

chise the Indians, civilised and uncivilised, christian and pagan alike. That is what we protest against and what we have been protesting against during the last three days, and what we intend to protest against so long as his Bill is before Parliament. Then we have the utterances of the eloquent and elegant member for King's, N.B. (Mr. Foster). We always like to hear that hon. gentleman speak, although he often does not say very much; but his mode of address is always pleasant and elegant and adds to the amusement, if not to the instruction, of the House. What did that hon. gentleman say in discussing this question? I wish to draw particular attention to this, and I want the hon. members to notice how the hon. member for King's will record his vote, after hearing what the First Minister said this afternoon, that he proposes to enfranchise or give the power of voting to all Indians alike. The hon. member for King's said:

"Hon. gentlemen opposite get up and they thunder away for hours and hours, in a futile attempt to mislead the country into the thought that every savage Indian in the Great North-West is, forsooth, to be enfranchised, and made a voter under this Bill; that Pi-a-Pot and Pat-him-on-the-back, and those other Indians, with whose names hon. gentlemen are suspiciously familiar, shall have votes."

What does the First Minister tell the hon. member. He says: No; I intend to give the vote to Poundmaker, Strike-him-on-the-back, and all the rest of them. The hon. member for King's said that we had been thundering away all night and all day on a subject that was not before Parliament, and that we were answering statements which the First Minister never made. It is as plain as the noon-day sun that the First Minister, when he introduced the Bill, intended to confer the right to vote on the Indians in all the Provinces and in all the Territories, civilised and uncivilised. The hon. member for King's went on further to say:

"One hon. gentleman even let his fancy—no, not his fancy, but some peculiar and hitherto abstruse faculty, which has lain dormant in his mind since 1872—he suddenly let it loose this afternoon, and in most chaste, eloquent and courteous words, he devoted about an hour of his talk to the leader of the Government, as to how fitting he would be to be the representative of those wild hordes of Indians in the North-West. Now, that may have been very clever, from the hon. gentleman's standpoint; very *a propos* from the peculiar cast of ability which he possesses; very much in the line of the hon. gentleman's antecedents, and of his constitutional qualities of mind; but, at the same time, it was not just in the best of taste, in a parliamentary debate, to indulge in any such remarks or make any such comparison. These hon. gentlemen know, and, if they do not, I pity the lack of intelligence which could not know—they know as well as they know they are sitting there, that it is not the intention nor is it in the power of this Bill to enfranchise the wild hordes of savage Indians all over the Dominion, whom they have been talking about."

That is a great compliment to the First Minister. The hon. member for King's, in his wisdom, says we ought to know that it is not in the power of the Government or this Parliament to enfranchise the Indians in the North-West, the vast hordes roaming over the prairies of the Territories. The First Minister tells him he knows nothing about it; that that is just what he intends to do, to enfranchise Poundmaker, Strike-him-on-the-back, and all the celebrities of the North-West. That is what the hon. gentleman said he proposed to do, in reply to a question asked by the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills). Yet the hon. member for King's said we should know better. I tell him that Parliament has power to do anything, except make a negro a white man. It can disenfranchise you and me. The First Minister, if he saw fit, and no doubt he would be supported, might pass a Bill disfranchising all the Grits in Canada? Parliament has the power to do anything; it is only a question as to how far it can go without outraging public opinion. The member for King's tells us:

"There is no other intention, and if hon. gentlemen had not a political purpose to serve you, would never hear them coming to such extravagant conclusions as that all the wild Indians in the country are to be enfranchised by the Bill. We are here simply defining the persons who come under the term Indian, and when the appropriate qualification clause comes up, it will be time enough to amend it, if, by any possibility, the wild Indians, to whom hon. gentlemen opposite refer, are

included in it. Having read this Bill through, I fail to see where it allows those savage hordes of Indians to become enfranchised; but if, when the qualification clauses are reached, it is shown to my satisfaction that such is the case, I will join hon. gentlemen opposite in preventing any such possibility occurring."

Well, Sir, we have it now beyond peradventure, we have it out of the First Minister's own mouth, we have it recorded in the volume of the *Hansard*, we have it stated in the hon. gentleman's press, and the press throughout the country, that the intention of the hon. gentleman was to enfranchise all these wild hordes of Indians, no matter where they live, so that the hon. gentleman has now an opportunity of joining us, as he says, in preventing any such possibility occurring. It is true that the right hon. gentleman hinted now that he proposed to limit the operation of that provision to the older Provinces, but does that make it any better or more justifiable? We say that, to a certain extent, the educated Indian, the Indian who has had the benefit of some education, who has managed, by industry and perseverance, to acquire the necessary property qualification, ought to have a vote, but he does not propose to limit it to that class. What he proposes, and what the Bill enables him to do, is to allow every single Indian of the age of twenty-one years, who lives on a reserve, to have a vote, under the occupancy clause of the Bill, and the hon. gentleman knows as well as I do that there are not 10 per cent. of these tribal Indians, even in the older Provinces, who can read or write their names. The hon. gentleman says that these Indians will not be influenced by the Government or by the Superintendent General, because they have the ballot. Well, Sir, who will serve as scrutineer, when these gentlemen of whom, as I have said, only a very small number can read or write, will record their votes? Who will see how they vote? It will be the agent of the hon. gentleman, and it is folly, the rankest kind of folly, that these Indians, who know no more about politics than a jackass knows about navigation—it is folly to tell us that they will act independently, when they are surrounded by the political influence which will surround them. The hon. gentleman says they can read and write, but I would ask him to visit some of the tribes in the district from which the hon. member for Algoma comes; let him travel through that region, and he will find that the number capable by their intelligence and education of exercising the franchise will be very limited. He need not leave his own Province, for he will find there a large band of Indians living, not as civilised people live, but living in the lowest possible degradation; and yet these are the people whom the hon. gentleman even now proposes to enfranchise by this Bill. I say that many of the Indians of Ontario, especially those in the Georgian Bay region and in the disputed territory lately awarded to Ontario, are wholly unfit to exercise the franchise—just as much so as the wild hordes who roam over the prairies of the North-West—and still he proposes to enfranchise those tribes. I am told that in the other Provinces the same state of things prevails; that few of them are educated; few of them read the newspapers. There may, of course, be some, such as the chiefs, or others, who have been at school or college; but these are entitled to the franchise; and if the hon. gentleman wants to be reasonable and fair, if he does not wish to grasp constituencies out of the hands of the men who now retain them, he will limit the franchise to those of the intelligence necessary for the proper exercise of that power. But that is not his object. He knows, as well as I do, that in the constituency of the hon. member for Brant, the hon. member for Bothwell, and the hon. member for Middlesex, the hon. member for North Ontario, and the hon. member for North York, there are bands of Indians who still maintain their tribal relations, who are still under the influence of the Superin-