

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Castleden's resolution, as I understand it was—very well, I'll read it:—

That this committee immediately invite the Canadian Indians to send a representation of at least five Indians to represent the following five parts of Canada: (1) Alberta and British Columbia; (2) Saskatchewan and Manitoba; (3) Ontario; (4) Quebec; (5) the Maritime Provinces; to sit in on all the deliberations of this committee with watching briefs and to be available to be examined as witnesses under oath.

Now, following the procedure of 1926, when there was an investigation similar to this, it was found rather difficult to determine on one representative of the Indian bands from British Columbia; at that time, I am informed, there were at least five representatives who came here from British Columbia with their squaws and their papooses. Now, assuming that we have a similar number from each of the five districts named in the resolution, we would have at least twenty-five Indian representatives plus their papooses and plus their squaws; and it was with that view in mind, of eliminating unnecessary attendances that we thought it would be best, and we thought so unanimously, that it would be best to have a liaison officer; and if at the same time he could be a solicitor and an Indian, so much the better.

Mr. REID: Was any thought given by the steering committee to ask the Indian agents all over the country, who could be of great assistance to the committee in taking the directions of the committee and telling the Indians not to—because the Indians do have confidence in their Indian agents and the Indian agent might be the best means of controlling an influx of Indians to the city of Ottawa?

The CHAIRMAN: The steering committee thought that we should do everything in our power to see that the Indians were properly represented. I mean to say by that: that they were fully represented according to their wishes, not according to our wishes, and that they would get full and complete representation before this committee. Another matter that was considered to be of importance was that one object of the liaison officer would be to systematize or to put all briefs in such shape that they could be presented before this committee in an orderly fashion.

Mr. CASE: It seems to me that the problems will vary regionally. Some of our Indians have made representations and I believe they have not that confidence that Mr. Reid has indicated in their Indian agents. I wonder if we could not deal with this in a regional manner. Instead of having this one counsel, could we have him assist the Indians from central Canada to prepare a brief on things that they would like the committee to give attention to, and to present that brief along with certain representations that might accompany it. And after that has been done, could we not then take up the Pacific Coast Indians and have them prepare a similar brief, then they could come along with anybody else that they wished to pay who would make their representations; and after we have had four or five or a definite number of briefs filed, we could then give consideration to them much in the way of a fact finding committee, and thus go about our work with their assistance or help, rather than to have any misunderstandings, rather than to have all central Canadian Indians represented by counsel while those from the more distant parts, with probably greater problems, not be represented by counsel at all.

The CHAIRMAN: That is what we have been discussing; that is what we want to do, as you suggest.

Mr. CASE: Would that not help to bring it about?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is what we are suggesting.