

- (c) is, with the permission in writing of the superintendent, absent from school for a period not exceeding six weeks in each term for the purpose of assisting in husbandry or urgent and necessary household duties,
- (d) is under efficient instruction at home or elsewhere, within one year after the written approval by the Minister of such instruction, or
- (e) is unable to attend school because there is insufficient accommodation in the school that the child is entitled or directed to attend.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: Mr. Applewhaite asked the question about children being required to attend school beyond passing the entrance to high school. It is not a question of entrance but of age; in Quebec it is fourteen years; in Ontario, sixteen years, and in other provinces it varies between fifteen and sixteen. The practice is children may be excused from attending school for special reasons after entrance; for example, employment, required at home, et cetera.

The CHAIRMAN: Shall the section carry?

Carried.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: That leaves section 11, the question of the validity of marriages, section 86, and Mr. Applewhaite's amendment. We can deal with the latter first, that is, section 29:

Recognizing in a general way what Mr. Applewhaite has said, that we have a function to perform quite independent of that of the Department of Justice, I think we should qualify it a little by saying generally that our function is to determine what we want done and it is their function to do that, and they appear to have given the opinion that this section did, in fact, carry out our intention. We have consulted them since the amendment was made and their answer is that if qualifications of that kind are to be introduced into section 29, similar qualifications will have to be introduced into many other sections in the bill, else those words in section 29 will cause a doubt as to the meaning of the other sections. They think they have carried out the purpose of covering all reserve lands in section 29.

The CHAIRMAN: Any comment, Mr. Applewhaite?

Mr. APPLEWHAITE: I am not convinced, but if the rest of the committee is, I am satisfied.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Mr. Chairman, could the minister give us an idea as to how this sort of stipulation has worked out in the past? Has the interest of Indians always been protected under a similar clause to this in the old Act?

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: The answer would have two parts to it: first, has there been absolute protection against seizure by legal process, and I think the answer to that is yes. The alternative, perhaps, is whether it is in the interest of the Indian to have that absolute protection. We have had some discussion—there was some discussion at the investigating committee—as to whether this was a restriction on the credit of the Indian and I think everyone agrees that if his possessions, except in the case covered by conditional sales agreements, are not subject to legal procedure, it stands to reason his chances of obtaining credit are limited.

Mr. BLACKMORE: My observation on that question, I think, has been expressed once or twice. I believe the Indian's credit should be guaranteed in some other way. I think the department should allot a portion of the revolving fund to be set aside for that purpose, and if that were done it would be far better. There is no doubt that the Indians must be provided with the means of obtaining credit. The lack of credit is felt keenly on the reserves and many men there could do a great deal more to help themselves if they could only get a little credit.