

BLEEDING DAY AND NIGHT: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE GRAND TRUNK PACIFIC RAILWAY ACROSS TSIMSHIAN RESERVE LANDS¹

JAMES A. MCDONALD
Department of Ethnology
Royal Ontario Museum
100 Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario,
Canada, M5S 2C6

ABSTRACT/RESUME

The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway built a mainline across Tsimshian lands in northern British Columbia beginning in 1908. This paper outlines the complex process of land surrender and claims for damages of the Tsimshian of Kitsumkalum. The author suggests that the construction of the railway and the treatment of these claims contributed to a change of Kitsumkalum from a viable independent community to a position of economic dependency and subordination.

Le Grande Ligne Pacifique de chemin de fer a construit une voie principale à travers les terres Tsimshian au nord de Colombie britannique en 1908. Cet article met en relief le processus complexe de renonciation à la terre et de revendications pour les dommages chez les Tsimshian de Kitsumkalum. L'auteur suggère que la construction du chemin de fer et la façon dont les revendications ont été traitées ont contribué à la transformation des Kitsumkalum d'une communauté viable et indépendante en une situation de dépendance et de subordination économiques.

INTRODUCTION

Link Of Empire

The beginning of the 20th century was a time of ambitious optimism for Canada. The economy was on the upswing and the Dominion government was returning, once again, to the business of "nation building". With the west viewed as a land for opportunity and profit, the possibility of laying a second transcontinental railway was seized as an instrument for Canadian penetration into the territories of the northwest. This time a line would cross northwards, with a terminus at or near Port Simpson in British Columbia. If successful, the resources and wealth of the vast western areas would be made available for intensive development.

For those with an even wider vision, the project would create a "link of Empire" to provide Britain and Eastern Canada with a new route to the Orient. Trade would be secured and the interests of the Empire protected against other commercial nations (Lower, 1939:16 and 75ff).

In time, all of this was achieved, more or less. The railway was built and great quantities of wealth were exploited. Unfortunately, the anticipated prosperity was not evenly distributed. In the process of realizing the new national dream, many small communities were disturbed and badly disrupted (for example, see Leonard, 1988). Crippled, often broken, many of these communities never recovered from the impact of the project. As a plan for economic development, the scheme had a major flaw: it was designed to profit a small number of an already powerful class of people but gave little to local populations. In the hands of those who controlled the project, the railway's original task of nation building effectively became a mere consequence of the development, not its guiding light.

Particularly hard hit were the indigenous populations: the Indians, Metis, and other long time residents who lived throughout the land the railway crossed. These groups of people had economies and life styles different from the one the railway had come to represent, and the requirements of the Company and of its subsidiaries often came into conflict with the needs and desires of the Native economies.

This paper describes the experiences one Indian village had with the project. Kitsumkalum was located near the western starting point of the Mountain Section of the railway and was home to one of the first Native groups in British Columbia to encounter the project directly. The coming of the railway was a major event in the history of the Tsimshian people, one that left a legacy of social and economic disruption with which the Kitsumkalum Village administration is still struggling. For them, as for many other communities, the railway was the thin edge of a wedge that would quickly break open their territory for industry. The community of Kitsumkalum was profoundly influenced by the construction of the railway and the history of this event is an important element for understanding the

nature of Kitsumkalum today.

The significance of the study of history in unravelling the contemporary social problems facing the Aboriginal peoples of Canada is well established in Native Studies (Brody, 1988:xiv). Trigger has identified dependency, coercion, and domination as key concepts for understanding the unequal relations between Aboriginal peoples and Euro-Canadian society (Trigger, 1988:37). Through the close examination of historical details, such as the ones described below, we can determine how the development process failed Aboriginal people, such as Tsimshians, by progressively marginalizing them within Canadian society.

We must keep in mind that the Aboriginal population was not always in a marginal position with regard to Canadian society. Historians have recognized the role Aboriginal people played in shaping Canada with the so-called Laurentian hypothesis, which characterizes early Indian-Canadian relations as governed by an economic alliance (Trigger, 1976:2). However, as many have also noted, by the end of the nineteenth century, the Indian had "become a peripheral element to Canada's history" (Patterson, 1972:33). This historical pattern is a generic one and as such is useful in characterizing 19th century relationships between the Tsimshians and the emerging Anglo-American economy on the North Pacific Coast. Elsewhere, I have demonstrated that the alliance involving the Tsimshians continued beyond the fur trade into the early period of the accumulation of industrial capital. Nonetheless, it was quickly undermined as the indigenous Aboriginal human resources (such as labour and business acumen) became less critical to the expansion of capital than the natural resources in their territories (McDonald, 1985; n.d.). Replacing the alliance, in the economic history of Canada, was a frontier mentality in which Aboriginal concerns were impediments to progress. As Fisher has pointed out, the new social and economic order was not as malleable as that represented by the fur trade. It was unyielding, aggressive, and unresponsive to Aboriginal societies (Fisher, 1977:211). Unlike historians of contact relations in British Columbia such as Fisher, but like the anthropologist Knight (1978), my emphasis is on industrialization and capital accumulation in northwestern British Columbia as a more critical context than settlement for interpreting the change.

The following account of the early relations between Kitsumkalum and the railway discusses the specific impact the project had on one of the Aboriginal communities along its route, and presents information concerning the experiences Indians had with economic development during the industrial period in British Columbia. The events described below contributed to the transition of Kitsumkalum from an independent community, with a viable economic formation that took advantage of many new economic opportunities during the 19th century (McDonald, 1985), into a state of economic dependency and political subordination, with the associated social, demographic, and cultural problems experienced during

the 20th century (McDonald, 1985; Canada, 1980). Many other works have described the history of the railway from the viewpoint of the company and the governments involved. This account is about the social structure of development from the Aboriginal viewpoint. Although the events occurred at the turn of the century, in the context of contemporary controversies over development currently being discussed throughout British Columbia (M'Gonigle, 1988) and Canada (Richardson, 1989), the past does not seem so distant and what happened eighty years ago at Kitsumkalum retains a relevancy.

A Brief History of the Railway

To achieve the goal of northern development, the Canadian government entrusted the railway project to private business concerns which would organize it as a profit making venture. Accordingly, the Cabinet in Ottawa accepted a proposal from the Grand Trunk Railway Company, Canada's oldest existing line, and Charles M. Hays, one of the top railway tycoons of the day, to form a new organization: the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company (the GTP). These people, relying heavily upon government grants, would build the railway from Winnipeg to a new townsite on Kaien Island, now Prince Rupert (Lower, 1975:96ff; Bowman, 1971:12ff).

As businessmen, the directors of the Company expressed pleasure that their surveys in British Columbia had revealed "vast areas of the richest soil, with splendid climatic conditions" (Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company, 1911:5). Company fliers praised the Kitsumkalum Valley, in particular, for its well watered bench lands "capable of producing enormous yields of small fruits" (Ibid.:11). Other areas in the Skeena River District, both large and small, were described as potential agricultural, fruit growing, and dairy farming areas which could be expected to "yield excellent returns" (Ibid.). The company predicted that "land-seekers and mineral and timber prospectors" would flock to the north for <169>the agricultural and other natural and diversified economic resources<170> (Ibid.:5). The prophesy was made good, as American and European capital poured into "New British Columbia" in the aftermath of the railway (Ormsby, 1958:357).

The first sod of the Mountain Section was ceremoniously turned into Prince Rupert on May 7, 1908. Actual construction began shortly after at Copper River (then called Newtown), on a section for which the Company had acquired a \$5,000 a mile subsidy from the provincial government. By March 3, 1910, the grading and culverts were finished in the first 100 mile section to Copper River. Between July 7 and September of the same year, steel had been laid 70 miles up the Skeena River Valley from the Zenardi Rapids on the coast. This portion was considered one of the most difficult portions of the route (Lower, 1939:76), but later, when work reached Kitselas Canyon, construction slowed to a snails pace while tunnels were

completed. Beyond that point, steel was laid at an average rate of one mile a day.

The eastern and western tracks met in April, 1914 (Lower, 1939:77) and the first train from Winnipeg reached Prince Rupert a few days later. Regular freight and passenger services began later that summer. After two decades of planning, the Pacific was accessible and businessmen from around the world were finally poised to take advantage of the resources of the north.

A Disappointment

Hopes ran high for the prosperous future that the venture promised, but the government's decision to accept the project as a profit venture for private capital quickly led to many conflicts that weakened the original dream. Profit making replaced nation building as the prime motive, as the Company built what Robin called its rails of steel (1972, Chapter IV) and tried to establish its economic dominance along the way (Leonard, 1988). A long list of administrative, judicial, and moral problems plagued the railroad until the government finally took it over in the 1920s. By then, the "stumbling incompetence" of management (Leonard, 1988:361) had left the project a mighty disappointment to many of those who had held a grander vision, if not, perhaps, to those who had profited during the construction heyday.

The chief contractor with responsibility for the Mountain Section of the road was Fowley, Welsh, and Stewart. They, in turn, sublet small portions, sometimes only a few miles in length, to other contractors. This spread responsibility for the work thinly, which affected quality and usually meant more difficult conditions for the workers (Lower, 1939:66). Strikes became common and bitter. In one case, over 12,000 workers walked off the job in British Columbia, following the example of the crews at Hazelton. The Company reacted by calling troops from Edmonton, "to protect Company property" (Lower, 1939:129).

The Company gained an evil reputation with its numerous highhanded and often illegal actions. As Judge Mabee of the British Columbia Courts said, the Company was not above a "breach of faith of the worse character" to achieve its ends, or of obtaining land through the "grossest deceit" (Lower, 1939:118). One example of how far the company was willing to go to obtain land for itself was the pressure it placed on provincial governments. When Premier McBride of British Columbia refused to accept the Company's land demands, the Grand Trunk Pacific decided not to begin construction from the coast eastward, thus preventing the development of many profitable business deals among the province's business men (Lower, 1939:102).

In cases where the GTP required Indian Reserve land in British Columbia, the purchases were arranged by its Grand Trunk Pacific Town

and Development Company. With the help of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), and sometimes the local missionaries as well, these purchases were made with a minimum of trouble. An example was the transfer of the original Fort George Reserve to the Company. The subsequent development of the land into the city of Prince George made the Company a profit that exceeded \$1 million from the first sale of lots in 1913 (a return of some 800%), and more in later years. This profit was earned simply by subdivision and auction (Lower, 1939:117). The Band, on the other hand, received \$150,000 plus a new smaller reserve (Lower, 1939:116).

Another example involved a major purchase, originally to be 32,000 acres, from the Tsimshian Reserve near Prince Rupert. The politics of this deal are an especially important detail in the history of the project. At the time, provincial consent was required for such transactions concerning Indian Reserve land, a lever the province used in negotiations (and, partially, in retaliation against the Company's earlier refusal to build from the coast). The agreement which finally secured provincial consent stipulated that construction begin from Prince Rupert eastward and that the Company accept other conditions intended to benefit provincial businessmen (Lower, 1939:103; Bowman, 1971:12-13). One of the intended results, which quickly followed the announcement, was a rush to obtain timber licenses along the Skeena River (Ormsby, 1958:355) which displaced Tsimshian economic development and ignored their land claims (McDonald, 1985).

Following this agreement, talks began with the Tsimshians in February, 1906. With the active co-operation of Indian Agent Morrow and Bishop Du Vernet, the GTP was able to push the deal quickly to completion after five days of bargaining. The Tsimshians had originally refused to sell the whole Reserve to the Company, but faced with combined forces of God, the Law, and Business, they acquiesced to the sale of 13,519 acres for \$7.50 an acre (Lower, 1939:143). In comparison, the Fort George Indians later received over \$115 per acre, plus land.

These were not isolated instances. Before the railway was finished, the Company had obtained millions of dollars in subsidies from the Dominion and Provincial governments, gouged numerous municipalities, acquired vast parcels of land through grant or purchase, and caused tremendous speculation over other tracts to the point that almost all of the agricultural land along its route was taken up for speculation (Lower, 1939:111ff; Ormsby, 1948:359), to the detriment of any Native claims over title.

The transcontinental railway had promised regional economic development and did create a short term construction boom for labour and businessmen alike. In the tiny settlement of Kitselas the temporary population sometimes surged to 1,500 people (Asante, 1972:86). Unfortunately before the railway was completed the country slid into economic recession, taking the railway project with it (Morton,

1972:417,433). Within a few years Canada's entire railway system would nearly collapse. The resulting crisis made the problems associated with the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific seem unimportant in comparison, and with the coming turmoil of the times, the issues were soon forgotten.

Kitsumkalum in 1908

At the turn of the century, the people of Kitsumkalum were scattered and living in a number of locations, including Kitsumkalum Village, Zimagord Reserve, Port Essington, Metlakatla, Port Simpson, Kispiox Village, and the Nass. Few families stayed in one location all year round, preferring to travel to work for wages, or to hunt, fish, or trap. Others operated small stores or practiced crafts. In other words, they did whatever they could to make a living.

Nonetheless, the people of Kitsumkalum maintained their ancestral ties, continuing to return to their homes in Kitsumkalum Valley where, nestled in the forest that cloaked the black mountains, they harvested food from the land as their grandparents had done for years before them. There, they preserved salmon in their smoke houses and made preparations for winter. They also planted crops. Nearly all the families had small gardens which they tended, and which they had tended for generations. Major Downie commented on Kitsumkalum's agricultural habits in 1859:

A large stream called Kitchumsala (sic) comes from the north; the land on it is good and well adapted for farming; here the Indians grow plenty of potatoes (Downie,1859:72).

