

the requisite quantity of water to fertilize it is useless. And although frequent and urgent representations have been made to the local authorities in regard to the requirements of the Indians in this respect, their claims to consideration have been, up to the present time, neglected, and in some instances ignored.

As the Indian superintendent for the Province remarks in his report, which will be found among the appendices published herewith, it is fortunate that the work of railway construction, so extensively carried on in the Province for several years past, has afforded the Indians of the interior the means of obtaining a livelihood. But now that this work is drawing to a close the Indians will be obliged to turn their attention exclusively to agriculture to procure a subsistence; and their discontentment will be greatly increased when they find that owing to the want of water for irrigation their labor will generally be barren of result. The sales made by the Department of Lands and Works of British Columbia of certain lands that had previously been allotted to Indians has not served to reassure the minds of the latter. And the impossibility at several points of procuring from unsold Crown lands either sufficient or suitable allotments for the Indians of the locality has tended to increase the embarrassment. The only way to overcome this difficulty would appear to be to purchase lands for them.

The existing complications in connection with Indian management in this Province have been also greatly augmented by the action of the Provincial Government in instructing their officials to refuse the use of court houses, gaols and the services of constables to Indian agents, who, acting in the capacity of magistrates, decline to pay over to the Government of British Columbia the fines imposed and collected under the Indian Act, 43 Vic., cap. 22, sec. 90, which *inter alia* directs that one moiety of the fine shall be paid to the informer or prosecutor and the other moiety to Her Majesty, to form part of the fund for the benefit of the band of Indians with respect to one or more members of which the offence was committed.

Indian matters on the north-west coast have been peaceable during the past year. The presence of a stipendiary magistrate there has had a beneficial effect.

The depression in the fish-canning business has affected prejudicially the Indians of those regions, who formerly obtained lucrative employment at the numerous establishments engaged in this industry. Numbers of Indians, in consequence of many of the canneries being closed, have been obliged to seek their subsistence from other sources.

#### COWICHAN AGENCY.

The agent's report as to the moral tone of the Cowichan Indians is not very gratifying. The railway construction which is being proceeded with in the district has affected them prejudicially in that respect, owing to the increased facility