hudson Bay Company; they are the lowest tenderers.

Mr. CHARLTON. Oats are charged at Fort McLeod at \$1.19 a bushel, which would seem a rather large price to an Ontario farmer. Is that reasonable under the circumstances?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. It is the price of the country.

Mr. CHARLTON. The firm of I. G. Baker & Co., Fort Benton, supplied 160 pairs of cotton overalls at \$1.75 each. I used to be in the dry goods trade; and I sold such an article at about 60 cts. Freight would be a small matter on these, which weigh $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 lbs. each. Such prices seem hardly justifiable. One item shows the humanity of the Government, and I can dwell on it with a considerable degree of pleasure. I see charged on the 18th of February, 1881, by J. J. Clarke, at Fort McLeod, \$10 for material for a coffin for Little Drum, furnished because his family were too destitute to supply a blanket to wrap him in. Would it not have been cheaper to furnish a blanket?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. We wanted to introduce civilized customs there.

Mr. CHARLTON. I doubt the propriety of going contrary to the traditions and usages of the Indians in matters of this kind. They should be allowed to bury their dead, according to the customs they have hitherto pursued, especially if it is cheaper.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I see you have a fit of coffin to-night.

Mr. CHARLTON. I am perfectly aware of the important functions of the pipe of peace among the In-

dians. I see an item, under supplies to sick and destitute Indians, of five gross briar root pipes, charged by J. J. Roos, of Ottawa. Might they not have been furnished with clay pipes?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I suppose that those were for the chiefs?

Mr. FLEMING. The large figures relating to the Indians of the North-West, furnish food for very considerable reflection. The policy of the Canadian Government towards the Indians under their charge, has always been one of the greatest humanity. That policy has been endeavored to be carried out by settling the Indians on reserves, and giving them instruction in the ways of civilised life. The policy, a very good one, has been further extended by the present Government, in the appointment of a large number of farm instructors, placed on the various reserves in the North-West. The result is somewhat startling, if the figures and reports of the Indian Superintendents in the North-West, are indicative of them. I find, on looking at these reports, that this very good policy which I commend the Government for continuing to carry out, has been placed to a very considerable extent in the hands of men who failed to carry out the Government's intentions. During the negotiation of the treaties made with the Indians, great promises were made. The Indians were led to believe, that if they forsook their nomadic life and resorted to the reserves, and entered on the cultivation of the land like white people, happiness, and peace and prosperity would result. Some of them were induced by those glowing promises to attempt settlement on the reserves, but these attempts have been to a great extent a failure, not altogether at least, on account of the Indian character, but largely, I think, on account of the character of the instructors, and of the inadequate way in which the policy of the Government has been carried out. When the Indians have so settled, they are promised implements, seed, grain, cattle, &c., but many of the instructors sent up to them were as little capable of entering on farming operations, as the Indians to whom they were sent. I observe that a large number of these men have been dismissed by the Government. I do not know for what reason. but I congratulate the Government on having weeded out a number of these inefficient officials; not only that, but those who were in charge of the distribution of the implements and other effects to the Indians under the treaty, have, to a very large extent, failed to carry out their purposes. I have the testimony, at page 131 of the report, of Mr. McColl, speaking of the Little Forks Band, as to how the promises which were made to them have been carried out:

"Missinawaypenesse, one of the councillors, represents that they are almost destitute of agricultural implements to cultivate their gardens. Their plough and harrow are broken and they are unable to mend them. This band is composed of seventeen families, and it is presumed that all of them are cultivating the ground, as one axe, one scythe, one spade and two hoes, were only given to such according to treaty; and I find upon referring to the records in the office that they received 20 axes, 32 hoes, 2 ploughs, 1 harrow, 15 scythes, 12 spades, &c., consequently they are still entitled to 2 hoes, 1 harrow, 2 scythes and 5 spades. I also notice in the same records, that nearly all the bands within this Agency have received more axes than they are entitled to under treaty, and that only two or three bands have received their complement of hoes, spades and scythes, notwithstanding the representations to the contrary made to the Department as well as to the Indians in reference to this matter."

On page 134 of the same report, it is stated, with reference to the Indians under the agency of Mr. McPherson:

"The agent informed me that although no potatoes had been requisitioned for this year owing to the Indians having, with few exceptions, an abundance of their own for planting, yet 175 bushels were forwarded to his agency, from Winnipeg, on the 27th of May; but before the Indians could be notified of the arrival of those supplies, they were generally through planting, hence only eighty-one and a-half bushels were taken by them; forty-nine were lent to other persons to be returned in the fall; twenty-seven and a-half bushels were sold at Rat Portage