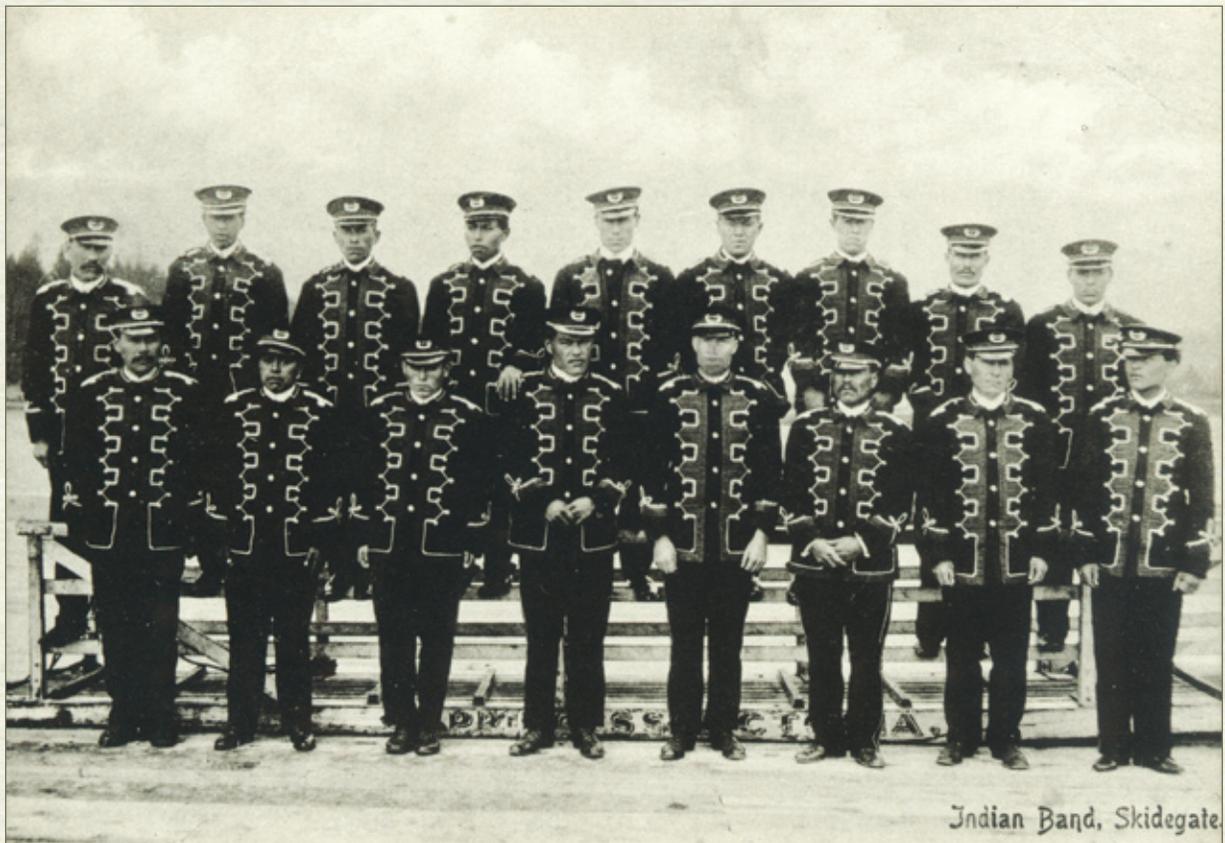


HAIDA LAAS

JOURNAL of the HAIDA NATION

SEPTEMBER 2010



Indian Band, Skidegate.

Indian Affairs ✦ 1913 ✦



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SEPTEMBER 2010

Haida Laas,



CANOE AT OLD MASSETT, 1930.

COVER

Cover photograph taken by the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, circa 1913.

...

THE SKIDEGATE BAND

Back l-r: Louis Collison, Pete Pearson, Josh Morse, Band Leader Arthur Moody, Robert Chamberlain, Albert Derrick, William Russ, James Jones, Henry Green.

Front l-r: Thomas Crosby, Mark Young, Charles Bell, James McKay, Luke Watson, Ike Wilson, Simon Wesley, Solomon Wilson.

...

Thank you to all those who provided photographs for this issue.

...

Bold text is editor's emphasis.

This paper is presented in honour of the people who were here for us in 1913. Some of us will have heard their names or have relatives among them and all of us can be proud of the way we were represented.

We have attempted to match the pictures to the same age and time period, though we could not find pictures of all who testified.

By this time our population had been decimated by smallpox and was still on the decline due to tuberculosis. According to some accounts, the Haida population was 880, of which 300 were in Alaska. Edward Curtis was here around this time and Swanton was here 12 years earlier.

Though the settlement of our land couldn't take hold while our population was strong, it was now being encouraged by the colonial government through the pre-emption of land. By 1913, the fortune-seekers had established gold, coal and copper mines, several canneries, two whaling stations and the timber companies were taking hold. New Masset, Queen Charlotte, Skidegate Landing were well established and Port Clements was getting going. To put this in a broader perspective, the new Statue of Liberty was standing in New York City, the Trans-Continental Railway was almost 50 years old, the First World War was just beginning and Edward Curtis was here taking photographs of the "dying race" of Indians.

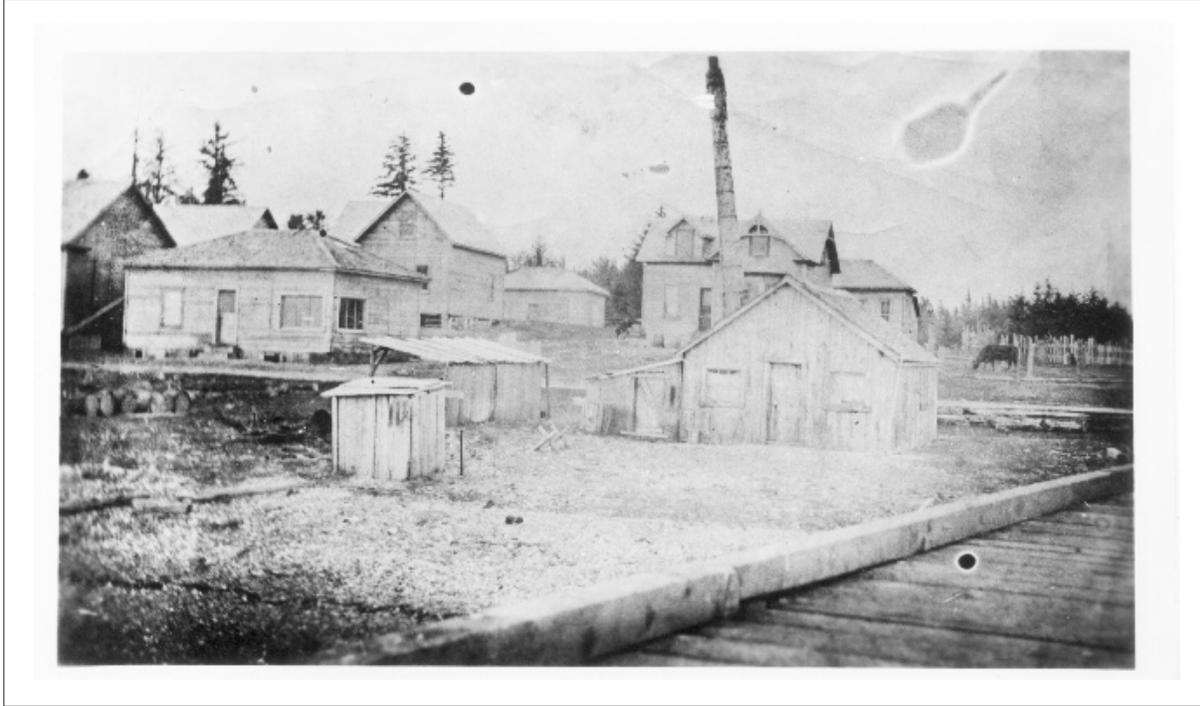
During the early 1900s there was a lot of political activity and our people worked in defence of the land and rights alongside other indigenous people from the Nisga'a to the Salish.

In 1913, a Commission of the Dominion Government was sent to Haida Gwaii to examine the state of "Reservations." Our people tactfully avoided the trap of accepting Reservations and the agenda of the Commission. At the hearing our people laid out a very reasonable position,

as they stated: If they are to be considered citizens of Canada, they should have the same rights, at this time they didn't even have a vote, and at least receive the same allotment of land as other people. At this time our people were ready to negotiate or to let the courts decide. Though our people showed a willingness to share they held issue with the fact that their cattle were being rustled and other people were being given leases on the village and camp sites.

During the hearings there is mention of an "Aboriginal Title" case that was to go before the Privy Council in England. The Crown did eventually cheat our people out of that case in promising to negotiate a fair settlement. The Allied Tribes grew out of those efforts until the Crown outlawed any further talk about the matter, banning any gatherings of Indians and threatening to fine and even jail supporters.

