

**INDIANS AT WORK:
An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia 1858-1930**

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Preface

Indians At Work originally was part of an attempt to sketch in some of the forgotten components of working class history in British Columbia. It was preceded by three earlier life histories in a similar vein and was intended to open a vista on an Indian past little discussed. Although I have brought anthropological understanding to bear, this book did not primarily flow from disciplinary interests.

The purpose of *Indians At Work* was not to contend with any single view or book and it was not as rapidly dashed off as some reviewers believed. If any single stimulus lay behind this and my earlier books, it was a reaction to the glorification of social ghettos which was being fostered under the guise of 'multi-culturalism' during the 1970s. Many academics were enthusiastically rediscovering the supposed centrality of ethnicity in an endless stream of accounts about 'cultural communities'. It was my general intent to question some of the wonderous claims made for ethnicity and its allegedly guiding role in people's lives.

In the case of native Indian history the importance of cultural-ethnic identities were real enough. However, I see no reason to fundamentally alter the view presented originally. For better or worse, native people throughout BC during the latter third of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century entered the wage industries in a host of capacities and made these an important part of their lives.

A general caution to readers is that when they find certain realms of behaviour designated as 'traditional', 'sacred', 'ritual' or 'ceremonial' they should be on guard. Simply applying these designations to particular activities or beliefs does not in any way explain them. Worse, when something is termed 'ritual' or 'ceremonial' etc. it may entail an unstated proposition that the material underpinnings or consequences can be dismissed, a claim that we are now dealing with a 'different realm of reality' in which *virtually anything goes*. The fact is that food and other products generated for and utilized in 'ceremonials and rituals' involve the same expenditure effort and entail the same consumption of material goods regardless of whether they occur in ceremonial or prosaic contexts. It sometimes makes more sense to regard rituals and ceremonies as epiphenomena of the main process - the effort and goods mobilized, dispersed and utilized.

A related proviso applies to accounts of 'prestige economies', those endeavours in which people seem to strive to acquire materially inconsequential rights and statuses. Detailing the workings of prestige economies was once the delight of many anthropologists who seemingly saw them as the triumph of cultural free will over earth-bound considerations. Earlier anthropological accounts were filled with tales of cattle-keeping pastoralists who made use of their cattle only for prestige purposes, of horticulturalists who regularly produced large surpluses of yams only to let them rot in prestigious displays, and of Northwest coast societies whose members strove to produce surpluses to dispense in status-bringing potlatches. Without going into particulars, contemporary anthropologists now usually treat prestige economics as part of broader economic-political systems which in no way are above and beyond material considerations. Therefore it is with some exasperation that one finds certain historians rediscovering prestige economies and the wonderous 'explanations' these offer. When the working lives of native people, in a host of industries, for over a century, are explained away as simply a novel facet of their own prestige economies, you can presume that you're being had.

In regards to another dogma; the doctrine of cultural relativism has long played a stultifying role in anthropology. It has two fundamental tenets; one is the proposition that the behaviour of individuals in differing societies can *only* be understood by reference to the beliefs of that society. It is hardly news that people in different societies believe and act differently and that those who grow up in a particular society are likely to reflect its beliefs. But to attribute such beliefs and behaviour to the imperatives of their cultural institutions is not an explanation - it is simply a tautology. It does not address the question how such cultural patterns come about or what their consequences are. Explanations based on cultural

relativism often entail little more than the observation that, '*Some like it hot, and some like it cold. And some like it in the pot, nine days old.*'

The second proposition of cultural relativism is that all features of all cultures are worthy of respect. This is clearly a moral doctrine and in no way adds to our understanding of sundry cultural practices. One can appreciate how this ethos slipped into anthropology during its formative years, especially in America during the first decades of the twentieth century. But it is *not* a guide to understanding anything.

Adherence to the imperatives of cultural relativism has sometimes led scholars into making social institutions in nonwestern societies seem functional and beneficial, simply because they exist. Virtually anything - endemic witchhunting, perpetual warfare, brutal slavery- could be alleged to serve necessary functions in a given society. This approach distorts the nature of many social and cultural practices whose consequences were anything but beneficial for many of those involved. Cultural relativism is a conservative philosophy in which the act of sanctifying traditional practices may blind the observer to the social costs involved. Even as a moral philosophy it is quite vacuous.

Similar objections can be raised about the related doctrine of 'ethnocentrism', long a handy *diablo ex machina* for those wishing to disparage views they find inconvenient. The charge of 'ethnocentrism' may be laid against any approach which does not restrict itself to the understandings held by the society under consideration. (Presuming that there are such things as values and knowledge which are shared by all members of a society.) While it is important to determine what members of a particular group know and believe, it is folly to limit oneself to that alone. No one who wishes to understand how certain social and historical processes actually operated can restrict themselves to traditionally accepted explanations - which may hold, for instance, that epidemics are the result of pestilential airs, or that Yaqui shamen could flit over Baja California by astral projection, or that the stock of salmon in a river system was conserved by the ritual treatment of the first salmon caught. There is no reason to accept the validity of ethnocultural explanations, indigenous or European, just because members of a particular society at a particular time believe in them.

On another matter; 'time immemorial' in many instances means roughly two or three generations previous to the current one, sometimes less. Life histories and oral accounts of what individuals themselves experienced are often invaluable - because they provide information and present understandings which otherwise would remain unknown. But orally transmitted accounts from more distant times often serve as 'mythological charters'; they retailor the past to provide rationales for present arrangements. All anthropologists who did ethnographic reconstruction through the elicitation of memory culture were aware of this process and tried, by corroborative checks, to correct for it. Others have not always been so careful.

As a caution about the too ready acceptance of private evidence, let us note a quissical reminiscence about gathering ethnographic data along the BC coast by the young Wayne Suttles. Having retrieved descriptions of indigenous sea mammal hunting techniques from native informants in a number of communities, Suttles approached Mungo Martin (a Kwakiutl elder) with these accounts of how sea lions were once taken.

Kwakiutl hunters evidently killed sea lions by clubbing them on their hauling-out rocks (Boas 1909:506). It is perhaps significant that two Fort Rupert men (Mungo Martin and Tom Omhid) did not believe it possible to attack a sea lion in the open water, and when I indicated that of the Salish told me of doing so, one of the two suggested that anthropologists should not believe all they are told. (Suttles, 1987: 240)

This is a caution which should apply in spades today.

I have laced this account with a degree of irreverence since it deals with topics too often hedged about with circumspect sanctity. This may be a mistake, since in Canada anything which is expected to be taken seriously cannot be treated impiously.

Some of my allusions are durable but others may have already become meaningless to most readers. For instance, a parody of the 'Maple Leaf Forever', a bit of colonial Canadiana once

stuffed down the throat of every schoolchild, to accompany a fleeting mention of Captain James Cook's sojourn at Nootka sound. The facetious treatment accorded Cook's place in Northwest coast history in the original edition of *Indians at Work* was, in part, a reaction to a year-long bicentennial fete orchestrated by the then provincial government. It involved the grossest trivialization of the past, with actors dressed as Captain Cook touring the province delivering 'historic proclamations' ad nauseam at the opening of shopping malls and scholarly conferences alike. That parody has now been deleted.

I originally wrote that while accounts by the initial European explorers and traders '*.... are irreplaceable, they provide less than a single standard ethnography might have provided.*'. I can only ascribe that statement to a hangover of an attitude which once prevailed in anthropology, particularly in British social anthropology. It was an outlook which largely dismissed the possibility of recovering the history of non-literate societies and generally considered only anthropological accounts of such peoples to be reliable. It is not a tradition I wish to perpetuate.

Some material has been added to the sections dealing with the historical background to native wage labour in BC and to the comparative accounts of such conditions elsewhere in Canada. I have tried to integrate work which has appeared during the last eighteen years, but usually without the discussion it deserves. The study of native history has become a prolific field and I doubt whether anyone is conversant with all the materials which are of relevance to native history in BC.

Little as been added to the core of the present book, the accounts of native Indian wage labour in BC. Here and there I have modified certain passages, occasionally I have been able to add some new information. But basically that account remains as originally written. The uncharted maze of potential source material - cannery record books, company journals, court and hospital records, unpublished memoirs and papers, parish and mission diaries, reports to and from the Department of Indian Affairs, and all the other sources which only become apparent in the course of investigation - most have been left fallow. No doubt this is a great failing on my part and established officers and aspirant cadets in the vanguard of scholarship will note what I have left unsurveyed.

Given the Byzantine intricacy of the law and the phenomenal stakes now at issue in native land and resource claims, minor details of ethnographic description can assume far greater importance than the original compilers ever conceived of. For instance, contemporary claims to specific salmon fisheries may turn on the issue of whether gillnets were used indigenously or not. While questions of technology are somewhat more straightforward than other aspects of native societies, even here we are often threading on less than solid ground.

While ethnographic evidence has become important in court cases, courts *should not* be a place to determine the truth or falsity of ethnographic or historical fact. I fail to understand why the conditions prevailing among native peoples some 150 or more years ago should determine present-day rights. Obviously they do and clearly the courts have assumed the role of determining what is correct and what is not. So, the following demurrer is in order: *None of the evidence and discussion presented in this book is intended to bear upon contemporary native claims.* None of it was gathered with that in mind and none of it is intended for such use.

In regards to some of the terms used here. Where not referring to some specific group I have used the terms 'Indians,' 'native Indians,' or 'Indian people' interchangeably in preference to whatever the currently fashionable designation may be. The terms 'indigenous' and 'aboriginal' are also used here, usually to denote pre-European practices or social formations.

The spelling and names of particular 'tribal' communities is a recurrent problem; Erna Gunther (1956: 269) provides a list of some nineteen different renderings for the 'Kolushan' Tlingit in the published literature. Other groups are almost as rich in alternate designations and spellings. The designation of particular Indian groups and settlements in BC is here

usually rendered as given in the 1990 edition of *Handbook of North American Indians . Northwest Coast* . The exceptions are spellings given in the sources cited.

Much less satisfactory are the terms 'white,' 'Europeans,' or 'Euro-Canadians.' Use of these all inclusive terms tends to concretize people from backgrounds as different as found among native people themselves and with interests as divergent as those between natives and non-natives. Where of importance I have referred to 'Japanese,' 'Hawaiian', 'Chinese' etc., which underscores once important social boundaries but can be misleading. Members of these groups may have been native-born Canadians and their roles and interests were not uniform. Those individuals with a more cosmopolitan genetic and cultural inheritance are here treated according to whichever social group they were part of. However, reality is always more complex than terms or categories can convey.

A final note on the mode of citation. The original edition of *Indians At Work* placed all reference citations and additional discursive material in numbered footnotes. These have been retained in the present edition. Newly added material and citations however are noted in the body of the text, for example (Murray, Peter 1988:160).

Indians At Work may be a book which has been overtaken by events. Developments of the past generation may have reduced the topic of native Indian wage labour to a footnote of history. Given the massive shift from commodity production to service industries and the importance of government-funded revitalization projects, accounts of Indian workers in the resource industries of an earlier day may seem unimportant. Nevertheless, if wage work and employment in commodity production were an important part of native peoples' lives over a number of generations, then that remains a part of their history. Some effect to believe that this is a degrading aspect of the native past. Personally, I find it rather heroic.

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Chapter 1

A Part of the Picture

Native Indian workers and producers have been important in some industries in British Columbia for well over a century. It is time that the generations of Indian loggers, longshoremen, teamsters, cowboys, miners, fishermen and cannery workers, and others who laboured in virtually every primary industry in BC were recognized. Wage work in the major industries of this province has been an intimate feature of Indian lives for five and more generations.

Even this leaves out the previous history of Indian groups in BC as commercial trappers-traders and as occasional workers around trading posts prior to 1858. By the 1890s, native Indians retaining neo-traditional economies dependent on subsistence fishing and hunting along with commercial fur trapping were an atypical minority.

This study is *not* intended as a comprehensive social history of BC native Indians. Despite many excellent ethnographies there is as yet no complete historical overview of native Indian peoples in this province. The present study attempts to outline the history of native Indians as workers and independent producers in the primary resource and other industries of BC between 1858 and 1930. It covers the periods from the first gold rush and the main entry of European settlers, through the foundation of most of the primary industries, to the beginning of the great depression. It was the period of the most strategic involvement of Indian workers in the emerging industrial economy of the province.

While there were Indian workers in BC before 1858, their numbers were small and the economic-political situation qualitatively different from that which would follow. Until that time, Indian groups generally still retained control over most resources and maintained their own political autonomy. European settlement and industrial development were to change this situation drastically over the next three decades. While the incorporation of Indians into wage labour begins dramatically after 1858, the closing date for this period is much less clear cut.

The terminal date chosen for this study is somewhat arbitrary. To carry the account forward through the 1930s and into the present would have required further research and much additional space. The 72 years covered approximate what would have been one relatively long lifetime and incorporate about as much as seemed feasible in one book. I have used 1930 as a cut-off date, *not* to imply that Indian wage labour somehow ceased after that, but because in various ways the great depression wrote finis to much local and small scale enterprise as it had developed over the previous generations. Throughout Canada and particularly in the resource industries, the decade-long depression ushered in or consolidated the hegemony of monopoly capital. The epilogue to the present volume outlines a few of the every day and the more dramatic events among Indian peoples in BC during the 1930s and after. It is *not* intended as a summary of developments during those following sixty odd years.

No native Indian societies has been more researched and written about than those of the North Pacific coast. Yet throughout the extensive literature on BC Indian societies one is hard pressed to discover the fact that, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and on, Indian peoples everywhere in the province were working in the major industries of that period. Apart from a few exceptional ethnohistories, I have been forced to reconstruct the scope and nature of Indian wage labour and independent commodity production from asides and footnotes in accounts written with other concerns in mind.¹

Given the paucity of accounts which dealt directly with native Indian labour I relied heavily on fragments from sources with interests in mind. The material is drawn from memoirs, obituaries, company journals, reports from government agents and missionaries. Unpublished dissertations on particular industries in BC have been an important source but

I have only scratched the surface of the mass of company records, band documents, parish diaries, government reports and so forth which could be of value. In most instances, ethnographic accounts had little to say about Indian wage labour during the period concerned. Most local histories (with some outstanding exceptions) generally treat Indians as part of the pre-European past. Once European settlers arrive on the pages of the scene, the Indians are no longer mentioned. That Indian workers, and Indian people generally, continued to be part of regional or local history generally goes unnoted.²

Even historical work touted as the definitive account of Indian-European relations in BC during the nineteenth century fails to break free from the established maxims. Accordingly, we hear that:

*During the maritime fur trading period the Indians of the Northwest coast were not, like some pre-Marxist proletariat, the passive objects of exploitation. Rather they were part of a mutually beneficial trade relationship.*³

We are told that after the golden age of fur enterprise, Indian peoples allegedly became reduced to irrelevance in the economy established by white settlers. According to Robin Fisher, after 1858,

*Vancouver Island and British Columbia were changing from colonies of exploitation, which made use of indigenous manpower, to colonies of settlement where the Indians became at best irrelevant, and at worst an obstacle, to the designs of the Europeans. Rather than economic cooperation there was now economic rivalry between the races.*⁴

One might dismiss this as a typical academic joust with straw men (after all, who would claim that tribal Indian groups were a 'pre-Marxist proletariat'—let alone pretend to know what that means). But Fisher's account is a recrudescence of the view which holds that with the passing of the buffalo, or the sea otter, and the coming of the steam engine, Indian peoples were shuffled off into some form of reserve dependence. We will see how misconceived this is.

Although the above view is somewhat less endemic than it was eighteen years ago, one still finds that major texts gloss over the history of native involvement in the broader economy. A recent textbook intended for college readership, *Native Peoples. The Canadian Experience*. (R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson ed., 1986), contains twenty-six articles dealing with the culture and histories of Canadian native peoples to present times. Yet it is as if everything had stopped at the period of the late fur trade and the establishment of reserves. The sepia photos accompanying the text are mainly of the late nineteenth century and are antiquarian even for that period. There is virtually no mention of native Indian workers in the industrial economy.

The encyclopaedic *Handbook of North American Indians. Northwest Coast* (1990) as excellent as it is, treats mainly with Indian societies in the 'ethnographic present.' The component articles provide only passing mention of Indian involvement in wage work, if they mention it at all. It would seem that a century and more of Indian wage labour in a host of different industries simply does not fall within the purview of Northwest coast anthropology. Kew (1990) presents a 'History of Coastal British Columbia Since 1849' with the barest sketch of native employment, largely restricted to the commercial fishery and mainly revolving about the partial displacement of native fishermen. He provides a restatement of that hoary view which holds that native involvement in commercial fishing/canning, and in other industries, was merely a modification of their traditional subsistence undertakings. Naturally, not every author need concentrate on every aspect of native history, but there is a serious imbalance when more than a century of wage work, and all it involved, is completely overshadowed by documenting minutia of cultural persistence.

At least two accounts of native Indian history in BC address the topic treated here: James McDonald's (1984) *Images of the Nineteenth-Century Economy of the Tsimshian* and James Burrows' (1986) *A Much-Needed Class of Labour': The Economy and Income of the Southern Interior Plateau Indians, 1897-1910*. They have the benefit of being

delimited studies which deal with the variety of jobs and industries which native people of particular regions were engaged in. They sketch the multi-stranded reality which prevailed for native people in different regions .

McDonald's article and his doctoral dissertation, 'Trying to Make a Life', deal with more than a century of economic and social history of the Tsimshian villagers of Kitsumkalum. Speaking of the coastal Tsimshian in general, McDonald surveys the considerable changes in their lives wrought by involvement in the fur trade and other industries during and the nineteenth century. He quizzically notes that the early anthropologists, focused on an ethnographic reconstruction of traditional societies, missed what was actually going on around them. In listing the range of wage labour and commodity production in which the Tsimshian were engaged McDonald says, "*I hope the evidence presented here will help correct the commonly held view that Indians were not part of the modern economic development, which began in the nineteenth century, and modify the reconstruction of traditional Tsimshian society as having been shunted off from the main track into reserves that had no part in that process. On the contrary, Indians were often critical to the successes of various industries.*" (McDonald, J. 1984: 40)

McDonald points out that wage work was not simply added on to the rounds of traditional economies but required adjustments and compromises when native men and women worked in canneries or comparable enterprises. More than that, he suggests that many white workers employed in the resource industries during that era also combined a mix of subsistence activities with wage work. "*The data I have currently examined suggests a considerable similarity between Tsimshian and immigrant workers. Both combined hunting, fishing, and trapping with a seasonal cycle of wage employment. In the nineteenth century none of these elements could support a person: nor could a strictly 'traditional' economic system or a 'traditional' industrial system.*" (McDonald, J. 1984: 53)

James Burrows (1986) 'A Much Needed Class of Labour' is more delimited in time and deals with the work history of the Salishan peoples of the southern plateau region between the 1890s and 1910. It is a valuable account since few have addressed themselves to the history of native people in that area during that period. Burrows makes the point that not only were native societies different in different regions, but that the Euro-Canadian settlement and industries which developed in various regions also differed. He points out that the gold miners who initially entered the southern plateau region soon withdrew and were followed by a more gradual settlement which gave native people one or two generations to adapt.

Burrows discusses a wide range of Indian employment, on ranches and farms, as woods workers, and as many-faceted casual labour. It indicates a broader involvement in the regional economy than I had supposed. The rationale of limiting his account to the period 1897- 1910 escapes me but his work will hopefully stimulate a fuller study of native Indian wage labour in the region.

Documenting some of the drama and variety of Indian labour history in BC should dispose of the view that Indians are new to wage work. This challenges a related misconception which holds that ongoing traditional values and attitudes somehow limited Indian capacities to deal with the new industries. Without prejudging the extent of continuing cultural traditions among BC natives, the present account holds that such traditions *did not* fundamentally limit the ability of most Indian workers to hold their own in many industries when opportunities were available. In other words, Indian workers were Kwakiutl or Lillooet or members of more particular social groups, but they could also be catty loggers, adept farmers, or skilled longshoremen. They could be and were both of these, and more.⁵

By the beginning of major European settlement in 1858, Indian peoples in many locales had already been enmeshed in the maritime and land-based fur trade for up to eighty years. Many features of what may seem to be 'traditional' Indian society had evolved during the course of the fur trade. While virtually all Indian people continued to be enmeshed in their

domestic economies as subsistence hunters and fishermen, fur hunting for trade was added to their round of activities. Some Indians became traders and a few became occasional employees for European trading companies. Others were independently engaged in washing placer gold and cutting logs or experimenting with the provision of a variety of products and services which were exchangeable for trade goods.

A volume might well be written about the Indian labour which was the precursor to the wage work dealt with here. The lives and work of the permanent Hudson Bay Company 'servants' —Metis, French Canadian, Iroquois, Kanaka, and others—and their relation to local Indian peoples would also be of interest. Despite the seemingly endless writings about the fur trade in Canada, very little systematic treatment has been given to those workers who constituted the majority of the fur trade personnel. A great deal is yet to be done in these realms by those with the inclination.

While increasingly enmeshed in the fur trade, in 1858 Indian people were not yet substantially involved in wage labour. The next thirty to forty years—till the end of the nineteenth century—would see the end of political autonomy, a rapid decline of fur trading in most areas, the shift of Indians to a minority status, but also their integration into virtually every major resource industry in the province as workers and owner-operators.

Not the first, but one of the consistently most important areas of Indian employment from 1870 on was in the commercial fishing and canning industry. The usual view of Indian participation in this industry is of native men and women following traditional pursuits, using techniques inherited from time immemorial in the waters and territories of their ancestors. Those enamored of the wonders of cultural conservation have viewed wage work in canneries as a slightly modified version of the traditional summer fishing encampment, in which women's work in fish preservation merely shifted to preserving fish in canneries for wages. Old wine in new bottles.

In fact, commercial fishing and work in canneries was strategically different from traditional subsistence fishing and became progressively more different as the industry evolved. To a large extent the gear, the methods, the knowledge, and the context of commercial fishing were novel. The primary mode of early commercial fishing was salmon gillnetting on river estuaries. This was distinct from the primary indigenous methods (involving weirs and fish traps, dip nets and drag nets, spearing, etc.). To a casual reader one type of net fishing may seem much the same as any other but the realities make them quite different for working fishermen.

While dug-out canoes continued in use for travel and subsistence fishing, Indian commercial fishermen were widely using planked cannery boats by and before the 1890s. Indian fishermen were among the first to acquire and install the cantankerous early gas engines shortly after the turn of the century. As important as fishing gear and techniques was knowledge of the changing fishing regulations, as well as information about employment conditions. Requisite was knowledge of how to secure jobs in canneries and how to contract for a cannery boat, and hold on to it. Indian fishermen were familiar with the changing fish rates, quotas, stipulations, company store prices etc., of specific canneries well before 1900.

A considerable proportion of the Indian commercial fishermen *did not* fish in their ancestral territories. They fished, especially in the years before WW I, in relatively close proximity to the canneries. These canneries did not draw exclusively on local Indian fishermen working waters known to them. Large numbers of Indian fishermen travelled long distances to fish for canneries in locales new to them. While members of nearby bands may have fished in their traditional waters, many Indian fishermen (possibly the majority) came to novel fishing grounds and had to learn the peculiarities of local tides and runs, the secrets of glory holes and snags, as much as any newcomer.

The canneries themselves, in which so many Indian women and some men worked, were among the more mechanized industries along the coast. Native women worked cleaning fish, filling cans, working with machines, amid a complex of clanking tinning machines,

alongside steam vats and tray boilers, near conveyor and transmission belts, amid steam, and pipes, and foremen. Those canneries may seem primitive and haywire by today's standards, but they were the industrialism of the resource frontier.

Indian men and women worked at cannery jobs on an early assembly line basis. Their work was at least partly geared by the demands of the canning line. They worked for wages, either straight wages or on a piece-work basis. They often lived in company cabins in the cannery villages which were built around the plant. They bought food and goods at the company store, the cost of which was checked off their earnings. They worked as part of a heterogeneous (although ghettoized) labour force.

A belief that life and work in the canneries and commercial fishing was merely a minor modification of traditional subsistence practices can only be sustained by a willful romanticism or an ignorance of what commercial fishing and canning was all about. And yet, Indian commercial fishing entailed greater continuity with traditional roles than obtained in most industries in which Indians worked.

What of Indian seamen and sealers? An Edward Curtis picture may spring to mind of hardy Indian canoemen paddling their marvellous craft along the coast, off to the potlatches or maybe out to hunt seals. They did that, of course, as well as transporting themselves and members of their families hundreds of miles up and down the coast to work in canneries, hopyards, sawmills, and to visit the bright lights of Victoria or Seattle. What is less frequently known is that there were Indian seamen working on coastal sailing vessels as well as on the decks and in the engine rooms of the early steam ships. Indian deck crews also worked the sternwheelers which plied the interior lakes and rivers of the province from the 1860s until the 1920s. Indian-owned schooners began to appear by the early 1870s and some of them were later constructed by Indian boat builders themselves. By 1910 at least two bands owned and operated their own steam-driven tug boats.

While some Aleut hunters travelled aboard European ships before 1820 to hunt fur seals, the main phase of pelagic sealing developed between the 1870s and 1911. Indian hunters and crewmen from much of the outer coast worked aboard the fleet of sealing vessels which carried them from the Oregon coast to the Bering Sea and back. They were canoe steersmen and hunters, but of necessity some were also seamen sailing in the stormiest waters of the world during the last days of sail. While these sealers represented a continuation of traditional activities, the context of pelagic sealing often placed them in some rather novel surroundings and company. They worked under white skippers and mates and often as part of mixed crews including white sealers. During the height of pelagic sealing, possibly forty to fifty Indian sealers stopped over in the port cities of Japan each year, to say nothing of San Francisco or Victoria.

One of the most firmly held maxims about native Indian history is that their traditional cultures militated against farming. The soil was mother earth and disturbing it was sacrilege—as the more high flown romances would have it. Supposedly, what little farming Indian people took up was due mainly to missionary and government pressure. Allegedly, it was quickly given up when native people felt at liberty to do so.

In fact, Indian farming in viable areas in BC initially evolved independently of both mission and government direction and in a number of regions developed into sophisticated mixed farming. In some areas it was extremely important for more than three generations. It declined largely due to the economics of small scale farming, additionally limited by certain government restrictions. While there probably were many Indian people who disliked farming, there were also many who made sustained attempts to continue farming, only to find it progressively less viable. Inherent cultural disinclinations were not at the heart of the matter.

Indian farming developed from a few groups tending potato gardens well before 1858 and the major Indian farming regions in the province were established by the mid 1880s. By then the bands around Cowichan and in the Fraser Valley, as well as some interior bands, had established mixed farms on which they raised livestock, cereals, market produce, fruit,

and fodder. By the 1890s Indian farms in some locales were comparable to white owned farms in those regions, with a similar complement of barns, houses, tools and livestock. Some Indian farms possessed much of the horse-drawn machinery then in use, occasionally including even the huge steam threshers which were then marvels of modernity.

While the majority of Indian farms remained primarily subsistence operations, they were of considerable importance in domestic budgets. These small farms often involved techniques such as irrigation, crop rotation, orchardry methods, and the skills of small stock keeping. That many Indian farmers, or their children, eventually gave up farming and went into wage work had less to do with the cultural imperatives of the past than with the fact that even seasonal wage work usually provided better returns than farming on a small scale. Many white homesteaders came to the same conclusion.

In the Cariboo and other parts of the southern interior, Indian cowboys and ranchers established herds ranging from commercial ranches to the more usual hard scrabble cattle operations. Probably there were always more landless and cattleless Indian cowboys and ranch hands than there were Indian ranchers. In parts of the Cariboo and Chilcotin, along the Nechako and on the Nicola Plateau, Indian cowboys were an important part of the ranch industry.

Every Canadian has heard of the French-Canadian and native voyageurs who once manned the canoe fur brigades through the northern and western reaches of Canada. In BC, Indian canoe freighters were of more localized importance. The covered freight wagon pulled by a four or six horse team is closer to the reality of Indian freighters than is the canoe. Indian packers and horse freighters were part of the transport chains which brought supplies to work camps, mines, and small settlements in the more isolated interior during the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Indian freighting and packing really came into prominence during the settlement phases of BC. Indians packed in supplies for the railway and other early construction projects throughout the province. From the beginning of the 1880s until about WW I Indian wagon freighters teamed supplies up the Cariboo road, out of Ashcroft and 150 Mile House, and elsewhere. They were preceded and supplemented by a generation of Indian horse packers spread from the Skeena to the US boundary region. Until replaced by trucks, Indian teamsters worked for farms and ranches, hauling on a local basis.

Some may believe that reserve-based enterprises are a recent phenomenon. In fact, reserve enterprises and local Indian businesses were not uncommon eighty to a hundred years ago. Some cottage industries attempted to replace purchased goods with locally produced items; one mission village in the 1870s had its own sawmill, a trading schooner, a tannery and cobbler shop, a spinning and weaving shop, a glass works and brick kiln, a blacksmith and hardware shop, a trading post, and yet other enterprises.

With certain exceptions, cottage industries disappeared quite early —probably because of their inherent uncompetitiveness with commercially produced goods. Cottage industries were sometimes established as a part of mission policies to keep their Indian communities as separate from the broader Canadian society and economy as possible. What the history of cottage industries did show was that it was quite possible to rapidly transmit the skills of new industries to native people; but it also demonstrated that such industries were not viable in an age of mass production when native people had the alternative of obtaining cash through wage work .

Some traditional manufactures, variously modified, had a more durable history than cottage industries. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century there was an upsurge in production of commercial handicrafts and art for the curio and ethnographic trade. Individual artists and craftsmen from many points along the coast and the interior produced masks, basketry, and carvings of great variety for sale to European collectors. However artistic and authentic this work was it was produced with the intent to make some money. Some Indian artists and performers wound up in rather surprising places as part of their ethnographic endeavors.

Canoe building probably witnessed a boom during the period of heightened coastal travel, and especially with pelagic sealing. Some Indian boat builders began constructing planked schooners, fishing boats, and other work boats for sale well before the turn of the century. In general, by or before 1900, a wide range of new artizanal skills existed on reserves. It was would not have been unusual to find skilled carpenters, blacksmiths, cobblers, haywire mechanics, and talented jacks-of-all-trades in many communities.

Independent Indian entrepreneurs of considerable variety sprang up. They owned and ran trading schooners; they operated their own stores on various reserves. In some locales Indian businessmen owned hotels, inns, cafes, pool halls and other more specialized emporia. In at least a few places Indian distillers did heroic service in surreptitiously brewing the 'water of life', they produced a pretty fair product, according to some appreciative samplers. In a more respectable vein, by 1900 settlements such as Port Simpson and Masset contained the range of stores and services typical of small towns on the resource frontier—most of them owned and run by Indian businesspersons.

A common view is that whatever wage labour Indian people in BC were involved in during this period, they were tied to their own locales: that they were an inward-looking people, rich in their own customs but unknowledgeable about events of the larger world. Considering their work-related travels one may wonder about this. Already by the mid 1870s BC Indians were migrating to work in sawmills, canneries, hopyards, docks, and all manner of jobs from Alaska to the American Northwest. Some were working on coastal shipping and got as far as San Francisco and during the following decade there were Indian sealers aboard the schooners putting into Japanese ports and waters.

Although it may not strictly be part of labour history, we should consider a few of the tours pursued by native people from BC. A team of seven Bella Coola men contracted to tour museums and give public exhibitions of their manufactures and dances in Germany during 1885-1886. They surveyed the scene in Germany, attracted the attention of Franz Boas, and later met him during the first days of *his* first anthropological tour of BC. Apparently none of the Bella Coola visitors wrote a monograph about Germany of the 1880s. But for that matter, neither did Boas.

Over the next twenty years Indian men and women from the coast and the interior toured and performed at the Chicago Columbian Exposition and at the St Louis World Fair; they made consulting trips to the Field Museum at Chicago and to the Natural History Museum in New York, as well as visiting other American settlements. Some even toured the European continent. While relatively few, they represent the far greater number who travelled the Pacific coast as part of their search for work. Native people from Ontario and further east had been engaged in similar circuits and in overseas tours for almost a century previously, passages which were, in some respects, even more amazing.

There were a number of industries in which Indians worked which only the most unregenerate romantic can consider to be traditional. Some may wish to see Indian labour in logging as akin to 'woodcraft', and may find no major difference between the occasional tree felling of aboriginal times and the maze of skids, spring boards, steam donkeys, cables, bull blocks, etc. etc. used in commercial logging by the turn of the century. In fact, there was very little similarity between indigenous woodworking and the requirements of commercial logging.

Independent Indian loggers were delivering logs to the early coastal sawmills by 1856. During the next two generations they worked as handloggers and in the logging camps of companies large and small. By 1910 members of at least fifty bands in BC were engaged in logging and sawmilling, from the coast to the Kootenays, on isolated inlets and near burgeoning towns. They were working as independent handloggers, as members of Indian-owned logging companies, and in some of the largest corporate logging operations in the province. In some cases, the grandfathers of the 1910 fallers may already have been loggers.

Sawmill labour may even have preceded logging as a source of employment. Sawmills provided little scope for uniquely Indian work patterns and roles. While primitive when

compared to plants of today, early sawmills (along with canneries) were the vanguard of industrialism in many of the resource regions of BC. Indian workers laboured as boom men, on the green chain, and as gang labour. In some mills there were Indian foremen and Indian skilled workers —sawyers and men operating the log carriage, as well as others maintaining the steam boilers. Indeed, from the 1880s on a number of local sawmills were owned, and operated by Indian communities themselves or in conjunction with local missions. They provided lumber both for use by band members and for regional sale.

If Indian sawmill workers and loggers were employed on a seasonal and fluctuating basis, and interspersed their wage labour with subsistence activities, this was not especially different from the way many non-Indian workers were then employed. In the sawmills themselves, Indians and others worked in factory-like conditions. They worked around whirring circular and head saws, planers and edgers, steam driven carriages, clanking dog ladders and so forth. The discipline of work, even if somewhat flexible by today's standards, was that of an industrial plant.

Indian longshoring developed around the export sawmills in the Crofton-Chemainus and Burrard Inlet areas from the late 1860s and on. Initially, sawmill work and longshoring lumber were broadly interchangeable and a body of Indian sawmill-longshore workers emerged around some of the main export sawmills. There have been Indian families with more or less continuous work histories as longshoremen for five generations and more. Some sailed on lumber barques to longshore timber from the myriad of sawmill ports of the coast, others worked with the most cosmopolitan of work crews. On the Burrard inlet docks they worked with Hawaiians and Chileans, with Indians from up and down the coast, and with men from every corner of the globe. They also were central in forming some of the first longshore unions in the Vancouver area.

It is not known if any native people in BC gaped in amazement at their first sight of 'fire wagon' locomotives, as so quaintly recounted in older school books. But Indian workers certainly helped cut the grade, build the tressels, and lay the rails on which the iron horses ran. While helping to build the railroads many Indian employees must have worked around construction locomotives, before these symbols of modernity first chugged into the towns emerging along the line.

From 1881 until WW 1 Indians worked in the construction of virtually every railway in BC. They worked as navvies in gang labour and sometimes took up sub-contracts for grading and clearing right-of-way. A few became skilled axemen and worked on timber bridge construction. Many contracted their own teams and wagons to haul supplies and ballast for the construction of the grade. They laboured on the construction of the CPR mainline, the Esquimalt and Nanaimo RR, on the Kettle Valley line, the Canadian Northern main line and on the Grand Trunk Pacific which linked coastal Prince Rupert to the new railhead at Prince George.

Many native railway workers came from the settlements along the line of such rail construction, but others travelled long distances to obtain such jobs. Later, Indian section hands helped maintain the tracks, from their completion until today. Even if they were only a small proportion of the army of construction workers involved, Indian railway workers were there.

There was no gold to be found lying in the streets of the young province, but there were thin deposits of the stuff to be found in the sand and gravel deposits of many gold-bearing streams in a number of regions. Indian placer miners, working their own claims, were scattered throughout much of the interior from the 1850s until the 1930s. An undetermined number of Indian prospectors also ranged the interior and parts of the coast, looking for copper, gold, lead, silver, and other saleable ore leads. In the Vancouver Island coal fields, Indian labour was employed in surface work and in coal loading at some locales, although none apparently worked underground.

Some readers may hold that while there were Indian employees in the resource industries, they should not be thought of as 'workers.' In some sense this may be correct - self

identification and articulate feelings about being members of a broader working class were probably rare. However Indian workers played a part in some early unions and labour actions in BC.⁶

In 1893 one of the first fishermen's strikes on the Fraser was supported by Indian fishermen. In addition to rejecting the advice of a Department of Indian Affairs agent to return to work three of the Indian leaders addressed public rallies, in Vancouver and elsewhere, in support of the striking fishermen. Indian fishermen and cannery workers were sometimes deeply involved in the strikes and organizational battles of the industry from 1900 on. They participated in their own groupings and as members of broader unions. It is quite a complex history of advances and retreats, of changing alliances and strategies.

It may be that Indian fishermen's organizations were ethnic defense organizations in a novel form. At times they were directed at excluding Japanese fishermen and at other times they may have acted in concert with canning companies to advance their own particular interests. However, during various periods some Indian fishermen also supported and worked with non-native fishermen in broader union organizations.

In the coal fields, the Nanaimo Coal Trimmers Protective Association was organized in 1889. It probably had a substantial Indian membership, since they comprised a considerable proportion of that work force. Indian coal trimmers appear to have participated in the great Vancouver Island coal strike of 1912-1914, at least to the extent of refusing to act as strikebreakers.

In 1906 the Duncan local of the Federal Labour Union was composed partly of Indian workers. They sent an Indian delegate to the Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress held in Victoria that year, which passed a resolution committing the TLC to pursue the question of Indian franchise. In the same year, Indian longshoremen of the Burrard Inlet area were central in forming the Lumberhandlers Industrial Union, Local 526 of the Industrial Workers of the World. Indian lumberhandlers participated in virtually all the union struggles of the Vancouver waterfront, some as union members but others as strike breakers. Squamish members were central in founding the International Longshoremen's Association in 1912, and were part of the bitter Vancouver dock strikes in 1923 and 1935. Some later helped establish the first Canadian local of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union.

It is usual to follow-up accounts as the above with an obligatory dictum to the effect that 'Indian people and cultures continued unchanged in essence, regardless of what lives they lived'. This seems an excessive and dogmatic claim. It is true that some Indian peoples were not basically incorporated into the industrial economy during this period. Different spheres of Indian society were affected and changed to varying extents: it may be that some changes were less fundamental than they appeared. But Indian communities which evolved during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries incorporated much of what was then Euro-Canadian culture. Naturally they were not exact copies of 'Canadian society' and distinctively native cultural elements persisted, to differing degrees among different native groups. But the overwhelming emphasis which the literature has given the persistence of Indian traditions has obscured the broad changes which did occur.

The alleged continuation of distinct Indian work patterns in the new industries may be exaggerated by comparing them to middle class stereotypes, rather than to the actual behaviour of non-Indian workers in the same industries at the time. A good deal of what is sometimes attributed to a continuation of seasonal Indian work patterns seem, in reality, to be variants of a pattern once common to most primary resource workers in BC, regardless of derivation.

Robin Fisher's *Culture and Conflict* describes Indian labour as having become irrelevant to the BC economy after major European settlement, adding that what employment Indians obtained was neither 'steady nor permanent' and only acquired 'at the pleasure of whites.'⁷

That work in the resource industries was neither 'steady nor permanent' and that jobs were obtained only 'at the pleasure of' the employers, applied equally to non-Indian workers. While it is true that Indian labour in some regions took on the characteristics of a marginal labour force, that was by no means universal. In many cases it makes more sense to consider Indian workers as an elemental part of various industrial labour forces. Neither the absence of 'regular jobs' nor the need to sell their labour power inherently differentiated Indian from other wage workers.

Whatever the nature of employment, wage labour became of importance to many Indian families and groups. They were not necessarily the last hired-first fired nor did they regularly labour under differential wage rates. Taking both cash and non-cash components of domestic economies into account, there was probably a considerable overlap in incomes of Indian and non-Indian primary resource workers. It is difficult to say to what degree Indian as compared to other workers were exploited. The business records of the early enterprises are often tenuous and many of those entrepreneurs may have had only 'bottom line' realization of what the costs and profits were. ⁸

Although Indian people took part of the general industrial development of the province, it is also true that they were subject to special restrictions laid down by a series of 'native laws' implemented by both the provincial and federal governments. Such laws appear to have affected the economies of independent Indian producers more severely than Indian wage workers.

Since *Indians at Work* was first published a body of research has dealt with the policies, administrative practices and the notables of the Department of Indian Affairs. This should help fill *some* of the lacunae which existed for writing Native Indian history. But it is crucial to know what administrative actions actually were taken in the field, rather than what the legal prerogatives and policies of Superintendents of the D.I.A. were.

When accounts attempt to spell out the operation of native laws and the specifics of Indian administration, where they document the consequences of policies and actions, when they delineate the interests behind such laws, such studies deal with important dimensions of Indian history. However, little is added when accounts simply repeat the refrain that 'Native people must be understood as an internal colony.' Sometimes the glibness of such truisms can be detrimental to a fuller understanding.

Some readers may feel that the present study does not provide sufficient emphasis on the cultural changes forced upon Indian groups by external agencies. Others may miss indignant accounts of racist stereotypes promulgated by notables of the time. While racism was prevalent enough, it was by no means directed only against Indians and non-Europeans. While institutionalized 'racial' disabilities are a part of the story - it is not the main story dealt with here. If there is any ideological predilection involved it is the proposition that class and class interests, not racism or racial interests, are ultimately what made the world go around - in British Columbia of a century ago as today.

It may legitimately be held that the present account should deal in greater depth with the past struggles of Indian groups to maintain lands and resources. That also was a part of the picture. It receives brief mention in the chapter dealing with European settlement, but it is a topic cannot be dealt with here in any full way here. This is an initial survey of native Indian wage labour. There are many areas left undiscussed. ⁹

The body of this book can be taken as a refutation of the view which holds that native Indians were occupationally limited by the continuing imperatives of their aboriginal cultures. Readers will note that disposing of this view does not require any reference to 'ethnocentrism', that perennial *deus ex machina*. Anyone who can visualize the jobs in the industries to be described should realize that Indian workers involved had to be adept and hard working. Whatever else they were, whatever cultural traditions they retained, Indian

loggers were loggers, Indian longshoremen were longshoremen, Indian cannery workers were cannery workers.

Virtually all Indian adults were employed in some way. Government subsidy payments were effectively non-existent throughout this entire period. Native people in BC had to support themselves by working for wages or in subsistence production or, more usually, a combination of both. There was no other choice. That also applied to the non-Indian population during the era of bracing free enterprise. There were no guaranteed medical services, no pensions, no 'social safety net' for *anyone*.

What some romantics find particularly disgraceful about Indian-European relations in Canada is that Indians may 'become' workers. This is often intended as a damning comment on the depths to which native people have been forced. Such advocates have little conception of how long and how broadly Indians have been engaged in wage work in many regions. To romantics, being a worker is a terrible fate indeed, something which native people must be helped to avoid. Some apparently have an image of working people as an amorphous, cultureless mass—the mythical abyss. Naturally, Indian workers were and are not like that. Neither was anyone else.

Some historians have come to recognize that labour history is more than just a chronicle of the formation and policies of labour unions; more than a chronicle of strikes and confrontations with employers and the state. Such historians have delved into the day-to-day routines, the work and skills, the on-the-job social relations, as well as the home life, budgets, health, and fraternal societies of those they are writing about. In short, they have looked at labour history as the social history of particular groups of working people.¹⁰

I am in full agreement with this approach and see it as the proper goal for this study. However, the actual scope of the present account is more restricted and deals mainly with the work done and jobs held by native Indians in various BC industries. A more rounded social history of native Indian people in the province will have to first proceed on a more regional basis.

Many of the accounts of Indian labour presented here are necessarily cursory. Many of the bald statements made here should be read as having unstated qualifiers such as 'it seems,' or 'in the cases discovered,' or 'probably.' I have not noted the intricacies and contentions which could be dealt with in a more delimited study.

I have used 'wage work' and 'independent producers' in a rather general way. The intent is to emphasize the extent to which Indian labour was articulated, in one way or another, with the broader economy. Some readers may legitimately hold that many Indian people were not engaged specifically in *wage* labour—i.e., that they did not receive wages but instead were owner-operators providing commodities for sale to corporate buyers. This distinction does not imply that Indian independent producers - such as handloggers or commercial fishermen- were thereby removed from the industrial conditions which applied in the resource economies. There was a spectrum of modes of employment in many industries: most Indian and non Indian resource workers laboured in a variety of such arrangements during their lives. The formation of a class of Indian employers from the owner-operator sector was an important development and had/has relevance to the interests and alliances made by that sector of the Indian population. Unless specified, such entrepreneurs are not implied where the term 'independent producers' is used in the text.

Although I use the terms 'workers' and 'class' I have avoided the designation 'proletariat'. Not because it is unfashionable but because it bespeaks a class consciousness which was either absent among most native people or of which I have no reliable evidence. This innocence is not inherent in the native experience and among some native sectors in Latin American one can correctly speak of an Indian proletariat. It is anything *but* the demeaning estimation which some scholars take it to be.

Apart from the general paucity of accounts about Indian workers, some major imbalances exist in the record of Indian societies in BC. There exists a great disparity by region and topic. Relatively few studies deal with the post contact history of the peoples of the interior

of the province. Even on the comparatively well documented coast there has been a concentration of work on relatively few groups. For a long time the primary interest of anthropologists was in retrieving and theorizing about aspects of the indigenous cultures. A few social institutions have received a staggeringly disproportionate coverage. Above all else, potlatching and the ideology of rank and kinship. It is not surprising that many lay readers have the impression that most members of coastal Indian societies were engaged in or preparing for potlatches from dawn to dusk, from winter to fall, year in and year out. Such over-emphasis has exaggerated the centrality of certain native institutions and has helped foster a view that when these institutions disintegrated or were banned, all else came tumbling down. This diverts attention from much more massive and fundamental changes which demanded re-adjustment of native Indian societies.

Many day-to-day activities, which in terms of time and economic importance probably bulked larger than the more dramatic institutions, continued to play a role in variously modified forms in Indian communities. These have not usually captured the public imagination as have accounts of potlatching and winter ceremonials.

Another imbalance in the anthropological record is that there is relatively little information about the role of women in the newly emerging economy. The general implication is that women's worlds remained little changed, or at least had a much greater continuity with their traditional roles than did that of Indian men. There may be some truth in this but it cannot be taken on faith. Both the early involvement of some women in wage labour and also the broader changes in native societies must have involved adjustments in domestic activities. It would seem that comparatively few Indian women were interviewed in the earlier ethnographic accounts.

Even more problematic, a disproportionate amount of the information which went into writing ethnographies appears to have come from the chiefly and newly dominant sectors of native societies. There were few accounts by members or descendents of the 'lower rungs' and slave classes in coastal societies. Such people may have been involved quite differently in many of the 'central' social institutions than traditional accounts would lead us to believe. It may be that their responses to the changes brought about by European colonization and the spread of wage industries were rather different from that of chiefly families.

As one exasperated anthropologist wrote, more than a generation ago, '*...the ethnographic picture of the Northwest Coast as visualized, taught, and accepted by many anthropologists is that which in fact applies only to the nobility of the southern Kwakiutl. ...there are masses of ethnographic data relating to the distinctions between the upper and the lower classes and the cultural disabilities suffered by the latter. The reality of the lower class and the magnitude of the cultural distance separating it from the upper class are firmly established in ethnographic facts and citing Drucker to the contrary will not dispose of them.... I think that much of the confusion is due to the fact that many field workers followed Boas in giving attention to the more remarkable phases of culture with the result that the homely habits of the commoners did not come to be known.*'¹¹

One of the most persistent misconceptions of native Indian history in BC is the vision of a golden past age. In this view, indigenous societies on the North Pacific coast existed in a veritable Garden of Eden where ready-smoked salmon flanks launched themselves, glittering from the streams, into trenchers of salalberry and oolachan sauce, where a superabundance of foods was always and everywhere available with the merest of effort. A veritable land of Cockaigne. In such accounts, wars and raids were mainly rough games for prestige, slaves were not really slaves, chiefs were the servants of their people, all necessities were shared, and settlements were rife with cooperation and equity. Spiritualism and tradition reigned supreme and almost everyone was part of one big family.

While the nature of the indigenous societies is mainly outside the purview of this study, readers should understand that many informed accounts paint a picture quite contrary to the above rosy view. Popular conceptions generally disregard or gloss over considerable evidence of suffering, hardships, and oppression between and within indigenous Indian

societies. While this is not a justification for whatever inequities followed in the wake of European settlement, it should remind us that native Indian societies did not witness a fall from natural grace at the arrival of Europeans. Given the fantasies about the native past which now pervade the mass media, and even public education, the above point cannot be made strongly enough.

The responses of Indian peoples to the changing opportunities and restrictions of the early colonial and industrial eras in BC were varied and intricate. One should give members of those generations credit for being something more than mere pawns responding to the acculturative pressures of Euro-Canadian society. They recognized that no solution existed in a return to a past age, even if that had been possible. If there is any single process which is wondrous in this account, it is the resilience and adaptability of Indian people during those early, chaotic, generations.

One would like to hear some accounts of those native individuals, men and women, who for whatever reasons, ventured beyond the bounds on their societies. Surely there must have been *some* native people, like many Europeans, who were not especially eager to carry on the ancestral customs of 'their people'. Native people who were closer to past traditions may have evaluated them somewhat differently than their descendants do. The commitment to preserving and revitalizing indigenous culture which we see today may have been less than universal in earlier periods.

An account of native Indian labour should be considered in relation to the life and labour of non-native people in BC. I have occasionally alluded to or interspersed brief descriptions of work in specific industries as recounted by nonIndians. This may invalidate such evidence for some readers, however it underscores that whites and others tackled the same jobs as Indians did with economic results which were materially not much different.

The history of Indian workers in most of the primary industries of BC, while known in part to some, will probably be novel to many. Much experience may now be lost, however much probably still remains in the sometimes fresh, sometimes fading memories of older Indian men and women throughout this province. It may be that younger native people, like their white counterparts, have little knowledge about such aspects of their past and have accepted variously distorted versions of their own and our common history. There is reason to feel pride in the vitality and determination of Indian men and women who for five and more generations faced and met the social and industrial challenges of their times.

If a better understanding of the real history of Indian working people cannot serve as a guide for the future, it may serve as a warning about blind alleys and fanciful misconceptions which lead nowhere. A fuller history would attempt to illuminate the common experiences and interests which both Indian and non-Indian working people in BC share. In a number of ways then, this study is only a part of the picture.

Chapter 2

Ethnohistorical Background

Aspects of the Indigenous World

The indigenous population in the region which is presently British Columbia was composed of peoples with quite different societies, quite unevenly distributed over the land mass. Some 60 per cent to two-thirds of the indigenous population lived strung along the narrow coastal strip and major islands seaward of the Coast Mountains. Far less than ten per cent of the total population lived in the boreal forest of the northeastern half of the province. The peoples of the southern interior plateau and valleys possibly comprised a quarter of the total population. Within these broad regions, native Indian populations were concentrated along major salmon rivers or at particular coastal sites. There were possibly 80,000 native people living in the territory of present-day BC in the late 1770s.¹

It is somewhat arbitrary to fix one's purview on the disparate set of regions now organized as British Columbia. Ongoing intertribal contact, trade, and population exchange among Indian groups was of long standing. Some important pre-European trade routes ran from the interior to the coast along the Fraser, Bella Coola, Skeena, and Nass rivers, while others criss-crossed the interior. It was not a simple network. Archaeological work has delineated at least twenty-two trade trails linking the settlements on the Skeena to the Nass as well as to the immediate hinterlands. (MacDonald, G. 1984: 77) While there were seemingly unpopulated and little utilized areas, most regions, or the resources therein, were claimed as the territories of one band or chiefly family or another. The definitiveness and inclusiveness of these territories varied, their boundaries shifted, but there were few zones to which no groups laid claims.

Such social entities as Kwakiutl, Tsimshian, or Nootka had no political coherence or meaning. In many cases even the names of such ethnic units were attached by later European observers; there do not seem to have been any indigenous terms for such broader cultural groups. They were merely culturally similar groups speaking variants of the same language. No 'tribal' political integration existed, although a shifting hegemony of certain major villages and chiefs over nearby ones sometimes arose. The maximum extent of practical political coordination was the population which wintered in a particular village site. Even those groupings were somewhat fluid, with less strongly attached individuals and families sometimes shifting from one winter village to another. Among Salishan communities along the lower Fraser, even the members of primary winter villages did not necessarily act in concert, but as members of particular chiefly houses with critical kin ties cross-cutting village allegiances.

Among the northern hunters, primary hunting bands were amorphous and changing collections of extended families indigenously. It may be that it was the process of government administration which formalized the membership and to a certain extent set the social boundaries of the northern hunting and trapping bands. As corporate entities such band societies were a late development. Hunting and trapping strategies among boreal hunting groups, under both indigenous and later conditions, entailed some critical social requirements. Foremost among these was a continual flexibility and the capacity to rearrange people to shifting animal resources. Exclusive, family-owned, territories were probably not indigenous among hunting bands and would have hampered flexible population readjustments. However, those groups whose basic subsistence requirements were met by salmon fishing on inland streams may have evolved trapping tracts more or less exclusively held by certain chiefly families.

Few if any native groups, however thinly spread and remote they were, remained truly isolated and separated from contact with others. There seems to have been a continuous, if uneven, flow of ideas, people, and techniques between Indian populations in pre-European

times - both peacefully and otherwise. Archaeological evidence of indigenous trade networks indicate goods crossing ethnic, racial and almost every geographic boundary. At one time anthropological accounts tended to emphasize the uniqueness of every native society described. This transmitted a picture of greater separation and distinctiveness than probably existed.²

Indigenous societies in BC were more varied than anywhere else in Canada. They included speakers of many different languages and displayed a variety of cultural traditions. To recognize that there were broadly similar types of Indian societies does not mean that there were not important cultural differences among them.

Three broad types of social organization existed. Along the coast, native societies were typically organized as chiefdoms -although the case of the populous Coastal Salish groups is somewhat ambiguous. This means that political authority in any group was vested in the heads of a limited number of chiefly families, with much of the population comprising classes with markedly different rights. Throughout the southern interior, Indian societies were of a 'tribal' type, organized mainly along kinship lines. Chiefs, while present, did not indigenously command the power they did on the coast nor were there 'class' distinctions comparable to those which existed in chiefdom level society. Throughout the northern interior, Indian societies were organized at the band level, in which the main functioning units were multi-family camping groups. No broader political direction existed and even formal kinship organization may have been of secondary importance outside the multi-family hunting group.

No native society in BC had developed anything like a state level of organization, with its attendant coordination of political power and the wider possibilities for directing resources and labour, for good or evil, which this entails. The history of those indigenous societies which, independently, did evolve into state organizations in Meso-America indicate that native ruling classes had no lessons to learn from anyone on the matter of rapacity. While state level organization is nowhere to be found in the Northwest coast there were marked differences in the degree of social equality-inequality entailed in the different types of society.

The subsistence resources on the coast and river estuaries were both greater and sometimes more localized than found throughout the interior of the region. The size and concentration of settlements among coastal groups were also greater than those found inland. Coastal winter villages ranged from occasionally under a hundred to over 500 persons. Loose confederations of villages and hamlets around specific inlets may have been in the process of forming (for instance, among the Nootka) before contact and did develop early during the fur trade period. These might include a few thousand persons under at least the nominal direction of a leading chief or family. Such groupings probably were evanescent, growing or declining depending upon the fortunes of war and internal factionalism.³

The large concentrations of Indian people which developed in a few locales during the fur trade, such as those around Fort Simpson and Fort Rupert in the middle of the nineteenth century, were not indigenous. There were no internal structures capable of coordinating the distinct groups which congregated at such sites. This may help explain why factionalism and conflicts were rife around such settlements.

The winter villages were comprised of the chiefly families who owned the primary fish and other resource sites. The extended families which wintered over in one village were the effective social units; they and not the village grouping per se were the fundamental constituent units. There was usually no effective political authority broader than the villages, although sentiments of cultural affinity and kinship might exist between villages. Marriages between chiefly families, potlatches and other social ties, might link villages but these linkages were sufficiently changeable that war and raids between different villages of the same cultural group could and did occur.⁴

The settlements in the southern interior were smaller and possibly more fluid than those typical on the coast. There were permanent villages near fishing sites on the major salmon streams but, despite the effective storage of seasonal catches, overall subsistence resources were more diverse and fluctuating. Even the salmon harvested upriver may have been less nutritional than they were downstream (Kew, M. 1976)

Throughout the northern interior of BC, Indian societies were typically on the band level, with summer camps of rarely more than a hundred people breaking down throughout most of the year into the basic units composed of extended families of up to two dozen people. They were more or less continually involved in seasonal moves to different resource sites. While virtually all Indian societies had some degree of custodial control over major food resources, the coastal groups were the furthest removed from a system of communally owned resources. Among coastal peoples all major resource sites were owned or controlled by chiefly families. Chiefs and the extended households they represented 'owned' the sites for weirs and dip netting, the clam and camas beds, and the main sites of other food resources. While coastal chiefs may have 'owned' these sites and resources in the name of their people, while they may have acted partly as administrators of their use by other band-members, they did not necessarily administer them for everyone's equal benefit. Chiefs and their immediate families were materially better off than those who did not have rights to the major resource sites. A consequence was that some families might suffer hunger while others feasted.

In short, a system of proto-classes based upon more or less restricted ownership of strategic resources had evolved among indigenous societies of the coast in pre-European times. The extent of 'class' formation varied and the nature and degree of 'exploitation' is much debated. But the situation was rather different than popular images of indigenous communities where everyone is part of the 'community' and where necessities are invariably shared.⁵

Gary Coupland summarizes archaeological evidence which outlines the evolution of corporate resource-owning groups and internally ranked societies from a basal condition of equalitarian band societies in the Skeena River region. *Prehistoric Culture Change at Kitselas Canyon* (1988) is a complex account and it is difficult for a non-specialist to evaluate the archaeological evidence surveyed. One is sometimes puzzled by the measures taken as indicators of greater or lesser rank and delimited property rights. (Coupland, G. 272-288) Much of what would be observable in an extant society has left only tenuous material indicators behind for prehistorians to evaluate.

Nevertheless, considering the evidence of sites ranging from Prince Rupert Harbor to Kitselas Canyon, and covering more than 5000 years of cultural evolution in the region, Coupland outlines the forces which led to the type of internally ranked societies which emerged on the North coast. This seems to have emerged at Kitselas Canyon by 2,500 B.P. and was probably a recurring process whose results were reached elsewhere two thousand years before European contact. (Coupland, G. 295-299) If I understand him correctly, the process involved a long initial period when coastal groups migrated seasonally to fishing sites on the Skeena and then shifted to marine resources at winter locales. These were equalitarian band societies based on the exploitation of a wide array of resources which varied seasonally.

Coupland proposes that sections of this population came to concentrate their subsistence activities on the seasonal runs of salmon, and established themselves year-round on the most strategic salmon fishing sites on the Skeena. They came to preempt those sites, or at least control them, for their own corporate uses. He suggests that comparable processes probably took place elsewhere on the major salmon rivers and proposes that the relative status of different native groups varied in rough proportion to the productivity of the fishing sites they controlled. From this point on, warfare seems to become a recurrent feature of aboriginal life in the region.

The process whereby corporate local groups became internally ranked societies, with a limited number of chiefly families owning or controlling the major resource sites, is less clear. His suggestion seems to be that chiefly authority over others made possible a more thorough exploitation of local resources through chiefly direction (Coupland, G. 101-102). There is no implication that such was necessarily for the benefit of *all* concerned.

Coupland notes recent reconsiderations of Northwest Coast societies, which hold that slavery had important material bases. That slaves and members of lower classes did provide food and other surpluses for the chiefly lineages. If I understand Coupland correctly, he also suggests that potlatches and other institutions involved in the validation chiefly statuses, *did not* necessarily operate to redistribute food to members as a whole but operated primarily to the benefit of the chiefly families (Coupland, G.19-25). To whatever extent further evidence bears him out, it is an audacious departure from the Panglossian kind of functionalism which long bemused anthropology.

Turning back to the ethnographic evidence. It is true that native Indian societies in BC were kinship-based societies, in which status and rights were inherited through various descent lines. But kinship organization was not exclusively a matter of family relationships, as we may conceive of them. Instead, kinship was the matrix of most social organization — a pervasive complex of roles, duties, and expectations which were ascribed to individuals by their positions in the kinship system. It is a mistake to think of kin relationships in such societies as *necessarily* warm and supportive. Kinship was *also* the sociology of authority and power, ranging from supportive to exploitative.

The fundamental social and corporate units of coastal societies were the household groups—the chiefly family and other 'dependents' living in a single 'big house.' These household units have variously been termed lineage segments, local clans, numayms, and other indigenous terms. They were the primary corporate units, owning rights to resource sites and territories. They ranged in size from a dozen to possibly fifty people; with an inner core of more closely related kinsmen plus others attached in quite heterogeneous ways. A powerful chief might have control or influence over the lesser household groups in a village, but not necessarily. Nuclear families were *not* the fundamental units. There may always have been a certain fluidity in the manner in which kinsmen became attached to the corporate households, with pragmatic considerations playing an important role.

There appears to have been a considerable differences in the permanence of such household units and of village composition in different regions of the coast. Suttles' accounts of southern Coast Salish groups describe populations in which the intervillage kinship alliances of households might be as important as their ties with other households in the village where they resided. This made for an ever-shifting network of kin ties between neighbouring and more distant Salish villages.

Although the more narrowly held corporate rights prevailing in the stratified societies of the northern coast seem to have entailed a more static village membership, Miller points to an important element of flexibility which existed among the coastal Tsimshian.

While nobles had a fairly fixed and rigid relationship to their household and town, commoners, considered unreliable and shifty, picked their winter household from those of their noble kinsmen on the basis of which of them offered the greatest personal advantage to them. This decision was discussed all summer long and confirmed by participation in the games, theatricals, and visiting that occurred at particular fall places.....Commoners could decide on the relative abundance of the winter supplies for a particular household because each of the name holders had held back a small sample of the range of fish, meat, berries, fruit and so forth from their territories. Each of them in turn sponsor a feast just after everyone was back in the village, during which time all could 'taste' what their territories had provided for that year. (Miller, J.1984: 32)

It is impossible to now decide how real that choice was but feast-giving Tsimshian nobles presumably did not dole out their stored food stuffs to 'shifty commoners' simply for

prestigious or altruistic reasons. It was the labour power provided by the 'clients' they might attract which, in part, produced the surplus food tasted in the village feasts.

In general, coastal villages were basically a collection of corporate households. In some locales the major villages were fringed by the habitations of the 'lower class'. In other cases such families were concentrated in nearby hamlets; they were the descendants of families or larger groups which in various ways had lost claims to status and thereby to primary resource sites. Such lower class households were only marginally attached to the corporate kin groups of the main villages but were broadly under their control, it would seem.

Village political authority was merely the direction of the largest and most prestigious of the households. In some regions, the chiefly households and villages they inhabited were also ranked in order of prestige. Although such ranking was probably always open to some degree of contest.⁶

Many of the coastal societies recognized descent through both maternal and paternal lines, individuals inheriting different roles and rights through both lines. Some coastal societies were more stringent in the ascription of kin membership. Such matters are the delight of ethnographers but it is often difficult to separate the indigenous social theory of how things are supposed to work (which is what kinship systems are) from what took place in actuality.

Membership in descent groups was more rigidly prescribed and the boundaries of such groups more clearly drawn in the stratified societies of the central and northern coast. Stricter rules regarding kin group membership were in large part concerns over who had the right to share in corporate rights to resource sites and who came within the authority of which property-owning group. It implies a degree of fixity in such societies, something which is not always evident.⁷

Where corporate control over resources was less exclusive, or where material conditions demanded a greater degree of flexibility in social arrangements, groupings based upon descent were more fluid. The peoples of the BC interior seem to have been relatively more flexible in their adjustments and readjustments of people and corporate groups. Among the northern hunting bands, pragmatic considerations of enrolling and readjusting members to functioning hunting and trapping groups were at least as important as any kinship ideology. Not all members of coastal Indian villages were equally involved in the intricacies of kinship relations. Slaves everywhere along the coast were held to have *no* kinship ties or rights. The only inheritance they bequeathed to their descendants was their status as slaves. They were outside the bounds of normal kinship. The lower echelons of 'commoners' were also largely removed from the kinship claims on the chiefly families.

While most commoners may have been formally members of one or another of the leading kin groups in a village, they might be poor relations indeed. They had little or no say in the direction of chiefly-corporate decisions. They had few or no claims to inherited rank and their role in potlatches was mainly to act as suppliers of the food and goods distributed by chiefs to other chiefly families. Some commoners might be marginal participants in potlatches, but this rarely served to change their status. Relations between chiefs and their lower class kin could be threatening and authoritarian. In some cases it was impolitic to even comment upon genealogical connections between persons of disparate wealth and power.⁸

Descent and inherited rank were of prime importance to chiefly families. Leading families tended to have important affinal ties (ties of marriage) with similar families in neighbouring or more distant villages. Commoners tended to marry locally. The chiefly families had kin ties and inherited claims across a number of communities. This might serve as a linchpin between different villages but it also provided additional underpinnings to chiefly power. Inherited rights to names, titles, ranks and resources were not acquired merely by birth and through descent. There might be multiple claims to particular positions which could be made through various lines of descent. Inherited rights were, in a sense, potential claims which had to be validated. Such validation came through the public bestowal and *public*

acceptance of given names and ranks through various ceremonials, which varied in name and in particulars from society to society. Such transfers of authority and rank ranged from the most mundane and uncontested to the infrequent but dramatic rivalrous potlatches.

The word 'potlatch' itself is only a general term taken from Chinook jargon (meaning 'to give away') and is used to designate a host of different public displays of wealth, primarily concerned with transferring or consolidating political status. Each coastal society had their own names for differing rosters of potlatch-like ceremonials, few of which operated in exactly the same way. Potlatches might be distinguished from other feasts which had a certain similarity. What distinguishes potlatches was that they were a public validation of claims to specific ranks.

Accounts of the various ceremonies in which prestigious names, ranks, and positions were transferred often tend to emphasize the non-material nature of what was being claimed. They often treat such transfers as exotic symbols of prestige, they underscore the seemingly esoteric nature of the rights to display certain crests, rights to sing particular songs, to participate in particular dance societies, to be known by particular titles. While the quest for prestige and the imperatives of potlatching did have a certain dynamic of its own among coastal societies, some accounts have tended to obscure an underlying aspect of such doings. We should understand that many (though not all) of the rights to immaterial items - rights to particular crests, titles, etc.- were like title deeds. Claims to social rank and to status positions included rights to particular resource tracts and control over some quite material interests. They were not *merely* prestigious titles.⁹

I do not know what proportion of the titles acquired in potlatch-like feasts *did indeed* convey claims to certain resource tracts. The reality was probably that some such titles did entail 'ownership' rights while others didn't. But the entire complex of named status positions and their validation may be seen as a procedure in which material rights are embedded and justified in a broader system.

Not all persons who might, through descent, claim a particular rank could mobilize the backing or wealth needed to validate their claim. Potlatches were a test of the support which a claimant, and his or her supporters, could mobilize. Generally, potlatches were held—with their attendant speechifying, gift giving, and transfer of status titles—*without* any contending claim being raised. It was particularly important that leading members of other chiefly families be in attendance. By participating in such potlatches, by accepting the gifts, they publicly signalled their acceptance of the claim being put forward. Potlatching was a way of demonstrating public acceptance by the leading families, especially of those of neighbouring villages, to titles claimed by the potlatch giver in a society without deeds, law courts, or state power.

Rivalrous potlatches were, in essence, a test of strength and support for the particular claims by different corporate kin groups. The contest was measured in what relative amounts of wealth each side could acquire and give away. They involved the mobilization of labour power, wealth, political alliances, as well as the more charismatic qualities of the contenders. Such competitions, while infrequent, could be complex and drawn-out affairs. They entailed challenges within the ranking system of chiefly families.

Potlatching witnessed a great upsurge when the structure of political authority was thrown into disarray during the nineteenth century. According to Codere, the potlatch among the southern Kwakiutl only reached its height after the decimation of that population by disease and the attendant scramble for vacant status positions. Before the suppression of intertribal warfare, rivalrous chiefly families had an alternate means of deciding disputes about relative rank and inherited claims. They could raid their rivals rather than engage in 'fighting with property'.¹⁰

The activities of so-called 'dance societies' were important during the winter season when the chiefly families and their adherents were congregated in the main villages. These dance societies mounted the dramatic winter dances which had become prevalent among coastal

groups. It was the dramaturgy by which members of the dance societies seemingly demonstrated special powers which was secret. The status of being a member of one or another of the dance societies was anything but secret, and was indeed a matter of public status.

The drama of the winter dances captured the interest of early anthropologists and a literature dealing with the cosmology, the songs and performances, and preparations for these gatherings ensued. A great many of the artifacts which once graced ethnographic museums were the masks, props, and costumes used in the winter dances. Much the finest carving and artwork created by Indian artists was produced for such ceremonies.

The dances were typically followed by or interspersed with potlaches and announcements by chiefly families of the acquisition of some additional status by one of their number. The winter dances were not always as central as they became. It is generally believed that the whole complex of winter dances and the ceremonies which they entailed was elaborated and spread among coastal societies within protohistoric times. Frankly, I am not at all sure what role the winter dances played which was not already served by other social institutions.

However else the winter dances differed from one group to another, it appears that the performers were drawn mainly from the leading families in a village. It is evident in the accounts of the traditional winter dances that a degree of awe was instilled among the uninitiated members of the audience. Commoners had little role in staging these performances and were usually never members of the dance societies. They were providers of the basic food stuffs of the feasts and observers at best.

The winter dances have been viewed as a reaffirmation of the cosmological beliefs about the proper order of forces and people. This may be so. But these ceremonies may also have been a means of demonstrating chiefly power over the lesser members of the community. Additionally, as Miller suggests, it may have been that the winter dances served to attract the service of commoners to one or another of the chiefly houses they could attach themselves to.¹¹

In regards differential powers within native societies, major food resources were more localized and more completely under the control of chiefly families on the northern coast than in the southern reaches of the region. The indigenous peoples of the Alaska panhandle and northern BC coast were probably the most stratified societies in the northern half of the continent. This stratification included the presence of a substantial slave population. Among the Tlingit, possibly a quarter of the population were slaves during early historic times.¹²

While slavery on the Northwest coast was different from the slavery of plantation economies, Indian slaves were treated as slaves in the normal sense of that term. Slaves were often the survivors of wars and raids. Typically, only younger women and young children were taken captive - adult males were normally killed since they were difficult to control and too likely to later escape. Older people or others unwanted by their captors were also killed. Slaves were purchased from or sold to other groups through a trading network. Some were born the descendants of slaves, an ineradicable status, while others were commoners who, for a variety of reasons, had fallen under the ownership of a chief. Although slaves might be treated as the household servants of their masters, they were usually assigned the most onerous tasks and their every action could be commanded by their owners. They could be beaten, abused, or killed for whatever reason the owner saw fit. Runaway slaves were generally killed if apprehended. We do not know what the demographics of slavery were, but it seems certain that they experienced a far higher death rate than the non-slave sectors of local populations. If Indian slaves were 'really members of the household and more like dependents of a chief', as apologists always like to describe them, they were slave members of such households.¹³

Many anthropologists once tended to underplay the economic importance of slavery in Northwest coast societies, treating slaves as mainly a facet of the prestige system. However

there were dissenting views. Viola Garfield held that slaves increased the productivity of their owners households, although this was not something which a Tsimshian chief was expected to mention. Such chiefs did however boast about the cost of slaves they had acquired, which might be between two hundred and one thousand dollars in the mid nineteenth century.(Garfield, V. 1951:30) She noted that from ten to twenty slaves were reputedly owned by *each* of the nine tribal chiefs at Port Simpson. In addition, *each* of the approximately fifty lineage heads (i.e. the heads of households) are reported as having owned from two to ten slaves. (Garfield,V.1966:30)

On the southern coast, as everywhere in the interior, slaves were much less common. But even here there were considerable differences in the power and life chances of commoner and chiefly families. Speaking of Coast Salish communities on the lower Fraser and Gulf of Georgia regions, Suttles notes that there existed sections of the village comprised of 'poor relations.' Their dwellings were often situated so that they would be the first struck by any raiding party. There were satellite hamlets made up of people described by upper class families as 'without name,' or 'without morality,' or who 'had lost their history' - meaning not only that they had no prestige but that they were to some degree dependent upon chiefly families for access to strategic subsistence resources. They were people who were *excluded* in the various surplus food-wealth- prestige exchanges which may have buffered periodic scarcities among the more prestigious families.(Suttles. W.1987:17)

Commenting on misconceptions about the nature of 'community' among coastal societies Suttles notes that, *'... considering what the concept 'community' may imply to those concerned with social welfare, we should note that there is no reason to believe that either the aboriginal village or the intervillage 'community' automatically looked after everyone residing within its limits. The Native theory of social stratification seems to imply that some people may not be worth bothering with, and the working of the social system perhaps even promoted some human wastage'* (Suttles,1987: 221)

Similarly, Verne Ray's primary informant of the Chinook of the lower Columbia, held that *'... the upper class could infringe as much as it pleased upon the lower classes, and added that famine was unknown to the former since the food of the latter was appropriated in such circumstances.'* (Ray, Verne, 1938: 56) To the extent that this was true, it suggests a redistributive system which redeployed food from the poor to the powerful in times of scarcity.

Coastal societies were not very Eden-like in another sphere. There was a near continual state of hostility. There were raids, ambushes, campaigns, in which individual warriors, parties of travellers, and sometimes entire villages were wiped out. The long history of warfare along the coast is attested to by the fortified villages and the presence of specialized weapons and armour. Narrative traditions among coastal peoples are often rife with details of past warfare. Organized native warfare in some regions may have a history of some two to three thousand years.

George MacDonald notes that thirteen forts have been archaeologically documented among the Haida and that if the Tsimshian and Tlingit were included there may have been as many as a hundred forts among the three groups during the protohistoric period. One of these was Kitwanga fort, sited on a hill near the Skeena river. It was surrounded by an outward sloping wall of palisades on which log deadfalls were set. Such fortifications often had a single, stair-like, entrance, which could be pulled inward to become a part of the defensive stockade. The tightly grouped houses within the fort were stoutly enough constructed that they might be defended separately if the outer defenses were breached. There also were tunnels and hidden food caches and underground hiding chambers included in the complex. (MacDonald,G. 1984:78-79)

Warfare was by no means absent in the interior. Along the central Fraser, villages harbored inside palisades were still present in the first decade of the nineteenth century. In addition to providing defense for the local population, fortified villages may have served to control indigenous trade routes. MacDonald has located some twenty-two trade trails in

the Skeena-Nass-Stikine system, one of which ran directly past Kitwanga Fort. He holds that sections of this trail system, as well as bridges, were maintained by local chiefs as part of their trading interests. Narratives suggest that while movement back and forth to the oolachen fisheries was generally unrestricted, controls and tariffs were imposed on the transport of scarcer goods. (MacDonald 1984: 76-79)

In the early to mid nineteenth century there was an annual show of military strength to make such custodial rights stick; this took the form of mock battles between the supporters of the predominant Tsimshian chief at Fort Simpson and members of villages along the lower Skeena. It may have been in this such affairs that the elaborate helmets and suits of wooden armour were used, rather than in actual wars.

MacDonald holds that warfare has been an organized and extensive activity in the Skeena region since approximately 1000 BC *"Even from this early period the coincidence can be seen in the increase in evidence for interregional trade, and intergroup conflict. Warfare and trade go hand in hand over the past three thousand years in the Skeena estuary and adjacent coast."* (MacDonald, D: 1989: 50)

I originally suggested that a rough military parity between different groups probably existed before the advent of the new trade goods and weapons. But I now question whether or why that should have been so. Warfare was not simply a product of the introduction of European traders and weapons into a stable indigenous scene.

Long ago, Morris Swadesh (1948) noted that Nootkan oral accounts provided many motivations for engaging in warfare, including the desire for territorial acquisition, a phenomenon familiar to western societies but once thought to be rare in simpler societies. However, focusing on the motivations involved is somewhat beside the point: quite variable and exotic motives can have similar material results. What is important is the actual warfare and what its consequences were. These included the *de facto* transfer of resource territories.

Writing of the Nootka during the era immediately before contact and trade, Dewhurst holds that *".....access to the fluctuating seasonal resources was also limited culturally by Nootkan political and social organization. Nootkan histories repeatedly show how less-powerful groups were obliged to live in seasonally undesirable places: a common theme is how groups restricted to one environmental setting, either 'outside' or 'inside', often warred with their neighbour to obtain properties in the other setting. Indeed, local group histories typically emphasize political alignments through marriage and the absorption or annihilation of groups through warfare to acquire resource properties. Presumably, the population of Nootka Sound had built up, so that there were more groups of people present than supporting resources available, according to the political organization. Thus, politically and militarily weaker groups ended up with fewer properties and the less valued ones."* (Dewhurst, J. 1978: 20-21)

In short, warfare was a prevalent feature of the aboriginal world. It would serve us well if someone were to pull together the sources and provide an overview of warfare on Northwest coast at the time of contact. Far more than just the weapons and military strategies and raids would enter into such an account. Demography, the place of trade and trade routes, the role of social stratification, and the constraints on specific kinds of resource utilization might be viewed in the light of ongoing warfare. As a simple example, fear of raids and ambushes may have been a basic consideration in the dispersal of smaller groups to scattered resource sites.¹⁴

Turning to the question of disease and intercultural contacts; exchanges between the peoples of the northwestern/eastern tips of Alaska and Siberia are of considerable antiquity. It is a truism that along with trade comes at least a partial interchange of ideas - but also an interchange of disease organisms. Not all, but many human diseases can pass from group to group with ease, regardless of the cultural differences between them. It is difficult to understand why some of the pandemic diseases of the old world did not spread along Siberian-Alaska vector before the arrival of Europeans.

We may look southeast as well as northwest. It is difficult to understand why infectious diseases did not spread from the Spanish settlements in New Mexico and on the Mexican Pacific coast by the mid to late 1500s. Intertribal trade linked the peripheries of Spanish settlement to the indigenous California coast quite early on. Is it possible that a demographic history of epidemics followed by population rebound was in operation even before the direct contact was made.? These are not questions which can be answered by cultural anthropologists and historians alone. There may be some surprises awaiting us.

While it is unclear which diseases existed indigenously, they were not exclusively importations brought by European traders and settlers. While the morbidity and mortality of indigenous diseases are little known they presumably were unlike the epidemics which followed. Disease organisms and their effects upon human populations are not among those orders of things which depend upon how they are 'culturally perceived'. It is part of the gullibility of our own times that some current observers take the claims of spiritual practitioners not as documents of a belief system but as if those practices actually cured diseases. Skepticism is in order. Although indigenous practitioners probably had palliatives and remedies for a limited range of sickness, the herbs, spiritual procedures and the other therapeutic techniques at their disposal did not have any more chance of success against most infectious diseases than did the nostrums of their medical counterparts in Europe of the time. A poor prognosis.

In another sphere, the subsistence economies of coastal and riparian groups in BC which tapped salmon runs produced food surpluses which are alleged to have been greater than anywhere in North America. However, there are no quantitative accounts of the amount of fish and other foods which any indigenous groups amassed during a year. Ready-smoked salmon flanks did not launch themselves, glittering from the streams, into trenchers of oolachan oil and salal berry sauce with the merest of human effort —as some would have us believe.

Although abundant in total, the primary fish resources were seasonal and fluctuating. Some marine resources were quite localized. Seasonal surpluses were obtained only through coordination and through a great deal of hard work. While many rivers and streams teemed with different species of salmon for brief seasons, while various species of shellfish as well as herring, halibut, sturgeon, rock cod and yet other fish were available to specific groups, there were settlements which recurrently ran short of preserved foods and faced very short rations during critical periods. Some sectors of village populations, and some entire villages, were faced with food shortages and hunger much more frequently than were others. Recurrent and unpredictable shortfalls of food were more common than is usually presumed.¹⁵

This point is felicitously made by Peter Macnair, *Popular accounts suggest that the people of the Northwest Coast occupied a paradise where food-gathering was a simple and assured matter. A careful examination of native accounts indicates that this is not the case; every day of the year saw a good proportion of the population involved in some aspect of the food quest. Long winter storms could prevent travel by canoe for days on end, and rationing was a concern of every household. Although clams and other shell fish were usually available at doorstep, some winter villages contained populations exceeding 500 persons, and an immediate resource could be quickly threatened..... Stories of privation and even starvation are part of the histories of the Kwakwa Ka'wakw and other Northwest Coast peoples, and an easy life was far from assured.* (MacNair, 1986: 506,507)

The productivity of native fisheries depended upon extensive knowledge of local resources as well as the extant fishing technology. It was impressive enough - although not the answer to every problem of subsistence which might arise. For instance, it is sometimes alleged that the conservation practices of native societies preserved salmon stocks at some optimum level, until the entry of European settlers and resource misusers. Claims about conservationist imperatives among indigenous societies in North America have a long

history. On evaluating such claims one should ask *how* game and fish conservation was achieved by native practices. The mere fact that native peoples realized the desirability of sustaining their food resources and had ritual procedures directed toward this end, is not an answer to the question of whether indigenous conservationist techniques actually worked. Again, skepticism is in order.

It may be that the population sustainable by indigenous technology on the Northwest coast had reached its long-term maximum before Europeans arrived - a condition which may have been developing for a millennium. The evolution of stratified societies revolving around the control of strategic food resource sites, the wars revolving around control of such resources (whether culturally so phrased or not), the raids to seize stored food surpluses, all these suggest populations which were pressing upon the carrying capacity of their resources.

The fundamental limitation of all food gathering economies, regardless of how effective they are or how abundant the resources at their disposal, is that an expanding population cannot be supported beyond a critical level. That population level is not set by the best or average annual conditions but by the most stringent years. Even if the rivers are teeming with fish and the storage boxes are filled with preserved foods during most years, a one or two year period of dearth each generation will act to limit a population to that lower level. Unlike even primitive food production economies, hunters and fishers are unable to significantly increase the total amount of food resources available, which are set by natural processes. This is so regardless of how effective their harvesting capacities are.

Given the capacity of human populations to double (or at least markedly increase) each generation, we would expect a far larger indigenous population in BC if indeed the subsistence economies regularly produced, for could be made to produce, substantial food surpluses. To me, this argues that whatever the exact number of people in various regions of BC the overall population was living close to the sustainable level of its resources and technology.

The classic ethnographies typically dealt with traditional subsistence economies as portrayed in memory culture and were not based on direct observation, since many of the traditional techniques no longer were practiced. This means that we normally have qualitative not quantitative accounts of the specifics and returns of the former subsistence technologies. Moreover, the ethnographic and historical accounts of 'indigenous' economy normally deal with what had emerged during the early fur trade period. Truly indigenous economies may have differed considerably in certain aspects from those reconstructed for the 'ethnographic present'.¹⁶

Varying by age and gender, the basic skills of subsistence endeavors and domestic manufactures were general to adult members of native societies. While there were specialist canoe builders, carvers and woodworkers, as well certain ritual specialists, most adult men and women could perform the basic tasks done. Individuals had a multiplicity of skills. Naturally there were individual differences in the skill of particular hunters or fishermen, cedarbark weavers or food preservers. But the major households could and did produce most of the basic foods and manufactures they utilized themselves. Each chiefly household 'owned' or had access rights to the major subsistence resources, even though their sites might differ in richness.

Probably all native groups in the region were involved in some degree of intertribal trade. This involved the interchange of goods and specialty products derived from certain regions or produced by particular groups - chilkat blankets, sea lion hides, camas tubers, certain kinds of canoes and many other goods. Food stuffs entered into these exchange networks, the trade in oolachen 'grease' being among the best known. But it seems highly unlikely that any native group was dependant upon trade food for its basic subsistence requirements. Native communities were, and had to be, basically self sufficient in their food economies. Neither the capacity nor the reliability of indigenous trade permitted dependency on an external food supply. The burden of proof rests upon those who would argue otherwise.

Subsistence activities were inextricably meshed with other spheres of life. A specific undertaking, such as dip netting salmon on a particular site, might involve elements of productive technology, of kinship relationships and inheritance rights, of gender roles, of ritual prescriptions, as well as broadly cosmological conceptions. Work was not easily separable from other aspects of life.

Labor involved in the subsistence economy was not lackadaisical. The pace set by tidal currents, by fish runs, by the requirements of taking game animals or even taking shellfish, was demanding. The direction of Indian leaders was probably more forceful and foreman-like than popular images suggest. However, it is fair to say that indigenous labour patterns were more fluctuating and more geared to individual capacity than much of the wage labour which was to follow. Not only did tasks and locations change by season but cycles of intense activity alternated with periods of rest and sociability.

. An understanding of the technology and mode of production involved in the major subsistence endeavors is central in an account of indigenous societies. But it is impossible to meaningfully summarize the requirements and returns of these various productive systems for all of the groups dealt with. We will later consider native involvement in the commercial fishing industry and will at that point consider how this differed from indigenous methods.¹⁷

While land animals were hunted everywhere, they were seemingly not a major food source among most coastal groups. This generally held estimation may yet require reevaluation, particularly for such populations as the Tsimshian, who exploited both marine and inland resources. However even in the interior, along the major salmon streams, salmon probably equalled game as a source of food. Everywhere there was a complex mix of primary and secondary food resources. The specification of such food resources, how and when they were utilized by particular groups in particular locales, is the strength of ethnoecological studies like those presented by Kennedy and Bouchard.

Knowledge of the behaviour, of the habitat and cycles, of the animals hunted was as crucial as the technology used. The knowledge employed by a single hunter or fisherman would undoubtedly have filled a fair-sized book. Some of this knowledge might be difficult to disentangle from partly intuitive yet nevertheless real understandings. There is no reason to be amazed by the broad and subtle knowledge about animal ecology acquired by Indian hunters and fishermen. Nor should we be surprised to find some individuals considerably more or less capable than others. Some were especially perceptive and able to construe indicators of animal activity, others were less so. Some were strong and quick, others had some degree of incapacity. There always must have been a wide range in the capabilities of individual Indian fishermen and hunters - to say nothing of that elusive quality of 'luck'.

Those animals which became of importance during the fur trade were also hunted and trapped indigenously, both for food and for their pelts. However, efforts to take fur bearers such as marten, fisher, weasel, mink, fox must have been minimal before their pelts acquired trade value. Taking sea otter normally involved spearing the animals from canoes, and may have involved cooperative hunts. Such activities probably increased in importance during the maritime fur trade, when certain pelts became of greatly increased value.

While hunting and trapping were predominantly male activities, women participated under certain conditions. Among the northern band societies it was usual for women to set snares for small animals and to tend fishing nets near the trapping camps. Some occasionally took part in the primary hunts when their help was needed. I do not know how frequently women engaged in subsistence fishing on the coast, in addition to their work in preserving the catches. Customary division of labour was not necessarily so rigid as to override personal interpretations or practical requirements.

Along the coast women dug clams, gathered mussels and harvested a variety of other marine resources. This seems to have been an important alternate food resource, but the residue left behind by different foods can be deceiving. Shell-fish beds may have served as a kind of natural store, to be exploited at particular seasons when other foods were scarce,

but requiring greater effort per unit of return than salmon fishing or other subsistence pursuits.

It was primarily women who gathered and preserved the seasonal berry harvests. They also dug camas tubers in the restricted region in which these existed. Camas bulbs were something of a delicacy and were traded to groups who did not possess them in their territories. However, nowhere in BC did plant foods make up a major proportion of the food consumed.

The role of women in food preservation was probably of equal, or greater, importance than their activities in food gathering. Their work was particularly important in the preservation of the seasonal salmon catches. Such seasonal harvests could not become a surplus for the winter months unless they were effectively preserved.¹⁸

Fish had to be gutted, filleted and cleaned before preservation processes could begin; they had to be processed quickly before decomposition set in. Before metal knives and tools were available, fish preservation must have been a time-consuming process. The primary means of fish preservation on the coast involved smoke drying and oiling cleaned fish. It is unclear how long fish surpluses preserved this way could be kept, and indeed there are recurrent accounts of stored foodstuffs having gone bad. Sun and wind drying salmon was a more effective means of preservation used in the southern interior but on the raincoast this method was usually not feasible.¹⁹

Women prepared cedar and spruce roots, as well as well as nettle for fibre, which were made into cordage and used in bindings and netting. Along the coast they also produced the cedar 'bark' clothing. Gathering the materials for fibre and textiles was only the start of the process. Simply noting the spheres of domestic work does not begin to convey the knowledge and practical skills which were involved in what may seem to be simple tasks. One may turn to Hillary Stewart's (1984:113-153) *Cedar* for an account of the skill required in stripping cedar bark and bast from the appropriate trees and processing it so that it could ultimately be woven into clothing.^{19a}

Women's work in the preparing the pelts of fur-bearing animals, as well as in the preparation of hides and hide clothing, was of especial importance among the northern hunting groups. During the fur trade era the condition of the prepared pelt was of critical importance in the price it brought.

Men normally produced the implements they used in everyday life. However, specialist wood carvers usually made the canoes, the wooden storage chests and the paraphernalia of masks and ceremonial gear. Certain skilled craftsmen oversaw the building of the big houses. Such work was typically done by those who had acquired special training and who in some sense were professionals. We will return to this later in a brief discussion of the 'ethnographic trade'. But a consideration of the techniques and artistic principles involved are beyond this account.

The classic accounts of traditional Indian economies provide mainly qualitative descriptions. There is little in the way of quantitative data on how many people, from what social strata, men or women, worked at which tasks. There is no quantitative data of how much time and labour went into specific types of fishing, into food preservation, into hunting and gathering, into domestic manufactures, into storytelling or preparing for feasts. Nor do we have any quantitative data on just how much food or goods were regularly produced. We cannot come to a true determination of what was a more or less crucial activity or resource without some quantitative data. In many spheres we are still only guessing.

For instance, we do not know whether the preparation and preservation of marine resources for long periods of storage entailed a greater limitation than actually catching the fish. This allowed commentators to presume that there was always and everywhere an abundance of food resources available to coastal peoples. Nor do we know what food surpluses and labours were extracted from Indian slaves. This allowed accounts to dismiss

any material basis for Indian slavery. In general, we do not know exactly how the different sectors of any single Indian community were spending their days, seasons, and years. This allowed writers to exaggerate the centrality of such dramatic but in some ways secondary phenomenon as potlatching and winter ceremonials.

The original ethnographic accounts of Indian societies were primarily reconstructions of conditions which had existed in the mid or later half of the nineteenth century. They largely were reminiscences of societies which existed after three generations of fur trade and contact with Europeans had effected native societies and economies. During that period new factors altered features of native societies. Considerable changes had occurred by the time the Indian men and women who later became the 'old informants' of the early anthropologists were born.

Chapter 3

Contact and the Fur Trade Era

The Maritime Fur Trade

The assorted Spanish, Dutch, Basque, French and English explorations and trading-fishing voyages, as well as the spread of European settlement in various eastern and southern regions of North America by the beginning of the 16th century, need not detain us here. By 1640 a Russian trading base had been established on the northern shores of the Sea of Okhotsk. (Pentthick, D. 1976:15) During the following century Russian goods penetrated into the Chukchi region in the northeastern tip of Siberia and *possibly* had reached Alaskan shores through intertribal trade before the arrival of Bering and his successors.²⁰

An interesting sidelight of the 'Chukchi trade' was that it did not disappear with the establishment of Russian trade posts. Indeed, some of the goods which the Russian traders offered on American shores were native products and craft goods produced by Siberian native peoples. Archaeologist George MacDonald notes the two-way exchange of native goods which lasted well into the nineteenth century. He notes that Yenesei and Chuckchee items traded by Russians were direct imports from Siberian native groups and that a suit of Tlingit armor with a decorative fur border of Chuckchee derivation, found in Siberia, bore witness to the trade between the two regions.(MacDonald, G. 1989 :24-25)

The *possibility* that Chinese or Japanese vessels could have been blown east and wrecked upon the Northwest coast at some earlier time was underscored by the case of a Japanese trading junk which was driven ashore on the Olympic peninsula, south of Cape Flattery, in 1834. Three of its crew of twelve survived the journey and wreck to be captured by local natives. (Lewis, W. and Murakami, N. 1923: 121) While such involuntary voyages before the arrival of European traders may have provided a smattering of exotic items, from metal goods to Chinese cash pieces, it seems unlikely that handfuls of shipwrecked voyagers effected the native societies they arrived among.

The first documented case of Asian contact with North America was a by-product of the Spanish conquest of Mexico and the Philippines. In 1565 the Manila-Acapulco sea route was established and Spanish shipping made annual voyages between those two ports for the next 250 years. The 'Manila galleons' carried luxury goods -silks, spices, porcelain - primarily acquired in trade with China. The main east-bound route of these ships began in Manila, worked its way north to Honshu and then proceeded on a rough great circle route which, it was hoped, would make landfall in northern California. The losses in crews and ships was heavy and it is quite possible that one or more such galleons was wrecked on the Oregon or California coasts before 1760. Filipinos and Chinese were regularly carried aboard the Spanish ships and by 1635 a Chinese community was already established in Mexico City. (Wolf, E.1959: 187, 263. Severin, T.1994 :231-233) What role these early Asian immigrants played in Mexico or elsewhere on the continent is unknown to me.

The first European voyagers to set foot on the margins of the Northwest coast were Russian traders and explorers operating out of newly established bases on the east Siberian coast. Some fleeting contacts with Aleutians and possibly with the Alaskan mainland may have been made in the 1730s. But it was the 1741 expedition commanded by Vitus Bering which definitely reached the Aleutians. He and most of his crew were lost when wrecked on one of the Commander Islands as they were returning to their Kamchatka base.

Russian trade expeditions were launched into the Aleutians in the following year. Siberian-Russian traders sailed out of bases in Kamchatka to both hunt and trade in the new-found archipelago almost every year thereafter. They had reached the eastern Aleutians in 1753 and by 1761 at least one expedition wintered over at a base on the Alaskan peninsula. The voyages combined Russian, Siberian and Cossack 'promyschleniki; one

such voyage which left a record behind was that led by Puschkarew to the Alaskan peninsula in 1761.

These traders were called promyschleniks. They risked the dangerous voyages without a compass, in fragile craft, the planks of which were only bound to the ribs and the cracks stuffed with moss, from which they were called 'Schitiken', or sewed ships. A trip lasted two to three years. ²¹

The trading expeditions by *promyschleniks* were fairly extensive. It seems that much of what they brought with them to trade had been produced in Siberia itself; some goods produced by Siberian natives and others the product of primitive iron smelters and forges which had been established in the frontier regions of east Siberia. "*By the 1760s sailings were commonplace. Trustworthy accounts indicate there were more than eighty sailings to the Commanders, the Aleutians, and the Pribilof Islands during the second half of the eighteenth century.*" (Dumont 1977:17) Since the majority of these expeditions wintered over, in any given year between 1760 and 1790 there were always some Russian expedition present in the region. What the broader consequences of those early contacts were, in the dispersal of new diseases or the knowledge of native peoples about sea-based traders, are unclear.

