

Up to this time fully half of the band present had not been able to get into the building, and did not hear what had taken place. The building being too small to take the vote in, we were asked to go outside. Then Mr. John Semmens, the inspector of Indian agencies, spoke loudly in Cree, saying, 'All you that want \$90 go to this side, indicating where the chief and council were standing, the others go to the opposite side.' The crowd separated under great excitement, a great many not knowing what they were doing. After they were separated, some of them moving from one side to the other, not knowing what they were doing. Mr. Semmens and myself started to count the votes that were against, but when we got through counting we turned around to count the other side. I was told then that the other side was counted. I did not know who counted the other side, and they claimed they had a majority of seven. I was astonished to hear this, and sized up the two sides and satisfied myself that there were a larger number standing on my side than there was with the chief and council, but I had no opportunity whatever of counting the number that stood with the chief and council. I protested to Mr. Semmens, saying to him that he should not have said that you who want \$90 go on one side, but you should have said you that want to surrender the reserve go to one side, and you that don't want to surrender the reserve go to the other side, then the people would have understood what they were voting for.

I declare that I consider the vote irregular and improper, as it was not stated fairly to the people, nor was it fairly counted as it was counted by different parties.

I would like the hon. minister to listen to this declaration from this man because it is very serious. He says:

When Mr. Pedley read the surrender that he had with him prepared, he read it in English, and fast, that even I who understood English, found it difficult to understand the terms of the surrender. This was not interpreted to the band in their own language, consequently very few, if any, understood the conditions of the surrender. I am satisfied that Mr. Pedley and the others came determined to secure the surrender. The surrender was all prepared without any consultation with the band, and they brought the \$5,000 with them. Without this money on the ground, I am satisfied they never could have secured the support they did in favour of the surrender.

I wish to place on record another short declaration by William Sinclair, who is an interpreter and whom the government employed as such on several different occasions. William Sinclair says in the middle of his declaration:

I further declare that I heard Mr. Pedley say that he had \$5,000 in his satchel which he would divide among the Indians, providing they would make a surrender of the reserve, if not he would take the money back.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true and know-

ing that it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of the Canada Evidence Act.—Wm. Sinclair.

Declared before me in the town of Selkirk, in the province of Manitoba, this 22nd of January, 1910.—C. R. Smallman, commissioner.

Well, Mr. Speaker, judging from the manner in which the hon. minister dealt with the serious indictment against his department last year, I had good ground for feeling that he did not meet the charges fairly and that he begged the question from beginning to end. Especially in his opening remarks was the minister entirely unfair, and he failed to demonstrate during his whole speech any justification for the language with which he prefaced his remarks. That is a sample of the methods employed by the hon. gentleman in answering this indictment which is laid at his door, not by me, but by his wards, the Indians. It will be remembered that I made a statement last session regarding the signing of the receipts for the patents, and this is perhaps one of the most serious phases of the whole question because probably more hinges on it than hon. gentlemen in this House can possibly conceive at present; whether the minister does or not. I submitted at that time many declarations from reliable Indians showing that they had never received or even seen their patents and that they had never, knowingly, signed any receipt for the same. This fact did not, however, trouble the Minister of the Interior who is responsible to this House for the management of that important department. He contented himself by saying that he had laid on the table receipts for most of the patents duly signed. These receipts were no doubt sent to him by the agents who had been parties to this scandalous transaction; but it never seemed to dawn on the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, as the legal guardian of the Indians, that it was his duty to investigate the allegation made by dozens of his wards, and if forgery had been committed, as seems quite probable, it was his duty to punish those guilty, and to rectify the great wrong done these wards of the people.

Here I intend to submit one or two declarations simply to sustain this charge. They have already been placed on 'Hansard,' but I desire that there should be no misunderstanding as to the minister having had the facts before him when he made his speech last year. I refer to the affidavits on page 7408 of last year's 'Hansard.' The affidavits state distinctly that those who made them had never seen their patents and had never given any receipt for their patents. This matter was brought to the minister's attention from time to time before he made his speech last year.