Needless to say, like many Commissions since, there was little gained by this exercise. This 1913 transcript is very important to our upcoming Title Case. Our people didn't compromise our position as a Nation, they described our rightful place here on Haida Gwaii.



Old Massett - 1912

ROYAL COMMISSION ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
OLD MASSETT, SEPTEMBER 9th, 1913

RG 10
INDIAN AFFAIRS
Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia

QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS AGENCY
QUEEN CHARLOTTE AGENCY

At Massett, BC, September 9, 1913

HENRY EDENSHAW was sworn as Interpreter.

The Chairman briefly explained the scope and purpose of the Commission.

The address of welcome (Exhibit D 1) was read by Chief Councilor A. Adams, to which the Chairman replies, as follows.

ALFRED ADAMS

Gentlemen:

We welcome you to our largest and populated home of the Massett Band of the Haida Nation. **On these Islands our forefathers lived and died, and here we also expect to make our home until called away to join then in the great Beyond. Here we are raising our families, and all we have in this world, with the traditions and associations, lands and household goods are bound up on the islands that once were our own; but are now becoming the homes of others.** Since the coming of our White friends, we have been Wards of the government, and the limits of our land have been drawn, giving to us an interest in six acres apiece of the many thousands over which we formerly roamed, and held against invaders. As you are aware, each of our separate tribes had places of their own and were governed by their Chiefs. The missionaries came among us, and the government took charge of us. We were asked to centralize, to be Christianized and educated, and we came here, to Massett, and built our homes, returning, now and then, to our old homes, where we fished and where the bodies of our forefathers laid. At the mouth of every river and stream, you will find our old camping grounds. All along the coastline are our former hunting grounds and the places where we fished, hunted and made our boats and canoes. These places are now covered by coal and timber licenses and occupied by preemptors. Year by year, the limits have been drawn, and we are now restricted to a small piece of land, here and there, the whole Band not having as much land as one prospector can cover with coal licenses. Where a

foreigner can obtain 160 acres, we are allowed six, and we have always been British subjects since the flag of Britain was raised on our Islands.

It is said we do not improve our land. You will see for yourselves our towns are not the largest on the islands. We are fisherman, and the product or our work shows in the large sum produced by the fisheries of the country. Whether we can take a place, that foreigners are allowed to take, after a short residence, you may judge from personal observation of our product. As persons who have respect for the land, we can truthfully say that no breach of the law has been committed by any of the Haidas that called for trial, during many years. **With sixty years of so-called civilization, we may not be up to the standard set for us; but the marks of advancement will show most favorably with those of any country where the people were in bondage but a half-a-century ago. Against the twenty centuries of Christian teaching, place our sixty years, and our advancement has astonished those who see no hope the Indians. We have reached a stage where our ambition and hopes call for further advancement, where our grievances have been brought before those in charge of us, and we look forward for redress.** We cannot again have our old homes; the former

Commissioners did not meet us and ask what our wants were. They met a few old men, while the majority of our people were away, seeking a livelihood at our fishing grounds, and we were appropriated six acres apiece, land that old men were interested in. When the preemptor and purchaser of land applied for it, we were not considered, and our old houses were torn down. Even on our reserve, which are not fenced, cattle roam at will. **Without any treaty; without being conquered; we have quietly submitted to any laws made for our government, and this we intend to be our course. With other Indians, who claim to have to have the same grievances, we asked that our claims be taken before to Privy Council of the Nation; to be finally settled there, once and for all time.**

On your Commission we have no direct representative, in the councils of the country, we are not represented. None of us are allowed the privilege of the Franchise; no matter how advanced we may become, or are. It is hard for us to understand how we have been placed, like one large family, and now we find the government giving thousands of dollars to the residents of some reserves, while other are isolated and poorer than before. Why should the coming of a railway, or the building up of a town, make some Indians rich, and not make member of the same family as well off. We are all Wards, all on an equality, and all would be satisfied if the rulers of our people would give all what a number are now receiving. We find no fault with the prosperity of our Indian friends, whose land is required for other purposes; but our land has been taken by others also. We read and learn. We have advisors that are writing to us about our grievances. In their hands we placed our claims, and we do not desire to hamper them in any way, by making suggestions. We are pleased to meet with you and to see that recognition is given by sending to us a body of gentlemen to look into our land affairs. We can show you the homes of our ancestors now occupied by others. We wish you to realize that we have been self-supporting and we are thankful for the aid the government has given our children, in the way of free education, on the same line as the Whites. We have lived for many years, in harmony with our White brethren, respecting the law and proud of being under the flag of Great Britain. We would not desire to be understood as against

anything that would make these islands more prosperous for the Whites as well as for our people. Our lot has been thrown in together, and we hope to live our lives in peace and contentment. The problems to be solved are not so difficult and we trust that your report will pave the way to have them adjusted satisfactorily. We trust that God will direct you in looking into the case of the Indians, and that any clouds that may appear will be brushed aside by the sunshine of a happy day. May the God of the White man and the same Ruler of the Indians bless your deliberations, and may your visit mark a speedy ending of the troubles that we claim to have in respect to the lands our forefathers had over to our generation.

*Chief Councilor for the Haida Nation
of Queen Charlotte Islands*



ALFRED ADAMS

TO WHICH THE COMMISSIONER REPLIES:

The Commissioners are very much obliged for the address which you have just presented and for the kind way in which you have received us. We trust with you that our work may be satisfactory all round, not only to the Indians but to the governments which we represent, and that it may be the means of bringing increased happiness and prosperity to the Indians. **Insofar as the right which you speak of are concerned we have nothing to do with the question of Indian title.** I stated in my remarks at the beginning of this meeting. With regard to your past history, I do not wonder that you look back upon that with very great regret and I think that would be especially true of a people who are descendants of such men as the Haida Indians who, I have always understood, were among the strongest of the Indians in this part of the world. **We cannot deal in any way with the matter, which you suggest should be brought before the Privy Council, because that is a judicial court. We have no such power and no such authority.**

You have referred to the condition, which the Indians present in this village and you stated that none of have been tried as yet in the courts for any criminal offense, and I think that is most creditable to you. Judging from the assemblage of men I see before me this morning, I am not surprised to hear that



CHAIRMAN N.W. WHITE of the ROYAL COMMISSION ON INDIAN AFFAIRS for the PROVINCE of BRITISH COLUMBIA.

such is the case. I have heard the fact that you are just as you have described most emphatically stated by the gentleman here on my right, who is the clergyman laboring among you. **I think it is the desire of all white men to see the Indians advance and become more prosperous, because it is better to live with the people who are advanced in civilization.** Of course there are exceptions, but I am satisfied that all the best thinking white people are desirous of seeing the Indians advance in civilization and prosperity. We have nothing to say with regard to your advancement in Christianity, because we know that you are for the most part members of a Christian community. I do not think anything has given any member of the Commission more pleasure than to see the Indians throughout the Bella Coola Agency are member of various

Christian churches. There is more cleanliness and order among them. In regard to the matter you have touched on as to your having no voice in the councils of the nation, and no power to elect your representatives to parliament. I believe I am right in stating that an Indian may obtain the franchise. They have done so down in Eastern Canada. It seems to me that the power, which an Indian had to obtain the franchise, should not be as small as it is. But it depends largely upon his intelligence. I understand that if you can convince the authorities by certificates, recommendations, etc., that an Indian has the qualifications to obtain the franchise he can do so. And judging by the appearance of the Indians here I cannot see any reason why they have not got the franchise. I think that the Indians powers as regards this might be enlarged and it is a matter, which I think might very properly be brought under the notice of the government. Some of the tight strings, which are at present around the Indians in this respect, might be in some ways relaxed.

HENRY EDENSHAW

Gentlemen:

On behalf of the people of Massett I also wish to welcome you to our reserve, as representatives of two governments appointed to look into our affairs.

We are a people who desire to live in the best of harmony with all of our neighbors, be they White or Indian, and we have endeavored in the past to accept all that has been taught to us for betterment. You are aware that we have our homes and our all on these islands, at present far away from the great centers of trade and commerce. Many years ago, our forefathers fought to hold these islands, and kept them, not only for others of our own race; but from the people of other nations, who dared not come to this country, knowing we were ready to die for our homes.

The White men came here, and were welcomed. We accepted your flag, and we also accepted your religion and government. At that time there was no question of our rights to the land. We owned it all, by the power of our right as a nation. **Since then we have gradually lost the rights we had, not through war or treaty; but through the laws made for the government of a people as a whole.** We are not complaining of the Whites coming here. They must live as well as the Indian; but we ask for compensation, or land, that we consider is ours still. **It may appear wrong to those who do not understand that we are a lot of men who desire to have our difficulties settled early, so that all heartburning may be over and done with.** We hope your visit will be of assistance settling our troubles and that the day is not far distant when this land question, which appears to be the only one in dispute between us, may be amicably settled to the satisfaction of all of us.

