

far more than the Indians got for it. Its location has been explained by my hon. friend from West Elgin (Mr. Crothers). I myself have been there and know the situation. Let any one go there and look at the locality, and just consider what the land is worth. Take the testimony of my hon. friend's own office, and the general opinion of people who know anything about the locality. It is within 25 miles of a city of 150,000 people, which will shortly be a city of half a million. It has four channels of communication open from it to that city throughout the year with the exception of some part of the winter season. It has steam railways on each side, an electric railway and water transport throughout the season of navigation. Do you mean to say that that land, situated alongside the very considerable growing town of Selkirk, and within 25 miles of one of the greatest cities of the west, and with constant facilities for transport—do you mean to tell me that that land in 1907 was worth no more than \$5.60 per acre? There is no use talking about any such price. It was worth at that time four times that price; and if the guardian had been faithful to his trust and had undertaken to get for his Indian wards all that could be got out of that land, instead of the small paltry sum which the Indians are to get, they would have been made rich by it. They had a right to that; the speculators had none. The guardian should have got that for them; but either through negligence or active participation, he enabled the speculator to get the profit and prevented the ward from reaping it. What happens? Persons who come to settle on that property and enter into active work of cultivating it must pay on an average from \$25 to \$60 an acre for it. So that my hon. friend (Mr. Oliver) has not even the excuse of giving the land to the real tiller of the soil at the bottom price. Instead he has enabled speculators to get it at the bottom price, and then the speculators hand it over to the real cultivators at the highest price. But what have the Indians got?

My hon. friend made an argument against himself out of his own mouth. He says that the Indian in 1907 was much worse than was the Indian of 40 years ago. Although the evidence is against him, he must be judged by his own view. If that view be correct, all the more reason why the guardian should have been the more careful to look after his ward. Taking his own view, if the Indians have deteriorated during the last 40 years, and are, therefore, more like children and less like men, they should have had all the more the best care that their guardian could give them.

No man can read the story through—and I have read it through carefully—without coming to the conclusion that there was either callousness to any of the best rights and the best interests of the Indian on the

Mr. FOSTER.

part of his guardian, or there was absolute, open knowledge that the Indian was being dispossessed in order that the speculator might have the greater gain and profit.

I do not want to weary the House by a recital of what is in the evidence, but I would ask any man just to read over the facts and circumstances and see if he can come to any other conclusion. To get up here and read an affidavit, in which a man writes just what suits him and no more and swears just exactly what he wants to swear to, and cannot be cross-examined, is simply abusing our credulity. There is no use in reading an affidavit of that kind in order to convince level headed men that everything has been properly done. Why, in affidavit after affidavit and evidence upon evidence, the fact stands out that the Indian agents themselves made it easy to sluice that property from the Indians and hand it over to the speculators, and it was done through the passage ways of backstairs influence, and drunkenness and truck—any device that could be used in order that the Indian might be despoiled at the lowest possible price to the speculator. Why, the agent himself dabbled in this thing, and the guardian of the Indians knew it and knows it to-day. The agent of the guardian appointed to look after his wards dabbled himself in these lands, and the guardian knew it, and knows it to-day.

Yet the silly, inane proposition is put before us to-night that if the Indian has been cheated by fraud or forgery, he can prosecute. Let the Indian prosecute! All you need is to put that proposition before you and look at it with one eye and you can see it is absolutely untenable and untrustworthy as an argument.

Now, look at the outcome. There was the property of the Indians in the trust of the Minister of the Interior, worth at least \$1,000,000 in 1907, and before the speculators get rid of it, it will have changed hands for pretty nearly \$2,000,000. What does the Indian get out of it? He gets 21,000 acres given to himself, and the average that he got for 18,000 acres of this were taken by three or four land speculators was \$5 per acre. And what became of the \$5 per acre that he got? The men did not get it in many cases. There were cases in which truck and false accounts and trumped up accounts were part of the payment made to the Indian. The Indian agent knew what was going on, and never interfered; the department knew well, before they permitted the change, that these men would have no chance at all in the hands of the speculators. Why, you might as well turn untrained children into the arena of business, and expect them to protect themselves, as to expect the Indians, under certain circumstances, to protect themselves in the disposal of property. Anyway, all