

prices in these tenders are too high, not only for waggons but for ploughs and other articles.

Mr. MILLS. I see that the hon. gentleman still asks for this vote for provisions for use at annuity payments. It was voted in the first instance because these Indians were not on the reservations, but had to assemble at certain points to be paid their annuities, and they had to be fed while receiving their payments. It was assumed that when they became settled on their reserves this practice would come to an end.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The hon. gentleman is quite right; it is an abuse of long standing. They met at certain points, and some times kept it up for three weeks or more. The vote used to be enormous in those times, but it is being gradually reduced. As the Indians are placed on reserves, the agents go around to pay them. There are still, however, a number of places where they have to assemble, owing to the circumstances of particular localities, and I dare say there are some small presents of food, even on the reserves. With the Indians, you cannot break these customs off suddenly.

Mr. MILLS. I hope the hon. gentleman will, in future reports, give us some information about these cattle, pigs and seed grain supplies, because most of these Indians have, no doubt, already had, in cattle, implements, etc., over and over again the amount required under the treaty obligations, and of course they are getting this over and above treaty obligations.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. In some cases.

Mr. MILLS. I do not object to that; but it would be most convenient to the House and also to the Department if we had statements showing the amount paid each year. We should have some control over the expenditure for this purpose; we should see what bands are making progress, and what are not.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I will try and get that up for next year. I do not think we can do it for this year.

Mr. MILLS. Surely the Department know what they have done in the distribution of supplies.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). The amount of \$215,056.83 is a large sum for supplies for destitute Indians. In the reports for 1882 and 1883 there are very clear evidences of gross frauds perpetrated by the head men among the Indians on the Government. In several cases the agents report that a large number have been rationed in excess of the real number in the band. For instance, in 1883 the Blackfeet appear to have drawn rations for 800 or 900 more than there really were in the band; and one or two other bands are in precisely the same position. I would like to know whether there is any system by which the agent of the Government can tell the exact number. Mr. Denny, the Indian agent at Macleod, says:

"I found that a great deal of cheating had been going on in rations; 3,000 had been drawing rations, when there only ought to have been 2,200."

That appears to have been going on for some time. Further, he says of the Sarcees, of Calgary, that they have been drawing rations for a much larger number than there really were in the band. Another agent reports that some two or three families have been drawing rations who have been living in the United States for ten years. Another agent reports that the number in the band that he had charge of was much over-estimated; that is, that they had been drawing rations for a much larger number than there really were in the band. I would like to enquire whether the First Minister's attention has been drawn to this matter, or whether any steps have been taken to check these practices. There must be either gross negli-

gence on the part of the agents or gross frauds on the part of the Indians. I would also draw the First Minister's attention to the fact that the agents have reported, over and over again, that the supplies are of very inferior quality. Mr. Wadsworth has several times pointed out that the supplies are of inferior quality, and that the sacks of flour weighed only 90 or 92 pounds, instead of 100 pounds, and that it is lumpy and bad. If the Indians are getting inferior supplies, a poorer quality of flour or bacon than the contract requires, that is a fraud on the Indians as well as on the Government; and the middle men who furnish the supplies must have been guilty of the very grossest misconduct during the last three or four years. I would like to know whether any steps have been taken to punish the parties furnishing these inferior supplies, or to check them.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I would simply say that originally, as the hon. gentleman knows, there were occasional frauds; that is, the Indians, when in large bodies, managed to get more supplies than they were entitled to. That evil is gradually correcting itself; the Indians are now on their reserves, in a great measure, and the system has been adopted of supplying each family with a ration ticket, which must be produced when they are paid, so that there is no danger of fraud in the future. The hon. gentleman says there is fraud on the Indians because the food is imperfect. It cannot be considered a fraud on the Indians, because they have no right to that food. They are simply living on the benevolence and the charity of the Canadian Parliament, and, as the old adage says, beggars should not be choosers. But the Government attempt to get the article they advertise for, and they are pretty successful, on the whole. Even in Ontario, the hon. gentleman has seen and heard of contractors sending in inferior articles, which were afterwards condemned. Up there, when they are sent to a distant post, they cannot be condemned; they have to be used. I do not think there has been any unwholesome food given, although it has not, perhaps, come up to the standard. Mr. Wadsworth is an active and zealous officer, I believe, and he reports that last year all the supplies were satisfactory.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). It seems to me there must be something wrong somewhere, though I am not prepared to say where it is, or who is to blame for it. For instance, in the band of the Bloods, it is reported there are 2,200 Indians. According to the vouchers from the Department, we have supplied the Bloods for the last five months of 1883 with \$48,744 worth of beef alone, and all this was obtained from I. G. Baker & Co. I do not know whether they are butchers or traders, or what they are, but all this was supplied by them. That appears to me a large sum for supplying 2,220 Indians, and I find by the reports there were not 2,220 every month. In some months there were 1,300, and in others 1,400, and the greatest number in any month was 2,200. Yet we have given them for five months \$48,744 worth of beef alone.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. They will not starve.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). What I am afraid of is, that this will not all reach the Indians. What check has the hon. gentleman? When we turn to the vouchers, we find that the Department has no check, excepting the receipts of the farm instructors, and I say that the class of men sent there as farm instructors are not a class to be entrusted with granting receipts for these enormous amounts. Voucher 436, 1st of October, 1883, \$10,000 worth of beef for that month; voucher 381, 30th of September, 1883, \$10,434 paid to Mr. Baker; voucher 325, 31st of August, 1883, \$9,014 paid Mr. Baker for beef; voucher 542, 31st December, 1883, 70,512 pounds beef, at 13½ cents, \$9,518; voucher 494, 30th of November, 1883, 68,869 pounds of beef, equal