

*Supply—Interior—Indians*

drawal of this section from sale on the ground that the Indians required the land for pasturage purposes. Mr. McKay's application therefore did not reach the department. For the reason stated, this section is, of course, not at present listed for sale, but I have instructed the officials to request Commissioner Graham to report in the matter, and to state whether in his opinion the land is still required for Indian use. I shall be very glad to write you further in the matter in due course.

Then there is a letter, which I will not delay the house reading, from the assistant deputy and secretary to Mr. Graham at Regina, asking for a further report. Next is a letter dated January 7, 1927, addressed to George W. McPhee, Esq., M.P., Yorkton, Saskatchewan. This reads:

With reference to my letter to you of the 20th ultimo, relative to the desire of Mr. Norman McKay, of Verigin, Saskatchewan, to purchase a portion of section 26-32-32, W. 1 M., I enclose copy of a report submitted by Commissioner Graham, of Regina.

You will observe that in the opinion of the Commissioner, this particular parcel of land is required by the Indians for pasturage and hay purposes.

Then there is a letter addressed to the Department of Dominion Lands from Pelly, Saskatchewan, dated May 14, 1927:

I understand that the above section of land has been held by the Indian department and used by the Indians south of Pelly for pasture land; and that recently this section has been turned back to the department and is to be sold.

If this is correct when and how is it to be sold? Will it be by public auction or private sale? A party spoke to me to-day who wishes to bid on this land and I will be glad to hear from you as to how and when it is to be disposed of.

This letter is signed J. M. Telford, who is a barrister dealing in real estate in Pelly.

Next is a letter dated June 8, 1927, to J. M. Telford of Pelly, Saskatchewan:

Replying to your letter of the 14th ultimo, in connection with the above land, I may say this section is still being reserved for the use of the Indians for pasturage and hay purposes. In the event of the land being thrown open for sale, you will be advised.

This is signed J. C. Caldwell, in charge of the lands and timber branch. I direct particular attention to the last sentence. I submit that when a responsible officer of the department writes a letter of that kind to someone in the country it should be taken seriously and there should be someone in the department who feels in honour bound to carry out the obligation undertaken. Yet this promise was deliberately disregarded. The land was sold at private sale for at least not more than half of what some of the farmers, with whom Mr. Telford was in communication, had offered to pay.

[Mr. Campbell.]

There are many other letters dealing with the same matter, but I do not wish to delay the house reading them. There is in the file a letter dated August 19, 1927, to Mr. Fred J. Malakoff, signed J. C. Caldwell, informing him that the land at that time was not available for sale. On November 3, 1927, a letter was written to E. A. W. R. McKenzie, Jr. Indian agent, by J. C. Caldwell, as follows:

Will you kindly advise the department, at your earliest convenience, if section 26, township 32, range 32, W1-M, is still required for the use of the Indians for pasturage and hay purposes.

Here I want to draw the attention of the minister to this fact: On November 23 there was a letter from Kamsack, Saskatchewan, to the secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, as follows:

Replying to your letter No. 68970-4 of the 3rd inst, regarding section 26, township 32, Range 32, W.P.M. I beg to advise that this is the only pasture that the Keeseekoose band have for their cattle and is still required for pasturage and hay purposes.

Your obedient servant,

(Sgd.) E. W. R. McKenzie,

Indian Agent.

To my mind this is the worst offence of which the department is guilty. Here you find the Indian agent, a man on whose recommendations they must depend, informing the department that this was the only pasturage land available for this Indian band, yet in spite of this the department deliberately disregarded the obligation entered into with Mr. Telford and disregarded as well representations of the Indian agent, all in the interests of one man who desired to secure this land for much less than its actual worth.

Then there is a letter under date of November 30, 1927, addressed to the hon. member for Yorkton, in which the official takes the stand that the land is not for sale. Some other correspondence follows, with which I need not weary the committee, but in this correspondence it is suggested to Mr. McPhee by the departmental officials that he might discuss this matter with Mr. Graham. The letters which passed between Mr. McPhee and Mr. Graham are not in the file, and one can only surmise what actually happened, but I find a letter from Regina under date of April 23, 1928, addressed to the secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, as follows:

In reply to departmental letter No. 68,970-4, of the 11th instant, I have to say that I am of the opinion that section 26, T. 32, R. 32 west of the first meridian could now be disposed of without adversely effecting the interests of the Keeseekoose band.

Your obedient servant,

(Sgd.) W. M. Graham,

Indian Commissioner.