MARK INGRAHAM

Gentlemen:

As one of the Councilors of the Massett I feel that you will be satisfied that the young men are pleased with your visit. We welcome those who are looking into our affairs with their eyes and minds turned towards us in a way that will help to settle troubles. You will see that we have some reason to ask for assistance in settling our troubles. Our land is being taken up by the White settlers. We call it our land

because our forefathers owned before the White man come here. We know that we cannot occupy it all; but we did not get even get a fair share of it. Many years ago, before we were men, the Commissioners came and talked with a few old men. Our fathers and mothers were away. They only marked out a few places and left. We have now found that our land is a small piece, here and there, and many old settlements were left out. The Missionaries asked our people to bring us here, and they left the old homes and came to one town. That should not mean that we lost the old homes. Because the missionaries and the government wanted to have us all in one place to be educated and to learn to be accommodate the teachers of our people and to be advanced, and people then said we left these places and they are no longer ours. Other Indians did not do this, and they have large reserves for a few families. We have a small piece of land each, when all is divided among us, about six acres each, and that is not enough, when a White man can take up to 160 acres. We could go on and show many other reasons for giving us justice; but you will understand that we are a people who want to advance with the islands. We have no word to say against our White neighbors. **We live with them, in harmony, and all we ask is fair treatment of our claims, which we hope you are here to give us. As men of a race that always took the lead in anything we undertook, we are doing the same now,** in learning to be loyal subjects, and we hope your visit will help us to continue to live in harmony with our neighbors.

ROGER WEAT

Gentlemen:

As one of the Councilors of Massett and Chief of a Tribe, I am very glad to meet you and hope you will look into our affairs in a way that will bring to an end our troubles over our land. We have our gardens and our graveyards, and have our old timberlands and fishing grounds, that are now lost to us. We will never get them back, because the White man has taken them up for his own use. Some of us are trying to hold pieces of land, and we do not know whether they are ours or not. Every year some person comes on our old settlements and says 'this is mine I have a record on it from the government', and we cannot dispute it. **All men have a certain love for their old homes and where their dead people are laid, and we**

have too. We are advancing very fast and are no longer children. We want to take place as men, like all other men, and to give our children some rights. You give 160 acres to any man who wants it. Why do we get only six acres of our old homes, which all belonged to us not long ago. We look to you to help us getting our rights and we are glad to know that something is being done to change the mistakes the commissioners made many years ago.

PETER HILL

Gentlemen:

As one of the younger members of the Massett Band, and one of the coming Chiefs of the people here, I would like to say a few words today.

We are glad to meet you and hope your visit will be of benefit to us. Haidas we are and must remain; but we look for change in our condition soon and to take our places as men who are able to earn our living and have a place to the Councils of the Whites. We have no votes. We are Wards of the government. We classed with the ignorant and looked upon as people who are not capable of caring for ourselves.

This is a mistake. We are good British subjects, willing to do anything to go ahead. We are willing to learn and are able to read and write. We know what is going on around us, and we respect the Crown and are loyal to the King. We hope you will **tell the government that we are no ignorant class of Indians and that we are thankful for past favors. Tell them we are self supporting and able to take care of ourselves. With the settlement of, our land grievances, we will be happy and contented and hope the day will come soon when we can say that we have nothing to complain of.**

I hope your visit will be a happy one and that you will go away with a good impression of the Haida people and of the Massett people especially.



HENRY EDENSHAW



PETER HILL

GEORGE JONES

Gentlemen:

We are glad to see you here among us and hope your visit will be pleasant. Our troubles over the land of our forefathers are placed in your hands by the government and we hope your report will show that you are a people who can understand and appreciate the work you are engaged in. We have tried to go forward with the White brethren and to be God fearing and law

abiding subjects. **We hope to live and die here and to leave our families something that will benefit them.** In our homes and outside, we are struggling along to live good lives and as Christians to live in peace and harmony with all. Others will lay before you the news of the lands we once had for our own and the way we are trying to make a good living for ourselves and those depending on us. We are grateful for past favors and feel that we have something to look forward to more than to always remain Wards of the people. In our schools and our churches we learn to love our neighbors as ourselves and we can tell you that we will always try to follow the good example of the good Whites. We live with them and work with them and we hope that our people will soon become a part of the whole nation in the way of having the same rights and privileges that others enjoy. Again, on behalf of the Council and the people we welcome you to Massett.

CHIEF COUNCILOR ALFRED ADAMS remarked that some of the Indians in other parts of British Columbia are being treated about a thousand times better than those of the Queen Charlotte Islands, some of them having as much as 90,000 acres and some as much as 60,000 acres. He continues: While the entire band here, numbering 300, have only 2000 acres between them. We want if possible to meet your commission at joint meeting of the councils of the Massett and Skidegate tribes.

The Chairman: Who was it wrote a letter to me with respect to our going down to Skidegate?

Mr. Thomas Deasy: I wrote a letter to Mr. Bergeron asking if the Council of the Massett Indians could be taken on to Skidegate; but the reply you sent has not as yet been received.

ALFRED ADAMS: Our idea is to give you fullest information of our troubles here and in order to do so we would like to give it to you full while you are right here in our village. We will give you what we can and then what we cannot give you here we can give you after consulting our Skidegate friends. We want to see the Skidegate Indians. We have only small reserves and the Skidegate people have only small reserves and we do not want to say anything that might conflict with what they have to say. We have not been treated as other wards of the government have. Our trouble is that other Indians in British Columbia receive better treatment than us in every way and we do not know the reason for it.

The Chairman: That letter which Mr. Deasy wrote us was received stating that you wished to be conveyed to Skidegate after the meeting here and an answer was sent to you stating that we would take you down but had no means of bringing you back. That letter apparently has not reached you yet. You stated that you wanted to put some questions to the Commission before you adjourned. What are they?

ALFRED ADAMS: Why are we treated in such a way? While the other Indians in this province are getting so much more than us? It strikes us that the law states that all Indians should be treated alike. We are wards of the government and as wards of the government we should be treated like every other Indians. It is a kind of problem to us – a real problem to us – that these things should be so.

The Chairman: You want to get our answer to the question you put before you have your consultation at noon?

ALFRED ADAMS: Yes.

The Chairman: Well where are these Indians living that have from sixty to ninety thousand acres in their reserves?

ALFRED ADAMS: I could not say right away but I have read of it. I may have been mistaken. Some of them I am positive have 30,000 acres.

Dr. Mckenna: Are you referring to a whole agency or to only one Band.

ALFRED ADAMS: One community only.

The Chairman: In reply to that question, the Commission have to say to you that they do not know what governed the minds of previous commissioners who allotted these reserves – why they gave such large quantities of land in one locality and such small quantities in another, but possibly it may have been due to the fact that they did not meet the chiefs of the Band here. If they had met the chiefs of the band and they made requests for more and the bands did not get more we do not know but what it might have been given. **So far as I have been able to gather the large allotments of land which you refer to have been made down in the East where the Indians are far removed from the sea.** They catch no fish and the only way these people can make their living is by farming and it is quite likely that in making these large allotments they gave them an allowance of land which would enable them to earn their living that way and have enough to live on besides. **Then they came here to the coast they probably saw that the Indians make their living by fishing and considered that they did not require more, as they were not farming.** We have heard other Indians on our way here state that they did not want more and as they were fisherman. It may therefore be that the Commissioners at the time these reserves were laid out came to the conclusion that you did not want more land, as you were fishermen. Some of the channels we came up, if they were laid off – if the land in the vicinity was laid off in one block as they have been in the East, the land would be of no use whatsoever except for the purpose of cutting firewood and logs, and that is what may have passed through the minds of the commissioners at the time these reserves were made. There is one instance that has been brought to my attention by Dr. McKenna: that is that at Metlakahtla and Port Simpson they have large quantities of land laid off for reserves.

Continuing, the Chairman said: Mr. Shaw had drawn to my attention to the fact that there is no provision in the provincial law in which an Indian may exercise the franchise. I was in error in stating that there was such a provision.

Rev. Mr. Hogan: I can give you the reason why these people want that land at Metlakahtla and

Port Simpson. It was because they had a man to represent them of Rev. William Duncan, who spoke for them, but these Haida were away at different places at the time when Judge O'Reilly can here; he came in the fishing season when most of their people were away and the few old people that were here probably did not understand what the commissioners were saying. That is where the result of the business lies. These Indians should have had 1800 acres in each of the different places to which they belong, instead of having 1800 acres here for the whole band, scattered among the various fishing stations. Of course when those commissioners came here they used to like to travel in fine weather and they could not wait until the people came back.

The Chairman: It may be as Father Hogan says, and it may be that they got more land that they are entitled to at Metlakahtla and Port Simpson, but you will bear in mind that this Commission is just going around to settle matters of that kind.

ALFRED ADAMS: I must say that we are entitled to the whole Island.

The Chairman: Anything else to say?

ALFRED ADAMS: We want to be treated the same as other Indians in British Columbia. Those Indians who are capable of doing things for their betterment are treated by the Government pretty fair and what ever that is we want to get a hold of it. We are all equal in the eyes of the government and of the King, and we want to be treated alike. That would satisfy us all. There is another trouble which however we don't want to put before you today and that is the trouble we have in our local matters.