Regularized trade began in 1781 when the Russian America Company, a Russian version of the HBC, established a permanent trading fort on Kodiak Island. Empress Catherine the Great (or not so great, if you were a Russian peasant) proclaimed Alaska to be Russian territory in 1788. By that year Russian ships were exploring the inlets and channels of the southern Alaska coast and many Aleuts had already been dragooned into the service of the Russian-America Company as fur hunters and company servants.

The Indian peoples of the mainland, especially the Tlingit, were another matter. They continued military resistance to all comers for close to a century; we will return to them later. A Russian settlement was established at New Arkhangel (Sitka) in 1799 and was destroyed by the Tlingit a few years later. Reestablished by force in 1804, New Arkhangelsk survived Tlingit assaults in 1809 and 1813. The Tlingit were more successful in wars with the Eyak and other small Athabaskan groups, but as late as 1855 they destroyed a Russian outpost at Ozersk on the mainland. The Tlingit had acquired a supply of rifles and muskets, and even some 'falconets' and cannon from American traders, despite the Russian interdiction of such trade. (Holm and Vaughan, 1990:22) However, Sitka remained the primary Russian trade and government centre on the North American coast until the transfer of Alaska to American sovereignty in 1867.

A more transitory factor on the Northwest Coast was the Spanish presence, which had already been established on the Pacific coast of Mexico since the mid sixteenth century. By 1771 they were beginning to push north and establish permanent bases in California, sending voyages of discovery along the outer BC coast by 1774. A number of Spanish expeditions 'surveyed' the northern coast during the next fifteen years. Between 1789 and 1795 Spain maintained what was the first permanent European base in present-day BC, at Nootka Sound. A remarkable account (Mozino's *Noticias de Nutka*) records something of the Spanish base-mission at Nootka during its final years. Shifting political power in Europe and the colonial over-extension of a declining Spain resulted in the *de facto* surrender of Spanish claims to the area north of California with the Nootka Treaty. A great deal can probably be learned from both the Russian and Spanish historical sources on the initial nature of contact with Indian societies on the Northwest Coast.²²

The *real* European discovery of BC begins, as all school children know, in 1778, when the last expedition in Pacific waters led by Captain James Cook put into Nootka Sound. Cook's expedition was a part of a more general exploration of the Pacific, and its bordering lands, which were beginning to be of greater interest to European enterprise. Part of his commission was to ascertain, once and for all, whether a Northwest Passage existed or not and a number of officer's serving under Cook later became prominent or notorious

navigators in their own right. The sojourn at Friendly Cove lasted approximately a month. They traded for some furs and acquired some curios; the interested officers and naturalist aboard made some drawings and took some notes on the Nootka. The ships made repairs and took on fresh provisions and then they sailed off. Before heading for the Sandwich Islands Cook sailed north to investigate what is now known as Cook Inlet, in southern Alaska, and briefly put in at the Russian trade base on Kodiak Island. He and his officers were not impressed.²³

It may be that one reason for emphasizing the primacy of Cook's visit with the Nootka was to underscore the British Crown's claim to the region. Certainly no one can take seriously the view that the discovery of the North Pacific coast of North America somehow depended upon Cook's explorations. With Russian, Spanish, French and other navigators prowling the edges of the Pacific coast, with fur trade companies edging into the eastern parapets of the sea of mountains, European entry into BC, that decade or the next, was foreordained.

From this point on, the region 'enters history,' with the recorded doings of naval captains, traders, and an assortment of entrepreneurs and empire builders far too numerous to even mention here. A mass of ship's logs and other journals are preserved from those voyages. But the actual nature of Indian societies and the changes they underwent are only partially discernible from the traders' logs. The descriptions of material culture and of goods traded are quite revealing but the jottings on what European observers took to be the social and cultural features of coastal Indian societies are more tenuous. They vary greatly depending upon the observer, from fleeting maritime trader to naturalists and others attached to expeditions whose task it was to describe the resources and inhabitants of the shores they reached. Skippers had more important things to preoccupy them than native customs.

Outside of coastal Alaska, the maritime fur trade did not begin until some seven years after Cook's sojourn among the Nootka. It was stimulated by the posthumous publication of Cook's journal relating, in part, his account of the Northwest coast. More accurately, it was the report that the limited trade in sea otter pelts by some members of Cook's crew had netted a tremendous profit when sold in Canton. Exploration on distant shores for King and Country was all well and good but the most moving passages were those of the pounds and shillings to be made in the trans-Pacific fur trade.

The first of the maritime traders, in the form of one James Hanna, reached BC shores in 1785. In 1786 there were four British ships and two French ships engaged in exploration and trade. In addition, there was John Meares who had set out from Calcutta to trade on the coasts of North America. Meares arrived on the west coast of Vancouver Island in the summer of 1786 in a leaky tub called the *Nutka* and with a taste for furs. With him was another ship, the *Iphengia Nubiana*, sent by the same consortium. According to Meares' sometimes questionable account, there was also a Nootka Indian aboard by the name of Comekela, whom Meares had found hanging around the docks of Canton, China, waiting for a ship back home. It may be one of those highly improbable things which recurrently happen in actuality. Supposedly, Comekela was hailed by his kinsmen when Meares arrived among the Nootka.

Meares discovered that a number of trading ships had recently preceded him and he decided to winter over on an inlet of the Alaskan coast. The mortality among his crew was staggering, even for those days. But the profits from the sale of sea otter and other pelts on their return to Macao were even more enticing. So a second venture was mounted the next year.²⁴

The transnational nature of the maritime fur trade is evident from Meares' voyages. In his second voyage of 1788-1789, Meares, an English entrepreneur and ship master, was bankrolled by British businessmen resident in Calcutta. Meares' ship sailed out of the port of Macao, with nominal Portuguese registry to circumvent the trade monopoly held by the East India Company. The *Argonaut* was under the command of one James Colnett, the

officers were British while the crew included a team of Chinese carpenters who were to establish a base at Nootka Sound and who did, in fact, assemble the first European ship built on the Northwest coast. There were also Hawaiian seamen as well as a few Bengali deckhands and some British tars among the crew.²⁵

The maritime fur trade was booming by 1790. For the next quarter century anywhere from one to two dozen trading ships were working the BC coast each year. American maritime traders appeared on the scene in 1788 in the form of the Captains Gray and Kendrick, out of Boston. After initial strong competition between British and American shipping the wily Yankee pedlars came to dominate the coastal trade. The zenith of maritime trade on the Northwest coast was between 1790 and 1820. There were some twenty merchant ships trading furs along the BC and Alaska coasts in 1792, and if one adds warships and survey vessels, no less than thirty ships visited the region that year. Possibly the peak was in 1801, when twenty-three trading vessels alone were working the region. After 1810 the numbers of these ships gradually declined, and by 1830 had been largely replaced by the land-based fur trade.²⁶

The early contacts of maritime traders with Indian groups along the BC coast were rather different from the once popular romances of awe-struck natives marvelling at the 'winged ships' arrived amongst them. It was also different from current native versions of invariably hospitable First Nations people gulled by rapacious intruders. After the initial contacts, gullibility was in short supply.

There were two recurrent patterns of response by native groups to ship-based traders and voyagers. In some cases natives ambushed and killed whatever landing party was sent ashore. But far more usual was the enthusiasm with which seemingly uncontacted native groups welcomed and tried to attract the trade of European vessels. Their responses suggest some previous knowledge, or hearsay, of the kinds of goods which might be acquired from these sea-dwelling nomads. Equally puzzling, to Cook and others who were making what they believed to be the original contact with native peoples, was the presence of a smattering of metal goods amongst them. Initially, virtually anything made of iron or copper was much in demand by native traders.

Indian chiefs and their followers dealt with the trading vessels with a mixture of caution, bluster, calculated goodwill, and sometimes guile. Native leaders almost immediately recognized the traders as men like themselves, if with different customs and goods. They soon determined some comparable and complementary appetites between them. *If* sea-borne traders and their implements were viewed as having certain supernatural powers, this too was not radically different than the powers which invested whole realms of being, including Indian chiefs themselves. Their actions show they were by no means overwhelmed.

Native leaders learned the mechanisms of the new trade, the relative value of goods, and acquired an appreciation of both the utilitarian and luxury items obtainable in short order. Much to the frustration of some traders, Indians rapidly became quite selective about what they wanted and what they would trade for it. They came to withhold furs in anticipation of better trade terms from competing maritime traders. Some of the trading vessels to the Northwest coast carried an 'armorer' in their ship's crew (such as John Jewitt of later captivity fame). One of the primary tasks of the armorer was to work iron blanks, on a shipboard forge, into whatever knives and implements were currently most tradeable among native groups. All of this had occurred within two decades of the first contact with Europeans and more than a generation before any permanent trading post was established in coastal BC.²⁷

Neither during the maritime trade nor during the later land-based fur trade was there any general attempt on the part of Indian groups to expel European traders. The main exception seems to be the Tlingit. Usually, native groups valued the presence of traders - the greater the number the better the terms of trade. However, Indian groups resisted attempts by

European traders to trade with more distant groups. Controlling the furs brought by more distant native groups might provide a profit of from 100 to 500 per cent for the Indian middlemen.²⁸

The cases of armed conflict between trading vessels and Indian groups should not be seen as the initial shots of native resistance to foreign domination. Neither Indian middlemen nor maritime traders wanted to alienate each other unnecessarily. Although it did happen that premeditated attacks were made on trading vessels when it seemed that the ship and its stock of goods could be taken as a prize. By this period British entrepreneurs had given up piracy as a means of primitive capital accumulation, so they were much incensed by savage assaults of their ships.

Possibly the best known case of the latter was the seizure of the American ship *Boston* in 1803, and the murder of almost all its crew by Yuquot Nootka warriors under the direction of Chief Maquinna. Only John Jewitt and one other crewman were kept alive, Jewitt to work as a smith for Maquinna. The Yuquot acquired some seven or eight hundred muskets as well as large stores of powder, some cannon, and indeed the whole trade manifest of the ship.

After Jewitt's rescue and return to New England in 1805 he penned an account of his captivity among the Nootka, which was later expanded and suitably edited. Jewitt spent the remainder of his life flogging this account in the towns and fairs of New England. *The Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt*. etc. has been around in its final form since 1824 and has been recently reissued and annotated by Hillary Stewart (1987). It is a unique perspective on Nootkan society of the period - a mixture of eye-witness account but also of bunkum geared to American readers of the time. Anthropologists and historians tend to use Jewitt's account selectively, depending upon their predilections about Nootka society, but few have dismissed it.

In 1811, another trading vessel, the *Tonquin*, was taken by Clayoquot Nootka. There is no first hand account of this because no crew members survived that attack. Once the fates of the *Boston* and the *Tonquin* became known trading vessels avoided these Nootka settlements and Nootkans desirous of western goods had to travel considerable distances or trade through Indian middlemen to get them. (Dewhirst, J. 1978:22) The decimation of the sea otter also tended to push the Nootka into the backwaters of trade until the emergence of pelagic sealing, a half century later.

One should not make too much of the rare success of Indian warriors who seized merchant ships. Ship-board trade usually took place under secured conditions; boarding nets were slung around the vessel from yardarms, the deck and sides of the ship were covered by loaded cannon, and only a few Indian traders, under the watch of armed seamen, were allowed on the deck at any given time. It was a reasonable precaution in most coastal roadsteads.

Some of the armed set-tos between natives and trade vessels may have entailed retaliation for previous attacks or grievances claimed by one side or the other. There are always reasons galore for those who want to find them. The conflicts seem comparable to the raids between Indian groups or to the privateering which had previously existed among European seafaring nations. What armed resistance there was to European entry per se came later, mainly during the first decade of white settlement.²⁹

The rapid spread of European goods through inter-Indian trade is brought home by an item in Captain Vancouver's survey of the BC coast. In 1792 one of his ships inched its way along the northeastern coast of what later became known as Vancouver Island and put in at a Nimpkish Kwakiutl village. This was the first direct contact of that village with Europeans. However, the Kwakiutl there already understood the nature of European vessels and traders. Indeed, they had already acquired a quantity of muskets and other items through intertribal trade, possibly with groups on the west coast of Vancouver Island. A mere six years after the maritime trade began an as yet uncontacted group had acquired a stock of the most

difficult to obtain trade items in circulation. Some years before the Clayoquot Nootka had already acquired 200 stands of muskets and other native groups even managed to obtain swivel guns and small cannon to mount on their forts.³⁰

It may be instructive to consider a single cruise by a single trading ship along the BC coast. While each ship and each trip were to some extent different, the voyage of the *New Hazard* in 1811 and 1812 is not atypical. The basic pattern of maritime trading was well established; some coastal groups had more than twenty years experience with trading and Europeans.

The *New Hazard* was an American ship out of Salem, Massachusetts. Her mission was to trade furs on the North Pacific coast and carry out commerce with China before returning to New England. She arrived on the BC coast on March 28, 1811 and began to trade mainly around the Queen Charlotte Islands (especially in Cumshewa Inlet). The Haida were already long conversant with Yankee traders and had established ways of relating to them. After a brief trip to resupply in Hawaii the *New Hazard* returned to the BC coast to trade and winter over.³¹

In total, about eighteen months were spent sailing and trading along the Alaska and BC coasts during 1811-1812. Over a hundred separate landfalls were made, including some forty to fifty separate trading stops at some two dozen different locations. They put in at some of the major villages two, three, and more times. In the course of the cruise the *New Hazard* crossed the paths of thirteen or fourteen other trading ships. In one cove, near Cape Scott, she encountered four trading ships lying near a single village.

Naive Indian fur suppliers (if they ever existed) had long since given way to Indians who knew what they wanted and did their best to get value for their furs. The trade manifest of the *New Hazard* lists muskets, gun powder, shot, iron goods, and copper sheathing (which initially had been converted by Indian artisans into the prestigious 'coppers' but which by 1812 had become a glut on the market). In addition they carried wearing apparel, Indian cottons, woolens, paint, sugar, bread (pilot biscuits?), molasses, rum, tobacco, and woodenware. While some ornaments were still traded for by Indian groups, trinkets and beads were not of any great consequence.³²

The *New Hazard* also engaged in an interregional trade between Indian villages. For instance, they bought oolachen grease from groups on the Nass River and traded it on the Queen Charlottes. Some Indian canoes bought at Nawhitti, on northern Vancouver Island, were sold in Cumshewa Inlet. Although not mentioned in the log of the *New Hazard*, other vessels traded dressed elk hides, ornamental abalone shells, and preserved native foods between villages.

The *New Hazard* also engaged in a limited trade in Indian slaves. In this they adapted to the indigenous interregional trade in slaves, which involved the purchase of Indian slaves (up to four) from local chiefs and carrying them, further from the region of capture, where they might be sold at a higher price.

Some natives at the major roadsteads were apparently well versed in the names and activities of the various ships cruising along the coast. One Tsimshian man could inform the captain of the *New Hazard* what the itinerary of another Boston ship was and where it had gone in the spring of 1812. Somewhat unusually, the *New Hazard* transported a number of Indian chiefs and traders from Cumshewa to Skidegate, from the Queen Charlottes to Nawhitti and to other points along the coast.³³

Having wintered over and traded along the BC coast for eighteen months, the *New Hazard* sailed for Hawaii in late 1812, proceeded to Canton, and in April 1813 sailed for Boston with a cargo of silks, tea, and dyes, obtained from the sale of pelts acquired on the Northwest coast. Of course, not all trading ventures were so extensive nor so successful.

This was but one voyage by one maritime trader. During the forty years of the maritime trade—between 1785 and 1825—there were more than 300 such voyages by traders and other ships along the North Pacific coast. It is easy to understand that in the decades before

the first permanent fur trade post was established on the BC coast, coastal peoples had already become deeply affected by and quite knowledgeable about trade and Europeans.³⁴ Although a phenomenal amount of scholarship has gone into attempts to reconstruct native societies during the initial contact period no one seems to have been interested in tracing the lives of the European seamen that natives came in contact with. It would be valuable if someone were to dig through what logs and journals there are to give us a realistic picture of the American, British, and other seamen who worked the ships across distant seas, under impossible conditions, to put in at unknown roadsteads of the Northwest coast. What were their lives really like and what brought them to ship aboard vessels bound for distant lands when so many of their comrades never returned? It would not be an simple topic to research but it would surely provide us with something better than the derogatory stereotypes which are typically dished up.

The maritime fur trade declined drastically after 1820, initially because of the decline in sea otter pelts, which had been decimated through over-hunting, and later because land trading posts were corralling furs which had previously been traded to coastal Indian middlemen. Some sea otter continued to be taken by Indian hunters along parts of the outer and northern coast until the end of the nineteenth century, but this peltry was insufficient to base distant and expensive trade voyages on. With the decline of the maritime trade, those native groups on the outer coasts which had previously thrived fell into a condition of relative decline until the emergence of other sources of income.

Land-based Fur trade

The two main contenders for the land based fur trade in British North America during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were, of course, the Hudson Bay Company and the North West Company. In coastal Alaska, the Russian-America Company was a factor but one which seemed unable to compete with other traders outside its established realm. In the regions of present-day Oregon and Washington the situation was complicated by the presence of American trade companies and parties of American trappers. The Columbia river basin was an important sphere of HBC interest from the second decade of the nineteenth century until the arrival of American settlers and the end of British authority over the region in 1846. While an integral part of broader Pacific fur trade history, developments in that region are too complicated to deal with here.³⁵

As an aside to developments in Oregon Territory, it might be noted that the allegedly hide-bound HBC could and did mount a formidable resistance to such colourful American outfits as the Pacific Fur Company and the later Rocky Mountain Fur Company, despite the doings of such 'mountain men' as Jedediah Smith and his cohorts. In light of the legendary toughness and self-reliance of the American trapper-traders in the far west one should consider the series of campaigns mounted by the HBC in what became known as the 'Snake River expeditions'. Although named after the Snake River country of southeastern Oregon (then the frontier between HBC and American trapping-trade operations), between 1823 and the early 1830s these expeditions were sent into most of the fur regions of Washington, Oregon, and the bordering plateau and mountain areas. They combined hunting and trapping and fur trading ventures with the aspects of war parties. They were part of a HBC strategy of 'trapping clean' a region in which they had serious competition. (Rich, E. 1967: 272-274)

The Snake River expeditions were led by both HBC and former North West factors - Finan MacDonald, Peter Skene Ogden, John Work - and included French-Canadian company servants, some Iroquois voyageurs and others of more diverse background. The fact that they could trap-out territories in which they faced not only American trappers but also the armed resistance of local Indian groups, argues against those views which see fur traders in general, and the HBC in particular, as *necessarily* dependant upon Indian middlemen and trappers for their fur supply. White frontiersmen could harvest furs as well

as anyone. The one thing the HBC *couldn't do* was to halt the settlement of regions which were reachable by immigrants and which were amenable to economies other than hunting and trapping.

Some of the complaints later raised against 'white trappers' overtrapping regions were earlier made by North West Company traders in regard certain Indian 'free traders'. For instance, writing of the Peace River neighbouring regions David Harmon's journal entry for October 13, 1818, states "*For several years past, Iroquois from Canada, have been in the habit of coming into different parts of the NorthWest country, to hunt beaver & c. . The Natives of the country consider them as intruders. As they are mere rovers, they do not feel the same interest, as those who permanently reside here, in keeping the stock of animals good, destroying alike the animals which are young and old.*" (Warkentin, G. 1993: 257) Many of these Iroquois 'freemen' had previously been employed by the North West Company as voyageurs.³⁶

The North West Company posts in the Pacific region were supplied through the Peace River-Athabasca district and spread through the northern and central interior between 1805 and 1820. They were hampered by HBC patents of trade on the Pacific coast and the North West Company transport routes stretched back across the continent to the Great Lakes and Montreal. The HBC operated primarily out of major posts on the Pacific coast and were supplied by sea. Until 1846 the Pacific headquarters of the HBC was on the lower Columbia River, first at Fort George and later a bit upriver at Fort Vancouver. The entry of the HBC into New Caledonia did not develop until after 1821, when it absorbed the North West Company. This resulted in the establishment of monopoly trade in the region and the HBC effectively operated as the colonial government of the territory under British control until 1849, and in fact until the arrival of European settlement.

There is so much that needs to be said about the fur trade—its economy, society, and impact—that it might be better to say nothing at all. There are libraries of fur trade journals and there seem to be as many fur trade historians abroad as there once were fur traders. And yet, for all this, little has been done in documenting the day to day life of the 'company servants' who made up the bulk of those involved in the fur trade. A history of the post labourers, canoemen, seamen, artisans—in short, ninety per cent of the fur trade staff—has yet to be written. While one may applaud the recent inclusion of women (i.e. the native wives of factors and their children) into the historical record, this in no way lessens the fact that the great majority of the men and women involved have not been accounted for.

Not counting the Russian bases on the Alaskan coast, the first land-based trading post west of the Rockies was the North West Company's Fort McLeod, established in 1805, in the northern interior of BC. During the next sixteen years they established a string of posts through northern and central BC and into what is now Washington state. The first HBC post in present-day BC was Fort Langley (1827), which was of quite a different scale than any of the interior posts. Later coastal trading posts were Fort McLoughlin or Bella Bella (1833), Fort Simpson (initially on the Nass in 1831 and then to its permanent site in 1834), Fort Rupert (1849), and Fort Victoria (1843). A network of secondary posts spread through the interior.³⁷

There were outposts in which a fur trader, his clerk and a few 'servants' comprised the total staff. But the coastal trade forts were miniature commercial ports. In addition to the factor and other company officers these coastal posts always had a body of personnel invariably termed 'company servants'; permanent and indentured employees who were transferred from post to post as required. They included blacksmiths, coopers, sailmakers and shipwrights, carpenters and a variety of other artisans. There were farm and general labourers, couriers, sailors and other transport workers. The company servants were drawn from as far east as Quebec, from the Iroquois reserves on the St. Lawrence, and from the Metis population which had grown up around the western network of trade posts. There were Orkney

Islanders and Kanakas from the Hawaiian Islands, as well as the others of more varied background.

HBC and North West Company officers frequently married local native women by the 'customs of the country' while other fur trade staff had more informal relationships with Indian women. Whatever the case, children of these unions ensued. Many of these children took on differing roles within and ancillary to fur trade society. Others, we don't know how many, pursued their own destiny outside the narrowing confines of fur trade life. Some traced quite extraordinary trajectories.

But more important than the families of officers were the wives and families of the permanent company servants. Around the larger posts they might constitute a considerable proportion of the local population, much to the horror of HBC efficiency experts who calculated how much of the fort provisions these family members consumed.

The staff roster of one coastal post may be of interest. In 1825, George Simpson, then governor of the Honourable Company, proposed that the following staff be established at Fort Langley when it was opened: one chief factor and two clerks, two blacksmiths, one shipwright and an assistant, one carpenter, two sawyers as well as a cooper, tinsmith, and tailor. In addition to these, ten general labourers. Twenty-three men and officers in all, exclusive of seamen and what Indian labour might be employed in transport and on the large farm which was to be established. In 1830, three years after its establishment, there were twenty-four officers and men at Fort Langley, including many of the artisans proposed by Simpson. Although Fort Langley was unusual in that it soon became primarily a farming and provision centre rather than a trading post, it was not atypical in size for the coastal fur forts.³⁸

In 1825 some 1,983 officers and permanent company servants were employed by the HBC in its Pacific region, from Oregon and throughout present day BC. Governor Simpson reduced this number to 827 officers and men shortly after. In addition were the wives and dependents of company employees, as well as Indian workers.³⁹

As for the Russian posts of the Alaska coast, by 1830 Kodiak and Sitka had been permanently established for forty-seven and twenty-five years respectively. These posts were peopled with a mixture of Russian company officers, Siberians, and others of various extraction. From the beginning the Russian-America company had 'recruited' a large number of Aleuts to work as labourers and hunters. They also acted as a native militia. A census of Russian Alaska in 1838 indicated the following population around the two major posts: Europeans, 406; Creoles (Russian Metis) 307; Aleut and Kolushan Indians, 134. It was estimated there were some 1,000 independent Kolushan Tlingit settled immediately around Sitka.⁴⁰

By the late 1830s or early 1840s the combined population of officers, company servants and their families in the north Pacific region must have totalled at least 1500 to 2000 persons. Mixed relations of hostility and kinship seem to have existed between Indian groups and the company servants. It is unclear how many former company servants and their descendants passed into the emerging local populations. But they and their families may have played a far greater role in transmitting the manners and skills of European frontier society than is generally believed. Their numbers, while small, were not as insignificant as may seem. They were potential nuclei of an emergent frontier population. As distinct from the Canadian plains and the MacKenzie river regions, where a separate group of Metis emerged, such individuals were absorbed by both the Indian and the European populations.⁴¹

We know little about the lives of the company servants of the HBC or those of the Russian trade posts. We know only the barest outlines of their relations with Indian populations. Nor do we know with any certainty the history of former company staff after the decline of the fur trade. It may be important both in native history and in a fuller history of fur trade society.

In the introduction to a collection of extracts from fur trade journals and logs of exploration, after noting the mass of material available, Germaine Warkentin reminds us that, "*However - exhaustive as all this may seem - we only rarely have accounts from and by the great bulk of the voyagers, canoemen, transport workers, artisans about the forts and on the overland routes. With rare exceptions, it is the commander, the trader, the people who give orders and expect them to be obeyed -who speak to us through their journals. Oftentime, the majority either could not write, saw little point in doing so if they could, or would have been realistically cautious about putting their own views and that of their fellows -their doings, strategum and hopes and goals -on paper for officers or their like to read.* (Warkentin, G. 1993: ix)

Well said ! Only certain perspectives of the fur trade are reflected in the journals. Entire social landscapes of fur trade society and of cultural contact have been largely omitted. However, I suspect that a great deal more about the lives of company servants could be recovered from the journals by those who decide to do so.

Indian groups in BC retained their political autonomy and continued to hold possession of their territories throughout the period of the fur trade. The HBC's main interests were in maintaining a trading peace and keeping potential competitors out. To achieve that they were prepared to deal with Indian middlemen, who controlled direct access of more distant trappers to the trade posts. The HBC had little direct use for the territories held by Indian groups and the fur trade was best pursued by allowing Indian groups to extract the furs as they saw fit.

The character of the fur traders and the nature fur trade society has been much refurbished in the last generation. Recent accounts dwell on the broad minded, non-interfering, free enterprising relations of traders to Indian groups. It is quite true that fur trade companies were *not* interested in acquiring the lands or changing the cultures of Indian groups—except to stimulate their increased involvement in trapping . In parts of central and northern Canada this state of affairs was sometimes complicated by the decimation of fur resources, upon which the HBC attempted to institute various schemes to conserve the fur bearers. The resource utilization policies of the HBC had an impact on native societies and may have generated certain native territorial arrangements which have been in dispute ever since.

While the economic interests of fur traders were different from that of settlers, they could treat both their employees and their Indian suppliers with tightfisted callousness. They had no compunction about opening and closing trade posts whenever the economic conditions warranted, regardless of how this effected those native people who had come to rely upon such posts. Although individual HBC factors varied, they were what one would expect of administrators of a monopoly trade company, largely beyond the reach of any law other than their own but dependent upon the trade of native peoples.

Although the HBC acquired some Indian slaves to work at their post on the Columbia in the 1820s, it had no real use for slave labour. It is incorrect to suggest, as I did previously, that HBC factors on the Pacific blighthly acquired Indians slaves as conditions warranted. They sometimes purchased Indian slaves with an eye to having them ransomed back by kinsmen in their communities of origin. Basically, the HBC followed its fundamental precept of not interfering in native societies, as long as its trade was not threatened.⁴²

While there was comparatively little armed conflict between the HBC and Indian groups, there were frequent set-tos, alarms, and brief melees which threatened to become broader actions. There were affronted chiefly dignities to be indemnified, sputtering hostilities which had to be smoothed over, if not settled. The fur trade forts were not quaint anachronisms.

A fundamental precept of the HBC was that the killing of any company employee, or of any other European within their purview, was to be punished in kind. Retaliation was to be meted out against a group if the perpetrators could not be determined. Considering the savagery of European governments toward 'their own' people who overstepped the narrow legal boundaries, actions such as the HBC's are all too comprehensible.

That the HBC could be ruthless in defending itself is evidenced in a punitive raid they mounted against Clallam villages at the entrance to Puget Sound during the spring of 1828. Factor Alexander MacKenzie and his party had been murdered in that vicinity early that year while returning from an inspection tour of Fort Langley, by natives presumed to be Clallam. The HBC mobilized a war party using its armed schooner *Cadboro* and a force of sixty men drawn from nearby posts. These included HBC officers with French Canadian, Metis, Iroquois, and Kanaka company servants acting as a militia. Some Chinook engaged by the HBC at Fort Vancouver also took part.

In July of 1828 this HBC force surprised and attacked a Clallam village near later Port Townsend. They burned it and shelled other Clallam villages. This punitive expedition killed at least eight Indian men and women in one village, and seventeen more in another. There was no assurance that those present in the villages raided had been involved in the attack on Factor McKenzie's party.⁴³ It was not until warships of the Royal Navy began to patrol the coast in the 1850s that bombardments of Indian villages were again seen on such a scale.

The vast majority of Indian people in BC continued to be subsistence fishermen and hunters, some of whom added trapping and trading to their rounds. However, a few individuals did take up at least seasonal work on trade posts. By the mid 1850s there already was a tradition of Indian canoe freighters and Indian horse packers in various regions of the coast and southern interior. There also were Indian seamen working aboard HBC supply vessels and on other coastal trade ships.

Both casual and more permanent Indian labour was employed on the company farms at Fort Langley and on the outskirts of Fort Victoria. There was a trade in salmon, game, and other country foods, as well as garden produce, by Indian producers. Incipient attempts to create a commercial export salmon fishery on the Fraser, utilizing gillnets and producing barreled salted salmon for the Hawaii and Californian trade, were under way well before 1850. Indian placer miners were hunting gold on the Thompson River by the early 1850s. At Nanaimo, and probably elsewhere, Indian loggers were delivering logs and shingle bolts to the local saw mill. Production of 'Indian curios' for sale was under way among the Haida.

While the cases of early Indian 'wage' labour are interesting, as yet they were of little consequence when compared to other processes taking place in Indian societies during the fur trade era. The processes of change were not of equal importance to every group nor did they evolve everywhere at the same time. Some of the developments we are about to discuss were more or less co-terminus with the fur trade, but others only picked up momentum during the settlement period which was to follow.

Let us end with two fragments of the trajectory of descendants of fur trade society. Consider the case of David Harmon and some members of his family. Harmon (1778-1843) grew up in a prosperous Vermont family and joined the North West Company in Montreal in 1800. He was sent to the Saskatchewan region to apprentice as a trader and in 1805 took a French Metis girl as wife, by the customs of the country. Elizabeth Duval was the fourteen year old daughter of a French Canadian employee of the North West Company and of a Cree mother. She moved with Harmon to Dunvegan (near present-day Fort St. John) and later to North West Company posts in northern British Columbia.

Harmon sent their first son to Vermont to be brought up by his relatives since he could envisage no proper life for him if raised around a trading post. The son died a few years later. Harmon and his wife had twelve children together and despite the problems which Harmon could foresee for them in settled Canada he brought them back with him when he returned east after nineteen (not sixteen) years 'in the Indian country'. On leaving the fur trade in 1819 Harmon and his wife were remarried with benefit of clergy at Fort William and then went to live in various locales, initially with his relatives in Vermont and later in Montreal. Harmon died of smallpox in 1843 but his wife continued to live on in Montreal (or in Brooklyn N.Y.C. by another account) with one or another of her sons until her death in 1862. I don't know what most of their children wound up doing but their youngest daughter became a teacher and '*was running a school for young ladies*' in Montreal as late

as 1904. (Warkentine, G. 1993: 251,252) (Brown, J. 1980: 106,107) (Lamb, K. 1957: Intro.)

Harmon's case may not be the most typical example of what paths the children of fur trade officers took. However, by the 1840s a considerable number of the children of HBC officers were sent to Ontario and Quebec, where a number became enmeshed in businesses and merged with the regional populations.

Sylvia Van Kirk's *Many Tender Ties* and Jennifer Brown's *Strangers in Blood* provide a rich selection of biographical sketches of the sons and daughters of fur trade factors. They note that such individuals might have gained officer status within the earlier fur trade regime but that after 1830 they were generally reduced to becoming clerks or company servants. The result was that many - we don't know what percentage - left the fur trade and followed other avenues. All things considered, that may not have been a bad choice. After sketching the varied paths of some officers' children, Brown (1980:193-197) ends with a section entitled "Canada-ward, Their Favorite Roosting Place." In distinction to the recurrent tales of racial disadvantage faced by children of mixed ancestry, here we find fur trade families emigrating to and successfully merging into small town Canada, the children becoming successful in a variety of enterprises.

A rather different case is that of Ranald MacDonald, especially interesting since he left behind an account of his adventures. MacDonald was born in 1824 in proximity to Fort Vancouver, the son of Chief Factor Archibald MacDonald and a daughter of Chinook Chief Concomly. His mother died soon after his birth and he was raised first by his mother's sister and later by Archibald MacDonald's second wife. In 1834 Ranald was taken by his father to the Red River settlement to attend residential school and some years later he was sent to St. Thomas, a townlet of old Ontario, where he was apprenticed to work in a local bank under a former HBC officer.

Ranald MacDonald's account was written near the end of his life with an eye to the proprieties of a Victorian readership, but his reminiscence of being an apprentice bank clerk ring utterly true. The respectability of small town Ontario was deadening, his visions of himself doing the same sort of bookkeeping twenty years later were terrifying and the appeal to try his wings in a broader world were altogether irresistible. Sometime before his twentieth birthday he 'deserts' his apprenticeship with the Elgin Bank, makes his way over to the Mississippi and works his way down to New Orleans on the early riverboats. He ships to New York and there finds a berth on a sailing ship bound for England, later on others headed around the Horn and into Pacific waters. We next hear of him in Yerba Buena (California) and then in Hawaii. If it were not for a trail of ship's logs, a report to the U.S. congress, and references to him in a Hawaii seaman's newspaper, Ranald's account might seem spurious.

During the next few years MacDonald is an able seaman aboard sailing ships and whalers working their ways around the Pacific. He has come to the belief that the Japanese were the ancestors of the Indians of the Northwest Coast and that he, as the son of a Chinook 'princess' and an HBC factor, would have natural ties with the Japanese and might be able to start a trading venture there. Japan at the time was still a feudal society whose rulers had stringently forbidden any external contact.

In the spring of 1848, while on an American ship working the whale grounds off northern Hokkaido, Ranald slips away at night with the ship's boat and lands among a settlement of native Ainu. (His account of how he jumps ship is almost certainly retailored for a property-conscious readership). Japanese officials in the region arrive to apprehend him and politely but sternly ship him off to Nagasaki, which contains the only enclave in which foreign traders are allowed. After a long trip down the east coast of Japan by junk Ranald reaches Nagasaki and the Japanese authorities confine him in a room there. Over the next six or seven months he acquires some unreliable information about Japan and learns a little Japanese from his guards, while two Japanese officials occasionally visit him to practice their English. That is about the long and short of it.

Although MacDonald later tried to write himself into the role of 'first Westerner to visit Japan', it is self-delusional. In the summer of 1849 he was united with a party of shipwrecked American seamen and they were taken off by an U.S. naval vessel. This is where his book-length account ends. But Lewis and Murakami (1923), who finally got the narrative into print some 30 years after MacDonald's death, provide a sketch of what is known of the last 40 odd years of his life.

It seems that Ranald worked on a few more ships in the Pacific after leaving Japan and may have visited Australia before returning to the American northwest in 1853. During the next years he became a partner with his half-brother, Allen MacDonald, who had left eastern Canada to investigate business opportunities in British Columbia. At one point in the late 1850s they ran a store at Douglas (at the head of Harrison Lake and the initial entrypoint to the Cariboo goldfields) and then operated a ferry crossing the Fraser at Lillooet. They later established a 'ranch' in the Cariboo and ran a pack train into the gold districts of the region. In 1861 Ranald teamed up with a Canadian lawyer and with San Francisco backers to pioneer a shorter supply route into the Cariboo from Bentinck Arm, on the coast. This too was a bust. By 1862 his half-brother had returned to Montreal. Ranald went prospecting in the Horsefly lakes region for the next ten years, spending the summers along the gold bearing creeks and the winters on his ranch in the Bonaparte valley.

There is a gap of some years until we pick up MacDonald's trail again in the late 1880s, when he was living with a 'niece' in the remains of former HBC Fort Colville, in the plateau country of Washington State. He had few visible means of support but was known to white pioneer farm families in the area as a colourful character, a courtly survival of a seemingly distant past. By the early 1890s he was living in semi-destitution and made a final attempt to have his previously written 'Japan Adventure' published. He died in 1894. (Lewis, W. and Murakami, N. 1923: 5-6. 40-48.)

Although individuals of mixed native-white ancestry became successful businessmen or reached the goals they set for themselves, there were many others like MacDonald. Despite their strivings they ended up with nothing truly accomplished and nothing won. No doubt there were many native and non-native wandering jacks-of-all-trades whose narratives would have been every bit as striking as MacDonald's - had they left behind a record.

Changing Indian Societies

Territorial transfers and the readjustment of populations to resources were probably a general and continual process in the indigenous societies, despite mythologies to the effect that tracts had been handed down unchanged from time immemorial. But unprecedented territorial destabilization among Indian groups developed with the fur trade.⁴⁴

In a few locales (as at Fort Simpson and around Fort Rupert), formerly disparate groups consolidated around the trade sources. While the tribal groups collecting around the major posts initially retained their former identities, they acted in sufficient concert to further the interests of their trader chiefs. The attraction of such adjustments was that their chiefs could then control the trade of more distant Indian groups. This might reap a profit of 100 to 500 percent for the Indian middlemen. (Vaughan and Holm, 1990:14) It was a potentially lucrative arrangement but one which came with certain unrecognized costs attached.

Although intertribal or inter-village warfare had been endemic on much of the coast, it was probably exacerbated - not by the fur trade per se but by the struggles to control access to it and sometimes for the resources entering such trade. With the coming of the fur trade, the armament (and possibly the nature) of intertribal warfare changed. Muskets spread to every group which could obtain them. Once the trade in arms had started even defensive strategies would have required involvement in the fur trade to obtain the new weapons.

It was briefly fashionable to dismiss the military advantages conferred upon groups which acquired gunpowder and muskets. Some commentators suggested that European firearms of the era had more disadvantages than advantages and that their 'power' mainly resided in

the fire and smoke which they so magically disgorged.(See Fisher, R. 1976)It is an imaginative proposition - but mistaken.

Despite such views, I don't think there is any real question that firearms were a major new weapon in the native balance of power. Every people in the world who experienced a contest between forces armed with firearms and those who were not soon learned the importance of this weapon. The occasional successes of dagger or claymore-armed natives to the contrary, military superiority was conferred even by the cumbersome matchlocks of an earlier era, to say nothing of the relatively reliable muskets traded on the Northwest coast.

The Northwest trade musket may have been only marginally more accurate and even slower to use than the bow and arrow, but its advantage lay in the penetrating power of the ball. This made the indigenous armour, quite effective against arrows and comparable missiles, useless.⁴⁵

Many things remain a puzzle. For instance, why did Indian villages dispense with their fortifications after muskets became prevalent? It was feasible to make such defences relatively impervious to musket-armed raiders, as Indian leaders would have known from their observations. Someone has yet to draw together the accounts of Indigenous warfare of this period, in differing locales and under differing conditions, and sketch out the implications of military power dependent upon a continuous flow of guns and trade. We should expect *other than* strictly military changes among Indian societies facing or acquiring new types of weapons.

In any case, it is clear that whether using muskets or traditional dagger and mace, the casualties were high. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century raids and intertribal wars were endemic in most coastal regions. Nor were they absent in the Interior, as is evident in the pallisaded villages and armored warriors which Simon Fraser encountered in 1808 on his trip down the river which bears his name. Warfare and raiding did not cease until pacification was externally imposed. There is no doubt that many times the number of Indian people died in intertribal wars during this period than did in struggles with Europeans.⁴⁶

Slave raiding and the numbers of slaves held by some groups may have increased during the fur trade era. The main source of slaves were women and children taken as captives during raids. As raiding increased, the possibilities of acquiring more slaves by the stronger groups increased. Groups which raided for slaves might themselves be raided. I originally suggested that there seems to have been a heavier loss of people from the southern coast, especially from Coast Salish populations, to groups further north. It now seems that the patterns of slave raiding were more complex, probably more regional, despite the spectacular raids which ranged down the coast near the end of the fur trade period.

A few of those recently captured might be ransomed back by their own people, although that seems to have been a fairly rare occurrence. The proportion of the total Indian population along the coast who were or became slaves is difficult to estimate. It would include not only the number of slaves at any given time but also all those who passed into slavery at some time during their lives. Although there are no demographic figures, all indications point to a higher mortality among slaves than among other sectors of local populations. So that if 'only' ten percent of a group were slaves at any given time, the proportion of the total population who were slaves during a lifetime would be higher than ten percent. They may have constituted a quarter or more of the population of some groups by the early nineteenth century.

Owning slaves was not *merely* prestigious for chiefly families. Surplus production and other services could be extracted from slaves. Some recent studies have suggested that certain coastal chiefdoms were based on surpluses extracted from slave labour or extracted from free households through the power conferred by having slave retainers.(Kobrinsky, V. 1975; Donald, L. 1983.)

During the maritime trade period Indian chiefs in some locales began prostituting women slaves to the crews of trading vessels and later to the personnel of trade posts. We do not know what the economic, social and demographic consequences of Indian prostitution were. One would want to know approximately how much income these services brought in, who received that income, what the shifting markets were, what the *specifiable* consequences were and so forth.

A revealing comment about the attitude of romantics toward this matter is that of Norman Newton, the author of a book about Indian-European relations. Discussing one of the alleged consequences of early maritime trade among the Haida, he says, *'The sailors from New England also spread a good deal of venereal disease, probably through the female slaves who were used as concubines by their masters and prostituted to the traders. Unfortunately, Haida and Tsimshian women of good family, who had respectable sexual morals (Solomon Wilson, other informants, and indeed almost every reliable printed source are quite emphatic on this) also became infected from their husbands.'* (Newton, N. 1973:92- 93) Apparently slavery, enforced prostitution, and disease for the enslaved is acceptable until the people of 'good families' are effected. The malaise is always attributable to some section of the 'white underclass'.

Despite the misplaced indignation of some, and even the apologetics of certain anthropologists, Indian slavery was a brutal phenomenon. It is ludicrous to bewail the fact that the British and US governments were tampering with the integrity of native cultures by suppressing slavery. If they were, so much the better. ⁴⁷

Social stratification in coastal societies probably was always somewhat mercurial. Particular chiefs and particular groups rose and fell in power. That was so despite accounts which held that one or another temporal arrangement of ranked lineages had continued from time immemorial. 'Time immemorial' in these contexts typically means two or three generations before the oldest surviving generation, often less. It is the function of mythological charters to wrap the present order of things in the web of an invariant past. It is difficult to say whether stratification and social inequalities within Indian groups was intensified over the course of the trade eras, but it seems likely that a deepening disparities between particular groups emerged. Those chiefs who successfully dominated fur trade routes concentrated power greater than had existed previously.

Initially, the leading village chiefs or the household lineage heads traded the combined furs of their kin and dependents and had the predominant say over how the proceeds would be distributed. While the powers of some chiefs may have increased with the fur trade, they were ultimately faced with the novel sources for acquiring wealth by their adherents. In the following settlement era they were also faced with the emergence of native communities with alternate bases of adherence.

The demographic estimates for the indigenous populations in the region now known as British Columbia, or of the Northwest coast in general, are quite variable. This is underscored by the recurrent revaluations of Indian population figures for the pre and early contact periods.

While intertribal warfare may have played some role in depopulation, the overwhelmingly most important cause was the dissemination of new diseases accompanying Europeans. Such epidemics could spread throughout the region even without direct contact with Europeans. There were outbreaks of vaguely described 'fevers' in the Russian-Alaska posts during their first three decades. This culminated in the regional smallpox epidemic which in 1836-1837 was estimated to have killed one-third of the Indian population of the southern Alaskan. It is difficult to understand how or why such an epidemic would have been localized to the Alaskan coast and not have spread to other groups. However, in 1835, there were still some 60,000 -70,000 Indian people along the coasts and interior of BC.⁴⁸

Depopulation became critical during the last half of the nineteenth century. A few years after being founded, Victoria had become a major centre in circulating diseases among

Indian populations. Epidemic after epidemic was contracted there and spread to coastal villages by Indian parties who had gone to Victoria to trade. Venereal diseases, TB, pulmonary diseases of various kinds, and 'children's diseases' (notably whooping cough and diphtheria). Surprisingly, cholera and typhus, two pandemic diseases which scourged European populations during the nineteenth century, are not usually noted. But in 1850 a measles pandemic spread up the coast, into the Fraser Valley and into the interior - one of the 'minor' diseases which in combination with others had disastrous effects among Indian peoples.

The most catastrophic epidemic to strike the Indian population broke out in 1862 and ravaged the length and breadth of the region. Smallpox. By the end of the 1862-63 smallpox epidemic an estimated one-third of all Indian people in BC had died. Whatever the true casualties of particular epidemics, it is clear enough that a process of depopulation was under way and continued for the next thirty to fifty years, the trajectory varying for different native groups.

However horrendous these epidemics were I am no longer convinced that any group declined to ten percent of its previous level. For instance, it is difficult to believe that eighty to ninety percent of the Haida population died in the course of a single year during the 1862 smallpox epidemic. Such a mortality rate is unparalleled for any *documented* epidemic among any people, at any time. However, even if mortality figures were considerably lower than often claimed, a near apocalyptic situation was developing at the end of the fur trade period.

One of the concomitants of Indian depopulation, especially from the 1850s and on, was an increasing fluidity sometimes bordering on disorganization of traditional social organization. The epidemics resulted in families being wiped out, lineages decimated, and sometimes whole villages so reduced that they could not function as previously. Kinship roles and duties which had evolved for more stable Indian societies reeled as particular Indian populations declined to a half of what they had been originally. Descent and the inheritance of rank and of territories— even where they still had some functional meaning—became fluid as many chiefly families and their descendants ceased to exist. Inherited titles and ranks became, in part, a matter of survivorship. Variable lines of descent were constructed to claim positions. Acquisition of leading statuses was thrown open to competition by a wider range of people.

An upsurge in potlatching developed among some groups as individuals with old or novel claims sought to validate or acquire chiefly ranks and titles. This took place as the material bases of such ranks were about to be eroded by European settlement and government. One of the more dramatic cases was that of the southern Kwakiutl, who were among the most actively engaged in potlatching. According to Codere, the classically described Kwakiutl potlatch existed mainly between the 1840s and 1921. It was a phenomenon stimulated by the advent of novel trade goods, the suppression of intertribal warfare and massive population decline among the Kwakiutl.⁴⁹

Counterpoised to the above processes, the fur trade period also witnessed a flourishing of native arts and increased wealth among Indian coastal societies. For those who survived, the first half of the nineteenth century witnessed an efflorescence, a blossoming of Indian cultures. New tools and other trade items - and possibly the impetus of contact itself—stimulated an upsurge of native manufactures and art, as well as public ceremonials.

It may be pertinent to summarize some material changes which occurred during the fur trade periods: what later were viewed as traditional artifacts stem largely from that time. According to Vaughan and Holm (1990) the famed northern canoe of the Haida only came into existence after the advent of the fur trade; similarly so for Chilkat blankets in the classic style. The carving of masks and the production of ceremonial goods was greatly stimulated by the fur trade. *Almost all of the ethnographic artifacts* held by museums today were produced with iron tools, during the fur trade period or later.

The articulated rod and slat armour once worn by warriors was dispensed with and only remained as family heirlooms. The process of making cedar bast clothing gradually dropped out of use and was replaced by trade blankets and cloth. Techniques of producing stone implements were mainly forgotten as they were replaced by trade tools and implements. Some Northwest coast artisans learned to work metals, at the Russian trade posts in Alaska or elsewhere, and came to produce distinctive steel daggers of high quality. (Vaughan and Holm, 1990: 47,66,135,168)

Shield-like 'coppers' were the most prestigious of potlatch items; each had an individual history and name. Restricted skills were required to turn copper sheets into the lacquered and engraved, potlatch coppers. Trade copper had flooded the coast by the beginning of the 19th century, becoming a glut on the market. In response to the surfeit of potlatch coppers a native distinction developed between 'false' and 'authentic' coppers - but in fact none of them were made from native copper. One specialist notes that all potlatch 'coppers' appear to have been made from trade copper. Of the 125 'authentic' coppers held by museums, *all* were made of European smelted copper. (Widerspach-Thor, M. 1981:157-160)

Trade items such as metal tools, cordage for nets, muskets and much else, probably increased the efficiency of food production. Food surpluses, potential and actual, must have been greater than ever before. The relative 'ease' with which food and other goods could be acquired or produced, and the largesse with which it was distributed, may have been a consequence of the new technology and the new goods acquired in the fur trade. The time and effort invested in potlatch-like feasts, intervillage visits and winter dances were elaborated at the same time that depopulation was taking place.

In sum then, by 1858, at the beginning of major European settlement, no truly indigenous and unchanged Indian society remained in BC. They had all undergone variable but considerable degrees of change. They were neo-traditional Indian societies undergoing further change. Much of what is popularly held to be the pristine culture of the Northwest coast was partly the result of the eighty year fur trade history. It combined both continuities with the past and newly emergent forms.

The native groups in BC were still all 'tribal' societies, still politically autonomous and in most cases still in control of their territories. Their however modified subsistence and domestic economies still provided their food and other daily necessities. While social destabilization was at work, kinship and indigenous political systems were adapting to cope with such pressures. Familial and domestic roles were probably only little changed. Everywhere, Indian people spoke their own languages.

Changes during the thirty years following 1858 would be vastly greater than anything which had come before.

Chapter 4

Colonization and Settlement

Gold Rush to Confederation

In preparation for the American acquisition of Oregon and Washington Territories, the HBC Pacific headquarters had been shifted from Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River to Fort Victoria in 1846. In 1849 the Colony of Vancouver Island was established, with de facto administration being carried out through the HBC. Settlement and development of the colony, such as it was, initially took place under trade company aegis.

There was originally no intention of recruiting ordinary farmers or others of limited means. Initially there was no homestead option. The settlement policy during the first decade of colonial administration seemingly hoped to recruit some variant of a British squirearchy, with monied landholders purchasing large properties on Vancouver Island and working them with dependent labour. It is hardly surprising that with so many better options available to investors and emigrants, this settlement policy proved a phantasm. Apart from the settlement which occurred in conjunction with the opening of the Nanaimo coal mines, there was a very modest expansion of farms in the immediate vicinity of Victoria. Some tendrils of settlement also inched into the Cowichan region of Vancouver Island.

Although the HBC was ready to try its hand in commercial operations other than the fur trade -it made ventures into commercial farming, salting salmon for export, mining coal for sale to steam ships etc. - almost all such ventures proved unprofitable in the longer run. Keith Ralston, surveying the HBC coal mining ventures at Beaver Harbour and around Nanaimo, concludes that, along with specific difficulties, an underlying problem was the rigidity of HBC labour management. Their officers treated European labour, north country English miners in this case, as if they were indentured company servants. The miners, who had evolved their own customs of what proper procedures and a fair day's work constituted, resisted being treated as indentured servants. (Ralston, K. 1983)

Despite the paucity of settlers, two processes were set in motion. One was the negotiation of treaties with Indian groups on Vancouver Island for the surrender of native title to lands in areas where European settlement had begun or was anticipated. The second was a policy of initially limited but increasingly systematic punitive actions against Indian groups which attacked or threatened European settlers and shipping.

Between 1850 and 1854 James Douglas, first as chief factor of the HBC and then as governor of the Vancouver Island Colony, 'negotiated' fourteen treaties with Indian groups, extinguishing native title to lands around Fort Rupert, Nanaimo, and in the Cowichan and Victoria regions. Earlier accounts rarely tired of alluding to the liberality with which Douglas dealt with the Indian peoples and their land claims. However, even a cursory view of the reserve lands and compensations provided by the Douglas treaties indicates otherwise. The Douglas treaties left Indian reserves only their permanent village sites, a few of the most crucial fishing sites, and those small plots of land already fenced and worked by Indians. Virtually none of the Indian treaties concluded by the Provinces of Canada or the later Dominion Government provided so little.

According to Wilson Duff, the Douglas treaties provided an average of some ten acres of reserve land per Indian family. The standard treaties later signed by the Dominion of Canada provided 160 acres in agricultural and 640 acres in non-agricultural regions per family of five. Duff estimates that additional compensations in goods amounted to an average of some two pounds and ten shillings per family. In one of the first treaties, surrendering native title to land in the Victoria area, the total value of compensation in goods was some 300 pounds sterling.⁵⁰

The ability of colonial authorities to implement Indian land cessions and to project a degree of authority over a still very thinly settled region depended not simply on

negotiation. Behind colonial authority was the capacity to call upon armed force. A partial listing of the naval and allied expeditions against Indian groups during this period includes the following cases: British marines from naval vessels anchored at Esquimalt were used in a show of force against encampments of 'northern Indians' engaged in intergroup fighting around Victoria in 1848 and 1849. A force consisting of H.B.C volunteers as well as Indian and white constables recruited in Victoria were periodically called out in clashes with Indians encamped around that city from 1850 until the early 1860s. Two naval expeditions were sent to Kwakiutl villages in the Fort Rupert and Nahwitti areas as a show of force in 1850-1851 after the murder of three sailors who had jumped ship. A Nahwitti village was finally bombarded.

A gunboat and mixed force of marines and volunteer militia were sent into the Cowichan and Nanaimo areas in 1853 to apprehend Indians accused of murdering a company employee. That same year there was an exchange of rifle and cannon fire between a British gunboat and a Masset village as an aftermath of the looting of the wrecked schooner *Susan Sturgis*. In 1856, there was again an expedition of militia backed by a gunboat to the Cowichan area to arrest Indians accused of murdering a white couple. This verged upon becoming a wider clash.

Colonial authority was gradually extended over Indian groups, insofar as it was practical and where the murder of non Indians was concerned. However colonial officials and naval authorities did not go looking for intratribal feuds to resolve or other interventions in purely Indian matters until later. But in 1860 a gunboat was sent up the lower Fraser River as a show of force and to arrest an Indian accused of robbing a Chinese placer miner. In the same year, the Yucultaw village at Cape Mudge which had been involved in shooting-up passing Indian parties, was bombarded by a British gunboat following an exchange of rifle fire. The next year (1861) a gunboat was sent to intercept a belligerent party of Haida returning home after a visit to Victoria. They were believed to have been raiding Indian settlements along the Gulf of Georgia coast but their arms were returned to them so that they might make a safe passage past the Yucultaw, who apparently still were active belligerents. In 1862-1863 a force of British sailors and local militia was clambering over Galiano Island and its vicinities to apprehend the murderers of a white settler.

In 1864, the armed steam sloop *Devastation* was sent to Barkley Sound to investigate the murder of the white and Indian crew of the trading schooner *Kingfisher*. Two years previously another schooner, the *Trader*, had been seized by Nootka and one of its Indian crewmen killed. It emerged that members of an Ahousat village near the entrance to Clayoquot Sound were responsible. An attempt by a naval landing party to seize the suspects resulted in an inconclusive gun battle. The consequence was that this and a number of other Ahousat villages in the vicinity were bombarded and partially or totally destroyed. This action was probably the most destructive use of military power witnessed in BC.⁵¹

Although chiefs might boast about how easily they could rebuild their villages and refill their food chests, the large scale destruction of canoes and houses was a major blow to any group hit. We have no reliable figures of how many native people were killed in these punitive raids, or whether those who were had been responsible for the acts which brought about retaliation.

The Hesquiat Nootka thirty miles to the north of the previous naval action were apparently unimpressed. In early February of 1869 the barque *John Bright*, sailing out of the Puget Sound mill town of Port Ludlow with a load of lumber, was driven north by a gale and wrecked near the village of Hesquiat. Ten members of her twenty-two man crew survived the wreck only to be murdered on the beach. According to later court testimony the reason was that the Hesquiaht simply wanted to strip the wreck and didn't want any survivors left to complain about it. They also had the standard rationale of having been cheated or abused by some white trader at some previous time.

A schooner trading along the coast brought information of the killings to Victoria and public outrage resulted in a gunboat being sent to Hesquiat. On arrival they found the

Hesquiaht ready to both admit and to defend their actions. They would not give up those responsible and two suspects were surrendered only after a landing party resorted to burning houses and smashing native canoes. The two chiefs held responsible were taken to Victoria for trial, where a tangle of accusations by their rivalrous supporters led to them both being convicted of murder. They were taken back to Hesquiat in July of that year and hung before the assembled village. (Gough, B. 1984: 125-127)

During the late 1860s at least three separate gunboats made cruises into northern waters and into the estuary of the lower Nass as a show of force. The murder of a party of Nishga Indians returning to Kincolith from a whisky potlatch in 1867 threatened a mission from Metlakatla and missionary William Duncan prevailed upon governor Seymour to request that a gunboat be sent. In July of the following year the *Sparrowhawk* called in at Metlakatla and her commander was urged to intervene on the Nass by Duncan and Tomlinson, the missionary at Kincolith. Commander Porcher however feared that this might stir up a wider conflict and he was "... unwilling to be drawn into what he called a "Corsican vendetta." (Gough, B. 1984: 195) He decided that it was politic to refer the matter to the colonial government. Next summer the *Sparrowhawk* did return to the Nass, loaded with a cargo of high officials such as governor Seymour, the commissioner of lands Joseph Trutch, and William Duncan. Leading Tsimshian and Nishga chiefs were taken aboard and a peace hammered out between them.

One of the last military actions of the Royal navy on the coast involved the bombardment of the isolated Bella Coola village of Kimsquit in 1877. The background to that action was a complicated set of events which involved an American steamer lost four years earlier, rumors of stranded survivors being murdered by a passing party of Indians, pressures by American officials to pursue the matter, fruitless coastal searches and finally a series of leads which brought the British gunboat *Rocket* to Kimsquit. Kimsquit was so remote that its chiefs still thought that they could face down the challenge of a gunboat. The landing party sent to arrest suspects faced armed resistance and had to withdraw. Following demands by the ship's commander that the suspects be delivered up proved of no avail, the gunboat proceeded to cannonade the village, burning and more or less destroying it. By then its inhabitants had evacuated to the surrounding forest. Despite their attempts to reestablish the village, most Kimsquit people later dispersed to other Bella Coola villages. (Gough, B. 1984: 198-204)

These punitive expeditions involved some extraordinarily rough 'justice' by any standards. There was no way of assuring that those whose villages were destroyed, or those who were killed, or those who were handed over by Indian leaders, were indeed the ones implicated in killings for which they were being punished. For the purposes of colonial pacification it probably did not matter much. In addition to the armed confrontations there were frequent cruises of British naval vessels, stopping to lie off Indian villages along the coast. With news of actual bombardments probably circulating widely, the meaning of such visits by naval vessels could hardly be ignored by Indian people.

A general cessation of intertribal warfare along the Northwest coast was evident even before the 1870s. The large scale depopulation which attended the pandemics of the 1860s may have played a major role in this. Killings among and between some isolated Indian groups sputtered on but never on a scale that could be termed 'warfare'. The primary aim of colonial authority had been established.

Gough (1984: 85-89) holds that the Royal Navy also played a material part in the suppression of slavery on the coast. It is unclear how that policy was put into practice in BC. An institution as deeply entrenched as slavery is not uprooted by the random freeing of individual Indian slaves or by the pronouncements of naval captains. Nor should too much be made of the diplomatic statements of chiefs supporting this policy. The eradication of Indian slavery still seems to be a topic open for historical study.

A British gunboat was deployed as late as 1888 to accompany a detachment of militia to quell apprehended disturbances which agitated authorities on the Skeena consequent to a

murder committed by one Kitwankool Jim at Hazelton. The *H.M.S. Caroline* got no further than Port Essington, already a booming cannery town on the Skeena estuary, where she lay, occasionally demonstrating her firepower to Indian cannery workers there. A rather bizarre scene.

British gunboats were also engaged in the interminable chase after whisky-running ships. These sometimes lay just across the Alaskan boundary line or in the waters of Puget Sound; they either made dashes across the border or anchored in American waters and let Indian bootleggers-retailers come to them.

The illegal booze network had a geography of its own, with certain locales showing considerable durability as the main distribution points for particular regions. Although hundreds of gallons of ardent spirits might be smuggled in on a single run the total amount may not have been so great, considering the numbers of potential consumers. However, the extremely high prices which liquor could command among Indian buyers might justify treating whisky running and bootlegging as a not insignificant enterprise, one which some Indian entrepreneurs were not slow to exploit.

Gunboat diplomacy on the BC coast does not seem to alter the basic picture. Armed confrontations between Whites and Indians were relatively rare, of brief duration, and with comparatively low mortality. Certainly far more Indian people died in intertribal raids than in conflicts with Europeans during the colonial period. However, Gough probably is correct in his contention that the military power demonstrated in the deployment of gunboats, both in punitive actions and by their mere presence, was a critical factor in the authority wielded by early colonial and provincial authorities in BC

Let us step back to where we left the chronology of European settlement in the region. By mid 1855 the total European population of Vancouver Island Colony was a mere 774 persons, mainly concentrated around Victoria and Nanaimo. Fort Rupert had returned to being a fur trade post. There was as yet no significant European farm settlement anywhere and the first export lumber mills were still some years in the future. In general, the colony was still a fur trade region with occasional dreams of grandeur. Along the coast and throughout the interior of present day BC the non-Indian population was comprised by the staff attached to trade posts. The total Indian population of the two regions was, very approximately, in the order of 50,000 people.⁵²

There was a foretaste of the Fraser river and Cariboo gold rushes during 1851-1852 on the west coast of the Queen Charlottes, with reportedly up to 1,500 American miners milling about Victoria at one point. But it proved ephemeral and collapsed almost as soon as it started. Nevertheless, the surge of miners and others who swept into the Fraser River and southern interior regions in early 1858 caught the HBC and colonial authorities unprepared. It catapulted developments on the mainland to the fore and constituted the basis for the first major European settlement of BC.

The first scattered parties of 'American' miners began to arrive overland from Washington Territory late in 1857 but the main wave came through Victoria on the way to the Fraser in April 1858. The traditional estimates are that from 20,000 to 30,000 miners, pedlars and others arrived in the first year—although there were probably never that many at any given time. An estimate of the Euro-American population made in November 1858 gives a figure of some 10,600 in the main mining regions scattered from the lower Fraser to Lytton and Lillooet. By that time Victoria had boomed into an actual town with some 3000 more or less permanent residents.⁵³

Whatever the exact figures, the scale of the influx was unprecedented. The Euro-American population had increased some ten to twenty fold in less than a year. The HBC trade monopoly in the two regions was lost and a separate Colony of British Columbia was established on the mainland in November 1858, with James Douglas as briefly the Governor of both Vancouver Island and British Columbia. The previous policy of attempting to settle the colony with a propertied gentry was abandoned, as signalled by the

passage of the first Land Ordinance in 1860. It allowed for homesteading crown lands for a nominal filing fee and with agricultural improvement. The dispersal of lands for settlement came to be seen as a fundamental threat by Indian groups, especially as no treaties surrendering native title had been made on the mainland and since few reserves had yet been laid out.

Indians in the Thompson river region had been recovering placer gold for trade some years before the gold rush began. The first contingent of the 'American' miners entered BC during the spring and summer of 1858 and located first on the lower Fraser from Fort Langley to Hill's Bar (Yale). Although many withdrew when the lower Fraser proved less rewarding than expected, others pushed on, working the bars of the Fraser canyon, as far as The Forks (Lytton). Some prospecting parties had already reached Lillooet by the end of the year.

The closest BC came to duplicating the US experience of Indian-white wars arose during the first year of the gold rush. The Indian groups in the regions effected were neither prepared for the wave of miners nor were they willing to give up their lands and resources to aliens. We will probably never know the full extent of the near and actual clashes which took place. There were threats and raids upon miners by Indian parties and expropriations of Indian fishing sites and placer bars by miners.

In recent stereotypes it is the miner and transient worker who is The Savage, held in check only by a thin red line of civilization represented by notables of the colonial power. Charges that gold rush miners murderously assaulted Indian peoples typically cite a passage from the travel memoirs of one Herman Reinhart. He tells of a party of American prospectors passing through the Okanagon Lake region in early 1858, who are said to have attacked an Okanagon encampment and killed a number of its inhabitants, for no particular reason. (Nunis, Boyce 1962:303) It may have been true, but its singularity underscores the rarity of such occurrences.

Hostilities came to a head in the Fraser river May and September of 1858, culminating in a number of set-tos and threats between Indians and white miners around Boston Bar In August. Miners in the area drew back to Yale and there was talk of organizing a miners' militia. In mid September 1858, Governor Douglas, with a detachment of thirty-five Royal Engineers and Marines, again appeared at Yale. He laid down the law and arranged a truce which took hold between miners and Indian groups up-river. He informed the assembled miners that Indian lives and property (if not their territorial claims) would be protected by British law. Miners were simply concerned with getting at the diggings.⁵⁴

Whatever the differences between the fur traders and broader British entrepreneurial interests, both agreed upon the debased nature of the gold miners and other transient workers who poured in during and after 1858. According to a touring *London Times* reporter, chief factor Yale of Fort Langley complained of American miners pilfering from the company farm in the following vein.

They invaded his cornfields, ate the green peas, stole the oats, tore down the fences for firewood, and misconducted themselves in other ways. How strange that the natural coarseness, the bad manners, and the vulgarity of this people will cling to them wherever they go. I take this to be an illustration of the effect of bad government upon national manners and morals. A stop must be put to these unseemly and brutal displays of their customs in this country. Our own self-respect calls for their repression. If these people don't know the practice of decency, they must be taught it, and if they don't choose to learn it, they must go back to their own country, where they can indulge in their propensities. I of course allude to the 'Hoosier' class—the great Yankee 'unwashed,' and do not include in my denunciation any American who deserves the epithet of gentleman.⁵⁵

Part of the contemporary stereotype we have of gold miners and frontier workers in general can be attributed to the class arrogance of an aspirant squirearchy. Factor Yale and reporter Fraser seem to have had a blind eye for the looting on a world scale, and the

rapacious exploitation of 'their own people' at home, which gentlemen of the British and American regimes were then engaged in.

One account sometimes cited as typifying the views of the European settlers toward Indians is that of Duncan George MacDonald, in a tome entitled *British Columbia and Vancouver Island: a description of these dependencies and an account of the manners and customs of the native Indians*. Something of its flavour can be gleaned by a mere listing of the chapter subheadings supposedly dealing with Indian manners. They read as follows: *Slaves horribly abused. The Medicine Man and the dead. Mode of scalping. Young Indians more savage than old. Horrible modes of torture. Barbarous conduct of an old squaw. Shocking cruelties to an old man. An instance of cannibalism. Horrible massacre of emigrants. Cruel custom of getting rid of aged. The native beauty. The blanket feast. The Indians must disappear before the march of civilization. The Bishop of Columbia too sanguine.*

Elsewhere we hear that native people are '*most filthy in their habits and extremely debauched and sensual, syphilitic complaints of the very worst kind being prevalent among them,*' and that they '*feed upon salmon*' and '*burrow in the earth to live like badgers and ground hogs.*' MacDonald's book is a reconfirmation of the old adage that whenever you hear a people described in this way you can be sure that somebody wants their land. His conclusion is that '*nothing can be expected but a war of extermination sooner or later, in which it is to be feared that the cunning, the ferocity and the local knowledge of the Indian may prove an overmatch for the superior knowledge of the white men, who number so few.*'⁵⁶

But MacDonald was *not* one of the miners or settlers who entered BC during the gold rush and who, despite conflicts, sometimes wound up working and living beside Indian people. Instead, MacDonald was part of the 'thin red line' of British colonial bureaucracy; he worked on the Government Survey staff in BC.

There is another facet of Duncan MacDonald views which is hardly ever noted. To him, and others like him, miners and workers who did not fit the role of docile tenantry or forelock-tugging 'hands' were almost as loathsome as the savage Indians. Accordingly, beside his venomous descriptions of native Indians let us note MacDonald's estimation of white frontier workers and miners during 1862. He describes them as a '*polyglot breed of riff-raff from the fields of California and the slums of Europe, intemperate, disrespectful, vicious, dishonest, greedy and sunk in profanity, filth and vulgar passions.*' (This sounds quite modern, something one might hear on C.B.C or Knowledge Network docudramas today.) Nor should we leave out MacDonald's estimation of the Chinese, miners and others. To him they were '*...the off scourings of the cities of Shanghee, Hong Kong and Canton, whose habits and mode of life blend but too well with those of the grovelling Indian.*'⁵⁷

Although the mining camps were marked by a rough and ready social life, one should question the portrait of American and other miners as a typically lawless and violent lot. Despite the undoubted racist attitudes which then prevailed, with people surging back and forth over vast tracts of BC, there is no more than anecdotal evidence of any serious violence. From 1859 and on, Judge Matthew Begbie's circuit court tours - which established a frontier version of British law in the mining regions - were rarely accompanied by more than a constable or two but faced no serious problems of enforcement. This bespeaks less the wonder working capabilities of Great Judges and stern Governors than it does of the comparatively law-abiding character of the vast majority of the miners and settlers.

At least one historian has come to a similar conclusion, which he presents in an evaluation of the myth surrounding Governor James Douglas. Clarence Karr notes that gold miners and other migrant workers represented the antithesis of what nineteenth century ruling classes considered as civilized and that James Douglas resembled other colonial British governors in, "*Generally expecting the worst from the lower classes, he disliked their lack of*

emotional control, their slang and their potential disobedience. For him, benevolent, paternal despotism was the best form of government" (Karr, C.1983: 56, 59)

Let us consider some of Karr's audaciously sensible comments on the actual miners in the BC gold rush. "*Rather than the expected mythical mob of unprincipled and uncouth humanity, the miners consisted generally of a respectable, law abiding and even educated groups whose only real interest was in becoming rich.....Ironically, one of the primary mechanisms of control during the Fraser rush was the miners themselves. A sizeable number were experienced miners almost ten years older than they had been in California in 1849. Some of them before their arrival in British Columbia had feared a breakdown of law and order which might disrupt their mining activity. They were pleasantly surprized to discover an efficient and orderly controlling administration"* (Karr,1983:64)

He goes to note that despite their reputation, the placer miners could best pursue their gold quest when claim jumping, theft and violence was eliminated.

The gold rush immigrants were indeed 'polyglot.' Many of those who entered from the American Pacific regions had in fact recently arrived from other parts of the world. There were many from eastern Canada, Britain, and from continental Europe, as well as some blacks, Hawaiians, Chileans, and a substantial number of Chinese among the new arrivals. Needless to say, few of the gold seekers ever struck it rich. Most, if they remained in BC, became wage workers or otherwise part of the evolving frontier population.⁵⁸

As yet we have no ethnohistory which draws together the events and the responses of those Indian groups which came in direct contact with the mining advance. However, Indian peoples did not merely take up defensive positions around their villages and camps. In many cases they reached out to meet the dangers, but also whatever opportunities existed in the new situation.

Some Indians quickly adopted the newly introduced placer mining methods: what initially had been a gold hunt became a systematic working of paydirt. By 1858 numbers of Indians were not only working their own claims but also were working for wages on white placer operations on the lower Fraser, regardless of whatever mutual distrust existed. It seems that Indian placer mining actually increased along the Fraser and Thompson rivers.

Indian ferrymen briefly did a booming business while Indian packers and freighters quickly took up jobs on transport routes to the Cariboo. Surplus salmon and game was sold to miners while produce grown on the early Indian garden-farms found a ready market. Indeed, one of the complaints of HBC factors was that recently arrived groups of miners were paying Indian workers excessive wages, making it difficult for the HBC to obtain Indian labour at their former rates. Another complaint was that Yankee pedlars were undercutting the HBC custom by selling goods to Indians at lower prices.

One might also consider the personal and sometimes lasting relationships which developed between certain miners or settlers and Indian women. If many of these relationships were transitory, there also were native-white families established which were as permanent as any. I am unaware of any systematic account of such families, who may have comprised a significant proportion of the 'pioneer stock' in the southern interior of BC. One may surmise that their descendants participated in a great variety of doings during the succeeding generations.

By 1860 miners had pushed up the Thompson river and into the southern Cariboo. While few of the early placer areas were completely abandoned, by 1861 the major locus of activity came to focus on the northern Cariboo. The Lightning Creek-Barkerville finds came in 1862 and proved to be the biggest strike of them all. Up to 4,000 men swarmed into the Barkerville area, building boom towns and requiring transport and other support services which laid the basis for a more permanent settlement elsewhere in the interior.

The one major act of Indian armed resistance to European settlement in the interior occurred in 1864 as a spin-off of the Cariboo gold rush. Alfred Waddington, a Victoria businessman, determined to construct a wagon road from the coast to the gold fields and in early 1864 sent a crew to cut a route from the head of Bute Inlet, along the Homathco River

and through the Chilcotin country to the Cariboo. The Chilcotin Indians had all the contact they wanted and were in no mood to accept a transport route through their territory. In the early summer of that year a war party was mounted by one Klatsassin, who by a series of lightning raids killed most of the road building crew, some two dozen men, then on the margins of Chilcotin territory.

News of the Chilcotin attack triggered an immediate response from the colonial authorities. A volunteer force was sent to the head of Bute Inlet but the main punitive expedition was mounted from the Cariboo. After a wild goose chase and incipient skirmishes, the leaders of the Chilcotin war party were enticed into surrendering, under variously disputed terms. Klatsassin and four others were hung after a prompt trial by Judge Matthew Begbie. However, the Waddington road was abandoned and the Chilcotin region long remained unsettled by white ranchers. A hundred and thirty years later the Attorney-General of a BC provincial government delivered a posthumous pardon and a tearstained apology to the Chilcotin people. No one now knows the names of the white road workers who were killed.⁵⁹

Individual set-tos between white and Indian still occurred in isolated regions. Intertribal wars seem to have ended with the 1860s, although feuds and killings continued among some Indian groups into the 1870s, with provincial juridical power extended over the more remote regions in the late 1880s.⁶⁰

Only a minority of the natives in BC came into direct contact with the advances of the Cariboo and allied gold rushes. Yet to one extent or another all but those in the most remote northern regions were effected, since the gold rush laid the economic and political structure of white settlement. Vancouver Island and BC changed from being a region with a few enclaves of European settlement in a sea of more or less autonomous Indian societies to one in which Indian people rapidly became a 'minority,' despite the fact that they would continue to constitute the majority of the total population for the next twenty-five years.

Total gold production peaked in the mid 1860s and in 1865 the Cariboo Road, that fantastic thread of cuts, switchbacks and cribbing, snaked from Yale to the nethermost regions of the Cariboo. It linked the coast with the interior and provided something like a regular transport system between the two zones. By the 1870s ranchers and farmers began to settle in districts closer or farther away from the hamlets and aspirant towns which were in the process of forming. This initial settlement was still very limited.

Gold production began to fall off and by the 1870s BC was entering an economic depression which was only gradually moderated by the development of commercial fishing, lumbering and agriculture. In 1867 the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia were merged. James Douglas had retired as Governor in 1864 and the new colonial administration evidenced an increasing unwillingness to settle Indian land claims. In 1871, after having gotten certain concessions from the new Canadian government, the colony of British Columbia (already including Vancouver Island) joined confederation. Census estimates of the BC population in the summer of 1870 gave the following figures: in round numbers there were some 8,500 whites, some 1,500 Chinese, and some 450 blacks. There was no tabulation of those persons of other derivation nor any official figures on the native Indian population.⁶¹

The Indian population of the province (from 35,000 to possibly over 40,000) was still in the majority. Outside of the few regions of European settlement the Indian population was in the overwhelming majority. They remained so until the mid to late 1880s, when the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway resulted in a sustained European immigration. The completion of the CPR (1886) can also be taken as the beginning of large scale industrial resource extraction in BC. As we will see, Indian people played an important part in many phases of the coming industrial period as workers, owner-operators, and small entrepreneurs. Far from being counted out, their role in the labour force increased during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and on.

The Mission Systems and their Adherents

Missionary activity was not a significant factor in the fur trade period in BC. Missions to Indian groups were essentially concomitant with or just prior to European settlement. By the early 1850s the Oblates had established missions among Salish groups in Washington Territory. But the sporadic expeditions of Oblate Fathers into the regions of BC, sometimes performing mass baptisms, had little significance as yet.

The years between 1859 and 1863 witnessed the first systematic mission efforts among BC Indians - William Duncan's mission among the Tsimshian at Fort Simpson (and later Metlakatla) and the Catholic missions in the Okanagan region and in the Fraser Valley. The 1860s saw the early predominance of Catholic missions on the south coast and southern interior, the Church Mission Society (Anglican) at Metlakatla and Kincolith, and the forerunner of Methodist missions operating out of Nanaimo. During the next two decades missions spread like wildfire. They reached their zenith of influence between 1890 to shortly before WW I.⁶²

It would be a mistake to view missions primarily in theological terms. What incorporation of native groups into mission villages fundamentally meant was the extensive (if not total) reorganization of social life by the adherents. The theological distinctions of soul catching would be of little interest to us here were it not for the fact that different mission systems tended to foster differing forms of social and economic reorganization. While there are numerous accounts of the more famous missionaries, relatively little systematic study exists of the Indian societies that developed around such missions. For two or three generations mission villages were the way of life for a substantial proportion of the Indian population of BC. Despite the valuable additions to the topic which have been made a full overview is still lacking.

Clarence Bolt's (1993) *Thomas Crosby and the Tsimshian. Small shoes for feet too large* is an account of the Methodist mission among the Tsimshian of Port Simpson during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It sets out to present the Indian purposes and interests in adherence to this particular mission, and to missions in general. Bolt does, in part, succeed in providing Tsimshian views of what they expected from enrollment in their mission system. But he does not truly document the day-to-day lives of the Tsimshian at Port Simpson during this era.

While fundamentally sound, Bolt glides over the complexities of everyday life which one finds in a chaotically alive history such as Dalzell's. However, his central thesis is well taken - that by the late nineteenth century the capacity and interests of people like the Tsimshian at Port Simpson had outgrown both the paternal efforts of missions and the 'protective' policies being put forth by the Department of Indian Affairs. *Those* were the proffered 'shoes' which were pinching Tsimshian 'feet' by the end of the century.

For a diametrically opposed view, one may consult Charles Lillard's introduction to *Warriors of the North Pacific. Missionary Accounts of the Northwest Coast*. The four journal extracts range from 1829 to 1900, and vary from unintentional satire to accounts one would like to know more about. Lillard provides an evaluation of the missionary effort as only the most florid evangelists of that time would have portrayed it. Apart from a few notables such as Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, the white "...population consisted of men involved in exploitative industries, trading and business, and missions, and all but the latter exploited the Indian." (Lillard, C. 1984:21) It was the missionary who drove back the whisky trader, opposed the savage logger and rapacious trader, helped check epidemics with soap and water (sanctified or otherwise), preached against deadly sins and raised the hopes of a demoralized Indian people. (Lillard, C. 1984:21-25). Most uplifting.

It is the case that between circa 1860 and 1910 the great majority of the Indian population in BC became adherents of one Christian sect or another. Naturally, this did not mean that they necessarily gave up all their traditional beliefs. Many indigenous values and beliefs could be and were retained, in modified or largely unmodified form. One might make a

distinction between those Indian people who considered themselves to be (and so were) Christian and those Indian groups which came to live in mission villages.

Mission villages all entailed organized programs of acculturation. This directed change was *not* basically geared to assimilation into the frontier industrial world growing around them. Most mission systems had visions of the separate and distinct Indian communities they wished to create and sustain. To one extent or another they entailed visions of rural villages based upon maximum, feasible, self-sufficiency. Ironically, some of the early mission programs appear to have had critical points in common with the policies of 'self determination' suggested for Indian peoples today.

There are a number of factors which help account for the rapid incorporation of many Indian groups into the mission systems. Missions offered chiefly families the opportunity to continue their authority, in modified form, when their traditional bases of influence were being eroded. The Catholic missions in particular preferred working through and strengthening the established chiefs in their mission villages. The so-called Durieu system of the Catholic missions consciously provided scope for distinctions of rank by local Indian elites. Similarly, chiefly families in the more stratified north coast groups came to fill their appointed place in protestant mission hierarchies. Sometimes this constituted a continuation of but at other times a certain shift in local power, as those not traditionally in line for leadership acquired important positions in the new mission system.

Members of an emerging strata of Indian leaders allied themselves with missions. Between the 1870s and the 1890s a body of Indian men (and some women) emerged who were relatively successful in directing local enterprises and in dealing with the developing cash economy. Such Indian leaders were often prominent in the operation of particular missions, which may have entailed as much a reorganization of local political power as anything else.⁶³

The above is not to suggest that Indian leaders who supported missions did so exclusively out of self-interest. But if new positions of influence were developing they might be expected to have interest in them. Probably many Indian leaders who opted for and led their followers into mission systems were moved by the need to find new approaches to developments emerging around them. Despite the vitality and persistence of traditional native culture, it seemed unable to cope with the new conditions on its own. Although possibly exaggerated by the missionaries, it seems clear that a social malaise had become evident in many Indian communities during the last third of the nineteenth century.

Indian communities generally allied themselves solidly with one mission or another. Group membership in one church or another may have been a continuation of traditional 'tribal' boundaries. For instance, on a village level, it seemed expectable that when the Haida at Masset joined the Anglicans, the Haida around Skidegate would prefer to join a different mission, such as the Methodists. Such group membership was usually stable and long lasting.

The geographic spheres of the different mission systems evolved rapidly and shifted relatively little after 1890. The Oblates were first in the field and Catholic missions predominated in the Fraser Valley and the adjacent south coast, as well as throughout much of the interior of the province. The major mission stations usually served a penumbra of other Indian settlements in a region.⁶⁴

It would be interesting to know what the ideological antecedents of the Catholic missions in nineteenth century B.C. were. There had been a three hundred year history of Catholic missions among Indian peoples from California to southern South America. That history may have played some part in the approaches of the Oblates to their Indian missions in Canada. Alternately, the experiences of the Catholic missions in eastern Canada may have had a more direct influence. Neither Catholic nor Protestant missions in BC developed *sui generis*.

It would also be of interest to know what role missionaries played in the drafting of early Indian land claims. It may be that accounts of indigenous territoriality and land ownership as rendered to non-Indian audiences in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were colored by views held by missionary advocates.

In any case, the Catholic missions were among the most committed to developing autonomous Indian enclaves. Their initial successes were among Indian communities in regions where it was possible to establish farming. The Oblate missions, above all others, strove to inculcate mixed farming amongst their Indian parishioners. The belief seems to have been that farming, better than any other economy, would lay the basis of self-sufficiency for Indian mission communities. Small scale farming was expected to create the settled, stable community which approximated the Oblates view of the proper social setting. One wonders to what extent idealized visions of peasant Europe or the Indian peasant communities of Latin America played a part in their outlook. The difficulty was that BC was not peasant Europe. Moreover, many peasants in Europe and Latin America at the time were desperately trying to escape from being traditional peasants.

The Catholic missions made sustained efforts to expand and diversify Indian farming among their parishioners, both through instruction and through aid in acquiring new stock and crops. Some quite effective small farms grew up and apparently there were more than a few enthusiastic Indian farmers. But cash was always needed and small farms could not in the long run hold Indian farmers as mere subsistence ventures.

The Catholic mission system which evolved by the 1870s has been termed the Durieu system (named after the Archbishop of BC who regularized it). The Durieu system, from its inception until circa 1910, was a system of indirect rule with local hierarchies of watchmen, sextons, chiefs and sub-chiefs all linked to the parish church. It was not intended to ease the integration of Indians into the broader society developing around them. Rather, it was part of a policy aimed at developing a separate network of Indian village communities. To this end village economy and polity was to be as self-contained as possible. Law and order were to be imposed internally, if possible, without the intervention of the Canadian state.⁶⁵

Bouchard and Kennedy catch something of the quality of life on a Catholic mission reserve in the reminiscences of Sliammon elders. The account is of a Comox Salishan village north of present-day Powell River during the first decade of the twentieth century. The village was under the control of an Indian hierarchy appointed by the priest, among whom the most important were the 'Captain', 'Watchman' and 'Bell ringer'. The Captain told village members what work had to be done around the church while the Watchman acted as a kind of moral policeman. (Bouchard and Kennedy, 1983:119)

The Watchman's position in the village was a very powerful one. Bill Mitchell explains some of his duties. "The Watchman woke people in the morning before church. When the church bell rang, he stood by the door and waited for the people to enter the church. If they smelled like they were wearing perfume, hair cream or face lotion, they would be reported and punished. Sometimes the punishment would be to stand in front of the altar with your arms out to the side. If you didn't want the punishment, you could pay a fine. The people who didn't have any money would sell their jacket or shawl to get money for the fine. This money would go to the church for repairs."

Rose Mitchell, the daughter of the last watchman at Sliammon, reminisced, "If you were well-to-do you could buy your way out of your punishment. Men gave their suits of clothes to the Watchman and women gave their shawls or money. Sometimes the men had to kneel in front of the church until the third bell had been rung. You could see how dirty knees got from kneeling in the dirt. But in those days then men were very humble and never questioned the Watchman's word. (Bouchard and Kennedy, 1983:122)

These leaders of the local mission hierarchy lectured the community about correct behaviour and sometimes enforced nightly curfews. Mission policy prohibited Sliammon people from engaging in gambling, drinking, potlatching, Indian dancing and 'doctoring'. If the 'watchman' or 'captain' was not strict enough in enforcing these prohibitions, the

village might be punished by the priest refusing to officiate at religious rituals until they repented. (Bouchard and Kennedy, 1983:123)

The Durieu system did not attempt to change all aspects of traditional Indian life. Traditional domestic relations, marriage arrangements, parent-child obligations, and male-female roles (particularly as regards authority) were generally supported. The role of leaders within Indian societies might be modified but an established hierarchy was encouraged under mission aegis. As one anthropologist said of the system,

*Wealth could still be used to signify high status by making sizeable contributions of money for the construction and maintenance of church buildings and, at Seschelt, for the residential school. Although potlatches drew stern disapproval from the priests, feasts still could be used as status symbolizing devices, subject only to slight modification. Likewise the aboriginal marriage custom of paying money to the parents of the bride survived . . .*⁶⁶

Social control operated through the local chiefs who acted as judges, under the direction of their local priest. Indian watchmen (or sometimes local police) acted as the eyes of this power and enforced whatever fines or punishments were imposed. Religious, 'moral' (i.e. sexual), and interpersonal conduct was all within the purview of this authority. It was on this matter, of operating a separate juridical system, that later brought the Durieu system into conflict with the provincial government. The provincial government intervened in 1892 to provide legal protection for individual Indians from the justice dispensed by the mission system. In that year a Father Chirouse of the Williams Lake mission was charged and convicted of presiding over the double flogging (forty lashes each) of a Lillooet couple who had been convicted by mission watchmen of adultery.⁶⁷ This is a bit of history quickly passed over by current enthusiasts of native sovereignty.

The Catholic missions also attempted to introduce cottage industries such as knitting, basketry and curio production for sale. However, their Indian parishioners came to rely upon a mix of subsistence endeavors and off-reserve work almost everywhere. At Seschelt, increasing numbers of men were engaged in logging and commercial fishing by the 1890s. At the Burrard Mission men were working in sawmills and longshoring on the Vancouver docks. Although the mission hierarchy continued to have influence in many villages well into the twentieth century, it was beginning to lose its rationale as far as Indian interests were concerned. The increasing capability of Indian people to make their way in the broader economy - and the necessity to do so- undercut the basis of adherence to missions. It gradually became clear to Indian members that the church had only limited capabilities in advancing Indian interests.

The first Protestant mission was launched in 1859 by William Duncan, who set up inside the walls of Fort Simpson and slowly proceeded to gain converts in that fraction-ridden Tsimshian settlement. After making some headway Duncan departed from Fort Simpson in 1862 with a group of Tsimshian converts to establish a model mission village at Metlakatla, an old winter village site of one of the Tsimshian groups. The bulk of his early converts came from only two of the nine 'tribes' congregated at Fort Simpson but Metlakatla became a resounding success as a mission village and laid the general pattern for other efforts on the north coast which were to follow.⁶⁸

Duncan's policy entailed the isolation of Indian converts at Metlakatla from both Europeans and from unconverted Indians as part of a forced draft program of acculturation. Not acculturation to the contemporary Canadian society of frontier BC, but to a bucolic vision of English village life. Metlakatla established the most extensive program of cottage industry attempted by any mission in BC. The rapid developments at Metlakatla counted partly on the support of the Church Missionary Society, and its resources in Great Britain. While Duncan was at Metlakatla a stream of instructors, equipment, and funds flowed into that community from abroad. Tsimshian moved from Port Simpson to Metlakatla, which for a decade was a sort of mission boom town with considerable influence on nearby Tsimshian groups.

It would not be an exaggeration to call Metlakatla a village theocracy. At one point Metlakatla village could mobilize forty Indian constables to act under Duncan's warrant as magistrate. A hierarchy of chiefs and watchmen enforced the minutiae of mission directives on proper decorum, tithes, church attendance, etc. Surprisingly it did have the allegiance of most of its Indian parishioners.

Various disputes, some with the provincial government and others internal to the Anglican church, undercut the external support and the political influence of Rev. Duncan. A Bishop Ridley was dispatched by the Anglican Church to take charge of Metlakatla mission in 1879 but was confronted with the open opposition of Duncan and most of his supporters. What it seemed to boil down to was that mainstream agencies, whether secular or religious, were not prepared to accept the existence of a quasi-autonomous mission state at Metlakatla. Duncan, however, retained the support of the majority of Metlakatlans. When he decided to leave BC in 1887 to establish a New Metlakatla on Annette Island, at the southern tip of Alaskan territory, more than two-thirds of the Tsimshian at Metlakatla followed him. There they raised an even more 'modern' Indian community, without the trappings of cottage industries but with considerable commercial success, in which Duncan lived until his death in 1918. Bishop Ridley remained in Metlakatla and rebuilt a network of Anglican missions throughout the region by the beginning of the twentieth century.

Other missions had been established in villages on the Nass estuary in the late 1860s, but initially with only limited success. The Anglican successes came in the late 1870s and throughout the 1880s. Alert Bay arose as a modified model village after 1878, when a Rev. Hall set up shop. That mission fostered the establishment of a commercial sawmill and set up a store in the 1880s. A fish cannery later gravitated to the village, with an attendant increase in docks, traffic and money. Concomitant with this some Kwakiutl mission supporters arose as entrepreneurs, both within the local community and in the broader economy. Aiyansh, on the Nass, and Masset, on the Queen Charlottes, also became Anglican mission villages by the 1880s.

Methodist missions appear to have evolved somewhat differently than the others in BC. By the mid nineteenth century the Methodists had recruited a wide-ranging network among Indian people in Ontario, one based heavily upon native missionaries and teachers. They seemed ready to do likewise on the Pacific. Until the early 1870s the Methodist mission was confined to Nanaimo and Victoria, with some revival expeditions launched into the Fraser Valley. Between 1871 and 1875, Alfred Dudoward and his wife, Kate Dudoward, as well as W.H. Pierce and George Edgar (all from Fort Simpson) became Methodist converts during Victoria revival meetings. The Methodists first major success was when Thomas Crosby was recruited by the Dudoward family to establish a mission at Port Simpson.

Both of the Dudowards were children of white fathers and native mothers and had been raised in the middle-class standards of the period. Kate Dudoward had attended a private school in Victoria and had been raised as part of a highly respectable family there. Alfred Dudoward was the son of a trader and ship captain, and had been raised in a 'comfortable' Victorian household of the resource frontier. Both were in their twenties when they converted to Methodism in Victoria and were seemingly convinced of the necessity of creating a revitalized community among their fellow Tsimshian at Fort/Port Simpson.

At the time Fort Simpson was under considerable pressure from nearby Metlakatla. During the ten years since its founding Metlakatla had drained many Tsimshian away from Fort Simpson. In terms of regional influence Metlakatla had supplanted Fort Simpson. Changing Fort/Port Simpson into a Methodist village was, among other things, probably an attempt to reclaim the leading role of that settlement in the region. The Methodist adherents were successful in this, particularly after the departure of Rev. Duncan and most of the Metlakatlans to Alaska in 1887. By then Port Simpson had once again become the leading settlement of the north coast, with a burgeoning roster of local stores, enterprises, native loggers and sawmill workers and so forth.⁶⁹ During the 1870s the

Dudowards owned a store in Port Simpson, and with their schooner *Georgina*, developed a trading business that reached up and down the coast. Kate Dudoward survived into the early 1930s, apparently still resident in Port Simpson. (McDonald, J. 1984:45)

The Methodists came to incorporate and rely upon Indian missionaries, lay preachers and teachers more heavily than any of the other churches. The evangelical style of Methodist preachers is said to have played a role in recruiting Indian converts. They also had a generation-long experience of recruiting native ministers in Ontario .

White and Indian missionaries operating out of Port Simpson established missions villages at Kincolith, Skidegate , Kitkatla, Kispiox, Port Essington, Hartley Bay, Bella Bella, Bella Coola, Gitemaks, Kitseguecla, and Hagwilget between the mid 1870s and the 1890s. I wouldn't bet my shirt on the accuracy of the above list, but there came to be a lot of Methodist missions around the north coast.

These missions seem to have avoided the pitfalls of attempts to be economically self-sufficient. The enterprises fostered were at least partly geared to a broader regional economy. Indian Methodists do not seem to have had an exaggerated fear of the moral dangers of wage work in 'white' industries, although Methodist missionaries too railed against the varied sins which tempted their parishioners at the Sodom and Gomorrahs of the Skeena, and elsewhere.

One may doubt whether mission villages were the most useful vehicles of social reorganization, but Indian missionaries and lay teachers were often central in garnering converts and establishing new missions. To the visible handful should be added the far greater number of Indian lay supporters of the mission infrastructures as catechists, church elders, and in other capacities. The following are a few of the Methodist Indian missionaries who operated on the coast between 1871 and 1911.

David Sallaselton was born on the Nanaimo reserve in 1853 and was converted/recruited by Thomas Crosby in 1868. Sallaselton became a teenage preacher at Nanaimo and was sent to Victoria for a short course on Methodist theology. By 1871 he had become known for his fiery revival meetings, held in store-front tabernacles in downtown Victoria. His 'Steamboat sermon' warned listeners about a coming apocalypse from which they could save themselves only by getting their tickets to heavenly life now, or be left behind like those who had missed the sailing of a steamboat. It sounds very up to date. Sallaselton is said to have converted a number of local residents as well as Indian workers passing through Victoria, but was called back home by this maker following year.⁷⁰

By 1875 W.H. Pierce was working and preaching to Indian sawmill workers drawn from the entire coast at Port Laidlaw, Washington Territory. He returned to Port Simpson and over the next fifty years was engaged as a teacher, lay missionary, recruiter and sometime political organizer in such locales as Port Simpson, Wrangell (Alaska), Bella Bella, Gitlakdamiks, Kispiox, and Port Essington. Pierce was also involved in fund raising tours in eastern Canadian parishes. He remained active until the early 1930s and some of his experiences in Indian-operated enterprises are mentioned later.⁷¹

In 1876, Phillip McKay (or Clah), a Fort Simpson Tsimshian who had been William Duncan's first interpreter, was preaching to Indian dockworkers at Wrangell, where he and other Fort Simpson men had gone to work. By then an influential member of the Methodist mission faction at Fort Simpson, McKay's life was cut short by an illness contracted at Wrangell. In the same year Charles Amos from the then isolated Haisla community of Kitimaat was converted to Methodism while visiting Victoria. He went to Fort Simpson for training and returned as a missionary to Kitimaat. Amos later worked as a lay teacher and missionary in other north coast communities. George Edgar and his wife, both from Fort Simpson, also served at Kitimaat as Methodist missionaries in 1878, and later as lay teachers in settlements on the Nass and elsewhere.

During the late 1870s, a Mrs. Dicks, the wife of a Fort Simpson chief, came to aid the Nass mission. She soon became an influential power in the local Nishga bible school.

Joshua Moody, a Nishga assistant of W.H. Pierce, acted as a lay teacher at Nass mission for a decade or more during this period. Another Nishga Methodist teacher was George Tait. In 1883, a young Tsimshian by the name of David McKay was sent to act as a lay teacher among the people of Kitwancool, who until then had made efforts not to be saved by anyone.⁷²

In a somewhat different vein, one Edward Marsden (the son of William Duncan's first Tsimshian convert) had been sent to Marietta Presbyterian College in Ohio at about the turn of the century. Returning with a college degree in divinity, Marsden attempted to bring the New Metlakatlangs over to his Presbyterian version of Christianity, but with little success.⁷³

Probably the best known later Indian missionary-politician was Peter Kelly. Born in Skidegate in 1885, Kelly grew up during the zenith of the Indian mission era. Methodist missionaries had been encouraged to come to Skidegate in around 1880 by Amos Russ, a member of a chiefly family located there. Kelly's rise from one of the lesser Skidegate families may be taken as an example of the new opportunities opened for some by the mission system. He attended the Methodist residential school at Coquileetza and returned to Skidegate in 1905-1906, taking up a post there as teacher in the mission day school. Kelly later married one of the daughters of the Russ family, briefly tried his hand at timber staking and handlogging, but returned to mission work in 1910 when he was appointed as the lay minister for the Tsimshian at Hartley Bay. He also held a job as an Indian labour manager in the nearby fish cannery.

Later, Kelly obtained a degree in divinity from Columbia College (New Westminster) and then took charge of a series of mission postings in Nanaimo, Bella Coola, and Cape Mudge. He long ran the Methodist mission boat *Thomas Crosby 3* which cruised up and down the coast, bringing the good news to scattered hamlets. Kelly also became a prominent spokesman for Indian rights, as he conceived of them, and was active in Indian delegations to Victoria in 1911 and in the 1927 Federal-Provincial Commission which was to finalize Indian land claims in BC.

While Kelly became a prominent figure in the Native Brotherhood of BC from the late 1930s and on, I do not know what role he played in that organization. It is unclear what Kelly's relations with Indian working people were, but throughout his adult life he was lionized by the Vancouver press as a 'tribune of his people'.⁷⁴

More important than the priests and reverends were the Indian men and women who served as church wardens, lay teachers and supporters of the mission systems in general. Ultimately, they more than anyone decided whether and to what extent the missions would be maintained. For two to three generations church missions received the support of Indian people in many locales. And it was they also, or their descendants, who ultimately decided enough was enough.

School Days

Whatever differences there were between the policies of the various sects and missions, all agreed upon the importance of formal education for at least a portion of their parishioners. All missions wanted to establish an educated elite of Indian adherents as well as a fuller transmission of their own versions of Christianity. This seems to have been the main purposes of the residential schools which were originally established by the mission groups. Education conjoined religious instruction and literacy with vocational training. The latter ranged from rudimentary instruction in subsistence farming to training in a range of trades.

Some Protestant missions established day schools in their villages. These were partly bible schools but provided the rudiments of literacy and some knowledge of the wider world. Such day schools began in the 1860s and for a long time operated side by side with residential schools.

Catholic educational strategy relied primarily upon residential schools, the first of which was opened at Mission City in the mid 1860s. During the 1870s and early 1880s the Catholic residential schools predominated in the province. These schools were probably more influential in forming the views of generations of the Indian leadership than the current reminiscences and denunciations of residential schools suggest. While only a small proportion of school-aged Indian children attended, the intensity of the schooling they received surpassed that of the day schools. Anglican and Methodist residential schools were established in the 1870s and 1880s and became influential within their own networks.

Residential schools increased in number during the 1880s, at which time the Department of Indian Affairs assumed part (later most) of their operating costs. The Department set certain curriculum guidelines but left the operation of Indian residential schools in the hands of the mission bodies. Some of the curriculum is intriguing—such as 'Indian History'. Without further investigation one can only speculate what it might have entailed. Otherwise, the curricula seem much like those of public grade school instruction of the time, stressing reading, writing, arithmetic—and obedience to those in authority. Vocational training appears to have been left up to the individual residential schools. It was stressed in those residential schools which came to be called 'Industrial schools.'

By 1895 the basic pattern of Indian schools in BC was already set. There were eleven residential schools and nineteen day schools, enrolling some 1300 pupils. This comprised roughly one-third of the school-aged Indian population. However, by 1910 there were some forty-six day schools (mostly in coastal villages) enrolling circa 1350 students, mainly in grades one to three, while there were 650 students in thirteen residential schools. It may have been that a portion of those who initially attended day schools continued education at residential schools. *But of those Indian children who did attend school during this period, only a minority seem to have attended residential schools.* School attendance for Indian children under fourteen years of age was made compulsory only in 1920.⁷⁵

Most residential schools were relatively small, typically ranging from thirty to sixty students. Coquileetza, with 105 students, was by far the largest. The Indian students spent from nine to ten months of the year away from their families and home communities during the years they attended residential school. They were often in their late teens or older when they finished schooling. In recent accounts, residential schools come across as frightening and oppressive institutions, usually little related to the practicalities of later life. This could also be said of public schools attended by non-Indian children during that era. Strangely enough, many of the Indian graduates of the residential schools sent their own children back to those schools - and they their children.

There is no doubt that the intent of the mission residential schools was to acculturate students to mission standards. Use of native Indian languages was disallowed and there was a ban on indigenous beliefs of all sorts. A portion of each day was spent in manual labour, maintaining the school buildings and its farm. This is an aspect of residential schooling which some accounts find terribly degrading. While manual labour interspersed with classroom education could potentially be a satisfying mix, the manner in which it was done apparently left some Indian students feeling humiliated.

Residential schools sought to inculcate the etiquette, morals, maxims, manners, in short the culture—not of Euro-Canadian society as it existed but a mission version of respectable society. This was done by precept and lesson and may have had more impact than later observers believe. Unfortunately, the patterns learned were often rather removed from the reality of every day life on the industrial frontiers. An indefinable mission style became prevalent among Indian spokespersons which lingered well into the twentieth century.

The most common 'occupational' training provided in residential schools was instruction in small scale agriculture: beginning before 1870 it became a near universal feature of residential schools between 1890 and the 1930s. Initially it was not as ludicrous an undertaking as it later became. Agriculture providing for subsistence needs as well as

generating surpluses for sale made some sense as one source of income. But as a general economic strategy it was undoubtedly ill conceived.

While instruction in agriculture varied in quality, it provided Indian students with a better grounding in mixed farming than that possessed by many white homesteaders. In some schools, instruction dealt with the intricacies of orchardry, with irrigation techniques, with methods of fallowing and rotation, and with market garden cultivation in general. There was instruction on stock keeping for domestic purposes and a few residential schools also taught the rudiments of cattle raising. By 1895 the Kootenay Industrial School provided training in the operation and maintenance of steam-powered threshers. This is not to say that Indian students learned to be effective farmers by going to school. But they probably received instruction in farming more relevant than that available in public schools in farming areas.⁷⁶

Female students received no vocational training in residential schools, under the presumption that they would become wives and mothers after leaving school. In addition to the basic curricula of reading, writing and mission mores, schooling for girls placed a great emphasis on running a proper Victorian home - replete with essentials such as needlework and the production of antimacassars. Girls did do agricultural chores on residential school farms but it is unclear if the role of many Indian women in subsistence gardening stemmed from school lessons or from practices already well developed in Indian farming communities.

One area of instruction which did have some practical use was in the preparation and preservation of food stuffs — techniques such as canning, pickling, root cellar storage etc. But apparently no residential school made any attempt to transmit traditional skills in preserving fish, game, and wild vegetable foods. These were still important elements in the domestic budgets of most Indian communities.

By or after the mid 1880s instruction in certain trades became common at residential schools. It is uncertain if this training was to provide Indian tradesmen with the skills to meet reserve needs or whether it was meant for off-reserve employment, or both. By the mid 1890s the trades taught in Indian industrial schools in BC included house and general carpentry, cabinet and furniture making, blacksmithing. A few industrial schools also provided instruction in shoe making, saddle and harness making, boat building, and printing.⁷⁷

Residential schools probably were not the primary source of the new trade skills among Indian people in the province. It would be my guess that many learned these skills on the job; a body of men with many capacities emerged. These sometime carpenters, blacksmiths, boat builders, hay wire mechanics, and jacks-of-all-trades were a feature which enriched reserve life. They were useful talents even where they did not bring cash incomes.

Residential schools today have become a handy scapegoat for sundry ills which befell native peoples. Almost any kind of charge now can be conveyed into print, even in journals like *BC Studies*, and be believed. If residential schools were as horrendous as they are portrayed, one wonders why Indian parents sent their children to them when it was not required? One would also like to know how it was that much of the Indian leadership passed through such schools during two generations without their psyches being destroyed in the process.? Did the nature of residential schools deteriorate during their final years or did personality disorders among their 'survivors' only arise as a broader malaise gripped Indian communities? Is there indeed any reliable evidence which shows a significant difference between those who attended residential schools and those who didn't?

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Throughout the period dealt with, government social and health services were negligible or non-existent, both for white and Indian alike. Assured medical care, old age pensions, relief payments, etc. simply did not exist. It was an age of untrammelled free enterprise and of

bracing 'self reliance' which produced its own cannibal dance—more voracious than any Hamatsa spectacle.

The single biggest budget item of the Department of Indian Affairs was spent in supporting Indian residential schools. Miniscule funds were disbursed for emergency rations and medical care in BC (although rations issued to Indian bands in the Prairie regions from the early 1880s were substantial, if insufficient.) A proportion of the funds used to operate the mission programs came from band and village members themselves. Variable support came from governmental and private sources. However, it was usually mission personnel who delivered what social and health services were available. Medical missionaries and nurses staffed Indian hospitals from the 1890s on while some early missionaries themselves tried to instigate vaccination programs. One has to wonder whether the untrained dispensation of medicines disbursed by missionaries (such as Bishop Ridley at Metlakatla) had any beneficial consequences for the recipients. But missionaries and allied medical staff provided much of what 'public' services were available to Indian people. However limited and anachronistic these services seem in retrospect, until other alternatives were available they were not disdained.

While there were missionaries who played the role of agents of colonial control, this role was neither universal nor unmixed. Although it is a little documented topic, it seems that some missionaries secured legal counsel, drafted petitions, solicited support for Indian claims among the white population. This was probably most important during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and during the early twentieth, when Indian leaders were still learning the ropes of political action. How effective it was is another matter. Missionaries themselves were ultimately powerless vis a vis the real power of business interests and their governments. This became increasingly clear to their Indian adherents after the turn of the century.

However, to one extent or another, Indian people everywhere had to face challenges by forces external to the mission world. As they did so they became more reliant upon their own estimations and decisions. The Nishga Land Claims movement of 1910-1911 and on is only one dramatic example of independent Indian action. Missions became progressively less relevant in Indian responses to external forces— even where they remained important in reserve affairs.

Mission systems generally were authoritarian and ultimately stultifying. Loss of much traditional culture was only part of the cost. Yet Indian parishioners were not simply unwilling pawns or unwitting dupes. The foregoing has attempted to suggest what social and material reasons underlay Indian support.

Government and the Net of Native Laws

Legislative acts and administrative policies were both extremely important for Indian peoples and yet restricted in scope. The politics and policies which intersected in these laws and their administration are a realm which requires study other than presented here. It is a sphere which has only recently come under detailed scrutiny and might benefit by a less cultural and a more materialistic analysis.

The policies of the provincial and the federal governments toward Indian peoples were sometimes at odds. Put crudely, the thrust of provincial legislation was to remove land and resources from native title for the benefit of the classes which the provincial government represented. Once this was accomplished, the provincial government opted out of any role toward Indian groups. By accepting a clause in the British North America Act, it fell to the federal government to provide whatever governmental administration and services which involved Indian people. This it did through the Department of Indian Affairs or its precursors. The initial Indian Agents arrived in BC upon confederation in 1871. In 1876 the first federal Indian Act came into effect and became the single most important piece of legislation defining the legal position of Indian peoples for the next century. It was what in other contexts is generally referred to as a 'native law.'

Provincial legislation, legislative orders in council, and administrative decisions affecting Indian peoples served mainly to expropriate lands and resources claimed by native groups. In addition, provincial legislation progressively restricted Indian utilization of crown lands. Crown lands in BC, surprisingly, continued to comprise four-fifths of the land area throughout the period discussed. Rights to utilize irrigation water, crown timber and grazing land, often was almost as important as were the provision of reserve lands. Provincial legislation which restricted utilization of crown resources by Indian users reduced the viability off-reserve enterprises such as ranching, farming, logging, and sawmilling. It was in spite of these restrictions, that Indian farming and other enterprises advanced and maintained themselves. Let us consider some of the pertinent provincial legislation.

An early piece of legislation curtailing Indian rights to crown resources was put in place before BC joined confederation. Preemption of homestead land by settlers began to take on some importance during the 1860s. The initial Land Ordinance of 1860 protected Indian villages and their improved lands, but not hunting and fishing territories, from homestead claims. It apparently also permitted Indians to file homestead claims. By 1862, that is just what some Indian groups were doing—filing homestead applications. In order to deal with this 'problem,' a legislative ordinance was passed in Victoria in April 1865. It stipulated that Indians could preempt lands under the homestead provision only with the prior consent of the Lt. Governor of BC. If permission was given, a minute-in-council had to be passed in the legislature, for every individual case, to authorize the preemption. After that the individual Indian claimant still had to 'prove up', i.e. meet the requirements for completing patent, to receive the title to the homestead tract. This required a certain amount of land cleared and involved a process of some years. Needless to say, very few Indian homesteads were preempted under such conditions.⁷⁸

Even the right of individual Indians to buy crown land—which a few years previously had been theirs—was under contention. It was permitted by the British Colonial Office in 1862. As bitter irony, some Indians set about purchasing crown land in order to obtain certain sites they wanted. How and to what extent the purchase of lands by status Indians operated later, when the reserves were allotted and laid out, is unknown to me. .

At one point in the early 1870s the position of the BC government of the day was that Indian reserves in the province were not to exceed twenty acres per family of five.⁷⁹ The federal government's policy was to provide reserve lands of 160 acres (a homestead sized block) per family of five in agricultural areas, and one square mile per five people in non-agricultural areas. Pressure by the federal government, and the incipient Indian land claims movements, managed to raise the allocated reserve lands in BC. But they remained proportionally somewhat lower than reserve lands provided for in federal treaties.

A study of Indian land claims movements, in their considerable variety from the 1870s until the late 1920s requires a book in its own right. Fortunately, Paul Tennant's *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in BC, 1849-1989*. now provides an extensive overview of these processes as a background to the more contemporary land claim movements. It is impossible to briefly summarize the events and individuals engaged, except to note that every time Indian land claim movements were proclaimed dead, they later sprang to life again. Despite periods of quiescence and shifts in regional focus, this issue stimulated most (although not all) Indian organizations which sprang up.⁸⁰

The initial Indian land claims movement developed in the mid 1870s when land preemption by Euro-Canadians was taking place and when establishment of Indian reserves was proceeding at a very slow pace. It may be worth repeating a fragment of an often reproduced petition of the Indian chiefs of the Douglas and Portage bands to the Federal-Provincial commission responsible for establishing Indian reserves in 1874. After proclaiming their past friendly relations with European traders and settlers, their statement goes on to tabulate the disparities of reserve sizes established for various bands in the

Fraser valley and canyon area - most of them too small to be economically feasible. The statement then proceeds in more general terms as follows,

5. Discouragement and depression have come upon our people. Many of them have given up the cultivation of land because our gardens have not been protected against the encroachments of the whites. Some of our best men have been deprived of the land they have broken and cultivated with long and hard labour, a white man enclosing it in his claim, and no compensation given. Some of our enterprising men have lost a part of their cattle, because white men had taken the place where those cattle were grazing and no other place left but the thickly timbered land, where they die fast. Some of our people are now obliged to cut rushes along the bank of the river with their knives during the winter, to feed their cattle.

6. We are now obliged to clear heavy timbered land, all prairies having been taken from us by white men. We see our white neighbours cultivate wheat, peas, etc., and raise large stocks of cattle on our pasture lands, and we are giving them our money to buy the flour manufactured from the wheat they have grown on same prairies.

7. We are not lazy and roaming about people, as we used to be. We have worked hard and a long time to spare money to buy agricultural implements, cattle, horses, etc., as nobody has given us assistance. We could point out many of our people who have those past years bought with their own money, ploughs, harrows, yokes of oxen and horses, and now, with your kind assistance, we have a bright hope to enter into the path of civilization.

8. We consider that eighty acres per family is absolutely necessary for our support, and for the future welfare of our children. We declare that 20 or 30 acres of land per family will not give satisfaction, but will create ill feelings, irritation among our people, and we cannot say what will be the consequence. ⁸¹

The above was addressed to the commission charged with laying out Indian reserves and does not present simply facts. Given its style one may wonder who drafted the petition. Its demands were remarkably modest and embody the minimum requirements for bands which did or intended to farm in the southern interior and Fraser Valley. There was land claims activity among the Tsimshian at Fort Simpson as well, who had begun to consider what white settlement might mean and who demanded rights to cut timber on crown lands. The initial land claims movement subsided after the Indian Reserve Commissioners and survey crews laid out Indian reserves throughout much of the province.⁸²

Probably the most widespread Indian land claims movement during the period dealt with emerged in the first decade of the twentieth century. It involved both regional and intertribal organization and was fanned into being by the refusal of the provincial McBride regime to consider any more Indian land claims. In 1911 the provincial government also insisted it had the right to recover any reserve lands which it determined were not being used by Indians. These were the 'cut-off lands'. It entailed not only a threat but an actual process through which more than 30,000 acres of reserve land reverted to the provincial government. The Nishga land claims movement, and later the Allied Tribes, and other Indian leaders entered the battle during the following decade. It culminated in a Federal-Provincial Commission, the McKenna-McBride Commission, which after some years of hearings came to a decision in 1927. After some minor reallocations it froze Indian reserve lands in BC at approximately the size they had been in 1897 and pronounced the question of further claims permanently closed. The single gain was that the reversionary claims of the provincial government to reserve lands was dropped.

The total Indian reserve land in BC was frozen at some 733,891 acres, divided into some 1,560 parcels of reserve lands. In twenty-five years of organization, delegations, and protests, the reserve land base was finalized at only some three per cent over what it had been in 1897.⁸³

Given the role which accounts of aboriginal land and resource use have taken on in current native land claims, the rendering of details take on an importance which cannot

easily be forseen. A full account of any one of the Indian land claims would require a great deal more space than available in a brief overview. Strangely enough, the mass of information presented in lands claims case has rarely entered into public purview while books and articles purporting to be popular accounts of those claims often have been examples of 'client-centered scholarship.' Some these accounts could themselves be a topic of study, of the role of mythology in contemporary society.

Frankly, I am not conversant with the intricacies, factual and legal, entailed in contemporary land claims cases. The thumbnail sketch presented above is not intended to relate to current aboriginal land claims.

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While the ownership of lands was a fundamental and visible element in government-Indian relations, there were other crown held resources which also were of consequence. Water rights legislation in BC developed in conjunction with early placer mining - and grew into an especially chaotic tangle. Fundamental to this chaos was the fact that rights to surface water did not go along with land ownership. Water rights could be and were claimed and transferred independently. Registering water claims was on a 'first claim, first get' basis. Individuals and companies could and did alienate rights to streams for irrigation purposes, for hydraulic mining, and for more diverse purposes regardless of the occupancy of Indian or nonIndian land holders.

The Indian Reserve Allotment Commissioners did attempt to include registered water rights when they were surveying and setting up reserves during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. That their estimations were often insufficient is witnessed by the fact that a number of reserves in the interior, where farming was under way, were already plagued by a shortage of irrigation water as early as the 1880s. Previous alienation of water rights impeded a number of Indian farming and ranching reserves.⁸⁴

In addition to the blocks of land preempted or purchased from the provincial government, cattle ranchers throughout the interior also depended upon grazing leases for crown lands on which to pasture their herds over the year. By 1870 grazing leases to crown lands were restricted to persons who were bona fide preemptors of crown lands in the vicinity of the pasturage sought. Since Indians were not considered to be bona fide preemptors (according to the Land Ordinance), it would seem that they were excluded from applying for crown grazing leases. There may have been ways of getting around this restriction, since Indian ranching did spread. But as early as the mid 1870s Indian cattle grazing on crown lands were occasionally seized or driven off by other ranchers who had acquired such pasturage through government leases. By 1888 crown grazing leases were being auctioned off to the highest bidder.⁸⁵

Although the evidence is unclear, it appears that Indian ranchers found it difficult to obtain leases to grass and hay land on crown lands under these conditions. They generally had to make do with what resources were available on reserve lands. On some reserves this pasturage was sufficient for those families who took up cattle rearing but it placed an inherent limit on how many cattle and how many Indian ranching families there could be. Along the coast, the timber on crown lands was the resource of prime importance. The history of ever-changing forest legislation and of timber leases in BC is the fundament of much of the early commercial statesmanship of this province. Although clear enough in broad outline, the intricacies of crown timber legislation are not easily unlocked. All that can be said here is that the value of timber resources and their imminent loss were apparent to some Indian spokesmen from before the turn of the century. As early as 1887 a deputation of Indian leaders from Port Simpson raised the question of their right to cut timber on crown lands with the provincial government. They raised this issue in conjunction with reserve claims and hunting/fishing rights, but the importance of timber as a resource was evident to them. Members of that community had been working as loggers and sawmill workers for the Georgetown sawmill in the region for approximately a decade.⁸⁶

A steady alienation of the most accessible crown timber lands by sawmill and logging companies, and by speculators, occurred throughout the two decades before 1900. A crescendo of timber staking—a rush to match most gold rushes—broke out between 1904 and 1910. American, eastern Canadian, and British timber corporations and their local agents, as well as speculators of all variety, scurried into the last great west to feast at the potlatch thrown by the McBride government for its fellow robber barons. Neither the claims of the Indian bands nor those of white handloggers scattered along the coast stood much chance against such as these. A few Indian entrepreneurs managed to participate in that speculative timber boom and acquire some modest profits, but they were very small fish in the scheme of things. By or immediately after 1910 much of the then commercially retrievable timber along the coast had been alienated by some form of lease to private lumber holdings. How it came to be that crown timber resources were still available for some small logging outfits into the early 1940s, is unclear to me. Possibly it was simply the case that there was so much timber that the bigger logging companies just creamed off the most profitable stands and that tracts of more difficult to reach timber remained open for smaller contractors.

According to Codere's account of the economics which underlay the Kwakiutl potlatch system, provincial timber lease regulations in 1908 disallowed handlogging licenses for Indian loggers. (This presumably followed from the license stipulation which required a licensee to be on or eligible to be on the voters rolls.) She speculates that this operated to drive many Indian loggers into employment for the non-Indian logging companies.⁸⁷

Codere seems to be mistaken in this matter, since provincial forestry legislation excepted Indian loggers from the citizenship requirements of the act. Indian handloggers continued to take out licenses to work the timber along the coast, although increasing numbers of Indian loggers were working from corporate logging companies as well. As we will see, Indian loggers were everywhere in the woods industry, from running their own small outfits to operating steam machinery in the large corporate forest companies.

At the time, the Department of Indian Affairs was encouraging Indian bands to harvest the timber on their reserves and there was an upsurge of cutting by band logging companies. However there can be little doubt that handloggers and small logging operators in general, Indian and non-Indian, were increasingly restricted by the loss of timber lands to large corporations following the Forestry Act of 1910.

Native Indians in BC were generally free to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes until shortly before WW 1. (A major proviso were the restrictions set by Federal fisheries regulations, particularly in regard to salmon fishing with weirs.) As late as 1910 there were still commercial Indian hunters supplying game to work camps in various regions of BC. Game and conservation laws were extended to all residents of the province, including native Indians, in 1912. But hunting for subsistence purposes was still permitted, for both Indians and white trappers and prospectors.

Game regulations restricting the kind, numbers, season, locales and methods of taking game animals gradually were tightened. The prosecutions of Indians circumventing game laws in the 1920s and on indicates both the increasing enforcement of these restrictions and Indian resistance to them. Opposition to game laws was not only a practical necessity for many families, but also seems to have become symbolic of Indian resistance to ever greater government restrictions. It might be noted that a considerable proportion of the white population living in semi-settled regions of the province developed sentiments comparable to those of native peoples in regards the ever-tightening government restrictions on access to public lands and once common resources.⁸⁸

For reasons that one can only guess at, government agencies and private lobbies in Canada took a much greater cognizance of Indian claims to fur trapping rights than they did to other Indian resource claims. Possibly this stemmed from a view that trapping was the natural preserve of native Indians. Government reports, bulletins of fur trade companies,

urbane enthusiasts of the Canadian wilds, raised the clarion call to defend Indian trapping rights vis a vis non-Indian trappers during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Some rather strange bedfellows were involved in this crusade. A study of the arguments and interests involved in this campaign for exclusive native rights to fur resources could be a valuable contribution to our understanding of how 'historical' facts become established.⁸⁹

In any case, in 1912 the BC Fish and Wildlife Branch required the registration of Indian as well as non-Indian trap lines. The stipulations conveyed all fur resources within a tract to whoever held the trap line registration. Private ownership was further strengthened by regulations which delineated the boundaries of registered trap lines in 1926 and permitted their transfer by sale. Although these regulations brought trapping more fully under government control, the registration procedures may have aided Indian trappers then in competition with non-Indians. However, a consequence of preserving fur resources exclusively for Indian use *may have been* that many non-status Indians lost the rights to trap.

What the consequent changes were in trapping arrangements were among Indian groups in BC is impossible to say without fuller study. In the eastern subarctic, the delineation of exclusive Indian trapping tracts conflicted with the flexibility inherent in traditional trapping organization.

Provincial and Federal attempts to regulate Indian food fisheries also developed during the first decade of the twentieth century. Moves had been made to place Indian food fisheries under license on the Fraser during the previous decade but events came to a head when attempts were made to prohibit Indian weirs on the Skeena. Indian-operated weirs and fish traps along the major spawning rivers were banned. Possibly the most dramatic confrontations occurred on the upper Skeena and approaches to the Babine Lakes between 1904 and 1906. Geoff Meggs' account of the salmon fishery in BC provides a powerful overview of the actions and interests involved there. (Meggs, G. 1991:74-80)

Canners had convinced the Department of Fisheries and Marine that the weirs used by the Gitksan and Carrier in subsistence fishing were impeding and decimating commercial salmon stocks. (The tens of thousands of salmon caught and later dumped by oversupplied canneries at the river mouths were not decimating the stocks, of course.) The Department of Fisheries there upon banned the use of Indian fish weirs upstream and moved to dismantle them after native people refused to do so. Despite the determined resistance by Indian fishermen/women of the area - resistance involving physical set-tos, arrests, and the rebuilding of smashed weirs - the Department of Fisheries was ultimately successful. Indian fishermen had to shift to other means of getting their catch.

By the beginning of the 1920s Indian subsistence fishing throughout the province proceeded under license of the Department of Indian Affairs. Special rights were accorded Indian subsistence fishing; salmon headed for their spawning grounds could be taken at times and with methods (such as dip nets) which were forbidden to non-Indian fishermen. Sale of fish caught under Indian food licence was strictly forbidden, but despite prosecutions was never eliminated in the province.

The commercial fisheries on the coast and on the major salmon spawning rivers were under the jurisdiction of the federal Department of Fisheries. Indian claims to the inherent right to take fish commercially were never recognized. Until the mid 1890s the great bulk of the commercial fishing licenses issued were issued directly to canneries. Indian fishermen, like most others, fished for canneries under cannery fishing licenses. This began to change by the turn of the century, when fishing licenses on the Fraser and surrounding waters were opened to independent fishermen. In northern waters, as on the Skeena and Nass estuaries, cannery-held fishing licences (or the 'attach system') continued to predominate until the early 1920s.

During the period we are dealing with the possession of a commercial fishing license (obtainable at a nominal fee) was not the key factor in entering commercial fishing. Many, probably most, Indian fishermen were dependant upon cannery-supplied boats, nets and

supplies to carry them through the salmon fishing seasons. In 1923 most of the cannery fishing licenses and the attach system were eliminated on the north coast but Indian fishermen on the north and central coasts continued to be reliant upon the rental of cannery-owned boats and credit more than other group. A fact which would be of importance in later conflicts within the fishing industry.⁹⁰

It would be a mistake to view the laws controlling Indian access to crown resources as part of a single, premeditated scheme. The legislation was piecemeal and the workings of the interest groups which brought them about were often complex. However, there was one piece of federal legislation which did serve as a unified 'native law' and one federal agency which administered governmental relations with Indian people throughout Canada in a more or less uniform manner.

The Department of Indian Affairs and the Indian Act

The operations of the Department of Indian Affairs and the provisions the Indian Act, and its various revisions, were the unilateral creations of the Canadian federal government. They were distinct from treaty provisions and did not involve negotiations with Indian people themselves. The application of the Indian Act and the administration of the Department of Indian Affairs proceeded regardless of whether Indian people had signed a treaty with the Canadian government or not.

In BC, all resources and lands were considered to have been transferred to provincial title without any treaties or surrenders of native title ever having been made (An exception were those bands and lands included in Treaty No 8 covering the northeastern corner of the province.) Reserves and federal government policies were extended to BC Indians regardless of whether treaties had been signed or not. 91

The process of laying out Indian reserves in BC was a drawn-out undertaking, including initial surveys and considerations of local demands for specific sites before the actual establishment of particular reserves. The earliest reserves might be considered to be those established by the Douglas Treaties of the 1850s but the main period of reserve allocation in BC took place between 1876 and 1908 and was carried out under a Joint Committee of Indian Reserves. (Duff, W. 1964: 67-68)

Although the amount of lands *ultimately* set aside for Indian reserves in BC was roughly comparable (on a pro capita basis) to lands so designated elsewhere in Canada, reserves in BC were smaller, more scattered and far more numerous than elsewhere. So that of the circa 2,240 blocks of Indian reserve lands in Canada, some 1,620 are in BC. (Duff, W. 1964: 68). The boundaries of the lands once utilized by specific groups and the particulars of the reserves established are the concern of land claims investigators today. The evidence amassed in each case are studies in themselves. However dramatic they are, these must be left aside here.

The last two decades have seen considerable historical study of the Department of Indian Affairs, its personalities and the nature of its administration. It is an area which past anthropologists, with their focus on local communities, tended to by-pass. One would like to know something more about the *actual* administration by the DIA as it affected the day-to-day lives of Indian people. A recitation of the specific clauses in the Indian Act or of the official policies of the DIA at various times is one thing, but what the actual interpretations were locally we often do not know. The disparity between official policy and real applications was probably considerable. I am still unclear how DIA administration effected Indian participation in wage labour.

For instance, there is the question of the 'pass system' and how it was applied. Immediately following the Cree and Metis rising of 1885, the DIA and its agents were given the power to restrict movement of Indian people off their home reserves. The 'pass system' required that Indians leaving their reserve - to hunt or seek work or attend celebrations at other reserves or visit towns etc.- should obtain written permission from their local Indian Agent. This regulation was operative, with variable degrees of strictness, to Indian reserves

in the agricultural regions of the Prairies from 1885 until some time in the 1920s. In northern regions and among hunting and trapping bands the pass system does not *seem* to ever have been instituted.

The operation of this pass system on BC reserves is something which I have not weighed - and which I did not find discussed in the sources used. The participation of Indian workers in virtually every resource industry in the province throughout this period indicates that Indian people were not *in fact* restricted to reserve living. However, if Indian Agents did have the power of disallowing the movement of individuals or groups off their home reserves, it could have served as a powerful method of controlling and directing their labour. It is strange that these restrictions were not prominently raised by Indian or other spokespersons for native rights in BC.

Apart from those peoples in the Peace River region, no Indian groups in BC signed treaties formally surrendering their lands. While symbolically important as documents recognizing previous title to land, the formal treaties made between the Federal government and Indian groups between 1871 and 1921 (with 'adhesions' of local bands to existing treaties until 1929) themselves guarantee very little. Treaties have come to symbolize 'inalienable rights' to reserve lands and government services by the descendants of those who signed treaty. But a close reading of the treaties indicate that they promised very little in the way of economic aid and financial support. The stenographic records of what was said and how these treaties were signed indicate that government representatives engaged in treaty making recurrently rejected demands that government provide food and other subsidies to those Indian groups which ceded aboriginal title to their lands.

Treaties and treaty rights are separate from the operation of the Indian Act and the administrative policies of the Department of Indian Affairs. The stipulations of that Act and the administrative policies established by the DIA were far more important in the lives of Indian people than any of the provisions of the treaties.

The Department of Indian Affairs emerged from precursors which had evolved before the creation of the Dominion of Canada. Indian reserves had been established in the province of Upper Canada (Ontario) before confederation and administrative policy foreshadowing that of the DIA existed by the late 1850s. The British North America Act of 1867, establishing Canada as a 'sovereign' dominion, reserved government relations with native Indian groups for exclusive Federal jurisdiction. The Department of Indian Affairs' emerged as a separate federal department shortly after confederation, a status it would retain until 1936, after which it operated as a more or less autonomous 'Branch' in other departments.

Originally cast in a strongly colonial mould, the Department of Indian Affairs has long been a handy scapegoat for all ills which befell native people. While its field officers, the Indian Agents, may have been patronizing and sometimes arbitrary, the main failing of the DIA was that it was underfunded and largely powerless within the Federal government. This may have stemmed from the fact that status Indians did not have the right to vote - although it seems questionable what electoral impact a small, dispersed and politically uninitiated native population would have had.

The DIA usually lacked the support of any powerful interest group, and thereby remained incapable of advancing Indian interests even when it might have wished to. According to Patterson, from circa 1860 until 1913 "*...the costs of Indian administration was borne primarily by revenues derived from Indian sources, such as the sale or lease of land. The limited funds available through these sources provides a comment on the 'services' which would be made possible. It is necessary to keep in mind, of course, that the era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries predates the Welfare State.*" (Patterson, E.P. 1972:26)

Certain key policies forwarded by senior administrators of the DIA, such as the goal of the gradual assimilation of Canadian Indians into the broader society, remained at odds with the desires of most Indian people - however well-intended such policies were. The

Department of Indian Affairs was not a representative of Indian interests vis a vis the rest of the government. To expect that, at the time, would be quite unrealistic.

In the original edition of *Indians at Work* I made some surmises about the role of Indian Agents in BC during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, drawn largely from their Annual Reports. I leaned excessively upon the autobiography of one William M. Halliday, who was the Indian Agent of the Kwakiutl agency from before WW.I until the early 1930s. Halliday was central in the effort to suppress the potlatch after W.W.I and as such has gained a certain notoriety. ⁹²

In retrospect, I no longer feel confident in generalizing on the role which the DIA and its Indian Agents played in BC. Indian Agents varied greatly in their familiarity and relations with the Indian groups whose interests they were to protect. The situations of the native groups also varied considerably from region to region, as did the non-Indian population in those regions. Some Indian Agents -such as Harry Guillod of the West Coast Agency during the last two decades of the nineteenth century - seem to have been quite remarkable men, operating under impossible conditions. Nevertheless, the pervasive powers which the DIA and its Indian Agents had seem to have been a fatal flaw in the whole system.

What tangible consequences the DIA administration had on the various Indian communities is unclear to me. But it is clear that Indian people in BC were not economically dependent upon government aid during the period discussed. Little in the way of welfare payments were made by any government, to anyone.

The DIA always had minimal funds to work with. It's budget rarely served to do more than subsidize residential schools, maintain the scattered Indian Agents and dispense marginal amounts for health care. Consider the budget of the Department of Indian Affairs for all Indian people in BC during 1912. This was a fairly typical year for the period.⁹³

DIA Budget-Expenditures for BC (April 1, 1912-March 31, 1913)

Administrative Salaries	134,277
Travel and Administrative Expenses	16,608
Surveys	5,268
Legal Expenses re Land Claims	3,895
Relief to Destitute	12,664
Hospitals and Medical	34,948
Aid to Indian Farms	9,120
Hartley Bay Wharf Repair	1,501
Residential and Industrial Schools	169,364
Day Schools	19,674
Other Educational	1,570
Total	\$326,482

A few gross points which stand out are that some 60 per cent of the budget is expended for schooling. Secondly, the administrative costs and surveys consumed more than the expenditures for health, welfare, and economic aid combined. It should be emphasized that these funds were the total government expenditures then made to the circa 24,000 Indian people then in the province. The point that welfare and relief funds were largely absent should be brought home by the fact that the expenditures that year for direct relief payments averaged some fifty cents per capita, or not quite twice that if one includes 'aid to Indian farms'. A few aged and destitute individuals might receive a pittance from these funds, but for the vast majority of Indian people in BC there just were no welfare expenditures.

Some of the failings of the DIA lay outside its own control. It had little influence in the federal government and even less in dealing with provincial ones. The existence of the Department of Indian Affairs was used as a rationale which let provincial governments off the hook in providing services for Indian people -although it should be remembered that

throughout the entire period no government provided much in the way of services to anyone in need.

The DIA was a quasi-colonial agency partly because it was charged with administering a comprehensive piece of legislation. The Indian Act -initially proclaimed in 1876 and periodically revised - was the fundamental piece of legislation which defined Indian people into a single, separate, class of 'natives'. Such legislation was not instituted by the handful of civil servants in the DIA (although admittedly Indian Affairs administrators were influential in drafting provisions of the Act), but by the parliament of Canada. That parliament also accepted the disallowance of Indian franchise by all provincial governments until 1948 and did not make provisions for Indian federal franchise until yet later.

The Indian reserves throughout Canada, whether created by treaty negotiations or by administrative action, were/are a special category of federal crown lands. They are lands held by the federal government for the 'use and benefit' of status Indians. Although reserve lands are removed from the actions of provincial governments and 'inalienable' by band members, there was/is no inherent guarantee that Indian reserve lands could not be altered or dispersed by federal government decision. The sale of reserve lands occurred from the late 1880s until W.W. 1, especially on some of the larger Prairie reserves. The typical rationale was that the reserves were larger than the band could use and that the funds received for the sale of reserve lands were to be used to improve the economic conditions of the band members. No comparable land losses appear to have occurred in BC, apart from reserve lands 'cut off' by the provincial government before 1916, which were recouped by Indian bands in the following decade.

A stipulation of the Indian Act was that reserve lands could not be used as collateral for loans and could not be sold by band members, individually or as a group, without the approval of the Department of Indian Affairs. Patronizing as it was, this stipulation probably served to retain reserve lands more or less intact. Most important of all was the fact that reserve lands were free from any and all taxation, whether municipal, provincial or federal. It seems evident that if reserve lands had been required to carry the burden of land taxes much of it would have been lost in default.

The Indian Act spelled out, in a legalistic way, who was and who wasn't a status Indian. It spelled out the membership of a legally defined class of native people. The creation of a separate native status was not necessarily rejected by Indian people themselves, although there was ongoing contentions over how decisions of inclusion or exclusion were to be made. The Indian Act determined who had rights to band patrimony, how reserve resources could be utilized, how band governments might function and what powers they had. In some ways, the Indian Act can be viewed as a federal version of provincial municipal acts, which also specify what powers municipal governments have. The difference, in the case of the Indian Act, is that the Minister of the Department of Indian Affairs had veto power over decisions taken by local Indian groups regarding reserve operations. Band councils and chiefs became largely consultative bodies.

Of less fundamental importance (but of greater dramatic appeal) were the selective interventions of the Indian Act in some Indian social and cultural practices. Revisions of the Indian Act in 1884 outlawed the potlatch and winter dance ceremonials of native groups in coastal BC, as well as participation in the sun dance among Indians on the plains. The potlatch ban came to symbolize the most glaring example of legislated attack on Indian cultures. As a symbol it has been quite important- but its application seems to have effected only a few groups, relatively late in the scheme of things.

The potlatch ban has often been portrayed as an example of 'white' ethnocentrism. Simple intolerance and unacceptable interference into other people's cultural practices. All too often, expatiation on the injustice of the potlatch ban merely serves as a vehicle for righteous denunciation of administrative practices which had relatively little effect and which have long since ceased. Indian societies certainly did not come apart merely because the potlatch was banned, especially when that prohibition was only sporadically enforced.

Focussing on attempts to suppress the potlatch beclouds the changing material conditions facing native societies before 1920. It misdirects attention away from more fundamental forces in contention, interests which in no way could be resolved by a simple tolerance of differing social practices. It also disregards the differing interests which had developed within the native population by that time.

It should be noted that for the first thirty-five years that the anti-potlatch clause was on the books, no BC court would enforce it and no provincial government would prosecute the offenders. The first major enforcement came just after the end of WW1, and focused on the southern Kwakiutl. A number of convictions of prominent Kwakiutl potlatch givers were obtained, and their dance paraphernalia was seized or given up under threat of prosecution. Despite this, surreptitious or thinly disguised potlatching continued in the more isolated coastal communities into the 1930s and beyond.⁹⁴

One might ask why it was that the BC government long refused to enforce the anti-potlatch stipulations of the Indian Act. A BC superior court ruling of the 1890s to the effect that 'potlatch' was not defined with sufficient clarity to make enforcement feasible seems to be no answer. The substantial amounts of goods purchased from regional retailers by Indian potlatch givers may be part of the answer. Moreover, preparation for potlatches involved the earnings of Indian wage earners on the still thinly populated coast: the money costs of potlatches may have seemed heaven-sent by early cannery operators, desirous of obtaining Indian cannery labour through their Indian recruiters.

The variable implementation or non-implementation of the potlatch ban involved many forces and interests in BC. This topic has been reinvestigated in Douglas Cole's *An Iron Hand on the People (1990)* in a manner which presents us with a realistically intricate picture of who and what was involved. We can now view the the potlatch ban and resistance to it as something other than an over-performed morality play. It is evident that certain regional commercial interests had a stake in maintaining the potlatch and that some sectors of the Indian population did support the suppression of the potlatch.

The Department of Indian Affairs was the point of contact between government and Indian peoples for so long that many observers have tended to overlook the many other forces and interests which were involved. The DIA and the Indian Act later became a convenient scapegoat for all ills which befell Indian people. It is still that in the crusades of the mass media, which requires an easily definable villain and a pat answer to every topic under the sun.

Viewing native history as primarily a chronicle of unmet promises and exploitation is dangerously misleading, especially when it presumes that simple prejudice or ethnocentrism is what is at issue. The underlying issue was and is who acquired the resources of the region. Ultimately, neither natives nor the vast majority of whites retained any significant ownership of or access to the lands and resources of the province. It fell into the hands of foreign and national corporations and their serried agents.

Chapter 5

Resource Industries and Indian Labour

European settlement in British Columbia was never primarily based upon farming—it was never a farmers' frontier. BC leapt from a region sustaining a monopoly trading company extracting furs to one based on the industrial extraction of primary resources for export. Apart from the early gold rush period the extraction of those primary resources mainly involved hired or contract labour. It involved increasingly capitalized companies which hired Indian, white and oriental labour working for 'wages'.¹

The Fraser river and Cariboo gold rushes which laid the basis of significant European settlement between 1858 and the early 1860s surged through the southern mainland and the central interior and brought between 20,000 and 30,000 miners and assorted entrepreneurs to the region. The majority of these miners had left by the late 1860s, when the placer mining boom had bust. While farm and ranch areas did develop, such farms were not typically of the scale which could afford to hire labour. Some of the so-called farmers were also seasonally engaged in wage work themselves. However there were some with aspirations of becoming a local squirarchy. They are often quoted by historians of Indian-European relations in BC as supposedly typical of 'the settlers'.²

In 1870, a year before BC entered confederation with Canada, a census compiled for H.L. Langevin, federal minister of public works, listed the provincial population as follows: Europeans (8576), Coloured (462), Chinese (1548). While there was no census of native Indians, Duff suggests a population of some 35,000 to 40,000 persons. If one realizes that about three-quarters of the non-Indian population was concentrated in the Fraser Valley and southeastern Vancouver Island, it is clear that resource industries outside those areas (or even in them) were necessarily dependent on Indian labour.³

The resource industries became central to the economy quite early. Although their total production increased enormously, and their main loci and relative importance shifted over time, the major industries had been laid down by the beginning of the 1880s. In order of importance, they were gold mining (later replaced by coal and base metals), lumber, and canned salmon. The value of furs and cattle hides combined were in fourth place but the contribution made by furs dropped rapidly.⁴

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (between 1881 and 1886) marked the beginning of truly massive capital investment and large scale permanent European settlement in BC. The CPR opened up the prairie and eastern markets to BC products. This was particularly important for the lumber industry which became the leading export after 1900.

Large scale capital investment in BC primary resources and related processing plants surged ahead during the early 1890s. The generation following 1890 saw a boom in resource extraction and capital investment in fishing, lumbering, and transport. While part of this activity involved resource speculation, some of the companies built quite extensive plants and operations. For instance, the Canadian Western Lumber Company had built the largest, most capitalized sawmill and logging complex in the British Empire at Fraser Mills and around Comox by 1911. In addition to the growth of the resource industries, most of the basic infrastructure of railways, shipping, wharfs, instant ports, etc., which would exist in BC until WW II was laid down in the thirty-five years between 1880 and 1915. They were halcyon years.⁵

Census figures for the Indian population in BC during the last quarter of the nineteenth century are only approximate estimates. Different figures are presented by different sources. However, the general picture of absolute and relative Indian decrease vis-a-vis the total population of the province is the same regardless of what figures are used.⁶

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Indian Population</i>	<i>Indian Percentage of Total</i>
1870	45 - 50,000	35 - 40,000	65 - 80 %
1885	c.49,500	28,000 (1885)	c. 50 %
1891	98,000	c.25,000 (1895)	27%
1901	178,000	23,600	12%
1911	392,000	23,000	6%
1921	524,000	22, 600 (1917)	4.5%
1931	694,000	22,600 (1929)	3%

The declining percentage of Indian people within the provincial population, while real, can be somewhat misleading. It should be remembered that the European population was heavily concentrated in the southern mainland and on southeastern Vancouver Island. (By 1901, over 60 percent of the European population were resident there and if we add the other main locales of Euro-Canadian settlement—the Kootenay mines, the Okanagan, and the Kamloops areas—we have over three-quarters of the non-Indian population.) Outside of these regions, Indian people still comprised a very considerable proportion of the regional population and potential labour force. It was only in the second decade of the twentieth century that European settlement spread through the remainder of the province. This was in conjunction with the various railway and other development booms which 'opened' one area after another. The declining Indian population has led some observers to presume that they became irrelevant to the labour force and somehow disappeared into reserve existence after the coming of the CPR. In point of fact, Indian wage labour and entrepreneurship expanded and reached its peak only in the two generations after 1885.

The major resource industries in BC were rapidly dominated by relatively large and highly capitalized companies. They wanted resources as inexpensive as possible (or free, ideally). They wanted substantial amounts of labour as cheap and unencumbered as feasible. These industries were both labour extensive and able to utilize labour trained on the job. Despite being comparatively mechanized in their central production phases, virtually all of the resource industries included phases which required large amounts of labour —fishing from unpowered skiffs for canneries, the felling, bucking, and yarding phases of logging, the manual handling of lumber in sawmills and in longshoring, the general pick and shovel work of most construction, and so forth. However, it is mistaken to consider many of these jobs as unskilled. The knowledge and skills acquired by fishermen or handloggers probably equalled those of many artisans.

The resource and allied industries in BC were generally characterized by seasonal or fluctuating operations. Industries such as salmon fishing and canning operated for no more than four to five months in the year, and rarely that at a single cannery. Similarly for much farm labour. The logging and related industries also varied by season. Possibly as important as seasonal variation were fluctuations created by economic and organizational factors. Individual logging companies and sawmills opened and shut down, hired and laid off, in a steady swirl as leases and contracts and markets shifted. It was not unusual for sawmills to operate full blast for a number of months to fulfill the orders on hand and then cut back or shut down until further orders came in. Those employed in the mill took up work longshoring the lumber, shifted to other mills, took up a different jobs, or remained unemployed until things started up again. Transport and shipping fluctuated with the output of other primary industries, construction projects surged ahead and ultimately closed.. Many mines boomed and then declined. All of this proceeded in variable and only partly predictable cycles.⁷

Workers in these industries (both Indian and white) were not usually “permanently” employed. Men and women typically worked for different employers and at different jobs, moving from one to the other. This was so even where individuals came primarily to be

loggers or longshoremen or other specialists. It was not unusual to alternate commercial fishing during the summer and fall, with logging in the early winter and spring. Alternately, fishing might be interspersed with sawmill work or with a variety of subsistence tasks. There were many combinations of wage labour with subsistence and independent commodity production. And for both Indian and white workers, there were variable, unpredictable but recurrent periods of unemployment.

The industries were in a state of continual change: work skills were learned and then became obsolescent, methods of fishing and canning changed, forms of transport altered. Certain industries such as sealing or river transport disappeared. As new machinery and techniques replaced previous jobs, skills acquired through long experience became irrelevant (for Indian workers as for others). Industries might arise, boom and then disappear in a region. While the effects of these changes were buffered somewhat by the continuing importance of subsistence economies, the fluctuating nature of the resource industries were a long standing feature of Indian labour history. Indian workers and independent producers showed a remarkable resiliency in the face of these changes.

Many of the primary resource industries came to utilize contract labour, of both Indian and non-Indian workers. This employment pattern shifted much of the risk and organizational problems on to the workers themselves. The main industrial plants retained a supervised and regular labour force. But, in fact, almost all of the primary industries relied at some point on substantial numbers of quasi-independent workers.⁸

Primary resource workers evolved certain responses to the industries in which they laboured. They developed domestic, economic, and psychological strategies to partially cope with shifting employment and unemployment. They were mobile, they often worked at various now distinct jobs. Job-to-job mobility even acquired a certain mystique of independence.

It is sometimes noted that Indian workers preferred employment in jobs where they could work on their own or with other native people. They did so in commercial fishing, in contract and handlogging, in primarily Indian longshore gangs and in a variety of other jobs. Supposedly they preferred jobs where they could set their own pace and work patterns. However, when the pay was right and when the jobs were available Indians worked in what were then comparatively regularized industrial tasks, alongside non-Indian workers. Possibly they didn't think too highly of pulling lumber from the green chain of sawmills. Who would? Nevertheless, Indian workers were found in most of the basic industries in the province.

However variable the incorporation of Indian workers into the broader economy was, they became increasingly effected by the general processes of capitalist economics in the resource industries. By the mid 1890s such seemingly removed events as a speculators' panic in New York could rapidly effect the jobs and incomes of Indian workers in BC. For instance, Indian loggers and workers at the Georgetown sawmills, on the then still semi-isolated north coast, were thrown out of work, as orders for lumber ceased due to the financial depression of 1893-94. Alternately, the financial decisions of particular fish canning companies could and did determine where Indian fishermen and cannery workers might get jobs, where they would fish, what might happen to the arrangements they had established with particular canneries. Investment decisions about machinery and productive techniques could and did render acquired job skills and experiences obsolescent—for Indian as for other workers. The boom and bust economics of development in BC had comparable effects upon regional job opportunities, for all workers.

Distinctive Indian cultural practices did not necessarily disappear because Indian workers became involved in wage labour. The degree and spheres of social change varied and was only partly due to the involvement of Indians in wage labour. Much traditional lore remained in evidence (although this may have become increasingly reserved for application in the proper situations). The great majority of Indian resource workers were still members

of native communities, had families and homes to return to. They had social and family responsibilities. Still, it seems excessive to claim that there was no or little acculturation.

I have here generalized about industrial conditions and Indian labour for an entire province over a seventy year span. In fact, there was considerable variation during this period. A pervasive feature of native Indian workers was their identification as members of particular Indian communities. But that identity did not exclude their acting in consort with non-Indian workers where they perceived interests in common. Such interests arose as being part of particular industries in particular locales. Indian involvement in labour union activity may have been 'ethnic defense' activities in a novel form. But by the early twentieth century some Indian loggers, Indian fishermen, etc. participated in these industries basically as other workers did.

One who clearly *did not* consider himself a 'worker' was Charles Jones, or Queesto, a Pacheenaht chief by birthright'. Queesto/Jones was born in 1876 into a chiefly family of Pacheenaht Nootka on the southwestern coast of Vancouver Island. During Queesto's childhood the Nootka were deeply enmeshed in pelagic sealing from schooners; his father also operated as a dealer, buying up seal pelts from Nootka locallu and selling them for a handsome profit at Victoria. (Jones and Bosustow 1981:37).

Queesto himself went on a fur sealing expedition to the Bering Sea in 1900 but during much of his adult life he worked in the logging industry; as a chokerman, chaser, faller, rigging slinger, boom man and finally as a woods foreman for logging companies up and down the coast until the 1940s. (Jones and Bosustow, 1981: 35,113-123). In his later years Queesto complained that his and other chiefly Nootka families had once owned slaves who had been freed by the 'whiteman's' government without adequate compensation to their owners. (Jones and Bosustow 1981: 60- 62, 95) He also has a go at 'whiteman's unions' which allegedly froze native workers out of logging. This is ethnic fantasy at work and his account is one of chiefly chauvinism. Yet, even among the Nootka substantially engaged in subsistence fishing and hunting, cash income for food and other purchases had become crucial by WW1.⁹

Women's Work and Subsistence Economy

The roles of Indian women seemingly changed less than did that of men. Although Indian women also entered the wage-cash economy their importance in subsistence food production possibly even increased as more men spent greater amounts of time in wage labour.

Anyone who has grown up under conditions in which water must be hauled by hand, fuel wood cut, split and packed, clothes scrubbed, foods preserved and prepared etc., will appreciate the tremendous amount of work involved. It was an endless task which could consume all the time and effort available. Probably the bulk of time spent by Indian women was in cooking, washing, tending children, and the multitudinous tasks of housekeeping. Indian families may have had some advantage in the cooperation of extended kin, but this probably did not fundamentally alter the effort involved.

Women were predominantly responsible for preparing and preserving fish for subsistence purposes. Effective preservation was essential to achieving a storable surplus from seasonal fish catches. In individual circumstances women also participated in subsistence fishing and, in the northern interior, in taking small game for the pot. Traditionally, Indian women did the gathering.; they dug and preserved clams and other shellfish, and collected a wide array of wild tubers and berries. Gathering the materials for producing domestic basketry and for sale continued in some areas.

The initial potato gardens in Indian communities were almost always tended by women, who later helped maintain subsistence farmlets, with the aid of husbands and family. Quarter and half acre gardens, while commercially negligible, could produce very substantial amounts of food for home consumption. Women also tended the domestic livestock kept for home use in some locales—the family milk cow, chickens, and other animals. In

addition to traditional preservation techniques, Indian women learned the novel methods usually associated with European homesteading. Harvest season during the 1890s would have seen Indian homes on many reserves engaged in a flurry of pickling, canning, jam making, and other forms of food preservation, traditional and novel.

Subsistence fishing, gathering, hunting, and gardening proceeded alongside or was interspersed with wage work or commodity production. Both were a necessary part of the overall domestic economy. Food and other domestic production could often be carried out in between jobs or when wage work was not available. Although this might mean that subsistence activities were not done at the most advantageous times, there was a broader mix of wage work and subsistence production than was later possible.

While adult men and women were the prime producers, subsistence fishing, hunting, and gardening could be geared to the effort individuals were able to or wished to expend. A wide range of people could pursue food production with some result. The physical demands of much wage labour of the period largely excluded the very young, the aged, and those who were physically handicapped in some way. They may not have been the most effective fishermen or gatherers but their subsistence contributions could be quite substantial.

During periods of wage work, families might depend largely upon purchased foods. However, the domestic economy continued to provide a variable but usually substantial proportion of the food consumed by families on most reserves, whether coastal or interior. Even those families which did rely heavily upon purchased food had diets enriched by locally secured fish, game, and produce.

Wage work mixed with subsistence production was *not* unique to Indian communities. Many non-Indian families throughout rural BC also depended heavily upon subsistence food production to sustain themselves. On many stump ranch plots, white families hunted, fished, grew or bartered for much of the food they consumed. Money was used mainly to purchase items which could not be domestically produced: primarily clothes, tools and hardware goods. The importance of such subsistence strategies allows us to understand how families with cash incomes of \$200 to \$300 a year could live in reasonable comfort by the standards of the time. This was accomplished by living in one's own dwelling, rent and tax free, with no fuel or utility payments to make, with a substantial proportion of food produced domestically. Many consumer goods which today seem to be necessities were simply not available or were not purchased by working people, of whatever derivation.

Many native women produced goods for domestic use— knitwear, baskets, and other household items. In some cases these became cottage industries producing items for sale. However the single most important source of wage work by Indian women developed in the 1870s with the fish canneries. Over the succeeding generation Indian women probably comprised the bulk of cannery labour in BC. Although partly replaced in the Fraser River canneries at the turn of the century, they continued to be a crucial part of the cannery labour force north of the Fraser throughout the period dealt with. Canneries hired Indian women each season, often through Indian labour recruiters, along with Indian fishermen. Women cannery workers typically travelled to work with their husbands or other relatives.¹⁰

Indian women also worked as seasonal harvest labour on large commercial farms. Some Indian families from the southern coast and parts of the southern interior migrated to the hopyards in Washington State from the 1880s on. They worked the berry, fruit, and hop crops of the Fraser Valley, in the Okanagan, and around Creston in the Kootenays. Some worked in the fruit canneries and packing plants which once existed in those regions.

Some Indian women also pursued 'men's jobs.' A number went out sealing as canoe steerers with their husbands, others acted as boat pullers in the oar and sail commercial fisheries, a few worked as packers. Among the northern trapping groups some women undoubtedly trapped, regardless of whether this was their 'proper' sphere or not. Clearly, some were an important force in their family's enterprises. However, apart from the employment of many native women in the coastal fish canneries, they do not *seem* to have

been extensively employed in industrial wage labour until the opportunities created by the war-time industry following 1940.

It may be salient to note a denunciation about this account of native women workers and a claim as to who may speak for them. Marjorie Mitchell and Anna Franklin say, "...*Knigh* bemoans the fact that 'the scope and nature of Indian wage labour' has been little more than a footnote in the economic history of British Columbia, and yet his discussion of Indian women's economic participation is reduced to the same footnote status." (Mitchell, M. and Franklin, A. 1984: 28)

Moreover, "*Conscious or unconscious, early European and later Euro-Canadian biases, coupled with male biases on the part of both reporter and informant, leave little but questionable and often contradictory reflections about the lives of Indian women....Women are accustomed to sharing their experiences not only with other women, but also, and sometimes more frequently, with men, particularly with male lovers or husbands. Women are accustomed, also, to hearing those men revising, editing, and reducing the reality of women's experience into insignificance. For Native women, the issue of their reality is compounded, particularly by male anthropologists who have inquired of Indian men about the lives and roles of Indian women.*" (Mitchell, M. and Franklin, A. 1984: 29)

So all-pervasive is this chauvinism that, "*Indeed, not until publication of Margaret Blackman's life history of Florence Edenshaw Davidson, a Haida woman, has the breadth and depth of the life of any British Columbia Native woman been regarded as '...inherently worthy of consideration'*" (Mitchell and Franklin, 1984: 29)

It may strike some readers as strange that the many female anthropologists who studied Indian societies on the Northwest Coast, over a seventy year period, did not address themselves to this alleged gender deletion or find native women 'inherently worthy of consideration' until the present generation of academic office seekers.

There is a great deal still to be learned - about both native women's and men's lives during the recent past. But dismissing the studies done by earlier anthropologists and historians will simply broaden the gap of our knowledge. Possibly the intent is to create a *tabula rasa* which can then be engraved with currently fashionable views. These can be narrow and very class-bound, once the rhetoric is stripped away.

Since Blackman's life history of Florence Edenshaw Davidson has been cited as the single worthy account of a British Columbia native woman, let's briefly consider it. Blackman is an American anthropologist who over twenty years has informed herself on a broad spectrum of Haida culture. Her work with Florence Davidson is a worthy addition to the sometimes luminescent life histories produced by anthropologists, both male and female, over the last seventy years. Blackman holds that Davidson confided in her because of a quasi grandmother/granddaughter relationship they estgablished. She holds that the account could only have been gathered because they were both women. (Blackman, M. 1982: 15) That may be so in their case, but it does not follow that a coincidence of gender or ethnicity necessarily results in similar experiences or unique insights.

Florence Edenshaw Davidson was born in Masset village in 1896; her father, Charles Edenshaw (1839 -1920), was a major figure in Haida-European relations during the latter third of the nineteenth century, as well as possibly the best-known Haida artist of his time. (Blackman, M. 1982: 52,53) The narrative is the chronicle of a woman from a high ranking Haida family, collected when she was a Masset elder. It is a valuable account, but not necessarily what Haida or other native women engaged in wage work may have experienced.

Less than fifty pages are devoted to Davidson's life between marriage at age fourteen, and widowhood in her mid sixties. During those fifty years Florence Davidson's life *was* overwhelmingly concerned with domestic duties - of bearing and raising children, of dealing with illness in the family and of the endless tasks of 'homemaking'. She conveys her family's continuing involvement in subsistence activities; there are brief comments on seasonal trips to subsistence fishing sites, of tending vegetable gardens, of collecting and preserving country foods. She also experimented with the intricacies involved in traditional

manufactures for sale and later passed the techniques on. (See Hillary Stewart's references to Florence Edenshaw Davidson in *Cedar*) But, unless I have missed some crucial part of Davidson's life history, there is virtually no discussion of Haida women engaged in wage work .

While there are scattered references to native women working in canneries, the only passage discussing such work is a fragmentary reminiscence from Davodspn's childhood. Working alongside family members in Inverness Cannery, on the Skeena, she says, "*We piled cans in the trays, When we'd filled all the trays we left work. We'd go out for a while and we'd forget to come back. We'd come back to work whenever we remembered it. I used to get five cents and hour but I enjoyed that time*" (Blackman, M 1982: 82)

Somehow, I don't believe that summarizes what wage labour in canneries by native women was all about. Actually, Davidson's adult life was more completely focused on domestic matters than my overview of womens' work suggests. If that was the central feature of her life then that is what her life history had to be about; but it does not encompass the range of work experienced by other native women's along the coast.

The patterns of Masset marriages, in so far as they reflect the decisions of other Masset women, seem somewhat different from that illustrated in Florence Davidson's account. Mary Lee Stearns notes that in the 80 year period following the 1880s a substantial rate of outmarriage developed among the Masset Haida. During some decades between one third and two thirds of Masset men and women married non-natives or Indians from other bands.¹¹

Some of this outmarriage had to do with the demography of small populations and the limited number of appropriate spouses available locally. But it also stemmed from the desire of some young women to 'get out of Masset.'(Stearns. 1981:181) It suggests that many Haida women, and possibly others elsewhere, were not necessarily committed to living out local cultural imperatives and were ready to try something else. There is no reason to believe that they lacked as full a portion of 'respect for themselves' as Florence Edenshaw Davidson had.

One Family

There is an illuminating *Work History of a Coast Salish Couple*, recorded by their granddaughter.¹² The couple, Ed and Rose Sparrow, were born respectively in Musqueam in 1898 and on Kolk'waplat reserve near Chilliwack in 1902. As a child Ed Sparrow worked 'shooting cans down from the can lofts' at Celtic cannery, close to Musqueam reserve, and with his family in the regional hop harvest. By the time he was thirteen Sparrow was working seasonally for one of his relatives in the Fraser River salmon fishery and for a while was a tallyman in a local cannery. During WW I he was a logger in a half dozen logging camps around the southern coast as well as working in Vancouver and Squamish sawmills. In between such jobs, he hauled cordwood and cut shingle bolts independantly.

After marriage Ed Sparrow and his wife lived near Chilliwack for seven years and during the 1920s he worked in yet other logging camps of the region. He occasionally went picking hops and trapping muskrat around the margins of the Fraser Valley during off-seasons - incredible as that may seem today. He was employed by the City of Chilliwack for a year but by the late 1920s he became engaged in commercial fishing, both on the Fraser and the Skeena rivers.

Rose Sparrow had been raised by her great grandparents at Kolk'waplat reserve and she provides a fleeting but evocative reminiscence of the care which her great-grandfather brought to the small farm he had there. As a girl and young woman she learned the fundamentals of fishing and fish preparation, as well as gardening and a number of other by then traditional women's taks. After leaving residential school, Rose Sparrow worked briefly in a New Westminster cannery and then at Eddy's Nursery. After marriage she was

increasingly engaged in housework and rearing children, although during some years she made the splint baskets for sale.

In 1927, with a growing family, the Sparrows moved to Musqueam. For a year things seem to have been fairly tough, with no jobs except occasional work in Chinese market gardens and beach combing for lost logs. However, in the following year Ed Sparrow acquired his first fish boat and began more or less regular fishing trips to the Skeena fisheries. They both occasionally worked in the Skeena canneries during spring, making and repairing fishing nets before the fishing season started.

During the 1930s, Rose Sparrow was primarily involved in raising their now large family. She began knitting Cowichan sweaters for sale to Vancouver stores during that time but in 1948, with her children in school or able to take care of themselves, she re-entered seasonal cannery work at Steveston. That continued for the next twenty years.

During his latter years, Ed Sparrow shifted to fishing mainly on the Fraser, sometimes at Rivers Inlet. By the mid 1950s he was also active in the Native Brotherhood and later became a member of the Musqueam Band Council and then business manager of the band. He retired from fishing in 1972 but began raising cattle on reserve land to keep himself active. This outline is the barest sketch of one native couple's work history but it suggests some of the variety of work which a family of that era might be engaged in.

*

The history of Indian people in wage industries was not uniform. There were individual differences in work experience and there were marked regional differences in the kinds of industries and jobs available. Let us first consider some of the reserve-based industries which generated a cash income before turning to those primary resource industries which provided wages. Few of the reserve-based enterprises permanently removed Indian practitioners from wage or contract labour in the broader economy. The fact that reserve enterprises are here discussed first does not imply that they were either chronologically the first or ever the predominant source of income.

I have left aside those Indian groups of the northern interior who continued as commercial trappers and subsistence hunters during the period dealt. Their history *seems* to have been like that of other native groups throughout the Canadian north. Wage labour does not *seem* to have been especially important among northern trappers in BC before 1930. However, future study may require some reevaluation of this view.

During the depressions and recessions which struck various industries or the economy as a whole, many Indian people eked out a living by returning to marginal trapping, subsistence fishing and hunting, gold panning and marginal jobs of considerable variety. However, we will find that the involvement in the industrial economy, by most Indian groups, was considerably earlier and broader than is generally believed.

Chapter 6

The Ethnographic Trade and Tours

Not the earliest but one of the more interesting sources of cash income was the production of artistic and utilitarian items for museums and private ethnographic collections. This trade was in full swing by the 1870s and in some locales production of high quality carving for the 'curio trade' had developed before the 1850s. Some of the items which collectors were interested in had already been discarded in everyday use and local Indian craftsmen may have had to experiment to reproduce items such as cedar bark apparel and other items which seventy to eighty years of fur trade had already replaced.¹

Purchases by museums and private collectors rose to a flood tide between 1880 and about 1910, tapering off by the 1920. While a broad range of objects was collected, the most marketable seem to have been the more dramatic and 'colourful' ceremonial items such as masks, crests, dancing gear, carved boxes etc. In short, potential exhibit material that would interest audiences in Washington Heights, N.Y.C., and in similar locales. Canadian museums and collectors got into the act quite late. But a stream of agents for museum and private collectors from Europe and North America travelled the coast or worked through native Indian buyers engaged in purchasing the desired objects.

Locating and negotiating for the purchase of specific items from native families could be a sensitive and time consuming process. The local Indian Agents of collectors seem to have been entrepreneurs often involved in a variety of enterprises but occasionally their determination to acquire certain prized items resulted in local anger. Possibly one of the most flamboyant of such native collectors was Louis Shotridge, a Tlingit who had married into one of the leading Chilkat lineages and who became active in purchasing ethnographic items in the years immediately before WW1. His life and work might easily be the topic of a memoir in its own right - possibly a rather paradoxical one. (Suttles, W. and Johaitis, A. 1990: 79, 92; Cole, D. 1985: 264, 353)

The trade in coastal Indian art and artifacts began with the earliest maritime traders: it was often quite substantial. Explorers, administrators, and fur traders, especially the maritime traders who had ships with which to cart the items off, took substantial collections of Indian art and artifacts back to their homelands.

A prominent curator of Northwest coast art says that, *Many fine early masks collected on the Northwest Coast in the nineteenth century are now believed to have been made for sale to traders rather than for native use. It had become apparent that these foreign visitors were anxious to acquire carving of various kinds, especially masks, and the local artists obliged them.*

Among these early 'tourist' carvings were many representing painted female faces wearing very large labrets, which symbolized for buyers, the savage Northwest Coast and could be expected to amaze friends and family back home. ...Although there is no evidence that these masks were made for Indian use they are finely carved, very thin, and expertly painted. They were not turned out hastily for the tourist trade, but are superb examples of the carver's art. (Vaughan and Holm, 1990: 96, 97)

It would seem that virtually *all* of the carved wooden artifacts from the Northwest coast preserved by museums originate in the fur trade period, since almost all were made with steel tools. (Vaughan and Holm 1990: 150)

Despite current cant, it is incorrect to picture these artifacts as 'national treasures' at the time, since Indian artists and carvers were quite capable of replacing sold items with ones of equal beauty and authenticity. Wilson Duff is probably correct when he suggests that much of the native material would not have survived into the present era had it not been collected and preserved by museums at the time (Duff, W. 1964: 79)

Collectors and museums were especially keen on masks, ceremonial paraphernalia, dancing costumes, Chilkat blankets, wooden armour, traditional clothes and on other displayable items which were of the appropriate size for transport and exhibit. Not too big, not too small, and preferably striking in some way. (Getting the seventy-odd foot West Coast canoe which for eighty years graced the central hall of the American Museum of Natural History from Puget Sound to New York was a problem in logistics which few would attempt.) Fish nets or other mundane objects were in limited demand.

Just a few of the buyers of Indian ethnographic artifacts during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries include G.M. Dawson (that multi-faceted Canadian surveyor), Aurel Krause, Adrian Jacobsen, 'Judge' G. Swan, and George Emmons. Filip Jacobsen made buying trips along the coast and on one voyage, in 1885, he took out 'several tons' of ethnographic artifacts from the Bella Coola.

Franz Boas and other anthropologists bought for US and European museums. Harlan Smith, James Teit, and C.F. Newcombe (of the BC Provincial Museum) not only acquired items for their own institutions but also acted as buyers for more distant collectors. The National Museum of Canada got into the act rather late, with the combined ethnographic and buying trips of Marius Barbeau. Barbeau's work becomes more understandable when one recognizes that an important part of his job was to purchase and document exhibit material for the National Museum of Canada. There were also a host of monied private collectors—John Wannamaker, George Eastman and George Heye (who later established the Heye Indian Museum in New York, crammed from ceiling to floor with his purchases). Buyers of the argillite objets d'art were legion.²

The local stocks of ceremonial masks, crests, costumes, whistles and rattles, and apparel was unequal to the demand. Some of it was not for sale, at least initially. So Tsimshian, Tlingit, Nootka, Haida and other native artists-craftsmen produced goods for the ethnographic market. While the commercial production of ethnographic items may seem ironic, it should be understood that the objects produced were broadly of the same authenticity as other purchased artifacts.

Members of some coastal groups were also involved in producing items for the curio-art trade. While often masterfully made these entailed novel objects and forms - model memorial poles and miniature carved chests, quasi-realistic figures and convoluted panel pipes. Some of these began to bring high prices from collectors as objets d'art, although other curio carving sold for relatively low prices. One of the best documented examples of the commercial carving is that of the Haida. Some Haida were already carving items for sale during the later maritime fur trade period. By the 1850s they were producing a considerable volume of carvings for the curio trade, which they sold in Victoria. Initially, some of these items simulated the scrimshaw work done by Euro-American seamen, but modified Haida art forms in new materials soon re-emerged and proved far more saleable to white collectors.

According to Marius Barbeau, the height of Haida carving in terms of economic importance, quality, and artistic production was between the late 1860s and the first decade of the twentieth century. Haida carvers then produced carved ornamental pieces, panel pipes, bowls, ornate whistles, storage boxes and chests and masks. They carved model ceremonial poles and miniatures of canoes and Haida houses, as well as bracelets, brooches, and rings. They worked in wood, argillite, copper and silver, producing items of often extraordinary beauty.³

Haida carvers were open to considerable experimentation, at times combining traditional and very untraditional items in to their work. One Haida carver at about the turn of the century even tried his hand at reproducing a model Egyptian sphinx from an illustration he had seen. It didn't catch on.

The number of individuals who earned their primary income through these carving was probably quite small. Many Haida and Kwakiutl carvers had worked much of their lives in

other jobs. Sometimes they became full time carvers when physical limitations made other work difficult. Other men and women earned supplementary income through the production of handicraft items. However, with certain individual exceptions, commercial carving and especially handicraft work was usually a poorly paid undertaking.

An unusually high proportion of Haida men were involved, at one time or another, in carving. They were seemingly drawn from all the social ranks in Haida society. Although it seems that many of them had learned their skills through some kind of personal apprenticeship only a few could support themselves primarily through carving. One of the few Indian carvers who seems to have made a substantial income was Charles Edenshaw, a Masset chief with additional business interests. He had a reputation among collectors as the finest argillite carver of his time.⁴

Many of the carvers and artists apparently worked in other capacities during their adult life: they were fishermen, sealers, loggers, or engaged in various entrepreneurial undertakings. Some were canoe makers and boatbuilders and skilled carpenters; they generally multi-talented men. Some Haida carvers, and the native agents who bought work locally, regularly made trips to Victoria (later to Port Simpson, Port Essington, Ketchikan and Prince Rupert) to market their goods. Often they sold their items through stores dealing specifically in Indian art and handicrafts, particularly in Victoria. At least one Haida notable, Alfred Adams, was not a carver himself but acted as an agent for Masset carvings to stores in the larger cities. He later became a moving force in the establishment of the Native Brotherhood.⁵

While the work and names of the more prominent Haida carvers were familiar to collectors and museum buyers in many parts of the continent, the market for Haida carving had declined by the 1920s. By the late 1930s it reached its nadir. While some work by better known artists brought passable prices among collectors, but an experienced carver such as Andrew Brown (who had carved a forty-foot 'totem' pole for the City of New Westminster in 1920) was reduced to selling miniature totem poles at the Prince Rupert dockside to tourists for a few dollars a piece.⁶

Commercial carving and handicrafts was also important to some southern Kwakiutl after the 1870s. Carved masks, ceremonial objects, dance paraphernalia etc. were supplemented with such untraditional items as model totem poles, miniature houses and silver and copper jewelry by the 1880s. Much of this was sold in Victoria and Vancouver and by the the 1890s there was a wider interest in Kwakiutl art among collectors and museums.

While commercial carving and handicraft production was apparently never as economically important among the Kwakiutl as among the Haida, Kwakiutl carvers did produce a range of items for sale. Their total production, as evidenced in museum holdings, was considerable - possibly because potlatching and winter ceremonials continued longest among the Kwakiutl. Although there was initially some experimentation, the seemingly traditional nature of their work may have been an important feature of their salability. There was a drastic decline in the purchase of ethnographic items in the 1920s, partly because the major museums of the world now had a surfeit of Northwest coast artifacts and partly because material items no longer seemed as important as they once had.

The trajectory of the ethnographic and curio trade among other coastal groups who were once involved is unknown to me. The recrudescence of Indian carving and art during the last generation is something beyond the scope of this book.

Touring the Continent

A few BC Indians made some fairly dramatic tours of Europe and America during our period, although in this they had been preceded by an earlier stream of native men (but rarely women) from eastern Canada. In considering these cases we should remember the equally dramatic journeys of native men and women along the Pacific coast, which usually went unrecorded. We should remember the constant stream of people from many regions of

the coast who, by schooner, steamer, in single canoes and in fleets of fifty, travelled hundreds of miles to work in canneries, sawmills, and what have you. Not a particularly unusual itinerary would be a trip from the central coast to work in the Fraser River canneries, then a move on to the Washington State hopyards or lumber mills of Puget Sound, mixed with a stay in Seattle or a visit to the bright lights of Victoria, and then back home again. There were also the near endless visits to other Indian villages. By the 1870s the coast was alive with people on the move. Unfortunately, the travels and novel experiences of ordinary Indian workers and their families were little recorded. Many of these 'routine' trips would have been every bit as amazing as the tours abroad.⁸

As for the tours, a rather interesting one is that of the Bella Coola group which toured Germany in 1885-1886. By the early 1880s the international market for Northwest coast ethnographic items was in full swing. One of the more redoubtable travelling buyers for European and American museums was Filip Jacobsen. During 1884-1885 he was cruising the central coast, buying and putting in orders for ethnological artifacts, particularly for two ethnographic museums in Germany. It struck Jacobsen, and presumably his museum backers, that the artifacts and exhibits would be better understood if their makers were to accompany them and demonstrate their use, along with whatever songs and tales they might wish to pass on.

Jacobsen initially tried to persuade some Kwakiutl to accompany him with their products, but they were discouraged from going by the local missionary and the regional Indian Agent. Besides that, they may have felt that they could earn more working in the commercial fisheries during the coming season than they would on the pay scale offered by Jacobsen. Jacobsen then talked a team of nine Bella Coola carvers and dancers into accompanying him to Europe. They set out from Bentinck Arm in early 1885, took a schooner to Victoria, a steamer to San Francisco, the Union Pacific Railroad to New York and a steamship to Bremen.

The Bella Coola group spent thirteen months in Germany, staging ceremonial performances, providing consultations, and giving demonstrations in the manufacture and use of the cargo of ethnological items they had brought along. They appeared at the Hamburg Museum, in Berlin, and at the Ethnographic Museum in Jena and elsewhere. Three of the Bella Coola performers, Alex Davis, Billy Jones and Tom Henry, allegedly learned to speak some German.⁹

I would have thought that details of the Bella Coola tour were beyond the powers of historical retrieval but Douglas Cole's remarkable study, *Captured Heritage*, has managed to do just that; along with providing accounts of the various players in what he calls 'the scramble for Northwest Coast artifacts'. Although one may disagree with Cole's portrait of anthropology of the time and his view that native heritage was somehow 'captured' by the sale of artifacts to museums, he has dredged up a phenomenal amount of detail about the individuals involved through letters, reports and newspaper accounts. Native and white, they were a mixed and lively bunch. *Captured Heritage* greatly extends whatever is said.

One of the people in Germany impressed by the Bella Coola team was Franz Boas. Boas, freshly returned from a stay among the BaffinLand Eskimo, was soon to emigrate to America, and within a decade became a central figure in establishing anthropology as a scholarly field there. He also became known (not entirely correctly) as the man who initiated anthropological field work among the cultures of the BC coast. Under his impetus, and that of his students, it became one of the most studied native Indian regions in the hemisphere.

In September of 1886, Boas arrived in Victoria. A few days after he stepped off the boat from San Francisco, on his first field trip to the North Pacific Coast, Boas ran into Alkinous, one of the members of the returned Bella Coola tour. The topic and language of their discussion has not been recorded but the possibilities are ironic indeed. This took place during, and a year after, the Riel rebellion.¹⁰

Some six years later Chicago decided to stage a World Columbian Exposition. Along with the usual exhibits of industrial progress which had become standard operating procedure for World Fairs, the Chicago Columbian Exposition also organized extensive exhibits of native Indian life in the Americas. Franz Boas, then allied with the Field Museum in the windy city, was in charge of 'Our Native Americans' exhibits. In 1893 he brought a team of Kwakiutl men and women to the Chicago fair where they gave Hamatsa and other winter dance performances. The group included George Hunt of Fort Rupert, who had been collecting accounts of traditional Kwakiutl life for almost a generation. Hunt also made a number of consulting trips to edit notes and check collections in the Museum of Natural History. Others were to make later visits to the Field Museum in Chicago and also to New York.¹¹

During his years of field work on the BC coast Boas ran across members of both the Bella Coola tour and the Kwakiutl Chicago World Fair team working in the industries along the coast. In one of his later visits he met some of his earlier informants encamped near fish canneries on the lower Fraser, waiting for the sockeye season to open - amidst a maelstrom of comings and goings and general industrial boom. Nowhere, except in his field diary, did Boas consider such actual native life worth describing.

Another type of tour is represented by that of Tsimshian Methodist missionary, W.H. Pierce. In 1901 he had gotten the band-owned sawmill at Kispiox running smoothly and briefly put aside his ventures in model village building to go east. Pierce toured the Methodist congregations of eastern Canada raising monies for the North Coast missions, and recruiting a number of medical and other missionaries to come up to the Skeena. He was quite successful.¹² An earlier and much more wide-ranging number of tours by native missionaries and spokesmen engaged in eliciting funds and addressing white Canadian and European audiences will be mentioned in the comparative section dealing with southern Ontario.

Near the turn of the century, Father La Jeune, then the central figure in the Catholic mission station in Kamloops, took two of his more eminent Indian parishioners to Europe. One was John Chilitza, already a rancher of substance in the Nicola plateau, the other, Chief Louis of the Kamloops band. They did a grand tour of England, Belgium, France and Italy. Chief Louis got an audience with Edward VII, an English king of the period, and both travellers got to meet Pope Pius the Tenth, who gave Louis and Chilitza religious medals and his blessings. In addition, the two Indian travellers entered competition in the International Exhibition of Shorthand held in Nancy, France and won one medal and one diploma. Their skills may have been honed in putting together the Kamloops mission paper called *Kamloops Wawa*.¹³

In 1906 Chief Joe Capilano, a member of the Squamish Burrard Inlet band and a longshoreman on the North Shore lumber docks, took his savings and travelled to London. He managed to get an audience with the same King of England and put before him an appeal for Indian rights and land claims in BC. Capilano returned to the Vancouver docks, the King to his counting house, and the Vancouver press occasionally refloated the story on the days when there was little copy. There the matter seemed to rest. Except that Capilano's trip was part of an upwelling of Indian claims that were gathering steam. A few years later, far north on the Nass, the Nishga Land Movement would refer to Capilano's trip.¹⁴

Meanwhile, back on the Exposition circuit, the director of the BC Provincial Museum arranged a tour of seven Kwakiutl and Quatsino people to enliven the St. Louis World Fair of 1904. This included Bob Harris of Quatsino, Charles Nowell of Alert Bay, a West Coast shaman known as Dr. Ateu and four other men and women. A humorous account of the in no way awed Indian performers' impressions and doings at the St. Louis World Fair has been left by Nowell, in his autobiography.

Among other performances, they staged a Hamatsa Dance—which left many in the American audience awe-struck. Using the stage craft developed in winter dancesw, they manufactured a life-like blood-filled replica of a black child who was also working around the Fair. (Nowell claims he was an African pygmy; Duff holds it was an American Negro child) The dummy was made of baked mutton, with articulated bones, and had a screaming whistle embedded inside. As the *piece de resistance* to their series of dances, they 'kill' 'eat' and 'resurrect' their 'victim' before a Fair audience.¹⁵

*We begin with a Bella Bella dance; the West Coast people all knew the songs, and they were singing while Bob Harris and I was dancing. When we got nearly through with one song, Bob Harris made a mistake in beating, and then he say, 'hap-hap-hap.' I got behind the screen and dressed as an Indian and came back and told the people in English that the Cannibal is mad now, because they made a mistake in beating the board, and we don't know what he is going to do, because he is so fierce. The two young men from West Coast came and held him—trying to keep him from going toward the other people. Bob Harris was struggling to get free from their hold. Finally he got away from them, and he ran around. When he got to where this little fellow was sitting, he picked him up and ran behind the screen and left him there. Then he took hold of this thing [i.e the dummy] he made just like him and make it squeak and yell, and when he came out in front of the screen was yelling loud. Bob Harris came in front of us and push his head down and bite the neck until out came the blood all over his face.*¹⁶

According to Nowell's account (embroidered in parts), consternation and cries swept the audience. They were told to return in the evening when miraculous things would be done. They came in droves.

It was evening when we get to our house [part of the Fair] and the house was already full of white people. Last of all the people who owned the Fair came in and sat in front of the house. All the ladies and gentlemen were sitting right on the ground with their silk dresses on—right in the dirt—because they were told by the guards that is the way Indians sit. Dr. Newcombe came over to us and want to have a talk with me. I look at him with a strong fierce look on my face and told him not to come near.

*So we begin with one song and sing it, and Bob Harris get up and go around the fire singing with the rattle in his hand. Then he go to see the body that he had eaten and say, 'The bones are all stuck together'. I interpreted to all the people in the house. Then we sang another song, and then he got up and went around the house and went up to where this little fellow was lying on a table. It was the little Pygmy himself, lying under a mat. He says, 'he has flesh on his bones now, the whole body is in good order.' Then we sang another song, and he went around again, lifted up the mat, and felt. 'He is quite warm now,' he says. He came back and we sang the last song, then the West Coast men was dancing over the dead man with their hands shaking while we were singing. When we got through, Bob Harris went around the house, still using his rattle, singing, and went toward where the little man was lying and lift up the mat. He took the mat off, and took the little man up and sit him on the table, and he begin to look around stiff like as we told him to do. Bob Harris took him down from the table and took him around the house, holding him by the hand. And all he say is, 'Banana, Banana.'*¹⁷

Nowell then proceeded to tell the audience they had witnessed a great deed such as is performed only in secret winter ceremonies and that they had for themselves seen the eating and resurrection of the little man. Although present-day museologists may find it disgraceful, Houdini couldn't have done it better.

The performers apparently made the most of the St. Louis World Fair. Bob Harris and Nowell later made a trip to the Field Museum in Chicago for consultation purposes. They also took a guided tour of New York 'but didn't do anything there.' Nowell returned to the BC coast to work in various capacities, including being a labour recruiter for one of the

canneries. He also worked as an agent for the Provincial Museum, being one of the more tradition-oriented of the Alert Bay Kwakiutl.

It's not known what Indians working in BC sawmills, canneries, and docks etc., thought of all this. But regional white audiences were becoming less amenable to the more customary Indian stage tours. Pauline Johnson, the 'Mohawk Princess', who had once packed opera houses and theatres in the Canadian east and in London, was reduced to living in a West End Vancouver rooming house. She made the occasional tour of small interior towns, in which her buckskin costumes and Victorian poems about Hiawatha only drew declining crowds. She quit in 1909 and during her final years sold stories, like those in *Legends of Vancouver*, to Vancouver newspapers at a few dollars a crack.¹⁸

Indian men and women who stayed at home may have viewed the touring Indian dance groups with a mixture of humor and pride. But after their own experiences, dance tours to Museums and World Fairs may have seemed like an interesting but not an overwhelming undertaking. In eastern Canada, Iroquois and others had been sporadically working in 'Wild West' shows touring the US since the 1870s. Others had worked or were working in travelling medicine shows, selling herbal remedies to the folks in small town America. Indians travellers from other eastern groups had been making tours of and taking delegations to Europe sporadically throughout the nineteenth century. Some 150 Iroquois participated in the Sudan campaign to save Pasha Gordon in 1884. We will meet them in a later comparative chapter. The tours of Indian performers from BC were hardly unique.¹⁹

As a final comment on the ethnographic trade, consider the photographic expeditions of Edward S. Curtis among the Coast Salish, Kwakiutl, and Nootka. Curtis' photographs have long been standard illustrations for books about native history, especially those of a romantic cast. Many who see these photographs feel that Curtis managed to capture the look of North American Indian life during its final traditional days. However, it may have struck some viewers as strange that Curtis, whose field trips to the BC coast were mainly in the period between 1908 and 1916, was able to find Indian people living such traditional lives.²⁰

Among Curtis' most famous photos from the BC coast are those of the Kwakiutl—feasts, winter dances, potlatch guest-laden canoes, and portraits of individuals engaged in some traditional activity. Curtis did most of his work among the Kwakiutl shortly before WW I. By that time some Kwakiutl groups had a forty to fifty year history as handloggers, commercial fishermen, wage workers and entrepreneurs in varied enterprises. In addition was a previous fifty year history in the coastal fur trade. The parents and grandparents of some of Curtis' Kwakiutl subjects may have travelled to work in the canneries, sawmills, hopyards of Puget Sound and the Fraser Valley during the 1870s. A sawmill and cannery operated at Alert Bay from the 1880s, run mainly by Kwakiutl crews. Kwakiutl men had worked as seamen on coastal vessels, as sealers visiting the hunting grounds from the Bering Sea to Japan.

Shortly after 1900 the Canadian Pacific Steamships and the Alaska Excursion Line began stopping at Alert Bay (sometimes at Fort Rupert) on their summer cruises to Alaska. Among the touring notables of that gilded age who visited Alert Bay were John Wannamaker, the New York department store money bags, and George Eastman of Eastman-Kodak. These luminaries enthused about Kwakiutl art and carted away carvings, memorial poles, and whole houses for their private collections. West coast 'primitive art' was 'in' among some wealthy American collectors during the first decade of the twentieth century.²¹

Before Curtis made his expedition to the Kwakiutl there already were a few Kwakiutl seine boat captains. One local man owned a steam tug which he used to tow logs from his logging operation. In 1912 Kwakiutl fishermen around Alert Bay had briefly gone on strike (unsuccessfully) against a nearby cannery. It was into this milieu that Curtis came to capture the images of the last traditional Indian cultures.

Considering the use to which Curtis' undeniably beautiful and evocative photos have been put it would serve us well if someone could closely examine whatever field notes, letters, and photographic scripts remain of his expeditions into darkest BC. We do know that Curtis frequently carried traditional costumes with him, as well as appropriate artifacts and ornaments, because he could not rely upon finding them among the people whose life he was photographing. He almost invariably had to supply wigs dressed in the traditional manner since the depicted hair styles had long since disappeared. Apparently there were recurrent difficulties in getting his Indian subjects, especially men, to wear such wigs.²²

Viewers may have puzzled over the rather Edwardian poses struck in so many of Curtis' portraits. One should remember that Curtis had previously been a moderately successful portrait photographer catering to American high society, both in Seattle and during the Harriman Expedition to Alaska at the turn of the century. On the other hand, it seems that the imagery utilized by the then emerging 'Native American' spokespersons was quite in line with Curtis' photographs.

It is not speculation but fact that Curtis directed and posed most of his portraits of Indian people at work and at home. Such posing was required both by the cameras at his disposal and because Curtis was determined to portray what he intuited the spirit of the scene to be. As his enthusiasts have said, he was not 'merely' a documentary photographer but an artist. The question is what the photos do document.²³

None of this is meant to detract from the beauty of Curtis' work. It may even be useful in providing some notion of what neo-traditional life during the fur trade period looked like. But with the imported costumes and artifacts, with the directed poses, scripts, and with the photo editing and retouching done by Curtis, we cannot tell from the photos alone what was the reality of the time and what was the vision of the photographer. The 'ethnographic' accounts which accompany the photos provide only the rarest indication that the Indian peoples being described had as yet been changed by European contact in any significant way. And this in the years immediately preceding WW I.

A couple of years later, during that war (in which some 4000-5000 Canadian Indians enrolled in the armed forces) one David Bernardan from a Oowekeeno village at Rivers Inlet, wound up as the captain of a Royal Navy river craft as part of the British Mesopotamian campaign to free the middle-east, and their oil resources, from the grip of the Turks. Undoubtedly some will hold that he was carrying out the traditional cultural imperatives of Kwakiutl men by being a fearless warrior and a intrepid canoeman.

As a postscript to Edward Curtis and his work, two divergent accounts have appeared recently. Christopher M. Lyman's *The Vanishing Race and Other Illusions. Photographs of Indians by Edward S. Curtis* is a hatchet job in which Curtis is reviled as a racist and a propagandist of manifest destiny. According to Lyman, native peoples were not 'vanishing' at all but were being subjected to physical and cultural genocide. It would seem that Wounded Knee was the only relevant scene to be photographed. "*The crime of those killed was their 'Indianess', and the punishment was justified under the doctrine of Manifest Destiny. According to this convenient and often murderous doctrine, those who were thought to be racially 'inferior' -especially Indians - had to be swept from the path of Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic 'progress'. If they could be neither enslaved nor assimilated then the common practice was to exterminate them.* (Lyman,C. 1982:18)

We hear that guilt over the Indian holocaust had crept into American society by the beginning of the twentieth century, but instead of recognizing the root cause as 'racism' Americans turned to the doctrine of manifest destiny to justify the past events as inevitable. According to this view Edward Curtis' photographic work served as a quasi scientific rationale for an allegedly disappearing race. Ethnography as whole was similarly complicit, we are told. (Lyman, C 1982:17-19)

The remainder of the text is all bent to demonstrate the above theme. On rereading it, I have the sinking feeling that after twenty-five years of media repetition Lyman's posturing

will seem courageous to many, rather than the mishmash of pseudo-history and fashionable villification that it is.

A very different book is Bill Holm and George Quimby's *Edward S. Curtis in the Land of the War Canoes: A Pioneer Cinematographer in the Pacific Northwest*. It is an account of what went into the making of Curtis' 1916 movie *Land of the Head Hunters*, which intended to portray Kwakiutl life in the period immediately before contact in 1792. It was *not* an adaptation of a Kwakiutl narrative, as I once thought, but was scripted by Curtis himself. Although the plot is rather typical of movies of that period the concern to reconstruct ethnographic detail was so painstaking that it didn't mesh with American audiences' images of Indian life. That was one of the reasons why it failed commercially but also why, sixty years later, it could be used to provide some idea of what traditional coast society looked like. A still of one of it's sequences graces the cover of Wilson Duff's *The Indian History of British Columbia*.

Facades of Kwakiutl big houses had to be built, cedar bast clothing had to be made up to order, masks and other ceremonial gear had to be bought, borrowed or manufactured. The Kwakiutl actors and extras had to be coached in traditional roles. Many local people seem to have taken to acting like ducks to water.

