

1 They are, moreover, all men of high standing and character in the province, and who have taken much interest in public affairs, especially in matters affecting the Indians.

In the month of September, the Department was notified that the Commissioners had organized themselves and entered upon their labours.

10 If will be seen that - from the foregoing statement - the Commissioners are clothed with ample power to deal in a practical and summary manner with this long standing controversy--- one in which the interests of the White settlers of British Columbia, as well as of the Indians of British Columbia are so deeply involved; and the constitution of the Commission gives good reason to expect that the Commissioners will so deal with the question as to do justice to all parties interested.

20 Certain of the provisions of the "Indian Act of 1876" passed last session (subsequent to the date of the Order in Council regulating the powers of the Commission), being in conflict with the large powers thereby conferred upon the Commission, Your Excellency was advised to issue a Proclamation, under the Provisions of the 97th section of that Act, exempting the Indian Lands and Indian Reserves in British Columbia from the operation of certain sections of that act.

The Proclamation bore date the 23rd December and the effect of it will be to enable the Commissioners to deal absolutely and at once with the British Columbia Reserves, without reference to either the Dominion or Local Governments, in the manner originally intended by the Order in Council of 6th May, 1876.

30 The question of the rights of the Indians in all the lands in British Columbia in which their rights have not been extinguished by treaties between themselves and the Crown is still unsettled.