

chise, on the ground that he is an Indian, or on the ground of any inherent or innate incapacity to become a citizen. We, on the other hand, believe that he has the capacity to become a citizen, and we claim for him the same right that is accorded to the negro, or to men of any other race in the country—the right to become a citizen in the ordinary way, and to obtain the franchise in the same way as every other citizen does.

Mr. CAMERON (West Huron). I think if there is any necessity for reason being assigned for the long discussion that has taken place on the interpretation clause, that reason will be amply supplied by the statement made by the First Minister this afternoon, especially in connection with the statement he made on the afternoon of Thursday, and the statements made on Saturday by the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule), the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Dawson), and the hon. member for Kings, N. B. (Mr. Foster). It is perfectly manifest that the First Minister and his followers are not at one on the subject. It is perfectly clear that those hon. gentlemen I have mentioned do not read this passage as the First Minister reads it. It is perfectly manifest that the interpretation put upon the word "Indian," in the clause of the statute, is not the same as it is in the clause now suggested by the First Minister. Now, Sir, we were told, on Thursday afternoon, by the First Minister, in reply to my hon. friend from Bothwell (Mr. Mills), that this Bill was not limited in its operations to enfranchised Indians, to the intelligent Indians, nor to the educated Indians, nor to the old Provinces. The First Minister knew perfectly well that Poundmaker does not live in the Province of Ontario, nor in any other of the old Provinces; he knew that Big Bear does not live in any of the old Provinces; and yet he stated, in reply to the member for Bothwell, that these two noted individuals would be entitled to vote under his Franchise Bill. Now, the statement made by the First Minister is perfectly clear. It is contained in the *Hansard*, and I suppose the *Hansard*, on this subject, can be trusted in its report of the language of the First Minister. What does *Hansard* say upon that subject? On Thursday afternoon Mr. Mills put the following questions to the First Minister:—

"Mr. MILLS. What we are anxious to know is, whether the hon. gentleman proposes to give other than enfranchised Indians votes.

"Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes.

"Mr. MILLS. Indians residing on a reservation?

"Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes, if they have the necessary property qualification.

"Mr. MILLS. An Indian who cannot make a contract for himself, who can neither buy nor sell anything without the consent of the Superintendent General—an Indian who is not enfranchised?

"Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Whether he is enfranchised or not.

"Mr. MILLS. This will include Indians in Manitoba and British Columbia?

"Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes.

"Mr. MILLS. Poundmaker and Big Bear?

"Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes.

"Mr. MILLS. So that they can go from a scalping party to the polls."

Now, Sir, it is perfectly manifest that whatever the First Minister proposes to do now, he intended all along to give the vote to the Indians in Manitoba, the North-West, British Columbia, and the older Provinces, civilised and uncivilised, Christians and pagans, no matter what their condition was. The proposition of the First Minister was that every one of these Indians should be enfranchised. What did the hon. gentlemen who addressed the House on the other side say? What did the hon. members for Algoma, for King's, and for Kent, N. B., say, and especially the hon. member for King's? Did they take the same ground as the First Minister—the same ground as the First Minister occupied this afternoon, when he was again interrogated by the hon. member for South Brant (Mr. Paterson)? No; the

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hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Dawson) did not take any such ground. That hon. gentleman goes upon the supposition that only the Indians who are enfranchised under the Indian Act of 1880 and 1884 are entitled to vote under this Bill. We are told by hon. gentlemen opposite that we have been taking up three or four days in discussing a question; but hon. gentlemen on the other side and their own leader do not agree in the interpretation to be put upon the statute. Can it be wondered at that we should discuss the question at length, in order to extract from hon. gentlemen opposite the real intention of this Bill. No hon. gentleman opposite condescended to answer. We challenged hon. gentlemen opposite with intending to overwhelm the free and independent vote in many of the constituencies by the electoral vote of Indians, by giving to Indians in the North-West, Manitoba and British Columbia, the power of voting, to pagan and civilised Indians alike. We were not answered. No one undertook to deny it. They could not do so, because the First Minister, in declaring his intention to Parliament on Thursday afternoon, stated in the plainest possible English that his intention was to give the vote to all Indians in the Provinces, and in the Territories, when they were entitled to send representatives to Parliament. I should like to know what the hon. member for Kent said upon this subject, and I shall be very careful to see how he votes. Let us see what that hon. gentleman said. He said:

"Sir, I say it matters not what nationality a man belongs to, whether he be an Indian or negro, if he possesses the same qualifications for the franchise that a white man does, he ought to receive it."

That is as we all say on this side of the House. If he possesses the same qualification he is entitled to exercise the electoral franchise, whether negro or Indian, or whatever his nationality may be. So says the hon. member for Kent. What is the First Minister's answer? Let the hon. member for Kent and the hon. member for King's take their answers from the First Minister. He says: No; I intend to enfranchise, not simply the Indians in the older Provinces and in Manitoba, but Poundmaker, Strike-him-on-the-back, Yellow Quill and the Man-who-took-the-coat. Yet his own followers who, no doubt, were with him at the caucus when the matter was discussed, tell us a different story; and the member for Algoma (Mr. Dawson), whose election would be materially affected by enfranchising the Indians, tells us that such is not the intention of the Bill—that it was not intended to enfranchise the Indians, except those who have acquired by industry, economy and moral and good lives the necessary property qualifications to entitle them to vote. The hon. member for Kent went on to say:

"Why should not the Indians have the franchise as well as anybody else, provided they stand upon the same footing as others?"

So we say. If the Indians stand upon the same footing, has the property qualifications, if he pays taxes, if he is amenable to the laws of the land, if contracts can be made by him legally and enforced, if he can deal with his own property, then give him the power to vote, and if necessary allow him to be sent to Parliament himself. The hon. member for Kent went on further to say:

"All this Bill proposes to do is simply to place the Indians on an equal footing with other men, and to give them equal privileges, whenever their conditions are equal. That is the interpretation I put upon the Bill, and I believe the country will so understand it. While we refuse to give them the same privileges as we give white men, does such a policy not tend to keep them down? In view of these facts, I think there is no harm in adopting this clause of the Bill and enfranchising those Indians who are equally qualified with white men to exercise the franchise."

I ask the hon. member for Kent, is that all this Bill proposes to do? I ask the hon. member for King's, is this all the Bill proposes to do? No. It proposes to do a great deal more, and the First Minister slaps his followers in the face, and tells them that is not so, and that he proposes to enfran-