

would be that the law was only consolidated last year, and there was no necessity for re-opening the question after so short an experience. Then the Bill does not provide for the enfranchisement of the Indians, for according to them the rights, opportunities and privileges of citizens is, I think, the only solution of the Indian question, more especially the only solution which affects the more advanced tribes, on whose behalf and with respect to whose circumstances, I am more particularly acquainted. Any change that has been made in the law is only in the direction of still more firmly fastening the shackles of tutelage upon them—a change tending to keep the Indians in their present condition. I speak on behalf of 3,000 Indians, among whom six missionaries have been labouring for the past thirty years, and who have twelve public schools and an industrial institute. In that band there has never been but one enfranchised under the Act of 1868, and that Indian was unable to get the land to which he was entitled; he petitioned to be restored to his former condition as an Indian. If there is such a record after twelve years' experience, is it not time that some step was taken by which more progress might be made? The whole Indian law discourages the assimilation of the whites and the Indians, and the solution of the Indian problem can only be found in wiping out the distinction which exists between the races, in giving the red man all the liberties and rights enjoyed by the white man, and entailing upon him all the responsibilities which attach to those rights and privileges. For those reasons I am opposed to the discussion of this subject at the present time. The Indian question is the question of the country. It means, as we know from the Estimates brought down yearly, the expenditure of millions for the maintenance of the Indians—it means one of the most pressing and vital questions of the hour, and I warn the House, as I warn the hon. the First Minister, that legislation in the direction proposed, old-time legislation, simply means that it will entail upon the people, year after year, and for all time to come, the voting annually of hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep the Indians in the low, degraded state in which they are at

present. What I advocate is this: That we should have an Indian policy, which will not only tend to relieve us from those heavy burdens, but will give to the Indians more rights than they now possess, and wipe out the race distinctions that now exist. The policy adopted by this Government, whether mistaken or not, has had in view the object that the Indian should not have a wrong done him. We have endeavoured to show ourselves superior to our neighbours in the management of those men. I submit, and I say it without egotism, that without any greater ability than other hon. members possess, that I know more of this subject than most of the members, because it has been forced upon my consideration. I wish my words had weight enough to induce the hon. the First Minister to allow this measure to lay over. I would be glad to render any assistance I could in trying if we could introduce a Bill, next Session, which would bring about what I think the hon. gentleman desires, and by which our Indians may be benefitted to a much greater extent, and in a more rapid manner, than is possible under the provisions of the Bill now under consideration.

MR. WHITE (East Hastings): The hon. member stated that he did not want to address the House at this period of the Session. At what period would the hon. gentleman like to speak? Have the Government said we must close? This House can, if necessary, sit all next week, or the following week, in order to complete the business of the people. The hon. member has said some very true things. It is time we began to give our intelligent Indians all the rights and privileges which pertain to other classes of the community. He has referred to the fact that we are yearly giving thousands of dollars which are of no real benefit to the Indians. I believe that is correct. We are making them believe that the country will support them, and putting them in a position in which they have no credit or standing in the community. We should no longer treat the Indians as children. Something should be done to put them in a position to make them know and feel that they were responsible to themselves and to the country. On one reserve there are not more than two Indians; the rest are half-breeds, and many of them are edu-