

upon them. I hold that the hon. First Minister can do nothing less, in fairness, than to accept that proposal. To insist on thrusting the franchise upon the tribal Indian, without his asking for it, is an absurdity that should not be perpetrated, and that will not be in the interest of either the Indian or the white man.

Mr. DAVIES. I did not intend to take any part in this debate, but when my hon. friend who has just sat down read from the book of the historian, Parkman, a statement of the condition of the Indians in 1642, I thought he had taken the trouble to go very much further back than was necessary. I thought the contemporary records of our own country would enable us to ascertain the exact condition of barbarism in which the Indians live. I take the *Free Press* of the date of 8th June, 1885—

An hon. MEMBER. That is no authority.

Mr. DAVIES. Nothing is authority for the hon. gentleman; but I am sorry to say it is a very sad authority for the unfortunate people, the account of whose murder I shall read. But the same despatch is in the *Mail* newspaper of this morning, and I suppose they will swear by that as gospel. In a despatch, dated Winnipeg, 8th June, I find the following:—

"A correspondent writing from Frog Lake gives a description of the scene upon arrival there of the Winnipeg Light Infantry on Queen's Birthday. The settlement consisted of the Roman Catholic Mission, a mill, and some eight or nine settlers' houses. The church, parsonage, mill, and every settler's house, were burned and levelled to the ground, and their contents strewn around. In the cellar of the parsonage, and guided there by the terrible smell, one of the most awful sights ever seen was witnessed. Four dead bodies were found huddled together in a corner. Two of the bodies were those of Father Lafard and Father Lafiac, and another was that of a lay brother, and a fourth some one unknown. The corpses were horribly mangled. All four heads were charred with fire beyond recognition; the four hearts torn out; wide incisions had been made in the lower part of the stomachs (those who know the Indian method of torture will know for what purpose) and the feet and hands of some were missing. Every body was rotten with corruption, and when taken out of the cellar and laid upon the grass the sight was simply horrible. Strong men of the regiment cried like women."

This is a description, not of what took place in the year 1642, but what took place at the hands of a band of Indians, of the same class as those whom the hon. gentleman proposes by this Bill to enfranchise and to put upon a par with the white men of this country. So far as the proposition to enfranchise the Indians is concerned, it is not at present before the House; but I desire, before I sit down, to emphasise the fact that the Opposition were not and are not opposed to the Indian exercising the franchise simply because he is an Indian. The Opposition have formulated the position they take in clear language, that is, that every capable and free citizen in this country, who has arrived at maturity and is a British subject, should, if not disqualified by law, have the right to exercise the franchise. What we opposed and oppose now is the enfranchisement of incapable citizens. What we asserted and assert now is that the right hon. First Minister himself, who now enfranchises these Indians, is the man who has disfranchised them. The hon. gentleman smiles, but since my advent in this House I have heard him declare that the Indians were not sufficiently advanced to be entrusted with the smallest share of municipal government. I have seen him carry into law an Act which describes these Indians as mere children, as wards of the State, incapable of holding any land of their own, incapable of making valid contracts, incapable and unfit to serve on juries, or to bear arms as volunteers, incapable and unfit to do any of those duties which every free citizen should be able and liable to discharge; and he ought to be able to discharge them before he can claim the right to be placed on the list of voters by this Parliament. If Parliament has deliberately declared the Indian to be a child, a ward of the State, and if it has, with gross inconsistency, it may be, now declared that he shall have a vote, the question before the committee is

Mr. CHARLTON,

the simple one: What prudent restraints should be cast upon that Indian when he is exercising the vote? Now, the amendment submitted by my hon. friend (Mr. Pater-son) involves three distinct propositions. The question for the committee to consider is: Are all those propositions fair and just? or are any of them unfair and unjust? What are the propositions? The committee is asked to assent, first, to the proposition that the Indian, if he is to have a vote, shall come forward and apply for it himself. What is there unfair or unjust in that? The hon. gentleman will remember that when you come to confer a right upon white citizens you go to the assessment rolls of the parish or municipality, and if there are no parishes or municipalities, as there are not in Prince Edward Island, you go to the poll books of the last election. You have some groundwork, some data to go on. But with the Indians there are no assessment rolls, no poll-book, no voters' lists, no tax-payers' lists. Therefore, we say, instead of going on these reserves and taking these Indians' names, which are not even known to white men, from the Indian agent, let those Indians who claim the right to vote come forward in their own person and demand it. If the Indians are what they are in my part of the country, a low, degraded race, incapable and unfit to exercise the franchise, hon. gentlemen opposite would be afraid to oppose this proposition; but if they are not, if there are any of them intelligent and capable of exercising the franchise, let them come forward and apply to be put on the list. I know what the Indians in the Maritime Provinces are like. I have heard hon. gentlemen here express their opinions about them; I know a dozen of hon. gentlemen who support this measure, but who are ashamed to express their opinions, because they know that the Indians there are a low, degraded race, unfit to exercise the franchise. We are told that in other parts of the Dominion they are as intelligent as the whites, and just as capable of exercising the franchise. Well, if they are, why object to this proposition. The hon. member for Monck (Mr. McCallum) says there is no harm in putting on the assessment rolls 800 or 900 names, whether they exercise the franchise or not.

Mr. McCALLUM. I never said anything of the kind.

Mr. DAVIES. The hon. gentleman declared that their names should be put on, and that they might exercise the franchise—

Mr. McCALLUM. I never mentioned the words "assessment roll" at all.

Mr. DAVIES. That was a mere slip of the tongue on my part; I meant the voters' list. If the hon. gentleman will permit me, I say he declared that all they wanted was to get the names of the Indian on the voters' list.

Mr. McCALLUM. If the hon. gentleman will allow me—

Mr. DAVIES. I will not allow the hon. gentleman's interruptions. He has deliberately chosen to take a meaning from my words which I did not intend to put on them.

Mr. McCALLUM. I do not know what you intended to put; I know what you said.

Mr. DAVIES. I said that the hon. gentleman argued here for some time that there could not be any possible harm in adding a large number of names to the voters' list who never heretofore exercised—

Mr. McCALLUM. I argued nothing of the kind.

Mr. DAVIES. The sound of the hon. gentleman's voice is ringing in my ears yet. It is not an hour ago since he said there could be no possible harm in putting a large number of names on the voters' list, and he not only stated the fact, but gave the reason, because, he said, they would