

a just settlement. If a person takes possession of something belonging to you, surely you know it, and he knows it, and land is a thing which cannot be taken away, and hidden. We see it constantly, and everything done with it must be more or less in view. If we had had nothing, or the British Columbia Government had taken nothing from us, then there would be nothing to settle, but we had lands, and the British Columbia Government has taken them, and we want a settlement for them. Surely then, it is clear there is a question to be settled, and how is it to be settled except in the courts?

Mr. McBride made the statement, "We Indians were well satisfied with our position, and that the present agitation among us was fomented by certain whites." We deny this statement completely—it is not true. The fact of our visiting the Victoria Government—many of us from long distances, and at great expense—shows that we are not satisfied. As we have stated before, we never have at any time been entirely satisfied with our position, and now that the country is being more and more settled up, and we becoming more restricted in our liberties year by year, we are very far from satisfied. Why should we be satisfied? What have we received, and what has been done for us to make us satisfied? All the promises made to us when the whites first came to this country have been broken. Many of us were driven off our places where we had lived and camped from time immemorial, even places we cultivated, and where we raised food, because these spots were desirable for agriculture, and the Government wanted them for white settlers. This was done without agreement with us, and we received no compensation. It was also in direct opposition to the promises made to us by the first whites, and Government officials, that no white men would be allowed to locate on any place where Indians were settled or which were camping stations and gardens. Thus were we robbed by the Government, and driven off many of our places by white settlers (backed by the Government), or coaxed off them with false promises. Then we were promised full freedom to hunt, fish and travel over our country unrestricted by regulations of the whites, until such time as our lands were purchased or at least until treaties were made with us. Another promise broken, and so on with all. We can tell you all of them if you want to know, and prove them through witnesses still living. What of Governor Seymour's promises made to the Lower Fraser Indians who convened at his request purposely to hear his message to them concerning the proposed policy of the whites towards the Indians of this country? They rank with the other early promises—all broken. This is enough to show there is a sufficient reason for our dissatisfaction, and also that it required no white men to point out these things to us, and urge us to be dissatisfied. Even if it be true that certain white men help us at the present day in our agitation to obtain our rights by doing writing for us, etc., why should Mr. McBride find fault with them? Did not Governor Seymour and other great men of the Province in early days state to us that the whites had come here to help us and be brothers to us? Why should he denounce these men for doing what his predecessors, and, we believe, also the Queen, said was the right thing to do? We have learned that most whites do not keep their word (especially when it is not written word). Only those very few whites who help us appear to be trying to keep the white man's promises made to us by the white chiefs of this country in early days. They alone appear to uphold the honor of their race. We assure you, Chief, the present agitation among us over these matters is simply the culmination of our dissatisfaction which has been growing with the years. With changing conditions, greater pressure and increasing restrictions put on us, we had at last to organize, and agitate. Either this, or go down and out, for our position has been gradually becoming untenable. We have not been hasty. It has never been our policy to jump at conclusions. We have never believed in acting without full knowledge, nor making charges without full proof. Although we have known, yet we have waited a long time for the hand of the British Columbia Government to be shown so we could read it without any doubt. Some of our chiefs, distrustful and impatient, many times during these long years, one way and another, through the Indian office, through Victoria, through Ottawa and in other ways, have attempted to get matters concerning us straightened, but they have always been baffled in their efforts. Others, hopeless and disgusted, would not try. Then we were ignorant and groping in the dark; now we are more enlightened and can see things clearer. Like conditions drove us of the interior, and the Indians of the Coast, to organize and agitate independently, and unknown to each other. It is only lately we have joined forces to try and obtain a settlement of all questions concerning us. Mr. McBride gave a partial explanation of how the Reserve System of British Columbia originated. This does not concern us. What we know and are concerned with is the fact that the British Columbia Government has already taken part of our lands without treaty with us, or payment of any compensation, and has disposed of them to settlers and others. The remaining lands of the country, the Government lays claim to as their property, and ignores our title. Out of our lands they reserved small pieces here and there, called Indian Reserves, and allowed us the occupancy of them. These even they claim as their property, and threaten in some places to take away from us, although we have been in continuous occupancy and possession. No proper understanding was arrived at, nor proper agreements made between ourselves and the British Columbia Government, when the reserves were laid off. Not one of us understood this matter clearly nor in the same light the British Columbia Government seems to have done. Things were not explained to us fully, and the Government's motives appear to have been concealed, for they were understood differently by the various chiefs. We never asked for part of our country to be parcelled out in pieces and reserved for us. It was entirely a Government scheme originating with them. We always trusted the Government, as representing the Queen, to do the right thing by us, therefore we never have opposed any proposition of the Government hastily and without due consideration. We thought, although things appeared crooked, still in the end, or before long, they might become straight. To-day were the like to occur, or