

the First Minister alluded to, and one result is plain enough to us all. Never has there been a more wanton waste of public money than in connection with the Department specially under the control of the First Minister and his successor. On the mounted police we expended last year \$489,000; on surveys and Dominion lands, \$895,000; and on Indians \$1,166,000; or we spent, in all, in the year 1883-84, \$2,547,560 on these three services; and we have had to spend a great deal more for Mr. Dewdney and all the other officials, who have taken our money and left us in utter ignorance of everything it behoved us to know. Then, as my hon. friend truly said, there has been a far more serious error committed. Practically, to all intentions and purposes, the North-West has been looked on for many years as one great field for plunder. Was there a man who you dared not put in office down here? You sent him up to the North-West. Was there a man whose character was too bad—and it must be pretty bad—to provide an office for under the immediate inspection of the hon. gentleman, he was sent up to the North-West. Was there a man you could not supply with printing or other contracts; he must get a timber limit, a coal area, a colonisation company, or this, that or the other, out of the North-West. This has been within the knowledge of every one who has gone there. No wonder that the people are discontented and leave the country. Their rights, as we all know, have been interfered with. Had these hon. gentlemen simply sat still and allowed the people to go in and develop that country there would have been none of these risings or disturbances; we should have had a strong and prosperous Province there, and the hon. gentleman's position would have been tenfold stronger to-day, and the condition of Canada infinitely better. The hon. gentleman charged my hon. friend with unpatriotic conduct and quoted English precedents to him. The hon. gentleman is very fond of quoting English precedents. Has he looked at the precedents set us from day to day by the Conservative leaders in England, in their criticisms of the conduct of the Government in Egypt and the Soudan; in their criticisms—which I do not approve of—on the conduct of officers who have just been engaged with the enemy at the front. Let him consult the English newspaper files, let him consult the organ of the party whom he says he is affiliated with, and he will find that my hon. friend's motion and language are mildness itself compared with English precedents, to which the hon. gentleman might have appealed. Sir, my hon. friend stated—and I believe every man behind him, and I hope every man in this House agreed with him—although, recollecting certain things which happened before, I fancy he is more likely to get support for that sentiment from this side than his own—that he was willing to assist the Government to the best of his power to re-establish law and order in that country. He said that he was not going to censure them for neglecting to take the steps they should have taken; but he said: We are ready to help you to put down this revolt, but we say you ought to explain to us and give us information; it is idle for you to attempt to conceal it; it is being discussed from one end of the country to the other, and it is the merest child's play to say it should not be discussed in this House. This House is the proper place to discuss it; the people's representatives have a right to be informed of the doings of the Government, and to consider whether it is blameable or not.

Mr. McNEILL. If the hon. gentleman consults the English newspapers he will find that Mr. Gladstone refused to give information.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Well, Sir, Mr. Gladstone may have refused to give information about matters of negotiation with foreign potentates, but my hon. friend will find that the Conservative party did not accept that as a sufficient reason for not pressing for information.

Mr. McNEILL. I think they have.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. And as my hon. friends opposite are always citing the actions of that party as being just what is good and right, we may be pardoned for citing them now and then, although we do not go one-fourth or one-tenth as far as they do. My hon. friend's motion, I repeat, is exceedingly mild, compared with the comments and resolutions offered day by day and hour by hour by the Conservative party in England, with respect to the serious matters in which the country is engaged at this moment. The plain matter of fact is this: The hon. gentleman knew that he ought to have taken this matter up, and ought long ago to have appointed a commission. He has been, according to his custom, according to the title he has earned among the Indian tribes, putting it off until to-morrow—until it is too late, I fear, to expect to settle it by a commission. Now, he is responsible for the mistakes which resulted from that neglect; and it is too late to ask us, who recollect the events of 1871, who recollect his blundering and the blundering of his Government in 1871, who recollect the mischievous consequences which flowed from his mistakes and errors, to sit still while he repeats those errors, with even more mischievous consequences, to-day. Now, just let us come back to the plain facts. Is anything clearer than this: that at least a year, practically a year and a half, ago, as the facts read by my friend show, the Government were aware that there was danger; they were aware that there were complaints; they were aware that these men had serious grounds for complaint; and they were, above all, aware that the man whom the hon. gentleman (Sir John A. Macdonald) admits has great and undue influence with the half-breeds was in the midst of them, stirring them up to strife; and, if I understand what the hon. gentleman said this afternoon, deliberately offered to the Government to withdraw from the country on payment of a certain sum of money. Was there no warning in that? Certainly, remembering what had already occurred, the hon. gentleman should have immediately taken precautions; he should have sent his commissioners, not now, but then, about a year ago, and then, in all probability, we would have cut the ground from under Monsieur Riel's feet, and we would not have had, at this most inconvenient period—and it is a most inconvenient period, in many ways, for the hon. gentleman—to deal with this trouble which, as the hon. gentleman has truly said—and I am sorry I cannot contradict him—may ultimately inflict very considerable injury upon us. We are quite willing to cooperate with him in every reasonable movement he requires to make, for the purpose of restoring good order in that country; but we require an open statement of his intentions. Everybody will admit that such a statement will not in the slightest degree prejudice or interfere with our warlike operations; everybody will admit that it is not possible for Mr. Riel to derive any considerable assistance from the knowledge that the hon. gentleman has ordered half a battery or a regiment to proceed to the scene of action. I approve of the hon. gentleman taking all reasonable precautions that the expedition, when it goes forward, should go forward in such strength that it will over-awe these people and bring them to their senses, without injury to any single man, without any blood being shed in that territory; but I say we ought to face the situation. There is no use in hiding from ourselves what the plain facts are. If we conceal our knowledge of the situation it will not, in the slightest degree, benefit us; because it is already a matter of public discussion and notoriety from one end of the English speaking world to the other. We have no wish to urge the Government to hasty action, but what we desire is that they should give us, in Parliament assembled, such information as my hon. friend desires, information which will enable