

(13) That the fishing rights, hunting rights and water rights of the Indian Tribes be fully adjusted. Our land rights having first been established by concession or decision we are willing that our general rights shall after full conference between the two Governments and the Tribes be adjusted by enactment of the Parliament of Canada.

Your Committee heard evidence on the disabilities of the Indians of British Columbia arising from restrictive regulations regarding fishing, hunting and the use of water for irrigation purposes. The Indian Commissioner for British Columbia and the Director of Fisheries, of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, were heard on this subject. The fishing industry is a most important one in the life of the Indians, and at least one-third of the fishermen engaged in the commercial fisheries are Indians and a large number of Indian women are employed in the canneries. The chief complaint was against the restriction to take fish for food purposes, and in this matter the sympathies of the Committee are with the Indians; at the same time the necessity of preserving by adequate regulations the fisheries is paramount. By co-operation between the Department of Indian Affairs and the Department of Marine and Fisheries grievances have gradually disappeared and we would commend to the Government the desirability of having as close co-operation as possible not only between these two Departments, but between all the Departments of the Dominion Public Service that have to deal with problems affecting Indians or Indian reserves, and that in all cases an extremely sympathetic and liberal view of the Indian situation should influence regulations and their enforcement as against Indians. The amelioration of local difficulties must be worked out by local officers, and we are convinced of the importance of leniency in the enforcement of the regulations that might, if rigidly enforced, work hardship and even suffering upon Indians.

It must be recognized that Indians have had from the earliest times, special interest in hunting, and that in those regions where their subsistence is obtained from the hunt they should receive every consideration. It is clearly to the benefit of the Indians that there should be strict regulations to conserve the fur-bearing animals, and the Provincial regulations appear to have that in view. It is the duty of the Department of Indian Affairs to see that any privileges or rights which the Indians have under these regulations are taken advantage of to the fullest degree. In this connection it is noted that the Provincial authorities do not exact any license fee from Indians for hunting or trapping, and like exemption of Indians in so far as commercial fishing licenses is concerned might be considered favourably by the Department of Marine and Fisheries.

Water for irrigation, where this is a necessity for successful agriculture, is a matter of the utmost importance in certain districts of British Columbia. These affairs are regulated by the Province, and the Indians are on the same footing as ordinary citizens in the allotment of the available water. In the endeavour to obtain water records, the Department of Indian Affairs has been insistent in advocating the claims of the Indians to sufficient water for their reserve lands, and where success has not followed, it has been owing to the insufficiency of water for all claimants or from some inherent flaw in the original records. The number of cases of the latter class is, however, very small. We would recommend that the Department of Indian Affairs continue to give the most careful attention to the development of irrigation systems on the reserves so that the water may be utilized to the fullest extent, and we commend co-operation between the Department and the Water Powers Branch of the Department of the Interior.

(14) That in connection with the adjustment of our fishing rights the matter of the international treaty recently entered into which very