

to discuss it solely as it affected the Indians themselves and the public. If he imported into his argument either private feelings or party interests he strayed from the path of his duty as a legislator. So long as he kept the interests of the Indians and of the public in view he occupied an unassailable position. His method could not be challenged, nor his motives impeached. If he departed from that public ground—if there is reason to think that he had in mind less the interests of the Indians and of the public than of the party he serves, he placed himself in a most unenviable position. The reader will be left to judge for himself of Mr. Cameron's motive—whether that gentleman was moved, in making the speech in question, by zeal for the public welfare or for the interests of the Reform party.

In opening a discussion of the Indian question Mr. Cameron assumed a grave responsibility. Few of the Indians of the North-west are far removed from the primitive condition in which our fathers found them. They have very imperfect notions of the duties of the Government towards them, and of their claims upon the Government. They desire to get all they can; and they are deeply incensed when they think they have been wronged. The buffalo, formerly their chief support, has wholly failed them. They have suffered in consequence; they have been required to go upon reservations; they see white men settling upon land once wholly theirs; they cannot at once change their natures and acquire habits of application and persevering industry; and it is not difficult to make them believe that white men are solely responsible for all the changes that have come upon them and all the miseries that have overtaken them; or that it is the duty of white men to maintain them in comfort and idleness. A speech like that of Mr. Cameron spread among them will certainly give them exaggerated notions of their rights and of what they believe or may come to believe are their wrongs. And the nature of the Indian is to resent a fancied wrong after a very bloody