

pel those men to pay their obligations unless they apply for such legislation. There is a judge of the Superior Court of the province of Quebec who is exempt from all the laws binding the rest of us in regard to our civil rights and duties. But the hon. gentleman says, "That is all right. I would never touch him unless he wants to be bound, because to do so would be to interfere with the sacred cause of human liberty." Does he not see that he is off the tract altogether? There are Indians in scores—I know them myself for they have been down here—and if the hon. gentleman had been before the committee he would realize that they demonstrated to the full that they were citizens of Canada, and should be made so in law. He would acknowledge that by their status, their education and their activities they were in a position where they could not possibly claim any special immunities, because they were at the same time enjoying all the advantages of citizenship. No matter what the circumstances may be, no matter how educated the Indian may be, no matter what he may be worth, no matter what rank he may hold in society nor what position he may occupy in business, apparently it is perfectly proper that he enjoy all those advantages and at the same time be absolved from paying his debts; and yet my hon. friend exclaims that it is interference with the great principle of human liberty to remove from the Indian that exemption when he enjoys those liberties and those advantages.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: If the hon. gentleman wishes to deal with the subject of debt, he ought to bring in a Bill for that specific purpose, and I will support him.

Mr. MEIGHEN: This is the only way. We can only make an Indian liable for debt by enfranchising him. So the hon. member had better support this Bill.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Is that the whole purpose of the Bill?

Mr. CAHILL: Which of the hon. gentlemen opposite are we to follow,—the member looking after this Bill who wants to make the Indian pay his debts, or the member for Skeena who wants to put the Indian on the higher plane of citizenship?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Both.

Mr. CAHILL: Which of the angels are we to follow, the angel of good or the angel of evil?

Mr. PECK: All the "higher" citizens pay their debts.

Mr. CAHILL: The hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Peck) states that the Archbishop of the Anglican Church and the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church in his constituency advocate the principle of this Bill. That is all right, but neither of them is an Indian. What does the Indian say about it? The Indian has a solemn treaty with this country, and we propose to break that treaty by force. The Indians do not ask us for enfranchisement; but we say they must have it. One hon. member says, "We are endorsing this Bill because we want to give the Indian liberty." The minister who is in charge of the Bill says, "We want to get after the Indians and make them pay their debts, we want to coerce them, we want to put them off their Indian reserves and take their land."

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I quoted a few minutes ago a document but I find I have one or two other communications that have been sent to me, among them being a letter from an Indian who is enfranchised. He writes:

445 Parliament Street,
Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.,
April 20, 1920.

HON. W. L. MACKENZIE KING,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear, Sir,—I beg leave to draw your attention in regards to the proposed amendment of the Indian Enfranchisement Act as contained in Bill No. 14, sections 107 to 111, inclusive, now before the Legislature of Ottawa. No doubt you are aware that the nature of the Bill is compulsion and that the majority of the Indians are against it. But there are a lot of Indians who know nothing about this. However, they seemed to be satisfied with the present enfranchisement Act and why should they be disturbed by new one. But who wants this compulsory law? Surely it is not the Indians that are clamouring for it. I am enfranchisement Indian and quite agree with the stand taken by Indians. I think it is most unreasonable and unjust to pass such a law without the consent of the Indians themselves. It is simply taking away by mere force their rights and privileges which were given to them by the British Crown, and I do not think the Canadian Parliament has any right to deprive of any Indian or Indians, his of their hereditary rights, etc., without the consent of the Imperial authorities. Kindly consider these points I have raised and kindly let me know what you think. If you can support my views I should be very glad. I am sure the Indians need every ounce of pressure from their white brothers. No doubt there are some broad-minded men still left. I should appreciate an early reply. The Bill will soon have its third reading I presume.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) MICHAEL LACELLE.

P.S. Enclosed find copy of resolution which is self-explanatory. L.