

cated, and had they responsibilities of members of this House, could fill positions here with credit to themselves and to the country. I hope the hon. the First Minister will give one or two days more for the consideration of this measure, and I hope the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Paterson) will stay and give his assistance. No one is more anxious to do his duty towards the Indians than the hon. Premier, and there is no one in the world whom they respect more; and I trust this measure will be carefully considered before it passes into law.

It being Six o'clock the Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD: I do not propose to reply to the hon. member for South Brant (Mr. Paterson) at length, but I may say, in reference to one of his objections, that this Bill has passed the Senate, and has been printed and distributed for a very considerable time. If any hon. gentleman wishes to move an amendment he has plenty of opportunity. He said that whatever alteration is made in the Bill has the effect of limiting the power of enfranchisement. I see no clause altering the Bill in such a way, and think the hon. gentleman is misinformed.

MR. PATERSON: The right hon. gentleman misunderstands me on that point. I did not say that.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD: The hon. gentleman made an appeal to the House about the necessity of advancing the interests of the Indians, civilising them and putting them in the condition of white men. After all, I am afraid that the hon. gentleman's views are affected by the influence of party. Disguise it as we may, wherever there is an Indian settlement the whites in the vicinity are very naturally anxious—when they see the slovenly, unfarmerlike way in which the Indian lands are cultivated especially if the lands be very good—to get rid of the red men, believing, and perhaps, truly, that the progress of the locality is retarded by them, and that the sooner they are enfranchised, or deprived of their lands, and allowed to shift for themselves, the better. I dare say it would be better. If the Indians were to

disappear from the continent, the Indian question would cease to exist. But we must remember that they are the original owners of the soil, of which they have been dispossessed by the covetousness or ambition of our ancestors. Perhaps, if Columbus had not discovered this continent—had left them alone—they would have worked out a tolerable civilisation of their own. At all events, the Indians have been great sufferers by the discovery of America, and the transfer to it of a large white population. We are bound to protect them. The United States, British and Canadian Governments have all agreed as to the necessity of defending and protecting the Indians. As to giving the Indian lands away, enfranchising the Indians, and giving patents for their lands, the policy would be a failure in this country, as it has proved a failure in the United States. The experience in regard to the granting of lands to the Indians, call them enfranchised or not, means simply this: The Indian gets his deed, and by some injurious or unfortunate process, sells or leases his land, and becomes a vagrant without property. We have seen individuals of this race succeed, by means of education, but the exception proves the rule. The general rule is that you cannot make the Indian a white man. An Indian once said to myself: "We are the wild animals; you cannot make an ox of a deer." You cannot make an agriculturist of the Indian. All we can hope for is to wean them, by slow degrees, from their nomadic habits, which have almost become an instinct, and by slow degrees absorb them or settle them on the land. Meantime they must be fairly protected. The hon. gentleman says this Bill should stand over until we have an opportunity of discovering or inventing some new system of civilising the Indians. I am afraid he and I would not agree as to the best means of doing so. I am afraid he would favour the dividing of the different reserves among the Indians, giving them deeds in fee simple, and leaving them to shift for themselves. That would be cruelty of the worst kind. I think this Bill is called for until we can, by common agreement, come to some understanding as to some means of advancing the Indians in the scale of civilisation.