

70 Indian Chiefs, Councillors Sign Petition Against Law Allowing Reservation Evictions

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BY JACK DEAKIN
(Journal Staff Writer)

Indian chiefs and councillors, representing bands from all reserves in Alberta except one, gathered in Edmonton Saturday to sign a petition protesting to the federal government four sections of the Indian Act. These allow eviction of Indians from reservations.

The meeting of more than 70 chiefs and councillors, from northern Peace River reserves to those of the south, was to protest an order threatening the eviction of 118 Indians from the Hobbema reserve, 55 miles south of Edmonton.

Mrs. J. C. Gorman, a Calgary

lawyer who will act as legal counsel for the 118 Indians in their appeal to the courts against the eviction order, attended the meeting, held in the Bissell Institute. She assured the

gathering that an appeal against the eviction would be filed before the "deadline" date of Feb. 5.

"We still have a little time in which to prepare our case, but

the appeal definitely will be filed before the Feb. 5 deadline. We are not in any hurry to file our appeal as we still have much work to do," she said.

The petition, to be sent to Prime Minister St. Laurent in Ottawa, protests four sections of the Indian Act. They are sections 7 and 9 which give what is termed "exclusive and dictatorial" powers in the administration of the reserves to the minister of the department of citizenship and immigration.

Other sections are 11 and 12 which would attempt to define what constitutes an Indian. It was as a result of one of these sections that 10 members of the Samson band on the Hobbema reserve were able to protest the eligibility of 118 of their fellow tribesmen, questioning their

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70 Indian Leaders Sign Petition Of Protest

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right to live on the reserve where all were born.

PROTEST UPHELD

The protest by the 10 Samson band members was reviewed by the Indian affairs department and also was heard by a neutral referee or commissioner. The latter upheld the protest and the registrar ordered the eviction of the 118 within a three-month deadline.

The only action left for those facing eviction was to obtain legal counsel and appeal to the courts. The court decision will be final.

If the court support the eviction the Indian families, affected, two third of those facing eviction being children, will have to give up their homes and their land.

They would not be allowed to go to any other reserve, although in the words of Hon. George Prudham, federal minister of technical surveys, the evicted Indians would be "taken care of" and would receive some form of "relief."

Since Dec. 1 the Indian families facing eviction have not received their "oil money." This amounts to about \$2,900 each month for the 118 persons. The money is from royalties from oil found on the reserve.

BREAKING TREATY

Voicing his support of the petition to Ottawa protecting the four sections of the act, one Indian spokesman stated "the government cannot legally break the treaty promises. But what the government is attempting to do is to have us, through these acts, break the treaty for them."

He referred to legislation in the Indian Act as a "white man's law" working against the Indians generally. He said that the sections of the Indian Act being protested would divide and disintegrate Indian bands throughout the west.

"I came a long way to attend this meeting to help my friends at Hobbema," he said. "Let's start fighting harder for our treaty rights. If we don't we won't have any reserves left. This law is not good for us. It will cause much bitterness be-

tween us and we must fight together to make the white man keep his promises," he said.

Several speakers praised the efforts of John Laurie, Calgary, in his campaign for the betterment of the Indian. They also expressed their thanks to Mrs. Gorman, one speaker saying "I hope the great spirit will give this lady the power and the strength to win this case for us."

MUST STICK TOGETHER

The support of Indians from other reserves is indicated in the words of another Indian who said: "We are not blaming Hobbema for this, but we must stick together and fight this case. Why should only 10 Indians be able to say what shall be for 118 of their brothers and sisters?"

He added that "118 are paying because one man was cross with another. He only had to get nine more names to the protest, but he did and 118 are paying," the speaker said with deep emotion in his voice.

The Alberta Indian Association has a membership of approximately 2,500 and embraces every reserve in Alberta except one. Jim Gladstone, of the Blood Indian tribe, is the president and also was chairman of Saturday's meeting.

At the conclusion of discussions all delegates formed a lineup to sign the petition protesting the act.

A fund has been started to pay legal fees and other costs. Many Indians of other bands and reserves have contributed as have many white friends of the Indian.

It is estimated that about 45,000 individual protests have been sent to Ottawa. Commenting on the tremendous support being given those facing eviction, Mrs. Gorman stated "the greater flood of protests still is to come. People across Canada are in sympathy with the Hobbema Indians," she said.

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REPRESENT 2,500

70 Indian Chiefs Protest to Ottawa

EDMONTON, CP — A meeting of more than 70 chiefs and councillors from all but one of Alberta's Indian reserves has signed a petition protesting to the federal government four sections of the Indian Act which allow eviction of Indians from reservations.

The meeting Saturday of the Alberta Indian Association protested an order threatening the eviction of 118 Indians from the Hobbema reserve, 55 miles south of here. The association has approximately 2,500 members.

Delegates contended sections 7 and 9 of the act give "exclusive and dictatorial" powers in administration of the reserves to the immigration and citizenship minister.

Sections 11 and 12 which attempt to define what constitutes an Indian were also protested. It was under one of these sections that 10 members of the Hobbema reserve successfully challenged the right of 118 members to remain in

the reserve because their forefathers allegedly accepted scrip payments in lieu of Indian rights.

Mrs. J. C. Gorman of Calgary, legal counsel for those evicted, told the meeting an appeal to the courts against the eviction would be filed before a "deadline" date of Feb. 5. She said much work had to be done in the interim.

If the court supports the eviction, the families will lose their homes and land. They are no longer receiving oil royalties that total about \$2,900 a month for the 118 persons.

Hon. George Prudham, federal minister of technical surveys, has said that the group if evicted will be "taken care of" and will receive some form of "relief."

Canadair Seeking Tech Students

Opportunities to work on nuclear power, guided missiles and jet aircraft may be awarded some fortunate graduates of Calgary's provincial institute of technology and

Hamilton Speaker

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Indians Protest Treatment

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By WAYNE KINES

[Herald Staff Reporter]

HOBEBEMA—Representatives of Alberta's 16,000 Treaty Indians on reserves from Lesser Slave Lake in the north to the U.S. boundary in the south attending the Indian Association of Alberta conference here protested Wednesday that they had been unfairly and unjustly represented in discussions with the Indian Affairs branch of the federal government.

They called for election of their own delegates from both their bands and from the Indian Association itself to all future conferences called by Indian Affairs and also for freedom to use their own interpreters and legal advisers.

The serious-faced chiefs, councillors and delegates of more than 20 Alberta Indian bands passed three resolutions demanding that themselves and not the Indian Affairs branch choose their conference delegates, and that the IAA also be allowed its elected representation with everyone being told beforehand what is to be discussed.

President Jim Gladstone of the IAA asked for a reinstatement of the old Indian Act, saying that the new one was at least 10 years unrealistically ahead of the present problems.

Today, resolutions calling for a separate cabinet post and for a standing committee of Parliament on Indian affairs are expected to

See Page 7—INDIANS



INDIAN MEETING. More than 150 Indians from all parts of Alberta are meeting today in Hobbema to discuss their affairs throughout Canada. Some of the Indians have come almost 1,000 miles to attend the two-day session. Mrs. Ruth Gorman, Calgary, counsel for the Indians, is shown above with four of the executive members. They are, left to right, John Laurie, Calgary, an honorary chief and treasurer for the Indians; Johnny Gladstone, president of the Indian association from the Blood tribe at Cardston; Mrs. Gorman, Ed. Hunter, Hobbema, secretary, and Albert Lightning, honorary vice-president from Hobbema.



INDIANS PROTEST ACT — Indians from every reserve in Alberta except one, meeting under the banner of the Indian Association of Alberta, signed a petition in Edmonton Saturday protesting to the federal government several sections of the act which allow evictions from reservations. Pictured

left to right are: James Bull, Jim Ermineskin, Johnny Samson, chief of the Samson band of the Hobbema reserve; Albert Lightning, who faces eviction from Hobbema; Mrs. J. C. Gorman, of Calgary, counsel for the Indians facing eviction, and Jim Gladstone, of the Blood Indian reserve, president of the Indian Association.

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ST 19, 1950

Discussions Incomplete, Indians to Meet Again

Work-weary chiefs of Alberta's 14,000 Indians adjourned their conference Friday night after two days of intensive study and discussion on a government-sponsored bill which seeks to amend the Indian Act of 1878.

With only two-thirds of the work completed, the Indian leaders representing seven tribes will meet again next Thursday at the Hobbema reserve, near Wetaskiwin, and finish the job. To some extent they are working against time because Bill 267 is expected to be read at the fall meeting of the House of Commons.

Second day of the conference, under the sponsorship of the Indian Association of Alberta at Paget Hall, was conducted in the same business-like way that Thursday produced a resolution which, if incorporated in the act, would give Indians recourse to the courts for the first time.

