INDIANS OF PROVINCE SEEK MANY CHANGES IN ADMINISTRATION

Victoria Times
Sat. Aug 11/23

SIXTEEN POINTS SOUGHT BY INDIAN TRIBES.

1. All foreshores fronting on reserves to form part of such reserves.
2. Further land grants from the B. C. Government on a basis of 160 acres per capita.
3. Unrestricted right of fresh water fishing for food purposes.
4. All rights for commercial fishing off Indian reserves.
5. Rights for commercial fishing without license fee, off lands not within Indian tenure.
6. Right to secure license for purse and seine fishing at half usual fee. This privilege is not now enjoyed by Indians.
7. Right to cut timber outside reserves, for fuel and manufacture of canoes.
8. Amendment of the Pelagic Sealing Treaty of 1911 to allow the towage of canoes by gasoline launches, to be used in the capture of seals, from the reserves in B. C.
9. Ample water for irrigation purposes.
10. Unrestricted right to hunting and trapping, and hereditary trap-line rights, wiping out the restrictions imposed by the B. C. Game Act, which limits trapping privileges to those regularly employed in that occupation.
11. Extension of school facilities on the reserves, by high and technical education on equal terms to those available to white residents.
12. Absolutely free medical and hospital attention, and tubercular sanitariums through the Province.
13.—Sufficient grazing areas. (The B. C. Government has already set aside large areas for aboriginal stockmen).
14. Mothers' and widows' pensions, as effective in British Columbia for white women.
15. Cash compensation for annuities similar to treaty annuities.
16. Re-imbursement of about $100,000 spent endeavoring to secure settlement of land title question.

Many amendments of the Indian Act are also sought, chiefly dealing with the administration of the funds accruing from the sale of reserves, and other capital property of the tribes.

For five days Indian leaders in British Columbia have continued in this city the series of conferences initiated with Hon. Charles Stewart, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, and Dr. Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent General in Vancouver last month. When Mr. Stewart was in the East, it was decided that the representatives should meet here with Dr. Scott and W. E. Ditchburn, Inspector of Indian Agencies. The conferences concluded this afternoon, the delegation in lieu of a legal fight on the prior right claimed to the title of all land in the Province, asking for a number of concessions, and removal of restrictions.

This right, which would affect all land except a small area on the island, is contested by the Province of British Columbia, which claims that the Terms of Union in the matter of reserves, were fulfilled by the allotment of lands made under the commission system, being recently validated by Provincial Order-in-Council.

If the land grant of 160 acres per capita were to be confirmed, instead of the Indians owning about 750,000 acres, they would be entitled to 4,000,000 acres in this province.

The representations made by the delegation will go to the Minister for consideration.

Failing an adjustment on the above lines the delegation indicated it would press for a test case in the courts.

The Delegation.

The members of the delegation attending were:

Rev. P. R. Kelly, Chairman, representing the Haida Indians.

Andrew Paul, Squamish, secretary, representing the Indian tribes from Burrard Inlet to Cape Mudge.

Mrs. Jane Cook, of Alert Bay, Kwawkewith Agency, Cape Mudge to Rivers Inlet.

Ambrose Reid, Indians of West Coast to Nass River and part of the Skeena.

George Matheson, Chilliwack Indians.

Christopher Paul, Saanich Peninsula.

Simon Pierre, Upper Fraser Valley.

Thos. Sampson, Central Interior.

Alex. Lambert, Kamloops and Shuswap.

Peter Adolph, Indians of Interior.

Stephen Jimmy, Lillooet and Lytton Indians.

Land Titles.

Rev. A. O'Meara, on behalf of the Council of the Allied Indians, submitted a paper on a constitutional standpoint that the Indians of British Columbia had never ceded their lands to the Crown in the right of the Province.

It was submitted that the only cession was some 335 square miles of territory on Vancouver Island transferred by Indian Chiefs, Queatsino and Port Hardy, prior to Confederation.

Hon. Charles Stewart last year had stated that he was prepared to treat with the Indians of British Columbia in the same way as in other sections of the Dominion, providing the Indians would surrender the land title claim. This was alternative to the proposal to submit a test case to courts.

In 1919 the Allied Indians presented a statement of claim before the Government of British Columbia, indicating they were willing to settle their claim out of court on reasonable terms.

The delegation objected to the report of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, asserting that it was not a final settlement with the B. C. Government in the matter of reserves under the terms of the Terms of Union.

Under this article the Dominion Government agreed to deal with the Indians as liberally as had been the policy of the colony of British Columbia, and the province on its behalf agreed to set apart lands sufficient for their use and occupation.

Historical Situation.

To understand their claim it is necessary to review briefly the historical position of the Indians in this province. Shortly after B. C. came into Confederation negotiations took place between the Dominion and the Province to settle the problem of Indian reserves. As a consequence the Indian Reserves Commission was set up, composed of Messrs. Alex. Anderson, Archibald McKinley, and Gilbert W. Sproat. Allotment of reserves continued under the Commission and later under Mr. Sproat alone, as well as his successors, Judge P. O'Reilly, and Judge A. W. Vowell.

In 1907 the Government of B. C. refused to set aside any more lands for Indians, asserting that the Government had done its part under the Terms of Union. The Indian Department thereupon sent out the late Dr. J. A. J. McKenna, who came here in 1912. He negotiated with Sir Richard McBride, pleading the application of Section 13 of the Terms, which would have removed disputes between the Dominion and the Provinces to the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State for the Colonies for adjustment.

The Commission.

The Provincial Government, however, took another course, that of agreeing to the appointment of a Royal Commission. This commission eventually reported, and some of its recommendations have been adopted. It was limited to the readjustment of areas of reserves, and as a consequence 46,000 acres were confirmed, 47,000 acres withdrawn, and 87,800 acres added to the reserves in B. C.

The Government of Canada has expended on the Indians in B. C. $216,000 in the first decade after Confederation, $525,000 in the second, $990,000 in the third, $1,425,000 in the fourth, $2,799,000 in the fifth decade, $1,248,000 in the years 1921-22, and the vote for the current year is $783,438.

The actual total expended on the Indians of B. C. from Confederation up to March 31, 1923, is $8,918,328, of which $500,000 has gone on relief, $124,000 on aid to agriculture, $1,076,000 on medical aid, and $4,321,353 on Indian education.

The population of aborigines from 1871 to 1923 has shown very little change, varying from 25,000 to 40,000 in different years. The actual land held in B. C. to-day by 24,500 Indians on reserves is 20.75 acres per capita, as against the following in the old provinces:

Province	Aborigines	Acres
Nova Scotia	2,000	10.6
New Brunswick ..	1,846	2.5
P. E. I.	292	4.5
Quebec	12,000	16.0
Ontario	26,400	52.5

It will thus be seen that the delegation asks for five times as much land as the Indians at present hold in this province.

Closing Remarks

At the close Dr. Scott complimented

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