

he is freed from the regulations that up to that moment have prevented him from disposing of the land.

Bearing on the very principle of this Bill, there is a provision which I find it extremely difficult to reconcile, and as to the proper application of which I am very doubtful. It is the taking by the Government of authority to declare which Indians shall be enfranchised, even though they have not sought enfranchisement. I asked the right honourable gentleman whether he could indicate any general policy which would govern the department or the Superintendent General, but he has not answered that question. So I am still at a loss to know by what rule an Indian in a reserve will be selected by the departmental agent for enfranchisement. Will the individual Indian's qualification be decided upon the ground of his education, of his having progressed beyond the necessity for tutelage, or of his having shown in a general way, in his life and behaviour, that he is qualified to become a full-fledged citizen of Canada? It seems to me that considerable difficulty will be experienced by the board of three arbitrators whose duty it will be to draw a line between those who are considered eligible for enfranchisement and those who are not. On that board the Indian band will have one representative. I have tried to imagine what kind of plan could be evolved for the exercise of the authority that this Bill would give for the enfranchisement of Indians, and I confess that I am unable to see how the Government or the department could lay down a rule that would be satisfactory to the Indians themselves.

These people are our wards, the descendants of the original owners of the soil, and we have taken very good care of them. Comparisons are always odious, but there has been a kind of tradition throughout our country that we have been perhaps more liberal than the Republic to the south in the treatment of Indians. However, perhaps I am venturing on dangerous ground here.

I shall not oppose the third reading of the Bill. I shall patiently wait to observe its future effect, in the hope that we may not have to regret the step we are now taking.

My right honourable friend to my left (Right Hon. Mr. Graham) mentioned the Six Nations Indians, who claim to be independent. When I was at Geneva I wrote considerable correspondence with respect to them. I remember that the principal reason among the many reasons advanced by the department to prove that these Indians recognized themselves as subjects of the King was

the fact that they were given the privilege of voting in two general elections in the eighties, at polls established on their territory, and seventy-five or eighty per cent of them registered their votes for the election of a representative of that district to the Parliament of Canada. That, it seemed to me, was a clear admission that they recognized their status as citizens of Canada.

Hon. J. S. McLENNAN: Honourable senators, there is another point that I think ought to be considered in connection with this Bill. It seems to me that it would be in conflict with public policy to give an opportunity to white people to settle in the very heart of an Indian reserve. The reserves have been established for a good reason, and in my opinion they should be so administered that so long as their material prosperity is not interfered with, the tribal unity will be preserved as much as possible. It is obvious that if white people can purchase land in the centre of a reserve and go to live there, the effect will be deleterious to the general policy of this country in the treatment of our Indian wards.

While on my feet, perhaps I may be allowed to register the traditional protest made in this Chamber towards the end of each session. That protest is against the practice of sending a great deal of legislation to us when we have not time to give it full consideration. The practice has been followed so long as I have been in the Senate, and I have heard protests made by the honourable leader on the other side (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) and by predecessors of the right honourable leader of the House (Right Hon. Mr. Meighen). But nothing further has ever been done towards having all legislation sent to us in sufficient time. However, I am making this protest now for fear that otherwise there might be a gap this session in our usual procedure.

Hon. W. A. GRIESBACH: Honourable members, I was able to follow the right honourable leader of the Government in his explanation of the legal effects of this Bill, and I can see how one legal fact would lead to another. If an Indian is made a one hundred per cent citizen and is given title to land in the middle of a reserve, he becomes the owner of that land and should have the right to dispose of it. I am wondering whether sufficient thought was given to the practical side when the right honourable gentleman was instructed by the department in the legal aspects of the case. I should like to know whether, as a matter of fact, an Indian who had been enfranchised was given