

party placing sufficient importance on the elements which had to be dealt with and the difficulty of dealing with those elements with any material which any Government could have at its disposal. When the first Riel rebellion broke out, I had the honor of being consulted in every step that was taken. The troops were carried through without the loss of a single man, and the rebellion was put down without a shot being fired. Success on that occasion was due to the extreme good management of the Government under the same distinguished gentleman who is at the head of the Government to-day. I had the honor of recommending at the time, when it was proposed to send an armed force into the North-West Territories to maintain order among the Indians, that the true Mounted Police to send among those Indians were these very half-breeds of whom we are talking to-night. These men had been accustomed to lead the life of soldiers. They were accustomed to ride on horse-back over the plains, and they were inured to hardship and fighting. I believe if a police force had been organised out of these half-breeds, there would have been no outbreak. It may be asked: Why trust the maintenance of peace to the men who had been in arms against the Government? I say, if you had shown confidence in those men, if the Mackenzie Government at the outset had shown confidence in them and enrolled such of them as were fit for the duty as policemen, we would never have had a rebellion in the North-West. They would have been proud of the confidence reposed in them, and their knowledge of the Indian character would have enabled them to maintain peace among the Indians. When speaking of those rebellions which have occurred among the Indians, we must not think they are the very quiet innocent people they are represented to be, and that the faults are all on the side of the white man, for the first Riel rebellion and this last Riel rebellion were by no means the only ones that occurred among the Indians. They had often been at war with the fur traders, and on two occasions troops were sent out by the Imperial Government to keep order. We must not suppose, therefore, that we were dealing with people living quietly in their native land, and that the fault of inciting them lay entirely with the whites, for these half-breeds were a people who had been constantly at war and were very jealous of their position and independence in the new land to which they had gone. Perhaps there is one thing not to be regretted in this trouble, and that is it has taught the white men a little respect for the Indian. Formerly these people were spoken of with the utmost contempt, looked upon as spiritless and cowardly; but the white man has found that they are not naturally cowards. The half-breeds fought bravely though in a mistaken cause, but we found at least that they were not to be despised. The Indian Poundmaker and his band, when attacked unexpectedly on their reserve and while imperfectly armed, did not run away, and Poundmaker, when the retreat of a troop of volunteers commenced, showed a great deal of magnanimity in preventing his people from following them. The hon. member for Quebec East (Mr. Laurier), in his very eloquent speech, remarked, very truly, that the Indians are a highly sensitive people. The half-breeds specially are sensitive, and I may add they are exceedingly vain, which quality no doubt they derive from their ancestry—I speak of their Indian and not of their French ancestry, for of course they derive no bad quality from the French—and they are apt to take offence sometimes without sufficient cause. But whence comes this new-born admiration of the Indians? Last year, during the franchise debate, we heard them described as the most degraded people on the face of the earth. We were asked, are you going to give the franchise to people so degraded as Strike-him-on-the-Back and others, but to-night nothing can be found too good to describe their high qualities. Their heroes are equal to Scout and Wellington. How circumstances alter cases. I have always been a friend to the

Mr. DAWSON.

Indians, and am very glad to see this change coming over hon. gentlemen opposite, but I find it rather extraordinary that they should limit their sympathy to this small body of Indians in the North-West, who were up in arms against the Government. Why should they not have a little feeling for the Indians in other parts of the Dominion? In Algoma, we have 12,000 Indians, who, at times, suffer a great deal. I have brought their grievances before the House; I have told the House that the white people were going in and destroying the fish on which the Indians relied for subsistence. But there was no sympathy shown for them. It appears it was all reserved to the small band in the North-West who took up arms against the Government. No doubt they may have grievances, and a great deal has been said with the view of making the Government responsible, but there is no doubt that the Government have done a great deal for the Indians. The Government have been extremely anxious to find out what they had to complain of. Of course, if there were agents sent among the Indians who were not reliable, one side of the House has as much to account for in that respect as the other side. Whose fault was it if incompetent agents were sent out? It certainly was not wholly the fault of the Government. I heard a very true remark made here the other night by an hon. member, who said: Hon. members have themselves to blame a good deal for this. It is generally thought that a man who can do nothing at home need only to be sent abroad to prove himself a very good fellow, and it very often happens that individuals not very well qualified for the duty are forced by members on the Government, I think this is a case in which many excuses may be made for the Government.

Mr. MITCHELL. I am not going to inflict a speech upon the House at this late hour of the evening, but I am simply going to give my reasons for voting as I intend to vote on the amendment which is now under consideration. I have listened with considerable attention to the statements made by the mover of the resolution and by the gentlemen who have sustained him, and I have listened to the replies on this side. If we were to believe the statements from the other side of the House, there has been utter neglect on the part of the Government in relation to the treatment of the half-breeds. If we believe the statements from this side of the House, and more particularly from the hon. the Minister of the Interior, the complaints should not be confined to the Government of the day, but his answer is: You're another, you did likewise. Now, I am not going to enter into the discussion of the question whether the half-breeds have been or have not been properly used in regard to the particular subject which has been referred to; but, from the conviction that I have had in relation to the general treatment of the North-West on the part of the Government of the day through the two previous Ministers who occupied the position of Minister of the Interior, I have long since come to the conclusion that their administration of the affairs of the North-West was not such as to be for the good of that country or the welfare of Canada, and therefore I am going to vote in favor of the amendment.

House divided on amendment of Mr. Laurier (p. 819).

YEAS:

Messieurs.

| | | |
|----------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Allen, | Fisher, | Livingston, |
| Amyot, | Fleming, | McOraney, |
| Armstrong, | Gaudet, | McMullen, |
| Bain (Wentworth), | Geoffrion, | Mills, |
| Béchar, | Gigault, | Mitchell, |
| Bergeron, | Gillmor, | Mulock, |
| Blake, | Glen, | Quimet, |
| Bourassa, | Guay, | Paterson (Brant), |
| Burpee, | Guilbault, | Platt, |
| Cameron (Huron), | Gunn, | Ray, |
| Cameron (Middlesex), | Harley, | Rinfret, |