

drawn from the demoralizing influences of the white man, there was one single individual and one only, who, as it transpired afterwards had some personal interest in the matter, desired that efforts should be made to remove these Indians, and that one man was a defeated Liberal candidate. It seems to me we have made out up to the hilt a case for a thorough investigation so that the people of this country may know the true inwardness of the dissipation of the 40,000 acres of Indian lands, worth, I think I am putting it at a moderate rate, \$25 an acre.

Mr. W. M. MARTIN (Regina). I desire at the outset to set my hon. friend from West Elgin (Mr. Crothers) at rest by telling him that I have in my hand the affidavit of Mr. Frank Pedley, Inspector General of Indian Affairs, giving an absolute denial to all the charges made in this debate with respect to his action in connection with securing the surrender of the St. Peter's Indian reserve. Before placing that affidavit before the House I desire to call attention to a few points in connection with this case as they appear to me. One argument used by the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Bradbury), is that the meeting was called on a very short notice, but, we have the evidence from the hon. gentleman's own speeches that the meeting was held on that reserve for a period of two days before the vote took place, and it would seem to be a most peculiar thing if the Indians on that reserve did not know that the meeting was going on. There is not so much doing on an Indian reserve that those living on the reserve would not know that a meeting was being held for the purpose of determining whether they would surrender their rights to their reserve and obtain another reserve from the government. The Indians certainly would be anxious to find out what the terms of the surrender should be. I should think it reasonable to suppose that the fact that a meeting for such a purpose was held on the reserve for two days would be ample notice to all the Indians as to what was taking place. Let me on this point read a clause in the affidavit of Mr. Pedley—I will put the whole affidavit on record later on—in respect to that meeting:

I do solemnly declare: That I was present during the whole of the meeting referred to and submitted the terms of the surrender clause by clause to all the Indians assembled, and each clause of the said surrender was carefully explained to the Indians both in the English language and in the language of the Indians by an interpreter acceptable to the Indians, and I firmly believe that every Indian present at that meeting thoroughly understood the terms of the surrender.

The said meeting lasted for two days and during that time a full discussion took place

Mr. CROTHERS.

in which a great many of the Indians participated, and any Indian who desired to ask for information was given the fullest opportunity of doing so. On the day when the vote was taken it was decided by the meeting unanimously, just before the noon adjournment, that the vote should be taken at a certain hour in the afternoon of the same day. This was done, and out of a possible vote of 270 in the entire band there were 205 votes cast on the question of the surrender. The vote was counted by the Indian agent and the inspector of Indian agencies and was checked over by Wm. Asham, who was opposed to the surrender, and by one other whose name I do not remember. Not one objection was raised either to the vote itself or to the method of taking it.

I submit, in view of this evidence that there cannot be any honest objection taken to the method of conducting the meeting.

Mr. FOSTER. What did he say the majority was?

Mr. MARTIN (Regina). He does not say in his affidavit, but I understand it was a close vote, 107 to 98, or something like that. It has also been argued that there has been no protection given to the Indians in connection with the dealing with these lands, but I would like to point out that in the original draft, surrender it was proposed to permit no Indian to dispose of any particular parcel of land which he got as part of the terms of surrender without the consent of the department, and the Indians absolutely refused to surrender their rights at all with that clause inserted, and at the request of the Indians themselves that clause was struck from the surrender.

Mr. CROTHERS. Does the hon. gentleman think that it was a proper thing for the government to yield to the request of the Indians that that clause should be taken out of the agreement and that they should be allowed to sell if they thought fit. Would you do that with a child?

Mr. MARTIN (Regina). If my hon. friend knew anything about western Canada at all he would know perfectly well that no town in western Canada wants to be along side of an Indian reserve.

Mr. CROTHERS. That does not answer the question.

Mr. MARTIN (Regina). In dealing with a band of Indians in connection with obtaining the surrender of a reserve some inducement of some kind had to be held out to them to move away from the town of Selkirk. I do not know as much about the town of Selkirk as my hon. friend (Mr. Bradbury) does, but if I am correctly informed, every man in the town of Selkirk wanted the St. Peter's reserve moved away. I agree with the minister that as a matter of public policy and in the in-