

HISTORICAL NOTES

Conclusions from research compiled during the production of A Garden of Thieves

by Dean Unger

A *Garden of Thieves*, is the culmination of twenty-four years of research, interviewing, discussing and digging. To do the subject proper justice would entail an entire book in itself. As such, I include, here, only a cursory overview of the main points and conditions that I explored and uncovered during my research. These details pertain to the conditions and circumstances that existed at the time land claims policies were enacted, done to offer important and accurate context to the story while I was writing it.

The intent with which a thing is acquired is, in some way, the measure of its merit. There is a pretext for what will follow here. That is, much of what is written is historical fact. Some details, like the amorous and vitriolic Amor De Cosmos – the second Provincial Premier of British Columbia, through the mid-Victorian era, are more or less specifically correct. Other facets of the story are accurate clips that are true to the cultural mores and beliefs at the time. It is essentially a view from thirty-thousand feet, but blown out into a vivid, moving tale with accurate descent, down into the lives of those whose fates unknowingly weave and unravel the tale before our eyes.

The Texada Island land scandal was an actual event, and was the subject of the First Royal Commission in British Columbia. It was a circumstance that I felt revealed some of the underlying sentiments that existed then, among settlers and among the people of First Nations. These inclinations also reveal sentiments that underpinned the social and political structures that were in place during late colonial British Columbia. Whether overt or not, by their very nature, these sentiments had a hand in facilitating the calculated transfer of all land in the Province of British Columbia, from the collective First Nations, to the Crown. The form that the land policy eventually took, ultimately resulted in the smothering of First Nations culture – not one culture, viewed collectively, but many individual Nations, that were each unique unto themselves.

Much of the displacement occurred at the hands of individuals, who took advantage of the lack of guidelines and regulation, both within the colonies themselves, and from the Federal Government.

Presently, there are 198 distinct First Nations in the province of British Columbia, each with their own unique traditions and history. There are more than 30 First Nation languages, and close to 60 dialects spoken in the province. Many did not survive integration, and have disappeared in the mists of history.

The struggles the Natives endured over the last two centuries, as a direct result of this poorly executed interference, is an outgrowth - an evolution - of the circumstances they were presented with. From the time of European arrival here, and well beyond, for the First Nations, there was no context for understanding the white man's rule of law. It was forced upon them. Much of the bigotry that ultimately became entrenched in “white” culture, resulted from impatience and a lack of understanding, that, no matter what measures were enacted, the Natives just didn't seem to get it. In searching the historical record, it's not much wonder: little effort was made to find a common

language, and common meaning, to engage these discussions. The two sides were speaking entirely different languages, and little effort was made to bridge the gap.

According to historical details included on the Sliammon Treaty Society website, the year 1838 marked the beginning of the fur trade for the Tla'amin people, with the arrival of a ship named the "Beaver", from the Hudson's Bay Trading Company. It is noted in historical records, posted on the Sliammon Treaty Society website, that the ship encountered Tla'amin Natives at the North end of Texada Island, where muskets were traded for furs piled to the same height. In 1872, Dr. Israel Powell was named 'Indian Superintendent' to the Tla'amin people, and later, after stripping their traditional land from them, in a fashion contrary to treaty laws and regulations – most notably, Lot 450 - he was named Dominion Inspector of Indian Agents, along with the title of visiting Superintendent & Commissioner for all of BC, an office he held until 1889. Powell River and Powell Lake were both later named after him. Lot 450 pertains, in part, to a 15,000 acre illegally purchased timber lease issued to R.P. Rithet, a close associate of Dr. Powell.

This allocation was inclusive of land extending south from Grief Point, and north to Sliammon (Tla'amin territory), and encompassed three permanently occupied villages and many seasonal village sites, despite that they were, in theory, legally protected from sale or claim. It should also be noted here, that Commissioner, Gilbert M. Sproat, was initially among the fair-minded in the Government, and went to great effort in helping the Tla'amin, Klahoose and Homalco Nations, in attempts to iron out the land question. However, by all appearances in the historical record (internal and external government communications documents), while one hand was giving, it seemed, from appearances, the other was on the take: he was at the helm of the Land Commissions office when many questionable transactions went down. Whether he was directly involved or not, is difficult to ascertain, though common sense seems to imply that very thing. Also of note, was the fact that, at the same time, land was granted to white settlers, free of charge, up until 1879. Natives themselves were not permitted to purchase land grants at the time. However, these were policies he had little control over at the time.

