

INDIAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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41 South Turner St.,
Victoria, B.C.,
4th December, 1916.

Dear Sir:-

I have several letters of inquiry as to how the Indian Rights question is progressing, and in reply, I can only say that the last word I had from Ottawa was to the effect that the Dominion Government was just waiting for the Royal Commission to report, when plans would immediately be made to lay the whole matter before the Indians. Of course, the question of title must be settled by the Exchequer Court of Canada, and if the Indians are not satisfied with the ruling of that Court, then the matter will go to England for the decision of the Privy Council. We have tried from the commencement to get a direct reference to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and a great deal of money has been spent in going to Ottawa, and to England, but everything is held up for the report of the Royal Commission. We have asked that a copy of this report be placed in the hands of our local lawyer, Mr. J. E. Bird, of Vancouver, so that he may advise the Indians what to do in the matter. Mr. Bird has already done a great deal of work for us, and so far we have paid him very little money, because our money is all gone. I do not like asking you for money, as the times are so hard, but something must be done if you want to see the matter finished. Of course, if you do not care how it goes, then it will be just as well to let the whole thing go, which would be a very foolish thing after accomplishing so much.

The late Provincial Government refused to acknowledge the rights of the Indians, but the new Government evidently thinks that the Indians have some rights, and in their pre-election platform have promised to take the matter up and have it settled. This looks good to me, and I think it would be a mistake to have no lawyer when the question does come up. Please call a meeting of your people at once and let me know what you will do, as I have no money in hand to even buy stamps for your letters.

Yours faithfully,

C. M. TATE, Gen. Secretary.