

collected the amounts due by the purchasers, and to have evicted them would have been a hardship. Individual cases of a similar nature freely come before the department. Too high a valuation is often made of land, and even practical farmers are frequently deceived as to its value, finding after they begin to clear that there is no depth of soil and that the bare rock will be exposed on a fire going over the land. But the opinion of the Minister of Justice, bars the department from giving in this, and other cases, the relief which it is customary to grant. Hence the authority of Parliament is asked for making reductions by way of foregoing part of the purchase money due or the interest thereon. Very few reductions have ever been made in rents payable under lease. Indian lands are mostly leased for the benefit of the individual Indian owners thereon, and only occasionally for the whole band, and when reductions in rent have been made in cases of land leased for the benefit of the Indian owner, the consent of the Indian owner has first been obtained. It is doubtful, however, whether the department has authority to reduce rent, even with the consent of the Indian owners; and, as there is sometimes very good reason for reducing rent, it is thought well to remove all doubt as to the department's right to do so. There are a number of cases which I could cite to show the hardship which would be inflicted upon purchasers, were the full amount exacted, but I shall not weary the House with them. They can be given when in Committee, if such be deemed necessary.

Hon. Mr. MACDONALD (B.C.)—The hon. gentleman spoke of taking power under the bill to pay enfranchised Indians their interest in the property of the band. What would become of the Indians who are not enfranchised? What would become of widows whose husbands were entitled to a share? How would they get their share of the common fund? There is a case in point with which I am acquainted. There is a large amount of money in the hands of the government from the Songhees reserve. There is a widow now belonging to the band who is badly off. Her husband was the chief of the Songhees, and she had to sell her cattle in order to get wine and other comforts for her husband when he was sick, and after her husband's death she lost her child, and she is now quite destitute. She applied

the other day to the Indian agent in Victoria for relief, and he gave her nothing. He told her to go to work. How she is to get work I do not know. The only work that she could do is washing, and on the coast that is done by Chinamen principally. There is no work for women. Men can go hunting or fishing or go out to labour in the fields. What is meant by "enfranchising" in the Act? I do not understand the term. Does it mean that a man is entitled to vote at elections?

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—An enfranchised Indian is placed in the same position as a white man, and holds his property in his own name.

Hon. Mr. MACDONALD (B.C.)—In this case, to which I have referred, the woman is very badly off. The money of the tribe is lying in the bank, and she cannot get enough to buy a loaf of bread. Now, with regard to the Potlatch and the Tamanawas, the government cannot possibly stop these, for this reason: that all around the coast the Indians at the villages have these dances, and the government have not police all over the country, and they never will have police at these points. The Act will be, in a great measure, a dead letter in British Columbia, where those dances are held. Even in Victoria it will be difficult to stop them, but out in the country it will be impossible to prevent them. I think the government should not pass a bill which would be a dead letter.

Hon. Mr. BERNIER—I should like to ask if the superintendent is given full power under the first clause of the bill to lease the lands of Indians? It seems to me that this is giving to the superintendent a very extraordinary power. It gives him solely and fully the power of dispossessing an Indian of his land, and leasing it without the interference of the Indian himself. The cases in which the power could be exercised might be described.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—In reply to the hon. member for Victoria, I am not aware of the regulations governing the disposition of an Indian's property in British Columbia, but I have made a note of it and will make inquiry and I hope to be able to get the information. As the hon. gentleman puts it the case seems to be one of very great