

putting the Indian on the same footing as the white man in this respect?

Mr. McCALLUM. I am in favor of giving the Indian all the rights we have already conceded to him under this Bill, and you are not, at this stage, going to take them away. We have decided to enfranchise the Indians, and by a side wind you want to take his name off the list.

Mr. MILLS. The hon. gentleman is perfectly willing to give the Indian a vote, to treat him in this particular as a white man, so long as he will vote the Tory ticket; otherwise, he is not so disposed to treat him as a white man, and he is not afraid of offending the Indian by discriminating against him. If you propose to deal with the Indian as an ordinary citizen, to do away with the discrimination that exist between him and the white man, to impose upon him the full responsibilities of citizenship, the hon. gentleman is opposed to that. He wishes to retain him as a ward of the Government, but at the same time he insists upon giving him the electoral franchise. There are several things worthy of consideration besides what the hon. gentleman has said about discrimination. If I remember rightly, the hon. gentleman has, during this discussion, discriminated against the Indians of British Columbia and Manitoba. It is true many of the Indians of British Columbia are, perhaps, more energetic and enterprising than those on this side of the Rocky Mountains, but he has not hesitated a moment to declare that all the Indians of British Columbia shall be disfranchised. They might not be so useful to the Government as the Indians near the capital, and therefore it is not necessary to confer on them the franchise; but as regards the Indians of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, who are immediately under the influence of the Government, it is of great consequence they should have the right to vote, as otherwise the existence of the Government might be put in jeopardy. Now, I observe that the First Minister, speaking on this subject, said he did not wish any invidious distinction to be made, and that this amendment would make an invidious distinction between the Indian and the white man. But the hon. gentleman began by making the distinction. He has provided in this very Bill, and in the amendment he proposed himself, that the Indian shall not vote merely for the value of his reservation; that his vote shall depend upon the valuation of the improvements he has put upon the reservation. On that very matter the hon. gentleman has made a distinction between the white man and the Indian. Why? Because he knows the Indian has no such interest in the reservation as the white man has in the property he occupies. He knows, notwithstanding what he read from Mr. Plummer, that the title to the Indian reservation is in the Crown and not in the Indian; and it is on the value of the Indian improvements he proposes to give the Indian the franchise. But most of the improvements upon which the Indians will qualify are improvements made by the Government. Take almost any Indian band in the west: their lands have been divided amongst them; location tickets have been issued by the Superintendent General; houses have been built, not by the Indians but by the Government, out of the Indian funds which have been provided by the sale of these Crown lands reserves for the Indians, and there would practically be no difference between giving the Indian a vote on the value of the land he occupies, and giving him a vote on the value of the improvements which have been made, not by him, but for him, by the Superintendent General.

Mr. McCALLUM. Was it not done out of his own money?

Mr. MILLS. If it be their own money, why are not the Indians allowed to manage their own affairs? If he is to obtain a vote, why is he not allowed to use his own money

Mr. MILLS.

in his own way? If a white man comes into the possession of property which he has not purchased by his own labor and his own industry, and is not competent to look after it, he loses it, and with it loses his vote. The hon. gentleman knows that if the Indian were allowed to control his own property he would not hold it, and would not have a vote. Therefore, he will not allow him to control it, but gives him only nominal possession of it, and allows him to vote on property held by the Crown for him and over which he has no control. The hon. gentleman says it is not fair to put the Indian in a different position from the white man. Why, suppose an Indian rents part of his holding to another Indian, or to a white man, with the consent of the Superintendent General, what does the law provide? That law which the hon. gentleman himself put upon the Statute Book provides that unless the Indian farms what he retains in a satisfactory manner, the rents which are derived from the portion of land he has transferred to a tenant for the time being shall not go to him, but to the band to which he belongs. So that, although the hon. gentleman professes to be so anxious not to wound the feelings of the Indian, and so anxious to protect the interests of the Indian, yet he treats the Indian, so far, as a mere serf to the Government, that he will not allow him to receive the rents of lands he has placed in the hands of a tenant, unless he cultivates well the part he retains for his own use. I observe the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Dawson) went on to state that the Indians in the United States were treated as white men.

Mr. DAWSON. I instanced one State.

Mr. MILLS. The Indian in the United States, before he can exercise the right of citizenship, must break with his tribal relations, must ask to have conferred upon him the responsibilities of an ordinary citizen, and when he has done so he is in all respects dealt with precisely as any other member of the community. That is precisely what we have provided in our Indian Act. We say that upon certain conditions he may be emancipated, that he may apply to the Superintendent General, and when he is emancipated and receives his own portion of the reserve or allotment belonging to his band, he then has his own property under his own control, he is liable to taxation, he is capable of entering into a contract, he may sue and be sued—he has, in fact, all the responsibilities of an ordinary citizen; and if he has not the capacity of looking after his own property he must lose it, as any other person would. Such an Indian is entitled to the elective franchise now. There is no objection to his then exercising it; if he shows he has the capacity of managing his own affairs, we say let him be enfranchised, but so long as he is the ward of the Government, under the control of the Government, we say that the franchise should not be conferred upon him. The committee have agreed that it shall. We have the next step in the proposition of my hon. friend. He proposes that before you confer the elective franchise on the Indian, or put his name on the voters' list, he shall apply in person. If he is interested in becoming a voter he will do so; if he is not, the public will derive no advantage, nor will it be a gain to himself to have his name on the list. How is it with the white population? Their names are on the assessment roll; the revising officer takes the name of a white man from the assessment roll. The Indian is not assessed, he pays no taxes, he is not under municipal control, you do not know what his property is worth, and you have not the ordinary means of information in his case. I hold, therefore, he should be obliged, personally, to apply to the revising officer to have his name on the roll, and to give such a description of his property as will enable any one to identify it so as to ascertain its value. That is only a necessary security against fraud, against the voters' roll being stuffed with names of parties that should not be there