

Canada, or the Canadian Government, or the Canadian people, was under no obligation to feed these Indians, but as Christian men they could not allow them to starve; they supplied them with food, and every vote we asked for the purpose of feeding these Indians was opposed by hon. gentlemen on the other side, and especially by the hon. member for Bothwell, who said we were pauperising the Indians, and that they should work as well as the white men. Votes were taken year after year to feed the poor Indians while they were changing their habits of life, and changing their modes of acquiring their food. The buffalo was gone, and we fed them—sparingly, but sufficiently—until, by degrees, they could be got to go upon their reserves. I state distinctly that there has been a great amount of benevolence with prodigality or profusion; there has been great tenderness to the Indians. Although the Indian will keep himself in a starving condition, there has been the greatest tenderness on the part of Parliament to put money at the disposal of the Government, and there has been a careful and judicious disposition of the vote to the Indian, without letting him feel that he had enough for himself and his family without working. The great trouble is to get the Indians to work, for they can work and they are now working. But if they are told by pseudo-philanthropists, by men who are led more by their hearts than by their heads, that they are suffering, that it is the duty of the Government not to allow them to starve, then they never will work. It would be impossible for me to go into an answer to all the charges made against the Department. I shall see, Sir, that the vindication of the Department shall be widely disseminated in all parts of the Dominion, because it will not do that the Government or any Government should lie under the charges which were brought against them—altogether unfounded as most of them are—sometimes from drawing improper inferences, and sometimes from the utter want of accuracy upon which the hon. gentleman relied. More than that, I accept the challenge thrown out from the other side, and it is the intention of the Government to issue a commission—and I pledge myself it will be an impartial commission—to look into the whole question of the management of the Indians in the North-West, as well as the charges which have been brought, or may be brought, against the Department, and I am quite satisfied, on the part of the Department, to abide by the result.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. It is certainly a great misfortune that the hon. gentleman has not been able, from whatever cause, to have stated publicly in the House what he has to say in reply to the attacks from the hon. member for West Huron and the hon. member for Brant. Any statement of that kind, coming from the Government, ought I think to be made in the House.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Certainly.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I am aware the hon. gentleman's state of health may have afforded a reasonable ground for not doing it. However, my object was not on the present occasion to enter into this discussion, which cannot be possibly carried on to-day, but I want to call attention to this point with regard to Mr. Edgar Dewdney, whom the hon. gentleman has repeatedly declared to be a very excellent officer, and who may be so in some respects, for anything I can say to the contrary. It is a fact that Mr. Dewdney—it has I believe been repeatedly admitted by the hon. gentleman himself—has been largely engaged in various speculative transactions in the North-West. The hon. gentleman said yesterday, and I was glad to hear it, that he himself, in the whole term of his office, had never bought an acre of land in the North-West or elsewhere, and he claimed credit for it.

JHON A. MACDONALD. No.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Well, I think he can, because I think that the position of a Minister or a Lieutenant Governor is such that he ought not to speculate, and ought to keep himself clear from speculation. With regard to members of the House it is different, and unless they avail themselves of their position to claim undue advantages it is another affair. But there are strong reasons why a Minister of the Crown, and more particularly the Minister of the Interior, or a Minister specially concerned in North-West affairs, or the Lieutenant Governors of the distant Provinces, should keep themselves perfectly clear from being mixed up with a number of persons in real estate transactions of that kind. No doubt there is a great temptation, but they are officers of this estate; they occupy a semi-judicial position in which their private interests might warp their minds unintentionally. Now the statement made and repeated in the papers, and, as I understand, admitted on the part of Mr. Dewdney and the hon. gentleman himself, is to the effect that Mr. Dewdney has been largely engaged in speculative transactions. Now, as a matter of public policy—and the hon. gentleman knows that I am only laying down the rule which has been laid down again and again by the English Government as to their officers—no man in his position should engage in such transactions. I shall not wait to point out the innumerable evils which arise from that state of things, but I say if he has done so he has seriously erred and has laid himself open to an immense amount of misconstruction. Any gentleman holding his position I maintain should keep himself aloof from all sorts of speculation or speculative proceedings. That is my doctrine, and I should be sorry to hear the Minister disavow it. I ask him to state what he thinks on this subject.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The hon. gentleman says I admitted that Mr. Dewdney had been engaged in large speculative transactions. Well, I am not aware that I made such an admission. What I stated was that he told me that when the Hudson Bay Company put up some seven or eight sections at sale, some years ago, he had bought them with some others. I have not been informed of any other speculations; he may have engaged in them or he may not have done so; he did not inform me. Mr. Dewdney has written to me again and again, both during last summer and the year before, that he would like very much to have an enquiry made into the charges made against him, and I shall make it now. Whether he has bought any property or not I do not know. We know that Mr. Cauchon, the late Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, bought largely, and altogether hon. gentlemen opposite knew he was engaged seriously in speculation, although like everybody else up there he unfortunately ruined himself; yet I do not think hon. gentlemen objected to his speculations. Mr. Aikins is the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, and I am not aware whether he has bought a lot or not; but it is a question whether he could not buy if he liked, not land under the control of the Government; but I take it that the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, or Quebec, or Manitoba or British Columbia or the North-West, is not to be prevented from buying from private individuals. I think Mr. Dewdney would be exercising a wise discretion in not buying any land directly or indirectly from the Government; I agree with the hon. gentleman so far. But the hon. gentleman says that in consequence of these speculations Mr. Dewdney's unpopularity arose. His unpopularity arose from this one cause—his refusal to give permits to bring intoxicating liquors into the North-West. The law imposed on him the duty of issuing those permits; it was an unpleasant duty, from which he has asked to be relieved; but some one must do it, and so long as the present system of excluding intoxicating liquors from the North-West continues, I think the responsibility of issuing permits is thrown very properly upon the representative of