

The CHAIRMAN: The majority rule.

Mr. HARKNESS: But if you have an extreme case such as I mentioned you have not got a majority; you have a tiny minority.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: The remedy lies in the hands of the Indian who is called upon twice to vote before that condition would arise.

Mr. HARKNESS: Nevertheless you have that attitude on the part of the band, for various reasons. In some cases the reason is that the government of Canada has no right to be holding votes in this connection at all—they do not recognize our jurisdiction.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: Nothing in the Indian Act is going to give any countenance to that opinion.

Mr. HARKNESS: I still say that if you have that opinion, nevertheless, I do not think you should take a vote of a very tiny minority and use that as authority, for instance, to alienate the lands of the reserve.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: As I said before I do not think any minister would do that under the conditions you have mentioned.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I did not hear what the minister said.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: I said that I did not think, under the conditions Colonel Harkness mentioned, that any minister would continue with the sale.

Mr. BLACKMORE: There is one matter in connection with it that I think ought to be given quite a lot of consideration. There are some Indian bands so situated that it is exceedingly difficult for them to get together. In my constituency Indians in one reserve have to travel a hundred miles to get to a meeting. I think the minister can readily see that there will be real difficulty there if we apply the exact letter of this law as the clause has stipulated?

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: I think every effort is made to obtain the votes of all Indians and I would, I think, recommend to the appropriate authorities the dismissal of any officer or other official who called for a vote at a time when the band might be dispersed.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Well the Indians actually live all over a very long reserve.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: But I imagine your constituency will be just as long as the Blood Reserve and appropriate action is taken to get all the votes there.

Mr. BLACKMORE: That would be fine if appropriate action were taken but the Indians, great numbers of them, would have no means of assembling.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: I do not suppose there is a hall large enough to get them all assembled and to a certain extent they must be dispersed.

Mr. HARKNESS: I move we adjourn.

The CHAIRMAN: There are still a couple of sections here.

Mr. HATFIELD: What investigation does the minister make in these cases? Suppose there is a large block of land goes up for sale on some reserve, what investigation does the minister make before he agrees to permit the band itself to vote and sell it? I have known of cases where votes are purchased—

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: Well, there is usually a lot of preliminary correspondence and discussion and the department does not submit for approval of the band council an offer which is ridiculous. Certainly on some offers it might be difficult to determine the value of the land that is being surrendered. One might hold an opinion that the land was worth \$1,000 when it is worth \$600. However, if you had an offer of only \$200 it is hardly likely that the department would expect the band to consider it. However, when there is a reasonable offer the offer is presented to the band council. If the band council passes upon it they then order a vote and decide whether the offer is accepted.