

The CHAIRMAN: Is that similar to what we call smelts?

Hon. Mr. STIRLING: No. What I am leading up to is this, that particularly with the rehabilitation of returned men it is a pretty common thing for individuals and the public to point to some excellent piece of agricultural land in a reserve and say that now that it is not being used why cannot they have it to develop it, particularly in the irrigated areas where it is not easy to find land good for their purpose. I want to raise that point and hear whatever Major MacKay has to tell us with regard to that question which is all too prevalent. They say, cannot we get a piece of agricultural land taken from the reserves to use for further settlement?

Now apropos of that I think I would like to make an inquiry here as to what the position is with regard to the McBride Agreement which was a cut-off arrangement between the dominion and the province. I have never been clear in my mind as to how many parcels of land the Indians were ready to give up in trade for how many parcels of land the province was ready to give up. In my earlier years here when discussions took place with regard to the development of another piece of land I usually found that the McBride Agreement stood in the way because I was told it had not been implemented by both the province and the dominion. I rather think that you will tell us that as far as the dominion is concerned it has been implemented by order in council in recent years and consequently land given up, should I say by the dominion on behalf of the Indians of the province, is now open to development under provincial regulations.

The WITNESS: If I can recall, I think there are three divisions to your question. The first one is the number of reserves in your constituency and the number of Indians resident on each reserve. I am afraid I cannot give you that information offhand, but I shall be glad to secure it for you in time.

Hon. Mr. STIRLING: Am I not right in suggesting that on these reserves which you will list there are quite a number of them on which there are no resident Indians? Is that not so?

The WITNESS: I would think that is correct.

The second division of the question is with respect to observations made by people regarding the non-use of Indian lands and the same remark could be made with respect to the non-use of lands held by whites. The Indian lands were set aside for use of the Indians but there was no stipulation that these reserves were to be brought under cultivation and used in a prescribed period of time. I think those who set the reserves aside had in mind it would be many generations before the Indian could be brought to make a proper use of them. If we took this land from them we would deprive them, their children, and their children's children of the opportunity to make a living. You can uproot white people and they can re-establish themselves very readily. It is not so with the Indians. They take deep roots in the land and stay there. The government has spent a great deal of money in assisting them to make use of this land. If you take this land away you will have to start all over again. I recall on one occasion the mayor of one of the larger communities said to me that we should remove the Indian population from the property of the municipality and I asked where we would put them and he said it didn't matter to him, just take them away. That would not solve the Indian problem.

Hon. Mr. STIRLING: May I interrupt there? I would not like it to go on record that this is something I personally am advocating, but it is something one continually hears.

The WITNESS: I understood that. Of course, I can quite understand the attitude of the people where perhaps the requirements of the municipality happen to be on Indian reserves that were not being used. Of course, in the first place the surrender of the Indian owners is required and it is not always easy