

As we look over the Province of British Columbia we see that the Indians have occupied its valleys, hunted on its mountains and fished in its streams for hundreds if not thousands of years. Here is a historical fact that cannot be overlooked. It surely cannot be a tenable position that outsiders may come in and because they are white, or rich, or strong, or civilized or christian that they may quietly take possession of the lands of the original inhabitants without any reference to this age-long occupation.

Then as we look over the rest of Canada we find that everywhere, from the Atlantic Seaboard to the Rocky Mountains, the claims of the Indians have been considered and dealt with. On what valid grounds can the Indians of British Columbia be treated in a totally different way from the Indians of the rest of Canada?

Further, when we look at the subject from the historical point of view we find that all authorities other than the Government of British Columbia have recognized the Indian title.

As soon as Canada became a British possession in 1763, King George III issued a proclamation stating that he would reserve under his sovereignty, protection and dominion for the use of the Indians all the lands and territories not included within the limits of the three governments recently formed, and this proclamation was supplemented, from time to time, by Imperial statutes to the same effect.

When the British flag was first hoisted on the Pacific Coast 350 years ago the British authorities recognized the rights of the Indians.

When the Hudson's Bay Company first organized a government on the Island of Vancouver in 1850, they took the precaution to make treaties with the Indians by which they acquired a full title to the land they needed.

When the Hudson's Bay Company made way for a more regular form of government in 1856, the Legislative Council of Vancouver Island asked the Imperial Government to allow them a sum of money with which to extinguish the Indian title. The Imperial