

port, and are, therefore, degraded, it will be a source of a great deal of future mischief. Not only should this question be considered, but the whole should receive the careful consideration of the Government, for I feel certain that, if the Indians were subjected to a larger extent to the responsibilities that devolve upon the white population, they would be benefitted to a proportionate degree. At present the course is a downward one, and the degradation will be sure to go on very rapidly.

MR. BLAKE: I think the subject to which my hon. friend has adverted cannot too early or too seriously engage the attention of the Administration. Whatever we may think as to the policy which has guided the management of the Indians in the older Provinces, there is really a very grave question, both socially and financially, as to the Indians of the North-West. You are expending about \$550,000 annually upon the Indians, and \$300,000 for the Mounted Police, the principle cause of which was to protect the settlers and overhaul the Indians, peaceable though they generally are. You are thus approximating to the expenditure of \$1,000,000 a year for the management of the Indians in the North-West. Their food supplies, as hunters, are diminishing yearly and rapidly. The buffalo does not come to the prairies as he formerly did. The hon. gentleman opposite has had to ask for a special vote of \$200,000 to feed the starving people, not only from motives of humanity, but because the Indians will not starve so long as they can divide among themselves the grain of the settlers. We are in a very serious condition in regard to this matter. We may be subjected to this serious charge for an annual fund, and, in that case, we are training the Indians to look to us for aid. They know that to this wealthy Dominion, if the buffalo does not arrive, they are to look, to supply the food which they would obtain if the herds of buffalo were accessible, and that impression will grow. I am, of course, not complaining of what has been done in the past by either Government, but I think it is not too late to endeavour to retrace our steps, and at the earliest moment to implant in the minds of the Indians a spirit of independence and

responsibility—to endeavour, as far as we can, to point out to them the opportunities open to them for earning a livelihood in other ways, and substituting that for the spirit of reliance upon the Government. At present they believe that if they fail in their endeavours to get their own living, there is an inexhaustible fund from which the Great Mother will supply them with food. This is not a hopeless task. I had a conversation with Mr. Maurice, the late Lieutenant-Governor, in which he told me of an Indian who imported direct from Great Britain what he required, and not deal with middlemen at all. This may be an exception, but it shows that there are instances of self-reliance among Indians, which may be more numerous than we are aware of. I have read accounts of the degree of independence shown by the Indians in British Columbia, and of the power of trading and acquiring property, which have been developed among them. I think we should turn our attention more than we have in the past towards making the Indians more responsible and self-reliant, instead of teaching them to rely on us for everything, otherwise we shall have an increasing expense and a more degraded, instead of a less degraded, population.

MR. THOMPSON (Cariboo): I agree, to a great extent, with the remarks which have been made by the hon. member for West Durham (Mr. Blake), but I do not agree with the observations of the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) in reference to giving the Indians municipal government for themselves. Within two years there was a chief of a tribe in British Columbia, who was getting too old, and the Indians wished to elect a younger man in his place. I met the young man, and asked him if the tribe were going to make him chief. He said they would if he desired it, but he did not want to work for nothing; if they paid him, he did not mind being the chief. He told me he had been interpreting for the Indian Commission for some time, but he did not want to be a "tyhee" and not get pay for it. The Indians of British Columbia are, to some extent, a self-sustaining class. They work industriously; they fish in the rivers they work in the mines; they hunt in the forests; they cut cordwood for