

Michillimaquinae, and other places and posts of the countries above, the married and unmarried soldiers, remaining in Canada, shall be carried or transported into the British colonies or to Great Britain, and they shall not be troubled for having carried arms.

It says that they shall become British subjects, but it nowhere says that these Indians shall become British subjects. These are the Indians who were the allies of the French, and I do submit that unless there is something else in this bulky volume which I have not had time to read during the course of this debate, they still preserve some of their original status, and that this parliament has no jurisdiction over them.

Mr. MURPHY: Does my hon. friend contend that these Indians in Quebec are not British subjects?

Mr. POWER: I do not think they are unless they want to be.

Mr. MURPHY: Then my hon. friend disagrees with—

Mr. POWER: With Blackstone? Oh yes, he has been dead a long time, almost as long as the minister.

Mr. MURPHY: As dead as the arguments of my hon. friend.

Mr. GRAY: While this discussion is very interesting, I should like to place on record something practical for the consideration of the minister. This matter has been discussed at great length, and I think the minister has now introduced three or four amendments, but I have yet to hear any real reason for the introduction of this particular clause enforcing upon the Indians compulsory enfranchisement. If these men are intelligent enough to have this forced upon them, they are intelligent enough to have their petitions seriously considered by the minister and the government. The minister has stated before that he had not received these petitions.

Mr. MURPHY: No, I said that I had not received a certain petition mentioned by one hon. member. I did not say that I had not received any petitions.

Mr. GRAY: I was referring to the reply which the minister made to the hon. member for Charlevoix-Saguenay a week or so ago. I hold in my hand a copy of a petition dated Walpole Island, Ontario, March 8, 1933. It is addressed to the Hon. T. G. Murphy, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, and it is signed by over one hundred members of the Chippewas and Pottawatamies of that island. I am going to place it on Hansard, and before this section passes, or before we consider it

[Mr. Power.]

further I think the minister should give to this house the real reason for forcing upon these men an enfranchisement which they do not desire. The petition reads as follows:

Dear Sir,—

On report in the press that the government of the Dominion of Canada are in consideration of enacting an act of parliament to force the Indians of the Dominion of Canada into compulsory enfranchisement,

We the Chippewas and Pottawatamies of Walpole Island do herein make our humble protest to such an enactment of act of parliament for the following reasons:—

The Indians of this part of the province of Ontario are not in a position or qualification to enter into such enfranchisement, by education, or temperament as borne out by the fact that the smartest ones of our race who have taken enfranchisement have in a few months or years lost all their property, and in most cases have had to receive help.

Outside of one or two, who are graduates of universities, the majority of the Indians have not even a common or public school education, and therefore cannot compete with the white people.

Therefore we, your humble petitioners, who are descendants of the loyal subjects or allies of the British crown, who have fought for the rights of the British crown, and also rose as one man to the call of the Dominion of Canada, and have volunteered and fought side by side with our white brothers in the great war, do herein request your favourable consideration of this, our humble petition:—

Signed:

F. A. Ermatinger, chief.
Joseph Sampson, chief.
Walter Sands, councillor.
Frank Day, councillor.
Allan Isaac, councillor.
Raymond Nahdee, councillor.
William Nahdee, councillor.
Earle Sands, councillor.
Elijah Blackbird, councillor.
Ebenezer Greenbird, councillor.

I would ask the minister now what he has to say to these petitioners. Does he still insist upon enforcing enfranchisement upon these tribes?

Mr. MURPHY: The hon. member is not stating the case fairly. He states that I am going to force compulsory enfranchisement upon these people. In their petition they state that they are not ready for enfranchisement because they have not the necessary education, but if the hon. member has read the amendment he will see that a court is set up to determine whether or not the Indians are fit for enfranchisement, and unless they are considered fit they will not be enfranchised.

Mr. GRAY: May I ask this question? Who initiates these proceedings? Is it not the minister?

Mr. MURPHY: The Superintendent General may.