

April 15, 1874

by acclamation, and that recently he was again elected by a very large majority.

Those circumstances afforded ground for the supposition that he would again be returned. That was a circumstance not without gravity, and it deserved to be considered; but they must remember that one of the principles upon which they were called upon to act was that the circumstances under which Louis Riel stood at present were such as to render it impossible that he should serve the people of Provencher or of any other constituency. It was because he did not come here, and because his absence from this place was occasioned by an evasion of justice that Provencher was not represented; and it was on that ground that they were asked to declare that seat vacant. If Riel should be expelled and should be returned again, and if there should be no alteration in the present state of affairs, he saw no alternative except to repeat the process of today. Affairs might change; Riel might submit himself to justice; he might appear here and say he was ready to take his trial; circumstances might come to light which would give a different turn to the affair; but assuming the same circumstances to exist he saw no alternative except to repeat the operation.

He (Hon. Mr. Blake) was of opinion that the proposal of the hon. member for Bagot (Mr. Mousseau) ought not to prevail. It was not consistent with the amendment of the hon. member for

Châteauguay (Hon. Mr. Holton). He admitted it was not absolutely opposed to it, because some hon. members might be of the opinion that, promise or no promise, there should be an amnesty, while other hon. members might hold that if a promise had been made which pledged the faith of the country there should be an amnesty. But the motions were inconsistent.

He thought the motion of the member for Bagot, like many of the proceedings of gentlemen calling themselves and, he assumed, being the friends of Louis Riel, on this occasion was highly improper from their own point of view. He thought no step could be taken in this direction except by those members who would be found to be not a very large minority of this House, who believed that under all the circumstances this motion for expulsion should be replaced by an immediate pardon of Riel, irrespective of any promise or pledge of pardon having been given, and his restoration to all civil and political rights, and immediate reception into this House. He believed the result of the division would show this was not the sentiment of the House, and such a finding was ill-calculated to promote the cause which he had no doubt the member for Bagot had sincerely at heart.

*[Remainder of Hon. Mr. Blake's speech not given in the press.]*

The House adjourned at 2.15 a.m.