The Chairman: Do I understand you to say that there is other respects than the division of the land, in which you consider you have been unfairly treated? If there are, we would like to know them. Have you any other question to



HAYAS of KAYNG-HAIDA, 1913
Edward Curtis photo



POLE AT YAN.

complain of apart from the land question and the Indian Title?

ALFRED ADAMS: We should like this information to go through our Indian Agent, in full, because he has studied our conditions and knows everything in Massett now and we want to see the Agent give you full information. We are not treated by the Government as well as other good Indians are.

Mr. Shaw: You say that you do not get equal treatment in regard to the land, is there any other respect in which you consider you do not get equal treatment?

ALFRED ADAMS: We have a lot of ways, but we cannot give you all the trouble we have until we get the things in writing to give to you.

Rev. William Hogan: One thing is that the Indians have no protection for their fisheries. The Indians here used to be able at one time to go out to Hecate Straits and bring back large hauls of Halibut and other fish, but the Americans were allowed to come and steal the fish and have almost exhausted the fish supply. And what did the Government do in the way of protecting the place. They sent a small cruiser of about 8 knots to chase an American vessel, which was capable of doing 15 knots an hour with ease. It is a shame and disgrace that these things should be.

The Chairman: We will hear you later Mr. Hogan, please don't interrupt now?

Mr. Macdowall to ALFRED ADAMS: Did I understand you to say that your Councilors want to consult together today and put your grievances of requirements in writing?

ALFRED ADAMS: Yes.

Question: Then when you have put those grievances in writing you want to go down to Skidegate and present those grievances to us there.

ALFRED ADAMS: Yes.

Mr. Shaw: Is there anything more to present to us here today then?

ALFRED ADAMS: Well, the Chairman has been asking us question and if you will hear our grievances again we shall be glad to give them. We are the Children of the Government the same as the other Indians of the Province, and whatever they are getting from the Government we want the same.

Thomas Deasy (Indian Agent): We did not know anything about the Scope of the Commission until this morning and now it is going to take some time to get together all the information which you require. I might say that one great question with the Indians here, is that some of the Indians on their Reserves in British Columbia have received large sums of money for reserves in lieu of those, which they sold. There is one Indian girl at Skidegate, from Victoria (Songhees Indian) reputed to be worth \$18,000. The Indians here are of opinion that when a reserve is sold, the money received for it, should be divided equally among all the Indians in the whole of the Province of BC.

Mr. Shaw: It is their idea that any money received from any sale of Reserve in no matter what part of the Province that reserve is located, should be divided not between the people living on that reserve, but between all the Indians in the Province.

ALFRED ADAMS: Yes that is the idea.

Mr. White: Why, if that idea were carried into effect, the Indians would not receive more than about 5 cents each.

CHIEF COUNCILOR ADAMS at this point handed in a further letter.

To the Land Commissioners:
Gentlemen:

After looking over the scope of your appointment, as defined in the Orders in Council and Agreement re: Powers and Functions of the Royal Commissioners on Indian Affairs. We have arrived at the conclusion that each head of a family of the Band, makes application for at least One Hundred and Sixty Acres of Land, which shall include our reserves and old settlements and some to be given to

us, in fee simple and to be selected by a Commission consisting of an equal number of the members of the Massett Band, with a representative of the Provincial and Dominion Governments. Making four persons to select the land and a fifth to be selected jointly by the commission.

In making this claim, on behalf of the Massett Band we desire to have it understood that our fishing grounds are being depleted; our timber lands are in the hands of timber men and speculators; we must soon take to agriculture for a living and we are now producers, earning thousands of dollars worth of wealth from the sea. We desire to have our land near the water, where we earn our living, and not to be restricted to the same terms as pre-emptors, seeing that we spend months on the waters, producing food for others as well as ourselves.

In asking for 160 acres each, we require only what others receive, on application. We would be pleased to have the land allotted at an early date, in order to obtain it before all is taken up by others.

This is local matter and we consider that this settlement of the land question among our people is on that should be settled shortly, or all of our lands will be gone.

*Alfred Adams, Roger Wiat, George Jones
Mark Ingram, Mathew Yeowmans*

The Chairman: We will take this letter and file it and when we come to make up our report we will give it our consideration.

At the afternoon session, the Reverend William Hogan addressed the Commission as follows:

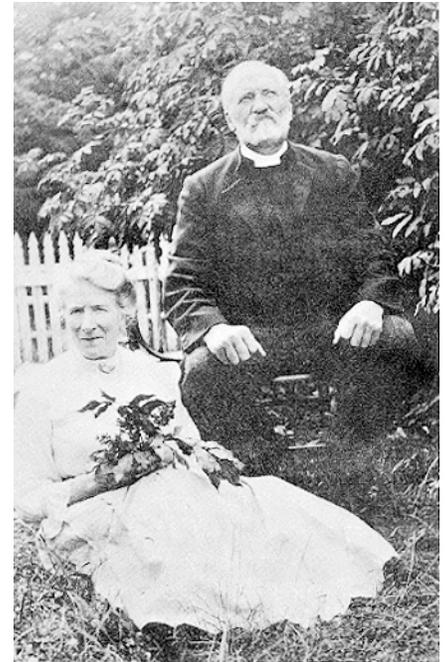
Mr. Chairman, and member of the Commission, it affords me very great pleasure to have the privilege of meeting you all here today. I wish to bear my testimony to the character of the Haida Indians, as long as I have known them.

I am in my 21st year of service on this Coast and during that time I have known a great deal of them. The progress shown by these Haida Indians

during the time I have known them has been nothing short of wonderful. They are today and have been for many years living the lives of good true, and trustworthy men, and reliable Christians. In the old days they were the bravest of brave Indians, and had a name, which struck terror into the hearts of the neighboring tribes. Now you see them a quiet peaceful, law-abiding intelligent community. I am sorry today that many of the brave old men have passed away and lie in a silent tomb.

I must also bear testimony to the splendid work which has been done among these Indians by the Venerable Archdeacon Collison, Rev. J. H. Keen, and Rev. William Collison. These men labored among the Haidas for many years, and you see here today the effect of their labors. At a time when the dominion Government were not in such a position as they are today to devote financial help (because they had not the money 30 or 40 years ago that they have today) the Church Missionary Society of London England, stepped into the breach and supplied teachers as well as missionaries, and the Dominion Government look back and remember the progress and development which has taken place in the condition of the Indians and what has helped to bring that band of men to their present position. Many of them, as you are aware, addressed you today in good English. In their lives they are good and true men. I am not afraid to pick out of ten men of the Council here today, to whom I am not afraid of turning over the work in connection with the Church when I am away.

Now as to the requirements of the Indians here today, and in the future. There are several things I wish to bring before you notice today as a commission, and I would like you to bring them before the notice of the Dominion and Provincial Governments, as being necessary for the good of the Haidas. This year has been a hard year with our people. They were very successful as regards the Spring Salmon it is true, but the supply of the Humpbacks, Cohoes and Sockeyes was most unsatisfactory. The Indians scarcely made enough to pay their store bills, at the Cannery. **Our Haidas in days gone by, never begged from the Government, not from anyone else, but gentlemen, this year has been a hard**



**REV. WILLIAM "FATHER"
HOGAN & WIFE MARGARET.**



HAHLKAIYANS – MASSETT, 1913

Edward Curtis photo

one for them. They are most anxious to rebuild our church here. I know they are. The Church has been up for over 30 years and it is all too small. The Indians are growing and it is overcrowded from a health point of view. They bring their children to the service, because I wouldn't have them leave their children at home, and the result is that the Church is crowded Sunday after Sunday when the Indians are here, and it is too small to sanitary. They want a [paternal Government to give a donation to enable

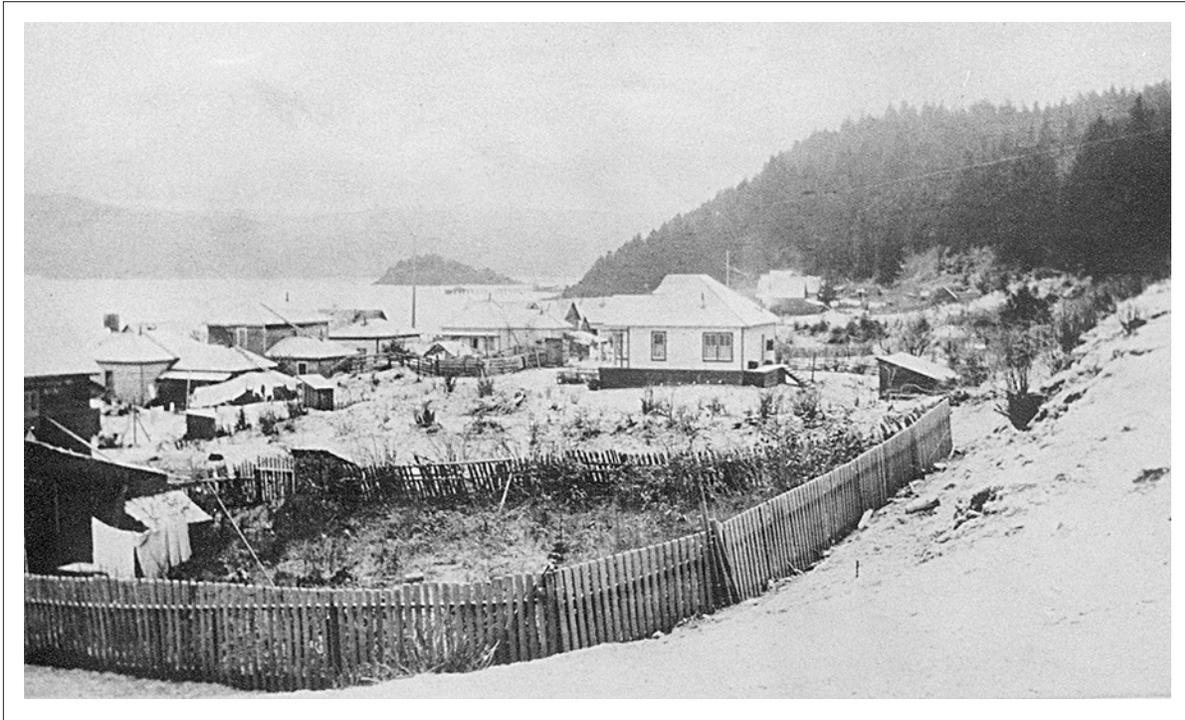
the Haidas to rebuild their Church. The women of Massett have set an example to everyone, the equal of which I don't think you will find anywhere in British Columbia, having by working at home, earned some \$316 toward the re-building of their Church. I think that, in itself is an indication that they are not beggars but are trying to do what they can. There are just a few other things which I think do what they can. There are just a few other things which I think are most necessary for this village. The nearest doctor lives some 3-miles away from this village. All year round accidents will happen, and cases of sudden illness arise, and it is not always possible to get the Doctor when he is wanted. He may be miles away attending some other case. If the Department could see its way to make appointment of a qualified nurse who could instruct the Haida women in simple medical and surgical duties. It would I am sure be the means of saving life in many cases. It would also be a great boom to the Indians of this tribe if a mechanical instructor could be appointed by the Government, who would instruct the Indians in the art of running gasoline engines, electricity, and other scientific trades. I venture to say that if this were done every man would own and running his own gasoline boat, and I think they would prove to be very skillful at other trades. I want to forestall accidents. If you want to have them a strong race as they were before, when they held these Islands and hurled back the wave of Asiatic from the Pacific Coast of

America, them you must support them today, and Alfred Adams, should not have the franchise. They are able to build their own boats, and to do other good works. They are not children now although the government treats them as children.

Their position in the past, gentlemen, has been one of passive resistance to injustice. We hope now, that justice will be done and that every man of them will receive 160 acres of land in his own right to hand down to his children in the days to come. We insist upon the young people here who have nothing to do during the winter, the government can see their way to it, having a Central school erected on the Island, where both Skidegate and Massett's can have technical education, or if not, that the Mission School at Metlakatla should be set in motion again.

We have several men here today who are representatives of that school and examples of what that institution did under the guidance of an earnest and capable man – Mr. Scott – the government closed that school, for lack of funds. I think it is a disgrace that they should ever have done so. I would like to see an institution established at Tow Hill, and if the Government can't see their way to do that, then they should again set in operation the Metlakatla School.

There is just one other thing before I close gentlemen, and that is that these Indians should not be deprived of getting timber for their own use, or for logging either. It is a shame and an anomaly that timber men can sit in their offices in Chicago and curtail all the woods from Naden Harbour to the Yakoun River. It is not fair or just it is not fair dealing. Gentlemen, we do not ask for anything for these Haida Indians but what is fair and just. That is all I have to say. •



Skidegate, circa 1913

**ROYAL COMMISSION ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
SKIDEGATE, SEPTEMBER 13th, 1913**

ROYAL COMMISSION ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
SKIDEGATE, BC September 13th, 1913

**A meeting with the Indians of the Skidegate Tribe of the Haida Indians
was held in the Schoolhouse, Skidegate, BC on the 13th September 1913.**

HENRY GREEN was sworn as interpreter, and on behalf of the Skidegate Indians.

JAMES STERLING

To the Land Commissioner:

Gentlemen:

The Skidegate Band welcomes you to the South end of the Island, where our principal village is located, and where we have constructed our homes. You will see what progress we have made, and have an opportunity to judge our people. We have adopted the ways of the Whites, where we found them for our betterment, and many are striving to excel in the modern ways by introducing customs and ideas that mean advancement. **In our home, we are a people who live as the law directs, breaking none, although temptation is in our path. Take the intoxicating liquor away from us; let the Whites show us Christianity is all that is claimed;** give us some of that Charity on which all law and good government is founded, and the Indians of this country will further advance.

Our land troubles are, we understand, the principal reason for your visit, and we have no solution to offer you. Most of our land, of former days, is gone forever from us. What can we say regarding it? Our fishing and hunting grounds, our graveyards and woodland, is all taken up by others. We have little to call our own, and cannot dispose of the little, if we want to. We are Wards of the government, a people governed by a people, with no voice in the deliberations. When some persons advised us that they had taken up our grievances, we said to go forward and do the best for all of the Indians. We considered that the troubles of our great family were not ours alone, although we feel that we have lost more than many of our Indian brethren. Although we have every respect for you in your visit to us, we must say that we have asked to have our rights brought before the Privy Council of the country. We look upon any settlement by the government as one that might not prove satisfactory if taken to the high court, which settles all difficulties, once and for all time, our side of the grievances would be heard and all would end there. It is useless for us to bring before you what you already know. **Our people claim that we**

were not treated right by those who gave us the small tracts of land called our reserves. Then was the time to give us enough of our land to satisfy everyone; then was the time to make a treaty with us. We were then very ignorant (to the ways of the white men); but we would have stood by and arrangement made between two contracting parties. We were not consulted at all. Whether the older men of the Band made any arrangement with the Commissioners of the early days, we are also ignorant (unaware). We were told that this and that piece of land was all we could look forward to, and we have not been contented ever since.

We did not claim and threaten; but, like the children we then were, we protested. We protest still; but is doing us no good. If we can help to settle the difficulty, we are willing to do so. We have every respect for our White friends, and we are a Christian people. The Indian Rights Association asked us to join in bringing these grievances before the government, for final settlement. We placed our claims in their hands, and we do not desire to hamper any of the Indians or other interested in the work. Any thing we can do for your Commission, we are willing to consider. We meet you in a spirit of good feeling and trust your deliberations will lead to a betterment of our condition. Our Council and our young men and women are all willing to do anything to advance the Land, which is not one people ignorant of the ways of the world. We have nothing but food feeling, as Christian brothers, to our fellow men, living on the islands.

We again bid you welcome to the homes of the Haida Nation, once the rulers of land and sea throughout this country. The thousands have been reduced to hundreds; but we hope to increase in numbers, now that we are enjoying to privileges of understanding that we must conform to certain rules, to increase in numbers. It was the

survival of the fittest in the days of our forefathers; it is the same today. We realize our weakness and ask the help of those who govern us. The governed must be satisfied with those placed in control of our affairs. **All we ask is justice and we pray that your visit will bring us nearer a settlement.** We hope your visit will be pleasant and that you will return to your homes with a good impression of the Indian Wards of the Haida Nation.

*James Sterling, Chief Councilor
on behalf of the Band.*

The Chairman in reply to the address said:

The Commission is very much obliged to you for this address. It gives us great pleasure to visit this village as well as to have had the opportunity of visiting the village of the members of your tribe residing on the Northern part of the Island. It is with pleasure we notice the progress you have made both here and at the other village to which I have referred, but it is no more than what was to be expected from the descendants of the people and ancestors from which you have descended. We are especially pleased with the appearance of your village. We have found wherever we went, a very much improved and advanced condition of things where there has been a resident missionary of the Christian denomination. **Perhaps the very best means of bringing about true civilization has been the Christian religion.** Christianity and Western individual effort that is, by the effort of each man in the tribe. **Another great aid to civilization is Commercial enterprise, and that again is never going to be got by lying down on your back and expecting the plums to fall into your mouth.** There never has been a white nation yet which has got ahead in that way. They have got there by working hard. Each man working for himself and his own ends. If you have claims which you have had. I hardly know how to express what I mean because I can hardly get a word that you will understand, which will express it. If you want to reach out reach out independent of the Government if you can. **I know that at present I am only going to mention one thing, contained in that address, and that is with respect to the question of what is called "Indian Title." All we can say with respect to that is, that it is not within**

our powers to deal with and we have therefore nothing whatever to do with it.

