

One of the first charges which Mr. Cameron brings against the Government is that it dealt unfairly by the Indians at the very outset—that it took advantage of their simplicity and their ignorance of the ways of the world to drive hard bargains in the treaties negotiated with them. He says:

Let me then, first, deal with the kind of officials which this Government placed over the untamed, uneducated, uncivilized, unchristianized wards of the nation, with whom this country was bound to deal honestly and fairly, because Canada induced the Indians of the North-west to surrender their possessory rights to what is practically an empire for the merest pittance.

Now, will it be believed that every treaty with the North-west Indians was made by the Mackenzie Government? In 1873 a treaty was concluded at the north-west angle of the Lake of the Woods, by officials of the former Conservative administration, with the Salteaux tribe of Ojibbeway Indians inhabiting the western part of Ontario. But in the latter part of that year a change of administration took place, and the control of Indian affairs passed into the hands of the Reform party, where it remained till the end of 1878. Every treaty with the Indians of the North-west was made while that party was in power. So that if it is true that the Indians were wronged, if it is true that advantage was taken of their simplicity, if it is true that they were cheated into relinquishing their "possessory rights" to the soil of the North-west "for the merest pittance," the charge of wrong does not lie against the present Government or against the Conservative party, but against the Mackenzie Government and against that Reform party of which Mr. M. C. Cameron is so distinguished a member. This attempt by Mr. Cameron to censure the present Government for acts of the Mackenzie Government will give a fair idea of the candor with which he approached the subject he undertook to discuss. It may be said that he did not in express terms affirm that the present Government obtained the possessory rights of the Indians for a mere pittance. No; he did not. He merely made his statement in such a manner that people