

Government, while the name of the other gentleman who was responsible for its receipt has been dropped, which I take as an evidence that he has been relieved from his duty. All these circumstances seem to me to point in the direction that there has been inefficiency, mismanagement, extravagance, and I do not know that it is too strong an expression to use, on the part of some individual, culpable neglect. It is a serious matter. The Indians of the North-West are entitled to humane treatment at the hands of the people of Canada. We have a rich domain there; we have a great country; it was theirs before it was ours; we have endeavored, I believe, in the past to do what is right and proper towards those Indians; we have entered into treaty obligations with them. I hold that the Parliament of Canada wish the treaty obligations made with the Indians of the North-West to be observed to the very letter, and if there be any deviation, that it be in the direction of giving the Indians even more than was secured to them by their treaty rights. Sir, they have been a loyal people to Great Britain in days gone by. They might have remained a loyal people to Canada, as I trust many of them are still; but I warn the Government that we must have men in the management of our Indian affairs who will see that there is honest and fair dealing with these Indians. We must not proceed on the line that they are little better than animals, that we can break faith with them, and that our policy must be to toss their food to them as to dogs. It is in our power to secure the good will of the Indians. It was our proud boast a few years ago, when our neighbors on the other side of the line had their turmoils, unrest and massacres among their Indians, to say that it was due to their agents taking advantage of the Government, and to point to our own country where we had no such difficulties. Sir, I am sorry to stand here, only a few years later, obliged to confess that we are not in a position to point to our Indian policy as proudly as we did before, and why? Because some of our Indians have been under arms against the Government, and I believe the necessities they were under made them ready to be worked on as they were. The Indian agents cannot avoid reporting upon the supplies which have been granted to the Indians, and on the treatment to which they have been subjected. You have also the statements of men in independent positions, who have seen these Indians, and they depict their treatment in language that goes to the heart of every humane man. And yet we find a Minister of the Crown saying, we do not deny that mistakes have been made, but when a case is brought to our notice we look into it. I ask if the charges made by such men as the Rev. Mr. McDougall and Rev. Mr. Robertson, as well as by many officials, do not warrant an investigation; and I ask if there has been an investigation of charges emanating from such sources? Instead of hon. gentlemen boasting of what they will do at the next general election, and being in a position to say, we had an investigation of these matters, and there is our report, what did the Minister do? He simply contented himself with saying; I deny the statements made, in the face of the fact that the documents showed that the Indians had been given food that was unwholesome and that was causing sickness and death. I am sorry to say that the head of this Department, no longer ago than last year, spoke in reference to this subject in such a manner and such a spirit as I could wish he had not shown. Last year, when the hon. member for West Huron was condemning the management of the Department and stated that frauds had been perpetrated on the Indians, the First Minister replied in these words:

"The hon. gentleman says there is a fraud on the Indians because the food is imperfect. It cannot be considered a fraud on the Indians because they have no right to that food. They are simply living on the benevolence and the charity of the Canadian Parliament, and, as the old adage

Mr. PATERSON (Brant).

says, beggars should not be choosers. But the Government attempts to get the article they advertise for, and they are pretty successful on the whole. Even in Ontario, the hon. gentleman has seen and heard of contractors sending in inferior articles, which were afterwards condemned. Up there, when they are sent to a distant post, they cannot be condemned, they have to be used. I do not think there has been any unwholesome food given, although it has not, perhaps, come up to the standard."

I say I could wish that these words had not been used, and that such was not the spirit on which we proceed in our treatment of the Indians. Sir, we may go beyond our treaty rights a little in aiding these Indians; but the Ministry have not the excuse that the Parliament of Canada would not vote them their money. The Parliament of Canada have not hesitated to grant them their money; the Parliament of Canada will not hesitate to do so, but will aid the Government in every legitimate way to induce the Indians to live on their reserves and become self-supporting. The Government have been using their energies in that direction; I give them full credit for what they have done, and I hope they will be successful in it; but I tell you, you cannot expect to accomplish that at once. You cannot expect to change the nature of the red man all at once. It is impossible to take men who have lived by the chase, and who delight to roam, band them together in a reserve, make them abstain from their roving habits, and settle down to cultivate the fields, raise food for their own support. It is impossible all at once to get them to secure supplies for themselves, but if they are unable to do that, must we say that they do not deserve anything, that they have no claims upon us? That they must, at any rate, have no right to any claim for frauds committed upon them, if we feed them with bad flour and send them to early graves? Shall we say to them: You have no claims on us, and beggars should not be choosers? No, we must deal with them in a larger spirit; we must give them time to change their habits before withdrawing from them that care which they demand at our hands. There are other considerations that ought to induce us to have regard for them. It is painful to read the reports of the Indian Department. I am sorry to say that, not in one or two years, but in the blue books for years back, you will find agents repeating the oft-told tale, that, unfortunately, owing to frosts, the crops of the Indians were destroyed. No doubt, you may say it is owing to inferior husbandry, and I trust the frosts will disappear from the North-West, as they have disappeared, through improved cultivation, from parts of Ontario, which suffered from them years ago; but the Indian is not to blame if these frosts occur under his present system of cultivation, and if he has become impoverished on that account, the Parliament of Canada should not lend a deaf ear to the statements made by the agents, to statements which have been made again and again, by responsible people who have seen these Indians so pressed by hunger, that in places whither they were forced to go to find sustenance, they sustained life by eating garbage from swill barrels and by feeding on carcasses of diseased animals. We have a right to expect that there should be better management of the Indians. Why, we keep up a small army of officers in that country. If you take the regular salaried officers there, you will find that, according to the Auditor-General's account, without the farm instructors and other hired agents, there are over forty regular agents or special agents among the Indians in Manitoba and the North-West. In that country, there are about 39,000 or 40,000 Indians, and there is an agent to about every thousand souls. Surely, with those agents and farm instructors, the Government ought to be able to look better after these Indians. It should be impossible that any misery should fall upon them, such as the miseries we read of, or that they should be compelled to take as supplies flour of the description I have mentioned, taken from the reports of the Government agents themselves. I might go further into