

engineer, and that he will undertake to justify the Department in creating this particular branch by showing how very necessary it is in the public service, and a large expenditure will be incurred which, in my opinion, is wholly unnecessary, because I believe that at the present time, at all events, the best defence is no defence at all.

Bill read the second time, and considered in Committee and reported.

INDIAN ACT AMENDMENT.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD in moving the second reading of Bill (No. 87) further to amend the Indian Act, 1880, said: The amendments made are of more or less importance; and with the assent of the House we will take the second reading and go into Committee on Wednesday. No doubt the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills), who has paid much attention to the Indian question, will consider the proposals in the meantime and express his views in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. BLAKE. The hon. gentleman is proposing to give us only one opportunity of expressing our views on this Bill. He now proposes to take the second reading in silence, and the two next stages can be taken on one day. Perhaps the hon. gentleman will explain the Bill.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The Government have found they can get along very well with the Indians, if the Indians are let alone; but we have had on several occasions much trouble in consequence of the acts of whiskey dealers, smugglers and other parties, and in this Bill the first clause makes such persons liable to be punished. The second clause refers to the selling of ammunition to Indians. Formerly there was no difficulty in this regard, because the Mounted Police were able to prevent its introduction; but with the Canadian Pacific Railway and other railway facilities, there is practically no check on it, and this clause provides a punishment. The third clause provides that celebrating the "Potlach" is a misdemeanour. This Indian festival is a debauchery of the worst kind, and the departmental officers and all clergymen unite in affirming that it is absolutely necessary to put this practice down. Last year the late Governor General issued a proclamation on the advice of his Ministers warning Indians against celebrating this festival. At these gatherings they give away their guns and all their property in a species of rivalry, and go so far as to give away their wives; in fact, as I have said, it is a great debauch. Under this Act to celebrate the Potlach is to be guilty of a misdemeanour. There is an amendment for the purpose of enlarging the powers of Indians to devise their property by will. The whole question of the enfranchisement of Indians is dealt with in the 15th section, section 99 of the present Act being repealed. These, in brief, are the main objects of the Bill; of course we shall consider them more fully in Committee of the Whole. With these remarks, I hope hon. gentlemen opposite will allow the Bill to be read the second time and put down for Committee of the Whole on Wednesday, when full opportunity will be given for discussion at that and subsequent stages.

Mr. MILLS. I have not had an opportunity of reading the Bill, but I desire to enquire whether it contains any provision to enable unenfranchised Indians to dispose of their products, but there is no authority to sell or dispose of them, and at the present time when they do sell, purchasers take a risk and the Indians obtain less for the products of their industry than other persons in the community. Some provision should be made with respect to this matter, whether the hon. gentleman has it in his Bill or not. I simply mention the matter, because it is one of very considerable consequence to the Indians, as it places a serious impediment to their industry to find they cannot freely

dispose of the fruits of their toil, and have not the same liberty to sell as other persons in the community.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. There is no clause in the Bill to that effect, the Bill having special reference to the North-West. The present law is quite sufficient for the purpose. The Indians have the right to sell under the consent of the local agents. It is of very great importance that that power should still remain in the Local Agents, subject to the higher officers of the Indian Department. We are just getting the Indians to remain on the Reserves; and we can scarcely, for some years, expect them to raise more than enough to feed their own families. If there were a surplus, and the Indians had power of unrestricted sale, they would dispose of their products to the first trader or whiskey dealer who came along, and the consequence would be that the Indians would be pensioners on the Government during the next winter, and Parliament would have to vote, as it has in the past, a considerable sum of money. However, this question can be discussed in Committee.

Mr. BLAKE. The understanding is that the third reading will be taken at a subsequent stage to the Committee of the Whole, and on these terms I have no objection to the second reading.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Certainly. I want to get a good Bill.

Bill read the second time.

It being six o'clock the Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

SUPPLY—IMMIGRATION.

Sir LEONARD TILLEY moved that the House again resolve itself into Committee of Supply.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). Mr. Speaker, before this motion is adopted, I desire to offer a few observations to the House on a very important subject upon which I shall ask hon. gentlemen to express an opinion. The subject that I more particularly desire to bring to your attention is that of immigration into, and emigration from, the Dominion of Canada. I would have preferred, as you can readily understand, that in speaking on this subject, the Minister of Agriculture, to whose Department it particularly refers, had been present. Circumstances are such, however, that he is not with us, and all will agree that in the discharge of public duty we cannot allow a circumstance like that to prevent its being attended to, and no doubt one or more of his colleagues will be able to explain some matters which I think require explanation at the hands of the Government, and defend, if they find a defence to be necessary, the actions of the Government, or rather, of that Department of the Government. Sir, I may just say at the outset, that the question looked at from a financial point of view, is a very serious question indeed. For some years past we have gone on appropriating a large and still larger yearly amount of money for this branch of the public service. It will be within the recollection of some members of this House who were members of the last Parliament, that we were told by the Government in very plain terms indeed, that by reason of the contract that we were entering into at that time with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, the great burden that had rested on our shoulders in times past, with reference to the question of expenditure in connection with immigration, would be lifted from us and transferred to the shoulders of that Company. I desire in my opening remarks to point out how utterly and grievously the Ministry have failed in fulfilling those promises, and shall ask them, as I think I have the right to ask them—as the House has a right to ask them—to give