

Indian Act

purpose of the legislation, at the present time it is not sufficient. I believe the same principle should be applied to the Indian Act and the regulations amended accordingly, so that a greater amount will be available.

In addition to that I would hope that the fact that the total amount available is being increased to \$1 million means that the department itself has decided on a much more vigorous policy so far as making use of this provision is concerned, and will give perhaps a more vigorous leadership than has been the case in the past in encouraging Indians to make use of this provision and get into various activities in which they can make a living for themselves.

In so far as the first part of the resolution is concerned, it reads merely:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the Indian Act to provide for a number of changes in connection with the administration of the act—

One would think from this wording that probably the changes are not of very much importance. In introducing this resolution the minister did not say anything about those changes. In fact I think he said they would not be of much interest to the house.

Mr. Pickersgill: I know the hon. gentleman would not want to misrepresent what I said. I said that I did not think there would be much advantage to the committee in my talking about a hypothetical bill, and I would prefer to speak about the rest of the bill when I would be in order in speaking about it, on second reading. Some of the clauses are quite important, but they have no financial implications and are therefore not part of the resolution.

Mr. Harkness: I was going to say that my understanding is those changes are quite substantial.

Mr. Pickersgill: But they have nothing to do with the resolution.

Mr. Harkness: The statement in the resolution concerning certain administrative changes is a very poor description of what is involved in these various changes. My information may not be correct, but I understand that copies of the proposed changes were shown to a meeting of Indians which was held in Ottawa last winter. I was very glad to hear that this meeting had been held, and that the proposed changes had been shown to the Indians. I think it is essential, in dealing with our Indians, that their co-operation be secured, and that when changes in the act are contemplated they should be

consulted and their advice should be taken in regard to any changes which may be proposed.

However, what I understand or what I have heard as a result of these delegates coming back and circulating their experiences among their comrades and others, is that the general purpose of many of the changes proposed is to shift authority and power to make decisions from the governor in council, where it resides under the Indian Act as it is at the present time, to the minister himself. As far as I can gather, the Indians look on such a change with very considerable trepidation. They consider their interests would be much better protected if the power of decision in regard to these matters were to remain with the governor in council rather than be shifted into the hands of one man, the minister. These changes, if they are as I understand them, represent an increase in the arbitrary power of the minister and his agents—

Mr. Pickersgill: I wonder whether I might raise a point of order. The hon. gentleman is surely anticipating something that is not before the committee. If this resolution is adopted I understand it will give the minister authority to introduce a bill, and when that bill is introduced the hon. gentleman will know whether or not these things are being done and the minister will be in a position to state what is involved in these changes, and every hon. member will have an equal opportunity to debate it. It does seem to me, sir, it is quite out of order to be anticipating a future debate. No other change in the proposed bill has any financial implications except the one that I have spoken about. The whole bill could have been introduced, if there had been no amendment to section 69, without a resolution at all. I submit, sir, we should stick to what is before the committee at this time.

The Deputy Chairman: I am afraid the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration would have to go farther than he has gone to persuade me that his point of order has been well taken. I am not responsible for the drafting of the resolution the committee is considering, but it does start out in this way:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the Indian Act to provide for a number of changes in connection with the administration of the act; . . .

And so forth. That is part of the resolution before this committee. I think in my not too long experience here that in resolutions of this kind it has been the regular practice for members of the house to indicate matters which they think should be included