This was their economy at the end of the 19th century. Some of the leaders and elders at this time, like Solomon Johnson, had received their chiefly titles before there were surveys and reserves, in the days when the Tsimshian still acted as a sovereign people. Much of the culture remained, but in 1908 there had already been dramatic changes.

One of the fundamental changes occurred with the alienation of their land in 1891. In return, three reserves were allotted to the Kitsumkalum Indian Band by the Indian Reserve Commission, although little of the Valley was occupied or otherwise used by Euro-Canadians.

Another change involved the abandonment of the old village at the canyon of the Kitsumkalum River in preference for the new one at the mouth, as the focus of life shifted towards the new economy forming on the coast and along the Skeena River (L. Hayward, interview,1980). The growth of industries and markets drew people to the Skeena in search of work and supplies. The new technology of the river boat, which was replacing Indian freight canoes, was restricted to routes along the Skeena.

The river boat landing spots were increasingly convenient places to live, especially for families who travelled to or from the coastal canneries for the fishing season. Additional pressure to move came from the Department of Indian Affairs, which was eager to bring people out of areas difficult for its agents to reach, and to centralize communities as much as possible for purposes of schooling and administration. After the move, members of the community still camped in the Kitsumkalum Valley and the adjacent Zimagord Valley to fish, hunt or trap, but the Skeena River had become the important focus.

The location chosen for the new village was well situated. The lands were flat, fertile, and well-wooded for fuel and game. Two clear streams flowed into the rivers, and fish were abundant. In the past, the location had been a minor residential site for Kitsumkalum and a camping spot for travellers en route to the old settlement areas of the Valley. The community still had access to its ancestral resources.

Sixty-six people were officially registered at Kitsumkalum in 1895, and ninety-eight were on the Band list of 1916 (Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Reports), giving Kitsumkalum one of the larger censuses for the Tsimshian "tribes" in the early part of the century. (Garfield, 1939:333 reported only one of the nine tribes living in the village of Port Simpson to be larger in 1935.) The figures seem low and must be used with caution. In 1980, I estimated that the official Band population of one hundred represented only 20-25% of the actual community (McDonald, 1985). At the time of the above census, many people from Kitsumkalum were already living near Port Essington canneries.

The year construction began at Copper River (1908), at least nine family groups lived in the village of Kitsumkalum, headed by Stephen Wood, Benjamin Bennett, Arthur Kennedy, Philip Roberts, Margaret Kennedy, Solomon Johnson, Charles Nelson, David Starr, James Pierce. These people, and probably Walter Wright as well, had property in the village, often fronting the Skeena River. Other families were headed by Mark Bolton, Peter Nelson, Thomas Wesley, Robert Wesley, William Starr, Matilde Pollard, and a number of single people. (For a discussion of the social structure see McDonald, 1985.)

Some of these residents had houses and other buildings, while other people seem only to have had gardens. Stephen Wood, for example, had a log house on his cleared lot, a work shed and a dog house. His family tended a small garden, probably growing crops like potatoes, carrots, turnips, cabbages, and so on. The Woods also had a smoke house for curing their winter supply of salmon. Benjamin Bennett had a house and a garden on the Kisumkaylum² Reserve, and a camp at Zimagord from which he hunted and trapped. Mark Bolton also had a garden which his family planted every spring, on land given to him by his grandmother (E. Spalding, interview, 1979).

The arrival of the new century was an important time for these people, for with it came a period of drastic change. Industry was about to burst into their peaceful valley, bringing settlers, workers, businessmen, and government officials. Within a lifetime, the land would change beyond recognition. Hunters would find it difficult to identify their territories. The fish would disappear from many of the streams and rivers, and it would no longer be possible for the community to live an independent life on the land that had supported their ancestors for so many generations. These changes had begun in their fathers' times with the opening of the first cannery at Port Essington, and they are still going on.

The question of Aboriginal rights was important to the Kitsumkalum who were dealing with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. Direct evidence comes from an old diary written by a Kitsumkalum leader which mentions, without elaboration, a meeting held May 13, 1911 in Kitsumkalum concerning the land question in Kitsumkalum Valley (Kennedy, n.d.). There is no record of the discussion, but the Tsimshian had never been satisfied with the way their land rights had been treated, and had organized protests several times. The more prominent events included a delegation of chiefs who argued their case before the Premier of British Columbia in 1887; a 1912 meeting between Prime Minister Laurier and delegations of British Columbia Indians in Prince Rupert to discuss questions of Native title (Ware, 1974:58); and a 1913 meeting between government and local chiefs in the Tsimshian village of Hartley Bay to discuss Aboriginal title to their ancestral lands (Campbell, 1984:22). The neighboring, and often related Nisga'as had formed their Nisgha Land Committee in 1908 and drafted the "Nishga petition" which they formally adopted in 1913 to demand legal settlements. Throughout British Columbia the land movement was growing and becoming better organized to fight the Canadian system. In 1915, the "Allied Tribes of British Columbia" was formed by Interior Salish groups to support the Nishga Petition (Drucker, 1958:95). The result was a series of commissions (such as the McKenna-McBride Commission of 1913-1916 and the 1926 Joint Committee) which were established to examine Indian protests of land policies and the reserve system. Pressures for a resolution of the land issues mounted until 1927 when the Indian Act was amended to ban the raising of funds for pressing land claims (Cassidy and Dale, 1988). These comments describe an aspect of the political climate surrounding the arrival of the railroad. Although in contemporary political terminology the story I am about to relate deals with specific claims affecting reserve lands, the people of Kitsumkalum were also worried about their broader, comprehensive land claim to their Aboriginal territories. Unfortunately, the available information only provided occasional clues to place the specific incident into the broader land question.

First Encounters: With or Without Permission

When the work crews entered Kitsumkaylum (I.R. 1) in the summer of 1908, they had already marched across eight reserves in the North Coast Agency without permission.

Procedurally, the railway company was required to place with the government a certified copy of right of way plans for each reserve to be crossed. This was to avoid difficulties during construction and to identify what effects the crossing would have on the reserve. The company was also required to leave with the government a deposit of money to be used in settling any claims concerning the right of way. Both steps were to be completed prior to the granting of permission to enter the reserve, but in the summer of 1908 the Grand Trunk Railway was still remiss.

The village leaders protested to Ottawa the arrival of the work crews and focused on the procedural matter to assert their rights. Eventually, albeit after the fact, the railway company made the required official application for permission to traverse Kitsumkalum's two reserves of Kitsumkaylum and Zimagord.

The Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) received an application in January, 1909, but was unable to process it due to the unsettled problem of Indian title in British Columbia. (Then, as now, the land question was complicated by a dispute between two levels of government, Provincial and Dominion. This prompted the appointment of the Royal Commission in 1913.) In the meantime, apparently to facilitate the progress of the railway, the DIA agreed to push ahead with an evaluation of compensation for the land for which application had been made (35.99 acres). Doing so was intended to prevent any unnecessary "delay [until] the time this Department will be in a position to deal with the matter" of title.

The final surveys for the rights of way were made in 1922 and the original figures for the acreage required from both reserves were corrected. The final results removed 30.30 acres from Kitsumkaylum Reserve (down from the original survey of 32.94 acres), and 3.05 acres from Zimagord Reserve (up from 3.01). A total of 33.31 acres were thus alienated to the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company.

Compensation for this land was paid, in 1923, at the rate of \$45 per acre, giving the Band \$1,498.95 (i.e., 1,363.50 and 135.45 for the Kitsumkaylum and Zimagord Reserves respectively). Whether or not this was a fair price would require further research, but some figures are available for a comparison of prices for one acre:

Tsimshian Reserve 1906:	\$7.50 (Lower, 1939:143)
Fort George 1910:	approximately \$115 (Lower, 1939:116)
Skeena River District lands	
-1911:	\$6.50 to \$30 Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company, 1911:11)
-1911, partially cleared:	over \$30 (Ominica Herald, 1911:11)
-1911, expected soon:	\$50-\$150 (Ominica Herald, 1911:11)
-1919:	\$8 to \$30 (Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company, 1919:5)
Prince George (lots), 1913:	\$120-\$10,200 (Lower, 1939:117)

Obviously these are only indications of market value. Values would vary by area from year to year. Prices paid before 1911 would have to be estimated without the benefit of an established market and with an eye to a speculative future, for example the sale of subdivided lots in Prince George.

Charting the sequence of events leading to the transfer of Kitsumkalum's land is revealing of the power relationships involved (see Table 1). The legal transactions flowed from the 1891 decision of the Indian Reserve Commission which allocated three Indian Reserves to Kitsumkalum. The reserve boundaries were confirmed by the Royal Commission in 1916 (The Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, 1916:589) and the Commission's report was accepted by the Dominion Government through Order-in-Council #1265 in 1924 and by British Columbia in 1938 through Order-in-Council #1036.

Parallel to this sequence, but not synchronized with it, was the construction schedule, which began in 1908. The following year, the company received a recommendation accepting its proposed rights of way by Order-in-Council #2026 and construction on the Reserves was finished in 1910. The Company then received patent to the rights of way from the Dominion by Order-in-Council #1006, dated 1928.

The dates of these transactions raise at least three serious concerns each of which has moral, legal, and political implications. First, when the two governments accepted the report of the Royal Commission and settled the land question as it pertained to reserve boundaries, they were in fact accepting boundaries which already had been altered. The original reserve allotments had been of minimal size and of restricted economic potential, but the railway project further reduced the potential. Aside from the technicalities of the confirmation process, the Dominion government had a fiduciary obligation in its responsibility to its legal "wards", which does not seem to have been fulfilled.

Second, according to legal arrangements between the British Columbia and Dominion governments, any land taken from an Indian reserve was to revert to the province. In this case, the land was transferred directly to the railway company. It should be noted that the application and

recommendation for acceptance by the Dominion are all dated prior to the McKenna-McBride Agreement, signed on September 24, 1912. That 1912 agreement allowed the Royal Commission to handle any reductions to reserves for public purposes through Interim Reports (Ware, 1974:14-17). As both Order-in-Council 2026 and the railway construction predated the agreement, the rights of way land would not have properly involved the Commissioners and any transactions which occurred should have caused the land to revert to British Columbia rather than to the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company.

Third, when the 1938 provincial Order-in-Council was passed, it specified that lands taken from Indian reserves for public purposes should not affect improvements already made upon the lands.

nevertheless...no such resumption (of lands for public convenience) shall be made of any lands on which any buildings may have been erected, or which may be in use as gardens or otherwise for the more convenient occupation of any such buildings (Order-in-Council 1036).

The paths of the rights of way, some twenty years earlier, had destroyed dwelling houses, smoke houses, woodsheds, dog houses, cleared lots, and gardens. These were listed by Indian Agent Perry in 1911 in an effort to determine the amount of compensation to be deducted from the railway company's damage deposit. Seven families are mentioned in his list of people being directly affected by construction, i.e., as being within the path of the roadway, but others who suffered damages were never listed or compensated. One example of this later type was the loss of gardens when rubble from blasting covered them, making them <169>hard as cement<170> and of no further use (E. Spalding, interview, 1979). The damage inflicted by the right of way over Kitsumkaylum conflicted with the final resolution of the reserve question.

Trespassing and Camping Out³

The company operated two camps on Kitsumkalum's I.R. 1 for their crews. One was for a subcontractor, Mr. Washtock and Company (misspelled as Bostick or Wostock in Department of Indian Affairs correspondence, see Lower, 1939:68 for names of subcontractors in the area). This camp was on the reserve from June, 1908 to about September, 1911. The other camp, for a group of Grand Trunk Pacific engineers under Messrs. Mulville and Bowsworth, existed at about the same period. There is no record of permission being requested to use the reserve or of any explanation why they did not use other available Crown lands, equally as suitable but unoccupied, which were in the immediate area.

The Band, acting in its own interests, secured a promise from Mr. Dempster, an official of the railway to pay a rent and, after the subcontractor's crew left, to allow the camp buildings to become the property of the Band.

All was in order after the crews vacated the site, at least until engineers employed by the company were discovered cutting timber from the reserve for firewood. When the Band asked them to stop, the engineers defiantly tore down the camp buildings instead.

Kitsumkalum then demanded compensation for the loss of their newly acquired property. Department of Indian Affairs Agent Perry supported the Band and informed the company that the requested \$50 annual rent was fair.

For two years the matter lay unsettled. When the Department of Indian Affairs pressed it, the railway paid the rent without dispute, apparently because it had lost the file. They did not, however, give compensation for the destroyed buildings. For whatever reasons which have now been lost, the DIA did not pursue the matter any further.

Borrow Pit⁴

In the spring of 1911, the people living at Kitsumkalum again had to complain to the Department of Indian Affairs. This time the company was illegally removing gravel for ballast (used in constructing the railway).

The DIA did not respond quickly, but when it did, it advised the railway during the following summer to acquire additional reserve land for the Borrow pit (or gravel pit as we would call it today). This type of transaction was permitted under the Indian Act, and did not require the consent of the Band. The matter could be arranged in Ottawa, simply between the Indian Superintendent and the lawyer for the Grand Trunk Pacific. Forty dollars was suggested as a fair price for the acre of land, \$5.00 less than the adjacent right of way.

