

*Supply—Citizenship and Immigration*

which has given concern, not only to members here but I know to officials of the minister's department who are in charge of this work in the field. The amount involved here is not large in relation to the total expenditures, but still \$350,000 is not an unsubstantial amount, and I would hope that some provision might be made for a more adequate scale of provision of supplies. I understand that this is done mainly by the provision of supplies rather than by the payment of actual cash to the Indians. I hope the minister will take the whole matter into consideration and establish for the future a more adequate scale of relief payments to Indians.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I shall be very glad to take the hon. gentleman's observations into account and look into the matter further.

**Mr. Trainor:** How does the minister reconcile his remarks on this item with the current fiction that the Indian is a full-fledged citizen and as such his welfare is a matter of provincial responsibility?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** That is a fiction which is rather new to me.

**Mr. Trainor:** The Department of National Health and Welfare subscribes to that.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I can consider only my own responsibilities and I have never heard that from any quarter. Of course we do take the view in my department that those Indians who go off the reserve, who work off the reserve, who live off the reserve, who have their normal domicile somewhere else, should be treated like any other Canadian citizen, and should they require welfare services those should be provided by the provincial and local authorities in the same way as they would be provided for anybody else. Those Indians are taxpayers and wage earners and they contribute to the communities in which they live. But we have never taken that view about the Indian on the reserve and of course it is always open to an Indian who has still the status of an Indian to go back to the reserve to which he belongs if he wants to do so.

**Mr. Trainor:** The minister does subscribe to the doctrine that the Indian on the reserve is definitely a ward of the government?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** No, I do not and there is no legal justification for that view. However, the government does have certain responsibilities for the Indians that have been laid down by parliament, and that is what it is my duty to carry out.

**Mr. Campbell:** Can the minister give us the particulars of the rations which are given out to Indians in need of relief?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I am afraid I could not do that specifically.

**Mr. Herridge:** The minister advises that the Arrow lake band of Indians is extinct and I understand there was some money in the band fund. What happened to those funds?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I would not venture to express an opinion on that, but I shall ask for legal advice and communicate it to the hon. member.

**Mr. Blackmore:** Mr. Chairman, I do not know whether this is the item under which I should raise this matter. It is a matter that has troubled me greatly in relation to the Indians. There is a fine reservation and a fine body of Indians in my constituency. The Indians are increasing rapidly, and we desire that they shall increase rapidly because they are very good Canadians.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** They are all Canadian babies.

**Mr. Blackmore:** That is right. When a certain group of Indians has been assigned to a certain reservation they continue to increase naturally and over a period of time it is quite obvious that the reservation tends to become inadequate in size. I wondered whether or not the minister has dreams, visions and plans for adding to the size of any given reservation in accordance with the needs of the population of that reservation. I do not think the matter was seriously discussed by the committee which sat upon this problem of Indians some time ago, but I felt that that matter should be given very serious consideration. There are several reasons—

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Chairman, I know the hon. gentleman and I would almost see eye to eye on this question, but it is not at all within the scope of these supplementary estimates and it is a very big subject. I feel that, if we are ever to end the session, we have to stick to the things that are within our scope. To reassure the hon. gentleman, I can tell him that this matter is engaging most active consideration and I should be very glad indeed to receive any representations from him privately that he would care to make. If I am still minister and if he is still here—as I am sure he will be—I shall be glad to discuss it on my estimates next year, but I do not think it is fair to the committee, when there is no item relating to this matter, to take the time today.

**Mr. Blackmore:** May I thank the minister most earnestly for that assurance.

Item agreed to.