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The British Columbia Indian Land Question

Policy of the Social Service Council of Canada

An Historical Sketch and an Answer to Criticisms

PREPARED BY
THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE "FRIENDS OF THE INDIANS."

POLICY OF SOCIAL SERVICE COUNCIL.

At the annual meeting of the Council, held on 23rd September, 1910, the following resolution was passed:—

"In view of the national importance of securing full justice for the native race in all parts of Canada, this Council, while not expressing an opinion upon the merits of the claims now being made by the Indian tribes of British Columbia, expresses its sympathy with the aims of the Conference of Friends of the Indians of British Columbia in seeking to bring about as rapidly as possible a just and advantageous solution of the problem presented by existing conditions in that Province, and its sense of the great importance of accomplishing that object. This Council expresses the hope that the Governments concerned will facilitate a prompt and final settlement of the whole question of the Indian title."

At the annual meeting of the Council, held on 26th September, 1911, Rev. Canon Tucker, who had represented the Council in interviews held at Ottawa and in England, presented a report of which the following was the concluding paragraph:

"It was difficult to exaggerate the value of the help which has been given by the Council to the Friends of the Indians, in their delicate and supremely difficult work. As it seems likely that further representations will have to be made to the Governments of British Columbia and of Canada, and also the Imperial Government, it is of very great importance that the Indian Affairs Committee should be authorized to continue to co-operate with the Friends of the Indians, along the lines upon which they have acted in the past."

The following is an extract taken from the Minutes of the same annual meeting:—

"An informing address on the claims and complaints of the Indians of British Columbia was made by Dr. Chown, and heard by the Council with much interest.

"He said that these Indians desired, and were entitled to have, their claims judicially decided, and that they felt keenly the fact that they were not allowed to become on fair conditions enfranchised citizens.

"A Special Committee on Indian Affairs, with full power, was appointed as follows: Canon Tucker, Convener; Drs. Chown, Copp, R. P. Mackay, Keirstead, Carman, and Messrs. Hamilton Cassels, and A. E. O'Meara, and the Secretaries, with power to add."

The following is an extract from the Report of the Executive Committee of the Council which was adopted at the annual meeting, held on 6th September, 1912:—

"The fact cannot be despised, however, that very serious constitutional difficulties stand in the way of an equitable settlement—difficulties that arise mainly from the attitude of the British Columbia Government which persistently refuses to admit that there is any question to be settled. Both