

of negotiating, working and competing with the white man, it will enfranchise him. Education and industry will be factors in deciding capacity. If, having considered these factors, the board decides the Indian is reasonably capable of making his way without the benign assistance of Government, he will take his place with the rest of us as a citizen of Canada.

Let it be remembered that if the band's representative on the board votes that an Indian should remain a member of the band, and if the other representative votes yea as to his fitness for enfranchisement, a judge will be called upon to give the decision. It seems to me that all proper precautions for the protection of the Indians are embodied in the Bill.

Hon. Mr. McLENNAN: Should we go so far as to affect injuriously the Indians who remain on the reserve, by introducing what seems to me an unwholesome element? The history of the majority of persons who have "gone native" in other countries would lead one to conclude that a white man living on an Indian reserve would not be a good influence.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: White men have to live around the reserves all the time. If they do not behave themselves they are not a bad influence any longer; they are put in jail.

Hon. Mr. McLENNAN: But there are stages en route to the jail, and a white man might have exercised an evil influence before he was put behind the bars.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: With the leave of the Senate, I should like to express this view to my right honourable friend opposite (Right Hon. Mr. Meighen). The Senate of Canada has the right and duty to review proposed enactments and to suspend them for further consideration. I feel that if this Bill had come before us earlier in the session we should have referred it to a committee. This committee would have summoned before it representatives of the Department of Indian Affairs, and perhaps would have heard some members of the band who have raised certain objections to enfranchisement. The committee would have reported back to the House, and thus we should have had the advantage of being fully seized of the situation before passing upon the measure. I confess I am not in a position to pass final judgment on the advisability of enfranchisement, and yet I am moving in the direction of the enactment of legislation which may not work for the good of the Indians. I think the right honourable

gentleman will admit that the proposal to enfranchise is a new departure. Up to the present time the Indian's release from tutelage has been sought by the Indian himself. Now we say to thousands of Indian wards, "The time has arrived when you must walk freely among us as citizens." I appreciate what the right honourable gentleman has said about the desire of gradually absorbing the Indians into the community. As he says, many of them are very bright men. But I doubt the wisdom of the somewhat arbitrary step now proposed, and I think the Senate would not be doing full justice to itself in saying "Amen" to legislation that in its application might be fraught with danger.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: Section 7 deals with enfranchisement. The other sections relate to other matters.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Enfranchisement is the principal feature of the Bill. Its other features have been already explained. I hope the House will not think I am obstinate in asking that this Bill be passed now. For the life of me I cannot see any reason why final consideration should be postponed. This is the third time the Bill has been before the House. It is not a last-minute measure. Every question has been fully answered, and where there has been any doubt the answer has been verified. Why, then, should we say we are not competent to decide the main feature of the Bill—enfranchisement? This is not the first such Bill submitted to this House. A similar Bill was passed in the spring of 1920.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: That was asked for by the Indians.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: No; the Bill was fathered by myself when I was Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. It was enacted in 1920, but was repealed in 1922 or 1923. The result is that as long as the Indians can get this special assistance from the State only those of exceptional ability among them are ready to do without it. They have the land and the funds. They have the Government officers at their elbow. They have the full protection of the law: they can incur debts, and any property they may possess cannot be applied in payment. Do honourable members seriously say that, although the Indians are entirely competent, so long as they do not apply for citizenship we must continue to absolve them from all the obligations of citizenship? It is not sought by this Bill to take away from the Indians what they are entitled to. They get their share of