

words of a telegram which has been referred to in this debate this afternoon. The hon. member for South Wellington no doubt thought he was helping his leader in so far as the telegram addressed to Sir Richard McBride was concerned, in which that gentleman was told to make any bargain he liked, when he said that the Government knew all the time what the price of the Songhees reserve was. The hon. gentleman is absolutely mistaken. This Government had sent agents to the Indians and the local Government had been endeavouring for years to get a figure from the Indians. Until that bargain had been struck by the local Government the Dominion Government had no idea what the Indians would take for their land and neither had anyone else.

I want to ease the conscience of the hon. member for Edmonton (Mr. Oliver) as to the condition of these Indians and I do not think it is fair to them that the statements that have been made in this House should go unchallenged. I am afraid that my hon. friend the acting Minister of the Interior (Mr. Crothers) was a little bit too anxious to combat that resolution and for the sake of combatting it, he accepted the statement as a fact that these Indians are existing in a state of depravity and debauchery.

Mr. OLIVER: I think that the motion that I read stated that some of them were in that condition but not the whole of them.

Mr. BARNARD: It is possible that out of one hundred and twenty-five some of them may be in a bad condition but I say without any fear of contradiction that the idea that is sought to be conveyed by that newspaper article is absolutely false. Any man who knew the condition of these Indians prior to the day of surrender and who knows the condition of these Indians to-day will say that the surrender was the very best thing that could have happened. Before the surrender these people lived in shacks of the meanest description. To-day, on their new reservation, they have their own individual houses. Before, several families were all hived together in a lodge while now they have their own homes their own horses, orchards, and vehicles and they seem to have an exceedingly prosperous settlement. Any man passing through the country would not be able to pick out this district as an Indian reservation.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Did they get a fair price for their land at that time?

Mr. BARNARD: They got an excellent price for their land and I was very glad that they did.

Mr. NESBITT: And they are in a better condition than they were before?

Mr. BARNARD: Very much.

Mr. NESBITT: And it was not wrong to pay them that money?

Mr. BARNARD: I think not—certainly not. It would be an advantageous thing if hon. gentlemen opposite would be prepared to trust the local Government of British Columbia to see that these Indians on the Kitsilano reserve get fair treatment in that particular, the same kind of treatment that the Songhees Indians did. The hon. member for Edmonton made another statement which I think possibly will stand some examination. He said: That there is a question as to the title of this reserve; that the provincial Government is paying \$300,000 for it; that someone else had offered a million and a half dollars, and that someone else had said the property was worth seven million dollars; figures which in my opinion are absolutely ridiculous. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Oliver) went on to say that you must deal with the question of ownership before you can deal with the land, but he did not follow that policy when his friends of the Grand Trunk Pacific wished to acquire the Indian reserve on Kaien island, the present townsite of Prince Rupert. He knew that his title was shaky; he would not give them an ordinary deed of it; he would only grant such rights as he thought the Crown had. The provincial Government put in its claim for the reversion directly the Indians surrendered to the Grand Trunk Pacific, and the Grand Trunk Pacific, after I take it investigating the question of title, decided they had better pay the provincial Government, and they did pay them a good round sum of money for that reversion. I do not think that in connection with the Fort George reservation, which was acquired by the Grand Trunk Pacific, and which is owned by them to-day, and which they intend to make a divisional point, the hon. gentleman took the same course as he says should be taken now in connection with this reserve. I do not think he was altogether animated by such a tremendous desire for the welfare of the Indians in bringing this question forward, as he was by a desire to make a point against the Government.

Mr. H. H. STEVENS (Vancouver): This Kitsilano reserve is situated at the mouth of False creek in the city of Vancouver, and as the hon. member for Edmonton (Mr. Oliver) has stated, it is undoubtedly of very great value as Indian reserves go. It should be remembered, as intimated by the right hon. the leader of the Opposition, that when a band of Indians are located in the heart of a city it is certainly not in the interests of the city