

First Minister, last Session, declared he could not at that time bring down, if they are brought down the hon. gentleman will find that the Government, instead of suppressing papers which would militate against themselves, suppressed papers which bore testimony to the truth of the position they took and in relation to which they certainly, on party grounds and on personal grounds, had no reason whatever to fear publication. What is the particular motion which is now brought up by the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Amyot), and in relation to which this motion has been made as an amendment? It is a motion for petitions sent to the Government praying for the commutation of the sentence or for the execution of the sentence passed on the unfortunate man, Louis Riel. Are we to be told in Parliament that the judgment of the Executive is to be formed by public petitions from people praying for commutation or for the execution of the death sentence? Are we to be told that the solemn responsibility that rests on the Executive is to be affected by popular clamor of one kind or another? Is that the hon. gentleman's conception of his duty, if he were Minister of Justice to-day as he was Minister of Justice in the past? Is this question which is before us to-day going to be affected in any way whatever by the production of any petitions either for or against the commutation of the sentence on Louis Riel?

Mr. BLAKE. Why did you give a list of them in your own blue book?

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). We have given a list of them; and there, Mr. Speaker, is the statement of the hon. gentlemen. Did we conceal anything? Would he have known any more if the words of the printed headings—for that is what most of them were—had been put there—if they had been brought down with a list of the names attached to them? Was that going to alter the judgment of the House in the matter? Why, Sir, the fact that the list of petitions was put in, the fact that the Government frankly stated in the report which they brought down to Parliament, that there were petitions, and gave the number of those petitions in the Blue Book they submitted to this House—the very fact that they did that, is a proof that they did not want to shield themselves against the suggestion that, in spite of petitions, they have permitted the execution to take effect. Sir, the hon. gentleman pretends that he has not got information enough upon which he can decide this question. For one, Sir, I think it would be a most unfortunate thing if we had to deal with the whole question of the administration of affairs in the North-West and the execution of Louis Riel, as one question. They are not one question. Admit every single thing which the hon. member for East Quebec (Mr. Laurier) so eloquently said last night, in a speech of which,—although I differ from him altogether, and I trust I shall be able before this debate is closed to show that his appreciation of the facts was not at all accurate—in a speech of which I, as a Canadian, am justly proud, because I think it is a matter of common pride to us that any public man in Canada can make, on the floor of Parliament, such a speech as we listened to last night; but I say, admit for the sake of argument, everything he said; admit that there was delay in settling the Indian title of the half-breeds; admit that there was delay in settling the land question; admit, for the sake of argument, that their petitions were unanswered—will the hon. member for West Durham (Mr. Blake), the leader of the Opposition, take the responsibility of saying that that justified the rebellion in the North-West? Does it justify the bereavement of the families who have been brought to grief throughout this country, the Metis in the North-West, the English people of Manitoba and Ontario, who to-day find their hearths desolate by the absence of loved ones—will he pretend to say that these delays justified a rebellion which brought about that condition of things? The execution of Louis

Riel, his conduct in connection with that rebellion, must stand by itself, and it does stand by itself with information far more sufficient to enable a judgment to be formed upon it than was the information which the hon. gentleman had fifteen years ago, when he paraded Ontario from one end to the other against “the red-handed murderer,” as he described Louis Riel, and when by the purchase—I cannot say by him, but certainly under circumstances which were at least suspicious in relation to the matter—by the purchase of a man who betrayed his colleagues, and by appeals to the very classes in the Province of Ontario whom his friends are now so violently denouncing, he managed to obtain office. I say he did this, Mr. Speaker, on evidence far less than that which he has to-day, and which, unfortunately—so little capable is he, according to his own judgment, of forming an opinion on a subject of this kind—he considers insufficient to enable him to say whether Louis Riel was justly executed, whether he justly expiated his crimes on the gallows, or whether, on the other hand, he should have been reprieved—should have been set at liberty in order that in a few years more he might, if possible, inaugurate another rebellion. Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman has counted without his host, if he thinks he can divert public attention from this question by talking of the absence of papers. I tell him that he will find—and I have predicted with regard to him before in Parliament, and my predictions have turned out to be correct—he will find that when he comes to face his constituents, and his followers at his back from the Province of Ontario, when they come to face their constituents, will find that the people there are not going to be told that all that has occurred during the last eighteen months is a blank to them, and they cannot make up their minds whether this man committed a crime sufficient to justify his execution, or whether he did not. The whole thing is an attempt to draw a red herring across the trail, which the hon. gentleman will find to have been a fatal mistake. I predict it now, and he will realise before he is very much older that my prediction has been a true one.

Mr. BLAKE. I desire to say that the hon. gentleman has misunderstood a part of my speech. I did not say that the absence of these papers would disable me from forming a judgment. On the contrary, I have said that in the absence of these papers I knew what inferences I should draw, and I am prepared to draw them. I am prepared to give my vote and my reasons for my vote, and will do so before this debate is over; but I did say that it would be infinitely—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Order, order.

Mr. BLAKE. I am not out of order; I am perfectly in order, but I did say—and here is where the hon. gentleman misunderstood me—that it would be much more satisfactory to this House that the material for a judgment should be placed before it is called on to decide.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). This, Mr. Speaker, is another of the many attempts made by the Government—hon. gentlemen on the other side are prepared to decide this question and render their verdict, evidence or no evidence; it is of no kind of consequence to them. As soon as the Minister of Public Works cracks the ministerial whip they will vote according to his dictation; I say, Mr. Speaker, that this is another of the many attempts made by this Government to cripple this discussion and to stifle the enquiry that we are endeavoring to make with respect to the conduct of this Administration. The hon. member for Cardwell ventures upon a prediction. He says that the public of this country will be able to draw their inferences from the conduct of my hon. friend from West Durham. There is another inference which the people of this country will be able to draw, and which they will draw