

all the world besides, they had seen little of white men. The number of these Indians amounted to about 4,000. They must have mustered nearly 1,000 armed men, and so formidable were they considered by the military authorities that one of the officers who went through with Colonel Wolseley informed me that if they had been hostile the expedition would have been obliged to turn back. There were emissaries among these Indians from the insurgents at Red River, so that they were in a very unsettled state, so much so that the Government in the previous year—in the spring of 1869—had sent out an agent to reside among them in order to keep up a good feeling and prevent them from becoming hostile. I shall now explain the expedition to which the hon. gentleman referred, which was not Colonel Wolseley's, but one composed of Canadian volunteers in the following year. In 1871, the men who were to build the boats came forward and went to work. The Indians happened to have assembled at Fort Frances at that time; and they often assemble there in considerable numbers. I have seen as many at one time as 1,000, but on this occasion I fancy there were no more than 500. They came to welcome the strangers who were to build the big canoes in that country, and they extended their welcome in a way which rather alarmed these workmen. Let anyone imagine thirty or forty mechanics who never had seen Indians before in their lives, surrounded by 500 painted savages whooping and yelling and dancing throughout the night around blazing camp fires, and exhibiting the scalps they had taken—for the Indians in those days were in the habit of exhibiting these trophies. We had numbers of them in those days dancing around and showing scalps at their great meetings at the Portage, when a big chief would get up and tell how many scalps he had taken, and how he had drunk the blood of his enemies. Fancy a scene like this kept up for a whole night among these mechanics, and hon. members will not be surprised that they were a little alarmed. This was in 1871, and the men ran away from whatever cause, though I think they had no good reason. I had men there at the time, but they were accustomed to the Indians, who, I have no doubt, indulged in these manifestations in a friendly spirit and partly, perhaps, to get presents from the workmen in the way of a good dinner, or something of that sort. The truth is, these men became very much alarmed. Mr. Chisholm afterwards left, and though he made a great many excuses, I believe the truth was that he was thoroughly frightened. Immediately when this occurred, Captain Dick sent back for shipbuilders, and, of course he could not send ordinary men, as he had to get mechanics who were fit for the work he had to perform under his contract. The hon. gentleman has spoken about law as if there were courts of law there as in Toronto. But it must be borne in mind, that this was in the middle of the wilderness, a thousand miles from courts of law, and at that time there were only two steamers plying on the great lakes, the *Algoma* and the *Chicora*, instead of the numerous beautiful steamers that traverse these waters at the present time. But Captain Dick, as I have stated, set to work to get forward other men, and he got them on the ground towards fall. They were good men, much better adapted to the country than the first lot, and there were among them a number of Iroquois voyageurs and other men of that sort. I happened to be going through from Manitoba at that time, and waited there, leisurely examining what was going on on the route and making preparations for the winter, when there came an express messenger from Governor Archibald then Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba—hon. gentleman will please remember that this was in 1871, and that Colonel Wolseley was then in England—telling me that he had sent an express to Ottawa making a demand upon the Government for troops, as the Fenians were threatening to invade Manitoba, and as a mat-

Mr. Dawson.

ter of fact they did make a demonstration about that time. I immediately put all the force that I could muster on the road to prepare for getting through these troops. Captain Dick came forward and offered me all the men he had, and under the circumstances I considered it incumbent upon me to place them along the route so as to hasten the progress of the troops when they came. The result was that they went through in a little over a week, while Colonel Wolseley's expedition of the previous year had required nearly six weeks to get through. Captain Dick acted very patriotically on that occasion, but I had no means of recompensing him further than by paying the men for their day's work during the time they were employed. I had no power to take into consideration the losses he had sustained further than make a report upon the subject to the Government. An officer of the Government, Mr. Brunel, a very respectable man from the Province of Quebec, was sent to inspect the steamboats, and the contractor was paid for the work which was actually done under the strict letter of the contract. All that we could do beyond that was to promise to report the matter for the consideration of the Government. Now, as to its being incumbent on the Government in such cases to provide means for maintaining law and order, I think it will be readily admitted that that duty was incumbent on the Government. Here was a large force of Indians totally unaccustomed to law and able to muster a little short of 1,000 armed men, while the greatest number of men that worked on the road was from 300 to 400 white men all unarmed scattered here and there along the route. Fortunately we were able to get on pretty well with the Indians and to keep on amicable terms with them, as our men were accustomed to Indians; they had seen many before, as they were boatmen, or men who had been working in the woods all their lives. These mechanics were not in that position. The nearest troops were distant from them 200 miles, in a direct line, on one side in Manitoba, and a much greater distance by any road which was practicable at that time, and the nearest on the other side were in Toronto. There was no Magistrate in the country to whom they might appeal, and finding themselves unprotected they became alarmed. I do not think, as I said before, that there was any occasion for their alarm, because I believe the Indians would not have harmed them; but, at the same time I think the Government is perfectly right in taking all the circumstances into account, and I may say that I recommended the Government of that time to place some sort of force there, together with a Magistrate, so as to give confidence to the people employed in that section. But in order that it may be understood that everybody did not consider these Indians to be so harmless as I did, I may say that when Colonel Wolseley was absent with the troops at Fort Garry, he left a company of soldiers at Fort Frances to take care of his supplies. I happened to go there at the time and the officer in command was in the greatest state of alarm. I told him that he was perfectly safe among these Indians, that they never would attempt anything aggressive, and that all they wanted was to get a dinner or a piece of tobacco or something of that kind. I mention all this in order that the House may understand that the circumstances were somewhat extraordinary. According to the strict letter of Captain Dick's contract, he was paid what he was legally entitled to, and the only claim he could possibly have was for an allowance on account of the losses he sustained under circumstances which no one could have foreseen.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I do not think it will be necessary for me to say much on this subject after the very succinct and clear statement made by my hon. friend, who had better means of knowing the facts in relation to this subject than any other man in this country, because he was in charge of the work, and acquainted with everything in connection with it. Nor do I believe that the House will