

whether or not the Indian himself wants enfranchisement. It shows whether he is fit, in the opinion of the board to become enfranchised. If he is and does not himself desire to be enfranchised immediately, the order has no effect for a period of two years, during which time the Indian may make such representations to the department as he thinks proper. Our report recommended that the Government consider the advisability of amending the rules of the House so as to provide for a standing Committee on Indian Affairs. If that recommendation is approved and such a committee is established, the complaint of any Indian could go to that committee; and even if the rules are not so amended the matter can certainly be dealt with in a proper and fitting manner. So that it is safe to say that no Indian will be enfranchised against his wishes unless he is clearly fit for enfranchisement. And as I have said, why should Indians who work in the shops of Montreal, Brantford and other such places and who are in receipt of an income of from \$6 to \$9 a day, have all the protection surrounding wards of the country? These people are taking their places with the other residents of Canada; they are in just the same position as white men. Every Indian who came before the committee expressed a desire to take his place with the white man as fast as possible; no good argument was advanced against the compulsory enfranchisement of Indians who are in the position that I have indicated. Unless it can be shown from the record of the department or from something that was brought before the committee that it is the intention of the department to enfranchise, against their wishes, Indians who are unfit for enfranchisement, I cannot see what objection there can be to this proposal.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I desire to move that the words "or on the date of such order" in the portion sought to be added by the subcommittee be changed to "or earlier." As it reads, I am afraid that enfranchisement could take place either at the end of two years from the date of the order, or at the actual date of the order, and at no other time. That was not the intention, and, of course, it would not be common-sense. The intention is not to compel enfranchisement for two years, but if the Indian desires it earlier, at any time between the date of the order and the end of the year period, he can have it.

Mr. BOYS: I think the minister is mistaken as to the meaning of the clause. The

order which enfranchises the Indian is made immediately after the report is made. The order is not dated two years hence; it is dated as of that date. The wording we have is: "or on the date of such order if requested by such Indian." Now, suppose the order is made providing for enfranchisement two years hence. The Indian himself, before the two years are up, makes a request to be enfranchised, and if he does that, his enfranchisement takes place as of the date of the order, which would be a day gone by and not a day in the future. If there is to be a change, the only change that should be made is in the date of his application or request.

Mr. MEIGHEN: My point is this. I did not have time to discuss the matter with the hon. member who was chairman of the committee, but I discussed it with the Deputy Superintendent General and with another member of the committee. If the clause is left as it is, then the order that the Governor in Council passes after a report of the Board, could provide for one of two things: one, that the enfranchisement of the Indian would take effect in two years from the date of the order; or two, that the enfranchisement of the Indian would take effect at once upon the date of the order, the second, only in the event of the Indian requesting it. If the Indian can request it to take place, there is no reason why he should not be allowed to request it at any time within the two years.

Mr. BOYS: That is the intention.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is what I thought. That is what I rose to say and what I said before. There is no use making it take effect within the two years and then to have the enfranchisement date back. That would retroactively make the Indian liable on obligations for which he was not liable before and which took place in the period between that date and the date of enfranchisement. That is why I make this suggested change which I was sure was the intention of the committee.

Mr. McCOIG: In what way does the enfranchisement of an Indian affect him as regards his Government grant?

Mr. MEIGHEN: On enfranchisement he gets commutation of all his rights. He gets such lands or such cash as his share amounts to, and then he makes his way in the world. He gets no more grants; he gets no more protection from his civil liabilities, and he gets the