

*Supply—Indian Affairs Branch*

developed. In Quebec we have had the full cooperation of not only the present Quebec government but the government that preceded it. We have had set aside two large areas for the restoration of beaver. At the southern end of James bay we have about 1,000 Indians.

Mr. MacNICOL: That is on the Ontario side?

Mr. CRERAR: On the Quebec side.

Mr. MacNICOL: There are about 1,000 on the Ontario side.

Mr. CRERAR: It is east of James bay. We have secured there over ten thousand square miles, and we are developing a similar area north of the lake St. John country. Development work is being carried on in northern Saskatchewan, northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories. I can say with some confidence that if these policies are wisely and sanely followed, we shall take that population of Indians who have been dependent for their livelihood upon fur in the past practically off relief within ten years, probably within seven or eight years. That is a bit of work that I think is constructive and well worth while. Then we are endeavouring to develop the reserves that have agricultural possibilities so that the Indians will have live stock and meat and cereals for their support.

There is no problem to-day that offers a greater challenge to the Canadian people than the Indian problem. I think there are definite possibilities of solving them. My hon. friend suggested that the whole Indian problem might be a matter of review by a special committee. I shall be glad to take his suggestion under consideration. In fact we have at present under review the whole Indian Act, which stands almost in its entirety as it was passed sixty or seventy years ago. If we come to a consideration of the revision of the act, these other matters to which my hon. friend has referred might be examined into at the same time.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I should like to commend the minister for the laudable work he has done. I have no use for carping criticism which overlooks the fine things that have been done.

I have noticed the hospitals that have been established for Indians. These hospitals are highly commendable and are increasing the numbers of the Indians and adding to their happiness.

But with the many commendable things I wish to point out two or three matters that also should be borne in mind. We should not

[Mr. Crerar.]

dream too much of great things to do by and by but should get under way what we are going to do. The Indians are suffering seriously from certain ills which are developing among us and which we are treating with a measure of indulgence. I refer to such as marketing difficulties. If the white man finds it difficult to understand why we cannot produce and sell wheat, let hon. members imagine how the Indian feels when, after having learned to produce wheat, he finds he cannot sell it or the price is so low that he cannot make a profit. I have in my constituency one of those reserves on which farming has been developed. I have known Indians who were successful stock raisers to be reduced to despair simply because they could not sell to advantage. The government must be particularly careful and give special attention to the Indians' problems while we are going through these trying times. I have talked with Indians from the reservation in my constituency who were bewildered by the unemployment problem. They have learned to harvest sugar beets, to pick up potatoes, and built themselves up so they could get along fairly well; they had teams and bundle racks to go into the grain fields and supplement their income, and then when troubles came in 1929 and following years, they could not get that work and income upon which they had been dependent. This condition applies all over Canada and is causing great trouble.

I would point out that, if I am correctly informed—and I have information from dependable sources—there is developing among the Indians in Canada a bitterness which is really dangerous, notwithstanding all the good things the minister is doing. I point this out so that the minister may be a little more indulgent than he has been.

Mr. NICHOLSON: I was out of the chamber for a few minutes and did not hear the first remarks of the minister. Did he say anything about the tuberculosis problem?

Mr. MacNICOL: Yes; it is gradually improving.

Mr. NICHOLSON: I am glad to hear that, because my information was that the problem was not being adequately handled. The department did not have sufficient money to cope with it. Is there anything further the minister might say?

Mr. CRERAR: Nothing was done especially with regard to the tuberculosis problem