

too much praise cannot be accorded. There are other points where similar results have been achieved. At Cowichan, twenty years ago, a man's life was hardly safe; but for several years there has been a Catholic mission there, and the missionaries have induced the Indians to take to agriculture to some extent. I quite agree with the suggestion which has been made, that where the land is suitable for agriculture a teacher should be appointed to teach the Indians agriculture. I think that the sum mentioned is entirely inadequate for schools among the Indians. For instance, there is not a school in the district of Comox. The agent of that section has to traverse the whole west coast of Vancouver Island, so that he cannot visit Comox more than once or twice in twelve months. In the district of Nanaimo there is no Indian school. A clergyman holds the services of the church there, but so far as I know, no effort is made to educate the young Indians. Still, they are gradually becoming more industrious; the young men are giving up the pursuits of fishing and hunting, and are taking to working in the mines and on the steamers that ply on the coast. They are the best sailors we have. At the time I left Vancouver Island, nearly all the stevedoring was performed by Indians. They are so far advanced that they performed this work by contract; and although they do it for less money than the Chinamen used to do it for, yet they will make \$3 or \$3.50 a day, when the Chinaman would only make a dollar. I do not wish to detain the Committee, but I thought it necessary to mention the inadequacy of the educational facilities for the Indians of British Columbia, and the desirability of having teachers in agriculture and arts.

Mr. MILLS. I would like to ask the hon. Minister when he expects that this service will come to an end. It was expected that three or four years would complete the labours of the Commission. Perhaps the hon. gentleman will be able to inform the Committee what amount of work has been accomplished, how many Indians have been located, and when the Commission are likely to reach the conclusion of their labours.

Mr. McNEILL. Before the right hon. gentleman answers that question, I would like to suggest that a great deal of benefit would accrue from a survey of the swampy lands of the Saageen Peninsula being made with a view of forcing a road through them. They would thus be made of great value, not only to the Indian Department, but to the white settlers of that district. I should like, also, to call the attention of the Government to the condition of things that exist in that Indian territory at the present moment. An edict has lately gone forth from the Indian Department, which fell like a bolt from the skies upon the settlers of that neighbourhood, cancelling some 500 lots belonging to settlers and others in that part of the country. I am quite sure that the intention of the Government, in cancelling the sales of these lots, was a good one—that the cancellation was made for the benefit of the Indians, and also of the settlers; but it has been somewhat unfortunate, owing to the mode in which it has been done. No notice was given of this sudden change of policy, and the consequence is, that many *bona fide* settlers will find themselves in the occupation of lots, the sales of which have been cancelled over their heads. There are others who have spent very large sums of money in that district—men who have really built up that country—who have given employment to the settlers there, who have enabled them to sell their produce, by purchasing from them what they otherwise could not have sold, and who by that means have enabled the settlers to contribute to the revenue of the Indian Department. These men stand now to lose large sums of money, which they invested in land there on the faith of an understanding which I am informed has been in existence in that part of the country for some years.

I merely desire to call the attention of the Government to the matter, in order that they may see, as I am quite sure they desire to see, that no injustice is done to any of these parties, and that a hard and fast line is not adopted, but that each case is dealt with on its merits. I have been informed already that, so far as actual settlers are concerned, this will be done; but whatever arrangement is made, I hope that those men, who are the innocent purchasers of Indian lands, and who have spent large sums of money in building up that part of the country, will not be allowed to suffer.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. This is one of the cases where lands have been sold years and years ago, belonging to the Indians, and the parties who bought them have not yet paid for them. Some have gone on making improvements and others have not, but they have been going on year after year without paying up. There must be an end to that. The Indians have a right to get the price of their lands, and the Government want the purchasers to pay or else the land will be taken back and sold to others. The hon. gentleman says that they have built houses and made improvements, but if they paid their debts to the Indians, the Indians would have no cause of complaint. The truth is that the Indians have no friends but the Department. There is a continual pressure by the white man to disregard their rights. True, they are sometimes not pleasant neighbours, but they are the original owners of the soil and we must put up with them with all their faults. We have no desire to deprive any man of his house and farm, but he must pay the debt he owes the Indians. With reference to British Columbia, there is only one Commissioner there, Mr. O'Reilly, better known in British Columbia as Judge O'Reilly. From my acquaintance with Mr. O'Reilly, which is of recent date, I formed the highest opinion of him and his trustworthiness. I cannot say exactly when these reserves will be finally laid out and set apart for the Indians; I am discussing the whole Indian question with Mr. Smythe, the First Minister of British Columbia, who is now here, with a view of expediting the surveys and the getting these reserves confirmed by the Government of British Columbia. As regards the suggestions made by my hon. friend opposite, that the Indians should have a farming instructor, we are trying to give small salaries to good farmers in the vicinity of Indian settlements to teach the Indians practical farming. While this will not be a heavy charge on the Treasury, it will be a substantial addition to the farmer's income.

Mr. MILLS. Does the hon. gentleman get an annual report from Mr. O'Reilly, as Commissioner, showing the number of reserves set apart and the number of families provided for each year?

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I would draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the fact that almost the whole of this \$25,000 really goes to provide the salaries of some nine or ten white gentlemen; for instance, of the Fraser Agency, the total expenditure is \$2,770, of which \$1,700 go to the superintendent and his travelling allowances; \$214—expenses connected with the visit of the Governor General; so that a very small sum will go directly to the benefit of the Indians. The same holds good as to the others. I do not quite understand the services these Indian Agents render; they may perform valuable public services, and great services to the Indians, but British Columbia is a long way off.

Mr. BAKER. And well we know it.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Distance lends enchantment to the view.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. You had the Prime Minister as representative once, and he is supposed, conse-