

and in fact previous to the time when the news was communicated, the Department had taken precautions to provide for the transport and for the subsistence of about 500 men to be sent into the North-West. It is intended that 100 men of "B" Battery and 100 men of "A" Battery shall be conveyed immediately over the Canadian Pacific Railway, north of Lake Superior, and provision has been made so that no delay will occur in the transport. The battery has been under moving orders for the last three days, and orders have been given now that they shall leave immediately; and I expect the detachment of "A" Battery will leave Quebec to-night or to-morrow morning at the latest, and "B" Battery will meet them to-morrow night or the morning after.

Mr. BLAKE. Where is General Middleton just now?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. At Winnipeg, but he telegraphed that he was going to move west to-morrow morning.

Mr. CHARLTON. Would it not be well for the Government to remember that we are very near the opening of spring, and any force necessary to send into the North-West should be hurried forward? A sudden thaw might interrupt communication north of Lake Superior, and a serious disaster might be the result.

Mr. MILLS. I desire to enquire whether it is intended that the commission, to which the hon. gentleman has referred, should at once undertake their duties; or is it proposed that the commission should be held in abeyance until the present difficulties are disposed of.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Oh, no. The commission will go on at once without any delay, because they will deal with all questions connected with the half-breeds, not only at the scene of disturbance but at Edmonton and elsewhere. Edmonton is perhaps the chief place to which immediate attention should be paid.

Mr. BLAKE. Is the formal commission issued?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. That I really cannot say.

Mr. BLAKE. I suppose the hon. gentleman will bring down a copy.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes.

### THIRD READING.

Bill (No 60) to incorporate the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada.—(Mr. McCarthy.)

### CONSIDERED IN COMMITTEE.

Bill (No. 73) to incorporate the Alberta and Athabaska Railway Company.—(Mr. Williams.)

Bill (No. 43) to authorize the Royal Canadian Insurance Company to reduce its capital stock, and for other purposes.—(Mr. Curran.)

### WAYS AND MEANS—THE TARIFF.

House again resolved itself into Committee of Ways and Means.

(In the Committee.)

Mr. BAIN (Wentworth). With reference to allowing woollen rags to enter duty free, I cannot help thinking that the opinions expressed by the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. Orton) before recess will be held by the farmers of this country to be, in many respects, sound. I remember when the National Policy was inaugurated, that one of the benefits the Finance Minister claimed would be conferred upon the laboring classes of this country was that the shoddy goods would be driven out of the market by those of solid Canadian manufacture; and I remember that the Finance Minister illustrated his remark by saying that the poor man would no longer have the trouble, when he went out on a rainy

day, of coming home at night with his knees through his pants. Now, it seems to me that in the abstract that is a sound principle, and I regret very much that it is being departed from and that encouragement is being given to the introduction of a low grade material. Looking at the matter from an agricultural standpoint, the sheep industry is depressed enough in its present circumstances without having this additional burden imposed upon it. At no time in the history of agriculture in the world have the prices of wool and the other products of sheep been at so low a price as at present. In the Province of Ontario the majority of our farmers last season did not realise over 17 cents a pound for their wool. If it had been from 30 to 35 cents a pound, as in old times, when there was an active demand from the American side for our long wools, there might have been some plea for encouraging the introduction of the cheaper article, for the purpose of mixing it with our high priced wools, to produce a moderate priced article for consumption. But, as a matter of fact, the world's supply of wool seems to be exceedingly abundant. I cannot understand on what principle the Finance Minister can encourage the deterioration of all woollen goods by allowing woollen rags to come in duty free. I can understand from the standpoint of the hon. member for Richmond and Wolfe (Mr. Ives), who told us that a cheap grade of blankets could not be made to compete with the low grade of English manufacture made for exporting to this country. If we consider that the low priced English goods have to pay a duty of 7½ cents a pound and 20 per cent. additional *ad valorem*, it does seem to me that with Canadian washed wool, costing only 17 cents a pound, the Canadian manufacturer who cannot stand up in face of that competition deserves to go under. If the truth were told, I think the hon. gentleman is anxious, not so much to enable the manufacturers to furnish cheap goods, as to put a little more money into their pockets at the expense of the Canadian consumers. When the hon. gentleman tells us, so far as cultivation and stimulus of the wool production of this country is concerned, that we cannot hope to compete with those countries where they do not require to feed their flocks during winter, I would like to remind him of the large number of sheep that have found their way to the ranches at the foot-hills of the Rocky Mountains, where they expect to be able to produce wool as cheaply as anywhere else on the face of the earth; and I would like to ask him, as an expounder of the National Policy, whether he considers it equitable to those parties who are starting that industry to give them this kind of competition with the first wool of their stock that they put on the market. It appears to me that the hon. gentleman had an eye rather to the interests of the manufacturers of his district than to the production of wool in our new and growing western territory. I would like also to draw the attention of the Minister of Finance to the present condition of the sheep industry in this country. In common with the development of the cattle shipping trade, for a number of years we did a growing and profitable business in mutton with the old country markets. The industry of shipping mutton to the English and Scotch markets had steadily grown, until two years ago our shipments reached 114,000 sheep. But last season, through the competition of the Australian colonies, and through various other causes, our shipments of mutton sheep to the old country had shrunk to some 67,000, a decrease of almost \$500,000 of clear receipts to the farmers of this country. Now, Sir, with the fact that our mutton is thus facing a keen and active competition from the other British colonies in the market that we have heretofore successfully occupied, and with the fact that our wools are at present at the lowest prices that they have touched for at least fifty years, it does seem to me that it is not a favorable time to place in competition with this depressed industry woollen rags imported duty free for the