

tendent General has it in his power to withhold from the Indians the usual annual contribution, and he therefore has the means of coercing them into voting for the Government.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). The First Minister was bound to have proposed, if he does not approve of my amendment, some plan whereby the difficulty that I proposed to obviate might be got over in some other way. The only reply he has made is that he does not approve of the amendment, because it draws invidious distinctions between the Indian and the white man. If there are any invidious distinctions existing between them they have been put upon the Statute Book of Canada by the First Minister himself. To say that a proposition that the Indians to whom it is proposed to give the franchise shall be placed upon the voters' list by making a personal application to have it done, to say that it is placing him at a disadvantage, as compared with other classes of the community that are newly enfranchised, such as the wage-earners and others, is absurd. Why, last Session the right hon. gentleman proposed, and placed it on the statute book, that the Indian might make a will, and if the will suited the pleasure of the First Minister, when the Indian died his property would go to the person he willed it to; but if it did not suit the pleasure of the First Minister, then the Indian should be deemed to have died intestate. Is there not an invidious distinction here between the Indians and other classes of the community? He put on the Statute Book that the Indian may not have liquor sold to him or given to him. You may call it invidious, or otherwise, but there is a clear distinction drawn between him and the white man, for the hon. gentleman has not yet ventured to make it a penal offence for any one to sell or give a glass of liquor to a white man. Why, Sir, the Statute Book is full of distinctions crystallised into law by the hon. gentleman himself. In the Indian Act the hon. gentleman says that the very land upon which the Indian shall qualify he cannot dispose of without the consent of the Superintendent General. I do not care if he is an educated Indian, the most intelligent Indian on the reserves, he is not at liberty to lease the land that is given to him. If he be a minister, a lawyer or a doctor, he cannot lease his land, but the Superintendent General may lease it for his benefit. I say that when it is proposed, as this Bill proposes, to give to men so entirely dependent upon the Government a vote, under the control of agents appointed by the Government—I say it is an indecent thing to propose that there should be no remedy, that there shall be nothing to prevent the Indian agent, of his own motion, handing in to the revising officer a list of the Indians placed on the reserves, and to have their names entered on the voters' list. There is nothing to prevent the agent going to the revising officer, and from his payroll giving the names of those Indians, with a description of the holdings that will enable them to vote. You cannot tell who the person is upon the roll; you cannot tell what the Indian's property is upon which he qualifies. Hon. gentlemen opposite say: Oh, it will necessitate the running of surveys, that could not be got through in time for this election. That was one of the great objections which the First Minister saw. If there had to be a survey and a description given of the separate holdings it might necessitate such steps being taken in the way of surveys which would not be completed in time for the Indian to vote in 1887. And that is what the Government want the Indian vote for—it is, above all things, to vote in 1887, for in that particular year the Government think that, if ever they will need the Indian vote to save them from an outraged people, it will be then. I do not, however, ask that the Government shall not avail themselves of the Indian vote at the next election. My motion does not go so far, but it simply provides that there shall be a description given of the Indian holdings.

Mr. MILLS.

It has been pointed out by the First Minister, by a letter from one of the Government's agents, that the Indians have a system of land transfer among themselves; that the transfers are recorded in a book; but that book is controlled by the Indian agent and is not open to public access. If electors went to the agent and asked to have access to that book they would be denied. I want that book to be made open, so that a description can be given of the different locations, as is done in the case of white men; because if this is not done, I hold that the Indian vote is in the hands of the Government and will be controlled by them. Am I to be met and told that my proposition shall be voted down because it draws an invidious distinction? Am I to be told that by the First Minister, who has placed Acts on the Statute Book by which the Indian is not allowed to lease his land, make a will, who, if absent from his reserve, in the United States, for five years, forfeits all rights in the land, who has put such Acts on the Statute Book; and yet, forsooth, we have to be told that my proposition is to be voted down, because I have ventured to ask that the Indian shall be allowed free agency in this matter of having his name placed on the voters' list. I ask that the Indian shall not be placed in a position in which the Government can place his name on the roll without his consent, and I am not afraid of what the First Minister suggested, that in my own county the Indians would regard this proposal as an affront, and consider I was drawing invidious distinctions. I have very great doubt whether, in my own county, the Indians will avail themselves of the privilege of voting. I have in my hand a letter written by a gentleman of standing in Haldimand, in which he states distinctly that the Indians spoken to in regard to this matter of giving them the vote said they did not want the vote and would not have it. I believe that will be the case largely, and I have reason to know that they will resent it. But if the Indian agent can go and place their names on the list, without their consent, they will be compromised. And then there might arise an agitation among the white people, setting forth that the Indians, having claimed to be placed on the list of voters, must bear their share of municipal taxation, must contribute to the county rates, and to the cost of the administration of justice; and thus there will be questions raised that should not be raised, and feelings excited that have not been excited before; and that result is not in the interest of the Indians. My motion asks that the Indians shall be consenting parties to having their names placed on the voters' list, and that they themselves shall make a request to the revising officer to be so entered. I do not propose that the Indians shall travel miles in order to enter their names; but the revising officer might, after proper notice, visit the reserves, for the purpose of making up the voters' list. The First Minister says we must not pass this amendment, because it will draw invidious distinctions. That argument is not worthy the attention of the committee. That the Indian property should be described, as the property of white people is described, is surely a fair proposition, and that evidence should be given under oath as to the value of the improvements is surely a fair proposition, and the same remark applies to the suggestion that the post office address should be put in the published list. Hon. gentlemen opposite, when they assume the responsibility of so dealing with the Indians, cannot blame me for not having pointed out the danger involved in proceeding to force on them a measure they do not want. Why do I think they do not want it? Last Session the First Minister introduced an Indian advancement Act, one which had been much enquired about since 1830. It was stated that the reports of the Indian agents went to show that the bands were not sufficiently advanced to have a simple form of municipal government among themselves. Last year the First Minister placed on the Statute Book an Act by which the more advanced Indians