

April 15, 1874

He looked upon this question as one affecting a British subject. The man put to death in the Northwest was a British subject and he was foully murdered while in defence of the Crown and the country. This was the light in which he desired to consider this matter—altogether apart from the religion or nationality of the member for Provencher. He desired also to state that when he asked the Government a few days ago whether they intended, in view of the facts that had been elicited at the bar of the House, to take action in the matter on that occasion, he had no desire to relieve himself of any responsibility he had assumed, but, looking over English precedents, he was of opinion, judging from what had been done in the Imperial Parliament, that after the facts had been elicited at the bar of the House, which facts showed that the man had been guilty of acts which disqualified him from associating with gentlemen, and which disqualified him from holding a seat in this House, it was the bounden duty of the Government to take the first opportunity to relieve the House from the odium attached to it by such a member continuing to have a seat there.

He brought this motion up purposely when the address had been passed, with the full knowledge that in doing so he should not in any way be embarrassing any member of the Government. Had he desired to place the Government and their supporters in that position he might have made the motion on the motion to go into Committee of Supply.

The House would very well remember the first time this question came before it. It was on the motion of Mr. McDougall (Lanark North), seconded by himself, on the 10th April 1871. At that time the matter was fully discussed, and very strong opinions were expressed upon the occasion. The next motion moved was that made by the hon. member for Brant South (Hon. Mr. Wood), on May 12, 1871, on the motion to go into Committee of Supply. This motion was moved as a vote of want of confidence in the Government, and he did not hesitate to condemn the Government for not taking steps he thought they should have taken in the matter.

He made this explanation in order that the gentlemen who occupy seats in this House at the present time, and who did not occupy seats during the last session, might not be led astray by the opinions that had been expressed and the charges that had been made, that he had been actuated by the desire to embarrass the gentlemen who controlled the destinies of the country. He contended that it was the duty of the Premier, or those with whom he was associated, to have brought this matter before the House, and his reason for coming to that conclusion was the course they had pursued during the last three or four years. He found they had expressed a strong desire to bring Riel to justice, and they had declared that it was the duty of the Government to take the initiative in this matter.

He (Mr. Bowell) thought that the present Government should pursue the same course in office as they had pursued when in Opposition, and more particularly did he come to that conclusion when he read the speech of the hon. member for Lambton (Hon. Mr. Mackenzie) who declared that the policy of the Government would be that which they had advocated in Opposition. He found in

another portion of the speech that that gentleman declared he desired to be consistent in his political career, and he expected his opponents to be consistent also. He thought from these declarations to the electors at his nomination that if he (Hon. Mr. Mackenzie) desired to carry out the policy he had advocated he would have taken the first opportunity of ridding the House of an unworthy member. He thought the leader of the Government would have taken such steps as he desired should have been taken by his predecessors to bring Riel to justice.

He found that the Hon. Minister on April 4, 1870, expressed opinions like the following:—

“We have most painful accounts in the public newspapers of an atrocious murder being committed by men—ruffians, I might say, (*Hear, hear*) who are at the head of forces there that call for most extraordinary exertions on the part of our Government (*Hear, hear*), and in order to know exactly what the House and country ought to do the Government, I think, are bound to place in possession of this House all the information they have with regard to that murder. We know that other persons were held prisoners there besides the unfortunate gentleman who was murdered; what security have we in this country that other of our fellow subjects shall not be murdered as well as poor Scott. I have simply to express the hope that the facts will be laid fully before the House. The time is now passed for hiding anything connected with these people—(*Hear, hear*)—and when they have resorted to the outrage of murdering our fellow-subjects, there should be no further squabbles on the part of the people of this country in the matter.”

Mr. BOWELL, continuing, said there were the sentiments which he (Mr. Bowell) not only echoed then, but which he echoed now. On January 5, 1872, the same hon. gentleman said that during the last election he had condemned the late Government for their utter want of sympathy with any movement to bring the murderers to justice. The present Government were prepared to take what steps they could to bring the murderers of Scott to justice.

That declaration was made in reference to the Local Legislature of the Province of Ontario, of which the hon. member (Hon. Mr. Mackenzie) was then Treasurer. He did carry out that declaration by placing in the estimates the sum of \$5,000 as a reward for the arrest of the murderers of Scott, and in making his budget speech when he came to the portion referring to the \$5,000, Mr. Cameron (Huron South) said, “\$25,000 you ought to have made it”. Hon. Mr. Mackenzie then said: “If the hon. gentleman thinks we ought to offer \$25,000 I can only express my regret that he did not propose to offer that sum when he was in a position to do so. The hon. gentleman not only declined to propose a reward, but to the last moment declined to even record detestation of the deed and his sympathy for the relatives of the murdered man.”

He (Hon. Mr. Mackenzie) further said: “The House, with only one dissenting voice, has expressed a resolution of sympathy, and we now propose to follow up that expression by the direct offer of this reward in order to secure the apprehension of those who were guilty of that outrage. I believe that this will accomplish the desired result, and I believe that the result will be that the man who acted in