

as submitted by the Order in Council. It is unlikely I should think that the Indians would concern themselves with procedure. They have I imagine sufficient discernment to perceive, if their deliberations be not influenced to the contrary, that a question of procedure is at present quite irrelevant; but if necessary you may unhesitatingly assure them that no point of procedure will be permitted to prejudice a decision upon the merits of the case, and that the Government will see to it that the proceedings are brought and conducted in such a manner as to provide for the admission of all the facts and arguments which are material to the controversy.

May I be allowed to add that in view of what I have stated I do not propose to consider the procedure until it is ascertained that the Indians have acquiesced in the conditions of the Order in Council which are preliminary to any procedure.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sgd.) C. J. DOHERTY,

Minister of Justice.

The Indians did not acquiesce in the conditions of the Order in Council as the Right Honourable C. J. Doherty informed their Counsel in the above letter they would have to do before he would move farther in the matter. Consequently, there was no further action on the part of the Dominion Government.

A change of tactics was adopted in June, 1926. In that month a Petition embodying the Indian claims, based on aboriginal title, was presented to Parliament. The session then in progress terminated abruptly and action on the Petition was not taken until the present session, when the Petition in question was referred to your Committee for enquiry and report.

Having given full and careful consideration to all that was adduced before your Committee, it is the unanimous opinion of the members thereof that the petitioners have not established any claim to the lands of British Columbia based on aboriginal or other title, and that the position taken by the Government in 1914, as evidenced by the Order in Council and Mr. Doherty's letter above quoted, afforded the Indians full opportunity to put their claim to the test. As they have declined to do so, it is the further opinion of your Committee that the matter should now be regarded as finally closed.

While making this declaration the Committee wish to state that they are impressed by the fact that the Indians of British Columbia receive benefits which are in excess of those granted by Treaty to Indians in other parts of Canada. Comparison of these expenditures will be found in the statements made by the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs at pages 15-17 of the printed evidence. It is clear that they are not discriminated against; that reserves have been set aside for them sufficient for their needs, and that the obligation for Indians assumed by the Dominion when British Columbia entered Confederation has been generously fulfilled. In considering the extent of this bounty the Committee could not fail to notice from facts submitted that it had exceeded the benefits which appertain to Indian treaties, and that if a treaty had been made, the compensation would have been in comparison much less than the generous expenditures now made on behalf of the Indians in British Columbia, which amounted to \$690,683 in 1925-26.

As it was the desire of your Committee to give the very fullest and most sympathetic consideration to all the claims of the Indians and to give them every opportunity to state any existing hardships or disabilities under which