

Canada Elections Act

have been held on those reserves at election time and I have addressed meetings there at such times. They are held for the purpose particularly of discussing the issues fully with those who have the vote, most of them being those who have served in the armed forces or their wives. What I want to say is that no matter what the nationality or background of the voters in the constituency generally may be, there is no section of the constituency where discussion of public questions concerning the people of this country is on a higher level. These people are well informed. They not only know the history of our different activities within the area but the background of the government of the country.

Last summer I was invited to the graduation ceremonies associated with the graduation of a group of Indians from one of the schools, a school similar to those referred to near the Brantford reserve. I have been at many graduation ceremonies of universities and colleges throughout the country but I have never attended one where the dozen pupils graduating gave a better account of themselves than did these full blooded Indians. Not only did they meet all the requirements of examinations and everything of that kind but when it came to putting on a program associated with the occasion they put on one of the finest displays of choir singing by men and women that I have ever listened to.

It has been long known in our section of the country that from the very early days some of the best concert singers we have had have been Indian girls. I recall the last occasion when the former prime minister came to our province and was entertained in the Qu'Appelle valley. The singer who sang some of the very finest English songs was a full blooded Indian girl. I remember too that away back in 1904 or 1905 when I was attending normal school at Regina whenever a concert was held in any of the churches or anywhere else the chief singer was an Indian girl who dressed in kilts and sang Scotch songs.

We have always followed these activities on their part and I do want to say that I can never understand why it is we have not found a way to give them all the vote. If the bill before us does not provide for it then I think we should have a bill that does. We should no longer consider that they are any different from any of the rest of us. Given the same opportunities that we have they produce results that are on just as high a level as those produced by the people of any nationality we have within our country.

I want to say that so far as I am concerned, personally,—I do not know that I have any

authority to speak for the party to which I belong—I am in favour of this measure to provide the Indians with a vote. There have been some who have said that the Indians in the Brant district and those in the Qu'Appelle district are educated to a higher level than the Indians of other districts. I find that no matter where I go, even in the far north of Saskatchewan, I find among the Indians individuals who are just as highly developed as any of us, and just as capable of voting as any of us. I would say that, on the other hand, you can go into any community anywhere and see people who will make you wonder why the vote was given to them, especially when you compare them with some other people. I believe that these Indians are just as capable of holding the vote as the members of any other race. I should like to commend this measure to the support of this house, and I would say that if this measure is not sufficient to assure the vote for Indians, the government should come along with a measure that will.

Mr. Jack Wratten (Brantford): Coming from the city of Brantford and the county of Brant, as I do, may I remind the house again that we have a large reservation there. Our city is named after one of the most famous chiefs of the Six Nations. Our city was born and developed on the site of the ford that Brant found across the Grand river when he first came to that area. We are very proud of the Indian people who live on the reservation adjacent to our city. There is located near Brantford the first Anglican church that was built in Ontario, and the communion service used in this church came over in Queen Anne's time.

We also have in Brantford, near the Grand river and near the Mohawk church, an institute which educates the children from the reserve. Mention has been made of the fact that Indians from the reserve have gone out into this fair country of ours and have become famous citizens. While one of the other hon. members was speaking on this subject, the name of Pauline Johnson came to my mind. She was a famous Indian poetess, whose home, Chiefswood, is still standing on the banks of the Grand river. I understand it is to be made an historic shrine in the very near future. I should like to call your attention to the fact that Magistrate Martin, who passed away a short time ago, was a full-blooded Indian who came from the reservation. He served during the first war and rose to be a magistrate in the city of Toronto where he was held in high esteem by everyone who met him.

[Mr. Gardiner.]