

Agricultural Rehabilitation Act

in the Canadian economy. Though the economic position of the Indian people has improved over the years, it is still below par and it should be the aim and responsibility of the federal government to see that discrepancies in opportunity as between the white man and the Indian are removed. This bill offers an opportunity to develop a new means by which they can support themselves and live in a self-respecting manner by developing their agricultural and forestry potential within their own reserves. Some of these reserves were mentioned by the hon. member for Port Arthur and I should like to make reference to those in the Cochrane and Kapuskasing area where there are also large numbers of Indians with great tracts of land which could be developed.

I feel that what is needed is an intensification of educational facilities so as to ensure that every Indian boy or girl may enjoy opportunities equal to those given to young white people. The Indians should have opportunities to improve their vegetable gardens and put more land, of which there is no scarcity, into production. The means of doing so should be made available to them on the same basis as to any other Canadian.

The argument that Indians are backward because they have been left on reserve land is false. It is natural for people of common ancestry or race to want to live in communion with each other. Indians are as natural to Canada as its physical features. No one with a sense of historical values should deprive the original Canadians of the benefits of any legislation which a Canadian government enacts. The Indian Act does not protect the lands of the Indians or attempt to provide for rehabilitation and development. I submit that here is an opportunity for the government to do something tangible outside the scope of the Indian Act.

I am speaking, of course, for all the Indians living in all parts of Canada. This bill, too, would apply to all Indians in Canada wherever they may live, but I should like to single out those who live in northwestern Ontario and have not made as much progress as those living in the southeastern portion of the province or those of British Columbia, the reason being not exactly the fault of the Indians alone.

Extension of adequate long term loans to Indians is a desirable development to enable them to utilize more fully the potential of their lands. The need to promote agriculture on reserves is a real one and every possible means should be used to encourage Indian participation in federal-provincial rural development programs, including leadership training, and a general improvement in the efficiency of farming operations.

[Mr. Badanai.]

The development of roads on reserves and the inauguration of long range road building plans are closely linked with the rate of progress in the fields of economic development and agriculture. The need for better roads is great, and more consideration will have to be given in providing them directly and through joint efforts with federal, provincial and municipal authorities.

No one can now hold to the belief that the white man is inherently superior to the Indian, nor do we have the ingrained idea that the Indian is naturally of a lower status than the white man. At least these ideas have not manifested themselves in our laws to any great extent, and many of these laws are in our books for the benefit and protection of the Indian people. Some of these laws, however, are now causing resentment and dissatisfaction among the Indian people. This stems from the fact that they have no voice in the formulation of government policies and less than their proper share in the benefits of legislation. To overcome these feelings of resentment and dissatisfaction, the Indians should be given a chance to share the benefits arising from government policy. For instance, they should be able to qualify for loans under the Farm Credit Act and for benefits under any public legislation introduced, for example, in the field of health and welfare. Great strides have been made in education but a great deal more remains to be done and should be done to bring living conditions on the reserve to a point where the Indians can grow to economic and social equality with surrounding communities.

The Indians of today are better educated than they were. They want to make the reserves a better place in which to live and they are willing to do something about it provided adequate opportunities are offered to them. I also think provision should be made in our laws for Indians to participate in tourist promotion. Schemes could be developed to help the Indians on the reserve near Fort William, and there are other areas which could be helped in this way. In Fort William, for instance, there is a mountain called mount McKay, and I think it should be possible to exploit the splendour of mount McKay as a tourist attraction. It may well be a means of reaching the \$1 billion tourist industry target that the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources (Mr. Dinsdale) hopes to achieve by 1967. Achieving this stupendous sum should be the centennial's greatest objective. But to do so we need more than a world fair; we also need a concerted effort to enable Canada to offer attractions in every part of the country, and I submit that the development of this mountain by the Ojibway tribe of lake Superior,