

followers and before the House and the country. He has absolutely made the deduction from his argument that the government has been party to robbery. In the technical sense he calls it something different, but in the essence of it, he alleges that the government has taken away from men who have legal rights that which they possess by virtue of those legal rights, and has done it without process of law and without their consent. Now, you may call it robbery or larceny or whatever you please. The name matters nothing; the act itself is brutal, manifest and unjust. Is there no reply to that? My hon. friend the Minister of the Interior is not expected to make a reply. He does not know the law; he does not care a fig what the law is—he has told us that more than once. He told us that last year when it was put to him straight as to whether this was a legal thing or not, and up to this very hour he has shown that he cared so little about it that he has never asked for an opinion from the Department of Justice about it. He is not even so thoughtful as my hon. friend from Regina, who did take the precaution to get an affidavit from a responsible officer, the deputy minister, between the hour of adjournment and the hour he commenced to speak—an eleventh-hour affidavit, or worse. Well, it struck me, who am not a lawyer and have never been a judge and never expect to be, that where you have affidavits clear and explicit, on one side, and affidavits equally clear and explicit on the other side, a judge would not care to try a case on that kind of testimony. He would consider that it called for oral evidence under strict and close examination and cross-examination. Here we have, in the first place, a member of parliament, just as honourable as any other member of parliament, just as anxious to do his duty by his country and his constituents, and from his personal observation, his personal knowledge, and the information he has gleaned over two or three years during which this transaction has been more or less before the House and the country, giving us his positive views on the matter. He lives in the vicinity and knows the circumstances personally, and his version is that a great wrong has been committed. We cannot simply laugh at that and say there is nothing in it. That is not reasonable. Dozens of men, who have interests, who have knowledge and who have information, have made solemn affidavits, all of which are to the effect that there has been wrong-doing—that they have been wrongfully done out of their rights, in exactly the way the hon. member for Selkirk has described. Now, that ought to produce the impression that a *prima facie* case

has been made out, and that it is something worth looking into. Then, the legal aspect of the matter has been brought out, and there is no answer to it. I do not believe that my hon. friend from Regina (Mr. Martin), would contravene the legal conclusions which have been arrived at by my hon. friend from St. Ann's (Mr. Doherty). No man in the government does, and the minister himself, without the least solicitude, admits that he has never taken the trouble to get the opinion of the Justice Department upon the matter. Now, I want this much understood with reference to myself, and I think it is true with reference to my hon. friend from Selkirk, that neither of us holds the view that it is impolitic or wrong in itself to endeavour in certain circumstances to change the Indians from one reserve to another. The hon. Minister of the Interior tried naturally to make capital against the hon. member for Selkirk, by basing an argument on that. He said it was for the benefit of the Indians and for the benefit of the white men living near and for the public good that there should be a change of reserves. Granted that that is so; the opposition of my hon. friend from Selkirk is not because the reserve was sought to be changed to another locality, for the general good of both white people and Indians, but it is because in carrying out that which might have been a laudable object, it was carried out so that wrong and injustice resulted, and men and Indians were deprived of their property rights and of what should have been the real result of the sale or disposal of those 48,000 acres of land. The hon. minister thought he had made out his whole case when he said that 74,000 acres of good land for a reserve had been given to them in place of the 48,000 acres which they owned under him as their guardian.

You must go further than that. Granted that another reservation of 74,000 acres were given to them, and that they will be healthier and better on it, and that the public good will be better served, there is this element of injustice. They owned that 48,000 acres, they had a right to every dollar that land could be made to bring over and above expenses. To whom should the profit go—to the Indians or the speculators? The whole gravamen of the charge is that the guardian of the Indians caused proceedings to be carried on whereby the speculators got almost everything, and his Indian wards almost nothing. There were 48,000 acres of land. My hon. friend from Regina can talk about the value as long as he pleases, he cannot convince any one who knows the circumstances, that the land in that reservation, which is the choicest land in Manitoba, was not worth