I want to congratulate you upon what seems to be under the circumstances, the prosperous conditions in which you are living. We all hope, whatever your claims may be, if they are right claims that justice will be done to you. We are much obliged to you for your wish expressed here, that we should enjoy a pleasant time in your village here, which we expect to have and to which your very excellent band of music and the other members of your tribe will contribute.

If you have any statements to make we will be glad to hear them.

At this point, a further address was handed in and read by Henry Green

JAMES STERLING to the Chairmen and other Dominion Commissioners:

Gentlemen:

We feel ourselves highly favored in having an opportunity of extending to you a welcome to our Island home.

We have often heard of Ottawa and of the men there in charge of Indian Affairs, but we congratulate you, that you at last, are the first sent by the Ottawa Government to whom we could bring our burdens and pour out our complaints.

We do not ask for, nor do we wish to get, what belongs to other people. We are content to enjoy what our fathers handed down to us.

Our hearts have been made heavy, as the years have passed, to see strangers come among us, stay a few days, put a stake in the ground and go away. This seemed strange to us at first, but stranger still when we were told that they sold their stakes for many thousands of dollars. It is too true Sirs, that most of the timber about our homes, the land, on which our fathers set their traps, and the streams from



HENRY GREEN

which our forefathers took their fish, have passed into the hands of strangers. White men have come and by settlement, loadmaking and fires have driven our game away.

We tried to make ourselves believe we were in our own country, but we are more and more reminded that what



PEOPLE FROM THE VILLAGE OF SKIDEGATE.

we supposed was ours is paid in many cases to belong to men who never saw these islands.

You; Gentlemen have come to us. We are glad of that, but we shall rejoice still more if after looking into our affairs you shall see and appreciate things from our standpoint. Many of our young men have been in Industrial schools where they learned farming; some of the wished to begin farming for themselves but as will be evident to you most of our reserves are not at all suitable for agriculture.

We have been told that the land outside of our small reserves is not for Indians. We supposed it was ours, but are surprised that we can neither pre-empt or purchase land anywhere in British Columbia. To us; this seems to be an injustice and a hardship. We have been told that we belong to the British Empire and that we are numbered among the subjects of the King. Yet, Sirs; we have been humiliated as the years have been going by, to know that the BC Government made no record of our births, marriages and deaths.

Most of our young men are more or less educated yet the franchise has been denied them. It was on account of what we have already mentioned and other troubles, that we collected money employed Lawyer Clarke to lay our claims before the Privy Council. We hope Gentlemen that as a

result of your visit the Government shall remove what has troubled us.

*Signed on behalf of
Skidegate Band Council J. Sterling,
Chief Councilor*

In reply to which the Chairman stated:

There are some matters in this address which are not in the other address. There is a good deal, which is not in the other address at all. There are some matters here upon which we can make suggestions to the Government, that is, it would be within our authority to do so, and we will take these matters into our consideration and make such recommendations as we think the circumstances justify.

AMOS RUSS: We are glad that you people from Ottawa and the other lawmakers are here, and we are here to put before you our troubles. The troubles, which we have experienced during past years. That as far back as ever we can remember, without any doubt at all, the Queen Charlotte Islands practically belong to the Indians. **It came about after a little while that the Islands were the Queen Charlotte Islands, but we don't know who gave them that name. As far back as we can remember we can claim that the Islands fairly belong to us and as far back as we can remember there was never any treaty with respect to this land, between the Government and the Indians. We have never had a fight for the Islands. No nation ever came and fought us for them and won them from us.** We don't know why the Government took them away from us. If we had had a Treaty with the Government we would not claim the Islands. When the first Missionaries arrived here, the three principal points they taught us, were these: Don't take things that belong to others. They taught us "Love one another: and don't kill anybody. These are the three points they taught us. These things they taught us out of the bible. We are glad that we kept the teachings of the missionaries who taught us these things, and as years have past on and on we have seen and know, that the Government has come in and sold our lands. What can we do? We have kept the teachings of the missionaries, "Don't

do any harm to others,” “Love one another,” and we are keeping these teachings yet. This will tell you that we have a good feeling and not hard feelings against anyone.

We laid our case in the hands of the lawyers and the Privy Council of England is taking up the Case, which I don't doubt that you people know. We are glad that we can say that we have seen people come in and take land among us and we have never had any trouble the same as the white people have. For instance, the Boers and the English fought over their land troubles. We have not fought because we have kept what the missionaries taught us, and what more it doesn't look manly to fight. Up at the North of the Island, there used to be villages and villages, right from North Island to the present village of Massett, these villages stood side by side, but at the present there is only one village there, namely Massett. North Island was so named by the Indians, and now the Government has called it Langara.

I can say that myself, if I took a piece of land and claimed it without any title to it, I would naturally call it another name and that is the case with North Island. At this end if the Island as far down as the Island extends, there were villages and villages side by side right to the furthest point and at the present time there is only village and the is Skidegate.

We know that day by day the Government is selling land far down this coast and also down the west coast of the Island. We know for a fact that the Government is selling this land and yet we can say that the Queen Charlotte Islands are ours. You can see right around the Island there are villages and villages and you can see our Totem poles which are the same to us as the white men's pre-emption stakes are to them.

We cannot take a step further in the question until we hear what our lawyer Clark has to say to us. **We cannot put any trouble before you people but we will hear and know later what to do.** We congratulate you gentlemen that you have taken the time and the trouble to visit our villages, for we thank you gentlemen very much. I cannot call myself a gentlemen before others, but this I know and claim, that I am a Christian Gentlemen. That is all I have to say.



AMOS RUSS

The Chairman to the Interpreter: Is he speaking on behalf of all the Indians here?

The Interpreter after consulting with Amos Russ. Yes.

The Chairman: Then understand that these Indians decline to make any other statements as to their grievances, before this Commission? (To the Interpreter) Ask him if he has the authority of all the Indians here, when he says: “We cannot take a step further in the question until we hear what Lawyer Clark has to say.”

The Interpreter then put this question to AMOS RUSS, who replied:

It is some 50 years ago since the surveyor came to lay out the Indian Reserves. He stated that the Indian Reserves were ours and no man could touch them. At the present day, we came to find out that the Government had practically located us here temporarily. Therefore we laid our claims before Lawyer Clark and left the matter in his hands, and he will take it before the Privy Council in England.

The Chairman to the Interpreter: But I want to know if he was speaking on behalf of all the Indians present just now or only in his behalf.



**A YOUNG GIRL AT
SKIDEGATE, CIRCA
1913.**

Photo taken by the
Royal Commission.

The Interpreter: Yes, he is speaking on behalf of all the Skidegate people.

The Chairman: I understood the Councilor to say, that the Privy Council were about to take action in this matter of the "Indian Title" to the land?

The Interpreter: Yes.

The Chairman: Does he mean by that the Court of the Privy Council is taking action?

The Interpreter: That is the understanding we got through the mail from Mr. Tate.

The Chairman: For more than 60 years I have been a lawyer and have been very familiar with the means of bringing cases before the Court of the Privy Council, and I know what state a matter must be in before it can go before the Privy Council. I am very much surprised to hear that you have had any advice of that sort, because I know that there is nothing in the case, which is in a position to go before the Privy Council at all so you must have been misinformed in some way or other. That is none of my business, I am only telling you

this for your information. Somebody is misleading you or you have misunderstood something.

The Chairman to the Interpreter: Tell them there is no necessity for taking further statements in view of what Councilor Russ has stated. Now if any of you wish to give testimony with respect to the character of your reserves, as to whether they are for cultivation or gardening of any sort, or as to any cattle or any stock you may possess, or any ship or rigs, the number of boats you own, launches or otherwise, how the different reserves laid off for you are used by you, or other matters of a similar nature. We will hear what testimony you wish to give. Of course I think it is right that you should understand that we would get this information somewhere else if you don't care to give it yourselves.

COUNCILOR JAMES STERLING: I know for what purpose you have come to this village. It will never do to go about it in a rough way, and talk it over in any sort of a way, as it is a very important thing, and it will

have to be done right, and before our people I would like to ask you this question, "How many of you gentlemen are here to represent the Government?"

The Chairman: There are five gentlemen on this Commission. This Commission is issued by the Dominion Government under the Great Seal of Canada, and signed by the Acting governor-general that Commission appoints us five gentlemen to act. Dr. McKenna & Mr. White has been appointed by the Dominion Government and Mr. Shaw and Mr. Macdowall have been appointed by the Provincial Government, and these four gentlemen have elected me as Chairman.

COUNCILOR JAMES STERLING: I know that the Dominion Government are on the look out to see that no one interferes with the Indians. I know for a fact that the Provincial Government at the present time is practically working right against the Indians. If it had not been for the late Queen who had supported and looked after our interests through the Dominion Government, we would now have been in even greater trouble. We are somewhat nervous. We feel just as though we cannot say what we want to say, because we do not know who is to represent the Indians, of the five who are present at the meeting, and we have got this idea that the two Governments, Provincial and Dominion are fighting over our lands, and therefore we are afraid to put the question before these gentlemen. I know what the Indian Reserves are all right, but although they are reserves set aside for the use of the Indians we are not allowed to do as we like in our own reserves. We have been somewhat cramped and crushed up and we cannot move round, as we want to. You gentlemen have asked us not to say anything about the Privy Council or Lawyer Clark.

The Chairman: I simply said that you had either been misled or that there had been some misunderstanding about the matter.

COUNCILOR JAMES STERLING: I would like to ask you gentlemen a question, and I must have an answer to it. I want to know above all things that the Queen Charlotte Islands and these reserves belong to?

The Chairman: As to the ownership of the Queen Charlotte Islands, the Indians claim to own the whole of the Islands. The Dominion Government and the British Columbia Government claim that both or one of them own the Indian reserves on these Islands, and the British Columbia government claims to own the whole of the lands on the Queen Charlotte Islands outside of the reserves, except those places which they have granted to private individuals. The Dominion Government doesn't claim any of the land on the Islands outside of the Indian Reserves, but the Indian reserves they claim for the Indians.

COUNCILOR JAMES STERLING: I would like to ask one more question. The Dominion Government and the BC Government between them, they own these Islands? I would like to ask this question. Why and in which way did they both get the Islands? If you could give us evidence of how they got the Islands, before all these people, we would be contented.

The Chairman: That is just the question, which you want the Privy Council to decide. I won't give an opinion in that respect. Let the Privy Council do it. I have had enough cases taken from my judgment to the Privy Council without having another one.

COUNCILOR JAMES STERLING: I know the time when Judge O'Reilly came to the Islands to stake the Reserves. I think it was in 1883 that the Reserve was laid out. Our fathers fully depended that there would be no trouble after the Reserves had been laid out. I thought it was already settled at the time when Judge O'Reilly staked the Reserves out, and I don't fully understand why you Commissioners are around here to look up cases of this kind, to see what is the trouble.

The Chairman: It would seem to be running through your mind that we have come here with the intention of depriving you of some of your reserves or of some portions of them. We have to a certain extent, considered the situation here and know pretty well what the character of the land is, and the nature of the reserves. We got sufficient information through sworn testimony to come to a certain conclusion with respect to that. I am authorized to state that the Commissioners have no



CHILDREN AT PLAY IN SKIDEGATE, CIRCA 1913.

Photo taken by the Royal Commission.

intention whatever of cutting off any reserves or portion of any reserve belonging to the Haida Tribes on the Island. We have come to the conclusion that you have no more land belonging to either band – Massett or Skidegate – than you reasonably require, and we are leaving the question of adding to your reserve, open until we hear what you have to say, if you wish to say it. When the reserves are dealt with, whether they are kept as they are, or additions made to them after this Commission gets through they cannot be changed without the consent of the Indians, and your interests in the land will not, as heretofore, be subject to any control or interference by the Government of British Columbia. Now if you desire to give testimony with respect to your reserves etc., we will be prepared to hear it.

PETER BROWN: On behalf of all the Skidegate people I would ask you to adjourn the meeting till after lunch. We will put before you what we want, and our ideas, after lunch. We would then like to put one straightforward question to you gentlemen.

NOTE BY MR. COMMISSIONER MACDOWALL

Commissioners Shaw and MacDowall had an interview with James Sterling and succeeded in convincing him that the members of the Commission were not biased in any way, and that they had no instructions from their respective Governments, irrespective of what is contained in the Commission.

SOLOMON WILSON: I want to say, really in regard to what you are here for, will this interfere with any of our lawyer questions.



SOLOMON WILSON

would not interfere ...

The Chairman: Who are the people who told you it would interfere?

SOLOMON WILSON: Mr. Tyson for one.

The Chairman: Mr. Tyson is not a member of the Commission, and we are not prepared to say whether it will or will not interfere with your other interests.

SOLOMON WILSON: Then you are leaving us to risk it?

The Chairman: Well, I will not tell you that it will, and I will not tell you that it will not, because I do not know.

The Chairman to the Interpreter: After hearing what this man has said to them, what conclusion have they come to with respect to giving testimony as the quality of the reserves, and as to any additional lands they may require, or any other matters affecting their reserves?

The Interpreter: Mr. Wilson's idea when he got up to ask you that question, as to whether anything that was stated would interfere with the matter lawyers Clark has got in hand, was he wanted to know if we would have the right to vote and we also wanted to ask you for 160 acres, and we wanted to find out if asking these things would interfere with our other business which lawyer Clark has in hand.

The Chairman: I am not prepared to say. It may or it may not.

SOLOMON WILSON: I want a true answer please.

The Chairman: I cannot give you any other answer.

SOLOMON WILSON: If we were to ask you for anything will it interfere with our other claims?

The Chairman: I say it may. I cannot say whether it will or not.

SOLOMON WILSON: Half of you people say it

The Chairman: I am not prepared to say whether it will or will not. I say it may.

The Interpreter: We have just got a telegram from Prince Rupert, from Peter Kelly, saying, "Make the Commissioners wait."

Mr. Shaw: Who is Peter Kelly?

The Interpreter: He is a member of this band, and one of our advisors. He is at present at New Westminster College, studying for the ministry. We would like the Commission to wait until he comes, as he had got a holiday on purpose to appear before the Commission.

NOTE BY THE CHAIRMAN

On being interrogated as to whether any person is prepared to testify as to the character of the reserves, the population thereof, and state as to the property on the reserves and the area of the reserves, I am asked if this will prejudice their rights as to the "Indian Title." **I stated that it may, and thereupon being again asked if any person would testify no one responded. I therefore hold that they do not wish to give testimony.**

The Chairman addressing the INDIANS: I don't wish it to be understood, that we intend to force our rights under this Commission. **If you do not wish to testify as to the reserves, but don't run away with the idea that the Commission is without power to act, because we could order witnesses to be summoned to give evidence before us, and if they refused to come we could arrest them, and bring them here, and when we got them before us, if they refused to testify we could imprison them, but we don't intend to take that course at all.** We don't desire to act in any unkind way towards the Indians. We want to maintain good feeling all round, but we are going to call witnesses ourselves, and that course having being entered on our books, whatever evidence we take would not prejudice you, because we will produce the evidence and you won't. If you call the witnesses it might prejudice you as I have stated. If we call the witnesses, it won't. That is all. Their tribe don't want any additions to their villages. Any evidence which the Indians gave in which they asked for increases on the Reserves might

prejudice their claims with respect to “Indian Title,” now we propose to call evidence that is called by us cannot prejudice your claim. Any evidence that is taken is taken at the distinct instance of the Commission.

PAUL JONES: I am pretty well on in age now, and I have experienced quite a lot of trouble in times gone by over our land, and seeing you people here today has brought back the old spirit again.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Realizing that the discussion on the land question would go nowhere, Henry Green changes the subject.

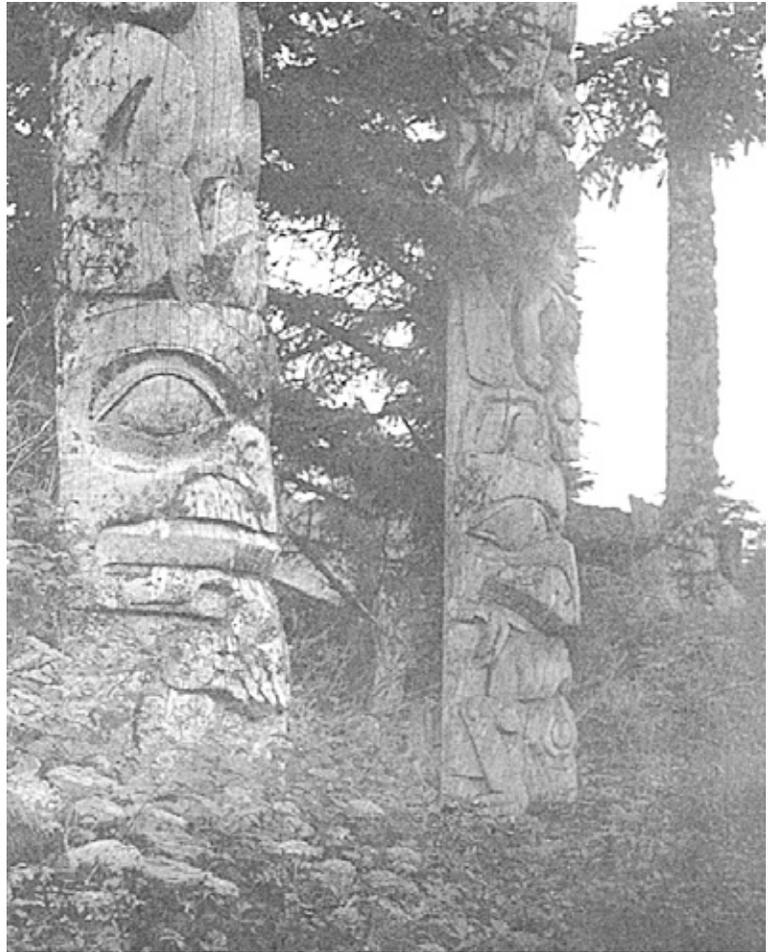
HENRY GREEN: Mr. Chairman and other Commissioners, I want to know if you can do anything towards helping us in a local matter. Right here in this village we have a musical band and we have hired a man from Victoria – Arthur Solomon – who has improved our band quite a lot, and we have gone to Prince Rupert three times and won the contest for the cup. The Indian Agent and Mr. Tyson have told us that the very next time we have a Band practice within the Reserve, they will put Arthur Solomon off the Reserve. Now what do you think about that? We will never have a better chance than this to put before you our grievance in this matter.

