

*Indian Act*

training these native Indians to become welders, diesel mechanics, carpenters and all the rest of it—there is something we must remember and it is this. We are educating these people in the Northwest Territories to follow professions of this sort. I want to suggest to the minister now that it is all right to educate these people along these lines, but he should remember one thing. Once they become diesel mechanics, they have to be supplied with work. Once they become welders, they have to be supplied with work or an opportunity to do something along that line. Development in the Northwest Territories is slow. I am afraid that we are going to have students coming out of these schools and work is not going to be available in the Northwest Territories. Then, what do we do?

As a matter of fact, a few years ago an Indian from Fort Simpson was sent to the technical school in Calgary to take a course in welding. What happened to him? He is back in Fort Simpson. They sent him back to Fort Simpson to weld. There is not enough welding in Fort Simpson to keep this fellow in tea. He does not have to be a welder to go out and trap beaver or muskrat. I just want to impress upon the minister the fact that it is all right to educate these people along vocational lines but there has to be a long-term viewpoint to ensure these people of work once they are educated.

I was rather amused when I looked through three of the reports of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration for the years 1953, 1954, and 1955. Generalizing on conditions in the Northwest Territories, this report had this to say:

Fur catches were poor and prices very low. As a result, in some localities where caribou and other game was plentiful the Indians did not attempt to catch their fur quotas.

Then the report says how many schools there are in the area and that Indian health was better than average. No serious epidemic occurred during the year and tuberculosis was well under control in the far north and all known cases were hospitalized. They do not say what the department was doing to help the Indians. They do not say what the department was doing to help the Indian make a living.

Then, the 1954 report says:

The economic condition of the Indians in this area continued to decline owing to the scarcity and low prices of furs. The relief problem was greatly eased, however, by the fact that caribou were available at nearly all points with the exception of Providence, Hay river and Fort Liard. The installation of freezer storage plants at various points in this area contributed in large measure to the reduction of relief costs.

The fishing activities of the Indians increased over most of the territories and helped considerably

[Mr. Hardie.]

to supplement the available food supply. Several attempts were made to interest Indians in commercial fishing, with varying degrees of success.

I will come back to that in a minute. That is about all they said. The general health of the Indian was good, and no serious epidemic occurred in the year. Then, they set out how many schools there were. That is all for 1954.

Then, the report for 1955 had this to say:

A moderate increase in the price of fur brought some improvement in the economic position of the Indians in the Northwest Territories and many of the Indians took advantage of opportunities to improve their diet through domestic fishing in the numerous lakes in the Mackenzie area.

Mr. Chairman, they have been doing that since the beginning of time, fishing the lakes. Is this new? Is it new to the department of Indian affairs, that they were fishing the lakes.

A supervised caribou hunt was conducted for the first time in the Yellowknife and Rae areas, in an effort to encourage the Indians to provide food for the summer months and, at the same time, conserve big game by storing in cold storage lockers provided by the branch. The experiment was moderately successful.

No serious epidemics occurred during the year and thorough chest X-ray coverage was conducted in conjunction with the paying of annuities during the summer months.

An increasing number of Indians turned from hunting and trapping to other industries, taking seasonal employment in commercial fishing and lumbering industries and in the transportation service.

Commercial fishing, lumbering and transportation service, that is all summer employment. Hunting is for the winter time, but they do that anyhow.

These reports tell what had been going on up there for three years, and except for the fact that the department built freezer or storage plants in various points, that is all that is said about what the department is doing for the native in the Northwest Territories. The department is telling the rest of the country what the native is doing. Everybody knows he is fishing. Everybody knows he is trapping. But they do not know how much money he is getting out of fishing and trapping. I find from the files of the department of northern affairs that the average Indian trapper in the Northwest Territories earns \$450 per year. The cost of sugar, for instance in Aklavik or Tuktoyaktuk or any place along the Arctic coast, is \$25 per hundred. Flour costs \$20 per hundred and tea \$1.85 per pound. How far would \$450 go? Do not ever get it into your head that these people want relief. I have heard people say oh, when the native gets relief he is not going to work as long as he can get relief. I am telling you that the relief he gets from the department of Indian affairs is not worth