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Premier

Veterans' Land Act

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April 28th, 1942

Mr. B. G. Webber, M.L.A.,
OSOYOS, B. C.

Dear Mr. Webber:

I have your letter of the 7th inst., and your
suggestions have been carefully noted.

With kind personal regards,

Yours faithfully,

Chairman,
Post-war Rehabilitation Council,

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Legislative Assembly
Province of B.C.

7, April, 1942.

Hon. H. G. Perry,
Chairman,
Post-war Rehabilitation Council,
Victoria, B. C.

Dear Mr. Perry:

This will acknowledge with many thanks your letter of March 27, asking for suggestions in regard to post-war rehabilitation.

One project which has suggested itself to many of us in the Similkameen valley, is the opening up of the southern portion of that valley below Cawston by a Provincial government irrigation and lands scheme similar to that of the Southern Okanagan Lands Project. Mr. J. Ritchie of Keremeos visited me in Osoyoos yesterday with regard to this scheme, and in an elaboration of it, he has suggested that a suitably supervised camp of Japanese be established at Cawston to erect the irrigation works, and to fabricate their own pipes of cement on the spot. Were this project completed before the war ends, Mr. Ritchie's suggestion was that the Japanese be employed to raise seed, cannerly tomatoes and other necessaries particularly for the overseas market. Any profit accruing from the sale of this produce might be used to pay off the capital investment. The understanding would be of course that the Japanese would be removed from the valley after the war, and that the lands then available under irrigation be included in a soldier settlement scheme.

Mr. Ritchie will be in Vancouver and Victoria this week, and I have suggested that he attempt to see you to explain more fully the details of the scheme.

In regard to post-war rehabilitation generally, I feel very keenly that something more fundamental than patching will have to be done to our economic fabric if our re-adjustment to pacific conditions is to be at all adequate from the point of view of the distribution of our potential consumer goods supply on the basis of need.

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What the province can accomplish by its own endeavour is very strictly limited necessarily, but it does seem to me that we might very well begin progressively to assume control of our public utilities - particularly light and power - and our natural resources. I am confident that if private firms can operate these to their profit, so can the state. The additional funds so made available to consolidated revenue might very well be used in providing employment through essential public works in the matter of power developments; forest rehabilitation; government financed prospecting parties; roads, etc.

I trust these suggestions may be of some use to you and with every good wish for the fruition of the work of the Council,

I am,

Yours very sincerely,

' Bernard G. Webber '

9-1-7

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO
LAND SETTLEMENT BOARD



VICTORIA, B.C.

LAND SETTLEMENT BOARD
DEPARTMENT OF LANDS

January 31st, 1944.

Memorandum for the Honourable John Hart, Premier.

Attached hereto is summarized report on matters affecting the Provincial Government discussed at conference of Dominion officials and others in Vancouver Jan. 25 - 27 on "Veterans Land Act."

Agenda also attached.

More detailed information will be filed in Lands Department for record.

F. D. Mulholland

F. D. Mulholland.

Copy also to Hon. A. Wells Gray,
Minister of Lands.

*Mr. Mulholland asked me to point out
that these were closed meetings
Ray*

- 11. There is some fear that enough farms may not be obtainable at satisfactory prices (reported average price increase already 25%). This may later cause more attention to clearing raw land.

Veterans' Land Act.

1. Administered by field supervisors and assessors of The Soldiers' Settlement Board throughout the Province, assisted by Regional Advisory Committees.
2. The Board is chiefly concerned now with establishing machinery for post-war settlement: is not in a hurry to give men now being discharged from service in Canada preference in choice over men now serving overseas.
3. The Board estimates some 8,000 veterans, having 2 years or more farm experience, have some intention of farming in B. C. after the war. (From questionnaire of 340,000 Service men)
4. Majority demand of veterans is for small holdings, within reasonable distance of industries, for homes and partial security in unemployment.
5. Chosen districts for this purpose are lower Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island, Okanagan and Kamloops, but any suitable lands accessible to industries will be of interest.
6. For full-time farming five areas tributary to C. N. Ry., Prince George, Vanderhoof and Bulkley Valley towns, are receiving attention, because Dominion-Provincial soil and other surveys have disclosed extensive undeveloped arable lands. The Board has been provided with status of ownership in these areas.
7. The Board has selected two blocks of vacant Crown land, of about 2,500 acres each, near Prince George and Vanderhoof, and intends to select two others further west when the snow goes. Each of these blocks is to be subdivided into about a dozen farms with about 50 acres cleared, buildings, fences, etc, on each. This project is regarded as experimental.
8. Board officials had the impression that the general reserve on vacant Crown lands is to be maintained until after the war so that returning veterans may have opportunity for individual selection of areas. They also were expecting further definition of suitable areas by B. C.
9. Present policy is to concentrate on buying private farms because
 - (a) For small holdings there is little suitable vacant Crown land accessible to industries:
 - (b) for full-time farms it is believed the cost of clearing and buildings on raw lands will exceed cost of buying existing farms:
 - (c) for either purpose development of raw land will involve more delay:
 - (d) of 26,000 occupied farms in B. C. (1941) there are 7,400 farmed by men aged over 60 (2,000 over 70) many of whom have no family successor.
10. The Board is taking over the Japanese lands in lower Fraser Valley.
11. There is some fear that enough farms may not be obtainable at satisfactory prices (reported average price increase already 25%). This may later cause more attention to clearing raw land.

