

tion. I have heard it stated, Mr. Chairman, that Canada has no clearly defined Indian policy. In other words, that while the Government in co-operation with the churches of the country has sought to improve the moral and social status of the Indian youth, she has not made any adequate provision for their full and subsequent citizenship. This Bill is an honest and carefully wrought out measure to promote, with reasonable celerity, the social and civic welfare of the descendants of the original inhabitants of this country.

The native has been and is in many ways under-rated and misjudged, possibly because he differs in many important respects from the white man, but those differences are mainly the results of generations of training, environment, and natural or race characteristics. When we consider his history and understand his character, we find many strong mental and moral qualities that promise well for his future development and citizenship. At the same time there are certain obvious defects in his mentality which demand from us as his guardians kindness and consideration, to enable him to reach the largest measure of self-adjustment and independence.

The Indian is by nature very strongly domestic in his habits. He is a faithful friend and possesses in a high degree the artistic temperament, as evidenced by the dexterity of the women and by the style of public address used by the Indian orator. But he is slow to move, has little initiative, and is almost devoid of the economic instinct. Therefore it may be regarded as incumbent upon us, by reason of these existing conditions, to do our utmost to help him realize and enjoy what we conceive to be the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship.

There are about 100,000 Indians in Canada; approximately one-quarter of these are in British Columbia. It is of those and those only, Mr. Chairman, and of their relation to this Bill that I propose now to speak. These Indians represent all grades and conditions of civilization and progress, from the aboriginal state to comparative social and financial comfort. I understand that one Indian of British Columbia bought \$25,000 worth of Victory Bonds last fall. It is estimated that probably less than one-half of these Indians have ever had an opportunity to secure even a rudimentary education, and of those who have had the opportunity a very considerable number have refused to attend the school provided.

[Mr. Stacey.]

There are seven or eight linguistic stocks in the province, each of which has several distinct dialects. These stocks vary in intellectual capacity, as they do in other respects. Some, indeed, are of very high order, mentally alert, analytical, vigorous, and capable of great development under favourable conditions. But it is worthy of note that while there are many natives who are financially easy and many more who are intellectually qualified to a very high degree, not a single Indian from British Columbia has up to the present time made application for enfranchisement. When it is noted that 300 Indians in the Dominion at the present time have applied for enfranchisement the question naturally arises: why are none from British Columbia included in that number? One reason that may be assigned—I do not say the only one—is that an unfortunate state of affairs exists in British Columbia between certain Indian tribes on the one hand and the province of British Columbia and the Dominion of Canada on the other. Bill No. 13 which has been before this House is an attempt to remove the difficulties existing on the former account, whereas Bill No. 14 proposes or aims to promote the social and civic welfare of the individual Indian. In all fairness it must be said that a number of Indians from British Columbia appeared before your committee to oppose the passage of this Bill. But with equal candour it must be stated that it was soon discovered, upon their own admission, that their opposition was not really against the provisions of the Bill; for more than one of them stated that they did not know anything about those provisions. Their attitude was based, rather, upon the twofold objection as set forth by their counsel, Mr. O'Meara: first, that they formed a kind of protectorate under the British Crown and therefore this Parliament had no authority to pass this Bill—or, inferentially, any other Bill—affecting the allied tribes of British Columbia; second, upon the ground that they claimed tribal ownership under aboriginal title and Royal Proclamation of 1763 and were entitled to an interest in all the lands of the province. I propose now, Mr. Chairman, to state to the committee as clearly as I am able, not in the learned language of the lawyer but in the simpler speech of the layman, the condition of affairs in British Columbia in so far as they relate to the two points presented to your committee, as mentioned a moment ago.

It is necessary for us to review very briefly the history of the settlement and de-