

these cases are brought before him, there is, at any rate, evinced by him strong feelings of humanity. I need not read his letter. One clause says :

"If the condition of matters on the reserve be such as stated by the doctor, prompt and remedial measures should be called for."

It appears an agent was sent to examine and report upon the condition of affairs which I will not read, but I will read a short letter from page 35, which says :

"OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
"NORTH-WEST TERRITORY, REGINA, 27th February, 1884.

"SIR,—Again referring to my letter of the 7th inst., No. 6,930, and your reply of the 15th, No. 11,175, I have the honor to state, that Mr. Agent McDonald was forwarding a report of his tour of inspection of the Indian Head reserves made subsequently to the visit of the doctor, a copy of which is herewith enclosed. By it will be seen that the destitution mentioned as existing by Dr. Edwards, was, to a certain extent, exaggerated."

By reading the report hon. members will see that there was only too much force in what the doctor reported. The committee will agree with me that there are evidences that the Department has a humane desire to have grievances attended to, but blame lies at the door of the Government so long as they maintain officials in office whose duty is to attend to grievances and fail to do so, though reported upon by their own officials in the public interest.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I regret very much I was not able to be here when the hon. member for West Huron (Mr. Cameron), made a long and elaborate attack on the Indian Department in regard to its North-West management. I do not know that I would have gained much information by it, because the speech was an elaborately prepared one, in which the hon. member went into a number of details which could not be answered on the spot. So soon as I was aware of the speech made by the hon. gentleman I obtained a copy of it and transmitted it to the North-West. I asked for a report not only as regards the Indians but in regard to all the matters referred to, and I gave instructions that every charge should be brought up, every statement should be examined into and verified or refuted. In order to do that a great extent of country had to be traversed. Each charge consisted of a distinct allegation of wrong-doing, a sin of omission or commission. The evidence to meet each charge had to be collected and thoroughly investigated. Only within the last two or three days I have received additional evidence. I had intended, if my strength had allowed me, to have gone into the whole question, but it would have taken a much longer time to have read the evidence in rebuttal than it occupied to make the charges, and the House would not have listened to me. The speech of the hon. member has been published under the auspices of hon. gentlemen opposite and widely distributed. I shall take care that the answer will be distributed equally widely. I will let the country see from the evidence that, from the beginning to the end, the speech of the hon. gentleman is characterised by the same want of accuracy as has characterised all the speeches and attacks on everybody and everything made by the hon. gentleman in the House this Session. I shall be able to show that to the satisfaction of the country. As regards the charges against Governor Dewdney, I would not be worthy of my place if I did not rise in support of my officers when I know they do their duty. That gentlemen has a very severe and unpopular duty to perform, and there have been a set of influences brought against him which at one time brought undeserved unpopularity upon him. That he has surmounted, and the country and the North-West are rising to express views as to his merits just as strongly as originally they were prejudiced against him. I believe he is a good officer, a faithful officer. When the hon. gentleman states he was in Ottawa instead of being at his post, I may say that he was here because I summoned him myself for the purpose of going into the whole matter connected with arrangements in the

Mr. PATERSON (Brant).

North-West. It would be very easy for Governor Dewdney to throw away the money of the country upon Indians hanging round the various posts begging for food. It would be very easy to give them flour, beef and bacon, that would cause him no trouble and might give popularity. But he was told to husband the funds and the food placed at his disposal. With respect to the Indians that were camping in and about Fort Walsh, he was specially instructed by me to act as he did. Those Indians had left their reserves. They were told to go back to their reserves and to cultivate the land, and that they should have food if they did so. We had agricultural implements, cattle, seed grain and food for them there, but they would not go. They were near Fort Walsh, and almost immediately adjoining the boundary between the United States and Canada. There was then great danger of improper communications being had between the Indians of the two countries. They were, therefore, told that if they remained there they would not get any food. They were also told that if they would go to their reserves they would be fully supplied in every way, but they would not go. They were reduced from full rations to half rations, and then to quarter rations, but with the obstinacy of Indians they would not go, and they were told that if they refused they must take the consequences. It is only by using those means that you can get the Indians to work. There are police stations, scattered settlements, land agencies, all those are nuclei for white settlers, and their food is stored. The Indians hang round all those posts. So long as they can get the white men to feed them they will stay there. The mass of the white population in the North-West is composed of young men, and the Indians hang round the posts because they want to stay there, and their women want to stay there, and because the Indians sell their women, and the greatest amount of demoralisation goes on in consequence of the degraded habits of the Indians, the barbarous and savage habits of the Indians. It is the policy, and it will be the policy of the Government so long as I have anything to do with this Department, to see that the Indians go on their reserves and work there, and the Government will then fulfil the treaty obligations and even more. By strictly carrying out that policy it has been in a degree successful. The Indians are going on their reserves, and this year the accounts are much more favorable as to the number of Indians on the reserves, the quantity of land broken and the quantity of roots and grain put in. The Indian will allow himself to run almost to death's door rather than move from the place where he is. It was only because with Christian feelings we could not see them starve that they were given quarter rations. That is the policy of the Government, and it is the correct policy. The committee must remember that the Government are under no obligations to furnish food to the Indians. He has got his hand and his head; he has the capacity for work if he chooses. The white immigrant goes there and he must "root hog or die"; he must work or starve.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). We shut him up on a certain reserve?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The reserves are enormous.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). We shut them up on reserves, and the reports of the hon. gentleman's own agents show that they have lost their crops through frost.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The Indians, by the strict, stern rule, are settling on their reserves. Why, Sir, before the buffalo disappeared we gave no food to the Indians. Hon. gentlemen opposite, when they were in power, did not give food to the Indians. There were treaty obligations; a certain number of cattle and implements; a certain amount of seed grain and so on, were all given under treaty obligations, and that was all required to be given and all that was given until the sudden disappearance of the buffalo.