

Lieut.-Colonel
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but it has been rather more from moral influences than from any direct physical influences. I do not think, for example, that the traffic in liquor has been chargeable with it, which undoubtedly has been chargeable with it in other countries, or more to the south.

328. *Chairman.*] When you say that the Indians have diminished, are you speaking of the Hudson's Bay territory, as a whole, or are you referring to particular districts only; are you prepared to say that you believe that the number of Indians within the limits of the Hudson's Bay territory, taken as a whole, has diminished?—When I was able to compare the estimate of the number, which I procured in 1844, with Sir John Franklin's of about 20 years previously, I found a diminution of number; and the aggregate number which I was able to establish by the best statistics that I could get was so very small that I cannot but believe they must have been more numerous, from the accounts which we read of a century ago.

329. Did their physical condition appear to you to be bad?—Miserable in many cases.

330. *Mr. Roebuck.*] Is it not a known fact that the brown race disappears in proportion to the coming on of the white race?—I think it is.

331. And the mere fact of a settlement, even at the Red River, would of itself tend to diminish the red population?—It would undoubtedly lead in that direction; but the Red River Settlement is peculiarly situated; the Indians in that part of the country are not diminishing so fast, because the buffalo is not decreasing, which is their great means of subsistence. As I mentioned before, the buffalo swarms to the south of the Saskatchewan, and even to the north of it; the Indians there are the finest, and I do not think they are diminishing so much as elsewhere.

332. *Chairman.*] Did you think that the physical condition of the Indian was worse as you got to the north?—Unquestionably, and also worse to the south; the physical condition of the Indians about the Lake of the Woods and the Rainy Lake is very much worse, and all round Lake Superior, within our own region, than it is on the Saskatchewan, because the resources of subsistence are so much less; the Indians there are again and again in the most abject misery by the failure of the precarious means of subsistence which they have.

333. Had you any opportunity of seeing the condition of the Indians within the Canadian territory?—I have seen a good many of them from time to time.

334. What is their condition?—They are comparatively comfortable; if not, it is their own fault.

335. They have property?—Yes.

336. Even money in the funds?—Some of them have.

337. *Sir John Pakington.*] Looking to this vast district between Canada and the Pacific, there is a great portion of it, I apprehend, in which the white race can hardly be said to be advancing as yet?—Yes.

338. And over a great portion of that tract I presume there is no reason to suppose that the Indian population is deteriorating or diminishing?—It is so, I think, from causes which may appear rather remote. I believe there is a constant depressing moral influence, which is caused by association with classes in a superior condition of comfort to themselves; then they become reckless and improvident; they barter what is necessary to their own subsistence, or to that of their wives and children, which is equally important, for finery, things which are of no real good to them; their good furs, which they had better wear themselves, they trade away for beads, and they go half clothed, and they contract pulmonary complaints, and their children are born with weakened constitutions, and their families are diminished in number; the result is, that it is hard to find an Indian family of more than three or four children. I remember an instance of one man who, I think, had nine children, who was quite a phenomenon of paternity.

339. But surely your last answer applies to those cases in which the Indian has been brought into contact with the European?—They are all brought into contact with the Europeans by constantly trading with them and depending upon the European trade for their means of subsistence.

340. Is that answer correct as affects the whole of the great district to which I have referred?—With the exception of a very small district to the north, on what are called the barren grounds, where there are bands of Chipewyan Indians subsisting on the flesh of the reindeer, and where the skin of the reindeer is
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