The Sliammon Treaty Society website, in a well-researched chronology of events that occurred this side of contact, points out that most of Sproat's apparent advocacy efforts fell upon deaf ears among the government, because of perceived economic interest in the area, which took precedence. He eventually resigned in protest after a concerted and organized effort to discredit him for being "too generous with land allotments". This lynch effort was led by Israel W. Powell, and supported by Joseph Trutch – a name that recently has come under great scrutiny. The Tla'amin themselves were stripped of their traditional names and given legal Christian names, to make it less confusing, in attempts to identify and register them to the Canada Census. While all this was happening, new place names were given throughout Sliammon territory, by anyone who happened by, with no First Nations consultation.

Not surprisingly, many of these places had already been given recognized names by the Tla'amin people. In 1920, Tla'amin children, between the ages of five and fifteen years old, were apprehended ***from their families, en masse, by Indian Agents and the North West Mounted Police, and sent to Catholic Residential schools, the last one of these, St. Mary's, in Mission, finally closed in 1984. Even onward until 1960, there was a "Whites off reserve /Natives back on reserve by dusk" curfew still in effect. Natives still had limited seating in restaurants, pubs and the movie theatre in Powell River without proof of enfranchisement. This segregation occurred in every form of public transportation and service, including steamships, trains and buses.

Despite extensive exposure to the realities of integration here in BC, and across Canada, I was shocked, during my research, to discover an entry in series of daily log

books, compiled by the British Columbia Provincial Police during the late-nineteenth century, and housed in the BC Provincial Museum, in Victoria, that up to the late nineteenth century, there were still hangings for “Indians practicing sorcery”. It is also recorded that, in 1892, Father Chirouse – the Godhead for the church in Sliammon, was sentenced to one year for “whipping an Indian” (a scene incorporated, for posterity, but via “symbolic” players, into A Garden of Thieves); and, in 1894, a notation was made regarding a Mr. Hollingsworth's and his purchase of “Sarah Cliff, a half-breed Indian girl.” These Provincial Police archives, are testament to the minutiae and specific details of First Nations life, during and after integration; they do far more than any running narrative, to pin-point how insidious and destructive the dismantling of First Nations culture was.

History here, is but a looking glass to the much larger picture. I am reminded of Alan Watts, who writes, “The five colours will blind a man's sight. The eye's sensitivity to colour is impaired by the fixed idea that there are just five true colours. In fact, there is an infinite continuity of shading, and breaking it down into divisions, distracts the attention from its subtlety.” We are capable of endearing ourselves to only one colour at any given time, as with truth and its many shades of meaning. But, to suddenly see the meaning of a life, or the far-flung effects of an event in history, from the infinite possibilities of meaning; to realize that there is a story that, if known, would have changed the course of things, what then?

Although there were well-intentioned men in the mix, in the end, the questionable and often nefarious intent of others won out. Edward Bulwer-Lytton, the Secretary of State to the Colonies, and to Governor James Douglas himself, could be said to have had Christian morals at heart in devising the system of subjugation, but, when the Crown later replaced Douglas with Joseph Trutch, all bets were off. Trutch was an outright bigot, who refused to recognize the legitimacy of land claims decisions made by his predecessor. In an excerpt from the *The Indian Land Question 1846 - 1857*, a book of government communication documents, published in 1857, William A.G. Young, the first Colonial Secretary, brazenly insists, after Douglas was ceremoniously removed from office, that:

“...all reserves should be reduced as soon as may be practicable. The Indians have no right to any land, beyond what may be necessary for their actual requirements, and all beyond this should be excluded from the boundaries of the reserves. They can have no claim whatever to any compensation for any of the land so excluded, for they really have never actually possessed it, although, perhaps, they may have been led to view such land as a portion of their reserve, through Mr. McColl (Royal Engineer for the Crown) so loosely 'reserving' such large tracts of land, out of which, at some future day, the various Indian Reserves would have to be accurately defined.”

From the moment Joseph Trutch took over operations from Douglas, it seems he was of the same mind as Young, for he began a systematic dismantling of all that had been done to that point. When Trutch was finished, he had effectually reduced Douglas' initial reserves by 92%. In 2007, the history magazine, *The Beaver*, assembled a list of the "Worst Canadians" as of that year. Trutch made the list.

