

He called the Indians together and explained to them its principles, and requested each man to contribute a blanket and each boy a shirt as his first tax. He did not tax the women. The product of the first levy was more than ninety blankets and a great number of shirts, deer-skins and furs, besides pocket-handkerchiefs and the like. These articles were paid out to those employed upon the public works.

The various industries that I have already mentioned as now being carried on at Metlakahtha were begun from time to time. Mr. Duncan himself gave the Indians instruction and was, and is, a partner in many of their enterprises. These have been profitable, but Mr. Duncan has invested his dividends, as fast as he has received them, in new ventures, and has made a will for the disposition of his interests, after his death, for the benefit of the community. His house is like the others and no better furnished, and when he is at home he is the busiest man in Metlakahtha.

One chief source of anxiety in the early days was the question of government. When the Indians left Fort Simpson to found, or to join their friends in the Christian village, all tribal relations were broken and the authority of the chiefs renounced. In fact they had really had no law but their own wills, and their violent passions were unrestrained. This could not be changed at once, and some of the best of them, in a fit of temper, were apt to seize a knife and attempt to take life. Mr. Duncan dreaded a murder above everything else, for he feared that it would be followed by others. He selected, therefore, some of the best men to act as a police-force, and when he procured them caps and belts, they were very proud of their distinction. He drilled them a little, occasionally. He himself was appointed a magistrate by the Governor of British Columbia, and he made his police the efficient instruments for the execution of the law. He impressed upon them the importance of doing their duty fearlessly and impartially—the necessity, when he put a warrant or a summons into their hands, of serving it upon the person named, even though he be a brother or a friend.

They soon became very efficient. He made the swearing-in of these constables an occasion of great public solemnity.

The suppression of the liquor traffic was the most difficult task of all, for, in spite of Mr. Duncan's endeavors, white men would occasionally smuggle whiskey in, and some of the weaker natives would drink it. And so determined was he to stop this, that his murder was confidently predicted, as the only magistrate in the country, stationed about two hundred miles south, had been killed by a whiskey seller. But he had the advantage of being surrounded by people who almost unanimously sympathized with him in his efforts to break up the traffic, and of having the assistance of a constabulary force that, when they swore to execute the law, believed it their duty to be true to their oaths, and in a few years there was not a vestige of the traffic left.

There was one Slavonian who for a long time managed to evade the law, but at last he was caught, and he was shown no mercy. His vessel was seized, and, after the nails and iron in it had been saved, it was burned. When the owner got back to Victoria he purchased a new vessel and threatened to make another voyage to Mr. Duncan's dominions, and, out of spite, named his ship "The Duncan." But he never appeared in the neighborhood of Metlakahtha again.

Although Mr. Duncan's whole course has been calculated to win the love and confidence of the Indians, his rule has been firm. One of the first public buildings erected was a jail, and the whipping post became an established institution for the punishment of those who threatened to take life. On one occasion it became necessary to whip a desperately bad man, and the constables were afraid that he would afterwards kill the one who applied the lash. Mr. Duncan told them to blindfold him so that he would not know who did the whipping. A handkerchief was tied about his eyes, and the constable took the piece of rope, but he was so nervous that he began to talk. Of course the man recognized his voice. Thereupon Mr. Duncan took the piece of rope from the constable, and going up to the