

Indian Act

near Lethbridge are going to be able to attend that meeting? How many of them are going to be able to afford it? There will also be many Indians to the north and west who will be unable to attend the meeting, and the result will be that a great percentage of the Indians will not be able to attend. Who will be the people who will select members for the council? It will be a little group of Indians who live within three or four miles of the area just north of Cardston. That is the kind of thing which needs to be given much thought in managing Indians.

It was either the hon. member for Humboldt-Melfort or the hon. member for Prince Albert who suggested that the Indians believed that if they got the franchise they would have to give up their treaty rights. The Indians in my constituency have that idea. They are fearful that if they vote they will disqualify themselves from getting their treaty rights. That shows there should be no relationship between an Indian voting and his being independent on the reserve and enjoying his treaty rights. If we feel that the Indian has reached the point where he can safely vote, let us give him the vote regardless of whether he is a treaty Indian or not. Let there be no strings attached.

This was emphasized by the hon. member for Mackenzie, who gave a very fine talk on this matter. When the Indian becomes qualified for a job he should have a job to go to. In fact, I am beginning to think that we must adopt that attitude toward white people as well. When boys or girls are qualified for jobs I submit it is the duty of the government to see that they get jobs, even if it is necessary to create a new industry in order to provide such. I know that will be looked upon as rather extreme, but there is nothing more disheartening to a boy or girl coming out of university than to be unable to get a job no matter where he or she may go to try. If the Indians are going to be given education and training, jobs must be waiting for them when they have completed that education and training. I cannot see any way of escaping that conclusion if we are going to create among the Indians a sound morale.

The same thing is true of the goods they produce, the fish, the lumber, the furs and wheat. It is one thing for white men to compete with each other for a share of the world's markets, but it is another thing altogether for the Indian to do that. He does not possess anything like the facilities with which to force his way into world markets that the white man has.

I think that will constitute the main portion of what I have to say. There are two other matters which I think need attention, one

[Mr. Blackmore.]

having to do with liquor. I find a great deal of apprehension existing in the minds of the older men, those from about 45 years of age upward, regarding liquor. They want to keep liquor away from their youth.

The Deputy Chairman: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but it is my duty to advise him that his time has expired.

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Chairman, I did not intend to speak on this subject at this time, but after listening to the well-prepared discourses we have heard this afternoon I feel that I have a story which I should tell in connection with the Indians in the territory which I am fortunate to represent. Incidentally, the reserve of these Indians is located within half a mile of my own home in the town of Enderby. We have heard in this debate calls for a royal commission, and we have heard details of the situation of the Indians in Saskatchewan and Alberta. We have heard the splendid plea by the hon. member for Lethbridge for the alleviation of distress among the Indians.

After listening to the details of the hardships suffered by many Indians I am beginning to think that the Indians in British Columbia are living in a pretty good part of the country. Of course I know that, and I have always preached that British Columbia is the garden of Eden. After listening to the details of the plight of the Indians in Saskatchewan and Alberta I am beginning to believe that is more and more the fact. I was surprised to hear that throughout the reserves in Saskatchewan there has been on an average one new house built per reserve during the past year. I have never gone through the reserve counting the houses, but I know that within two miles of Enderby there have been at least 25 houses built on the reserve during the past two years. They are scattered much farther afield than that. They are not just congregated in one place as a showpiece for the reserve. You can drive through the reserve and see the new houses.

As I listened to the pleas made for legislation and departmental action I wondered whether that was the answer. It appears to me that the problem is to find some way of integrating the Indian into the life of the local community. I do not mean to take the Indian off the reserve, I mean to make him acceptable to the community life of the white people in the areas adjacent to the reserve. I must admit that this is a local problem and its solution depends entirely upon the leaders in the white community who might be interested in the welfare of the Indian.

There is no doubt that the person best able to provide that leadership is the Indian