Earlier in the game, during the pre-Trutch administration, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, after whom the town of Lytton, BC, was named, showed a more or less humane approach, citing the tenets and principles of what was touted as “an enlightened motive,

for a humane demeanour in the approach to playing the role of steward to the First Nations”, In a letter to Governor James Douglas, Bulwer-Lytton writes, “The feelings of this country would be strongly opposed to the adoption of any arbitrary or oppressive measures towards them (the Indians)...” And later on, "I commit it to you, in the full persuasion that you will pay every regard to the interests of the Natives which an enlightened humanity can suggest..." He continues, "proofs are unhappily still too frequent of the neglect which Indians experience when the white man obtains possession of their country, and their claims to consideration are forgotten at the moment when equity most demands that the hand of the protector should be extended to help them.” In his statement he was careful to assert that, as the requirements of colonization pressed upon lands occupied by members of 'that race', liberality and justice should be adopted in compensating them for the surrender of the territory, which they have been taught to regard as their own.”

Even with all his influence in the Mother Land, in facing Trutch, and the sentiments he upheld, Bulwer-Lytton, found he was fighting an uphill battle. He was already a famous author when offered the post of Secretary of State to the Colonies. He had achieved fame with books published early in his career: *Zanoni*, a translation of an encoded Rosicrucian parable; *The Last Days of Pompeii*; *The Power of the Coming Race* – a book that became the inspiration behind what is now known as the Hollow Earth Theory, and, by 1828, he had risen to critical acclaim with the publication of *Pelham*. Among the many distinctions in his life, it seems he had an enigmatic effect on those around him, and did much by way of subtle influence and suggestion, to inspire Bram Stoker, in his later writing of the infamous, *Dracula*. Bulwer-Lytton also penned the quotes: “beneath the rule of men entirely great, the pen is mightier than the sword”, and “pursuit of the almighty dollar”, in the book, *The Power of the Coming Race*.

Due to Bulwer-Lytton's former successes, he had a respectable presence and held considerable sway in political circles. In bringing his full influence to bear upon the situation, and to drive the point home, he summarizes, in his critique of Reverend Herbert Beaver, a fanatical priest stationed at the Columbia Headquarters, that, respective of ones position and the influence they hope to effect, one must, “live a life of beneficent activity, devoted to the support of principles, rather than of forms; he must shun discord, avoid uncharitable feelings, temper zeal with discretion, [and] illustrate precept by example”. These same principles were his own, and were brought to bear in his relations with the First Nations of British Columbia. In laying out reserves, he left the choice of the land and the size of allotments, largely to the Indians. Surveyors were instructed to meet their wishes and “to include in each reserve the permanent Village sites, the fishing stations, and Burial grounds, cultivated land and all the favorite resorts of the Tribes, and, in short, to include every piece of ground to which they had acquired an equitable title through continuous occupation, tillage or other investment of their labour. Meanwhile, here in BC, as his total land policy evolved, Governor James Douglas, grew certain that the time would arrive when the First Nations people might aspire to a higher rank in the social scale. He held great hope they would lay claim to a better condition. Douglas advocated that the Indians should be enabled to acquire property by direct purchase from government officers or through pre-emption. He went on to assert that this should be done “on precisely the same terms and considerations in all respects, as other classes of Her Majesty’s subjects.” However, despite Douglas' assurances that the native Indian tribes were to be protected in all their interests to the utmost extent of the Government's present means, subsequent events proved the contrary.

Under Douglas rule, payouts to First Nations for a handful of initial land claims began. To offer an idea of the economies of scale that were in play at the time, in another

excerpt from the Indian Land Issues document, the language included in the original land claims contract confirms amounts paid to the first handful of Nations to sign:

The Teechamitsa Tribe handed over “the whole of the lands situate and lying between Esquimalt Harbour and Point Albert, including the latter, on the Straits of Juan de Fuca, and extending backwards from thence to the range of mountains on the Saanich Arm, about ten miles distant.” They received, as payment, twenty-seven pounds, ten shillings sterling. The document was signed at Fort Victoria, on 29th of April, 1850. The Swengwhung Tribe, of Victoria Peninsula, South, of Coloeitz, were paid seventy-five pounds sterling for what was deemed to be their land. The Kaky-aan Tribe, of Metchosin, forty-three pounds. The Chewhaytsum, of Sooke, were paid forty-five pounds sterling. The Queac'Kar, of Fort Rupert, were paid sixty-three.

What was, in 1850, twenty-seven pounds, ten shillings, is approximately \$4000USD, or roughly \$5000CDN, by today's standards. All other agreements that followed are in the same vein, though prices paid vary according to the land acquired. In 1920, seventy years later, according to statistics Canada, the average weekly budget of an average household was somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$21.00CDN. When calculated for the rate of inflation in 1920, the average sum paid to the Natives for their land would not quite be enough to purchase a single home in metropolitan Vancouver at that time.

As further example of the value of money in those days, in 1827, when Governor James Douglas' had threatened to quit his fur trading post at Fort Vancouver, his salary was raised from sixty pounds sterling, to one hundred pounds sterling annually - roughly four times the lowest amounts paid to First Nations for what was loosely determined to be their land. This, the land, was their heritage, their right by posterity and possession. To say there was no context against with which to measure the decisions made at the time, is debatable: the British had been Colonizing territory across the globe for centuries. At its root, after careful consideration of the facts, it seems that, ultimately, basic human greed, voracity, and covetousness was responsible for what came after.

Meanwhile, just before things went south with respect to responsible integration policy, F.W. Chesson, Secretary to the Aborigines Protection Society, who could foresee the early results of Trutch's interference, wrote an impassioned plea to Bulwer-Lytton: "from all the sources of information open to us, [it is clear] that unless wise and vigorous measures be adopted by the representatives of the British Government in that Colony, the present danger of a collision between the settlers and the natives will soon ripen into a deadly war of races, which could not fail to terminate, as similar wars have done on the American continent, in the extermination of the red man." Chesson cites the reckless inhumanity of gold diggers in America, where it had already been proven that miners took an exceedingly dim view towards the unfortunate Indians. A story in the New York Times, confirmed that it is the custom of miners, generally, “to shoot an Indian, as he would a dog; and it is considered a very good joke to shoot at one at long shot, to see him jump as the fatal bullet pierces his heart.” Trutch himself is said to have uttered similar sentiments at times. “But there is another aspect of the question, which is of equal importance,” Chesson continues. “The Indians, being a strikingly acute and intelligent race of men, are keenly sensitive in regard to their own rights as

the aborigines of the country. There can be no doubt that it is essential to the preservation of peace in British Columbia that the natives should not only be protected against wanton outrages on the part of the white population, but that the English Government should be prepared to deal with their claims in a broad spirit of justice and liberality. The recognition of native rights has latter been a prominent feature in the aboriginal policy of both England and the United States. Whenever this principle has been honestly acted upon, peace and amity have characterized the relations of the two races, but whenever a contrary policy has been carried out, wars of extermination have taken place; and great suffering and loss, both of life and property, have been sustained both by the settler and by the Indian.”

While this was all going on, the newspapers of the time seemed, for the most part, to be run by fiery editor's with a will to power and influence, or, at the very least, the benefit of financial opportunism: John Robson, editor of the *British Columbian*, and, Amor De Cosmos, of the *British Colonist* newspaper. Incidentally, both editors accused and inferred that Douglas was despotic, a charge that may have had tremendous influence upon what was, for Douglas, the final outcome. It seemed every effort was made against Imperial/Federal intrusion, and if there weren't obvious infractions, with little effort something could be found to gripe about. In reading early copies of De Cosmos' *British Colonist*, the paper is rife with unsubstantiated claims against the nefarious doings and intentions of the Federal Government, who would, at any cost, undermine Colonial independence, as well as glowing endorsements from questionable names, if not anonymous contributors. Under the weight of constant pressure, the British Royals eventually divested Governor Douglas of his office, with both the Colonial administration, and the Crown appointments being extinguished at the same time. But they tempered their toxin with honey – the loss of position came with the honour of being elevated to second rank in the Order of Bath. In comparison, the ideal editor these days must possess a modicum of judgement, be self-possessed, and perceive and enact the best interests of the population which he/she serves. At the hands of both editors, Douglas was saddled with the blame for establishing what was disaffectionately called a “family-company compact” – that underlying his stratagem in establishing the colony, he brought along a tendency toward protectionism that was seen to benefit the few rather than the many. But the self-same spirit that existed within the family-company compact, was also rampant in the newly formed representative government of the colony, with De Cosmos now preparing to take on a larger role within the Colonial Government. He used his influence with the *British Colonist* to hide his intention beneath the guise of beneficence, or outright sturdy, yet, concealed self-interest. De Cosmos effectually pounded a fist of indignation with the one hand, while, with the other, he had quietly posited Mr. Henry Bevan into the Land Commissions Office as Land Commissioner, responsible for issuing – and rejecting – land grants. He used his newspaper as the voice of dissension, to cement temporary favour among the voting colonists. A new generation had moved in and were now in place to harvest their share of the wealth from the new colony, for the most part at the expense of the First Nations. De Cosmos, along with Trutch, was an outspoken voice against land concessions to First Nations, citing that the practice was a hindrance to economic growth and prosperity. And he would carry on as though none of it existed, seeming to make up his own rules and policies as he went. All-in-all, the stage was set for the one of the largest land scandals in Canadian history.

