

COPY.

INDIAN AGENT'S OFFICE.

Prince Rupert, B.C.

Nov. 21, 1924.

Dear Mr. Ditchburn:-

Replying to your letter of the 18th ult. regarding Mr. O'Meara and his doings, I would state that this gentleman has, within the last two months, made two visits to the Nass River. During his last visit, he remained for over three weeks at Kincolith holding meetings with the Indians from all villages on the River. He returned to Prince Rupert last Saturday (15th) en route for the south.

I hear he has been endeavoring to collect money from the Indians for the purpose of taking the Land Question to the Privy Council. He has met with a certain amount of opposition from men like Charles Barton who evidently did not take kindly to O'Meara's demands for money. However, it is said he succeeded in raising quite a sum of money, but I have not been able to ascertain the exact amount.

During the visit of the Premier to Prince Rupert, delegations of Indians from the Nass and Skeena arrived and were received. A special delegation came from the Nass. Mr. O'Meara, who had arrived from the south, intending to act as spokesman for the delegation, was not permitted to take any part in the interview, and was much annoyed at the coolness of his reception. The delegates were introduced by myself to the Premier at his request. The Indians had been coached by O'Meara to express dissatisfaction at the findings of the Royal Commission, and asked permission to have the whole question referred to the Privy Council.

Last week I received the following wire from Constable Newnham:-

"O'Meara at Kincolith, made an effort to address strong gathering of Nishga tribe, prepared to remain there three weeks. Indians incensed at O'Meara incurring unauthorized expense and his further demand for money. Charles Barton has made motion the Department be asked to proceed against O'Meara for fraud. Motion being discussed in all villages before general assembly at Kincolith. Expect to leave here Monday."

Even allowing that the actual situation may have been slightly exaggerated, it is, nevertheless, interesting. I shall probably hear in a few days any further developments, and will let you know, if necessary. Personally, I cannot understand why this person should be permitted to prey on any grievance the Indians may have, and at the same time make them distrustful of the Department and its officials.

I sincerely hope Newnham's wire is correct, as it is time that the Indians woke up to the fact that they are being badly fleeced. If they once realize this themselves they will not resent any action by the Department against the activities of certain agitators.

Yours sincerely,

W.E. Ditchburn, Esq.,  
Indian Commissioner for B.C.  
VICTORIA, B.C.

(SGD) W.E. Collison,  
Indian Agent.

P.S.

I am enclosing for your perusal copy of a report prepared by O'Meara of the interview with the Premier at Prince Rupert. As no stenographer was present at the time, the report must have been prepared from notes and memory.

W.E.C.

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