

offence may seem out of place, but when you consider that the peace, tranquillity and prosperity of a settlement are all in the hands of one man, their interference cannot be said to be quite misplaced. Good agents mean good instructors, so that to a great extent the Indian problem would be solved with half a dozen good agents through the North-West. Mr. Olink, the instructor who by his kind dealing towards the Indians under his care succeeded in keeping them loyal, wanted to go back to his reserve when the troubles were over, but as he thought himself entitled to an increase of salary and asked for it he was discharged."

Now, I propose to show by the documents submitted to the House—

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). The hon. gentleman has read a letter; will he state the name of the writer?

Mr. CAMERON (Middlesex). Does the hon. gentleman demand the name of the writer, with his Commission sitting in the North-West to enquire into these things, and the First Minister stating—

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). The hon. gentleman misunderstands me. I do not propose anything; I merely ask if he is going to give the name.

Mr. CAMERON (Middlesex). The gentleman making that statement is a responsible individual; he speaks from knowledge of the facts; and I take the responsibility of saying here that every statement he makes is entitled to credence. Let us see how far his statements are borne out. Much of the suspicion that has existed in reference to the affairs of the North-West has arisen from documentary evidence submitted to this House; and much that has been stated outside must have been concealed, and purposely concealed.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I want to call the attention of hon. gentlemen opposite to the fact that these Estimates are being put through with a rapidity never before attempted in Parliament, and it is utterly impossible, if disorder prevails, that progress can be made. We desire to help hon. gentlemen opposite on this occasion; but you cannot pass 200 items of estimates through without discussion at all. There is but one way we can get on, and that is by hon. gentlemen listening quietly, and the quieter hon. gentlemen opposite are the shorter my hon. friend will be.

Mr. CAMERON (Middlesex). I desire to confine myself largely to statements of fact, and I desire to be brief. Now, I desire to place before the committee in a condensed form the statements, financial and otherwise, that have been submitted to the House very recently. An individual who is known to the Department of Militia as Major Bell appears before the public in a variety of characters in connection with North-West transactions. I find, for instance, that W. R. Bell, the manager of the Qu'Appelle Farming Company, as he himself states in his evidence before the Commission, presents himself to Major Bell of the force and suggests that he be given a contract for the supply of hay. W. R. Bell says to Major Bell: "I have so many thousand tons to sell; how much will you give for it?" And the reply is: "I will give \$22 a ton," and Major Bell as the officer of the Department of Militia closes the contract with W. R. Bell. I find in addition that Major Bell makes a purchase from the Hudson Bay Company of a number of carts and horses, and with these makes a contract with himself for the transport of a quantity of supplies, hires out his own horses to himself, and draws the sums I mentioned. Up to the 30th of June, 1885, Major Bell, as the senior partner of the firm of Bell & Lewis, drew \$52,774 for teaming, and up to the 15th of March, 1886 drew in addition \$53,911. As manager of the Qu'Appelle Farming Company, he drew up to the 30th of June, 1885, \$44,547, and \$12,174 in addition up to the 15th of March, 1886. As W. R. Bell, on a special contract made between himself as representing the Department and himself as a purchaser from the farmers of the North-West Territories, of hay and other supplies, he drew

\$6,152 at the same time that he draws, as Major Bell, an officer of the North-West field forces, something like \$1,000 in salary. Up to the 15th of March last, he drew a total of \$171,059. There is this, however, to be said, that the Commission that subsequently met overhauled Major Bell's account and in a communication that was sent to the firm of Bell & Lewis he is asked to refund to the Department of Militia the over amount of \$1,890. I am sure the committee and the country will appreciate the great care of that Commission in demanding from Major Bell, who has had these very discreditable transactions with the Department, a refund of \$1,890 which he had been overpaid in these immense transactions, representing the enormous sum of \$171,000. Now, I proceed still further to examine the peculiar characteristics of the contract which this man made. The following is from the evidence of Stewart before the Commission, page 209:—

"Q. Have you anything about a memorandum of agreement between you and Major Bell, and also give your reasons for signing that?—A. On the 20th I went to Qu'Appelle to take possession of the Qu'Appelle route. I found Mr. Jones there, Mr. Bell's clerk, and I could not very well take possession that night of the route, and I waited until night. Major Bell arrived from Winnipeg on the night of the 20th of May. The following day I went to his office and told him that I had the contract, and wished to take charge of the work. He told me that he had a contract himself covering Qu'Appelle, Moose Jaw, Swift Current and Calgary, and that he had made arrangements in Winnipeg with J. L. Lewis and Mr. Whitehead as partners to handle all the freight, and wished me to go further west. I did not wish to do so, and he told me that Laurie had no right to give a contract, that he was a 'damn fool,' and that he would have him dismissed before a week. \* \* \* He told me that J. L. Lewis and he and Whitehead were going to work together and that he would give me an interest in the contract at \$212 a ton."

Let us see for how much Stewart, the contractor, agreed to perform that service. Colonel Forrest asks Stewart at page 217:—

"Q. With regard to these negotiations between you and Bell, in the result your prices were effected by these propositions, now where there has been collusion to make up two prices, have they profited by your collusion?—A. That is easily answered. I worked on the price of \$110 per ton, I didn't go in collusion, I didn't acquiesce one hour with Major Bell, it sounded too much like a penitentiary job for me. My contract was for \$110 per ton, but that contract Major Bell wished me to acquiesce in was for \$312 per ton. Had I acquiesced in this arrangement, the Government would have been wronged to the extent of over \$100,000—\$102 per ton at Moose Jaw and something in the neighborhood of \$80 per ton at Qu'Appelle, and a like amount at Saskatchewan Landing—the aggregate I know would amount to over \$150,000. Further, they followed my advice in changing the plan of transportation, making each teamster responsible for his load and charging him with any loss the Government sustained."

There this contractor bears evidence to the statement made in the letter I have read, that every teamster dumped his load where he pleased, and made a makeshift for a load, and drew his pay at the end of the journey. He further says:

"My contract was about one-fifth of the amount that I understand it was costing the Government to carry supplies from Qu'Appelle to Clarke's Crossing. I received the knowledge from Mr. Rigby who was handling the pay rolls and making out the cheques for the Hudson Bay Company, in the same office with the paymaster, Mr. Crawford. He advised me that it was costing from \$500 to \$700 a ton from Qu'Appelle to Clarke's Crossing."

Now, it may be said that Mr. Stewart was making this statement on his own responsibility entirely, but he produces a letter from Mr. Bell, dated Moose Jaw, 27th May, to this effect:

"MY DEAR STEWART,—I have made a very satisfactory arrangement to me. I have quite cleared myself with the General and satisfied Ross entirely. Now I have laid a foundation for a good thing for you, and I want you to fall in with my arrangements, and I trust all will come out to our mutual satisfaction.

"Yours in haste,  
"BELL."

Stewart was suspicious of Bell, doubted his honesty, feared his intent was really to deprive him of the contract instead of sharing it with him, and asked him for a written engagement, and on page 217 of the report will be found this engagement: