

or central, has failed to acknowledge that the original title to the lands existed in the Indian tribes and communities that hunted or wandered over them. Before we touch an acre we make a treaty with the chiefs representing the bands we are dealing with, and having agreed upon and paid our stipulated price—oftentimes arrived at after a great deal of haggling and difficulty—we enter into possession, but not until then do we consider that we are entitled to deal with an acre. The result has been that in Canada our Indians are contented, well affected to the white man and amenable to the laws and government.”

From the time at which Lord Dufferin delivered the address, from which the above quotation is made, the successive Governments of British Columbia have persistently refused to recognize the claim of the Indians.

In August, 1910, the “Friends of the Indians” presented to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, then Prime Minister of Canada, a memorial from which the following are extracts:

“We feel sure you will agree with us in thinking it fundamentally necessary that the question of Indian title, which for forty years has been an issue between the Indian tribes and the local Government, and has now been brought to the front by the Indian movement, should at the earliest possible date be decided by the Judicial Committee of His Majesty’s Privy Council.

“In view of the fact that the Indians claim to hold the rights which they assert by virtue of the proclamation of King George Third and under the protection of the British Crown, it would seem to us that only by securing a decision of the Judicial Committee can full justice be done to them and their sense of injustice removed.”

“In concluding, may we be permitted to say that in our judgment it is a truly great question and one of Imperial scope with which you are called upon to deal.

“In the course of an interview on the subject of the land question held at Victoria in 1887 between representatives of the Naas River and Fort Simpson Indians and the Premier and other members of the Provincial Government, one of the Naas River Indians summed up their object in these words: ‘We want justice to be done to us.’

“We believe that this appeal which now comes from the united Indian tribes of the Province should be answered.

“We believe that the great principles of British justice should in their entirety be applied to the treatment of native races, and we earnestly and confidently ask that your Government will make these principles