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It is respectfully suggested:-

- (1) To avoid misunderstanding, that the Board be officially notified that the Province does not propose to interfere with Dominion responsibility for selection of veteran settlement areas; and that the Board be requested to inform the Province as soon as possible of the definite areas which its officials have selected to take advantage of the Province's offer of free land, in order that the general reserve may be lifted.
- (2) That all reasonable requests for information at Victoria and in Government Agents' offices in districts concerned, with regard to ownership, soil or other relevant surveys, and search of title in Land Registry Offices be freely granted the V. L. A. officials.
- (3) After the first selection of vacant Crown land by the Board, and after lifting the general reserve, that the offer of free land still apply to applications by, or on behalf of, veterans for a reasonable period after the war.
- (4) That undeveloped lands applied for by the Board under this free offer be held in reserve, but only conveyed to the Board, lot by lot, as the Board notifies the Province of its intention to develop them.
- (5) In order to avoid undue interference with other disposition of Crown lands, that a limit be placed on the period during which lands selected by the Board will be held in reserve without development; say for three years after the war.
- (6) That the Province keep in close touch with the activities of the Board, and study the effects of its operations on Provincial land policies, agriculture, fishing, public works, education, and the general social and economic position of communities affected. And also investigate the possibility of cooperation between the two Governments in projects for the complete settlement of rural communities.
- (7) That further investigation be made as to possible developments in the event of the application of the Dominion "Prairie Farms Rehabilitation Act" to British Columbia.

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VANCOUVER CONFERENCE

January 25th--27th 1944.

A G E N D A

Tuesday, January 25th

10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Assemble Hotel Vancouver.
Opening remarks by the Chairman.
Some aspects of Provincial Government's
rehabilitation plans - Mr. F.D. Mulholland,
Provincial Lands Department.
Rehabilitation legislation as pertaining to
Department of Pensions & National Health -
Mr. Geo. Derby, O.B.E., District Administrator.

2:15 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.

Relationship between Small Holdings and
Industry - Mr. E.E. Carncross.
Qualifications and training.
Land purchase.
Leases.
Duties of Regional Office Committees.
Discussions by Regional Office Committee members.

Wednesday, January 26th

10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Operational program V.L.A. for 1944.
Regional Offices and staffs.
Training of new field staff (short courses).
Transportation problems.
Forms and stationery.
Insurance and collections.

2:15 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.

Soldier Settlement policy.
Questions and answers.

Thursday, January 27th

10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Farm economics in relation to V.L.A. -
Dean F.M. Clement, U.B.C.
Re-establishment of fishermen under V.L.A. -
Major J.A. Motherwell, Chief Inspector of
Fisheries.

2:15 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.

Soil Surveys - Dr. D.G. Laird, U.B.C.
Mr. Farstad, U.B.C.

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January 28.

W. K. Chandler, Esq.,
Legal Adviser,
Soldier Settlement and Veterans' Land Act,
518 Rogers Building,
VANCOUVER, B. C.

Dear Mr. Chandler:

I have for acknowledgment your letter of January 27, and note what you have to say regarding legal fees on the transfer of properties to the Director of the "Veterans' Land Act, 1942".

Please be advised that this matter was referred to the Attorney-General since it comes under the provision of the "Land Registry Act". I have brought this matter to the attention of the Attorney-General again, requesting that he give an early reply.

Yours sincerely,

Secretary.

The Honourable R. L. Maitland, K. C.,

Attorney-General,

BUILDINGS.

January 28, 1944.

On January 6, the Premier received a letter from Mr. G. Murchison, Director of the Soldier Settlement and Veterans' Land Act, with reference to registration fees with respect to the transfer of land under the Soldier Settlement Act.

This letter was brought to the attention of the Minister of Lands who advised us on January 13, that since the matter came under the provision of the "Land Registry Act" he had referred Mr. Murchison's letter to you for attention.