Kitsumkalum's representatives protested the arrangement. In an eloquent argument they noted that because North American Indians were not allowed to acquire Crown land under British Columbia law, except by special government consent, they effectively could not replace the lost land. Therefore, they argued, the acre of gravel was worth much more than what the company was offering. The argument impressed the Agent and may have had some effect in protecting the size of the reserve. There was no further communication on the subject for two years. Then, in 1912, the railway began to make final arrangements for purchase at \$40.

Agent Perry upheld Kitsumkalum's interests during a Departmental investigation and managed to find compromise that allowed the Company to take gravel, yet left ownership of the land with the Band (D.I.A. 986/31-2-7-1). With a settlement in hand and the affair nearly brought to a

conclusion, the Grand Trunk Pacific wrote the DIA in May, 1912 telling them not to bother proceeding.

Our company has removed all the gravel that it requires from this land, and will not have occasion to take any more therefrom. There will be no necessity for the issue of the patent (letter from Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company to Department of Indian Affairs).

The company had finished with the area and official permission was no longer required. Later, forty dollars was routinely deducted from the company's damage deposit and eventually placed into Band funds. As to the timber removed from above the gravel, the Department apparently considered that an acceptable loss. No additional consideration was given for it.

Timber Wealth Lost⁵

As the company was illegally removing gravel from near its recommended right of way, another Grand Trunk Pacific crew was helping itself to a substantial amount of timber, again without the necessary permit or offer of payment.

According to the contractor responsible, these trespasses occurred on I.R. 1 and 3 between 1908 and 1910, the period of construction. Kitsumkalum's complaint was forwarded to Ottawa in 1913. The delay between the time of the offense and the recording of the complaint may have been due to negotiations over payment. Kitsumkalum displayed such patience throughout the construction of the railway. In this case it proved to be a serious handicap for the final outcome.

The Band was not entirely opposed to having timber cut, so long as they were fairly compensated for the loss of part of a valuable resource. They requested a stumpage of 50 cents per tree from the Company.

The government's response was slow. An official estimate of the damage was not made until the following December (1914), well over a year after Ottawa received notice of complaint. Agent Perry reported to his superiors that 1,900 trees had been cut from I.R. 1 and 137 from I.R. 3, "principally cottonwood and mostly small" (letter, Dec. 29, 1914). He disagreed with Kitsumkalum's requested stumpage, and felt 25 cents would be adequate payment for "the Indians". According to him, the trees had been used mainly as ties for a light, temporary railway needed during construction. As later became known, this usage was only part of the offense: many had been cut for camp fuel and other purposes.

Perry also noted that an additional loss of trees had occurred at the borrow pit but did not feel those should be charged to the Company,

presumably because they were already negotiating for the gravel under the trees. The Department also excused the Company from the necessity of paying for any trees its crews used for fuel.

The Railway replied to these requests and grants in March, 1915, claiming it was impossible to investigate the estimated loss until the snow conditions improved. That summer, the Company had the land cruised and by August 6 its engineer was ready to dispute the Band's claim. He began his argument with a statement that only 901 trees had been cut beyond the limits of the right of way (724 on I.R. 1, and 177 on I.R. 3). Furthermore, he blamed the Indians and other, unknown persons for cutting some of those trees, so that the Company's responsibility was much reduced. He then concluded with a final denial of any responsibility to compensate the Band, on a basis that contractors had done the damage and they should be the ones responsible for the damages. It was a thorough argument and his intention was clearly to discredit Kitsumkalum's claim, but many of the comments in his letter were in conflict with previous and later information.

The engineer was willing to go further to defend the Company and mentioned in his closing remarks that two Indian houses which remained in the right of way were being tolerated by the Company. Although he failed to mention that the Company still did not hold title to the land, he did suggest that the Department of Indian Affairs might want to draw up leases for those houses with provision, of course, for a "nominal" rent from the Indians.

The houses being used to intimidate the Band were not worth the threat. One, belonging to Benjamin Bennett, had been abandoned and allowed to fall down, probably because of the pending loss of land for the right of way. The other one, the Starr building, was located just six feet inside the right of way, hardly a disturbance to a track centred 94 feet further away. The Company was only showing its pettiness with this strategy. After all, nearly five years had passed since the first train had rolled through Kitsumkalum and the Company had not found it necessary to complain about the presence of the houses. (These structures are visible as small boxes on the railway right of way plan. A third box on the plan was not mentioned in the correspondence and may have been one of the houses destroyed outright by construction.)

In reply to the Company's damage estimate, the local Dominion Constable, who seemed miffed at the Grand Trunk Pacific, stood by the original cruise of 2,037 trees. He also noted that the Company had received the benefit of the doubt in some cases and that an even higher estimate could have been made by him. So confident was the Constable on this point that he challenged the Company to come with him to the reserves where he would point out the additional stumps.

The Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa responded more gently to the Company. The officials did not press the Constable's offer for a tour of the reserves, although they did maintain his original estimate as the official

one. Following the example of the Constable and another point, the Department gave the Company the benefit of the doubt as to who was responsible for paying the stumpage. Accordingly, the bill was sent to the contractors, Fowely, Welch and Stewart, as the Company had instructed.

The contractors did not bother to dispute the claim. They simply refused to pay it, claiming that over five years had passed and the claim was therefore a dead letter. Agreeing that the contractors were within their rights, the DIA turned once again to the Company for direction.

Then, suddenly, all the delays and negotiating came to an end with Fowely, Welch and Stewart accepting qualified responsibility. They agreed to pay but insisted that the circumstances, mainly the age of the claim, demanded special consideration. Therefore, they said, they would only accept the estimate of damages made by the Company. In addition, they demanded consideration for the fact they had sub-contracted the job. Those sub-contractors were identified as the people truly responsible and thus as those who should pay the damages. However, they reasoned, as that option was impossible, Fowely, Welch and Stewart would agree, generously, to pay one half of the estimate. It would be interesting to know the reason for this change in mind - was it a strategy on the part of the contractors, and others, to keep their losses down? There is no definite explanation in the records.

In the end, Kitsumkalum was forced to accept \$71.68 instead of their original claim for \$1,018.50. They also had to live with the apparent "generosity" of the contractors, in the face of much greater losses. The Band's reaction to this conclusion was not recorded, but the attitudes of the other participants can still be found in the official correspondence.

The contractors were dismayed at accepting any loss to their profits. However, satisfied at having saved nearly \$1,000, they turned attention away from their victory and vented their anger at the government by focusing attention on the "negligence of the Department".

The railway company was also upset at the Department and for a number of years frequently demanded protection of the right of way against Indian use. Naturally, this attitude affected the Band more than the Department of Indian Affairs, especially when people were actually ordered off the land, but such actions also served the Department with a reminder of the Company's importance and dominance.

For its part, the Department of Indian Affairs absorbed these blows from all sides without comment. The Department had played the role of mediator and had achieved, once again, a settlement in favor of the developers. If more problems arose from the original one, these would only further justify the Department's existence. Nonetheless, DIA field staff must have been relieved when the cash settlement was finally received in December, 1915 and the file could be closed - they had other headaches in progress.

