

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: Commissioner of Penitentiaries.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Thank you—as Commissioner of Penitentiaries. I recall that I spoke on the occasion of his appointment, referred to his experience and capabilities, and expressed the hope that he would fulfil to the utmost the expectations which so many of us had of him. I think he has done that. He has been a splendid civil servant, steady yet progressive in his attitude toward prison administration. I am glad to see that the Government is taking action to retain his services so long as he is capable of performing them, and to retain the services of his fellow commissioners. I commend the Government for its action.

Motion agreed to and bill read second time.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the third time?

Hon. Mr. Méthot: With leave, I would move the third reading now.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Unless there is some reason amounting to necessity, let us follow the regular rules. I cannot see that anything is gained by giving two readings to this bill in one day.

Hon. Mr. Monette: A good reason might be its unqualified approval by the honourable senator.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Oh, no. My approval will stand, I suppose, until tomorrow. If it does not it will be because, during the interval, I have had reasons to change my mind. That is very unlikely, but I reserve to myself and the other members of this house the right to contemplate the bill during the next day and, perhaps, find some reason to change our minds. That is why we do not put bills through one-two-three, bang and away. There are occasions when it is necessary or desirable to hurry the passage of a bill, and in such cases I have no objection to that being done. For instance, now and again I have asked for leave to expedite the first, second and third readings of divorce bills, but there were sufficient reasons. This bill, however, can be passed tomorrow just as well as today, so I suggest that the rules in this connection be maintained.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: The only reason for urgency that I can imagine is that General Gibson or one of these other gentlemen will reach his 65th birthday tomorrow.

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: General Gibson will not be 65 for some months. There is no urgency whatever in connection with this bill; it can stand for third reading tomorrow.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the third time?

Hon. Mr. Méthot: Tomorrow.

INDIAN BILL SECOND READING

Hon. James Gladstone moved the second reading of Bill C-24, to amend the Indian Act.

He said: Honourable senators, this amendment has a great deal of importance attached to it by myself personally and by many other treaty Indians in this country. Not only does it remove from the Indian Act certain clauses which are objectionable, but it is a reassurance to the Indians of Canada that their treaty rights are not being endangered.

During the weeks that I have listened to the debates here I have heard two languages spoken—English and French. To me, and to other native Canadians, these are foreign tongues. Therefore I should like to place in the official Debates a few words in the language of my own people, the Blackfoot Indians, as a recognition of the first Canadians.

Ekoh-kinay-tam-etakee-kunay-apee unohk-ohtayts-tseeh-pee mukiy-sitsip sukoh-moh-kee unok-see awk-aw-kee-tsee-maks. Nitowat-simoyee-nukohk-okomot-ayhpo-wat-omohsah-ow.

My words, translated into English, were these:

The Indians of Canada are very happy to know they have someone in Ottawa to represent them in the Government of Canada. I pray that I will be able to speak the right words for them.

As this is my first address to the honourable members of this august chamber, I will take the opportunity to bring before you some of the history and problems of the people I have the honour to represent.

It is a great honour to me personally to be chosen to speak for my people. It is also an honour to my own nation, the Bloods, Peigans and Blackfeet. In the few months since my appointment to the Senate I have visited many Indians, in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, British Columbia and the Yukon, and everywhere I have been overwhelmed by the friendly feeling of the Indians who have received me. The great regard these people have for the Prime Minister for carrying out his pledge of appointing a member of their race to the Senate was said by some to be the biggest moment of their lives. Now they look forward to seeing some of the things which were promised to us by our great mother, Queen Victoria.

In this brief time, I cannot begin to tell you all about the history of my people. There