

North-West at 13½ cents per lb., that the Government through their officials in the North-West supplied them with pork at 23 cents a lb. The Indians were to obtain beef which was contracted for at 13½ cents per lb., and yet because some friend of the Government had pork in the North-West which he wished to get rid of, the Government sanctioned the purchase of his pork for the Indians at 23 cents a lb. Yet we are told the Indians had nothing to complain of. The policy of starvation was the policy of the First Minister of the Dominion. He declared his policy was that the Indians should be reduced to submission by starvation. Four years ago in his place in Parliament the First Minister, with all the responsibilities of his high position resting on his shoulders, declared that the policy of his Government was one of reducing the Indians of the North-West to a state of submission by a state of starvation. I quote from the discussion on the Estimates, in 1880, the hon. gentleman's words:

"I must say, however, that it was a dangerous thing to commence the system of feeding the Indians."

It was not a dangerous thing to induce the Indians to surrender their possessory rights in the North-West, but it was a dangerous thing to continue to feed the Indians.

"So long as they know they can rely, or believe they can rely, on any source whatever for their food, they make no effort to support themselves. We have to guard against that, and the only way to guard against it is by being rigid, even stingy, in the distribution of food, and require absolute proof of starvation before distributing it."

That was the policy announced by the First Minister four years ago—that before food is distributed to Indians the Government must have positive proof that the Indians are in a condition verging on starvation. That indeed is the policy declared by the First Minister in his place in Parliament not long ago. The hon. gentleman said:

"When Louis Riel was sent for last summer, he was sent for by these poor people, suffering from hunger; because, while we went to a large expenditure in keeping them, we did not give them such a quantity of food as would make them hang around the different stations and become habitual beggars. We kept them on short rations, on short allowances, and we tried to force them—I am speaking now of the Indians—and we have forced them upon their reserves."

That was the policy. I say it is clear from the reports of the Department of Indian Affairs, by the Mounted Police reports and other official papers, as well as from the press, that the Indians have been systematically robbed and swindled by the officers and middlemen who furnished the supplies to the Indians. This fact has for years been well known to the Government, and no steps have been taken to remedy the wrong. As a general rule, the Indian is easily controlled, easily managed by those in whom he has confidence. Those who keep faith with the Indian can rely on him. But the moment you break faith with the Indian he becomes faithless, turbulent, treacherous, and rebellious, as we have seen in the recent outbreak. The Government have broken faith with the Indian. They induced him to surrender to the Crown his possessory rights to the North-West on the faith of certain promises made. Those promises have been violated. The Government agents have deceived the Indian, broken faith with him and lied to him, and in the recent outbreak we have seen the terrible results. The First Minister, the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, has been aware of this condition of things for years. The Government have been warned of the Indian discontent by officials, by the public press and in every possible way by residents of the North-West, and yet the Government did nothing to avert disaster and death to the whites surrounded by roving bands of uncivilised Indians. Take up the reports of the Indian Department and Mounted Police reports, and you will find abundant evidence of violated promises, breach of faith and gross fraud. And now, Sir, I will quote from the public reports brought to Parliament by hon. gentlemen opposite—from official sources, and I say if these reports can be relied upon, the condition of affairs in the North-West Territories with respect to the Indians, is a condition of affairs which would not be tolerated in any christian

country. C. E. Denney, Indian agent, in his report for 1882, speaking of one Grant, an agent over the Sarcees and Stoneys at Calgary, says:

"I was obliged to discharge Mr. Grant, who has been in charge of that agency, owing to grave irregularities."

In other words, this man who was entrusted by this Government to deal fairly and honestly with the Indians, broke faith with them, violated this duty, misled them, defrauded them, and he was dismissed and nothing more. It was only the Indians who were defrauded, and Grant was simply dismissed without investigation and without punishment, although the matter was drawn to the attention of the First Minister through his own agent. T. P. Wadsworth, superintendent of Indian agencies, in his report for 1882—speaking of the Rivière du Barre Indians, says:

"That the flour and bacon received as supplies was bad and that the flour received by the Indians at Battleford, had become lumpy."

Mr. Wadsworth in his report for 1883, speaking of the Indians in Sekaskoots reserve, says:

"I could get no account of the supplies sent in by the contractors or the Government."

He further says:

"That the flour received by those Indians only average 83 pounds per sack."

And again speaking in the same report of Poundmaker's band, he says:

"That the flour was inferior and of light weight."

Here we have positive evidences of fraud. The Indians were supplied with flour which was light in weight and inferior in quality, and yet the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs never took the first step to redress these wrongs, or bring the guilty to justice. We must recollect that we are under treaty obligations with these Indians, to supply them with certain articles at a given time, of a given quality and quantity. We failed in discharging our duty in that respect, and the consequences were serious. A. McKay, the Indian agent at Grand Rapids, in his report for 1882, speaking of the Island Band, says:

"That the inspector of Indian agencies promised to supply them with all they might require and that they were urged by that agent to make their demands on the Department for the same." That they did do but the supplies were not sent.

Mr. E. McColl, inspector of agencies, in his report for 1882, speaking of the Swan Lake Band, says:

"That waggons, etc. were promised these Indians and that he was apprehensive of serious consequences unless their claims were recognised."

Mr. A. McDonald, the Indian agent under Treaty No. 4, in his report in 1882, publishes a letter from Poundmaker to Dewdney in which Poundmaker says:

"It is Poundmaker who takes the liberty of sending you a few lines. He entreats your Honor to send him the grist mill with horse power you so kindly promised him at Cypress. We expected it last summer but in vain."

This letter was written in November, 1882, and two years before that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs had promised these supplies to the old chief, but he had neglected to give them. He had deceived him, and lied to him, and the result was that the Indians had lost all confidence in the Indian Commissioner. J. McRae, the Indian agent at Carlton, in his report for 1882, speaking of Okenasis' Band, says:

"The chief says, and Mr. Tompkins corroborates his statement, that Mr. Wadsworth, the inspector, promised him a large lumber wagon last fall, and broke his promise."

L. W. Herchmer, in his report for 1883, speaking of the Sioux at Bird Tail Creek, says:

"A great deal of sickness has visited them lately, caused by the want of fresh meat."

W. Pocklington, in his report for 1883, speaking of the Stoneys, says,

"During last winter there was a great deal of distress among them for want of clothing, many of them not having a blanket to cover their nakedness."