

*Indian Act*

areas the widest possible freedom should be given to the Indians in the matter of taking fish and game for food purposes. The Indian is a conservationist by nature, and he will not kill unless necessity demands.

It has been necessary for the Indian people to adapt themselves to the impact of this civilization. In the older parts of Canada this process of adaptation is proceeding successfully and I for one am happy to say that their health and economic situation is improving—perhaps not as much as we would like, but still the tide seems to have turned and the trend is upward.

I am not unmindful of the devoted efforts of the missionaries and public servants in the north; of the splendid work of the doctors and nurses of the Indian health services under the able direction of Dr. Percy Moore, and officials of the Department of National Health and Welfare, and the sympathetic understanding of their many problems by director D. M. MacKay and his efficient and loyal staff.

Much has been done, especially since the second world war, in improving the health of the natives in the north. The establishment of the Charles Camsell hospital at Edmonton gives hope that that dread disease, tuberculosis, may be banished entirely. With the campaign to improve health conditions should go a campaign to improve housing, living conditions and hygiene. Much has also been done in improving educational facilities for the natives in the past few years, and I am mindful of the many fine schools which have been opened in the north in recent years.

These schools should not confine their teaching to the three R's. They should teach trades so that the Indian people can take their rightful place in building the many houses and buildings that will be required; in the greatly expanded mining industry and in operating tractors and machinery used in maintaining and constructing roads, highways, hydro developments and other engineering works and projects that are already built or will be constructed.

In my opinion every endeavour should be made to create employment for them. Many of them are natural-born mechanics and are proud of their already acquired skills. We must not only give them every opportunity to learn these trades but we must give them encouragement and opportunities for employment.

While thinking of the welfare of those natives who should and will take part in the development of our great northland, we should not overlook the welfare of those who for many years to come will continue to depend upon hunting and trapping for a

living. They should be encouraged to husband and develop their resources of game and fur-bearing animals in the same way that a wise farmer tills his farm or a wise rancher develops his herds.

Something should be worked out to afford the native trapper a measure of economic stability and stable prices for his furs, as is given to the farmer for his products, as it is a recognized fact that their economic conditions depend to a large extent upon the fluctuations of the fur market—and this means either hunger or plenty for the native trappers of northern Canada.

Another matter of concern to the native population of my riding is the fact that carpenters and labourers are brought in to the Mackenzie river districts from Edmonton and other large centres by government departments, at great expense, to work on the various projects, when there are already many residents who have the skills and ability and willingness to do the job in hand, and who can do it equally well, if not better, and at much less expense. I trust the departments concerned will discourage this practice and make provision for the employment of local people on northern projects.

I commenced by congratulating the minister upon bringing in this legislation at the present time. I conclude what I have to say by congratulating him again upon the evidence we have had of his keen and kindly interest in the Indians of Canada which, indeed, augurs well for their administration under his guidance.

**Mr. G. F. Higgins (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this resolution I shall not attempt to emulate the eloquence of the hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Blackmore) in either the length or the quality of my remarks. I propose chiefly to refer to the matter of education as it affects the Indians.

Before doing so however I would preface my remarks by stating that we have not many Indians in Newfoundland. I believe they number less than a thousand in all, and that they are situated chiefly in the ridings of Grand Falls-White Bay and Burin-Burgeo. The original inhabitants of the country, the Beothuks, have now been completely killed off by the original white settlers. The few tribes remaining are the Montagnais and the Micmacs. I believe they came from the mainland.

In this connection I should like to bring to the attention of the minister an article which appeared in our local press in Newfoundland when this matter was under discussion last year. This article from the