

absolutely defy contradiction of that. Then, we are told that we are living in a civilized country. Why, it is fundamental; go away back to Magna Charta; one of the things they fought for was that no man should be deprived of his property against his will except by due process of law. Yet here are 98 Indians who have been deprived of their property. Let us condemn, as the minister condemns to satisfy the government, the men who did not go to that meeting and whose property was taken away from them in their absence; here are 98 men who went to the meeting and voted that they would not surrender their property, yet their property is gone from them, and this is a country where a man cannot be despoiled of his property without due process of law! It is a perfect disgrace. We heard the other day of certain relations of ours with some other countries being a blot on civilization. I say it is a blot on the vaunted civilization of this country and it is no answer to tell me or to tell the public that you have done better for the Indian than if you had left him there. You do not justify the thief. The thief does not justify himself by saying to me: I have taken your property against your will, but I am ready and willing to give you something better. These people owned their property or they did not own their property. The report of Chief Justice Howell called the attention of the government to the fact that these people owned their property as individuals. Chief Justice Howell's report and the meeting of the Indian tribe to which they went to vote against parting with it have deprived them of their property. Now, I may be told that they have signed deeds now by which they have consented to the surrender of the reserve. I dare say that is true; I do not question it. That was part of the plan. Chief Justice Howell does not put in question in his report the existence of those rights which the Indians had under the Manitoba Act. He does not for one moment suggest that the Indians should be told about the existence of those rights. He does not suggest, what must have been perfectly evident to any reasonable man, that these rights were not matters to be dealt with by the surrender of an Indian reserve, but he says that when the surrender is voted it would be well to have these Indians renounce their individual rights. So, the individual rights are sufficiently clear that it is quite recognized that the surrender of the reserve will not deprive them of their individual rights, and, therefore, it would be well to put them specially in the deed. I have not seen the evidence that that was put to these men at the meeting. Ninety-eight men voted against any surrender at all, voted that they wanted to keep their rights and, in the face of that positive affirmation, without colour of right in so far as these

individual rights are concerned, this government has taken over their property because it has been able to get them to sign off some deed for which they were paid no other consideration than the considerations that were offered for the surrender of the Indian reserve.

The Minister of the Interior is indignant because my hon. friend from Selkirk talked about robbery. Well, I suppose the minister was right when we get down to technical things, robbery means stealing with violence. As far as I know there was no violence. If my hon. friend from Selkirk had called it larceny, had called it obtaining property by false pretenses, he would, perhaps, more correctly technically have described it. But, if taking a man's property without right, depriving him of his property in violation of the law, appropriating to yourself that which belongs to another man, may be properly described as robbery, then I do not know of any case of robbery more clear, more unmistakable, more indisputable, than this. We are told that we robbed the Indian for the Indian's good—a very convenient doctrine. I wonder how we would like to live under a law which would enable the government to rob us for our own good? My hon. friend (Mr. Foster) suggests that they practically do it now. Well, as far as robbing is concerned, he may be right, but as to how far it is for our own good I would be more disposed to question his statement. But, that is beside the question. In so far as that answer is made, all I have to say is that there is no right in the government of Canada to rob an individual for his own good any more than there is in me to deprive my neighbour of his property because I think I can do something better with it than he can do for himself.

I quite recognize that they have not described their act in taking the property as I have described it, but they have sought to justify it by saying that the Indians have got a better reserve, and the white people are happy to be rid of the proximity of the Indians. In such an absolutely clear case of legal spoliation it would be a pity to spoil it by adding anything to it that might be qualified as sentimental lamentation. Our friends on the other side are not very fond of sentiment in connection with any question, but for my part I cannot help expressing my endorsement of the words of the member for Selkirk, in so far as they point out that this transaction puts an end to our boast that under British government the aborigines get justice. We are bigger than they, more intelligent than they, more astute than they; they do not know they have a title under the Manitoba Act; they know probably even less about the law than the Minister of the Interior wants to