

April 15, 1874

to do that which he (Mr. Smith), as the Government here believed, had gone up to do towards bringing about the restoration of peace, quiet, and good will in that country, he had done all he possibly could to bring the Government here into discredit, and prevent that union with Canada which was then much desired here, and greatly desired, he must say, by a large portion of the people of the Northwest, and not only the English-speaking people there.

He, assisted by many of the most respectable and loyal men of the Northwest, did his utmost to accomplish the work that lay before him. He thought the most humane way in which he could accomplish his object was not to commence with the spilling of blood, but to make peace as much as possible between the people to allow angry feeling to subside, and to give time for the arrival of that force which was absolutely necessary to put matters on their proper footing. People looking at the dreadful event which they were discussing from this place and at this time could not for a moment, even in imagination, conjure up what it was to those who were present at that time.

An hon. gentleman had said that on the 4th of March, 1870, he (Mr. Smith) had sat comfortably in his room while a fellow creature was being put to death. It was unfair of hon. gentlemen to speak in that way of what they knew absolutely nothing, or next to nothing of. (*Hear, hear.*) It was not true that Hudson's Bay Company had forty pensioners at their command. There were a few worn-out old men in the Province some distance from the place, but there were no men in the Fort at the time. The whole number under the control of the Hudson's Bay Company, including the clerks in the office, did not, he believed, exceed fifteen. Three of these very pensioners were afterwards struck off the roll after Mr. Wolseley entered the country, and upon an investigation; so that these men would scarcely have been the very best to use against the insurgents.

On the 4th of March, when Thomas Scott was killed, instead of sitting comfortably in his room, he (Mr. Smith), immediately on the representation being made to him, and at the instance of the Rev. Mr. Young, found out Mr. Riel, and, in company with Mr. Young, did all in his power to save the life of Thomas Scott. (*Hear, hear.*) It would be remembered that, some little time before, there was another who was condemned to die—Captain Boulton—and it was well known in Red River that on his representations Mr. Boulton's life was saved. Unfortunately, his efforts were not equally successful on this last occasion; but neither the member for Lisgar (Mr. Schultz) nor any other gentleman regretted more than he did that his efforts had not succeeded.

They had heard a great deal about the atrocious manner in which Scott was killed. He had done his utmost to probe this matter, and he had never been able to substantiate these statements in any way. He did not believe in the truth of the assertions with regard to the barbarities alleged to have been perpetrated. His (Mr. Smith's) conduct had been approved of by the late Government and by the Imperial Government, and also by his constituents. (*Hear, hear.*) If further proof were wanting it was to be found in the words of Mr. Young.

It had been industriously attempted to connect the Hudson's Bay Company with this thing throughout by the hon. member for Lisgar, but he had forgotten to tell the House that there was at the time a recognized Government of twenty members, of whom only two were in any way whatsoever under the control of the Hudson's Bay Company, and that these gentlemen held their sessions, and saw and dealt with the insurgents, and endeavoured to dissuade them from the course they were pursuing.

Among the twenty were the Bishop of St. Boniface, the Anglican Bishop of Rupert's Land, and others. He thought it would be admitted that the members of the Committee recently appointed were, with the exception of himself, well fitted for their duties. It was only English fair play that this House should insist on having further information in regard to those matters, of which he professed to have more knowledge than the majority of the members of this House.

It was justice, not to Mr. Riel himself, but to those men who sent him here, and he was convinced that in the constituency of Provencher there were to be found many men not one whit less loyal to the British Crown than any member of this House. They had chosen to send Mr. Riel here. He was not saying a word in favour of Mr. Riel, but he thought in the spirit of British fair play they should know the whole case before they pronounced judgment on the matter. (*Cheers.*)

Mr. ROCHESTER put a question to Mr. Smith, amid loud cries of "Order", which prevented the hon. gentleman's voice from reaching the gallery.

Mr. SMITH (Selkirk) said he had been with Mr. Riel up to within ten or fifteen minutes of the time when Thomas Scott was executed. He met the Rev. Mr. Young, as arranged, at his (Mr. Smith's) house, after which he went to Governor McTavish, and he did see from the window a man led forth, who he had no doubt was Scott. He immediately took his cap and was going out when he was withheld, for the reason that no one really believed it possible. There was another man named Parker, and he was withheld from going because it was said that if one was sacrificed the other would be also. There was nothing in his report which he did not still believe to be true. All was done in a moment, and he was himself a prisoner within the Fort at that time, and had been so all the time as much as the other prisoners, including Thomas Scott.

Messrs. Schultz, Rochester, Cunningham (Marquette) and Farrow rose at once.

Mr. SCHULTZ said he desired to make an explanation.

The SPEAKER said the hon. gentleman must confine himself to explanation.

Mr. SCHULTZ was proceeding to make a statement, when he was called to order.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM (Marquette) held that they should discuss this question on its merits, and not with reference to the culpability of the member for Lisgar or that of the member for Selkirk. But since such latitude had been allowed, he wished to