

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: We have been discussing this Bill freely, almost as though we were in Committee. But I suggest to the right honourable gentleman that perhaps it would be better to take the second reading and go into Committee.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I think we should go into committee immediately after the second reading.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was read the second time.

CONSIDERED IN COMMITTEE

On motion of Right Hon. Mr. Meighen, the Senate went into Committee on the Bill.

Hon. Mr. Copp in the Chair.

On section 1—truant officers:

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: This simply provides that every member of the Mounted Police or any special constable appointed for police duty on an Indian reserve shall be a truant officer.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I may say, honourable members, that the Six Nations Indians gave me considerable trouble at Geneva. Having done all they could in this country to free themselves from the control of the Dominion Government, they went to the foot of the Throne, whence they were directed to return with their complaints to Ottawa. Then they appealed to the Council of the League of Nations for protection, claiming that Canada was violating a treaty made some 150 years ago between a representative of the King and themselves. I obtained from the department considerable information on the status of these Indians and furnished it to the Society of Friends at Geneva, which was endeavouring to protect the rights of Indians in Africa, Asia and America. I remember that one of the grievances was that a police officer of Canada had dared to invade the Six Nations reserve. I cited our law which permits these Indians to vote, and showed that all the members of this particular band had recognized themselves as Canadian citizens by going to the polls at the last two general elections. I do not know whether the provisions of this Bill apply to Six Nations Indians. Can the right honourable gentleman state whether there is any exception in their favour?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: No, there is none at all.

Section 1 was agreed to.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN:

On section 2—removal of executors:

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: This applies where an executor does not proceed as he should with the distribution of estates.

Section 2 was agreed to.

On section 3—consent of agent required for sale or barter:

Hon. Mr. GILLIS: Has the law not always prevented an Indian from selling?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Formerly the law made it an offence only for the person buying from the Indian, but this amendment makes it an offence for the Indian to sell. The Indian is put on his guard, because usually he is just as much to blame as the other party.

Section 3 was agreed to.

On section 4—buying of produce prohibited:

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: The explanation given on section 3 applies here.

Section 4 was agreed to.

On section 5—roads:

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: This enables the Superintendent General to say where roads shall be established on a reserve.

Section 5 was agreed to.

On section 6—regulations:

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: This is to regulate the operations of hawkers and peddlers:

Section 6 was agreed to.

On section 7—board of enquiry as to fitness for enfranchisement:

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: This is the section which was referred to on the motion for second reading.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: This is the kernel of the Bill. I quite understand that the Superintendent General should take notice of the request of an Indian who desires to be enfranchised, but I wonder what will govern the selection of persons for enfranchisement in the absence of such requests. As I said before, the matter would be quite simple if the section applied only to those individuals who had left or might in the future leave their reserve, to live as ordinary Canadian citizens, for they would have shown that they no longer desired to remain wards of the Government. But how will the Superintendent make his selection among Indians who have shown no inclination to move away from the reserve?