

authorities which I fear would weary honorable gentlemen were I to read, and I must be satisfied with stating that it comprises 234 distinct varieties, there being among these no less than 95 songsters and the great Duck family alone comprising 26 varieties.

Honorable gentlemen, will I think, admit that a beneficent providence has strewn these vegetable and animal blessings freely over this northwestern land, and were they now as equally distributed, as in times past, there would be less need of the present large expenditure for imported food, but the Indian lives only in the wants of to-day, and has not counted upon the consequences of his own acts in utterly exterminating some of these species from large tracts of country, and it needs the strong arm of the administration to prevent the continuance of this habit; and wise counsel to restore the balance of productive power, and in this connection, honorable gentlemen, will find no more interesting information than is to be found in the present report on Indian affairs which was presented early this session, where the anxious care of the Superintendent General and his Deputy is constantly evinced in the instructions to Superintendents and Agents. For instance, on page 108 of Part First, we find the Commissioner reporting regarding the Wild Rice, that—

“The bulk of the seed distributed will, in accordance with your instructions, be sown, as is the case in other localities in which the wild rice is indigenous, in the fall of the year. In order, however, to meet the changes which climatic influences may possibly require, a certain proportion will be sown experimentally at other seasons. The conditions under which this is done will be carefully observed and the results noted.”

The degree of progress made by some of the bands of the early Treaties, as reported by their agents, is remarkable and may be found on other pages of this admirable Report. In one instance, 3 small bands collectively numbering 1,849, or about 300 men cultivated 708 acres of land producing 16,550 bushels of roots and grain last year and the Band in addition cut 3,410 tons of hay and caught and fur to the value of \$32,500.

Unfortunately, however, reports such as these are offset by those of Agents of less favored Prairie localities where the

Indians (those of the later Treaties), still have to be fed and have not shown much aptitude for agricultural pursuits, but every effort is being made for them.

It may be asked, of what use can such a Committee as the proposed one possibly be? My answer would be this:—It cannot be possible but that hon. gentlemen, such as I have mentioned, and especially the more elder ones who have had extensive experience in the early days of their respective Provinces, and who have since travelled in the North-West, will be able to elicit valuable information from sources within easy reach, and if charged with that duty by this hon. House will be able to obtain information and to offer suggestions upon the best means of conserving, increasing and distributing the existing natural food products of the North-West, alike beneficial to the white and red inhabitants; and should their report even pave the way towards efforts to transplant to some districts the surplus of others, and to add new varieties to the species indigenous to the soil, they will have accomplished an object which will be an addition to the white settlers' agricultural wealth, and confer a blessing upon a race, the end of whose history may possibly be not very far off.

HON. MR. GIRARD—I rise with much pleasure to second the motion of my hon. friend from Manitoba. He has made his case so clear and so complete that he would leave nothing for me to say on the present occasion but for the fact that there is so much to say for the country which I have the honor to represent, that we can at all times find something of interest to lay before the House. I will not undertake to follow my hon. friend in his exposition of the wealth of the great plains of Manitoba and the North-West Territories. He knows the country well. His early efforts were in those localities, so that he is speaking with a more intimate knowledge of the subject than I could myself. At the same time I would suggest that if the Committee is granted my opinion is that great benefit to the Indians may be expected from it. We had committees before in reference to the North-West, and on every occasion those committees