

from bona fide farmers in the district as high as \$20 an acre; but the land was sold privately for \$10 an acre.

The council of the village of Pelly asked for a right of way through this land to a quarter section on the beach of Racing lake, where they have a recreation ground. After considerable correspondence the department agreed to grant them a road allowance, the papers so far as I know were all completed, and all that was necessary was to have a survey of the road. There was some detailed work done in that connection and finally the village authorities did have a surveyor on the ground. The road was laid out, there being no doubt whatever about accepting the word of the departmental officials, because the matter was settled so far as they were concerned. However, after the survey was made and after they had done some work on the road they suddenly found that the land had been sold, and the party who had purchased it then stepped into the picture. On appealing to the departmental officials we found, as they had to admit, that consideration had to be given to the purchaser; and a good deal of correspondence is still going on. But the village even at best must now pay the other party a considerable amount for the land. They have been kept out of it for a long time and at the moment they are not absolutely sure that arrangements can be made.

I protest, first, against the failure of the department to carry out the promise they made, that they would notify the people in the district when the land was sold—and it was apparently sold to a man whom we suspect of being a political favourite, for very much less than its intrinsic value. That is the first complaint; and the second is that a direct obligation was undertaken by the department to provide the village of Pelly with that road. On the strength of the assurances given by the officials this survey was made, and later on the department's promise was deliberately disregarded and the land sold to private parties.

I wish to quote from sessional paper 169 a letter dated August 27, 1926, to the secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, and signed by W. M. Graham, Indian commissioner. The letter reads:

On the 12th instant I wrote, recommending withdrawal from sale of section 26-32-32, W1st in the Keeseekoose reserve, as the area can be profitably used by the Indians as a pasture and I shall be glad if you will inform me whether the action recommended has been taken.

A further letter, No. 7 on the file, dated September 3, is addressed to Mr. Graham, the Indian commissioner:

Replying to your letter of the 27th ultimo, under your file No. 310-6, I may say that the sale covering section 26-32-32, W1, Keeseekoose reserve, will be withdrawn from our sale list and reserved for the Indians in the reserve, as requested.

Apparently up to that time the matter was closed, and then appears a letter from George W. McPhee, the honourable member for Yorkton, dated December 15, 1926. It is addressed to the Hon. Charles Stewart, Minister of the Interior, and is marked personal. Before I read that letter I wish to commend the minister for his decision to leave personal letters in the file and to bring them down in sessional papers. On a previous occasion I had a good deal of argument with the Postmaster General (Mr. Veniot) over this question of including in the file personal letters of a really public nature and bringing them down. I consider it an infringement of the rights of parliament to withhold such letters, and in this case, whatever blame I attach to the Minister of the Interior in other respects, I commend his fairness in putting these letters on the file. This particular letter reads:

Mr. McKay wrote last summer to Mr. Graham, Indian commissioner, asking with respect to section 26, township 32, range 32, west 1st, and he received a letter dated June 18, giving the acreage of this section. Mr. McKay wanted to buy the west half and forwarded a certified cheque for \$200 deposit. This was returned to him on the 30th of August, stating that the land had been withdrawn from sale. I know this land and I feel satisfied that it is not required by the Indians and should be in the hands of someone who will make it productive. Mr. McKay has offered \$7 an acre for the west half and \$2 an acre for the east quarter of this section.

The letter is signed George W. McPhee.

First I want to call attention to the fact that the hon. member for Yorkton takes upon himself to say that the land is not required by the Indians, whereas in fact there is a letter on the file from the Indian commissioner who states that the land is required for pasturage; moreover, there is a further letter which I shall read, written by the Indian agent, saying that the land is required for pasturage. As a matter of fact, I know that up to that time the Indians of Keeseekoose had no other pasture land. There is a letter from the minister to Mr. McPhee dated December 20, 1926. It reads:

I have received your letter of the 15th instant, with reference to the desire of Mr. Norman McKay, of Verigin, Saskatchewan, to purchase a portion of section 26-32-32, W. 1 M.

The department, I may say, was not aware that Mr. McKay had made application to purchase these three quarters, as Commissioner Graham some time ago recommended the with-