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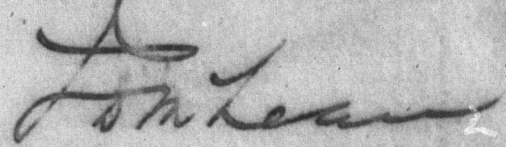
Sir,-

Mr. Megraw, of Vernon, B.C., representing Indian Agencies, has called the attention of the Department to the fact that what is known as near beer and cider is, in some localities, being sold openly to Indians and that consequent drunkenness among the Indians has been the result. He states that these vendors contend that the Prohibition Act of the province permits the sale of this beer as a non-intoxicant and that they accordingly are at liberty to sell it to Indians and that this view is shared by the Chief of the City of Vernon and by the Police Commissioners. Mr. Megraw states that the municipal authorities of Merritt have forbidden the sale of these beverages on the ground that they are intoxicants within the meaning of the Indian Act.

It has been suggested that the Indian Act be amended to forbid specifically near beer and cider. The Department pointed out to Mr. Megraw that "intoxicants" as defined in the Indian Act is already as comprehensive as it could well be and includes any intoxicating "fluid" "drug" or "substance" and the fact that the Provincial Prohibition Act may permit the sale of near beer as a non-intoxicant does not in any way of the prohibition contained in the Indian Act and that it is apparent that there is any necessity for the suggested amendment.

I am confident that the Provincial authorities are as much interested in this matter as this Department, and I would be glad to know whether you share the Department's view to the interpretation of the definition of "intoxicants" in the Indian Act and if so whether your police officers might not be instructed to warn vendors of this beer and cider against selling them to Indians.

Your obedient servant,



Asst. Deputy and Secretary.

Hon. J. W. Le B. Farris, K.C.,  
Attorney-General and Minister of Labour,  
Victoria, B.C.

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