

Mr. MACKAY: The minister, of course, will have the power to exempt an individual or a group of Indians from the operation of the section requiring a permit.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: The Indian may not need a permit now.

Mr. WOOD: These fellows I have in mind are quite successful farmers and I would not like to see any obstacle put in their way.

Mr. MURRAY: I was going to say regarding these baskets, that in British Columbia they make baskets also, and very beautiful baskets, in fact, they are works of art. They are sold to American tourists and others and they are never sold cheaply. It just shows the variety of products manufactured by the Indians across the country.

Mr. HARKNESS: As the minister has said, this section is one that has caused a great deal of complaint on the part of Indians in western Canada. It was put into effect to begin with in the early days when the Indians had no sense of the value of money and for their own protection, to prevent them dealing off all their herds of cattle for a few bottles of whisky and a few beads. Now, this thing has continued right through from that time. In the meantime a large number of Indians are successful farmers and are able to handle their own affairs. The purpose of subclause (2) is so the minister may grant to these people who are able to handle their own affairs the right to do so, and it is a forward step and one that is all to the good.

The question I was going to ask about this is what policy is going to be followed now in connection with this matter? Is the grant of these permits to individuals or bands as a whole to handle their own affairs going to be quite widely practised, or how do you propose to handle the power which subclause (2) gives you?

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: It stands to reason we will have to be informed as to the capabilities of a band generally or an individual Indian and I have no doubt that the agent himself may be as well informed as anyone, or the person who normally deals with that Indian or band in the white neighbourhood near there; but it is the intention to grant the permits and to actively seek out persons to whom permits should be granted. We are not going to sit back and wait for people to complain that they have not been granted a permit. We will actively embark upon a policy of granting them.

Mr. HARKNESS: Well, then, your policy will really be to circularize the Indian agents, I presume, and ask them to recommend the people who, in their opinion, should have permits, and then permits will be issued to them? On the other hand, if a man has not received a permit as a result of that, is there any provision for him appealing or taking it up with the superintendent or yourself in order to get that permit?

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: There is no provision necessary for that; if he sits down and writes me we will read his letter and investigate his case.

Mr. HARKNESS: Will that information be sent out to the Indians?

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: I think this section is pretty well known on most of the reserves in western Canada but we will make it known everywhere.

Mr. BRYCE: What I want to get at is this: In this section, the minister may at any time give exemptions to one Indian or half a dozen Indians to sell their grain, but are they still under the supervision or jurisdiction of the agent whenever you give them that exemption, or are they free agents as Major MacKay said a few minutes ago?

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: They are free agents for the purpose of subclause (1), that is the sale or barter of produce, of cattle or other animals, grain or hay.

Mr. BRYCE: And they do not need to consult their Indian agents?