Holm and Quimby have unearthed some of the filming directions and the accounts of what goods and services were purchased. Better yet, they discovered the stills of a talented Seattle photographer who shot pictures of Kwakiutl actors and sets while the movie was being made. There is a picture of 'ferocious warriors' in a canoe, clowning around for the camera, expiring in exaggerated poses during a break. Elsewhere, we see a dead whale (borrowed from the whaling base at Naden Harbour, Q.C.I.) being towed for a native whaling crew to harpoon. Possibly the most amazing photograph is that of the redoubtable George Hunt, whose youngest son had gotten the lead role in the film, planted in front of an array of newly-minted warriors issuing from a big house. The senior Hunt stands with megaphone in hand, like any other director of the time, delivering last minute instructions on what the Kwakiutl actors are supposed to do when the camera starts rolling.

Curtis' film entailed his own vision of ethnographic veracity combined with commercial marketability. But it is clear that Kwakiutl men and women weren't afraid to try their hands at this new media. That vitality and openness was an important part of the broader picture of Indian people along the coast, almost eighty years ago.

Perverse as only history can be, Curtis' works have reentered serious ethnographic literature and are currently cited by scholars in the latest edition (1990) of the *Handbook of the North American Indian. The Northwest Coast*.

Some Indian people at the time attempted to preserve something of their traditional cultures in the written record. Between the 1880s and into the 1930s there were scores of Indian informants and anthropological co-workers. Every ethnographer relied upon the information provided by such men and (less frequently) women. Usually this was a once in a lifetime undertaking but in some cases, the Indian participants are legitimately seen as lay ethnographers in their own right.

Possibly the best known of these was George Hunt, son of the white trade store owner at Fort Rupert and his Tlingit wife. George Hunt himself was raised in the local Kwakiutl milieu and was a life-long participant of that society. He was working as interpreter with government parties during the reserve surveys of the 1870s and was, even then, independently taking notes on Kwakiutl traditions. He began working with Franz Boas in collecting and translating Kwakiutl materials during the late 1880s. They published monographs under Boas' name, under joint authorship, and under Hunt's name over twenty-five years. Hunt himself made a number of trips to the Museum of Natural History in New York, before and after the turn of the century, to edit some of this work.

On the eve of the twentieth century a diverse body of native students of native life was beginning to emerge. By the 1900 there were two professional Indian ethnographers working for the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., J.N.B. Hewitt and Francis

LaFlesche. Somewhat later the Tlingit artifact buyer, Louis Shotridge, emerged on the scene and published in a number of museum journals. Arthur Parker, from an upstate New York railroad -mission family, was soon to emerge as a claimant to Iroquois history and American nativism in general.

Spokespersons of a native bourgeoisie had begun to emerge in America, sometimes with connections quite unlike those usually surmised. It is not a theme which can be pursued here but one might simply note that the first head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (U.S.) had been one Brigadier General Ely Parker, a veteran of the Union army, a Republican party loyalist of the Grant administration, and a member of an Onandaga mission-railway family.²⁴

Back in BC, another lay anthropologist was William Benyon, a Tsimshian from Port Simpson. Benyon and Boas co-authored a monograph on *Tsimshian Texts*. Benyon later worked with Marius Barbeau, of the National Museum of Canada, for more than a quarter century, leaving behind reams of field notes on Tsimshian tales and oral history which only recently has been edited and published. George MacDonald's (1988) *Tsimshian Narratives. Volumes 1 and 2*, are drawn from some two thousand pages of notes deposited with the National Museum of Canada before Benyon's death. He also wrote accounts for journals and was active in the formative years of the Native Brotherhood in the region.²⁵

There were the Edenshaws of Masset, Henry and Charles, who were informants to anthropologists like John Swanton. Alfred Adams, also of Masset, was at times involved in Marius Barbeau's collecting work. There was Dan Cranmer, of Village Island fame, who in 1921 mounted the potlatch to end all potlatches and stirred up a hornets nest in the Department of Indian Affairs. Although the anti-potlatch clause of the Indian Act was invoked, Cranmer probably gained more fame as the result of his potlatch than anyone ever had. He too travelled to New York in the early 1920s to deposit an account of his potlatch and of other aspects of Kwakiutl society with the American Museum of Natural History. A fragment of Cranmer's lively record of the big bash, highlighting the kinds of goods distributed, is to be found in Codere (1969).

In a more typical anthropological role, Peter Pierre ('Old Pierre') was a member of the Katzie band whose main village was on the lower Fraser and whose fishing sites were strung along the Pitt River. Pierre was about seventy-five years of age when, in 1936, he provided Diamond Jenness with his version of Katzie cosmological beliefs. This became the basis for Jenness' *The Faith of a Coast Salish Indian*. Although Pierre had long been involved with the Catholic mission system, he was considered to be the local person most knowledgeable about traditional Katzie ways. He had been born in the early 1860s: one of his elder brothers had died when preparing for shamanistic power. That sounds starkly traditional. However, Pierre's oldest brother had emigrated to the Lillooet district as a lay reader for the Catholic mission. Another brother, 'Billy', became the chief of police on a reserve near New Westminster while a third became a policeman on the Harrison Mills reserve. Pierre's older sister had married an HBC employee who later took up farming near Langley Prairie. Two of their daughters later married white men. Pierre himself sent part of his boyhood living with his older sister and her husband on their farm. (Suttles, W. 1973: 28) All of this had emerged during the last third of the nineteenth century. Old Pierre's traditional knowledge was not unmixed with experience of a broader, rapidly changing, world.

What I find surprising is not that there were native memorialists by the late nineteenth century but that there were so few of them. Eventhough native traditions had been passed on orally, knowledge of and facility in writing was of well established among native individuals by the last third of the nineteenth century. Newspapers in Indian languages were being produced by Indian journalists and printers in parts of America before the mid nineteenth century (Debo, Angie 1934). Therefore it is puzzling and unfortunate that native people in

western Canada apparently did not keep diaries or produce narratives of their own past, distant or immediate, until they were canvassed by anthropologists.

Many of those who provided ethnographic information probably did so with the belief that they were leaving behind what record would be retained of past Indian cultures. In that, they were in accord with many of the early anthropologists, whose failure to record what was actually going on around them is comprehensible in their priority to get down on the record what could be still gotten, before it was gone.

Chapter 7

Cottage Industries, Reserve Enterprises and Indian Entrepreneurs

Missions were sometimes important initiators of new Indian enterprises. During the height of their influence, from the early 1870s until shortly before WW I, many mission villages contained a range of reserve enterprises. Control of these ventures ranged from mission ownership, to band ownership, to partnership with individual Indian entrepreneurs. At least part of mission motives in fostering such industries revolved around establishing economically self-sufficient communities. Indian-owned enterprise was seemingly less rigidly committed to such a policy.

The most thoroughgoing attempt to establish a system of cottage industries was instigated by missionary William Duncan at Metlakatla between the mid 1860s and 1880s. Cottage industries were not only to produce goods locally but also to check the tendency of Metlakatlans to work for wages outside the community. That is, the original mission system of cottage industries was not merely an economic venture but was part of a social strategy to build closed Indian communities in which local authorities and people would not be dependent upon outside economic forces or social processes.

With a few exceptions, the cottage industries at Metlakatla were intended to provide those goods necessary to sustain a rural Victorian village. Surprisingly, some cottage industries had a modest success during an initial period when relative isolation made for high cost of imported items and relatively little cash to buy them with.

What stands out in the history of this first and most ambitious venture into cottage industries is both the technical possibility of carrying them through and the long-run economic inviability of most of them. They were sustained through mission policy. Such policies harked back to bucolic visions of a pre-industrial society which seemed appropriate for recently tribal native peoples. Most of these cottage industries attempted to duplicate goods mass produced elsewhere.¹

By the late 1870s Metlakatla had a water-powered sawmill to cut lumber for houses and buildings on the reserve. It utilized imported mill equipment and was operated by local Indians who had become trained as sawyers, haywire mechanics, and sawmill workers. There was a sash and door mill and a small shingle mill as well. A separate carpentry shop utilized treadle-powered lathes and drills to turn out the ornamental posts and grill work so essential for mid-Victorian architecture; it also produced some furniture and other woodenware. A cooperage made barrels and kegs for local food preservation and for the export of salted salmon. The staves were manufactured in the cooperage while the barrel hoops were fabricated from imported iron in the local blacksmith shop. The blacksmith shop was to produce simple hardware items used in house construction and also repaired purchased iron hardware. For a while there was also a glazier shop, making glass window panes from local resources. There were also a shop making soap and candles and a kiln to produce bricks.

A flock of sheep had been brought in and sheep rearing and shearing taught. A weaving shop was established which incorporated carding, hand spinning, and weaving wool yarn into cloth on hand-operated looms. Women were encouraged to take up spinning and weaving in their homes and were learning how to make European style clothes. Knitting was also introduced. For a while, a community dyeing and tailoring shop also existed. A community tannery was to process hides from a small herd of cattle and a cobbler shop made shoes. Some livestock and the trappings of subsistence gardening were also introduced, but apparently had only limited success. It was evident that farming was not suitable everywhere, even to the most evangelical missionaries.

In the sphere of trade, Metlakatla mission owned and operated a trading and supply schooner which brought purchased goods directly from Victoria. The schooner was

sometimes used to ferry Indian constables and Metlakatlan employees to the earliest fish canneries on the Skeena. Metlakatla had a community warehouse and a community store for local residents, as well as a trading post and hostel, suitably removed, for visiting Indians who were not members of the mission community. In addition, there were the usual accoutrements of model villages—although on a more elaborate scale than was typical. The Metlaktlans erected a cathedral-like frame church, a school, a community hall and organized a brass band and choir. There were a large number of Indian constables. Resident European instructors resided in Metlakatla by the end of the 1870s. But one essential component of English village life was omitted; there was no ale house, since demon rum was one of the prime evils which Duncan and other missionaries set out to combat.²

Probably the most promising industrial venture at Metlakatla was the one most removed from local self-sufficiency. In fact, it was not a cottage industry. It was the commercial salmon cannery built there in 1881-82 with funds partly subscribed abroad. The cannery was supervised by expatriate staff but was operated by Metlaktlans. According to Ross, one of Duncan's reasons for establishing this cannery, in addition to the income it would provide, was to curtail the seasonal movement of Metlakatlan men and women to work in the emerging fish canneries on the Skeena. It aimed to supplant the subversive influence of wage work in the Skeena canneries, with their polyglot crews and hectic life. While it later ran into financial difficulties, the Metlakatla cannery was technically quite successful. It processed approximately 5000 cases of salmon in its first year of operation and in 1884 it packed some 8300 cases, 18 per cent of the total regional pack.³

While Metlaktlans partly financed the cottage and commercial enterprises in the village, financial support also came from the Church Missionary Society based in Great Britain. Duncan was successful in attracting a stream of technical advisors and practical teachers to Metlakatla.⁴ No model village, unless it was later Port Simpson, had as many instructors. Despite these advantages most of the cottage industries at Metlakatla had been given up or were in decline by 1887 when internal church quarrels led to the departure of Duncan and the great majority of Metlaktlans to Annette island, in neighbouring Alaska. There they established a new model village (New Metlakatla)—but without most of the cottage industries. It became a showpiece of native enterprise within the broader industrial economy and despite certain internal factional conflicts Duncan continued to live there until his death in 1918.

What the more than twenty year history of cottage industries at Metlakatla shows is that it was possible to transmit the artizanal skills of traditional rural European communities to Indian people with considerable success. But these industries could not compete against mass produced goods by the last quarter of the nineteenth century. By the late 1870s and 1880s Indian people over much of the BC coast had the option of earning cash through independent commodity production or wage labour to purchase mass produced goods. We have no comparative time and cost studies, but it seems that the efforts invested in cottage production could not match the lower cost of mass produced items. Cottage industries at Metlakatla were maintained as part of the policy of self sufficiency and social isolation. Although this dream enraptured many other missionaries, rarely did it find such grandiose expression.

One cottage industry which did maintain itself in a few locales was the production of commercial knitwear. 'Cowichan' knitwear was introduced to the Cowichan of Vancouver Island (and later spread to members of other groups) by Scottish settlers in the 1860s. It was initially part of an economy of rural self-sufficiency, a complement to home-spun clothing. By the 1870s the Cowichan farms had acquired sheep, which provided the wool they spun into yarn. There was an ongoing market for the distinctive knitwear produced by Indian women. The bulky sweaters, socks and hats and mitts produced were always saleable. Long before 'Cowichan sweaters' became fashionable, they were a typical item in the wardrobes of fishermen and other primary resource workers in the province.⁵

Production of Cowichan knitwear provided a supplementary source of income in most cases. 'Cowichan' knitwear spread to some Fraser Valley reserves and was produced in some interior locales early in the twentieth century. Knitters at Musqueam, from reserves around Chilliwack, and from the Lytton area marketed their goods in Vancouver stores. The advantage remained with those farming bands which kept sheep to produce their own raw wool.

Cowichan knitting was a partial exception to the history of most cottage industries. Analogous enterprises which attempted to provide supplementary income through cottage industry techniques usually resulted in what one later observer (somewhat exaggeratedly) termed 'rural sweatshops'. Most handicrafts brought low returns, regardless of how beautiful the items were or however much people took pride in making them. Only a limited range of items ever became 'folk art' and fetched reasonable prices on the market.⁶

Hide clothing and beadwork produced for sale was of minor importance. Individual women among the Carrier, Chilcotin, Shuswap, did produce moccasins, buckskin jackets, hide gloves, beaded belts, and similar items for sale. While of importance as domestic clothing these goods provided little supplementary income.

The main commercial handicraft in the southern interior of BC was the production of ornamental and utilitarian basketry and mats. Some of the basketry from the Thompson river reserves did enter into a limited collectors trade. Baskets for utilitarian use, as berry containers, storage baskets, mats, etc., continued to be made and used by most of the southern interior groups. Some Indian women from the Lillooet and neighbouring regions were making and selling baskets to settlers and traders from the 1870s on.

By 1890 ornamental basketry was being sold in some specialty stores in Vancouver, New Westminster, and Victoria. There were baskets in their traditional shape and design as well as such items as serving trays and household items geared to Victorian and Edwardian tastes. However, the returns never seem to have been commensurate with the effort invested. Basket making entailed not only the actual weaving of the items but also the considerable effort involved in gathering or digging up, splitting, and variously preparing the roots and other materials used.⁷

Production of both decorative and utility baskets for sale developed briefly among some coastal groups as well. It is probably an indication of economic hard times among them. Woven rush matting, twined basketry flask covers and a wide range of other items were produced for sale by some Nootka women before the turn of the century. One of the mission-initiated cottage industries at Sechelt during the 1890s was ornamental basketry manufacture for the Vancouver market. For a while, some Indian families in the Thompson River region, in the Okanagan, and in the Fraser Valley produced utilitarian basketry. These were splint and rough basket containers used for picking, storing and marketing tree fruits, potatoes, and other market produce. Comparable to the 'wooden ware' industry of the Maritimes, this handicraft industry never became of consequence among Indian producers in BC.⁸

While not exactly a cottage industry, an early enterprise was the production of dog fish oil. This seems to have been fairly important to groups on the West Coast of Vancouver Island from the 1850s until their incorporation in the sealing trade in the late 1870s and on. After catching the dogfish, their carcasses were rendered by simple boiling in large open kettles. James Douglas, writing to the British Secretary of State for the Colonies in August of 1855, 'estimated' that some ten thousand gallons of dogfish oil, and some whale oil, had been acquired from the West Coast groups the previous year by "...a few enterprising individuals who live among the Indians and collect the article as it is manufactured by the natives". (Pentthick, D. 1968:124). An export market for dogfish oil seems to have been largely illusory. By the 1880s it was being bought for twenty to twenty-five cents per gallon and was used as a cheap, but smelly, lubricant—especially for greasing the skids of horse logging operations. The reduction of dogfish to meal for animal fodder or the use of

dogfish livers for the extraction of vitamin supplements was something which developed only much later.

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs for BC estimated the value of Indian-produced dog fish oil in 1875 was \$44,500. Some Nootka teams were supposedly earning from four to six dollars per day in this undertaking (Sessional Papers, DIA. 1875:47; 1879:45). What this meant in actual earnings is anybody's guess. Other Indian groups in Howe Sound, at Nanoose, Qualicum, and Cape Mudge along the eastern shores of Vancouver Island sporadically engaged in dog fish oil manufacture from the early 1880s until shortly after 1900.

A dogfish oil reduction plant was established near Skidegate in 1879 and had a checkered history. In 1901 the plant was acquired by the local Methodist mission and operated by local Indian workers. It included three buildings, a steam boiler, a battery of evaporating and filtering tanks, and could process some 40,000 gallons of dog fish oil per year. John Mathers, son of a Tsimshian missionary, took over operation of the plant. However, during that decade the market for dog fish oil disappeared. The plant was converted and for a while operated as a clam cannery. (Dalzell, K. 1967:101, 107-108).

A reserve industry which seemingly witnessed a certain boom during the early settlement era was canoe and boat building. Here was practical wood artistry at its finest. Dug out canoes of variable size and shape were commercially produced among a number of coastal groups. These were always the work of specialist canoe builders who had produced the larger canoes for chiefs of village families. However some native groups even at the time of contact were making canoes for trade with other groups. The Nootka work canoes seem to have been particularly marketable. They evidenced a high level of workmanship and were made from particularly suitable specimens of cedar: in addition, their flat-bottomed design seemed to make them particularly sea worthy. Nootka canoes of twenty-five to thirty-five feet seemed to handle best; those which were substantially larger sometimes proved to be unmanageable, or at least impractical to use.

The pelagic sealing industry (circa 1870-1911) seems to have generated an upsurge in the production of medium-sized sea-worthy canoes. During the height of commercial sealing hundreds of hunting canoes were made for use aboard the sealing schooners. These canoes saw hard use, were frequently damaged and broken, and required constant replacement. By the 1890s a top quality dug-out canoe suitable for off-shore sealing sold for as much as \$300, an average year's income. The market for such canoes provided a final burst of production among Indian canoe makers.⁹

According to Hillary Stewart, an Ahousat man by the name of David Frank, eighty-four years of age at the time of interview, had built some forty-seven canoes during his active lifetime. This worked out to a little better than one a year. They were all intended for practical use in fishing, sealing, packing and whaling and the largest was some thirty-four feet. He estimated that a well cared-for canoe might last as long as thirty years, but that in normal usage their lifespan was closer to ten years. (Stewart, H. 1984:55-56)

Although planked boat building was a trade *later* taught at a few residential schools, its emergence was more or less independent of schooling. The advantage of planked boats over dug out canoes was their greater durability. They also allowed of greater latitude in size and design. There were Indian commercial boat builders at work by the beginning of the 1880s, if not earlier. Shortly after the turn of the century Indian boat builders had become well established in at least the following locales: at Penelakut on Kuper Island and at Lyacksun on Valdes Island, at Galiano Island and among the Quamichan and on neighbouring Cowichan reserves. On the northern coast there were Indian boat builders producing anything from row boats to small schooners at Port Simpson, Port Essington and at Metlakatla, as well as at Bella Bella, Alert Bay, Fort Rupert, and in the Cape Mudge settlements.¹⁰

Let us consider one locale. A few of the Haida canoe makers and boat builders whose names have come down to us are Tom Price, who built both canoes and planked boats as well as doing argellite carving before WW I. John Cross of Skidegate built canoes and boats (as well as doing some tattooing) before becoming a commercial carver. Andrew Brown of Masset, one of the best boat builders on the Islands, built the schooner *Queen Charlotte* at about the turn of the century. Brown, along with another Masset man named Robert Ridely, also built the schooner *Seabird* and the gas-powered boat *Annie D* sometime before 1920. Daniel Stanley of Masset, an accomplished carver, built the two masted schooner *Princess Victoria* on contract for a white fisherman sometime before his death in 1911. And there were others elsewhere.¹¹

Printers Ink

A minor but interesting aspect of mission enterprises was the establishment of Indian newspapers and bulletins. Some of these were produced in various indigenous languages. They suggest a degree of literacy in local Indian languages which, at the turn of the century, now seems surprising. The journals were generally produced by Indian printers and compositors.

Among the early North coast Indian-mission publications was a small cyclostyled bulletin (later a printed monthly newspaper) which came out of Kitimaat between 1893 and 1906. It was initiated by Rev. G.H. Raley. Called *Nanakwa*, it seemingly carried mission tracts mixed with local news. Shortly after the turn of the century some residential and mission day schools also produced newsletters, none of which I have seen or surveyed. They, and the other native journals mentioned here, might provide interesting source material for future researchers.¹²

Probably the best known Indian mission newspaper was *Kamloops Wawa*. It was put out regularly under the supervision of Father Le Jeune at Kamloops mission between 1891 and 1904 (with occasional issues appearing as late as 1917). The newspaper was apparently printed in an expanded version of Chinook jargon and its Indian readers were presumably bilingual or trilingual. *Kamloops Wawa* varied from four to sixteen pages in length and contained news items of local interest from the scattered Indian reserves throughout the region. Probably it was also laced with the moral maxims of the time, whether religious or secular. However, Indian correspondents sent in news from their particular locales and a volunteer Indian staff at the Kamloops mission (initially mainly women) set up and printed the newspaper. By 1898 it supposedly had a monthly circulation of 3000 copies—it's peak. Another mission bulletin printed in syllabics was put out at the Fort St. James mission sometime before 1910, but was apparently short lived.¹³

Less well known than the *Kamloops Wawa* was the newspaper started by the Anglican missionary Rev. McCullagh, at Aiyansh on the Nass. It was initially published in Nishga. It appeared in 1891 as a cyclostyled bulletin, called *Hagaga* and subtitled *The Indians' Own Newspaper*. McCullagh translated gospels into Nishga and these apparently were part of the first good news in that newspaper but it also contained stories in English and was used to teach reading in that language.

By the beginning of the twentieth century *Hagaga* circulation had grown sufficiently that McCullagh could round up the money to import a commercial printing press. Seven local Nishga men trained to operate the press. By that time printing was one of the trades taught in some Indian residential-industrial schools.

By 1907 the bulletin had become a small newspaper of eight pages, now called *Aiyansh Notes*. It seems to have been printed in English. Shortly after, the question of Indian land rights was again surfacing and the Nishga apparently used the newspaper to promote their land claims, much to Rev. McCullagh's discomfort.⁴

A number of the original Nishga printers and editors were still alive when, some forty years later, the Native Brotherhood of BC launched its influential newspaper, *The Native*

Voice. None of this was particularly novel since at least a half dozen native-owned weekly newspapers, some written in an indigenous language, had flourished in the Indian Territory (Oklahoma) between the 1830s until well into the twentieth century. Some of those journals furthered political conflicts over resources *within* and between Indian nations in Oklahoma (Debo, A.1934).

Indian Entrepreneurs

Indian entrepreneurship within a commercial economy emerged during the Maritime fur trade period, with those who have sometimes been called 'Sea Otter Chiefs'. There were typically more Indian traders and middlemen than white traders involved at some point in the inland and coastal fur trade. Chiefly power came to depend, in part, upon controlling a phase of the fur trade. That they more than held their own in dealings with the HBC indicates not only their sagacity; they could also be quite rapacious in dealing with other Indian groups having to trade their furs through them. While commercial trapping continued long after 1858, Indian entrepreneurship took on new directions during the settlement era.

A little discussed sphere of Indian enterprise was moonshining and bootlegging. It may have involved a considerable cash flow, although it is now impossible to estimate how much. The practitioners carried on business in a number of native communities, although excluded from the more tightly run mission villages. One report of Indian distillers is from Masset of 1879 (before that community became a mission village). A surprisingly appreciative Indian Agent noted that *'...the manufacture of Hoochy ohoo [Hootch] which was being carried on by some of the enterprising natives. All the capital required by the native distiller is a supply of molasses and potatoes, a couple of coal oil tins, with a little oil left in one, and a worm, which is made with facility by drying a piece of pulp. A very fair article of 'tangle leg' is thus produced, and in the absence of the legitimate mode of procuring 'fire water', is highly appreciated by many of them'* 15

Moonshine liquor was made for sale and does not include the brews made for home consumption. Indian and 'half-breed' bootleggers were probably more numerous than the rather difficult to conceal distilling operations. Successful Indian distillers and bootleggers had to be careful adept individuals. No powerless or intemperate bootlegger could ply his trade for long. They may well have included some of the more forceful men on the reserves.

Illegal distilling continued on the outskirts of reserves scattered throughout the province, producing goods of varying merit. Lackalsap is recurrently mentioned in reports of the day as a steadfast supplier of the neighbouring reserves, despite the efforts of the resident missionary and the Provincial Police. No doubt there were Indian people then, as later, who could hold their liquor and were not its slave. But for those who couldn't, ardent spirits were a serious threat.

On a more respectable plane, from the 1870s and on Indian entrepreneurs established a wide range of small scale enterprises. They operated freighting and packing outfits, ran trading schooners, had their own boat building yards, and ran stores, hotels and yet more diverse enterprises. Indian owned logging outfits and sawmills were quite common. While it may be grandiose to call some of these operations 'plants', they often were of a scale similar to white local enterprises then prevalent on the margins of the corporate undertakings. Most of these enterprises, whether Indian or white, were owner-operated regardless of what additional labour was hired. Because of their great variety I have discussed most of the Indian enterprises in conjunction with the industries in which they occurred. The following notes will deal with the more purely commercial examples of Indian entrepreneurship. But one should realize that the locus of Indian enterprise lay *outside* retail merchandising.

By the early 1870s the Dudoward family of Port Simpson was engaged in coastal trading with their own schooner. They also operated a store in that community. Part of the rising new Tsimshian Indian leadership, the Dudowards used their influence to bring in the Methodist mission and strove to make Port Simpson the Indian metropolis of the north coast

until the rise of Prince Rupert. A wide range of Indian-run businesses grew up at Port Simpson.¹⁶

In 1873 the once booming HBC post at Fort Rupert was sold to Robert Hunt, whose wife was from a leading Tlingit lineage but whose family was reared and incorporated into the local Kwakiutl community. The Hunt family long played a central role in trading and allied business venture around Fort Rupert. One of the sons, George Hunt, became the most famous Indian lay anthropologist of the BC coast, and an entrepreneur in his own right.

The doings of the Cook family of Alert Bay may give a feel of the new entrepreneurial class which was emerging in some native communities by the end of the nineteenth century. They were in some ways different and occasionally at odds with the older Indian leadership, which itself had often been important as traders.

Stephan Cook was born circa 1870 in Victoria of a white father and Indian mother. His wife, born in Seattle, was of a similar background. Both were initially raised in contemporary white surroundings but were educated respectively in the residential school at Metlakatla and at a private boarding school in Victoria. Stephan Cook became a protégé of one Rev. Hall, who ran the Anglican mission complex at Alert Bay. In about 1890 Hall placed Cook in charge of bookkeeping and the business management of the mission-owned sawmill and general store at Alert Bay.

When the mission sold its interests in the sawmill and store to European entrepreneurs some years later, Stephan Cook opened his own store on the reserve at Alert Bay. By the late 1890s his store was operating quite successfully. A facet of his entrepreneurship lay in acting as a labour recruiter for canneries in the region. According to one rather bumptious account of the Cooks' relations to recruited Indian labour, 'They took charge of their money, assisted them to take better care of their children.'¹⁷

Stephan Cook remained a powerful elder within the local Anglican church, capable of modifying mission policy at times. His wife was a church catechist as well as acting as interpreter in the local Provincial Courts. By 1910, the Cooks were influential, not only in the Indian community around Alert Bay, but in the region as a whole. They were sometime spokespersons of the Indian faction which supported the suppression of potlatching, which today would seem to be a suicidal role but which then did not seem to undercut their economic position at Alert Bay.

Cook also became involved in staking timber leases and mining claims for copper. These were speculative ventures which he later sold for reportedly a substantial profit. By the 1920s the Cooks, with their adult sons, had launched into the acquisition of the first of what would become a fleet of five seine boats. They were captained by family members and hired native crews. During the 1940s and later younger members of the Cook family emerged as leaders of the Native Brotherhood of BC.¹⁸

Elsewhere, in 1884, an inn and livery station on the road to Port Alberni was kept by a local native man. According to one somewhat patronizing source, '... Qualicum Tom is well known as an enterprising and accommodating Indian, giving refreshments to horse and man on reasonable terms, and being well spoken of by all.'¹⁹ Even on the relatively isolated west coast of Vancouver Island some Nootka men were investing their earnings from sealing voyages in stores. By the late 1890s at least five Nootka communities had Indian-owned stores. There was Constance at Heshquiaht, someone called Mack at Ohiaht, an August in Ahousaht, a John in Kyuquot, and a guy named Jim of Chaicclesaht - although these apparently were tiny stores and had difficulties in financing.²⁰

By or before the turn of the century there were one or more Indian-owned and operated stores in the following settlements: Aiyansh Kincolith, Lalalsap, Metlakatla, Masset, Skidegate, Hazelton, Andimaul, Bella Bella, Fort Rupert, Alert Bay and Village Island. In 1900 Port Simpson was a not atypical town (1100 pop.) of the resource coast; although still influenced by a mission presence. It was then the largest settlement in the region and had a variety of stores, services and local industries owned and operated by an amalgam of

Indian and white residents. One somewhat rosy report of Indian-owned enterprises in the region appears to have had a certain validity for Port Simpson itself. *'In the Northwest Agency the Indians own sawmills, and dogfish oil manufactures, they also have many stores, and have commenced in a small way to can salmon and clams; nearly all the trades are there carried on, such as carpenters, blacksmiths, painters, etc., etc., as well as many other different enterprises which are being started and wholly managed by the advanced natives, with every reasonable prospect of an average measure of success.'*²¹

Next to Port Simpson, probably the greatest concentration of Indian-run enterprises in any single community was at Masset. By 1908 Masset had three or four stores, two hotels and at least one cafe owned by local Indian entrepreneurs. There was a small shellfish cannery nearby, owned by the Anglican Mission in conjunction with other local entrepreneurs. One man owned a trading schooner, others owned fish boats. Besides that, Masset had the full range of 'model village' accoutrements—community hall, fire hall, town office, board sidewalks, church, school, and brass band. And there was talk of installing lanterns for street lighting. These were all locally funded, built, and maintained. Skidegate, the Haida community at the south end of Graham Island, had a similar range of community property. Being smaller in size there were fewer stores and shops. But it did have a clam cannery and fish oil reduction plant with apparently some local Indian investment.²²

Henry Edenshaw may be an example of the transition of members of traditional chiefly families into the new Indian leadership of this era. Born in the early 1870s, Henry Edenshaw became an early adherent of the Anglican mission after most of the Haida population in the north of Graham Island resettled at Masset. While continuing as a teacher and catechist, he soon developed business interests. By the turn of the century he was trading between Masset and Port Simpson and Metlakatla.

In 1906 Henry Edenshaw, in conjunction with Rev. Collison and a group of regional entrepreneurs, staked timber leases on the Queen Charlottes during the wildest timber boom in BC history. They staked a number of leases on Masset Inlet in 1907 for twenty cents an acre which they shortly sold to large timber interests at \$2.50 an acre. Chicken feed to the big timber corporations, but a tidy profit for local entrepreneurs.

By 1908 Edenshaw owned and operated the trading schooner *Josephine*, which carried freight and had the mail contract from Port Simpson to Masset. He was also the owner of the largest hotel in Masset and a store there. He continued as a bible school teacher and was influential in the local church.²³

Peter Kelly, not from a chiefly family, followed a somewhat different trajectory. Born in Skidegate in 1885, he grew up during the early Methodist mission years there. He entered Coquileetza residential school (near Chilliwack) and went on to obtain high school matriculation. Returning to Skidegate in 1904 Kelly took up a position as teacher in the Methodist day school and married into the leading Indian family of the Skidegate mission complex in 1909.

After marriage Kelly decided that school teaching did not allow scope for his needs. He became involved in timber cruising for lumber companies and in staking timber claims on Jedway Bay. He also tried an unsuccessful stint as the partner with a white hand logger. A logging accident and the financial failure of this venture convinced Kelly that his calling lay in the ministry.

In the summer of 1910 he left Skidegate to minister to the Tsimshian mission village at Hartley Bay. A cannery had recently been established nearby and in addition to being the local minister Kelly obtained a job as a foreman in the cannery. Says Allan Morley, his biographer and one eminently qualified to recreate the straw boss spirit of that age, *' . . . [Kelly] was promptly engaged by the cannery as a foreman. It was not required of him, however, like other foremen, to wade amongst fish guts on the cleaning floor or supervise the men shoving racks of tins into and out of steam ovens. His reputation, and his high personal standing among the Haida, made him, in effect, what we now call a personnel*

manager.....The 'young man in the manse' counselled the Indians and advised the management in the face of disputes arising from misunderstood terms of employment and the swelling tide of labour discontent in the British Columbia fishing industry.'

There were no strikes at Hartley Bay while Kelly was there', crows Morley. ²⁴

Kelly later attended Columbia College (New Westminster) to become a full fledged minister. He took up a number of missions along the coast, including operation of the mission ship *Thomas Crosby* — in which role he was lionized by the Vancouver press. According to Morley, Peter Kelly was the second generation of his family who had consciously chosen to adopt Euro-Canadian ways. During his adult lifetime he was one of the most visible 'spokesmen' and proponents of Indian political rights in BC and a lifelong member of the Conservative Party. He represented the views of earlier missionaries and also that of the emerging Indian middle class.

Some native people who struggled to acquire what was then an advanced education found less application for their studies. Among them was one George Matheson, a young Tsimshian man who had completed a year at Columbia College (New Westminster), which he hoped would lead to a law degree. He was unable to finish his studies and in 1901 found him working at Port Essington as a store keeper on wages.²⁵

At least one observer remarked on this in the ointment as early as 1901. Wrote a C. Todd, Indian Agent for the Northwest Coast Agency:

Many Indians have, alone and in companies, gone into the business of store keeping and other forms of trade and enterprise, but have had little success, owing partly to their lack of confidence in each other, family jealousies, lack of business experience, and too costly manner of living. Some of the younger generations are, however, rapidly gaining business experience and are, in a measure, able to keep business accounts. ²⁶

Considering that native traders had been effective competitors with the HBC in that area for over sixty years and had been directly involved in European industries for close to forty years, factors other than being able to keep account books were undoubtedly involved. From a peak during the first decade of the century, Indian stores and services appear to have run into increasing difficulties. By WW I they were in decline and many were on the skids by the 1920s. The remaining Indian-owned enterprises (with the exceptions of those in fishing and logging) seem to have disappeared in the 1930s.

Chapter 8

Subsistence and Mixed Farming

One of the most durable myths about native Indian history is that their traditional cultures were so immutable and inflexible as to forever predispose Indians against any form of farming. The incontrovertible evidence of Indian farming ventures during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is typically written off as negligible and allegedly due only to the attempts of government and missions to impose European economic patterns on Indians. The later failure of Indian farms, after three and more generations of farming, is then seen as the 'triumph of Native values' over an imposed economy.

In reality, Indian groups in BC initiated farming largely through their own efforts. Here, mission efforts merely extended and reinforced Indian farming after it had been established independently. Government involvement only came later, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Although farming was never of primary importance in the economy of BC, Indian subsistence farms producing a surplus for sale spread to many reserves in regions where it was viable. The major problems facing Indian commercial farming were broadly applicable to small scale farming in general and were not primarily due to Indian cultural resistance.

What was unique about Indian farming was the burden imposed by federal and provincial restrictions—restrictions on water rights, exclusion of crown grazing leases, exclusion from homestead preemption etc. as well as difficulty in obtaining loans for farm improvements. The general retreat from semi-commercial farming by Indian farmers by WW I should be considered part of a broad process which saw the attrition of most small farmers (Indian and white). Even relatively successful Indian farmers found they could do better financially in wage work than in farming.

The beginnings of Indian horticulture in BC appear to have spread from the HBC trading posts on Puget Sound and the Fraser River during the 1820s and after. The Haida may have acquired potatoes and gardening techniques from the stream of maritime traders who visited them. Forts Nisqually and Langley, and later Fort Victoria, developed large company farms both for own use and to supply other trade posts with fresh food. Some HBC posts also purchased what surpluses the initial Indian gardeners wished to sell. It was mainly potato gardening at first.¹

By the mid 1830s Haida traders were selling canoe loads of potatoes—over 400 bushels in one trip—to the HBC post at Port Simpson, as well as trading them to neighbouring Indian groups. By the early 1840s subsistence gardens had been established in various Coast Salish settlements: there were 'flourishing' potato gardens around Nanaimo, among the Cowichan, and throughout the Songish and Sooke villages. In the Fraser Valley, the Katzie, the Semiahmoo and the Samish settlements (and probably others) planted subsistence gardens. Gardening had already spread to an undetermined number of groups in the Lower Thompson River region.²

Although there was no tradition of agriculture among BC Indian groups whatsoever, this did not stop them acquiring what was novel and useful. The early potato gardens were usually small (under an acre per family). They were tilled primarily by women and were mainly a supplement to traditional foods - fish and game and shellfish. There was some trade in agricultural produce but no group was primarily dependent upon its gardens. It was, however, the basis for later Indian subsistence and market farming.

The trajectory of Indian farming in BC during the next twenty years suggests a gradual spread and elaboration. By 1860 subsistence farmlets had spread to Indian communities throughout much of the south coast and southern interior. Missions became of importance in intensifying Indian subsistence farming by the mid 1860s and later. They built upon a full generation of independent Indian gardening in some areas. Mission efforts were

important in the development of Indian mixed farms during the next generation as Indian farms came to grow a wide range of crops, raise a variety of stock and utilize some fairly sophisticated small farming techniques.

Government involvement in Indian farming in BC began only in the late 1870s and 1880s and seems to have been largely a matter of inveigling native groups to continue or to expand their farming operations. Indian Agents sometimes pursued this vein after experience in reserve farming had convinced Indians of its relative unprofitability. What was needed was not encouragement but rather additional capital, secure markets and sufficient land and water to make reserve farming economically viable. It was obvious to even the most bucolic advisor that agriculture was impractical in some regions of the coast and the northern interior. But we might also keep in mind the blind enthusiasm which Federal and Provincial officials had in 'opening up' homestead areas for European immigrants and returned veterans, even into the 1920, encouraging tens of thousands of families to settle in areas virtually hopeless for farming.

There is a note of somewhat ironic surprise in the reports of the initial agents of the Department of Indian Affairs, who on taking up their posts in BC, from 1871 to 1875, discovered that many reserves in the New Westminster Agency raised large numbers of livestock and were quite knowledgeable about agriculture. On some reserves, especially in the Cheam and Chilliwack region of the Fraser valley, Indian mixed farms and gardens were flourishing. Members of the Cowichan bands on Vancouver Island had a considerable amount of land under cultivation and were raising some 500 head of cattle. Their farms were dotted with barns, stables, and fences. In fact, Indian farmers of the Douglas and Portage bands (the first near Nicola Lake the other on the Serpentine river of the lower Fraser valley) had won medals at the US Centennial Exposition, held in Philadelphia in 1876, for wheat they had grown.³

I have no continuous account of Indian farming for any single reserve in BC, however valuable such an account might be. It may be of interest to consider the history of farming on Lummi Point reserve, ten miles south of the Canadian border, during this early phase. The Lummi were culturally and socially part of a network of neighbouring Coast Salish groups around the Fraser valley.

White settlement developed in northern Washington Territory one to two decades earlier than in southern BC. Some Lummi men worked in logging, sawmill work and commercial fishing from the inception of these industries in the region, during and before the development of reserve farming. At least some Lummi families were raising potato gardens by the 1850s. After the establishment of reserves in Washington Territory the US Bureau of Indian Affairs began to provide foundation stock, seed, some implements, and a resident farm instructor. (This differed from the situation in BC, although it was to become a pattern for Indian reserves on the Canadian prairies later.) A number of Lummi families shifted to subsistence farming during the 1860s. Growth of reserve farming was gradual but by 1867 families cultivated some 155 acres at Lummi Point. That year they produced some 10,000 bushels of potatoes, 150 bushels of wheat, 30 tons of hay and raised a mix of cattle, horses and other livestock.⁴

Some sixteen years later (in 1883) the majority of the 275 band members were engaged to some degree in reserve farming and stock raising. Seventy-five families cultivated some 500 acres, which produced 2000 bushels oats, 450 bushels wheat and enough hay to feed the circa 600 head of beef and milk cattle raised on the reserve. In addition, they grew potatoes, vegetables and fruit for home consumption and sale. Their houses, barns, farm implements, livestock—in short, the material appearance of their farms—were said to be comparable to the small farms of white settlers then in the region. However, the Lummi farms on average were only about ten acres in size. As a subsistence source such farms could be extremely productive; as commercial ventures they were increasingly non-competitive.⁵

Stasis set in for the Lummi farming. They began to experience increasing difficulties in competition with larger scale farming in the region. The limited land and capital available on the Lummi reserve, linked with recurrent gluts on the market and depression of farm prices, made reserve farming progressively less feasible as a source of cash income. Increasing numbers of Lummi men shifted to wage labour in sawmills, logging, commercial fishing, and other industries in the then booming state. During the 1890s Lummi farming was static and after 1900 the amount of reserve land farmed, the amount of produce and livestock raised, dropped steadily. It continued as a predominantly subsistence activity on the reserve until the end of the 1930s.⁶

Returning to developments in BC, the 1880s saw the consolidation of Indian farming in some areas, its spread to other reserves where it was viable. By 1885 the majority of the reserves in the Fraser Valley, as well as those around Cowichan and on the Saanich Peninsula (Vancouver Island) were involved to some degree in mixed subsistence and market farming. Subsistence as well as commercial fishing and wage labour naturally continued among members of these bands. Reserve farming was well established among some bands of the interior; those along the central Fraser and Thompson Rivers, and around Kamloops and throughout the Okanagon. On the Nicola Plateau, cattle ranching by band members was firmly established. However, wage labour on white farms, on commercial orchards and ranches, was beginning to be of importance.⁷

A sketch of Indian farming may emerge from the crop statistics of the Cowichan and the Fraser River Agencies, the two predominant reserve farm regions in 1885. They show, a pretty fair mix of crops and a rather substantial production for small farms of a century ago, operated by people from cultures which supposedly made them antithetical to farming. Naturally, not everyone or possibly not even the majority of the population even in these two Agencies were directly engaged in farming.

INDIAN FARMS IN TWO AGENCIES, 1885 ⁸.

Cowichan Agency. Fraser River Agency. Total.

Total Population	c. 1,725	c.3,525	c.5,250
Acres Cultivated	1,723	3,527	
<u>Crops Produced (in bushels)</u>			
Wheat	800	985	1,785 bu.
Oats	2,985	4,475	7,460 bu.
Peas and Beans	300	2,369	2,669 bu
Corn	?	75	75 bu.
Barley	?	1,065	1,065 Bu.
Potatoes	8,680	22,915	31,595 bu
Hay	670 tons	788 tons	1,460 tons
Plus an undetermined amount of garden vegetables and orchard fruits.			
<u>Livestock Kept.</u>			
Horses	429	837	1,266
Milk cows	337	553	890
Oxen	142	158	300
Sheep	480	505	985
Pigs	992	175	1,167
Plus a general stock of poultry.			

Some Indian reserves were large enough to sustain then contemporary farming but in many cases either the size of the reserve, the quality of the land, the absence of sufficient irrigation water restricted the extent to which farming could develop. In addition, by the mid 1880s previously open resources on Crown lands were progressively alienated by white

farmers and ranchers. Loss of water rights and grazing rights on Crown lands were particularly serious for some bands in the interior. But possibly most important was the increasing competition for regional markets by the larger white farms which were developing.

On the lower Bridge River reserve during 1885, every plot that could be irrigated was cultivated and fenced and the band was in the process of constructing a long irrigation ditch to add another twenty acres to the fifty it already had in cultivation. At nearby Cayoosh Creek, band members had built a two mile irrigation canal with 300 feet of raised flume in order to irrigate some twenty acres of poor soil. At Ka'tsam (in the Thompson Canyon) some fifty acres of reserve land had been brought into cultivation only by bringing water in a considerable distance with flumes. Reserve farming in parts of the southern Cariboo, Thompson and Okanagan regions was already becoming limited by the availability of irrigation water.⁹

On some reserves, especially those minuscule plots scattered through the Fraser and Thompson canyon regions, reserve land suitable for horticulture had already run out by the mid 1880s. One Indian Agent noted in 1885 that at Skuzzy all the cultivatable reserve land was already in use and that some of the young men of that settlement had asked his help in buying Crown land they might farm off the reserve. At nearby Kekatoos, band members had already given up cultivating what gardens they had because the size, boundaries and tenure of reserve land was under dispute.¹⁰

The High Tide of Indian Farming

Reserve farming in BC probably reached its peak between 1890 and WW I, its trajectory being somewhat different in different regions. After that period Indian farming began to stagnate and decline. With some important exceptions, it had become mainly a subsistence activity with occasional surpluses for sale by the beginning of the great depression.

However, in 1900 some Indian farms were still holding their own and continuing to evolve. A large and varied stock of horse-drawn farm machinery existed on many Indian farming reserves. Indeed, the presence of horse-drawn machinery may be a practical indicator of Indian commercial farming, as distinct from the subsistence gardening which was more general. Indian farmers owned a range of plows used for specific tasks. They utilized disc harrows, mowers, binders, wheeled hay rakes, and so forth. There were wagons of all descriptions, carts, sleds, and the endless paraphernalia of harness and gear that went with horse-powered machinery.¹¹

Indian farmers were, necessarily, experienced in both using and maintaining this not so simple equipment. Capital invested in horse-drawn machinery must have been substantial and it is probable that many small white farms were no better, and some less well, equipped. In a few locales, Indian farmers were working with their own steam threshing machines before the turn of the century. In 1895 Indian students operated the steam threshing machine of the Kootenay Industrial School, sometimes hiring out to thresh the crops of white farms in the region. By 1900, Cowichan band members at Somenos owned, operated and maintained their own steam threshing machine. Others owned horse drawn threshers, with which they harvested their own crops and hired out to bring in the crops of neighbouring white farms. There were Indian crews using their own horse-drawn threshing machines harvesting out of N'Kamaplix (in the Okanagan) and around Hope as well.¹²

A process of experimentation and improvement of Indian livestock and crops was fairly widespread. The Cowichan were shifting from small horses and ponies to raising heavy draught horses. Some bands in the Similkameen region began raising Percherons, one of the highly-valued and beautiful draught horse breeds of the time. Upgraded breeds of beef cattle were being introduced at Kamloops and in the Okanagan crop varieties were being upgraded.

Much more general than commercial farming were various degrees of subsistence farms. These provided potatoes and a wide range of garden produce, as well as poultry and possibly a few head of livestock (typically a milk cow) for home consumption. There might be surpluses for sale, but this provided only supplementary income. Indian farmers whose main cash income was derived from farming were probably always in a minority. For instance, in 1899, on two of the smaller farming reserves of the Fraser Valley (Scowlitz and Chehalis), the two largest dairy herds were respectively twelve head and nine head of milk cows. Many of the men of that 'farming reserve' were working for wages in the nearby Harrison Sawmill and in connected logging camps. Their farms were mainly run by other family members. In this they were like the stump ranch farms of white resource workers on the benches and hollows surrounding the Fraser Valley.¹³

Subsistence gardening even spread to many of the reserves along the coast, where the basic economy was fishing and wage work. Some families in fishing communities obtained supplementary food from their gardens. It may have provided a few families with goods to barter or sell to other community members.

When all is said and done, the bulk of the Indian farming was concentrated in a relatively few regions. Of the approximately 20,000 acres cultivated on BC reserves in 1910, about 80 per cent were on reserves in only three of the twelve Agencies, containing less than one-quarter of the Indian population in the province.¹⁴ Moreover, many of those living on the 'farming reserves' were mainly engaged in subsistence gardening. This would suggest that probably no more than 10 to 15 per cent of the Indian population engaged in semi-commercial farming even at its height. This was roughly the proportion of the total BC population then engaged in agriculture. It places Indian farming into perspective. Farming, while important in providing a substantial subsistence supplement, was never as important as wage work in the Indian cash economy.

The difficulties of Indian orchardists may provide some glimpse into the problems facing small Indian farms in general. While most Indian farms contained a few fruit trees for home consumption, there were some two dozen reserves with commercial orchards. (Many residential schools provided instruction on orchardry, which apparently struck a responsive chord among Indian farmers.) By 1910 some of the larger orchards were apparently thirty to forty years old. They ranged from semi-abandoned apple orchards to well-tended operations producing a wide array of tree fruits for the market.

Orchardry involved ongoing problems such as selecting appropriate root stocks and using skilled grafting techniques. There were insect predations and problems of spraying the fruit trees. In 1910 Indian orchardists were experimenting with various sprays and methods of application to deal with an epidemic of tent caterpillars and aphids. (the orchardist's equivalent of locust). Some were faced by problems of multiple land use. On one Fraser Valley reserve, the orchards were not sprayed for fear of poisoning their milk cows, which were grazed on pasture between the fruit trees. There were problems of introducing new fruit varieties when the species already established became unpopular on the market. However mundane such worries may appear to readers, they were the sort of considerations which were part of the farming lives of Indian orchardists—a minute proportion of the problems which had to be solved if that economy was to be preserved. They were not mundane considerations to Indian farmers.¹⁵

Some Indian orchardists were dealing with the agricultural problems per se with apparent success. The 1912 Agricultural Fair held at New Westminster included about 300 entries from Indian farmers, many of them tree fruits. At Merritt, one Indian orchardist sold 400 boxes of apples and near Lytton another had earned \$200 from the sale of his fruit. Hardly staggering by today's measure, but then comparable to a season's wages. In the Chilliwack and Sardis area Indian orchards were supposedly better than neighbouring white ones. During 1915 the small reserves in those two areas marketed 1400 boxes pears, 4500 boxes

apples, 1100 boxes plums, 3600 boxes cherries, as well as large quantities of raspberries and blackberries.¹⁶

But the bottom line of Indian orchards was whether they produced income even approximately equal to available wage labour. By 1910 numbers of Indian farmers came to the conclusion that they did not. Indian orchards were being left untended as the owning families migrated to seasonal work in hop fields and canneries to earn wages. Some commercial orchards continued on reserves at Sardis, in the Okanagan, and near Creston, but gradually the others declined into home consumption uses, or went wild.¹⁷

This process was not restricted to orchards. Many semi-commercial Indian farmers began to shift to wage labour, allowing their farms to become subsistence gardens, which were continued to be of importance for another generation. This process did not occur overnight, nor was it unaccompanied by some sadness. Nor was it universal. But it had begun before WW I.

Indian ranching, as distinct from the mixed livestock raised on reserve farms, had become established throughout the Cariboo and on the Nicola Plateau before 1890. There appear to have been Indian ranchers in parts of the Cariboo as early as the earliest white-owned cattle operations. Acquisition of grazing leases to crown lands rapidly became crucial. Despite somewhat inauspicious beginnings, Indian cattle ranching proved more durable than commercial farming. It spread into the Chilcotin region before the turn of the century and Indian ranchers were spread from the heartland to the margins of the cattle range of the BC interior. Despite the innumerable difficulties involved in small scale ranching, Indian ranching held on until the 1930s and even later.

Commenting on eight Spahamin reserves on the Nicola Plateau in 1900, the regional Indian Agent said, 'These Indians are the most extensive stock raisers in the Agency and have the best quality [stock]. Some of the best stallions and brood mares to be found in the Province are owned by these Indians.'¹⁸

John Chilliheetza, the chief of the Nicola band, owned 'hundreds of head of cattle and horses' and was a successful rancher by any regional standard. *'He has been known to pay as much as \$500 for a young pedigreed horse for stud purposes, he also from time to time, invests largely in bulls for the improvement of his cattle . . . he can at any time, at the banks and houses of business where he is known get credit to the amount of several thousand dollars.'*

Jim Michell, also of the Nicola band, was another renowned Indian rancher.¹⁹

While true, these are the typically sanguine accounts of the DIA, derived as much from hope as from a realistic view of general conditions. Most Indian ranchers of that time were operating at a totally different scale than the Chilliheetzas. Their small, strung-out herds provided some food and a little income. Additional food came from hunting and cash from farm labour or cowboying on large ranches in their regions. Indian cowboys comprised a considerable proportion of the ranch hands on many large Cariboo ranches from the late nineteenth and throughout much of the twentieth century.

Terry Glavin's (1993) collection of reminiscences of and by people of the Nemiah valley, in the Chilcotin, combine accounts of events which were part of the daily lives of many small ranchers as well as more uniquely native viewpoints. They stem from a region which was long comparatively isolated from major European settlement and the accounts might well be reflective of conditions through much of the interior plateau during the the previous century.

Although I have discovered no economic account of any Indian rancher of the time, their operations were probably much like small scale cattle ranching by persons of whatever derivation. Indian ranchers were not alone in the difficulties they faced. Marriot's account (*Cariboo Cowboy*) of the last wave of hard-scrabble white 'ranchers' who entered the Meadow Lake region of the Cariboo shortly before WW I, makes it clear that these white settlers had no more success than did most Indian ranchers.²⁰

An account by a native woman who grew up and lived in the Cariboo ranching area during this period may be of interest. Mary Augusta Tappage describes aspects of her life on a quarter section of scrub pine 'ranch' in the Soda Creek area between the late nineteenth century and the 1930s.

Augusta Tappage was born near Soda Creek in 1888, daughter of a Red River Metis father and Shuswap mother. She attended the Williams Lake residential school until 1901 where she learned the etiquette of a well brought up young woman of that time while her maternal grandmother taught her ' . . . the crafts necessary to an Indian living in the high Plateau lands.' However, during her girlhood her father regularly subscribed to newspapers, no small thing in the Cariboo at the turn of the century. She was then, and remained seventy years later, an avid reader.²¹

" George Evans came along and it wasn't long before I got married. December 1903, sometime between Christmas and the New Year. Father Thomas married us in the little church down on the reservation.' Through her marriage to the son of a Welshman, Augusta became non-status, although George's mother was a Shuswap of the Sugar Cane reserve.

*Augusta and her husband lived at first with her parents while George worked at one of the large ranches in the vicinity. They then decided to get their own farm. They pre-empted one hundred and sixty-six acres on the banks of Deep Creek, not far from Augusta's birthplace'We had three years to pay off the farm and we did—but it was hard work. One way we were lucky. In those days you could work off your taxes by doing work on the road, so that's what George did.'*²²

The family lived the typical 'homestead' life of the Cariboo of the time. They knew the river boats which once put in at Soda Creek and the freight wagons rolling north on the Cariboo Road, they witnessed the growth of the bonanza cattle ranches and the final residues of hard scrabble placer mining. They cleared land and carried out the general imperatives of homesteading . Augusta made what purchases they could afford at the general store at Soda Creek, while the mail order catalogue was the 'dream book' in their home as it was among so many tens of thousands of other rural families of the time. Home remedies and homestead skills were mixed with refashioned Shuswap techniques of gathering and fishing.

Augusta's husband died in 1931 and her eldest son was killed in a riding accident not many years later. The younger son took over the ranch while Augusta took on occasional odd jobs, becoming a sort of granny to many local children.²³ While some may read her account as somehow uniquely native, the tenor of the book is primarily a life of a broad sector of rural British Columbia of the time.

To return to the course of Indian farming in the province; the Indian Affairs Department continued to opt for the maintenance of Indian farms long into the twentieth century. Agents almost invariably bewailed the fact that Indian farmers gave up these pursuits for employment in wage labour. For instance, Indian Agent Robertson, writing of an Indian farmer at Lake Cowichan in 1910, complained that '*early in the season Alfred Livingstone started to clear some land but owing to the high wages offered by survey crews and timber cruisers, Alfred went where he could get the quickest and highest return for his labour.*'²⁴ It took other Indian and white stump ranchers of similarly marginal farms additional decades to learn the sense of Livingstone's decision.

Chapter 9

Commercial Fishing and Cannery Work

While salted salmon from the Fraser River was exported in modest quantities to Hawaii and California by the HBC in the 1840s and 1850s, it was not a significant or successful trade. Commercial fishing in BC was based upon the export trade and awaited the development of the canning process, which had been undergoing trial and experiment first in Scotland and then in New England since the beginning of the 1830s. The first fish canneries on the Pacific were established on the Sacramento and Columbia Rivers in the late 1860s. The first commercial cannery in BC opened on the Fraser in 1870 and the industry became of importance in 1876, when three canneries operated on that river. The first cannery on the Skeena opened in 1877, on the Nass in 1881, and others at Rivers Inlet and the elsewhere on central coast shortly after. Their names, numbers, and periods of operation can be an endless topic of debate.¹

Indian commercial fishermen and cannery workers were crucial during the first two decades of the industry in all these locales. Although partially displaced in the Fraser fisheries by 1900, they continued to be of importance there and were critical in the north and central coast fisheries. The great majority of Indian fishermen worked under some form of contract with a cannery. Although they may have arrived in their own canoes, they typically fished from cannery boats, with cannery nets and frequently were dependent upon advances from the cannery store to purchase food and other goods required during the fishing season. In some of the earliest cannery operations Indian fishermen and cannery workers lived in tent camps they established near the cannery during the fishing season. But later the majority lived in cannery cabins or in cannery fish camps. Wives or other relatives of the Indian fishermen often made up an important portion of the cannery work force. In some regions, especially on the central and north coast, canneries engaged Indian labour recruiters and utilized Indian foremen in what was sometimes known as the 'Tyee system'.

Some Indian fishermen and their families developed on-going relationships with particular canneries and their managers. Sometimes these had the quality of patron-client relations. But the long roster of strikes and work stoppages by Indian fishermen and cannery workers indicates that they also acted to defend their group interests. Whether these were also class interests, as employees, is difficult to decide.

By 1890 the canning industry had grown from being a promising experiment to one of the three most important income earners in the province. The fundamental basis of commercial fishing was salmon, particularly sockeye salmon. The primary locations of commercial fishing and canning were at the mouths and estuaries of the great salmon rivers. In order of importance these were the Fraser, which in 1900 sustained forty two canneries, the Skeena and Nass (with eleven each), and Rivers Inlet (with six canneries). There were an additional thirteen other canneries scattered along the coast cited to be in close proximity to the annual salmon runs.² The concentration of canneries on the major salmon rivers meant that many Indian fishermen and cannery workers had to travel to where the canneries were. Canneries were not necessarily located near Indian settlements. Many Indian commercial fishermen did not fish in their home locales. Only later technological changes, particularly the introduction of gas-powered boats, ice facilities and fish packers, dispersed commercial fishing to all of the coast.

The mainstay of the early salmon fishing fleet were planked skiffs and carvel-hulled Columbia river boats, operated by two 'men' and moved by oar and sail. The primary technique was gillnetting (although seine netting from the beach was used in a few locales). A reminiscence by Walter Wicks for the Skeena fisheries in 1904 outlines the work and method quite well. Although he was not a native Indian, the basic gillnetting techniques were

used by all; so in lieu of a contemporary native account let's hear what Wicks has to say about the physical side of this kind of fishing.

The operation of the boat was simple but back breaking work. As my partner cast the net over the stern I pulled the boat ahead until two hundred fathoms of net was stretched out over the water. Once the net was cast we drifted lazily down river with the tide . . . The boats were twenty-six foot double-enders, equipped with a centre-board which acted like a deep keel for stability under sail. It was pushed down through the boat's bottom in a centre-board box and used when bucking head wind, but otherwise drawn up. We could also move the boat with nine foot oars and hard work. To haul in the nets, the boat pullers would stand and push with the oars stern-first toward the net as the net man hauled in. There was no cabin on the boat, but we had a small tent we could rig up for protection—although it left our legs exposed to the rain. A cut down five gallon coal oil can answered for a wood cook stove .³

Cannery tug boats towed strings of these fishing vessels up or down river during various stages of the salmon runs, bringing the boats back to the cannery or a fish camp camp at weekends. The crews were English, Finnish, Norwegian, Japanese, as well as Indian fishermen from villages of much of the north coast and Skeena.

The fishermen covered many miles of water to take advantage of tidal changes which were strictly observed when making a 'set.' The many packing plants located floating camps at convenient places on the fishing grounds so that fishermen could deliver their catches without a daily return to the home cannery . . .

As the season progressed we followed the salmon up river. Then it became real work as we fished in strong shallow tidal waters infested with rocks, sandbars, snags, and sunken logs. Bucking the tide with nine foot oars was always a must to reach some vantage point for a single set..⁴

While every river, and each stretch of every river, was different, while individual fishermen had their own particular knacks and store of knowledge, Wicks' account, in broad outline, can be taken to describe commercial salmon gillnetting from the 1880s until the WW I era, and yet later on the north coast.

The early canneries relied heavily upon Indian labour and by the 1880s Indian fishermen and cannery workers were already drawn from long distances, travelling by canoe and steamer, to the major cannery regions. The Fraser River canneries drew Indian fishermen and workers from the length of the coast—from Sooke, from the Cowichan reserves on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, from Musqueam and the lower Fraser Valley reserves, from the Kwakiutl of Alert Bay and Fort Rupert, from Bella Coola, and sometimes even from as far afield as the Skeena river region. Later, a more regional Indian labour force developed in canneries. However, even canneries relying upon regional Indian labour drew native fishermen and some cannery workers from many different locales. This must have resulted in a considerable interchange of experience and widened social contacts among members of Indian groups.⁵

Many commercial Indian fishermen were *not* working in their traditional fishing grounds. They had to learn the techniques and secrets of the new fisheries as did anyone else. Gillnetting by oar and sail demanded able bodied, healthy men—and sometimes women. At least some Indian women worked with their husbands and other relatives, usually as boat pullers. It is unknown how numerous Indian fisherwomen and boat pullers were but it was sufficiently common that canning companies stipulated that advance payments would not be made to women boat pullers. In some locales, Indian fisherwomen helped crew the mosquito fleet of handline trollers, cod boats, and halibut hunting canoes which took fish both for subsistence purposes and offered surpluses for sale until well into the 1930s. Indeed, when engine-powered gillnetters became general in the cannery fleets, wives and even young children became fairly common aboard Indian-operated fish boats. A wonderful way to grow up, I suspect.⁶

Work in commercial fishing and canning was physically demanding but it included social activity as well. Charles Nowell's brief account of his first experience of fishing on the Fraser River provides some feeling of the noneconomic decisions that often must have been part of trips to the canneries. Nowell, an adventurous young man of seventeen, came from Fort Rupert to the Fraser in 1887 when the canneries there were heavily dependent upon Indian labour. He reminisces,

*This was the time I went to Frazer River without telling my brother. I told the woman I was going around with, who was going to Frazer River, that I'd go down there myself. So I came to Alert Bay and got on a boat that was going to Frazer River, and I got off not knowing where the girl was staying in the canneries. I had to swipe a canoe in New Westminster and got another boy my age, also from Fort Rupert, that knows the places and the canneries there, and we went down toward where the canneries were, and inquired where the Fort Rupert people are fishing at. They didn't know, they said, maybe in one of the other canneries, so we keep on going to cannery after cannery until we find another Indian from Fort Rupert, an old man, my aunt's husband, but not a near relation. He told me that the woman I want is gone down to a camp of that cannery where he was staying. He told me he couldn't get anybody to go with him as a partner in fishing. So I went to the manager of that cannery and asked him for a boat and net. I took this man to be my boat puller, and we went down to the camp where that woman was staying.*⁷

After the end of the 1887 fishing season on the Fraser, Nowell and a group of others set out for a stint of hop picking in Washington State and then on to the bright lights of Seattle—where they 'blow'er in.' Nowell returns to Vancouver dead broke. There he lands a job as a stoker in the boiler plant of a North Vancouver sawmill, then works as a checker on the lumber docks of that mill, and finally returns to Fort Rupert. Nowell's account underlines the fluidity and variety which many working in the coastal industries experienced. We will meet Nowell again as a sealer and then as a labour recruiter for Rivers Inlet canneries around the turn of the century.

There was a great deal of fluctuation in the fishing-canning industry. New canneries opened, others went broke or were retired to become fish camps. Some burned down. Government fishing regulations changed and fishing grounds shifted: the permissible periods of catch, and the mesh sizes and methods allowable were rarely constant. All this and much more was part of the considerations made by Indian and other commercial fishermen by the turn of the century.

Commercial salmon fishing and canning is a seasonal industry. The main salmon runs varied somewhat from one river to another, varied by the species taken, and varied annually in numbers according to the species cycle. In the most general terms, canneries were engaged in start-up operations with a small crew from the end of April to late June. The fishermen and bulk of the cannery workers arrived for the main salmon fishing season between the beginning of July and late September, extending into October if chum salmon were taken. Final packing and shut-down operations proceeded during October and most canneries were closed for the year by November.⁸

Basically, the main fishing and canning season was no more than three to four months with the peak activity compressed into six to eight weeks. Start-up and shut-down work might extend employment for a few workers for an additional month. But that was it. Few fishermen or cannery workers were employed for five months in a year, usually less. At the end of the season (or when they were laid off) fishermen and cannery workers got their earnings from the cannery bookkeeper. The advances given and the debts to the company store were deducted. People then returned to their home villages, sometimes after a brief fling at some town along the way. They then engaged in subsistence or domestic activities around their own settlements or looked for work in alternate wage industries until the next fishing season.

Until the mid 1890s many commercial fishermen used cannery boats and nets and worked directly for the canneries at wages ranging from \$2 to \$3 per day. Licenses regulating commercial fishing had been instituted by the Federal Department of Marine and Fisheries shortly after the inception of canneries. Fish licensing has an ever changing history of Byzantine intricacy, which few would claim to understand. However, in essence, until the mid 1890s, the bulk of the commercial fishing licenses issued for salmon in BC waters were allocated among the canneries themselves. Under pressure from white fishermen, licenses were opened to independent fishermen on the Fraser by the mid to late 1890s. However, canneries continued to use a number of stratagems—such as providing boat, gear, advances, and buying the licenses for nominally independent fishermen—so that a core of dependent fishermen was usually attached to each cannery. They seem to have been primarily Indian and recently arrived Japanese fishermen. On the Skeena and Nass rivers the canneries continued to hold virtually all of the fishing licenses and operated on an 'attach system' until the early 1920s.⁹

One concomitant of the rise of independent fishermen was that canneries shifted to a piece rate payment for fish some time before 1900. This placed the risk squarely on the shoulders of the fishermen. Fish prices fluctuated from season to season, even within a season. At the beginning of the particular run of salmon the price paid might be higher and then drop as the main run came in; at the peak of the run the fisherman might not even be assured that the cannery would buy the fish he had caught. A fairly typical rate for the Skeena canneries in 1904 was \$.15 a piece for spring salmon, \$.06 a piece for sockeye, \$.08 for coho and a penny a piece (per fish, not per pound) for pinks.¹⁰ On the Fraser, prices were higher, but catches smaller. What the average earnings of fishermen and cannery workers might have been will be considered in the discussion of Mill Bay Cannery.

Although it may seem straight forward, it is difficult to determine just how many Indian and non Indian fishermen there were in a given year or in a given region. Different sources give radically different figures. Gladstone holds that there were only 850 gillnet licenses held by Indian fishermen (out of a total of 3664) in all of BC in 1898. By 1900, this had supposedly dropped to 347 Indian-held licenses. However, Ralston notes 555 gillnet licenses held by Indian fishermen on the Fraser River alone in 1900 (plus 393 cannery licenses, many of which were worked by Indian fishermen).¹¹ In both cases, the actual number of Indian fishermen should be multiplied by two—there being the net man and boat puller working under each license. Moreover, at least a half of the 800 plus fishing licenses held by canneries on the Skeena and Nass, and the circa 400 cannery licenses on the central coast, were worked by Indian fishermen. It seems reasonable to estimate something in the order of 1500 to 2000 Indian fishermen and boat pullers working for canneries at the turn of the century. Whatever the exact figures, it is clear that they were being gradually replaced by canneries who contracted Japanese fishermen until that process was reversed through the Oriental exclusion legislation in the mid 1920s.

The first primitive gas-powered fishing boats appeared on the Fraser sometime before 1910. While not overly reliable and of limited range they allowed an increased mobility. On the Skeena and Nass where canneries owned the licenses and boats, gas powered fishing boats were excluded from salmon gillnetting by Fisheries regulations until 1923.

Individual Indian fishermen in many regions began acquiring their own fishing boats shortly after the turn of the century. Some reserves developed boat building into a speciality and others became notable in the modernity of their vessels. For instance, Bella Bella fishermen owned some thirty gas powered fishing boats as early as 1911. By 1913 some Kwakiutl, especially those at Alert Bay, had acquired a number of gas-powered gillnetters, work launches, a steam tug, and the first Indian-owned seine boat in the region. The Masset Haida, already having built schooners and other work boats, began acquiring a fleet of gas powered trollers some years later.¹² By 1920 Indian and white fishermen in the Queen

Charlottes had organized the Queen Charlotte Salmon Trollers Association, with locals on the Islands, at Port Simpson and at Port Essington.¹³

Independent Indian fishermen operating their own fish boats became more common during the 1920s and 1930s. However, the majority of Indian fishermen continued to work under contract on cannery-owned vessels. According to Gladstone's figures, in 1929, after the 'attach system' of the northern canneries had been lifted and when the partial expulsion of Japanese fishermen in the industry had taken place, the racial composition of BC fishermen was as follows: Whites-7884; Indians-3632; Japanese-2344, for a total of 13,860.¹⁴ This includes all commercial fishing licenses, from salmon gillnetting to cod trolling. These estimates probably include many marginal fishermen.

The increasing number of fishermen and the increased range of gas-powered boats meant that there was gradually an increasingly competition for fish stocks which had been effectively limited to those fishing for regional canneries. At the same time, independent boat owners were locked into a system of capital costs, operating costs, maintenance bills, and other cash expenditures. Even if these costs were relatively small by later standards, it made independent commercial fishing different from fishing on cannery-owned boats. Commercial fishing gradually became no longer just one string of a many-stranded domestic economy. Although the major canneries retained fleets of their own fishing vessels, which they contracted to Indian and non Indian fishermen until the 1950s and later, this became an ever smaller proportion of the entire fishing fleet on the coast.

It may be of interest to consider a few highlights of the work life of one of the most successful of Indian fishermen. James Sewid was born in Alert Bay in 1913. James Sewid's father had been a logger, his stepfather was a logging camp operator and seine boat engineer. One of his grandfathers had been among the first Kwakiutl seine boat skippers. One uncle was a veteran seine boat captain for the ABC Cannery while another uncle was one of the first Kwakiutl to own his own seine boat. They were not members of a marginal labour force by any stretch of the imagination.

James Sewid grew up learning, first hand, how to operate steam logging donkeys, how gas and diesel engines work, what cannery life was like, and so forth. He sometimes accompanied his stepfather, David Matipli, to work in logging camps, canneries and the engine rooms of seine boats where he was shown how things worked.

At age twelve, Sewid was working on the seiner owned by his uncle Ed Whanock and the following year he is in the engine room of the cannery seiner *Sunrise*, skippered by his grandfather. The next year Sewid took over running the engine for a seiner captained by another uncle, one Henry Bell. Admittedly, these elders may have kept a closer eye on him and provided closer direction than Sewid remembered in his reminiscences. But young men could once do those kinds of things. Together they worked the coasts and coves of Johnstone Strait, from Alert Bay to the Knight Inlet cannery during the later 1920s. Traditional political status was still of sufficient importance that Sewid's relatives arranged to have him acquire the first of various potlatch names and to enter the prestigious Hamatsa dance order.¹⁵

Speaking of his life as a seine boat fisherman during the late 1920s and early 1930s, Sewid says,

Around June we had finished all the work on the nets and the other work around the [Knight Inlet] cannery and our boats started coming in. They were all company boats that were kept in Steveston during the winter and a man delivered them to us at the cannery. As soon as Henry Bell's boat came in we loaded the net and other things on and then went to pick up our crew in Alert Bay and the other villages. I was running the engine for him. I used to love that job. After we picked up our fishing license in Alert Bay we would go out fishing from June to October. Although I was the engineer on Henry's seine boat I used to try everything. I would put one of my friends down in the engine room and go up on the wheel and make a 'set.' There are many different ways to make a set, but in all of them you

have to let the net out where you think there might be some fish, and then when it is out you circle around and get the other end of it. Then the bottom of the net is all pulled together and you have to pull the net in and get any fish you have caught on board. If Henry Bell was going to have his supper or take a little sleep he would say to me, 'all right, Jimmy, you take over.' I would watch and if I saw a fish jumping, I would make a set . . . Every weekend during the fishing season we returned to Knight's inlet for supplies. We had to get fuel, oil, water and coal for the stove on the boat. If there was any damage that had been done to the nets we would repair them when we came in. While I was out fishing Flora [his wife] would be working in the cannery. Her job was to put salmon that had been cut up into the cans and these would be stacked on a tray. She was paid for how many trays of salmon she did each day. When I was home on the weekends the ladies were usually free and so we would all go up the little river there and have a picnic. We would fish for trout and the kids would all play around and swim in the river.¹⁶

James Sewid's later became the captain of a cannery seine boat and went on to become the owner of a small fleet of seiners, as well as a prominently voice within the Native Brotherhood. A fragment of his reminiscences of being captain of the cannery seiner *Annandale* may be of interest.

I had worked with many of those [veteran seineboat] skippers and some of them were very easygoing, nice men. They didn't push their crew too much and they didn't rush. They didn't seem to care too much but just took things easy. I had worked with those kind of skippers in my earlier days. Then too I had worked with skippers who were really going after the fish. They were really hard-working men who were rough and didn't have mercy on their crew. They didn't slow down at all, especially if there were fish around. They just set and set and set and worked hard. Some of the crew would be complaining, and the skipper would just be rough with them and tell them that they must set again because there were fish around. And that was the kind of man I was as a skipper. I didn't know how my crew felt about me. I didn't want to be mean to them or anything like that but it was just my way; I liked to work fast and I'm still like that today. If a fellow was slow or seemed lazy and didn't take any interest in what I wanted to do I really went after him and told him to smarten up or else. Being a skipper on a seine boat means you are responsible for firing men and when they are family men that is quite a responsibility. The captain is the man that is going to be responsible for their families. I had to work hard in those days and I had a lot of trouble with my crew. They were drunk all the time and I didn't like it so I fired some of them. I was pretty tough at first. We would go ashore into Alert Bay and they would get a bottle and start to drink and then they came on board drunk and would have to sleep it off. I had no alternative except to fire them and get another crew to take their place.¹⁷

It is difficult to guess what readers may make of the above statement. To me it underscores the proposition that seineboat owners and similar employers play similar roles regardless of whether they are Indian or non-Indian.

This conclusion is reinforced by a recent memoir: Harry Assu's and Joy Inglis' *Assu of Cape Mudge* (1989) is subtitled 'Recollections of a Coastal Indian Chief' - and so it is. Born in 1905, the son of chief Billy Assu of the Cape Mudge Lekwiltok, Harry Assu began commercial fishing at the end of W.W.1 and continued to do so for the next sixty years. After a varied apprenticeship he became the skipper of cannery seiner and went on to become a seineboat owner. It was his table seiner which was portrayed on the old Canadian \$5 bill.

In addition to his life as a seineboat operator, Assu was a life-long member of the Native Brotherhood, was the chief of the Cape Mudge band for sixteen years, a member of the Masonic Lodge and an elder of the United Church on Quadra Island. He acted as a spokesman for Indian interests in discussions with the Federal Department of Fisheries. As well as being a prominent potlatch giver he was a founding board member of the

Nuyumbalees Society, the organization which operates the local Kwakiutl heritage museum. (Assu and Inglis, 1989: xiii)

Harry Assu's story interweaves the life of a successful native entrepreneur with the ideology of ethnic nationalism. This is suggested in Assu comments about the natural allies of native fishermen like himself,

We were always able take care of ourselves. Indians don't join unions. I look at it this way. There is no help from the unions. If you are fired, the union cannot give you a job. It's the company that gave you the job. In the early days before I bought a boat of my own, I ran a company boat. In the company, if they thought you were a strong union man, they wouldn't have anything to do with you.

Native people and the people who managed the canneries worked pretty well together from the beginning. When the unions involved our people in a big strike at Rivers Inlet around 1916, we lost out on our whole summer fishing season. What we lost out on was not just a job. Fishing is our living, our way of life! We own these waters, and we have to be able to fish them. (Assu and Inglis, 1989: 71)

Assu also holds that commercial fishing on the coast was/is based on indigenous knowledge, which allegedly is why Indian fishermen *allegedly* are the most productive sectors of the fleet. There is also reference to how various native fishermen continue to fish the waters which were their traditional territories. Possibly such accounts are to further future resource claims.

The misrepresentation of what labour unions in the fishing industry are all about, and what they had been able to accomplish for all of their members, speaks for itself. Only the intentionally gullible will be convinced that the interests of native workers are best served by the good offices of native entrepreneurs.

Native large vessel owners had become important in the Cape Mudge-Campbell River region by the 1980s. According to Assu, the roster read as follows: the Assu family owned and operated seven seiners, the Lewis' four, the Roberts family another six seineboats, while the Quocksister family had four. The Chicktie owned three seiners and the Dicks and Price families two seineboats apiece. (Assu and Inglis: 81) This amounts to 28 seineboats with crews of possibly 140 to 150 men. In addition are the gillnetters and trollers owned and operated by band members. I don't know how many millions of dollars of operating capital all this entailed, what the returns of the crews were, or how this and other native fleets fit into the ever-changing maze of fisheries regulations.

During and after WW 2 a fleet of Indian-owned and operated seine boats, as well as gillnetters and trollers, emerged. However the bulk of Indian fishermen did not acquire their own boats; they worked on shares on cannery and privately-owned fishing vessels. Some joined the Native Brotherhood of BC's as their industrial bargaining agent. Others, Indian fishermen and especially cannery workers, joined the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union. Most did not have success stories to relate, except the success of earning a living by doing productive, challenging work, often under difficult conditions.

Canneries and Cannery Workers

The early canneries used manual labour in lavish amounts at every step of the canning process. Fish were unloaded, butchered, cleaned, and washed by hand. The carcasses were sliced into chunks and put into cans by hand. The cans were weighed, loaded into trays, shifted through the steaming and cooking process, soldered shut, labelled, boxed and stacked—all by hand. Even the individual cans were initially manufactured by hand, in the cannery.¹⁸

Chinese men and Indian women were crucial to canneries along the BC. coast during the first generation of operation. Chinese contract workers produced the cans and did the fish butchering. Indian women (and some men and children) workers were crucial in many of the other canning phases. Although Japanese and other cannery workers partly replaced Indian employees on the Fraser during the 1890s, Indian cannery workers continued to be

important in other regions throughout the period dealt with. In the north and central coast canneries, Indian cannery workers continued to be crucial to production .

While visiting Port Essington, on the Skeena, in June 1888, Franz Boas recorded one of his few impressions of then contemporary Indian life as evidenced by work around Robert Cunningham's cannery. It was one of the first fish canneries of the region and was fairly typical of its time. According to Boas there were some 600 Indians from a number of locales engaged in commercial fishing around Port Essington. Some Indian families rented cannery cabins while others lived in tents. They traded at the Cunningham company store with 'stamps,' (i.e. company script). As a touch of up-to-date consumerism, a jeweller made a living by travelling along the coast repairing watches owned by Indian fishermen and cannery workers. The coast was alive with moving people, including Tsimshian, Haida, Kwakiutl, Bella Bella, and others from a host of particular settlements.

A brief outline of work in the Cunningham cannery by Boas during the season of 1888 is as follows:

*Work starts in the cannery at 7 a.m. Two hundred Indians are used for processing the salmon, and Chinese solder the cans. It is quite interesting to watch the processing of the salmon. At the first table women cut them open; at the next table heads and tails are removed. Then they are drawn and thrown into a bath where they are washed. They are then put into a machine which cuts them into seven parts and throws them into a trough from which they are distributed to be stuffed into cans. The lids are placed on top at another table and then they are placed in a soldering machine which fastens the lids. They are then placed on a large iron frame. The soldering is not checked in any way. The entire frame is then placed into boiling water for twenty minutes and then cooled. Finally the cans are packed into boxes. About forty fishing boats leave here, according to tide conditions. The salmon are caught in nets.*¹⁹

Such observations of what the Tsimshian, Kwakiutl and other native peoples of the coast were then actually doing rarely intrude into Boas' or others' ethnographic reconstructions of traditional society of the people they were studying. That is one reason why we often know more about arcane mythology than we do about how Indian people were making a living a century ago.

An aside about Haida fishermen and cannery workers who journeyed to work at Port Essington comes from Charles Harrison's reminiscences. Harrison was a one-time missionary among the Haida who later became a settler in the Masset area. His sometimes far-fetched but occasionally earthy memoirs mention the Haida's disdain for lesser mortals, as conveyed in a humorous saying making the rounds in the 1880s or 1890s.

"The Haidas seemed to ridicule the idea of intermarriage with the Zimsheans and in the Chinoo jargon used to sing 'Kwansun Kakkwau Spukshoot Illahe Kluska marry tenas sun, Kluskamarsh Sitkumsun'

Spukshoot Illahe is now known as Port Essington. A Zimshean clan lived there and do now, so the song in English said, 'Always the same at Port Essington They marry in the morning and are divorced at noon.' (Cited in Lillard, C. 1984:158)

Estimates of the number of Indian cannery workers engaged at any given time are quite variable. Seventeen BC canneries in 1884 supposedly employed some 2710 cannery workers, roughly half of whom were Indian. Ralston's figures for four of the larger canneries on the Fraser and at Rivers Inlet indicate a median of 120-130 cannery workers and 120 to 160 fishermen at each in 1890. Although piecemeal mechanization was applied to cannery processes by the first decade of the twentieth century, the number of cannery workers in total did not necessarily decline. Gladstone's estimates are as follows. In all probability they are only partial figures, since it seems doubtful that early canneries could have functioned with an average of only 64 to 73 workers per plant.²⁰

BC Cannery Workers

Year	Canneries	Chinese	Indian	White	Total	Average/Cannery
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1898	51	2,340	936	390	3,666	73
1900	64	2,640	1,056	440	4,136	64
1905	67	2,940	1,176	490	4,606	69

For a comprehensive account of the intricacies of cannery technology, and their evolution, one may peruse Duncan Stacey's (1982) *Sockeye and Tinplate*. Although it deals with the processes in the Fraser river canneries between 1871 and 1912, it applies equally to north coast canneries at a slightly later date. Stacey's (1981b) detailed investigation of labour and production methods at the Gulf of Georgia cannery, during and after this period, suggests how intricate the factors were and how difficult it is to determine seemingly simple statistics.

Canneries recruited a highly heterogeneous labour force. The 'typical' cannery of the turn of the century employed Indian fishermen and women cannery workers from a number of different villages and linguistic groups. They did not necessarily act in concert simply because they were 'Indian'. Chinese cannery workers, usually under contract to a 'China boss', lived in a separate company bunkhouse. They were invariably single men. Japanese fishermen lived both in bunkhouses and in the fishing camps established by the cannery near the fishing grounds. Japanese women cannery workers appeared in the Fraser River canneries before 1910. White fishermen fished out of their own camps or from nearby villages in some regions. The cannery world was less cosmopolitan than it was ghettoized.

Whatever else it was, cannery work was factory work. Those who picture Indian women cannery workers as continuing their traditional roles in fish preservation in somewhat novel surroundings do not understand the nature of work in canneries. Cannery work proceeded on an assembly line basis. The work was geared to the flow of the packing line and partly set by the speed of the machinery. Cannery workers laboured under various degrees of supervision by foremen. They produced commodities (tinned salmon) which they normally did not use themselves. They worked for wages. They worked amid a Rube Goldberg collection of steam vats, chutes, canning machines, hoses, pipes, steam, clanking transmission belts and the other paraphernalia which made even the early canneries harbingers of the industrial revolution on many parts of the coast.

The basic cannery working day was ten hours but during the peak season working days were often much longer. Cannery workers required stamina as well as speed. It was dirty, smelly, wet and tiring work. And yet, it was not markedly worse than many industries of the time. A certain degree of camaraderie and even adventure seems to have been attached to travel and work in the canneries. It was not all gruelling work. Accounts of cannery work are interlaced with festive Sundays, picnics, and interludes of enjoyment. Moreover, cannery work was seasonal and one could see the end in sight - an aspect of other early resource industries appreciated by workers regardless of national background. The main problem was that incomes received had to last until the next fishing season or the next job.

Employment arrangements at canneries were relatively informal. Most canneries had a core of regularly employed Indian women who repaired nets before the beginning and during the fishing season. Additional women cannery workers were hired from the families of employed fishermen. Others were recruited before the beginning of the fishing season. Both Indian labour recruiters and Chinese contractors were involved in hiring a proportion of the Indian cannery labour force. Payment was mainly on a piece rate basis - so many cents per case of tinned salmon processed - with a welter of different rates applying.

The method of hiring Indian labour was for the companies to appoint an agent or 'contractor' in each village. He thus became the 'boss,' hiring the necessary help and being paid so much per 'head.' Women and plant workers at the actual plant were hired and paid by the 'Chinese contractor'. ²¹

Indian labour recruiters were especially important on the north and central coast, well into the 1930s. Canneries often had a number of such recruiters in the main villages from which they drew their fishermen and plant workers. Indian labour recruiters lined up fishermen before each season, gave notice of prices and rates, arranged for cash advances and

generally acted as go-betweens for the cannery at the local level. An account by one such Indian labour contractor is that of the middle aged Charles Nowell. He describes his role as recruiter for a central coast cannery between circa 1905 and the 1920s.

After we came back to Alert Bay I used to go up to River's Inlet and fish for the River's Inlet Cannery. When I first went there, the manager told me to come back and hire some Indians to go out fishing and offered me so much for getting fishermen and fillers, and I worked for him for quite a while. My little education in English helped me in all the jobs I got. When I go to River's Inlet, we go for six or seven weeks, only just for the sockeye season. Mr. and Mrs. Lagius and my wife and children all go, and we stay in the shacks that they built for the cannery people. The other Indians go out fishing, but I have to stay in the cannery and look after the women that are filling the cans. In those days while I was hiring Indians for the cannery, I was given authority by the manager to promise the Indians what I would do for them if they came to that cannery. I used to know before hand what the price of the sockeye would be, and I would tell them that I'd give them gumboots free or some rain coats or extra money so that I'd get the good fishermen for this cannery. I paid all their fares up and back, too, and when I get to the cannery, I tell the manager what I promised them. He get the bookkeeper to write out all the promises and make me sign it, and then it was sent to the head office. Before they start to fish, I call all the fishermen. There were two men in a boat, and they get fifteen dollars. When all the other canneries heard about it, their fishermen begin to kick, and so they have to begin doing the same. Some time in January, I used to write to the head office for advance money to give out to the fishermen. That would be the time that everybody would be out of money, and I go to my fishermen and tell them that I have advance money if they want it. They all come to my house to get what they want, and that is how I used to get all the best fishermen.. ²²

Nowell continued as an Indian labour recruiter working for the Brunswick cannery, Rivers Inlet into the 1920s. Some of the strains involved in this role are implicit in his autobiography - he began drinking heavily until he finally gave up that job.

Writing of the role of the Chinese labour contractor in coastal canneries from the 1880s until the 1940s, Duncan Stacey notes that,

'This system had many advantages for the canners. The contractor took responsibility for employing sufficient hands, especially the expert cannery labour needed in the manual canning systems, and the cannery owners believed that the China boss could get more work out of his Chinese crew.....Another reason the canners liked the contract system was that they knew before the season began exactly what the processing would cost per case. Board and room expenses were handled by the contractor, and any loss was borne by the contractor rather than the canner.' (Stacey, D. 1981:19)

He goes on to note that Chinese contractors also hired and directed some of the Indian workers employed in canneries. What the relationship was between Chinese contractors and native Indian labour recruiters was is uncertain.

Some canneries overcame the problem of a regular labour supply by being located near Indian settlements. In other cases they regularly drew labour from a particular set of Indian villages. Some of Indian villages linked to particular canneries witnessed the evolution of a strata of Indian foremen and 'personnel managers'. For a while Stephan Cook was a recruiter for canneries drawing Indian labour from Alert Bay.²³

In lieu of comprehensive data on the wages and working conditions of Indian cannery labour, let us consider some highlights of a single north coast cannery. The data is drawn from the notebooks and cannery accounts kept by the manager, Henry Doyle.²⁴ Doyle was prominent in the BC Packers combine, a central figure in the consolidation phase of the BC canning industry during the first decades of the twentieth century.

Mill Bay Cannery: One Case

Mill Bay Cannery was located in the Nass estuary not far from the village of Kincolith. Although it was the largest cannery on the Nass it was less mechanized and more dependent on manual labour than was then typical of canneries on the Skeena or the Fraser. It was also more dependent on Indian fishermen and cannery workers than was usual. However, despite certain peculiarities, Mill Bay Cannery can be taken as representative of the canneries during the period c1890-1920.

From its beginnings in 1889 until about 1904 Indian fishermen predominated at Mill Bay Cannery. Between 1894 and 1900 the cannery employed an average of sixty to seventy-five Indian fishermen to crew most of its cannery boats. The fishermen were drawn largely from the Nishga villages but also included Tsimshian, Haida, and a few from more distant settlements of the north coast. Indian women cannery workers seem to have been drawn mainly from the nearby villages, although Chinese cannery workers and contractors continued to be of importance.²⁵

Japanese fishermen appeared in the Skeena canneries by the late 1890s and gradually became prominent on the Nass as well. They made up an increasingly large percentage of Mill Bay fishermen after 1904, especially during the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway (1910-1914), which drew off many Indian employees, some of whom had previously worked as fishermen. During the following decade a rough parity between Indian and Japanese fishermen was reached at Mill Bay and its supplying fish camps. Until 1923 fishing regulations excluded powered fish boats from the Skeena and the Nass and the catch was taken by the oar and sail gillnet boats described earlier. Fishing licenses were held by the cannery.²⁶

It is unclear if the Indian fishermen and cannery workers at Mill Bay were involved in the strikes which touched the northern canneries at the turn of the century. They did apparently go out on strike in 1904. There were also local work stoppages at Mill Bay which were too minor to enter into the recorded history of industrial disputes but which are indicative of the ongoing frictions between canners and fishermen. The Mill Bay manager listed the names of twenty-four Indian fishermen in the 'blacklist' at the back of his *Cannery diary* for 1908. Blacklisting was a fairly open practice used to cow dissatisfied fishermen and cannery workers, a practice which Henry Doyle was working to coordinate and systematize among the cannery clan. However, as long as substantial numbers of fishermen and cannery workers were needed, blacklisting was not a policy which individual canners could overplay.²⁷

In 1908, Indian women working in the cannery net loft earned from \$1.50 to \$1.75 per day. Men working in the plant were paid \$2.50 per day, women cannery workers \$.20 per hour for the standard ten hour day. We do not know the earnings of the bulk of the cannery labour because they were employed on a highly variable piece work basis. Some were paid, confusingly, under the block charge made for 'China Labour', since some Indian cannery workers were employed under the piece work system contracted for by the Chinese labour contractor. But since jobs with a daily wage were much desired, those working on pieced rates probably did not earn more than the pay mentioned above.²⁸

Between 1902 and 1916 Mill Bay Cannery gradually and belatedly installed the basic advances in cannery machinery. The first and most important was the installation of the so-called 'iron chink,' a machine which cut and sliced the butchered fish carcasses into can-sized chunks automatically and reduced the butchering crew to a fraction of what it had been earlier. While can filling remained partly a manual task, a number of other processes were also mechanized. Greater use was made of conveyor belts, the automatic weighing of cans, and steam boilers which did away with the time consuming double cooking which had been required earlier.

Mill Bay cannery switched early to use of factory-produced 'sanitary' cans; these came pre-cut in flat form and could be easily reformed by machine. This included a system of capping the tins by mechanical crimping and did away with the slow and labour intensive

process of making the tins on site, by cutting and soldering each can by hand. Cold storage facilities were expanded, which allowed the plant to hold surplus fish over long periods. Nothing very exotic. But these were processes which effected the employment of Indian and non Indian cannery workers.

In 1910 Mill Bay Cannery had fishing licences for sixty gillnet boats, one-quarter of those operating on the Nass. It packed some 13,000 cases of salmon that year, 31 per cent of the total for the Nass, and was the largest cannery on that river.²⁹ Let us see if we can make some sense of the fragmentary and bloodless company accounts in the Mill Bay Cannery diary for the year 1918. While this was a somewhat atypical year due to the labour shortages which developed toward the end of WW I, it seems to broadly reflect cannery conditions on the north coast until the mid 1920s.

By 1918 Mill Bay Cannery had forty-eight cannery boats regularly in operation (twenty-nine manned by Japanese and nineteen by Indian crews). In addition, there were twenty-two Japanese crewed cannery boats and twenty-six Indian ones supplying fish from Kumeon and other fish camps. If fishermen in all outlying districts are included, somewhat more than a half of the crews were Indian. Fish buyers and packers were shipping troll caught salmon from the Queen Charlotte Islands and Port Edwards to Mill Bay, obviating the necessity of fishermen from these regions to travel to the Nass for the fishing season. Fishing for spring salmon began on April 8 (only three boats) but the main fishing fleet began working between the middle and end of June. The peak salmon fishing period was between the first of July and the middle of August. The number of fishing crews declined as the main sockeye salmon run passed, although the pink and chum salmon runs brought a smaller upsurge in activity during September and October.

Apart from some spring salmon fishermen who worked for wages, all boat crews were paid on a piece rate basis. All fishermen were paid the same piece rates. Differences in the earnings of individual boats and fishermen depended on how much and what species of salmon they caught. Accurate records of the catches and payments to individual boats must have existed at one time, but have not survived in the present documents. On an average, Japanese fishermen earned approximately \$400 for the 1918 season, and Indian fishermen an average of \$270.³⁰

The greater total earnings of Japanese crews were offset by the fact that almost all migrated to the Nass seasonally, stayed somewhat longer and had higher transportation and subsistence costs to pay than Indian fishermen from the region. In general, a fisherman would be lucky if he returned home with net earnings of \$200-\$250 at the end of the season. But in poor years a fisherman the season's take-home pay might be much less, especially after transportation costs and food bills were paid.

There were eighteen monthly-salaried employees at Mill Bay Cannery, who are listed in cannery accounts as 'white labour,' but also included a few non-white foremen. Excluding the \$1700 paid by the manager to himself, the average salaries were surprisingly low. Towboat and fish packer captains were earning only \$65 to \$85 per month. Salaries ranged from a low of \$50 per month for a number of Indian women net workers to a top of \$100 per month for the plant foreman. The mean salary was only \$85 per month, paid over an average four to five month season. However, this was assured net income and room and board were provided for the staff.³¹

Since authorities differ even on the number of canneries in operation and the number of fishing boats working in a given year, one may appreciate that statistics on cannery workers are problematic. Numbers, durations of employment, income—let alone more qualitative aspects—are extremely sketchy. In many canneries, it is possible that the managers did not themselves know exactly who was working in the plant or what the ultimate dispersal of wages was.

The bulk of cannery labour was hired by Chinese labour contractors. They negotiated the piece rates with the cannery manager, recruited most of the workers (sometimes in

conjunction with Indian recruiters), and saw to it that the requisite labour force was available at the various phases. Payment for cannery work was usually made on a piece rate per case packed. This was distributed by the contractor to cannery workers in various jobs on differing piece rate scales.

A very crude estimate of earnings by cannery workers at Mill Bay in 1918 - if one divides the circa \$18,140 paid through the Chinese contractor to the crew of about sixty men and women working under him - would be some \$300 per person for the entire canning season. However cannery workers doing different tasks received different piece rates and some did not work the entire season. It is my impression that a cannery worker who cleared \$200 during a season, after various deductions, was probably doing well. However, when compared to the typical earnings of fishermen themselves we can appreciate that women cannery workers may have contributed a substantial share of total family incomes.³²

It seems that the real incomes of Indian fishermen and cannery workers had apparently not improved much, if any, during the twenty-five years of mechanization and reorganization carried out by canneries on the north coast. According to Gladstone, the typical wage of Indian fishermen working for canneries on the Skeena and Nass during the mid 1890s was some \$45 per month, plus board, while Indian men working in cannery net lofts were then getting \$70 per month. In 1908 cannery wage rates for Indian men and women were \$1.50 to \$2.50 per day. By 1918 the top Indian salary at Mill Bay was only \$85 per month while the earnings of average Indian fishermen was less. In the interval the cost of most consumer goods had increased.³³

As yet we have no day to day accounts, no diaries or reminiscences, by Indian cannery workers of that period. How they decided where to work, how they budgeted their incomes, what joys and fears were blended with their working lives, is undocumented. However, it is clear that Indian fishermen and cannery workers did not fatalistically accept the conditions and wages offered them by the canners.

Unions, Strikes and Indian Fishermen

There may have been Cowichan Indian fishermen involved in the brief work stoppages at the Ladner and Ewen canneries on the Fraser during the mid 1880s. Unfortunately, little of the day to day activity, views, hopes, and strategies of Indian fishermen of the early period have come down to us. We know even less of the Indian (and other) women cannery workers who almost universally supported the work stoppages over grievances and pay rates.

The first major strike of salmon fishermen occurred on the Fraser in 1893. It was a period of both overextension and retrenchment by canners. At the same time there was an increase in the independent fishing licenses held by white fishermen, who initiated union organization under the banner of the Fraser River Fishermen's Benevolent and Protective Association. No extensive mechanization of canneries had yet taken place and fishermen and labour were in relatively short supply. In the previous year, the pioneer canner, Thomas Ladner, wrote that he was desperately trying to recruit sufficient Indian fishermen, noting that fellow cannery magnate, Ewen, was complaining about other canneries 'stealing' his Indians through the dastardly stratagem of offering them \$2.25 per day wages. As late as July 14, shortly before the main 1892 fishing was to begin, Wadhams cannery had crews for less than a third of its eighty boats. Such a situation must have stimulated the hopes of white and Indian fishermen in their demands for \$3.00 per day or ten cents per fish for the coming season.

According to Ralston, at least a third of the 2,350 fishermen on the river in 1893 were Indian. This made their participation in any strike action vital. While the Fraser River Fishermen's Protective Association enrolled white and some Indian fishermen directly, Indian fishermen were allied informally through representatives from their own fish camps.

³⁵ The Association also made overtures to the Japanese fishermen but excluded Orientals

from membership in their organization. This marked the beginning of a more than fifty year history of open ethnic rivalry in the fishing industry, which some labour organizers attempted to combat in the interests of a broader solidarity.³⁶

Virtually all fishermen came off the river - Indian, white and Japanese - at the beginning of the 1893 strike. Thomas Ladner, along with other canners, complained that 'their' Indians were being intimidated by FRFBPA. organizers. A number of 'half breed' union organizers were arrested. Various scare tactics were instituted by the canners who brought pressure to bear upon Indian fishermen in the fishing camps. They mobilized the BC Superintendent of Indian Affairs, A.W. Vowell, who with the Indian Agent of Cowichan Agency and the governor of the Provincial gaol, toured the Indian fishing camps urging them to return to work.³⁷

At a Vancouver public meeting held to raise support for the strike, three leaders of the striking Indian fishermen (Cranberry Jack, Capilano George and George Meshell) regaled the audience with their views of the government agents. According to a reporter from the *Vancouver World*, '...the Indians fully understood the grievances of the white fishermen and being in sympathy therein, had joined the union'. They also said that Indian Agents should be looking after the interests of the Indians and not the interests of the canners.³⁸

The canners were taking action as well. Wrote Ladner to his Victoria partner, *I wrote you last about the devilish time we were having with the Union. I succeeded with others in getting the Authorities to come up and take the matter up, they came here [Canoe Pass Cannery] yesterday and visited the different camps and tribes and last night the Indians all went in except the Cowitchans and the Kuper Island Indians. These are which I have at the Wellington Cannery. Today I took some of their [cannery] boats away from them and gave them to Northern Indians and White contractors and they have promised to all of them go out tomorrow.*³⁹

The strike began to come apart gradually and then collapsed when Japanese fishermen returned to the river en masse. Only minor concessions were made. The anti-oriental stand of the FRFBPA did not help matters. White and Indian fishermen began drifting back to work, some Cowichan fishermen being the last to stay out. Some Indian fishermen lost the season when others took over their cannery boats. The strike extended the fishing season and required hiring some new crews. On August 10, 1893, Ladner again wrote to Rithet, his Victoria partner.

Call on the Indian Department at once and ask them to allow the young fellows that belong to the Indian School at Kuper Island to remain here for a couple of weeks longer, they are working as boat pullers and earning good wages. The teacher called on me yesterday and told me the holidays would soon be over, but that he did not wish to take them away from earning some money if the Indian Department had no objections . . . this would deprive me of a number of pullers and stop boats fishing. The teacher's name is Rev. G.J. Donckele ⁴⁰
Ah, hired education !

Apparently the Indian fishermen of the Cowichan area remained amongst the most militant and they formed their own local of the BC Fishermen's Union when it was organized in 1900. However, even before the Cowichan joined, a local of the new union was formed among Indian and other fishermen at Port Simpson, then the largest settlement of the north coast. Things had been happening among the 'Northern Indians.'

Commercial fishing had expanded rapidly on the Skeena and Nass but it was still an isolated region and the canneries depended very heavily upon Indian fishermen and Indian women cannery workers. The first recorded strike in the region was in 1894, when 'unorganized' Indian fishermen, supported by women cannery workers, went out in the canneries on the Skeena. There were broader based strikes on the Skeena and Nass in 1896 and 1897. In 1899, a strike centered on Rivers Inlet pulled out some 2500 Indian and white fishermen as well as some Japanese fishermen.⁴¹ Japanese fishermen were becoming

important in the northern canneries and despite inter-ethnic rivalry there were cases of alliances between these groups, though they were never long lasting.

One of the most determined of the fishing strikes in the north developed on the Skeena and the Nass in 1904. It was led by Indian fishermen unaffiliated with any union. (What happened to the local of the BC Fishermen's Union established in Port Simpson in 1900 is unclear.) One leader was an Indian from Port Essington known as Nedildahld. He was said to be '*. . . a first class agitator, being possessed of a good command of language and the faculty of impressing the most optimistic feeling among his followers. In consequence of the influence of Nedildahld, the Indians are unanimous in their refusal to fish.*'⁴²

Initially this strike was supported by Japanese fishermen, but under pressure from the canners and in view of past grievances with Indian fishermen, they gradually returned to work. Some years later, when Japanese fishermen were more prevalent in the north, they initiated strike actions themselves, only to have them undercut by strikebreaking whites and Indian fishermen.

At its height the 1904 strike involved 800 Indian fishermen and 200 women cannery workers; it dragged on most of the season, and slowly broke apart. Some 300 Indian fishermen left the Skeena to fish the remainder of the season on the Fraser. The Albion Cannery owner who hired them and provided advances was raked over the coals by Henry Doyle, the executive officer of the recently formed BC Packers combine. Doyle was in the process of establishing a coast-wide blacklist system through which strikers would not be hired anywhere in the industry during the duration of a strike and selectively excluded afterward.⁴³

The most dramatic fishermen's strike of the early period occurred on the Fraser in 1900. The two sides were assembling for battle by 1899. The canners were determined to present a united front in a policy of wage and rate cuts.

The first locals of the new BC Fishermen's Union had been established at New Westminster and Vancouver; some Indian members directly enrolled in these two locals. The driving forces in the BC Fishermen's Union were Frank Rogers and Will McClain, two leaders of the Vancouver trade union movement and both prominent in the Socialist Labour Party. Despite the growing anti-orientalism among white and Indian fishermen, Rogers and McClain attempted to enroll fishermen from all nationalities on a class, not an ethnic basis. Their efforts were blocked by the sentiments of fishermen in the New Westminster local and also by the interests of Japanese fishing bosses. The bulk of the Indian fishermen on the Fraser gave support to the impending strike mainly through a series of informal groups usually described as 'under their own tribal leaders.'⁴⁴

The fishermen's demands were for \$.25 per fish or \$3 per day, guaranteed purchase of fish delivered to canneries, and some form of union recognition. The canners refused to negotiate and the strike call was issued in mid July, 1900. It was initially solid and union picket boats soon swept the handful of strikebreakers off the river. Japanese fishermen working under contract to thirteen of the larger canneries initially recognized the strike.

On July 15 the Fishermen's Union and its sympathizers mobilized a rally in Vancouver to build public support. The Vancouver demonstration started with a parade down a main city street led by the Port Simpson Indian Brass Band and ended in an open air rally at the corner of Hastings and Cambie streets. It was attended by over a thousand people—a substantial crowd in those days. The rally was addressed by Will McClain, by a Winnipeg labour leader named Trimble, and by an Indian chief from Port Simpson. Funds were collected, new members signed up and McClain and the Port Simpson Indian Brass Band left for a rally in Nanaimo to raise funds and support 'from the class conscious coal miners' there.⁴⁵

Some days later the canners raised their offer to \$.18 per salmon, although with no guarantee how long this price would hold and with no intention of recognizing any union. The Japanese Dantai, their fraternal organization, under its own leaders, were preparing to

accept that offer. The bulk of the white and Indian fishermen appeared still committed to their original demands of \$.25 per fish or no fish. There were two opposed counter-marches of Japanese and white fishermen in the Steveston area, the center of union militancy. The canners decided to bring in the militia, a form of labour negotiation then much in favour. Certain cannery operators, acting in their capacity as magistrates, determined that a potentially riotous situation was apprehended and convinced the provincial government to support the civil power with troops—who became known as the 'Sockeye Fusiliers'. Shortly after the militia had established their camp at Steveston a large contingent of striking fishermen, both white and Indian, paraded around it, singing a parody of 'Soldiers of the Queen'.⁴⁶

Although individual Japanese fishermen refused to fish, the strike began to collapse as the bulk of the Japanese Dantai returned to work. Despite the actions of the union picket boats, some of the white and Indian fishermen now began to waver. The Indian fishermen of one cannery went out on the river, but after meetings between union and Indian leaders they returned to camp again. According to some accounts the bulk of the Indian fishermen were among the strongest supporters of the strike. With a heavy salmon run already coming in the canners became worried.

Ralston tells us that, *'When the strike was prolonged, there were signs that most Indians, rather than break with their union allies, were simply preparing to leave for their homes and forfeit the rest of the season's work. A general exodus of Indians would pose another problem for the canners: their operations would be partially crippled by the loss of the services of the Indian women and children who were employed in processing.'*⁴⁷

On July 25, the canners arranged a large meeting of Indian fishermen at Canoe Pass which was attended by Duncan Bell-Irving, a major player in the canning business, and by A.W. Vowell, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for BC. They succeeded in extracting a promise that if the strike were not settled by the following Sunday the Indian fishermen would go back to work.⁴⁸ Some six days later, the remaining fishermen on strike voted support of their union leadership but also voted to return to work en masse under the new rates offered by the canners. Variousy described as a defeat or a partial success, the 1900 Fraser River strike did mark the beginning of true union organization in the industry .

One result of the strike was the spread of Fishermen's Union locals to a number of communities along the coast. By early 1901 locals existed in Vancouver, New Westminster, Steveston, Eburne, Canoe Pass, Cowichan, Port Simpson. Some of these locals enrolled Indian fishermen directly and the latter two locals were composed predominantly of Indian fishermen.

The 1901 fishing season saw what was essentially a replay of the 1900 strike, although more bitter, and apparently leading to a more clear cut defeat. Lodges of the BC Fishermen's Union began to stagnate. Some white fishermen shifted their focus to anti-oriental campaigns and turned for help to local politicians, some of whom were all too ready to fish in troubled waters.. The last major strike on the Fraser during the era occurred in 1913. It was initiated mainly by Japanese fishermen, who had become the predominant force on the river.⁴⁹

The canning companies had introduced a series of wage and rate cuts, confident that they could rely upon the racial divisions among fishermen to defeat any strike. They were correct. In this case it was the Japanese Dantai fishermen who mobilized against the rate cut. The strike was broken, in this case with the help of Indian fishermen and cannery workers. No single ethnic group had a monopoly on courage or opportunism in these labour struggles.

During all these events, Indian women cannery workers came out in support of Indian and other striking fishermen. Indian cannery workers struck in conjunction with fishermen in 1893, in 1900, 1901 and initially in 1913 on the Fraser. The 1904 strike of the Skeena saw 800 Indian fishermen and 200 Indian women cannery workers come out of the plants.

Nimpkish seine boat crews operating out of Alert Bay attempted a brief work stoppage in 1912 for higher wages but were undercut by other fishermen in the region. Japanese, Indian and white fishermen participated in semi-organized strikes on the Skeena in 1917. But the upsurge of political and union militancy which marked the WW I years in BC seemed to bypass the fishing industry. There were ephemeral work stoppages led by regional fishermen's associations at Rivers Inlet in 1922, on the Fraser in the mid and late 1920s, and at Nootka Sound in 1929. They had little effect. The organization of the Fishermen's Industrial Union, and a series of successor unions which later culminated in the establishment of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, signalled an upsurge of union activity. They attempted to and did organize all fishermen and fish plant workers, of whatever ethnic derivation and in whatever phases of the industry, into one industrial union. Counterpoised to this was the formation of the Pacific Coast Native Fishermen's Association and other sectional organizations. Fortunately, that is beyond the scope of this book.⁵⁰

Chapter 10

Seamen, Riverboat Crewmen and Sealers

Coastal Seamen

Indian seafaring aboard sailing vessels has a long history. American and other ships operating in the sea otter and early seal hunting trade took aboard Aleut and Indian crews at the beginning of the nineteenth century. These ships ranged from the Alaskan coast to the California waters. While the Indians and Aleuts aboard were primarily hunting crews they undoubtedly acquired skills in seamanship, as well as an intimate look at the seamen's variant of 'European' society. In the late 1820s HBC Governor George Simpson proposed to man the company's coastal ships with Indian crews and British officers as a cost-cutting plan. While this scheme did not fully materialize some Indian seamen were working on HBC supply vessels by the end of the 1830s. During the California gold rush crewmen on HBC cargo ships 'deserted' for the gold fields and were largely replaced by Indian seamen.¹

By the mid 1860s William Duncan's Metlakatla mission operated its own supply schooner (the *Kate* or the *Caroline*), running cargo and passengers from Victoria to the North Coast. From the start she was crewed mainly by Tsimshian from Metlakatla. A few years later, the schooner *Favorite* -under command of one Hugh McKay - operated partly with a Haida crew out of a base on Cumshewa Inlet on the Queen Charlottes.

Built at Sooke in 1868, her ribs and planks cut from Douglas fir taken from the hills surrounding that bay, the *Favourite* had an almost charmed existence. She worked as a packet running from California to Hawaii, engaged in the cod fisheries of the Okhotsk Sea, and returned from twenty-nine sealing voyages. She served as well as a supply and passenger ship along the BC coast. The *Favorite* was probably the best known vessel along the northern coast during the last third of the nineteenth century and Indian crewmen and sealers worked aboard her in various capacities at different times.

In 1881, when Aurel Krause came to make one of the first anthropological investigations of the North Pacific coast, he travelled into the Tlingit communities on the *Favorite*, then partly manned by an Indian crew.² Just one of many similar schooners was the *Surprise*, which made freight runs along the West Coast of Vancouver Island. In 1875 two of her deckhands were Kyuquot Nootka while both the mate and skipper had Indian wives.³ This latter feature was quite common among coastal skippers and river boat captains and their families often became prominent in local communities.

There were Indian crewmen on some of the early steam vessels of the coast. Between 1870 and 1873 W.H. Pierce, the later Tsimshian missionary, began his working life on the HBC steamer *Otter*. In 1871 the *Emily Harris*, the first screw-driven steamer built on the coast, was making regular cargo and towing runs between Nanaimo and Victoria, with a mainly Indian crew. (She went down that year when her boilers exploded.)⁴ Indeed, the 1876 Annual Report to the Department of Indian Affairs notes the importance of Indian seamen in BC coastal shipping, particularly for those from reserves in the Fraser River Agency. Between 1884 and 1910, DIA reports mention Indian seamen in coastal shipping and 'marine engineering' at Alert Bay, Fort Rupert, Metlakatla, and Port Simpson. This was only a partial listing since there were also Indian seamen among the Nootka, Haida, and Coast Salish. They worked on lumber barques, coastal freighters and tugboats. I have no figures on the number of people involved.

As for Indian ship owners, one of the first was Alfred Dudoward, a leading member of the Port Simpson Tsimshian. By the mid 1870s he had acquired and was operating the schooner *Georgina*. He ran her between Victoria and Port Simpson. Shortly after the turn of the century two Indian-owned schooners, the *Mountain Chief* and the *Fisher Maid*,

briefly took up sealing in coastal waters but withdrew after a few unprofitable trips. We will return to Indian-owned sealing vessels later.

By the first decade of the twentieth century there were Indian boat builders fashioning work boats and even schooners in a few locales. Around 1908 Henry Edenshaw of Masset was involved in various enterprises, one of which was the operation of the schooner *Josephine*. She carried passengers, freight and held the mail contract from Port Simpson to Masset. Roger Weah was the mate of her Masset crew.⁵

By 1910 the Cowichan of Valdes Island owned their own steam vessel which they used to tow log booms. Similarly, in 1907 a Tanakteuch Kwakiutl man owned a steam tug he used in towing booms from his logging operation. Everywhere there were Indian owned gas-powered boats, used both for fishing and and available for charter services.⁶

As for working deep sea, only a few late cases that have come down to us. In 1918, Dick Harry from an East Saanich reserve shipped on a freighter carrying lime from the Saanich quarries (then employing Indian quarry workers) on a voyage to China. He made a number of trips, spent part of the inter-war years working as a foreman in a Vancouver Island lumber yard and in the Naval docks at Esquimalt, and during WW II made fourteen trips in the Canadian Merchant Marine.⁷

An interesting case is that of Frank Donley, the primary informant in Kalvero Oberg's 1931 study of the Tlingit settlement at Kluwan. Donley had worked as a deckhand on the Alaska Steamship Line ships running between Seattle and Alaskan ports before WW I. He had served in the engine room of US Navy destroyers in European waters during the Great War, and had returned to coastal shipping with a marine engineer's ticket long before he collaborated with Oberg on his account of the traditional Tlingit. Oberg would probably not have been surprised by his informant's experience, since Oberg himself was familiar with the Finnish settlement Sointula during the 1920s, where the lives of immigrant fishermen and loggers overlapped with those of native people in nearby Alert Bay.⁸

As a Canadian equivalent to Donley, we may mention David Bernardan from the Oowekeeno village at Rivers Inlet. He enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy at the outbreak of WW I, rose to become a petty officer, and was somehow transferred to the Royal Navy. In 1917 David Bernardan was the commander of an infantry transport ship on the Euphrates River, south of Baghdad, in the British Army's campaign against the Ottoman Empire to make middle-eastern oil safe for democracy. I'd like to know what happened to him afterward.⁹

Back in B.C waters there was the famed towboat and packer skipper, Heber Clifton. Born in Metlakatla in about 1870 he grew up during Metlakatla's 'model mission village' era. His family was among the minority which did not follow William Duncan to a new settlement in Alaska 1887. During his youth Heber Clifton tried his hand at trapping, prospecting, and local wage work. Married sometime during the 1890s, he and his wife contracted to backpack freight from Hazelton to the HBC post on Babine Lake. They made something of a stake and later settled in the new Tsimshian village of Hartley Bay, where they built a home and raised a family.

Clifton began working in coastal towing sometime before the turn of the century. By 1906 he was already an experienced towboat skipper, master of the steam tug *Florence*, a tender for the J.H. Todd cannery. Four years later he was captain of the seagoing tug *Topaz*, operated by the Northcoast Towing Co. to move log booms and scows for the Georgetown sawmills. He towed some of the first Davis rafts, those awesome wooden icebergs, out of Cumshewa Inlet and made runs as far south as Vancouver and Washington State. For almost forty years Heber Clifton skippered tugs and fish packers on the north coast. A number of well-known towboat men served under him before gaining their mate and master tickets.¹⁰

Sternwheel Crewmen

Between 1860 and WW I sternwheel lake and river boats were a major part of the transport network throughout the interior of BC. They provided much of the bulk freighting and passenger services on stretches of the lower and upper Fraser, as well as on the Skeena, upper Thompson, lowerStikine, the Columbia and Kootenay rivers. Many of the larger lakes of the interior - Kootenay, Arrow, Okanagan, and Shuswap lakes - also were served by sternwheelers before the arrival of railways and roads. In a few regions, sternwheel traffic continued into the 1920s and even into the 1930s. Indian deck crews were employed on many sternwheelers until their passing, but were especially important in the period 1880-1910.

A utilitarian sternwheeler might carry a crew of twelve to fifteen men, of whom eight or so were deck crew - depending on how much cargo was to be handled and how difficult the waters were. The deck crew loaded and unloaded freight, put aboard fuel, and handled steam winches, cables, and tackle used in running the more dangerous river passages. According to an account by a touring *Victoria Colonist* reporter, Indian deck crews predominated on the Skeena River sternwheel traffic in 1907.¹¹

Some feeling of the more dramatic moments of steamboating is contained in John Morison's account of running the Kitselas Canyon on the Skeena in the first decade of this century.

But I remember one day going up there and no other boat would look at it except ol' [Capt.] Bonser. And he let a holler out of him just at daylight. He says, 'We're going through that canyon today, but every passenger get off.' So they all trooped ashore. We had to stay. My job was carrying one of these cork fenders around, slip it in between rocks. We got up to this Ringbolt Island an' there's a right angle turn at the top of it and there's a ringbolt in the rocks there for what they call the 'breast line' so as to pull 'er around this awful current running at high water. We just went from side to side bouncing on these great big boils . . . And the Indians—they were all Indian deck hands, white men couldn't stick it—were standing waiting there with the heaving line and when she touched the rocks, there was a little footing, and they went up like goats. They were supposed to take the cable with just the smooth end of it, put it through the ringbolt, take a kind of half hitch and whip it with a piece of cord. Well, this day they made a mistake and put a hook in this ringbolt. Well, we started up and were just making the turn when the line fouled on the capstan. They did that sometimes, the coils got mixed up. And he gave a toot for them to let go on the rock. Well, they couldn't. It was just like an iron hand. I remember one of the Foley boats up ahead of us, they started lowering two of their boats case she started to lay right over. And I remember the wood was piled on the working deck, it slid right off into the river, it showed how far she went. And I was standing up just below the wheelhouse and the ol' skipper hollered at the mate—the mate had an axe, was chopping away. He says, 'Send this young fellow up a heaving line.' He threw it up to me. And the ol' man looked down at me and said, 'Now when I say throw that line, you heave it, throw it to those deck hands so they can get another line into that ringbolt. And God help you if you miss.' I hit the mark. ¹²

Whatever the danger and excitement of sternwheeling, a more typical feature was the long hours of hard work for low pay. There were both white and Indian deck and engine crews on the river boats throughout the province. Speaking of work conditions on sternwheelers operating out of New Westminster in the 1890s to 1905, Hacking says that, *If it was the end of the month, turmoil was compounded. This was pay day and the majority of the crews would very likely have just returned from spending their wages in one of the many saloons that flourished conveniently close to the wharf . . . It was the custom to employ two shifts of deck hands, one white and one Indian or half-breed, in order to create rivalry, and consequently get more work done.*

Those were the days when steamboat men often had to work eighteen to twenty hours at a stretch. When pay day came along, nerves would be worn thin, so after the inevitable trek to the saloon, general free-for-all fights would break out between whites and Indians.

. . . [in] 1905 six deck hands on the river steamer Beaver struck in protest against long hours of work. 'The men have been getting \$40 per month' reported the Columbian but they did not consider that enough remuneration for working from early morning until midnight. They accordingly notified their employers that they were willing to work from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day for the same old \$40 per month, but they wanted 40 cents per hour for work done after 8 p.m.¹³

A week before, the deckhands and engineroom crew, as well as the mate, of the sternwheeler *Transfer* had also struck but were replaced by a scratch crew. Indians and white crews participated in such spontaneous walkouts both as strikers and as scabs.

Indian deck hands and cargo handlers were prominent on the Stikine, and especially on the Skeena river. At the beginning of the twentieth century they also acted as pilots on those two rivers. A number of early steamboat captains married into leading Indian families. The son of one such family became a legendary riverboat captain in his own right, bringing the first sternwheeler up the Skeena as far as Hazelton in the early 1890s, thereby undercutting the Tsimshian canoe freighting which had dominated that route since 1860.

Riverboats witnessed one final burst of activity shortly before WW I, transporting supplies to build the last major links of the railway network in BC. A small remnant of the sternwheel fleet continued on some of the bypassed rivers and lakes of the southern interior until the 1930s. However, in northern Canada, sternwheelers and their predominantly Metis crews continued as the major means of freighting into the 1940s.

It may be that the first Indian people to see steam ships were awed by the smoke-belching 'fire canoes,' as some quaint histories would have us believe.¹⁴ However, in the course of not too much time they were handling the rigging, stoking the engines and working the decks of such vessels .

Sealing and Whaling

While some Nootka groups, particularly the Makah on the Olympic peninsula, continued their traditional methods of whaling for subsistence purposes until shortly after 1900, there is little evidence that Indians along the BC coast were ever involved as crewmen in the commercial whaling fleets. This is surprising.

Commercial whaling in the North Pacific started early in the nineteenth century and was dominated by American whalers, who spread from the south to the north Pacific. They hunted the large and slow moving Wright whale, entered the whaling grounds along the Northwest coast and reached their peak during the 1840s and 1850s. The methods used are those which continue to dominate our historic image of whaling - square-rigged wooden sailing ships, cruising distant waters in interminable voyages lasting a year or two, setting out their oar-powered hunter boats which raced after the sounding whale, riding almost unto the whale's flukes as it surfaced and the harpioneer striking in the iron-tipped harpoon, and finally the killing lance. And then, if the whale didn't sink - which was very frequently the case - towing the carcass back the ship to strip it of its baleen and blubber, which was melted in the brickwork try-pots on the deck of all whaleships, rendering the blubber into barrelled oil. Dangerous, exhausting, greasy-dirty work which paid very little for the crews. Possibly the most amazing thing about the industry was that anyone could be enticed into working on whaleships of the time.

While there are numerous logs of whalers passing and even hunting off the BC and south Alaskan coasts, particularly on the Kodiak whaling grounds near Mount St. Elias, I have found no account of local Indian crewmen on these vessels. Although the HBC during the late 1840s was alarmed that American whaleships might anchor in convenient coves, and might mix trading with local Indians with their whaling activities, most of these whaleships

refrained from putting in along the BC coast. The handful of vessels which did so were exceptions.¹⁵

Before the introduction of steam-powered hunter boats, operating out of shore bases in proximity to the whaling grounds, before the invention of explosive harpoons, both of which appeared in the last decades of the nineteenth century, before these, certain species of whales were relatively safe from whalers. Fast swimming and unpredictable whales, such as Fin and Grey whales, or those species which tended to sink when killed, were not easily taken and not generally pursued by the early whaleships. Nor were they usually able to overtake the largest whale species (although early whalers somehow managed to harpoon and take Sperm whale). The whales commercially hunted along the BC and Alaskan coast was the oil rich, buoyant, slow swimming, Wright whale. By the 1860s they already had been decimated and the whalers were concentrating on the recently discovered Bow whale (a closely related species) fishery in the Arctic Seas, beyond the Bering Strait.

From the 1870s until the demise of arctic whaling in the first decade of the twentieth century, American whalers developed ongoing relations with North Alaskan Eskimo, who sometimes became *commercial* whalers and sea mammal hunters themselves. They frequently carried on a substantial trade in furs with the captains of whaleships. A wintering-over base for the whalers in the western arctic was on Hershel Island, to the west of the Mackenzie delta. Many Eskimo of that region were attracted to the trade opportunities offered there by the whalers and were effected in a variety of ways. There is no parallel for any of this among native groups anywhere along the Northwest coast.

According to Barbeau, some Haida men had worked on whaling ships by or before the 1850s. He holds that the earliest Haida argillite carvings produced for trade were essentially facsimiles of scrimshaw work done by American seamen and whaling crews. It is evident that Euro-American sailing ships and shipboard life is memorialized in some of this carving but there was enough ship traffic, other than whalers, in and out of Haida ports to account for this.

Histories of the American whaling industry, plus the logs of a number of American whale ships operating in the North Pacific, often list the derivation of the ships' crews. They come from almost every corner of the earth -Yankee farm boys, English tars down on their luck, desperate Azoreans, Kanakas, a smattering of Blacks from America or the Caribbean, crewmen from every European coast. There may even have been some crewmen from remnant Indian groups of the American Atlantic seaboard. But in none of the logs of the whale ships is there any mention of Indian crewmen recruited from the Northwest coast.¹⁶

It is reassuring to get negative corroboration from a specialist: Robert Lloyd Webb, the curator of the Kendall Whaling Museum, has produced an exhaustive study of American whaling in the North Pacific from its inception in to its conclusion. *On the Northwest; Commercial Whaling in the Pacific Northwest, 1790 -1967* surveys an extraordinary range of literature, including the logs of some 150 whaleships operating in the North Pacific, mainly from the 1830s to the 1860s, without discovering any mention of native people taken on as crew. Part of the answer to this anomaly may be contained in the attitude of the master of the American whaleship *Caroline*, hunting from the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the waters off Mount St. Elias during the summer and early fall of 1843. In a journal kept by crewman George Bailey, he notes the reluctance of the captain to have any native canoes near him and his constant concern with apprehended attack (Webb, R. 1988:292-294)

Webb was at pains to present Northwest coast native involvement in whaling but was led by force of the evidence to restrict himself to anthropological accounts of indigenous whaling among the Makah and some Nootkan groups. While the California Grey whale and the Humpback whale were hunted by these peoples, who had developed a sophisticated technique of whaling, it is still uncertain how central the catches were in their domestic economy.

The Makah and the Nootka apparently curtailed or ceased their offshore whale hunts in the last quarter of the nineteenth century; only three whales were reported as being taken by the Makah in 1892. (Webb, R. 1988:134) However, with the collapse of pelagic sealing the Makah briefly returned to whaling by more or less traditional methods at around the turn of the century. Webb notes a journal entry of the towboat *Lorne* which in 1905 watched some sixty Makah in six large canoes chase and strike a whale off Cape Flattery. '*When the whale was killed he looked like a giant pincushion with all those balloon bladders sticking in him.*' But then something most untraditional occurred. Another towboat, the *Wyadda A. Prescott*, took the dead whale in tow and pulled it hastily back to the Makah waiting at Neah Bay" (Webb, R. 1988: 134) It is unclear if this later whaling was for subsistence purposes or to produce whale oil for sale.

The classic account of indigenous Makah and related whaling methods was presented in T.T. Waterman's (1920) *The Whaling Equipment of the Makah Indians*. Erna Gunther and Ann Renker's chapter on the Makah in the *Handbook of North American Indians, Northwest Coast* (1990) provides the social context of indigenous whaling and an outline of Makah history within the context of American settlement during the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

A very few Indians did participate as shoreworkers in the sporadic whaling ventures launched in BC inshore waters. In 1869 the Dawson and Douglas Co. operated the schooner *Kate* as a whaler from a base on Cortez Island and occasionally employed some Indian men as shoreworkers or in towing in whales killed in Gulf of Georgia waters. About the same period, a man remembered only as 'Peter the Whaler' hunted whales in Howe Sound from a sloop with an Indian crew. His trying-out bases were Bowen Island and Coal Harbour.

The 'modern' whaling industry which operated along the BC coast from the first to the sixth decades of the twentieth century took a considerable catch of whales but required very few crewmen. It seems to have been almost a family industry, especially among the ship's officers and harpooners. No Indian crewman ever seems to have worked aboard these vessels, although some Indian labour was initially employed at some of the shore bases. The Victoria Whaling Co. employed some Nootka shoreworkers around its base at Sechart, on Barkley Sound. Such whaling bases was where the flensing took place, the blubber converted into oil and the meat and bone processed into bone meal in the attached reduction plant. Local Indians comprised a proportion of the shoreworkers at Sechart in 1908 but but apparently had be replaced by 1914. (Webb, R. 1988: 204,206)

Some Kyuquot Nootka worked in the nearby whaling base in 1910. But the whaling stations and the associated reduction plants established at Naden Harbour and Rose Harbour (respectively on the north and south ends of the Queen Charlotte archipelago) mainly employed Japanese and Chinese labour.¹⁷

Indian involvement in pelagic sealing was a completely different story. It may be worthwhile to specify what 'pelagic' means. 'Pelagic sealing' does imply the hunt for a distinct species of fur seal nor does it necessarily involve novel hunting methods; the same 'stalking' and spearing techniques were used by Indian sealers both indigenously and commercially. What pelagic sealing did involve was that the hunters and their canoes were based upon schooners which cruised far out to sea, up and down the north Pacific coast. The main fur seal herds migrating to and from their rookeries often travelled thirty to a hundred miles off-shore.

Aleut sea otter and seal hunters had shipped aboard European vessels on extended cruises in waters as distant as California but the decimation of the sea otter herds by the 1820s and the decline of fur seal herd by the 1830s led to a reduction of commercial hunts. As early as 1835 (and again in 1841) the Russian-America Company restricted hunting on the Pribilof Islands, the fur seal breeding grounds, to Aleut subsistence needs as a conservation measure. The North Pacific seal herd began to increase but the transfer of Alaska to

American sovereignty in 1867 led once again to unrestricted commercial seal hunting. It ushered in the most dramatic phase of pelagic sealing.¹⁸

Some Haida sealers were working on a schooner based in Cumshewa Inlet at the end of the 1860s, and a few continued to do so until almost the end of pelagic sealing. However the Haida did not become a major element in the industry. Nootka on the west coast of Vancouver Island became engaged in pelagic sealing by 1870. Among the first ships to recruit them as hunters were the sloop *Reserve* and the Nanaimo schooner *Wanderer*, which took on a crew of Ohiaht Nootka from Barkley Sound and proceeded to the sealing grounds. This began a forty year history of extensive Indian involvement in pelagic sealing. Nootka sealers became the predominant native group in the industry, although there also were sealers drawn from the Haida, the Quatsino, Kwakiutl, and from Salish communities at Sooke and elsewhere. Despite the mystique which has become attached to Indian sealers, there were many white sealers also employed aboard the schooners throughout the period.¹⁹

There was a rapid expansion of the territory covered by sealing operations. The fleet began to go south of Cape Flattery to meet the seal herd, following it from the California and Oregon coasts to the Aleutians and finally to their rookeries on the Pribilofs in the Bering Sea. Initially, the fur seal rookeries were in the hands of the Alaska Commercial Company, an American outfit which had influenced the relevant congressmen and had gotten extensive rights over Alaskan trade. They fought a running battle with poachers and interlopers, although with declining success.

Between 1872 and 1892 the number of vessels regularly sealing in BC and Alaskan waters rose from five to over one hundred. The decimation of the seal herds was dramatic, so dramatic that even the American government in 1893 moved to ratify a pact with the British and Russian governments to conserve the seal herds. The Canadian government refused to ratify this convention, with the result that the Pacific sealing fleet took up Canadian registry and flew the red ensign as a flag of convenience. In 1894 Victoria became the home port of the sealing vessels left in the trade. Among other consequences, Victoria acquired its own small but lively Barbary Coast.²⁰

The fifty-nine sealing vessels sailing out of Victoria in 1894 had a complement of 888 white and 518 Indian crewmen. Some ships carried both white and Indian hunting crews but about half of the vessels carried a predominantly Indian crew. A typical arrangement for these was a white skipper and mate, a few skilled seamen and anywhere from a dozen to thirty Indian hunters, depending on the size of the schooner and how many hunters the captain could recruit. At times some Indian hunters must also have acted as seamen. Towards the end of the decade some sixty per cent of the sealers on the Victoria-based fleet were Indian.²¹

Sealing vessels were usually small schooners, from under thirty to a hundred ton displacement. Some, like the twenty-seven ton *Rosie Olsen*, crossed to Japan and back. Small, in variable states of repair and age, with no auxiliary engines or radio, they sailed the most dangerous waters of the world, Indian sealers and others, during the last days of sail.

Sealing was not conducted from the schooners themselves. Canoes and hunting boats were put over the side when seal 'herds' were located. Typically, there were eight to more than a dozen hunting teams with a complement of two men in a canoe or three in a hunting boat. An Indian hunting team invariably consisted of the harpioneer in the bow of a Nootka-style canoe, and his steersman in the stern. Wives of Indian hunters sometimes went along on these voyages as steersmen, although this was not typical. Although the hunting boats attempted to stay within sight of the mother ship, fogs, currents, rapidly rising winds, and the chase itself frequently separated them. Lost crews were usually picked up later but often enough separations ended in disaster. It was a dangerous business, even by the standards of the time.

Sometimes the experiences of Indian sealers were of epic proportions, as with the two Hesquiat men who were parted from their schooner near the Aleutians and who returned home over a very roundabout route. Consider the work-related adventure of these two Nootka sealers. Writing from Hesquiat mission on November 1885, Father Augustine Brabant outlined their story.

On their first voyage two men lost their vessel and by their absence on board caused much uneasiness and grief to their friends and many tears to their relatives at home on the arrival of the schooner. They are now back, and pose as heroes. After losing the vessel they landed on one of the Aleutian Islands. There they met a native who treated them well and, by signs and gestures, showed them the direction of a trading post. The trader, a white man, gave them some provisions and directed them to a bay where American fishermen were busy with their trade. Thence they were taken in a boat and landed at one of the central trading stations. They were then taken to San Francisco on the Alaska Commercial Company's steamer, Dorah.

They were treated with much kindness by the Captain and his men. The first officer took the two men, bewildered upon seeing the large city, to the British Consul, who paid their passages to Victoria. There they at once went over to see the Bishop, who assisted them by a letter of recommendation to the owners of the vessel from which they had strayed. A canoe was bought and a supply of provisions and they arrived home last Sunday, just in time for Mass. 22

Pelagic sealing by Indian hunters involved sneaking up and harpooning the animals: there was a catalogue of specific conditions, of weather and of animals behaviour, which varied the particular method of approach. Harpooning or spearing fur seals at sea was a tricky procedure since the hunter could rarely get close enough for a direct thrust and had to throw the harpoon so that it submerged just before it struck the seal. Strangely enough, this was a skill which white sealers never seemed able to learn. The white hunting crews mainly used rifles and shotguns, as did Indian hunting teams on certain schooners.

As distinct from seal hunting in northern Europe, where the animals were taken when they congregated on ice packs at certain times of the year, the Pacific fur seals frequently sank before they could be recovered. The percentage was always strongly contested but it may have been that the majority killed were lost. The International Sealing Commission soon banned the use of rifles and shotguns in the hunt because of the high loss of seals. While enforcement was always a cat and mouse game it was a factor in curtailing sealing ventures even before 1894.

A voluminous literature, surprisingly detailed and sophisticated, emerged from private and government conservationists of that day. There was a great deal to consider in fur seal conservation and 'harvesting': the pupping and mating patterns on the Pribilofs, the differing migration routes of male and female fur seals, the sex and age statistics of animals struck and actually taken by pelagic sealers (a count open to the most blatant fabrication). Briton Cooper Busch's *The War Against the Seal* (1985) surveys much of the earlier literature with a jaundiced eye on the seal holocaust. He describes the dramatic decline of *all* the sea mammals hunted over the last 150 years, along with comments on the men who hunted them and the methods they used.

Without attempting to summarize that body of material, the most fundamental things which can be said about the fur seals and their pursuers was that despite the determined protection of the rookeries themselves, the fur seal herds were rapidly being depleted by pelagic sealing. The sealers were killing and losing *at least* as many seals as they actually landed, and these animals were predominantly females and juveniles since it was they who migrated in herds down the coasts and back again to the rookeries. Controlled harvesting of the seals -primarily of the bachelor seals which normally did not enter the demographic equation- could only proceed by the land-based hunt. This had been done under both the Russian-America Company and the Alaska Commercial Company.

The Aleut population transferred to the Pribilofs by the Russian-America Company had become employed in the controlled land hunt and served as armed guards of the seal rookeries. By 1892 they had become dependant upon American government subsidies: in that year the annual income of the circa 200 Aleut population on St.Paul Island (the main rookery in the Pribilof's) amounted to \$7,583 from seal pelts taken and \$ 694 from miscellaneous income. An additional \$7,075 worth of goods were supplied by the North American Commercial Company while some \$ 9,226 came from government aid. (Busch, B. 1985: 125-126) But let us return to the sealing schooners.

Most Indian sealers signed on for a season's cruise in BC and Alaskan waters. These cruises ranged from Cape Flattery to the Bering and might last from late spring to the beginning of fall. Individual cruises would be shorter than this. Indian sealers had community duties which were disrupted by more extended voyages. Attempts by skippers to coerce Indian sealers to extend their cruises sometimes led to strikes and 'mutinies,' during which the sealers refused to hunt or to lower their boats. In some cases they broke their harpoons and threatened to halt the working of the ship. This was an effective but a dangerous ploy. Instance the case of the *Dora Seward*, when the Indian hunters refused to be carried into Alaskan waters where they feared they might be seized by American patrol vessels. They forced the skipper to take them back to their homes on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Although there was no damage to the ship and no injury sustained by her master, a number of the Nootka sealers were arrested and tried for 'mutiny'. A few were actually convicted and spent time in jail. It was a threat which white seamen constantly faced as well. ²³

Sealers were paid by the number of seal pelts taken, anywhere from two to ten animals per hunting day - and on very rare days more. But there also times when a hard day's paddling ended with no seals taken. Most of the time spent on a sealing cruise was taken up in getting to and returning from the sealing grounds and searching for the scattered pods of seals, since they were never concentrated except around the rookeries. Depending upon the season and the ship's luck, hunting days were lost when it was too foggy or stormy to put hunting boats over the side.

The price for seal pelts varied considerably over the duration of the industry, depending upon the fashions of the market and the number of seal pelts available. However, prices paid to sealers for pelts taken do not seem to have shifted very dramatically. In 1889, the 26 Victoria-based schooners which went out to hunt returned with some 35,000 fur seal pelts which were worth \$245,000 landed at the dock. Murray suggests that the median price for untreated seal pelts landed during this period was about \$7 a piece. It was only after they had been shipped to London or New York, processed and dyed that the value of the pelt rose to \$28. (Murray,P.1988: 71)

The lowest price paid to pelagic sealers was \$2 a pelt. Throughout most of the period they received from \$3 to \$4 a pelt, when these were selling on the fur market at \$6 to \$10 dollars. The difference was accounted for by the operating cost of the vessels and profits made by the shipowners. In 1885, skipper Alex McLean attempted to recruit hunting crews at Kyuquot offering \$2.50 per skin but the Kyuquot held out for \$5 dollars. Later in the same season John Bailey, skipper of the Lazarus-like *Kate*, promised to pay \$4 per pelt to Nootka hunters at Ucluelet and had trouble raising them at that price. (Murray,P. 1988:28)

Small traders scattered near the Nootka settlements could afford to pay higher prices for seal pelts taken offshore by hunters in their own canoes since the trader had neither the risk nor the cost of a schooner's operation. However, when pelt prices were fluctuating such traders might pay more for the pelts than they later got on the market themselves and go broke. This happened to a number of the small traders among the Nootka.

The income for a season's work as a sealer was highly variable and open to much debate - especially later, when claims were being tendered to the Canadian government commission charged with making compensation to vessel owners and former hunters after pelagic sealing was finally banned. It is only an educated guess that the earnings of sealers typically

ranged from two hundred dollars to as much as five hundred dollars in a season. In one case a Nootka sealer allegedly earned \$1,200 in a particularly successful voyage. In unsuccessful cruises the sealers might receive little more than the usual \$25 or \$30 advance money plus their maintenance while aboard.

A general estimate for catches during the height of sealing is that a very good hunt would be some 2,000 pelts taken by a sealing schooner in a full season's cruise, while 1,000 was adequate. Unlucky vessels might return with pelts less than the cost of the cruise. The *Umbrina* brought back 25,950 seal pelts in her nineteen seasons (until sunk off Cape Flattery), but she was a large ship with a larger than normal hunting crew. (Busch, B. 1985: 139). If we accept a catch of 1,200 pelts for an average voyage on a schooner with a dozen hunting crews, a rate of \$3 per pelt would mean returns of some \$3,600 split up between twenty-four hunters and paddlers. This would average \$300 per hunting crew. But the actual returns would differ significantly since they depended upon the number of pelts taken by each team.

Harry Guillod, Indian Agent for the West Coast, noted that many Nootka sealers in the 1890s were worried about voyaging aboard schooners to the Bering Sea because the vessels might be impounded by U.S. revenue cutters and they would lose their season's earning. He noted that the hunters of the West Coast Agency had earned some \$62,000 from sealing in 1891, \$40,000 of which came from voyages to the Bering. In that year sealers from the village of Hesquiaht, with a total population of 210, had manned five schooners and had earned some \$9,000. He estimated that sealers in good years earned an average of \$500 per season. (Cited in Murray, 1988: 163) I am unsure if this average combined the income of hunter and steersman or if Hesquiaht sealers had more profitable hunts than others.

From the mid 1880s until the end of pelagic sealing in 1911 a few schooners with largely Indian crews each year pursued the hunt into Japanese waters and along the Kurile Islands. This usually was done in a one year cruise, with the schooners putting in for resupply in a Japanese port, such as Hakodate. The sealers did not winter over in Japan, as I had once supposed. But for about thirty years an average of fifty or so Indian sealers from BC put in at Japanese ports for a variety of reasons and got to know something of those distant shores. In 1894 and 1895 some four of the twenty-six vessels carrying Indian crews from BC made the hunt in Japanese waters. They included the *Mascot*, *Fawn*, *Walter A. Earle*, and the *Rosie Olsen*, with a complement of seventy Indian and twenty-five white crewmen. The following year saw a different set of ships and men so engaged.²⁴

One brief account we have of an Indian sealer is a fragment of Charles Nowell's life history. As a young man of eighteen he had just returned from a series of jobs in Fraser River canneries, a visit to Seattle, and work in a North Vancouver sawmill. After coming back to Fort Rupert he traveled to Quatsino Sound to get a berth on a sealing schooner. The year is 1887 or 1888. The ship, the *Rosie Olsen*.

That winter we young men of Fort Rupert went over to Quatsino. I never told my brother I was going. The Koskimo people were going out hunting for fur seals, and the captain of the sealing schooner wanted some more hunters, so I agreed with Charley Wilson to go. We went out that night on the schooner and sailed during the night.

We had \$30 apiece in advance from the captain. I gave it to a Koskimo woman I was fooling around with to go on with until I get back. That is the third time I ran away, and when I got back I found that my brother was a day late when he came after me.

I had a terrible time in the sealing schooner, for I was never out in rough water in a big boat before. I was seasick for two weeks and couldn't eat anything. The captain came down to the forecabin to see me and gave me some raw carrots to eat. He told me to eat as many as I could, and said it would stop me from puking. That stopped the seasickness, but I began to want to come home . . . It took us just two months and three days, and we were in Yokohama, Japan.

We waited there over three weeks for the Japanese to make us canoes. They were having war with China at the time, so all the carpenters were busy. During the time we were there

I stayed with a Japanese girl, and all the boys had their Japanese girls. When the carpenter built us the canoes, we began to seal hunt. Charley Wilson was the hunter, and I steered the canoe. When we got through hunting there, we went inside to Hakodate. While we were going through the inlet, we ran against a sandbar during the night. It was foggy and raining that night, and our schooner got wrecked. The keel came off. We got into our canoes and heard the waves smashing on the beach, but the fog was so thick we couldn't see. When we got on shore, Charley Wilson and I went back to the schooner and take all our sealskins out and took them on shore. 25

During their brief stay in Hakodate Nowell and his mates find a sailor's boarding house to stay in, go to the European Consul, and discover a restaurant with pretty Japanese waitresses. They also threaten one of their drunk shipmates with 'Let's get him on shore, and then let him turn into a Japanese and stay there all the rest of his life.' According to Nowell's account they managed quite well. Somewhat later their captain arranges a working passage for the crew back to BC on another sealing schooner. They set out to hunt in the Bering Sea, still open to sealing but under the control of American-enforced strictures.

All the guns that we had brought with us from the wrecked boat was taken from us by the customs at Japan. We had to spear the seals in the Bering Sea. They don't allow us to use guns, so every time a [American Fisheries] cutter comes around, he throws all the skins on deck and sees if they are shot. In about an hour another cutter comes and does the same. We were there hunting about a month when it get nasty—raining and blowing and fog. Almost as night, it was so dark. The captain had no chance to look at the sun for a week to see where we are. One morning the captain come and shouted, 'It's calm now and I see a lot of seals close to the schooner.' So we all went out and take our canoes down from the schooner, and put our grub and compass in it and started off from the schooner with our spears. Our canoe was soon full and we skin them and leave all the fat on, and throw the meat over and hunt some more. There were seals everywhere—lots of them. We pick out only the small ones because they bring the same price as the big ones and we can pack more in our canoes. 26

Paid off in Quatsino, Nowell allows his older brother to take most of his \$600 earnings, which will be invested in a proper marriage and the beginnings of a potlatch position. Nowell goes on to other adventures. After experiences such as these it appears unlikely that developments on the central BC coast would have produced much in the way of culture shock for individuals like Nowell.

The Quatsino of the west coast of Vancouver Island were deeply involved in sealing. Some Haida as well went sealing, both on sealing schooners and offshore of the Queen Charlottes in their own canoes. Alfred Adams, of later Native Brotherhood fame, remembered the surge of activity around Masset during the late 1880s when sealing schooners put in to take on crews. Mathew Yeoman, later a Masset carver, was one of those who at the turn of the century sailed on a sealer to hunt in Japanese waters. Members of some Cowichan communities also joined the sealing fleet, as did men from Sooke, with disastrous consequences.²⁷

Losses of men and ships in pelagic sealing was a constant feature of the industry. The following cases are merely suggestive of an aspect of the hunt from its beginning to the end. In 1883 the schooner *Mallerville* was wrecked near Hesquiat, although most of her crew were saved. In April 1895 the *Earle* foundered off Cape St. Elias and went down with all hands. The twenty-six Indian crewmen lost were said to comprise 'most' of the adult men of the Sooke band. In 1901 the *Fawn* was driven ashore by storms on the northwest coast of Vancouver Island, although her crew were saved by heroic measures. The following year the schooner *Hatzic* sailed out of Kyuquot with twenty-four Indian sealers plus a white crew. All were lost when she sank in a gale shortly after. In March 1911 the schooner *Umbria*, with twenty-six Nootka sealers aboard, was struck and sunk by a steamer in heavy

fog off Cape Flattery. Fortunately, her crew were rescued and taken to San Francisco by another ship.

According to Murray's tabulation, between 1886 and 1895 some 33 sealing schooners foundered, half of them with no survivors. Many of them were lost without a trace. The toll was 231 men lost, of whom 130 were Indian sealers. For those ships hunting the Kurile Islands and Siberian coasts, the losses were even higher, although relatively few Indians participated.²⁸

The losses involved in pelagic sealing were matched by the dangers of traditional seal hunts from canoes off home villages. During May of 1875 some 70 Nootkan canoes from a number of different villages were caught in a storm offshore while sealing and driven southwest. Some Hesquiahts managed to reach the Washington coast, but more than 100 others were drowned. In the spring of 1882 possibly 50 more Nootka were drowned in a gale while hunting fur seal in their home waters. (Murray, P.1988: 19,26,78)

Pelagic sealing lifted the Nootka out of the half century of economic stagnation which followed the loss of their earlier position as traders and sea otter hunters. Sealing was probably the major source of cash income for Nootka communities from the later 1870s until the end of pelagic sealing. For instance, eight sealing vessels took on Nootkan crews in 1885. The schooner *Favorite* returned to Hesquiat from a cruise to the Bering Sea with payments averaging \$160 per sealer, not a very profitable trip. But that same year some seventy young men from Hesquiat shipped aboard other sealing schooners.²⁹

During the height of pelagic sealing 'most' Nootkan men worked in the industry at one time or another. The Ohiaht, Kyuquot, Ucluelet, Clayoquot, Hesquiat, Ewlhwillahht were all deeply enmeshed in pelagic sealing. In addition, some Nootka women shipped aboard schooners either as cooks or to act as paddlers for their husbands or other relatives.³⁰

Although traditionalist in many social and cultural matters, the Nootka were not adverse to savouring the fruits of late Victorian consumerism. By the turn of the century they were buying everything from baby carriages to rifles and tools. They acquired gramophones, fashionable clothes of the era and assorted musical instruments with their earnings. Some even bought bicycles, but where they might have ridden them is a puzzle. A number of Nootkans built European-style houses while others started small stores with income earned in profitable cruises. Probably there were a great many novel ventures attempted which have now passed from memory.³⁰

We should note something of the sealing vessels which were acquired by a few Pacheenaht entrepreneurs and by their kinsmen, the Makah of the Olympic peninsula. The following comes mainly from Peter Murray's admirable history of the pelagic sealing industry, *The Vagabond Fleet*..

By the early 1890s Indian sealers benefited from a ban on the use of firearms since few white hunters could master the hunting spear. Schooner captains began to compete for the best Indian hunters and on *some* trips they earned sizeable stakes. By then, American-owned sealing schooners were going on the auction block through confiscation and bankruptcy. Even earlier some Makah had begun acquiring their own vessels.

"They began operating their own schooners in 1880 when the Neah Bay Fur Sealing Company chartered the pilot boat Lottie at Port Townsend, which had been taking seals for some years on her trips to Cape Flattery, just west of Neah Bay. The Lottie was subsequently purchased by Chief James Claplanhoo. In the next few years the Makah purchased three other small schooners before acquiring the old Discovery in Victoria. Then, in 1886, Chief Peter Brown bought the schooner Champion. The Makah schooners were not as large and comfortable, or as well maintained, as the best vessels of the Victoria sealing fleet. As Captain William Brennan of Victoria once observed: 'They (the Indians) always want to ship on a first-class schooner, unless they own it, when any rattletrap will do.'

The *Lottie* cleared \$8,000 on a sealing voyage to the Bering in 1891 and \$7,000 the following year. Encouraged by this success, the Makahs bought more ships and in December, 1893, a total of 10 Indian-owned sealing schooners were fitted out in Neah Bay for the spring season. (Murray, P. 1988:155,156)

Murray notes that the new wealth was accumulated by a relatively few individuals among the Makah, such as Chief Clapanhoo, who wanted nothing to do with the potlatch competitions. The special advantages of Indian sealers were removed by a 1893 convention on seal conservation, which required them to observe the same restrictions as non-Indians when hunting from schooners. This ruling was disputed by Makah but in the spring of 1894 their schooner *L.C. Perkins*, owned by a James Lighthouse, and another Makah vessel, the *Amateur*, were seized by an American patrol vessel for hunting out of season. The Makah and their representatives came up with the imaginative claim that they were engaged in their traditional hunt (which was unrestricted), and were simply using their schooners as offshore 'refuges'. This ploy made the rounds of the American and Canadian Fisheries departments but was insensitively rejected. (Murray, P.1988:157)

During the mid to late 1890s some BC natives also operated their own sealing schooners - particularly Nootka from San Juan Bay. A few small schooners were acquired but without notable success. Some Pacheenaht sealers crossed over to Neah Bay to sign aboard the Makah-owned vessels. But the Makah were having their own problems; in March of 1892 their *James G. Swan* was ordered confiscated by a Seattle Court for sealing in the Bering during a general closure. The next year Clapanhoo's ship *Lottie* was wrecked on Dungeness Spit as she was tried to pull the schooner *Decanks* off the beach. In 1897 the Makah's schooner ventures came to an end when the U.S. banned pelagic sealing by any of its citizens. (Murray, 1988: 159-160)

In contrast, Indian sealers had become ever more prominent in the sealing fleet based in Victoria. Native entrepreneurs in BC also came to build, buy and operate their own schooners. The first vessel acquired by a Victor Jacobson (a white sealing skipper) in 1883 was the twenty-three ton *Mountain Chief*. She had been built by an Indian chief on the Nass river. Jacobson paid \$400 for her, did a refit and used her for sealing until at least 1888. But he found it increasingly difficult to recruit Indian sealers, who preferred bigger and newer ships, and so had to "take on a number of Clayoquot women to act as paddlers for their husbands." (Murray, 1988: 27,28)

In 1892 the *Mountain Chief* was still engaged in sealing but was now owned by one Jim Nawassum, a Pacheenaht of San Juan Bay. Nawassum had sailed for a number of years on Makah schooners before buying his own vessel. The *Mountain Chief* was twice boarded by U.S. revenue cutters for having hunted inside Alaska territorial waters and finally towed to Victoria for court disposition, but was returned to Nawassum on his plea of ignorance of American law. He abandoned her on the shore of San Juan bay in 1895. (Murray:117, 196)

Charlie Chips of Nitinaht acquired the 18 ton *Amateur* in 1894 for a \$1,000 and went sealing off the coast. *She could carry eight canoes and Chips took one of every three skins.....After the Amateur was wrecked on Nitinaht Bar, Chips decided to give up and go out on the white men's schooners as a 'boss'* (Murray, 195-196) Jimmie Nyeton, also of Nitinaht, briefly owned the 18 ton *Pachewallis*, which he had bought from a Chinese owner and had refitted. Also flitting around the coast for a while was the *Fisher Maid*, built by a native boatbuilder on the Queen Charlottes and briefly used by an Indian owner for sealing.

The most costly undertaking by a native boat builder-owner came late in the game and was presented to the Canadian claims compensation hearings in Dec. 1913. A Fred Carpenter had built a 60 foot sealing schooner, the *Rainbow*, in 1906-1907 on Campbell Island near Bella Bella. *"She was constructed with day labour and local lumber at a total cost of \$4,000....Carpenter was an enterprising native who had earned some from logging, some from a gasboat which he used to carry 'tourists', and got the balance from his father, a*

Chief who was also a lighthouse keeper employed by the government." (Murray, 1988: 224) Carpenter's claim was ultimately rejected.

White sealing schooner owners had conflicting views about Indian sealers. Despite the talents of Indian hunters, a considerable number of white sealers remained in the industry and attempted to organize a Sealers Union in 1898. The schooner owners then combined in an association which set crew quotas and uniform rates for all crewmen and hunters. Some skippers said they preferred Indian hunters because they were 'less quarrelsome' than whites while others felt that Indian sealers were more likely to quit hunting under poor conditions. Some owners noted that it cost less to provision Indian sealers than whites but others said that their services had now become as 'expensive' as white sealers. The most illuminating quality of these discussions was the mean-spiritedness involved (Murray, 161,179-183)

One remarkable proposition emerged from the schooner owners efforts to cut costs and hold down wages. Sometime in late 1896 or 1897 a proposal was made to recruit "... *some 100 Micmac Indians from Nova Scotia, who were said to have experience spearing hair seal and porpoise..... The supposed industriousness of the Micmacs and their willingness to work for lower wages was intended to give 'our Siwashes' an object lesson.*" (Murray, 180)

A tabulation of the shifting number of schooners and the number of their Indian and white crews can be found in the footnotes. The main materials lacking are accounts by the Indian (and white) sealers themselves.

Pelagic sealing began to wind down between 1905 and 1910 with the decimation of the seal herds, the increasing restrictions and the decline in catches. Those schooners which did continue to go out sometimes had relatively profitable voyages. In 1905 the *Eva Marie* returned with 837 pelts, to the value of \$30,000, since seal skins had climbed to \$35 on the London market and brought \$14 per pelt even at Victoria dockside. (Busch, B.1985:139) Other vessels no longer found enough seals to pay for outfitting and ship after ship left the sealing trade. Many of them were moored in the inner harbor of Victoria where they gradually mouldered away. By 1910 only a handful of the remaining sealing fleet actually went out to hunt. The following year, Canada finally ratified the International Sealing Convention and by the end of 1911 pelagic sealing was banned in all North Pacific waters.

Chapter 11

Logging, Sawmilling and Longshoring

Sawmilling

An early account of Indian suppliers providing logs and shingle bolts for trade comes from Nanaimo. By the summer of 1852 the HBC was in the process of establishing a coal mine settlement there and the Indian population of the immediate vicinity had cornered the trade in coal gleaned from surface outcrops. They were also engaged in cutting shingle bolts and shingles used in the construction of the miners' cabins. The local natives attempted to prevent more distant Indian groups from cutting into this trade. In September of 1852 J.W. McKay, the senior clerk at Nanaimo, wrote to James Douglas as follows; "*A number of Shusuhomish and Sheshalis arrived here last week. They were anxious to enter into the shingle business as the Nanaimoes will not allow them to work the coal. They brought with them a few pieces of split cedar to trade as near the shape of shingles as they had any idea of, for which they asked extravagant prices. Owing to their want of tools they cannot work at a reasonable rate.*" (Norcross, B. 1979: 6-7) Douglas replied the following month, saying that given the immanent arrival of the remaining miners from Fort Rupert, McKay was at liberty to employ as many Indians as necessary to get the cabins ready.

A small steam-driven sawmill was established at Nanaimo to cut lumber for local construction but the price paid for sawlogs was amazingly low. In 1856 Indian handloggers from the surrounding area were bringing in logs at the tariff of eight larger logs or sixteen smaller ones for one HBC blanket.¹

It may bear noting that timber and wood products were the basis of almost all construction throughout BC during the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century. Hotels and stores, private residences large and small, schools and churches, warehouses and much else were built of dressed timber and lumber. Wooden beams, flooring, and siding were also basic in the construction of many factory buildings. Most bridges, tressels, and docks, as well as water flumes and other infrastructure were mainly of built of wood. There were even wooden sidewalks and wood cobbled streets. If properly maintained, such wooden structures could last longer than the requirements of their builders. Timber was readily available, was easily worked, and was perfectly suitable for the scale of structures then built. European settlement and economic expansion meant that a substantial local and regional market for lumber existed; lumber which could be produced in relatively simple sawmills. Such mills could be found almost everywhere in the province and were among the first industrial operations established in any region.

The larger, heavily capitalized, sawmills in BC produced lumber for export and initially shipped to Pacific Rim markets. The prairie lumber market only developed during the 1890s and the markets in eastern Canada or in Europe could not be tapped until later because of the high transport costs involved.

In 1862-63 Gilbert Sproat was supervising the establishment of the initial sawmill operation in the Port Alberni region on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Logging and milling was mainly done by a crew of white workers but Sproat made some attempts to recruit native labour. He offered Nootka labour engaged around the sawmill a rate of two blankets and biscuit rations for a month's work - but paid *nothing* if the Nootka workers failed to complete a full month's employment. Through this rationale he seems to have avoided paying Nootka workers anything at all. (Lillard, 1987: 3-4, 40) It requires no ethnological insight to understand why the Nootka soon refused to have anything to do with Sproat and his mill. The sawmill ran up deficits and was abandoned shortly after. Sproat went on to other enterprises and higher levels of cogitation while the region only became a center of lumber production a generation and more later.

Export sawmills arose in the Crofton-Chemainus and the Burrard Inlet areas during the 1860s. Indian labour was employed both in the mills and in longshoring lumber into sailing vessels, which were then the primary means of transporting timber long distances. Local Songhees men also worked in sawmills around Victoria in the early 1870s. Far to the north, the Tsimshian at Metlakatla were operating their small mission-owned sawmill by the end of the 1860s. By 1874 a commercial sawmill (Georgetown Mills) was established on the north coast near Port Simpson; it employed Tsimshian and other Indians from the region as loggers, sawmill workers, longshoremen and in other capacities. It later purchased logs from Indian-owned logging outfits, presumably Tsimshian, based in Port Simpson.²

Indian men also migrated from points along the coast to work in sawmills and other enterprises in Washington Territory by the 1870s. They were sometimes accompanied by their wives and families. During 1875-1876, W.H. Pierce, a Port Simpson Tsimshian, came to Port Laidlaw, Washington, to earn a stake by working in the sawmills there. He found that others had preceded him. Port Laidlaw sawmills were employing several hundred Indian workers from Washington Territory and the BC coast. There were people from the Queen Charlotte Islands, from Port Simpson and the Nass, from Kitimat and Bella Bella and from yet other points employed in the mills there. Working elsewhere in Washington Territory were people from the Nootka settlements on west coast Vancouver Island and others from the Fraser Valley.³

Export lumber mills on Burrard Inlet had become a major industry by the 1870s and local Indian labour made up part of the work force. In 1873 one Squamish man had allegedly amassed some \$3000 mainly through sawmill work, which he reportedly used in a competition for chiefly status against another Indian sawmill worker. By the mid 1870s a complement of Indian sawmill workers and stevedores existed at the Moodyville and Hastings sawmills on Burrard Inlet. Others worked in logging camps or as hand loggers around the southern coasts. Sawmill and lumber handling jobs already were an established source of cash income to Squamish bands on Burrard Inlet by 1878.⁴

While sawmill work entailed unskilled labour a good deal of practical experience was required and acquired. Some Indian men already held clearly skilled jobs. One Dick Issacs, a Squamish man from a North Vancouver reserve, had been a sawyer at Hastings Sawmill before he was crippled in a work accident in 1886. Jim Franks and Alex Tom, two other Squamish men, operated the log carriage at Hastings Mill in the mid 1880s. A core of Indian sawmill workers had worked many years in the Moodyville mill during the previous decade. According to Calvert Simson, then storekeeper at Hastings Sawmill, trade was often in company script and Chinook jargon was a common means of communication in and around the mill during the mid 1880s.⁵

One of the early Squawmish lumberworkers was Agust Khahtsalano, born in 1877 on a stump ranch in what today is Stanley Park and raised on Kitsilano point, which was then an Indian reserve. Although his account is rather mangled, the picture which emerges outlines Indian families who by the beginning of the 1890s worked, lived and participated in the vortex of industrial and urban developments taking place in the Vancouver area. By the mid 1890s Khahtsalano was working at the Rat Portage sawmill and at other mills around False Creek. Indian workers were then a normal part of the picture. By 1910, along with a white logger called Jenkins, Khahtsalano had acquired the funds to establish himself as a small logging operator, hiring his own crew. He continued in this line with modest success throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s.⁶

The Indian workers engaged in the sawmills and docks of a burgeoning Vancouver during the 1880s and 1890s were not solely drawn from local bands. There were both temporary and more permanent Indian workers drawn from up-coast. For instance, in 1887 Charles Nowell, a seventeen year old from Fort Rupert hits Vancouver after spending his summer earnings in Seattle.

When we got to Vancouver I was dead broke, and went over to North Vancouver in a small canoe to the sawmill and asked the manager if he could give me a job. He told me I could be a fireman [on the steam boiler] in the sawmill. I says, 'I never did it before, but I will try and do my best.' He says there is another Indian there who has been working for two years and he will tell me what to do. ⁷

Steam boilers and screeching machinery apparently did not overwhelm some Indian people and Nowell went on to become a minor foreman on the dock before returning to Fort Rupert. Another case is that of Harry Cameron, a Haida who in his youth was returned to the Queen Charlottes to be raised by his maternal uncle. Cameron had grown up in the Gore Street area of East Vancouver in the 1890s. His father had *previously* migrated from the Queen Charlottes and had long been working in the Hastings Sawmill.⁸

Band or mission-owned sawmills were producing for local or regional markets before the turn of the century. In addition to mills cutting lumber for reserve use, a mission-owned but Indian-operated commercial sawmill was established at Alert Bay in the late 1870s. Although it was later sold to private interests it continued to be run mainly by Indian labour, skilled and unskilled. By or shortly after 1900 band or mission-operated sawmills also existed at Masset, Skidegate, Kincolith, Andimaul, Kispiox, and elsewhere.⁹

A somewhat ironic account is that of a Tsimshian who attempted to explain the workings of sawmill machinery to a rather nonplused party of government commissioners. In 1887 members of the BC Royal Commission investigating conflicting land and other claims visited Metlakatla. A stenographic record of an exchange between Commissioner Planta and a Metlakatla Tsimshian named Albert Leighton is of interest. Leighton had then been working around the local sawmill for twelve years and was the chief mechanic there. His capacity was born out in his description of the workings of the Metlakatla mill, its housings, bearings, drive wheels and milling machinery etc. The commissioners were clearly puzzled by all this mechanical intricacy. (British Columbia. Report on the Royal Commission on Condition of Indians etc. 1888: 456-457)

Another case of an Indian-operated sawmill was that at Kispiox. Organized as a band venture by W.H. Pierce, it was to be part of the model village complex he hoped to establish in Kispiox. The sawmill equipment was purchased in 1898 through a \$50 per share investment subscribed by band members. A waterpowered sawmill, planer, moulder and ancillary machinery were imported and a team of millwrights came to set it up. But in the second year of operation it was found necessary to rebuild the penstocks and re-site the mill. This was done successfully by the Kispiox themselves, who devised their own practical changes without external assistance.

The sawmill grew into a commercial enterprise providing employment to local Indian sawmill workers and logging crews. It provided material for house construction at Kispiox but also sold lumber to Indians and whites in the Hazelton area. By 1909 the mill was operating on a two shift basis, due to the building boom created by the Grand Trunk Railway construction. Two Indian logging crews operated to supply the mill with timber. However, with the construction of more modern sawmills in the region and with the lowered transportation costs provided by the completed GTP Railway, the Kispiox mill retreated to production for reserve needs.¹⁰

Logging

The numbers of Indian loggers involved in the earliest phase of the lumber industry is unclear. Some Indian handloggers may have delivered logs to early local mills, as at Nanaimo in the 1850s, and it seems that there were Indian loggers in the Sooke region during the 1860s.

Logging for export sawmills during the 1860s and 1870s was mainly restricted to the environs of the Gulf of Georgia, southeastern Vancouver Island, the adjacent mainland and in the lower Fraser Valley. Logging was initially done in within easy hauling/skidding

distance from water connecting with the sawmills. No extensive haulage or towing was feasible at first. The Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for 1875 lists work in 'lumber shanties' as providing a part of the cash earned by Indians only in the Fraser River and Northwest Coast agencies.¹²

During the next decade the spread of sawmills, plus the feasibility of towing log booms longer distances, opened up the inlets and sounds along much of the coast to commercial logging. By the end of the 1880s there were Indian loggers not only at Port Simpson but others among the Kwakiutl, and from Sechelt and Sliammon. Indian loggers were important in the Cowichan area where, in 1890, they comprised a third of the white-water men taking the log drive down the Cowichan River. I suspect that there were Indian loggers throughout the interior by then, although I have no clear evidence.¹³

By the 1890s logging was important as the cash source for an increasing number of coastal communities. People from the once isolated Haisla village of Kitimaat had entered the industry by then, although their full involvement in logging and commercially fishing emerged only later. Handlogging had been taken up by many of the southern Kwakiutl. In 1892 the Lekwiltok near Cape Mudge constructed a two to three mile skidroad for their own logging operation, but got into debt through the cost of hiring horse and ox teams to pull the logs out. Later attempts on their part were more successful. Native handloggers and small logging outfits from Sechelt and vicinity were already established in the industry. They were culturally modifying trees and converting them into cash.

By the last decade of the nineteenth century logging was no longer merely an occasional source of cash income. It had become critical for some native groups. When a sharp recession hit the North American economy in 1894 orders for lumber dried up, sawmills shut down and both Indian and white loggers found themselves without jobs. It was a consequence of a US financial panic. By then, the wizardry of New York speculators could effect the jobs and incomes of Indian workers in distant BC.¹⁴

At the end of the 1890s even the relatively isolated Salish communities of Homalco and Klahoose were engaged in logging. In the Northwest Coast Agency, logging for the three major sawmills then in the region was second only to commercial fishing and cannery work as a source of cash income. By 1901 Nootka from their various settlements around Barkley Sound were supplying the Alberni sawmills (no relation to Sproat's original venture) with logs and shingle bolts. The Queen Charlotte Islands were on the verge of a lumber boom which during the next decade was to turn the region into a hive of logging activity.¹⁵

A crescendo of staking timber land developed in BC between circa 1900 and 1910. Timber speculators and large lumber companies trooped into the province to acquire vast tracts of timber land under various leasing arrangements, at minimal costs. Provincial governments touted development railways, prosperity and resource giveaways - and were reelected. It is surprising that as much land remained under crown title as did.

Many of the same problems faced handloggers and small logging outfits, regardless of whether Indian or white. Lack of credit, timberlands alienated by speculators and large corporations, boom and bust cycles in the market, continual technical changes and recurrent financial problems. Despite this, Indian loggers in some regions 'flourished' - in the context of the times this means that they were making a passable living doing hard and dangerous work. Codere considers the period 1900-1908 the highpoint of Kwakiutl handlogging. She notes that in 1907, of twelve southern Kwakiutl tribal groups, nine were engaged to some extent in commercial logging. Of these, the Matilpi, the Klawatis and the Kwakewlth, were said to obtain their major cash income from logging.¹⁶

Following Codere's account, I originally held that Indian handloggers faced legislated restrictions following the 1908 Provincial Timber Licence regulations, which required that anyone staking timber claims had to be on the Provincial voters roll. This would have excluded native Indian handloggers on crown timberlands. But in fact, Indian handloggers utilizing crown timber were exempted from the franchise requirements of the act and

continued to log under licence. Indian logging also got under way on reserve lands. It appears that DIA policy encouraged logging reserve tracts at this time. In 1911 the Lekwiltok at Cape Mudge obtained a loan for horses and logging equipment to work timber stands on their reserve, which they were able to pay back through log sales in the following year.¹⁷

The intricacies and endless changes to BC Forestry Acts from 1910 and on are quite beyond me, as they must be to every lay person. It is generally held that from this date on the allotment of provincial timber lands begins to take on a modern character, with corporate forestry and governmental interests increasingly systematized. However, opportunities for small logging outfits continued to exist for a further generation, and more. Independent Indian logging operations continued among the Kwakiutl, the Bella Bella, Bella Coola, among the Kitimat and elsewhere. Moreover, Indian loggers were now also engaged by white-owned logging companies, large and small.¹⁸

By 1910-1911 Indian men from more than fifty bands worked in logging and sawmilling. Although I won't list them here, the reader may peruse the footnote to see the almost province-wide spread of this industry.¹⁹ Some bands had been at it for only a few years, many for a generation and a few had a history of employment in the lumber industry of close to a half century by that time. They worked along the length and breadth of the BC coast, on the Queen Charlottes and on Vancouver Island. They logged along the Skeena and on the side hills of the lower Fraser. Others worked in the Kootenays and around the Shuswap Lakes. Indian lumber workers operated band-owned sawmills, did stints in fly-by-night portable mills, and worked in the largest export sawmills in the province. They worked in virtually every job in the industry, from skid greaser and chokerman to high rigger and sawyer.

In 1910 some twenty Kwakiutl men from Kingcome Inlet were working in a logging camp of the giant Powell River Pulp and Paper Company. Further north, on the Queen Charlotte Islands, some Haida worked in company logging camps before and during WW I. Such Haida loggers would have witnessed a rather proud occupational culture quite different from that the mission villages proffered. While not detached from their home villages, they knew the lumber camps with their cosmopolitan crews and the logger boom towns, such as Port Clements, with their specialized emporia. It is possible that Haida loggers of that era had a greater facility with working class variants of 'European society' than did the white missionaries themselves.²⁰

In the interior of the province, lumbering was limited to local or regional sales until the prairie building boom developed in the 1890s. Then it surged ahead for a twenty-five year period. Members from bands around Adams and Shuswap Lakes were working as 'woodsmen', cutting logs and rafting timber to sawmills in Kamloops by the end of the 1890s. The most important lumber region of the interior was then the east Kootenays. Although the native population there was quite small some became horse loggers while others worked for large lumber companies. By 1910 members of the Tobacco Plains, Lower Kootenay, and St. Mary's bands worked in various phases of the regional lumber industry. Due to a number of external reasons—the decline of the prairie market, changing transport costs, shifting loci of capital investment and the over-cutting of regional timber resources—the Kootenay lumber industry declined rapidly during the 1920s. For the next twenty-five years the coast was the primary logging area.²¹

In the Cariboo, logging and sawmilling was small scale and long produced mainly for regional markets. By the early 1920s some Indian loggers and lumberworkers were employed in small sawmills scattered along the PGE rail line, such as those in Squamish, Pemberton, Devine, D'Arcy, and other settlements. Indian loggers were also to be found on the Nicola plateau, around some of the Okanagan reserves, and at Alkali Creek, in the Chilcotin, in the 1920s. As a late instance of native entrepreneurship, we may note Albert Meldrum's small logging operation during the 1940s at Meldrum Creek in the West

Cariboo. He had previously been a professional boxer in Canada and the US, fighting under the title of the 'Cariboo Chief.'²²

I have no information on Indian lumberworkers in the Prince George-Bulkley Valley regions, although some were undoubtedly employed in the sawmills which sprang up during railway building boom of 1912-1915. When that region developed into one of the major lumber-producing zones in the province in the 1940s, native lumberworkers there were quite prominent.

Let us consider another fragment of James Sewid's recollections here. Sewid's father had worked in the woods for many years before he was killed in a logging accident in 1913. James Sewid's stepfather, David Matilpi, was also a veteran logger.

David Matilpi was a logger and with his five brothers owned a logging camp. They would move around from one place to another. The logging camps they set up were often back on little isolated lakes. I dropped out of school for a while and used to go over to where they were living at one of the logging camps and stay with them for a while. He was a very good mechanic and could run any kind of engine. He was running those big steam donkeys they used in logging, and when I was a little boy I used to follow him around wherever he would go, and that's where I learned how to run donkeys and engines.²³

Sewid also recounts his involvement with a band-owned logging company on Village Island. While set in the mid 1930s, the account gives some feel of the problems facing band-owned operations, problems which existed before and after that period.

There was a lot of timber on our reserve there and so the tribe decided that it would be a good idea to have our own logging operation instead of selling the rights to the timber to some other firm. We thought we might employ our own people by doing that but it didn't work out. The chief was the one who was running that logging operation but his brother was . . . more or less the brains. His brother was a hooktender and a high rigger and a very good logger. Of course I was running the steam donkey to pull the logs out of the woods and then boom them in the water, and a tugboat took them to Powell River. It was awfully hard in those days to get somebody to run the steam donkey. I was the only one who knew how to do that . . . I had an elderly man working with me as a fireman and two or three others who would unhook the logs when they were pulled out and pile them up.

On Saturday I used to go for half a day to do some repairs on the donkey, like cleaning the tubes. It was a lot of work on that steam donkey. It wasn't like a diesel which could be worked on whenever it needed work. On the steam donkey you had to keep things in good shape. If there was anything to be done on the machine I had to go over it and fix it myself to be sure that I had it going. Everything had to be in order. Well, the chief and his brother were fighting all the time and his brother finally quit. We knew that he knew more about logging than any of the boys that were up in the woods. So the boys that were working, especially the boys that were close to him, felt that he should be brought back into our logging operation. They wanted him rather than his older brother, who just walked around and didn't do anything or know anything. I didn't know what he was there for. So when the younger brother came back in the chief quit. It was better that way and Henry Bell took over to kind of be boss. We owed money to the man who sold us the donkey and we tried to pay all our debts. We carried on for a few years after that.²⁴

A rather different account is that of a non-status Indian logger who did spend all of his working life in the logging industry. Hank Pennier was born in 1904 on the Chehalis reserve at the mouth of the Harrison River. By then members of the Chehalis and Scowlitz reserves had been employed as sawmill workers and loggers for the Harrison Mills and smaller outfits for some twenty-five years.

Pennier began work in the woods, helping his brother take out shingle bolts, while still attending the Indian residential school at Mission. His first regular job was as a helper in a Coquahalla Pass sawmill in 1920. In 1922 he became a logger and the next thirty-three years of his life were spent in the logging industry, mainly around the margins of the Fraser

Valley. He was a chokerman, a high rigger and sometimes a hooktender, during the twenties and thirties. Pennier remembers steam and cable logging during the late 1920s this way,

. . . '27 and '28 were very good years in the woods as far as earning money was concerned. But boy oh boy logging was a tough and rough game. You had to work or else. If you were a little slow getting those chokers the hooker would holler at you, 'Don't run, fly'. And if you didn't, down the road you'd go for your time card. Many's the guy who was packed out of the woods [injured] and I helped the odd one pack out too.

There was one new choker man in particular, he started work in the morning. Before noon on that day there were two of the boys injured. 'If this is logging', he says, 'to hell with it. I'm quitting.' And he did. If you worked overtime all you got was straight time. No time and a half about it.

We had a big 12 x 14 steam unit by this time, for yarding the logs in with and I remember this high ball wood's foreman standing behind the yard engineer who was running her at three quarters throttle. The Bull of the Woods finally got so he couldn't stand this any longer and he shouts to the engineer, 'This thing's got only two speeds, wide open or shut.' So the engineer sure punished that old yarder after that.

Nothing mattered just so long as they got the logs out. They were all log hungry. 'Specially after a few beers those high ballers would start those big logs flying around and you sure had to watch your self and stay in the clear or you would get hit good, injured or maybe killed. 25

Pennier experienced the crimps of Black's Loggers Agency, the seasonal shut-downs and haywire logging operations, as well as permanent jobs for two corporate forest companies. He revelled in the endless intricacies of rigging and the oral history of countless logging operations; from salvage logging on Vedder Mountain to being head loader in an H.R. MacMillan camp near Port Alberni. Over thirty years in the logging industry, two near fatal accidents which leave him partially crippled, and he ends as a boom hole borer for Canadian Forest Products at Harrison Mills. When no longer capable of even that he retires to his stump ranch near Deroche.

Pennier notes that it was mainly in his work life that he related to non-Indians, as other workers; that his social life was mainly lived apart from whites. Despite this and despite the title of Pennier's book (*Chiefly Indian*), his account is also the story of thousands of other loggers of that period. While one appreciates Pennier's openness and knowledge, we do not have to accept his conclusions. Despite his own experience of being rousted around, injured, and finally cast aside as a worn-out old man in his early fifties, this does not seem to sway Pennier from a feeling of the rightness of things.

The logging business can mean a really good life and good pay for an Indian who wants to spend his life at it and it always is a mystery to me why more of them don't see this. Hell it never hurt me any, except my hips that is, but that is the risk a man has to take and I am not grumbling. 26

Other loggers did not share Pennier's fatalism and more than forty years of union struggle served to improve the wages and make the conditions a little safer than what some were willing to accept. What we *do not* have are accounts of those Indian loggers and sawmill workers who not only extracted a living from their work but who also were part of the struggles to create an industry fit for men, not 'timber beasts'. Both as individuals and as members of broader groups, their voices should be heard.

Longshoring

Longshoring as a regular source of income developed from the employment of Indian workers in the export sawmills. Until the 1890s such sawmills were exclusively coastal and lumber was shipped aboard lumber barques, and later steamers, destined mainly for Pacific Rim markets. Sawmill production fluctuated considerably and often the same crews which

produced the lumber were used to load it into ships. From the 1870s to the 1930s Indian longshoremen were primarily involved in lumber loading.

Cowichan men were working in the Askew sawmill near Chemainus during the late 1860s and Indian lumber loading gangs were well established in the the Crofton-Chemainus area by the late 1870s and 1880s. They were drawn from the local Cowichan bands and from those on the Gulf Islands. Indian lumber handlers travelled to stow cargo from sawmills along the BC coast. As a young man in the 1890s, August Jack was a foreman of travelling Indian longshore crews. He recounts that the working *lingua Franca* of lumber loading was Chinook jargon. During that decade and into the 1920s he and other Indian longshoremen shipped aboard lumber barques heading to take on lumber at Nanaimo, Prince Rupert, Union Bay, Deep Bay, Nanoose and elsewhere.²⁷

Reminiscing about the time he was manager of the Victoria Door and Lumber Company mill at Chemainus in 1919, H.R. MacMillan himself enthused about the hard working qualities of the Indian longshore gangs. They apparently were called in for specific jobs from their home reserves and worked under their own bosses. They managed to load and turn around lumber ships in record time. It appears that their working milieu was much more segregated than that in a port like Vancouver.²⁸

The sawmills and docks of Burrard Inlet gradually became the most important locale for Indian longshoremen. Members of local Squamish bands were already working in the Burrard Inlet sawmills by the end of the 1860s and longshoring is listed as one of the primary sources of their income in the 1876 Department of Indian Affairs report. Moody's Mill, in North Vancouver, was a major employer of Indian labour and by 1870 a heterogeneous 'community' of sawmill workers and longshoremen was growing up nearby.

By 1890 a plethora of mills had emerged around Burrard Inlet and on False Creek. Many hired Indian workers and a core of Indian longshoremen had begun to develop. By the end of that decade a number of Indian foremen and other longshore specialists, such as 'side runners', 'hatch tenders', 'donkeymen', already existed on the Burrard docks.²⁹

A linkage between leadership of Squamish bands in North Vancouver and employment on the docks seems to have developed. For instance, Dan Paul (the father of Andrew Paul, a notable Indian spokesman of the following generation) was both a 'watchman' in the Squamish mission hierarchy and a permanent mill worker and longshoreman during the 1890s. By 1896 he was the superintendent of lumber loading gangs for a stevedoring company briefly operated by Captain Cates. Chief Joe Capilano also worked as a foreman on the Vancouver docks during the same period. This helped finance his trip to England in 1906 where he laid forth Indian land claims in an audience with a King of England.³⁰

Vancouver dock workers were a heterogeneous lot by the late 1890s.. They included Chileans, Kanakas (Hawaiians), native Indians, native whites, assorted Europeans, and others such as John St. John, a Barbadian who for forty years was active in supporting whatever labour unions there were on the docks. Squamish longshoremen were part of this cosmopolitan bunch, although often they worked in separate gangs. Usually they loaded the same kinds of ships and did the same kinds of tasks as other longshoremen did. By the turn of the century they drank together, argued, combined and competed with each other, and began to organize labour unions.³¹

Alex Nyman, who grew up near Moodyville near the North Vancouver docks, remembered longshoring near the turn of the century. The Indian longshore crews around Burrard Inlet numbered fifty to sixty men. They specialized in longshoring lumber. Nyman began working on the docks in 1903. As a kid of not quite fourteen he was desperate to get away from doing chores on his family's farmlet on the not so distant outskirts of Vancouver. Remembering his first step into adulthood,

Believe it or not, my first boss was Chief Joe Capilano. Leon was in charge of the works. Leon Nahu. They were working night shifts to get the ship out; it had to be finished by the first of the year so they put on night crews. They got men from everywhere and they had to

put a night foreman on. The whole job was too big for Joe so they put Joe on the after end only and they had another fellow up forward. Leon used to stay from seven o'clock in the morning until twelve o'clock at night, to oversee the whole job. Chief Joe came along and said, 'Say boy, would you like to go to work' and I said, 'Sure.' I would do anything if I could get away from that milk ranch. 32

Something of the ingenuity and the pride of work involved in lumber longshoring in those days is captured in an account by Ed Nahanee, one of the second generation of Indian longshoremen on the inlet. While probably an overly rosy reminiscence, Nahanee suggests a certain camaraderie among dock workers. He began work on the waterfront in circa 1912, at the age of fifteen or sixteen. His father had previously worked for many years for Empire Stevedoring as a steam winch operator. Ed tells of longshoring roughly during the era of WW1.

One of the wire puller's jobs was to guide the load to the chute. You had a peavy and would give it a pinch here and a pinch there. When the load was moving it was easy to handle. We would have about 500 feet of wire. You had to have strong legs.

When you started to load a sailing ship, right down at the bottom there was about six feet of rock ballast. The siderunner would look at the rock and it would be uneven and he had to see that it was leveled out by stowing a bit here and a bit there and a bit this way and a bit that way. The ship might be 400 feet and once the bottom was leveled you floored off. We could stow about a million and a half feet in a ship that size. It took a hell of a big ship to take over two million. There were a few steam ships coming in at this time. But there were an awful lot of sailing ships . . .

On those sailing ships we would have four men a side down below. Two wire pullers, a donkey driver and four men on the dock. The four men on the dock made up the loads. We used to work 10 hours a day. No overtime. We got 45 cents an hour. That was in 1912.

...It would take about six weeks to load one of those ships. That would be working six days a week . . .

The guys were all characters on the beach. They all fitted into a picture of fun. It made a real nice, lively day. When you went home, you went feeling good. The next morning you were all there again. That was the spirit in those days. If I had to do it over again I would do the same thing. I don't care how dirty the job was, I had the strength and I had the brains. St. John used to say we were all one big family. A part of each other.

A comparison of wages in those days. We were getting 45 cents an hour. A man working in a sawmill got 40 cents. Around 1918 we went on strike for 5 cents an hour more. I think that there was a small strike in 1915. That was when we started to amalgamate with the cargo handlers.

We belonged to the Bow and Arrows. I was secretary-treasurer the same time as Andy Paul was business agent. I was only there as secretary for about six months and then I went bossing. This was around 1923 or 1924 . 33

Indian longshoremen acquired a reputation as lumber loaders. Both they and their employers recounted tales of the skill, stamina, and knack of Indian longshore crews in this work. Tales of how Indian crews working day and night got the ships out in time, stories in which Indian longshoremen had to be sent in to take over difficult jobs which other longshore gangs could not handle, and so forth. If many of these stories were apocryphal, they bespoke a certain pride in the work done. One story is recounted by Ed Nahanee.

During the First World War we had a ship come in here called the 'West Point' I was driving double winch and it took exactly twenty-five days to load that ship. She was loading timbers up to 90 feet with the ship's gear. Now, that is where Horton's brain comes in. There is no boom on the ship long enough to lift 90 feet so we had to find other means. Here is where Horton comes in. Harris White was on the hatch. He brings a 90 footer, 24 x 24 up about half way across the hatch. Shifts the sling back to the middle. Takes the end of the stick and swings it. He puts the end of the timber between the mast and the mid-ship

boom. He had got a skid across there for it to rest on. Then he puts the gear on the back end of it and then gives the signal to take the weight. Then it is up to the winch driver. He has to ease it down, ease it down until it gets to the bottom. There is a wire from the anchor winch to make sure that it doesn't get away. When the front end hits the bottom the sling from the front end is moved back and with the anchor winch going ahead and the hatch winch coming back, it is set down in the hatch. We worked at this until we couldn't get anymore 90s in and then we finished off with 'short stows.' When this ship got to the Old Country they couldn't get the 90s out and we sent two men from here to show them how.

Old St. John used to tell a story about Horton. He couldn't use a tape measure. He couldn't read or write. In his head he could figure most anything out. ³⁴

I have no idea what the above technical details mean, but similar accounts from the first half of the twentieth century can be found in the I.L.W.U.s *Man along the Shore*. Woven through the pages of this set of accounts are reminiscences of and by Indian longshoremen - William and Ed Nahanee, Jack Fisher, Gus Band, Joe Capilano, Dan Paul, Leon and Jumbo Nahu, Ambrose Reid, Louis Miranda, and a dozen others. In the overarching context of work they allude to both the camaraderie among dockworkers from disparate backgrounds but also of the divisions and sometime defeats they experienced. The role of Indian longshoremen in the formation of labour unions deserves a brief mention.

It is unknown whether any Indian longshoremen participated in the short-lived attempts of the Knights of Labour to organize the Burrard Inlet docks in 1888, or whether they joined the Independent Stevedore's Union in 1896. The docks still remained essentially unorganized during the bitter labour struggles of 1903. But three years later, Indian dock workers had established the first lasting union organization on the Burrard docks. According to Stuart Philpott's account of Squamish longshoremen, ' . . . in 1906 the Lumber Handlers Union, No. 526, of the Industrial Workers of the World, began, composed largely of Indians. Meetings were held in a hall on the reserve.'³⁵

The majority of the fifty to sixty members of the IWW local were Indian lumber loaders from North Vancouver but it was not an exclusive ethnic organization. According to Ed Long, the core members of this union included Englishmen, Hawaiians, and others. One of the founders was John St. John, a black man from Barbados who had already had a career as a seaman, boxing promoter, sealer, and longshoreman among the Chemainus lumber gangs. It was he who designed the crest of the North Vancouver lumberhandlers who during the next fifty years (under various designations) were colloquially known as the 'Bows and Arrows'.³⁶

The IWW local appears to have foundered after 1908. But by 1911 and 1912 Indian longshoremen were again in the thick of organizing. Louis Miranda, one of the Indian longshore leaders, was instrumental in having them affiliate with the International Longshoremen's Association.

. . . on July 12, 1913, a second ILA charter was issued to form Local 38-57, apparently composed mainly of lumber handling Indians. The local's first president was Squamish Band member William Nahanee. The executive also had some White members over the next few years although Ed Nahanee, son of the first president and present [1963] business agent for the Native Brotherhood of BC, was vice president of the local in 1915. ³⁷

There were also ILA locals at Victoria and Prince Rupert by 1913, although it is uncertain if they then had Indian members. The lumber loaders of Chemainus seem to have remained outside any labour organization.

The Vancouver locals of the ILA were smashed during the bitter 1923 dock strike, which was orchestrated by the Shipping Federation (one of the most sinister employers' organizations ever to exist in Canada). Local and imported strikebreakers took over the jobs on the docks. Most of the ILA men who supported the 1923 dock strike in Vancouver were

blacklisted, although some were gradually allowed to return to work when they were needed. Many Indian longshoremen were long banished from work on the docks.

Although Chief Dan George does not appear to have been involved in union activity, a little of his working life may be worth considering, in view of the cinematic roles in which he has been cast. For much of his adult working life Dan George was a longshoreman in the world which has been outlined here. He was born on the Mission reserve in North Vancouver in 1899 when that community already had a generation-long history of longshore and sawmill work. He entered St. Paul residential school and received what was then a quite adequate education. He graduated in 1915 and became a logger the following year. After his marriage in 1919 George began working on the Burrard Inlet docks as a longshoreman. His activities during the 1923-1935 period are unknown to me, but he continued working on the docks until 1946, when a serious work accident compelled him to quit. Some time later, Dan George established a musical band which performed in assorted Vancouver cabarets. His forte was in delivering pungent humor in straight-faced puns. According to one memorialist: 'Through the experience of travelling with his band, Dan realized that a future lay in the field of entertainment. It was his stubborn perseverance that kept him going in the early years of his acting career.'³⁹

Many Indian and other longshoremen were banished from dockwork until 1935, while others were recruited as replacements. Tim Moody, whose father had been blacklisted after the 1923 strike, recalls how his family had to leave the Vancouver area to survive.

After his father had been forced to return to Squamish by the 1923 strike, the family lived by hunting and fishing with a cash income of \$4.86 a month in relief from band funds. For other money, the men fished all day from dugout canoes in Howe Sound and attempted to sell the catch to residents of Woodfibre and Britannia Beach. ⁴⁰

In an ironic twist, the company union (the Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers Association) came under the influence of the Workers Unity League in the early 1930s. In 1935 it launched into a bitter dock strike in Vancouver. As part of its strikebreaking effort, the Shipping Federation recruited members of longshore families whom it had previously blacklisted. Some of the complexity and self-justifications involved is caught in a comment by Tim Moody.

Some would call us strikebreakers. But that is a matter of opinion. The men whose jobs we took were those who broke the strike of 1923. It was a case of need. We found it necessary to retain these positions. My father said that my grandfather had been a longshoreman and we had to hang on to what he had started. It was all we had. ⁴¹

Following the defeat of the 1935 strike the mainly Indian lumberhandlers of North Vancouver retained eighty-five jobs and were formed into a separate organization (the North Vancouver Longshoremen's Association). It was led by Frank Baker, Gus Band, and later Tim Moody, all Squamish men. Some of the strikers eventually were allowed to return to the docks but many of the older and more militant longshoremen were forced out of the industry forever.

However, in 1942, some of the leaders of the North Vancouver Longshoremen's Association threw their support behind an effort to have the International Longshore and Warehousemen's Union recognized as the bargaining agent of Vancouver dockworkers. This finally witnessed the establishment of a union able to defend the interests of longshoremen.

Chapter 12

Mining and Railways and Freight Transport

Placer Mining and Mine Labour

Indians along the Thompson River were recovering placer gold from the bars on that river by or before 1853. In the fall of 1856 some 300 ounces of gold were traded into Thompson Post (Kamloops) by Indian placer miners. Initially, it was more like gold hunting, with few effective tools or techniques utilized for washing gold out of the sands and gravels. But not long after, Indian placer miners had acquired all the basic methods then in use.¹

The initial gold rush of 'American' miners into the lower Fraser Canyon began in early 1858 and extended into many parts of the province/colony during the next dozen years, usually without any particular success. James Douglas, writing on April 6, 1858, immediately before the main influx of white miners, noted that *'The search for gold and 'prospecting' of the country, had, up to the last dates from the interior, been carried on almost exclusively by the native Indian population, who have discovered the productive beds, and put out almost all the gold, about eight hundred ounces, which has been hitherto exported from the country, and who are moreover extremely jealous of the whites, and strongly opposed to their digging the soil for gold.'*²

In 1859, Judge Matthew Begbie, while touring the Lillooet area, was petitioned by two chiefs of the Cayoosh band who complained about interference with Indian placer workings and gardens by white miners. However, Indian groups along the central Fraser and Thompson regions were able to retain some of the bars and gold workings they had been working. Others there worked for wages on the larger placer operations opened by white miners.³

Within the first year of the Fraser gold rush, native people on the Fraser between Hope and Yale were employed on white placer operations. In May 1858, James Douglas again noted that Indian placer miners were working their own diggings around Hope and trading their gold to Americans. Furthermore, there were eighty Indians and thirty whites employed as wage labour on placer operations at Emory Bar (Yale). The Indian workers were receiving two to four dollars a day, much to the annoyance of Governor Douglas, who felt the excessive wages would make it difficult for the HBC to hire Indian labour.⁴

By the early 1860s the center of gold production had shifted to the Cariboo region, in particular to the Barkerville-Richfield area. Indian packers and casual workers were present there (as in most other gold rushes of that century) and an Indian shack town grew up on the outskirts of Barkerville. But there does not seem to have been any independent Indian mine operations there. After the Barkerville surface gravels had been worked out the mines became more capital intensive, requiring deep shafts to get at gold deposits at bedrock.⁵

During the later 1860s and the 1870s, Chinese, white and Indian placer miners continued to take gold from the bars and benches of the Fraser, Thompson and Bridge rivers and from other streams of the southern interior. The 1876 Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs mentions members of Indian bands scattered from Yale to Lillooet on the Fraser and from Lytton to Spence's Bridge on the Thompson, engaged in placer mining gold.⁶

By the 1880s mining in BC had basically shifted to hard rock operations involving shafts, tunnels, hoists, drilling equipment and above all else, capital. Most miners became wage and contract workers. Even on surface workings, highly capitalized hydraulic operations became the order of the day. Some Indian and white placer miners continued to work claims on the original gold-bearing streams well into the twentieth century, but as a form of alternate income. They placer mined gold when no other cash income was available. So, the number

of men and women engaged in washing gold fluctuated in direct relation to the cycles of depression and recovery in the broader economy.⁷

There is little published material about Indian prospectors, but in 1883 Indian prospectors around the Lillooet area were said to be 'again' taking out Free Miner's licenses to stake claims in the Bridge River region. These were probably placer gold claims but there were others prospecting for other minerals as well. This required a considerable practical knowledge of ore samples which was hardly traditional.⁸

In June of 1893 Pierre Cronin, an Indian prospector in the West Kootenays, located outcroppings of high grade galena ore on a northern ledge above Moyie Lake. One Father Coccola of the local RC mission was shown samples of this ore and contacted a Spokane mining magnate, who purchased a half interest in the claim. The remaining half interest was held by the Indian prospector and Father Coccola, which they later sold for \$12,500. The claim later came into the possession of the Cominco Company which developed it into the St. Eugene mine, one of the richest silver-lead mines in Western Canada.⁹

Such stories were true but anecdotal amongst *all* prospectors, who in the long run usually did not make more than the grub stake which allowed them to go on prospecting. They lived partly off the land while out prospecting, and mainly on dreams when they weren't.

In 1899 three Indian prospectors from the Kinbasket (Kutenai) band went prospecting and discovered a number of good quartz leads on a creek known as Horse Thief Number Three. On their return they were able to dispose of a part of their interest in the claim for the sum of \$800, which they divided among themselves. This seems more in line with what would constitute a good prospecting season.¹⁰

At the other corner of BC, two native prospectors did considerably better. Shortly before 1897 'Tagish Charlie' and 'Skookum Jim', already veteran prospectors in the region, were members of a group which discovered and staked the first claims in the Yukon which led to the Klondike Gold Rush. It seems that the native people in the Yukon itself did not involve themselves in placer mining itself, either during the height of the boom or later. That is somewhat strange. We will later note what roles they did play there.¹¹

The next great mining boom in BC was centered in the Kootenays and was based on hard rock, base metal mining. It began in about 1890 and with various booms and recessions continued in high gear until about WW I, continuing as a delimited industry until present.

The Kootenay mines initially were an extension of mining in the American mountain west. It was capital intensive and involved some of the same companies and capitalists who prevailed south of the border. The miners' unions which sprang up in the Kootenays were local organizations which soon joined the Western Federation of Miners, forerunner of the International Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers Union.

While some of native Kootenai worked in packing, logging and sawmilling, I have found no evidence of Indian workers in the corporate mines and mine towns which sprang up in that region. However, Indian miners were sometimes employed in the American fields.¹²

By 1906 the Western Federation of Miners had fifteen locals in BC; the WFM delegate to the 1907 Canadian Trades and Labour Convention was one Honore Jaxon, a former secretary to Louis Riel, who had returned to Canada after a sojourn in the Great Republic. In his address to the TLC Convention Jaxon exemplified the amalgam of rhetoric and egalitarianism which marked militant labour unionism during that era. In part he said,

The spirit of freedom was engendered in the men who came in contact with the Indians. The descendants of those pioneers are now in the majority of the Western Federation of Miners . . . Our Western people have a different function to those of the east. They saw, as the Indians before them saw, that there was no more west for them to be driven to, it was for them to make the stand against the hitherto overwhelming power of capital. ¹³

Considering the bitter and heroic struggles of labour in the eastern part of the continent, Jaxon's rhetoric was rather silly. However, it suggests something other than the anti-Indian sentiments imputed to labour by later sages.

There was at least one 'part-Indian' organizer who came out of the traditions of the Western Federation of Miners, and whose life and death demand remembrance. His name was Frank Little —IWW organizer and martyr. In 1911, in Missoula, Montana, a man with at least as much native ancestry as Pauline Johnson was jailed along with Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and other IWW agitators. Frank Little was 'the one-eyed, half-Indian organizer and member of the General Executive Board' of the IWW. A comrade of Bill Haywood and other now historic figures of the American labour movement, he participated in the free speech fights in Fresno, California, and led organizational campaigns from the Mesabi Iron Range to the wheat fields of Dakota. In 1917, still unrecovered from an attack by thugs, Little came to Butte, Montana, to organize an IWW miners union. There he was lynched by vigilantes of a local Citizen's Alliance - not because he was native but because he was a militant union organizer.¹⁴

Maybe it was Frank Little that Carl Sandburg had in mind when, in 1920, he wrote in his epic work *The People, Yes*.

*'Why,' said the Denver Irish policeman as,
He arrested the Pawnee Indian IWW soapboxer,
'Why don't you go back to where you came from..'*

Returning to the shores of British Columbia, let us consider the Indian labour involved in and around the Vancouver Island coal mines. Coal was discovered at Beaver Harbour near what was to become Fort Rupert, in the late 1830s. The HBC hoped to establish a coaling station there for its own steamships and to produce coal for export. The local Kwakiutl, inveterate traders themselves, realized the value of the deposits once the HBC showed interest in them. Writes Codere,

*The Kwakiutl, who had never mined coal or even used it except occasionally as a pigment, very quickly saw the economic possibilities of such an enterprise for the group which controlled it. [Factor] Finlayson writes: 'They informed us that they would not permit us to work the coals as they were valuable to them, but that they would labour in the mines themselves and sell to us the produce of their exertions . . .' The Kwakiutl were determined to have the profits from the mines for themselves. It is doubtful whether in the entire history of the Hudson's Bay Company's dealings with 'simpler people,' they met another case of opposition based on precisely their own kind of profit motives.*¹⁵

Actually, the HBC had a generation of experience in dealing with native people quite like the Kwakiutl in this regard. The Kwakiutl near Fort Rupert collected and traded coal dug from exposed surface seams until 1849, when a small group of Anglo-Scottish miners were brought in to open underground workings. It is unclear how much coal was actually extracted at Beaver Harbour, but at one point in 1850 the HMS *Driver* put in there and her captain reported ' . . . no less than twelve hundred tons of coal lying on the beach, collected by the Indians.'¹⁶

Shortly after that the HBC decided that working the coal deposits at Beaver Harbor was not profitable; richer fields had been discovered around Nanaimo. When the Nanaimo fields were opened in 1853, the HBC closed up its coal trade at Beaver Harbour, although Fort Rupert continued to operate as a trading post.

A once prevalent grade school text in BC retailed a story of the discovery of coal at Nanaimo. It spun a tale of an aged Indian, the so-called 'Nanaimo Coal Tyee', who wandered into the HBC blacksmith shop at Fort Victoria and enquired whether the company placed any value on 'the black rock that burns.' As the story had it, he was willing to exchange information about coal sources for the repair of his musket. The imputation being that Indians had no understanding of resources not traditionally used by themselves.

The fact of the matter was that Halkomelem people in the Nanaimo area were quite aware of a market for coal and before 1852 were already mining surface outcroppings and bringing the coal to Victoria for sale by the canoe load. Naturally they did not have the technology or the knowledge to conduct underground mining on their own. But it seems that taboos about not touching mother earth were of little consequence in their decisions.¹⁷ The HBC dispatched a small party of staff to Nanaimo harbor to begin working the coal deposits. Writing in September 1852, Joseph McKay, the senior officer of the recently established Nanaimo post, noted that *'The Natives commenced working Coal on the 8th Instant and have been busily employed ever since, not withstanding the inclemency of the weather, which had been very wet the last few days.'*

About 1400 barrels of coal were 'mined' or collected, and shipped out on the first boatload. Payment was at the rate of 'one shirt' per day per Indian miner. The next year, things got rolling and Factor Ovid Alland was transferred from Fort Langley to take charge of operations at Nanaimo, and Indian labour seems to have shifted to the provision of food stuffs, logs and shingle bolts¹⁸

The history of the Vancouver Island coal fields, the industry and social world which emerged, is a story on its own. Suffice it to say that these coal mines constituted the first center of 'heavy industry' in the province. They became the first indisputable center of open class conflict, which developed into a crescendo between 1877 and 1912.¹⁹

The evidence of Indian workers in and around the Vancouver Island coal fields is fragmentary and discontinuous. Between 1860 and 1880 their role is problematic. It appears that they were employed only in some locales, usually as stevedores and occasionally as surface labour. Bartlett's study of those involved in the Wellington coal strike of 1877 suggests that the miners were premoninantly of British and American extraction. A few miles away, the Harewood coal mine in 1875 is said to have employed some 623 miners and mine workers. Of these, 396 were Europeans, 176 were Chinese, and some 51 were native Indians. There was a wage differential between European miners and others, although it is unclear whether this was due to different scales for the same jobs or not.²⁰

According to another source, by the time of the Great Coal Strike of 1912, *'The Native Indians had been the first miners. Two generations of them had worked in the mines, many of them underground, although only one, Johnie Matchie, had ever held a miners certificate—and that had been taken away from him.'*²¹

Between 1880 and 1912 the Annual Reports of the Department of Indian Affairs recurrently notes Indian 'coaltrimmers' (longshoremen) working on the Nanaimo docks. Some members of the Oyster Bay and Sicameen reserves were also employed in surface operations and coal loading at Ladysmith during the first decade of the twentieth century. Indian coaltrimmers at Nanaimo were mainly but not exclusively local people, since at least one group of Fort Rupert Kwakiutl also worked around the Nanaimo collieries in 1882.²² It is unclear what role native Indians played in the labour movement of the Nanaimo area. However, in 1890 one Thomas Salmon from Nanaimo was the delegate of the Miners and Mine Labourers Protective Association to the Trades and Labour Congress in Ottawa. The Nanaimo Coal Trimmers Protective Association had been organized in 1889 and it joined with the MMLPA and the Knights of Labour to form the Nanaimo Labour Council in 1891. Further south, outside of the mining region, a local of the Federal Labour Union existed in the Duncan area; it had Indian members. In 1906 this local sent an M.J. Elliot, an Indian member, as its delegate to the Trades and Labour Congress convention being held in Victoria. That convention resolved to raise the issue of Indian franchise among its 'friends' in Parliament.²³

It would be of interest to know if Indian workers were involved in the Great Coal Strike of 1912-1914. According to one account, the employers attempted to induce Indian workers in the Nanaimo area to act as strikebreakers, and when they refused they were blacklisted from

future employment.²⁴ It is difficult to evaluate this claim. But is it true that Indian coal handlers at Nanaimo are no longer mentioned in the reports of the Department of Indian Affairs Department after 1912.

When Peter Kelly, then a newly ordained Methodist minister, arrived at the Nanaimo reserve in 1916, he apparently found a hard-pressed population sustaining itself by subsistence fishing and through a variety of casual jobs. Kelly's biographer puts this down to the demoralizing effects of Indians mixing with the savage coal miners, who made Nanaimo something other than the mission village some would have preferred. If there is any truth to Morley's account of Kelly's influence over the Indian community at Nanaimo, it might indicate just how fully Indian workers there had been crushed.²⁵

Railway Work

Between 1880 and 1920 two waves of railway construction laid down the basic rail network of the province — the CPR mainline, the Esquimalt-Nanaimo RR, the Crow's Nest Pass line, the CNR mainline, Grand Trunk Pacific, Kettle Valley line, and the Pacific Great Eastern - were all built and completed in that period. While rarely mentioned in the drama of railway building, Indian labourers, gandydancers, teamsters, sub-contractors and suppliers participated in virtually all of these construction projects.

Indian workers from bands in the Fraser and Thompson Canyon regions were employed in driving the CPR grade and steel through the mountains between 1881 and 1885. In doing so they must have worked around construction locomotives before the first trains ever chugged into the small towns which sprang up along the line. At Kekatoos, near Yale, *most* Indian men were employed in the railway construction and were said to be earning 'good wages.' ('Good wages' presumably meant the typical railway navvy's pay of \$1.50 to \$1.75 for a twelve hour day.) Between Yale and Lytton there were Indian railway workers from the reserves at Shuwha, Skuzzy, Kamiss, Kapatsetsan, and Ha-in. Men from reserves near Lytton were both working directly on the construction of the line and were also engaged as freighters for the railway camps. Wagon freight outfits owned by local Indians participated in an upsurge of business, taking contracts to haul supplies and material for the railway works.²⁶

Along the Thompson River, railway workers came from reserves between Hluk-hluk and Kamloops. Writing in 1885 about Nicaomin reserve near Spence's Bridge, one sanguine Indian Agent reported that 'Most of the young men have been steadily employed on the railroad for the last three years, and some of them are in good circumstances.' There were Indian railway workers drawn from reserves all along the line, from the lower Fraser valley to the Shuswap Lake country.²⁷

Indian workers not only came from the reserves along the line of rail construction; they sometimes travelled long distances to obtain such employment. Writing from Port Simpson in June 1883, Rev. Thomas Crosby noted that white miners and a number of Indians from Port Essington had set out to seek work on the C.P.R. construction along the Fraser river. Others migrated from the north coast to work in the construction of the Esquimalt-Nanaimo railway during 1884 and 1885. They included Nishga, Tsimshian and Haida men, plus a few women. Some of them had worked on the Vancouver Island railway works since their inception. Men from the Cowichan reserves were also employed on that line as 'trackmen', presumably meaning that they not only helped lay the track but worked in the maintenance gangs.²⁸

Railway construction involved not only a large amount of gang labour, it also generated a demand for a host of supplies and support services. Indian horse packers and wagon freighters were contracted to haul supplies into the main rail camps and out along the lines. Assorted goods and services were supplied regionally. Mountains of wood ties were needed. Vast amounts of timber were used in cribbing, trestles and bridging. Hay and fodder were purchased locally, if possible, for the thousands of mules and horses used in

construction. Fresh fish, game and produce found a ready market in the construction camps and Indian farms and suppliers along the Fraser and Thompson rivers provided a portion of these needs.

Railway work did not cease with the completion of a particular line. Especially in BC, maintenance and rebuilding continued afterward. Track had to be repaired and replaced, snow and rock slides cleared, timber-work built and rebuilt. All this and more was needed to keep that spider-work of rock, steel and wood, which were the railways in BC, operating. Section crews and extra gangs were permanently employed to keep the lines operating after the initial construction. Indian workers from a number of bands were employed on the section gangs, stationed every twenty odd miles apart along the rail line. By the end of the 1890s Indian railway section workers were prominent in the Fraser canyon, particular around Boston Bar, Boothroyd and Yale.²⁹

A second wave of railway construction occurred between 1904 and 1915 and witnessed an even broader involvement of Indian labour. The extension of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo line north to the coal fields of Cumberland and west to the lumber town of Alberni in 1910-1911 employed both Nootka and Cowichan railworkers, as well as some Kwakiutl and Haida. The CPR's Kettle Valley line, running from Hope through the Nicola plateau and into the southern boundary region, was also being built at that time. It too had Indian construction workers drawn from reserves around Hope and from the Coldwater reserve near Merritt. In the Fraser Valley, men from the Chehalis and Scowlitz reserves were engaged in replacing and upgrading the original CPR track during 1912.³⁰

The construction of the CNR grade down the North Thompson and Fraser rivers saw many of the same Indian groups which had helped build the CPR now help build the Canadian Northern. Between 1909 and 1913 Indian construction workers were reported from Union Bar and Hope, at Yale, Spuzzum, Siska Flats, Boston Bar, Boothroyd, and Kanaka Bar. In 1911-1912 the sleepy little hamlet of Lytton had become a booming tent town in which construction workers from the region rubbed shoulders with men drawn from half-way around the world. Many Indian men in the region had abandoned work on their farmlets to work on the railroad. Along the Thompson River, Indian railway workers were reported from Cook's Ferry, from the lower Nicola and Niacomen and elsewhere.³¹ Unfortunately, I have found no account by any of the Indian railway workers of that period. It is probably now too late to recover such material through oral reminiscences.³²

On the Grand Trunk Pacific line, pushing east from the instant port of Prince Rupert, Indian workers and sub-contractors were employed in a wide range of jobs. Indian construction workers on the GTP seem to have been matched by those engaged in ancillary employment. Many local Indians were involved in packing and freighting, and as producers of ties, timber and other goods. The railway project drew Indian workers and small contractors from Port Simpson to Fraser Lake. During the height of the GTP construction, so many Indian workers left the fisheries that the north coast canneries were sometimes short of labour.³³

The GTP and CNR construction relied partly upon a system of sub-contracting, the so-called 'station work.' This method shifted the risks and the cost of support (housing, food, transport etc.) onto the shoulders of workers aspiring to be sub-contractors. The system entailed contracts to build up a stretch of rail grade over a few thousand yards, for instance. The plum dangled before prospective contractors was that they could, with ceaseless work, make more than the average day's wage. But the 'station' rates were cut very fine and many sub-contractors wound up making earning very little. During 1912 at least two Indian bands, those at Fraser Lake and Francois Lake, got involved in taking a sub-contract to clear the right of way and build up the grade for a section of the GTP line. The region Indian Agent who facilitated this venture pontificated that, *'On recommendation, railroad contractors awarded contracts to Indians. All these works were faithfully carried out and*

considerable sums of money earned in wages.' It would be interesting to know just what the hell was meant by that.³⁴

The main railroad construction projects were completed in 1915. The Pacific Great Eastern was tracked from Squamish to Quesnel a few years after WW I. Never again were there railway projects with the scops of those of the earlier decades.

Packing and Other Labour

While Indian labour was employed in transporting goods for the HBC during the fur trade period, commercial freighting became a major source of Indian incomes only with the European settlement of BC. Indian packers and freighters became important in the carrying trade throughout much of the interior from the late 1860s until about WW I. In some areas they dominated this trade. Native men (and some women) worked as back packers in a few regions but more typically operated with strings of horses or freighted with teams and wagons.

Canoe freighting was of importance in a few locales.¹ Possibly the best known case was that of the Lower Skeena. Between the late 1860s and the mid 1890s most of the supplies shipped into the Skeena country was brought up-river from tidewater to Hazelton by Tsimshian crews in their dugout canoes. This traffic was a monopoly of coastal Tsimshian under Chief 'Legaic' (a title held by a number of different men during the nineteenth century). For more than a generation this traffic provided a lucrative source of income. Rates ranging from \$5 to \$30 dollars per ton of cargo were charged, depending upon the season and the distance to be covered. According to MacDonald, "*Although the Hudson's Bay Company was able to buy out some of Legex's privileges, all goods and passengers still had to go up the Skeena in his canoes until the 1890s....He raised his freight rates from \$30 per ton to \$90 per ton between 1865 and 1893. Finally in 1892, the Hudson's Bay Company put the first steamboat into service on the Skeena, ending the last of Legex's trade monopolies and ending the era of the 'superchief' of the Northwest Coast*" (MacDonald, J. 1984: 79)

The passage of sternwheelers through the Skeena Canyon to Hazelton brought about an overnight collapse in canoe freighting. Writing in 1895 from Metlakatla, the regional Indian Agent said,

[There has been] *an almost total extinction of the canoe freighting business on the Skeena River, owing to the continued success of the river steamer Caledonia, which carries in six days as much freight as formerly required the services of two hundred Indians and forty canoes for eighteen days, earning at least \$4,500.* ²

Elsewhere in the interior of BC canoe freighting was never of any great consequence and was undercut by the early spread of sternwheel traffic. However, in some locales Indian families established ferry services. For instance, in 1894 some members of the Shalalth band operated a canoe freight service on Seton Lake, running from Cayoosh Creek to Shalalth, then the entry point to the early Bridge River mines. This was displaced by a steam launch which was put into service and finally by the completion of the P.G.E railway. Indian-operated ferries carried men and supplies over crossings at various points on the Fraser, the Thompson, and on the Shuswap Lakes.³

The simplest and most strenuous form of packing was by human carrier. Incredible as it may seem, some trading posts, survey parties, and mining camps in isolated regions of central and northern BC were supplied by transport chains which at some point involved back packing. The Indian packers of the Babine and Stuart Lakes region were among the best known. Men (and sometimes women) of these and from Gitksan bands in the vicinity of Hazelton worked as back packers during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.

A typical freight pack for men was ninety to one hundred pounds (the standard HBC 'piece'), plus the food and equipment needed by the packer himself—carried along winding

trails, up hills and down, through slippery mud and over rock. The pay scale which obtained for packing between Hazelton and Fort Babine in the 1880s was 10 cents per pound. It was a distance of about 90 miles and the trip took four to six days, depending upon the condition of the trail and stamina of the packers. Heber Clifton and his young wife came from Metlakatla to Hazelton in the 1890s to make their first stake by packing into the Babine country. It was an occupation obviously restricted to the young and strong.⁴

Where it was feasible, horse packing replaced back packing. Native Indians both worked as wranglers and also established their own horse packing outfits. Pack trains might be driven by four to more than a dozen wranglers. Building up a packhorse string involved a major investment; it was not a casual undertaking. Horses or mules had to be bought or bred, harness and gear had to be acquired; both involved a substantial cash outlay. In most areas it was necessary to grow fodder for the horses since they could not be expected to winter-over and still come in in good shape without hay supplements. Knowledge in the care, shoeing and use of horses was called for. In some parts of the southern interior, horses had been acquired by Indian bands before the entry of Europeans. Elsewhere, as in the Bulkley Valley, horses arrive only after European entry. In both cases, packing with horses required novel skills.

Indian wranglers from Anderson and Seton Lakes area apparently worked with mule teams which carried supplies from the Fraser into the Cariboo at the beginning of the 1860s. One Lillooet man born near Seton Lake in 1894 reminisced of the 'horse' packing his father was involved in. Says Sam Mitchell,

John Scott, who was later buried in East Lillooet, went with my father to Yale to get a job packing the mules. Some of the large mules could carry ten 50-pound bags of flour, which were packed five bags to a bundle. The smaller mules carried smaller loads. Some of the mules carried beans and bacon, which were wrapped in burlap .

When the packs were removed, they were placed on the ground and the mules set free. When it was time to repack, each mule went to his own aparejo [pack] and stood in front of it. There were five pairs of packers for the 150 mules. The man who was handling the pack stood on the left side of the mule. First, the aparejo, which looked like a short, hay-filled, single mattress, was balanced on the packer's knee and then thrown onto the mule's back. Then the man on the other side threw on the first bundle and tied it to the aparejo. The man on the left fastened the other bundle. When both packs were secure, a piece of canvas was stretched over the bundles and tied on. Then the whole pack was fastened by a diamond hitch. The cinch went underneath the mule and the rope was wound around the pack and joined with the hook on the other end of the rope.

When the mule was packed, it followed the bell horse. Two men stood on either side of the trail and tightened the mule's cinch ropes as it walked by. If the hay fill in the aparejo was lumpy, the mule would sit down and refuse to move until it was adjusted.⁵

Mitchell goes to say that mule and horse trains were replaced by wagon freighters when a road was built into Lillooet. Truck transport, which followed the construction of allegedly passable roads supplanted *most* horse and wagon freighting after 1920. However pack horse teams continued to be used in transporting supplies to especially isolated locales into the 1930s and, in my personal experience, even into the early 1940s.

In 1876, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in BC noted that Indian packers had garnered a large proportion of the carrying and packing trade in the interior. Indian freighters were especially prominent along the Thompson River and in the southern Cariboo. Many Indian families in the Lytton area owned strings of pack horses which they used in freighting to Lillooet, and beyond. Many of them contracted to haul supplies for the construction of the CPR and later for the CNR. Franz Boas, passing through Lytton in July 1885, noted that many Indians there ' . . . had farms and large herds, some keeping over 100 horses and using them to pack goods into the Lillooet area.' It was not the kind of thing which he stopped to document.⁶

At Seton Portage, Indian horse packers carried supplies into the Bridge River mines from the early 1890s until about 1910. One such operation continued out of Shalalth until the 1920s.⁷ In the Bulkley Valley region, Indian horse packers were active from the 1880s until the completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific in 1914. In 1900 they packed in the supplies and cable for the Dominion Telegraph line, then being laid to Dawson City.⁸

In 1899 some members of the Ashcroft band were teaming up the Cariboo Road from the railhead at Ashcroft. Other Indian wagon freighters were then working out of 150 Mile House.⁹ Augusta Tappage growing up near Soda Creek at the turn of the century, remembered Indian freighters on the Cariboo Road each summer. Considering the competition for freight traffic, native Indian teamsters must have been capable and reliable. Members of the Nicaomin and Shanich reserves were freighting with teams and wagons into the Nicola Plateau. The Naaik band was reputed to be especially well equipped with heavy draught horses, harness, wagons and freight sleighs, and were hauling goods from points on the CPR line. As for the Nicola, *'Their chief occupation, apart from tilling their farms, is freight hauling, for which they are well equipped with horses and wagons. They do most of the freighting carried on between Cook's Ferry [Spence's Bridge] and the Similkameen.'*¹⁰

People from the Chuchwayha reserve were engaged in packing supplies for the new mines which had opened on the Similkameen. At the turn of the century, Indian teamsters were freighting on a local basis at Fountain, Soda Creek, Anchan (Chilcotin), at N'Kamip (in the Okanagan), around Cowichan and in the vicinity of Creston. While freight was transported longer distances by steamer and railroad, wherever possible, short-haul freighting continued to involve Indian teamsters and packers until circa WW I. With the 1920s, trucks rapidly replaced horse freighting. It appears that no Indian-owned trucking firms arose, at least not until much later.

'Casual' Labour

What was casual about casual labour were the terms of employment. It was sporadic, unreliable, and usually poorly paid. Many Indian people did such work at one time or another but it is untrue to suggest that it the main source of cash income for Indians. Farm work and harvest labour, as well as land clearing, was a source of Indian employment in various regions during the period dealt with. Indian harvest labour was especially important in bringing in the hop and berry crops. Native employment in the Washington State hop fields was well established by the 1880s and Indian harvest workers annually worked in the berry and hopfields of the Fraser Valley somewhat later. During the depression of the 1930s they, and the migrant white workers who laboured beside them, typically earned a dollar a day.¹¹

Indian fruit pickers helped harvest the Fraser Valley and Okanagan crops before the turn of the century until recently. Harvest labour was drawn from nearby reserves but some native people came from as far afield as Lillooet and the Kamloops regions to work in the Fraser Valley. Berry picking could and did engage women and children pickers extensively.¹²

Picking fruit, berries and hops was highly seasonal and provided limited earnings. It may be that some fruit pickers looked upon the job partly as a working holiday, a chance to get away from home, to travel and visit with others during the short season. But the fact that Indian women and adolescents, as well as some men, were available for this work suggests the lack of alternatives for those engaged.

In the era before farm mechanization some Indian men worked on large farms as farm hands, paid on both a monthly and daily basis. They contracted to clear land, worked in the harvest and hauled grain, and did the variety of tasks needed on non-mechanized farms. I don't believe this was ever a major source of income to any group in the province.¹³

A few Indian women worked in small hotels and cafes around the province and some were washer-women while a few others occasionally worked as domestic labour—jobs which people stay away from if they have any choice. Probably they reigned down curses on their employers, although such salient bits of social history have not come down to us.¹⁴

Indian labourers worked on the crews which strung the first telegraph line into the Cariboo in 1865. In 1900, others were working on cutting the right-of-way for the Dominion Telegraph line from the Skeena north to Dawson City. During 1910-1911 Indian workers helped bring in the first telephone line from Ft. George through the Bulkley and Skeena regions. These were all short-lived jobs and seem to have had no lasting consequences, other than the historical fact that native labour was engaged in laying the infrastructure of the province.¹⁵

Indian villages, as they were built and rebuilt, were largely the work of local carpenters. Such carpentry skills were sporadically employed in the maintenance of canneries and the other industrial infrastructure along the coast. Henry Doyle's notebooks between 1902 and 1918 are spotted with references to Indian carpenters employed at canneries (although Doyle didn't think too much of this, preferring to see Indians hired as fishermen).¹⁶

A few native people worked in Victoria warehouses and in cement factories and quarries in Saanich.¹⁷ To list every job which, at one time or another, Indian people held would come close to listing most of the occupations in the province. The exceptions were in the professions and in managerial positions. However, a fresh look at the emergent native middle class in eastern Canada and in the U.S at the beginning of the twentieth century might provide some historical surprises.

Lastly, we may consider what might be termed 'emergency' jobs. Work which produced some cash income—although precious little—and which was undertaken when other sources of income had dried up. Certain activities resurfaced during periods of economic depressions; work which typically involved self-employment and the tapping of marginal local resources. Such ventures included placer mining, marginal trapping and bounty hunting (predators such as cougar, coyote, wolves carried a bounty paid by the provincial government). Salvage and shingle bolt logging, cutting firewood for sale, 'commercial' hand trolling might fall into this category. The extent of subsistence fishing, hunting, and gardening also probably increased when there was no money to be had.

In part, it was the marginal way in which these activities were pursued which made them 'emergency' jobs. Some of the same endeavors might be carried out in a more effective manner by others. During economic recessions men and women took up activities with relatively little experience or without the equipment to effectively exploit given resources. These were stop-gap measures.

Ancillary trapping was a widespread means of trying to earn some income. It ranged from youngsters to family men attempting to tap whatever fur resources were available locally. Whereas commercial trapping on a sustained basis continued to be basic in the economy of Indian bands in the northern interior throughout this period, individuals temporarily engaged in trapping had neither the resources nor the equipment needed. While marginal practitioners learned the fundamentals involved, they rarely had the experience of those who did it on a regular basis.

Similarly with placer mining. Economic depressions brought forth additional prospectors, Indian and non-Indian, to the known placer gold streams. Many had only a rudimentary knowledge of how to proceed. Using only the simplest of equipment, they might at best eke out an existence by washing gold from bars and benches which usually had been already worked over in the past.¹⁸

The 1930s saw a recrudescence of activities which had become anachronistic in previous decades. They were desperate measures. Probably there are luminaries today who would like us to return again to those thrilling days of yesteryear. However, the opportunities and resources which allowed Indian and other unemployed working people to temporarily

sustain themselves by emergency jobs are no longer available. Neither is it likely that the the economic crisis will be temporary.

Chapter 13

Beyond the Eastern Mountains

There are two central features in the economies of most native Indian groups in Canada during the period 1860 to 1930. At the beginning of this era none were pristinely indigenous societies and by 1890 only a minority were fundamentally still based upon hunting and trapping. However, subsistence food production was crucial to the great majority of Indian groups throughout the entire period. Some combination of subsistence fishing, hunting and gardening—in conjunction with residence in their own dwellings, untaxed and without significant utility costs - was almost everywhere crucial. The second, less well known, feature of Indian economies was the wide range of wage labour or commodity production which was as general as continuing subsistence production.

Given these two general features, there appears to have been considerable differences in the nature and extent of Indian wage labour in different regions of Canada during the period 1860 -1930. Even within BC the involvement of native people in the labour force varied enormously. It varied over time and with the industrial development of different regions. It varied with the viability of other options for obtaining cash. Given this variation within a single province over the course of seventy years (one relatively long lifetime), one should expect considerable differences in native history in other regions of Canada. The present comparisons are neither comprehensive nor systematic. Much of the fundamental research has yet to be done. However, they do intend to demonstrate that the history of native labour in BC was not unique.

Farming Communities of Southern Ontario

Some sixty to eighty years ago any moderately cogent observer would probably have taken it as common knowledge that many Indian reserves and settlements in the farming regions of Ontario were carrying out a mix of subsistence and commercial farming (with variable degrees of success to be sure). It is indicative of our social amnesia that we now find this recent past to be surprising.

Rogers and Tobobondung list thirteen Algonkian reserves in southern Ontario which were farming by 1842. In many cases they already had a previous generation of incipient farming behind them, although they were to become fully enmeshed in market farming later.¹ Southern Ontario was the only region in Canada where horticulture had been of importance indigenously. But it is important to recognize that the Indian farming communities which emerged were built primarily around methods of Euro-Canadian agriculture, not indigenous subsistence gardening. It is not nineteenth century missionaries but two contemporary ethnohistorians who say that,

*By 1850 the Algonkian Indians of extreme southern Ontario had become settled in villages located on reserve land, adopted farming, assented to schooling and had acknowledged Christianity. They were externally in many ways rural Victorian farmers. Yet hunting, fishing and gathering still played a part in the economy, much socialization was to Indian ways and there can be no doubt that native religious beliefs if not practiced were still strongly held.*²

Developments on some of the farming reserves indicate that over the next fifty years a rural Victorian way of life became something more than simply an 'external' aspect. The Mohawk of Tyendenaga (on the Bay of Quinte, Ontario) came to Canada at the end of the American War of Independence. *Before* their move they had already been farmers in upstate New York. Their farms around Fort Hunter had averaged thirty-eight acres per family and involved raising European as well as indigenous crops.³ Their livestock and implements, their houses and barns, were not atypical of white farms of the region.

After settling at Tyendenaga in the early 1790s these Mohawk re-established their farms and by the early nineteenth century they were engaged in mixed farming, had built local sawmills and grist mills, and had in general developed an economy not markedly different from that of the 'pioneer' white farmers around them. Hamori's account does not document the later trajectory of Tyendenaga farming but it does suggest that toward the end of the nineteenth century reserve agriculture faced stiff competition from non-Indian farms. Although there was at least one privately-owned steam thresher on the reserve in 1885, lack of credit to modernize farm operations and shortages of farmable reserve land became problems. By the early twentieth century an increasing number of local residents were dependent upon wage labour, especially in the fruit and vegetable canneries of neighbouring Deseronto. Those employed, seasonally, still maintained subsistence gardens on the reserve. The commercial farms on the reserve gave a patina of prosperity and continued into the 1930s, but by then only a small minority of band members were commercial farmers.⁴

The Six Nations reserve near Brantford, Ontario, was also established following the war of American Independence and was intended as a refuge for those members of the Iroquois confederacy who had fought for the British Crown and who had to leave their lands in upstate New York. In size and population, the Haldimand Grant was long the largest Indian reserve in Canada.⁵

By the 1820s the Iroquois of the Six Nations reserve were scattered over the Haldimand Grant in homesteads and small hamlets allegedly grouped by tribal and subtribal affiliation. Many were involved in subsistence gardening, using indigenous crops and still relying upon fishing and hunting for food supplements. Only some families had incorporated European crops but there were a number of larger commercial farms in evidence.⁶

Iroquois drawn from a number of reserves continued to play a role in imperial defense. Indian levies from both Six Nations and Caughnawaga were called out to help suppress the 1837 Patriote risings in Upper Canada and Quebec. Their later participation in overseas campaigns, ranging from the Sudan to the Somme, will be mentioned below.⁷

The Six Nations reserve contained a strata of leaders who were both economically successful and knowledgeable about Euro-Canadian society. But a considerable proportion of the reserve population were poor, if their farm ventures are any indication. A census of the Six Nations reserve in 1844 indicated that many of the households were cultivating subsistence garden-farms. A marked differentiation in farm size had developed on the reserve, with 146 families (of the total 440) cultivating under five acres but some 38 families having from 50 to more than 150 acres under crops. The latter being substantial sized farms by regional standards.⁸

According to the government agent who compiled this census of the Six Nations reserve, *The large [Indian] farmers pursue exactly the same Mode of Agriculture as the whites, except that they sow less seed . . . They sow wheat and oats, and grass down with timothy. They also grow peas in large quantities, with which, and Indian Corn, they fatten their hogs. The small farmers grow little else than Indian Corn and potatoes, in the cultivation of which they only use the hoe. On the large farms, the field labour is performed by the men, with the exception of the cultivation of Indian Corn, which, on large or small farms, is always performed by women.*⁹

Unimproved reserve lands were apparently still 'common property'; that is to say, available for use by reserve members. However, improved lands and pastures, along with farm buildings, were individually owned, inherited or even sold within the reserve. A small portion of the reserve lands had been lost, under endlessly disputed circumstances, through investment in the Grand River Navigation canal project. According to Olive Dickason, the lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada invested \$160,000 of funds intended for the Six Nations in stock of the Grand River Navigation Company, in their name but without their consent. Some 369 acres of reserve land were also transferred to that company for towpaths,

locks etc. When the canal company went bankrupt in the 1840s reserve spokesmen demanded they be reimbursed for losses, but to no avail. (Dickason, O. 1992:238) Sale of reserve lands allegedly continued into the 1840s, with a consequent malaise in reserve farming.¹⁰

There seem to have been internal frictions simmering between factions on the reserve. John Brant, a younger son of Joseph Brant, was elected to the Upper Canada House of Assembly in 1830, but lost his seat on charges of irregular voter practices. (Dickason, O. 1992: 222)

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Six Nations reserve operated effectively as an Indian municipality. By the 1890s the reserve government operated its own ten grade schools, which were staffed mainly by Indian teachers. It placed select students at the Mohawk Institute, a mission-run Indian residential high school.¹¹

The band council maintained its own road and bridge building crews and boasted at least two construction companies. There was a local board of health which had control over the reserve hospital. A system of wardens, constables and watchmen implemented council decisions on forest and other reserve resources. Indeed, Pauline Johnson's father was a part of the reserve administration system during the poet's childhood. Her familial surroundings seem to have been fairly typical of the rural middle class during the Victorian era. This makes her later poetry more comprehensible and partly explains why she was accepted as a luminescent exemplar of Canadian literature of the time.

Another Six Nations notable during the last quarter of the nineteenth century was Peter Martin. He attended the University of Toronto and is *said* to have financed his education by managing a touring Wild West show, hiring some actors from the reserve. Martin later became a medical doctor and a co-founder of the Independent Order of Foresters, a life insurance company.¹²

However, even during the height of commercial farming at Six Nations increasing numbers of men left their homes to work in lumber camps and at whatever wage work was available to them. By the turn of the century a regional Indian Agent noted that while farming was still the chief means of making a living, many younger men instead 'seek employment in factories in Brantford and other places.'¹³ While purely speculative, it would be ironic if some of them wound up in the Brantford factories manufacturing steam threshers, which were then the symbols of modernity in the western grain growing regions of Canada.

People from Six Nations were involved in some of the non-Indian institutions of the region: they were members of farmers' institutes, belonged to fraternal organizations, and participated in annual agricultural fairs. In addition, many Six Nations men were members of the Canadian Militia. Volunteers from that reserve comprised three companies of the Haldimand Rifles, a militia regiment based in the area. By 1900 they began to attend summer military exercises on an army base in the Niagara Peninsula. The Mohawk Institute prided itself on providing formal military training as part of its curriculum, supervised by a British petty officer. It had its own militia unit by 1900. The culmination of this military enthusiasm came in WW 1.

While the conscription provisions of the Military Enlistment Act did not apply to status Indians, voluntary enlistment during WW I was extremely high on many of the Ontario and Maritime reserves. Close to 300 officers and men from Six Nations volunteered for overseas service when the Haldimand Rifles were mobilized. They were combined with Iroquois from Caughnawaga and St. Regis to form two companies under their own officers.

Three of these officers were later transferred to the Royal Flying Corps when it was formed—Captain J.R. Stacy, a Caughnawaga customs broker from Toronto, a Lieutenant Moses, and Oliver Martin from Six Nations. Martin was the only one to survive and later became a Brigadier-General in the Canadian army during the next great war, finally retiring in the 1950s to become a magistrate. Lieutenant Cameron Brant, a lineal descendent of Joseph Brant, was killed in action, but the son of another Six Nations chief, one Captain

A.G.E. Smith, survived three wounds to become the adjutant officer of a Polish battalion training in Canada. The Six Nations Women's Patriotic League sustained the war effort at home by patriotic drives.

Thirty-five Six Nations men were killed and fifty-five wounded in action. A few veterans may have remained in the peacetime army, a few others entered new careers, like Lieutenant Gilbert Monture, who became a mining engineer and consultant, or Elmer Jamieson, who later earned a doctorate in education and taught in Toronto schools. But it is not known what most of the Indian veterans did after their return home.¹⁴

The 1920s *seem* to have been marked by worsening economic conditions on the Six Nations reserve. The structure of local government was shaken and there was an upsurge of conflict between reserve factions - usually described as between 'traditionalists' and 'progressives' but possibly also between proto classes. In 1923 a delegation of reserve members travelled to Geneva to petition the League of Nations to recognize the Six Nations as a national entity. The League of Nations, being what it was, was not about to be drawn into an internal dispute between natives and one of its member Dominions. In 1929 the traditional tribal chiefs of the Six Nations reserve were replaced by an elected band council, resulting in conflicts which have sputtered on till today. Without knowledge of the background and interests involved in these disputes it is impossible to know who backed which faction for what reasons.¹⁵

There are two excellent studies of Indian farming communities in southern Ontario. Both are of Algonkian reserves with no tradition of indigenous horticulture before the nineteenth century. The Chippewa reserve at 'Caradoc' (a pseudonym) was established southwest of London, Ontario, in 1822. Subsistence gardening had begun by 1827 and ten years later most of the 400 reserve members were farming family plots ranging from ten to twenty acres. The Mississauga Indian missionary Peter Jones opened the Mount Elgin residential school on the Caradoc reserve under Methodist auspices in 1850. In addition to reading, writing and righteousness, the Mount Elgin school provided training in agriculture and in mechanical trades.¹⁶

Initially, Caradox established a reserve economy based on subsistence agriculture which provided surpluses for sale. By 1870, mixed farming on a European pattern was well developed, with most families growing a mix cereals, beans, potatoes, and fooder crops, as well as raising cattle, pigs and horses. However, craft manufacture of 'wooden ware' for sale had become important, suggesting that some reserve families must have been desperate for some cash income. Hunting and trapping were negligible.

While agents of the Department of Indian Affairs had nominal responsibility for the reserve, Caradoc seems to have operated much like other municipalities in the region. The leading element on the reserve was a stratum of Indian church leaders and successful farmers; they were dominant in the band council. Christie's study of band council records indicates the operation of an Indian-run local government. The Caradoc council passed what in effect were local ordinances; it operated the infrastructure of reserve services and hired individuals to carry out council policies.¹⁷

There were forest bailiffs to enforce regulations about cutting reserve timber. Reserve roads were built and maintained as tax work under 'path masters.' A board of school trustees hired Indian teachers for local schools until about 1900. Church wardens on the reserve enforced social strictures, ranging from required church attendance to a night curfew for children. There were native constables to keep the peace and even a local dogcatcher charged with enforcing regulations about the allowable number of dogs permitted. The band council contracted for the services of white doctors in a nearby town, hired and fired them. All this was done with band funds.¹⁸

Reserve self-sufficiency did not mean isolation from surrounding white settlements and practices. Some of the institutions which developed on the reserve were extensions of

organizations existing throughout rural Ontario of that time. By the 1880s there was a branch of the Agricultural Society on the reserve and a local Fall Fair was held annually. Caradoc farmers and their families also attended surrounding agricultural fairs, where they entered competitions for livestock, crop, and home made preserves. A Women's Institute and Fair Committee, an Anglican Young Peoples' Association, even a Methodist Temperance Society - these and other elements of rural Ontario society then existed at Caradoc. The appellation 'Rural Victorians' seems to be appropriate.¹⁹

One fraternal order which became established at Caradoc was the Loyal Orange Order. In 1878, a former chief and school teacher at Caradoc was a Grand Master of the Orange Lodge. That year he addressed members of a brother lodge in the nearby white community of Melbourne on their annual Battle of the Boyne blowout. The Orange Order was still going strong on the reserve shortly before WW I. Christie relates one man's reminiscence of the twelfth of July at Caradoc.

I can remember the parades forming up at Muncey Station—all kinds of people marched, not just the Lodge men—the Chippewa Brass Band always played. W.L. was always King Billy riding on a big horse at the head of the parade. Everyone went to the picnic at the fair grounds afterwards. ²⁰

However, even during its apogee, pressures were building against the viability of reserve farming at Caradoc. The establishment of private title to sections of reserve land (the 'tickets of location' introduced by the modified Indian Act of 1880) protected the lands of a strata of Indian farmers. But a growing reserve population meant that of other families found themselves without sufficient land to farm commercially by the 1890s. Class differences between those Indian families dependent upon wage labour and the successful Indian farmers (who typically were also the church and band leaders) were becoming explicit by the turn of the century. A trickle of off-reserve migration became marked after 1900.²¹

By 1920 Indian seasonal workers had become the main labour force in the regional flax industry; after 1924 the burgeoning tobacco industry also employed Indian labour from Caradoc and other reserves. Commercial farming on Caradoc was declining by W.W.1, it stagnated during the 1920s, and collapsed during the 1930s, after which it became mainly a subsistence activity.

According to Christie, it was the decline of the Caradoc farming income after WW I which resulted in the collapse of the reserve local government. The 'retrogressive underdevelopment' which occurred was not due to any unique ethos but to the position of reserve economy within a broader market economy. Reserve dependency upon the Federal government is fairly recent and did not become instituted until after the collapse of local economy. ²²

A comparable pattern of reserve farming combined with work in the regional lumbering industry developed among the Ojibwa of Cape Croker, Bruce Peninsula. The advance of European farmers and loggers into the peninsula gradually undercut the possibility of hunting and trapping and triggered the first phase of reserve farming at Cape Croker shortly before 1840. The marginal nature of the reserve land required that the Cape Croker farmers also engaged in logging and other wage work.

While comparatively slow to develop, by the 1860s and 1870s subsistence agriculture was an important part of Cape Croker economy. By 1880 farming was one of the three major economic pursuits, along with lumbering and lake fishing. By then hunting and trapping were negligible in community income.

And in fact, by the latter half of the 19th century, the Cape Croker economy was similar in many respects to that of Euro-Canadians in adjacent townships of Bruce County. Both engaged in subsistence farming, grew the same crops, used similar equipment, belonged to farmers institutes, raised the same kind of livestock and poultry, etc. However, despite the importance of farming, lumbering was a vital winter occupation for both the white settlers of the Bruce Peninsula and the Cape Croker Indians. ²³

During the height of reserve farming at Cape Croker (from the 1880s until circa 1910), individual Indian farmers owned a wide range of horse-drawn machinery: mowers, binders, disc harrows, ploughs of various kinds as well as the wagons and harness typical of horse farming. It was capitalized farming of its time and not a matter of garden patches. There were three Indian-owned steam threshing machines on the reserve in 1890, one owned by the band itself.²⁴

Nor was there lack of agricultural initiative shown by band farmers. Around 1896 numbers of Cape Croker farmers went into growing sugar beets for the Wiarton Beet Sugar Manufacturing Co., whose plant was built in a nearby town. By 1902 joint meetings of the Farmers Institute at Cape Croker and those from the neighbouring white municipality of Albermarle were held in the reserve council hall. Work bees interchanged the labour of white and Indian farmers in the area. By 1912 *most* Indian families at Cape Croker subscribed to magazines relating to farming.²⁵

In addition to farming, Cape Croker people were engaged in the Bruce Peninsula lumber industry, from before 1850 until its demise in the 1920s. During the height of their involvement, men from the reserve worked as loggers in lumber camps throughout the region. They were also employed in nearby sawmills and longshored lumber. For a time they had their own logging outfits and operated a small shingle and tie mill on the reserve, also used for cutting railroad ties until 1916.²⁶

A church-commercial farmer leadership does not appear to have emerged at Cape Croker as it did at Caradoc. But an effectively Indian-run municipality had emerged by the 1890s. A chief and four counselors appointed what in essence was a municipal civil service—forest guardians, a postmaster, and caretakers for reserve halls. Roads, sanitation, and other public services were regulated and maintained by the band council through levies raised locally. The three reserve schools were operated by a local school committee which had a say in hiring teachers and setting curriculum. The services of a white doctor in Wiarton were contracted for by the band council. By 1896 there were four native constables appointed by the council, equipped with handcuffs and badges of rank to implement band by-laws—especially those proscribing ardent spirits.²⁷

The decline of Cape Croker farming coincided with the beginning of WW I. It was exacerbated by the collapse of regional lumbering, which had previously been the other main source of income. The 1500 acres of reserve land under cultivation had already been extended into submarginal land before 1914. Cape Croker farming stagnated during WW I when most men of enlistment age on the reserve joined the army. When they returned, small scale farming was on the skids. Eighty years of logging had exhausted both reserve and regional timber by 1920 and the last sawmill in the area closed in 1926. Cape Croker farming continued during the 1920s but had become semi-subsistence agriculture in the 1930s.²⁸

The Chippewa of Christian Island, (on Georgian Bay), appear to have had an economic history roughly intermediate between the farming reserves discussed and the reserves beyond the agricultural belt, in which farming was or became primarily a subsistence venture.²⁹

On Parry Island reserve subsistence farming was a marginal case which approximates the general image of Indian farming. The reserve was established in 1874 and, being in a submarginal agricultural area, there was never any option of commercial farm development. As distinct from commercial Indian farms, Parry Island gardeners were primarily committed to aboriginal Indian crops (corn and beans), as well as potatoes. European crops and livestock were acquired only slowly after 1900 and subsistence gardening was still supplemented by hunting and fishing. Nevertheless, as of the mid 1890s, 50 to 60 per cent of the food consumed came from the garden plots, while some 30 per cent came from game

and fish. The remainder was purchased food. Even marginal subsistence farm ventures were important during this period.³⁰

As Diamond Jenness documented, a vital memory culture of traditional Ojibwa beliefs was retained into the 1930s, at least by some Parry Island elders. According to Rogers and Tobobondung there was a continuation of the guardian spirit complex, a continued reliance on native medicines and recourse to traditional spiritual powers. While extended kinship organization was replaced by reliance on nuclear families, private ownership of reserve tracts had little support. Band members resisted the issuance of 'tickets of location'.³¹

In contradistinction to the above, the records of the Parry Island band council from the 1880s to 1902 document political arrangements fundamentally different than those of a hunting and trapping society, which it had previously been. What we find is the structure of a local government, albeit an impoverished one. There are formal decisions on who was and who was not permitted to join the band. There are decisions on work levies to build and maintain reserve roads and other local infrastructure. There are detailed provisions dealing with reserve resources and conservation measures for fish, game, and timber. Bailiffs are appointed to enforce these regulations. Funds for education, health and (pathetically meagre) relief payments are allocated by the band council. For all its seeming traditionalness, the Parry Island population was *not* a band society by the end of the nineteenth century. It was an Indian reserve community with defined boundaries and with strictures relating to membership.³²

According to Rogers and Tobobondung, the decline in Parry Island farming set in during the 1920s. While subsistence gardens continued to be planted, the hay fields, livestock, and orchards which had existed before WW I were disappearing. Massive off-reserve migration began in the early 1940s when jobs opened in the Ontario war industries.³³

As an overview of the collapse of three and more generations of Indian farming in southern Ontario, R.W. Dunning suggests, . . .

*..... that the revolution in agriculture, i.e., increase in viable units of land as well as greater capitalization required for economic farm production, pronounced the end of Indian subsistence farming as a way of life. Here then we see for the southern areas those who are principally hunters and collectors changing to subsistence cultivation on a European immigrant model in the nineteenth century until the economics of expansion by the 1930s prohibited its continuation as a basic economy. And since the late 1940s for those people who were unsuccessful in obtaining wage labour in surrounding regions, per capita welfare payments became more basic to their sustenance.*³⁴

It may be in order to end with a thumbnail sketch of native spokespersons from Ontario who were involved in off-reserve undertakings during the nineteenth century. This outline is drawn mainly from Penny Petrone's simple yet valuable reader *First People, First Voices*

One John Sunday (Shawundais, 1796-1875) was educated by Methodists and took up missionary work among his fellow Ojibwa. By 1833 he was exchanging letters about the Ojibwa language with the early American ethnologist, Henry Schoolcraft. In 1837 Sunday travelled through England, where he raised the cause of Methodist Indian missions in Canada. He later was a widely travelled preacher and public speaker in Canada, 'one known for his droll wit' (Petrone, 80)

Another Ojibwa Methodist was George Henry (Maungwudais, c.1810-?). He too became a preacher and in 1844 toured the United States and Europe as the leader of an Ojibwa dance troupe. In 1848 he published his impressions of European society, *An Account of the Chippewa Indians Who Have Been Travelling Among the Whites in the United States, England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Belgium*. As part of their tour of Great Britain they were taken to see the sights - Wallace's Oak near Paisley and Robert Burns' cottage. (Petrone, 87-95) There is something ironic about an Indian Methodist tour visiting the shrines of romanticised Scottish epics.

George Copway (1818-1869), was yet another Ojibwa Methodist minister - also a lecturer, author and herbal doctor. His 'autobiographical' *The Life, History, and Travels of Kah-ge-gah-bowh, a young Indian chief of the Ojibwa* was published in Philadelphia in 1847. It went through six editions under the title *Recollections of a Forest Life* and its success enabled Copway to tour the United States and Europe as a lecturer. He followed this up with his 1850. *The Traditional History of the Ojibwa Nation* (Petronne, 106-110)

Although it is beginning to sound repetitious, Peter Jacobs (1805-1890) was yet another Ojibwa Methodist preacher who did missionary work in Indian communities from Lake Superior to Hudson's Bay. He was a skilled orator and spoke on the Ways of the Indians to large audiences in tours throughout Canada, England and the United States. His journal of travels and events at his various postings has a realistic ring to it.

One of the most influential Indian Methodists in Canada was Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby, 1802-1856). Of Mississauga-Welsh extraction, he was an indefatigable lobbyist in efforts to establish a Mississauga reserve on the Credit River, Ontario. He managed to have himself elected as chief of the band at age twenty-seven but the land was not transferred to band title, so Jones and his followers established farms for themselves on another reserve in southern Ontario. (Dickason, O. 1992: 235)

Jones made the first of a number of tours to England in 1831, to raise money of the Indian Methodist mission in Canada. His *History of the Ojibwas Indians, with especial reference to their conversion to Christianity* was published in London in 1861. (Petronne, 83-84). Anyone considering a historical study of the origins of the 'Alongkian family territory' debate, and the uses to which it was later put, should consult these accounts of Indian customs by the early native missionaries.

Although one may take the above as evidence of the role of missions among a new native leadership in the mid-nineteenth century, what I want to underscore is the knowledge of the Euro-American world by a strata of Indian spokesmen. What effect *their* versions of Indian traditions had among the Euro-Canadian audiences of the time would be of considerable interest.

There seems to have been a stream of native Indian missionaries, lecturers and touring spokespersons addressing European and American audiences from the mid nineteenth century and on. One Catherine Sonego Sutton (1824-1865) accompanied her aunt, the English-born wife of Rev. Peter Jones, to the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837 and returned to lay a petition for Indian rights before that Queen in 1860. Henry Chase (c.1816-1900) was an Ojibwa chief who was ordained as a minister of the Church of England in 1864. He ministered to his parishioners in Muncie, Ontario, and visited Great Britain and the continent several times, giving talks and sermons there on various occasions before 1883. A Francis Assikinack (1824-1863) had attended Upper Canada College in Toronto, had taught school for a while and later rose to become the chief clerk in the precursor of the Department of Indian Affairs. He published articles on the domestic life of the Ottawa - the people not the town. (Petronne, 110,130)

More purely oratorical or theatrical tours were launched by Buhkwujjene (1815-1900), another 'chief of the Ojibwa' who visited England in 1878 and gave recitations of Indian lore, costumed in the by then standard stage dress of native sages. A somewhat more flamboyant orator was John Ojijatkha Brant-Sero (1867 -?), a Mohawk poet and dramatist from the Six Nations reserve. He gave lectures and dramatic readings to audiences in Canada and abroad, once declaiming passages from *Othello* in both English and Mohawk on the stage of a Chicago theatre. Brant-Sero had his people's version of Hiawatha published in the British anthropological journal *Man* and in 1908 allegedly entered a 'male beauty contest' in Folkstone, England. (Petronne, 125-138)

It is time to leave the travelling Indian publicists of nineteenth century Ontario. One suspects that other regions, at earlier or later dates, added their own quota of native tours and spokespersons. What we don't have are accounts by the host of travelling Indian workers, the voices of river raftsmen, loggers, traders, migrant farm workers, sailors and all those

whose working sojourns away from their homes were every bit as remarkable as the forays mentioned above. They probably had at least as much to tell Indian listeners of the time, accounts of the wonders and dangers of the broader world, stories that probably were as dramatic and surely more pragmatic than renderings of Hiawatha or John Wesley.

Resource Ontario

Members of Indian bands throughout much of northern and western Ontario entered into wage labour in some of the resource industries during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This followed a long era when they were primarily involved in the fur trade. They participated in the construction of the CPR through these zones in the early 1880s and the CNR line further north in the first decade of this century. Many Indian men from what had previously been a fur trade economy were employed in lumber camps, sawmills by or before 1900.

When Alexander Morris came to the Fort William-Rainy River region of westernmost Ontario in 1873 to 'negotiate' the treaties which surrendered Indian title there in advance of expected white settlement, some Indian leaders were already considering what effects a railway would have on their region. This is less surprising than it may seem since they had lived near and worked on the major transport route to western Canada for close to a century.³⁵

In 1884, the Indian Agent of the Northwestern Ontario Agency, writing of the Wanitowaning band in particular but intending his comments for the agency as a whole, said, '*As winter advances, many of the Indians obtained employment getting out railway ties, also in the railway work in progress . . . also as deckhands on steamboats, in sawmills and lumber shanties.*'³⁶ This applied to many of the Indian bands along the line of CPR construction from Lake Nipissing to the Manitoba border. Where they were not directly employed in railroad construction they were engaged in various kinds of transport work.

Another burst of construction activity developed in the region during the first decade of the twentieth century, when preparations for and the construction of the Canadian Northern (CNR) went ahead. Edmund Bradwin discusses the employment and alleged nature of Indian railway workers in sections of his *The Bunkhouse Man* (an account of work and wages in the railway camps of northern Ontario between 1903 and 1914). While Bradwin was not markedly *more* racist toward Indians than toward other non-Anglo Saxon workers, he demonstrates engrained ethnic stereotypes which probably operated in limiting the roles of Indian workers.³⁷

At the turn of the century, Indians in northern and western Ontario were engaged in wage labour in what was then a frontier development region. Most adult men at Long Lac were engaged in portaging supplies for the railway construction during 1899-1900. At Fort William-Port Arthur Indians worked in the burgeoning lumber industry while others were employed on the coal docks and in the construction of grain elevators. At Red Rock and Pic River some men were shifting from winter trapping to work in the lumber camps.³⁸

An interesting case is that of Temiscaming, where in 1900 *Indians engage in hunting, fishing, building rowboats, canoes, acting as guides for tourists and working in the lumber camps during the winter and on the drives in spring.*³⁹ Some Temiscaming had been involved in lumbering by or before the 1890s. They and the Temagami are the people who Grey Owl (nee Archie Belaney, the English eccentric, sometime trapper and later native sage) was to portray some thirty years later as 'children of the forest. It now seems incredible that people as sagacious as Harold Innis and George Stanley, writing in the 1930s, could have taken the shop worn hoakum peddled by Owl/Belaney as the insights of a Canadian native writer. But they did. (Innis, H. 1962: 378, Stanley, G. 1938:200)

It may be of interest to note another undertaking being played out on a set between Lake Temagami and Temiscaming in early 1929. This was the filming of an epic entitled *The*

Silent Enemy (i.e the ever-present threat of starvation), which was intended to portray the life of the Ojibwa 'before the coming of the whiteman'. A fuller account is to be found in Donald Smith's (1982) remarkable history of an Indian imposter who went by the name of Buffalo Child Long Lance. It is an episode from the golden age of bunko.

Setting aside the Alaskan reindeer who played the role of thundering herds of caribou, the lead of *The Silent Enemy* was one 'Long Lance', a mulatto from South Carolina who had passed himself off as Cherokee to get into Carlisle Indian Residential School. He later enlisted in the Canadian army to serve in France and had returned to work as a journalist and native spokesman from one end of Canada to the other. The role of 'aged chief' was acted by one Chauncey Yellow Robe, a Sioux who had spent almost all of his youth and adult life as a student and then a warden at Carlisle School. He too had diligently created a self appointed role for himself as spokesman of 'my people'. The villain of the movie, a shaman who wants to cook the hero's goose, was played by a French-Canadian Metis named Paul Benoit, who hailed from just west of Ottawa. The winsome Indian maiden (standard issue in such epics) was one "...Molly Nelson, or Molly Spotted Elk, a beautiful Penobscot girl from Old Town, Maine. She was easier to find than the others - she danced every night in New York at Texas Guinan's Night club, a well-known speakeasy" (Smith, D. 1982:168). The one more or less authentic Ojibwa actor the directors discovered was named George McDougall, a thirteen-year old from a trapping family, who took it all in his stride. A number of local Ojibwa were hired as extras, a job they were happy to get since the regional lumber and trapping economy had gone bust.

Reality is often more outrageous than fiction: while filming, Long Lance encountered Agnes Belaney, the then seventeen year old daughter of Archie Belaney by his first Temagami wife. The daughter was working in a restaurant at Temagami and had the poor sense to tell Long Lance that he "...must be a different kind of Indian". (Smith, D. 1982:170) As for Owl/Belaney himself, "*Archie lived in the Temagami area from 1906 to 1911, and again in 1925, just three years before Long Lance and the rest of the cast and crew arrived to make The Silent Enemy. As Grey Owl, Archie read Long Lance [Lance's fabricated autobiography] in 1931 and hailed the author as a 'splendid savage*". (Smith, D. 1982: 170-171). I believe that P.T. Barnum had an aphorism relating to such ventures.

Let us return to the more mundane world of resource Ontario at the turn of the century. We were interrupted in a discussion of Indian loggers there. The Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs of 1897 mentions the members of at least twenty-four bands in Ontario engaged in logging, working in sawmills, and in related woods labour.⁴⁰

In addition to railway construction some Indian men in the region worked on the section gangs maintaining these lines. From 1910 to 1915 members of the Chapleau and Mattagami bands were employed as trackmen and section hands by the CPR. Probably the majority of native people in the Northwest Ontario Agency continued as trappers and hunters in the 1920s, but employment in logging camps and at sawmills was important in regions where such work existed. Some native people even worked as deckhands on Great Lakes shipping.⁴¹

It is unclear to what extent the mines in northern Ontario employed native labour. In at least one area, in the small mines of the Red Lake-Pickle Crow region, some Indian workers were employed initially as casual labour and later as mine workers during the late 1930s and on.⁴²

There are some outstanding studies of the Indian societies based upon trapping and hunting in northern Ontario.⁴³ There can be little doubt that north of the height of land, commercial trapping did remain central to Indian economies until recent times. However, in what might be termed the resource extraction region of Ontario, wage labour has long been of importance to Indian people. It may be in order to note one group which managed to hold its own during a period of industrial development.

The Ojibwa of Dokis, whose reserve is on the French River, were among the last of the Indian traders in eastern Canada. One DIA agent described them as 'a tribe of shopkeepers', carrying goods by canoes and trading furs with more isolated Indian groups as late as 1884. He says, *'On my return journey I met the principal members of this community on their way home...with four or five boats and large canoes, deeply laden with provisions, groceries, dry goods, sleighs, sewing machines, etc... With these goods they will trade during the coming fall and winter.'*⁴⁴

The construction of the CPR through the area was followed by small white settlements with stores, which rapidly undercut the role of Indian traders. During the next twenty years Dokis band members mixed subsistence hunting-fishing and trapping, with varied wage work and logging. The neighbouring Nippissing band had been 'steadily employed' in the construction of the CPR line near their reserve during the 1880s but after its completion had fallen back upon subsistence gardening and casual labour.

By 1910 both the Dokis and the Nippissing bands were engaged in the regional lumber industry, working in logging camps and on the river drives. The Dokis held on to their reserve timber until 1910, when they leased cutting rights to lumber companies, at the peak of the market. The band obtained some \$1.1 million for this lease, a lot of money then. Included in the deal was a clause which gave band members priority employment rights in logging reserve timber. Many Dokis men established small horse logging outfits and contracted to cut and haul out the timber. These logging operations continued to be central to the local economy, with various ups and downs, until the 1940s. In addition, some local men worked in off-reserve sawmills, on lake shipping, and in a variety of band enterprises.⁴⁵

Even the decline of the local lumber industry did not have as catastrophic effects as the collapse of Indian farming had elsewhere. John Mortimore notes that a successful mix of local enterprises and off-reserve jobs took up the slack and provided a level of economic success at least comparable to that of non-Indian communities in the region.⁴⁶

Caughnawaga, Quebec

Caughnawaga was established by those Mohawk who allied themselves with the French regime and moved to the outskirts of Montreal between 1668 and 1680. By the beginning of the nineteenth century some Caughnawaga were employed as canoe men in the fur brigades which reached into the lands west of Lake Superior. Caughnawaga and members of other Iroquois communities comprised a significant portion the voyageurs recruited by the North West Company. Some found themselves on the shores of the Pacific by the second decade of the nineteenth century. Presumably, those so employed were no longer effectively part of the Caughnawaga home community.

At Caughnawaga itself, subsistence gardening combined indigenous crops with those acquired from the French colonists. During the later nineteenth century, when farming was beginning to 'flourish' on some southern Ontario reserves, it was already stagnant at Caughnawaga.⁴⁷

By the middle of the nineteenth century Caughnawaga men were working in the white pine industry which was spreading up the Ottawa River and its major tributaries. They worked in the lumber shanties and rode log drives down the Ottawa, the Saguenay, the Gatineau rivers for the next sixty years. They and the Iroquois of St. Regis (Cornwall, Ont.) were renowned for taking the large square timber rafts down the Lachine rapids to the Montreal lumber docks. This activity lasted late enough so that some of its drama was captured by documentary photographers at the turn of the century.⁴⁸

Some Caughnawaga during the late nineteenth century were well-travelled. Apart from their work-related trips some participated in international tours. One group of Caughnawaga went to the Paris Universal Exposition of 1867 to demonstrate their arts and crafts as part of a Canadian delegation. The following year, fifteen Caughnawaga toured various British

cities giving exhibitions of lacrosse and Indian dancing. In 1876 another group of thirteen Caughnawaga toured Ireland, Britain and Scotland, again giving exhibitions of lacrosse. From the 1870s until W.W.I some Caughnawaga men travelled with in various 'Wild West' shows touring the United States. Miles Diablo was one of the last Caughnawaga to work in the *Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Wild West Show*, which in 1916 was playing to the folks in Wheeling, West Virginia. During the same period a few Caughnawaga toured the small towns of the eastern US and Canada with horse and wagon, selling home-brewed Indian herbs and medicines.⁴⁹

Hallowell notes one traditional American image of Native Indians was that they were possessors of unique knowledge of 'natural' healing. This was used to commercial effect. Although not dealing specifically with Iroquois participants, he mentions that during the late nineteenth century there were up to 150 medicine shows on the road in America, most of which featured native Indian herbal practitioners and pitchmen. One of these *'the Kickapoo Indian Medicine Company went on the block in 1911, after thirty years of roaming the American plains and hamlets. it still brought \$250,000.* When Chauncey Yellow Robe, who we met filming at Temagami, died his obituary was prominently carried in the American theatrical press. (Hallowell, I. 1967:330,331)

A more serious expedition was that of fifty Caughnawaga who, along with eighty other Iroquois from Six Nations and St. Regis and some Ojibwa of Manitoba, volunteered for the 'relief of Khartoum' to rescue Pasha Charles Gordon. The Caughnawaga were part of a British expeditionary force and acted as keelboat men ferrying troops up the Nile in 1884. It proved to be somewhat anti-climactic but there were few casualties. The leader of the Canadian Indian boatmen was a Captain Louis Jackson, a Caughnawaga who lived in Montreal and was a businessman there. Captain Jackson's brief memoirs of the Sudan expedition, *Our Caughnawaga in Egypt*, is a revealing document in that it is little different than similar campaign memoirs of the era.⁵⁰

One facet of Caughnawaga employment which has captured the public imagination is their history as structural steel workers. Purveyors of pop anthropology have floated the story of how Caughnawaga involvement in high steel work was a cultural continuation of their traditions as footsure hunters and daring warriors. But as we have seen, a lot of history had flowed through Caughnawaga between the time they were hunters and the time they took up bridge work.

As usual, reality is just as amazing as myth. Caughnawaga involvement in structural steel work began when the Dominion Bridge Company obtained the contract to build the main CPR bridge crossing the St. Lawrence River in 1882. They chose the Caughnawaga reserve as the site for the crossing. In addition to monetary compensation, the community leaders extracted a commitment that Dominion Bridge would hire a quota of local Indian workers in the construction process. The initial Caughnawaga bridge workers were ordinary day labourers; structural steel work required special skills. In the course of the two-year bridge construction, Indian insistence and temporary shortages of experienced steel workers led Dominion Bridge to train one or two gangs of Caughnawaga riveters. They followed Dominion Bridge to its next major project, the rail bridge at Sault St. Marie. On that job the Caughnawaga trained a number of other community members on a rotational basis, which established the core of structural steel workers.⁵¹

By 1900 Caughnawaga steelworkers were working for the Dominion Bridge Company, for the Iron Bridge Company of Lachine, and for the Hydraulic Company. Others on the reserve were employed in the declining local quarries and in lumbering, stevedoring and other jobs.⁵² By 1907 there were about seventy skilled bridgemen in the Caughnawaga population of circa 500. A number were killed that year in the collapse of a bridge being built at Quebec city but a new generation of Caughnawaga steel workers was working in the US by 1920. There were three or four Caughnawaga high steel gangs in New York by 1926

and three more in 1928. They worked on the construction of the George Washington Bridge, the French building, Rockefeller Centre and other projects throughout the US.⁵³

Caughnawaga reserve seems to have taken on some aspects of a bedroom community of temporarily absent men employed elsewhere. By WW I reserve farming was senescent. I do not know the extent of Caughnawaga employment in Montreal but it probably was earlier and more varied than DIA reports suggest. One might also guess that a Caughnawaga middle class, both on and off reserve, has a more varied and longer history than is usually presumed.

Quebec north of the height of land remained Federal territory until 1912 and people there remained effectively part of northern Canada, having little contact with the cities and rural settlements of southern Quebec. The provincial government did not truly enter these northern lands during the period discussed and Indian groups there remained based upon trapping.

I do not know what those Indian populations living in the intermediate zone of Quebec, analogous to the resource extraction region of Ontario, were doing. *It seems* that trapping and subsistence hunting continued there, along with casual wage work. The Abenaki of Lake St. Francis, the Micmac in the Gaspé, as well as the Montagnais of Pointe Bleue (Lac St. John), had members who worked at least seasonally in sawmills, and in lumber camps during the late 1890s.⁵⁴

Reserves of the Maritimes

The Micmac, Malecite, and Abenaki of the Maritimes had been in ongoing if not continual contact with Europeans for about 300 years in 1860. They had gone through the cycles of trade with offshore fishermen and land based posts, had experienced epidemics and colonial wars, and had had dealings with missions and various early settlers. Although it is not a history we can pursue here it may be of interest to note that by the start of seventeenth century the Micmac and Malacite had entered the commercial whaling and sea mammal hunts along the Maritime coasts. They "... entered into the service of Europeans for a few goods or a little pay, doing 'all kinds of work, such as cleaning and butchering whales.' They were above all hunters for marine mammals such as walrus, seal, and small whales, and before the arrival of Europeans they had depended primarily on marine resources by the beginning of the seventeenth century, Mi'kmaq were sailing European shallops (Dickason, O. 1992: 106)

Some Micmac chiefs made visits to Europe in order to press for Indian claims during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. But already by the beginning of the nineteenth century trapping in the region had become marginal. The native populations of the Maritimes eked out an existence with a mix of subsistence fishing and hunting, very incipient gardening, and some degree of involvement in commercial fishing. By the 1830s there were about 1 400 Micmac in Nova Scotia and another 1,000 Abenaki, Malecite and Micmac in New Brunswick. (Dickason, O. 1992: 230,231)

Government-established reserves intended to foster Indian farming slowly emerged during the early 1840s in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. However, a 1844 report by Joseph Howe (then the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for Nova Scotia) mentions only a handful of incipient Micmac garden plots. The same marginal subsistence economy *seems* to have continued thirty years later. According to an 1877 report of the Micmac of St. Francis Xavier, '... the men were all away shooting porpoise in the Bay of Fundy . . . A scanty crop of potatoes, and letting their fields for pasturage, with here and there a cow, is all they gain, save firewood and home, from their land. The sale of baskets and woodenware, with that of porpoise oil, berries, some deer meat and wages gained in log cutting make up the scanty hoard which clothes and feeds them.'⁵⁵

While the above view may be broadly correct, it may underplay the extent and importance of seasonal wage labour. Micmac and Malecite men were engaged in the lumbering

operations of the St. John and other rivers in New Brunswick from at least the 1860s on. They worked in the lumber shanties, on the spring log drives and on the lumber docks. By 1897 the Malecite of Tobique and Woodstock (on the St. John River, NB), the Micmac from the communities at Eel Ground, Red Bank, Kingsclear, and of Restigouche in New Brunswick, as well as the Micmac in Halifax and Shelburne counties in Nova Scotia, were all involved in lumbering and related work. Some had been so engaged for close to two generations.⁵⁶

For whatever reasons, the Micmac in Nova Scotia were less involved in lumbering than those in New Brunswick.⁵⁷ In Nova Scotia bands a mix of subsistence fishing and gardening was supplemented by commercial handicraft production. The woodenware industry, widespread on many Maritime reserves throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, exemplifies an unprofitable kind of cottage industry. Micmac basketry and woodenware were not artwork or curios intended for the tourist trade. The goods were 'mass produced' by Indian artisans and sold for utilitarian purposes, being containers for storing and marketing potatoes, apples and other produce. They included bushel baskets, barrels, tubs, and boxes which were purchased in bulk by farmers and retailers.

McFeat's study of the last commercial woodenware producers among the Malecite of Tobique notes that the industry was well established there by 1868. It was a source of supplementary income for many during the next sixty years but a full-time job for only some. McFeat's account of two elderly artisans - one making barrels and the other producing wooden splint baskets- notes that they had earlier worked as loggers, in sawmills, as carpenters and at other wage labour before settling into their crafts. Most people at Tobique had given up these crafts. It seems that the once extensive Indian woodenware industry was largely a response to the lack of other jobs or sources of income.⁵⁸

The picture of marginal reserve economies in the Maritimes may be overdrawn. It is an oversimplified portrait for the Micmac settlement at Restigouche. By the early nineteenth century they had experienced some two centuries of dealings with French missionaries, fishermen and traders, and with British forces. This involved a variety of alliances and delegations to colonial officials by Micmac chiefs.

In 1823 a delegation of Restigouche Micmac journeyed to Quebec City to petition for lands excluded from their reserve. Failing there, a party of three Micmac chiefs raised the money for a voyage to England to lay their claims before the British government in 1841, and again in 1851. Apparently to no avail.⁵⁹

In circa 1830 the Restigouche reserve consisted of some 1200 acres and contained a Catholic mission complex. There were scattered garden plots and a few head of livestock but few Micmac families were permanently resident there. By then a number of Restigouche men operated commercial fishing boats and one owned a twenty-five ton schooner.⁶⁰

By 1844 Micmac were apparently settling at Restigouche, but only three or four of the circa eighty families there were primarily farmers. The rest pursued a mix of subsistence gardening and relied upon fishing and hunting to the extent that they could. Some worked seasonally in regional lumber camps. A generation later, in 1868, commercial production of woodenware and baskets had been added to the mix of reserve economy. Although there was still a good deal of movement on and off the reserve, the houses and the external appearance of Restigouche was said to approximate that of surrounding white villages.

By then nearby Campbellton had become a center for sawmilling and lumber shipping. Many Restigouche men were employed there and in the regional logging camps. Throughout the summer lumber vessels from many countries loaded timber at Campbellton and even at Restigouche itself. The Intercolonial and CPR railway lines were driven through the area between 1875 and the early 1880s. It is uncertain if Restigouche men worked on

their construction, as they did on other rail lines a generation later. The Department of Indian Affairs began to administer the reserve during the 1880s.⁶¹

In 1902 a French-Canadian company established a large sawmill on the Restigouche reserve, the Chaleur Bay Mills. It was in more or less constant operation until 1931, employing a large number of both Indian and white workers. One Restigouche man remarked, some thirty years later, 'You couldn't walk past the lumberyard without somebody asking you if you wanted a job.'⁶² The wages were not high but from the perspective of later years it is understandable how this period came to be regarded as a 'golden age' of economic prosperity. A number of French-Canadian workers and their families became established in company houses built on the reserve in conjunction with the mill.

Between 1903 and 1921 the local priest at Restigouche published a monthly newspaper in Micmac called the *Micmac Messenger*. Along with marriage notices and news of the regional baseball teams, the *Messenger* carried advertisements for labourers to work on the railways being built through northern Ontario and western Canada between 1905 and 1914.. *Some Indians answered those advertisements and followed the railroad. Others roamed over Canada and the northern United States working in lumber camps, on river drives, and in the wheat harvest. Some Indians fought in World War I. But most stayed at the Mission, to work in lumbering, at the mill, loading on the docks or farming.*⁶³

It is unclear what the economic trajectory was during the 1920s, but the regional lumber industry was laid low by the great depression. The Chaleur Bay mill closed in 1931, never to reopen. The fall migration to work in the harvest of the New England potato crop became of importance in the 1930s. It may be a measure of the desperation of the times. Starting then, many reserve families began to depend upon relief payments. *'Some of the most experienced woodsmen kept their jobs, but pay was low, and the people who were children then remember being hungry most of the time. Families with a tradition of farming fared better; but most others had even forgotten the basic hunting, fishing, or craft skills.'*⁶⁴

Chapter 14

A Prairie and Northern Sketch

A Prairie Sketch

Given the rapidity of the agrarian settlement which was to come, it takes some effort to remember that as late as 1860 native peoples of the prairie region and its boreal margins were still primarily engaged in neo-traditional hunting and trapping. While the Red River settlement had become a modest agricultural island, after a half century it's inhabitants were still subsistence farmers and/or commercial hunters. Its agricultural population was still miniscule and their production very limited because *transport costs virtually ruled out exporting agricultural products*. There is some historic significance in the Manitoba provincial flag, with it's bison standing in a field of stooked wheat.

By the early nineteenth century native peoples on or in the margins of the plains were becoming suppliers of pemmican to the HBC and the Northwest Company. Where the fur-bearing animals had been trapped out, the main trade product was pemmican. (Friesen, G. 1984: 39-43)

By the late 1820s, Metis from the Red River and Assiniboia regions came to dominate the pemmican trade. The main 'cash' product of the Canadian prairie region then was pemmican - parfleches of dried, pounded buffalo meat mixed with tallow and sometimes dried saskatoon berries. Although fur traders experimented with other preserved foods (some of them quite revolting), and although their posts were always supplemented with local game and fish, their transport networks were typically fed on pemmican. (Rich, E. 1967:217-225) Although the bison provided much of the subsistence needs of the Metis themselves, the pemmican trade was a commercial industry.

The time required in shipping goods in and taking furs out of distant inland posts by canoe brigade, and the risk of being frozen in, did not allow for hunting and fishing on the way. The fur brigades travelling to and from distant posts were always in a race against time. Voyageurs were allotted one and half pounds of pemmican per day or, what was held to be its equivalent, some eight pounds of fresh fish or game. (Friesen, G. 1984: 39)

The food sources utilized by trade posts varied from region to region and era to era, but as an example of the amounts entailed consider Norway House, the transshipment center at the north end of Lake Winnipeg. In 1842 it required some 400 bags of common pemmican (c.36,000 lbs.) as well as 150 bales of dried meat and lesser amounts of other country foods. This was in addition to whatever fish and other food was procured locally. (Innis, H. 1962: 301).

In total, Innis estimates that in 1857 between 2,000 to 3,000 *hundredweight* of trade pemmican was produced and purchased, mainly from the Saskatchewan and neighbouring prairie districts. (Innis, H. 1962: 302) According to one estimate, four pounds of fresh meat yielded one pound of pemmican. (Harrison, J. 1985:26) Accepting a conversion ratio of 4 to 1, this entails some 800,000 to 1,200,000 pounds of fresh buffalo meat turned into trade pemmican in one year. The cost of pemmican rose as its availability decreased but it was only in 1871 that the declining hunt on the plains meant that the Saskatchewan district could no longer supply pemmican to the fur trade network (Innis, H. 1962: 359).

Organized Metis buffalo hunts included as many as fifteen hundred people, men and women, setting out from their settlements in southern Manitoba for the hunting grounds in the 1830s. The Metis seem to have done well at it while the trade lasted.

".... in the middle years of the nineteenth century, when the colony was turning in every direction to discover some means of paying for external purchases, the Metis and their hunts were the one source of cash. They provided the pemmican which the fur trade still needed and which the Company readily bought in almost any quantity. There were indeed years in which all of the pemmican was not purchased, but the buffalo hunts provided most of the cash on which the colony depended. The Metis disbursed their gains with such

prodigality that they stimulated economic life in a way which was in itself necessary and desirable, however untoward the consequences for the Metis themselves."(Rich, E. 1967: 253)

By the mid 1840s Metis were using their locally built, high-wheeled, Red River carts to haul goods from the U.S., going as far south as St. Paul, Minnesota, then the head of steam navigation on the Mississippi. Despite initial objections by the HBC, Metis freighters carried south what buffalo robes, hides and pelts they had acquired and brought back American goods. This was profitable because of the high cost of transport over the York Factory route, in which it cost more to carry goods down from Hudson's Bay than it did to ship those same goods from England.(Innis, H. 1962: 294)

A body of Metis 'free traders' emerged and by the mid 1850s expeditions of 200 or more Red River carts, driven by Metis freighters and sometimes accompanied by their families, set out for St. Paul each season. (Harrison, J. 1985: 32,33) But by the end of the decade these Metis freight caravans were largely supplanted by steamboat traffic on the Red River. But the kinds of enterprises carried on by Metis - the freighting and trading across borders, the trade with Indian groups, the varied commercial undertakings of individual Metis, all suggest that they were something more than "a people caught between two worlds," as unquenchable Victorian rhetoric would have it. 65

One estimate of the population of the region now comprised by the three prairie provinces in 1869-1870, on the eve of their conveyance into the Dominion of Canada, is as follows. Some 25-35,000 Indians throughout the entire region, possibly 10,000 Metis and about 2,000 Europeans, including Red River settlers, fur traders and others. (Friesen, G, 184:137). This was to change dramatically as the initial wave of Canadian-European settlers began to arrive with the creation of the province of Manitoba in 1870.

Let us pass over the first provisional government of Manitoba under the aegis of Metis led by Louis Riel in 1869-1870, and its dissolution by troops sent from Canada. I will also sidestep the tangled debate about what lands were due to the Metis and how Metis land title and script were issued. The one thing which almost everyone seems to agree upon is that, given the vast tracts of land available, the Canadian government was niggardly and tardy in complying with Metis demands for secure land tenure.

Actually, a considerable amount of land had been set aside for Metis claims. Section 31 of the 1870 Manitoba Act 'set aside' some 1.4 million acres of land in Manitoba for Metis land claims (but did not locate such lands or specify how they were to be allotted) By a Legislative act of 1874 heads of Metis families could take either 160 acres of land (later raised to 240 acres) or government script to the amount of \$160 in lieu of that land.

By 1879 all of these lands had been allotted to Metis claimants and none remained for those who had not yet made their claim. According to George Stanley, some sold their claims and moved west. *Despairing of ever receiving their land patents, many disposed of their rights for a mere song. Some gladly sold their script for trifling sums to smooth-tongued speculators, packed up their few possessions and trekked across the plains to the Saskatchewan to live again the old life of freedom* (Stanley, G. 1938: 245). This refrain has become part of 'common knowledge' but the realities may have been more complex.

A Prairie historian, an advocate of Metis rights, suggests the complexity of Metis communities - even those which had recently established themselves on the frontier of settlement, as at Batoche, this way:

They had moved into the district more than a decade earlier and had established stable, often prosperous, farms along the South Saskatchewan. As in previous generations, they also served as freighters, translators, horse breeders, and in the dozen other occupations associated with their status as intermediaries between European Canadians and natives. Their dwellings began as rude flat-roofed log cabins with buffalo parchments stretched over doors and windows, but more enterprising [Metis] settlers soon moved on to finer structures. One leader in the Batoche-St.Laurent area, Francois Xavier Letendre, or Batoche, as he was called, lived in a two-storey clapboard mansion with fieldstone

foundation and log walls that featured a columned veranda, decorative barge-board on the gables, carpeted rooms, and chandeliers - the whole valued at \$5,500, which was the approximate value of Winnipeg's finer houses. Georges Fisher, Solomon Venne, and Charles Nolin were substantial members of the same community.....These fragments of information emphasize what is too often forgotten: that the metis settlements were permanent, stable communities, with merchants, mills, farms, and churches. Far from transitory camps, these extended villages contained a population of over 1,500 and represented the metis adaptation to the new economic order." (Friesen, G. 1984: 225)

No brief commentary on the Metis and Indian risings of 1885 can be very meaningful. It was a confrontation which might have been avoided, but the results would probably have been little different from what did follow. Given the fact that the Canadian Pacific Railway was nearing completion, agrarian settlement of the Prairie region was inevitable, and with it the elimination of what remained of a frontier existence. This is not a conclusion that some would accept today.

The year 1885 was the conclusion of one historic era on the northern plains but the Metis did not disappear with Riel's defeat. One would like to know more about what they did and what happened to them during the generations which followed.

Turning to the Indian populations of the Prairie region: the fur trapping resources had generally been decimated in the parklands of Manitoba and the open prairie long before 1870. Bison herds still existed in the western-most prairies until but were rapidly being annihilated. Following the treaties concluded with most native peoples on the Prairies during the 1870s, the first Indian reserves were in the process of being established and native people in a some locales were beginning to experiment with subsistence farming. Wage work throughout the region was negligible when compared to developments in British Columbia. But Wemyss Simpson, the commissioner charged with negotiating the first treaties with Indians in Manitoba, noted that already in 1870 some Sioux and Chippewa were working for white farmers in the Portage La Prairie and Poplar Point regions. They were employed making fence rails and in ploughing and harvesting grain and allegedly constituted an important part of the harvest labour in some parishes. Not a promising beginning.⁶⁶

I will also pass over the signing of Treaties by Indian groups with the Dominion of Canada. What these entailed, the rights they conveyed or didn't convey, their variable implementation, are the stuff of endless debate and sometimes imaginative melodrama. The treaties of the Dominion of Canada with Indian groups throughout the west were predominantly concerned with 'extinguishing' native title; they were, in a sense, unilateral since settlement would go ahead whether Indian groups signed treaty or not.

While the specifics of each treaty varied somewhat, few of the regulations and administration policies which came to effect native people were written into the treaties themselves. The regulations were mainly the consequence of the Indian Act and the administrative policies of the Department of Indian Affairs, which applied whether Indian people had signed treaty or not. Gerald Friesen reasonably holds that "*There will never be agreement on what the original parties did, let alone what they thought they had done. Nevertheless, it seems clear that a fundamental divergence in Indian and governmental views of the treaty has marred Indian-white relations from the 1870s to the present*" (Friesen, G. 1984:148)

By the end of the 1870s the Indian groups on plains were being settled on reserves and what passed for agricultural aid - seed and some hand implements - was being distributed. By the beginning of the 1880s DIA agricultural missions were operating among some Indian groups on the prairies. The last hunt for buffalo was made in the Cypress Hills in 1881 and was a total failure. Emergency rations were issued to prairie groups from the beginning of the 1880s. As distinct from other regions where reserve farming took hold, agriculture came to many of the prairie Indian populations as a desperate alternative to starvation. Not an auspicious beginning.

Nevertheless, a few prairie reserves did have some early success in their farming ventures. Noel Dyck (1986) mentions a select number of cases where Prairie bands got into farming, with some success, by 1880. For example, the Cree farmers on the Moosomin reserve, in the vicinity of Battleford Sask., had built houses and barns and were raising grain and cattle which they sold to the Northwest Mounted Police garrison and to townspeople well before 1885.

However, initial success could quickly be reversed by market conditions. For instance, Indian horticulturalists on the Peigan reserve harvested some 2,900 bushels of potatoes in 1882, selling the surplus above their needs at two and a half cents a pound. They were encouraged to expand production and in 1885 harvested some 6,700 bushels of potatoes, only to find that they were a glut on the local market and brought only a half cent a pound. They were "discouraged and disillusioned." (Dempsey, H. 1978:24)

In 1895 the DIA made a census of all Indian farms on prairie reserves. It listed some 1,525 subsistence farmlets on some sixty reserves. There was little of the then prevailing farm machinery and there were almost no grain farms of viable commercial size, even by the standards of that day.⁶⁷

A few farms and ranches on prairie reserves did fall within the range of commercial undertakings. Cattle ranching had been introduced on the Blood reserve in 1894 and by the end of that decade their herd had grown to fifteen hundred head. (Dempsey, H. 1978:25) By the mid-1890's DIA policy came to foster the advancement of individual Indian farmers and ranchers rather than attempts to improve band economies per se. Speaking of some commercial successes on southern Alberta reserves,

Among the Bloods, a man named Chief Moon took a hay contract in 1891, borrowing equipment from the agent. Within two year, he owned his own equipment and was competing with white ranchers for contracts from the Mounted Police and the Indian Department. Similarly, Heavy Gun started a coal mine on the Blood Reserve in 1892, hiring his own native teamsters and miners, while on the Peigan Reserve, Big Swan operated a stopping house on the stage coach route between Fort MacLeod and Pincher CreekEach such case was held up as evidence that the Indians could indeed become self supporting. No mention was made of the scores of others who had become despirited, dejected and demoralized by life on the reserve. (Dempsey, H. 1978: 26)

That is a well-taken proviso, but it may also be imbalanced to focus only on those who were 'despirited and dejected'.

By 1910 some savants within the DIA were beginning to question the economic wisdom of Indian farming, despite the increase in agricultural production on the prairie reserves. Reserve farms in the three prairie provinces totaled some 26,780 acres of worked land. These produced roughly 430,600 bushels of grain, 42,100 bushels of potatoes and garden produce, and circa 72,000 tons of cattle fodder. Indian farmer-ranchers also ran some 13,360 horses and 24,300 head of beef cattle on their lands.⁶⁸

Impressive as these figures may appear in total, if averaged over the prairie Indian population they constitute a picture of subsistence farmlets with a few head of stock thrown in on the side. This seems so despite the fact that some commercial-sized farms did exist on reserves by then.⁶⁹

Sarah Carter's *Lost Harvests* (1990) is a study of Indian farmers on prairie reserves and government policy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She discusses some of the initially successful attempts by Indian farmers and holds that the ultimate failure of reserve farms to develop into commercial operations was due to a combination of government restrictions. She presents and disposes of once fashionable 'culturological' arguments, to the effect that native Indians retained cultural values which militated against them becoming farmers.

If I understand the thrust of Carter's argument, it is that agriculture was fostered by the DIA on prairie reserves as a means to provide food for the local Indian communities. But

when Indian farmers began to acquire agricultural implements and attempted to enter the commercial market, the Department of Indian Affairs established a 'permit system' which required approval for surpluses to be sold. The government vision of Indian farming was allegedly that of peasant subsistence farms worked 'with hoe and scythe' and not commercial farming producing commodities primarily for sale.

The crux of Carter's argument may be summarized in the following passage, *As Indian farmers acquired skills and technology and reserve agriculture took hold, they began to pose a threat as competitors. Policies pursued by the Department of Indian Affairs beginning in the late 1880s were devised to divide Indian and white farmers into non-competing groups. The system was geared to protect and maintain the incomes of white farmers, to keep them content and, if possible, prosperous, in order to attract more immigrants. In the process reserve agriculture suffered. From 1889 to 1897 it was subjected to unprecedented administrative involvement by way of allotment in severalty and the 'peasant' farming policy, both of which set extreme limits on Indian agricultural productivity. Indians did not appear to non-natives to be 'productively' using their reserve land to full capacity. This perception paved the way for the alienation of much reserve land in the years after 1896.* (Carter, S. 1990: 193)

Carter holds that even those reserves which had shown agricultural growth ran up against the limitation of credit and DIA mistrust of commercial farming by Indians. She holds that federal and provincial 'subsidies' in the form of roads and services to immigrant white farmers were not extended equally to Indian reserve farmers. The failure of commercial farming on reserves allegedly drove Indians to become 'cheap labour' for the surrounding white farmers. This is not a process which has previously been discovered on the Canadian prairies, a region of family farms in the past. It will surprise those who grew up on hard-scrabble prairie homesteads to learn that they were lavishly subsidized by the federal government and that they depended upon (or could afford) Indian farm labour.

While it may be inappropriate to question Carter's analysis without contending evidence, her conclusions seem rather contrived. Everything turns on institutionalized discrimination, forwarded by federal and provincial governments. Ethnocentrism and calculated policies to destroy native enterprise go hand in hand in this account. The stagnation of commercial agriculture on prairie reserves is largely attributable to a government policy of economic sabotage.

But there is no reason to suppose that the few commercial farms which did or could develop on prairie reserves would have made any difference in the regional grain or labour market. The inflow of hundreds of thousands of immigrant farmers and the increasing productivity of their grain farms made Indian crops inconsequential as competitors. Similarly with the role of Indians as harvest labour. Moreover, one would like to know how many white homestead farms on the prairies also failed during the same period. It may be that the failure rate of reserve farms was not vastly greater than that of non-Indian homesteads in the prairie region.

It is true that a body of Indian harvest workers did emerge. By the turn of the century some prairie reserves began to acquire steam threshing machines. They were both band and individually owned. These machines, so much a part of the nostalgia of the prairie grain harvest, were used to bring in reserve crops as well as contracted to harvest the fields of non-Indian farmers in some regions. Until the mechanization of prairie grain farms in the late 1920s and 1930s Indian harvest workers, along with a far greater number of non-Indian workers, were a part of the migratory threshing gangs which laboured to bring in the grain harvest.⁷⁰

Whatever the economics of reserve farms and farm labour, a reservoir of poverty was evident on many reserves. The fact that ration payments were regularly dispersed on prairie reserves throughout the period discussed indicates that economic conditions must have been stark indeed.⁷¹ But as an indication that people on prairie reserves were not exclusively impoverished subsistence farmers and casual labourers, consider a handful who grew up in

the late Victorian and Edwardian eras. Others may have experienced as much and done as much - including 'casual labourers' - but went unremembered outside of their own families.

John Callihoo was born of Cree-Iroquois parents at Michel, Alberta, in 1882. He worked on a cattle drive from Edmonton to Grande Prairie (in the Peace River region) in 1898 and then became a freighter hauling supplies from Grande Prairie to Athabasca Landing. Later he contracted to supply beef to railway construction camps building the rail line from Calgary to Edmonton. Callihoo worked as a mail carrier in 1912 and began farming near Michel in the early 1920s. He became an activist of the Farmers Union of Alberta, a militant farmers organization, as well as a member of the Alberta Wheat Pool. During the 1930s he began organizing people on Alberta reserves into what became the Indian Association of Alberta, the then major native organization in the province.⁷²

Alex Decoteau was born in 1887 on the Red Pheasant reserve near Battleford. He moved to Edmonton in 1909 to work as a blacksmith with his brother-in-law. (His father had fought alongside Poundmaker in 1885, at the battle of Cut Knife.) Decoteau became an Edmonton policeman in 1911, began competing in regional track meets and was a member of the Canadian Olympic track team at Stockholm in 1912. He was made a police sergeant, enlisted in the Canadian army in WW I and was killed at the front in 1917. He was one of a long string of native people who have died in foreign wars, before and since.⁷³

On a different tack, Edward Ahenakew (b.1885) from the Sandy Lake reserve, Saskatchewan, went through the residential school system, attended Wycliffe College in Toronto and Emmanuel College in Saskatoon and received his Degree in Theology in 1910. He served as a minister on reserves in northern Saskatchewan until 1918 and then took three years of medical training at the University of Alberta. Returning to pastoral work on Indian reserves, he was a contributor to historical publications for thirty years. I do not know what role he played in regional Indian organizations during his lifetime.⁷⁴

Then there was Tatanga Mani (or George McLean), later known as 'Walking Buffalo'. During his youth he went to mission schools and attended St. John's College, Winnipeg, in circa 1900. Soon afterward Tatanga/ McLean returned to the Stoney reserve where he acted as interpreter for the chief and for government officials. Later he moved to Calgary where he briefly worked as a blacksmith and then for the North West Mounted Police. He returned to the Stoney reserve and was ranching there during WW I and after.

In 1934 Tatanga Mani was recruited into the Moral Rearmament Movement by its impresario, Frank Buchman. Off and on over the next twenty-five years Walking Buffalo served as one of the speakers in the colourful tours staged by that fundamentalist movement. He addressed audiences in many countries of 'free world' in the 1950s. Garbed in traditional costumes, he lectured his listeners on the Great Spirit, and presumably on universal standards of 'absolute morality'. As we noted earlier, there is a long history of native involvement in comparable tours.⁷⁵

And then there was James Gladstone. Gladstone was born on the Blood reserve in southern Alberta in 1888. He attended the reserve mission school and in 1903-1904 transferred to the Indian Industrial School in Calgary, where he learned the trade of printing. He worked in the composing room of the *Calgary Herald* as a typesetter after leaving school. Later he returned to the Blood reserve and worked there, and at Fort McLeod, as a mail carrier and as an interpreter for the North West Mounted Police. During WW I Gladstone was employed by the War Production Board in the effort to boost crop production on the Blood reserve, becoming the 'chief stockman' by the end of the war.

In 1920 Gladstone launched into his own ranching operations at Cardston, Alberta, and built up a commercial ranch. Between 1944 and the mid 1950s he was prominent in the Indian Association of Alberta and in various committees representing the Indian position to the Indian Affairs Branch and the Federal government. In 1957 he was appointed to the Canadian Senate.⁷⁶

These biographical snippets are *not* to be taken to suggest that even in the hardest of times, 'you could make it if you tried.' But these cases do suggest that people from prairie reserves may have been involved in a wider range of experiences than is generally appreciated. What we need are biographies of ordinary Indian men and women during that recent past.

Let us return to those native people who did not have reserves and who did not receive government aid of any kind. Julia Harrison's *Metis: People Between Two Worlds* is a guide to a 1985 centenary exhibition mounted by the Glenbow museum. The photographs included lead one to ask a thousand unanswerable questions about the people caught in the fleeting images. Pictures of packers, residents of northern stump ranches, men lining a freight boat up a river and others working on threshing crews, trappers and their gear, of women and children, of individuals standing alone and others crowded together. Pictures of both poor and highly proper Metis families. One would like to know more of the reality behind these photographs and I would suggest that simply saying that they document the "Expressive Individualism", which is said to characterize Metis culture, does not get us very far.

Two chapters deal with Metis existence from 1885 till 1949, mainly revolving around struggles with poverty. Harrison tells us that, *Although most people in Canada enjoyed prosperity in the boom years following the First World War, the lives of many Metis remained isolated and tenuous. They still were itinerant workers, labouring on threshing crews, digging seneca root, cutting and hauling firewood and, in the more northern areas, hunting and trapping. In many ways, their way of life in the 1920s resembled that of the Metis at the end of the nineteenth century.* (Harrison, J, 1985: 92)

Some people have obviously forgotten, or have never known, that millions of non-native Canadians of that era also scabbled by on stump ranches, eking out a living by seasonal work in logging camps and fisheries and in a host of alternate jobs. On many homestead farms white families also struggled along with domestic economies which resembled conditions at the end of the nineteenth century. Well into the 1940s.

One of the only accounts of Metis individuals who tackled native and Metis problems from a broader perspective is Murray Dobbin's (1981) *The One-And-A-Half Men*. It is a biography of Jim Brady and Malcolm Norris, two Metis political activists on the Prairies from the early 1930s to the 1960s. Brady and Norris were born into or made themselves part of Metis and native communities during a lifetime of campaigning for native needs.

Norris initially worked in rural Alberta during the era of the United Farmers government, trying to get a Commission established which would address the plight of the 'half breed' population and lead to the creation of Metis farms and co-ops. Brady cut his teeth on trying to make the Metis farm colonies established in the Lac La Biche region of northern Alberta viable during the 1930s. He was later involved in organizing a fishermen's co-op in northern Saskatchewan under a C.C.F. government, which sometimes appeared to him as misdirected as any other government. Brady wrote that, *"The Metis will always be the victims of deceit and self-deceit as long as they have not learned to discover the interests of one or another of the classes behind moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises."* (Swankey, B. 1882: 9)

That was a view he sustained throughout his life.

Norris operated as much in the white world as in the native one while Brady spent most of his life in Metis and Indian communities - but their view was that native people were inextricably part of a single economic system, in which the hegemonic forces penetrated everywhere and effected everyone. Regardless of cultural traditions or local allegiances. To what extent these two Metis organizers had an impact on existing conditions is, ultimately, unanswerable. They, like many others, played whatever cards were available but always disputed the rules of those who had set up the game. It may be that others who played their

hands more narrowly gained greater influence in both government and native circles. It is yet to be seen where such influence leads.

Among Northern Trappers

By 1890 only a minority of the native people of Canada were primarily engaged in hunting and commercial trapping. Those who remained trappers were mainly in northern Canada. Despite strong continuities with their more distant past, these peoples had long since ceased to be members of pristine hunting societies. That was so despite the fact that the great bulk of their food continued to be derived from game and fish. A body of outstanding ethnographic and ethnohistorical studies of such trapping societies exists: it cannot be summarized here. I will touch on only one aspect of the northern scene —the extent of 'wage' labour once involved in northern trapping economies.⁷⁷

Although the primary purpose of the Hudson's Bay Company was profits, throughout much of its history it maintained what quasi-governmental structures there were in the Canadian north. Even after the HBC conveyed its exclusive rights to trade in Rupertsland to Canada in 1869, it long remained the predominant external agency in many northern regions. While it was challenged at one time or another almost everywhere in its trade domains, sometimes by determined competition, the HBC managed to outlast all fur trade competitors.⁷⁸

The major HBC posts involved a hierarchy of factors and officers, clerks and intermediaries, post labourers and artisans, and people engaged in seasonal transport. Without much exaggeration one can speak of a societal entity evolving around the framework of the HBC some one to two centuries ago. Rivals, such as the North West Company and Revillion Brothers, established simplified but comparable patterns.

There has been a upsurge of historical study of the Canadian fur trade during the last generation. In general, the revised portrait of the fur trade is not that of exploited Indian trappers but of "partners in fur", of an HBC which allegedly was almost at the beck and call of Indian diplomats and traders. For instance, Arthur Ray tells us that,

...a common view of the Indians in the enterprise is still one that portrays them basically as simple trappers who hunted their own furs and accepted whatever prices for those commodities that the traders were willing to give them. The fact of the matter is that the records show that in the period before 1780, probably 80 percent of all the furs the Europeans received in central Canada came from Indian middlemen who acquired their peltry through their own trading networks.

Furthermore, these middlemen charged the Europeans substantially more for those furs than they had paid to obtain them from the trapping bands with whom they dealt. In turn, the middlemen advanced the prices for their trade goods well above the levels they had been charged by the Europeans, sometimes by margins of almost 1,000 per cent. (Ray, A. 1978:16)

However, all these furs were trapped by Indians and those trappers must always have been far more numerous than the Indian middlemen who corralled their pelts. Perhaps some observers feel that being 'simple trappers' is somehow demeaning while being Indian middlemen and gougers is somehow elevating. In any case, over the long run the HBC does seem to have largely eliminated Indian traders as middlemen.

The many artisans employed in the HBC network were originally recruited abroad, mainly in Scotland and especially from the Orkney Islands. They were indentured labour, employed under the conditions of that status, and were usually referred to as company 'servants'. Company servants typically 'reenlisted' when their original terms of service expired: by the early nineteenth century they had become a multi-talented and hardy lot. Throughout its history the North West Company employed mainly Metis, French-Canadian and Indian labour in a similar manner on its posts and in transport. By the mid

19th century much of the labour around HBC posts also came to be provided by Metis and Indian employees. The base to this structure was comprised exclusively of Indian trappers.

Carol Judd's (1980) all too brief survey of native labour in the HBC's Northern Department in the century before 1870 is quite instructive. She notes that with the elimination of French power in the western interior (following the end of the Seven Years War in 1763), the HBC departed from its original policy of drawing trade to its Hudson's Bay posts and expanded its network inland. With this, the HBC found itself increasingly dependant upon Indian canoemen for transport. They were initially employed in those roles for which Indians were perceived as having special capabilities. However they were also employed to fill jobs performed by European company servants when the latter balked at the wages and conditions offered. When Orkney company servants demanded higher pay in 1805 the HBC governors directed their factors to recruit Indian workers to break this dastardly 'combination.'

Speaking of the era before 1821 Judd says,

During this period there is no evidence to suggest that Indians were subject to prejudicial treatment as labourers. They appear to have been paid equivalent salaries to their European counterparts; they occupied positions ranging from common labourer to trusted guides and interpreters. They were, in short, treated as any other servants, with one major exception: they were not usually hired on contract, but were engaged merely for the season. (Judd, C 1980:308)

After the amalgamation of the HBC and the North West Company, Indian labour was again used primarily in transport work. Judd notes that the HBC tried to hire Indian labour primarily from regions which had been trapped-out. This applied to Indian employees who operated the York boat route out of Norway House during the 1840s: they had become fully dependant upon their summer 'wage' earnings since the fur bearing animals in the region had been decimated.

Donald Ross, chief factor at Norway House in 1844, worried that the Indians there would abandon trapping if they could make a living as labourers. To prevent that he stipulated that only those individuals who had brought in a certain minimum of furs during the winter would be hired in the summer transport work. *Nevertheless, despite overriding perceptions of Indians as hunters and trappers, and almost in spite of itself, the company came increasingly to rely on this readily available pool of seasonal labourers.* (Judd, C. 1980:309)

Judd implicates HBC Governor George Simpson as being instrumental in easing 'mixed-blood' offspring out of management roles in the company and in trying to reduce the number of natives employed by the HBC posts. But difficulty in recruiting company servants in Great Britain meant that many native people remained employed by the company. Judd dismisses the suggestion that natives concentrated on transport and similar work because they preferred pursuits akin to traditional rounds. Rather, it was the result of HBC policy which was unwilling to admit them to more influential and remunerative positions. In 1832 some twenty percent of the company servants and artisans were 'mixed-bloods' but this rose to about fifty percent during the 1850s. (Judd, C 1980:309,311)

Judd focuses on the exclusion of natives from the administrative hierarchy of the HBC, but she broaches an aspect of fur trade history which is rarely mentioned - the resistance of company servants to low pay and poor working conditions. This included 'desertion' (quitting without leave) and 'mutinies' (strikes) on the transport lines. The HBC had increased its use of native labour to circumvent the modest demands of its Orkney employees, but native labour was not immune to the blandishments of better conditions. Speaking of the second quarter of the nineteenth century,

Mutinies became commonplace. They occurred to protest the lack of proper food, the danger of being icebound, and the unremitting backbreaking labour on routes with many portages and heavily laden worn-out boats. Indeed, mutinies were bringing the entire

transport system to the brink of collapse. In many ways the company was at the mercy of its low status mixed blood and Indian labourers (Judd, 1980: 311)

Rather than considering the above as a normal response of employees to the demands of an employer like the HBC, Judd implicates the racial barriers in HBC staffing as the prime villain. However, it is difficult to comprehend why the employment of a few dozen native or 'mixed blood' officers would have made the slightest difference in the operations of the company and its relations with native people.

Judd closes with the requisite scholarly rejection of ideological errors, saying that it is misleading to discuss the relationships within the HBC in terms of class and that native company servants were not a working class. However...*the company had an employment hierarchy with rigid divisions which were next to impossible to cross. Hence a class-like situation existed: indeed it would possibly be appropriate to speak of a servant class and an officer class of employee. In this case the idea of 'class' would conform more closely to social stratification by employment than to a Marxian concept of class . (Judd,C.1980: 313)*

Heaven forbid !

But no one has suggested that native labour in the fur trade constituted a proletariat. That does not vitiate underlying differences between those who must seek work and those who employ them. Nevertheless, whatever quibbles one may have with Judd's account, it is clear we are a long way away from popular conceptions of what fur-trade society involved. The fur trade staff are not 'Caesars in the Wilderness', the roles of 'mixed blood' and Indian people did not emerge because of some inherent cultural imperatives but in response to economic and political considerations.

In addition to those who manned the transport networks, the larger HBC posts employed farmworkers and livestock keepers, craftsmen and general labourers. There were blacksmiths and coopers, sometimes shipwrights and armorers, carpenters and yet more diverse tradesmen on the major posts. There were packers, seamen, mail runners and others employed in transport. Even at the smaller posts, Indian trappers might work the canoes brigades, taking furs out and bringing trade goods in, during the summer season.

Speaking from personal experience of the East James Bay district in 1910, J.W. Anderson says,

The name 'trading post' has been used for many years to describe the establishments the HBC had to build in the Canadian wilds to conduct their business. The fur trade at any particular location was not just a simple matter of buying furs and selling merchandise. There were ancillary services which had to be provided, making necessary the building of storehouses, workshops, shipyards, etc., besides housing the staff. The trading post was therefore an establishment of varying size, depending on one hand on the size of the Indian population and the extent of productivity of the surrounding fur country, and on the other hand on the extent and variety of the ancillary services. Some trading posts were actually operated not primarily for fur trading but as trans-shipment points on one or other of the fur trade transportation routes. ⁷⁹

In 1912 Rupert House P.Q. housed the bases of two trading companies and one mission, with a white population of fifteen and Metis and Indian employees who, with their families, numbered some sixty people. Indian trappers and their families trading into Rupert House comprized some 350 people: the trapping population of two inland posts were also supplied from Rupert House. Many of the men who trapped in the winter were employed seasonally in freighting inland by canoe, as well as in hauling with horse teams, in haying and other work around the post during the summer.⁸⁰

Rupert House was then part of a still isolated fur trapping region. While competition between the HBC and Revillion Brothers increased the number of local Indian employees, the situation was not unique. At Moose Factory, the main depot for the James Bay region, the situation was even more striking. In 1910 *most* of the Indian and Metis men at Moose

Factory were permanently employed by the HBC. They occasionally trapped and did some subsistence hunting and fishing on the side. 81

It is difficult to say how common posts like Rupert House and Moose Factory were. But York Factory, Fort William, Norway House, Fort Francis, Athabasca Landing and others were of the same pattern. The 'outpost', consisting of a trader and one or two assistants, with the Indian population exclusively engaged in hunting and trapping, was not the norm in many regions during the height of the fur trade era.

In the East James Bay region the traditional fur trade economy stagnated in the 1920s, mainly because of the general decimation of fur resources. This had been preceded by a twenty year period during which fine furs and exotic items, such as silver fox, had sold at record highs. But by the late 1920s and during the 1930s the local economy collapsed. The fall in fur income, as well as the retrenchment policy instituted by the HBC, and new modes of transport were factors involved in the economic decline and radical simplification of fur trade society in the region.

Some band members left Rupert House for the developing northern resource regions in the late 1920s. The Ontario Northland railway reached Moosonee, on the southern tip of James Bay, in 1932 and many of the remaining HBC artisans became redundant. Artizanal capacities had been retained on the larger trade posts as part of a policy of self-sufficiency. With new transport facilities it became cheaper and easier for the HBC to ship in items which formerly had been locally-produced. It dispensed with a range of inter-post services altogether.

The cost cutting and orchestrated 'redundancy' around many northern trade posts was attended with sometimes tragic consequences for former employees forced to adapt to a strategy of subsistence hunting-fishing and marginal trapping. Credit advances for winter outfits dropped sharply and even those fully engaged in commercial trapping found their increasing reliance upon subsistence hunting and fishing not at all easy. 82

On another tack. Jennifer Brown's *Strangers in Blood* (1980) and Sylvia Van Kirk's *Many Tender Ties* (1980) set out to deal with women and family life in fur trade society, from the late seventeenth century to circa 1870. Both have excavated a mass of biographical accounts about the Indian and Metis wives of fur post officers and the trajectory of their children. Both document the ties of affection and concern of fur trade officers and their native families; an economic measure of which was the large stock of food and goods used to sustain trade post families, a matter which economy-minded HBC governors always expatiated about.

Both accounts note the importance of native women and the work they did around the posts and on trade expeditions. Van Kirk (1980:53-73) provides a chapter which surveys their roles as interpreters, producers of moccasins and hidewear, of their work as auxiliary labour and as providers of country foods in time of need. Van Kirk and Brown both are at pains to point out that the native wives and consorts of fur trade personnel were far more than merely bed mates. Fair enough. But the dependence of fur traders upon the varied services of native women can be overdone. Although familial relations certainly did exist on trade posts, the fur trade was not based on familial obligations and relationships. The fundamental importance of 'women in the fur trade' was as the wives and mothers and partners of Indian hunters and trappers - in which capacity they did do all the tasks and play all the roles attributed to them.

Van Kirk and Brown focus on the wives of company officers: the native wives of the company servants usually left no record behind. (Van Kirk, 1980:264) They underscore the fact that the wives and consorts of officers were typically treated with the respect due them. Both accounts detail the intrusion of racist sentiments against native-white marriages and their offspring in the generation which followed HBC consolidation in 1821. They detail the decreasing opportunities of achieving officer status by children of white-native unions. Brown suggests that this was a watershed in the relations between racial groups in Canada.

This is an unconvincing thesis, since whatever ideological changes which took place within fur trade society were only a reflection of the external world. Possibly I have misunderstood her argument.

The Brown and Van Kirk's studies are correctives to some past misconceptions. But I fail to see how the declining fortunes of a handful of families of native-white extraction, and their aspirations of becoming officers, had much to do with the lives of the vast majority of those engaged in the fur trade. The great majority of native people in the fur regions continued to be hunters, trappers and sometime labourers around the posts. If one is concerned about restoring women to their rightful place in fur trade history it would make sense to elucidate what lives the wives of trappers and company servants actually led. There is a lot of scope for further work.

A thumbnail sketch of developments in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon is problematic. As an overview of the ethnographic work done in the eastern and western subarctic one may peruse June Helm (Ed.) *The Subarctic Vol.6 Handbook of North American Indians*. For a brief but seminal overview of ethnohistorical processes there consult 'The Hunting Tribes of Subarctic Canada' in Leacock and Lurie (ed.) *North American Indians in Historical Perspective*.

We will simply consider fragments of the work histories of two northern populations. In the Northwest Territories it appears that Metis long dominated wage employment for trading companies and other external agencies, supplementing that income by resort to hunting and occasional trapping. The Indian population in the Northwest Territories does seem to have remained predominantly as trappers and hunters during the period we are dealing with. It may make some sense historically to conceive of 'Metis' as that sector of the native population which relied upon wage employment to some critical degree.

The range of employment by Metis in the Northwest Territories is suggested in work histories collected by Richard Slobodin. A partial list of the jobs held by ten Metis men during their working lives included the following: commercial trapping, commercial hunting, clerking for the HBC and for a number of other trading companies, store manager and independent trader. Other employment included being a riverboat purser, deckhand on a sternwheeler, an oxcart freighter, dog team driver and mail runner, RCMP special constable, and camp cook. Others had worked as general labourer, miner, heavy equipment operator, teamster, logger, pipeline construction worker, and prospector. Yet other jobs included being a Forest and Game warden, a deckhand on a schooner, a stevedore, a court interpreter, and a member of a geological survey. Others had worked as snow plough operators, mechanics, migrant workers in the Canadian south, carpenters, fishermen, tar sands workers, fire fighters, as well as one who served in the Royal Canadian Navy. To flesh out the experiences entailed in the work so blithely listed here would probably touch upon almost every activity which occurred in the North.

These were some of the jobs held by Metis men in the Northwest Territories between circa 1910 and 1960.⁸³ According to Slobodin they represent a fairly typical cross section of Metis work histories during that period. Others in his survey had more varied careers. One respondent commented on twenty years of his life by saying 'The jobs I've had would fill your book.'⁸⁴

In addition to the above, the river steamer and scow traffic which supplied the Mackenzie District until the mid-1940s was largely manned by Metis; they were deckhands, engine room crewmen, and river pilots. A few became ship's officers. The same applied to the shoreside operations, which were maintained by Metis stevedores and even shipwrights. At Ft. Providence and Ft. Smith, *most* of the older generation of Metis men had spent some part of their lives working on river traffic.⁸⁵

One would like to know the context of these jobs, what the social relationships were, what individuals involved felt about such employment and how it fitted into the life of their communities. In some instances one wonders whether 'native' or 'Metis' is a meaningful

designation for certain individuals. One young Metis man who cut his teeth in the engine room of a MacKenzie riverboat migrated to Vancouver during W.W.2 and wound up on merchant ships travelling to Great Britain. He also became an active supporter of the Canadian Seamens' Union, during its brief but heroic life. I suspect that people like him would laugh at being described as 'walking in two worlds'.

There were other situations which are also instructive. By the end of the nineteenth century the resource frontiers were spreading into previously isolated regions. A dramatic example of Indian involvement in one of these resource booms is that of the Peel River Kutchin and the Klondike gold rush.

The Kutchin had been in the process of becoming commercial trappers since the mid nineteenth century but were still heavily reliant on subsistence hunting. In the 1890s the Peel River Kutchin probably were one of the most isolated hunting and trapping populations in Canada. While the majority of Kutchin remained as trappers during the Klondike gold rush, some migrated to the gold regions and tried their hand in the new cash economy.

A summary of the work histories of thirty-eight Peel River men and women who had worked in the Klondike between 1900 and 1915 runs as follows. They had fished commercially (217 seasons) and had worked as packers and freighters (94 seasons). They had cut cordwood for sale and for fuel in river steamers (64 seasons). Some had been crewmen on the riverboats themselves (62 seasons), while others had piloted freight scows (37 seasons). Some worked as stevedores (44 seasons) and a few as carpenters and construction workers (20 seasons). Some Kutchin women had been employed as cooks and in laundering (23 seasons) but probably more had worked with their husbands providing commodities for sale.

Most of these jobs were seasonal and the winter was usually spent trapping and subsistence hunting. Only a few Peel River men held permanent jobs—one was a pool hall operator, another a motorboat mechanic, yet another was an independent trader. One became an Anglican minister. Seasonal or not, it was not an inconsequential experience.⁸⁶

Speaking of those who (in 1947) thirty years earlier had been part of the Klondike boom, Slobodin says,

These men share a number of experiences not known to Peel River men who died before the gold rush or to those who did not participate in it, or who were born later. Because of the character of more recent Peel River history, there exists the paradoxical or at least unusual situation that many of the band elders have had the experience of frontier culture unknown to younger men. The 'Dawson Boys' became familiar with bars, pool-halls, brothels, motion pictures, banks, pawn shops and other specialized emporia. While younger people who have attended mission schools speak English, it is noticeable that most of the 'Dawson Boys' speak it more fluently and more colloquially than do many of the younger members of the band.

There is in Peel River culture a lively appreciation of the hazards of the frontier situation. The Indians, it is said, died like flies around Dawson. The demoralized state of their friends and relatives in Moosehide [a Koyukon settlement near Dawson] was discussed at length at a band meeting in 1946, with the fervent conclusion that 'we must never let this happen to us.' Despite the misgivings of the missionaries and the chagrin of Hudson's Bay Company traders, a significant number of Peel River people failed to succumb to the pitfalls described by Jack London, Rex Beach and Robert W. Service. In 1947 the alumni of the Dawson pool-halls and Moosehide gambling games included the chief of the band, the three band councillors, the deacon (later ordained priest), the wealthiest man, and many other influential persons. These men retain a taste for good whisky, rather than the homebrew, which is all that their juniors know, but this has not prevented them from working hard and striving, each in his own way, to approach the Kutchin ideal of manhood, which is, put briefly, to be tough, competent, generous and high hearted.⁸⁷

The Klondike mining boom was a relatively transitory situation. But the responses of the Kutchin, at least those of the 'Dawson Boys', indicates the rapidity with which some native people could deal with the novelties of a new economy and culture—one of the most tumultuous examples of Canadian frontier society at that. The experience of the Kutchin was unusual in so far as it occurred so late, with so little previous contact, and in such a dramatic boom and bust manner.⁸⁸

Ken Coates and William Morrison's *Land of the Midnight Sun* (1988) devotes a good deal of space to ethnographies of the Yukon's native people. They present the view that the trapping economy fostered an admirable degree of autonomy and that when white miners and resource extraction entered the region the Indians became largely irrelevant to the new economy. (Coates and Morrison, 1988: 54, 55).

Reasonably enough, they emphasize that Yukon history did not begin or cease with the Klondike rush. They point out that most miners and other immigrants gradually left the Yukon and that native peoples again made up a significant part of the population by the 1920s. Moreover, only a small fraction of the Yukon was touched by mining or lasting white settlement. There was an upturn in the returns from trapping as fur prices, at least those taken in the Yukon, climbed to new highs during the 1920s. (Coates and Morrison, 1988: 192-194) As in the previous generation so in the next, the majority of native Indians in the Yukon continued to soldier on as trappers. This is not necessarily as wonderful as some enthusiasts believe. Since hunting and trapping in the north often entails great hardships which not even those raised in such conditions will (or can) sustain if other alternatives exist.

Coates discusses a *de facto* administrative policy of discouraging native Indians from settling near or working in mines and white communities. Indians were encouraged to remain as hunters and trappers by the Department of Indian Affairs and other private and public agencies in the Yukon. Apparently the overwhelming majority of Indians in the Yukon did remain trappers until they 'succumbed' to the bait of government welfare policies during the last thirty years.

I suspect that nothing which the Department of Indian Affairs or any other Euro-Canadian agency did do or could have done in relation to native peoples would find favour with critics today. Policies in which native people were 'best left as Indians', as hunters and trappers, or policies which fostered their integration into the broader economy are equally damned. Those who currently oppose the intrusion of pipelines or other industrial infrastructure into allegedly pristine realms, those who dismiss a past history of employment in non-traditional jobs by native peoples, those who decry the existence of welfare subsidies, might reflect on what the alternatives were and are.

Chapter 15

Summary

We have considered accounts of native Indian labour in BC over seven decades in conjunction with developments in the evolving industries of the province. The present story, which is mainly descriptive, has, I trust, made at least one point. Native peoples in BC and elsewhere in Canada have a long history as wage workers and as independent producers within the broader economy. It is a history which extends back well over a century. Indian workers were employed in a wide range of industries and in a great variety of capacities. Neither the demands of industrial conditions nor the tug of continuing social traditions stopped Indian people from facing the economic world of those times and dealing with it.

Indian workers, men and women, did not become irrelevant upon the arrival of European settlers and the disappearance of the fur trade, as some would have us believe. In BC, the numbers and range of Indian workers and producers increased rapidly during the period when the industrial infrastructure of the province was being laid. Ultimately Indian workers did become less strategic within many of the resource industries as their relative numbers within the overall labour force declined. *However, this is very different from saying that wage labour became irrelevant for Indian people.* From the viewpoint of Indian history, wage labour became increasingly important in the decades following the completion of the CPR, the spread of primary resource industries and the consolidation of a cash economy.

By the 1890s only a minority of native Indian people in Canada were still predominantly involved in hunting and trapping, mainly those in the northern boreal forests. We have not discussed those groups in the northern interior of BC who continued primarily as commercial trappers. While one can legitimately hold that they were as much a part of the picture as those who became engaged in the primary industries, northern trappers comprised only a small proportion of the total Indian population of the province. Their history is divergent from that of other Indian peoples in BC and is in many ways comparable to that of other trapping groups throughout the Canadian subarctic.

A certain strain of anthropology has long been enamored of discovering past social practices woven into new contexts. Old wine in new bottles. In some spheres, as in domestic subsistence economy and in spheres of social life, there was a continuity with traditional patterns. However, claims that traditional practices were *typically* carried over, more or less unchanged, into industrial wage work are specious.

Superficial similarities often mask strategic differences between traditional subsistence tasks and wage labour in analogous settings. The novel aspects of Indian wage labour in most industries are overlooked by those too eager to see the wondrous hand of cultural conservatism at work. For instance, despite certain similarities, wage work in commercial fishing and canning was not a simple continuation of traditional practices carried over from indigenous subsistence fishing and preservation. The gear, the locales, the conditions of work, and the social contexts of commercial fishing and cannery work were distinct from what had gone before. In other spheres, such as in longshoring, logging, sternwheel shipping etc., the wage labour which Indian people took up was virtually unprecedented in traditional activities.

Some may hold that it is invalid to conceive of Indian members of the labour force during this period as 'workers.' They will claim that native Indians remained tribal people with their inner values and outlook unchanged from time immemorial—that Indian labour was in the world of industrial work but not of it. It is a popular view, well suited to the romanticism of our times. It is a view based upon faith in the inherent unchangeability of human societies. Let those who pursue quintessential cultural spirits hunt away to their heart's content—there's no convincing them anyway.

The initial generation of Indian workers were still part of tribal societies, although those societies were experiencing greater or lesser changes at the time. It is also true that Indian fishermen, loggers, sawmill hands etc., did not generally cease being members of Indian communities merely because they took up wage work. Nor did they necessarily divest themselves of many traditional social roles. However, such cultural continuity did not make Indian people any less effected by or any less part of the labour force in the industries in which they were employed. The broad participation of Indian workers in the industries documented here indicates that to whatever degree traditional roles and values continued, such traditions in themselves did not fundamentally preclude Indian wage employment.

It is simply *not* the case that Indian workers were employed only in unskilled labour or in pursuits slightly modified from traditional rounds. They learned and utilized the complicated and novel skills associated with team freighting, with sailing in the most treacherous waters of the world during the last days of sail, and with the cornucopia of harness and machinery used in horsepowered farming. Some Indian entrepreneurs acquired their own gas boats, steam tugs, logging donkey engines, steam threshers and so on. The conditions under which many Indian workers, men and women, were employed from the 1870s and on were as industrial as you could get in BC.

Indian workers laboured in the first export sawmills of the coast, amid whirring head saws, clanking dog ladders, and lumbering log carriages. They worked in the first canneries around steam boilers and drive belts, on butchering lines and amid clanking tinning machinery. They worked on the deck and in the engine rooms of coastal steam ships and river sternwheelers. From the 1880s on, some helped lay the grade, build the trestles, and tack down the steel on which the first CPR trains ran. They worked on the docks and river ports and in most of the other primary industries at some point. The technology of that early industrial age apparently did not boggle the minds of Indian workers as much as current mythologies may presume.

Of necessity, Indian workers also became familiar with the social aspects of those industries. They learned about and came to deal with hiring policies, with contract systems and cash advances. They lived (at times) in cannery cabins and company bunkhouses. They dealt with both Indian and non Indian labour recruiters and, like others, probably puzzled over their wage accounts and the deductions made by timekeepers and company stores. Indian workers became aware of the variable wages, piece rates, and work conditions offered by particular companies in specific industries. They did not simply accept what they were tendered. Their innumerable walkouts and demands make that clear.

In British Columbia native Indian people were not an especially reserve-bound or inward-looking sector of the labour force. From the 1870s and on, Indian people streamed along the coast, travelling to places of employment, going for visits and taking in the bright lights of the boom towns which sprang up. They journeyed from the interior to the coast and back. They travelled from their homes and communities to the farms, cities, and mill towns of the emerging industries in BC and also those in Puget Sound and the Alaska panhandle. A number went much further afield.

While there was a small body of urban Indian workers by the late 1890s, the great majority of Indian people normally resided in and operated from their own reserve communities. This partly facilitated the continuance of certain indigenous social practices outside of work. Even in work situations, many Indian workers laboured with kinsmen and others from other Indian communities. However the labour force of the resource industries was quite heterogeneous. While ethnic segregation applied in many early sawmill and canneries, Indian workers were often part of rather cosmopolitan aggregations. For example, Indian longshoremen in the Burrard Inlet area worked with Chileans, Kanakas, native white Canadians and Americans, and with immigrants from Europe. Indian workers were not overwhelmed by the phenomenon of ethnic and cultural differences. They were sometimes less insular, it would seem, than were the people writing reports about them.

Indian workers were not typically a marginal labour force. In many cases it is more meaningful to consider Indian workers as elemental components of the labour force of particular industries. Differential wage rates, exclusionary policies, and 'superexploitation' of Indian workers was not as universal as some believe. A proviso to the above is the limiting effects which native laws had upon the development of particular Indian enterprises.

Some of the misconceptions about Indian wage labour may flow from more fundamental misunderstandings. It involves a failure to understand the work patterns in the primary industries as they once existed. Those who reject any conception of Indian people as workers often have little appreciation of what work in the resource industries in BC entailed. They are ignorant of the life and ethos once general to primary resource workers in this province. It is invalid to compare the responses of Indian loggers, fishermen etc., with those of some stereotypical 'factory hands.' The comparison which is in order is between Indian with non-Indian primary resource workers of the same period. There, the similarities are considerable.

It may have been that the traditional Indian patterns fit in with the demands of early primary resource jobs more easily than with the requirements of later industries. But four and more generations of Indian workers laboured in and adapted to many basic industries in BC.

Objectionable as it may seem to some, people and cultures do change. Social change is not synonymous with 'cultural genocide', as some pulpiteers would have it. There are some who may acknowledge the emergence of Indian wage work but who regard it as a violation of their 'proper role'. That view sometimes stems from a contempt toward working people in general. It constitute a disdain for those generations of Indian people who both seized the opportunities of the world emerging around them and strove to overcome the restrictions facing them. While social and cultural changes were obviously *not* all for the best, they are not necessarily all for the worse either.

Indian hunters-trappers were the primary producers of exportable commodities during the eighty year history of the fur trade preceding European settlement. Native peoples retained control of the resources and their political autonomy during this period. The final decades of the fur trade era witnessed the emergence of the Indian 'wage' labour. By the 1840s there were native seamen, packers, gardeners and casual labour working around the trade posts, although their numbers were few and their employment was typically transient. By the early 1850s some Indian people were engaged in placer mining, in collecting coal, in cutting logs and in other non-traditional labour.

The critical period of European settlement in BC was from the gold rush in 1858 until Confederation in 1871. It entailed extremely dramatic changes for Indian peoples in the region as a whole. The Indian population remained a majority in the province until the late 1880s, by which time they had effectively lost their political autonomy everywhere. A period of wide-ranging epidemics and Indian depopulation had been under way even before any substantial white settlement. Among some groups the epidemics reached catastrophic proportions. Under such conditions, the vitality of the response of Indian peoples to novel employment in new industries is all the more remarkable.

It is not true that Indian farming was primarily due to mission and government impetus, even though these two agencies later encouraged agricultural ventures on many reserves. Indian horticulture, both for subsistence purposes and to provide a surplus for trade, was initiated independently by distinct Indian groups between the 1830s and 1850s. Indian farming was reinforced by mission instruction and aid only during the 1860s and on. Government played a lesser and later role. During the two decades following 1860 the foundations of what often became sophisticated and intensive small scale farms were created—especially among Indian communities in the Fraser Valley, on southeast Vancouver Island and in parts of the southern interior.

Missions often envisioned farming as the economic basis of self-sufficiency for their Indian parishioners. But the majority of both Indian and white people in the province during

the period dealt with became wage workers, not farmers. However, subsistence gardening spread much more widely than did commercial farming on reserves.

Indian women were especially important in on going subsistence economies — as gardeners, gatherers, sometimes in fishing and always engaged in the various tasks of food preservation. Reliance upon fish and game and garden produce only slowly declined and even by 1930 most Indian people in BC probably relied upon country foods to at least supplement purchased food. Indian women were also engaged in many of the cottage industries which briefly flourished, and then lingered on in reduced form, during the last quarter of the nineteenth and into the early twentieth centuries. While their domestic roles probably changed less than did those of men, many native women came to participate in wage labour—in canneries, on fruit farms and hopyards, and in quite diverse kinds of work. Readers might legitimately hold that not enough has been said about the lives of native women. Let others who will and can, expand upon this.

Production of curios and carving for the ethnographic trade was established in some locales by the 1850s and was of importance as a source of income for some by the 1870s. To treat Indian carving and art as commerce does not impugn its artistic merit. But it *was* produced for sale; one can't understand the nature of the work without recognizing that. Commercial wood carving, work in semi-precious metals, production of ornamental basketry and of other collectibles was a supplemental source of income for many the native producers and artists. Although Indian carvers frequently were the trained inheritors of indigenous artistic traditions, only a few Indian artists of that time were able to earn an acceptable income by such work.

Some accounts of Indian tours related to the ethnographic trade suggest a confidence and readiness to meet distant worlds which is strikingly at variance with the image of culture-shocked native innocents. They often had a fine appreciation of the predilections of Euro-American audiences. A fuller study of the tours made by native individuals and groups from throughout Canada would take us back more than two hundred years and, by the nineteenth century, would show a steady stream of touring native spokesmen, entertainers, and assorted lecturers. By the beginning of the twentieth century some native people had been on tours through Europe and America. The tours of BC Indians to World Fairs and ethnographic venues is not as unusual as I had once believed.

The establishment of cottage industries in a number of Indian communities began with a flurry of apparent success during the 1860s and 1870s. Such industries often were due to the impetus of missionaries and others intent on creating reserve self-sufficiency among their parishioners. As such, they were part and parcel of a strategy of social separation of Indian communities from an 'encroaching' industrial society. The cottage industries established at Metlakatla under William Duncan were the most ambitious of such schemes but similar undertakings were initiated on many other reserves during the latter third of the nineteenth century. Metlakatla showed that it was possible to transmit the novel skills and technology of European cottage industries to Indian people, rather quickly. It also showed that the economics of such industries remained equally unviable in competition with mass-produced goods regardless of whether Indian or European producers were involved. Cottage enterprises rapidly declined, with certain exceptions which provided a supplemental income or because the artizanal skills involved continued to be useful within the local community itself.

Reserve industries of a different character also emerged during the 1870s and became of greater consequence in the succeeding two generations. They included small sawmills, modest fish oil reduction plants, boat building yards, and a variety of local service and resource-based enterprises. Most were geared, at least partly, to external markets. Some of them remained viable for many decades, and even thrived on a modest scale.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth probably saw the efflorescence of Indian wage labour and commodity production in BC. During that time

Indian labour entered into most of the important industries in the province. Some of the most fundamental adjustments took place during that period.

Commercial fishing and canning began in the early 1870s and mushroomed during the next three decades. Canneries spread from the Fraser to the Nass and to virtually every region along the coast. Indian fishermen and cannery workers were crucial to most canneries during this period. While commercial fishing was not the earliest source of Indian employment it would prove to be one of the most durable and important. As has been noted, commercial fishing and cannery work was not a mere continuation of traditional patterns carried over from subsistence fishing and preservation.

In the three decades following 1870 Indian workers flowed into the burgeoning export sawmills of Burrard Inlet and Vancouver Island. We noted the presence of Indian workers in some of the major sawmills of that era. They worked not only as unskilled labour; some were already sawyers, boiler operators, dock foremen by the mid 1880s. Indian longshoremen predominated in lumber loading. While there already were Indian handloggers and some working for white-owned logging outfits by the mid 1880s, this work had not yet become a mainstay of Indian employment.

Indian seamen working in coastal shipping may have declined during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. But there continued to be Indian crews on the river and lake sternwheelers during this period. Work in pelagic sealing grew rapidly during the 1880s, being of prime importance to the Nootka for the next thirty years. Pelagic sealing preserved much that was traditional, but proceeded in rather novel contexts. Sealing schooners carried Indian hunters and seamen from the coasts of California to the Bering Sea, and beyond.

Some Indian men worked on the construction of the CPR and the Esquimalt-Nanaimo railways between 1881 and 1886. Most appear to have come from communities along the lines of construction but others travelled long distances to get work on the railway projects. The conditions under which they worked and lived were far removed from traditional ones. They helped cut the grades and lay the steel, and a few worked in building the bridges and trestles. After completion, some Indian workers worked on the section gangs which maintained the rail lines.

Indian horse packers and teamsters came into their own during the construction of the CPR and later. Other Indian enterprises, which only later came to fruition, also had their beginnings in the years before 1890.

While the number and variety of Indian workers increased, their relative proportion within the total population of BC rapidly declined. This was offset somewhat by the concentration of Indian workers in certain industries and their location in regions where they continued to comprise either a majority or a substantial proportion of the population until circa WW 1.

Lands and resources reserved for Indian people were allocated by Indian Reserve Commissions involving Federal and Provincial deputies, who accepted Indian requests for particular sites but did not necessarily institute them. The reserves established between the 1870s and the end of the 1890s, although recurrently challenged, were not substantially altered over the next sixty years. The operation of the Department of Indian Affairs and the administration of the Indian Act also became formalized during the last quarter of the century.

Given the convoluted history of the Department of Indian Affairs and the variance of its administrative policies in different regions at different times, I have refrained from any general statements about such administration. A body of recent work dealing with the effects of the anti-potlatch provision of the Indian Act reinforces my belief that such intrusions into native social life were not as crucial as some commentators would have us believe. However, one should know more about the powers DIA Indian Agents had to control movements of Indian people from reserves through the provisions of the so-called 'pass system'. While this restriction was applied to the inhabitants of prairie reserves for some years after 1885, it apparently was inoperative in BC.

The pinnacle of Indian labour and entrepreneurship within the broader economy was probably reached between 1890 and WW I. It was not a uniform development however. Despite the general advance and diversification of Indian labour and commodity production, some sources of income and employment were already declining. This was counterpoised by industrial booms, a period of frantic expansion broken by recurrent financial 'panics'. The main railways, ports, canneries, the major mining areas, the durable farming zones, most of the sawmill and tributary logging areas were all blocked out and established during these twenty-five years. The basic infrastructure of BC as it would exist until after WW2 was laid down.

Indian farming and ranching reached its zenith during this period, but began to stagnate by WW I. Indian farms developed to a level comparable to non-Indian small farms in some regions, while elsewhere they slipped into decline. By the end of the 1890s many Indian farms were equipped with an assortment of horse-powered machinery. They raised the mix of crops and livestock also found on Euro-Canadian farms. However, even at their height these semi-commercial farms involved only a minority of the of the Indian population of BC. Possibly the percentage of Indian families primarily dependant upon farming was roughly proportional to the ratio of non-Indian farmers in the provincial population. Subsistence horticulture continued to be widespread.

The stagnation of Indian farming in some locales was due to the limited agricultural lands on reserves. Provincial legislation which made irrigation water, crown pasture lands and other public resources unavailable, played a part in undercutting Indian farming. The economics of small scale reserve farming were probably a more potent factor. Already established Indian farm lands were gradually abandoned. By 1910-1911 we begin to find semi-commercial Indian orchards being left untended as the owning families opted for work in seasonal industries paying wages.

Commercial fishing and canning experienced the initial steps of corporate consolidation and mechanization shortly after the turn of the century. The figures for Indian participation in that industry are extremely variable, but it is clear that fishing employed the greatest number of Indian workers of any of the resource industries. Indian fishermen and cannery workers lost their predominance in that industry ,first on the Fraser and later on the Skeena, as the numbers of Japanese and Euro-Canadian fishermen increased. But since the industry was expanding the absolute numbers of Indian fishermen and cannery workers along the coast as a whole did not seem to decline markedly during that period.

The twenty years before WW I witnessed some militant Indian participation in strikes and labour union activity in the fishing industry. The second decade of the twentieth century also saw the emergence of Indian fishermen owning and operating gas-powered gillnetters and trollers, and possibly a few of the first seine boats. While some Indian communities along the coast began to acquire their own fishing fleets others gradually slipped out of commercial fishing.

Some Indian businessmen (sometimes managers of reserve enterprises) came to operate small sawmills, logging companies, steam tugs, freight schooners, hotels, and stores in certain locales. But already by 1910 many Indian enterprises found themselves in difficulty. External observers often ascribed these difficulties to lack of business acumen. At this remove it is difficult to estimate what the real forces at work were but it seems reasonable to suspect that lack of credit, competition with European enterprises then entering previously isolated regions, and yet other factors were involved.

The mining boom which turned the Kootenays into a major development area during the 1890s and early 1900s had a relatively little effect upon Indian employment. Company mine towns nowhere seem to have incorporated Indian workers. A few Indian people in the region took jobs ancillary to mining and construction—as packers or as suppliers of local goods and services. A number worked in the Kootenay lumber industry which for two decades surged to supply the prairie market. Indian placer miners remained scattered throughout the southern interior, while Indian prospectors, in Kootenays as elsewhere in

BC, hopefully clambered over the countryside searching for saleable leads. Apart from a few modestly profitable finds, Indian prospectors and placer miners -like most others so engaged - eked out a bare living, enriched mainly by a certain freedom and evergreen hopes.

Indian participation in the railway and construction booms between circa 1910 and 1915 was even more widespread than it had been in the building of the CPR. Indian workers were both drawn from local reserves but also migrated long distances to obtain such employment. They worked in building the CNR mainline, in driving the Kettle Valley line through the mountain fastness, and in laying the extensions of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo railway. Indian workers and freighters seem to have been especially numerous in the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific, then making its way along the Skeena and Bulkley valleys from the newly built port of Prince Rupert. They laboured on construction gangs, cut ties, took contracts to construct sections of grade, acted as freighters, and sold lumber from their own sawmills. All this came to a halt in 1915. Ironically, the railways which they helped construct brought in new industries which often undercut local Indian enterprises.

An industry of considerable but transitory importance was commercial sealing. Pelagic sealing reached its zenith shortly before the turn of the century, with more than 800 Indian sealers engaged in a single peak year. Over-hunting led to a decline in catches and a rapid fall in the size of the sealing fleet even before the hunt was finally banned by the Canadian government in 1911. We noted the multi-faceted involvement of native sealers - from novice paddlers to sealing schooner owners - during the height of this industry.

In another field, sternwheel shipping boomed during the last decade of railway construction, which when completed replaced river shipping. Sternwheelers remained on a few river and lake systems serving as increasingly marginal feeder lines until the 1920s. After that time they were merely a beautiful anachronism. Finally, Indian packers operating horse and wagon services were replaced either by the expanded rail network or by transport trucking by the beginning of the 1920s. A few Indian teamsters continued in those regions as yet unreached by rail or passable roads.

The single most important resource industry, which picked up momentum in the 1890s and after, was logging and lumber milling. Established in a few coastal locales during the 1870s, logging and sawmilling for the export market surged ahead with the completion of the CPR, which opened what was soon to be the prairie market. Lumber exports to Pacific rim markets fluctuated but in general grew steadily. Lumber was already the leading export from BC by the late 1890s, but without the overwhelming predominance it would later acquire. Marked by the booms and recessions, lumber and wood products became *the* primary industry in BC during the twentieth century.

Indian handloggers and small logging companies arose along much of the inner coast during the 1890s and the early 1900s. Indian-owned and operated companies utilizing reserve timber were being encouraged by the Department of Indian Affairs by 1910. More important still was the army of Indian loggers and sawmill workers who came to work for large and small lumber companies throughout the province. By 1910-1911, members from fifty bands in BC - a third of all bands in the province- were employed in the lumber industry. They worked as boom men, fallers and buckers, chokermen, high riggers and hook tenders, occasionally as donkey enginemen and on the logging railways which were laid through the stands of prime timber.

Indian workers became to participate in work stoppages and labour union activity shortly before the turn of the century. Some Indian individuals were members of broader labour organizations, others participated in Indian groupings within particular industries. Indian fishermen, especially those from the Cowichan reserves and those on the Skeena estuary, were prominent in the labour struggles which convulsed the fishing-canning industry between 1893 and 1913. We considered the nature of Indian participation in two early strikes on the Fraser.

Elsewhere, Indian dockworkers helped found one of the earliest longshore unions in the Vancouver area. In 1906 they organized a local of the Lumber Handlers Industrial Union, of

the Industrial Workers of the World. They were also central in helping to establish the International Longshoremen's Association in 1912 in Vancouver. Indian longshoremen were a part of the disastrous dock strike of 1923 and were part of a complicated history of company unionism but also of union militancy during the 1930s .

During the Great War, some 4000 to 5000 Indian people from throughout Canada served in the armed forces. Only a comparatively small number came from BC but some did have rather extraordinary experiences. The industrial boom of W.W.1 was restricted to a relatively few regions, as compared to developments during the following world war. It appears that the major effect for Indian labour was increased employment in those primary industries which had already become traditional to them.

The war-time boom came to an abrupt halt in 1919. It was followed by a sharp mini-depression and then recovery, depending upon the particular industry and region. In general it was a period of growing difficulty for many small scale enterprises. In a number of industries owner-operators, both Indian and non Indian, fought rear guard actions to survive. Technology and skills which had evolved over the previous fifty years were becoming obsolescent. The history of industrial modernization involved great social costs as skills, knowledge, and social relations built up over a lifetime were superseded.

Throughout this present account are scattered stories of native people which deal with events from the 1870s to the 1930s. Fragmentary as they are, these reminiscences intend to provide some feel for the personal experiences which can only be hinted at in a survey such as this. It will repay the reader to look at these life histories, since they document how people's work experiences meshed with other aspects of their lives. They sometimes have the provocative contradictoriness of reality.

It will be evident that much of the data for an exhaustive labour history of Indian people in BC is missing here. The present account raises more questions than it answers. One would want statistics on the numbers of Indian workers by industry, job, and period. One would want data on wage rates and total incomes, and on duration of employment. One would also wish to compare such figures with those of non-Indian sectors of the labour force at the time. We might wish for accounts of Indian people over several generations and their attempts to balance the social and economic opportunities/ costs entailed in changing conditions. All of the above have been merely sketched in.

When a fuller social history of Indian people in this province is written it may well require some revision of what is said here. However I do not believe that it will require abandonment of the central proposition made—that Indian people worked in virtually all of the early primary industries in BC and that such employment was an important element in their lives.

Only the briefest overview of native Indian labour elsewhere in Canada has been presented. Yet it is clear that Indian workers were part of the broader economy almost everywhere. Possibly BC was unusual in the range and extent of Indian labour, but when others get around to studying this topic in central and eastern Canada, or in the United States, it is possible that they will find an even earlier and wider spectrum of Indian involvement in regional economies. The emergence of an Indian bourgeoisie, with its own views and interests, is a phenomenon which does not seem to have been studied by anyone.

Native Indian populations in the Maritimes apparently were already in dire straits by the mid nineteenth century. Their catch-as-catch-can economy seeming consisted of subsistence hunting and fishing and limited gardening, as well as some casual wage labour. To the extent that this is an accurate portrayal, the Micmac would have been among the first native populations in Canada to experience economic marginality. Their unparalleled reliance upon cottage industries (such as the production of 'woodenware' and commercial basketry) after the 1860s is understandable only in the context of limited alternatives.

On the other hand, the employment of the Micmac of New Brunswick in regional logging, longshoring, and sawmilling during the last quarter of the nineteenth century suggests that the process of reserve unemployment was not as universal as sometimes

pictured. Aspects of Restigouche history between the 1830s and 1930s suggest that some Maritime Indian groups were not as removed from wage labour as general accounts claim.

Many of the Indian communities of southern Ontario were enmeshed in subsistence and semi-commercial farming by or before the 1870s. We surveyed the trajectory of a number of such farming reserves. Some had acquired the roster of crops, livestock and techniques usually associated with pioneer European farming quite early on. Farming reserves ranged all the way from the developed agricultural communities of Tyendenaga and Caradoc, to the subsistence farmlets of Parry Island. While remaining identifiably Indian communities, some of these reserves adopted forms of municipal organization, of church and fraternal orders, and of internal class differentiation analogous to those existing in the surrounding non-Indian farming areas. Life on some of these reserves seems to warrant the appellation 'Rural Victorian.'

In other cases, as at Cape Crocker, wage industries such as logging and lumbering were combined with reserve farming. This too was not markedly different from the economy of many white settlers in that region. At the margins of the Ontario farming belt gardens were kept largely for domestic purposes. Yet even there, farm produce sometimes outweighed the amount of game and country foods eaten. General processes in the broader economy made both Indian and many small white farms untenable during the 1920s. According to some observers, it was the decline of local economy which brought about reserve dependency upon the Department of Indian Affairs.

At Caughnawaga and St. Regis, an earlier economy of subsistence farming relying on European and indigenous crops was already giving way by the 1860s. Caughnawaga people took up a variety of jobs; work in the lumber shanties and in taking the square timber rafts down to the deepsea ports. Other Caughnawaga worked in quarries and in a variety of jobs in the region around Montreal. Some Caughnawaga toured Europe and America, while others sallied forth to participate in the British expedition into the Sudan in 1884. A brief outline of the history of Caughnawaga steel workers makes their participation a little more realistic, if no less dramatic.

In what became the resource regions of Ontario and Quebec Indian groups wove together subsistence hunting-fishing and commercial trapping, with occasional wage labour in certain resource industries. By the end of the 1890s members of some two dozen bands in northern and western Ontario were employed in some phase of the lumber industry. Among them were the groups whom Archie Belaney (Grey Owl) portrayed a generation later as 'children of the forests.'

Members of Indian bands in this zone worked in the construction of the CPR and in the ancillary jobs which grew up around it in the 1880s. They later participated in the construction gangs during the building of the CNR. Many returned to trapping and/or took whatever seasonal work was available. We mentioned one band which from 1910 and on apparently made a success of their band logging operations.

For native populations on the prairies, it does appear that the picture of a rapid transition from indigenous economies to reserve dependence, with a fluctuating degree of subsistence farming, has greater validity than elsewhere in Canada. This transition seems to have taken place in less than a generation before 1900. Fuller research may find this view exaggerated. We do know that some Indian farms and ranches had developed into commercial ventures by the early 1900s. Some communities initially made rapid headway in raising agricultural commodities for sale, only to be undercut by the competition of the Euro-Canadian farms which developed. Some reserves acquired their own steam threshing outfits by the early twentieth century and Indian harvest labour was important until the end of the 1920s. We briefly considered the lives of a number Indian and Metis men who grew up on prairie reserves during the period. Their experiences were probably matched by those of many others whose stories have not come down to us.

Throughout northern Canada, Indian peoples continued a mix of commercial trapping and subsistence hunting-fishing. These were by no means pristine indigenous societies.

Even in these northern regions a significant minority of native people were engaged by the HBC and other large trading companies as artisans, transport workers, and in general labour. Some of the larger posts may have as many 'company servants' attached to them as trappers. This infrastructural pattern began to change around WW I and collapsed in most regions before or during the 1930s.

The interrelationship between fur trade officers, company servants and Indian trappers was an ever-changing one. Metis and other native families emerged from and were eased out of differing strata of fur trade society as it evolved. Nor were Indian voyageurs and employees so committed to 'their way of life' that they were unwilling to resist the conditions of employment and pay which the HBC wished to impose.

Native people in some northern regions became involved as wage workers and commodity producers in the infrastructure of trade and in the resource booms which occurred. Slobodin's account of the 'Dawson Boys' and of the wide array of jobs held by Metis men in the Mackenzie district of the Northwest Territories, from before WW1 and on, are dramatic reminders of a little known facet of native history in northern Canada.

The nature of native Indian wage labour varies by era and region. Even within BC one can delineate a number of regions in which the character of Indian labour differed considerably. In Canada as a whole, regional industrial development and the involvement of Indian people in it varied greatly. It was the nature of such industrial development which basically determined what opportunities Indian workers and producers would have in the broader economy.

BC rapidly evolved as a region of resource extraction and primary processing dominated by corporations. Their main interests were to gain control of or access to the natural resources at nominal cost and to obtain wage workers (or comparable 'independent' producers) at a relatively low cost. Indian people made up a substantial proportion of the available labour force in many resource regions and were perfectly adequate for the purposes of many resource companies.

The Canadian prairies on the other hand developed initially as regions of family farms. These had neither much need for additional wage labour nor had the income to pay for it. Prairie grain farmers themselves provided a seasonal surplus of labour, which took up much of whatever temporary wage employment existed outside of farming. The resource regions north of the prairie farm belt developed quite late and were of a much smaller scale than those which arose in BC. I have found no account of what role Indian workers played in those resource regions.

The resource extraction zones of northern and western Ontario were in some ways similar to the economy of BC. However they seem to have involved Indian workers to a more limited degree. This *may* have been due to the continuing viability of commercial trapping in these regions, or it may have been related to the prominence of single-enterprise towns in northern Ontario. But native people throughout Ontario tried their hands at a greater range of jobs than the 'trapping and tradition' accounts would suggest.

In southern Ontario and Quebec, reserve communities found it possible to hold their own within a rural economy of small mixed farms which prevailed into the early twentieth century. Reserve-based agriculture had an early start there. This applied also to local industries. However, Indian farms and enterprises, as well many analogous non-Indian ones, went to the wall with the consolidation of mass production on farm and factory.

Three economic features seem to have applied generally to most Indian peoples in Canada, outside of the northern trapping regions.

1. Despite important regional differences most native Indians almost everywhere have been involved in varieties of wage labour for well over a century. Their jobs have been extremely varied and were not limited to modifications of traditional pursuits.

2. Such wage work and commodity production was generally conjoined with domestic subsistence economies, both traditional and new. These provided a significant proportion of the food used by Indian families. (This mix of cash and domestic economy was not unique

to native peoples however.) Distinctive native social and cultural practices could be and were retained along with wage work. Whatever the nature of continuing traditional Indian values, these do not seem to have disallowed Indian participation in the broader economy.

3. Despite a variety of contractions and booms which affected Indian wage workers in the past, the unemployment and reserve dependence which came to effect increasing numbers of Indian people is a relatively recent phenomenon. It was initiated during the collapse of the great depression, was reversed by economic conditions during the 1940s, but came to fruition later. High levels of unemployment among Indian communities is a product of relatively recent political and economic forces.

Chapter 16

Epilogue As Prologue

The great depression was a limbo in which Indian and many more non-Indian families found themselves. Naturally, not even during that decade did an entire population exist in a state of suspended animation. Events of that terrible and heroic time deserve fuller treatment than they can be given here. Necessarily general, the reader may consider this epilogue as the prologue for additional work that should be done.

Many Indian enterprises and farms were senescent or in plain decline a decade before 1930. Only the occasional Indian-run business, logging company, or other small enterprise, tottered through the following decade. The main exception was the Indian fishing fleet. Although the collapse of small scale enterprises was a process general throughout the Canadian economy during those years, it seems to have been of exceptional intensity among Indian-owned businesses.¹

Some of the previous sources of wage labour had also dried up. The waves of railway and construction booms had come to a halt during W.W.1 and would not reemerge until much later. Work on river and lake steamers was largely gone by the beginning of the 1920s, as was wagon freighting. Some Indian-produced goods, such as basketry and carvings no longer found a viable market. Handlogging and small scale timber operations were plagued by the market swings and the costs of getting at remaining timber. It remained a vibrant industry throughout the 1920s but witnessed a catastrophic collapse during the early 1930s.

The centrality of Indian cannery workers began to decline with the mechanization and consolidation of the canneries before W.W.1. During the 1920s displaced Indian workers could often find employment in the remaining canneries and allied industries. Their role in commercial fishing continued to be extensive—especially after the legislated exclusion of many of the Japanese-Canadian fishermen during the mid 1920s.

If the 1920s witnessed a general decline of Indian enterprises and a narrowing of job opportunities, the 1930s were marked by a general devastation of jobs and income. While some Indian workers found employment even during the depression, the previous level of employment in the primary resource industries must have been much reduced.

Of course, not *everyone* was unemployed during the great depression—although to many people it seemed that way. Whether Indian communities were more, less, or equally affected relative to non-Indian workers depended partly upon what industries they had previously been involved in. Although fishing and cannery incomes were almost cut in half during the early 1930s, production revived and fishermen and cannery workers continued — but at reduced wages and fish prices. Although logging and sawmilling went belly-up between 1930 and 1933, the industry gradually began to pick up again. There too, wages were markedly depressed throughout the decade.

The desperation of the times is evidenced in an efflorescence of reserve subsistence farming and widespread reliance upon subsistence hunting and fishing. Similarly, a host of emergency economic activities, previously of declining importance, resurfaced: bounty hunting, placer mining, and marginal trapping. It is difficult to say who was in the most desperate straits during that terrible decade.

Even during the depths of the depression, relief and welfare payments to Indian people were insignificant. In 1935, the Department of Indian Affairs budget for BC allocated and spent some \$125,000 for Indian relief. This 'staggering' sum was recurrently commented upon and was reduced the following year when the DIA was merged with the Department of Mines. The relief allocation constituted some five dollars per capita per year for each status Indian then in BC. In practice, few Indian families received any relief payments and only the indisputably incapacitated and infirm received minimal amounts.²

In total numbers, far more white working people faced similar conditions. Many single men and families responded to the situation in ways not dissimilar from the emergency strategies adopted by Indians. At least one native man, who had experienced both the 'jungle camps' of the migrant unemployed as well as reserve poverty, could sympathize with the desperate conditions in which the migrant white unemployed found themselves during the late 1930s.³

Some authors have suggested that a resurgence of 'Indian identity' began during the 1930s in BC. They point, for example, to the formation of the Native Brotherhood of BC in 1932.⁴ The Native Brotherhood was founded primarily by leaders of north and central coast Indian communities and grew into what for a generation was the most influential native organization in the province. It evolved as a multi-purpose organization, part of whose role was to lobby federal and provincial governments for the attainment of various Indian rights, although not land claims. Its leadership was drawn mainly from prominent members of the former Protestant mission villages.

While the original mission systems were senescent by the 1930s, much of the ideology and internal political structure bequeathed to such communities were still important. The early leaders of the Native Brotherhood had grown up during the height of the mission village system. For some decades the Native Brotherhood managed to draw support from many coastal communities, although this waxed and waned over the years and it never incorporated groups in the interior of the province.⁵

No real history of the Native Brotherhood has been written. Druckers' (1958) account of native brotherhoods in Alaska and BC, while valuable, is a part of the phenomenon to be examined. It is as much a mythological charter as an analysis. The Native Brotherhood's shifting relationship with labour unions and its political and economic bases would be a study in its own right. A body of letters and position papers to government commissions, companies and public organizations relevant to such a study undoubtedly exists in sundry archives. Fortunately, these developments are beyond the purview of this book and I am happy not to tackle them.

Indian workers and unemployed during the 1930s were active not only in native organizations. In the bitter Vancouver dock strike of 1935, some Indian longshoremen were union supporters while others acted as strikebreakers. Indian fishermen and women cannery workers seem to have participated in the organizational battles and strikes which sporadically coursed through the fishing industry in that decade.⁶ Much of the reality and complexity of those events may have now become shrouded in mythology.

I know very little about what Indian peoples in the southern interior of the province were doing during the 1930s. There may be some surprises in store for future researchers. For instance, in 1936 and early 1937 members of the bands in the Lillooet-Fountain area had created an organization called 'United Indians of the Lillooet District'. Conditions there were desperate. Drought had knocked out subsistence farms, wage work was virtually non-existent, government ration payments were totally inadequate. In an attempt to force the Indian Affairs Branch to issue additional emergency rations the leaders of the United Indians began mobilizing a 'March on Lytton', the headquarters of the regional Indian Agent.

Some of the correspondence of the 'United Indians' organizing efforts has survived, and the phraseology it contains might astound even the most jaded reader. In February 2, 1937, a dispatch from a travelling delegation of organizers to the 1st Vice President of the United Indians of the Lillooet District reads as follows;

Comrade:

We got here last night about 2 o'clock. We are going down by sleigh. In case we come up against the authorities as you know what those low-lying parasites will do to try and intimidate us by putting us in jail. We got in touch and already joined the Canadian Labor Defense League, Vancouver Branch, four of us and you. Any letter for us, call at office,

open same, don't give a dam if it is love letter. Don't expect any, it may be important business. From Lillooet 1 o'clock, arrived 7 o'clock, Stop M. Doctor, fix sleigh. Up 3 o'clock this morning work. Will reach Lytton tonight. Determined. Not Cowards.

Slogans: On to Lytton, Vancouver, maybe to Victoria.

Chief going to be heard. Keep eye open. Newspapers, robbers business may be hot. Will keep in touch with you. Report every move. Your mail ask for discipline, agreed on among delegates. Strictly no booze, solidarity and be gentlemen.

Resolved coming home with the bacon.

Signed ...⁷.

One of the slogans raised by the United Indians was 'We Refuse To Starve.' One letter from an Indian organizer (January 22, 1937) is addressed to an 'Indian Workers Club' in Fountain. In the many petitions delivered to the regional Indian Agent, Indian petitioners often described themselves as 'farmer,' 'unemployed labourer,' 'workingman,' 'worker'. Although no 'hunger march' was apparently mounted, for about two years organizing efforts were carried on among bands throughout the region. While some of the rhetoric involved may have been just that, while the momentum may have been transitory, it indicates something of the variety of Indian responses to the depression years.

The main concerns of most Indian people during that decade were neither in helping to organize native associations nor in supporting union activity. Probably most Indian men and women were primarily involved in a mix of recrudescing subsistence activities and whatever income generating activities they could find or devise. Nor should it be imagined that an entire decade was spent in grim poverty and abject misery. Marriages and births, friendships and partings, very personal sorrows and passions great and small continued as ever. Even modest potlatches continued in a few coastal locales. Most people probably wrung some joy and sustained decent social relationships during desperate times. These were part of the daily minor triumphs which a true social history would deal with.

By 1941 the emerging war industries and military recruitment had created a labour shortage. Indian men and women flooded back to their traditional work in the resource industries and also into a host of novel jobs. Indian workers became employed in a wider range of industries than ever before. Some worked in the Vancouver and Esquimalt shipyards, banging out the wartime cargo ships, others in a variety of factories and construction projects. Native employment during W.W.2 should have reminded observers just how rapidly and broadly native people could adapt to novel jobs when given the chance and incentive to do so.⁸

Many Indian fishermen who became prominent during the next generation acquired their vessels during this period. In December 1941 (with the entry of Japan into the war) the entire Japanese-Canadian fishing fleet was confiscated and the Japanese-Canadian population interned. When these expropriated fishing vessels were later auctioned off, more than three quarters of them were acquired by and added to the cannery fleets. This provided a large number of cannery vessels available on a rental basis, which benefited those native fishermen who were prominent in the cannery fleets. Japanese-Canadians were not allowed to return to the BC coast or enter fishing until 1949; some native spokesmen were vociferous proponents of Japanese-Canadian exclusion.⁹

The post-war period involved a general economic retrenchment in Canada, but one which was relatively brief in BC. Job attrition in the primary resource industries was more gradual and started only later. The 1950s witnessed a selective assault upon the gains made by organized labour. Native Indians were not necessarily removed from this process. During this decade the NBBC was viewed by some interested parties as an organization which could be used to undercut the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, then the primary union in the industry. A prominent study of native Indians in BC raised the possibilities of this role, but concluded that it was impractical.¹⁰

The resource development boom which marked BC during the 1950s and part of the 1960s may have by-passed Indian workers. By the late 1950s numbers of Indian people, especially those in the fishing-canning industry, began to experience long term, structural unemployment. The formerly widespread network of mills, canneries, and work sites became concentrated in a reduced number of locales. This was particularly dramatic in the shift of fish canneries to essentially two locales in the province. Some regions were simply stripped of the plants and jobs they had once had.

In other spheres, the BC provincial franchise was extended to status Indians in 1949 and Frank Calder, then a young Nishga man, was elected as an MLA from Atlin riding. Three years later, a major revision of the Indian Act removed clauses banning the potlatch and other cultural restrictions. These changes only partly modified the constraints inherent in that Act. Status Indians were given the federal franchise in 1960.

Social security programmes gradually were provided to the Canadian public only after WW 2. Health and welfare programs were extended to Indian peoples over the next two decades. Probably the most important element of new government services was the improvement in health and medical care. The success of these medical services can only be fully appreciated by talking to older people or tracing the records of mortality through kinship and demographic charts. Deaths from preventable diseases, which long had been a general fact of life in many Indian communities, became more unusual. The Indian population of BC, more or less stable during the previous two generations, began to increase. The 1950s and 1960s saw a long delayed population increase. ¹¹

The late 1960s witnessed the beginnings of unprecedented government funding for native peoples. To my knowledge there is no complete tabulation of the sources and the funds dispersed in the name of native people during the past twenty five years. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs is merely the largest and most visible agency involved. It is remarkable that no one has hazarded a full account of what funds are dispersed and where they went.

The last twenty years have witnessed the emergence of a native Indian middle class, many of whom are involved in administering economic and social programs dependent upon government funding. It would be surprising if the ideology of this strata were not some form of ethnic nationalism. This is a view which holds that no classes or fundamentally different interests exist between Indian people and that conflicts are exclusively inter-ethnic ones. It is an outlook which calls for rights and resources to be allocated according to differential racial claims on them. It holds that the native condition can only be understood and dealt with only by other natives (i.e. themselves). This view now appears to be almost universally held by Indian people. Non Indians, after a generation of public indoctrination and schooling, have also come to accept this proposition; it is in accord with hoary views about ethnic boundaries and rights.

In conjunction with these developments is the emergence of a public ideology about native Indians and aboriginal society. That ideology deserves a study in its own right and would deal with claims about the inherent spirituality and conservationist nature of native culture, its general equity, its healing powers and inherent capacity to instill pride in its participants. This ideology has roots which go back well over a century and while it contains elements of truth, as it is presented to the general public, it can be described as an example of the 'invention of tradition'.

More than sixty years ago, William MacLeod (1928) alluded to the similarity between the colonization of Celtic Britain and that of the the New World; he noted similarities in the fictional traditions which have grown up around each. Eric Hobsbawm (1983) provides some compelling examples of the purposive 'Invention of Tradition' in Great Britain during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when many of the English, Scottish and Celtic 'traditions' were created and installed in the public consciousness. These accounts of historical charlatanism which attained political success provide a much needed skepticism when considering the claims of native traditions being made today.

Some twenty years ago, when this book was first published, any policy which required the transfer of large blocks of land and other crown-held resources to exclusive Indian title seemed utter fantasy, with no real possibility of realization. Since then political developments have made such transfers and conjoined native sovereignty all too possible. Before falling in line to support such far-reaching changes we should ask ourselves how it is that the powers that be in Canada have been so supportive of native land and resource claims. A great deal of the Native resurgence of the last thirty years has been funded and fostered by government agencies. One should also ask why the mass media, American and Canadian, have so persistently advanced the ideology of native sovereignty. Why is it that forces not normally noted for their commitment to either truth or social justice have ranged themselves so fully behind these native policies?

A system of caste rights is not without precedent in Canada. As recently as the mid 1940s there existed a set of legally distinct, racially-defined, castes in BC - native Indians, Orientals, European immigrants, native born whites- each having separate and unequal rights. It was a situation which all persons and organizations concerned with social justice sought to eliminate, and did ultimately eliminate. Today we find both 'progressives' and 'conservatives' backing campaigns to restore a system of distinct rights for 'aboriginal nations'.

Given the retrogressive developments of the past decade, it would be foolhardy to predict what may emerge over the next generation. However, the programs of native sovereignty now being put in place may be viewed by future generations as an almost inexplicable madness. It is a policy which a future generation may hold to be as misdirected as Indian policies of a century ago are now.

Whatever the future developments may be, the history of native Indian participation in the varied industries of BC during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries remains. The details of Indian participation in wage labour may change in the light of future studies. But I see no need to fundamentally revise the general outline presented in the body of this book. Whatever the future estimations may be, employment in the broader economy was an important aspect of native Indian history .

Notes

Chapter 1: A Part of the Picture

1. One well known exception is Helen Codere's *Fighting With Property* (1950), primarily a historical study of the Kwakiutl potlatch, but which presents an extensive outline of wage labour by during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Stuart Philpott's (1963) account of Squamish longshoremen and their history is another. Historical accounts of Indian participation in particular industries, such as P. Gladstone's (1959) and K. Ralston's (1965), are of great value.
2. An exception in the way local histories usually present native Indian presence is Kathleen Dalzell's *The Queen Charlotte Islands, 1774-1966*. Here, the changing Haida population remains in the picture, from beginning to end.
3. Fisher Robin (1977:23).
4. Fisher Robin (1977:96).
5. As a not atypical example consider sociologist Mark Nagler's estimation that "*The Indian's perspective on participation in the labour force is much different owing to his value system. The Indians' interests and attitudes frequently inhibit their participation in the labour force as they do not lead Indians to consider work in itself as a virtue or a source of personal prestige. The few things an unacculturated Indian might buy have insufficient attraction to move him to seek a higher income by way of year-round jobs which call for an unbroken sequence of work days.*" (Nagler, M. 1972:138)
6. Documentation of Indian participation in labour struggles is presented in the relevant industrial chapters. Stuart Jamieson (1950,1961,1968), Percy Gladstone (1950, 1953, 1959), Stuart Philpott (1963) are among the earliest students of native Indian labour history in BC.
7. Fisher, Robin (1977:109-110).
8. It would be valuable to be able to compare the per capita profits derived from Indian labour as compared to non-Indian workers in any given industry. But given the nature of records kept by early businesses this generally seems unanswerable. Even data on yearly incomes, duration of employment, etc. of Indian versus non-Indian workers is extremely difficult to ferret out.
9. A few of the better known applications of an 'internal colony' analysis are E.P. Patterson (1972), James Frideres (1974), and Howard Adams (1975). Also Peter Elias' (1975) application of the 'metropolis-hinterland' thesis to Churchill, Manitoba
10. Hann, R., Kealey, G. and L., Warrian, P. (1973:13-19).
11. Verne Ray, 'Rejoinder' in *Indians of the North Pacific Coast*. McFeat T. (1969:161,164.) (Original 1955.)

Chapter 2: Ethnohistorical Background.

1. Indigenous populations at time of contact (from Kroeber, A.L. 1963:131,132): *Coast*: Haida (9800), Tsimshian (3500), Nishga and Gitksan (3500), Haisla (1300), Bella Coola (1400), Kwakiutl (4500), Nootka (6000), Gulf of Georgia Salish (20,500); *Southern Interior*: Lillooet (4000), Thompson (5150), Okanagan (2200), Shuswap (5300), Chilcotin (2500), Kootenay (1200); *North and Central Interior*: Carrier-Babine (8500), Kaska (500), Sekani, and related Athabaskan groups (3200) The Beaver Athabaskans and the Tahltan were only partly resident in the regions of present day BC and had total populations of some (2500) each.

Wilson Duff (1964) presents a lower estimate of native population figures, holding that a more realistic estimate to be about 80,000 for the entire region of present-day BC. The relative distribution, however, remains much as it was always envisioned.

Estimates for indigenous populations before the epidemics of 1835 (from Wilson Duff 1964:39): *Coast*: Haida (6000), Tsimshian, Nishga, Gitksan (8500), Kwakiutl and Haisla (10700), Bella Coola (2000), Nootka (7500), Coast Salish (12000); *Southern Interior*:

Interior Salish—Lillooet, Shuswap, Thompson, Okanagan (13500), Kootenay (1000); *North and Central Interior*: Athabaskan, Carrier, Sekani, Kaska, Beaver, and Chilcotin (8800).

2. Once prevalent views of indigenous societies on the North Pacific Coast are under debate. While the views presented here may be questioned, contested points are not settled simply by citing one standard anthropological authority or other.

3. Possibly the modal size of main winter villages was around 300 -400 persons, although this varied widely from one locale to another. In some areas, the main villages had surrounding villages of 'lower class' people with only limited degrees of attachment. Suttles, for the Coast Salish, cites evidence for this from Saanich, Semiahmoo, Klallam, Nanoose, Skagit, Coquitlam, and for five other groups in Puget Sound (Suttles, W. in McFeat, T. 1969:168,169). Elsewhere, 'lower class' villagers lived on the edges of the villages in small huts. While not universal, those patterns were widespread (Swanton, J. in McFeat, T. 1969:56; Gunther, E. 1927).

4. Piddocke, S. (1964), Ruddel, R. (1973), Weinberg, Daniela (1973), Ray, V. (1938).

5. The question of differential access to strategic resources and the related phenomenon of internal 'exploitation' is probably the single most contentious issue in Northwest coast ethnography. Virtually all observers agree that slaves and their descendents had no rights—to territories, or resources, or anything else. Many of the original field workers also indicate a wide range of cases where marginal kinsmen, 'commoners', laboured under various obligations and paid 'tribute' to chiefly families, to which they often were nominally related. That chiefs acted partly as stewards of lineage resource sites does not mean that there was generally equal access to such resources nor that differential amounts of food, security, and goods did not obtain. See Ruyle, E. (1973), Ruddel, R. (1973:260-262), Garfield, V. (1945,1950), Ray, V. (1938:56), Wike, J. (1958:225).

6. Codere, H. (1950,1961), Boas, F. (1966). Especially on the north coast, 'clans' existed with sections in different villages (Garfield, V. 1939).

7. Suttles, W. (1962), Inglis, G. (1970), and others correlate the variable strictness of descent with the exclusivity to which strategic resources were owned by chiefly families. They suggest that both were related to the fact that major food resource sites were more localized as one moved from south to north. The actual operation of descent, alliance, and resource ownership was probably always both variable and related to pragmatic conditions (Adams, J. 1973). One must not mistake the ideology of descent and alliance for the actual processes at work.

8. Drucker (1939), Codere (1950, 1961) and probably the majority of anthropologists once held that rank but not class distinctions existed between members of coastal societies. They point to a certain fluidity and gradation of rank among non-slave members to support this claim. While it is true that a class system of a state society did not exist, very differential power did. After putting forth the view that commoners had rights in Northwest coast societies and could participate in potlatches, Spencer and Jennings go on to say; *In practice, however, 'poor' people, ne'er-do-wells, or individuals who were unable to define their social position with sufficient exactness as might occur when a major segment of a lineage died out, were little better than slaves....*

...Persons could rise or fall slightly in social status but there was general agreement on what a title was worth and the place in the hierarchy which it gave its holder. The Northwest coast had been described as an area where individualism was a keynote. This is actually not the case. While it is true that there was a sense of rivalry between chiefs, there was some sense of their working together to maintain the interests of their class. (Spencer, R and Jennings, J 1965:185). Also see (Garfield, V. 1950:28) and Oberg, K. (1973:41).

9. This aspect of the potlatch is unclear in many accounts. For instance, Homer Barnett, speaking of the coast potlatch in general, holds that it mainly involved the validation of prestigious positions, but, *"Claims are commonly embodied in family names, so that the assumption of the latter customarily signifies a claim to certain distinctions and privileges.*

The announcement or reassertion of these claims is in all cases the reason for the potlatch, and no potlatch is devoid of them, despite the fact that in some accounts they appear as incidental to, rather than provocative of, the occasion.' (Barnett, H. in McFeat, T., Ed. 1969:83) But these claims are not merely for prestigious positions since territorial and resource claims were also entailed in validating such names and titles to status.

10. Codere, H. (1950). Differing accounts of potlatching among various coastal groups focus on different aspects of 'the' institution. Suttles, W. (1960), Piddocke (1965), Adams, J. (1973), Ruddel, R. (1973), Drucker, P. (1951). They are not as mutually contradictory as they appear. The most fundamentally contentious view is Ruyle's (1973), which questions whether the potlatch was adaptive or beneficial for the bulk of the supporting populations.

11. Miller, J. 1984: 32), Garfield, V. (1950:46).

12. The claim that almost a third of the population among some coastal groups were slaves (Forde, D. 1963:92) might be an exaggeration. However the 1835 census of one Bella Bella village found almost a quarter of its 590 residents were slaves (Tolmie, 1963:304-306). Taylor (1952:161), using the 1835 census figures, suggests that twenty-five percent of the population as slaves was probably a maximum. These and others all suggest an increasing degree of slave holding in the northern coastal societies. Also, Oberg (1973) and Garfield (1939). I am indebted to a seminal paper by Mary Murphy (1976) which posits the differential involvement in slave raiding and trade as a basis for this variation.

13. As general overviews of Indian slavery see Averkieva (1966), MacLeod (1928), Ruyle (1973). The descriptions of Nootkan slavery in Drucker (1951) are revealing. He elsewhere holds that while it is difficult to estimate the slave proportion of Northwest coast populations, "...it was never very large, *for slave mortality was high.*" (Drucker, 1965: 52). Also see Oberg (1973) and Garfield (1950). Suttles (1960), dealing with the less stratified Coast Salish, presents a different picture.

14. Boas, F. (1966, Chapter 5), Codere, H. (1950), Drucker, P. (1951), Oberg, K. (1973), Ray, V. (1938), Gunther, E. (1927), Curtis, E.S. (1915, 1916, Vols. 10, 11). Indigenous populations were decimated and/or displaced in intertribal conflicts during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The Tsetsaut were decimated in a protracted series of wars with Gitksan groups, and the survivors dispersed, the Tsetsaut territories becoming part of the hereditary lands of the Kitwancool. Haida raiders pushed the Tlingit out of the southwestern corner of the Prince of Wales archipelago while Tsimshian groups drove the Tlingit from the regions around the Nass estuary in the early 1700s. The Tlingit, in turn, carried out raids on the Eyak and other Athapaskan groups well into the nineteenth century. The Carrier and Chilcotin were involved in intertribal hostilities which may have resulted in population shifts and by the late eighteenth century Nootkan groups were hotly contending with each other, resulting in the destruction of some Nootka tribal populations. The southern-most Kwakiutl were then in the process of driving out and expanding into the territories of Comox Salish on their southern border. Comparable processes were taking place between the Sekani and Beaver of the Peace River region, and among the Kutenai, who were forced westward across the mountains. Although the eighteenth century introduction of muskets was implicated in the later two cases (Duff, W. 1964: 59-60)

15. Drucker (1939) holds that there was never outright starvation among the Nootka but that at times food was sufficiently scarce that people would scour the beaches for codfish heads spurned by seals and sea lions, that they gathered up dead pilchards washed ashore, searched distant inlets for mussels and otherwise disdained foods, and even relished tough, rank flavored seagulls to sustain life (cited in McFeat 1969:149). Suttles (1960) similarly for some Salish villages, and Vayda (1961) for other groups along the coast.

16. General overviews of indigenous coastal economies are to be found in McFeat (1969), Drucker (1965), Elman Service (*Profles in Ethnology* 1962). While useful, they tend to pass over the critical fluctuations in these economies and to perpetuate the Garden of Eden view. Some alternate views which underline ecological factors are by Weinberg (1973), Ruddel (1973), Suttles (1962), Vayda (1961), Piddocke (1965).

17. See Hillary Stewart (1977) for a beautifully illustrated overview of indigenous fishing technology. Although there are many suggestions, no one seems to have done a detailed study of changes wrought in the productive technology and economy by the consequences of the fur trade.

18. See Suttles (1962, 1968). Also Inglis, G. (1970) on the importance of women shellfish gathering among northern groups and the basis for matrilineality. However, archaeologist Rowley-Conwy (1993: 62), dealing with north European mesolithic hunter-fishermen, notes that 50,000 oysters were the food equivalent of only a single adult red deer. On the Northwest coast we would have to adjust 'oysters' to the clam species taken and red deer to elk. In either case, shellfish harvesting entails an awful lot of digging to produce the equivalent of game and fish catches.

19. Some suggestions along these lines are presented in a paper by Michael Kew (1976). Also in Donald and Mitchell (1975), and earlier by Suttles (1962), Vayda (1961), and Weinberg (1973).

19a. In case any reader has puzzled over how a textile could have been made from cedar bark, what was used was the layer of celluloid-like bast between the outer bark and the wood. After stripping it from the appropriate young cedar trees it required peeling and splitting, further processing and seasoning before it was ready to weave. Basketry, ranging from fine rain-proof hats to utilitarian containers, was exclusively the work of women. So was the weaving of chilkat blankets, traditionally made from mountain goat hair, and/or the hair of a species of woolly dog kept for that purpose.

Ch3.Contact and the Fur Trade Era.

20. Krause, A. (1956, original 1885) provides an sketch of the early Russian and explorer-traders along the North Pacific Coast. Pethick (1976) gives some background on the European forces underlying shifting maritime trade here. Gunther (1972) presents accounts drawn from a wide range of early trader-explorers dealing with native life on the coast. Wike (1951, 1958) focuses on Indian responses to the maritime trade and traders. Fisher (1977) presents a current overview.

21. Krause, Aurel (1956:15).

22. Jose Mozino, *Noticias de Nutka*, University of Washington Press (1970, edited by Iris Wilson). A brief and readable outline of Spanish activity on the BC coast, 1774 to 1795 is Christon J. Archer, 'Spanish Exploration and Settlement of the Northwest Coast in the 18th Century,' *Sound Heritage*, Vol. 7, No.1(1978:54-63).

23. A frequently cited version of Cook's journals are J.C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery, 1776-1780*, Hakluyt Society, Cambridge (1967).

24. Howay, F.W. (1976:46), Meares, John (1790: xxx, 4, 10).

25. Meares, John (1790:109-111).

26. Akrigg and Akrigg (1975:66, 108).

27. On Indian responses to maritime traders I largely follow Joyce Wike (1951) account.

28. Wike (1951,1958) and Fisher (1977) are persuasive on the general desire of both Indian groups and maritime traders to avoid hostility which would restrict trade. This did not apply in *all* situations however. The Tlingit, for instance, were enthusiastic about trade (being middlemen traders themselves) but preferred maritime trade sources to trade bases established in their territories. In 1801, the Russian-America base at New Archangel (Sitka) was wiped out by Kolushan Tlingit. In 1804, Governor Baranoff mobilized a force of about 1000 Aleuts and company servants backed by the Russian warship *Neva* to reduce the Kolushan involved. The Kolushan had re-sited and fortified their village on a shallow river near Sitka, which large ships could not enter. According to Krause's summary of the Russian account, on arrival the Russians found the village defended with breastworks faced with sand embankments, against which cannon fire was ineffective. The Tlingit defenders had a large number of muskets and kept up a steady fire; they also had acquired two

cannons, which they used to fire at the Russian flagship. When a Russian-Aleut force finally invested the village they found it evacuated of people and arms. Not all accounts agree on the specifics.

A negotiated settlement allowed the Russians to re-establish at Sitka, but without any real control over the Tlingit. The Tlingit mounted another attack on Sitka in 1806 with forces estimated at some 2000 warriors. This failed, but Tlingit military power continued on the mainland and in the late 1850s they were still waging campaigns against other Indian groups. Indeed, they did not effectively lose their political autonomy until after American acquisition of the area in 1867. (Krause, A. 1956:31-34, 47, 72).

29. F.W. Howay (1925) mentions some dozen cases for which there are records.

30. Cited in Duff, W. (1964:59); also Codere, H. (1950).

31. Howay, F.W., ed. *Log of the New Hazard*, Stephen Reynold, 1938.

32. Howay, F.W. ed. (1938:xiii, 22). In an example of carrying coals to Newcastle, in 1804 one American sea captain purchased ermine skins on the Russian-European market and carried them to the BC coast (where they were highly valued for ceremonial regalia) to trade for sea otter pelts. Elk hides were also a desirable trade item on the north coast. *'Traders put in at villages at the mouth of the Columbia and in the Juan de Fuca Strait, and bought, with European goods, tanned elk hides The northern warriors apparently found this trade advantageous, exchanging relatively easily procured sea otter pelts for hides which were difficult to procure through native trade networks'* (Vaughan and Holm, 1990: 84).

33. Howay, F.W. (1938:28, 41, 68, 87).

34. Fisher (1977:13) calculates that, 'There were records of some 330 fur trading vessels coming to the northwest coast during the forty years between 1785 and 1825.' Some forty percent made more than a single trip. Nor does this include the visits of whalers or others not primarily engaged in trading. There may have been 600 or more separate cruises along the coast during the entire period.

35. The classic account is Harold Innis' *The Fur Trade in Canada* (original 1930). While still of great value it deals only briefly with the Pacific. Innis' work includes nuggets of information about processes which have not yet been pursued by later historians of the fur trade. Lewis Saum (1965) discusses general processes involving *The Fur Trader and the Indian* but does not deal specifically with BC. Fredrick Merk (1968) and E.E. Rich (1967) are two sources used here, but deal more with Oregon Territory than BC. W.K. Lamb (1957) is the journal David Harmon, a North West Company trader in the Stuart Lake area. in the early 1800s W.F. Tolmie (1963) is the diary of that HBC doctor-trader in various coastal forts in the 1830s. B.A. McKelvie (1957) presents a somewhat chaotic but useful compilation of accounts from Fort Langley during its years as a trade post. None of these are hagiographies, but none gives any systematic account of the fur trade staff. Arthur Ray's mini-library of books on the fur trade, only a few of which are cited in the bibliography, entail the current viewpoint about the processes involved, but deal with BC only marginally.

36. The journal of Daniel Harmon, a North West Company factor in northern BC between 1810-1819 gives an account of a small, remote post. By 1818 there already are immigrant *Iroquois* trappers and free traders in the vicinity (Lamb, K. 1957:193). Olive Dickason notes that *Iroquois* from Caughnawaga, Oka and St Regis on the St. Lawrence began arriving in western Canada as voyageurs and then began working as trappers at the beginning of the nineteenth century. *"The greatest number, more than 300, came between 1800 and 1804. By 1810 they had concentrated along the eastern slopes of the Rockies in the Athabasca and Peace River regions. By 1821 the movement was tapering off, and most newcomers had completed their contracts and were now 'Freemen'. Efficient fur trappers, the Iroquois used the latest technology of metal traps. One report has it that in 1819 the North West Company was obtaining nearly two-fifths of its fur returns from Canadian [i.e. French-Canadian and Metis] and Iroquois Free trappers."* (Dickason, O. 1992: 203) She goes on to note that given their methods, it is "...small wonder that the freemen were

accused of overtrapping to the point of stripping the region of its fur resources" (Dickason, O. 1992: 203, 204)

37. Before 1810 the westernmost posts of the North West Company were Dunvegan, Fort St. John, and Hudson Hope. Reaching west of the Rockies was Fort MacLeod, then Stuart Lake (1807), Fort Fraser (c. 1807), and Fort George (before 1810). Forts Sekani and Connelly were also established early in the northernmost interior. Fort Babine (Babine Lake, 1822), as well as a number of outposts, had a fluctuating history of opening and being closed. In central BC there was Thompson Post (Kamloops, 1812), Fort Alexander (1821), and Little Fort (1829). Forts Colville and Okanagan, somewhat below the 49th parallel in the southern interior, operated before 1826. The HBC posts were initially concentrated in the present-day regions of Oregon and Washington. The HBC Pacific headquarters at Fort George, and later Fort Vancouver (both on the lower Columbia River), an agricultural trade base at Fort Nisqually (Puget Sound) and five other trading posts were in operation by or before the early 1820s (see E.E. Rich, 1967).

Blanche Norcross notes that the HBC archives in Winnipeg contain the journals of some 210 HBC trade posts, ranging from northeastern Labrador to the Snake river country of Oregon, and dating from 1705 to 1943. In addition are a mass of account books from these trade posts, listing the goods traded to Indians and accounts of company servants. There are some 1,500 account books for York Factory alone. (Norcross, E.B., 1983: 80.) No wonder there are so many fur trade historians.

