

Mr. BLACK (Yukon): What qualifications has Mr. Mackenzie, formerly gold commissioner of Yukon, for the position of chief of the Arctic expedition? Is he an explorer, a naturalist, a geologist, a surveyor or a navigator? Has he had any experience in Arctic work?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Of course, we have no men who are thoroughly experienced in Arctic work, but Mr. Mackenzie has had very large experience of northern conditions, and no one knows that better, perhaps, than my hon. friend. Of course, it was administrative work as gold commissioner in the Yukon. We look upon him as a man of pretty sound judgment. What we need is an authentic report of the conditions under which the Eskimos are living in order that we may apply the best remedy to the startling troubles that we hear about now and then as happening among the Eskimos. I concluded that Mr. Mackenzie was probably one of our best equipped officials to bring back a report that would be of value for this purpose.

Mr. BLACK (Yukon): Have the Arctic expeditions in the past brought back any information?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): The Arctic expedition goes up the east coast as far as Ellesmere island. Last year they left Mr. Soper, a young man who was temporarily in the employ of the department to winter at Baffin's. Mr. Burwash has been up in that territory. We are trying to get an intimate knowledge of the situation in the north, particularly where the whalers winter. Captain Bernier is an experienced northern navigator, but he is a sailor. Mr. Craig, who went up for two years, is one of the officials of the department with no northern experience at all. Mr. Henderson went up there last year. But we think it important to put a man in charge in order that we may not hear of whole tribes being wiped out by epidemics. It seems that we should exercise the same humane supervision over the Eskimo that we have been exercising over the Indian.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Will any medical men accompany this expedition?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Yes, Dr. Livingston will go with the ship, but we will have a resident medical man at Cumberland gulf.

Mr. WARD: Is it the policy of the government to continue the legal, social and moral supervision over the Eskimos that has

[Mr. C. A. Stewart.]

been carried on in the past? Is it considered wise to interfere with their traditional customs and habits, or is this not a lot of money spent to very little advantage?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): It is quite likely that if it were possible to allow the natives to live in their own traditional way they would be just about as well off, although possibly the missionaries would not agree with that view; they would hold that the Eskimos ought to be given religious teaching. But you cannot keep out the white man; he will come in contact with these people, and we must take precautions to avoid such harrowing occurrences as have taken place among them from time to time in the past.

Mr. WARD: Is it the experience of the government that it is of any particular avail to attempt to exercise legal jurisdiction over these people?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): It is a little difficult to answer that. The reports of the missionaries are that it is, and that is the report also of the mounted police—that the natives do realize that they must no longer kill when they take a notion to do so, and that there is a chance of punishment following if they do. Of course that is not generally known among them. My hon. friend might be surprised to know that traders going into the Aklavik region find the Eskimo with high powered motors, the girls able to dance the modern dances, gramophones being used by the people, and so on. Perhaps they are too highly civilized. A missionary was telling me that he had thrown away an ordinary alarm clock because he could not make it go, and upon returning to his camp after an absence of three or four weeks he was surprised to find it hanging in an Eskimo's camp, running and keeping good time. Moreover, he says that he prefers to get an Eskimo when it comes to employing a man to take charge of a motor boat.

Mr. WARD: What is the cost of carrying on this work among the Eskimos?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): It would be difficult to say exactly, but it would not be very much. It will cost us more in the future. While the officials can only go in there during the daylight season, they do other work as well while they are there.

Mr. WARD: I have heard severe criticism with regard to the execution of a couple of Eskimos about a year ago, on the ground that it was questionable, whether the results were such as to justify the large cost.