

their apprehensions. Now, that is seven years ago. Ample time has elapsed for issuing the commission. More than ample time has elapsed for the redress of grievances and the settlement of claims. The hon. gentleman admitted that they knew a year ago that this dangerous agitator, a man who has been an outlaw, guilty of rising in armed insurrection against the Government of this country—that this man had come into that country. They had every kind of warning that men could have, that there was danger brewing; and my hon. friend simply declares—he does not censure the Government—he asks how it is, with these patent facts before them, with this information, with a knowledge of the character of Riel, and of the character of these Métis—whom the First Minister described, if I heard him aright, as little better than semi-savages—that with all these elements of danger before them, the Government omitted to take the most ordinary precautions. That is the complaint; and can complaint be juster or more reasonable. I was very sorry, indeed, to find that the First Minister on this occasion should have repeated the assertion, which, I think, he must have regretted, which, I think, he must have wished buried in the oblivion, that when, in June, 1872, he brought, what I must call, a most slanderous charge against the leader of the Opposition, that he had deliberately deprived him, the present First Minister, of the opportunity of bringing Riel to justice. He knew, and we have here the evidence of Archbishop Taché, to show that he knew that when he made this charge in July, 1872, in December, 1871, he had himself supplied Riel with the means of leaving the country, and of maintaining himself in a foreign country, for the purpose, as the First Minister stated, of hatching plots against this country. Here is an extract from Archbishop Taché's testimony in our journals:

"I came to Canada, 5th October, 1871. I saw Sir George Cartier in Montreal and Quebec, and he spoke to me about Riel's leaving the country, and he strongly advised me to use my influence to get Riel to leave the country for a while. This was in October or November, 1871."

That charge, to which I alluded being made in June or July, 1872.—

"I told Sir George that I agreed in his opinion, but that it was extremely difficult for me to interfere, as I had been so badly treated, being deceived about the amnesty. He urged me, saying I was the pastor of the people, and he insisted so much that I at last said I would try, but I said: 'You must remember that man is poor; his mother is a widow, with four young girls and three young boys, and she has no means of support, especially when her eldest son is away. He himself has only his labor for his support'—"

The hon. gentleman will observe that Riel was here in October or November, 1871.—

"and I do not think it is fair to ask him to leave his home without some compensation or some means of travelling.' 'That is true,' said Sir George; 'we will see about that.' He then asked me if I would go to Ottawa. 'Yes,' said I, 'I intend to be there the beginning of December.' 'Then,' said he, 'we will settle the matter there.' I came to Ottawa the beginning of December. Sir George also came, and then I saw him and Sir John. I had several conversations with both of them, but one especially I remember with Sir John. It was on the 7th of December, about noon, in his office. I do not remember who began, but he insisted that I should advise Riel to leave the country for a while, and added these words, so far as I can recollect them: 'If you can succeed in keeping him out of the way for a while, I will make his case mine, and I will carry the point.'

"The question of amnesty has caused me so much pain already that I thought I would be justified in using all honest means to secure Sir John's assistance in the granting of the amnesty, and it was on that ground, and on that ground only, that I promised, as I did then, promise Sir John, that I would endeavor to persuade Riel to leave Red River for a while. I made to Sir John the same observations which I had already made to Sir George about the necessity of giving some money to Riel if he were asked to leave the country. It was agreed by Sir John that they would do something about that matter—that he would consult with Sir George Cartier and give me an answer afterwards. I got an answer, dated 27th December, 1871, from Sir John, which I produce under direction of the committee, as follows:—

"[Private and strictly confidential.]

"OTTAWA, 27th December, 1871.

"MY DEAR LORD ARCHBISHOP—I have been able to make the arrangement for the individual that we have talked about. I now send you a Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT.

sight draft on the Bank of Montreal for \$1,000; I need not press upon Your Grace the importance of the money being paid to him periodically—say monthly or quarterly, and not in a lump, otherwise the money would be wasted, and our embarrassment begin again. The payment should spread over a year. Believe me, Your Grace's

"Very obedient servant,

"(Signed) JOHN A. MACDONALD.

"His Grace, the Archbishop of St. Boniface, Montreal."

Now, I ask what possible justification could there be in July, 1872, for charging my hon. friend with having driven Louis Riel out of the country, to hatch plots and mischief against the State, as the First Minister declared my hon. friend had done? I might just add one word. Archbishop Taché goes on to say:

"In my conversations with Sir John and Sir George there was no allusion to the Ontario proclamation which, indeed, was not ordered till a later period."

Sir, it strikes me that the First Minister would do well to refresh his memory before he again, in this House, declares that in July, 1872, it was his sincere prayer that he might catch Louis Riel. Now, he and Archbishop Taché can settle the matter between them. I have never heard the Archbishop's veracity impugned. Sir, if we are to go to the root of this trouble I believe it will be found to a great extent to be this. I do not in the slightest degree dispute the ability of the First Minister, but I only say to him here what I have said in many other places, that he and his successor in office have been guilty of a great and grievous error in their dealing with the North-West. Sir, I speak with knowledge when I say that it is utterly impossible for any man to administer the affairs of that country properly unless he has been frequently in it or is a native of it. The First Minister, when he entered office, took upon himself the charge of that huge Department. No man knew better than he that it was utterly impossible—and I use the words advisedly—for him to discharge the arduous duties of First Minister and leader of his party, and at the same time to administer that great Department. Unless my memory altogether fails, over and over again the First Minister had declared that it was a grievous error on the part of his predecessor, my friend from East York (Mr. Mackenzie) to attempt to discharge, at one and the same time, the functions of First Minister and Minister of Public Works. There is no doubt that my hon. friend has ruined his health in the public service by attempting to discharge duties which were too much for the strength of any single man to discharge. But, Sir, what does the First Minister do? It was of the greatest possible importance that the man who took charge of the Department of the Interior should give his whole soul and mind and strength to it, and the whole soul and mind and strength of any man in Canada would have been barely adequate (even had he taken the precautions, which the hon. gentleman neglected, to visit the country every year of his administration) to the proper discharge of the duties of the office. Now, I believe it is true that, during all the years the First Minister held office, neither he nor his successor set foot in that country. We have here the spectacle, which has always led to great evils and troubles, of attempting to govern a country requiring close and accurate knowledge at a distance of 2,000 or 3,000 miles. Consequently, these men are ignorant of facts which would have been apparent to them had they taken up their residence in the country or visited it, or had they used those means which any man having the smallest stake in the country would have used to acquaint himself with its wants and necessities. As a consequence, the present and the late Minister of the Interior have been perfectly ignorant of all these things; they have been in the hands of their subordinates. No doubt their intentions were good enough; but they have no knowledge, and they have neglected the plain and easy means of knowledge. What has been the result? One result