

instead of haggling over one word—the simple expression that an Indian is a person—who can deny that an Indian is a person, and if not a person what is he?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. A vegetable.

Mr. DAWSON. I think we should at least get through the interpretation clauses, and at the proper time and place we can discuss the question as to who shall, and who shall not vote, and discuss also whether an Indian should have a vote or not.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). It is with no object of keeping the committee any longer on the interpretation clause that I rise to make a few remarks. It has been correctly stated that there has been a very full—I was going to say discussion of the subject, but that would not be the proper word, as it has not been participated in by both sides; but a great deal has been said upon this word "Indian" in the interpretation clause, and I shall endeavor to make but a few remarks, and avail myself of the opportunity of discussing it when the other clauses of the Bill come up. I think, however, the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Dawson) is precluded from taking the ground that he did that time had been wasted in discussing the interpretation clause. If there has been any confusion at all, it has been, I suppose, because the First Minister took care to declare in this clause that a person included an Indian, which certainly shows that the Minister himself thought there might be some difficulty if he failed to embrace them among those to whom he proposes to give the voting power, at the next general election. Of course he told the committee on Saturday night that the reason he put in these words was to prevent uninformed men, like the hon. member for South Brant, from not understanding the matter. I appreciate the compliment, and it was very considerate on his part to take that trouble for my benefit. I call attention, however, to the fact that much as this subject has been discussed, the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Dawson) is precluded from saying that the discussion was not needed, from the fact that he has argued publicly, as he has with me privately, that under the present Bill it is impossible for any Indian living on a reserve to vote. He says it cannot be done, the Indian law emphatically forbids it, that such Indians are minors, that they are disqualified, that they cannot vote, and I would of course hesitate to express my opinion on the law, after being told that my mind is uninformed in the matter, but let the First Minister rise in his place and say if, under the provisions of the Bill, no Indian living on a reserve and maintaining his tribal relation, would have a vote. I would ask the First Minister to state if that is the case.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I would say that an Indian, although preserving his tribal relation, is qualified under this Act to vote.

Mr. PATERSON. Now, the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Dawson) has studied the Indian question year after year, and day after day; he has listened to all this discussion, and he yet has maintained the opinion which the First Minister says is incorrect. The other day he said the proposition to give a vote to an Indian on a reserve and maintaining his tribal relations, a minor, subject to the control of the Government, not allowed to manage his own affairs, was too monstrous to suppose. Out of the First Minister's own mouth he has heard that the intention of that Bill is to give the Indian in that position, what the Opposition has contended was designed to be done by the Bill. Do the members of the committee understand the question now? I know from private conversation, not with one, but with many of them, that they had no idea that the Bill contemplated that; they did not believe it; they shrank from it, and they do shrink from it in their private con-

versation. We shall see whether they have the courage of their convictions or not. I want to tell the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Dawson) that under the provisions of this Bill it is not only possible, but it is the will and the design of the hon. First Minister, to give votes, not alone to the Indians of the more advanced tribes living on the reserves of Ontario and Quebec, but to the Indians living in their tribal relations and under Government control in British Columbia and Manitoba.

An hon. MEMBER. And in the North-West.

Mr. PATERSON. I leave out the North-West because the Indians of the North-West are not yet admitted. But the hon. First Minister, I suppose, after he has the census taken in the North-West, intends to provide for its representation in this Parliament, and when that comes about the Indians of the North-West, perhaps next year, will also have votes. The enfranchising clauses of the Indian Act, which tell us how an Indian may be enfranchised, expressly declare that they shall not apply to the Indians of Manitoba and British Columbia; and yet these enfranchising clauses provide that an Indian, to become a citizen, must make application to the Superintendent General stating that he wants to be enfranchised; the Superintendent General then sends to the local Indian agent the application of that Indian; the local agent tells the Indian that he must get a certificate from some clergyman, stipendiary magistrate or two other magistrates, declaring that he has been a person of good moral character for the previous five years, and that he is of sufficient intelligence to be enfranchised; after he provides himself with that certificate, the Indian agent summons the council of the band to which the Indian making the application belongs, and tells the band that he has applied for enfranchisement, and that they have thirty days in which to file any opposition they may have to the Indian's claim. At the end of thirty days the affidavits made are sent to the Superintendent General; if he determines, after seeing the affidavits, that the Indian is entitled to enfranchisement, he then has power to give a location to the Indian of a certain portion of the reserve, which shall be his own; after all that is done, the Indian has to live for three years on that land, and if during those three years he has proved himself able to manage his own affairs, then, and not till then, the Government give him his land in fee-simple, and he does not even then obtain the power to sell it or alienate it. The most advanced Indian in the land has to go through all that process before he can be enfranchised; and yet, when I said that the Government were restricting their franchising clause too much, and were not giving the Indians a fair opportunity to rise to the level of other citizens, I was met with the statement from the hon. First Minister: Oh, gentlemen living in localities adjoining Indian reserves are anxious that the Indians should get the lands, because they know that they would soon go out of their hands. That was the answer of the hon. First Minister when he passed his enfranchising Act—that the Indians were not fitted for enfranchisement. That is the view he took with reference to the most advanced Indians in the country; for the Indians of my county—and in saying it, I do not want to make any invidious comparisons with other Indians—are, I believe, the most advanced tribe in the country. And yet, the hon. First Minister tells us with his own lips that the wild Indians living in British Columbia and Manitoba, I do not care whether he has a location ticket or not, if the revising barrister says he has property worth \$150, is to have a vote; and for anything I can say, he can run as a member of this Parliament and come and sit in this House. These are the very Indians with reference to whom the hon. First Minister inserted this clause in his enfranchising Act:

"The section next following (the enfranchising clause) shall not apply to any band of Indians in the Province of British Columbia, the