

except the lot of implements which the Indians left in the mud, and which were found there some eleven days after the payments had been made. The reserve referred to stretches along the east and west banks of Lake Winnipeg. The people are not Indians of the plains; they never have been dependent upon the buffalo, and their former means of subsistence have not failed. Consequently, farm instructors have not been supplied. If we had not given them those implements, they would probably have complained, and the hon. member for West Huron would have echoed the complaint here, that they were entitled to those implements and had not got them.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). I would call the attention of the hon. Minister to the fact that, with regard to trousers and shirts being worn out in three or four days, the report corresponds with the statement made by the hon. Minister in his speech, and is at variance with the statement made in the pamphlet.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). This matter is somewhat old, and my recollection of it is not as distinct as it would have been a few years ago, nor did I know that my hon. friend was going to bring it up. But I think the House will agree with me that it is only natural the hon. member for West Huron (Mr. Cameron) should seek an opportunity of making the statements he has made to the House to-day. I think it is rather ungenerous, perhaps, on the part of the Minister of Justice that he should have insinuated that my hon. friend had hesitated to make this statement while the late Prime Minister was yet with us. I think if the House will remember the position of matters after the opening of the House, and when the First Minister was ill, they will admit there was not an occasion offered to my hon. friend from West Huron when he could have very well done that. I think instead of that being urged as a reproach against him it should be rather cited in his commendation. The charge made by my hon. friend did not lie particularly against the late First Minister, that I know of. It was a charge against the Government. Perhaps the late First Minister may have had charge of the department at that time, although I think that during the years to which my hon. friend alluded, in which he found most fault with the management of Indian affairs, that department was directed by another member of the Government. Of that, however, I am not absolutely certain. The hon. gentleman, I think, also was not quite fair in stating that the hon. member for West Huron had brought his original motion at a time when the First Minister was not in the House owing to illness, for, although the First Minister was not able to be present at that particular moment, it must be remembered that notice was given of the motion, and that when the motion was reached the First Minister was ill, a fact which my hon. friend could not have foreseen.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. The motion was made on going into Supply, without any notice whatever, and the Minister of Public Works, who replied to the hon. member for West Huron, stated, as will be seen on reference to page 730 of the Debates, that the absence of the First Minister was due to illness.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). The First Minister was ill; that is my recollection. But the point I
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take exception to is, that it cannot be fairly charged against the hon. member for West Huron that he made his statement at a time when he could not expect to receive an answer. I do not think that was his object. The hon. member for West Huron tells me he made his motion on the 15th of April, and it was not until the 2nd of June that the House closed; and I find by the *Hansard* that as far back as May 4th the then First Minister was in his place, taking an active part in the proceedings of the House. He, therefore, had ample opportunity for a month before the session closed to reply to my hon. friend, but, according to my recollection, it was not until the closing day of the session that he alluded to the circumstance at all, and then only because I myself brought up some additional information which I had secured from a return, and which was not in the possession of the House at the time my hon. friend made his speech. The information which I brought to the notice of the House then, and to which my hon. friend has alluded to-day, consisted of pressing messages which had been sent concerning the condition of a large band of Indians who were reported to be in a state of semi-starvation. One of those letters was dated the 23rd of September, one the 2nd of October, and one the 19th of October, and during all this time the Government did nothing, although their own agent reported that unless something was done there was danger of an outbreak on the part of the starving Indians. Having brought these facts to the notice of the then First Minister, he replied, and in his reply undertook to deal with the statements made by the hon. member for West Huron. The only point I wish to make just now is this. I have not looked at the extracts quoted from the blue-books quoted by my hon. friend, but I have no doubt what he has quoted will be found there. He has made his statement in the presence of hon. gentlemen, who will see in *Hansard* the remarks he has made and will verify his quotations, if they feel any doubt in the matter; and the hon. gentleman has himself stated that if he has made any wrong statement or misapprehended the meaning of any report, he is quite ready to make the necessary correction. But, as far as I could see to-day, the hon. gentleman has confirmed every statement he made by authorities in the blue-book, and I think he has the right to complain that a document should have been prepared, I suppose, by an officer of the department, with the sanction of the head of the department, to explain away the blue-book in order to meet the charges he made, instead of replying to those charges in the House. I have not got that pamphlet, and do not remember what it is, but I know that it is based, not upon the denial that such things as were charged by the hon. member for West Huron against the Government were in the blue-book, but upon statements of Government officials explaining or denying the charge there made. The hon. member for West Huron is not in a position to say anything with reference to that pamphlet. If Parliament is furnished by the head of the department with an annual report, compiled from reports of the department received from Government agents in various parts of the country, and if in these reports certain statements are made, and if a member of this House, assuming those statements to be correct because they are in an official form, bases thereon a charge against the Government, it is a