

Hon. W. M. ASELTINE: Honourable senators, this appears to me to be a very important motion. I am sorry indeed that there are so few senators present to give it the consideration that I think it should have. I do not know that I am prepared to agree to the spending of any large amount of money on the scheme at this time, because world conditions, as stated by the honourable senator from Blaine Lake (Hon. Mr. Horner), are very serious. We do not know but that in the very near future we may be obliged to defend this country of ours against aggression from Europe or Asia.

I was present at the exhibition of the plans and specifications for the beautification of Ottawa, for which the honourable senator from Thunder Bay (Hon. Mr. Paterson) was responsible. I was very much disappointed that only two or three other senators were present. The scheme outlined by Mr. Greber was very comprehensive. It called for the wrecking of a great many buildings and the re-arranging of streets to alleviate the traffic congestion on Wellington and Rideau streets. In my opinion this would cost many hundreds of millions of dollars, and I think that before we proceed with anything like that we should have a consultation with the other provinces. Paragraph 7 of the motion reads:

That the expenditure of moneys for these purposes should be conditional on the effective co-operation of the City of Ottawa and other municipalities within the national capital district.

It seems to me that before much money is spent we should make sure whether in these proposed developments we have the effective co-operation of the provinces—Ontario and Quebec in particular—as well as that of the city of Ottawa and the adjoining municipalities.

As pointed out by the honourable senator from Blaine Lake, at the present time this country is faced with such serious problems as national defence and lack of housing; and until we have done more about these matters it would perhaps be well to postpone any great expenditures on the beautification of Ottawa.

Though I have thought it well to make these few remarks, I do not intend to oppose the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

INDIAN ACT

REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEE

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the fourth report of the Joint Committee on the Indian Act.

Hon. WILLIAM H. TAYLOR: Honourable senators, I regret having been absent from a previous sitting when the order for consideration of this report was called. Since then the other house has, without discussion concurred in the committee's report, and I therefore now move that the Senate also concur in it.

As the report states, the committee has been sitting during the last three sessions. In 1946 evidence was heard from departmental officials; during the next session we had before us Indians representing the various reserves throughout Canada, and at the present session we continued and completed our examination of the Indian Act.

The committee deems it advisable that almost every section of the Act should be either repealed or amended, and a draft bill is at present before the law officers of the Crown. One of the recommendations in the report is that immediately parliament next reassembles a special joint committee be constituted with powers similar to those granted to the committee this year, and that the draft bill be referred to it. Therefore, concurrence in the report will not necessarily mean adoption of our recommendations, for these will come before parliament next session in the form of amendments to the Act.

The committee has made various recommendations which it believes will improve administration of the Act from the point of view of the Indians themselves. I might call attention to this paragraph in our report:

All proposed revisions are designed to make possible the gradual transition of Indians from wardship to citizenship and to help them to advance themselves.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking all members of the Senate section of the joint committee for their faithful attendance at meetings. The revising of the Act, section by section, was perhaps not as interesting as some of the work done during the two preceding sessions, but the committee feels that its report, to which its members unanimously agreed, will be of great benefit to the Indians of Canada.

The motion was agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: Honourable senators, there is a difference of opinion as to