

It was the contention of Martinez that Perez, long before Cook, was the first to anchor in Nootka Sound, that caused the dispute which led to the Nootka Affair. That Perez sighted Queen Charlotte Islands is admitted, but whether he had ever landed at Nootka is by no means clear. Spain, however, took immediate action to expel the invaders. Martinez seized four of Meares' vessels and, according to the memorial presented to the British Government, put British subjects in irons and committed numerous outrages. Pitt demanded immediate reparation, refusing all discussion until that had been done. Meares' memorial, dated April 30th, 1790, was placed in the hands of the King and on the same day Pitt demanded adequate satisfaction and advised the fitting out of a squadron of ships of the line. Parliament voted £1,000,000 and England speedily placed in readiness an armament described in the introduction to Vancouver's Voyages as "the noblest fleet that Great Britain ever saw." Floridablanca, Prime Minister of Spain, saw that resistance was useless, and lost no time in capitulation. To say that the French Revolution paved the way for the acquisition of British Columbia by Great Britain is rather startling, but nevertheless true. Spain had relied on the support of the Royal Family of France and the Family Compact of 1761, but the deposition of Louis XVI destroyed her hopes. The States General claimed the right to make peace and war, and refused to recognize any such right in the King. An appeal to the States General, then controlled by the Tiers Etat, was useless, and was not attempted. On October 28, 1790, the Nootka Sound Convention was signed, full reparation was made, and Spain's unrestricted claim to sovereignty of the Northwest Coast was forever abandoned. Article V provided that North of the parts already occupied by Spain whereon the subjects of either party had made settlements since 1789 or "shall hereafter make any, the subjects of the other shall have free access, and shall carry on their trade without any disturbance or molestation." The Treaty of Madrid, 1794, a supplementary treaty of January 11, 1794, recited the equal rights of the powers in frequenting Nootka Sound, provided against the creation of permanent establishments in the port, and bound the contracting nations to resist every attempt on the part of any other nation