

Mr. BLAKE. I hope neither the hon. gentleman or anybody else thinks that I intimated the hon. gentleman said anything else than what he believed to be true. I stated that as soon as the Government became aware of the inaccuracy of their statement they should have given us the accurate facts.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I do not think I said there was only one gap, because I know there are several small gaps besides the chief one. I believe I said, or at any rate I intended to say the gap or gaps were 70 miles. If the hon. gentleman has seen the plan exhibited by the Canadian Pacific Railway, he must have seen where these gaps are. I find that the larger gap estimated to be 42 to 47 miles. I think 47 miles is the accurate distance—and then there are two other smaller gaps. Sleighs are in readiness at the gaps, and the men without difficulty are transferred from railway to sleigh and from sleigh to railway, and I think that is the safest and shortest route in Canada by which to send troops to the North-West.

Mr. CARON. In so far as the paragraph which the hon. gentleman read from the *Times* of Montreal with reference to the action of the American railway companies is concerned, I may say it is perfectly true. The American railway companies have been extremely kind, expediting with all possible promptness the ammunition we have sent over their lines, and I took occasion to telegraph Mr. Cable the thanks of the Government for his promptness.

Mr. BLAKE. It is stated the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Royal) has left for the North-West. Has he gone under instructions from the Government or on a Government mission?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Not that I am aware of.

Mr. BLAKE. At what time did Gen. Middleton leave Ottawa? When did he reach Winnipeg?

Mr. GAULT. The House and the country will recognise the great efficiency and promptness which the Government has displayed in sending forward troops. I need only say that there is still in Montreal a battalion ready to go to the front as well prepared to go as any battalion in this country.

Mr. CARON. General Middleton left, I think, on Monday night and must have reached Winnipeg on Friday morning. To be absolutely certain I will get the accurate information and give it to the hon. gentleman.

Mr. BLAKE. I have been informed that the Government has taken control of the telegraph lines west of Winnipeg. Is that so? And I would also ask what is the present condition of telegraphic communication in the North-West, in the disturbed region, and what are the present facilities for obtaining news, and what the date is of the latest news received from Prince Albert, Carlton and Battleford?

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. The hon. gentleman is perhaps not aware that the lines which are under the control of the Government are from Qu'Appelle to Fort Qu'Appelle, from Fort Qu'Appelle to Humboldt, with two or three stations on the way, from Humboldt to Clark's Crossing; then from Clark's Crossing it divides, one line goes to Prince Albert, the other goes to Battleford; from Battleford to Edmonton, and from Edmonton to St. Albert. St. Albert must not be confounded with Prince Albert. St. Albert is far in the west while Prince Albert is more in the east, about 20 miles from Carlton, but Carlton is not on the line of the telegraph. The line was cut Saturday last between Humboldt and Clark's Crossing, but was re-established during the night on orders from here, and the next news we heard was that the half-breeds had taken possession of our station at Stobart, about 17 or 18 miles from Prince

Albert. It is also called Batoche. Near there is Duck Lake. Stobart is about 16 miles from Carlton. The line has been cut between Clark's Crossing on the main line and Prince Albert, and has not been reestablished. The line was cut two days ago between Battleford and Edmonton in the west; that was reestablished once or twice but it has been cut again, and we have had no direct news by telegraph from Edmonton for the last two days.

Mr. CARON. Arrangements have been made to establish a service for the troops so that we will not be without information.

Mr. BLAKE. Is there any reliable information with reference to the fate of the Indian instructor on the File Hills reserve?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. No, there are only rumors of which we have no means of knowing the truth or falsity.

Mr. BLAKE. Are we to have to-day any of the papers which have been asked for, some of which the hon. gentleman stated were in preparation? Since that time it has been indicated to me, with reference to some of the papers which I have suggested as likely to be in the possession of the Government, that there was a letter from the Bishop of Saskatchewan to the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories, which probably the latter officer may have transmitted to the Government, as it was certainly his duty to have done; also there were several applications from Bishop Grandin in regard to the half-breed claims, and also that there was probably some response on the part of the Government to the memorial or representation or Minute in Council of the North-West Council which was passed in the year 1883. I mention these as other papers amongst those which I think it is important the House should have.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I will bring down such papers as are not confidential.

Mr. MILLS. When the hon. gentleman brings down these papers, he might also bring down the report which was made by Major Walsh in the autumn of 1878. Before the late Government retired from office, Major Walsh, who was connected with the police force in the North-West Territories, received leave of absence through the Secretary of State, and was in the service of the Department of the Interior. He was appointed to visit the half-breeds south of the Saskatchewan and north of the American border to ascertain their numbers, to ascertain their wishes and aspirations, to know where they would like to be located, and in fact to obtain for the Government all the information that could be had in regard to them, and which at that time was not in the possession of the Government. I understood in the Session of 1879 that that commission of Major Walsh was cancelled and he was ordered back to join the force. The Government, no doubt, had some reason for changing the policy of their predecessors in this particular. Major Walsh, I know, was engaged in those duties at the time that the policy was reversed, and he was ordered again to join the police force. I have no doubt that the Government have some papers upon the subject, the communication of the Government to Major Walsh and any statement he may have made to the Government in regard to it, and I hope the hon. gentleman will, with the other papers he may bring down, bring down those papers, and we shall then be in a better position to see what is the position of the half-breed population, known as the half-breeds of the plains, than we would be without that information.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. If the hon. gentleman desires to have speedy returns, he cannot get returns of all the papers and correspondence in regard to the North-West from the time we got the country.

Mr. MILLS. I am not asking that.