

With cartridges and breech-loading rifles the half-breeds and Indians have been able to exterminate the buffalo? A. I believe that the extermination of the buffalo is due to the fact that the Indians no longer being occupied in fighting with each other, were let loose on the buffalo, and of course the slaughter was greater than it had ever been before. No doubt the improved arms contributed to the destruction, but they could kill buffalo nearly as well with the old weapons as with the new.

*By the Honorable Mr. Macdonald:*

Q. Suppose the country were in the same condition now as it was twenty-five years ago, when it was in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company, would the Indians be able to live without assistance from the Government? A. If nothing had been done with the country, these Indians could live now as well as they lived before.

*By the Honorable Mr. Allan:*

Q. I can scarcely believe that the white people who have gone in there have killed off the buffalo. The thing had been pretty effectually settled before the settlers went to the North-West in any considerable numbers. The slaughter began some fifteen years ago? A. Fifteen years ago, just after the first rebellion, there were buffalo enough left to have supported the Indians, and they would have remained permanently in the country, if they had been left alone. I have seen them myself in such numbers that they covered the land for miles and miles. I have hunted buffalo with the Indians myself on horseback, and I have seen them, from the tops of the hills in those western plains, so numerous that you could not see the ends of the herds. The great herds at a distance looked like shadows of clouds on a summer's day—there were probably millions in them, and they covered the ground so close that you could not see it. Where they were in herds large enough to cover the extent of a township or two, you could see them also dotting the intervening landscape like beetles as far as the eye could reach.

*By the Chairman:*

Q. When was that? A. In 1873. In those days, after killing all that you wanted, you could pass through the herd without the buffalo apparently being afraid of you.

*By the Honorable Mr. Macdonald:*

Q. And now you do not see them at all? A. No. The Indians will not believe that the buffalo are all exterminated, but that herds will come back again.

*By the Honorable Mr. Girard:*

Q. I suppose you have met the Indians in bands on their reserves or on the trail sometimes? A. Yes; I have met them both on the reserves and on their travels.

Q. Have you been able to ascertain how they were getting their food or in what way they were living? A. At the time I speak of they were living on the buffalo. They lived on what they killed of the buffalo, but now they are living on the bounty they get from the Government, or anything they can find. They are shooting ducks, prairie chickens, muskrats, and even gophers—killing these and roasting and eating them, or if they found a dead horse they would have a grand feast.

Q. But from what you know of that country you could not indicate the best way to maintain—or the proper way to feed the Indians, or could not suggest what you should advise them to do to get their food? A. You cannot make an Indian work. The generation which has been unaccustomed to work will not work. The bush Indians will work because they have been obliged to paddle their canoes; they have been obliged to make their canoes, and axe handles, and everything like that, but the plain Indian cannot do anything of the kind. His hands are soft like a woman's, and he cannot work. I have asked them: "Can you put a handle in that axe?" And have been told: "No, I never made an axe handle in my life. I am not able to do it and will not try to do it." They will not cultivate the ground.

Q. Can they not do it? A. No, it is not that, but they think it is beneath their dignity to work. They have not been accustomed to it, and they say it has never been done by their forefathers. I have lectured them on the subject, but they have told me: "It is according to the traditions of your forefathers, but we have never done anything of the kind, and our forefathers have never worked." For an Indian