

agent down. This practice is deplorable and something ought to be done to stop it.

Mr. OLIVER. The hour is getting late but I might make a statement in regard to this particular reserve that may be of some interest to the committee. But, principally I want to draw the attention of the committee to the difficulties which appertain to the position which I at present happen to hold. A few minutes ago the hon. member representing Medicine Hat (Mr. Magrath) voiced the opinion, and voiced it well, that the department should use every endeavour to secure the surrender of a certain reserve or parts of two certain reserves. Now my hon. friend from Selkirk (Mr. Bradbury), in whose district the department was successful in securing a surrender last year, complains strongly of the method and of the results of the surrender. The surrender was negotiated by a gentleman who is now the chief justice of Manitoba. He was appointed as the sole commissioner to secure the surrender because of his prominence, of his standing and of his legal ability. It was thoroughly understood that the question was a most difficult one, that it was most complicated, that the surrender could not be secured by any ordinary negotiations, and therefore a gentleman in whose legal ability, as well as in whose character, I presume, everybody had confidence, was selected. He carried the surrender through with a great deal of difficulty, after many hitches and after it appeared that it had become impossible. However, he did secure the surrender and it certainly contained many peculiar terms. I do not suppose there ever was a surrender like it before, and I fervently hope that there will never be one like it again. One of the terms was that the Indians should be given title to some part of the reserve. It was a remarkable condition but I place it before the House as an evidence of how far the department is willing to go in order to meet the Indians and in order that the land may be turned to beneficial use. The Indian would only sign the surrender of the reserve as a whole when he got this particular piece of land as his very own to do with it as he pleased, and when he got it as his very own we had no control over him as an Indian Department or as a government. He could dispose of it as he pleased and the buyer who wanted that land had to buy it from him under such terms as might be agreed upon and took such chances as any man must take who deals with another man who has not been used to ordinary legal responsibilities in business transactions.

Mr. ROCHE. Was it upon Mr. Howell's recommendation the department granted these 16 acres?

Mr. OLIVER. It was not on his recommendation; it was in accordance with one Mr. BRADBURY.

of the principal terms in the treaty which he made with the Indians, and the term upon which the whole surrender hinged. I regret it should be said that improper means were used to secure this surrender. I cannot imagine that the gentleman who is now Chief Justice Howell would be a party to any improper proceedings.

Mr. BRADBURY. I did not say so and would not like to have it inferred that I did.

Mr. OLIVER. My hon. friend did not say it. I say that the surrender was on the responsibility of the present Chief Justice Howell, and I do not think that he would be a party to anything of that kind. The Indian Department certainly had no knowledge of it because the matter was placed absolutely in Mr. Howell's hands. I regret that the Indians concerned are not satisfied, because in my humble estimation, the Indians got a great deal the best end of the bargain, and if I had been transacting the business in person they certainly would not have got as good terms as Mr. Howell gave them. However, if my hon. friend knows the Indians as well as I do he will know that the fact that an Indian is not satisfied with his bargain is not evidence that he did not get the best of it. I had hoped all along that in securing this surrender it was for the benefit of the Indians themselves, and for the benefit of that part of the country. I believe the Indians will be better off on the new reserve and that the town of Selkirk and the surrounding country will be very greatly benefited by the fact that the surrender was made.

Mr. BRADBURY. I do not want it to be inferred for a moment that I intended to cast any reflection on Chief Justice Howell. What I said was that these rumours were circulating around Selkirk and I have it from one of the head men that they did receive from that commission four or five times more land than the average Indian received. In addition to that, these men were kept constantly in the employment of those who were purchasing this land. I know one man who told me himself that he paid the chief and council \$2 per day for attending at his office and helping to negotiate sales. I have a letter here from Chief Prince's son which bears out what I state, namely, that the chief and council received some inducement for agreeing to make that settlement; an inducement which the band knew nothing at all about but which they have since found out and of course they are very much dissatisfied. I think I know the Indian pretty well, as I have lived among them for 27 years. I know there is a great deal in what the minister has said, that once an Indian parts with something he wants to get it back again. The point I was trying to impress