38. Merk, Fredrick (1968:82). Also see McKelvie, BC (1957). Fort Vancouver was even larger; in 1824-25 it contained some seventy officers and men plus about eighty dependents. In addition were those Indian traders, casual labour and some Chinook slaves settled around it (Merk, F.1968:88).

39. Merk, Fredrick (1968:xliv,89, 90).

40. Krause, Aurel (1956:42).

41. Lamb, K. (1957:137,193), Merk, F.(1968:30, 31,108), O'Meara, W. (1968). Averkieva, J. (1971:338) suggests that a frontier amalgam of peoples had developed around Russian posts in Alaska, who in some ways were less Indian in self-identification than they would be some generations later.

42. The trader-physician William Fraser Tolmie noted the purchase of a male slave at Fort McLoughlin in May 1835. The factor paid the Kwakiutl owners 10 HBC blankets, one-quarter gallon gunpowder and 50 balls, 3 gallons of watered rum, a second-hand mug, and a worn-out trade musket. He was then employed in labour around the post. Tolmie, W.F. (1963:310, 311). Mellieur's (1980) extracts from the Fort Simpson journals note continual Indian slave trading going on around the post from the time of its establishment until at least the late 1850s.

43. McKelvie, B.A. (1957:42, 43). Also (Maclachlin, M. 1983: 23-26)

44. No simple consensus exists on the processes of social change involved in the fur trade along the Pacific coast. Unless otherwise indicated, the main sources for the following comments are drawn from Krause (1956), Oberg (1973), Garfield (1950), Codere (1951, 1961), Duff (1964), Wike (1951, 1958). Vaughan and Holm (1990) provides some fascinating specifics.

45. These suggestions stem from a 1959 seminar by Wayne Suttles and A.P. Vayda, 'Warfare on the Northwest Coast,' given at the University of BC. Also see Herbert Taylor and Wilson Duff, 'A post-contact southward movement of the Kwakiutl,' *Research Studies No.5. Washington State College, Vol. 24* (1956), and Wilson Duff (1964:59, 60).

46. See Garfield, V. (1945), Gunther, E. (1927), Ray, V. (1938), Ruyle, E. (1973), and MacLeod (1928). Writing of the Nootka after the establishment of maritime trade, Dewhurst says, "*Groups with muskets had an advantage over those without and applied it in the perpetual competition for resource properties. At this time European diseases which the Nootkans had little resistance to were introduced, and this may well have weakened various groups, making them politically and militarily vulnerable. In this period, Nootkan*

groups became involved in prolonged warfare with their neighbours over resource properties. Many groups were annihilated. The badly decimated either amalgamated into friendly groups or were absorbed by their conquerors. (Dewhirst, J. 1978: 24)

47. One muted example of misplaced indignation about the suppression of Indian slavery is Colson's comments on the US government intrusion on Makah society. She says, '*The social structure of the people was also attacked. Partly, indirectly through the attack on the potlatch through which the prestige system operated. Partly by more direct measures. Slavery was forbidden almost immediately, and the agents refused to recognize the old class system of slaves, commoners, and nobles.*'(Colson, Elizabeth 1967:216, 217)

48. I am largely following Duff's (1964) summary here. It may be that these standard figures exaggerate the scope of the decline. Restudies elsewhere (see Helm, Alliband, Birk, et al, 1975) suggest that previously accepted figures for depopulation have been excessive or true only locally. Whatever the exact figures, the epidemic depopulation of many coastal societies was severe.

49. Codere, H. (1950, 1961), Olson, R. (1940), Duff, W. (1964:39).

Chapter 3: Colonization and Settlement

50. Duff, Wilson (1964:61; 1969:24).

51. Much of this overview was drawn from Akrigg, G.P. and Akrigg, H. *British Columbia Chronicles* (1975, 1977), where it is to be found arranged by year. Barry Gough's *The Gunboat Frontier*, (1984) presents a blow by blow account of these events as seen from the bridge of British gunboats and conveyed in reports by commanders to their superiors in London. It is the most complete study of this topic to date. Gough notes, with a straight face, that, "*British Columbia was only one area of Queen Victoria's Empire which suffered from racial conflict. Empires are based on power. Consequently Victoria's was frequently 'at war' - on an estimated 230 occasion during her sixty-four year reign. The Pax Britannica constituted a unique system of global dominance. But strangely this peace of empire was maintained only by 'Queen Victoria's Little Wars'. Peace paradoxically meant war*"(Gough. B. 1984: 19)

The British Chartist leader, Ernest Jones, who on listening to endless Victorian jingoism, quipped, "The empire on which the sun never sets: and the blood never dries."

52. Figures for the Indian population of the province are quite variable until the 1880s. Duff (1961) suggests an Indian population of *possibly* 60,000 before the smallpox epidemic of 1862 and 40,000 after it.

53. Akrigg and Akrigg (1977:143).

54. After conflicts between Indians and miners in the Fraser Canyon area, in early May of 1858 Governor Douglas and a small detachment of British sailors descended upon the mining center at Hill's Bar to defuse the situation. This had a temporary effect but by summer there were reports of Chinese and Indian miners being evicted on some up-river bars by recent American arrivals. Douglas returned to Yale in early September 1858 with a force of Royal Engineers and Marines to quash apprehended disturbances, which in fact never materialized. There was another instance of showing the flag by a detachment of Royal Engineers in January of 1859. These were the first and last 'threats' to civil authority by gold rush miners (Ormsby, M.1958:157-161).

55. Reported by Fraser in the *London Times*, November 30, 1858, cited in Akrigg, G.P. and Akrigg, H. (1977:130). Factor Yale or reporter Fraser were possibly referring to the then recent doings of British gentlemen in the Opium War with China or the invasion of the Crimea or the endless military actions involved in expanding and maintaining an empire. Or possibly the *London Times* reporter was referring to the gentlemanly treatment of Lancashire cotton spinners, north country coal miners, or Irish tenantry.

56. MacDonald, Duncan (1862:300, 70, Table of Contents).

57. MacDonald, Duncan (1862:300).

58. See Rickard (1938), Bescoby (1933), Freisach (1861), Balf (1969), Trimble (1914). Nunis'(1962) version of Herman Reinhart's journal is aa recurrent source for 'the gold miner as savage' view.
59. Hewlett, E. (1971) Considering the drama and romance which has been woven around the 'Chilcotin War', it may be proper to put it in some perspective. No more than from two dozen Chilcotin warriors were engaged in this 'war'. The circa twenty-five deaths(mainly those of white roadworkers) which resulted were less than Indian losses in the sinking of a single sealing schooner in later years. Probably more men died in a single Nanaimo mine disaster during the 1880 s than probably did in all the Indian-European confrontations in BC combined (see Phillips, P. 1967:8, 9).
60. There were fears of renewed Indian hostilities during the land claims crises of 1874-76, but they did not materialize. In 1887, when a small party of Kootenai men from Chief Isadore's band released a fellow band member from jail by force it was big news. Events on the Skeena River in 1887-1888, involving the apprehension of one Kitwancool Jim accused of killing another Indian, resulted in mobilization of militia and the demonstration of firepower by a British gunboat anchored off the busy cannery town of Port Essington. A surrealist scene. This proved to be he final act of extending provincial judicial control over intra-inter Indian affairs. By 1888, provincial juridical power, and also the Dominion laws (which were enforced through provincial aegis) had been established over the native Indian population of the province.
61. H.L. Langevin Report, 1872. The exodus from the interior was evidenced by the fact that more than two-thirds of the non-Indian population now resided in the regions of southeastern Vancouver Island and in the lower Fraser Valley.
62. See Cronin, K. (1960), Duff, W. (1964), Usher, J. (1974), Large, R.G. (1957), Lemert, E. (1954).
63. The history of W.H. Pierce, the Cooks at Alert Bay, the Dudowards at Port Simpson, possibly Edward Edenshaw at Masset, and the Russ family at Skidegate may be considered in this light. See Dalzell, K. (1967), Hicks (1933), Large (1957), Collison, W. (1915). Also Patterson, E.P. (1962, Chapter 1) for the relation of missions and leadership among the Squamish of Burrard inlet circa 1910.
64. The major Catholic stations were Okanagan Mission (1859, 1863), St. Mary's Mission (Mission City, 1861), Squamish Burrard Mission (1864, but consolidated only later), St. Joseph's Mission (Williams Lake, 1867), Cowichan Mission (c. 1870, later Kuper Island), Sechelt Mission (1871), Fort St. James (1873), St. Eugene Mission (Cranbrook, 1874), and Kamloops (1878). By the 1880s there were also smaller missions among the Lillooet, among the Carrier, and among the Shuswap of the Arrow Lakes. Catholic missions to the Nootka and Kwakiutl proved fruitless.(Cronin, K. 1960, Morice, A G. 1910).
65. (Lemert, E. 1954:24). Also Cronin, K. (1960).
66. *'The social structure superimposed by the Oblates allowed pre-existing status differentials within the Salish tribes to be recognized; they ascribed roles with a moderate amount of prestige to chiefs and others whose loss of status otherwise might have been highly disruptive.'* (Lemert, E.1954:25)
67. Patterson, E.P. (1972:163-169).
68. I am basically following Jean Usher's (1974) account of William Duncan and Metlakatla. Also see Large, R.G. (1957), Duff (1964), and Sessional Papers, DIA, especially 1879, for that period. J.W. Arctander's *The Apostle of Alaska (1909)* carries the William Duncan story forward into New Metlakatla.
69. Drawn from Hicks, J.P. (1933), Crosby, T. (1914), Large, R.G. (1957), and McDonald,J (1984).
70. *Nanaimo Methodist Mission Scrapbook* (1871), North West History Collection, Vancouver Public Library.
71. Hicks, J.P. (1933:15, 16).

72. See Large, R.G. (1957), Hicks, J.P. (1933), Crosby, T. (1914). The Methodist newspaper, *The Wesleyan* (January 5, 1878) contains a remarkable letter from Philip MacKay.
73. Usher, Jean (1969:352). A Mrs. Dickenson, a Tsimshian woman who had received a mission school education and who was married to a local trader, had become a mission power among some Tlingit by 1881 (Krause, A. 1956). In 1883, a Mrs. Hamblet (originally from Fort Simpson and 'converted' in the Victoria revival meetings nine years before) was preaching 'amongst the lowest of the city' in New Westminster (*The Wesleyan*, July 4, 1883).
74. Kelly's biographer was the *Vancouver Sun* journalist Allan Morley (1967); therefore great caution is advised with this account. Also see LaViolette, F. (1961) and Drucker, P. (1958).
75. A listing for 1874 notes Indian residential and day schools at St. Mary's (at Mission), Nanaimo, Cowichan, Quamichan, Comos, Victoria, Kincolith, Metlakatla, Port Simpson, Lytton (Sessional Papers, DIA 1875:47, 48). Residential schools were to provide more intensive education for promising Indian students than was possible in the mission day schools. Anglican school complexes arose at Metlakatla, Alert Bay, and near Lytton. The Methodists influence spread from Port Simpson to other regional Indian settlements and in 1878 they established the largest of the residential schools at Coquileetza (near Sardis in the lower Fraser Valley). The Presbyterians also operated a few residential schools after the 1890. (Sessional Papers, DIA (1895, Part 2:131-334; 1910, Part 2).
76. From the mid 1880s and on most Annual Reports of the Department of Indian Affairs contain school-by-school reports. While hyperbolic, they provide valuable, sometimes depressing, data.
77. Sessional Papers, DIA (1895:147-153; Part 2:191-352).
78. Cail, R. (1974:177,178).
79. Wilson Duff(1969) presents an evaluation of the Douglas Treaties against the reserves provided by later Federal agencies
80. Belshaw, Hawthorn, and Jamieson (1960, Chapter 5). LaViolette, F. (1961) deals with some of the Indian actions and personalities involved. Cail, R. (1974) for figures. Fisher, R. (1977) elaborates on some of the government personalities involved.
81. Cited in LaViolette, F. (1961:115,116), from a petition of 1874. Despite the difficulties many bands faced acquiring adequate reserve lands, two years later, farmers from the Douglas and Portage bands entered crop exhibits in the US Centennial Exposition being held at Philadelphia, and won prizes for wheat and barley specimens they had grown (Sessional Papers, DIA 1876).
82. The most original part of Fisher's (1977) study of Indian-European relations in BC is his account of the intra government forces involved in the reserve and Indian land claims.
83. Lands set aside for Indian reserves increased from 28,437 acres in 1871 to 718,568 acres in 1897 (Cail, R. 1974:226). Due to cut-off provisions, Indian reserve land had fallen to 666,240 acres in 1913 (Cail, R. 1974:245). Indian reserve lands were increased in 1916 due to the Federal-Provincial Royal Commission (Cail, R. 1974:277) and were frozen at the 1924 figure of 733,891 acres, when the McKenna-McBride proposals were finally accepted by the provincial and federal governments. (Cail, R. 1974:238). These lands did not include those of Treaty No. 8 in the Peace River area, which had been ceded by treaty shortly before the turn of the century. The joint meetings between representatives of the Allied Tribes of BC and a Federal Commission in 1927 failed to significantly alter the previous BC-Federal arrangements.
84. Cail, R. (1974:256-258), Fisher, R. (1977:182-197).Some accounts of Indian farms on interior reserves restricted by lack of water rights are cited in the chapter on Indian farming.
85. Cail, R. (1974:45,196,197).
86. LaViolette, F.(1961:108). Also Drucker, P. (1958:106) for concerns about timber leases by the Native Brotherhood four decades later.

87. Codere, H. (1950:39) says, '*...it is most unlikely that the activities of a small group like the Kwakiutl, for example, were competing seriously with the big companies. The only possibility, and there seems to be no evidence on this point, was that the big companies might find it more difficult to get wage labour if a profitable area of self-employment existed.*' She is mistaken on the matter of exclusion of Indian handlogging. See Lawrence, J.C. (1957) on the timber staking boom; also Robin, M. (1972) on the contemporary administration of the 'Company Province'.

88. For the effect of the 1912 extension of provincial game and conservation laws to Indians see Sessional Papers, DIA 1913 and 1914, in particular for bands in the Stuart Lake-Babine Agency. For a brief overview of game laws vs. treaty rights in Canada, see Hawthorn, H. (1966, Vol.1, Chapter 12).

89. Debate about the nature and aboriginality of family hunting/trapping territories has focused mainly on Algonkian groups in northeastern Canada. But comparable processes may have been at work even among groups engaged in trapping in northern BC. James McDonald notes an intriguing consequence of the fur trade among the inland Tsimshian. *Marius Barbeau (1937) felt that the trade led to a crystallization of the social organization and to the development of extensive hunting territories with inviolate frontiers. (This latter point may actually have more to do with the privatization of territories for the exclusive use of chiefs, rather than the extension of the Tsimshian frontier to incorporate more land).* (McDonald, J. 1984:42,43)

While the economic and political context of Indian trappers in BC may have been quite different, Knight (1968:26-30; 1974: 356-358) suggests some external interests involved in instituting exclusively Indian trapping territories in northeastern Canada at about this time

90. See Ralston, K. (1965) and Gladstone, P. (1959).

91. Hawthorn, H.B. (1966, Vol. 1:211-262) provides a brief but stimulating overview of the relation of treaties, the DIA, and the Indian Act to Indian people in Canada. Douglas Sander's (1967) *Native Rights in Canada* holds the opposed view, that treaties are crucial. For general comments on the DIA see Patterson, E.P. (1972).

92. Halliday, W. (1935)

93. Sessional Papers, DIA (1913, Part I:5,159.)According to E.P. Patterson (1972:26), from 1860 to 1913 " ...the cost of Indian administration was borne primarily by revenues derived from Indian sources, such as the lease of land.'

94. LaViolette, F. (1961) presents the standard view of the law banning the potlatch. Also Codere, H. (1969) for a brief but vibrant account of the goods involved in Dan Cranmer's last potlatch. The Canadian anthropologist, Thomas McIlwraith, while doing field work among the Bella Coola in 1923, was preparing to both document and to play a minor role in a winter dance series given at that village. He wondered whether his participation might lead to arrest but no real interference materialized. A half century afterward the massive ethnography which McIlwraith had published on Bella Coola traditions was being consulted by Bella Coola elders seeking to refresh their memory of traditional ways. (Kennedy, D. and Bouchard, T.R. 1990: 337)

Chapter 4: Resource Industries and Indian Labour

1. Martin Robin (1972:35-38) notes that even during the period when commercial farming 'peaked' in 1891, less than twenty percent of the male labour force in BC was so engaged, a figure which continued to drop steadily after WW I.

2. See Robin Fisher (1977:102,110) for an account of Euro-Canadians as a class of employers and landlords. Martin Robin's (1972:44) otherwise valuable history also repeats the tale of avaricious 'settlers.'

3. Langevin, H.L. (1872, Appendix). also cited in M. Robin (1972:14); Akrigg and Akrigg (1977:403-405), and in R.E. Caves and R.H. Holton (1976:152). Langevin guesstimated that the 10,600 immigrant population in BC were employed in the following industries: mining (2350), agriculture (1830), trade (1300), manufacturing (400). This provides no separate

listings for industries such as transport, logging, longshoring, fishing, etc. The multiple occupations, often combining wage work and owner-operator employment, also do not appear in Langevin's estimates. Neither Indian labour nor population was mentioned.

4. While gold still made up over half of the exports in 1881 it was now being extracted primarily by wage labour in non-placer operations (Vernon Flucke, 1955). According to one tenuous estimate, the BC labour force in 1881 was distributed as follows: mining (2800), fishing (2600–2800), agriculture (2600), food (i.e fish) processing (1450), sawmilling (c. 300?). Other manufactures included the production of various newspapers, at least one real opium factory, and miscellaneous enterprises which employed circa 1150. Clearly, this is an incomplete census since twenty-seven sawmills obviously did not operate with only 300 men and without loggers. (R.E. and Holton, R.H. 1976:154, Table 28).

5. Martin Robin (1972:15-24), captures the sweep of resource acquisition throughout the period. Also see J.C. Lawrence (1957, Chapter 2) for an excellent account of the shifting loci and capital in the lumber industry and the wild staking booms which surged during circa 1900-1910. Also see Keith Ralston's 'Patterns of Trade and Investment on the Pacific Coast, 1867-1892 The Case of the British Columbia Salmon Canning Industry,' in Friesen and Ralston (1976).

6. Total BC population figures from the years 1880-81 and on are taken from the decennial Censuses of Canada. Estimates for the Indian population vary almost from one source to the next before 1893. Figures on Indian population used here are taken from Wilson Duff (1964:39 44, 45) and from tabulations in Belshaw, Hawthorn and Jamieson (1960:22, 23). While the figures vary, the general order of absolute and relative decrease in the Indian population in BC is the similar in all accounts.

7. By 1911 there were eighty-three major hard rock mines in the province, most of them in the Boundary-Kootenay districts. But the value of coal production outweighed both that of gold and major base metals combined. Thirty years previously, at the beginning of lumber export, there had been twenty-seven export saw mills in BC, but in 1911 there were some 225 sawmills and 59 shingle mills. These were provided for by an estimated 299 logging camps (exclusive of handloggers) employing some 14,000 men during the peak of the 1910 season. There were supposedly some 5650 licensed fish boats allegedly manned by 19,000 fishermen supplying the fifty-six canneries in operation (Gosnell, R.E. 1911:15, 23 30, 250).

R.E. Caves and R.H. Holton (1976), survey is at odds with more particular studies of BC industries of the period. They hold that substantial base in manufacture had developed by 1911 and that agriculture outranked all the other resource industries combined in labour engaged. They exclude fish canning and sawmilling from primary resource industries and do not consider how many 'farmers' were also wage workers in the seasonal resource industries. Given these provisos, the BC labour force of 1911 is estimated by Caves and Holton (1976:154-157, Tables 28,29) as follows: agriculture (24,400), mining (15,570), lumbering (11,830; alternately 15,000 16,000), fishing and hunting (4580), log and lumber manufacturing (17,240), fish preservation (5790), metal smelting (1280), other manufactures (3880).

8. Piece and contract work became central to the fishing and canning industry after the mid 1890s. This system of payment was also applied in certain phases of logging, as in falling. Sub-contracting out work was even utilized in railway construction.

9. Before he became a full time logger in 1919, Queesto and his family were partially engaged in subsistence hunting and fishing. This did not mean that they were economically self-sufficient since they purchased a considerable amount of cash food. Says Queesto, *I can remember getting my supplies from the store in Victoria as early as 1908. Just before the winter came on, we would go to Victoria in a small sailboat and buy things like flour, which cost \$1.10 a sack in those days, and sugar, which was \$5.25 a hundredweight, as well as rice, bacon and dried beans and peas. I used to get about 35 to 40 sacks of flour, 400 pounds of sugar, and about 20 big chunks of bacon at about \$2.50 a slab. What little*

money I made in those days, I saved to buy sugar and flour....Just imagine, getting a 49 pound sack of flour for \$1.10" (Jones and Bosustow, 1981:41)

This amounts to a minimum of 2,600 pounds of purchased food for a single family: it is more than many white homesteader families of the time bought in a year. In addition, there would have been expenditures for clothes, tools and other implements. This underscores the fact that cash income from wage employment or commodity production had become critical for native families, even those still heavily engaged in traditional subsistence activities.

10. The classic ethnographies provide accounts of Indian women's roles in the continuing 'traditional' subsistence and domestic tasks. But they rarely dealt with wage labour or other novel economic activities which women were engaged in. What is missing are accounts of ordinary Indian women of this period.

11. Of the 338 known marriages contracted in the century before 1960, a minimum of 39 per cent of Haida women ceased to be members of the band through outmarriage. (Stearns, M. 1981:187-189, tables 32 and 33). As an overview she says "*Those few women of cohorts up to 1930 who married white men were usually of high-ranking families. They retained some of the romantic aura of the 'Haida princess' enjoyed by several chief's daughters who had married professional men - geologists, surveyors, and so on - in the early days. Significantly, few members of the 1920-29 cohort who were caught up in the wartime parties married whites. Many of them went on to 'cook for' one or a succession of white men, usually those on lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder. While this may seem an insecure position, many of these relationships are of long standing..... Beginning with the 1930s cohort, the proportion of out-marriage jumped from less than a third to almost two-thirds of all marriages. These unions, contracted in the immediate postwar period, were almost evenly divided between whites and other Indians, including enfranchised Haidas. Of the girls born 1940-54, however, almost half married white men" (Stearns, M. 1981:188)*

12. Drawn from Leona Sparrow (1976), *Work History of a Coast Salish Couple*, MA, University of BC.

Chapter 5: The Ethnographic Trade and Tours

1. According to Barbeau (1957), production of curios for trade had begun among the Haida by the late 1820s. Also see Barbeau, M. (1929, Vol. 1:12-13).

2. I am basically following Wilson Duff (1964:77-79) here. The journal of one touring artifact buyer, Johan Jacobsen, is *Alaska Voyage, 1881-83*, (Erna Gunther, Erna ed., 1977).

3. Barbeau, M. (1957).

4. Barbeau, M. (1957:158); Thomas, Susan (1967:4).

5. Barbeau, M. (1957:125). He mentions some forty Haida carvers between the 1860s and 1930. Of especial interest are the fragments of life histories given for twenty-three carvers.

6. Barbeau, M. (1957:203).

8. In 1884 a fleet of fifty Nootka canoes left Kyuquot for the long and dangerous voyage to Seattle to find work (Sessional Papers, DIA 1885:82).

9. Kopas, Cliff (1970:235-237), Duff, W. (1964:78).

10. Rohner, Ronald (1969:30).

11. Rohner, Ronald (1969:145-150). Nicholson, George (1962:223) notes a Dr. Atliv, Annie Williams, Frank Jasper, a Mrs. Curley and her son Jah as the West Coast people who went to the St. Louis World Fair in 1904. They took along a dismantled 'Big House', a forty foot canoe and a cargo of masks, costumes and ceremonial objects.

12. Hicks, J.P. (1933); Large, R.G. (1957:96, 97).

13. Cronin, Kay (1960:178).

14. Patterson, E.P. (1972:169). According to LaViolette, F. (1961:126, 127), Capilano was only one of three chiefs sent to London following a decision by Cowichan leaders that spring to despatch a delegation to His Majesty on land claims. At least one missionary among the Nishga viewed Capilano's trip as part of a subversive plot (J.W. Moeran,

1923:154, 155). The Vancouver Public Library, Historical Photographs section, holds a photo of Chief Capilano's return to Vancouver, in which he is seen sitting regally in an open four horse carriage being driven past inattentive Vancouverites at the intersection of Hastings and Granville street.

15. Ford, C. (1968:185, 186).

16. Ford, C. (1968:187,188).

17. Ford, C. (1968:189).

18. Foster, Garland (1931). According to *The Native Voice* (July 1954), she was reduced to selling episodes of *Legends of Vancouver* to the *Vancouver Province* for \$7 per story. These were her versions of Squamish tales told to her by Joe Capilano.

19. See sections on 'Southern Ontario Reserves' and 'Caughnawaga' in the chapter 'Beyond the Eastern Mountains'. Also see Hazel Hertsberg's *The Search for an American Indian Identity* (1971).

20. Curtis, Edward, *The North American Indian*, Vols. 1-20. Those dealing with the Northwest Coast are Vol. 9 (Coast Salish, 1913), Vol. 10 (Kwakiutl, 1915), and Vol. 11 (Nootka and Haida, 1916) Consider the photograph of a 'Cowichan Warrior' (Curtis., Vol. 9, 1913:14) taken in 1911. This was a group which had already been involved in fishing strikes, had sent a delegate to the Trades and Labour Congress in 1906, and had a more than fifty year history of wage work on railway construction, on farms, in fishing and logging etc. It is quite possible that some of the traditional garments and paraphernalia which Curtis borrowed from the Smithsonian Institute had been produced by earlier generations of native people for the ethnographic trade.

21. Curtis first surveyed the Kwakiutl in 1910 but his main work there was between 1912 and 1914. Shortly thereafter he produced the movie *The Land of the Headhunters*, which was a scripted, costumed and directed rendering of Kwakiutl life on the eve of European contact - as envisaged by Curtis. It was no sense a document of contemporary Kwakiutl life. (Boesen, V. and Graybill, F.C., 1976). An outline of Kwakiutl involvement in the cash economy is available in Codere (1950). Also see Healey, E. (1958:57, 58).

22. Even enthusiasts of Curtis acknowledge this. *'It is a fact that while among the tribes of the Pacific Northwest he carried with him a bag of wigs and a good supply of primitive garments. He explains in his writings that the woven cedar bark capes were prepared especially for him by the Kwakiutl men and women. The furs and capes that appear in some of his photographs from the region had not been worn in years. Curtis wanted to capture more of the past than was there, so he had the natives don his wigs, which were legitimate representations of the earlier hair styles. The practice of wearing abalone shells as nose rings had entirely disappeared. Yet in some of his pictures of their region, Curtis was able to persuade the natives to wear them for the occasion.'* (Coleman, A. and McLuhan, T .C 1972: xi) The question is how accurate was Curtis' reconstruction of the past.

23. Curtis' photographic expeditions were partly funded by J.P. Morgan. Curtis knew Theodore Roosevelt, Gifford Pinchot, and the Goulds personally and was official photographer on an Alaska excursion by E.H. Harriman, the New York Central railroad tycoon. Scholarly objections by Boas and other anthropologists naturally had little effect. See Boesen, V. and Graybill, F.C. 1976:5, 7, 13, 28).

24. Healey, E. (1958:19). Hunt was already working with the Indian Reserve Commission in 1879 (Sessional Papers, DIA 1879:148). Two professional American Indian anthropologists of the pre WW I period were J.N.B. Hewitt, Francis LaFlesche, both with the Smithsonian Institute. In 1900 LaFlesche had already published an account(*The Middle Five*) of his own childhood and schooling among the Omaha of the late nineteenth century. Somewhat later, Louis Shotridge and Arthur Parker entered the American nativist scene. Henry Tate, a Tsimshian, was another anthropological informant working with Boas(Franz Boas and Henry Tate, *Tsimshian Mythology*, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1916).

25. Benyon was also associated with Sir Ernst Macmillan and Marius Barbeau during the 1930s in recording native songs. He also contributed material to Columbia and Harvard Universities. Some of his stories were published in the *Vancouver Province*. (*Native Voice*, Obituary, March 1958). Benyon deposited thousands of pages of notes on Tsimshian narratives with the National Museum of Canada, which finally edited and published them during the 1980s. (MacDonald, George. 1988). Also see William Elliott (1931).

26. *The Native Voice* (July 1954), Barbeau, M. (1928), Rohner, R. (1969), and Banks, Judith (1966).

Chapter 6: Cottage Industries, Reserve Enterprises and Indian Entrepreneurs

1. This is a somewhat simplified summary, since cottage industries producing local consumer goods merged with those which could provide some surpluses for external sale. Nor were the missionaries consistent or unanimous about this aim. However, the goal of self-sufficiency was an aspect of many mission enterprises.
2. See Jean Usher's *William Duncan of Metlakatla, A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia*, University of British Columbia Thesis, Chapter 4 (1969). Also Usher, (1974). An on-the-spot account of Metlakatla is in Sessional Papers, DIA (1879:114-119). Additional material in J.W. Arctlander, *The Apostle of Alaska: the story of William Duncan of Metlakatla* (1909).
3. Ross, William (1967:38, 39).
4. One of the most successful of William Duncan's former mission instructors was Robert Cunningham who after a brief stay at Metlakatla became an HBC factor and was fined \$500 by Duncan in his capacity as magistrate for selling liquor to Indians. Cunningham established his famed cannery complex at Port Essington in the late 1870s (Large, R.G., 1957:28, 29, 32-35).
5. Lewis, Claudia (1970:50). Also see Barbara Lane, 'The Cowichan Knitting Industry' in *Anthropology in British Columbia*, Memoir No. 2, BC Provincial Museum, Victoria.
6. The term 'rural sweatshops' was applied to native craft industries on northern Saskatchewan reserves by Peter Worsley, *Democracy From the Top* (MS.1961. Northern Development Program, University of Saskatchewan, Sask.) The Sessional Papers, DIA from 1890 to WW I report the production of decorated hide clothing for sale by members of various interior BC bands (Sessional Papers, DIA 1901:260-261).
7. Duff, Wilson (1964: 80,81). For a commentary on the economics of Indian curios and basketry by the 1950s and in preceding decades, see Belshaw, Hawthorn and Jamieson (1960, Chapter 19).
- 8 See Sessional Papers, DIA 1890-1911 for Sechelt, Chilliwack and some Fraser Valley reserves with members engaged in making utilitarian produce baskets.
9. Jordon, David (1898, Vol. 3:217) provides a partial list of some 142 canoes used on sealing schooners in 1895. Matthews, J.S. (1955:118). Codere, H. (1950:32) Says Harry Guillod, reporting from the mainly Nootkan West Coast Agency in 1901, 'A good many cedar canoes are made every year, but are principally sold to their own or adjacent tribesmen, a few going to the east coast of the island. There is a demand every year for sealing canoes as they get broken or worn out on the sealing schooners.' (Sessional Papers, DIA 1901:268)
10. Sessional Papers, DIA (1911:207, 208, 233, 234, 236). Boat building was also taught in a few Indian residential schools by 1900.
11. Barbeau, M. (1957:204-208). One later case was that of Edwin Underwood of a Saanich band. During the 1920s and 1930s he worked for the Todd Canneries both as a fisherman and boat builder During WW 2, Underwood and his brother built six gas trollers on the Saanich reserve, and later he became construction superintendent for the Indian Affairs Branch (*The Native Voice*, February 1953).
12. Large, R.G. (1957:102, 103). *Native Voice*, November 1958). Possibly the first press was at Metlakatla, where between 1870 and 1886 there 'Photographic equipment and a

printing press recorded the progress of the town and its people.' (Garfield, V. and Wingert, P. 1950:8)

13. Cronin, Kay (1960:173). According to Wilson Duff (1964:91), some books or pamphlets were also printed in Chinook there. A.G. Morice (1910:377).

14. Moeran, J.W. (1923). *Native Voice* (December 1965). Anthony Adams and Stephan Eli, two of the original Nishga printers, survived until 1965 when they helped put out some issues on the old press.

15. (Sessional Papers, DIA 1879:128)

16. According to R.G. Large (1957:93-93), Alfred Dudoward was the son of a French Canadian HBC employee at Port Simpson and his wife Mary, the niece of Chief Shakes. Her father was a prominent coastal captain and she was educated in a convent school in Victoria and raised in the home of a naval officer's family there. Two of the Dudoward daughters themselves married riverboat captains, and a son became a chief at Port Simpson.

17. Healey, Elizabeth (1958:19, 25, 28, 29).

18. *The Native Voice* (November 1947; March 1957, Obituary).

19. Sessional Papers, DIA (1885:79).

20. Sessional Papers, DIA (1899; 1903:282).

21. Sessional Papers, DIA (1902:284).

22. Dalzell, Kathleen (1967:178, 196). Sessional Papers, DIA (1911:389) notes five Indian owned stores at Masset.

23. Dalzell, Kathleen (1967:143-142).

24. Morley, Allan (1967:79, 63-69).

25. Sessional Report, DIA (1902:411).

26. Sessional Report, DIA (1901:264).

Chapter 7: Subsistence and Mixed Farming

1. See Merk, F. (1968) for Indian farm labour at Fort Vancouver, McKelvie (1957) for Fort Langley, Tolmie (1963) for Fort Nusqually, Ormsby (1958:92) for Victoria, and Factor John Work's correspondence from Fort Simpson for that post. On Harmon's potato gardens around Ft. St. James see(Lamb, K. 1957).

2. Tolmie, W.F. (1963:316); Suttles, Wayne (1951:283, 284).

3. See Sessional Papers, DIA (1876:44, 45, 54; 1877:48). The US Centennial festivities at Philadelphia were somewhat dampened by the news that out in the Dakotas, part of an American army regiment had been annihilated by the Sioux . Custer's Last Stand has been retold in so many potboilers and epics of the silver screen that the event has skewed the popular image of western North America during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In fact, the US was already on the verge of becoming the leading industrial power in the world by 1876. Compared to the battles and casualties of the American Civil War the set-to on the Little Big Horn was merely a minor skirmish.

4. Suttles, Wayne (1951:279, 280; 1954:60-64).

5. Suttles, Wayne (1954:65, 72, 76).

6. Suttles, Wayne (1954:66, 77 100).

7. A study of the evolution of farming on a single reserve, from inception to present, would be a valuable contribution. Classic ethnographic accounts are of little help and the Annual Reports of the DIA give little specific information before c.1880. Claudia Lewis (1970, Chapter 1) provides some very brief accounts of early Cowichan farming. Indian communities involved in gardening were scattered throughout the Fraser Valley by 1860. While the subsistence value of these garden-farms was probably substantial, the cash generated was apparently small. In 1878 the Indian Agent for Fraser River Agency guesstimated that wages from farm labour provided some \$15,000, while income from sale of crops and livestock provided only \$10,000. Lumbering and longshoring brought in twice as much as farm labour and produce sales combined. (Sessional Papers, DIA 1879:72)

8. Table drawn from Sessional Papers, DIA (1886, Part 1:98). Cowichan Agency covered southeastern Vancouver Island, Fraser Agency the lower Fraser Valley as far as Lytton. The farm/man ratios were not quite as low as they appear in the statistics since only about one half of the bands surveyed were actually farming and pasturage was not included. Still, the farms probably averaged little more than ten acres per family.
9. Sessional Papers, DIA(1886:86-88).
10. Sessional Papers, DIA(1886:88). Robin, Martin (1972:59-63). Kekatoos, Skuzzy and other reserves in the Fraser and Thompson canyons were within the 'Railway Belt', from which the CPR was to receive lands to help defray its construction costs.
11. The listing of barns, stables, farming equipment by farming band is far too extensive to cite. One summary says, '*[they]..purchase improved self binders, threshing machines, mowing machines, reapers, rakes and ploughs, etc., etc. and frequently, after completing their own work, earn considerable money by hiring to the white settlers themselves, their mowers, reapers, and threshing machines.*' (Sessional Papers DIA 1900:296)
12. Sessional Papers, DIA (1895:148- 1901:225, 216, etc.). The N'Kamaplix band had a steam threshing machine since 1899 and it is possible these were more widespread than noted here (Sessional Papers, DIA 1901:259).
13. Sessional Papers, DIA (1900:244).
14. Cowichan Agency, pop. 1740, cultivated 3109 ac.; Kamloops-Okanagan, pop. 2135, cultivated 9740 ac.; New Westminster Agency, pop 2500, cultivated 3761 ac. The total Indian population in BC was given as some 24,338 and the reserve farm land worked was then some 20,000 acres. (Sessional Papers, DIA 1911, Part 2:18, 126, 127).
15. A brief but revealing report on the nature of Indian orchardry was made by the Dominion Entomologist in 1911. It suggests some of the complexity and problems faced by these small farms (Sessional Papers, DIA 1912:273-277).
16. Sessional Papers, DIA(1911:276; 1912:286, 289; 1916:112). In addition to their orchard crops, the Chilliwack reserves produced some 420 tons of market vegetables in 1915.
17. Part of the reason for the decline in Indian orchards is evident in the fact that fruit packing plants in 1911 were paying \$20 per ton (or less) for premium grade apples—grown, tended, sprayed, picked, sorted, boxed, and delivered. One Indian commercial orchardist in the Lytton area was said to have earned some \$200 for the sale of fruit during the year, supposedly a remarkable success (Sessional Papers, DIA 1912:276).
18. Sessional Papers, DIA (1900:266).
19. Sessional Papers, DIA (1901:284). Also see Bawlf, Mary (1969). Chiletza had previously been on a grand tour of Europe and would later impress one Colonel McRae when the latter was buying cavalry mounts for the Canadian military in WW 1. He also played a major role in the Allied Tribes of BC during the land claims movement of the mid1920s.
20. Marriott, H. (1966:8-25) conveys some of the intermixed racism yet neighbourliness which existed in a Cariboo ranching area, where families with variable degrees of native ancestry continued to make up a large part of the local population.
21. Speare, John (1973:7, 23).Augusta Evans describes how she prepared to become a midwife. 'I bought a doctor's book from Eaton's. It was down at Regina then. It cost me three dollars, yes. But I read that book from end to end. I learned it by heart. At night in my kitchen by candle light. It was this thick and it had pictures ' (Speare, J. 1973:27) Also (Speare, J. 1973:8)
22. Sessional Papers, DIA (1911:210).

Chapter 8: Commercial Fishing and Cannery Work

1. According to C.P. Lyons (1969:705, 706) there were three canneries in 1876, seventeen in 1886, twenty-six canneries in 1891, and a grand total of sixty-five operating canneries in 1900. Other studies which provide excellent accounts of the early fish canning industry in

particular regions are Keith Ralston (1965), and William Ross (1967). Gladstone's (1959) account is the fullest treatment we have of industrial disputes and Indian fishermen in that industry.

2. Lyons, C.P. (1969:705-709). There is some variation in figures for canneries in operation in a given year. For instance, operating canneries on the Fraser River in 1900: Percy Gladstone (1959:121) says forty-eight canneries, Keith Ralston (1966:8) says forty-five canneries while William Ross (1967) and Ernest Officer (1955) give different figures for those on the Skeena-Nass and for the total number of canneries in operation. While the approximate orders agree, this suggests some of the problems of extracting hard statistical data from early industrial sources. The seemingly steady build up was actually one of great flux, marked by changes in locales, production, and employment by specific canneries. Possibly a half of the circa 120 canneries opened between 1870 and 1920 went broke, burned down, or were replaced by consolidation by the end of that period.

3. Wicks, Walter (1976:80,81).

4. Wicks, Walter (1976:82). Also see Knight, R. and Koizumi, M. (1976, Chapter 2) for the account of a Japanese Skeena River fisherman of the pre WW I period.

5. By the 1890 the Skeena canneries enrolled men and women from most of the Tsimshian communities of the region. There were also Haida from the Queen Charlottes, some Nishga from the Nass, and Gitksan from as far away as Hazelton and Kispiox. Kwakiutl fishermen and cannery workers from Fort Rupert and Alert Bay not only worked locally but also travelled to the canneries on Rivers Inlet, in Knight Inlet, and those on the Fraser. Nootka people sometimes sailed all the way from the west coast of Vancouver Island to work in the fisheries of Puget Sound. Sessional Papers, DIA in years 1885-1900 for BC coastal bands, also William Ross (1967), Clellan Ford (1963), W. Wicks (1976:14, 15), R.C. Large (1957). Also see Gladstone, P. (1953:160; 1959:131, 117).

6. Doyle Papers (Notebooks 1910-1912:56, 57; 1902:276). Rivers Inlet cannery specifically excluded women boat pullers from the \$15 advance made to fishing teams in 1902. This suggests that they were of some consequence up to that date.

7. Ford, Clellan (1963:132, 133).

8. A typical annual cycle on the Skeena circa 1900-1910 saw the canneries opening April when white 'engineers' and mechanics arrived to put the plant in working order. Shortly after came a crew of Chinese contract labour to begin manufacturing the cans used during the coming season. By early May a few Japanese and Indian workers arrived to repair nets and put fishing boats in order. A few fishermen began trolling for Spring salmon in late May. The bulk of the Indian and Japanese fishermen and cannery workers did not arrive until mid-June, and the Sockeye began to arrive at the end of that month. On the Skeena, the major Sockeye runs were taken between the first of July and the mid or end of August. This was the peak fishing season when all available fishermen and cannery workers were employed. Canning and fishing operations began to wind down during September with the Pink and Chum salmon runs. Before circa 1910 these two species brought a low price and were of only limited interest to canners. The canneries processing these two species remained in operation until late October and then shut up till next spring. The seasonal round was somewhat different on the Fraser (William Ross, 1967; Walter Wicks, 1976).

9. For a survey of the shifting intricacies of fish and cannery licensing, see the introduction of Keith Ralston (1965). Also William Ross (1967) for the Nass and Skeena.

10. Wicks, W. (1976:79). However, the typical rate offered by most Fraser River canneries for Sockeye salmon during the 1890s was six to ten cents per fish, sometimes less (Ralston, 1965; Gladstone, 1959). At Rivers Inlet, Sockeye still fetched eight cents per fish in 1902 (Doyle Papers, Notebook 1, 224:276).

11. Gladstone, Percy (1959:153); Ralston, Keith (1965:48); and Ross, William (1967). The figures for ethnic composition of BC fishermen had great political importance during the era of the Japanese exclusion in the 1920s, and sometimes later. For instance, compare Gladstone's (1959) figures for mid 1920s with those provided by Kishizo Kimura (1975).

12. The Bella Bella already operated some thirty gas boats (Sessional Papers, DIA 1911:202). The Kuper Island band was engaged in boat building and the steam tug was operated by the Lyacksun band on Valdes Island (Sessional Papers, DIA 1911). Helen Codere (1950:39, 40) notes that gas boats were beginning to replace canoes and sailing skiffs among Kwakiutl by 1911-1913 and that by 1914 several Indians in the Kwakewlth Agency had purchased seine boats and gear valued from \$10,000 to \$15,000.
13. Gladstone, Percy (1959:162). According to Gladstone the Queen Charlotte Trollers Association was in some way associated with the Industrial Workers of the World, a rather amazing situation if true.
14. Drawn from Percy Gladstone (1959, Appendix 17).
15. Spradley, James (1912:55, 56, 60, 66).
16. Spradley, James (1912:79, 80)
17. Spradley, James (1972:98, 99). Sewid acquired his first seiner in 1940 and a second on in 1944. He became established as a regional Indian entrepreneur—fishing, hiring crews, and packing fish for canneries.
18. An insightful account of the day-to-day operation of early canneries is William Ross' *Cannery Distribution on the Skeena and Nass* (1967). Duncan Stacey's (1982) *Sockeye and Tinplate* is a more recent and more detailed account of the specifics of cannery technology, especially of the changes involved in the shift from mainly manual to largely mechanized processes between c. 1890 and 1910. Geoff Meggs' (1991) *Salmon* and G.Meggs and D. Stacey's (1992) *Corklines and Canning Lines* provide a comprehensive overview of the fishing/canning industry from the beginning to the present.
19. Rohner, Ronald (1969: 94, 95). Boas' diary also gives a brief description of the work in the Alert Bay cannery in 1900 (Rohner, R. 1969:251, 252).
20. Lawrence, Joseph (1951:31), Ralston, Keith (1965:8), and Gladstone, Percy (1959:121). According to figures cited by Ralston (1965, Table 2:8) the labour force of thirty-five BC canneries in 1890 totaled some 7158 persons, including some circa 1700 fishermen on 835 cannery boats. There were presumably independent fishermen delivering their catches as well. This would suggest some 5500 cannery employees. The numbers of cannery workers per plant ranged from 71 (Alert Bay cannery) to some 160 (at Ewen's Lion Island cannery on the Fraser). Figures for four canneries give a median of some 120-130 shoreworkers per plant. This seems rather low.
21. Gladstone, Percy (1959:120). Also see Henry Doyle Papers for contracts with labour recruiters. One exceptional aspect of canneries is that they employed (mainly Indian) children in light and very low paid jobs until about WW I.
22. Ford, Clellan (1968:192, 228).
23. For Peter Kelly's and Stephan Cook's roles as labour recruiters and cannery foremen, see the section on 'Indian Entrepreneurs.'
24. The Henry Doyle Papers (University of BC, Special Collections) are a mass of business diary and cannery accounts which, while illuminating, require a specialized knowledge of then contemporary cannery economics. The citations presented here are offered with some trepidation.
25. Doyle Papers (Notebook 1908, unpaginated). Changing lists of fishermen's names suggest that there was a great turn-over among Indian fishermen fishing for the cannery from year to year.
26. Doyle Papers (Notebooks, Mill Bay Cannery 1904, 1908, unpaginated). Also William Ross (1967:69, 70) for same process on the Skeena.
27. Doyle Papers (Mill Bay Cannery Diary, 1908, unpaginated). Also see Doyle's Executive Notes (1904-1905) for his threatening response to a Fraser River canner who did not maintain the blacklist on striking Indian fishermen from the Skeena. In June 1909 some seventeen Indian fishermen struck for a fifty cent per week increase in bonuses for providing their own boats. They left Mill Bay and attempted to get these rates at the surrounding canneries, but proved unsuccessful since Doyle had lined up the other cannery

managers. The work stoppage lasted less than a week. Although only one striking Indian fisherman was fired, all were placed on the less advantageous piece rates. (Doyle Papers, Notebook 1907-1909:150).

28. Doyle Papers (Notebook 1907-1909:104).

29. Ross, William (1967:96).

30. Doyle Papers (Box 6, File 14, Cannery Statistics. Mill Bay, 1918). The twenty-nine Japanese boat crews received a total of \$23,304 for fish caught while the nineteen Indian boat crews got \$10,270 for the 1918 season. This did not include payments to fishermen at the Kumeon or other fish camps.

31. Doyle Papers (Box 6, File 14. Cannery Statistics. Mill Bay 1917).

32. Doyle Papers (Notebooks, Mill Bay Cannery, 1918). Box 6, File 7, Cannery Statistics. Mill Bay, June 30, 1918).

33. Doyle Papers, Notebooks, (Mill Bay Cannery, 1918). Also Gladstone, Percy (1959:136).

34. Thomas Ladner Papers (July 6-July 9, 1892).

35. Ralston, Keith (1965:51-54)

36. Thomas Ladner, writing on July 7, just before the beginning of the strike, said that *'There is still a boil amongst the fishermen and they are going to have a big meeting at Steveston tomorrow afternoon to fix the cannerymen, so they say. They have succeeded in getting a number of the Indians to join their Union and want the Indians to strike for \$3 per day—they are striking for ten cents for fish. I have succeeded in making quite a number of contracts with now Union men at six cents and they say the price is small but will work at that price. I don't know how they will stick to their bargain.'* (Thomas Ladner Papers, July 7, 1893)

37. Ralston, Keith (1965:55, 56, 58).

38. Gladstone, Percy (1959:133). Also Jamieson, Stuart (1960:148).

39. Thomas Ladner Papers (July 17, 1893). Among the 'Northern Indians', whom Ladner seems to have considered as country bumpkins, were three Bella Coola men who had made the tour of Germany in 1885. Boas ran into them in Ladner's cannery in 1890 (Rohner, R. 1969: 128).

40. Thomas Ladner Papers (August 10, 1893).

41. Gladstone, Percy (1959:153-160) Appendix D.

42. Gladstone, Percy (1953:169). Initially the strike was supported by many of the Japanese fishermen. But according to a *Vancouver Province* account of July 2, 1904, *'The cannerymen believe they can turn the people against the Indians and win them over. They are now busily working on the feelings of the Japanese by reminding them of the fact that in the strike of 1899, the Indians went back on the Japanese, left them in the lurch, and caused them to lose a week's fishing. The Japs remember the treatment they received from the Indians at the time and many of them are inclined to stand by the cannerymen and fish this season.'* Although it is unclear, it appears that in 1901 thirty-three Indian leaders ranging from Port Simpson to the Fraser River had signed a document of the Grand Lodge of BC Fishermen which proposed to exclude Japanese fishermen as well as to coordinate their demands to the cannerymen (Gladstone, P.1953:168).

43. Doyle Papers (Executive Notebook 1904-1905, unpaginated). Gladstone, Percy (1959:153).

44. Ralston, Keith (1965:96-114, 156).

45. Ralston, Keith (1965:121-123).

46. Ralston, Keith (1965:135-140, 148). The role of Japanese unions, benevolent societies, and the internal conflicts within the Japanese community has often been glossed over. For a somewhat different view see Knight and Koizumi, *A Man of Our Times*. (1976). Another view of the 1900 strike is found in Daphne Marlatt's *Steveston Recollected* (1975).

47. Ralston, Keith (1965:144, 145).

48. Ralston, Keith (1965:158).

49. Ralston, Keith (1965:169). Percy Gladstone (1959:144, 145, 155). Jamieson, Stuart (1968:142, 143). Around WW I a Native Fishermen's Association which supposedly had members from twenty-three bands was formed on the Skeena under the auspices of missionary W.H. Pierce and a Tsimshian, William Starr. One of its aims was to oppose Japanese fishermen there (Hicks, J.P. 1933:93).
50. Gladstone, Percy (1959:132, 133, 143). Gladstone (1959:180-182, 252, 253) also gives the Native Brotherhood of BC version of how the Pacific Coast Native Fishermen's Association was formed after the 1936 Rivers Inlet strike. (Also Gladstone, P. 1953:164.)

Chapter 9: Seamen, Sternwheel Crewmen, and Sealers

1. Merk, Fredrick (1931:81); Pethick, Derek (1968:65); Krause, A. (1956). Aleut hunters operating from Russian sailing ships were already engaged in sea otter and seal hunting by 1800. In 1811 the log of the Boston trading ship *New Hazard* noted at least three ships which were pursuing the seal and sea otter hunt from northern waters to California, with Aleut and Indian hunters (Reynolds, S. 1938:41, 46).
2. Dalzell, K. (1967:77); Krause, Aurel (1956: foreword). According to Large (1957:79), Duncan's ship was the *Kate*, while Usher (1974:67) says Duncan purchased the *Caroline* with funds loaned by the BC government and shares subscribed by Indian parishioners. It was manned by Indian crew but had to be sold after five years.
3. Lillard, Charles (1977:24). In 1864, the schooner *Kingfisher* had a mixed white and Indian crew when attacked on Ahousat Sound.
4. Hacking, N., Lamb, K. (1974:66); Hicks, J.P. (1933:11, 12); Sessional Papers, DIA (1876:36).
5. Dalzell, K. (1967:40, 41, 302); Thomas, Susan (1967:4); Large, R.G. (1957:91-93).
6. Codere, Helen (1950:39). Sessional Papers, DIA (1911:208) mentions an Indian owned steam tug at Valdes Island as well, and lists Indian operated charter launches at Port Simpson, Metlakatla, Bella Bella and elsewhere on the coast.
7. *Sidney BC Review* (September 9, 1976). Paul Frank, a Masset Haida, occasionally did argillite carving but had long worked on coastal steamers, first as a deckhand and then as a quartermaster, during the inter-war years (Barbeau, M. 1957:211).
8. Oberg, Kalvero (1973: xiv).
9. Sessional Papers, DIA (1919:20).
10. *Raincoast Chronicles*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1974:55-56); *The Native Voice* (January 1964, Obituary.) Also *Native Voice*, (February 1966).
11. Cited in Downs, Art, Vol.1(1967:70). Some members of the Scowlitz band on the lower Fraser were also employed on river steamboats during 1881 (Sessional Papers, DIA 1881:175).
12. *Sound Heritage*, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Vol. 5, No. 1, 'Skeena Country' (1976:15).
13. Hacking, N., Lamb, K. (1974:130). Also (1974:147, 148). There was a strike on the *Yosemite* as well. In 1891 an International Coast Seamen's and Sealers' Union claimed some 1400 members, but it is unclear whether it extended to river shipping or if any Indians were members (Philips, Paul 1967:22).
14. For a recent version of the 'Iron Horse' myth alleging Indian awe of river boats on the prairies, see Theo Barris' *Fire Canoe. Steamboat days revisited* (1978).
15. A dated but still superb history which documents the American whaling fleets—the crews and shipboard life—during the nineteenth century is Elmo Hohman's *The American Whaleman* (1928). Pay and conditions were extraordinarily poor, even for those days. The Indian whaler Queeg Queeg immortalized in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* may be patterned after those members of remnant Indian groups on the Atlantic US coast who occasionally shipped aboard whalers. Also J.T. Jenkins *A History of the Whale Fisheries* (1967:220-250).

Fairly typical were the 1858, 1859 cruises of the whaleship *Addison*, whose log provides a detailed listing of her very cosmopolitan crew. She worked the waters off the BC coast and carried out an extensive hunt with at least seventeen other whale ships on the Kodiak grounds in sight of Mt. St. Elias, but none had intention of landing (Garrer, Stanton 1966:34-46). Similarly the account in *Munger's Journal* (1967) and other whaling logs of this hunt. Norman Chance (1967) and W. Gillies Ross (1974) give accounts of two strikingly different patterns of Eskimo involvement in commercial whaling somewhat later.

16. Barbeau, M. (1954:108, 109) and Dalzell, K. (1967:44) allude to Haida on European whaleships by the 1820s. This may be so, but a certain ambiguity in usage may also be involved. The Indian sea otter and seal hunters working from European vessels were not involved in the deep sea whaling industry of that time, with its cruises of one, two and more years.

17. Peter Trower, 'BC Whaling: The White Man' in *Raincoast Chronicles, Vol. 1, No. 2* (1973:41-46); Sessional Papers, DIA (1912:276).

18. Buchanan, Lorna (1929: 29-33, 44, 45, 46).

19. The indispensable source for the Pacific pelagic sealing industry is David Jordan's *The Fur Seals and Fur Seal Islands of the North Pacific Ocean*, Vols. 1-4 (1898). The Annual Reports, DIA, from the West Coast Agency of that period are filled with a mass of reports about commercial sealing, with comments as to how it affected the home reserves.

20. Jordan, David (1898:143). The Pacific sealing fleet grew as follows: 1872, 5 ships; 1880, 16 ships; 1886, 36 ships; 1892, 122 ships; 1894, 59 ships. Limitations entered into by the American, British, and Russian governments forced the American sealing fleet into retirement and those which continued moved to Victoria. By 1894 almost all of the 59 sealing vessels operating in the North Pacific were working out of Victoria.

21. Jordan, David, (1898, Vol.3 :31, 216-218). In 1895 there were 854 Indian and 705 white sealers signed aboard the sealing fleet.

22. Lillard, Charles (1977:101, 102).

23. Jordan, David (1898, Vol. 1:226; Vol. 3:294). Also see Jordan, D. (1898, Vol. 3:287-306) for an account of one sealing cruise on the *Dora Seward*. Sessional Papers, DIA (1895:160, 161) for a brief account of the 'mutiny' of Nootka sealers on the schooner *C.D. Rand*.

24. Jordan, David (1898, Vol. 4:195-197) (1898, Vol. 1:216, 217).

25. Ford, Clellan (1968:135, 136).

26. Ford, Clellan (1968:140).

27. Barbeau, Marius (1954:100, 103, 109).

28. Sessional Papers, DIA, (1895: xvii; 1902: 265,280-281; 1911: 254) Also Snow, H.J. (1910:51)

29. Sessional Papers, DIA (1886:98).

30. Sessional Papers, DIA (1900:280) (Sessional Papers, DIA 1911:268). Also Sessional Papers, DIA (1895:160, 161).

Chapter 10: Logging, Sawmilling, and Longshoring

1. Codere, Helen (1950:47). Writing on February 6, 1856, Edward Stuart, the HBC factor at Nanaimo said, *'The Nanaimo Indians bring us large quantities of saw logs—none less than fifteen inches in diameter at the small end and fifteen feet long, at the tariff of eight for a blanket delivered at high water mark where required. If an occasional one arrives under that size it is bought by us at the tariff of sixteen for a blanket.'* Cited in McKelvie, B.A. (1944: 182).

2. Although they do not discuss Indian workers, two studies which provide an outline of the developing lumber industry in BC are L.B. Dixon, *The Birth of the Lumber Industry in British Columbia* (1958) and Joseph C. Lawrence, *Markets and Capital, a history of the lumber industry of British Columbia* (1957). The initial Annual Reports (1875 and on)

made by Indian Agents in BC mention the importance of sawmill work for Indian bands in the Fraser delta, Burrard, and Cowichan areas.

3. Hicks, J.P. (1933:15). As a newly converted Indian missionary, W.H. Pierce says, '*All hands were paid every Saturday and as the saloons were open to the Indians without any restrictions, they spent most of their money at those places, with the result that there was drunkenness and fighting all day Sunday, and when Monday morning came nobody was in a fit state to begin work.*' Pierce launched a temperance and revival campaign among the Indian workers there, with a variable degree of success. In true Horatio Alger style, '*The manager was well pleased with the results at the mill. The owner himself was moved, and told the manager to give me a promotion.*' (Hicks, J.P. 1933:15, 16)

4. Sessional Papers, DIA (1879:72). Philpott, Stuart (1963:41).

5. Matthews, J.S.(1955:14, 20, 253). Also, Matthews, J.S. (1942, *Hastings Sawmill Ledger Book*, Calvert Simpson interview). During the 1890s the Sessional Papers of the DIA list the Squamish group living near the mill as the 'Hastings Sawmill Band.'

6. Matthews, J.S. (1955:55). To my knowledge, there exists no historical study of Indian people in urban areas in BC. It is probably an older and more extensive phenomenon than is usually realized.

7. Ford, Clellan (1968:134).

8. CBC Radio Documentary, 'Between Ourselves', J.J. McColl (July 16, 1975).

9. Healey, Elizabeth (1958:25) gives the date of the Alert Bay sawmill as 1887. Large, R.G. (1957:82-83). Cedarvale, on the Skeena, had its own sawmill by 1890. For the discussion between the Metlakatla mill engineer and the visiting government commissioners see (British Columbia Royal Commission 1888:456-457).

10. Hicks, J.P. (1933:70,71).

11. Gilbert M. Sproat had planned to enter the British Indian Civil Service but instead became an agent of a company with financial interests in BC. He arrived in BC in 1860 charged with overseeing the establishment of a sawmill at the head of Alberni Inlet, where the Anderson company had acquired extensive timber rights. Sproat found that the best site for the intended sawmill was the local of a Nootka village. He demanded that the Nootka relocate, and when they refused to do so Sproat threatened to bombard the village by way of persuasion. The Nootka left. Later, Sproat found it difficult to recruit local Nootka to work in his sawmill operations, although possibly this had more to do with the miserable wages he offered. He duly recorded all this in his *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life* (1868). Sproat's venture in sawmilling at Alberni failed and after some perignations he returned to England as Agent-General for British Columbia, only to return some nine years later, in 1876, to take up a chair on the BC-Dominion Joint Commission on Indian Lands. He resigned that commission in 1880 but lived on in Victoria until shortly before W.W.I. (Richard, I.M. 1937).

12. Sessional Papers, DIA (1875:55, 56). For what it is worth, consider Lenihan's tentative 'survey' of the *estimated* cash income of Indians in the Fraser Superintendency, mainly the lower Fraser Valley, in 1878: fishing and cannery work, \$65,862; lumbering, sawmilling, longshoring, \$38,000; furs, \$25,000; farm labour, \$15,000; farm produce and country products, \$10,300 (Sessional Papers, DIA 1879:72).

13. Codere, H. (1950:10, 39); Saywell, John (1967:20); Sessional Papers, DIA (1884:98).

14. Sessional Papers, DIA (1895:165); Codere, H. (1950:38).

15. Sessional Papers, DIA (1901:268; 1902:257); Dalzell, Kathleen (1967:215-218). Also see J.C. Lawrence (1957:77-100) for a sketch of the international capital behind such developments. One lumber firm held rights to fifty-five square miles of prime timber on the Queen Charlottes by 1906.

16. Codere, H. (1950:35, 38, 39).

17. Codere, H. (1950:39); Sessional Papers, DIA (1912:277; 1913:224 229).

18. Brazil Kier remembered one of the last of the log drives on the Cowichan river recalling that '*. . . we make camp at the Ripps in a log cabin that were built for that purpose, the*

crew were about half Indians and in the bunk house at night, when all the garments were hung up to dry, there was so much steam you could hardly see the light.' (Saywell, John.1967:25).

19. Bands with members employed in logging or sawmilling were as follows: Glen Vowell, Kispiox, Andimaul, Kitsegukla, Kitkatla, Hartley Bay, Kitasoo, Kitimat, Kitlope, Skidegate, Masset, Bella Bella, Bella Coola, Oowekeeno (Rivers Inlet); some Songhees, three Cowichan bands, Lyacksum, and Nootka in the Alberni region; many Kwakiutl bands, including the Nimpkish, Tswataineuk (Kingcome Inlet), Tanaakteuk (Knight Inlet), Mamalillikulla, Wawlitsum, Cape Mudge and others. There were also people engaged in logging and sawmilling from Aiyansh Gwinaha, Lahkalsap, Port Simpson, Port Essington and Kitsumkalum. Many of the men of the six Squamish reserves around Burrard Inlet were lumber workers. There were sawmill workers and loggers among the Chehalis and Scowlitz, Coquitlam, from the Homalco (Bute Inlet) and Klahoose bands, from Musqueam, Sechelt, and Sliammon. In the interior, loggers came from reserves in the vicinity of Chase and from bands around Adams Lake. Indian woods workers in the Kootenays were from Tobacco Plains, St. Mary's, and Lower Kootenay reserves. Some men from Okanagan, Nicola, and the Alkali reserves worked in local logging operations. This listing does not include the more marginal shingle bolt and pole cutting enterprises once so common. (Compiled from Sessional Papers, DIA, Reports on Indian bands in BC, 1911.)

20. Sessional Papers, DIA (1912:277; 1911:218). One of the haunts of Queen Charlotte Island loggers of the time was Port Clements. 'In 1918, Port Clements was a bawdy, free living town with brothels, bootleggers and sawmill gangs supplemented by 800 loggers from the fourteen logging camps operating in the inlet.' (Dalzell, K. 1967:217)

21. Sessional Papers, DIA (1900:262, 263; 1911:211, 212); Lawrence, J.C. (1957:Chapter 2).

22. *The Native Voice* (October 1947); *First Citizen*, Vol.1, No. 1 (1970).

23. Spradley, James (1972:50, 55). James Sewid also worked as a 'woods boss' for an Indian owned logging company on the Nimpkish River (Spradley, J. 1972:123, 127). This was presumably the Cheslalkee Logging Co. started by Dan Hanuse's father, a Kwakiutl logger and store owner on Village Island, some time after WW 1. The logging operation became a regional success story. (Healey, E. 1958:70)

24. Spradley, James (1972:108,109).

25. Pennier, H. and MacDonald, H. (1972:58).

26. Pennier, H. and MacDonald, H. (1972:90, 40).

27. Olsen W.H. (1963:58); *Vancouver Sun* (July 16, 1971, Obituary); *The Native Voice* (August 1971, Obituary).

28. H.R. Macmillan, 'Reminiscences' in Olsen, W.H. (1963).

29. Indian longshoremen from the Burrard Inlet area occasionally travelled to Port Alberni and Englewood on central Vancouver Island ,sometimes with Chemainus longshoremen, to load lumber ships in those sawmill ports.

30. E.P. Patterson (1962:33) (1972:169); Philpott, S. (1963).

31. *Man Along the Shore* (1975) is basically a collection of oral accounts by men who worked on the Burrard Inlet docks from 1900 on. Accounts of work and life alluded are woven throughout many of the accounts there.

32. International Longshoremen and Warehousemen Union, Local 500 (1975:15, 16).

33. International Longshoremen and Warehousemen Union, Local 500 (1975:55, 56).

34. International Longshoremen and Warehousemen Union, Local 500 (1975:55).

35. Philpott, S. (1963:43, 44).

36. International Longshoremen and Warehousemen Union, Local 500 (1975:27, 29, 33).

37. Philpott, S. (1963:44).

38. International Longshoremen and Warehousemen Union, Local 500 (1975:80).

39. Carter, Anthony (1972:12).

40. Philpott, S. (1963:46).

41. In 1942 Tim Moody, then President of the NVLA, and Joe Jerome, a Tsimshian who who worked on the North Shore docks, threw their support behind the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen Union of Harry Bridges, and that year helped merge the various longshore associations as Local 501, the first ILWU local in Canada. (Philpott, S. 1963:47). Philpott also outlines the involvement of Burrard Squamish men in other unions after WW 2(1963:60-75).

Chapter 11: Mining and Railway Work

1. Rickard, T.A. (1938:9); Dalzell, K. (1967:60, 61).
2. James Douglas Correspondence, April 6,1858 (cited in Rickard, T.A. 1938:11).
3. Correspondence of Matthew Begbie, April 12,1859, from his tour through the gold regions (cited in Bescoby,1. 1933).
4. Cited in Rickard, T.A. (1938:13).
5. The *Cariboo Sentinel* of January 16, 1869 'describes' the Indian shacktown near Barkerville in its vituperative prose.
6. Sessional Papers, DIA (1876:36).
7. From 1880 to 1912 the Annual Reports DIA (Sessional Papers) recurrently mention placer mining among some one to two dozen bands in the Bridge River-Lillooet region, on the Fraser from Yale to Lytton, on the Thompson from Lytton to Spences Bridge.
8. Sessional Papers, DIA (1884:112) (1902:265).
9. Graham, Clara (1963:104-105).
10. Sessional Papers, DIA (1900:273).
11. Julie Cruikshank and Jim Robb (1975:13-19) provide accounts and photos of Indian people in the Yukon and northern BC involved in various phases of prospecting and mining and allied industries during and after the Yukon gold rush.
12. The Western Federation of Miners both incorporated Navaho miners as members during the Telluride (Colorado) strike of 1906, and opposed Navaho strikebreakers at the Durango mines in 1903-1904. Philip Foner, Vol. 3 (1964:403); Haywood, William (1929:136).
13. Cited in Martin Robin (1968:46). Also see Cherwinski, W.J.C. (1965).
14. See Foner, Phillip (Vol. 4 1964: 474) and Haywood, William (1929:301). The poem is from the *Collected Works of Carl Sandburg*, (1970: 472,473)
15. Codere, H. (1950:22, 23).
16. Gough,Barry (1971:102); Lamb, K. (1938:178); Kemble, John (1938:124).
17. For the 'Nanaimo Coal Tyee' myth, take your pick of older BC grade school history books. For Nanaimo Indians delivering coal to Victoria for sale by April 1850, see McKelvie, B.A.(1944:171)
18. McKelvie, B.A. (1957:74, 177, 178, 186). Also McKelvie, B.A. (1944).
19. None of the major accounts of the Vancouver Island coal mines deal with Indian workers. Some are well worth reading in their own right: Allan Wargo, *The Great Coal Strike: the Vancouver Island coal miners ' strike, 1912-1914*, MS, University of BC (1962); Alan Orr, *The Western Federation of Miners and the Royal Commission on Industrial Disputes in 1903*, MS, University of BC (1968).
20. Norman Bartlett, *The Wellington Miners Strike of 1877*, MS, University of BC (1975); Maurice Chenier, 'Bitter Era Began in Coal Mines,*Vancouver Sun* (July 29, 1971).
21. Griffin, H. (1958:9, 52).
22. See Sessional Papers, DIA 1888 to 1913 for Cowichan Agency; Nanaimo. Also Codere, H. (1950:32).
23. Phillips, Paul (1967:20, 22, 44).
24. Griffin, H. (1958:52).
25. Morley, Allan (1967:91-102).
26. Sessional Papers, DIA (1885:80, 88-90).

27. Sessional Papers, DIA (1885:90-91). During the years of CPR construction members of the Kamloops, Spahamin and other bands around the Shuswap Lakes were employed on railway work.
28. *The Wesleyan* (June 27, 1883); Sessional Papers, DIA (1885:79).
29. Sessional Papers, DIA (1899:258; 1900:256-258; 1902:235).
30. Sessional Papers, DIA (1911:266). Also (1911:223, 227).
31. Sessional Papers, DIA (1912:391).
32. The conditions and the strike on the CNR-GTP construction is discussed in Jack Scott, *Proletariat and Plunderbund* (1975:82-145). A reminiscence of railway construction work on the upper Fraser during 1912-1914 is Arnt Arntzen's account in *Stump Ranch Chronicles* (Knight, R. 1977:21-28).
33. Numbers of Indian fishermen from the Skeena took jobs in the railway construction during those years. Their labour in the fisheries was partly offset with the recruitment of additional Japanese fishermen. (Ross, W. 1967:69; Large, R.G. 1957). See Sessional Papers, DIA 1910-1913 for the Northwest Coast and Stuart Lake Agencies. Also Sessional Papers, DIA (1911:195).
34. Sessional Papers, DIA (1913:264, 265). Members of some bands in the Bulkley Valley, Stuart and Babine Lakes regions continued to be primarily involved in commercial trapping even during the height of the construction boom. However, commercial trapping was feeling the effects of conservation laws by November 1912. An unintentionally sardonic comment by the regional Indian Agent noted that, '*The Indians in the southern part of this (Stuart Lake) agency appeared to feel a hardship by the extension of the Provincial Game Laws in restricting the trapping of beaver, yet the agent materially assisted many of them by getting contracts from the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway to clear parts of the right of way.*' (:Sessional Papers, DIA 1913:281)

Chapter 12: Packing and Casual Labour

1. Charter services using gas launches and work boats were operated by Indian men at Port Simpson, Bella Bella, and Alert Bay by the turn of the century. Henry Edenshaw at Masset was operating his freight schooner in 1911.
2. Sessional Papers, DIA (1895:165). Also Large, R.G. (1957:26, 30) and *Sound Heritage, Skeena County* (1976:11-14).
3. Sessional Papers, DIA (1899:281;1900:292).
4. Large, R.G. (1957:31, 45); Peck, Don (1973); *The Native Voice* (January 1964).
5. Mitchell, Sam (1977:45). Also see Charlie Mack's account of Indian freighting on the Lillooet-Seton Lake route during the early 1860s (*Sound Heritage, Vol. 6, Lillooet Stories*, 1977:49, 50).
6. Rohner, Ronald (1969:100); Sessional Papers, DIA (1876:36). Chapter 9 on railway work contains references to Indian packers and teamsters during the 1880s.
7. Sessional Papers, DIA (1902:277). Also from personal notes taken at Shalalth, 1972. In 1899-1900, the following bands of the Cariboo-Thompson region were engaged in commercial packing and freighting: Ashcroft band, Bonaparte, Nicaomin and Shhahanih, Naaik, Chuchuwayha, Seton Lake Mission, Lillooet, Bridge River, and Soda Creek bands (Sessional Papers, DIA 1900:258-273).
8. Large, R.G. (1957:50); Sessional Papers, DIA (1911:255). By 1901-1902 Hazelton was a booming supply center for the region, with Indian people working in a variety of transport, warehousing, and related employment. In 1910 members from the following bands in the Bulkley-Skeena region were employed in horse packing or freighting: Getanmax, Rocher Deboule, Moricetown, Fort Babine, Stella, Stuart Lake, Fraser Lake (Sessional Papers, DIA 1911).
9. Sessional Papers, DIA (1900:259, 260).
10. Sessional Papers, DIA (1895:265; 1902:243).

11. Sessional Papers, DIA(1886:81) (1911:223-225); Sparrow, Leona (1976); Pennier, H. and MacDonald, H. (1972:35).
12. Sessional Papers, DIA (1911:212, 238-241, 244; 1916:90). Duff, Wilson (1964:80).
13. Marriott, H. (1966:8, 29, 74); Sessional Papers, DIA (1912:276, 277).
14. Sperry Cline (1973:41-44) relates the shabby way in which a 'much liked' Indian woman who cooked in a hotel worker was treated in pioneer Aldermere of circa 1911 .
15. Morton, James, *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains* (1975:17); Sessional Papers, DIA (1912:263). Sessional Papers, DIA(1913:251; 1911:266).
16. Henry Doyle Papers, (Notebook 1902, unpaginated; Notebook 1910-1911:60. On Clutesi see *Winnipeg Free Press* (April 23, 1974).
17. See Sessional Papers, DIA (1911:194-278).
18. For a brief account of placer mining as an emergency job done by an immigrant white couple in the Bridge River area during the 1930s see Rolf Knight, *A Very Ordinary Life* (1974:150-152).

Chapter 13: Beyond the Eastern Mountains

1. Rogers, E. and Tobobondung, F. (1975:268).
2. Rogers, E. and Tobobondung, F. (1975:271).
3. Hamori-Torok, Charles (1966:50).
4. Hamori-Torok, Charles (1966:51,52, 65); Sessional Papers, DIA (1886). *Indians of Ontario*, DIAND (1966:30).
5. The Six Nations reserve (originally called the Haldimand Grant) was provided by the British Crown to Loyalist Iroquois formerly under the leadership of Joseph Brant. Apparently, he did not actually live on that reserve himself. It was not originally bound by the regulations effecting later Indian reserves.
6. Sessional Papers, DIA (1919:17-18); Johnston, Charles (1964:229, 230).
7. Johnston, Charles(1964:292).
8. Johnston, Charles (1964:305-307). The circa 415 households tilled 6908 acres of improved land, lived in log houses, but had a limited amount of larger livestock. Distribution of farm land per family, Six Nations, 1843: no farm acreage, 50 families; 5 or less acres, 96 families; 5-10 acres, 85 families; 10-20 acres, 67 families; 20-50 acres, 68 families; 50-100 acres, 28 families; 100-150 acres, 9 families; 150-200 acres, 1 family.
9. Johnston, Charles (1964:308).
10. Johnston, Charles (1964:308).
11. By the 1850s Mohawk Institute had produced a number of Indian teacher-preachers and had evolved into the first of the Indian industrial schools, focused upon instruction in agriculture, mechanics, and cottage industries. By the 1870s it was attracting some Indian students from outside the region and had 60-90 students. See Sessional Papers, DIA (1877, Introduction:10, 11). Also, *Indians of Ontario*, DIAND (1966). Sessional Papers, DIA (1884).
12. The Sixteenth Annual Six Nations Agricultural Fair was held in 1884 (Sessional Papers, DIA 1884:1, 2). There were seven Indian school teachers on the six reserve schools, excluding the Mohawk Institute (*Indians of Ontario*, DIAND 1966:30, 31). Local administrators, businessmen, teachers, preachers, commercial farmers, and entrepreneurs had arisen from the Six Nations reserve. Although dealing exclusively with the US situation between 1870-1914, Hertzberg's *The Search for American Identity* is a fascinating account of the first generations of the Indian middle class there.
13. Sessional Papers, DIA (1901:35).
14. Sessional Papers, DIA(1901:23, 36), (1919:13-18); *Indians of Ontario*, DIAND, 1966: 32,33).
15. See Weaver, Sally (1966).
16. Christie, Laird (1976:101, 117).

17. These developments came to fruition after the mid 1870s. See Chapter 5 in Christie (1976).
18. Christie, Laird (1976:141,166).
19. Christie, Laird (1976:151-154).
20. Christie, Laird (1976:153).
21. Christie, Laird (1976:145, 160, 165-176).
22. Christie, Laird (1976:3).
23. De Mille, Mary (1971:247).
24. De Mille, Mary (1971:165-170).
25. De Mille, Mary (1971:200, 243).
26. De Mille, Mary (1971:221-223, 246). Also Sessional Papers, DIA 1900 reports for Cape Croker: 'A number of men work in mills, loading vessels, and rafting in the summer, fishing in the fall, and in lumber camps in the winter...'
27. De Mille, Mary (1971:125-128).
28. De Mille, Mary (1971:221-226).
29. The Chippewa of Christian Island were settled there in the 1860s and had developed a mix of fishing, hunting, and subsistence agriculture by 1880. There were work animals, milk cows, orchards, gardens and a herd of fifty Angus beef cattle before 1900. However, wage work in mainland lumber camps in the winter and stevedoring lumber in sawmills in summer, as well as rafting logs, was said to be the main source of income after 1900 (Sessional Papers, DIA 1904, 1906). In 1910 some twenty families had teams of heavy work horses which were used to haul out logs from the timber operations then proceeding on reserve land. A band-owned steam threshing machine, acquired in 1890, was seeing little use by 1912 and one Indian Agent claimed he saw the evidence of progressive abandonment of local farm plots over the previous twenty-five years (Sessional Papers, DIA 1912). He noted that it was primarily the older men who farmed, while most of the younger men engaged in lumbering (Sessional Papers, DIA 1913). Regional logging declined during WW I. The last timber leases on the reserve were let in 1925, and were worked out by the beginning of the 1930s.
30. Rogers, E. and Tobobondung, F. (1975:307; 286-341).
31. Rogers, E. and Tobobondung, F. (1975:303-305; 336-340; 292). Diamond Jenness' (1935) study was interested in retrieving what remained in memory of 'traditional' Ojibwa culture. In such accounts there is little mention of the history of changes during 200 years of contact and indeed almost no discussion of work and life current during the period of study.
32. Rogers, E. and Tobobondung, F. (1975:293-303).
33. Rogers, E. and Tobobondung, F. (1975:346).
34. Dunning, R.W. (1974, unpaginated). In a similar vein for reserves on Manitoulin Island see Dunning, R.W. (1964).
35. Morris, Alexander (1880:59, 69, 70,75).
36. Sessional Papers, DIA (1884:7).
37. Bradwin, Edwin (1928:103,104).
38. Sessional Papers, DIA (1900) See Northwest Ontario Agency; entries under Fort William, Red Rock, Pays Plot, Pic, and Long Lac bands.
39. Sessional Papers, DIA (1901:45).
40. Sessional Papers, DIA (1897:1-47). These include members of the reserves at Beausoleil Saugeen, Garden River, Michipicoten, Pays Plot, Thessalon, Spanish River, Whitefish Lake, Mississauga River, Whitefish River, Serpent River, Tahgawimi, Point Grondin, Cockburn, Sucker Creek, South Bay, Obigdeway, Parry Island, Dokis, Lake Temagami, Watha, Mud Lake, Rice Lake. Probably elsewhere in the regions which the lumber industry had reached.
41. See Sessional Papers, DIA (1910). See entries for the Whitefish Lake, Fort William, Nipigon, Pic River, Long Lac, Nipissing and Dokis, Chapleau and Mattagami band.

(Sessional Papers, DIA.1915) The Superintendent of the Northwest Ontario Agency reported, '*Some Indians work as deckhands and sailors for the navigation companies of the Great Lakes while others enjoy employment on the railways. In the lumbering districts during the winter and spring, many Indians find employment available. They work in the associated sawmills in the summer.*' Sessional Papers, DIA (1920) One must take such sanguine accounts with a spoon of salt; but they suggest a greater involvement in wage labour than was usually recognized for native people in that region.

42. Field Notes, Wunnummin Lake (Big Trout Lake band), 1962, deposited University of British Columbia.

43. Among the many excellent studies of trapping groups in this region are R.W. Dunning's *Social and Economic Change Among the Northern Ojibwa* (1959) and Edward Rogers' *The Round Lake Ojibwa* (1962).

44. (Sessional Papers, DIA 1884:8, 9) For Nippissing, see Sessional Papers, DIA (1883, 1900, 1910).

45. Mortimore, Richard (1974:61-68).

46. Mortimore, Richard (1974:15-17, 31-34, 93).

47. For the role of Caughnawaga and other Iroquois as 'company servants' of the North West Co. and the HBC, as well as free traders, in Western Canada see Merk, F. (1968); Geographic Board, Canada (1913:82), also Frisch, J. (1975). From the Indian Agent's reports of Caughnawaga during the late 1870s and 1880s, it appears that internal conflict over reserve land had arisen, resulting in barn burning, destruction of crops and at least one death. Agriculture apparently declined during this period (Sessional Papers, DIA 1878:29). However, '*Some of the well-to-do Indians place their children in colleges and convents...*' (Sessional Papers, DIA 1882:14)

48. Local men also worked in three quarries on the reserve during the 1870s (Sessional Papers, DIA 1877:11). Writing of Caughnawaga in 1880, '*A greater number of Indians left for the (lumber) shanties this spring than usual, owing to the higher wages, and many are staying there for the winter.*' (Sessional Papers, DIA 1880:12) Comparable comments are found in Sessional Papers, DIA (1875-1910).

49. Devine, E. (1937). *Indians of Quebec and the Maritimes*, DIAND (1967:19, 20) gives the date of the lacrosse expedition as 1882. Mitchell, Joseph (1959:13, 35).

50. Jackson, Louis (1885). Also, Stacey, C.P. (1959).

51. Mitchell, Joseph (1959:13-18).

52. Sessional Papers, DIA (1900:47).

53. Mitchell, Joseph (1959:20-23). Orvis Diablo, a retired Caughnawaga steel worker born around the turn of this century, said: '*I enjoy New York,*' he says. '*The people are as high strung as rats and the air is too gritty, but I enjoy it...I sent away for a dollar's worth of Little Blue Books,*' Mr. Diablo says, '*and they opened my eyes to what an ignorant man I was. Ignorant and superstitious. Didn't know beans from back up. Since then, I've become a great reader. I've read dozens upon dozens of Little Blue Books... When you come right down to it, I'm an educated man.*' He says his favorite five books are *Absurdities of the Bible* by Clarence Darrow, *Seven Infidel US Presidents* by Joseph McCabe, *Queer Facts About Lost Civilizations*, *Charles Finger, Why I Do Not Fear Death*, *Julius-Haldeman*, and *Is Our Civilization Oversexed* by Theodore Dreiser.' (Mitchell, Joseph 1959:28, 29)

An intriguing bit of lost social history is suggested by the photograph from the Jacob Riis collection titled 'Mountain Eagle, an Iroquois and his family.' Taken in the 1890s, it is a portrait of a young man, seated with a fiddle, while other members of his family work around a kitchen table doing embroidery or beaded Indian motifs - in a seemingly well-kept New York tenement. (Philip Foner and Reinhard Schultz, *The Other America* (1985: 118) Journeyman Press, London.

54. Sessional Papers, DIA (1897:47-64).

55. Gilpin, Bernard (1974:118). However, a chief of the St. Francis Xavier reserve, one James Meuse, had travelled to England in the mid nineteenth century and had managed to

convince a countess to endow a church and manse on the settlement. Also, Howe, Joseph (1974:91-96).

56. Sessional Papers, DIA (1897:1-64; 1901:51). See Bock, Philip (1966).

57. Wilson, Wallis, *Historical Background of the Micmac Indians of Canada*, National Museum of Canada Bulletin 173 (1959). Also in McGee, H.F. (1974:139, 140), and Hutton, Elizabeth (1974:70, 71).

58. McFeat, Tom, 'Two Malecite Family Industries,' in McGee (1974:167, 172, 173).

59. Bock, Philip (1966:15, 18, 19).

60. Bock, Philip (1966:16).

61. Bock, Philip (1966:19, 20).

62. Bock, Philip (1966:22).

63. Bock, Philip (1966:23). Shortly after the turn of the century, a local woman named Mary Isaac had acquired a teaching diploma and taught in the Restigouche school in English, French, and Micmac (Sessional Papers, DIA 1901:51).

64. On the effects of the 1930s depression on Restigouche see Bock, Philip (1966:25).

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65. However uniquely Canadian that Metis way of life was, it might be compared to that of the Gauchos of the Argentine Pampas - before they became folkloric figures in the couplets of *Martin Fierro*. Instead of hunting bison they were commercial hunters of the vast herds of wild cattle. Rather than making pemmican, the Gauchos only stripped off the hides of the animals, which were transported on creaking Argentine versions of 'Red River' carts to the sea ports, destined for the shoe and leather industries of Europe. During the latter half of the nineteenth century they became impoverished cowboys and ranch hands on the spreading cattle estancias. In Argentina, homestead-sized farms made few inroads and European immigrants mainly became workers in the larger cities, allowing the 'authentic' Argentine rentiers to expatiate about 'their' freedom-loving ancestors, the Gauchos!

No one in Canada yet has attempted the passionately sardonic recreation of history to be found in Eduardo Galeano's *Memory of Fire* (1987), Vol. 2. *Faces and Masks*, Vol.3. *Century of the Wind*..

66. Wemyss Simpson, in Morris, Alexander, *The Treaties of Canada With the Indians* (1880:41-43). Also Morris, Alexander (1880:279). For a broader context see Howard Adams' *Prison of Grass* (1975) and E.P. Patterson's *The Canadian Indian. A history since 1500* (1972:123-142)

67. The typical size of these subsistence 'farms' about five acres per family, not including unimproved pasture lands. A rough guesstimate from the DIA figures suggests a typical mix of potato and vegetable garden, .5 to 1 acre; grains, 1.5 to 5 acres; fodder and oats, 1 to 3 acres. (Sessional Papers, DIA 1895, Part 1:412-479).

68. Sessional Papers, DIA (1911, Part 11:126, 127). The figures given involve estimates of crop yields. I have no idea of how reliable DIA figures on *actual* farm production were.

69. A guesstimate would place the *average* size of farm plots on Indian farming reserves in 1910 at about ten acres per family (plus pasture land). Although there were some commercial sized Indian farms and ranches. Well over a half of the Indian farm produce came from reserves in the agricultural region of Saskatchewan (Sessional Papers, DIA 1911, Part 11:126, 127).

70. The land-poor reserves of Oak River and Birdtail, in southwestern Manitoba, operated steam threshing outfits they had purchased on their own in 1902 and 1903. They used these to harvest their own farms and hired out to surrounding white farmers. (see Sessional Papers, DIA 1902, 1903, 1907).

According to an unconfirmed piece of oral history, a former IWW organizer of Indian ancestry using the nom de guerre of 'Montana Blackie' worked the wheat harvest in the Dakotas and southern prairies during the late 1920s. Florian Stephan, on his first job off a

south Saskatchewan farm, worked with him on a migratory threshing gang weaving across the borders in 1927 or 1928.

71. Stan Cuthand, who grew up on the Cree Little Pine band in northern Saskatchewan, provides a qualitative estimate of the rations issued to the aged and needy on prairie reserves during the 1920s and 1930s. *The old people received their monthly rations from Indian Affairs - one scoop or two pounds of tea; four pounds of rolled oats, four pounds of salt, one bar of soap, four pounds of rice, one slab of bacon or meat, four pounds of beans, two boxes of matches, twenty pounds of flour, one can of baking powder, and two pounds of lard or tallow. This diet was supplemented by rabbits, ducks and prairie chickens. They were not too badly off, although at times the old people ran out of tobacco* .(Cuthand, S.1978: 38)

72. McEwan, Grant (1971:241-244).

73. McEwan, Grant (1971:234-240).

74. McEwan, Grant (1971:247, 248).

75. McEwan, Grant (1971:220-231).

76. A brief sketch of James Gladstone's children may convey something of the variety within this sector of the Indian population. As of 1960, "*The eldest operates a vegetable farm with her husband on an Indian reserve in the Okanagan Valley, BC. The next is a graduated nurse and was for many years at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria. In 1937, she was one of two girls chosen to represent the Indians of Canada at the coronation of King George VI in London, England. She now lives in Kitimat, BC. The next daughter also took nurses' training and worked in New Zealand and now lives in San Francisco. The youngest daughter was the first trained stenographer from the Blood Reserve and was employed for several years by the Indian Affairs Branch. She now lives in Calgary. The two sons, Fred and Horace, also have had successful careers. Fred is primarily a rancher, but also gained national prominence in the rodeo field and was formerly calf roping champion of Canada. Horace is employed by the government as assistant Indian superintendent at the isolated post of Hay Lakes in the northwest corner of Alberta.*" (*The Native Voice*, January 1960) Also *Vancouver Province* (September 7, 1971, Obituary).

77. 'Northern Canada' here means mainly those boreal lands of the Arctic and Hudson Bay drainage systems. It is impossible to select leading' works from the body of outstanding material available for northern Indian trapping groups. A good survey is Helm, J. and Leacock, E. (1971). Also, *The Contact History of the Subarctic Athapaskans: an overview* (1975), June Helm *et al.* *The Handbook of North American Indians. Subarctic, Vol. 6*, (June Helm ed. 1981) provides an encyclopaedic overview of groups both in the eastern and western subarctic.

78. As a general overview, I am still inclined to suggest Harold Innis' *The Fur Trade in Canada* (1962 orig. 1930). Charles Bishop's *The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade* (1974) is a more recent revisionist view which deals with the ethnohistory of one region of Indian trappers.

79. Anderson, J.W. (1961:46, 47).

80. Knight, Rolf, *Changing Social and Economic Organization of the Rupert House Cree*, MA Thesis, University of BC (1962:38-40).

81. For Moose Factory see Sessional Papers, DIA (1910, 1911). Also, Anderson, J.W. (1961:17-26) .

82. Knight, Rolf (1968:19-30). Unpublished kinship charts collected at Rupert House and Nemiscau in 1961-62 show individuals and families once from those two posts who emigrated to other reserves, resource towns, and other settlements throughout northeastern Canada over the previous three generations. In fact, Rupert House parish records indicate an ongoing outmigration from that post from 1900 on .

83. Slobodin, Richard (1966:78, 79).

84. One of the more 'bush oriented' Metis men was born at Fort Smith in 1894. His summarized work history reads as follows: '...Trapped, 1909-1917. Laborer for Hudson's Bay Company, Ft. Chipewyan, 1910-12. Special Constable, RCMP, Ft. Fitzgerald, 1917-18. Contract dogteam driver for mail, Ft. Smith-MacMurray, 1918-19. Special Constable, RCMP, 1919-20. Scow pilot through Fitzgerald-Smith rapids, Slave River, 1920, 1922. Interpreter and clerk, Hamden and Alley traders, Ft. Chipewyan, c. 1923-33. Mine labourer, Goldfields, Alta., 1933-39. Driller's helper, Athabasca tar sand, 1939-42. Labourer, US Army, MacMurray, 1942-46. Driller's helper, Athabasca tar sands, 1946-48. Carpenter in construction of government agencies, Ft. Smith, 1950-196. Camp cook for anthrax control crew, Wood Buffalo Park, 1963. Trapped winters at various locations between Lake Athabasca and Great Slave Lake almost every winter since 1950,' (Slobodin, Richard 1966:78)

85. Slobodin, Richard (1966:82, 83). See also Helm, Alliband, Birk *et al* (1975:324-327).

86. Slobodin, Richard (1962:32) Slobodin knew the Kutchin from the time he was a teenager among them in the 1930s. Although he never became a prominent figure in Canadian anthropology, he had an ability to convey the subtle realities of life among northern peoples as almost no other. For a brief account of the rounds of a Kutchin hunting and trapping party one could no better than read his journal of those who participated in a winter hunt he joined during early 1947. (Slobodin, R. 1969)

87. Slobodin, Richard (1962:33).

88. An evocative popular history of native people of the Yukon between the late 1890s and about 1940 is Julie Cruikshank and Jim Robb (1975) *Their Own Yukon*.

Chapter 15: Epilogue as Prologue

1. My discussion of Indian people and labour since 1930 is mainly suggestive and awaits future study. Belshaw, Hawthorn and Jamieson (1960) provide an overview of the economic and social situation as of the mid 1950s. They provide some quantitative data on employment and income but some of their findings seem difficult to square with previous developments -for instance the vitality of Indian farms and ranches reported by them for 1954.

2. Sessional Papers, DIA (1936, Summary Accounts).

3. These comments came from Isaac Beardy, of Wunnihinin Lake, Ontario, in the summer of 1962. He referred particularly to the 'jungle camps' around Sioux Lookout during the 1930s.

4. Patterson, E.P. (1962,1972: 171-174).

5. Philip Drucker's (1958) account, while useful as a starting point, smacks of the official version of the Native Brotherhood of BC. Comparable views of the PCNFA are woven through Percy Gladstone (1953, 1959). The real history is undoubtedly more complex and interesting.

6. Patterson, E.P. (1972:172) indignantly notes that the 'white unions refused to release their Indian members to the Pacific Coast Native Fishermen's Association.' *In fact* the so-called 'white union' was a fisherman's union which tried to organize *all* those working in the industry. Some extraordinary arguments arose in competing attempts to enroll Indian fishermen. At one point, in 1939, a representative of the PCNFA threatened legal action unless a non-sectarian fishermen's union transferred their Indian members to the PCNFA. According to the PCNFA spokesman, Indians were wards of the crown and did not have the legal right to enroll in unions or sign contracts unless approved by the Department of Indian Affairs. Apparently nothing came of this threat. The official letter to the Secretary to the Salmon Purse Seiners Union is dated July 5, 1939 (United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union Papers, MSS 285/Box 136, U.BC Special Collections).

7. United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union Papers, (MSS 285/Box 135, U.BC, Special Collections)

8. Philpott (1963), Gladstone (1959), Belshaw, Hawthorn and Jamieson (1960).

9. LaViolette, F. (1961), Gladstone (1953:161, 173). On the matter of Japanese-Canadian exclusion (UFAWU Papers, Boxes 135 and 136, U.BC, Special Collections). Geoff Meggs (1991:159) reports the number of confiscated Japanese-Canadian fishing boats acquired by canneries as 660 vessels out of the total of 887 auctioned off.
10. The authors of *The Indians of British Columbia* (1960) summarize this view thusly, *'The long-term interests and security of Indian fishermen on the Coast would be better protected, it has been argued, if the Native Brotherhood would pursue an independent policy and not be bound by the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union's strike decisions. The main canning companies might have a definite interest in helping the Native Brotherhood become an independent unaffiliated organization to counterbalance the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union. Correspondingly, they might have a long-run interest in maintaining Indians in the industry by helping them, enough of the more efficient ones at least, to buy better boats and equipment to put them on a more even competitive basis with the Whites. The operators are faced with periodic costly demands, and strikes, from a militant and frequently intransigent union. If the Indians could operate independently, in a separate organization, they would help keep the United Fishermen and Allied Workers in line.'* (Belshaw, C. Hawthorn, H. and Jamieson, S. 1960:120, 121)
11. H.B. Hawthorn's (ed.) two volume *Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada* (1966) provides a chaotic but sometimes seminal overviews of the situation of native Indian people in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

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