

taken up in some form, and he held that the giving of the paltry sum of \$20,000 was not at all what the people of St. John had a right to expect under the circumstances. At the very least, the Dominion of Canada ought not to have made money out of the misfortunes of the city. He held that this Government, whether they gave anything or not, never ought to have put into the coffers of the Dominion one single dollar arising out of that calamity. They might have loaned money to the city or assisted it in any way they could without loss of money, but he protested against the Dominion of Canada making money out of the misfortunes of the citizens of St. John.

Mr. PLUMB said the hon. gentleman who introduced this subject (Mr. Domville) had complained that the Government had been guilty of inexcusable delay in putting up some of the public buildings which were destroyed by the fire, also that the streets were still obstructed, and that great inconvenience was caused to the people from the want of the Government post office, Custom house, and other buildings of that kind. The hon. gentleman also complained that this was setting a poor example to those who were putting up buildings and helping to reconstruct the ill-fated city, and that if the Government had shown greater promptitude in commencing their works, the labour would have given a certain measure of relief. In connection with the claim referring to the revenue, he (Mr. Plumb) had a statement in his hand which might probably throw some light on that subject. This showed that the merchandize stock destroyed by fire was \$3,000,000.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT: How much was the insurance?

Mr. PLUMB said he was not speaking of the insurance, he was speaking of the relation of Government, not the relation of the insurance companies, to that destruction, and the duty paid on that merchandize, which would amount to something like \$500,000. The amount of duty paid in St. John, from July, 1876, to January, 1877, was \$415,798, and the amount

of duty paid from July, 1877, to January, 1878, was \$650,392, and of this last mentioned amount, \$50,275 was paid in the six months by a single man. These figures showed there had been an increase during the last half year of \$230,000 in the duties paid. The conclusion was that the duty on building materials which would be required would give the Government at least \$700,000 more than if there had not been a fire, so that we should be actually receiving that sum over our regular yearly revenue from the duties of that port. Now, Boston gave \$61,000 to assist the sufferers in the St. John fire, while this Government gave only \$20,000. He thought the latter a paltry sum to contribute to one of the principal sea-ports of this Dominion. Of course, he was perfectly aware that, however small this sum might appear to some people, there might be others who would consider it large, and he remembered that the First Minister had considered it necessary to justify the giving away of this sum. He said they had been blamed for having such a quantity of steel rails, and he justified this by saying that the Government had also given \$20,000 to the city of St. John. He (Mr. Plumb) was unable to see the connection between the two things at the time, and he was unable to see it now. But it seemed as though the Premier considered it a large sum, for he not only spoke of it in one place, but several times, during his summer excursion. He said great complaint had been made of the Government having loaned a certain quantity of rails to the contractor of the Canada Central Railway, "But," he added, "We gave \$20,000 to St. John on account of the fire."

Mr. MACKENZIE: I never said anything of the kind.

Mr. PLUMB: Well, I believe it is to that effect.

Mr. MACKENZIE: Read it.

Mr. PLUMB: At least you are reported to have said it.

Several Hon. MEMBERS: Read it.

Mr. PLUMB: I will undertake to read it. It was made use of at several meetings. On one occasion he said: