

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

in the government. I refer to another village in my constituency, that of Kitwanga. Part of this reserve is traversed by highway No. 16. The provincial government desired to relocate that section of highway No. 16 which passed through the reserve. This was an example of callous disregard for the rights of people if ever one existed. The correspondence in this regard was tabled pursuant to a motion of mine, and I should like to make reference to one or two letters if I may.

This is an example of the slight regard of the minister of highways of British Columbia for the Indian people, for their rights and their property. His action again tends to destroy what we are working toward in the field of mutual respect. This is a copy of a letter from the department of highways of British Columbia to Mr. W. S. Arneil, the Indian commissioner in Vancouver, dated April 2, 1959. I shall not read it, but it advises that the department contemplates widening the road through this particular village. The last paragraph of the letter reads:

One behalf of the department of highways, I am instructed to make formal application for entry to undertake the proposed reconstruction work within the above mentioned Indian reserves.

According to a subsequent letter, and before the formal application could be dealt with, we find that the department of highways moved on to the property, uprooted the timber and destroyed it, along with everything else. There is a letter dated April 17 from Mr. Arneil to the department of highways in which he says:

Work on this section of the highway, we understand, has already proceeded, the slashing work apparently now almost completed. Without specific approval of the band council for entry onto the reserve we anticipate some difficulty in negotiations.

I expect they would anticipate some difficulty in negotiations. I well know that Mr. Gaglardi has not too much respect for the law as long as he has his way. It is unfortunate that this invasion occurred, and it is unfortunate that the Indian affairs branch sat by and did not act quickly to prevent it or to prevent the destruction of the timber, the removal of the gravel and so on. The Indian people look to the Indian Act for some protection. It states that a person shall not trespass on a reserve, and if he does so he is committing an offence. In this instance they found no protection in the Indian Act, and no protection in the Indian affairs branch. They found nothing except a desire to negotiate and consummate the sale or surrender of that land after it had been taken by the department of highways. This is not doing much to assist in mutual understanding and the move toward integration.

I have a copy of a letter that was addressed to the Minister of Justice. In it accusations are made that the Indian agent in that agency attempted to put pressure on the council and certain members of the council, by means of threats of cutting off welfare and the like, in order to influence them not to negotiate in too difficult a way or on too hard a basis with the provincial government of British Columbia, and to make surrender of the land without too much trouble.

This information was communicated to the Minister of Justice on December 14, 1960. As far as I know, no action has been taken by him in that regard. As a consequence the rights of the Indian people in their land at Kitwanga reserve have just been pushed aside. If ever any people in Canada are covered by the bill of rights it is the Indian people, because they are the ones who are mentioned as a separate group of people coming within the jurisdiction of the federal government. Obviously the bill of rights means nothing as far as their land is concerned.

This sort of thing has been going on for many years. Unfortunately, whatever steps we may be taking toward integration, acculturation, understanding and asking them to trust us again in our dealings with them; no matter how many steps we may take in that direction, attitudes like this which have developed over the years in the Indian affairs branch, actions like those of Mr. Gaglardi, the minister of highways in British Columbia in invading that area, and the failure of the department or of the Minister of Justice to take some action to protect the rights of these individuals and their property, will do more to destroy the moves toward mutual trust that we are trying to develop than anything else. We are working at cross purposes unless we can implant in the mind of every member of the cabinet the fact that it is necessary to move in this direction of mutual desire.

The Chairman: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I must inform him that his time has expired.

Mr. Winch: First of all, Mr. Chairman, may I express my appreciation to those sitting on the government benches and in the official opposition for being allowed to follow the hon. member for Skeena at this time, owing to my having made a commitment several weeks ago to speak this afternoon at a seminar in Niagara Falls on the subject of my experience at the United Nations and in international affairs. I greatly appreciate that courtesy.

I desire to speak on this administration vote for the Indian affairs branch for one reason only. May I say that I fully appreciate