Mr. BLACKMORE: Is not the meaning of subsection (2) there that once he signs a waiver under the Dominion Elections Act he would lose the privileges which would otherwise extend to him under this section 86; is not that the interpretation of this section?

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: May I preface that by saying this. Some Indians claim, although there is no decision of any court to substantiate the claim, that they have rights of tax exemption provided for by treaty. As I say, here is no court which has so held. The only tax exemption which the Indian enjoys is that contained in this section of the Indian Act, and it was thought proper that if they should be entitled to vote under the Dominion Elections Act they should be placed in a position of equality with non-Indians so that they should not be entitled to vote while enjoying that tax exemption at the same time. Now, before the investigation committee there were many Indian representatives opposed to the vote or opposed to it if it meant the loss of certain rights they had or claimed to have; and in revising the amendment to the Dominion Elections Act we recognized that some of them would resent having the vote forced upon them; so we provided that it was entirely a matter of their own choice, if they felt they were losing certain rights they had which were more valuable than exercising the vote in the federal elections they should have the right to make that choice; and we have provided that the Indian does not have to vote if he does not want to do so, and thereby we are continuing the advantage of this tax exemption in the Indian Act. Alternatively, if he wishes to vote he may do so on precisely equal terms with non-Indians; that is, without enjoying the tax exemption of this section; and we think that subsection (2) of this section and the amendment to section 15 of the Dominion Elections Act has that result; so that the Indian now has lost nothing that he had before if he does not vote.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Well, Mr. Chairman, this is a matter which deserves most earnest and serious consideration. Is it really not a question of what would be in the interest of the Indian? Should we not give him the right to vote along with an actual guarantee that he would not lose anything in the nature of these rights by so doing? It seems to me that our aim and object is to encourage the Indians to come out and be one with us, and in doing that we do not want them to suffer any loss; but we do want them to come to the state where they will feel that it will be in their interest to come out and participate freely and become one with us. We do not want to threaten them with any loss of privilege they now enjoy. My idea would be that if we encourage them to do that the time would come within three or four generations when the Indians would be so completely at home moving around among non-Indians that these tax exemption and other considerations will cease to bulk large in their minds. They are not, it seems to me, getting very much in the way of exemption so far as taxation is concerned. As a matter of fact the Indian, like everyone else, pays his share of such things as the sales tax, the luxury tax, the gasoline tax, and taxes of many kinds; really, the only exemption with respect to taxation which he enjoys is that which relates to income tax.

Hon. Mr. HARRIS: Mr. Chairman, as Mr. Blackmore has indicated, there was very long heart-searching consideration of this section before it was put in. But the position, I can only repeat, is that we have three groups of Indians. We have a group who refuse to have anything to do with a vote, on any terms whatever; they were opposed to voting, they were opposed to other Indians demanding the vote. In the alternative you had the Indian who demanded the vote. In between you had the other group, which I think represented by far the larger number of Indians whose attitude was one of indifference; who said, in effect, we would like to take part perhaps, perhaps we would not, but the paramount thing is to retain our privileges as we now have them. Well, I think the solution here is the only solution in the light of their position, we must take the