

his own confused mind it was not with a view of betraying the cause of his fellow countrymen—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Yes, yes.?

Mr. LAURIER. Why, Mr. Speaker, I do not expect that the members who now interrupt me would deal in the same manner, but, Sir, I give them the credit of having better balanced minds than Louis Riel. In his own dazed mind it is evident that if he accepted the money it was not with a view of betraying his fellow countrymen—it was with the view of working for them in another way, since he said he would start a paper in the United States and raise up the other nationalities.

An hon. MEMBER. Another rebellion.

Mr. LAURIER. I grant that if that reasoning had been made by a man in his senses, such as an hon. gentleman on the other side, it would be enough to stifle any sympathy we could have for him; but we must make due allowances for the fact that it is proved that if he was not actually insane, no man can deny that upon this subject of politics his mind was not right or sound; and of course in the case of a mind unsound or insane we cannot apply the same tests that we should apply to a reasonable mind—it would be unfair to him. But that he was insane seems to me beyond the possibility of controversy. When the reports first came here last spring and in the early summer of his doings and sayings in the North-West, when we heard that he was to establish monarchies in the North-West, that he was to depose the Pope and establish an American Pope; those who did not know him believed he was an impostor, but those who knew him knew at once what was the matter with him. In the Province of Quebec there was not an instant's hesitation about it. Almost every man in that Province knew that he had been several times confined in asylums, and therefore it was manifest to the people of Quebec that he had fallen into one of those misfortunes with which he was afflicted. When his counsel were engaged and commenced to prepare his trial, they saw at once that if justice to him and only justice to him was to be done, their plea should be a plea of insanity. It has been said that the trial was a fair one. I deny it. I will not go over some of the arguments which have been put forward on this subject, but I ask the special attention of the House to this fact: This man asked for a month's delay for his trial; he obtained eight days. Was that justice? Was that British justice? Was that giving fair play to the accused? When he swore that justice to his case demanded a delay of one month could there be any public reason that militated against that demand? Could there be any public reason why such a request as that should not have been granted? and yet it was refused. Again, when he asked for witnesses, was the request granted him? No, it was again refused. I again recall the attention of the House to the affidavit which Riel gave, that he wanted several witnesses, amongst others Gabriel Dumont, Michel Dumas and others. I grant at once that to bring Gabriel Dumont and Michel Dumas to this country, both of whom were fugitives from justice, was hardly possible; but remember that he asked as an alternative a thing which was perfectly feasible, and it was denied him. He asked this alternative under oath:

"That unless the Government of this country or this honorable court do provide the means with which to secure the attendance of the above-named witnesses before this court, it is essential to my defence that the various papers, writings and documents taken from me at the time of my surrender to General Middleton, and taken by him and his officers from my house subsequently, should be placed in the hands of my counsel for their examination and consideration, previous to being put upon my trial."

Sir, you see the treatment of the accused on that occasion; he asked one of two things. He said either procure me the attendance of certain witnesses, Gabriel Dumont and

Michel Dumas and others, or if you cannot or will not do that give to my counsel the papers taken at Batoche. Was there ever a more moderate or reasonable petition presented to a court of justice? When this man simply said: I do not ask those witnesses if you cannot give them to me, but there is one thing you can give to me; you can give me communication of my papers which were taken from me at Batoche. Why were they not given? Reasons of State. Why, these papers have been moved for in this present Session, and the Government granted the motion without any objection. There could not, therefore, be any reason of State. True they have not been brought down yet, but the reason of State which was invested at the trial is not brought forward in this House, and why? Because such a reason would never have stood discussion in this public Parliament. That was the reason—I can see no other. But with this imperfect trial the jury recommended him to the mercy of the court. The Minister of Public Works said the other day that it was nothing unusual for juries to bring in verdicts with recommendation to mercy. No, it is not unusual, but what is very unusual is that the Government should give no heed to this recommendation. That was the unusual thing done on this occasion. After the trial was over the conviction was so deeply seated in the minds of many friends of the Government that ample and full justice had not been done, that they at once petitioned the Government to issue a commission to examine the prisoner, to see whether he was sane or insane in mind. This petition was made, as I am informed, by friends of the Government, to the Government, again and again. The Government did not refuse, but treated it simply as the petitions of the half-breeds were treated—put off, put off, until the very week that preceded the execution. And then the commission—was it a commission? I do not know what kind of a thing it was, what kind of instructions were given we do not know. But we do know that upon the 8th of November, 1885, just a week before the execution, two medical gentlemen from the east were at Regina and examined the prisoner. Were those gentlemen sent to Regina with the object of advising the Government whether or not the sentence should be commuted? I say emphatically, no. I charge this against the Government again, that when they sent this so-called commission to Regina to examine the state of mind of Louis Riel, it was not with a view of determining the question whether the sentence should be carried out or commuted, but it was to throw dust in the eyes of the public and enable the Government to say afterwards, we have consulted specialists and they have reported in favor of sanity. But Mr. Speaker, we have it on record that when this commission was sitting in Regina, when on the 6th, the 7th, and the 8th of November, Dr. Lavell and Dr. Valade were examining Riel to see whether he was insane or not, at that time the Government had determined to hang Riel; and this fact stands to the shame of the Government, perhaps more than anything else, because at that time they were simply playing a comedy; they were not acting with a view to justice; they were simply attempting to blindfold the people—to deceive the people. Why, Sir, the Order in Council containing the decision of the Government was passed on the 12th of November, but long before that time the Government had come to their conclusion. The hon. Minister of Militia about that time made a trip to the North-West. He arrived at Winnipeg on the 7th or 8th of November, so that he must have left Ottawa about the 3rd or 4th, or the 2nd of November; and before the hon. gentleman had left Ottawa for Winnipeg, the sentence, if not recorded, had been decided upon by the advisers of His Excellency. We have the evidence of the Premier himself as to that. Here is a letter which was sent by the hon. Prime Minister to the hon. Minister of Militia: