

Chapter I

Dispossession and Resistance in British Columbia

Every community has its own distinct history—a history of the land and the people. Unfortunately, common to all Indigenous communities is the very recent history of colonization, a history of dispossession and resistance. In the lands now called British Columbia, this history is well documented. Researching and interpreting this history is a significant component of any Indigenous research project.

Using a chronological narrative, this chapter provides a general overview of historical events in British Columbia, beginning with the 1763 British proclamation of sovereignty in North America. You can use this chapter to find information about specific events or compare different eras, detect patterns and identify relationships to get an overall sense of what has happened in Indigenous lands since 1763.

It should be noted that reviewing a chronology is merely a first step in the process of conducting historical research. Chronologies are helpful tools that organize information and provide useful narratives to introduce a topic. Thus they rely upon generalizations and the use of secondary sources to provide a very broad overview of complex relationships between peoples that, in this case, span more than 300 years. The chronology that follows is not a complete or absolute account of Indigenous history in British Columbia, nor does it aim to be. Rather, this chronology provides a general historical background to help you begin to conduct research on the Indigenous lands now known as British Columbia.

Chronology

1763 (February) Britain, France and Spain sign the *Treaty of Paris*, ending the Seven Years War. Having lost the war, France gives up all claims of sovereignty in North America. Britain now claims sovereignty over the whole of North America east of the Mississippi (with the exception of New Orleans and Louisiana). Spain and Russia still maintain competing claims to parts of western North America, including the lands currently called British Columbia.

1763 (May) Pontiac's War begins. As the British attempt to gain control of Indigenous territories, Chief Pontiac leads the Ottawa, Objibwa, Potawatomi, Wyandot, Miami, Delaware, Shawnee, and Seneca nations in a three-year military action to drive the British east of the Appalachian Mountains. By late fall, Pontiac's forces kill or capture more than 600 British colonists.

1763 (October) King George III issues a Royal Proclamation to affirm the *Treaty of Paris*

and expand Britain's claims beyond the Treaty. While reserving the lands of the west for the "Indian nations," the King declares that these territories are now under the "Sovereignty, Protection, and Dominion" of Britain and are to be surrendered only to the British Crown. Under British sovereignty, peace and friendship treaty-making gives way to surrender treaties and the Crown forgets the international character of nation-to-nation relationships between Indian nations and Britain.

1774 The Haida meet Spanish trader Juan Josef Pérez Hernandez during his journey along the Pacific coast. After welcoming the Spaniards in peace, the Haida engage them in trade. Hernandez had been instructed by the Spanish Crown to take possession of the land by erecting a large wooden cross on shore. The Haida and the Spaniards trade for two days without the Spanish setting foot ashore.

1775 Juan Francisco la Bodega y Quadra and Bruno de Hezeta reach the Pacific Northwest intent on claiming sovereignty for the Spanish Crown. After landing on the shores of Salish territory (Washington), Bodega erects a cross and declares Spanish sovereignty. Quinault warriors attack and kill his landing crew the next day.

1778 British Captain James Cook leads an expedition to the northwest coast. After spending nearly a month trading in Nuu-chah-nulth waters, Cook acquires several sea otter pelts that prove to be of great value in China. This marks the beginning of a maritime fur trade that attracts hundreds of vessels from Spain, England, the United States, France, Russia and Portugal to the coast, which Cook renames "Nootka Sound."

1782 A smallpox epidemic spreads overland from Mexico and kills one-third of affected communities in BC, mostly in Salish territories. By 1840, smallpox, influenza and other diseases kill roughly 65 to 95 percent of Indigenous populations in the area.

1789 The Nootka Controversy begins. As the value of the sea otter fur trade grows, Spain and Britain struggle for sovereignty over the Pacific Northwest. The Spaniards seize British ships, crew and land the British believe belongs to them. The Spanish kill Nuu-chah-nulth Chief Callicum and imprison British officers. The next year, Spain and Britain sign the *Nootka Convention*, in which Spain agrees to surrender the land taken and pay restitution for acts of violence against the British. Both agree to recognize equal trading rights in Nootka Sound.

1793 British Captain George Vancouver maps the northwest coast, circumnavigating the island that would later bear his name.

1793 Scottish fur trader and employee of the Northwest Company, Alexander Mackenzie, traveling overland from the east, reaches the Pacific Ocean at Q'umk'uts (Bella Coola) in Nuxalk territory. A map of his journey is published in 1801.

1803 Nuu-chah-nulth Chief Maquinna leads an attack on the British vessel, the *Boston*, in Nuu-chah-nulth waters after the ship's captain insults him during trade negotiations. Maquinna leads his wit-waak (warriors) to attack, burning the ship and killing all but two of its crew. Europeans avoid Nootka Sound for two years.

1805 Simon Fraser, fur-trader and partner in the Northwest Company, establishes Fort McLeod in Tsek'ehne (Sekani) territory. Within two years, the company establishes Fort St. James, Fort Fraser and Fort George in Dakelh (Carrier) territory. Fort St. James becomes the centre of government and commerce in New Caledonia.

1808 The Musqueam prevent Simon Fraser from entering their territory and fulfilling his goal of reaching the ocean from New Caledonia by chasing him back up the river that now bears his name.

1811 The US ship the *Tonquin* is captured and the crew killed in Tla-o-qui-aht waters after the ship's captain insults a Nuu-chah-nulth chief during trade negotiations by throwing furs in his face.

1821 The Northwest Company and Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) merge. The British Crown grants the HBC exclusive trading privileges with Indigenous people in the areas of North America claimed by the British.

1825 Fort Vancouver is established at the mouth of the Columbia River. Great Britain and the United States struggle for control over the territories of the west.

1826 HBC Fort Connelly is established in Gitksan territory (Bear Lake). Soon after, Fort Langley is established in Sto:lo territory (Fraser Valley).

1828 Dakelh (Carrier) Chief Kwah leads an attack on Fort St. James after HBC employees attempt to capture and execute the last of two Dakelh-ne men thought to be guilty of killing two HBC traders a few years before. James Douglas, Assistant Chief HBC Factor, is apprehended and let go after some negotiation. Douglas is transferred to Fort Vancouver the following year.

1835 Kwakwaka'wakw people inform traders of coal deposits in their territory (Beaver Harbour). Douglas (now Chief Trader of the HBC) sends a ship from Fort Vancouver to verify and claim ownership of coal deposits.

1843 Douglas (now Chief Factor of the HBC) establishes Fort Victoria on "Vancouver's Island." In his position as HBC Chief Factor, Douglas assumes Crown authority in the area and begins dividing Indigenous territories for European settlement.

1844 Quw'utsun' (Cowichan) warriors, led by Tzouhalem, attack Fort Victoria.

1846 Representatives of Britain and the United States sign the *Oregon Boundary Treaty*. The Treaty imposes the northern border of the United States along the 49th parallel, cutting across existing Indigenous territorial boundaries. Britain claims Vancouver Island and mainland territories north of the 49th parallel, asserting sovereignty over the lands that would become known as British Columbia.

1849 James Douglas establishes Fort Rupert to begin mining coal in Kwakwaka'wakw

territory. Douglas aggressively promotes the development of coalmines all over Vancouver Island.

1849 Vancouver Island becomes a British colony. Queen Victoria leases all of Vancouver Island to the HBC on the condition that the company promotes colonization of the island.

1850 Richard Blanshard becomes the first Governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island.

1850 As Chief Factor of the HBC, James Douglas begins to negotiate agreements with Kwakwaka'wakw, Saanich, Snuneymuxw and Songhees/Lekwungen, Sna-Naw-As, Scia'new, T'Souke and the Malahat peoples now engulfed by the Colony of Vancouver Island. The written agreements state that the Indigenous signatories surrender their entire territory forever in exchange for small reserves and residual hunting and fishing rights. The oral evidence indicates that the agreements reaffirmed Indigenous territorial ownership and allowed for peaceful European settlement within these territories.

1851 Governor Blanshard resigns and returns home to England. James Douglas becomes Governor of Vancouver Island and remains HBC Chief Factor.

1851 Saanich stommish (warriors) arrive at Vancouver Island Steam Saw Mill Co. logging operations in Saanich territory (Cadboro Bay) and force the loggers to leave. Within a year, two Douglas treaties affecting the entire Saanich peninsula are signed.

1852 The Cowichan Crisis begins. Governor Douglas, on behalf of the HBC, takes possession of coal deposits in Snuneymuxw territory (Nanaimo) and begins shipping coal to Fort Victoria. Soon afterwards, Snuneymuxw and Quw'utsun' (Cowichan) warriors kill HBC employee, Peter Brown.

1853 The British dispatch a gunboat and 130 men to Quw'utsun' territory where two men are captured, tried and executed under British law for the murder of Peter Brown.

1854 The last Douglas treaty, affecting the land occupied by the coalmine in Snuneymuxw territory (Nanaimo), is signed. The text of this treaty has since been lost, while the oral record persists.

1858 The Fraser River Gold Rush begins. Over 30,000 miners flood into the Upper Fraser Valley and Fraser Canyon after gold is discovered in the Fraser River. European and American speculators attempt to survey and sell land near Fort Langley, provoking Douglas to publicly declare that title to these lands belongs to the British Crown.

1858 The *British Columbia Act* proclaims the new mainland Colony of British Columbia. Douglas resigns from the HBC to become Governor of the new colony. Britain grants Douglas sole authority to allocate land in the colony to settlers and to establish Indian reserves.

1858 Britain deploys its Royal Engineers (RE) throughout the new colony to facilitate European settlement of Indigenous territories. For the next five years they build roads,

divert rivers, plan settlements, conduct land surveys, produce maps, and establish the United States-British Columbia boundary.

1859 Governor Douglas proclaims that all land in the Colony of British Columbia, including mines and minerals, belongs to the British Crown. This proclamation makes provisions for land auctions, sales, road-building, ditching, working of gold claims, and the establishment of New Westminster, the capital of the Colony of BC, at Skaiametl, the main Kwantlen community in Sto:lo territory.

1859 Douglas dispatches an Indian agent into Nuu-chah-nulth territory to regulate the sale of liquor, prevent uprisings and induce the people to abandon their traditional ways in favour of European ways. Within three years, the Indian agent disappears and is presumed killed by the Nuu-chah-nulth.

1862 The Cariboo Gold Rush reaches its peak. Over 10,000 miners flood into Dakelh (Carrier) territory through the Fraser Canyon. Construction of the Cariboo Wagon Road from Yale to Barkerville through Tsilhqot'in and Dakelh territories begins. The road is completed in 1865 despite strong resistance from the Tsilhqot'in.

1862 Infected Europeans bring smallpox to Fort Victoria, sparking an epidemic that devastates Indigenous communities for over two years. While some vaccinations are dispensed, the disease spreads when infected people are forced (some by gunboat) back to their communities. By 1864, Indigenous communities throughout the two colonies will lose a majority of their population.

1864 The Chilcotin War begins when the Tsilhqot'in attempt to stem the flow of settlers and smallpox into their territory by stopping the construction of the Cariboo Wagon Road. Three Tsilhqot'in men, twelve road workers and six settlers die during the conflict. Within weeks, an army of 100 colonists track down and arrest eight Tsilhqot'in chiefs. The chiefs are tried for murder under British law and six are executed by hanging.

1864 Governor Douglas retires. A.E. Kennedy is appointed the new Governor of Vancouver Island; Frederick Seymour becomes Governor of the mainland colony. Just before his retirement, and in response to Indigenous resistance, Douglas sends surveyor William McColl to establish Indian reserves in the central Fraser Valley. These reserves are relatively large; some are as big as 9,000 acres. Douglas' successor, Frederick Seymour, refuses to recognize the legitimacy of the reserves.

1864 Joseph Trutch becomes Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works for BC and assumes responsibility for Indian land policy. Trutch publicly denies the existence of Indigenous rights, reduces the size of existing Douglas reserves, and sets a new reserve allotment formula at ten acres per family.

1864 Thousands of Sto:lo and other Coast Salish peoples travel to New Westminster on Queen Victoria's birthday to protest the swell of European immigration and settlement in their territories and to express satisfaction with the reserves established by Douglas. Oral

history among the Sto:lo records that Governor Seymour responded with a promise that one-third of the proceeds from land sales in the Fraser Valley would be taken by the colonial government, one-third would be given directly to the Sto:lo, and one-third would be set aside for the delivery of educational and social services for the Sto:lo people.

1864 Nuu-chah-nulth wit-waak seize the British vessel the *Kingfisher* in Clayoquot Sound and kill the crew. Britain deploys two naval ships to capture and arrest those thought to be responsible. Once in Tla-o-qui-aht territory, the British begin shelling, destroying nine villages and killing 13 Nuu-chah-nulth people.

1866 The colonies of Vancouver Island and BC are united by an act of the Imperial Parliament. New Westminster becomes the capital of the united colony of BC.

1867 The Dominion of Canada is established by the *British North America Act (BNA Act)*. Under this Act, Canada asserts jurisdiction over Indians and Indian lands.

1871 British Columbia joins Canada. Canada retains jurisdiction over Indians and lands reserved for Indians. The Canadian government incorrectly assumes the 1763 Royal Proclamation has been applied in BC to secure the surrender of Indigenous territories. The Terms of Union guarantee a reserve policy “as liberal as that hitherto pursued” by BC, entrenching Trutch’s ten-acre policy.

1871 The BC Lands and Works Department is established to replace the earlier colonial department of the same name. Its task is to survey, map and administer land in BC. The position of Commissioner of Lands and Works is very prestigious, often resulting in a Premiership due to the ability to provide land as patronage.

1871 Ottawa publishes *A Schedule of All Indian Reserves (Surveyed) in the Province of BC* based on a list of reserves submitted by BC. A number of surveyed and unsurveyed reserves are left off the schedule.

1872 Israel Wood Powell is appointed Indian Superintendent to administer federal Indian legislation in BC. Critical of BC’s ten-acre policy, Powell attempts to allocate more land for reserves. Canada supports his position and in 1873, requests that BC adopt an 80-acre standard in establishing reserves. BC agrees to a 20-acre standard for new reserves but soon reneges on this agreement. Powell stops laying out reserves in protest.

1872 Thousands of Salish people rally outside the BC land registry in New Westminster and demand recognition of their territorial ownership and jurisdiction. Indians are prohibited from claiming unsurveyed lands.

1872 The Gitksan close the Skeena River to colonial explorers, fishers and traders. BC sends a military expedition from Esquimalt to reopen the river.

1873 The federal Department of the Interior is created. Indian Affairs becomes the Indian and Indian Lands Branch within this department. A Board of Commissioners is set up to administer Indian affairs in BC.

1873 The Salish and T'silhqot'in people send a petition to Superintendent Powell, demanding compensation for land taken by settlers. Fifty-six chiefs approve a petition asking for reserves containing 80 acres per family, highlighting settler encroachment and poor treatment. They threaten to appeal to the Dominion if the Province does not respond. Powell does not respond.

1874 The Salish organize a large protest rally, drawing hundreds of people to New Westminster from communities along the Fraser River, the mainland coast and the interior.

1874 BC passes a new *Land Act*, consolidating all previous land legislation. Through the *Land Act*, BC authorizes the annexation of Indigenous territories and sets Indian reserve allotment at 20 acres for every head of family regardless of family size. Canada again requests that BC adopt an 80-acre standard for all reserves. BC refuses. Canada disallows the *Land Act*.

1875 The Dominion government passes an order in council recommending that the BC government allot 80 acres of land to every Indian family of five persons. BC refuses, asserting that not more than 20 acres of land are required for each Indian family. A revised *BC Land Act* is passed, setting the 20-acre Indian reserve formula while providing 160-acre land grants for individual settlers free of charge.

1875 The federal government creates the system of Indian superintendencies. BC is divided into Victoria Superintendency (Vancouver Island and Northwest Coast) under I.W. Powell, and the Fraser River Superintendency (Mainland Division) at New Westminster under James Lenihan.

1875 *Papers Connected with the Indian Land Question, 1850-1875* is published. During a House debate, opposition leader William Tolmie demands that the government publish all papers related to the "Indian Land Question" in BC to be reviewed by committee. Despite opposition by Premier G.A. Walkem, a committee is struck and the papers are published. The Committee's report is never made public and *Papers Connected* is suppressed and government officials routinely deny Indigenous people access to the publication. It is not published for the public until 1987.

1876 The *Indian Act* consolidates all previous legislation regarding Indians and Indian lands in Canada. Over time, the *Indian Act* is amended to prohibit cultural practices and public assembly, to confine Indians to reserves, and to prevent the pursuit of land claims. While the *Indian Act* asserts Canadian jurisdiction over Indigenous peoples, creating "Indians" and "Indian reserves," it signals some governmental recognition of Indian lands and of the distinct position of Indigenous people.

1876 BC and Canada establish the Joint Indian Reserve Commission (JIRC) to examine and allot Indian reserves in BC in order to settle the dispute over Indian reserve size. The JIRC is made up of three commissioners: Archibald McKinley (BC), A.C. Anderson (Canada) and Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, who is appointed by both governments.

1878 The JIRC is dismantled. The Indian Reserve Commission (IRC) replaces the Joint

Indian Reserve Commission and Gilbert Malcolm Sproat becomes the sole Indian Reserve Commissioner until he resigns in 1880. In addition to reserves, Sproat's allotments include water rights and temporary reserves. Many of his allotments are too vague to be located by either the surveyor or succeeding commissioners. Not all of Sproat's reserves are allowed.

1878 Sproat begins allocating large reserves in the southern interior region. For several years under the leadership of Chillihitza and Neskonlith, the Okanagan and Secwepemc had been enforcing their land rights by evicting settlers and occupying land, prompting the IRC to visit the area and allot reserves.

1879 The Nlaka'pamux assemble at Lytton to discuss their land rights. A new political structure, consisting of a head chief and 13 councilors is proposed to deal with the colonial governments and the Nlaka'pamux request that their system be recognized under the *Indian Act*.

1880 Peter O'Reilly (Joseph Trutch's brother-in-law) is appointed Indian Reserve Commissioner. O'Reilly serves as commissioner until 1898. O'Reilly allots reserves as he did under Trutch prior to Confederation and revisits many of the reserves set aside by previous commissioners. O'Reilly attempts to allocate exclusive rights to certain fisheries, but government fisheries agencies challenge his authority to do so.

1880 Trutch becomes the Dominion agent in BC for railway and Indian matters. Construction of the BC portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) begins, contributing to increased immigration. Indian Affairs becomes its own federal body when the Department of Indian Affairs is created. The two superintendencies in BC are abolished to make way for the Indian agency structure. Indian agents are appointed and deployed.

1881 Canada creates six Indian agencies: Cowichan, West Coast, Kwawkewlth, Fraser River, Kamloops and Okanagan. The Indian agents report directly to the Indian Superintendent for BC (until 1910).

1881 Chief Mountain leads a Nisga'a delegation to Victoria to protest increasing encroachment of farmers, fishermen and loggers in the Nass and Skeena valleys. The Nisga'a denounce O'Reilly's reserve allocations.

1881 Canada enumerates Indians in BC in the national census.

1883 Railway lands in BC are transferred to Canada to help pay for railroad construction costs. The Railway Belt is a 20-mile strip of land on either side of the railway line totaling nearly eleven million acres. An additional 3.5 million acres, known as the "Peace River Block," is transferred to replace land already taken up in the more populated sections of the province. The Railway Belt and Peace River Block, including all Indian reserves contained within these sections, remain under federal control until 1930.

1883 The Lillooet and Northwest Coast Indian Agencies are created. The Tsimshian, Gitksan and Nisga'a refuse to accept the Indian agent appointed to their territories. Within five years, the Tsimshian protest against the agent, his behaviour, and the laws he aims to impose.

1884 The Tsimshian, angered by encroachment of settlers and the appropriation of their land, disrupt surveying activities and sabotage surveying parties in their territory.

1885 Canada enacts a potlatch ban. Every Indian engaging in a potlatch or Tamanawas (spirit) activities is deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and is subject to imprisonment of up to six months in jail. Uslick, a Sto:lo man from Chilliwack, is the first person arrested under this law.

1885 Three Tsimshian chiefs travel to Ottawa to express their concerns about land rights. They are the first Indigenous delegation from BC to take their protests to Ottawa.

1886 The Nisga'a prevent surveyors from conducting work in the Nass Valley.

1886 An armed uprising in Tsimshian territory is reported. Premier Smithe sends a warship to the mouth of the Skeena River. Troops reach the area two days later but all is quiet. The troops remain in the territory for a month.

1887 Tsimshian and Nisga'a chiefs meet with Premier Smithe at his home to reject a reserve that had been set aside for them and to request a treaty. Smithe, claiming Crown ownership, dismisses the request for a treaty as misguided and delusional. He promises to appoint a Joint Commission to look into the enlargement of north coast reserves.

1887 The Commission of Enquiry into the Conditions of the Indians of the Northwest Coast is dispatched to Tsimshian and Nisga'a territories. Smithe instructs the Commissioners to discount any claims of Indian title and assert Crown ownership of the land. Shortly after the inquiry, the Northwest Coast Indian Agency is established and an Indian agent is dispatched to monitor the Tsimshian, Nisga'a, Heiltsuk, Nuxalk, Haida and Haisla territories.

1890 The Nisga'a form the first Nisga'a Land Committee.

1897 The Klondike Gold Rush begins in the Yukon when news reaches Seattle that gold has been found in Tlingit territory. Within a month, the "Klondike stampede" begins as Canadian, American and European gold-seekers converge on the north. By 1898, the Klondike population reaches nearly 40,000, famine looms and stamperders are denied entry into Canada unless they bring a year's supply of food.

1898 A.W. Vowell is appointed Indian Reserve Commissioner. Acting as both the Indian Superintendent and the Indian Reserve Commissioner for BC, Vowell deals with the re-allotment of reserves, primarily timber reserves that had burnt down. Though he remains Indian Reserve Commissioner until 1910, his duties are suspended in 1907 when BC refuses to allot new reserves.

1898 An armed blockade at Fort St. John stops the Klondike stampede through northeastern BC. Dene (Slavey), Dunne-za (Beaver), and T'sek'ehne (Sekani) people take up arms after thousands of gold-seekers invade their territories, fishing, hunting and trapping out Indigenous livelihoods.

1899 Canada extends Treaty 8 to the northeastern corner of BC. Leaders of the Dene (Slavey), Dunne-za (Beaver) and Cree peoples sign Treaty 8. Canada promises to set aside reserves based on an allotment of 160 acres per Indian. The BC government continues to reject Indigenous rights but does not object to the treaty. Establishment of Treaty 8 reserves proves difficult, as the province is reluctant to set aside the land required.

1904 Okanagan Chief Chillihitza and Secwepemc Chief Louie travel to Europe with Father LeJuene for a conference on Indigenous linguistics. They meet with Pope Leo XIII and remain in Europe for four months.

1905 The *BC Game Amendment Act* authorizes provincial game wardens to regulate and enforce restrictions on hunting, fishing, grazing and trapping. This significantly undermines and disrupts Indigenous economies as Indigenous people are fined and imprisoned for trespassing and breaking fish and game laws.

1906 Amid much media attention, a delegation of Squamish, Quw'utsun, Secwepemc, Okanagan, Nlaka'pamux and St'át'imc Chiefs travel to London and present King Edward VII with a petition protesting the lack of treaties and adequate reserves in BC. The King advises them to discuss the matters with Prime Minister Laurier in Ottawa. Chief Capilano later reports that King Edward had made certain promises, which Canada denies.

1907 The Nisga'a chiefs reform the Nisga'a Land Committee. The Nisga'a reorganize politically to deal with colonial governments. The Land Committee raises funds, solicits legal advice and enters into alliances with other Indigenous peoples in order to assert territorial ownership and reject inadequate reserves.

1908 BC stops setting aside Indian reserves in defiance of Dominion pressure to increase the size of reserves. BC advises Canada that some Indian reserves are too large and should be reduced. Meanwhile, Canadian settlement and resource extraction increases rapidly as BC's economy starts to boom. The north coast is the only region in which reserve allotment has not been completed.

1908 The Nisga'a Land Committee issues a petition asserting ownership of the Nass Valley, and requesting 140 miles of the valley be reserved exclusively for the Nisga'a as hunting, fishing and timber grounds.

1908 A delegation of 25 coastal chiefs travels to Ottawa and presents Prime Minister Laurier with two petitions, which he promises to forward to King Edward VII. Laurier assures the delegation that their concerns will be addressed.

1908 Fourteen Secwepemc, Okanagan, Nlaka'pamux and St'át'imc chiefs send a petition to the Department of Indian Affairs denouncing the reserves set aside for their people as inadequate. They also express their discontent over the imposition of hunting, fishing and grazing restrictions, and over-fishing by settlers.

1909 Missionaries Charles Tate and Arthur O'Meara draft the *Cowichan Petition* on behalf of the Quw'utsun' and present it to colonial authorities in London. The ten-page petition asserts

Quw'utsun' possession and occupation of their land since "time immemorial" and invokes the 1763 Royal Proclamation as a guarantee that these lands, not having been surrendered to the Crown, remain reserved for the Quw'utsun'. In doing so, the Quw'utsun' regard the "Proclamation of their great father, King George III as the Charter of their rights."

1909 In response to the *Cowichan Petition*, Prime Minister Laurier seeks a legal opinion about the validity of Aboriginal Title and land claims in BC. T.R.E. McInnes, a barrister retained by the Dominion government, denounces the Indian land policy established by Trutch. McInnes believes much of the land in BC is subject to unextinguished Aboriginal Title and that Canada has a responsibility to pursue a legal land claim against BC on behalf of the Indians.

1909 Secwepemc, Okanagan, Nlaka'pamux and St'át'imc leaders meet in Spences Bridge and form the Interior Tribes of British Columbia. James Teit, a local ethnographer, is recruited to translate their concerns and demands to Canada and BC.

1909 Coastal leaders meet in Victoria and form the Indian Rights Association, bringing together north and south coast peoples. Charles Tate is appointed secretary and the people raise one thousand dollars for legal expenses. These expenses include the drafting of a legal position, *A Statement of Facts and Claims on Behalf of the Indians of British Columbia*, as a basis for a Privy Council hearing on Aboriginal Title.

1910 Reserve Commissioner A.W. Vowell retires and the Indian Reserve Commission is dismantled. Since 1907, Vowell had been noting, in yearly reports, bands without reserves, with inadequate reserves and those with unsurveyed reserves.

1910 The Indian Rights Association submits *A Statement of Facts and Claims on Behalf of the Indians of British Columbia* to Prime Minister Laurier, demanding a Privy Council hearing in London, England.

1910 Prime Minister Laurier visits BC to settle the federal-provincial conflict over reserve size and Aboriginal Title. Federal and provincial lawyers prepare ten questions to be submitted to the Supreme Court of Canada. Premier McBride demands the removal of any questions related to Aboriginal Title, informing Prime Minister Laurier that Aboriginal Title is a political matter that cannot be decided in court as it would have disastrous effects on BC's financial standing and jeopardize investment in the province. Premier McBride then travels to London to request that Britain maintain a policy of non-interference in BC. The London colonial office agrees.

1910 The Nisga'a Land Committee refuses to allow settlers into the Nass Valley. The Nisga'a serve notice to the BC Attorney General, the media, and individual landseekers that the Nass Valley is Nisga'a territory. All others are forbidden from entering the valley and staking claims until an agreement has been reached between the Nisga'a and the Crown.

1910 The Interior Tribes sends a *Petition of the Chiefs of Indian Bands of the Southern Interior at Spences Bridge* to the Department of Indian Affairs, demanding treaties, enlarged reserves, and compensation for lost land.

1910 While in BC, Laurier visits Kamloops. Learning that he is in favour of larger reserves and recognition of Aboriginal Title, the Interior chiefs present him with a *Memorial to Sir Wilfred Laurier, Premier of the Dominion of Canada from the Chiefs of the Shuswap, Okanagan and Thompson Tribes*. This is a letter condemning BC land policies and game laws, and rejecting BC's takeover of their lands. Believing that the Queen's laws will guarantee their rights, they request treaties with Canada.

1910 The Tsimshian and Nisga'a meet with Prime Minister Laurier in Prince Rupert.

1910 Tahltan Chief Nanok and 80 others work with James Teit to submit the *Declaration of the Tahltan Tribe*, asserting ownership over their traditional territories, which they have defended "at the cost of their blood." They ask that all their concerns regarding land and livelihood be settled by treaty with Canada and BC.

1911 The Interior Tribes, now consisting of the Secwepemc, Nlaka'pamux, Okanagan, St'at'imc, Tsilhqot'in, Dakelh, Tahltan, and the coastal Sto:lo chiefs, submits a *Memorial to the Honourable Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa*. That same day, the St'at'imc release the *Declaration of the Lillooet Tribe*, asserting ownership of their territories and reminding Canada that though BC lays claim to their lands, they have defended their land "at the cost of their blood" and have never surrendered or deserted it.

1911 In response to Indigenous petitions and declarations, Prime Minister Laurier passes Order-in-Council PC1081, proposing that the federal government take Indian claims to the Exchequer Court of Canada. The OIC sits in the Department of Justice for a year. By the time it is examined, Laurier is no longer Prime Minister.

1911 The Nisga'a Land Committee hires Arthur O'Meara as their legal counsel and begins formulating a legal position and strategy.

1911 Over 60 delegates of the Interior Tribes, the Indian Rights Association and the Nisga'a Land Committee meet with Premier McBride to protest BC land policies and demand to be heard by Canadian courts. McBride declines, asserting that they do not have a legal case and that Indigenous people in general are satisfied with BC policies. In response, the Interior Tribes issues a Memorial and Declaration, reiterating their July 1910 declaration.

1911 Prime Minister Borden and Premier McBride continue the dispute over BC Indian land policy. Former Prime Minister Laurier's proposal to take Indian claims to the Exchequer Court is formally set aside.

1912 Prime Minister Borden appoints J. McKenna to settle the dispute over BC Indian reserve policy. McKenna visits BC, meeting with Indigenous leaders and negotiating an agreement with Premier McBride. In September, McKenna and McBride sign an agreement to establish a Royal Commission to review the work of the Indian reserve commissions and hear evidence from chiefs, community members, Indian agents and third parties to adjust Indian reserves in BC. The issue of Aboriginal Title is excluded from the Commission's mandate.

1912 The Interior Tribes meets with McKenna and, after receiving a copy of the McKenna-McBride agreement, submits a *Statement of the Chiefs of the Interior Tribes of British Columbia to the Honourable Mr. Borden, Prime Minister of Canada and Members of the Dominion Government*, clarifying that their main concern is not the size of reserves, but the “stealing of our lands by the BC government.” The chiefs assert ownership of their territories and demand a Privy Council hearing, rejecting the mandate of the Commission and its ability to reach fair and unbiased decisions.

1912 Delegates of the Interior Tribes, Indian Rights Association and the Nisga’a Land Committee agree to unite under the Indian Rights Association on all matters related to the McKenna-McBride Agreement.

1913 The Nisga’a, independent of the Indian Rights Association, submit the *Nisga’a Petition* to the Privy Council in London. It is referred back to Canada. Soon after, the Indian Rights Association authorizes J.M. Clark, Q.C., to travel to London to submit a similar petition on their behalf. It too is referred back to Canada. Clark sees these independent submissions as a sign of a division within the Indian leadership. He promptly informs the Department of Indian Affairs.

1913 The Royal Commission on Indian Affairs in the Province of BC (the “McKenna-McBride Commission”) begins its community hearings. The Indian Rights Association resolves to appear before the Commission and demand the issue of title be settled before reserves are adjusted. The Commission travels the province for three years, holding community meetings from which they produce volumes of testimony and 98 interim reports. The people discuss water, hunting, fishing, grazing, and timber rights, and ask for treaties and larger reserves. They also express fears that the Commission will further reduce existing reserves. Commissioners assure the people that the *Indian Act* guarantees that reserves cannot be reduced without Indian consent.



McKenna-McBride
Royal Commission
hearing, Nanaimo
(BC Archives
H07051)

1913 Construction of the Canadian National Railway causes major landslides in the Fraser Canyon at Hells Gate, blocking the Fraser River salmon run and decimating the fishery. In spite of Indigenous protests and petitions, federal government officials heavily restrict Indigenous fisheries in the area, further undermining Indigenous livelihoods and economies.

1914 In response to the *Nisga’a Petition*, Prime Minister Borden revives Laurier’s proposal

to bring the issue of title to the Exchequer Court. Order-in-Council PC751 establishes the conditions under which Canada would allow such a case. Before a case can be heard, the Indians of BC first have to agree to 1) use lawyers appointed by the Department of Indian Affairs; 2) surrender their title if the court agrees that it exists; and 3) accept the recommendations of the McKenna-McBride Commission as a final adjustment of reserve lands.

1915 J.M. Clark reports to the Department of Indian Affairs that the Indian Rights Association is prepared to accept Order-in-Council PC751 in order to have its case heard. Meanwhile, the Nisga'a and the Interior Tribes formally reject Order-in-Council PC751 and continue to lobby Canada to delay the McKenna-McBride recommendations until the *Nisga'a Petition* is heard in court. The Department of Indian Affairs dismisses the *Nisga'a Petition* due to the apparent lack of consensus in BC regarding the rejection of Order-in-Council PC751.

1916 The Nisga'a and the Interior Tribes form the Allied Tribes during a meeting in Vancouver, in which the position of the Indian Rights Association is formally rejected and the organization dissolved. The executive of the Allied Tribes is elected to represent the Interior and Coast Salish, Kootenay, Tsilhqot'in, Dakelh, Kaska-Dene, Q'uwit'sun, Nuxalk, Nisga'a, Tsimshian, Haida and Gitksan peoples.

1916 The McKenna-McBride Commission releases its Final Report. The Commission establishes new reserves and confirms, increases or reduces existing reserves. The amount of valuable reserve land is reduced or cut off, while most new and enlarged reserves contain rocky, arid or otherwise undesirable lands. Cut-offs amount to over 36,000 acres of land, mostly in the southern and interior territories. Some reserves are cancelled completely. Many communities whose reserves are cut off or cancelled will not gain any land in return. The Minister of Indian Affairs promises that Indian consent is required before any cut-offs occur. Canada and BC move slowly to implement the report.

1919 BC passes the *Indian Affairs Settlement Act* to endorse the McKenna-McBride recommendations as a final settlement regarding Indian lands and affairs in BC.

1919 After an assembly in Spences Bridge and large intertribal meetings throughout BC, the Allied Tribes drafts a *Statement of the Allied Indian Tribes of BC for the Government of British Columbia*, outlining the "present position of the Indian land controversy" in BC, emphasizing Indigenous territorial ownership and rejecting the McKenna-McBride recommendations. The statement is distributed to Indigenous communities throughout BC before it is presented to Premier John Oliver in December.

1920 Canada passes the *British Columbia Indian Lands Settlement Act* to allow the McKenna-McBride recommendations and impose cut-offs without Indian consent, contrary to the *Indian Act*. The legislation is meant to be a full and final settlement of Indian lands and affairs in BC. The Allied Tribes condemns Canada and BC and intensifies its demands for a judicial hearing. Meanwhile, Indian Agents and the RCMP suppress Indian gatherings with a series of potlatch arrests, convictions and incarcerations.

1920 The Ditchburn-Clark Commission is established to review the McKenna-McBride

recommendations. While Canada accepts the McKenna-McBride Final Report in its entirety, BC refuses to implement all of the cut-offs and additions. James Teit is selected to represent the Allied Tribes during the review. The Ditchburn-Clark Commission confirms the work of the McKenna-McBride Commission, making few amendments, additions, or reductions.

1921 Indian Agent/Justice of the Peace William Halliday and the RCMP stage a major raid on a Kwakwaka'wakw potlatch at Mamlilikulla (Village Island), arresting 49 people and confiscating all regalia, masks and other sacred items. Twenty-six people are incarcerated and the confiscated items are sold to public and private collections throughout Canada and the United States. The Kwakwaka'wakw join the Allied Tribes.

1922 The Allied Tribes meets in North Vancouver to continue lobbying British, Canadian, and BC governments for a judicial hearing regarding Aboriginal Title.

1923 British Columbia passes Order-in-Council 911 approving the McKenna-McBride recommendations. Canada responds the following year with Order-in-Council 1265, confirming the McKenna-McBride cut-offs, except those within federally controlled lands in the Railway Belt. Despite being listed in the Final Report, the cut-offs in the Railway Belt do not take effect. Elsewhere in BC the cut-offs are made immediately, without consent of the Indian bands affected.

1926 The Allied Tribes petitions the Canadian Parliament for an inquiry, outlining the “Indian land controversy” since BC entered Confederation. Due to government approval of the McKenna-McBride recommendations, the Allied Tribes declares that it is entitled to a hearing at the Privy Council and demands the funding and sanction to do so.

1926 Neskonlith Chief William Perrish travels to England to petition King George V.

1927 Canada appoints a Joint Special Committee of the Senate and House of Commons to inquire into claims of the Allied Tribes as set out in their 1926 petition. The Committee considers the position of the Allied Tribes for two weeks, then declares that it has not proven any rights to the land based on Aboriginal or other title. The Committee recommends that the matter be closed and, blaming outside agitators for Indigenous resistance, recommends a ban on obtaining funds or legal counsel to advance Aboriginal Title cases. The Committee further recommends that Indians in BC receive an annual allotment of \$100,000 to be spent on education, medical care and the promotion of agriculture, ranching and irrigation on reserves.

1927 Canada amends the *Indian Act* to make it illegal to obtain funds or legal counsel to advance Aboriginal Title cases. This ends the Allied Tribes' hope of having a case heard at the Privy Council in London and the Allied Tribes dissolves. Indigenous resistance goes underground.

1928 The Special Funding Vote of \$100,000 annual payment for BC Indians (the “BC Special”) begins. BC and Canada regard the vote as final compensation for the settlement of Aboriginal Title in BC.

1930 Canada and BC reach the Scott-Cathcart Agreement, setting out conditions for transferring title to Indian reserves in BC to Canada. Canada passes Privy Council Order-in-Council PCOC 208 to transfer all land, except Indian reserves, inside the Railway Belt and Peace River Block to BC. BC claims all roads running through Indian reserves. The agreement also makes five percent of reserve lands available for public works. In return, BC is to transfer Indian reserves outside the Railway Belt and Peace River Block to Canada. BC delays this transfer for eight years.

1931 The Haida and Tsimshian form the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia (NBBC). NBBC organizes protests on fishing, lands, taxation and social issues. The founding declaration is similar to the Allied Tribes' statement, but avoids mentioning Aboriginal Title. Its official mandate is to improve the socio-economic conditions of Indian people in BC. Unofficially, the NBBC seek recognition of Aboriginal Title.

1938 BC passes Order-in-Council 1036 transferring Indian reserve lands outside the Railway Belt and Peace River Block to Canada. This OIC recognizes the terms laid out in Scott-Cathcart agreement.

1942 After entering World War II, the United States Army builds the Alaska Highway from Dawson Creek to Alaska. Completed in eight months, the highway transports over 10,000 American soldiers into Dene (Slavey) and Dunne-za (Beaver) territories, bringing tuberculosis, influenza and famine to Indigenous communities. The United States turns the highway over to Canada in 1946.

1943 Squamish political leader Andrew Paull establishes the North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB). Paull had figured prominently in the Allied Tribes and the NBBC. The NAIB aims to organize Indians across Canada to fight for civil rights without loss of Indian rights.

1945 Premier John Hart passes the *BC Electric Power Act* to bring electricity to settler communities and encourage population growth and industrialization throughout BC.

1945 World War II ends. Representatives of 51 nations, including Canada, the United States, Britain, and France establish the United Nations (UN) to maintain peace. The mandate of the UN includes promoting respect for human rights worldwide.

1946 Canada appoints a Joint Special Committee of the Senate and House of Commons to examine Indian policy in Canada. Indigenous leaders from across Canada, including Indigenous war veterans and those of the NAIB and the NBBC, appear before the committee and demand equality and civil rights for Indigenous people.

1951 Canada revises the *Indian Act*, removing provisions that violate the civil rights of Indian people, including the ban against potlatch activity and the pursuit of Aboriginal Title cases. Now that Indians have been guaranteed civil rights, Canada's longstanding drive to assimilate Indigenous people is carried out in the name of "equality." Meanwhile, industrialization and urbanization of Indigenous territories intensifies.

1951 The BC Power Company completes the John Hart Hydroelectric Dam near Campbell River, flooding Kwakwaka'wakw territories and disrupting traditional fisheries to bring electricity to settler communities on Vancouver Island.

1953 The BC Kemano Hydroelectric project dams the Nechako River to power an aluminum smelter in Kitimat. The resulting Nechako reservoir floods Dakelh (Carrier) territories, particularly those of the Cheslatta people. With little or no warning, the Cheslatta are forced to flee the rising waters and watch as their community's hunting grounds, traplines, and burial sites disappear.

1955 The Nisga'a restructure the Nisga'a Land Committee into the Nisga'a Tribal Council. Citing the 1913 *Nisga'a Petition*, the Tribal Council asserts Aboriginal Title and demands recognition of title and compensation for its loss.

1956 BC extends the Pacific Great Eastern Railway (later BC Rail) from Quesnel to Prince George. The railway cuts through Tsilhqot'in and Dakelh (Carrier) territories to bring industrialization and urbanization to the north. Within two years, the railway is extended north through Tsek'ehne (Sekani) territory to Dawson Creek in Dunne-za (Beaver) territory.

1958 The Nuu-chah-nulth establish the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council to confront BC and Canadian policies concerning Nuu-chah-nulth people and territory.

