

details in this matter, but it is unnecessary, as the statements of the hon. member for West Huron (Mr. Cameron) have not been controverted or attempted to be met by any denial; and how can they be denied, when the authority is the reports of the Government's own agents, contained in the Government's own blue books. Were it necessary, I could read reports from the same source of bands of Indians almost destitute of clothing and almost in a starving condition, and who were only enabled to sustain life through the efforts of benevolent people, missionaries and others, who did all in their power to prevent these unfortunate people from starving. We profess to be a christian country, and I believe the people will hold Parliament severely to account, should we hesitate in placing money enough at the disposal of the hon. gentlemen who occupy the Treasury benches, to meet the wants of the Indians, and prevent these harrowing tales of want, destitution and misery, reaching our ears in the future. The people look to us to exercise a strict supervision over the manner in which the Ministers, who are entrusted with the expenditure of this money, fulfil their duty. The people will demand that the money given the Government to be expended in relieving the necessities of these people shall not be used in upholding a horde of officials who are not properly discharging their duties; they will demand that two or three prices shall not be paid for provisions or implements of agriculture; and that the cost of travelling shall not be piled up to an exorbitant sum; and they will require that the whole cost of the machinery will not involve such a charge on the country as to cause the continued existence of a feeling, which has already pervaded to some extent the minds of the people, that the Indian problem is becoming a grave and serious one, and threatens to load us down with a burden too heavy for us to bear. Out of the vast expenditure charged on Indian account, only half a million dollars have gone to supplies for destitute Indians, and that has gone in prices paid for articles such as I have described and such as the hon. member for West Huron has quoted. If the money were properly expended, if some better system were established, if the Government agents deal with the Indians honestly, the money spent by the Government and properly put to use would have prevented any such tales of destitution and misery as those we have heard. In addition to the testimony of the reverend gentleman I have quoted, there is a gentleman holding an official position in the North-West; a gentleman who has been elected to the North-West Council, and who has been a staunch supporter of the hon. gentlemen opposite for the last twenty years—will they say we must not accept his testimony? This gentleman, Mr. Jackson, has stated, and his statement is published in the *Qu'Appelle Gazette*, that when he read the description given by the First Minister that Mr. Dewdney was the best officer he had, he lost faith in man. He condemns Mr. Dewdney as one who is insolent, whose word has been broken and is no longer relied upon by the Indians, and nothing could be more dangerous than to destroy the confidence of the Indian. I am simply stating what has been stated publicly, and the hon. Minister has not attempted to deny the statement. These facts press upon our consideration, and the charges made by the hon. member for West Huron (Mr. Cameron) press upon our consideration, and must remain on our minds unless hon. gentlemen opposite are able to give some proof of the correctness of their denial. The impression is borne home on the minds of many hon. gentlemen in this House, as it will be on the minds of the people, that there has been gross extravagance in the management of Indian affairs, that there has been neglect and incapacity, and that the charges made are amply borne out by the facts. I would it were otherwise; I trust the Government, while they may be able to vote down the resolution, because there are enough gentlemen who are as ready to support them, even without

any attempt at defence on their part, as the hon. gentleman who cried out: "Call in the members," before a word in reply was uttered, will rise to a sense of their duty and cause a searching examination to be made into the affairs of the North-West. I hope they will allow no favoritism to individuals to tie their hands, but that incompetent officials will be removed, and that the Indians will learn again to have implicit faith and reliance in the word of the Government and in the word of their agents; and that thus having this confidence, they will be more ready to receive instruction, become fitted at an earlier day to hold their own in the race of life, and ere long cease to be as heavy a burden upon us as they are at present.

Mr. FERGUSON (Leeds). I do not propose to deal with the general attacks made upon the Government by the hon. member for West Huron (Mr. Cameron) and the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Paterson) but simply to take up some special charges. I shall confine myself to a few of the specific charges that have been made. The general charges I shall leave the public to judge of. Great weight has been laid upon the character of the food, especially the flour, given to the Indians in the South Alberta District, and it has been stated that great distress, death and disease have resulted from the use of that flour. It so happened that I was in that country for three months during the epidemic from which these Indians died, and I had experience, not only by observation, but actually by medical treatment, in regard to those Indians who died during that time. For the first time, I have heard it declared that the food was the cause of the death of those Indians. I have not seen the report, and I do not know the professional position of the medical man who attributed it to the flour, but I am prepared here and anywhere else to give the most unquestionable testimony that it was not caused by the food. I make that a distinct and specific statement.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). Then they have an inefficient medical attendant there?

Mr. FERGUSON (Leeds). I do not know who the gentleman was, nor do I know his professional status, but I take the responsibility of making this statement on my own judgment and I am prepared to defend it. The cause of the disease and death of the Indians in that district was chiefly this: They were camped on their reserves along the river flats, and any person who has ever travelled in that country and visited the Indian encampments must have observed their specially filthy habits both in regard to their camps and to their persons. There are from five to twenty wigwams on an acre, occupied by from eight to ten persons each, and the Indian removes his wigwam or his tepee as it is called there, only when it becomes difficult from the filthy accumulation to get in and out, and he will shift it just far enough to get out of the way of that accumulation. The result is, especially since they have been confined to their reservations, that in summer, especially in August and September, which I think the hon. gentleman will find is the date at which this epidemic took place, a disease broke out which they call autumn fever or mountain fever, but is a sort of typhoid; and it was from that, and not on account of the food, that these Indians died. As an evidence of that I may mention that, when I was at Medicine Hat, it was my duty and opportunity to have charge of three or four men professionally, whom I found there from my own immediate district, two of whom were officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Medicine Hat is on a flat similar to the Blackfeet reserve and the Sarcee reserve. The village was composed of board houses and tents, all without the ordinary conveniences of civilised life about them. Another cause of this was the great quantity of canned meats used there. I saw a great number of empty cans, containing a little meat, thrown out, and this accumulation of animal matter, and the exhalations from it,