

"More than that, I accept the challenge thrown out from the other side. It is the intention of the Government to issue a commission, and I pledge myself that it will be an impartial commission, to look into the whole question of the management of the Indians in the North-West, as well as the charges which have been brought, or may be brought against the Department. I am quite satisfied, on the part of the Department, to abide by the result."

That was a very burning question during the last of the Session, and during the late election, and the Minister having pledged himself that a commission should be issued, I do not see why it was not done, especially when we find special warrants issued for the payment of commissioners appointed for another duty. I wish to ascertain whether the Indian Commission had been appointed, as the First Minister said it would be.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. There has been no commission appointed, and unless an occasion is made out, there will be no commission. At the time I made that statement the House will remember the circumstances. When I was absent, from indisposition, for a couple of months, an attack was made upon the Department by a member of the House at that time, he giving an immense number of instances of impropriety, and offences of various kinds, of misconduct, neglect and absolute malfeasance. I said there would be a commission, when I returned, as it was impossible to examine into the matter without sending messengers to the North-West to ascertain on the spot whether these charges were true or false. On examination into them which I caused to be made, I found the charges, from beginning to end, to be a mass of falsehoods, without one single merit of candor or honesty in the statements, and I think that was proved in the statement issued by the Department. So complete was the answer that during the whole canvass we did not hear anything, so far as I was concerned, about either the offences of commission or omission on the part of the Government. The answer was complete and thorough. There never was a more unjust, a more dishonest, a more untruthful attack made since the beginning of the world to this date, than was made on the Department at that time. The answer was complete, and there was no necessity for a commission.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I, on behalf of Mr. Cameron, of Huron, who is the member alluded to, beg to inform the House that he again and again challenged the First Minister to meet him on any public platform, and the First Minister did not dare to do so.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). With reference to that matter, I suppose the First Minister has alluded to the hon. gentleman whose name has just been mentioned?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). I think justice ought to be done to everyone. The First Minister complains that he made his statement when the First Minister was absent from the House. I am sure that hon. member regretted, quite as much as any member of this House, the cause of the First Minister's absence, but he cannot be condemned for having made these charges in the House in the presence of the hon. gentleman's colleagues. He also made charges against the Department. I made the charge on returns brought down for which I moved. I supported those charges by proofs, and I produced official documents from the hon. gentleman's own office, and those documents so recorded and forming part of the history of this country, clearly established by the testimony of the Government's own officers that there had been incapacity and neglect, that it had gone to such an extent, according to the reports of the hon. gentleman's own officers, that life had been sacrificed through it. I gave the authority. It was not my own statement. I did not wish unduly to push the Department, I made all the excuses I could; and the First

Minister having failed to carry out what he said he would do, it is no excuse now to affirm that he has ascertained that those statements were untrue. We had the solemn pledge of the First Minister given to members of this House that he would appoint a commission, and the country had a right to look for it, and had a right to demand it; and the hon. gentleman is not in a position, having thus pledged himself, to say, in the absence of the gentleman who brought up the matter, that that gentleman told lies in the House. The right hon. gentleman himself said: I will appoint a commission, and I pledge myself it will be an impartial commission, before which he and I can submit our proof. But the right hon. gentleman never appointed his impartial commission; but he takes advantage of his position in the House now to say that the charge which a gentleman who was then a member made, is as false as false can be. It would have been more proper and becoming after he had seen fit to make a distinct pledge, as I have read from *Hansard*, if he had appointed an impartial commission and allowed the country to judge as to who told the truth in regard to this matter. I say that the charges made against the Department were supported and proved by official documents and by the hon. gentleman himself, and the attempt made in this book, prepared in the Indian Department and printed at the public expense, which we had not an opportunity for criticising, but which was prepared in the hon. gentleman's own Department and purports to be an answer to the charges made—I say that this attempt does not answer the charges I made. I maintain to-day, as I did when I made the charges, that the statements were true, and their truth was proved by the document of the hon. gentleman's own officers, and those charges were sufficient to warrant investigation, especially when this investigation was promised to be made by the appointment of a commission. It will not do to say to hon. members that the charges were unsubstantiated. The First Minister is not in a very nice position in regard to this matter. The right hon. gentleman and his press have denounced Mr. Cameron as a liar, as the hon. gentleman has virtually done to-day, and they have prepared the document in the hon. gentleman's Department, which, as I have said, is not subject to criticism; and yet when Mr. Cameron challenged the First Minister, in the absence of a commission, to meet him on the platform and discuss the question, he failed to do so. Nevertheless the First Minister appeared in that hon. gentleman's riding and made charges against him, and, in common justice, he ought to have had an opportunity of appearing on the same platform and defending his statements. Not only was the commission not appointed, but the right hon. gentleman now denies that he has any intention of issuing it. This report of the Indian Department is prepared by men not responsible to this House—I suppose the First Minister is responsible, but I question very much if he examined it.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). This report is prepared in the Department and sent through the country as clearing the Government of all charges of mismanagement and neglect made by the ex-member for Huron (Mr. Cameron) and by myself—and I speak for myself positively—on the evidence of official documents brought down under an Order of the House, documents which were prepared for the hon. gentlemen's medical and other officers; and the country will understand that these charges levied against hon. gentlemen opposite have not been answered in that pamphlet, let the hon. gentleman give what reason he may for failing to carry out the solemn pledge made to the House for the appointment of an impartial commission to which all the facts were to be submitted.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The hon. gentleman having spoken twice, perhaps I may be allowed to do likewise, although he committed a breach of order in