

*Supply—Citizenship and Immigration*

be incorrect as to my figures, but I understand that there are 20 or 25 people of native Indian descent who are employees of the Indian affairs branch. This is just a rough guess, but that figure is in my mind. In any event, I have come to the conclusion that this mutual respect which is so desirable does not exist throughout the Indian affairs branch. This again is a reflection of the attitude of society toward the native Indian people. It is extremely unfortunate. I feel that this is one of the key things toward which the Indian affairs branch must work, this trustworthiness and mutual respect, and it must be backed up with proof. Perhaps this condition will continue for the next three years when, I understand, a number of changes will take place which may alter the situation immeasurably.

I think the administration of the branch must exude sincerity toward the Indian people. The Indian agents must exhibit this trust and respect. They must not do so merely by words or fine phrases, but must do so consciously and must give evidence of it by acts. There are a number of instances that take place from time to time which tend to destroy this mutual trust that we are all desirous of building up in the Indian affairs branch.

I should like to refer, if I may, to the matter of land in British Columbia. I did not raise this subject at an earlier time because, unfortunately, I did not have in my possession a particular document which I have since received and to which I should like to refer. If I may be permitted to make a slight reference to something that happened earlier, I would say that this house endorsed a bill repealing section 112 of the Indian Act. This was commendable. The thought was that if these Indian bands were to become enfranchised as entities they would move in the direction of becoming either municipalities under provincial structure or something akin to a municipal corporation. This was the end which I believe the minister and others had in mind some years ago when this provision was instituted. In fact there is still a reference in the act to the understanding that the application of such a band for enfranchisement is coupled to whether or not they will be operating as a municipality.

We have such a request from a village in my riding, from the Metlakatla. This request was made six or seven years ago. There was a committee of inquiry established under section 112, and that committee recommended against the request. I understand from the Indian people that their main objection to proceeding with enfranchisement was the question of lands formerly owned by the

[Mr. Howard.]

provincial government. This was what prevented this band from moving toward closer ties with our non-Indian society in the municipal and sociological field. I have here a copy of order in council No. 1036, approved and ordered on July 29, 1938 at the executive council chambers in Victoria. There is a list of the members of the cabinet who were present at that time, and incidentally they were Liberals. Part of this order in council deals with certain B.C. lands and, under the Indian affairs settlement act, transfers that land to the federal government in trust for the Indians. This is the key point, as I understand it, and is what prevented the Metlakatla band from proceeding toward enfranchisement and becoming something akin to a municipality.

The order in council reads in part as follows:

—subject to the condition that in the event of any Indian tribe or band in British Columbia at some future time becoming extinct—

Of course if they became enfranchised they would become extinct as a band. They are the same people, but they are not a band within the meaning of the act.

—that any lands hereby conveyed for such tribe or band, and not sold or disposed of as heretofore provided, or any unexpended fund being the proceeds of any such sale, shall be conveyed or repaid to the grantor—

What would happen under that provision would be that the Metlakatla band, if it became enfranchised, would lose its lands because they would revert to the province and become provincial lands. It was the refusal of the Social Credit administration under the former minister of lands and forests, Mr. Sommers, to change this order in council that led the Metlakatla band to say, if we become enfranchised we lose everything. What do we do? Do we step out of our village into the "saltchuck", and then where are we? We thought enfranchisement would mean that we would keep the lands. It was primarily because of this order in council that the Metlakatla enfranchisement question was subsequently rejected by the Metlakatla people themselves.

I say this order in council will be a barrier to any Indian band in British Columbia desiring enfranchisement as a band, regardless of the provisions in the Indian Act. Until there is a change made, this barrier will remain. There are other barriers with respect to land which are preventing and will continue to prevent any clear or definite approach toward the desired mutual respect and trustworthiness, the admiration of one group of people for another, as a step toward integration.

There was one other thing which happened in British Columbia which tended to destroy this hope that the Indian people had for trust