

an Indian to do what I have mentioned and make his seven or eight dollars a day and then go back to the tribe and do anything he likes and not be liable for his debts? I do not think for one moment this is a question of voting at all. A white man may be mentally weak, perhaps not half as strong mentally or physically as the Indian of whom I have spoken, but the moment he becomes twenty-one years of age, he is liable for his debts. Yet under the law of to-day, that Indian goes about with all sorts of protection around him, and at the same time he is competing with the white man and enjoying the benefits to which I have referred. It is not the intention of the department, it has not been in the past, and it will not be in the future, to enfranchise any Indian who is not fit; and if he is fit, if he can take care of himself, if he can do what I have mentioned, why should he not be enfranchised and become a full-fledged citizen? He need not vote unless he likes. Speaking as a member of that committee, I may say that the voting feature had not the slightest influence upon me. The policy of the department is not favourable to keeping an Indian a ward of the Crown; it is to try to develop his condition along educational and other lines in order that the day may come when he will become a full-fledged citizen of the country, taking with the white man the very part that he himself desires to take. If we do not move along these lines, how can that end be attained?

Mr. ROBB: The hon. member has mentioned the Caughnawaga Indians. Did their representative approve of this legislation?

Mr. BOYS: I have said frankly that I do not think more than one or two of all who addressed the committee or were examined by them were in favour of this legislation. The stand they took was that if they wanted enfranchisement they could apply for it. The difficulty is that some of those who should be enfranchised and perhaps be made liable to the laws of the land are the very ones who will not apply for enfranchisement. Why should they be protected?

Mr. BURNHAM: I should like to say a word on this matter as I have Indians in my constituency. An Indian who desires to become enfranchised should certainly have that privilege. This legislation does not in any way compel the enfranchisement of the band or any of its individuals who do not wish to become enfranchised, nor does it affect in any way the prosperity of

the reserve. Neither, of course, will it affect the money which they got under the treaty with the Government for the various properties which they have in times past sold to the Government, and for which they receive a stated annual amount. The Indians in the band in the county of West Peterborough are very intelligent, very progressive, and have a great deal of property. They want to have the vote. It is no good for my hon. friend (Mr. Robb) shaking his head, because they have told me they want the vote and their squaws want the vote. This tribe of Indians I speak of sent a very large number to the war, several of whom were killed and many decorated. Man for man they were more distinguished and more capable than the whites.

Mr. McKENZIE: Not at all.

Mr. BURNHAM: And to say that these men shall not under any circumstances have the right to the franchise, which, as I understand this legislation, is not in any way to be forced upon them, is to my mind a great ingratitude and an impropriety that requires a whole lot of explaining.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Before the amendment carries I think it is only proper that the views of the Indians who object to this legislation should be placed before the committee and be placed on record in Hansard. I have had handed to me a statement by some gentlemen who are representing the Indians, setting out the objections they have to this legislation, and with the permission of the committee I should like to read it, as I think it is important that we should not proceed with the legislation without having before us the objections to it from the point of view of the Indians. They are the parties that are concerned, and certainly if there is any obligation upon Parliament it is that we should safeguard the rights of a class of people who are particularly under the protection of the Government of the country. The memorandum that I have had given to me reads as follows:

As the Special Committee considering Bill 14 has now reported to the House of Commons, we think it well that all members of Parliament should know our reasons for objecting to this Bill. For this purpose we set out the following parts of our statement placed before the Special Committee.

"To the Special Committee of the House of Commons.

Considering Bill 14.

"We delegates of the Allied Tribes of British Columbia protest against the proposed com-