

tion. They cannot remain much longer isolated, as they have been for many years. They have of late years received assistance from the missionaries to live and to learn how to live. That time has now almost ceased, and they will have to be assisted by the Government. The people are so poor that at least eleven months in the year they live on fish, and fish only. Although the country has immense natural resources they have not as yet been developed, and if not developed they cannot be taken advantage of. It is well known that so long as a country is inhabited only by Indians there is not much to be expected of it; but when civilization has penetrated into that wilderness, as it will shortly, there is no doubt we will find an immense addition to the wealth of the Dominion from that part of the country, which is so great in extent that it is nearly as large as British India. It may be said that we have already a vast area in this Dominion to develop without attempting to do anything for the present for the Mackenzie Basin; but it is known to many of us that in certain parts of the Mackenzie Basin are to be found vast forests of valuable timber which are only awaiting the axe of the lumberman to convert them into a source of revenue to the country. In parts of that territory gold is found in paying quantities, and these mines only await development to yield large returns to those who will go in there and work them. In the rich valley of the Peace River millions of bushels of grain can be grown to supply other parts of the world. It is not necessary to remark that last year the Dominion profited largely by the crops we had in Manitoba and the North-West—more especially by the crop in Manitoba. It was a poor year, and there was not much grain produced in other parts of the Dominion, and if it had not been for the surplus crops in Manitoba the people in the eastern provinces would have been paying very large prices for produce. While it is well known that the soil of the Peace River country is very fertile, it may be stated that it also contains the best grazing land in the whole Dominion, and it is in the interests of Canada to have that country prepared as soon as possible for the advance of civilization. The preliminary step is to assist those who are there already. The time has perhaps arrived

when there should be established in that country industrial schools, where the Indians can be taught something and prepared to understand the benefits of civilization. When the light of civilization penetrates to that part of the country it will be an important duty of the Government also to provide in some measure a prohibitory law against the introduction of strong drink into that territory. We are familiar with the sorrows and miseries it has produced in the older provinces. Petitions from all parts of the country are now before Parliament praying for the passing of a prohibitory liquor law for the whole Dominion. It is well understood that such a law applied to a country inhabited by Indians would save them from destruction, because when an Indian has once formed a taste for fire-water he immediately becomes the most reckless and the most miserable man in the world. Under the circumstances, we cannot take too much precaution to protect the Indians of the Mackenzie River against the introduction of intoxicating liquors into that territory. It is the necessary accompaniment of civilization, no doubt. Those who go into a new country, bringing with them the light of civilization, bring with them also the bottle of death, and it is in distributing that bottle they sow the seeds of all those troubles, miseries and murders that we hear of from time to time in pioneer districts. Under these circumstances, I will certainly insist on the Government affording protection to those poor Indians of the Mackenzie River. It is my impression, that as yet they know very little of the use of alcoholic liquors. The Hudson Bay Company have been careful to prevent its introduction, and the Indians have obtained liquor only on rare occasions. What I fear is, that those who seek that country now for trading purposes or for the hunting of furs or large game will carry with them the curse of the liquor traffic. As I have already said, the population there is very poor, and any money that may be derived from it in the way of revenue from Customs should be set apart for the relief of the Indians. I have not been able to ascertain from the Public Accounts what has been collected; under such circumstances, I thought it was my duty to ask for information with reference to it, as I now do in my motion, and at the same time to ascertain what has been ex-