

training. If he had, I do not hesitate to say, he would put a far better case for the Indians than the man they did engage.

Mr. McKENZIE: He was not all Indian, I venture to say.

Mr. PECK: I wish to support what my hon. friend from Fraser Valley (Mr. Stacey) has said. I have no criticism whatever to offer of the leader of the Opposition for trying to obtain the widest information, but what I claim is that the representations that have been made do not express the true feeling of the Indians of British Columbia. People who come here and make that claim should have some sort of genuine credentials. I am prepared, as a member who represents over 6,000 Indians, to say that the few who make such a claim do not represent the Indians generally—those in my part of the country at least. I have every sympathy with the purpose of the Bill, and I congratulate the minister and the deputy superintendent general on their efforts. This is the first time in the history of the British Empire that people have struggled against enfranchisement—against obtaining liberty. We white men know what a long hard struggle preceded the granting of the franchise in this country to ourselves and no man ever made a nobler fight for liberty in this very Canada of ours than did the ancestor of my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition. It is extraordinary for these people to say that they do not want liberty, and it seems to me that they do not represent the real Indian feeling of the country.

Mr. CAHILL: What is the real Indian feeling?

Mr. PECK: I think they are in favour of enfranchisement.

Mr. CAHILL: You think so? The Indians do not say so.

Mr. PECK: I do not give credence to Mr. O'Meara's statement that the Indians are opposed to enfranchisement. He is an agitator who goes up and down the country specially among the Nishgas, bleeding the Indians of their money so that he may come down here and make "representations" on their behalf. I say that he does not represent the feeling of the great tribes of British Columbia.

Mr. CAHILL: What do the great tribes themselves say?

Mr. PECK: I say we have not got a true expression of their feeling. I deny that this petition represents the true feeling [Mr. Stacey.]

ing of the Indians in my constituency, among whom are some of the most enlightened and most advanced Indians in the Dominion. We wish to give them a chance to obtain the same full measure of liberty that we ourselves enjoy. By a peculiar coincidence, before leaving for Ottawa I had an interview with the Anglican Archbishop of Caledonia and the northern part of British Columbia, and with the Roman Catholic Bishop of Prince Rupert and the Yukon, and also with a number of other celebrated missionaries, and there was not one of them that did not wish to see the Indians have the franchise provided they could pass satisfactory tests,—that they understood our system of government and our institutions.

Personally I think the Bill is a good one and does great credit to the minister and those associated with him. If you want to refuse the franchise to a people, of course, you can do so, but it will be the most unique spectacle in the history of the world, for we are trying to enfranchise a people who, it is said, do not want to be enfranchised.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I would not like my attitude or that of other hon. members on this side of the House to be misunderstood. We are not objecting in the least to permitting Indians to be enfranchised, if they wish to be enfranchised. The broader you can make the bounds of freedom for mankind the better in every way. What we are objecting to is a policy of coercion—compelling men to be enfranchised against their will. And in all these matters of human relations I hope that we on this side of the House will always object to coercion or autocratic action on the part of government. So far as making it permissive for men to become free in the larger sense, the Government cannot go too far; but they must leave it to the individual to say whether he will have this liberty. Do not compel him to take a course that he does not wish to take.

Mr. MEIGHEN: There is not a day passes that the hon. gentleman does not speak and vote to compel people to do what they do not want to do.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: No.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Under our law we compel people to pay their debts; but debtors do not ask for that law. There are Indians practising law, and no man can make them pay their obligations; and yet the hon. gentleman says that it is against the great principles of human liberty to com-