

very unfair proceeding on the part of Ministers of the Crown that they should take the platform, and accuse the hon. gentleman of dealing in falsehoods, of uttering a tissue of falsehoods, when all his statements were taken from the Government report. The hon. gentleman is charged with falsifying the facts. That is a very strong charge for anyone to make against a member of this House, even a political opponent, unless there be very good ground for it; and it is for hon. gentlemen opposite to prove they had good grounds for such a charge by showing that the quotations made by my hon. friend from the blue-books were not in the blue books. To charge an hon. member of this House, who accepted as authentic the official reports submitted by the head of a department and commented upon them, with being guilty of stating a deliberate tissue of falsehoods, seems to me the opposite of the courtesy that ought to prevail between political opponents, though the battle may often wage warm and strong. There is this point to which I wish to call the attention of the House, that the late First Minister, when he did allude to this matter, in the closing days of the session, made a general denial of the statement of my hon. friend. He did not say that the extracts quoted were not in the blue books, but that they were capable of explanation, and I think he promised to name a commission to enquire into the whole matter. That, I believe he did not do, but he said he had sent off for information on the whole question to the different points, which he would have published. Such a course was taken exception to at the time. I took exception to it, and so did the hon. member for South Huron and the hon. Mr. Blake. They took exception on this ground, that it was unfair that statements made in this House on the responsibility of an hon. member should not be replied to in the House, but that, after the House had risen, there should be a document prepared, in reply to such statement, under official authority, and scattered among the constituencies, the contents of which were unknown to any hon. member. I think that was a reasonable and proper objection. If I remember aright, instead of answering or attempting to answer in the House the charge made by my hon. friend, although the then leader of the Government had ample opportunity to do so, the Government had this pamphlet prepared and distributed after the House rose. I have it not before me. I think I glanced through it, but it is some time ago, and it was upon the statements made in that pamphlet, purporting to be contradictions of the statement of my hon. friend, that the Minister of Justice and other hon. Ministers criticized the statements of my hon. friend as they did. I would ask the Minister now, when he considers it coolly, if he thinks that was fair, if he thinks he would be justified in attacking the statements prepared by officials whose own conduct was brought under review, because they might be called upon by the Government afterwards to say why they made those statements. How was my hon. friend to see whether these statements were true or untrue? He had only the information contained in the blue-books before him. If, subsequently, these officials saw fit to modify their statements, and if afterwards they said: We did not know this of our own knowledge, but took the information from some one else, that would be within the knowledge of the Minister, but

the member for West Huron (Mr. Cameron) did not know anything about that, no member of the House knew of it, and no one could possibly know of it except the Ministers themselves. It was, therefore, natural that the answer was prepared in that way. I said on that occasion:

"With reference to the main question, it is to be regretted that the First Minister was not in his place when this subject was brought before this House. It is also to be regretted that he finds it necessary to announce, without making a speech openly before the House and the people, where his statement can be scrutinized and criticized, that he will issue something like a manifesto with reference to the management of his department. He said that is necessary because the hon. member for West Huron (Mr. Cameron) was inaccurate in his statement. I suppose he applies the same remark to those I made. All I can say is that they were based on records brought down from the hon. gentleman's own department and I made them in the presence of the Government in order to be set right, if on any point I was wrong. But, if the hon. gentleman is to go through the papers of the department and select such as he sees fit without giving us any opportunity of scrutinizing them, we should like to know it."

I was conscious at the time that I had quoted, and had made an honest quotation, from a return which was before the House, and I was willing to have my statement challenged. Sir Richard Cartwright, who spoke after me on that occasion, said:

"Will the hon. gentleman issue this document over his own signature, or does he propose to make use of the officers of his department? Because I can see that rather serious inconveniences will arise if gentlemen at the head of departments call upon their officers to issue what is to all intents and purposes a political pamphlet. I do not object to the hon. gentleman making any speech or issuing any declarations when he sees fit, but I do not think officers should do it."

"Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I will take my own course about that; and it will be under my responsibility it will be issued. The hon. gentleman says, the answer ought to be made here. It could not be given here, because we had to trace up the facts and the evidence of the statements of sundry agents which the hon. member for West Huron quoted. We had to see those agents and ask them what they meant. For instance, there was a statement respecting Mr. Lawrence Clark, whom everybody knows. He says that the whole statement in the speech of the hon. member for West Huron is false; he used very strong language in that regard. Sundry clergymen have also stated that they have been quite misled. One of the charges brought was that a certain person had made a certain statement respecting frauds in the department. On being asked why he made that statement, he said the only fraud he knew of was a fraud committed by Mr. Pope Nixon, an officer of the late Government, and that was what he referred to, and not to any recent irregularities. The evidence will show there never was a greater tissue of false statements. I would have been very glad to have laid the evidence before the House, but it was only the day before yesterday that I received it from the far North-West. It will come, however, be published and distributed."

I call the attention of the House to what the First Minister proposed and said. If I interpret his statement rightly it was not that he would prove that what had been found by the member for West Huron (Mr. Cameron) in the blue-books was not there, but that the officers who had made those statements would qualify them, and that certain clergymen who had been quoted had written saying that they had been misled. If that were put before the House clearly, that would have had to be taken into consideration, and my hon. friend from West Huron, when he found that a statement had been made which was susceptible of another explanation, or that a clergyman admitted that he had been misled in what he had written, would no doubt have accepted that as a mitigation of his charges. But let the hon. gentleman be fair. The hon. member for West Huron did not know that these