

velopment of the Coast province. With reference to the entire Pacific coast, the first explorers came from Spain and Russia. Those from Spain explored the coast line of Mexico and the Pacific States and sailed as far north as the Aleutian islands, where there are still to be found certain geographical names of Spanish origin. The Russians, on the other hand, explored the Alaskan coast and sailed as far south as California. About the same time, or a little later, Captain Cook, Mears and others from England explored the coast line from the mouth of the Columbia river northward, including parts which are now British Columbia, for example, the Queen Charlotte islands, and all explorers including those from England, claimed the territory discovered by simply landing and formally taking possession in the name of their sovereign, just as D'Arcy McGee described Jacques Cartier:

In the forests of the North, while his townsmen mourned his loss,
He was rearing on Mount Royal the fleur-de-lis and Cross.

After the American Revolution, England's activities were greatly lessened on this continent by reason of the French Revolution, which continued to occupy her time and strength down to and including the earlier years of the last century. In the meantime the fur traders of the world had been looking with longing eyes to the wealth of the Pacific coast. The charter of the Hudson Bay Company did not permit them to extend their operations west of the Rockies, but the old Northwest Company had secured a lease on what is now the mainland of British Columbia. About one hundred years ago the Hudson Bay Company and the Northwest Company joined forces, which gave the former a footing on the Coast. In 1843 Vancouver island was leased to the Hudson Bay Company, and soon they established a post on the present site of the city of Victoria, and in 1849, Vancouver island was made a Crown colony.

What was then called British Columbia, namely, the mainland and Queen Charlotte islands, was made a Crown colony in 1858, and in 1866 the two colonies were united and five years later British Columbia entered Confederation.

Now, it is impossible for us to understand the British Columbia Indian question without some idea of its development through the successive periods I have just outlined. First, let us bear in mind that when the discoverers claimed the territory and formally took possession, the natives were

recognized, not as owners of the land, but as inhabitants of the country. They had absolutely no conception of ownership, as we understand the term. Then, a little later, when the territory came under the sway of the Hudson Bay Company, the same attitude and relation was recognized and maintained.

It must further be borne in mind that if we consider the relation of the Indian tribes to the Dominion, there is no fixed date which may be regarded as the time at which the whole question was definitely decided or settled. As a matter of fact, their present status is the result of long and gradual growth, just as the English constitution is the development of centuries and our own present national status is the outcome of natural growth subsequent to Confederation. So, in a similar manner, it can be stated that the present relation of the Indian tribes to this country has been the result of a century or more of mutual understandings and arrangements through, first, the Imperial Government, then, the Colonial Government and finally, the Dominion or Provincial Government and, indeed, with many tribes treaties are made. They, each in turn, dealt generously with the natives who were always regarded as the country's wards.

The allied tribes of British Columbia, as set forth in a petition presented to the House of Commons, claim tribal ownership of the land under aboriginal title, and this claim appears to be based upon the proclamation of King George III in 1763. This proclamation was issued after the conquest of Canada to establish His Majesty's Government in the newly conquered territory. The proclamation states that it is issued for the purpose of establishing a Government in the extensive and valuable acquisitions in America secured by the Treaty of Paris.

It is, perhaps, needless to point out that the French made no claim to what is now the province of British Columbia. Thirty years afterward, or in 1793, Captain Vancouver landed on the island that now bears his name, and in the following year McKenzie made his overland journey to the coast.

Regarding the proclamation itself, it was repealed by subsequent Acts of the Imperial Parliament, courts were set up, and a system of government was gradually developed. It is a well-known fact that the Hudson Bay Company always treated the Indians generously. It was in their interests,