

is being done under the provisions of Mr. Mowat's Bill, and the right hon. gentleman was not correct when he said he was following in Mr. Mowat's footsteps. What is the object of the Bill? We all know that the Indians in the North-West are taking the scalps of the white people there, and this Bill is for the purpose of scalping Reform members who have seats in this House. The hon. gentleman is after their scalps in a cowardly fashion. I say this is not manly warfare—it is Indian warfare in the truest sense. It is just possible that the hon. gentleman in giving these Indians votes is providing a place for himself, or other members of his Government who may be defeated in their constituencies, at the next general election. What a glorious representative the Indians of the North-West would have in the person of the leader of the Government! It would be a soft place to secure his election, because the hon. gentleman could compel these Indians to vote as he pleased; and no doubt they would be delighted to hail as their representative the man who has been decorated with the tawdry tinsel given him by the mother country; he would make a noble chieftain to lead them out in the plains of the great North-West, or in this Parliament. I believe that this measure is being passed with the same purpose and intent which actuated the right hon. gentleman when he passed the Gerrymander Bill, and when he obtained money from Sir Hugh Allan to corrupt the electors of this Dominion. He knows that there are constituencies in Ontario and in the other Provinces which can be affected by the Indian vote, and he hopes to attack the seats of hon. members on this side of the House, or to secure the seats of his own supporters, by influencing that class of voters. But, Sir, I believe that there is an over-ruling Providence in the affairs of this country as well as in the affairs of all other nations. I believe there is a limit to the corruption which a Government may pursue, and to the tactics they may adopt in the direction of perverting the free will of the people. I believe there is a time coming when they can go no further, and I believe that time will come when the next general election will take place. I believe that the next House will be composed of men who will represent the free and independent electors of Canada—men who will come here untrammelled and unfettered, and who will not sit behind the leader of any Government, and back him up in solemn silence in anything he attempts. I am satisfied that just now the people are being aroused with regard to this matter, from one end of the Dominion to the other. I am satisfied that they are being roused to the highest pitch of indignation, as is shown by the letters which pour in upon us from every part of the Dominion.

The committee rose.

ABSENCE OF THE SPEAKER.

THE CLERK. I have to inform the House that I have received a letter from Mr. Speaker, in which he asked me to inform the House of his unavoidable absence during this sitting, in consequence of the serious illness of a member of his family.

It being six o'clock, the Deputy Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

House again resolved itself into committee on the Franchise Bill.

Mr. SOMERVILLE (Brant). When the House rose I was stating that the people were aroused at the enormity of the attempt which was being made to subvert their rights, and the Opposition are comforted and strengthened by the letters and telegrams which are coming to them from all directions, encouraging them to make further efforts to prevent this

legislation from being placed on the Statute Book. The subject is almost an inexhaustible one; we have debated it for a week at a serious disadvantage, by reason of the silence of the Government and their supporters—I say the subject is almost inexhaustible and we might debate for weeks upon this one word "Indian." I find by the report on Indian Affairs that there are 131,952 Indians in the Dominion. I shall make a few quotations from this report, in order to show that these Indians, except such as have been properly enfranchised, are not men who should have the power to vote. Is it proper that these Indians, who live on the bounty of the people of this country, who are paupers, who are regarded by the law as incapable of regulating their own affairs, should be entitled by their votes to swamp the votes of the free and independent people of this country? I say no greater outrage was ever attempted to be perpetrated in the Dominion of Canada. Why not pass an Act of Parliament at once, to say that the agent of the Government on every Indian reserve in the country shall have power to cast the votes of all the Indians in the reserve for whatever candidate he sees fit. It would be more straightforward than the course proposed to be taken by this measure. Now, I will not make any further quotations. Does any one who reads the report of the Indian Department, or who reads the Indian Act, think that any injustice will be done to the Indians by leaving them in their present state? The Premier of the Dominion has still time to retrace his steps and recall this Bill. It has not been asked for by the free and independent electors of this country. It has not been asked for by the Indians themselves; and it is an insult to the white population of the entire Dominion that this concession should be made to savages, to men who are infants, to all intents and purposes, who are wards of the Government, and who are in no way entitled to be placed on a level with the free citizens of this Dominion. The arguments which have been put forward in support of the views of the Opposition are incontrovertible. The fact that not a single man on that side of the House has dared to get up in his place while this debate has been going on and attempt to justify the step which the Government have taken is the best proof that could be given that our position is incontrovertible. The hon. First Minister cannot defend the Bill himself. He dare not defend it, because there is no defence for it. His followers have not defended it, because they have been whipped into subjection. They have had their mouths shut. And I say it is an outrage upon the people of this country that this measure should be forced through in silence at this stage of the Session. I call upon the Government to retrace their steps and withdraw this Bill. If they do no more, they should drop this word "Indian." There is time still for them to repent of the evil which they are seeking to do; and I hope that to-night we shall have an exhibition of true patriotism from the Premier and his followers, and that they will act upon the advice of the Opposition, and withdraw this obnoxious measure. The interest of the Government, if nothing else, demands that that should be done. After three months of waiting we are just about where we were when this Session began, and who is to blame? Certainly not the Opposition. We have been ready and anxious to do business, but the Government have not brought down their measures in time for consideration. I say that now they ought to submit to the intelligent arguments which have been advanced by the Opposition in this debate. I say that the intelligent electors of the country have been insulted, and will continue to be insulted, if this word "Indian" is kept in the Bill, and if the rights of the people are trampled on, as they are, by every provision of this Bill.

Mr. SPROULE. I think we are passing through one of the most painful periods that has ever been experienced in the history of the Canadian or English Parliament. We