

not only the government but the white population have in the Indians. I am bound to say that there have been very serious errors in policy in Indian administration going back over a great many years. I have no hesitation in saying that, and I think it stems originally from a wrong idea. Go back sixty or seventy years. At that time the Indians were steadily, and in many instances quite rapidly, declining in population, and although they were wards of the state and were treated as such, the view was held in many quarters, sixty or seventy years ago, or even later, that the Indian problem would solve itself ultimately by the extinction of the Indian. That is no longer true, because the Indian population is increasing and the rate of increase is bound to accelerate. Humanitarian impulses alone have demanded better care for the Indians, better medical attention and education, and therefore we have to-day in this country approximately 120,000 Indians, with the certainty that they will increase in population.

I have no hesitation in saying that that problem is one, the seriousness of which in its implications is not realized by the Canadian people as a whole. We are modestly endeavouring to produce conditions in as many areas as possible under which the Indians may be self-supporting. That is true particularly in the northern parts of the different provinces. We are aiming at and have carried on for the last three or four years definite programmes for the restoration of the fur-bearing animals by means of which these Indians in the past made their livelihood. Sufficient success has attended that experiment to prove beyond reasonable doubt that it can be done. We have had full cooperation from most of the provinces. I would mention particularly the province of Quebec where we have secured three areas from the provincial government, in extent from ten thousand to twelve thousand square miles each, where we hope to restore beaver, muskrat and other fur-bearing animals. To do this takes several years. Since, however, that is brought about and trapping is done under proper supervision, conditions are created whereby the Indians in these localities can secure a permanent income.

There is the question of education and medical care, concerning which I understand an hon. member from Vancouver wishes to say something. Perhaps I can deal with that item when he raises his question. But in the prairie provinces on most of the reserves we are endeavouring to get the Indians to adapt themselves to agricultural pursuits, the growing of grain, the raising of cattle. On many of the reserves very good success has attended

those efforts. Of course in the last ten years these reserves have suffered as other parts of the country did. This season it seems probable that on some reserves we are going to harvest very good crops.

It is an important matter to have the right kind of Indian agents and supervision. All I can say is that the points my hon. friend has raised are fully appreciated by the officers of the department, and I think we are making progress toward a better state of affairs.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): The minister mentioned agriculture. I have part of one Indian reserve in my constituency, and I have a summer cabin in another reserve north of Carlyle. Therefore I have had an opportunity of seeing how the Indians live and some of their problems. I shall not detain the committee now as to the conditions under which the Indians live, which in some cases are absolutely appalling. It has been my privilege on many occasions to meet committees of Indians on these two reserves. I have asked them what is the one thing that could be done to enable them to help themselves, and they said this—I pass it on to the minister—that under the original treaties the provisions for giving them agricultural tools, for instance, were based on conditions that obtained at the time the treaty was made, and those conditions no longer obtain. On one reserve they told me they were being given hoes each year. A man would get a hoe each year when probably he had the hoe from the year before. They were getting agricultural implements that were out of date, and they wondered if it would be possible to get some modern agricultural implements on a group basis, say for half a dozen or a dozen to have a binder or a plough or some horses, and cooperate in their use.

I have gone to a number of the little patches of farms they have; they are very inadequately equipped to carry on anything like decent agricultural operations.

Mr. CRERAR: As far as agricultural equipment is concerned, on the reserves that are suitable for agriculture the Indians are supplied with modern equipment. My officials here have not the precise amount, but it runs to perhaps \$20,000 to \$25,000 a year.

An hon. MEMBER: Does that include tractors?

Mr. CRERAR: It does in some cases, and modern equipment. They are not by any means tied down to the kind of agricultural equipment that existed at the time the treaties were made.

But there is no gainsaying this, that it is difficult to bring the Indians to a realization of the need for attending to the agricultural