

vote. In a word, he becomes no longer an Indian, but a citizen in full status.

Mr. ROBB: My understanding of the matter is this. Subclause (2) of section 107 reads:

On the report of the Superintendent General that any Indian, male or female, over the age of twenty-one years is fit for enfranchisement, the Governor in Council may by order enfranchise such Indian, and from the date of such order the provisions of the Indian Act and of any other Act or law making any distinction between the legal rights, privileges, disabilities and liabilities of Indians and those of His Majesty's other subjects, shall cease to apply to such Indian or to his or her minor unmarried children, or in the case of a married male Indian, to the wife of such Indian, and every such Indian and child and wife shall thereafter have, possess and enjoy all the legal powers, rights and privileges of His Majesty's other subjects, and shall no longer be deemed to be Indians within the meaning of any laws relating to Indians.

As I understand this, it gives the Government of the day power to compel an Indian to become enfranchised.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. gentleman read the clause as it was originally drafted and submitted to the subcommittee, but the subcommittee has materially amended that clause.

Mr. ROBB: But the minister just a few moments ago answering the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King) said that no amendments were made in committee.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. member must have misunderstood me, because I did not say that. I said that there was no amendment to clause 1, and then I corrected myself as to that, because there is a slight amendment to clause 1. But there is a very substantial amendment to this clause providing safeguards in the matter of enfranchisement. I will send a copy to the hon. member.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Is it not a fact that all the rights of Indians as respects property, enfranchisement and other such matters are secured under treaty obligations, and if so, have the Government considered the possibility of these treaty rights being superior to any Act of Parliament and any Order in Council?

Mr. MEIGHEN: That has been fully considered. There are no treaty rights affecting the question of enfranchisement. The treaty rights affect property, but no clause of any treaty is interfered with in any degree by these clauses. Indeed, if it were, all the clauses would be similarly against the Treaty. This is mainly another

[Mr. Meighen.]

method of enfranchisement, and there is nothing in any treaty that affects this at all.

Mr. ROBB: According to this amended clause which the minister has kindly sent over, in the first place the department decide that they are going to have these Indians enfranchised, then they notify the council to make a nomination, and within thirty days after notice having been given to the council, in default of the council having appointed a board, the Superintendent General himself may appoint this board. Therefore, the matter is all within the power of the department if they wish to go about it, if the Indians say: We are not going to bother with that.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That refers to the appointment of the Indian member of the board.

Mr. ROBB: But, listening as I did at some of the sessions of the committee and knowing as I think I know the feeling of one band, that is the band in the county which I have the honour to represent, the St. Regis band, the Indian is absolutely opposed to this measure with the exception of the educational features of it. He is opposed to enfranchisement. He remembers when he did have a right to vote in the past, and he says: If you give us this, it allows the white man to come in at times and debauch the tribe. The Indian has nothing to gain by this and he does not want it. He says: We have treaties with the white men and we expect the white man to live up to those treaties. I am afraid we are to-day introducing a measure that will enable a Government, perhaps not to-day, but some day, to break faith with the Indian and to adopt measures that will not only take away from him his status as an Indian, but enable speculators to come in and take away his land. I imagine that is what the Indian is more afraid of than the question of enfranchisement.

Mr. BOYS: This would affect only the enfranchised Indians, it would not affect any other Indians of the band. Does my hon. friend think, in the case he mentions, where these very Indians cross the St. Lawrence river and work in the shops of Montreal—

Mr. ROBB: The Indians to whom I refer are near Cornwall.

Mr. BOYS: Well, I was thinking of the Indians of Caughnawaga. Is it proper for