

the train in the town of Selkirk where I met him, that there could be no doubt that the Indians had been the victims of the white man's cupidity. I appeal to the hon. minister (Mr. Oliver), who is responsible, to remember that at one time this band of Indians was strong and mighty in the land, and they did not mete out the kind of justice to their white brethren that we are meting out to them to-day in this House.

Now, I would like to say a word or two regarding this band of Indians. They are the descendants of the band who were the first to offer the right hand of fellowship to Lord Selkirk's hardy settlers who landed in the Red River district in 1812, and were allotted land at Kildonan. The property of the settlers and their animals were safeguarded by these Indians. The word of Chief Pegeus and of Prince was the law all over that country, and the rights of the settlers were protected by this very band that have been treated in the manner I have shown by this government. During the first Riel rebellion, where do we find these men? Every one of them loyal to the flag. When Riel had Dr. Schultz a prisoner under sentence of death, this band sent word to Riel to release Schultz or they would attack the fort. Schultz was released, but was taken again a few days later, after Riel had been reinforced by French halfbreeds. But Schultz made his escape, and was kept in hiding among these Indians until he could get out of the country, which he did by the assistance of Joseph Monkman, a grand old native of the country. Later, when good men were needed by Great Britain on the Nile for the expedition sent for the relief of Gordon, among the best of the rivermen sent out from Canada were to be found twelve or fifteen of the St. Peter's band. And, later still, during the last Riel rebellion, some of the best scouts the government had were St. Peter's Indians. This band was loyal at all times, although tempted by those who were leading the rebellion against the Canadian government. These are the men who have been practically thrown to the wolves by this government; these are the men who have been deprived of their inheritance, and upon whom this government has allowed its officials to perpetrate what I believe to be one of the most rascally transactions ever perpetrated in this country in connection with the Indian Department. This transaction reeks with dishonesty to my mind, and I think that if the minister did not think so too we should have had a fuller investigation long ago. But he seems to be afraid to touch this question—afraid to let in the light. Surely it is the duty of the Superintendent General, as guardian of the Indians, to protect these men, to protect them even from themselves if necessary.

Mr. BRADBURY.

and especially protect them from the public, and to take their side in such questions as this. I should not be required to stand in this House, and contend for the Indians; that is the duty of the hon. gentleman who is the guardian of the Indians. This matter has been brought before him in as forcible a manner as I am capable of doing. I am sure he has had plenty of opportunity to take the right course. I could tell the hon. gentleman of letters he has received from his old political friends, strong men, men occupying prominent positions in the city of Winnipeg who have verified a good deal of what I have told him to-day. So this is not a political matter with me. There is no politics in this; it is a matter of justice to the poor unfortunate Indians, men whom we ought to protect.

An hon. MEMBER. They have no votes.

Mr. BRADBURY. No, they have no votes. I contend that this treatment of the St. Peter's Indians is a blot upon the escutcheon of Canada. Up to the time this government came into power, it was the proud boast of Canadians every where that we had treated our Indians well, and that our Indians were satisfied. But now the cry goes up from this band for British justice. These men tell me in private conversation, 'This is not what we expected from Great Britain.' Many of these men do not realize the difference between Great Britain and this government. But there is a difference, thank Heaven! They appeal to-night for British fairplay, and that is all I am asking. I ask that this royal commission shall be granted. I have tried to be fair, I have tried to discharge my duty as the representative of the part of the country in which this transaction has taken place; and I now urge the government to grant this royal commission.

I move, in amendment:

It is the duty of the government forthwith to appoint a Royal Commission for the purpose of making a prompt, thorough and complete investigation in the negotiations which resulted in the surrender of the St. Peter's Indian Reserve, and into the said surrender and all circumstances connected therewith, and into the price or other consideration received by the Indians for lands allotted to them under the terms of the said surrender, and into the price or consideration received by the government for lands included in such surrender and afterwards disposed of by public auction, and into the locating of the said Indians on other lands and generally speaking into all matters and transactions in any way connected therewith or relating to the said surrender and everything leading up thereto and resulting therefrom.

And that counsel selected by the said Indians should be permitted to appear for and represent them before the said Royal Commission throughout the said investigation, and that the fees, charges, and any expenses of the said counsel should be paid by the government.