

adopt some different system of dealing with the Indians. He did not think that the system at present pursued was conducive to either the welfare of the Indians or the civilization of the whites living near them. In the County of Middlesex there were 12,500 acres of land in the hands of Indians, and it was lying there an uncultivated waste. He would strongly advocate the land thus held in his riding being put into the market. He did not wish, however, to do away with the rights of the Indians, and eulogized the British authorities for the fair play they had given to the aborigines.

Hon. Mr. LAIRD, whose remarks were almost inaudible in the gallery, was understood to object to selling the Indian lands. He saw no objection to the motion as first proposed by Mr. Paterson, but thought, if the wide range was to be taken as suggested by other members, it was only fair that definite complaints should first be made to the Department.

Mr. GILLIES said that he was very much pleased with the suggestion of the member for Middlesex West (Mr. Ross) relative to extending the scope of the motion. In the riding in which he resided there were large tracts of Indians lands, and for years there had been but little satisfaction with the way in which the affairs of those Indians occupying them had been managed. He found that meetings had recently been held by both the Indians and the whites residing near them, at which it was agreed that petitions should be forwarded to this House, asking that the lands which were given to the Indians some years ago should be disposed of at such prices as they would fetch. The Indians desired that they should be allowed to hold their land in their own right, and if this were permitted they would have an individuality, and feel a disposition to act upon their own behalf.

He hoped the member for Brant South (Mr. Paterson) would allow the Select Committee to have power to investigate into the condition of the affairs of other Indians as well as the Six Nations, and he (Mr. Gillies) hoped to be able to put into the hands of that committee information with reference to the Indians in his part of the country.

Mr. GORDON hoped the motion would be so amended as to extend to the whole Dominion. He complained that Indian lands were not being improved, and in consequence no benefit was done to the Indians. Indeed a wrong was done to the white man. He admired as much as any other the good faith which had been kept by the British government in the matter. He thought, however, that the land which had been set apart for the purpose was an injury to the settlers.

Mr. SNIDER said he sympathized very strongly with the Indians, but very much more with the white men. Nevertheless, he was in a position to act fairly between them in this case. All that he desired was that the settlers upon the barren Indian lands, which some time ago were bought up at a great price, should receive justice at the hands of the Indian Department. They had not been fairly dealt with by the late Government, but he had more confidence in the present Administration, who, he trusted, would see that justice was done in the premises. He considered that many of the Indians were extremely intelligent and entitled to the privilege of the franchise.

Mr. McGREGOR made some remarks, but was utterly inaudible in the gallery. He was understood to say that he approved of the franchise being extended to the Indians.

Mr. DAVIES said that so far as his experience in Prince Edward Island went, though several efforts had been made to civilize the Indians, they appeared to be incapable of appreciating the blessing of civilization. They enjoyed their lands, he believed, in common. The lands had not been divided among individuals, and if the lands were so divided they would soon pass into the hands of white people, and the poor Indians would be nowhere. They were bound to do justice to the Indians. (*Hear, hear.*)

In enfranchising the Indians in the more favoured settlements of Ontario, they should take care it was not tantamount to wiping them out. If it were desirable to get rid of the Indians, they might induce them to settle on the Thousand Islands. The lands which they had, they did not cultivate, and he believed they never would. He thought, however, the division of the lands among them would be tantamount to driving them out of the country.

Mr. SCHULTZ did not find in the motion any reference to the franchise, or to the operations of the reserve system. He contended that to detach the reserves would ultimately lead to the utter annihilation of the Indians. It was not possible that the size of the reserves in question conducted to the benefit of the Indians, and he thought an improvement might be made.

He thought both the Department and the House would be benefited by such an enquiry as this, and he would like to see the motion adopted. He was also desirous of seeing as large a committee as possible appointed, because this was a matter involving a principle which would sooner or later affect the people of the West.

Mr. PATERSON said he was willing to enlarge the motion according to the request of various members if he could do so upon the notice already given, and provided the Government were willing to accede to the change. He was afraid, however, from the remarks of the leader of the Government that the Administration would not be in favour of the change. He denied that he had any wish in the least degree to reflect upon the Department, either as at present conducted or under the former management. The representations made to him might not have been correct, and hence he contended the desirability of an enquiry.

Mr. DAVIES objected to the enfranchisement of the Indians, as he did not consider they would value that privilege; he asserted that if the Indians became possessed of portions of the land they would sell it for liquor.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE said he thought it would be extremely inconvenient to appoint a Committee to enquire into the whole question affecting Indian life, character and position on the Continent, and it was quite evident that such a Committee could produce no possible result. If there was to be a change of policy with regard to the Indians, that change must originate with the Government.

At the same time they would not object to any enquiry which the