

purpose, he was invariably met with the reply that British Columbia must stand on its own bottom. The impression in England at the time, so exaggerated were the reports about the riches of the new Colony, almost was that gold grew on trees. So, for lack of means alone, no policy looking to the extinguishment of Indian title, or Indian policy of any kind, in fact, was ever developed up until the time British Columbia entered Confederation. The Indians did not suffer as a consequence. There were no injustices perpetrated upon them of any kind and their means of subsistence in fish, forest, game and fur-hunting was ample. One of the terms of Union stipulated that the Dominion of Canada should assume charge of the Indians and the trusteeship and management of the lands reserved for their use and benefit, and, the federal authorities might have smiled over the further responsibility involved, that "a policy as liberal as that hitherto pursued by the British Columbia Government shall be continued by the Dominion Government after the Union" in respect of the Indians of the Southern end of Vancouver Island. In 1851 Sir James Douglas, who had just been appointed Governor of the Colony in succession to Richard Blanshard, effected a treaty with some of the tribes, whereby their interest in the land was purchased at a rate which figured out at about \$10 a square mile, and reservations were set apart for the Indians. The celebrated Songhees reserve in Victoria West just across from the business centre of Victoria was one of these. The difficulty of effecting its removal to a less urban situation was one of the knottiest problems the province and the city ever had to deal with, and it was finally achieved by the payment of a very large sum of money and rehabilitation in the neighbourhood of Esquimalt.

Undoubtedly, one of the things that should have been provided for at the time of Union was the formal extinguishment of the Indian title, as has

been done elsewhere in Canada and in the United States, but even at that time the great majority of the Indians of British Columbia were far removed from the few sparse settlements. The entire white population of the province at that time according to a census taken by the old colonial government was less than 10,000, and that was largely centred in Victoria, New Westminster and the Cariboo mining camps. Nobody thought about it apparently, and certainly not the Indians, very few of whom were conscious of the change that had been made in their relations from colonial to federal. It was not until several years later that the Indian question was taken up seriously. In 1876 a convention was agreed upon between the two governments to the effect that British Columbia should set apart land as reservations from time to time as selected by the Indian Commission, sufficient for the needs of the Indians, it being further understood and provided that the lands so selected should be increased by the province as the Indian population increased and be decreased and revert to the province as the Indian population decreased. In other words, the province retained a reversionary interest in all lands set apart. From 1876 for some years afterwards reservations were selected, surveyed and allotted under the terms of the convention, until approximately about 700,000 acres of the best lands of the province were alienated for Indian reservations, this out of less than 10,000,000 acres of agricultural areas. At the time of Confederation the Indian population was roughly estimated to have been about 35,000. Some years later, it was reduced to a little more than 24,000, and it now stands in the latest report on Indian affairs at 25,694. It would appear that the Indians in British Columbia are on the increase again, and I have reason to believe that is the case. There are six or seven racial stocks and about the same number of nations, and when it is understood that there are about 225 tribes in all distributed fairly uni-