

ests of that band of Indians have been conserved by the transaction that was entered into and which he criticised so severely. How is it to the interests of the town of Selkirk, we will say, that an area of land adjoining that town, containing 80 square miles,—my hon. friend said 80 miles square, which is as near the fact as he generally gets—should be held from effective cultivation and development by the occupation of a band of so-called Indians? And how is it to the interests of the Indians that these men who, before the town of Selkirk was there, at the time to which he has alluded so effectively, were there, not as Indians, but as halfbreed settlers in the Red River valley, holding their rights in severalty, and discharging their duties as citizens of the country at that time. Those men who were in that position thirty years ago are to-day admittedly degenerates to a very large degree because of their continued residence under conditions which are not suitable to their better development. My hon. friend is the enemy of the Indians of St. Peter's when he insists that they shall retain their location under conditions which have caused their degeneration from a responsible and respectable body of citizens of Canada to the conditions which he himself pictures to the House, that they are absolutely irresponsible and unable to transact their own business in the smallest degree.

Mr. BRADBURY. I shall not allow the hon. gentleman to put words in my mouth which I did not utter. I did not state that I wanted the Indians to retain those lands. What I contend for, is that you have done an injustice to the Indians, that you have allowed them to be robbed of the valuable lands belonging to them, when your duty, as guardians was to take care of them.

Mr. OLIVER. I understood my hon. friend to insist that the people were being robbed of their lands.

Mr. BRADBURY. That is right.

Mr. OLIVER. Because the lands were being sold?

Mr. BRADBURY. Because they were not being sold, they were just being taken from the Indians.

Mr. OLIVER. My hon. friend is very uneasy. I would like him to permit me to make my remarks. I did not interfere with him and certainly I think I had as much cause to protest as to the inaccuracy of the statements that he made as he has to protest against the inferences that I desire to draw. The Indians, he says, are being robbed. These Indians, in exchange for this reserve which they occupied to their own detriment a reserve of 48,000, are

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receiving a reserve of something like 74,000 acres of as good, or better land and very much better suited to meet their requirements, moral, social and material, than the St. Peter's reserve. Besides that they have got the full market price of their reserve at the time the reserve was sold. It is true that the land has appreciated in value since that time. So have town lots in Winnipeg, so have town lots in every city in the west, so have farm lands, but when my hon. friend suggests that because this land would only bring \$5 or \$5.50 an acre at auction four years ago and it was worth \$20 or \$25 an acre now, that therefore the Indians were robbed, he is trespassing upon the intelligence of the House, and he is not warranted in making such a suggestion. The Indians agreed to the disposition of their land at a certain time under certain conditions, those conditions were fulfilled, the Indians received the price for their land, they received a new reserve in exchange and I submit that the hon. gentleman is absolutely misrepresenting the facts when he uses the word 'robbery' in that connection.

My hon. friend laid some stress upon the conditions surrounding the surrender; that is that sufficient notice was not given of the vote that was to take place. My hon. friend knows—he knew when he said that to the House—that the question of surrender by the Indians on this reserve was under consideration by them for weeks and months before that time and that the matter was canvassed individually and collectively and the terms set practically before the meeting was held at all. Now, he knew that when he tried to make this House believe that the Indians had only one day's notice of this meeting.

Mr. BRADBURY. I do not like to interrupt the hon. gentleman, but if he insists on making statements that are absolutely incorrect I have to set him right. I did not know that, and the hon. gentleman did not know it because it never took place.

Mr. OLIVER. Well then it is a question of fact between the hon. gentleman and myself, and I will put it to the House in this way: He knows, as I know, and he knew then, as I knew then, that Mr. Justice Howell was commissioned to negotiate with these Indians for the surrender of their reserve. He knew then, as I knew then, and he knows now, as I know now, that Mr. Justice Howell had carried on these negotiations for weeks and months before this surrender took place.

Mr. BRADBURY. Will the minister tell me who with?

Mr. OLIVER. With these very Indians.