

better, even, than the Government at the new capital at Battleford. The Indians had very great faith in the late Governor of Manitoba, Mr. Morris, and I have no doubt, whoever may be the Governor of Manitoba carrying out the instructions of this Government—which I have no doubt will be in accordance with the instructions always issued by the Government of Canada—the Indians will have confidence in him as the Representative of the Queen. But in the haste to establish a Government in the North-West, the Ministry placed its seat at Fort Pelly, and expended a large amount of money there, and then discovered that the place was quite unsuitable. How much money they spent there we cannot tell until the Public Accounts come down. One of the difficulties in discussing a question of this kind, on the Address is, that there is no more information before the House now than there was last Session. However, Fort Pelly had to be abandoned, and Battleford was next selected. I am told that this place is also unsuitable, and the probability is that it will have to be abandoned. All this has occurred in consequence of proceeding faster than was necessary, and before the Government was in possession of information to guide it. An enormous amount of money will be spent in connection with the new Government of the North-West. There is a Lieutenant-Governor and Council, and a departmental staff which up to this time have been idle, and will be for some time to come. It is true the Lieutenant-Governor, Mr. Laird, negotiated the latest treaty with the Indians, but the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba could have done it equally well, and it was not necessary to appoint Mr. Laird at a high salary. When the people see what all the expense amounts to they will be astounded. Perhaps it is known to most hon. gentlemen that I visited Manitoba last summer. I heard when there that the Indians were not as contented as they had been, and that there was not the same confidence in the agents employed amongst them as there had been in former times; that they had become suspicious, and were growing more so. As for Sitting Bull, he is a potentate I do not know much about. At the same time, I think the Government might have let him stay without sending one of their number to Washington about

*Hon. Mr. Macpherson.*

him. I fear we may have assumed a responsibility unnecessarily. The congratulations on the abundant harvest are, of course, just. The next paragraph says that the increased revenue returns indicate that the commercial depression which has effected Canada is passing away. I hope it may be so, but I am afraid the belief at this moment is only entertained by the Government. I am afraid the increased revenue indicates excessive importations. It is probable that the imports will be smaller this spring than they were last, and that the falling off will be felt in the Revenue. The business men of the country are unquestionably suffering very greatly from the depression. The Insolvent Act is a measure that I think the Government ought to take some trouble to understand the working of. I am not going to express an opinion of it, because it is a very large question, and is one which should be examined by a commission, but its working at present unquestionably is to enable dishonest debtors to increase their business capital at the expense of their creditors. I am inclined to think the wisest course would be to suspend it for a time and appoint a commission to enquire not only into the working of the Act in the past, but to inform themselves thoroughly on the subject generally, and submit the best measure they could devise to Parliament at a future Session. The Lumber Trade, to which reference has been made, especially the American portion of it, continues to be as depressed as ever. I think I may almost say that for the present it is hopelessly depressed. The forests of Michigan and other States, afford all the lumber that is required in the United States at a cheaper rate than it is possible to export it from Canada and pay the duty which is imposed upon it in the United States. Now I come to the subject of the Pacific Railway, and that is one on which I will speak as lightly as I can, because, no doubt, it will come up more than once during the Session; but there are some errors—errors is altogether too mild a term—some extreme blunders on the part of the Government, in connection with the Pacific Railway, to which I must refer on this the first occasion on which I have the honor to address the House this Session. It will not do for the Secretary of State to say the Government inherited obliga-