

Selkirk, Manitoba, January 26, 1910.

G. H. Bradbury,
House of Commons, Ottawa.

Band received one day's notice of meeting September 23. Notices, three or four posted on Sunday, September 22.

WM. ASHAM.

Then I have a letter from the same man inclosing this original notice which I have already presented to the House:

Dear Sir,—The inclosed is the original copy of the notice that was posted one day previous to the time of meeting for the surrender of St. Peter's reservation, effected September 24, 1907.

In face of these very clear and distinct sworn statements, which were before the hon. gentleman when he made his speech, I feel justified in saying that the minister could not expect this House and the country to take him seriously when he was speaking on this matter. Without any intention of being offensive, it was an insult to the intelligence of this House and the country to expect them to accept the hon. gentleman's explanation, and his flip-pant reply to such a serious charge as that which had been preferred against his department by his wards, the Indians of St. Peter's. This is one of the charges that I preferred in my speech, and which the hon. gentleman characterized as a tirade of unfounded assertion and gratuitous inaccuracies. If the rest of the hon. gentleman's speech was as inexact and unfair as it was in connection with this charge, then I say that the hon. gentleman was unfair during the whole time of his reply to this very serious indictment. I desire to call the attention of the House to another of these charges. These are very serious charges; these are not charges to be dealt with lightly, to be passed over in the flippant manner in which my hon. friend dealt with them last year. When the hon. gentleman was replying to the charge that the Indians had been induced to vote by an offer of money, the statement I made being that just as the Indians were about being divided one of the agents said: You who want \$90 go to that side, and the others go to the other side, my hon. friend from Victoria and Haliburton (Mr. Hughes) made the following interjection:

Mr. HUGHES. If I heard the hon. member for Selkirk aright, he pointed out that the call was not to those who were for selling the lands and those who were against it, but the call was for those who wanted the \$90 to take one side, and those who did not want it to take the other side. I know the minister has overlooked that.

The hon. minister replying to that statement said:

Mr. OLIVER. No, I have not overlooked it. I can only say that I did not wish to be discourteous to the hon. gentleman, and ques-

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tion the validity of the statement he put forward. I am merely generalizing in order to save his feelings, and I may be pardoned, I presume, for again generalizing, and again saying that offer a question such as that had been under discussion for so long a time, when it was a question of such importance, it did not matter what was said in regard to the vote. Those Indians knew what the vote was for, and they voted for or against with full knowledge of what they were doing, and why they were doing it. I do not wish to bring in personal matters, but my hon. friend followed by the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. Hughes) has seen fit to mention the name of Mr. Semmens.

Mr. HUGHES. I never heard of him.

Mr. OLIVER. If he had listened to the speech of the hon. member for Selkirk last night he would have heard of him, because it was Mr. Semmens who was said to have made this announcement. Now, the suggestion is that Mr. Semmens was a party to an impropriety in which the interest of the Indians was not preserved. Now, I may go, perhaps, so far as to say who Mr. Semmens is. I happen to know Mr. Semmens ever since 1873, when he was a Methodist minister in the city of Winnipeg, and at that time he was considered to be a young man of very considerable promise in the ministry, and ever since then he has devoted his life to the advancement and the betterment of the Indians.

It will be noticed how carefully the hon. gentleman evaded the serious charge made by myself and suggested in the question interjected by the hon. member for Victoria and Haliburton. The hon. minister did not deny that charge; he contented himself with pointing out who the agent was—the Rev. Mr. Semmens, who had been guilty of an impropriety if nothing worse. To make this matter perfectly clear, I desire again to place on record one or two paragraphs from the affidavits which I submitted last session. On page 7059 of 'Hansard,' in a declaration by John Flett, he says:

Just as the vote was going to be taken, I heard Mr. John Semmens, Inspector of Indian agencies, state loudly in the Cree language to the Indians present: All of you who want \$90 go to that side, indicating with his arm where the chief and councillors were standing. I am satisfied that these two statements, the one by Mr. Frank Pedley, and the other by Mr. John Semmens, influenced many to go on the side with the chief. The majority of the Indians did not know that they were voting to surrender their homes, as I am sure they did not wish to do. They were not asked the question: You that are in favour of surrendering the reserve, go to that side. Many did not realize that the vote was whether or not they should surrender the reserve, I am satisfied that if the question had been stated fairly the vote would not have been carried.

On page 7062 this declaration is made by Wm. Sinclair, an educated Indian, who was used as an interpreter by Mr. Williams, the minister's agent, who was sent