

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

want to take too much of the time of this committee, but there were a number of briefs presented to the joint committee last year by the Quebec bands. There is a list of the briefs presented by these bands in the minutes and proceedings of the joint committee for Wednesday, May 4, 1960. I should like to make a brief reference to this list. There was a brief presented by the Eastmain band, Eastmain, Quebec. This is on the Quebec side of James bay, but it is in my riding. The brief was dated December 29, 1959. There was another brief presented by the Obedjiwan band, via Oskelaneo river, Abitibi east district. It is dated September, 1959. There was one presented by the Mistassini band, and it is dated August 24, 1959. The next one was presented by the northern citizens guidance association, and that is the one to which I should like to make a special reference. The different briefs that were presented by these bands will receive the careful consideration of the committee and exhibit the interest of the different Indian bands across the country in the committee.

I should like to read one section of the brief that was presented by the northern citizens guidance association, a group that is working for the improvement of the lot of the Indian in northern Quebec. This brief reads, in part, as follows:

Another matter of importance raised was the question of hostels for Indian children. The N.C.G.A. is in favour of the La Tuque plan provided it offers in the end permanent type employment to the future Indian labour force. Experience has taught us that seasonal employment is not the answer, nor ever will be. There are far too many negative sociological aspects involved. We understand that the La Tuque plan, commendable as it is, will not by any stretch of the imagination take care of the total number of available children. Our organization has therefore put on record a request that hostels be built in towns like Chibougamau, Chapais, Schefferville and eventually Mattagami. In such places, Indian children could receive primary education within their own environment, and eventually as the development of these towns proceeds, training in high schools and technical schools. Their training would qualify them for permanent employment in the mining industry, commercial and other fields.

Once again, it is emphasized that these offers of co-operation are coming from the industrial, educational and social leaders of northern Quebec mining communities. Will the opportunity be grasped by our federal government or will it be lost? Canadian citizens have been asked to develop a new consciousness towards their Indian brethren. We believe that we have done that here. We are willing to go all the way. But the next move is yours.

We would hope that the joint committee of the commons and senate would study these proposals humbly submitted, and that out of its discussions an enlightened and rewarding policy will be adopted.

This brief was signed by Doris H. Scanlon, Mrs. James P. Scanlon, secretary treasurer.

[Mr. Martel.]

I only mention this brief because I should like to know from the minister whether the project at La Tuque has been completed. We heard in the committee last year that it was going ahead, and since some of the Indians in my territory would be going to that school, I should like to get the situation clarified.

I should like also to make one suggestion before I conclude. Last year the committee received a great deal of evidence from the different Indian bands across the country. Before the committee resumed its work this year an index and a classification of all the material was supposed to be prepared. I understand that the classification and indexing of this material has been carried out by the departmental officials. I do not want to cast any doubt on their capacity or to indicate that they would be prejudiced in any way, but I feel the job could be done by independent persons or an independent group. Perhaps we could get suggestions from this group as well, and then the committee could proceed at a little faster pace. I was a member of the committee myself last year and it would be an impossible task for each member to go through all the evidence that was brought before the committee. If we had an independent group look through the material and prepare a résumé I feel this would be of help not only to the department but also to the Indians and to the members of the committee. I shall now conclude my remarks because we will have other opportunities to discuss these different matters in detail, when the joint committee starts its work.

Mrs. Fairclough: May I just tell the hon. member for Chapleau that in so far as committee work is concerned, this matter is in the hands of the committee. As a matter of fact, it was the committee which asked the department to undertake this work. If the committee wishes someone other than the department to undertake it, they will have to make other arrangements.

Mr. Martel: I will make suggestions to the committee.

Mrs. Fairclough: With regard to the school, may I say that it is in the planning stage now. I cannot give my hon. friend a definite answer as to when this project will be proceeded with but we are planning at the moment to have something in next year's estimates.

Mr. McQuillan: I listened with a great deal of gratification last night to the minister's opening remarks and I was pleased with the emphasis placed on the educational program.