

it worth in the year 1907? Was it worth \$25 an acre? It could not be bought to-day for \$50 an acre. About 40,000 acres of it dissipated, 21,000 of it given to these Indians, 15,000 acres of it sold; the Indians have sold the land for what they got patents, most of it at \$5 an acre, some at \$2 an acre. The government sold 15,000 acres at about \$5 an acre, and when the costs of dissipating this reserve is paid very little if any money will be left to put into the treasury of the Indian fund. This parliament, recognizing the inability, incapacity, simplicity and improvidence of the Indians has constituted them wards of this government, making this government guardians of the Indians. It is the duty of a guardian to deal with the property of his ward just as a prudent and far sighted individual would deal with his own private business, but with even greater restraint. That is not a hard proposition in which to put a guardian, to say that he shall deal with the property of his ward as a prudent and far sighted individual would deal with his own private business. I ask, have the government in this case dealt with this property, which was the property of the Indians of the St. Peter's band, as a prudent and far sighted private individual would have dealt with his own private business? You all know that a guardian is not permitted to hand over the property of a ward to the ward, and if he did so and the money was dissipated by the ward the court would make him restore to the ward the property so handed over and dissipated. The Indian Act provides the circumstances under which the government may make a patent of land to an Indian. The process of making a patent is an elaborate one. Section 108 of the Indian Act and the following sections read:

108. Whenever any male Indian or unmarried Indian woman, of the full age of twenty-one years, makes application to the Superintendent General to be enfranchised, the Superintendent General shall instruct the agent of the band of which the applicant is a member, to call upon the latter to furnish a certificate, under oath, before a judge of any court of justice, by the priest, clergyman or minister of the religious denomination to which the applicant belongs, or by a stipendiary magistrate or two justices of the peace, to the effect that to the best of the knowledge and belief of the deponent or deponents, the applicant for enfranchisement is, and has been for at least five years previously, a person of good moral character, temperate in his or her habits, and of sufficient intelligence to be qualified to hold land in fee simple, and otherwise to exercise all the rights and privileges of an enfranchised person. R.S., c. 43, s. 83.

109. Upon receipt of such a certificate, the agent shall, with the least possible delay, submit the same to a council of the band of which the applicant is a member; and he shall then inform the Indians assembled at

such council, that thirty days will be given within which affidavits made before a judge or a stipendiary magistrate will be received, containing reasons, if any there are, of a personal character affecting the applicant, why such enfranchisement should not be granted to the applicant. R.S., c. 43, s. 84.

110. At the expiration of the thirty days aforesaid, the agent shall forward to the Superintendent General all affidavits which have been filed with him in the case, as well as one made by himself before a judge or a stipendiary magistrate, containing his reasons for or against the enfranchisement of the applicant.

2. If the Superintendent General, after examining the evidence, decides in favour of the applicant, he may grant to the applicant a location ticket for the land occupied by him or her as a probationary Indian, or for such proportion thereof as appears to the Superintendent General fair and proper. R.S., c. 43, s. 85.

Thus the Indian Act requires that the Indian shall satisfy the superintendent that he is a man of good moral character, temperate in his habits and sufficiently intelligent to hold a piece of land in fee simple; that he has borne such a character and such habits for five years, and that must be certified to by a judge or a clergyman; then he is put on approbation and he has to live up to that standard for three years longer before the government will give him a patent to a piece of land as an enfranchised Indian. So he must have been a man of good moral character and temperate in his habits for eight years as certified to the satisfaction of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, and even at the expiration of that eight years when he gets his patent there is a provision that he shall not have the power to sell, lease, or otherwise alienate the land except with the sanction of the Governor in Council. In the face of these provisions of the Indian Act this government issued patents to these Indians, according to the Minister of the Interior without taking the precaution made necessary by this statute, of lands amounting to 21,000 acres.

They issued those patents with the view of their dissipating that land and selling it to white men in a very short time. The Deputy Minister, Frank Pedley, in his report to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, tells him that no doubt in a very short time all those lands will be conveyed to the white men. We have this government, instead of guarding the property of these children of nature, conveying all of these 21,000 acres of as good land as lies under the sun, in anticipation of the Indians conveying it all away to white people in a very short time. Is there an hon. member within the sound of my voice who approves of that, who believes that, had these 300 male Indians been Galicians, Doukhobors or Hindoos, having the franchise and having 300 votes

Mr. CROTHERS.