

they have rights, those rights will be preserved and they can get compensation. But I wish to finish what I was saying when the hon. gentleman interrupted me, namely, that this property should not be allowed to pass out of the hands of the public. It is extremely valuable and will be of increasing value as the years go on. I trust the present Government in dealing with this matter and adjusting the present situation which has arisen probably precipitated by the action of the provincial government, will keep in mind the interests of the public and not allow this reserve to pass into private hands.

Mr. McKENZIE: How does the province of British Columbia understand the Indian rights? Do these rights appertain to a specific number of the Indians who settle on the reserve, or do they belong to Indians who come on the reserve?

Mr. STEVENS: There are a large number of reserves in the neighbourhood of Vancouver, allocated to a tribe of Indians, and certain bands of certain tribes have reserves allocated. This particular reserve has about twenty-five families. The British Columbia Government take this attitude, that as long as the Indians are living on the reserve this reserve belongs to the Indians as a whole in trust by the Dominion Government; but the moment there is no further use by the Indians of the reserve, that reserve reverts to the province. That, in brief, is their position.

Mr. McKENZIE: Suppose that these twenty-five families of Indians moved away and a number of other Indians moved in, could these newcomers acquire rights to the reserve?

Mr. STEVENS: No. All Indians allocated to a particular piece of property must abandon it before the provincial Government exercises their reversionary rights. I do not claim that the reversionary rights are as complete as they say. It would seem that under the British North America Act there is foundation for such a claim. However, it is a technical point and there are a number of other provisions in Orders in Council entering into consideration in the matter.

Mr. NESBITT: I have understood that the money was paid to the Indians by the provincial Government of British Columbia, and the Indians moved off the reserve. Is that the case?

Mr. STEVENS: I cannot speak with more authority on that point than the hon. member for Edmonton has spoken. I understand from unofficial advice that I have received from British Columbia that that is the case, that they have been paid

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off and that they have moved. But I may say, I understand that the money has been placed in the bank to their individual account.

Mr. NESBITT: If there are negotiations between the British Columbia Government and the Dominion Government what more money could the Indians receive by such negotiations?

Mr. STEVENS: It would be impossible to anticipate what would be the outcome of a difference of opinion between the two governments. I understand the British Columbia Government are trying to deal in the most honourable manner with the Dominion authorities in regard to this matter. So, I anticipate there will be a very happy and successful outcome to this whole incident, satisfactory to the Indians, to the public and to the province.

Mr. OLIVER: Might I ask the acting Minister of Indian Affairs in regards to the commission which is to investigate the Indian matters in British Columbia. Are there instructions issued to that commission that are expected to form the basis of an agreement between this Government and the Government of British Columbia, and if so, have these instructions been laid on the table?

Mr. CROTHERS: I think all the instructions in the hands of the commissioners at the present time are the agreement upon which they were appointed, and the Orders in Council appointing them.

Mr. OLIVER: There is, then, an agreement between this Government and the Government of British Columbia, upon which agreement the commission was appointed?

Mr. CROTHERS: Yes.

Motion (Mr. Oliver) negatived.

At six o'clock, House took recess.

After Recess.

The House resumed at eight o'clock.

VANCOUVER HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS.

On motion of Hon. J. D. Hazen (Minister of Marine and Fisheries), House went into Committee to consider the following resolution:

Resolved, that it is expedient to pass an Act to regulate the harbour of Vancouver and incorporate the Vancouver Harbour Commissioners, and to provide for vesting in the corporation so constituted all lands and interest in lands within the limits of the harbour, heretofore vested in His Majesty, to be held for the purposes of such Act; and that the revenue derived from such water