

them, as it was to Prince Albert, as to the people of the north branch, as to the people of Edmonton, as to the people of St. Albert, as to the people of Fort Saskatchewan, and because they did not wish for, and, in fact, could not avail themselves, as they understood it, of the township survey, in order to get their lands. Mr. Pearce has given us his reason, in his letter of September, 1883, which I have read. He says these entries were not made because the re-survey was being expected, and the decision as to the re-survey was still being expected when Mr. Pearce was there in February, 1884. But there was another reason. The agent had been stopped by Mr. Pearce in September, 1883, in pursuance of the bungle of the Millar type. However the local agent was directed to investigate, and he did investigate, in May, 1884. The papers are brought down, but the investigation did not touch the lands of St. Louis de Langevin at all, because that was sacred soil; it was colonisation company's land, and it could not be touched, and therefore there was no investigation made of their cases. But the investigation was made of the other cases, and they were generally settled in one way or another. The first settlement in a few cases took place in each of the years 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877 and 1878, and many settlements in each of the years 1879, 1881, 1882 and 1883. In some cases, as appears by the papers, there were very large improvements, and the names of many of those people appear in the lists of killed, wounded and prisoners. Now, I do not know what was the principle of the settlement that was made; but I point out that had the surveys been made and approved, and the plans sent up, the investigation might have taken place in February, 1884, as it was intended to do, as Mr. Pearce was ready to do, and as he was only prevented from doing by the circumstances to which I have alluded. Then, in May, 1884, when the investigation did take place, the excitement had got higher, and in June, 1884, Riel came into the country, and these complaints and disputes and difficulties about lands remained, and the agitation went on increasing. What was the relative condition, Sir, at that time, of the white settlement at Prince Albert and the half-breed settlements at St. Laurent and in the vicinity? The white settlement had had a hearing; it had had an investigation in January and in February, a report in March, and the decision of the Minister in April. What was the situation in the case of the half-breed settlements at St. Laurent? They had nothing until May; they had then an investigation of the agent; the report was sent on and nothing was done. Mr. Pearce did not report; he was not asked to report, according to any of the papers which have been brought down, although I ask, would not the ordinary dictates of prudence, say: Now, in the month of May you have the report of the agent on the cases of these half-breed settlers; send down your report on them, so that we may act at once and decide their future in reference to these lands. But he was not asked to report on any papers brought down to us, and, in fact, he did not report until the 17th of October; and then he reported late, but still in time, if this report had been acted upon. On the 17th of October he reported on St. Laurent, Duck Lake, Batoche, Grandin, St. Antoine de Padoue, though not on St. Louis de Langevin; and having reported, what came of his report? It came down to Ottawa, and it was buried in the Department. While the report on the white settlers, which dealt with many hundreds of cases, and which established new principles, was disposed of in about three weeks, the report on the comparatively few cases, less than 100, dealing on the recognised old principles with the St. Laurent claims, was held over at Ottawa from the 17th of October, 1884, until the 9th of February, 1885, just while the difficulty was arising, while all the meetings were being held, while all the agitation and excitement was taking place, and on the 9th of February at last that report was approved by this telegram:

Mr. BLAKE.

"February 9, 1885.—Report of land board on St. Laurent claims approved. Instruct Prince Albert agent to give effect thereto."

You can know the reason; the account I have given you in the last few hours shows you that February and March were notable months in the Department of the Interior. There had been warnings; the half-breed enumeration was arranged on the 23th of January; on the 4th of February Governor Dewdney was told of it; and on the 9th of the same February they found time to deal with the ninety-five cases of the St. Laurent settlers, and telegraphed to say that it was approved. Doubtless this was on account of further warnings not brought down; but the grace came too late. Once again, I say I am not criticising the decisions; I am dealing with the question of there being a decision. The decision was reached on the 9th of February; by the time it reached the local agent the people were just on the eve of speaking out, and I observe by the *Mail* correspondent that in the wrecked house of one of the rebels was found a letter of the agent, informing him what his fate was to be. Thus, in this regard, there was the grossest apathy, delay, neglect, procrastination and incapacity which can be conceived; because, if there ever was a time when men should have been prompt it was at that time. In the fall of the year, the cases of the whites had been settled; those of the half-breeds had not. They were agitating and complaining; their chief was among them, inciting and inflaming them; an increased force had been sent among them; the Government had done something towards repression; were they to do nothing towards redress? No; the papers come down in October, and they lie half October, all November, all December, all January, and until the 9th of February, in the office, without the Government touching them, without telling these people that they should have their lands, and on what terms they might have them. And so I say, both as to their lands and as to the half-breed Indian title, the statements I have made I believe are beyond successful contradiction. In old and sterner times men would have been impeached for conducting in this way the public affairs of the country. In these milder days we have substituted votes of censure, and I move:

To leave out all the words after "that" and insert the following instead thereof: It be *Resolved*,—That in the administration of North-West affairs by the present Government, prior to the recent outbreak, there have occurred grave instances of neglect, delay and mismanagement in matters affecting the peace, welfare and good government of the country.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Whether, in the long and elaborate speech of the hon. gentleman, he has established a rightful censure upon the Government, whether he has shown that we have been guilty of negligence, of oppression, of mal-administration, I leave to the judgment of the House and the country. But there is one thing I think there can be no doubt about on either side, and that is that the hon. gentleman, in his speech, has furnished gratuitously a most able brief for the counsel of Louis Riel. I venture to say that not one of the counsel for that unfortunate man will be able to advance or will be able to adduce such arguments as the hon. gentleman has done this day, irrespective of the consequences which he should have known would have flown from his language.

Mr. LISTER. Who caused it?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. You may sneer but you will find, this House will find, that in the speeches of the counsel for Riel, when the trial takes place, as it will, within a few days, the substance, the basis, the apex and the bottom of that defence will be the speech of the hon. gentleman. And it was so from the beginning. From the beginning of this Session, every motion the hon. gentleman made, every question he asked, every return he called for—it was all done with the one object, the miserable, the wretched object of trying to get a case against the Government rather than get justice for the people of the North-West. I would ask