

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: I do not know whether this is the place to raise the matter but there is the question of the preamble to this Act that would set forth its purposes. Certainly anyone reading this Act would have difficulty in determining just what is our objective as far as the Indian is concerned. I suggest that a preamble would set forth what we propose to do here with the Indians under this Act.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: Well, the Act, the whole 125 sections, sets out what we are trying to do for the Indian. You could not boil it down into a preamble.

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: We have stated here again and again that it is the purpose of the department to eventually bring the Indian to a point where he becomes enfranchised and to all intents and purposes the same as a white person.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that the purpose of the Act or is it the effect of the Act?

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: I take it that it is the goal to be achieved under the Act. I think it should be made clear.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: The answer I have been making to the many representations that we should have a preamble is two-fold: (a) the custom of having long preambles has somewhat gone out of use in parliamentary matters; and (b) the original Indian Act had in it as a subtitle: "Being an Act for the gradual enfranchisement of Indians". So that while they may state the purpose of the Act I think if we tried now to state the ultimate intention we would get into a debate as to whether the words did convey the intention we all had, and it is much better to continue section (1) just as it is in the existing Act.

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: In other words, you feel that there are sections in this bill which would not be in line with that intention, that you would not want to state that intention in view of the nature of certain sections of the bill.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: No, I would not want to say that. The bill now is far more progressive than the existing Act.

Mr. FULTON: There are three questions I would like to raise, Mr. Chairman. The first is in connection with the position of the British Columbia Indians. In the House I set forth the position taken by a large number of Indians there who feel at any rate because their position is different in many respects that there should be a separate part of the Act dealing with British Columbia Indians. Very briefly stated their argument is two-fold. Firstly, we are in a different position—our position is not secured by treaty, but under an altogether different arrangement, and secondly, that being the case, there are circumstances which might well be visualized where if we are left in with all the other Indians in Canada the position of the Indians of British Columbia will work out to our disadvantage. Secondly, there are cases where our progress might be speedier than that of Indians whose position is complicated by treaty and if we are to be put in under the Act governing all Indians we may therefore be held back in our progress as a result of that situation. That, very briefly, leaving out a lot of other things, is their argument. I would like to hear from the minister as to why it was decided there could not be or should not be a separate part of the Act dealing with British Columbia Indians.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: In the first place we do not look upon the Indians as a peculiar problem in itself. They are problems as individuals and as bands here and there in Canada, so that what does apply to a band in British Columbia may not and probably does not apply to a band in the east. Nothing in this Act is intended to indicate that the Indians are a group of people distinct and having common problems throughout the Dominion, so that to that extent one would suppose, if we could agree with Mr. Fulton's contention, that we could examine the problem of the Indian of British Columbia as quite distinct from that of any other group. We can. There is no doubt that in some parts of British Columbia the Indian is more progressive and better educated than he is in some other parts of Canada, but if he is more progressive, the Indian