

The WITNESS: Of course. I did not say that.

The CHAIRMAN: I know. I want you to know that while it may be passed we do not like to get too enthusiastic.

The WITNESS: Yes, I know.

By and under the direction and recommendation of the Resolutions Committee of the Union of Ontario Indians, an organization of Ontario Indians assembled in conventions at Parry Island on August 19 and 20, 1946; Rama Indian reserve, October 20, 1946, and at Sudbury, Ontario, February 24, 1947; accredited delegates from various parts of the province attending and took part in the deliberations on the issues vital to the welfare of the Indian race. These conventions were being held in an effort to organize the entire population into one body, and in order to speak with one voice. As suggested by the Honourable Mr. Glen on December 14, 1945, speaking in the House of Commons:

I am satisfied that unless we get some united representation of the Indians throughout this country we shall not be very successful. I believe that isolated expression of opinion coming from individual bands or groups of Indians will not meet the situation.

Therefore, on the strength of that statement we made an attempt to organize and, under great handicap, as the territory is large and to cover the scattered Indian communities has been difficult and one of the main drawbacks is the financial situation amongst the Indians generally.

We have made a good start. The Union of Ontario Indians is the only organization that represents a large percentage of Indian population of Ontario southwest, the central and the middle north comprising the Robinson Huron and Superior treaties are largely represented, and treaty No. 9 among the Crees in the James Bay region having representation in this union; in order to carry on effective work the government must give some assistance and grant each band sufficient funds for travelling expenses from the band funds, and to give authorization to the banks to pay such expenses to a band representative, or its delegates attending provincial conventions. Similar to the old Grand Council of Ontario which was recognized as an institution of Indian official organ, or body, whereby Indians of Ontario approached the government for redress.

Under Dr. McGill this financial arrangement of the Grand Council of Ontario was entirely cut off. Consequently this organization immediately dissolved.

The Union of Ontario Indians demands the recognition of this organization on the same basis as it was before McGill's stoppage of grant. You find that the Indians will co-operate in every way possible. We grant guidance and sane aid.

We had no money. You cannot go on with an organization without money.

The CHAIRMAN: It is difficult.

The WITNESS: This is a short brief. I do not want to take up too much of your time with a long brief, but I want to make clear the position of the Indians and the Indian department.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT WITH THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE INDIANS

By authority given it by the "Indian Act" the Department of Mines and Resources, Indian Affairs Branch, governs the Indians of Canada.

Section 2, Subsection (b) defines the responsibility of the "Government and the Indians in that Section. It also defines the position of Indian Council when action is being taken by the Band as such means the Band in Council. Yet in Section 99-A the power of the Indian Agent overrides Indian Council."