

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: Yes. But he also knows it is a privilege granted by parliament, not something granted to him by a treaty.

I must say this is all subject to the peculiar situation in your own province, Mr. Fulton, but that is another matter.

The Indian is quite aware of the fact that if we are looking forward, as perhaps your argument would indicate, to the time when having gotten the Indian to participate in our elections, we will then suddenly say to him: "Now you have full right; you have greater equality than we have; we are going to take away from you extra privileges because you now vote."

He would not go along with your argument because that would lead to the elimination of his tax exemption. We have provided the other method. We have maintained tax exemption if he insists on it. That is the protection we are giving the Indian.

Mr. FULTON: Your approach to the question leaves it open to him. He has the hope that we are not going to force it on the Indian, and that eventually, voluntarily he will become enfranchised.

If that hope is realized, and if he takes the vote voluntarily, then your illustration with respect to taxation would follow. You still have it that it would be a voluntary process. It would not be necessary if the hopes of our program are eventually realized, or if you should say to him: "Now you have the vote, it is your privilege to accept the obligation to pay taxes." It would come about as a result of the other aspect of the program.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: Enfranchisement of the Indian is not progressing. At first it was thought that it would. But the Indian wished to live on the reserve. Until recently or in fact until this bill is passed there has been practically no practice which would permit the Indian to become enfranchised and remain on the reserve.

Indians prefer to live with their own people under their own band council rather than to become enfranchised and go abroad. That is our experience. I have no doubt it will continue to be the case. So if you are looking to voluntary enfranchisement to bring about a gradual relief of the Indian from the Indian Act, I do not think it is to be expected at the moment.

On the other hand, as the Indians hold these views, we do not think they should be deprived of that privilege which they are now capable of exercising simply because they choose to live on the reserve. It seems to me to be illogical and contrary to our conception of liberalism, spelled with a small 'l', when we have these fine people, these adults who are capable of voting, that we should deprive them of the right. That is why we have given it to them.

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: For a consideration.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: No, not for a consideration, because they have not got this exemption except as parliament wishes to give it to them. The position would be entirely different if they had it guaranteed, if they had a treaty or an agreement which gave them tax exemption, but they have not.

Mr. CHARLTON: They feel that they have, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: They feel that they have.

Mr. FULTON: And especially in British Columbia.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: Everything is subject to the British Columbia consideration. But my point is that so long as they have not these rights, but only a privilege granted them by parliament, they should be considered as ordinary Canadian citizens and not be granted the right to vote at federal elections in priority to you or to me.

Mr. FULTON: Perhaps we have a reasonable difference in view. If the Indian were now qualified in status, I would say your answer to the argument would be a natural one. But as applied to an Indian whom we are trying to