From the very start, it was my intention to try in my research to nail down the seeds that lay at the very heart of the legacy of hurt we have enacted in Canada – the affect and effect of the need to impose the British rule of law upon newly acquired territories, and whomever or whatever might presently exist there; not just here on the coast, but throughout the prairies too, and clear across to P.E.I.. The long and short of it is, where British Columbia is concerned, that the historical record conclusively damns De Cosmos for his efficacious greed, and self-serving intent, at the expense of First Nations, under his protection. The cost of this approach also came at the expense of the thousands of settlers who'd come here to make an honest living. De Cosmos, with his gregarious yet affronting and often aggressive style, earned him some powerful enemies in positions of influence. In pouring through court transcripts for the case, and in reading the coverage of D.W. Higgins, the new editor of the British Colonist, now renamed the Times Colonist, the notion crept into my periphery that, perhaps it was not too grand a step to imagine that his exile from the Colonial Government - and popular swimming holes there-of, might have been orchestrated, at least in part. In the end, whatever the case, in later years De Cosmos went mad. Meanwhile, the stage had already been set, and with the newly drafted legislation, they tore through people's lives, their cultures, and their very existence - in many cases clawing back land that had already been given.

For a long time it was said that the Coast Salish never lived on Texada. Though the hunting and fishing there was very good, it was said their belief that the island rose one day from the ocean in a great cataclysm dissuaded them from keeping a village site there. It was asserted the Tla'amin believed that, as surely as the island had risen from the sea, one day it would return: to live there would, of course, be foolish. In any case, for the purpose of the story, it seemed germane – logical even – to create a Salish Village on the Island. Though overt reference to the fact was, in my experience, limited, there were whisperings here and there, that it might be true; a silent golden thread to follow. Then, one day, I sat down with the brother of a former Tla'amin chief - twin brother, actually, and he told me an interesting story. One day, years ago, he and a friend had been dicing up a large windfall at Shelter Point. Inside, smack-dab in the centre of the tree, was a cast iron cannon ball. Short of a few drunk sailors blowing off steam with some target practice, or a mutiny of some kind, there were few reasons, during the age of European “arrival”, to want or need to fire a cannon ball shore-ward. One does not need to let the imagination wander too far, to come to a logical conclusion.

In actual fact, in 2013, Aquilla Archaeology submitted an impact assessment for Shelter Point, to the Powell River Regional District. The extensive report succinctly, and with perfect grace, revealed to council that there was, after all, a Coast Salish Village there on Texada. A big one. It was, the report suggested, potentially one of the largest Georgian Period Salish settlements found here on the lower BC coast.

Here, I reserve comment, as I fear I may come off a little reproachful. Instead, I assent to a statement by Jennifer Manuel, who writes in her recent book, *The Heaviness of Things That Float* - an historical fiction based here in BC, that after coming to terms with a contradiction among stories of arrival (the First Nations perspective) that tangle with the stories of first contact (European perspective), “Stories of contact” is a phrase that sounds as feathery and constructive as God's touch upon Adam's fingertip, when in fact these stories have been violent and corrosive. Weeds choking plants of sustenance... I know nothing about contact. I know only about arrival, and the dangers of presuming

too much.”

