

denial here. We have had no such denial. So, I think we may fairly assume that the statements set forth in these affidavits are absolutely true and reliable. If they be true, and considering the character of Indians—their incapacity, simplicity and improvidence—I think we may fairly assume that when Frank Pedley said to these Indians: There is \$5,000 in my satchel; if you will agree to the surrender of this reserve I will distribute it amongst you—that was, in substance and in fact, a bribe to these Indians. And, in bringing on that meeting at one day's notice and conducting it as the evidence shows that meeting to have been conducted, I submit, this government, instead of protecting the Indians, as, under their oath of office they were bound to do, were conniving at the plundering of these Indians. Now, the minister did offer one little reason for desiring to remove these Indians from St. Peter's reserve. He told us a year ago, if I remember aright, that there was no demand or request from the council of the town of Selkirk, from any clergyman in Selkirk or any citizen of Selkirk, or from any one at all except the defeated candidate Mr. Jackson, that these Indians should be removed. It was not, therefore, a case of the white people finding fault with the Indians being in their neighbourhood. No request whatever was made, according to the minister's statement last winter, that these Indians should be removed except that of Mr. Jackson. We have the minister to-day, with a good deal of warmth giving us a reason why these Indians should be removed, that they were degenerating, deteriorating morally; that they were worse than they had been forty years before. Well, I have looked into the reports of some of the inspectors of Indian agencies, and, with your permission, I will read some extracts from some of these reports. I have here the reports made by the late Ebenezer McCall to the government, dated 31st July, 1900. Mr. McCall was appointed to this position by the Liberal government. He says, amongst other things:

There seems to be a growing tendency among the Indians to attend divine service. Their interest in such matters was quite evident to me at St. Peter's.

That is where this band resided.

During the time we were there paying annuities, when religious services were held every evening in the adjoining chapel. These services, I noticed, were all well attended, and were attentively and respectfully listened to. It is almost a quarter of a century since I first visited these reserves, and in that time I have seen some marked changes. Twenty-five years ago St. Peter's was nothing but a string of huts and tepees, scattered along the banks of the Red river. The people were living upon fish, and spent their time hunting and trapping small game.

Their most pretentious vehicle was the Red river cart, whose creaking could be heard for miles crossing the silent prairie. To-day there are very few, if any, thatched-roofed houses. The buildings are shingled, well fenced, surrounded by gardens, with stables and storehouses adjoining. Twenty-five years ago the small house had but one room, in which all lived and slept, regardless of relationship. Now, the houses are divided into compartments. There has been an almost incredible advance made along the line of moral reform.

Although the minister tells us they had been degenerating morally for the last forty years.

Nearly all are united by our ceremony of marriage. I had not a single case of drunkenness while on my rounds. The fact that there is so little drunkenness among them generally, speaks well for the Indians.

Now, I have reports from several other inspectors along the same line, showing the rapid progress made by these Indians. The latest I have is that of Indian Agent J. O. Lewis, dated August 1, 1906. Speaking of these Indians, he says, amongst other things:

The St. Peter's Indians, as a class, are good labourers and expert with the ordinary implements of industry, handy men on boats and steamers. Last year one held the position of master on a large steamer, and another on a smaller steamer, while many hold subordinate positions. But whatever their success may be as wage-earners, frugality is characteristic of a few. . . . Out of a population of about 1,300, there are not many drunkards, and the band may be said to be temperate.

These are some testimonials from officers of this government, appointed by this government, testimonials as late as 1906, showing that these Indians on the St. Peter's reserve were making rapid progress morally, instead of degenerating morally as the minister would have us believe.

Now, the facts as established by affidavits filed by my hon. friend from Selkirk (Mr. Bradbury) show that St. Peter's reserve is a strip of land on either side of the Red river and somewhere about twenty-five miles from Winnipeg, extending up to the boundaries of the town of Selkirk. These inspectors tell us that it is all first-class land. This same man Jackson, Liberal member at one time, says in his report dated September 28, 1903, speaking of the land:

It is all first-class land; rich, black soil of great depth.

A strip four miles wide on either side of the Red river within 25 miles of Winnipeg, a trolley car running five and six times a day from Winnipeg to Selkirk adjoining this reserve, a steam railway on either side of the river with trains two or three times a day, land the best in Manitoba—what was