The Chairman: We will report this matter to the Government that is all we can do.

The Chairman: What have you to say regarding this matter Mr. Deasy?

Indian Agent Deasy: I might say that all I have done in connection with the Band Instructor has been to report to the Department of Indian Affairs, that he is not in my estimation a fit man to be allowed to live on the Reserve. I have carried out the instructions of the Department in the matter. A complaint was made to me regarding this man, and upon investigation I found out it was true, and the man had to go. The Band Instructor was informed that he could not live on the Reserve.

HENRY GREEN: You said you would not allow him to come on the reserve any more?



POLES AT KUNG

Indian Agent Deasy: Whom did I tell that to?

HENRY GREEN: To Willie Russ.

Indian Agent Daisy: (To the Commission) I might say that there has been considerable correspondence with the Department on this matter. All the letters are on file. I had my instructions from the Department and I have carried out those instructions in their entirety.

DR. McKenna: What was your reason for taking action in this matter?

Answer: He was a drinking man.

Question: Did he bring liquor on the Reserve?

Answer: No, he was living on the Reserve, which is contrary to the provisions of the Indian Act.



WILLIE RUSS

Question: Did he ever come onto the Reserve drunk?

Answer: Is there not a Bandmaster living on another Reserve who is a white man?

HENRY GREEN: If you are going to allow our Band instructor to be taken away from us, you might just as well take away the School Teacher.

Question: You reported this matter to the Department?

Answer: Yes. I reported that I did not wish him to live on the Reserve.

Question: Did you say anything in your report about his drinking?

Answer: I don't think so. I said that he was a man who I did not think should be on the Reserve.

Question: Was the reason because he was a drinking man?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Was this man a married man?

Answer: No, he was a single man, and was boarding with Willie Russ.

Question: Did you ever see him drinking?

Answer: I have seen him drinking.

Question: On the Reserve?

Answer: No.

Question: Did you ever know this man to commit an improper act on the Reserve?

Answer: No. I can state though, that someone very promi-

nent on the reserve objected to this man living on the reserve. I have no wish to mention names, as I don't want to drag anybody into this business at all.

Mr. Shaw to HENRY GREEN: Would you be willing to have this man arrested or put off the Reserve?

Answer: I did not say that. I said he might come on the Reserve to teach the band, but not to live on the reserve. He was on the Reserve today, and I introduced him to Mr. Young. He told me that the reason he was not teaching the band now was because there is "nothing in it".

HENRY GREEN: The reason why Mr. Solomon is here today is because we hired a gasoline boat to bring him here. It had been our intention to bring the band down to the boat to meet the Commission. We are short of one of our best cornet players, and Arthur Solomon can play that instrument pretty well. If you can give us any sort of an answer it is our intention to practice this winter for two or three months.

Mr. Shaw: (To Henry Green) Would you be willing to have this man live off the Reserve and come to teach your Band?

HENRY GREEN: No. He lives too far away and it would not be fair to ask him to walk 3 or 4 miles to and from his work each day for two or three months. A man likes to live where his work is.

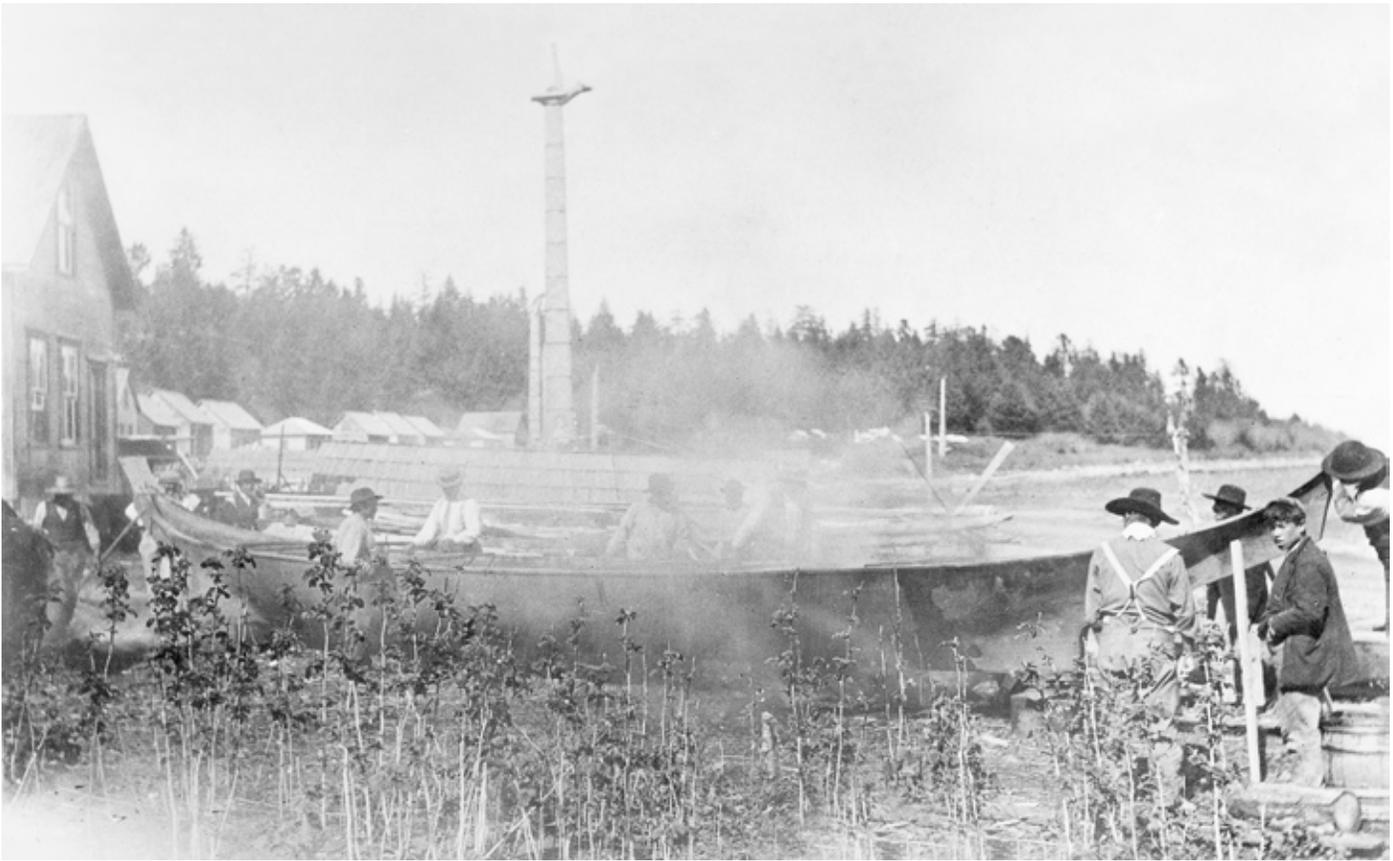
The Chairman: All we can do is report the matter to the Government.

Mr. Shaw: (To Indian Agent Deasy) When the complaints were made to you about this man, did you investigate and find out whether there was any truth in them?

Indian Agent Deasy: Yes, I did.

Indian Agent Deasy to the Commission: In regard to Arthur Solomon, I would like to ask this man (Henry Green) a question or two.

TO HENRY GREEN: Were you a member of the Band when the Cup was won in Prince Rupert the first time?



STEAMING A CANOE AT SKIDEGATE, CIRCA 1913.

Answer: Yes, I was.

Question: Was Solomon your leader on that occasion?

Answer: No, Arthur Moody was the leader of the Band on that occasion.

Question: You know the Arthur Solomon was there, but the reason he did not lead the Band on that occasion was because all the players had to be Indians, that is so far as the contest was concerned?

Answer: Yes.

Question: After the Cup was won and the concert was over, was there not some drinking in the Hall?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Was it champagne that was drunk?

Answer: Yes.

Question: And you had some?

Answer: Yes.

Dr. McKenna: How much did you have?

Answer: Just one drink.

Question: Did Mr. Solomon get this liquor for you?

Answer: No.

Question: Did he himself give you any liquor to drink?

Answer: No. It was ready for us when we got home to our Hotel.

NOTE: And so again the Commission was sidetracked exposing the jealousy of the Indian Agent toward Arthur Solomon who taught music in Skidegate.



SKIDEGATE BAND, 1915

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