

Act, but you will find it in the Consolidated Statutes, on page 573. Briefly, the provisions of that law are these: That if an Indian desires to avail himself of the enfranchising clause, he makes application to the Superintendent General, who sends the application to the local agent of the band, with instructions to tell the applicant forthwith to secure a statement under oath, made by some clergyman, or stipendiary magistrate, or two justices of the peace, that they know the Indian, know him to be a man of good moral character, and to have been so for some years previous. As soon as that certificate is obtained the council of the band is summoned, and the local agent of the Superintendent General lays before the band the fact that a certain member of the band has applied for enfranchisement, that he has secured the necessary statement, and he tells the band that they have now thirty days in which they can make any statement under oath which they please, that would go to show that the Indian is not deserving of enfranchisement. At the end of that time, if any affidavit against the Indian is lodged, the local agent sends it, as well as the affidavit made under oath, of the clergyman, magistrate, or justice of the peace, to the Superintendent General, who looks at them, and determines from the evidence before him whether, in his judgment, the Indian is fit to be enfranchised or not. If he thinks he is, he gives him a location ticket and he enters on a period of probation. He allots him a certain portion of land, with the consent of the band, and that portion is the proportion he is entitled to, by dividing the total acreage of the reserve by the total number of Indians upon it, and giving the man and his family their share of the land. He dwells on that land for three years, and is called a probationary Indian, and at the end of three years—it may be longer, at the discretion of the Superintendent General—but not before the end of three years, if he gives evidence of being able to conduct his own affairs, then the Superintendent General grants to him letters patent, conveying that land to him; and even then, under a late Act, he is subject to a restriction which was not embodied in a previous Act, that he cannot sell or alienate his land. I will read one clause of this enfranchisement Act, which will show clearly the distinction which it lays down between Indians and other residents of this country. (Clause quoted). Now, you see clearly the position they occupy. The Indian, after three years probation, after proving himself worthy, receives letters patent from the Government, making him an enfranchised man, and removing him from the control of the Superintendent General—making him free to make his own bargain like other men. It requires all that, in the judgment of the First Minister and of this House, before the Indian can have given to him the rights of enfranchisement. You may pass a Bill to enable him to vote, but he is no more enfranchised, no more a free man, than he is at the present time. I desire that the advanced Indians of this country may be led up by kindness, and not driven by force, to the desire to relinquish the tribal habits, and make application for enfranchisement—to give him every liberty we possibly can give him, and when you have given him that, give him with it, as you are bound to do, the right to vote. But the proposition of the First Minister is not to enfranchise the Indian; he is to leave him in the state of tutelage, the state of minority, which he occupies now, with the management of his affairs not in his own hands, but in the hands of the Superintendent General and his agents. Under these conditions, without any liberties, without any power to control his own affairs, you propose to give him a vote. Against that proposition we raise our warning voice. You propose, with one stroke of the pen, to give a vote virtually to all the Indians. Educated and uneducated, barbarian and civilised, you give to the lowest and most degraded of them the same right to vote that you give to

Mr. PATERSON (Brant).

the intelligent Indians who belong to the more advanced bands, such as I have in my own Province. In the enfranchisement clauses, on page 573, section 82, of the Dominion Act, it is provided:

“The sections next following shall not apply to any band of Indians in the Provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba, and in the North-West Territories, or the district of Keewatin, except in so far as the said sections are, by proclamation of the Governor in Council, from time to time, extended to any band of Indians in any of the said Provinces or Territories.”

Thus, the right hon. gentleman provides that even the privilege of asking to be enfranchised shall not be given to the Indians in Manitoba or British Columbia, because, in his judgment, they are not sufficiently advanced, even to warrant their asking for it. Are we to be told now that we are discussing a question in which no principle is involved, and are merely speaking against the Indians? No; if the hon. gentleman's proposition were to elevate the Indians, to give them greater privileges than they now enjoy, he would have no more ardent supporter than myself; but it is not a privilege to give to a man, whose affairs are managed by the Government of the day, who is not at liberty to buy and sell his own produce without the sanction of the Governor General, the right to vote. That right may be given to these people, but it will be but a piece of machinery which the Government, if disposed to use their influence, can work in their own behalf, and the votes pretended to be given the Indians would be virtually the votes of the Government given in their own favor. The hon. the First Minister cannot believe in his own heart that these men are capable of intelligently exercising the right of the franchise. What do the reports of some of his own agents in the Province of British Columbia show? On one reserve it is stated that there is but one respectable Indian in the whole lot, and it is intimated that the Indians there traffic in the virtue of their own wives and daughters. Yet, they would have the right to vote under this Bill. Read the report of the Superintendent General and some of his agents of the British Columbia Indians, and then mark the kind of people to whom it is intended to give the right to vote. Read the reports, and see how completely some of these men are dependent on the Government, dependent on them for bounty, fed by the Government, and then ask me if we are safe in giving them the right to vote, when that vote is absolutely controlled by the Government of the day? We are forced to the conclusion, a conclusion distasteful to hon. gentlemen opposite, but a reasonable conclusion, that this provision is not made with the desire to elevate the Indians, but that the Government may exercise the power they have over these bands, scattered in many different counties, to weaken the little band of opponents that stand against them in this House and strengthen the seats of some hon. members opposite, who feel that they are insecure without this aid. I have only one remark to make in conclusion, and that is that if the member for Kent (Mr. Landry) desires to be true to the position he has taken he will vote for the resolution of the hon. member for Bothwell, which provides that the Indians who are enfranchised, who occupy the same position as other classes of the community, should have the same civil rights and liberties as are given to other classes, but that those who are not in the same position, those who are minors, under the control of the Government, may not have the right to vote given to them until such time as they are removed from Government control and have the power to manage their own affairs.

Mr. FOSTER. By this time I should suppose that hon. gentlemen opposite, having been allowed the fullest latitude for discussion for almost a week, should have had ample time to debate this question to their hearts' content. Giving full credit to hon. gentlemen opposite for all the ability they possess, and there is, no doubt, a great deal of ability