

## SUPPRESSING REBELLION.

I hope there is no difference of opinion. I believe that we all agree that whatever grievances the Indians had, however much ground they had for complaint, the duty incumbent on the people of this country was to put down that rebellion in the promptest way possible. Nor is there any difference among us, in any part of the Dominion, as to the bravery manifested by our men who performed that duty. But now that the insurrection has been put down, now that the rising has been quelled, there was and is up to this moment a difference of opinion in various parts of the country as to what course should be pursued with any of the prisoners. Our attention has been called by those who do not agree with what was done, to the action that was taken

## IN THE UNITED STATES,

after a much more formidable rebellion, in which hundreds of thousands of lives were sacrificed—a rebellion involving a destruction of property, and an amount of personal suffering ten thousand times greater than that involved in the late rebellion, and a rebellion, too, without any reason, as we all agree. Yet when that rebellion was over the course taken was not to punish any of the parties concerned. The leaders were imprisoned, but no punishment was inflicted upon them. Some people thought that that was the course to be taken here. Others have been influenced by this consideration: that the jury recommended Riel to mercy. That jury heard all the witnesses, they heard Riel himself, they thought that he was guilty in point of law, and brought him in guilty, but were of opinion that mercy should be shown. And we have all been struck, I am sure, with the evidence offered there and the evidence which we have heard since with regard to his insanity. I do not say he was insane.

## I AM NOT PREPARED

to form any judgment. But I say that these are all grounds upon which a large section of the community are of opinion that there should have been no executions following that rebellion. I am not prepared to express any opinion upon that subject at all. The leader of the Liberal party in the Dominion Parliament discussed this matter very fully in the magnificent speech which he made at London. He pointed out there at great length the duty of considering this whole matter and discussing it in a judicial spirit. He pointed out also what an amount of evidence was still withheld from the public, and which it was necessary to be put in possession of before being able to form a satisfactory judgment upon the whole matter. In view of these considerations he declined to express any opinion upon the subject, until the matter

## SHOULD BE FULLY DISCUSSED

in Parliament, and until all the papers should be produced and in the hands of the people. That policy was one which was accepted by the whole Liberal party of the Dominion as the right policy—(applause)—and it is a policy upon which we are prepared to act. (Applause.) It is a policy not only accepted by the whole Liberal party, but approved of largely by the Conservatives themselves. (Cheers and countercheers.) We have read statements of that kind in their newspapers, and we have all heard such statements made by individual Conservatives. No doubt it commends itself to every man

## NOT BLINDED BY PARTISANSHIP

that in a matter of this kind we should consider calmly, and should not be called upon to record an opinion until we are fully informed of all the facts. Now I say that I am not disposed to help the Dominion at Ottawa by placing on record an opinion in accordance with the resolution the hon. gentleman has moved. So far from that, I hold it as perfectly clear upon the evidence at hand—we have all the evidence of which the Dominion Government has chosen to put us in possession—it is recognized as clear by the Liberal and Conservative newspapers that the Indians and Halfbreeds had grievances. There had been culpable neglect, which had caused the grievances, and culpable neglect in not removing the grievances. (Applause.) But for that neglect I hold that there would have been no rebellion at all—(applause)—and, without all the details, I state that this is the general conclusion of five-sixths of the people of the Dominion upon that point. (Applause.) Though we have not any evidence here upon the particulars I have referred to, the practical result is that I am justified, by the evidence put in our possession, from what we have read in Conservative and other newspapers and the documents, in holding—as I hold—the Dominion Government

## RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WHOLE

rebellion—(applause)—as responsible for the whole of the bloodshed—(applause)—as responsible for every life lost, as responsible for all the suffering, as responsible for all the destruction of property resulting from it. And I hold the Dominion Government as responsible for all the delay in settling and developing the territory which resulted from the rebellion. (Applause.) It would be monstrous to hold up by one single act or one single word a Government standing in that position. (Applause.) I say all that, and yet I hold as strongly as anyone that rebellion is a grave matter, and some have described rebellion as not being justifiable unless it is successful. If an ordinary rebellion is a grave matter, an Indian rebellion is of the gravest possible character. In this particular rebellion the sufferers were not those who were guilty of the wrongs of which the Halfbreeds and Indians complained. Before it was settled innocent men, women, and children suffered in persons and property and other ways, and it is to be remembered that in no sense were they party to the wrongs, either directly or indirectly. They were

## NOT EVEN REPRESENTED

in Parliament; it is a well-known fact, indeed, that to a very large extent the white population in the North-west recognized the wrongs of the Halfbreeds. There is no doubt then that the Halfbreeds had very great grievances; in fact it has been said that the grievances were greater than those which caused the American Colonies to rebel, and greater than those suffered before the rising of 1837. Still we cannot allow a man to take the law into his own hands even if he has grievances. Peace must be preserved, order must be restored, the general population must be protected, the British flag must be defended. (Applause.) Our Volunteers went forward with enthusiasm to restore order, and this they did easily and well; but now the whole matter is over it is quite another question as between those who were driven into the rebellion by their wrongs and the Government who caused those wrongs. (Applause.) And once more I say that it would not be becoming in the people of this Province and in this House to take any part in rescuing the Government of the Dominion from the fate which awaits them. (Applause, loud and continued.)

Mr. MEREDITH regretted the tone taken by Mr. Fraser and Mr. Mowat in dealing with the amendment moved by Mr. White. If the hon. gentleman from Essex, who was of the same blood as those for whom he was asking mercy, was willing to stake his political future upon his resolution, he should have met with a different reception. He referred at length to former resolutions of the House in the Riel matter, and to the resolution of the Dominion Parliament on Home Rule, adducing these as reasons why the amendment should be accepted. He charged the Government with taking their present course, not from patriotic, but from party motives. He referred to the question of the mental condition of Riel, and said it was not a question for discussion. It was so clear that that aspect of the case was not argued before the Privy Council.

Hon. C. F. FRASER—The question of the sanity or insanity of Riel had nothing to do with the Privy Council.

Mr. MEREDITH—It must have been before them.

Hon. C. F. FRASER—They were not discussing that at all.

Mr. MEREDITH—They were discussing the competence of the tribunal, and whether the evidence on which Riel was convicted was sufficient.

Hon. C. F. FRASER—No. They only had the question before them as to whether there should be an appeal in such cases, and they decided that there should not be.

Mr. MEREDITH concluded his remarks by giving his hearty support to the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. FERRIS said it was well known that this question was one which was familiar to the country, and therefore one which a layman might speak to. He thought at first that the motion had been brought forward from sympathetic or race motives, but he had found by the speech of the leader of the Opposition that it had been put forward from party motives. (Applause.) He could not vote for the amendment to the amendment on that account. Then the amendment states that the principal participants had been punished. To this he took exception, as he was well aware that some of the principal participants were now fugitives from justice. Regarding the former part of the amendment, he could say that so far as he knew, no Liberal newspaper or leader had said that Riel had not been legally tried and legally executed. He regarded a plea for mercy as a merciful course to take, but they all knew that the recommendation to mercy of the jury had not been regarded.