

"The Indians on the File Hill reserve believe that if one of their number fall sick there is no use in trying to make him get well, they have not sufficient nourishing food and they must let him die. The man I speak of came down to the fort the other day absolutely in rags, with his two squaws, and said to a man in Fort Qu'Appelle (I do not mention his name now, but at the proper time, if necessary, I can produce this man):—'What can I do for anything to eat? We are dying of starvation.' He was told:—'You had better go to Regina, and the Lieutenant-Governor may be able to do something for you.' ('Oh, oh.') The old squaw had an old piece of tea-chest wrapping, which you could throw hailstones through, to serve as a blanket. These are the wards of the Government! The man was so thinly clad that he was frozen below his knees, and yet he was going to Regina to try and move the heart of that man whose heart is stone—to move the heart of that man to give something to keep life in him. ('Shame.') Is such the proper conduct of the man who has charge of the wards of the Government? Why, he deserves to be hooted and hissed and driven out of the country. (Loud cheers.)"

One of the agents, Mr. Herchmer, writing upon this subject, says in his report for last year:

"During the winter I visited the Pas reserves a number of times and witnessed the actual condition of the Indians. For three months—January to March—many of those in the Pas Birch River and Pas Mountains suffered keenly. It was impossible to supply food as it was actually needed, for there was not sufficient in the district. Undoubtedly the amount of relief given last winter, though unprecedentedly large, has been the means of preserving numbers of these Indians alive."

They were suffering keenly, he says; there was no food in the district, simply because the policy of this Administration was a policy of reducing the Indians to submission by a policy of starvation. In the same report Mr. Herchmer says:

"About the same time an Indian came from the Pas Mountain, telling me of the privation from which the band were suffering and asking for relief, and further, that the Mountain Indians were suffering from want."

Mr. Pocklington, in his report, says:

"In January, while visiting the Piegan Reserve, I received a letter from Lieut.-Col. McLeod that 75 Stonies were in Pincher Creek in a starving condition. I started for their camp at once, and found them in reality starving, except for assistance given them by Col. McLeod and other residents."

Now, Sir, I submit that I have established beyond all controversy the charge I have made against this Government, that the Indians of the North-West Territories have been subjected to the greatest possible suffering, that the Government have permitted them to freeze to death and starve to death, and that in the midst of plenty, and with the bountiful donations of this Parliament for feeding and clothing the Indians. I go further than that, Mr. Speaker, I charge that last winter many of the Indians on the reserve at Indian Head were starved to death. I charge that Dr. Edwards, an employee of this Government, so reported to Commissioner Dewdney, and so scandalous and outrageous was the nature of that report, that Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney suppressed the original report, and it has not seen the light of day to this hour. I charge that this scandalous state of affairs was well known to this Administration, and that this is true is beyond peradventure, because I hold in my hands part of a speech made by Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney to the North-West Council during its last Session, as reported in the *Regina Leader* of the 10th December, 1884, in which he says:

"Shortly after they had taken up their residence on the reserve, hearing that there was a great deal of sickness in their band, we instructed Doctor Edwards, who was then in our employ, to make an inspection of Pi-a-Pot's people. In his report which I now have before me he states in these words, 'some of these Indians have died of starvation this winter. They were ill and could not eat the bacon and flour.'"

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, I ask this House of Commons, I ask the people of this country, if it is not a scandalous outrage that, right under the shadow of the vice-regal establishment at Regina, at Indian Head, on the borders of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Indians should have been allowed to starve to death during last winter, and that in the midst of plenty, with the enormous sums voted by this Parliament for the purpose of feeding and clothing the Indians. And yet we have it out of the mouth of Governor

Dewdney, and from the report of Dr. Edwards, employed by him to examine into the condition of the Indians, that many of the Indians on that reservation died of starvation last winter. I charge still further: That many of the Indians on the File Hills died of starvation last winter; that seven children of these Indians died of starvation within two months last winter; that those facts were made known to Commissioner Dewdney, and that he instructed the agent to go to the reserve and warn the Indians that if they disclosed to the public their misery, hunger and starvation their rations would be stopped. I challenge this Administration now to issue a commission to investigate the matter, to appoint a commission of sensible and honest men to investigate this whole question, and I believe that every statement I have made upon this subject is capable of the clearest possible proof. I say a Government which has so neglected the first duties of a Government towards its wards deserves condemnation, deserves the severest condemnation at the hands of the people of this country. That is not all. I say further, that the Indians, as I have shown, have been robbed, defrauded and swindled, frozen to death and starved to death, and yet we expect them to be peaceful, submissive, faithful and loyal subjects of the Queen. And that in the face of the statement of the Agent-General for Indian Affairs made in 1880 and re-affirmed in 1885 that the policy of this Administration was a policy of submission by a policy of starvation; and that in the face of the report of Agent Herchmer sent to the Department that a little starvation would do the Indians good; and that in the face of the declaration of Governor Dewdney that if they did not eat salt pork they might die and be damned to them. With this cruel and brutal treatment of the Indians, with this cruel and brutal report of agent Herchmer, and with the admission of Lieut.-Governor Dewdney, need anyone wonder that the Indians are dissatisfied and discontented. I should like to see the experiment tried on the officials of the Government; from the commissioner down to agent Herchmer, and from agent Herchmer down to the lower officials, and a little starvation might teach them common sense. A policy of fraud; a policy of violated treaties and broken promises has been tried in the neighboring republic for 100 years, and without success. It has been tried in this country for a number of years also without success, and it will be tried without success to the end of the chapter. The authoress of "One hundred years of dishonor," speaking of the practical results of this policy in the United States, says:

"The history of the Government's connections with the Indians is a shameful record of broken treaties and unfulfilled promises."

And then the authoress points out the result:

"Under all these conditions it is not a matter of wonder that the frontier was a scene of perpetual devastation and bloodshed; and that year by year there grew stronger in the minds of the whites a terror and hatred of Indians, and in the minds of the Indians a stronger and stronger distrust and hatred of the whites."

Then the authoress points out the true policy that ought to be pursued by a Christian Government:

"The reports are filled with eloquent statements of wrongs done to the Indians, of perfidies on the part of the Government; they counsel, as earnestly as words can, a trial of the simple and unperplexing expedients of telling the truth, keeping promises, making fair bargains, dealing justly in all ways and in all things."

Such have been the results of the policy pursued by the Administration. Hon. gentlemen have sown the wind and they must expect to reap the whirlwind. Nothing but discontent and dissatisfaction and rebellion could be expected from the course pursued by hon. gentlemen opposite. This statement I propose still further to confirm by the evidence of Mr. McDougall, from whose statement I have already largely quoted. He says: