

April 8, 1874

PORT STANLEY HARBOUR

Mr. CASEY moved for a Select Committee to enquire into the management of the Port Stanley Harbour since 1859, said committee to consist of Messrs. MacLennan, Norris, Irving, Cockburn, Stuart, and Casey. He said that in 1859 this harbour, which up to that time had been managed by Government, was transferred to the London and Port Stanley Railway Company, on condition that all the revenue of the harbour was to be expended in keeping it in repair. Since then the harbour, as well as the Port Stanley Railway Co., had been transferred to the Great Western Railway Company, and the harbour had fallen into bad repair.

The object he had in moving this resolution was to find out what had become of the revenues of the harbour, whether the Railway Company had carried out the trust reposed in them; whether they had appropriated these revenues properly, or done something else with them. The suspicion was pretty strong that the money had not been expended in the way in which it should have been, or the harbour would be in better condition than it is at present. He could give evidence with regard to this point if the Committee were granted.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE said he hoped his hon. friend would not press his motion today. He thought that he should in the first place ask for such papers or information as the Government could give with regard to the matter, and then, if he still thought a Committee was necessary, he could move for one. It was quite possible his hon. friend could get all the information he required by applying to the Department, but if not Government would offer no objection to a motion to send for persons and papers.

Mr. CASEY said that he had all the papers last session that could be got, with reference to the matter up to that time. He would, however, allow his motion to stand. He moved for the production of additional papers which the Government might have on the subject.

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CONDITION OF SIX NATIONS INDIANS

Mr. PATERSON moved for a Committee to enquire into the affairs of the Six Nations Indians in the counties at Brant and Halton, said committee to have power to report from time to time, and to send for persons and papers, and to consist of Messrs. Scatcherd, Oliver, Snider, Thompson (Haldimand), Ross (Middlesex West), Fleming, Rymal, Charlton, White (Hastings East), Gillies and Paterson. He said that these Indians were the descendants of men whose forefathers had spilled their blood in the defence of this country, and it would be the last thought he would have in his mind, in moving such a resolution as this, to do them any injustice.

Without desiring to reflect in the least on the management of the Department or on any of the officers, or on the system that had been pursued with reference to these Indians, he would say that such progress had not been made in improving their condition as there should have been, and it was felt, both by the Indians themselves and by their white neighbours, that the time had come when some steps should be taken to put them in a position to conduct their own

affairs instead of having them still managed, as heretofore, by the Government. What those steps should be it was not for him to say, but he thought that if the House was kind enough to grant this Committee there might be such information elicited as would guide it in devising some scheme by which the condition of these Indians might be improved.

He held that in the case of these Indians, as in that of children, the keeping of them under a paternal guidance would not tend to the development of their intellects; a change somewhat radical was called for in the management of their affairs, for they did not now occupy a much different position from what they did years ago. He might be asked, why not include all the Indians in the Dominion in this motion? The reason was that all the bodies of Indians in the country would not be treated alike. Some were in a much more backward state than others, and therefore he felt that it was best to confine his motion to those Indians in the County of Haldimand.

Mr. PLUMB enquired if the Indians themselves had asked for any action to be taken in their behalf.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE said not that he was aware of. Some inconveniences resulted from the Government having the guardianship of the Indians, but they could only consent to such changes in the present management of affairs as would be assented to by the Indians themselves and would not seriously interfere with their prosperity and happiness. They were all aware of the inconvenience occasioned to the whites in certain parts of the country by the proximity of the Indian reservations, but they must remember that it was through these reservations being made that the whites were enabled to settle down quietly in the vicinity. They should recollect also that the Indians were driven into small corners here and there over the country.

It was the duty of Government to see that the rights the Indians have are not interfered with by any hasty action; but the Government would have no objection to an enquiry as to what might be done with reference to improving their position, as well as that of the whites surrounding them. He did not understand that the motion contemplated enquiry into any abuse.

Mr. FLEMING said it was a question whether or not the condition of the Indians would be improved by enfranchising them.

Mr. THOMPSON (Haldimand) said the Indians of the County of Haldimand, as well as those of the adjoining County of Brant, had serious grievances to complain of, and he had represented them to Government previously, but without producing much effect. He had a petition in his possession, signed by 169 chiefs and warriors of the Six Nations, and another signed by 51 members of another tribe, both with reference to this matter. The people in the county he represented had been looking forward to the time when the lands held by the Indians would be put into the market, and it was with this view that his friend from Brant South (Mr. Paterson) had moved for this Committee.

Mr. ROSS (Middlesex West) asked if it might not be well for the Committee to take into consideration the condition of all the Indians throughout this Province settled on Indian reserves. He thought the day was at hand when the Government would have to