

be effected in the management of the Indian Affairs in the North-west and Manitoba, and especially ought we to have an explanation of why he removed the Indian Commissioner from a central part of the North-west Territories to Winnipeg. In the North-west Territories you have practically six treaties as against two in Manitoba; you have far more Indians in the Territories than in Manitoba, and there will be by and by further Indian treaties in the Territories. In fact, I believe the Minister is contemplating entering into treaties now with bands of Indians who are yet outside and all of whom are in the North-west Territories. I cannot for the life of me understand why the Minister removed the Indian office from a central point in the Territories to Winnipeg. I could understand his deciding—although I would not have approved of it—to abolish the commissioner's office altogether and to manage the Indians direct from Ottawa, but that he should retain the office of Indian commissioner and then bring the commissioner away from the midst of the Indians, to Winnipeg, is what I cannot understand. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Sifton) knows very well the character of the Indians, and that the Indian requires to be placed in touch with the great Ho-go-man, as he calls him, the head man. Now, if the chief of the Blackfeet or the chiefs of other bands in the North-west want to come in contact with the Indian commissioner, they will have to travel all the way to Winnipeg, instead of, as they used, either go west or south or east and concentrate in a central spot in the Territories and there meet the commissioner. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Sifton) brought down some returns I asked for, but owing to the fact that the year given is the financial year and not the calendar year, the returns did not give the information I wanted. I may say to the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sifton) that his plan has not worked well, and that in his own departmental report there is evidence that the change he made has not been satisfactory. If the Minister will turn to the report of Mr. Forget, the Indian commissioner, he will find that Mr. Forget admits in that report that he cannot supply the statistics that are necessary, and he says that in certain reserves there has not been the same success as that which characterized the management of Indians in the previous years. It could not fail to be otherwise, because in order to effect a small saving, and also in order, I fear, to confer political advantages on the heads of persons who were not obnoxious to such treatment, the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sifton) has made changes, or rather Mr. Forget has made changes at the Crooked Lake Reserve that last year resulted in having no crops, and Mr. Forget himself admits that the cattle have decreased in number. I am told that there is a very uneasy feeling among the

Indians of the North-west Territories, and I point out to the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sifton) that it is not in one year that the fruits of his policy will be seen, but a year from now or two years from now, after it has been seen what the effect on the Indian is of not being subjected to careful surveillance, as has been the case in the past. I say, that on the face of the departmental report of the hon. Minister, things are not satisfactory. But even suppose we had not that evidence, we should still be face to face with the anomaly, that in the matter of the management of Indian affairs in the west, the Minister brings the head man, the man controlling the Indians from being in their midst to being at the edge as it were of the whole Indian population. I think we ought to have from the Minister an explanation of the changes he made.

THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR (Mr. Sifton). I have not under my hand the detailed statement of the changes in the administration of Indian affairs in the Territories. That I regret, but I will have no objection when the Indian estimates are before the House, or at any other convenient time to discuss the matter. So far as the removal of the Indian commissioner's office from Regina to Winnipeg is concerned, I may say that that was done solely because the Indian commissioner said he could do his work better from that point. I can imagine no better reason than that.

MR. DAVIN. Do I understand my hon. friend (Mr. Sifton) to say that Mr. Forget said and reported he could do his work better from Winnipeg?

THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Yes.

MR. DAVIN. I have been informed that what he reported to the Minister was that he could do his work better by coming down to Ottawa.

THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. That is not correct: at least I have not the slightest knowledge of any such report. Whether Mr. Forget suggested that he should come to Ottawa or not I cannot say, but it is possible that in the voluminous correspondence there might be some such suggestion that would escape me. Mr. Forget never suggested as far as I am aware that the work of the office of the Indian commissioner could be better discharged from Ottawa than Regina, but he did specifically recommend that he should be placed at Winnipeg, on the ground that his work could be more advantageously and conveniently and effectively be done from Winnipeg than from any other point. The fact is, that while at Regina he would be nearer to certain tribes of Indians, he would not be nearer on the average to the Indians under his charge. In this matter we should speak from the standpoint of