I can easily see that cannon ball there, still and slightly glistening, in the dying sun. And I imagine that, upon its pitted surface was re-written the entire history of Texada Island. After all, there is, in all likelihood, much more to the story than was believed. The prospect of mortality, regardless of intellectual readiness, supposedly, to accept it, shakes one to the core.

I am also reminded here of a magazine article I discovered in National Geographic Magazine, if I remember correctly. The story detailed the discovery of a cave, in Kvaslund, Norway, where there are crude but entirely discernible carvings in the stone walls, showing that whomever had etched them into the rock had apparently discovered a lucrative method of hunting reindeer. In the cave-wall narrative, two men in a simple boat had reasoned that, being familiar with the behaviour of migrating reindeer, the deer were at their slowest and most vulnerable when they were crossing a body of water: river, lake, flood plain – where they could easily overtake and dispatch the animal. Their unmistakable intent was to, doubtless, preserve the invaluable information of their conquest. It was a simple matter of life or death. This leap of intellect could help ensure they would not go hungry. The carvings are also a symbol of something much greater. They are, in effect, a primary truth, an object that would communicate to those who would come after; an object to be interpreted.

The explosion from the cannonball found nested there inside that tree shatters the silence of ages. It marks a detail yet to be interpreted – but an old voice the Salish elders have no need to hear the like of to know the truth of it.

I will offer up no defence for the blooms and blossoms borne from the minds of average men, with a hunger they cannot feed, or an itch that they cannot scratch. For what follows is a fictional story of exceptional opportunity, and of unimaginable greed and corruption that slithered to the very core of the young government of the time. It reveals how, with even just a quarter turn south, forthright and militant ingenuity becomes opportunism that is moderately - even mildly - tainted with reasoning that's somewhere south of wrong. But, it's also a story of the ambition of excellent men and women, trying to make a home in the pioneer west, more specifically, on the Island of Texada, in the mineral rush city of Vananda, British Columbia c.1880. Some of these were born to it. Some of them worked skin to bone earning their place. But life in many of BC's early Company Town's was not always easy, and not always for the reasons you'd be inclined to think. There were unspoken rules of conduct. In the end, no matter how honourable a person was, her fate was sometimes, owing to the fates and poor choices, decided by a small gathering – a so-called peer-group – some of them friends, all of them directly in line and in keeping with the values of the time, or so they aspired to suppose.

These, then, by their estimation, would tell decisively whether said individual was perhaps getting it “not quite right” and that they would almost assuredly have to pay for it in some fashion. These were the makeshift laws, and often groundless regulations, created and enforced to the betterment of the Company bottom line.

Where the town itself was concerned, Vananda was a pioneer western town to be sure, but, as with there are two kinds of people in the world, there were the hard-working pilgrims, come to lay their claim, and there was the landed gentry – also mostly well-intentioned, but, yet, few among their host that equate most assuredly to a rot at the

centre of it. Their doctrine was started and inspired of entrenched Empirical ideals and was created by the greed and the hatred within mankind – one for another, one race against another, regardless of colour or creed, and fuelled by an inner rage to eliminate the competitor.

Ethno-relations was a moniker devised to imply there was some brand of Democracy at play in the heart of the new ideal. The Brits and the English would do their best to introduce the notion of commercialism and the rules underpinning the concept of land ownership. At first, and for a long time, there was little understanding of material ownership among First Nations, nor concerning what was expected of them, understandably. Eventually, the intellectual bridges were more or less built, and things fell into a rhythm of debatable merit. The whites grew despondent, began to cast aspersions, and were inclined to make judgments. Often, disenfranchised First Nations – the Haida, the Salish, the Nootka – and many others, would wind up on the doorstep of the legislature in Victoria, with no-where to go and not a clue how to fit in, or where to go for help. There they would remain, until the BC Provincial Police were harried by the public, who claimed to be speaking in the interests of public welfare, into doing something rash. The First Nations families that had come there for direction and understanding, were often forcibly driven from the city. Their culture and their land were being systematically dismantled, and what was left unmolested was eroding from the inside out in the shadow of grief.

The generations that lived it, or witnessed it, are almost all past now. Most felt the wrong of it through and through.

