

rection—if it can be dignified by that name—all for the miserable and unstatesmanlike desire of having a little attack on the Government. I have heard that hon. gentleman make many lugubrious speeches; but I have never heard him make a speech in which such an utter want of patriotism, such a mere factious spirit, was displayed as in this. The hon. gentleman says we ought to have given information on the 23rd that the militia were called out. I tell the hon. gentleman that the militia were not called out then, and I could not have given that information without stating what was untrue. The fact of the matter was this: Taking time by the forelock, after having shown, not apathy or neglect, but as a military man told me to-day, having shown extraordinary quickness in making all precautionary arrangements, my hon. friend, the Minister of Militia, sent a telegram on that day to ask if there was any want of militia, how many men the militia force could supply. That was the message he sent on that day, and therefore we could not communicate to this House what was not in existence. But if we had called out the militia, I say it was not our duty to inform this House. It was not our duty to spread wide, as the hon. gentleman has done to-day, the fact that there were men wild and foolish and desperate enough to take arms, or to pretend to take arms, against the Crown, or against the authorities of the country. It was our duty to localise and minimise the occasion there. It was our duty to put down this riot—for it is little more—without alarming the country, without alarming the timid people in that country, without alarming the expectant immigrants who are coming to this country. It was our duty to put it down as quietly and peaceably as possible, to neglect no precaution or care, to be fully armed in any case, so that if, contrary to our expectation, it, contrary to our belief, if, contrary to our hope, it should turn out to be a serious thing, if instead of being a riot, it should rise to the dignity of an insurrection, we were not to be found wanting. But it was arranged to keep this matter quiet. We had quietly collected our forces and made the arrangements, and we know and believe that if the trouble be merely confined to the Métis, it will be localised. Mr. Speaker, instead of the Government being justly subject to the attack for the manner in which that country has been governed, I say, if there is one thing which Canada ought to be more proud of than another, it is the peace, the quiet, and the order that have existed in the North-West ever since the successful result of the Red River expedition under General Wolseley. Sir, since that time there has been rising after rising in the United States, although they had their whole frontier lined with soldiery, 25,000 men, or nearly so, watching the western frontier and the northern frontier. There they had continued trouble; we heard of Indians being shot down like dogs; we heard of cruelties and outrages committed upon the aborigines. Sir, there has not been one single blow struck in anger in our North-West, until this thing happened the other day; with a small force of 300, and latterly 500 men—and I say that force is insufficient for the enormous duty it has to perform—peace has been preserved from one end of the country to the other. The Ontario and Quebec farmer has gone up and settled there with just as full a feeling of security and safety as if he were settling in Muskoka, or away up on the River Desert. We had no right to expect, at the time we assumed the responsibility of governing that country, that we would have been so uniformly successful in governing it in peace and quiet as we have been. You must recollect that country is occupied by savages, or semi-savages, by men who are now driven to desperation through the disappearance of their only means of procuring food; and hungry men are desperate, starving men are ready to grasp at anything, ready to charge those in power with being the cause of their starvation. Look back at the *Hansard* for

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD.

the last three or four years, and you will find that when I came forward here, in my capacity as Minister of the Interior, and asked for votes to support these poor people, we were taunted across the floor with our extravagance. I stated then we were obliged to ask for these votes; I stated that as christian men we could not afford to let these poor people starve; I stated that the buffalo had disappeared, that the game they depended on for support had disappeared; they were surrounded by whites; all their old opportunities of support were taken away; they were crowded out of their country—and yet we were told, again and again, and I appeal to hon. members if they did not hear the taunts of hon. gentlemen opposite, about the increased, lavish expenditure of this extravagant Government in the North-West; that we were wasting the means of the white people of the five or six Provinces in that insatiable gulf, the North-West. We have succeeded; we have kept that country quiet; and when Louis Riel was sent for last summer, he was sent for by these poor people, suffering from hunger; because, while we went to a large expenditure in keeping them, we did not give them such a quantity of food as would make them hang around the different stations and become habitual beggars. We kept them on short rations, on short allowances, and we tried to force them—I am speaking now of the Indians—and we have forced them upon their reserves; by slow degrees we are introducing among them habits of cultivation. Well, the Métis are, as you know, half Indian; they have many of the characteristics of the Indians, especially the Métis of the plain. Those who are in Manitoba and in some of the settlements have become, to a certain degree, like the Indians in the older Provinces; they have become agriculturists; they have taken to agricultural pursuits; but the nomads are just as wild in their habits, as irregular in their conduct, and as impulsive in their actions as their full-blooded red brethren. The hon. gentleman says there has been procrastination and delay. If there is one thing more than another on which I think the Department of Indian Affairs can plume itself, it is upon its treatment of the aborigines and its treatment of the half-breeds, in settling all their claims peacefully and quietly. The hon. gentleman will not deny that the Métis in Manitoba proper have been carefully attended to; he will not deny that the Indians there and that the half-breeds there are satisfied. Although I say it is an improper thing; although I say it was an unjust thing, it was an inopportune thing for the hon. gentleman to foist a discussion on the land policy of the Government at this time, yet I will say this, that the course taken towards the Métis has been kind, paternal, and in every way for the purpose of forwarding their best interests. The hon. gentleman asked the question, whether the new system of surveying had not been introduced with respect to the old settlement along the North and South Saskatchewan. In accordance with the principle of the surveyors, the surveyors had commenced and had decided to carry out that principle of laying out all the lines under the normal practice of surveying that has been laid down in the Dominion Land Act; but while that was being done, it was not for the purpose of depriving any man, woman or child of land they had a title to, by possession or otherwise; it was not that they had the remotest idea of taking possession of it. Only, the regular piece of land would be so much in one quarter, so much in another, and so much in another. That was the original arrangement made by the Surveyor-General, and it naturally raised the suspicion, as you can quite understand, among the half-breeds, that they were going to be forced out of their irregular tracts of which they were in possession, and would be compelled to take square blocks. The moment that was brought to the notice of the Department it was altered; and the half-breeds were informed they would keep and get their lands according to their custom. They have got their