1960 Secwepemc leader George Manuel and Nisga'a leader Frank Calder present briefs to the Joint Committee for the Review of Indian Affairs Policy. Citing the 1763 Royal Proclamation, Manuel and Calder both demand recognition of, and compensation for, loss of Aboriginal Title. The Committee recommends the establishment of an Indian Claims Commission to settle outstanding land claims in Canada.

1961 BC transfers 24,500 acres of Dene (Slavey), Dunne-za (Beaver) and Tsek'ehne (Sekani) territories (the "Peace River Block") to Canada for Indian reserves, pursuant to Treaty 8 obligations. Acreage is based on the allotment formula used by Canada for the numbered treaties of the Prairies (640 acres per family of five).

1966 Indian Affairs releases H.B. Hawthorn's survey of Indian socio-economic needs and policies. Hawthorn sees Indigenous peoples as a disadvantaged segment of the Canadian population that must be considered "Citizens Plus" (Canadian citizens with special rights and policies based on this disadvantage) in order to encourage their migration into the cities and the mainstream labour force. There is no mention of Indigenous nationhood or territorial rights.

1968 After generations of petitioning and lobbying British, BC and Canadian governments, the Nisga'a turn to Canadian courts, seeking legal recognition that Nisga'a title to their territory has never been extinguished and still remains with the Nisga'a people. BC courts rule that Aboriginal Title never existed based on the belief that at the time of colonization, the Nisga'a were primitive people with few notions of civilized society and private property. The Nisga'a take their case, *Calder v. Attorney General of BC*, to the Supreme Court of Canada.

1968 BC Hydro completes the WAC Bennett Dam on the Peace River, flooding Tsek'ehne (Sekani) territories. As a result of rising water levels in the new Williston Lake Reservoir, the Tsek'ehne (Ingenika, Fort Graham, and McLeod Lake Bands) are forced to abandon their reserves and watch as their communities, hunting grounds, traplines, and burial sites disappear.

1969 Prime Minister Trudeau and his Minister of Indian Affairs, Jean Chretien, introduce a white paper on Indian policy. The policy is one of aggressive assimilation and is soon dubbed "The White Paper" by Indigenous leaders. The Indian Association of Alberta is the first to respond with their "Red Paper" entitled *Citizen's Plus*, adopting Hawthorn's 1966 analysis and recommendations.

1969 The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) forms as 144 chiefs and delegates from all over BC meet to discuss the White Paper and its effects on Indian people in BC. The UBCIC agrees to counter Trudeau's policy with the "Brown Paper," *A Declaration of Indian Rights: The BC Indian Position Paper*. The UBCIC draws on the Alberta Chiefs' Red Paper and its Citizens Plus ideology, adding to it an insistence on the recognition of Aboriginal Title.

1969 Canada appoints an Indian Claims Commissioner to investigate reserve and treaty-based land claims. The Commissioner agrees to examine reserve lands that had been "cut off" by the McKenna-McBride Commission in BC.

1971 The BC Rail line reaches Fort Nelson in Dene (Slavey) territory. Chief Harry Dickie, supported by UBCIC, leads Dene and Dunne-za people to blockade the railway on the Fort Nelson Indian Reserve. Chief Dickie attempts to board a train carrying Premier Bennett to discuss settler encroachment and the suppression of hunting, trapping and other treaty rights.

1972 UBCIC presents a *Claim Based on Native Title to the Lands now Forming British Columbia* to Prime Minister Trudeau, demanding recognition of Aboriginal Title and compensation for its loss. UBCIC proposes that Canada establish a claims commission to adjust reserve size and determine the amount of compensation to be paid to Indigenous people for the loss of their territories. Trudeau ignores the proposal.

1972 The BC government agrees to consider the return of reserve lands that had been cut off by the McKenna-McBride Commission, but asserts that settling Aboriginal Title claims is a federal matter. Canada and BC begin negotiations with the Indian bands affected in 1981.

1973 *Calder v. Attorney General of BC*. The Supreme Court of Canada recognizes that the Nisga'a held title to their land before BC was established, however the court splits evenly on whether Nisga'a title had been extinguished since the establishment of BC. In response, Trudeau changes federal policy to allow negotiation of "Comprehensive Claims" based on Aboriginal Title and "Specific Claims" based on reserve lands. The Office of Native Claims is established to carry out this policy.

1974 Several Indigenous communities in BC engage in protest activities. These include a series of blockades of Highway 12 through the Bonaparte Reserve, a march to the BC

legislature and a caravan to Parliament Hill in Ottawa where riot police greet Indigenous protesters.

1974 The Nisga'a submit a Comprehensive Claim to begin negotiating the terms of settlement in their territory.

1975 The Vancouver media declares an "Indian Summer" as Indigenous resistance to government policies continues in rallies, marches, blockades and sit-ins throughout BC, including a highway blockade in St'at'imc' territory and a Nisga'a demonstration against CN Rail surveyors.

1975 Indigenous people in BC bring their resistance to an international level with the founding of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. The WCIP attracts over 200 delegates from North and South America, the South Pacific and Europe to the T'seshaht reserve near Port Alberni in Nuu-chah-nulth territory.

1976 The federal government agrees to negotiate the Nisga'a Comprehensive Claim. BC refuses to join the negotiations.

1977 Gitksan, Wet'suwet'en, Musqueam and Gitanyow file Comprehensive Claims with the Office of Native Claims. The next year, the Haisla submit a claim. The federal government refuses to negotiate any more claims until the Nisga'a Comprehensive Claim is settled.

1979 UBCIC drafts the *Aboriginal Rights Position Paper*, outlining a basis for all discussions relating to land claims and Aboriginal Rights. The position paper advocates exclusive control over larger reserves and includes an "Indian Government Manifesto" that draws on the principles of nationhood, self-determination, and equality of peoples.

1979 Pierre Trudeau announces that he intends to patriate the Constitution. Fearing that treaty and trust relationships between Indigenous peoples and the British Crown will be legally severed, Indigenous leaders petition the Queen to stop patriation until an agreement can be reached among Indian nations, Canada, and Britain that ensures Indigenous autonomy within the Canadian federation.

1980 The Nuu-chah-nulth submit their Comprehensive Claim. Three years later, BC authorizes MacMillan Bloedel to log Wah-nah-juss/Hilth-hor-iss (Meares Island) in Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht territories. After blocking access to the island, Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht seek an injunction to halt all logging until their Comprehensive Claim is settled. They also seek a legal declaration that title to their territories has never been extinguished, and that BC has no right to authorize resource extraction in Nuu-chah-nulth territory. BC argues that Aboriginal Title, if it did exist at all, has been extinguished. The BC Supreme Court grants the injunction in 1985.

1981 The UBCIC mobilizes the Constitution Express. Trainloads of Indigenous people travel from BC to Ottawa to lobby Trudeau and the premiers to guarantee Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination in the Canadian Constitution. In the end, Canada passes the *Canada Constitution Act, 1982* recognizing "existing aboriginal and treaty rights" (Section

Marching in the street - the Constitution Express reaches Ottawa (UBCIC Collection)



35). Three years later, after a series of unsuccessful First Ministers' Conferences, the task of defining Aboriginal rights is left to the Canadian courts.

