

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

May 22, 1947.

The Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons appointed to examine and consider the Indian Act, met this day at 11.00 a.m. Mr. D. F. Brown, M.P., (Joint Chairman), presided.

The CHAIRMAN: This morning we are to hear from the delegates representing the Indian population in the various parts of Ontario. There is a large number of delegates in attendance. There are six official delegates and we have, in addition thereto, a large number of delegates who have come either to present briefs or to be in attendance as spectators. On behalf of this committee, I wish to extend to all a most cordial welcome and assure them we will do our utmost to give as full and complete a hearing as is possible so that they may be given an opportunity of presenting what they consider to be the material they would like to have brought before this committee and put on the record, leading, of course, to the revision of the Indian Act.

The subcommittee did meet last night but there is no formal report at the moment. We have an agenda set out, and in addition to the witnesses who will be called, an opportunity will be given later to those who are not on this list and of whom we have not presently knowledge, but who may want to be heard briefly at the completion of this list, if that is your pleasure. This will raise, of course, the question of how many sessions we are to have to-day.

I might inform the visitors that the procedure of the committee, if we proceeded strictly according to plan, would be to have one hearing to-day and one hearing to-morrow. The hearing to-day would terminate at one o'clock and the hearing to-morrow would be from eleven until one o'clock.

However, we have adopted the practice of permitting the delegations to make further presentations, and we have extended the time by having additional sessions during the day. Is it your pleasure, gentlemen, that we should meet again to-day? I see there are quite a number here in attendance and I think they have come from considerable distances and therefore we would like to hear them as fully as possible:

Mr. REID: My own view, Mr. Chairman, is this; even though we are working under pressure and there may be an important vote in the House to-day, I think in fairness to the Indians from Ontario, or from any other province for that matter, in view of the fact that we have given additional hearings to other delegates, I would certainly be in favour of giving as much time as we reasonably can to these delegates from Ontario. That is my own view.

The CHAIRMAN: Well, then, suppose we see how we get along up until one o'clock.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: That's a good idea, let's get going.

The CHAIRMAN: Then we may be able to meet at four o'clock, subject, of course, to other events which may develop during the day.