

these regulations came upon them so suddenly that they had not sufficient notice to prepare themselves. In a particular place called Garden River, where the people are not Indians, but rather French half-breeds—and the population on the coast of Lake Huron are partly French and partly of Indian origin—at this particular place the people were deprived of the privilege of fishing in the fall, and the consequence has been starvation among them in the past winter. I drew the attention of the Department of Indian Affairs to that matter, and, as usual, met with a very kind response. They were ready to do everything they possibly could, and, I believe, they made the poor Indians in that section an advance in the moneys due them for one year ahead, in order to help them through the winter. But that was not enough, and their suffering has been very great. Now, Sir, the Indians of the North West, when deprived of natural food to which they had been accustomed for centuries, the buffalo, received aid from the Government. The Government must do it, because these Indians are able to take their own part; they are powerful, and they make themselves felt, and their grievance ring from one end of the Dominion to the other. But these poor people on the shores of the great lakes, although they suffer as much as the Indians of the North-West, from the white men coming into their waters, and sweeping off the food on which they have been accustomed to depend, their suffering does not attract so much attention. There is another feature connected with this question which the hon. gentleman has mentioned, and that is that certain payments were to have been made to these Indians under a solemn treaty. The Government of the day engaged to make certain payments to the Indians on the great lakes on account of the lands they had relinquished, lying between the lakes and the summit of the watershed. Under the two treaties it is ascertained and acknowledged that there is a sum of over \$300,000 due to these poor people. Now, Sir, a dispute is going on between the Government of Ontario and the Government of the Dominion, as to which Government should pay the arrears due to the Indians. The Government claims that as the land was apportioned to Ontario on which the payments were, in fact, made dependent, on the sale of the land, and were a lien on the land, Ontario ought to pay the arrears. What I maintain is this, that no matter what Government should ultimately pay the amount, the Indians in the meantime should be paid, and this matter settled between the two Governments afterwards as to which should furnish the funds. The Indians in many places are suffering now; while undoubtedly in many places they have advances in prosperity and are very well off, in other places they are very badly off. There can be no doubt that this amount is due. It is acknowledged by the Indian Department and by both Governments to be due them, and I think the payment of that amount should not be longer withheld.

Mr. ALLEN. The more I hear of the Indian question the more I am satisfied that the proper way to treat the Indians would be to enfranchise them, to give them their property and let them have possession of it, the same as white people. The Indian fishermen of whom we have heard

to-day are located along the different rivers and lakes, but they are not qualified to go into fishing profitably. They depend on white people for their fishing, and if the fishing grounds were allowed to remain in their possession the Indians would not make them pay. They would catch some fish for themselves, but it would be a hardship for the white fishermen on those lakes if any arrangement should be made to prevent them fishing on all those waters. I believe the Indians would be far better off if they got their lands and were taught farming—and a number of Indians now cultivate considerable quantities of land. If they were to attend to their farming business it would pay them a great deal better than fishing, because they have not the capital, the experience or the judgement to guide them in carrying on the fishing business as do the white men, who catch fish in large quantities, pack them in barrels with ice, and ship them to the United States. The whites engage the Indians to fish for them, and that is the only way they can make a living at the present time. I would recommend the Government to act differently with the Indians. Give them their lands; make them work those lands; persuade them, as much as possible, to give up fishing, except for their own use. They would then be better off, be better citizens and more comfortable, and such a result would be better for the country, better for the citizens at large, better for our fishermen, better for all persons concerned, and would involve less trouble, annoyance and anxiety to the country and to the Government.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. I followed what the hon. gentleman who put this motion before the House, and what the other hon. members have said on this subject. Of course, there is no objection to the motion and to the papers being brought down. The mover of the last motion has made two or three suggestions to the Government. The first was in regard to the fisheries. He thinks the Indians are not properly treated in that respect, and that a source of revenue to them, or of subsistence has ceased, and that those fisheries are now in the hands of private individuals, and therefore the Indians cannot use them. I observed especially what the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Dawson) stated when he read an extract, which I understood to be an extract from a treaty made with some of the Indians, by which it would appear that certain fishing rights were reserved to them. Of course that Department is not specially under my direction, and I am not in a position to answer the hon. gentleman now. But I will not fail to call the special attention of the sub-head of that Department to the point, so that he may lay it before the Superintendent-General as soon as possible. There cannot be an intention on the part of the Government to deprive the Indian of their rights, no matter what those rights are. If they are entitled to certain fisheries according to their treaty, the Government will, no doubt, take means to recognize those rights, and have them again placed in the possession of the Indians if possible, and if not, to compensate them for those rights. Another suggestion is made by the mover of the resolution, namely, that in order to encourage Indians to improve their stock and agricultural implements, the Government should give them an encourage-

ment in money, and that when an Indian would put aside for that purpose \$100 the Government should add an equal sum or a certain amount in order to encourage them. This is a suggestion which I am not ready to say the Government would accept or not, but it is worthy of consideration; I thank the hon. gentleman for having put it before the House. The hon. member for Algoma also spoke of arrears due to certain tribes amounting to a large sum of money, and the hon. gentleman said the difficulty is this, that the question is whether the Federal Government should pay it or whether it should be paid by the Ontario Government. I think if the question has come to that point some settlement might be found between the two Governments, the powerful Government of the Dominion and the powerful Government of that large Province, so that they would not, on such a question in dispute between the two Governments, deprive the Indians of that to which they might be entitled. Some means must be found by which this difficulty between the two Governments may be removed and the Indians have the amount due, if it is due to them. The hon. member for Grey (Mr. Allen) made another suggestion. He would go at once and enfranchise the Indians. I do not suppose the House or the community would object to enfranchise the Indians, but only when they are ready for enfranchisement. They have been under the care of the Government, which has done everything possible to improve their position in social life and to educate them, and there can be no doubt that before many years have passed a large number of Indians will have been enfranchised. but I differ from the hon. member for Grey, and I do not believe it would be for the benefit of the communities near which those Indians live, to enfranchise them before they are ready. It would not be in accordance with our duty as a Government and Parliament to give them liberty and place them on the same footing as white men before they had attained that degree of civilization and education which would enable them to advance in life. You do not do it with children. You try to educate them and bring them up, and then, after a number of years, when the young man or the girl is able to get on in life, then freedom is given them, if I may use the word. I think, therefore, we should take care not to enfranchise the Indians too soon, but as soon as they are ready for enfranchisement then it should be given them. There is no objection to the motion.

Mr. PATTERSON (Brant). I suppose the hon. Minister has not forgotten that the very parties he is now condemning as unfit to manage their own affairs are the parties to whom he gave the vote last year.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. I could answer the hon. gentleman, but I do not suppose that we should, on a side issue like this, begin again the long discussion we had last year, in which the hon. gentleman took so prominent a part.

Mr. EILLS. We are not beginning a long discussion, but just referring to the subject and beginning another.

Mr. GUILLET. I feel sure that the granting of the vote to the Indians would be the means of promoting their education and preparing them for the exercise of the franchise. This is good evidence of that in the fact that some of the hon. gentlemen opposite who were opposed to the enfranchisement of the Indians have been going among them.