

a comparison with the administration of hon. gentlemen opposite; I am not going to defend myself, or the action of my colleagues in endorsing what I have done, by arguments based upon recrimination. It is perfectly true that if two vices made a virtue, it would be very easy to do it; it is perfectly true that the hon. gentleman who made this attack upon the Government sat as a colleague of a Minister who was proven to have received large bribes; it is perfectly true that it has been proven that a large sum of public money was stolen or lost under the eyes of one of his colleagues, an ex-Minister of Railways; it is perfectly true, Sir, that scandals, gross scandals, disgraced the administration of the western country; that as peaceable a population as ever lived in Canada, upon the banks of the Saskatchewan, were driven into rebellion by the maladministration of hon. gentlemen opposite. That rebellion cost millions of dollars to put down; it cost valuable lives to put down; and, Sir, it is true, and hon. gentlemen cannot deny it, that the officers that were sent up there looted and stole from the people whom they were sent up there to protect. It is perfectly true that the settlement policy, the general administration of that western country where I have lived for the last 20 years, was described, not by a Reform paper, not by a Liberal paper, but by the leading journal of the Conservative party in the city of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg "Times"—was described in a moment of desperation at the actions of the hon. gentlemen opposite, as crass and incomprehensible from beginning to end; and it was stated in that paper, not a Liberal paper, but an organ of the hon. gentlemen, that as a result of their maladministration the trails from Manitoba to Dakota were beaten bare and brown with the wagon wheels of departing settlers. Sir, that is not my language, it is the language of the hon. gentlemen's organ, which declared that by their maladministration they had driven from the North-west—that great country—the magnificent tide of immigration which was flowing into it at that time, and which only needed to have been fostered and cared for to have filled up those western prairies. And that emigration never returned, or at least has only begun in a small degree to return since this Government attained to power. Sir, I do not mention these things for the purpose of justifying anything that I have done, or anything that my colleagues have done. If we could only justify our administration by a comparison with hon. gentlemen opposite, for my part I would be prepared to resign, and I do not think my right hon. friend the leader of the Government would care to remain in office if his Ministers had to defend themselves by comparing their records with those of hon. gentlemen opposite. Now, Sir, I am going to give you as well as I can—and I must apologize for being necessarily somewhat tedious—the facts relating to the administration

of the Yukon district so far as I am able to place them before Parliament. I am not going to claim that this Government is perfect, or that I am perfect. I am not going to claim that I did not forget anything; that every letter was despatched just at the moment it would have been well to have despatched it; that I thought of everything that was going to happen and provided against it; that I had the quality of omniscience, or the ability to see far over the Rocky Mountains from here to Dawson City, to probe the hearts of the men who were sitting in offices there, and to see, not only what they were doing, but to see their motives and what they were thinking about. I am not going even to say that we did not possibly forget some things that might have been provided for—that may be true. But I am going to say that we have exercised care, forethought, diligence, promptness and circumspection from beginning to end, in every possible respect. This statement I make to the members of this House, and when I sit down they will be able to judge whether I have proved my case or not.

Sir, to begin at the beginning, in December, 1896, I took office. I did not get settled to work in my department, practically, until the opening days of 1897. Early in that year, my attention was called to the necessities of the Yukon district. The Yukon was an unknown land at that time, nobody knew anything about it—nobody at least, except, perhaps, Mr. Ogilvie and the officers of the Government who were there. My attention was called—and I want to get this fairly before the House—to several reports or letters which had come to the Surveyor General from Mr. Ogilvie. They were not—and I have reasons for calling the special attention of the House to this fact—they were not the reports that were subsequently printed, although the reports that were subsequently printed included them. The bulk of the reports, which hon. gentlemen will remember as having been printed just after the session of 1897, were not received until the session got fairly on into June, to the best of my recollection; but before that, some letters which I think were printed with those reports had been received. On 5th March, 1897, which would be a couple of months after I had got to work in my office, the Surveyor General, Captain Deville, called my attention to the fact that Mr. Ogilvie had made a report, and the Surveyor General further called my attention to the fact that the Yukon territory had been neglected and had not received the attention that ought to have been given to it. He wrote to me as follows—but, mark you, Mr. Speaker, there was no information in the hands of this Government or in the hands of anybody which would justify the idea that there was going to be anything like an influx of population. Though the idea of people going into the country was spoken of, it was only spoken of in the sense of a