

change the habits of these people. Year by year as subsistence by hunting becomes more and more precarious our Indians must apply themselves to agriculture and other avocations pursued by the white man; otherwise they will be entirely dependent upon grants from the treasury, and capable local agents can help them to accommodate themselves to changing conditions.

Mr. FORKE: I should like to add a word or two, Mr. Chairman, to what I said last night on this subject. I know the minister is very sympathetic towards the Indian and his problem. I think perhaps I would be the last to say anything against teaching the Indian Christianity but I do believe our first duty is to teach him how to make a decent living. We all know how puzzled white people become sometimes in regard to problems of Christianity; well, the Indians get into the same difficulties, only a little deeper sometimes. I remember a good many years ago meeting an old Indian friend, and he immediately informed me that he was now a Christian. He was taking some wood to market that had been cut into stove lengths, and while conversing with him I turned over a few pieces and discovered some dozy lengths underneath. I tried to explain to him that this was not Christian practice. He replied, "Oh yes, the white people all do that." So you see some of the difficulties the poor Indian has to meet in dealing with Christianity. I repeat that I believe the great thing is in the beginning to teach the Indian how to make a decent living.

If we are to have successful Indian agents I endorse what the minister says: they must be of a sympathetic nature and the right stamp of men. An Indian agent must be able to go out among the Indians and settle their little quarrels and encourage them to continue at their work. Until we have such men to look after our Indians I do not care how much money we spend it will only be wasted. At the present time in the little reserve near my home I know there are a great many healthy young men, but they have neither stock nor seed to make their land of any use to them. What are they going to do all summer? There is a problem. The department might provide them with the necessary stock and seed, but unless there is an agent possessing the proper qualifications to look after those Indians and see that everything is done in the right way I think the assistance will be thrown away.

Just a word in connection with the education of the Indian. The Indian is different from the white man in a great many respects.

The Indians who live near me sometimes come over to see me about their difficulties. I can talk a little Indian and perhaps I may do so for a time; then I suddenly recollect that it would be better to have them talk English and I tell whoever I am conversing with that unless he speaks English I will not carry on the conversation any longer; and immediately he will commence to talk very good English. But he will not speak English as long as you will talk to him in the Indian tongue. Indians who have been educated at Elkhorn and Brandon will go back to the reserve and in twelve months, unless they are given some attention, you will not be able to tell the difference between them and the Indians who never saw the school, except, perhaps, that they are able to write a letter. I submit again that the Indians, to be properly looked after, must have an agent who takes thoroughly good care of them, who acts as their mediator and their counsellor and friend right along. That is the only way I can see in which we can arrive at a solution of the Indian problem. I really feel sorry for the Indians and their present condition in Manitoba. I would like to see the money devoted to the Indians well spent; I would not be niggardly at all in the matter of an appropriation for this purpose if I only knew that the money was being spent as it should be.

Mr. EVANS: I would like to say a word in support of what the minister has said. I do not think we should be stingy in the matter of voting money for the purposes of the Indians. We owe a debt to these people, and when the money is well spent we are well repaid in the effort. My own experience in connection with the Indians dates back to some thirty years ago, in connection with one of the reserves in Saskatchewan. The Indian agent who went among them at that time found the conditions very unsatisfactory indeed. Since then we have seen that reserve even without an Indian agent, although there are not as many Indians there now as there used to be, and they are in a very fair way. Some of them, I know, have fine herds of cattle, are following the occupation of farming and are living a civilized life in every respect. Their boys and girls are being educated, and they are intensely loyal. Some of them served in the Great War, and one I know particularly has gone out as a missionary to his own people. They are capable of being educated; they are susceptible to uplift, and I think we would make a mistake if we did not do our duty by them.