

Sensible men, reasonable men foresaw long ago what would be the inevitable result of the foolish and mad policy pursued by this Administration towards the Indians, the policy of submission by a policy of starvation. . . The Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, in his report for 1886, says :

"The Indians who rebelled do not plead grievances in extenuation of their having done so."

Mismanagements lead to rebellion.

I know that the supporters of the Government, in Parliament and out of Parliament, and the press supporting hon. gentleman opposite, and all those who clamored for the blood of Louis Riel, in order if possible to increase his criminality, have declared that, had it not been for him, the Indians of the North-West would not have taken up arms. That is true in a sense and it is not true. It is true that the action of Louis Riel was the spark which fired the train, but I say the combustible material was there all the same. It slumbered for seven years, but it only slumbered. It is not true that the action of Louis Riel was the only or the main cause of the Indians joining their kindred, the half-breeds, in the recent insurrection in the North-West Territory. The Indian, on the whole, is a quiet, peaceable, law-abiding, loyal subject of her Majesty the Queen, and it required a good deal more than the mad freaks of a lunatic to induce the Indians to take up arms against the sovereign power of this Dominion. I say that every man not blinded by party prejudice, every man whose eyes are open, or who is willing to have his eyes opened and his ears unstopped, must see that the policy, the avowed policy of the Administration and of their officials in the North-West had a great deal to do, had everything to do, with the outbreak of the Indians, and that that policy would sooner or later eventuate in an armed insurrection. The way to maintain the loyalty of the Indian is not by violating

solemn engagements, not by breaking every treaty entered into with the Indian, not by unfulfilled promises made by the Government, not by cheating, robbing and swindling the Indians, not by cruel and harsh treatment, not by death from cold and starvation; and of all these things I charge that this Government through their agents have been guilty.

Police bullets preferable to starvation.

Mr. Jackson, in the speech from which we have already quoted, says :

"I heard some of the men say, who took up arms against the police to protect themselves (it was said before some responsible citizens of Fort Qu'Appelle): 'We had to do it or starve to death, and we preferred to die by the police bullets rather than die by starvation.'"

Instead of dealing fairly and honestly by the Indians, as we ought to have done, in stead of maintaining unbroken our treaty obligations with the Indians, we pursued, and we still pursue that mad and reckless and inhuman policy of submission by starvation. . . The Minister of Justice told us not long ago, in his speech in Parliament, that :

"The man who undertakes in the North-west to incite the Indians to rise and commit war and depredations on the settlers takes his life in his hand, and if he appeals to me for mercy, he will get justice."

That sentiment was vociferously cheered by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House. I agree with that sentiment. It commends itself to my judgment; but I tell the Minister of Justice that if he is disposed to mete out merited justice to those who, by their misconduct, by their maladministration, by their incompetency and by their criminal neglect, provoked the Indian uprising, the hon. gentleman will sit alone upon the Treasury benches. There is nothing that hon. gentlemen so much fear as justice, that justice they will receive at the hands of the people of this country, if not at the hands of this Parliament.