Friday they tackled the technical language of the government bill on such complicated subjects as wills, estates, oil well royalties and family desertion.

FOUR LANGUAGES

Discussions again took place in four languages—Cree, Blackfoot, Stoney and English—with the assistance of interpreters.

In all languages they protested a clause in the proposed act which would allow Ottawa to remove a band of Indians from a reserve situated "wholly or partly within an incorporated city, town or village."

The emphatic rejection came because the chiefs felt the Indians did not ask the town to be built there; because they felt it was a violation of treaty negotiations which promised to let the Redmen hold their reserves "as long as the sun shines and the water flows into the ocean."

The same Qu'Appelle Treaty of 1874 said: "Therefore the promises we have to make to you are not for today only but for tomorrow, not only for you but for your children born and unborn."

One new clause which the chiefs were happy to commend, and which was considered by association secretary John Laurie as a "step forward" was No. 32 (2) which grants permission for either advanced bands or advanced individuals to sell produce from their own farms, a right up to now denied them.

SPEEDIER SETTLEMENT

Another contentious point which evoked some spirited discussion was the matter of administration of estates. Delegates were critical of existing regulations which place administrative powers with the minister.

Mr. Laurie pointed out that this procedure meant a delay of from two to five years between the Indian's death and settlement of the estate. In that time the estate al-

most always suffered from deterioration or loss.

The suggestions put forward by the assembled chiefs would place the power of administration in the hands of reserve superintendents for speedy settlement.

One delegate from Northern Alberta asked what would be the disposition of funds accruing from discovery of oil on a reserve. Mrs. John Gorman, legal adviser, stated money from leases goes into band revenue but if oil were found the additional funds would become capital on which the reserve could spend the interest.

Mr. Laurie, who will attend next week's meeting in Hobbema, stated he expects to hear a hot debate on Clause 113, "dictatorial and violation of human rights as set forth by the United Nations."

The objectionable clause provides machinery for the setting up of a committee whose decision may call for the compulsory enfranchisement of any Indian or a band of Indians.

The secretary pointed this out as an example of the bill's failure to provide for a secondary stage in the Indians' development.

James Gladstone, Blood Indian from the Cardston reserve, concurred. "We feel they should use the old act and amend it as years go by and we Indians become farther advanced."

stood that this parade is not operating at full capacity and

To say that the uptown has a surplus of

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THE LETTERBOX

Indians and their history

The Editor: Following a speech I gave as a guest speaker, on Indians, in your city a Mr. Kehoe, curator of your museum, wrote a letter of denouncement of my lack of knowledge of Indian history.

He was obviously present when I made the speech but he had not the courage to personally question me when I could have publicly replied to his accusations but rather chose to write a letter to the papers after I left, which he knew I probably would never see.

He criticized my lack of knowledge re Indian history in the fields of warfare, agrarian, commercial and tribal political development.

I have not the advantage of Mr. Kehoe of being an archaeologist, but I am a lawyer and I always carefully check the accepted authorities before I speak.

Directors of three museums have assured me that Diamond Jenness' book "Indians of Canada" is a leading authority. He was head ethnologist for many years of the National Museum of Canada. His book was published by that museum and has been many times republished by the Queen's printer.

Space does not permit me to state each quotation here but I will simply say that book agrees with every statement I made that Mr. Kehoe criticized me for being inaccurate on. If you wish to check with the editor of this paper, Mr. Kehoe, he has the actual

quotations which I have mailed him. For example, you said, "The Indian lived an economical life similar to that of Europeans at the time of Julius Caesar," who lived 150 B.C. Jenness says, on page 33, "They were no farther advanced economically than the inhabitants of England two thousand years before Christ." You are nearly 1,900 years out, Mr. Kehoe.

Mr. Kehoe, who is an anthropologist, suggests the Indian needs "The advice of trained anthropologists familiar with the Indian groups." Frankly I don't think the Indian needs his background explained to him, he is adequately aware of his own background and acutely aware of his present problems. He wants concrete help in solving these problems. If he were guaranteed to be allowed to retain his reserves as we solemnly promised he would be, and when off his reserve allowed to enjoy the political rights we other immigrants enjoy, such as adequate education, employments and legal rights and, if he could enjoy these rights without losing the privilege of returning to his reserve, I believe the Indians would be capable of solving their own problem and becoming outstanding Canadian citizens.

I suggest you consider this fact, Mr. Kehoe, also carefully check the leading authorities on Indian history.

RUTH GORMAN

Calgary

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