1983 The Haida submit a Comprehensive Claim. As the Haida await negotiation, BC authorizes logging in Haida Gwaii. The Haida block access to Gwaii Hanaas (Lyell Island), declaring it a Haida heritage site and seek an injunction to stop all logging until their Comprehensive Claim is settled. BC argues that Aboriginal Title, if it did exist at all,

has been extinguished. The injunction is granted and Gwaii Haanas is designated a Canadian national park.

1984 Canada appoints a task force to re-examine its Comprehensive Claims policy. The following year, the task force issues the Coolican Report recommending that Canada alter its policy to negotiate more than one Comprehensive Claim per province. Canada ignores the report until 1991.

1986 The Nlaka'pamux submit their Comprehensive Claim. The following year, Nlaka'pamux (Lytton) and St'at'imc (Mount Currie) communities sign the Stein Declaration to prevent logging in the Stein Valley. In 1989, a one-year moratorium is placed on logging in the valley. The Stein Valley becomes a Provincial Park in 1995.

1987 Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs file a lawsuit against BC and Canada seeking legal recognition of ownership to their traditional territories, and the right to govern them by their own laws. They also seek compensation for loss of land and resources. BC argues that Aboriginal Title, if it exists at all, has been extinguished. After several appeals and ten years, *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* is heard in the Supreme Court of Canada.

1990 The Oka standoff begins. Mohawk warriors barricade a road to "The Pines" near Oka, Quebec to stop golf course expansion into their traditional burial ground. In July, 100 police attempt to take down the barricade. One officer is killed and the Mohawks blockade all roads and bridges leading into their territory. Local non-Indigenous residents riot at the barricades and the Canadian Army is called in. Within months, the barricades are dismantled and 150 Mohawk people are arrested. The golf course proposal is abandoned.

Indigenous communities across BC erect blockades in support of the Mohawk people. People block railways and roads, slow traffic and hand out information pamphlets about Indigenous land rights and the struggle in BC.

1990 BC joins the Nisga'a and Canada in the negotiation of the Nisga'a Comprehensive Claim. This is the first time BC agrees to negotiate a Comprehensive Claim. BC still refuses

to acknowledge Aboriginal Title.

1990 UBCIC submits a draft *Comprehensive Framework Treaty* to Canada and BC, setting out a process for treaty negotiation in BC. The first principle is that no extinguishment of Aboriginal Title will occur with as a result of the signing of a treaty.

1990 The First Nations Congress, a splinter group from UBCIC that began to form in 1975, works with Canada and BC to develop a treaty negotiation process. UBCIC upholds its *Comprehensive Framework Treaty* proposal and refuses to participate.

1991 Canada establishes a Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples to examine the relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples. The Commission visits 96 communities, holds 178 days of hearings, and completes over 350 research projects over four years.

1992 The First Nations Congress, Canada and BC establish the First Nations Summit and the BC Treaty Commission to implement the BC Treaty Process. The Treaty Process strives for final agreements in which Indigenous Peoples surrender 95 percent of their territories to Canada in exchange for compensation and specific treaty rights. Within ten years, 120 bands enter negotiations, borrowing \$250 million to be paid back out of their compensation packages. As of May 2005, no final agreements have been signed.

1995 The Gustafson Lake stand-off begins when an American rancher attempts to evict Indigenous people gathered in ceremony on Secwepemc lands. Four hundred RCMP officers use armored vehicles, ammunition and land mines to evict 21 Indigenous people.

1996 The Nisga'a Tribal Council, BC, and Canada sign an agreement-in-principle that forms the basis of the first Comprehensive Claim agreement signed in BC.

1996 The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples releases its Final Report recommending a redistribution of political authority and economic resources to reform the relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples. Condemning Canada's Comprehensive Claim policy, the Commission recommends a policy that recognizes Aboriginal rights and emphasizes shared ownership and jurisdiction over land. Canada shelves the \$58 million report for two years.

1997 *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*. On appeal from previous BC Court decisions, the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs amend an original assertion of ownership and control over their territories, replacing it with claims of Aboriginal Title and self-government. BC argues that Aboriginal Title does not exist. Alternatively, BC argues, Aboriginal Title is not a right of ownership, but a right to engage in traditional subsistence practices such as hunting and fishing.

The Supreme Court of Canada rejects the trial judge's ruling that Aboriginal rights had been extinguished before 1871. The Court does not decide whether the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en still hold title to their land and instead clarifies that Aboriginal Title is not a right of absolute ownership, but a proprietary right to "exclusive use and occupation of land" that "is a burden on the Crown's underlying title." Once Aboriginal Title is proven, federal and provincial governments may infringe upon it for valid reasons, including resource

extraction, economic and infrastructure development, settlement of foreign populations and environmental protection. Aboriginal people must be consulted and compensated for any infringement or extinguishment of Aboriginal Title.

1998 Canada selects Vancouver-Whistler (Salish-St'at'imc territories) as Canada's nominee to host the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. Developers prepare a number of ski resort proposals for these territories.

2000 The Nisga'a Final Agreement becomes Canadian law. The Nisga'a surrender 92 percent of their territory in exchange for expanded reserve lands and \$190 million cash. The Nisga'a Lisims government is subject to provincial and federal laws. Nisga'a living in the settlement lands will be subject to BC, Canada, and Lisims taxation.

2000 St'at'imc people establish a protest camp at Sutikalh to stop a proposed ski resort development in the Cayoosh Mountains.

2000 Neskonalith people establish Swelkwekwelt Protection Centre at the Sun Peaks Ski Resort in Secwepemc territory to stop resort expansion. Secwepemc youth and Elders endure 54 arrests over four years. Resort expansion continues.

2002 BC holds a referendum on the principles of BC Treaty negotiations. The referendum is widely denounced as biased, divisive and unjust. Indigenous leaders across the province organize a boycott. In the end, 33 percent of BC votes, a majority of which support the BC government's position.

2003 Vancouver-Whistler is selected to host the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. Plans for the development of lands surrounding Vancouver-Whistler intensify.

2003 Lheidli T'enneh, BC and Canada sign the first agreement-in-principle under the BC Treaty Process. The Lheidli T'enneh agree in principle to surrender their territory in exchange for expanded reserve lands and \$12.8 million. The Lheidli T'enneh will be subject to federal and provincial laws and taxation.



The 2004 Spring Caravan to Victoria, "Moving Forward in Unity" (UBCIC Collection)

2004 The Songhees host a Spring Caravan to Victoria: "Moving Forward in Unity." Over 2,500 Indigenous People converge on the BC legislature to protest BC land policies. The charge is led by the Title and Rights Alliance, representing bands inside and outside the BC Treaty Process. BC responds by denouncing those gathered as misinformed malcontents.

2005 Prime Minister Martin promises a transformation of Indian policy in

Canada before reducing the Department of Indian Affairs' budget by \$260 million.

2005 BC continues to aggressively promote oil and gas drilling, ski resort development, logging, mining and other forms of resource extraction in Indigenous territories.

2005 The Haida Nation and their non-Haida neighbours block roads, seize timber and shut down forestry operations on Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands) to protest BC forestry policies in their territory.

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