

tion with the department which I have the honour to administer. He has taken advantage every session to address observations on this head, and I have on some occasions obtained from the hon. gentleman valuable information, on which I have been able to act to the advantage of the department. But I never listened to the hon. gentleman when I was so disappointed as I was to-day. The hon. gentleman has confined himself almost entirely to the financial aspect of the Indian question; he has not referred to the general Indian question, he has not touched upon a circumstance which he must have found apparent if he had carefully read the report, the very great advancement made by the Indians during the last few years. If the hon. gentleman had gone into the figures, he would also have found that a very great reduction had taken place during the last few years in regard to an item to which we looked forward hopefully as being reduced in the future to a very great extent, that is the Indian destitute vote. The question of management is, of course, the one to which the hon. gentleman has referred, and the one item for which we have to find money for many years to come out in that western country, if we hope our Indians will continue in the same frame of mind they are to-day, anxious to progress and advance. The hon. gentleman, who knows the country pretty well, must be aware that if we were to withdraw the close supervision we have to-day on the Indians, especially in the west, they would retrograde and become as ignorant, as indolent and incapable of providing for themselves, as they were before we took charge of them. The hon. gentleman has referred especially to the cost of the Indians in the North-West and Manitoba, and he has also devoted considerable time to those of British Columbia. In regard to Manitoba, the hon. gentleman made the remark that he could not so much complain of the cost of administration in that province as in the North-West. It must, however, be remembered that the Indians in Manitoba are much less in number, and they are to a great extent in the same position as our eastern Indians. They are able to provide their own living, almost entirely, by fishing and hunting, and, consequently, we are relieved from the expense of exercising a close supervision over their reserves, and especially watching their farming operations. The only way we shall be able to reduce the expense is by keeping a sufficient number of employes at the elbows of the Indians in order to keep up their courage and assist and advise them in working their farms and gardens. Any one who will carefully peruse the report must see that the Indians of the western country are making great progress. In Manitoba we have eight agencies, where the agents draw salaries varying from \$900 to \$1,000. They have their medical officers. There is no reason why we should have a large staff in that province, because the agents are able to give the supervision necessary to the Indians in regard to their farming operations. In the North-West Territories we have 18 agencies, the average salary paid to an agent being \$1,200, and clerks are also provided, as they are absolutely necessary in order to keep correct returns of the issues made and the different operations on the reserves. The agents have to closely supervise the farm operations, and assist the Indians in selling their products, and advise them as to what should be sold and what retained for their

Mr. DEWDNEY.

own use, and for seed. If these matters are not attended to, the Indians will become as wild as formerly. The question might be asked why we have so many of the agencies? It must be remembered that they are scattered over a very large territory, and the number of Indians in the agencies varies from a few hundred to 2,000 odd. Of course, in order to make a calculation as to the cost of the management of Indians, it must be remembered that it will vary in accordance with the number of Indians. On the Assiniboia reserve, which the hon. gentleman cited, the average cost was a little over \$6; while on the Blood reserve, where the Indians are more numerous, the average was brought down to \$1.25. But even if the average cost is \$6 in the case of the Assiniboia reserve, that is one of those bodies of Indians that is practically off our hands. Last year and for several years previously they have progressed so rapidly until this year they have raised almost sufficient for their own use. This shows the necessity of having officers to supervise the Indians in order to keep down the very large expenditure we must be called upon to make, unless the Indians are able to provide food for themselves. In 1879 there was scarcely a house for an Indian to live in, now there are 5,000 houses, many of which are furnished comfortably. At that time they had virtually no stock; now they have over 16,000 head of cattle and horses, cows 3,000, 70 bulls, 2,000 oxen, 5,900 horses, 200 pigs. 13,500 acres are under cultivation this year, and they have also broken an additional 2,000 acres. Next year they will have between 15,000 and 16,000 acres under crop. Every acre to-day is broken by the Indians themselves; we have no white farm hands now, they have all disappeared. If we have to employ any labour on the reserves, we employ Indian labour, and they get the advantage of that employment, and all white labour is dispensed with except on a few reserves, where we have farm instructors proper who supervise the whole work on the reserve. In 1879 there were only 16 schools, with an attendance of 500 children; now there are 150 schools, with nearly 4,000 children in attendance, this return including the North-West and Manitoba. It is impossible to curtail the salaries of the agents in the North-West, for you must pay them sufficient to cause them to feel they are making a fair living for themselves. With respect to British Columbia, it is impossible to send men into the wilds of that country and pay them \$500 or \$400 when they will be called upon to live away from civilization. It is necessary to have an agent there, and we should pay him at least a fair salary. The hon. gentleman, in speaking of the cost of administering agencies in British Columbia, based his argument on the fact that there was a very small amount spent for relief, and that the largest items were for medical attendance. That has also been the case in the Maritime Provinces for years, but I think we ought to consider ourselves fortunate that that is the state of affairs, and that the Indians we are supervising in these provinces are really making their own living. Of course, they have difficulties to contend with and they want some one within easy reach to whom they can appeal in case of trouble, so that it is absolutely necessary we should have agents to attend to their business. In British Columbia, as the hon. gentleman knows,