

in that constituency, they would have been so treated? They had no votes, they had no friends, they had no influence at headquarters. Friends of the government desired to get their reserve at the nominal figure of \$5 or \$5.50 per acre, if I remember aright. They desired to get it, they did get it, and the Indian was paid, in so far as he was paid at all, as the evidence put on file by my hon. friend for Selkirk shows, in truck, by giving the Indian a dollar or two and an old wagon or a cow. When he comes back for the balance of the price of his farm he is told that he has been paid in full—the wagon was worth so much, the old cow so much, you got \$2 or \$3 in cash, and I do not owe you anything more. The area of 36,000 acres of land, 21,000 deeded to the Indians, and 15,000 sold, has been nearly all dissipated, and when the costs of the proceedings come to be paid in full there will be very little, if anything, left to put into the Indian fund. That is what the evidence seems to show. The evidence is uncontradicted you will remember, by the men who best know, if it be not true, uncontradicted by Chief Justice Howell, uncontradicted by Frank Pedley, and therefore, I think, believed to be true by every hon. member of this House. If it be true then I think we should have a full and fair investigation of this matter by a capable and trustworthy commissioner appointed by this government. We have never ascertained, in so far as I have been able to find out, the particular instructions that were given to the commissioner appointed by this government, namely, Mr. Justice Howell. I have seen what purport to be particulars of these instructions, but they are of the most general character. If I remember aright the Minister of the Interior admitted in this House a year ago that part of the instructions were given by him orally and not in writing, and I can well understand that, because I do not believe that the chief justice would have done what he did do on the meagre instructions given him in writing. I submit that the evidence shows that no sufficient reason existed for the attempt to remove these Indians from the reserve that they had occupied since the year 1871, away back to a new place on the Fish river. There were eight day-schools and five churches with clergymen on this reserve. Many of these Indians had expensive farm implements, binders, seed drills, a large number of cows and horses and here we have a meeting called on a day's notice at which about one-third of the male members of the band did not attend, only two-thirds present, half of them outdoors and the other half in the building, two-thirds of the Indians told by the officer of this government. 'I have in my satchel \$5,000; I will not distribute it in case you vote in favour of the surrender, and if you do not I will take it

home,' that statement under oath being corroborated by the man who is said to have made it—'those of you who want \$90 stand over there; those who do not want \$90 go over there,' instead of saying to these men: Those of you who desire to surrender your reserve and get a new reserve a hundred miles away on the Fish river, stand over there, and those who wish to remain where you have been living for forty years and enjoy the homes you have constructed here, go over to that side. The statement made to them, as I said a moment ago, considering their character, simplicity and improvidence cannot be regarded in any other light than that of a bribe. So, we have the officers of this government bribing the innocent, ignorant, incapable Indian to surrender his home of forty years and go away back 100 miles away to Fish river.

Mr. BRADBURY. They had been there for 100 years.

Mr. CROTHERS. I was under the impression that they had settled in 1871, but my hon. friend from Selkirk says that they have been there for 100 years. We must not forget that there were amongst these two hundred a number of scallawag Indians as distinguished from the better class of Indians, and you had a lot of toughs thus voting away the homes of men who were industrious and sober. It seems that this government had determined, by hook or by crook, to get rid of this St. Peter's band of Indians, that were living on that reserve although they had no good reason for it. I think I have shown to the satisfaction of every hon. member of this House that these Indians instead of having degenerated in the last forty years had rapidly improved morally and spiritually, if the reports of the inspectors of the government are to be believed rather than the statements made by those who really do not know anything about it.

They were among these Indians and they noticed the improvement they were making materially, morally and spiritually and they reported to the government that this band of Indians were rapidly advancing to a state equal to that of the white man. One of the inspectors says that among 1,300 of them there were very few drunkards. Why, Mr. Speaker, that is almost as good a character as we could get of 1,300 members of parliament. And still, the minister tells us that although nobody complained, although the council of Selkirk did not complain, although the clergymen who were going in and out among the Indians day after day in the five churches on the reserve did not complain, and although the teachers who were filling positions in the eight school houses on the reserve never suggested that the Indians should be with-