

ings as the measure it is now proposed to pass. I have myself witnessed the idleness, the dishonesty and the immorality of the people whom the Government now ask us to invest with the franchise, and I say the proposition is a monstrous one. This is an age of advancement. This is a Christian country. And, Sir, the people of this country will not stand such legislation. I say that God reigns on this earth, and he will not permit such legislation. Right is right, and fair play is fair play. I say that God will not permit such kind of legislation to prosper, and if the Government of this country think they will keep themselves in power by a piece of such iniquitous legislation as this, they will find themselves greatly mistaken.

Mr. WATSON. It seems that hon. gentlemen opposite are determined to put this Bill through without any explanation, but I cannot sit still in this House without offering my protest against it. I consider this clause conferring the franchise on Indians ought to be wiped out of this Bill. I hoped that the Government would see fit to accept the amendment moved by the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) which would give the franchise to every Indian who had made such progress in civilisation as would entitle him to it, such progress as we all hope they will make at an early day. I think by conferring the franchise upon those who are sufficiently advanced, it will make them feel a certain degree of responsibility, and so become good citizens. I find that hon. gentlemen opposite simply sit in silence and attempt no answer to the arguments advanced against this clause, and they offer no explanation as to what this word "Indian" in the clause is meant to include. I do not believe they thoroughly understand what that word means, and I propose to give them some information upon that point. I propose to give a description of some of the Indians living in the Province I have the honor to represent. From all the reports we have of those Indians I do not think the First Minister who has charge of that particular Department could suppose that the Indians to whom he wishes to extend the franchise, are fit to receive it. I know personally a number of those bands who will be qualified to vote under this Bill, and I am strongly opposed to the franchise being extended to pagan Indians, who participate in the sun dance and torture themselves. I should be only too glad to see the franchise extended to Indians so soon as they are able to give an intelligent vote, when they hold certain property in their own names and are amenable to the municipality in which they reside and are liable to pay taxes. But this Bill provides that Indians living on reserves who have a bit of land which, together with the house, is worth \$150, shall have the franchise, they being the very people in regard to whom the settlers are calling for arms to defend themselves. The Indians, moreover, cannot buy and sell articles, and if you buy from them you are liable to a fine of \$100. They are simply minors. I was a little surprised after the speech made by the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Dawson), in which he stated that the Indians living on reserves were minors and cannot vote, at the reply given by the First Minister. Evidently the hon. member for Algoma and the First Minister do not understand Indians in the same terms. I believe the hon. member for Algoma was perfectly right in his statement. Still the First Minister refused to make any other explanation than that an Indian living on a reserve should have a right to vote if he had a house and lot worth \$150. It has come within my own personal observation that an Indian band in Manitoba is living on other people's land. The band under Chief Yellow-quill have given the people in the West considerable annoyance. They have settled about thirty miles west of Portage La Prairie and claim the land, although it has been patented by this Government to settlers. About two years ago there was very nearly bloodshed on account of the settlers trying to eject

Mr. McCraney.

the band from those lands. Under this clause the members of that band will be entitled to vote on other men's property. They occupy the lands and cultivate a small portion of it, which is known as the Indian garden. They have moved from their reserve at Swan Lake. The agent at Portage La Prairie gives some idea of the habits of these Indians whom it is proposed to enfranchise. The general character of a large number of the Indians is not of the best. A great number of them are very immoral. Some of the Indians to whom this privilege of voting will be accorded are those who participate in the most disgusting customs and who traffic their females with the whites for purposes of prostitution. These are the people whom the First Minister intends to enfranchise. The thing is to be abhorred. (The hon. member then proceeded to read extracts from the report of one of the Indian superintendents respecting the condition of the Rossin River band, in which he spoke of the drunkenness prevailing among them.) The present Indian Act of 1884 set out plainly enough who should be enfranchised, and I trust the First Minister will adhere to that Act. It is not necessary to say anything with respect to the influence which will be wielded by the Government officials in charge of the Indians. I do not care what party is in power, difficulty will arise. Probably not a dozen Indians in Manitoba of the age of 21 can read and write. In a few years when the young Indians are grown up they will be educated and be able to give an intelligent vote; but when that time comes they will separate themselves from the bands and live like white people. The Indians further west, whom it is proposed to enfranchise, are not such people as we would desire to be enfranchised. We see them at the present time making use of ammunition furnished them by the Government, as means of procuring sustenance, to slaughter our young men in the far west. Especially is it undesirable at this particular time when trouble is prevailing in the North-West and when thousands of our young men are there for the purpose of suppressing rebellion, that we should enfranchise the Indians. It is a measure which the country will not stand, and the voice of the country is already raised against it. This debate has been continued all on one side. If hon. gentlemen opposite think we are mistaken as to our interpretation of the position, why do they not rise and make the necessary explanations. I hope the First Minister will amend this clause so as to clearly define who are to be electors. The word "Indian" has a very wide meaning. The hon. member for Algoma thinks that a half-breed is an Indian, and said that the Premier of Manitoba is an Indian. Such a view may be taken in Algoma; but in Manitoba one of the greatest insults that can be given to a half-breed is to call him an Indian, and I have seen almost riots occur on account of this name being inadvertently used. It is therefore clear that this word "Indian" should be more clearly defined. A man who votes should be amenable to the laws of the country. He should be assessed, and he should pay taxes on his property. I think the Ontario Act meets the case, for it provides that an Indian who is receiving his yearly allowance from the Government may be entitled to vote in municipal matters. I think that is fair and there will be no wrong done. But put up an uncivilised Indian, a pagan Indian, to kill a white man's vote, is ridiculous, and the people will not stand it. If a band of 40 or 50 Indians came up to the polling booth in Manitoba and attempted to kill the votes of an equal number of white men who pay the taxes, who build the roads and bridges and support all the expenses of the Government, it would raise a rebellion in that country.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I wish once more to appeal to the House to adjourn the session of this committee. It is of the utmost importance that the members and officials of the