

question yesterday whether General Strange had made a report of the North-West Expedition, as to the part taken therein by the 9th and 65th Battalions. The Minister replied that all that had been received from General Strange had been published in the report in the annex A and B, though everybody knew that General Strange had published in the press of the country, under his own signature, and stated most emphatically that he had sent to the Department reports concerning the 9th and the 65th, and the share they had taken in the suppression of the rebellion, and that those reports were not contained in the official reports. More than that, I was asked myself by General Strange to make a general report as to the usefulness of the 9th Battalion in the North-West. I sent in that report, and I have never seen it since. I would say, in the third place, that the 9th and 65th are almost absolutely ignored in the official reports; in fact, twenty years from now the generation then living will hardly know there were two French Canadian battalions in the North-West. What the 9th was doing there, we do not know from the official reports. It was scattered over the country, being divided into five detachments, and was placed among the most warlike Indians and exposed to great danger; and the 65th took part in some of the battles in a most gallant manner, but that does not appear in the reports. The truth is, there seems to have been a decided plan agreed upon, I do not know where, to completely ignore those two battalions. Moreover, for my part, since I had the misfortune of differing in opinion with the Minister of Militia on the Riel question, his treatment of my battalion has been most severe. Not only does he make my position a difficult one, not only does he abstain from publishing any report concerning the battalion; but he wants us now to pay an almost fabulous amount under very extraordinary circumstances. I do not intend to discuss the account, but if the House will permit me I will give an idea of the way we are treated. It is a well-known fact that when the battalion came back from the North-West we were covered with laurels, there were no words sufficient to recognise our services. Not a syllable of complaint was uttered against the 9th. Everywhere we had been doing our duty and carrying high the flag of the Canadian nation; everywhere soldiers and officers had proved equal to their task. We received congratulations everywhere. But the day came when the commander of the 9th, who happened to be a member of this House, differed in opinion with the Minister of Militia, and then everything changed. When we arrived home there were some accounts still to settle. We contended that the Department owed us money, and we sent in our accounts. We received no answer. But more than a year afterwards—we arrived home in July—this was in November, 1886—while I was still expecting a letter in reply to the accounts we had sent, I received a letter of which the following is a translation:—

“QUEBEC, 11th November, 1886.

“SIR,—I have the honor to request you, in conformity with orders received from the Major General Commanding—

This is a very useful man to act as cover for the Minister—

“—to have deposited with the shortest delay, to the credit of the Receiver General, the amount of \$1472.83, and to give an account of the rations which have been furnished to you at Calgary by Mr. McGibbon for the use of your battalion when going to Quebec, and, moreover, to liquidate with your officers the balance of the respective amounts which are due them by you, and which amount to the sum of \$93.54.”

As to the last part of the letter, I must declare at once that I do not owe, and have never owed, a single cent to the officers of my battalion, and this is a gross insult made under cover of the Major General Commanding. As to this most extraordinary claim of \$1,472.83, I had never received any account whatever or any details whatever. This

came to me as a thunderclap without notice, without any intimation whatever. I was requested to pay right off \$1,472.83. I then asked for some details, stating, at the same time, that I never had any suspicion whatever that I owed a cent to the Department. In answer to such letter I received this famous account. The account is a voluminous one, and I will not go into the details. It is all based on suspicion; there is not a single item based on a voucher or on a single fact. The Department had employed officers during months and months at high salaries to find out accounts against the officer commanding, and the other officers, of the 9th Battalion. In that account there is a most extraordinary item. You know, Mr. Speaker, that we were at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. When my battalion was scattered all over the plain, without any instructions being given to me or any power given to me in the event of any occurrence happening, we received from the Minister of Militia, who was then on very friendly terms with me, permission to go through the Rocky Mountains, and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company had been kind enough to furnish us with gratuitous transportation. We were most thankful for that trip, and we went through the mountains as far as we could reach. We came back to Winnipeg, and there we remained and made a parade for the benefit of somebody. I wired the Minister over and over again, telling him it was most absurd to detain us there. His answer was that we would not be detained long, and, in fact, so well disposed was he towards us, that we could start five or six days after our arrival there. Well, this account charges me with the cost of feeding my men in the Rocky Mountains. If we had not been fed in the Rocky Mountains we would have been fed in Winnipeg, and I was not bound to pay the cost of feeding my battalion. That, however, is one of the items of that account. When I received it, I suggested to the Department that a commission or arbitrators might be appointed to consider the account in a friendly spirit. In answer to that letter I received notice that a commission had been appointed. And who were the commissioners? Was I consulted? Oh, no. The Minister took three of his own servants, three men, most honorable men I admit, but men over whom he had full control. He took one man, who has a family, and whom he has threatened at every year to displace; and he took two others of his employés; and the very same day those men were appointed it was announced that new corps would be formed and there would be vacancies for some officers. The commission proceeded to work. At five minutes to two o'clock on a certain day, I received notice that at two o'clock I was to appear before the commission to give explanation. Fortunately I was not detained in the court, for I would never have received notice, and the commission would have to proceed *ex parte*. The commission was bound to find a balance against me, of course. They proceeded to consider that celebrated account of \$1,472.83, besides the amount which they said I owed the officers of my battalion, and after an enquiry, most incomplete, where the interested parties were not heard, with the exception of four or five, the amount was reduced considerably. We will see how much. It was reduced, I find, to \$469.57. So that they have added \$226.27 for War Claims Commission's account. What that means I do not know. We were away for four or five months time at the North-West; we left our business; and now I must spend days and weeks to defend and protect myself against the Minister of Militia, who risked his life to go to the North-West. I do not know what these accounts are, but I know that when I was in the North-West, at Calgary, I received an order from Major General Strange to act for him, to represent him, and to sign accounts and vouchers. I spent the whole of my time in signing these papers, and for that time I received nothing; I have only been insulted for it, that is all.