

reserves are managed and operated from an office the business of which is characterized by nothing more than red tape and accurate book-keeping, we are going to have a continuance of the present conditions.

Remember, I am not finding fault with any of the officials, nor am I directing any special criticism against the system that exists, but it is not the proper system. The agent on a reserve should be something more to the Indians than an official; he should be their adviser and their friend; even more than that, he should almost be a father to them by giving his advice and assistance in all matters pertaining to their work. As those who know them are aware, the Indians have an almost childlike temperament. I do not say they are deficient in intellect; in fact, in intellectual ability they will compare with the white man. But they lack the white man's persistence, his sticktoitiveness, his going about his work day after day and carrying out his agricultural activities. I also know that if the agent on a reserve has the confidence of the Indians they will take his advice and be guided by it, and until the government appoint agents who will be something more than officials, who will do something more than carry out simply what the law requires them to do, so long will the condition respecting the Indians continue as it is in Manitoba.

I think it is a disgrace that Canada should allow its wards to be in the condition that they are in at the present time. It was almost pathetic to listen to the stories of some of these men. They went back many years and told me of the arrangement made whereby they became the wards of the government. They told me of how loyal they had been; that when the war broke out they sent their young men over to the front some of whom laid down their lives for Canada. Those who returned went back on the reserve; they have made a bad mess of it; they are unable to make a living and it is no exaggeration to say that they are starving; the people who live near them know the facts. At my own place we often feed the Indians because we know they are really hungry and need something to help them along. Now, I want the government to get acquainted with the facts; to look into the conditions that exists on the reserve; and when the inspector goes around, let him do a little more than enter the agent's office and see that the books are properly kept. I would like to see him get in contact with the Indians, find out what their complaints are, learn of the actual conditions under which they are living, and see whether something cannot be done to make life a little

[Mr. Forke.]

more pleasant for them. In the harvest time the Indians will go out and work well for a month or six weeks, and get big wages, but when they get a little money they go into the town and buy all the canned goods they can get hold of. They are improvident,

11 p.m. there is no use denying that, and that is why they need some looking after, someone to take care of them. I have no doubt that the minister is aware of these facts and is anxious to do something to help the Indians, but I want to make this appeal on behalf of the Indians as I know them; that the country do a little more for them; that something be done to help them to help themselves and get them into the way of making a fairly decent living and not actually starve as they are doing at present on the reserve.

The CHAIRMAN: Shall the item carry?

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I think we should hear from the minister; it is news to the committee that we have starving Indians.

The CHAIRMAN: The item is for Ontario and Quebec.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: There may be some in Ontario and Quebec, though I do not know any.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I had intended to make a statement with respect to the Indian department generally. The matter is a very important one to which I have given some considerable attention, and I am prepared to say some things with respect to the Indian department that I think the House should know. I am asking for a very considerable increase in the appropriation for Indian education. I believe that is necessary, in view of what I discovered last year in visiting a considerable number of the western reserves. I cannot speak with authority as to what has happened in eastern Canada because I have not visited those reserves. But as my statement would take at least half an hour, I might better give it to a fuller House to-morrow.

Mr. FORKE: I am sorry that I anticipated the minister's statement.

Progress reported.

On motion of Mr. Fielding, the House adjourned at 11.03 p.m.