

a transaction known as the Donaldson transaction which cannot be justified, simply on the ground that he did not know or, if he did know, it had slipped his memory. The hon. member for Edmonton in the present instance is determined that the Government shall know and is taking this course of letting them know what is going on in British Columbia between the Government of that province and the Indians.

I have read over the letter which the Minister of Public Works submitted from the Deputy Minister of Justice in regard to the duties, functions or jurisdiction of the commission recently appointed to make an investigation as between the Dominion of Canada and the province of British Columbia as to the property rights or the legal title in lands that are known in this country as Indian lands. Having read that letter I take the same view of the situation as my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, that the scope or authority of that commission is merely to determine the property rights of the two governments. It is purely and simply a question of law. These lands are to-day vested in the Crown in right of the Dominion of Canada and there is no doubt that there is some reversionary right claimed by or actually vested in the province of British Columbia and it is for the purpose of determining these property rights that a commission has been appointed. Mr. Newcombe, the Deputy Minister of Justice, says in the last clause of his letter:

In view of this it may be unnecessary to express any opinion as to whether the province is entitled to the reversion, since the question of title, which may be a difficult one, would be set at rest by the action of the commission pursuant to the agreement.

All he is asked for is an opinion as to the rights of the province and the Dominion of Canada in respect to the Indian lands. The point which the hon. member for Edmonton (Mr. Oliver) desired to draw to the attention of the Government and to emphasize was that according to the newspaper report—and it is upon newspaper reports that he bases his whole statement—some transaction has taken place in British Columbia. The government of that province were represented in the negotiations by Mr. Bowser, the Attorney General. The Indians were represented by themselves. According to the newspaper report, Mr. Bowser made an offer to the Indians of \$11,500 per family for their rights to this valuable property, consisting of eighty-six acres of land within the corporate limits of the city of Vancouver. The Indians demurred, according to the newspaper reports, and if the reports speak correctly Mr. Bowser, the Attorney General, acted without proper regard to the position which he occupied when he practically told the Indians that

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if they did not take that they would get nothing except land in some other part of British Columbia. I do not say that the newspaper report of the transaction is correct, not for a moment; but, the newspaper reports, having come to the knowledge of the Government, certainly put the Government upon inquiry and imposed upon them the duty of seeing that no such transaction is permitted to go through the House. If a surrender is arranged and finally consummated, the Government are bound to see that the Indians are paid for that land every dollar to which they are entitled. That, I assume, is the object of my hon. friend from Edmonton in bringing this matter to the attention of the Government. But of course, in this case, as in half a dozen other cases during the present session, hon. gentlemen opposite did not even accept the notice in the spirit in which it was given, but endeavoured by the old *tu quoque* process to bring up something about the surrender of an Indian reserve in the city of Victoria in 1910. We are not to-day concerned with the surrender of land in the city of Victoria; we are concerned with the contemplated surrender of lands in the city of Vancouver, and if the Government act up to the professions which the Prime Minister made in the House to-day when he assured the House that the rights of the Indians of Vancouver would be looked after to the fullest extent, we on this side of the House will be perfectly satisfied. There is every indication that the lands in Vancouver are to be sold at a gross undervaluation, if the present arrangement goes through. I cannot for a moment imagine that any Government would consent to such a transaction but I would say this to my right hon. friend that he must not allow too much to remain in the discretion of any commission he appoints in that regard. His own Government had better be responsible for the price which is arrived at, if a price is eventually arrived at, between the Indians and the province. I do not think that the commission which he has appointed would have power to estimate the value of these lands; at all events, not so far as I am aware. There is a tribunal which can estimate the value of the land, and why the assistance of that tribunal should not be obtained in this instance I cannot see. Surely a judge of the Exchequer Court could go to Vancouver, hear evidence and determine the proper price to be paid for these lands, and the matter need not be dealt with by any government commission in any way whatsoever. Let the commission determine, if they can, the title or the right to the land as between the Dominion and the province. Then I assume they would have performed their function, but there is nothing binding even in their find-