The Graveyard⁶

In reading the archival files, I repeatedly sensed a remarkable tolerance on the part of Kitsumkalum towards the Grand Trunk Pacific's high-handedness, but there was only one issue they did not allow to rest in the slow grindings of the bureaucracy. In February of 1909, the railway was threatening three of Kitsumkalum's graveyards. One lay a quarter mile below the village, another was one and a half miles below the village, and the third lay two miles below Hole-in-the-Wall.

The problem was that the right of way, as surveyed, passed over some of the graves. The blasting that was required for the road bed would destroy or disturb some bodies as well as wreck some tombstones, fences, and other buildings that formed part of the cemeteries. Thirteen graves were in immediate danger. Most were at the cemeteries near I.R. 1, and one was at the site below Hole-in-the-Wall.

When the problem first arose, the Company's engineer, Mr. Van Arsdol, demanded that the Band remove the graves. They refused. Turning to the Department of Indian Affairs, the Company wrote: "Please wire Indian Agent instructing him that our contractors be allowed to proceed" (February, 1909). The Band still refused to comply, "alleging", as the new Indian Agent Lorenz put it, "that settlement has not yet been reached".

Van Arsdol then offered to pay \$15 for the labour required to move each grave, but did not make arrangements to pay any compensation for disturbing the remains. By Tsimshian expectations, compensation was needed for the grave diggers and for the survivors who would require something for the injury to the dead, the family, and the sanctity of the original ceremonies (see Garfield, 1939).

The Department, being advised by Agent Lorenz that the offer was fair, attempted to formulate a compromise: let the Company proceed now, and settle the affair later. Ottawa expressed its confidence that the Grand Trunk Pacific would be generous in the final settlement.

Speaking on behalf of Kitsumkalum, Benjamin Bennett again demanded settlement of the money question before work was started on the graveyard. Infuriated, Agent Lorenz pressed his superiors to submit the matter to arbitration under the terms of the Indian Act and to ignore the wishes of Kitsumkalum's elders. Fortunately, calmer heads prevailed in Ottawa where it was realized arbitration was a costly procedure. Lorenz was told that the Band was "to be fairly recompensed". He was instructed to ensure "no apparent violence is done to their feelings".

In the records of these initial skirmishes over the graves, the representatives of Kitsumkalum do not appear to have met to prepare the community's position fully. I suspect their first responses were quick reactions to a problem which had come up suddenly, made by those who happened to be on the spot at the time. Whatever the situation was, it

changed in May when Solomon Johnson, an hereditary chief of some standing, entered the dispute with explicit terms of settlement from the Band.

In a handwritten request, the Chief explained the Grand Trunk Pacific expected to pay \$150,000 for the parts of the two reserves that were affected plus \$300 compensation for disturbing each grave (P.A.C., R.G. 10, v. 7079). Later newspaper accounts suggested the money would not be distributed to the survivors equally, but according to the rank of the dead. Two high chiefs were said to be among the buried.

A minor chief who spoke to this matter, Benjamin Bennett, stated that he supported the Chief and warned the Department of Indian Affairs that feelings were running high. I suspect this man was speaking in a style of Tsimshian diplomacy in which he posed as an intermediary to the higher chief. He said the payment may seem excessive to the government people, but the Chief had refused to accept less. To highlight the seriousness of Kitsumkalum's position (represented by the higher chief), Bennett claimed to have quarrelled with Chief Johnson over the amount (thereby representing the Canadian position?), but to no avail. The apparent intent of his speech was to indicate that both sides of the issue had been discussed and that, with all viewpoints in mind, the steadfast Chief was expressing the considered position of the Band.

Agent Lorenz misinterpreted the rhetorical style of Tsimshian nobility entirely, and took Bennett literally. To Lorenz, the problem was now the stubbornness of one man, Solomon Johnson, who was holding out in the face of criticism and dissent within his Band:

it is impossible to come to any reasonable understanding with these Indians so long as Chief Johnson has anything to do with it; there is no doubt in my mind that the other Indians would accept a reasonable offer from the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company for disturbing their graves but you and the Department will know that Indians always support the Chief; therefore this claim of the Indians can only be settled by arditration [sic] (letter from Agent to Superintendent, June 12, 1909).

Ottawa still preferred negotiation and wrote the Chief directly, first explaining that his requests were not a fair evaluation, and later ordering him not to stop the railway or the removal of the bodies.

In July, an impatient Company wrote the Department to say that the matter of official permission had been settled, although in fact, no recommendation was made until that fall and full title was not transferred until 1924. They also said Kitsumkalum had done nothing to remove the graves (which the Company was now counting at 20).

The Department of Indian Affairs was also becoming more upset by the Band's insistence on a full settlement. The government representatives finally agreed to begin arbitration to decide upon an initial payment that would allow the railway to proceed. The rest, they said, could be determined later.

Now Kitsumkalum stood clearly alone without even the pretense of Government support. A fence was quickly erected around the cemetery, blocking the route of the railway. Then, as a gesture of compromise, the Band, represented by Chief Solomon Johnson, permitted a temporary track to be built around the south side of the graveyard, which allowed the contractors to continue construction (D.I.A. 986/31-2-7-1). The Company agreed the cemetery would not be disturbed with this tract.

Following this development, the Company sweetened its offer to the Band by promising \$200 for a new graveyard, but Kitsumkalum's main demands for survivors' compensation were still ignored. In response, the Band unanimously passed a resolution at its August 14 meeting in Port Essington: moved by Charles Nelson and seconded by Sam Kennedy,

That the Department be asked that the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company construct the Railway around the graveyard as we cannot agree with the Grand Trunk Pacific on price [sic] for removing and disturbing graves (letter to Superintendent from Agent, August 17, 1909).

They also charged that Agent Lorenz was helping the Grand Trunk Pacific instead of the Band.

The Company's next offer included an additional \$1,000 for damages. (This seems to have been a compromise with the provincial government in order to obtain a provincial permit to remove the bodies; however, the authority of the provincial government to grant a permit for the Reserve is not obvious, considering the dispute over Indian reserves with Ottawa.) This offer was to be the Company's last before it would remove the bodies on its own. Ottawa concurred that the matter had dragged on long enough and wrote Agent Lorenz that "on no account are the Indians to cause further hindrance".

After this, all seemed settled to the officials in central Canada and the Grand Trunk Pacific lawyer wrote in appreciation for the efforts of the Department in support of the Company:

I am extremely obliged for the trouble you have taken in this matter personally, and will have much pleasure in advising Mr. Chamberlain of the very able assistance you have rendered (letter from GTP Legal Department to Assistant Deputy of DIA, August 28, 1909).

Unfortunately for him, his praise was premature<197>the Band stood its ground.

