

job at the time it should be attended to. I might cite one instance illustrating that. An Indian was ploughing on his farm. It was summer-fallow, and it was important to get it ploughed at a particular time. Another Indian came along; they sat down and talked a couple of hours and then decided to go off on some kind of expedition. The Indian unhitched his horse just where the plough was, took off the harness and laid it on the plough, went away and did not come back for four or five days.

Mr. GRAYDON: Would this not be for the agriculture estimates?

Mr. CRERAR: Yes. However, I have answered the hon. member's question.

Mr. EDWARDS: I would be remiss in my duty as an honorary member of one of the Indian tribes of Canada if I did not say two things that have been driven home to me as being uppermost in the minds of the Indians at this time.

One relates to the war. I have been reminded that in the last war an order in council was passed exempting Indians, by reason of their status, from compulsory military service. Not enjoying any rights of citizenship as such, being wards of the government, they were exempted from compulsory military service. That does not apply at this time, and there is a feeling of resentment in that regard. I commend to the government the advisability, the rightness, of reconsidering the status of the Indian as a ward of the government, yet subject to compulsory military service. It does not affect many of them, but the Indian still has in his mind—at least the western Indian—the treaty rights which they understood exempted them from any obligation to take up arms against their fellow man anywhere.

Next I want to commend the department for what it has done in the selection of agents to deal at first hand with the Indians. I think any success we have had so far is directly attributable to the Indian agent who comes into direct contact with them. But I want to say this: the Indians in my constituency at least were originally hunters. Anyone knows that the wild game have left the slopes of the Rockies, and perforce the Indian has been compelled, even as you and I, to change his mode of life and of gaining his livelihood. The tribe with which I am affiliated is known as the Stoneys, and their reserve indeed lives up to the name; it is stony. While it was fine as a hunting reserve, it no longer sustains the fur-bearing animals

[Mr. Crerar.]

to provide these men with a livelihood. I urge upon the minister, as I have done heretofore, the duty and obligation of making available to these Indians potential grazing and agricultural lands.

Mr. GRAYDON: May I ask the hon. member if he is a chief in the tribe?

Mr. EDWARDS: Yes, I am a chief.

Mr. GRAYDON: What is the name?

Mr. EDWARDS: The name of the chief is Mountain Grizzly.

Mr. WARREN: I should like to endorse the remarks of the hon. member for Calgary West (Mr. Edwards). I happen to live in a riding in which there is an Indian reservation, and I am quite ready to admit that when these reservations were established the poorest available land was chosen on which to place the Indians. While the hon. member indicates that the land may have been good for hunting and fishing, certainly it was not good for the purpose of making a livelihood from the soil. Residents of the reserve in my riding have left the reservation and made good as ordinary Canadian citizens. They have worked as government employees in this city; they served in the army during the last war and are serving in this war. They are typical Canadians, and I do not know why these splendid people should not have all the rights of Canadian citizens, why they should not be qualified to vote at elections and why they should not have all the opportunities which are enjoyed by other Canadians.

Item agreed to.

Indian Affairs branch—Medical.

163. Indian hospitals and general care of Indians, \$1,462,873.

Mr. MacINNIS: I wish to say a few words with regard to the health situation among the Indians in the province from which I come. Before doing so, however, I should like to point out to the committee that we are all agreed that the condition among the Indians of this dominion is anything but what it ought to be. Furthermore, the Indians being wards of the state, the government of this country has a responsibility to them; and if the provincial governments, or police forces, or the administration of justice in the provinces, do not properly protect the Indians, then it is the duty of this government, as the guardian of the Indians, to see that the necessary protection is extended to them.

I think it was during the session of 1939 that I drew to the attention of the committee of the house then dealing with this matter the