

me that some designation would be desirable, which would continue the sense of ministerial responsibility.

Mr. CANNON: Previously the Indian Act stated who was responsible for the Eskimos, but we have now an order in council instead of an act of parliament, and my hon. friend has doubts as to whether or not the act covering the Department of the Interior is wide enough.

Mr. BENNETT: It was thought it was not in 1924, and it was thought desirable to make it clear that a minister in either house of parliament should be the person responsible for the administration, or shall I say the minister in charge rather than the administrator, because there is a clear distinction between administration and ministerial responsibility.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): It is my intention to ask for an amendment to the Northwest Territories Act. All we are asking here is merely the repealing of what we did in 1927 in regard to the Indian Act.

Mr. BENNETT: This would be the act in which it would appear because they are wards of the nation. After all, the Indian Act is merely a code for dealing with the wards of the nation. They are called Indians in one instance, and Eskimos in another, both aborigines of this country. They are both wards of the nation and they are both covered by the Indian Act, which is a code only to deal with the conduct of the business of the wards of the nation as between the wards and the state. That is the reason I am drawing this point to the attention of the minister.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): If my hon. friend's convention were right, all that would be necessary to be done would be to add to the subsection that the revised statutes of Canada, 1927, be repealed and that the control be placed under the Minister of the Interior.

Mr. BENNETT: Except that it is not usual to deal with a statute in that way.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I confess that my hon. friend has confused me. I would consider that the Northwest Territories Act would have to be amended. If my hon. friend would allow this section to stand, we will look into it.

Mr. BENNETT: I desired to make it clear to my hon. friend, as it is a legal matter. Subsection 2 says:

The Superintendent General of Indian Affairs shall have charge of Eskimo affairs.

Instead of a minister we have now an officer, and if it is desired to follow the principle of ministerial responsibility, then there should be a substitution.

Section stands.

On section 2—Annuities and interest applied to maintenance.

Mr. BENNETT: This is a very drastic change.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): It merely gives us the right to transfer the moneys set aside. The present subsection reads:

The superintendent general may apply the whole or any part of the annuities and interest moneys of Indian children attending an industrial or boarding school to the maintenance of such school or to the maintenance of the children themselves.

It is merely widening the powers. The annuities and interest moneys of Indian children attending industrial or boarding schools are not required for and not applied to the maintenance of such schools, and the provision for such application is eliminated in the amendment.

Mr. BENNETT: I am sure the minister realizes the seriousness of the situation. In four or five lines he changes a whole principle in connection with the appropriation of public money. Under the section as it existed before, a school was to be maintained and public funds went to maintain the school. This will enable the department to farm them out, a most pernicious practice.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): My hon. friend is wrong.

Mr. BENNETT: To pay somebody for them.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): May I explain the difficulty? In the last five years, finding that those boarding schools particularly were in great difficulties financially, we have taken over the schools and their equipment in their entirety and the government have become responsible for them. There is no further charge upon the pupils, the Indians or anyone else for the maintenance of those schools. The teaching of course is still undertaken by the churches, and per capita grants made to assist in the tuition. All we are trying to do is to make applicable to the teaching the annuities that formerly were applied to the maintenance of those schools, sometimes to the construction of them, of course always, I will admit, largely under the control of the tribes themselves.

Mr. ADSHEAD: Are the Indians consulted as to the religion they want their children to be taught?

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): The Indians are always consulted. Seldom if ever do we take a child from an Indian family, unless the family are leading a vicious life, and place it in a school in opposition to their wishes.