Enough was enough, and the British Columbia Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Mr. Vowell, was sent to visit Kitsumkalum in August to resolve the problem once and for all. A true colonial administrator, he exemplified the kind of paternal racism that Kitsumkalum was fighting.

Upon arriving at the scene, the Superintendent immediately decided the affair had not been handled firmly enough. Agent Lorenz was judged to be inept and within a few months would be replaced, an action no one disputed.

Vowell then met with the Band to tell them that it was not Kisumkalum who had stopped the railway! This must have amazed the Band, but they listened patiently to learn that construction had been halted by the Department in toleration of the Band. The Department of Indian Affairs claimed to be indulging them so that they might have a fair hearing. After all, he said, Indians could not understand "such matters as the whites do". Carrying the logic further, he reasoned that now the Department saw the Band's request "was absurd" because white people (that is, businessmen and government people) would not make such a "ridiculous claim".

His construction of his argument in this way should not imply that Vowell was without any respect for the situation. On the contrary, he was trying to maintain the Department's authority, and contain any possibility of violence. Ottawa had feared serious trouble throughout the affair but, as a result of his investigations, Vowell assured Ottawa that Kitsumkalum did not pose any serious threat because their strength was not sufficient.

Upon hearing that evaluation, Ottawa relaxed. Once again the government/business alliance was free to safely develop the transportation link that would open the "wilderness" to mining, agriculture, and forestry interests. The Department could get on with its mission of fitting the Indian into (or out of) that plan.

Vowell was a careful observer on this crucial point, but having correctly analyzed the situation, he then created an explanation based upon assumptions about the Indian mentality that only served to confuse the issue to the public and make negotiations more complex. To these premises, he added the assumption that the Band was being advised by an outside agitator. I could find no support for this view, but it can be recognized as a standard device used by colonial administrations to discredit Native opposition to colonization and to separate the resistance from any outside support which may be available.

Interestingly, when Vowell examined the graveyard, he reported that the position of the graves relative to the path of the tracks did not make it necessary to move any of the bodies. This agreed with some of the railway company's own intelligence, received during the previous summer and recorded on a plan of the graveyard (D.I.A. 986/31-2-7-1). The tracks could easily go between the graves, damaging only some fences.

Despite such findings, Vowell ordered that the bodies be removed by the Band within ten days or he would let the Company do it. The battle was lost. Kitsumkalum decided to take care of its dead itself and accepted the Company's terms: \$1,000 for damages, \$200 for a new cemetery, and \$270 for removal of the bodies. The graveyard was excavated in the fall of 1909 and the bodies removed to a new location.

The content of the graveyard was found to be 18 bodies and 12 graves, which was recorded along with the names of those who shared in the compensation payments (D.I.A. 986/31-2-7-1). Seven people received payment from the Company for removing the bodies: Solomon Johnson, Charles Nelson, Thomas Wesley, Arthur Stevens, David Seymour, Steven Wood, and Walter Wright.

Payment might have ended the matter but the Department of Indian Affairs then raised the concern that the Company had paid too much. The Grand Trunk Pacific replied that the settlement had been calculated on a per body basis, and that there were graves with more than one body. A total of 18 individuals had been exhumed.

These were the 12 graves originally reported below the village. No mention was made of the solitary grave two miles down from Hole-in-the-Wall.

Inspired by the example of Kitsumkalum's fight, the neighbouring village of Kiselas claimed and won compensation for similar intrusions on its reserve.

Some Benefits From the Railway

So far my account of Kitsumkalum's encounter with the Company has been a dreary one with few allusions to any benefits that the Band may have collected to balance its losses. To a certain extent, this is a natural result of the records. Public archives tend to be filled with information on problems and resolutions, not successes. People tend not to involve government officials, lawyers, and so on, to register their satisfaction. It is therefore, easy for an archival study to emphasise the negative, for lack of information on the positive. Yet, there were hints as to what the benefits may have been.

Compensation Payments

The first, and most obvious benefit was the payment of compensation. These amounts are listed in the Table of Settlements (Table 1). The total is \$3,868.95. Whether they were fair evaluations or not is difficult to determine. No established market existed in land, buildings, and so on in the area at the time the Grand Trunk Pacific began work, so it would be difficult to draw up a fair estimate of the value of the property. All that can be noted is that the Company's payments for reserve lands were

inconsistent and obviously below that requested.

Aside from that problem, there is the question of the use of the money so received after it was put into Band funds: how did it benefit the Band? Unfortunately, its distribution is generally difficult, if not impossible, to trace, except in a few instances. One case was the payment of those who exhumed the bodies from the old graveyard; another was the building of the new cemetery and access road.

The first case provides an example of the type of problems that can be encountered: there is a minor discrepancy between the amount given by the Company to pay the men (\$270) and the amount actually distributed by the Department of Indian Affairs (\$254.25.⁷ This is little by present standards but it was not so little then, being the equivalent of slightly more than five days pay for a labourer (see below). In terms of the agreement, it meant that one body was removed without compensation. Was the missing money used in another manner, misplaced, stolen, or distributed and the record lost? I cannot answer.

The second case shows the Village working together for its improvement. Under the authority of the Kitsumkalum Indian Committee, the Band took some of the money it received to build, in the words of one observer, "a very good road through their reserve" to the new graveyard.⁸

A crew of 12 came together to work on the road. Their names were listed on a DIA voucher for "labor performed", included the Bennetts, Boltons, Kennedys, Leighs, Nelsons, Roberts, and Starrs (P.A.C., R.G. 10, v. 7673). Each person received \$3.00 per day for their time, minus the cost of meals. Emma Nelson was their cook and all the groceries and supplies came from the general store that Charles Nelson operated in the village ("Resolution of the Indian Committee of Kitsumkalum", D.A.I. 986/31-2-7-1).

When the road was finished Agent Perry commented "The work done was very substantial". In those days, road work must have been a very difficult task, based only upon hand tools and sweat.

Work

Very little precise information exists concerning the employment of Indian people by the Grand Trunk Pacific. The railway, like other companies in British Columbia, had racist hiring policies which divided its work force into different categories and created pools of cheap, non-White labour. "Divide and rule" strategies of this type helped reduce labour costs, and weaken labour organizations. The result for Native people was probably unpleasant but the terms and conditions of their work for the Company are not known.

