

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). One moment. I am not opposed to Indian enfranchisement—I desire it.

Mr. RYKERT. It is a very hard to tell where the hon. gentleman stands. His speech on this Bill was condemnatory of the principle of enfranchising the Indian.

Mr. PATERSON. No, no.

Mr. RYKERT. Yes, every line of it; and when brought face to face with his record we see that he would not enfranchise one Indian. The hon. member for Elgin also denounced it in unmeasured terms. These hon. gentlemen said: Why enfranchise Pie-a-Pot and Poundmaker and the others, when they knew that the Bill did not refer to the Territories at all? They knew that very well, but they thought to make a little capital out of it, a little by-play out of the remarks of the First Minister, because the First Minister in answer to some questions, in a jocular manner said yes. Was there a single hon. gentleman who raised his voice to say one word on behalf of the poor Indian—not a word until they were driven into a corner, and brought face to face with their record. Now it has gone to the country that this Government has endeavored to enfranchise the Indian, who is placed in the same position as the white man.

Mr. PATERSON. No.

Mr. RYKERT. Yes, the Act says so.

Mr. PATERSON. That is what we proposed and voted for and the hon. gentleman voted down.

Mr. RYKERT. Well, we shall see. I know that it is most unpalatable to these hon. gentlemen to be brought face to face with their own record. The Bill says:

“Person means a male person including an Indian.”

Section 3 says:

“Every person shall, upon and after the first day of November, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-five, be entitled to be registered on the lists of voters.”

Then it goes on to provide that he must be of the full age of 21 years, that he must be a British subject by birth or naturalisation, that he must be the owner of real property or a tenant, or have an income, and so on; and the Indian must have the same franchise and the same qualification as the white man. What were these gentlemen in favor of three years ago? They were in favor of enfranchising the Chinese and granting them every privilege that the white man enjoys; yet they say now he is no better than an Indian, and the member for West Elgin (Mr. Casey) says the Indian is no better than a negro. They were then in favor of the poor Chinese being included, and now they want to exclude the poor Indian. They say that they were not in favor of excluding the Indian who had the same qualifications as the white man. Well, what does this Bill say but that a person means an Indian, and that he must have the qualification required by law. Suppose the tribal Indians, as they call them, had a vote, would that be wrong? Who owns their property? Who owns the property of the Tuscorora Indians? Do the Indians, or does the Government? The Indians own that property, and no law of the land can take it from them. They have as much right to it as the hon. member for South Brant has to his; and if they have that property, which they work, and enjoy the benefits of, why should they not have the same rights as white men? What did the hon. member for South Brant say in 1875?

“Mr. Paterson desired to impress upon the hon. Minister of the Interior, the necessity that existed for the revision and codification of the Indian laws, and also with respect to the desirability of the enfranchisement of the Indians.”

In 1876, the Bill I have before me was introduced, and it has these clauses:

“86. Whenever any Indian man, or unmarried woman, of the full age of twenty-one years, obtains the consent of the band of which he or she

is a member to become enfranchised, and whenever such Indian has been assigned by the band a suitable allotment of land for that purpose, the local agent shall report such action of the band, and the name of the applicant to the Superintendent General; whereupon the said Superintendent General, if satisfied that the proposed allotment of land is equitable, shall authorize some competent person to report whether the applicant is an Indian who, from the degree of civilization to which he or she has attained, and the character for integrity, morality and sobriety which he or she bears, appears to be qualified to become a proprietor of land in fee simple; and upon the favorable report of such person, the Superintendent General may grant such Indian a location ticket as a probationary Indian, for the land allotted to him or her by the band.

“88. Every such Indian shall, before the issue of the letters patent mentioned in the next preceding section, declare to the Superintendent General the name and surname by which he or she wishes to be enfranchised and thereafter known, and on his or her receiving such letters patent, in such name and surname, he or she shall be held to be also enfranchised, and he or she shall thereafter be known by such name or surname, and if such Indian be a married man his wife and minor unmarried children also shall be held to be enfranchised; and from the date of such letters patent the provisions of this Act and of any Act or law making any distinction between the legal rights, privileges, disabilities and liabilities of Indians and those of Her Majesty's other subjects shall cease to apply to any Indian.”

Now, the hon. First Minister declared that when we came to the enfranchising clauses he would have clauses with respect to the Indians; but, whether he does or not, the fact stares us in the face, that the Indian who has the frugality and the industry to cultivate a piece of property, and works that property, and who chooses to take advantage of this Act, can claim the right of suffrage and nothing further; and the hon. member for South Brant strongly appealed to this House, years ago, that Indians should be relieved from the tutelage and the bondage under which they then existed.

Mr. PATERSON. Does the hon. gentleman understand the Bill to be what he said now—that only Indians who are assessed and have the same responsibilities as white men, are to have votes?

Mr. RYKERT. I understand by this Bill that a person means an Indian, or a white man, or a negro, and that that person must be an owner, tenant or an occupant or have an income.

Mr. PATERSON. Must be assessed for it; the hon. gentleman said assessed twice.

Mr. RYKERT. The hon. gentleman has not read the Bill. In fact, I would judge that most hon. gentlemen opposite had not read the Bill—from the erratic manner in which they have discussed the question, and the absurd and reckless statements they have made—as they seem to know nothing at all about the Bill. The hon. gentleman also said, in 1880:

“Then the Bill does not provide for the enfranchisement of the Indians, for according to them the rights, opportunities and privileges of citizens is, I think, the only solution of the Indian question, more especially the only solution which affects the more advanced tribes, on whose behalf and with respect to whose circumstances, I am more particularly acquainted. Any change that has been made in the law is only in the direction of still more firmly fastening the shackles of tutelage upon them—a change tending to keep the Indians in their present condition. I speak on behalf of 3,000 Indians—”

That is, the Indians of Tuskarora, the same as are going to be enfranchised by this Bill—

Mr. PATERSON. You are not enfranchising them.

Mr. RYKERT. And are going to have the right to vote and the same privileges as white men.

Mr. PATERSON. No.

Mr. RYKERT—

“—3,000 Indians, among whom six missionaries have been laboring for the past thirty years, and who have twelve public schools and an industrial institute. In that band there never has been but one enfranchised under the Act of 1868, and that Indian was unable to get the land to which he was entitled; he petitioned to be restored to his former condition as an Indian. If there is such a record after twelve years experience is it not time that some step was taken by which more progress might be made? The whole Indian law discourages the assimilation of the whites and the Indians, and the solution of the Indian