

1907. Mr. King opened an inquiry at Vancouver on May 25, which lasted until June 5, and which resulted in the settlement of the claims of the Chinese residents by payment to them of sums amounting to \$26,990, including an allowance of \$1,000 on account of legal expenses.

In the course of this inquiry the presentation of claims by two manufacturers of opium drew attention to the existence in British Columbia of a traffic in opium the extent of which had not been realised; and it was stated that opium was being sold in Canada for consumption by white people as well as by Chinese and other orientals. Mr. King in his report on the Chinese claims in connection with the riots at Vancouver took occasion to refer seriously to this evil as follows:

Suppression  
of opium  
traffic in  
Canada.

Regarding it as an anomaly that the Government of Canada should under any circumstances be held bound to make good pecuniary losses in an industry so inimical to our national welfare, and having regard to the discretion given me by my commission, I feel it my duty respectfully to submit that the operations of the opium industry in Canada should receive the immediate attention of the Parliament of the Dominion and of the several legislatures with a view to the exactment of such measures as will render impossible, save in so far as may be necessary for medicinal purposes, the continuance of such an industry within the confines of the Dominion, and as will assist in the eradication of an evil which is not only a source of human degradation but a destructive factor in national life.

On July 1 Mr. King presented to the Minister of Labour a further report on "The need for the suppression of the opium traffic in Canada" in which he stated that in the coast cities of Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminster there were at least seven factories carrying on an extensive business in opium manufacture, their combined annual gross receipts for 1907 being estimated at between \$600,000 and \$650,000; whilst the value of crude opium imported during the nine months of the fiscal year 1906-07 was \$262,818 as compared with \$261,943 for the preceding twelve months. He further expressed the opinion that the only effective means of suppressing this traffic was by the absolute prohibition of the importation, manufacture and sale of opium, save in so far as an exception might be necessary for medicinal purposes only.

Opium traffic  
in British  
Columbia.

On the 20th of the same month the Dominion Parliament passed a short act of two sections (chapter 50) which, for Canada, absolutely prohibits the importation, manufacture and sale of opium for other than medicinal purposes. By section 1, persons infringing the act are rendered guilty of an indictable offence and are liable to imprisonment for three years, or to a penalty not exceeding \$1,000 and not less than \$50, or to both. By section 2 possessors of opium for other than medicinal purposes were allowed a period of six months within which to deposit their stocks in a customs bonded warehouse for export, thus providing that all existing stocks of the drug should be sent out of the country. As noted on page xlvi, Canada was represented by Mr. King upon the joint international commission which

Sale of opium  
rendered ille-  
gal, except  
for medicinal  
purposes.