

Hon. Mr. MCFARLANE thought the time had arrived when some steps should be taken in relation to the Indian Reserves, for, as they were managed at present, they were of no benefit either to the Indians or anybody else, except perhaps to those who were engaged year after year in stripping the lands of the timber which made them valuable. He believed that some few instances occurred in Cape Breton where the Indians had been induced to settle upon those lands, but as a general thing they derived no benefit from them. He thought that the Committee should enquire into the matter, and ascertain whether it would not be to the advantage of the Indians to sell the lands and apply the proceeds to their use. It was true that the race which at one time caused so much excitement in this country was rapidly disappearing, still it was proper that the rights of those that remained should be protected.

Mr. DONALD FRASER agreed with the member for Cumberland that it was time that something should be done in this matter. In his county (Pictou) there was a large number of Indians, many of them in a state of starvation, and he did not suppose there were more than a hundred acres of Indian Reserves in the whole county, while throughout the rest of the Province there were large tracts. He thought that in those counties where these lands were situated, and where there were but few Indians, the lands should be sold, and the proceeds applied for the benefit of the Indians in other counties. He should like to be informed how the Indian money was distributed, and in what proportion it was received by the different counties.

Hon. Mr. MCFARLANE replied that it was not distributed by Counties at all. He believed that the Commissioner had taken great pains to ascertain where aid was most required.

Mr. LONGLEY did not agree with the member for Cumberland that the aborigines were fast disappearing from the country. He was informed by the Mac Mac Missionary that, so far from that being the case, they were rapidly increasing in number. In his opinion, the lands should be retained for the use of the Indians. As long as they were valueless, nobody took any interest in them; but the moment that there was a prospect of making anything out of them, there seemed to be a disposition to deprive the poor Indians of any benefit to be derived from them.

Hon. PROV. SEC. explained to the member for Pictou, that accompanying the Commissioner's Report was a detailed statement shewing the amount of blankets used, and to whom given.

Mr. BLANCHARD said that the original object of these reserves was to provide hunting grounds for the Indians, but as the country became more thickly settled they became useless for that purpose, and the result was that the Indians sold the timber to the white man, too often, he was afraid, not for the best purposes. Every effort had been made in Inverness (where there were large tracts of reserves) to induce the Indians to settle, but to no purpose. And he was inclined to think it would be more for their benefit to sell the land and apply the proceeds to their use, than to allow them to remain as they are, of no use to anybody and exposed to be plundered of the timber.

M. COLIN CAMPBELL said that complaints had been made to him that the blankets issued were too small.

#### CROWN LANDS, &c.

Hon. PROV. SEC. by command, laid on the table the report of the Commissioner of crown lands for the past year.

The report exhibits a large increase in the receipts over any former years. The gross sum amounts to \$38,398.76 for 1864, showing an excess over the previous year of \$18,949.74. The number of areas applied for was 97,383—exceeding that of 1863—47,852 acres. The expenditure for the department during the year for surveys, &c., in Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, including returned monies on rejected petitions, amounts to \$14,635.75—giving the nett proceeds of the year \$23,763. The report is also accompanied with an abstract exhibiting the number of acres applied for by each county, and the amounts paid respectively.

The Commissioner alludes encouragingly to the evidences of prosperity which these returns exhibit, and especially remarks upon the progress making in the Island of Cape Breton in adjusting the lines and bounds of settlers, who had many years since entered into possession of lands without title. On this subject he refers to a comprehensive report of Mr. Henry, Commissioner for adjusting these difficulties. From this report it appears that there have been 1673 lots surveyed, containing 237,204 acres—thus defining the lines and bounds held by 1598 squatters—at a cost of about \$4 per hundred, and removing all future grounds of controversy.

Both reports abound with various important suggestions for facilitating the work of the department, and carrying out the views of the Legislature in passing the act of 1859 for quieting titles in the Island of Cape Breton, and opening up new roads for the convenience of back settlers. The value of the lands already surveyed under the act, amounts, at \$44 per acre, to \$104,369, and a large amount of work is yet to be done.

Mr. CALDWELL presented a petition from Glace Bay, asking for additional mail accommodation.

Mr. MILLER asked the Government to lay on the table of the house a return showing the number of disputed applications for lands now pending in the Crown Land Office, or before the Executive Committee, with the dates of the several applications, the names of the applicants, and the counties in which situated.

Also, a similar return respecting disputed applications for rights of search, leases, etc., in the office of the Commissioner of Mines, or under the consideration of the Committee of the Executive Council.

Mr. BLANCHARD expressed the hope that the members of the Government would read the report of the crown land commissioner with care before they came to divide the road money; for they would find that in many parts of Cape Breton where people had settled who were engaged in developing the resources of the country, but small provision was made for the road service.

Mr. BOURINOT instanced, in illustration of this, the state of the road in the neighborhood of the important settlement of Gabarous, and said that it would scarcely be believed, yet such was the fact, that, within a year or two, they had no means of communication with