

sought refuge on the other side of the line, return so infrequently as to make them no longer a factor in the problem of food supply for our prairie tribes. I have no faith in the present efforts, in an agricultural direction, being likely to save us to any great extent from the necessity of feeding the Indians with imported food; and I believe that I am supported by most of the Roman Catholic clergy, and ministers of other denominations, who labour among them as missionaries, in the view that it is practically impossible to convert the adult Indian from his habits of the chase to the peaceful tillage of the soil at one step, and if this is the case, we have seriously to consider whether, in going on to locate and improve the present reserves, we are not making a serious mistake. I believe that, in view of the possibility of the right hon. Minister not having decided upon any definite scheme, a discussion of this nature, calculated as it is to elicit the opinions of those who have made the subject a study, it is the duty of everyone to express an opinion upon this difficult subject, and in offering my own, I commence with the assumption that the buffalo has ceased to exist as a source of certain supply of food to the Blackfeet and plain Crees. Roughly speaking, the Indian population of the whole of the prairie country, between the boundary line and the location of the Canadian Pacific Railway, is destitute of winter food, who now haunt the Mounted Police Stations and Indian Agencies, with all the consequent demoralisation, of which we have heard so much. While it is a fact that this starving condition exists among our plain Indians, their brethren of the wood are living in comparative plenty, and the difference is especially noticeable in the Crees of the prairie and the wood Crees. These two sections of our North-West population are the same people, speak the same language, and yet, while the horseman starves, he of the snowshoe, the trap, and the paddle, thrives, and is living in peace by some lake or stream, whose waters yield him fish when other food fails. Now, it so happens that north of located line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, on the confines of our fertile belt, and at the commencement of the immense wooded area, which, extending to the

Arctic Sea, is the last remaining haunt of fur-bearing animals on this continent, there exists the conditions whereby we may allow the Indian of the plains to indulge his love of the chase with profit to himself and relief to us in the matter of expenditure in the winter, when agricultural operations are impossible, without interference with such efforts as are at present being made to teach him the arts of a farmer. Believing as I do, Sir, that the attempt to suddenly convert the horse-riding, buffalo-hunting, plain-Indian suddenly into a farmer, I am opposed to the plan of making reserves in the region I have mentioned. This region is one which will be soon wanted for a white population, and the attempt to make its Indian population self-sustaining in the next ten years, by their efforts at agriculture, will fail, and the failure will entail a constant recurrence of the present expenditure, with probably a still larger increase. I believe the only available solution of the problem to be the transference of all our plain Indians to the district I have mentioned, located near the great fishing lakes of that region, where there would be absent none of the conditions necessary for successful agriculture, while the advance in the science of pisciculture would enable us to abundantly stock these lakes, which are not already supplied, with whitefish, thus forming for him a basis of supply which is found to be sufficient for all the different tribes of wood Indians. I believe, too, that physically and morally, this change would benefit the Indians, and the removal of all of our Indians from the neighbourhood of the boundary line would be to effectually prevent the possibility of collision with the American tribes, and, in part, the necessity of our very expensive Police Force. It must be remembered that our Blackfeet, peaceful and quiet as they have been as yet, are but another branch of the powerful, warlike and treacherous "Dakotah" nation to which the Sioux belong. With their removal north of the line of Railway we clear ourselves from the danger of their contact with the refugee Sioux, and we place them beyond the power of aid from the American branches of the same nation, and where the Railway gives us the power to strike hard in case