

merely for the sake of pay, but who are philanthropists. The Indians say they are willing to defray the expenses if we can only find the schoolmasters, and we are endeavoring to do so.

Mr. FLEMING. There seems to me to be a discrepancy between the condition of the Indians, as just explained by the Minister, and the large sum for salaries paid out to agents. Of the appropriation of \$23,300 last year, \$11,895 were paid as salaries to agents. Would the hon. Minister explain the duties of these agents?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The hon. gentleman must remember that British Columbia is an enormously large country, and this expenditure has to be scattered over that country down to the boundary line. The Indians are scattered, and from the mountainous nature of that country they are widely scattered. They settle down in the glens, in the valleys, or on the coast. Within a very few years ago they were savage; they are now becoming quite peaceable, except in the outlying stations, such as Queen Charlotte's Island. This Island was a very formidable place for white men to visit, because the natives dealt most summarily with the crews of any vessel that called there. Along the outside coast of Vancouver Island there are a large number of scattered Indians, who are so scattered that they can scarcely be said to live in communities. They are now, I believe, very profitably employed in the canneries and establishments of that kind. Indians are also now employed as miners and they work very well. But it must be remembered that they are not white men, and civilized, and must be strictly watched. They are very suspicious and easily aroused; the white population is sparse, and the Indians feel yet that they are lords of the country in British Columbia, and they are much more numerous than the whites; the officers are not too numerous and are not highly paid, but they are the best preventive police we have.

Mr. CHARLTON. I suppose we must congratulate ourselves at the small vote for British Columbia as compared with the vote for the North-West, and that such a considerable number of Indians in the former Province should give us so very little trouble. I observe an item of \$7,700 for surveys. Is the Government engaged in surveying the reserves?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. We have a Reserve Commissioner whose appointment was agreed to by the British Columbian Government, and we have a Government surveyor under him, and chain men. This is the usual vote in order to carry on the annual surveys.

Mr. CHARLTON. How many agencies have we in the Province?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Six.

181. Indians in Manitoba and the North-West ..... \$791,640.47

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I call the attention of the Committee to the very large decrease on the whole that there is in this vote. There is a decrease, in every item, except that of supplies for destitute, which is increased by \$60,708. The decrease on the whole vote is \$33,359. The expenditure under this head has been very large, but I believe it will be much diminished next year. The Indians are all moving away from Fort Walsh and going on their reserves, and so soon as we get them there we may hope they will become more and more self-sustaining.

Mr. CHARLTON. I notice that the votes in one or two previous years have been largely exceeded by the expenditures. I think the vote for destitute Indians in 1881-82 was \$102,000, and the expenditure \$563,000. Will the hon. gentleman give us some information as to the cause of that unusually large increase.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. At the time we took the vote last year I went, at considerable length, into the subject of destitute Indians, the utter disappearance of the buffalo and the action of the American Government which formed a perfect *cordon* to prevent buffalo from crossing the lines. Formerly the Indians in the North-West, except those tribes which had some little fishing, subsisted on buffalo. Buffalo was their bread, wine, and meat, and that supply utterly and totally failed. I am not at all sorry, as I have said before, that this has happened. So long as there was a hope that buffalo would come into the country, there was no means of inducing the Indians to settle down on their reserves. The total failure of the buffalo the year before last, and last year, caused the Indians to be thrown on the mercy of the Government in the North-West. We could not, as Christians and men, allow them to starve, and we were obliged, no matter what the cost might be, to furnish them with food. It was better to feed them than to fight them. At any time we were liable to an attack, and hungry men will, if necessary, help themselves. Last year we made considerable progress in settling the Indians on their reserves, and we would have made still further progress if it had not been for the rumor that buffalo had crossed the line and were flocking into the country. The moment the Indians heard the report, all the work had to be gone over again. The buffalo did not come in, in any considerable numbers. Some few Indians having heard that the buffalo had crossed the line, went to hunt, in expectation of obtaining their old description of food, but they found they were mistaken, and would have been much better off had they remained on their reserve. I believe the system of watching the country has been made so complete by the Americans that we will not have any more buffalo in our land. The Indians are satisfied of that, and those who have settled down are proving very fair farmers, that is to say, they are self-sustaining, and the accounts given are most encouraging for the future.

Mr. CHARLTON. I notice among the expenditures in the Public Accounts for the year ending 30th June last, that one firm, Baker & Co., obtained a very large sum. Where is that firm located?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. At Fort Benton, Montana.

Mr. CHARLTON. I believe they are Americans?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes.

Mr. CHARLTON. The other night, when I referred to the system of surveys in the North-West, I asked why the hon. gentleman had not adopted the American system in its entirety, and it was said in reply, that I drew all my inspiration from Washington. Where does the hon. gentleman draw his inspiration from in permitting a Yankee firm to obtain \$462,000 for supplies, which could have been obtained from our own dealers?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The inspiration from which I drew those supplies, through Baker & Co., was the greatest of all monarchs, the monarch of necessity. There was nobody else to supply the food on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains for the Blackfeet and the Bloods. There were no means of getting supplies except from Montana. I may say, though the members of the firm are Americans, they are most satisfactory contractors—fair, honest, liberal and trustworthy. They have fairly competed with other traders, because these contracts have always been put up to public competition, but nobody could tender for the supplies in the extreme West. The Hudson Bay Company tendered for a good deal. Other parties, Captain Howard, who is known, perhaps, to Mr. Watson, tenders; and is the lowest for some contracts this year. By next year we will have the Pacific Railway finished to Algoma, and the supplies for all these posts can then be tendered for from all the rest of the Dominion, and especially from