

*Indian Act Amendment*

offer any concrete solution of that problem; I can only say that we are giving it very serious consideration.

Mr. DUPUIS: I should like to know whether many of these Indians who have gone to school until the age of seventeen or eighteen have asked to be emancipated in order to enjoy the civil rights of the white people of this country?

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Yes, an ever-increasing number of the Indians have been asking for enfranchisement.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): Not at that age.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): No.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): That would be later in life?

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Yes.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): I thought the hon. member referred to the time they left the schools.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): They could not be enfranchised until they became of age.

Mr. DUPUIS: What I was getting at was whether, through their education, the Indians were more desirous of enjoying the civil rights of the country.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I think I can answer that in one word; yes.

Mr. COOTE: Has the department ever considered the possibility or advisability of picking out some of the more promising young Indians, which might be done on the recommendation of the teachers in the school, and giving them further education, perhaps in the technical schools? Would it not be possible to spend a little more money and send some of these young men to the technical schools in their own province, after which they might secure work on their own reserves or perhaps in adjacent towns?

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Yes, we have been giving that matter consideration.

Mr. NEILL: I think in justice to the department I should go on record as being of opinion that the department is doing a good and satisfactory work in teaching these children. Something was said about the boarding schools. For many years I saw the work of the day schools on the reserves, and I must say that the department has shown wisdom in practically abandoning those schools. They were utterly useless; the Indians moved

[Mr. C. A. Stewart.]

around so much that by the time the teacher got a child at one fishing station and gave him a few lessons, the family moved away and the children learned practically nothing. They forgot what little they had been taught before the teachers got hold of them again for another few days. In the boarding schools, however, they are kept from the time they are about seven years of age until they are sixteen. They get home for a month or so in the summer time and they are not subject to any more restrictions than are imposed upon white children in other boarding schools.

The condition to which my hon. friend referred in quoting from the *Literary Digest* was true, perhaps, of what you might call the first generation of educated Indians. So far as we could judge, they went back to the dirty, filthy conditions under which their fathers and mothers lived, but there was some difference, and when you came to the children of those people you found a very marked difference. Now when these children leave the schools they go back to homes where the conditions approximate those which obtained in the schools. In the old days, when they got a little bit advanced they would buy some white man's furniture; they would put it in the front room, where there was a board floor, and then they would live in the woodshed where there was a dirt floor and under all conditions which had prevailed during the time of their ancestors. The second generation, however, has progressed beyond that stage; they have stoves, gramophones, sewing machines and all the rest of it, and when these children go out into the world they are much more able to compete with white people. Their parents realize that. In the old days it was necessary to use compulsion in order to get these people to send their children to school, but now they are anxious to do so because they know the children must learn the white man's language in order to prosper.

It has been suggested that they should be given some advanced education along technical lines. Our industrial schools do give them that education; they are taught such trades as shoemaking and carpentering, and every industrial school must have at least one technical instructor. Beyond that I would not go. After all, our subject is to make these people good Indians, and if we accomplish that object we are doing all that is required. In the coast district of British Columbia these children take up the occupations of their parents; they carry on fishing or work in canneries, and they are much better equipped to do that, and receive higher wages and live under greatly improved conditions, in consequence of the education