

"I also notice in the same record that nearly all the bands within this agency have received more axes than they were entitled to under the treaty, and that only two or three bands have received their complement of hoes, spades and scythes, notwithstanding the representation made to the contrary to the department, as well as to the Indians in reference to the matter."

That charge was met by the Government in the following language:—

"The testimony does not sustain the charge. Mr. McColl does not say that any bands had received no hoes, spades, scythes, but that some of them had not received their complement—their full allowance. All necessary implements for these Indians were provided and stored with the agent, who, through an error of judgment, did not issue them in their proper proportions. So soon as the department was informed of this, immediate measures were taken to rectify the error."

It is here admitted that practically my charge is true. But I am answered that it was an error of judgment that the proper implements were not dealt out. It is just such errors of judgment that I complain of. We pay the officials of the North-West Territories very liberal salaries, and when they are guilty of neglect, we are told it is an error of judgment; that it was done in a moment of weakness; that it was an oversight or omission. But it was just such errors of judgment which forced the Indians, at an unfortunate period in the history of Canada, to do what, under other circumstances, they would not have done, namely, take up arms against the constitutional authorities of the country. You will find in the reports for 1883, at page 138, that Mr. McColl further says:

"The councillor states that in his portion of the Island band there are ten families who have only received one hoe apiece, whereas they are entitled to two hoes each by treaty, and that in order to plant their potatoes they were obliged to use old axes with handles driven through the eyes and bent double, so that they could be utilized like hoes."

And at page 139 of the same report, the inspector makes use of the following language:—

"The Indians received fifty large axes from the agent last summer, but they complain that they have not received the number of hoes to which they are entitled by treaty, and therefore they want them, as they are greatly in need of them."

I appeal to the House whether or not hon. gentlemen opposite were justified, on the public platform and behind my back, in assailing me in the manner they did. I appeal to Parliament to say whether or not the statements I made were true, and whether or not the answers made by the Government to my speech in Parliament denouncing them for their misconduct and mismanagement were justified by the facts I submitted. I also said:

"The same inspector further says: 'The potatoes and barley received last spring were half rotten.'"

Recollect that the charge I made was that the Government were supplying these men with barley, potatoes and other seed for seed purposes. The Indians complained of the quality of the seed supplied, and the Indian inspector himself said that those which were supplied were not fit for the purpose. Did the Government admit that, and say it was unfortunate, that it was an error of judgment, that it could not be helped, and it would not occur again? Nothing of the kind. The answer is that

"Seed potatoes and barley were furnished to the Loon Strait Indians, Treaty No. 5, in 1882, and were stored at Dog Head, but some of the Indians did not go for their share, and, therefore, a portion of the seed was spoiled."

Mr. CAMERON (Huron).

If that were true, it would perhaps be a sufficient answer to my charge. If the Indians were too lazy to go to Dog Head to get their potatoes and barley, I do not think the Government would be so very blameable, but if the potatoes and barley which the Government agents handed over to the Indians were half rotten at the time, then no language could be too strong to denounce the gross negligence and carelessness of the Government in relation to that. What the Indian inspector complained of was not that the potatoes and barley were rotten when they were received at Dog Head, but he complains "that the potatoes and barley received for seed last spring were half rotten, and were it not that these were replaced by others from Fisher's River, purchased by themselves, they would not have any crop." That is the potatoes and barley delivered by the Government to the Indians. That is found at page 141 in the report of 1882. What answer had the Government to make to the charge? Was I not right, absolutely and literally right? Was not my statement substantiated by their own agent whose report I have just referred to, and, consequently, was not the statement of the Government absolutely incorrect? I said further:

"The same inspector again says: 'That the councillor complains that the quality of the hats, trousers and shoes received by him were inferior.'"

The answer to that is:

"The clothing for the chiefs and councillors is always carefully selected and inspected, and this is the only complaining councillor in Treaty Nos. 1 and 2."

In the first place, it is not true that this is the only complaining councillor. I have already referred to others, and it is also clear that if, as the inspector says, the clothing received was inferior, it could not have been carefully selected, particularly when it was under Government control, and, therefore, the highest price was paid for it. Agent McPherson, in his report for 1882, page 41, reported:

"That the clothing for the chiefs and councillors was good, except the trousers and shirts, which were inferior and were worn out in three or four days."

And the same agent reports in 1883, page 133:

"The clothing they received was of excellent quality, excepting the trousers, which were inferior."

In 1884, page 96, Mr. Wadsworth reports:

"The trousers and wincey shown in the inventory are of very poor quality."

Yet, in the answer to the charge which I levelled against the Government, it was said that these articles were always carefully selected and inspected, and that this was the only band that complained. I have shown that two other bands complained. I could show that a dozen complained, if I were justified in taking up the time of the House on this occasion. Then I charged that the agent further said:

"John Marcus, one of the councillors of the Cumberland Band, complains that the agricultural implements forwarded by the department for their use were refused to them."

Then comes a paragraph which appears to be part of a quotation, but it is only given as the substance of the report. I said:

"We were under treaty obligations, we were in honour bound to give the Indians these things; they were bought and paid for, yet, when they reached their destination, some wise agent of the Administration would not hand them over to the Indians. Was any enquiry made into this? In so far as I am able to gather from the reports, none was made."

The author of this pamphlet assumed that it was a