

population; we would make it difficult to retain the white population, and we would impose serious restraints upon future settlement. I am strongly of the opinion that there is no measure which would cause a greater feeling of insecurity and excite more indignation in the minds of the people of the North-West than this proposition to place it in the power of the Government to disarm the white population. Those people are entitled to our sympathy, to our confidence. We are inviting them to go there and take possession of the waste land. We expect, in time, they will become a prosperous and contented people. We hope the country will, at no distant period, fill up with population so that they may enjoy the advantages that belong to all older and wealthier communities. But if we say to those people: You shall not have arms in your possession; you shall not be trusted; we do not believe you will seek to maintain law and order; that you will be on the side of good government but rather against it; that you need to be restrained rather than to exercise the privileges of freemen; then we are doing that which, beyond any other measure proposed this Session, will tend to create discontent and prevent the settlement of the country. Holding those views I propose the amendment which I have read. The course pursued by the Administration this Session is a very extraordinary one. The first proposition we had was to enfranchise the savages, and failing to do that, in consequence of the war and the strong feeling that existed in the country against such a proposition, the Government now propose to place the white and civilised settlers upon the footing of savages.

Mr. CARON. It is not my intention after the discussion which took place yesterday to go into this matter very fully to-day. I merely wish to answer one remark made by the hon. gentleman in addressing the House. The hon. member for Bothwell stated that by the Bill as amended the Government are attempting to deprive white citizens of the right of possessing arms. The hon. gentleman has not looked into the question so fully as he generally examines questions. On reading the Bill the hon. gentleman will see that with a permit any white citizen can possess arms. The reason why this clause was introduced was obvious. Since the troubles which have taken place in the North-West the white people themselves are very anxious to keep all arms, except those specified in the Bill, out of the hands of the Indians. The clause provides that in order that white settlers may hold arms, it is necessary that each one shall obtain a permit from the Lieutenant Governor. The reason for inserting this provision is that it will be quite easy for the arms to be traced and found. Under the circumstances the clause is a very good one. Of course it is special legislation for a special purpose, but its necessity has been doubly demonstrated by the events which have taken place in the North-West, and I cannot agree with the hon. gentleman in believing that this clause should be struck out and the amendment inserted.

Mr. BLAKE. I have looked at the debate in the Senate on this subject, and I confess I do not see any strong reasons adduced in support of the Bill. We must consider the condition, position and circumstances of the country and the character of the population. The character of the white population is eminently one which fits them to be trusted with arms. That is the ordinary right of British citizens, secured to them in effect by the great charter; and it is secured to citizens of the American Republic by the constitution; and it ought not to be taken away from settlers in the North-West, and the power should not be placed in the hands of the Executive to take away that right. They have done nothing to disgrace themselves so as to render them subject to such action. It is said that a white settler may possess arms if he obtains a permit. Look at the geographical area of the country and the distances which have to be

traversed, and the difficulty of obtaining a permit is apparent. We have to consider their position relatively to that of the Indians. It is proposed that the Indians shall be allowed to have smooth bores; but the smooth bores which whites use are breach-loaders. The modern gun is a breach-loader for which fixed ammunition is used; and so you deprive the white men of weapons for different purposes—I will not say for sporting purposes, because I believe there are important purposes in the North-West beyond those of sport—when you provide that white men shall not carry guns having fixed ammunition. The sporting gun of the white has fixed ammunition; the Indian's sporting gun is a smooth bore; and therefore you allow the Indian to sport, but you do not allow the white man to sport without a permit. I retain the opinion I uttered yesterday, that it is a proper thing to prevent the sale of those weapons to the Indian population, and the possession of them by that population should be very stringently guarded; but a provision which places in the hands of the Lieutenant Governor the power to determine whether any white man is worthy of having a breach-loader, rifle or revolver is one which ought not to be placed on our Statute Books.

Mr. WHITE (Hastings). I agree with the hon. gentleman. It will be imposing a great hardship on settlers in the North-West if they are prevented from exercising the right of having weapons with which to defend their homes. The Government should not place the white settlers under the power and control of the Lieutenant Governor and compel them to ask a permit from him. That is a great and an extensive country, and unless the white settlers have a right to have arms to defend themselves from the Indians, people certainly would not like to go into the country. I believe the Government should not place these restrictions on the white settlers of the North-West, and I consider it my duty to vote for the amendment of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. MITCHELL. I have only just seen the amendment, and indeed, I have only just seen the clause of the Bill. I entirely agree with the remarks of the hon. gentleman who has just sat down. I think it would be a great hardship if the people settling in that country were not permitted to have arms to defend themselves. What will be the effect of passing such a provision? Will settlers want to go out there, where their lives and their property may be endangered, and where they will not be allowed the free privilege of having arms in their possession to protect themselves and their families? I think the effect of that clause will be most detrimental to the future settlement of that country, and will remain a stigma on the legislation of the country that passed it.

Mr. WATSON. I entirely agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Hastings (Mr. White), the member for Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell), and those who have expressed themselves on this side. I believe it would be a great hardship, in the present state of affairs in the North-West, to prevent the white settlers from having rifles in their possession. I think that not only should the people have the privilege of buying arms for themselves, but that the Government should take on themselves the purchase of a certain number of rifles to arm the people there. Of course, from the remarks made by the hon. Minister of Militia, some time ago, I am not surprised at his bringing in a Bill of this description, because he as much as imputed disloyal motives to the white settlers of Prince Albert and other portions of the North-West. I can assure the hon. gentleman that the settlers of that country are as loyal as any in the Dominion, and will make good use of their arms in protecting themselves from the invasions of the red men of the west, and I hope the amendment will be adopted. So far as fowling pieces are concerned, I do not know