

of the country where they reside. They pay their own taxes, they make their own bridges and roads, they build their own school houses; they carry on the whole system in their own way, but it is in the Indian way, and it is in an efficient way. They carry out all the obligations of civilised men. If you go to any of the reserves in the older Provinces you will find that the Indians have good houses, that they and their families are well clad, the education of their children is well attended, their morals are good, their strong religious feeling is evident. You will find as good churches and as regular church-goers among the red men as among the white men. You will find that in every respect they have a right to be considered as equal with the whites. In the newer Provinces, in the North-West and in Manitoba, perhaps in British Columbia, they are not yet ready for the franchise; and it is my intention, when we come to the right place, to move an amendment in that direction. But as regards the Indian, the educated Indian of the old Provinces, our brethren living in the some Province with us, under the same laws, and carrying out the same laws as efficiently as we do—they do not fill our prisons in as large a proportion to their numbers as the whites do; in fact we seldom hear, comparatively speaking, of Indian crime. You find them steady, respectable, law abiding and God fearing people, and I do not see why they should not have the vote.

Mr. DAVIES. If the hon. gentleman had taken the pains when he introduced the Bill making this important change in the political condition of Canada, to explain its provisions at more length than he did, he might have saved this House a great deal of time which has been spent in discussing what the meaning of this Bill is. The right hon. gentleman chose to introduce the Bill with an explanation extending over eight minutes and a half, and it is now perfectly evident that in the fundamental changes which the hon. gentleman proposed to make, the members of the committee—those sitting behind the hon. gentleman, and those on this side as well—did not understand what his purpose and object was. I will undertake to say that until the right hon. gentleman rose a moment or two ago, at the end of four days' debate, not half the members of the committee really knew what his object was, or to what extent he intended to introduce the Indian franchise. We find the hon. gentleman stating now that the introduction of the word "Indian" was altogether unnecessary, that he did it merely to accentuate and emphasise his intention of giving the tribal Indian a right to vote—and when hon. gentlemen on this side stated it to be his intention, they were vociferously and lustily denounced by hon. gentlemen opposite, in the severest language they could use. The hon. member for Kent and the hon. member for King's said it was monstrous, it was inconceivable; they said that the leader of the Government never would propose such a Bill. These hon. gentlemen have had their answer to-day, and they have heard that the proposition which they denounced so much, which they spoke of in such terms, is the proposition of the right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. But shall we find those hon. gentlemen rising up to vote in opposition to the proposition of the First Minister, which they denounced so vigorously on Saturday, as a monstrous, an iniquitous proposition? No, Sir, you will see them rise up and follow the right hon. gentleman when he votes in favor of that proposition. Having now got so far with the reason why the word Indian was introduced, the reason being that the Prime Minister desired to accentuate and emphasise his wish to give votes to those people, he goes further and says that the Indian living in the tribal relation, under the provisions of the Indian Act, under the supervision of Indian agents, controlled by the Superintendent General, is a free man, a free agent. I shall not weary the House by

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re-reading the clauses of the Act which have already been read three or four times, to show that not one of those acts which are common in daily life by every free man, can be performed by an Indian, except under the sanction of the Superintendent General. He cannot purchase or sell property; any contract he makes is void, he owns nothing except by the will of the Superintendent General himself, and in every way he is a manacled slave, subject to the dictation of the Superintendent General; and he cannot even make a will except with the consent of that gentleman. The hon. gentleman appeals to that great act of British history which emancipated the black man from slavery, and he told us that when the black man reached Canadian territory he became a free man, and he was on the same level as his white brethren. So he does, and we are proud of the fact. We believe that every free man should have the franchise, and that if you make the Indian free, as the black man is, you should give him the vote. The contention which we oppose on this side is, not that the Indian *qua* Indian should not have the right to the franchise, but that the Indian, manacled in his hands, under the control and supervision and dictation of the Superintendent General, a perfect creature of the Government and its officers, should have a vote merely to register the whim and will of the Superintendent General for the time being. We say educate the Indian, elevate and civilise the Indian, and we say God speed those who are engaged in the work of elevating him to a higher plane of intelligence, and when they are elevated, when they are freed from the shackles which the Indian Act imposes on them, when they are declared by law to be free men, when they can march to the poll and record their own individual will as free men we would give them the right to do it. We say you have not the right to treat him otherwise than as the equal of the white man, when he has emancipated himself from the thralldom and control under which he lives, when he is in the tribal relation. But there is no comparison between the black man enfranchised and free, standing as to civil rights on the same level with the white man, and the poor unfortunate minor, as the hon. member for Algoma calls him, who has no mind of his own, who is not allowed to exercise any mind of his own. The right hon. gentleman goes on to argue with all the authority which he has as Superintendent General of Indian affairs, that the Indian has reached such a degree of intelligence as to entitle him to a vote, but when I turn to the opinions of the right hon. gentleman, as I find them on record over his own signature, not more than three years ago, as recorded in the Sessional Papers of 1881, I find that he considered that the Indian so far from being advanced sufficiently in intelligence to justify his having the right to vote for members of this Parliament, on the contrary he was not sufficiently advanced in intelligence to justify the right hon. gentlemen in conferring on him the simplest form of municipal government. Let me read what he says:

"The Department despatched a circular to the various superintendents and agents, calling upon them to report whether the bands under their supervision were sufficiently enlightened to justify the conclusion that the inauguration of a simple form of municipal government among them would be attended with success."

And here is the answer:

"From the majority of its officers who have replied to the circular the reports received lead to the conclusion that the Indian bands within their respective districts are not sufficiently advanced in intelligence for the change. An attempt will, however, be made at an early date to obtain the consent of the more advanced bands for the establishment of some such system. It is thought that a council, proportionate in number to the population of the band, elected by the male members thereof, of 21 years and over, and presided over by a functionary similar to the reeve of a township, might answer the purpose; or in its initiatory stage the council might be presided over with better results by the local Indian superintendent or agent."

And yet the hon. gentleman now comes before us, at the end of these three years, and tells us that they have not only