

For a more ample answer to the critics, the memorandum on the subject published by Mr. Taché, is here reproduced.

THE THIRD VOLUME OF THE CENSUS OF 1881 AND ITS CRITICS.

The third volume of the Census of 1881, which contains the result of the laborious and intricate inquest on the material conditions of Canada, is the subject of attacks from some newspapers. I have thought it my duty, both in the public interest and in justice to the officers connected with the work, especially the Chief Compiler, Mr. Layton, who have to my knowledge, honestly, diligently and intelligently accomplished their arduous task, to show the fallacies and the unfairness of these attacks.

It should not be necessary, but it seems, nevertheless, opportune to remark that absolute accuracy is never to be expected from such a labor as a Census, no matter when, no matter where, and no matter by whom it is executed. It is a false notion to compare the operation of such inquiries to the work of book-keeping and of balancing commercial or financial accounts. To impugn the result of a Census and question its immense usefulness, because errors of details are detected in it, is just as absurd and mischievous as would be an assault on the whole machinery of postal or Customs service, because a certain number of letters got astray and certain inaccuracies are found in reports. Nothing human is unfailing, and errors will occur, do what you may to guard against them: the more or less perfection is the more or less avoidance of such occurrences.

Men at all acquainted with the subject will not take notice of such errors, apparent or real, unless they materially affect the general results of the investigation; they know that when the returns give 32,350,269 bushels of wheat, it means about 32,000,000, and that such errors or inaccuracies of details, whether they are of enumeration, of compilation, of posting or printing, some being of overrating and others of underrating, generally balance each other: the only question is to see if they are not such as to notably influence the grand result and its proportionate deductions.

With these few preliminary remarks, I shall at once take up the points which have been made the subject of the attacks I propose examining.

The Relation between Numbers of Dwellings and Houses owned.

In table I of the first volume is given the number of separate dwellings subdivided into five categories, namely: vessels, shanties, inhabited houses, uninhabited houses, and houses in construction, situated in each district; in table XXI of the third volume are given the number of houses owned by the inhabitants of each district. The critics assume that the results of these two separate and quite distinct informations should exactly correspond, and on such extraordinary assumption attack the accuracy of the Census, because in the Census returns the figures representing these two results do not correspond.

The fact of the matter is that if these figures were in precise correspondence it would be a proof that they had been "cooked" and made, by a dishonest process, false and erroneous, for otherwise they cannot agree, being of different nature and purpose.

First, it is self-evident that vessels afloat, shanties, tents and wigwams of nomads are not houses owned, although they are dwellings; second, that houses owned by non-resident persons or companies are not to be included in the number of houses owned in Canada, although they are Canadian dwellings: this at once makes the number of houses owned smaller than the number of dwellings, by many thousands. The error of the critics, in this instance, is such that they have dwelt on the fact that in the Territories there are only 1,242 houses owned by Canadians for 11,652 occupied; when the Census shows that 9,357 of these dwellings are not houses, but the lodges of nomadic populations.