I am now enclosing copy of a letter from Mr. W. K. Chandler, Legal Adviser of the Soldier Settlement and Veterans' Land Act, with reference to that communication. Apparently, there is some urgency for action in connection therewith. It, therefore, would be appreciated if you could look into this matter and advise Mr. Chandler direct.

Secretary.

CANADA

Vancouver, B.C. January 27th, 1944.

The Private Secretary of the Premier of British Columbia,
Parliament Buildings,
Victoria, B.C.

Dear Sir:

I enclose you a copy of a letter which our Director wrote to the Premier on January 2nd regarding a concession with regard to legal fees on the transfer of properties to the Director, The Veterans' Act, for the purpose of settling returned men from this war on the land under the provisions of that Act. I had word from Head Office yesterday that the Director had received no reply and unfortunately he is away at the present moment.

I quite understand the burden of affairs which press on the Premier at this particular time and I would not like to bother him with a matter which is of little importance to him, though it means a good deal to us. In the meantime, the transfer of the Japanese properties in the Fraser Valley, which we bought from the Custodian of Enemy Property, is held up in the Land Registry Office at New Westminster because of some question of fees. We are acquiring some more property from the Custodian both on the Mainland and on Vancouver Island.

Might I invoke your assistance in looking into this matter and bringing it to the Premier's attention if you get an opportunity to do so. I am certain that the matter will receive his favourable consideration and can be quickly disposed of, if you will be good enough to assist me.

Yours truly,

*W.K. Chandler*WKC/W
Encl.W.K. Chandler,
Legal Adviser.

COPY

AIR MAIL

January 3rd, 1944.

The Honourable John Hart,
Premier of British Columbia,
VICTORIA, B.C.

Dear Mr.Hart:

I understand there has for some years been an Order-in-Council of the British Columbia Government in effect providing that land transfers under the Soldier Settlement Act to the Soldier Settlement Board or its successor, the Director, should only be liable for a registration fee of \$3.00, and the present seems to be an appropriate time to request your favourable consideration of an extension of this Order-in-Council to cover the purchases of land which will be made for the purposes of the Veterans' Land Act.

By P.C.8526 of the 13th November 1943, being revised regulations respecting trading with the enemy, and by Section 23 of those regulations the appropriate officer under the land titles or registration office shall forthwith, without charge, transfer the title of real estate into the name of the Secretary of State of Canada. As you are already aware an arrangement was entered into some time ago under which I undertook to purchase from the Secretary of State approximately 770 parcels of land formerly occupied by persons of the Japanese race who have been evacuated or interned. When the titles to these lands passed to the Secretary of State no charges or registration fees were paid as provided by the Order-in-Council above referred to. I am now advised, however, that on the transferring of these titles from the Secretary of State to the Director, the Veterans' Land Act, the Attorney General of British Columbia has instructed Mr.Stokes, the Registrar at New Westminster, that the full ad valorem fees are to be paid by the Director. A few transactions have been completed and a fee of \$2.50 each has been paid, but if the full rates, as referred to by the Attorney General, are to be paid the increase in the registration fees will in the aggregate amount to quite a substantial sum.

Because of the volume of current business passing through the New Westminster Registration Office, including the land transactions in which this department is interested, there is stated to be some congestion - this also doubtless results from shortage of help over which Mr.Stokes has no control. In order to be of some assistance in this matter Mr.Barnet, our Vancouver Superintendent, has agreed to lend to Mr.Stokes without charge the services of a fully qualified clerk to assist in matters of detail relating to this Japanese land purchase

In view of the foregoing I will greatly appreciate any support you may see fit to give me towards the continuance of the arrangement first above referred to.

Yours faithfully,

"G.Murchison"
Director.

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VICTORIA

Jan. 15, 1944.

Memorandum for the Hon. John Hart,
Premier

My dear Colleague:

With reference to your memorandum of the 13th inst. enclosing letter from Mr. G. Murchison, Director of the Soldier Settlement and Veterans' Land Act, in regard to registration fees with respect to the transfer of land under the Soldier Settlement Act. As the matter referred to is one which comes under the provision of the Land Registry Act, I have referred the letter in question to the Attorney-General to be dealt with in accordance with your request.

Faithfully yours,

Abells Gray

The Honourable A. W. Gray,
Minister of Lands,
BUILDINGS.

January 13, 1944.

I am enclosing herewith a letter from Mr. G. Murchison,
Director of the Soldier Settlement and Veterans' Land Act, with
reference to registration fees with respect to the transfer of
land under the Soldier Settlement Act.

I would appreciate your giving this matter your attention
and letting me have your recommendation in connection therewith.

Please return Mr. Murchison's letter after perusal.

Premier.

encl.