

much the youngest, he was recognized as the leading member and directing spirit of the commission. Charles Muir in the first of his special correspondence to the "Globe" from the scene of the commission's work, speaks of Mr. McKenna as "an official of keen intellect, well-read, reserved yet genial, and an influential factor on the commission. In speaking on the treaty negotiation in the House of Commons, the Hon. Clifford Sifton referred to Mr. McKenna as "one of the most capable and one of the best posted officials in the Indian service.

The following year, the claims of the Halfbreeds of the Northwest Territories were referred to him and he prepared all the memoranda and reports to council in the matter and was named chairman of the commission appointed to adjust the claims. One year later he was appointed sole Halfbreed Claims' Commissioner, and began a series of settlements beset with many and great difficulties. His principle was that the claim of the halfbreeds to land rights is of the same nature as the title of the Indians though differing in degrees: He therefore urged that such claim be settled synchronously with the extinguishment of the Indian Title, and has since been the leading spirit in such treaty settlements. Not only the Halfbreeds themselves, but also a host of speculators had to be dealt with in nearly every case. It was a place for no weak man. Mr. McKenna was chosen because of his mastery of the complicated situation, his firmness of character and his well known integrity and high sense of justice. Events justified the choice and the outcome was that men with conflicting interests and of different political complexion—Liberals who, because of party affiliation, expected especial favors and Conservatives who scarcely hoped for fairness from a commissioner appointed by an administration they opposed—both joined in acclaiming his great capacity for work, his firmness and his fine sense of equity. There was not even the breath of scandal. His attitude was recognized as absolutely judicial.

At the completion of the commission's work at Edmonton in the fall of 1900, Mr. McKenna and his co-commissioner, Colonel Walker were banqueted by the leading business men and made the recipients of expressions of appreciation of the efficient, courteous, and impartial manner in which the very difficult and delicate duties of the commissioners had been discharged.

In 1906 Mr. McKenna negotiated the treaty by which the Indians relinquished their claims to the country about Buffalo lake, Churchill river and Reindeer lake. At the same time he adjusted the claims of the Metis in that country.