

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

increasing amounts, depending on circumstances and conditions in the particular area in which the welfare payments were being made.

It would be interesting, if this information is obtainable, to get an indication of the number of people who have been on welfare assistance, or who fall within the five separate scales of payment; that is, how many were on standard rates, how many on class A, how many on class B, how many on class C and how many on class D. Perhaps an analysis of that information will indicate that the standard rates are generally applicable throughout the country and that there are very few native Indian people who were able to qualify for the increased payments.

I understand there has been a tremendous increase in welfare payments to Indians. Of course this is a reflection of economic conditions in the nation as well as of other factors, and we all know that one can very easily come to accept welfare payments as a means of subsistence on a long term basis. I think it would be most unfortunate if native Indian people and others should come to feel that their whole livelihood was gleaned from welfare payments by the department. This would tend to sap any initiative that the individual might have and, incidentally, this applies not only to Indians but to non-Indians as well if we can dip our fingers into the public treasury and live on welfare or relief. There are some people in this society who are quite happy and content to live that sort of lethargic life. I think it would be most unfortunate if, because of economic conditions and other factors, our native Indian people should come to believe that their subsistence and income were dependent solely on welfare plus the foodstuffs they may collect on or near their reserve.

As an indication of the effect of the decline in the economy, coupled with the increased welfare payments and the transition or the change-over from a voucher system to a cash system, I hold in my hand one example which shows what can develop as a result. I have copies of a series of letters exchanged between an organization or company known as Robertson's Market in Sarnia and the minister, and between Mr. Robertson and Mr. Patterson, the superintendent of the Sarnia agency, and a Mr. LeRoy in Sarnia also, all dealing with accumulated bills of Indian people and some non-Indians. I understand that bills have accrued in Mr. Robertson's market to the extent of some \$5,300. This correspondence has been exchanged over the period of a year or a little more. Mr. Robertson's attempt, of course, is to get either from the Indian affairs branch or from band moneys direct payment to him for these overdue accounts.

[Mr. Howard.]

That, of course, is not the point I want to deal with, because I think his approach to the department in this regard is quite correct; but it does reflect an unfortunate set of circumstances, one in which the Indian people themselves find it necessary to charge up groceries and perhaps other commodities in stores with which they have been dealing. Subsequently, for a variety of reasons, they found themselves unable to pay these accounts. This is not beneficial to the Indians themselves, and it is certainly not helpful to stores like that of Mr. Robertson.

I only raise the point to indicate that I think a more concerted effort should be made to ensure that the native Indian people do not come to rely on welfare payments as their sole means of sustenance, and so that a man like Mr. Robertson will not in the future find himself in the position of having a great amount of credit on his books over a period of time, to such an extent that the continued operation of his business is impaired.

The minister mentioned last night that there is a vote of \$100,000 under the Department of Finance, I believe, for housing loans to Indian people as a sort of pilot project, and she indicated that in subsequent years this amount of money, depending on the experience, could very well be increased. I think it would be interesting if the minister could give the committee an understanding of the terms under which these loans will be made. I have in mind the interest rate that will apply, the term of the loan, whether there are any restrictions on the amounts of such loans, and all other statistical information relating to the lending of money and the repayment thereof. Perhaps the minister could make this information available later.

I have in my hand a document published by the Progressive Conservative association of Canada, I believe. It is called "The Record Speaks", and I should like to take the opportunity to make one or two references to it so far as Indian affairs are concerned. On page 11, in dealing with Indian affairs, two statements are made which are not in fact correct. When I say they are not in fact correct that is a polite way to put it, because I will show later that they border on deliberate distortions of fact; or it could well be that Mr. Grosart, who I gather prepared this pamphlet, is really out of touch with the department and the government and is not sure just what is happening. The first sentence under Indian affairs reads as follows:

For the first time, the right to vote has been granted to all Canadian Indians.

We know this is not so. We know that all Canadian Indians had the right to vote some years ago; that by legislation enacted by