

To His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor  
of the Province of British Columbia.

Final Report of the Hon. Mr. Justice A.E. Lord,  
the Commissioner appointed to Inquire into the  
Allotment of the Doukhobor Lands in the  
Province of British Columbia.

I have submitted five interim reports during the course of the Inquiry, and I now have the honour to submit the following as my final report:

My fifth interim report was submitted on November 16th, 1959, and during the intervening five year period I have followed with great interest the progress of the sale of the lands to the Doukhobors. During the first year or so the sales were disappointingly slow but they gradually gathered momentum and I now understand that there is very little land left to be sold.

One of the recommendations made in my fifth interim report was as follows:

"In my view, it is absolutely essential that rent be paid by the occupants of all the Doukhobor Lands, as may be set by the Land Settlement Board, with the exception for the moment at least of the occupants at Krestova. This may seem to be an inconsistency in the application of a principle. It is. But I make this recommendation as a temporary measure equipped with the practical knowledge that at the present time there must be provided somewhere a repository for that hard core of fanatics constituted by a sizeable majority of the Sons of Freedom sect."

During the latter months of 1964 I had discussions with Dr. Gilbert Kennedy and Mr. Edward Bassett relative to the present problems and attitudes of the Sons of Freedom group, especially as they may be affected by the above recommendation. As the result of the deliberate destruction of so many of the homes at Krestova by fire and the later trek of so many of the sect to the Fraser Valley, the Krestova area can no longer be regarded as their stronghold and I understand that a number of them have purchased land on the Kootenay

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river and in the Slocan valley. Some have also shown an interest in Krestova. I also note that this group is showing a new spirit of cooperation in sending their children to school.

Bearing these facts in mind, and as Krestova still has an appeal to many of the Sons of Freedom, the next logical step would be to carry out a subdivision of Krestova and offer the lands for sale to Doukhobors on the same terms and conditions as the other Doukhobor lands, and I so recommend.

I also recommend that when any of the Doukhobor lands which have been reserved by the Land Settlement Board for highway or any other purpose are no longer required for such purpose, the Board subdivide the lands which remain and dispose of the same to such persons and upon such terms as the Board may deem advisable. In some cases, involving small pieces, the adjacent owners will no doubt be those first interested.

With these recommendations I think it can be said the general purpose of my commission as recited in the Doukhobor Lands Allotment Inquiry Act of 1953 has been accomplished, namely: "...that an inquiry be held as to what disposition, if any, should be made of the said lands, and the feasibility of selling the lands to the present Doukhobor occupants and to other Doukhobors who may be deemed qualified to purchase the lands".

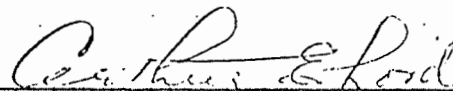
I was also asked to inquire into what provision should be made from the proceeds of the sale of the said lands for the claims against the lands of Her Majesty in the right of the Province. This no doubt has reference to the sums paid out pursuant to the authority of the Doukhobor Lands Acquisition Act Cap. 12, statutes of 1939, whereby title was acquired by

the Province to prevent dispossession of the families occupying the lands by way of foreclosure. Obviously Her Majesty in the right of the Province is entitled to be reimbursed for the amounts so expended. It would seem to me that, in the not too distant future, the Land Settlement Board may very well have disposed of practically all of the former Doukhobor lands. There may be a few lots remaining undisposed of in odd places and certain reserved land still under reserve for purposes mentioned earlier in this report. At that time presumably the Board will, for purposes of record, indicate the amount of money already received by the Crown for Doukhobor lands sold up to that date. At the same time, a few remaining lots could be treated as part of the Crown provincial lands and dealt with by the Lands Service in the usual way. There have been substantial disbursements by the Board and by the Lands Service, particularly in relation to surveys. If the monies on hand by the Board are transferred to the Consolidated Revenue Fund and the lands are dealt with as suggested, I believe it would represent the best possible reimbursement in the circumstances.

I desire to express my appreciation to the many government officials and employees who at all times accorded me the greatest help and cooperation in supplying me with data, reports and advice on the many problems which arose during the pursuit of my inquiries. I would name in particular Mr. Neil T. Drewry of the Assessment Commissioner's Office who accompanied the Commission on all its hearings and who spent many hours beyond the call of duty in preparing the valuation report of each parcel of land offered for sale. His knowledge of the Doukhobors gained when taking part in a soil survey of the Doukhobor lands was particularly valuable to the Commission.

I also wish to pay tribute to the professional assistance afforded me by Mr. J.G. Gould, counsel to the Commission. His work in interviewing witnesses, gathering of evidence, and the presentation of that evidence was performed with diligence and efficiency.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Arthur E. Lord", written over a horizontal line.

Arthur E. Lord, Commissioner,  
"Doukhobor Lands Allotment  
Inquiry Act."

Vancouver, B.C.,  
3rd March, 1965.