European vessels were plying the intricate and haunted shorelines and deeper forests for a good two hundred years and more. It was during this time that the dissent were spawned – largely beyond notice. And it went on this way for years. At first it seemed as though all were friendly, and that, overall, spirits were optimistic in nature and orientation. Then, in 1872, the Canadian Pacific Railway hired surveyor, Sandford Fleming, to forge a route of passage through the Rocky Mountains, and onward through the coast mountain range. Fleming had, for some time, been conducting his work here in British Columbia. He had become accustomed – skilled in some respects – with the local language, customs and beliefs of the resident First Nations that he encountered.

Fleming was one of the first to sense that something was not quite right. When the truth of it finally occurred to him, he quietly bade his time. For his part, until things were properly managed and running smoothly, he would not accept gifts, nor assume to navigate unaided within the culture of a foreign land. He would make every effort to seek council before acting in situations, or speaking out on topics he was not properly versed upon. With his new-found resolve in order, he would advise the Dominion Government of the powder keg he felt was near the breaking point. In his reports he reasoned, the Dominion would have had plenty of time to exact corrective measures as a system to enact land transactions in a responsible way. George Monro Grant, who accompanied Sandford on this epic voyage, wrote *Ocean to Ocean*, a sweeping account of the voyage and the challenges met and perceived along the way. One can't help but suffer the impression, after reading the book, that its publication contained safeguards against any lack of forthright measures on behalf of both the Government and the Canadian Pacific Railway to properly and diplomatically stem the problem.

It seems that, like Bulwer-Lytton and Chesson, both Fleming and Grant were nonplussed, to say the least, at the direction things had taken. Further, this was more or less the same spirit with which, eight years earlier, in 1864, Alfred Waddington concluded that the Chilcotin Massacre resulted from a breach of fundamental trust (this was during the smallpox plagues that ravaged BC First Nations). The subtle fear that was pinching at Fleming's neck and nipping hard at his heel, keeping him from sleep, was the

pervasive and powerful unrest that he sensed among the Indians. He predicted that, if the situation was left unchecked, it would threaten to arrest efforts to develop the western forts of the Hudson's Bay Company into legitimate, fortified centres of trade and commerce. As Fleming saw it, the government seemed content to let the Indian Nations who willingly, and with much anticipation, entered into negotiations with foreign sailors for possession of all manner of trinkets, and to barter away boundless tracts of The Great Spirit's Green Earth without a firm understanding of what this meant. He inferred that the problem would try when the Salish Brave was made to understand that a man desired to purchase a plot of his – of the land - from him, and that his full cooperation, his implicit understanding, and his permission that the man would then “own” the land in question, was tantamount. It would belong then, to the man – and all the encumbrances and advantages therewith.

In fact, what would come to pass was just as he had imagined. From the Natives point of view, it was not at all possible to take, or to have, or to own the land. Here, and among the vast majority of the First Nations spread along the BC Coast, the concept of land ownership, as was understood in the Old Country, did not exist. This detail seems to have been largely overlooked, save for what was eventually written in Grant's book

Though some could sense it, none really forsook all the complex inter-relationships that scattered implications over miles and through time. The damage and the horror and inhumanity that would come to pass, in order to force a political force majeure with a pedigree of Old Country influence - men in positions of power and spheres of influence – was a rule of law upon a land that cooperated more than bullied, that compromised rather than crushed. The men and women that formed this Pedigree were outside of the status quot, beyond the reach of the people who came here to make a hard-won home and an honest living. Settlers did not have family stipends to support them. They did not have parental or incidental trusts sheltering their every decision. They, too, were rugged to the bone. And they were patient and wont to help, often quite at their own expense. These were pioneering folk, creating homesteads on land hard-won from the ocean of forest. And they were bloody tough as nails. By their own rite, they would come to live and die on and of the land. They would slave – and later, work – in the mines, in the forests and on the sea.

All, despite creed and caste, could feel the bitter chill of this new religion that blew in from coast-ward and invaded the New World, like a steady, blinding sea-mist, sliding in perfect silence, building slowly, gliding over the surface of the ocean, swallowing ships like a creeping storm. It was a vile slick, pulled irresistibly toward it's potential: a foreign policy and lack of recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples that habituated lands we wished to take from them. The tendency was to inflict maximum damage: Shrapnel and corruption were consistent and far-flung, largely due to insistence that the Europeans were ordained by God to provide salvation for the primitive races that were present upon any land they “discovered”.

Again and again the record skips and we find ourselves in familiar territory. Truth and light - profound and singular and immutable by their very nature – stream through the fabric of Time seeking to reveal.

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