



**DID
YOU
KNOW..**

[The following is a continuing reprint of an article in the Brantford Expositor dated Wednesday, August 20, 1924]

ABOLITION OF COUNCIL OF CHIEFS AND AN ELECTIVE SYSTEM

"SEPARATISTS" DOMINANT

"To investigate the merits of this contention was not one of the duties assigned to me, and I merely mention it in connection with the subject of the powers assumed by the Council of Chiefs, which was so assigned. The Separatist party, if I may so describe it, is exceptionally strong in the Council of Chiefs; in fact, completely dominant there. The members maintain, and it is a logical sequence from the position, that, not being British subjects, they are not bound by Canadian law, and that in consequence the Indian act does not apply to the Six Nations Indians." Col. Thompson then cites some instances given him by Indian witnesses during the inquiry showing to what extent the Council has assumed duties which the superintendent-general at Ottawa is duly authorized to perform.

"I am fully convinced," says Col. Thompson, in dealing with the method of electing the Chiefs, "that those advocating a change in the system of government have fully established their contention, and that an elective system should be inaugurated at the earliest possible date. The franchise should be given to all male Indians of the band 21 years of age or over. The consensus of opinion was that for the time being the franchise should not be extended to women and since education is not very much advanced on the reserve, in this I concur."

As to the composition of the council, Col. Thompson says that a council of 14,

with a chairman corresponding to the reeve of a rural municipality, 15 in all, would not be excessive. He also recommends that the reserve be divided into several wards, each ward running from north to south the full distance of the reserve, the area depending as far as possible upon equality of population, and that each should select two councillors; he further recommends that the electors as a whole should choose the chief councillor.

MORALITY TOUCHED UPON

On the question of morality on the reserve, Col. Thompson says: "People live together as man and wife without ever having contracted marital relations with any one. This is not bigamy, though immoral, according to Christian ethics."

"I believe," continues the report, "that the clergymen living upon the reserve, commonly called missionaries there, are doing what they can to abate this practice, but it is so prevalent, that they seem to be making little progress in this direction. There is abundant proof that the council of chiefs is indifferent to this unfortunate state of affairs, and as their influence is great it makes the work of missionaries in this regard all the harder, and largely tends to destroy it altogether."

SUNDAY LACROSSE CENSURED

Lacrosse games held on the reserve on Sunday for profit come in for censure from Col. Thompson. "These have been the constant practice during the past season," says Col. Thompson. "The majority of the Indians know perfectly well that such exhibitions with admission charged, are not allowed in white communities, and that they are against the law. Their continuance breeds a contempt for law, and encourages the campaign for defiance of it. Hundreds of whites, many of them of the extremely rough element, flock to these exhibitions. Sales of goods are openly carried on till the gathering assumes almost the appearance of a market, and liquor is smuggled in."

"The law-abiding Indians strongly protest against these gatherings, and demand enforcement of the law."

[To be continued in Tekawennake issue dated June 5, 1974]