

Indian at face value. The one who does not want to vote, either because it is a matter of principle with him not to take part in national proceedings, is still protected. The one who wants to vote has that right on the basis of equality with non-Indians. He, however, can make his choice as to the advantages of voting or not voting. Now, on the question of equality of status, I think we would be granting the Indian a false status for joining in our proceedings if we granted him a privilege not enjoyed by others. We must remember that the Indian has confronting him someday the exercise of all the ordinary activities of Canadian citizenship and we would be doing him an injustice if we gave him that now on a higher level than the rest of us enjoyed because some day we would have to bring him down to the level of the rest of us and it would not be fair to him. Therefore, as I suggested a little while ago, this section meets the wishes of all three groups of Indians; in other words, they can have it on an equality of status with us, or they do not need to if they feel that they do not want to as a matter of principle, or that they should not as a matter of economic advantage.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the minister's very careful and full statement on this matter; however, I feel that at this stage we should do everything we can for the Indian, but at the same time we should protect whatever rights are his. That is really what it amounts to; and, I think one of the fundamental reasons that actuates me—I cannot exactly put it into words—is that the Indian, after all, is at a disadvantage in many respects. I think we all grant that. Now, in so far as those disadvantages can be removed or compensated for, I think that should be done. As I see it, that is one of the important considerations in reviewing this matter, but at the same time we have to bear in mind that the Indian inevitably pays a lot of our taxes already; he pays the sales tax, he pays the excise tax, tariffs and all the imposts that bedevil our civilization and which the Indian is unable to escape from. About the only tax exemption which he really has is that with respect to personal income tax. Bearing in mind that he already pays so large a measure of taxation, to ask him to give up his rights if he takes the right to vote—to force it upon him—seems to me not quite fair. As I said, I am not yet prepared to put it into words—but it deprives the Indian of a measure of motivation which I think should be provided for him.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: I might mention, of course, that this only applies to the Indian residents on the reserve who are not veterans or enfranchised. As you know, there is a preferred class of voter in Canada today, there is the Indian veteran and his wife; they enjoy this tax exemption without signing the waiver; and the Indians off the reserve have always voted anyway. This relates to the Indian on the reserve with respect to the income on the reserve. Now, I could make an argument which is precisely the opposite of that of Mr. Blackmore, that one of the penalties of civilization is that a great variety of taxes can be invented which are needed to maintain our position, and which will have to continue to be levied in order to have the advantages of what we consider a reasonably good state of society, and, as affording certain advantages to our citizens.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I might take issue with you on that.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: I do not intend to argue about that here. But Mr. Chairman, a very primary lesson in citizenship must be the responsibility that goes with it in return for whatever advantages we may extend.

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: Does the acceptance of the right to vote affect the Indian under section 82 relating to money by-laws and other matters relating to Indians on a reserve?