

House of Commons Debates

THIRD SESSION—ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT.

SPEECH

OF

MR. G. H. BRADBURY, M.P.

ON

ST. PETER'S INDIAN RESERVE

OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 1911

Mr. G. H. BRADBURY (Selkirk). Mr. Speaker, it will be remembered last year I called the attention of the House to the manner in which the surrender of the St. Peter's Indian reserve had been secured. At that time I pointed out that the Indians at St. Peter's alleged that they had been practically cheated out of their reserve. I pointed out that the methods employed by the government agent had been anything but creditable to the government. The hon. Superintendent General of Indian Affairs (Mr. Oliver) replying to my remarks, said, at page 7071 of last year's 'Hansard':

I am sure the House will not expect me at this stage of the session, would not wish me to make a detailed criticism of the four hours' speech made by my hon. friend from Selkirk (Mr. Bradbury) at the close of the last sitting of the House. My hon. friend is entitled to the credit, if credit it be, of having made the longest speech of the session. May I add my humble appreciation by saying that I believe never, since this chamber was erected, has there been delivered in its walls such a persistent and sustained tirade of unfounded assertion, of unwarranted insinuation; a tirade that, in its gratuitous inexactitude, is an offence against the privilege of parliament and an insult to its intelligence.

This is the language with which the hon. the Superintendent General opened within a three and one half hour's speech which was intended no doubt to destroy the force and effect of one of the most serious indictments ever delivered against the Indian Department of this country. After such a tirade of carefully prepared criticism of my humble efforts to discharge a duty which I felt imperative on me as a representative of the part of the country where this outrage occurred, I think I had a right to expect, and the House had a right to expect, that the hon. gentleman who started out with such a flourish of trumpets would have at least made good his reckless assertions; it was surely his bounden duty to demonstrate to this House the correctness of his bold and I think reckless statements in justification of the use of language verging on what would be considered unparliamentary, and which was certainly undignified and hardly worthy of a minister of the Crown.

You can read the minister's speech from end to end without finding one fair or intelligent argument to justify his opening criticism of my speech. Neither can you find one fair or one intelligent argument in