

There was work to be done then, and an Administration to be overturned. During the late campaign he had been able to pay a little amount of attention to public affairs, and to some effect, although by a few votes the hon. member for Wellington Centre had been enabled to make a temporary, and only a temporary, stay in this House. Every step he (Hon. Mr. Blake) took, every move he made, every speech he spoke the hon. gentlemen were the first to allege that he was animated by improper motives, that he had not the feeling such as animated their patriotic breasts, that he was doing something which it was not right for him to do. (*Hear, hear.*)

Long ago the charge of slackness had been made against him in this House. Though absent he had not been an inattentive peruser of the journals and he found that the hon. member for Hastings North (Mr. Bowell) had taken the earnest opportunity not to enquire of the Government whether they would undertake this duty or whether any other person would undertake it, or whether it would properly devolve on anyone else but himself to call for the papers, summon witnesses and take charge of the whole matter. He did not blame the hon. gentleman but he thought it absurd for any hon. member to say that when the hon. member for Hastings North was prepared to take the matter up any charge should be made against him (Hon. Mr. Blake) for slackness because he did not take it up. He would not refer to the gross abuse that had been hurled upon him, but would leave hon. members to consider what his motives had been.

Upon this occasion he asked the House and the country to judge of the scrupulousness of hon. gentlemen who had made these charges as to his motives, and to look at the action of hon. gentlemen on that side of the House as to the course they had taken with reference to his hon. friend from Selkirk (Mr. Smith). They had heard several attacks on his hon. friend of the grossest character, which he had been able instantly to refute, and the motives of some of them had been explained—not very much, he thought, to their satisfaction. (*Hear, hear.*) Some of those who had spoken on this occasion had said the party of the hon. gentleman had never influenced the country upon its question.

**Mr. BOWELL:** I did not say so.

**Hon. Mr. BLAKE** said the hon. gentleman could not say so, because he knew it was not true. (*Hear, hear, and laughter.*) The Orange institution had inflamed the country upon the question. He had always pointed out that it was a question to be considered by the people of this country, not upon the ground of nationality or religion. He averred that precisely the same course of action would have been taken by him if the religion and nationality of the parties had been reversed.

He believed many of the members of the Orange institution regretted the course which had been taken by some members of it. But when other persons, not members of the institution, took it up as an Orange question, as they did, it lay not in their mouths to say they had not made it a question of that description, and for the added difficulties in which the question was placed he held the hon. gentleman and others like him largely responsible; because it was not in human nature that the Orange institution—not as a whole, but through some of its prominent members—should take such action

as they did take, without provoking hostile action from those who belonged to a different religion than theirs. (*Hear, hear.*)

And this was not all, for they had had it this evening from the very gentlemen who deprecated any such mode of dealing with the question. They had the moderate, the considerate, the refined speech of the member for Carleton (Mr. Rochester), who told them that this man was murdered because he was a Protestant and an Orangeman. The hon. gentleman had made allusions of the most deplorable character, allusions which he could not characterize by any Parliamentary expression. He deprecated this mode of discussion, and regretted that the matter should not be so treated as to excite as little as possible these questions of religion and nationality which had been evoked up to this time. His hon. friend from Ontario South (Mr. Cameron) had taken ground which he perfectly well understood, although he was unable to agree with him in his conclusions upon the character of this crime. He wished to answer his hon. friend's position, especially as it was repeated by the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Cunningham), that this so-called Government had been recognized by the powers at Ottawa, an act by which he admitted they would have power to bind the country.

During the campaign of 1872 and at the town of Strathroy, the member for Kingston (Right Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald) spoke in reference to several topics connected with this matter. In the course of the speech he stated that Riel had sent no delegate to Ottawa; that the statement that he had done so was one of those falsehoods that were coined for political purposes; that after the delegates had been chosen by the people of the Northwest, Riel impudently issued a Commission appointing them his delegates, and that they were received at Ottawa simply as delegates of the people, and not as those of the Provisional Government. There was a statement by the first Minister, the Minister of Justice (Right Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald), who was a chief actor in these negotiations, in which he not only stated that these delegates were received as delegates from the people, but distinctly repudiated them in any other capacity, and declined to admit them as delegates from Riel or the so-called Government.

He thought that that statement—which accorded, he believed, with a statement made by the hon. gentleman on this floor of this House—disposed of the argument of the hon. member for Ontario South (Mr. Cameron), and the member for Marquette, that there was a recognition of a *de facto* Government in the negotiation.

Another position taken by his hon. friend from Ontario South was that the expulsion of Louis Riel would result in his return for Provencher once more. He did not deny that this was probable; they knew that Riel was standing for Provencher in 1872; that he would certainly have been elected there, but that he and his opponent, the Attorney General, made way for the Hon. Sir George-É. Cartier, who was good enough to write a letter to his constituents and to the candidates who had done him the honour to retire in his favour, and who held his seat virtually by favour of Louis Riel; that after the death of Hon. Sir George-É. Cartier, Riel was elected, he believed