

The Indians and the Commission

Memorial of Nishga Tribe of Indians

At Victoria, on 19th September, 1913, delegates sent by the Nishga Tribe of Indians waited upon the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, and presented the following Memorial:

TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON INDIAN AFFAIRS:

GENTLEMEN:—

1. For more than a quarter of a century the Indians of British Columbia have been asking that their rights be judicially determined. (First request made by Metlakahla Indians in 1886.)

2. In the year 1910 Canada through Sir Wilfrid Laurier and otherwise promised that our claims would be submitted to the Privy Council.

3. Ever since that time the Indians of the Province have been expecting that promise to be fulfilled.

4. During all that time the Government of British Columbia has been seeking to prevent such submission.

5. In the month of August, 1912, in view of the grave constitutional difficulties which had thus been encountered, the Nishga Tribe resolved independently and directly to place a petition before His Majesty's Privy Council.

6. On the 21st May last our Petition, copy of which is herewith laid before you, was lodged in the Privy Council.

7. Subsequently our London lawyers received from the Lord President of the Privy Council a letter relating to our Petition and referring to the alleged fact that "the whole matter raised by the Petition is at present under the consideration of a Royal Commission."

8. We are aware that His Majesty's Privy Council alone can finally determine our rights. We are also informed that in March last the Prime Minister of Canada stated that the Government of Canada did not intend to submit to the Commission the matter of determining our rights. For both these reasons we assume that the two Governments have not asked you to determine what our rights are.

9. At the same time we recognize that our Petition contains a number of statements of fact which might be considered and reported upon.

10. We, therefore, respectfully request you to state to what extent, if at all, you are prepared to consider and report upon the various matters contained in our Petition, and how soon you will be prepared to do so.

The above Memorial was unanimously adopted at a meeting of the Nishga Tribe of Indians, held at Kincolith on the twenty-fifth day of August, 1913.

W. J. LINCOLN,

Chairman.