

Evicted from Alberta Shack Town

Indians, Metis Must Move Out

EDMONTON (CP) — Definite plans have been made to relocate five of the 42 families to be evicted from a shack town near Fort Vermilion, Alta., government spokesmen said Wednesday.

The 300 residents are Indians and Metis who have been living on the land for years. They were given 30 days notice of eviction, effective March 8.

In their notice, owners W.

Pritchard and J. Rosenberger of Fort Vermilion said the eviction was necessary because of their increased financial commitments and because the shack town is a health hazard.

A spokesman for the federal department of Indian affairs said five of the families are treaty Indians and will be relocated on a nearby Indian reserve, about 325 miles north of Edmonton.

The remaining 37 families are non-treaty Indians or Metis and come under provincial jurisdiction.

A spokesman in the provincial department of social development said they have asked for a report on the families from their northern office.

"When we get the facts we'll sit down and talk to these people and see what we can do," he said.

"We will do something. We have to. But we'll have to wait for the report. We're on top of it and hopefully going to do something about it."

The provincial spokesman said 11 of the 37 families are on welfare.

Stan Daniels, president of the Metis Association of Alberta, said the Fort Vermilion situation involves the "whole question of Metis land rights."

"We are presently negotiating with the government and expect to have a meeting about March 24 dealing with the question of Metis land rights," Daniels said.

"There is nothing on record that they (Metis) actually exist on this land and they could be asked to move at any time.

"They are just squatters and have no legal rights. We

want a commission to deal with the land situation."

Daniels said the men, who served the eviction notice "may be testing the government to do something immediately.

"I don't think they want to hurt the (Metis) people . . . Conditions there are impossible . . . I think they want to use it as a test case," Daniels said.