From the little information there is, the employment record for Indians seems low, especially considering their majority position in the population

Table 1: Table of Settlements

Item ¹	Band's Request	Received
Right of way: 33.31A	not reported (but see graveyard)	\$1,363.50
Washtock camp	\$50/month Buildings	\$50/month Buildings
Mulville & Bosworth Camp (company camp)	\$50/month	\$50/month
Borrow pit (1 acre of gravel)	more than \$40	\$40
Timber over borrow pit	not reported	no consideration
Right of way & capsites	not reported	no considerations
Main trespass	\$1,018.50	\$71.68
Graveyard (graves, building, fences)	\$150,000 \$300/grave (plus labour costs)	\$1,000 damages \$200 new cemetery \$270 labour costs ((\$254.25 paid for labour by DIA)
Gardens (4 assessed)	not reported	\$245
Deared lots (5 assessed)	not reported	\$210
Houses (2 assessed)	not reported	\$150
Out buildings (3 assessed)	not reported	\$55
Washtock camp buildings	not reported	no consideration

1 Time, energy, morale and personal anguish were not compensated; employment was lost, and some gained; improvements in transportation cannot be quantified.

at the time. Some made money along the line by providing ties, food, restaurant services, and maid services. A few others received wage employment directly.

In my own records on employment histories of individual members of the community there is a single reference to a Kitsumkalum man, William Starr, who worked on the Grand Trunk Pacific river boat *Port Simpson* as an engineer (fireman). In another case, a Kitselas man was employed by the Company to work for its telegraph subsidiary. This poor showing in hiring practices existed despite a continual labour shortage during the

construction period. Considering the bad reputation the Company had as an employer, people from Kitsumkalum, and other villages, may have preferred either other employers or other forms of work (for example, trapping, fishing).

Two alternative and popular work options were closed when the railway started. One, the river boat service, had provided local people, both indigenous and immigrant, with jobs for decades. From Kitsumkalum, William Starr, Joseph Roberts, Mark Bolton, John Wesley, and Walter Wright, all worked at one time or another as pilots, engineers, and deck hands on the river boats.

The completion of the railway also ended the old river freighting business. People like Aaron Bolton and Charles Nelson had freight canoes with crews which carried supplies and passengers up and down the Skeena River (see McDonald, 1983). During the construction phases their incomes were boosted, but afterwards there was no longer any need for their services. They were forced to abandon the occupation.

Improved Transportation

The obvious benefit that springs to mind in considering the railway is better transportation. The community had already decided to live at the mouth of the Kitsumkalum River to take advantage of the river boat service, so it is natural to assume they would welcome an even more efficient mode of transportation.

An incident that occurred after construction was completed suggests those hopes were soon dashed.⁹ During April, 1919, Kitsumkalum requested that a bridge four feet wide be built along the trestle for the use of pedestrians. In their request, they noted that people living in the village purchased supplies in the new settlement of Terrace and carried them home by crossing the railway bridge. A foot bridge was suggested as safer than simply using the tracks.

The Grand Trunk Pacific refused the request claiming, at first, that the people could use the bridge itself, unofficially (so the Company would not be responsible for accidents). It did not want to encourage the use of the bridge by building a walk way. The refusal was qualified with the offer that if the Department of Indian Affairs built a proper access road to and from the foot bridge, the request would be reconsidered. There was a catch: the road had to meet certain grading requirements set by the Company for it to be acceptable. These were considered too expensive by the government and nothing was resolved.

When it was suggested that the Company put a flag station at the village instead, the Grand Trunk Pacific argued that only three families lived there (twenty-five individuals) and that this number did not warrant a station. The figure was much underestimated.

As a compromise, the Company suggested that people ride the train over the river to the first stop (Remo?), get off, and walk back with their freight. Large items could be unloaded at the village. A stop at Kitsumkalum did not interest the Company very much because, it claimed, these people never "exhibited very much of a travelling propensity, except perhaps to and from the fishing grounds". This was a particularly ill informed statement, given the attendance of Chief Alfred Wedildahd¹⁰ at the coronation of George V in England in 1910 (Asante, 1972:5). Nonetheless, the DIA accepted the Company's suggestion, and went so far as to instruct their Agent that it was not now necessary to consider placing a scow and access road at the river for the Band's use. They could use the train instead.

The Band was now caught in a double bind. The Company's offer was not convenient as it required walking against the gradients, carrying supplies. But, at the same time, the offer gave the DIA reason not to spend money on an alternative, more acceptable solution. Thus, the Band lost ground and, in a sense, became more isolated by the railway.

One point in the Company's argument should be expanded. The people along the river did benefit by using the train to move to and from the coastal canneries. People returning to Kitsumkalum used to paddle up the Skeena on a long, arduous journey that took 4 days (E. Spalding, interview 1979). (I was also told, by old people who remember doing it, that the return trip was much easier and could be made in a day.) With the train, people could move to their summer jobs, off-season camps, and winter homes much easier. During the years following the arrival of the railway, station stops like Kwinitsa were known as camp sites used by people from Kitsumkalum.

The railway also made the rest of the world a little more accessible. Travel eastward for jobs or for other reasons was easier; as was true in the reverse direction, which was heralded in 1910 by the arrival of Prime Minister Laurier to the coast by train to discuss the land question. Now politicians, workers, tourists, as well as the products of mining, forestry, and fishing could all move to their destinations with less effort and more comfort than the old time Tsimshian merchants and freighters who had first carried people and things from around the world deep into the interior.

CONCLUSION

The Grand Trunk Pacific used Kitsumkalum's two reserves as if they had belonged to the Company, not the Band. The expropriation of land for the right of way, of gravel for the road bed, and of timber for construction proceeded without respecting or seeking the Band's wishes for these resources. In most, if not each case, the Band appears to have been consulted only after protest.

Kitsumkalum received benefits in the form of cash compensation, work,

and better transportation but, weighed against loss of land, buildings, garden, timber, access to the river front, and disturbance of the graveyard, these do not appear equivalent to the cost.

Less specific costs were the impacts of the loss of income when river traffic came to an end, of the influx of new settlers riding the railway, and of the development and export of regional resources appropriated for foreign interests. Still more difficult to evaluate is the amount of time and energy spent by members of the community to protect their property and rights, time which could have been spent more beneficially. Finally, we can list unknown effects on morale from the continual acts of domination which repeatedly demonstrated the relative positions of the Indians, the Company, and the Government: beginning work without a permit, taking gravel, cutting timber, placing camps, refusing a foot bridge. These actions declared the contempt the Company had for Kitsumkalum's wishes, and for local populations in general. The land question was ignored, the graveyard desecrated, the feelings of individuals were not compensated, and Tsimshian legal ways were ignored.

As for the Government, it's dealings with complaints from Kitsumkalum were typically slow, especially compared with the attention accorded Company requests. Government officials demonstrated greater understanding and, I think, sympathy to the Company than to the Village, and enforced laws which took power away from Kitsumkalum in favour of the Company. A significant demonstration of this attitude was the way the government ignored the land question despite it being an active and serious concern to Kitsumkalum (Kennedy, n.d.). The railroad was constructed without general consultation and without resolving the fundamental claims the Tsimshians had declared to the land. This approach has persisted, causing the Band to enter litigation in the 1980s over issues first broached in 1908.

The loss of community land and resources from the reserves was part of a process that started, formally, with the colonial usurpation of political power and property rights to Tsimshian land by the British. The reduction of Kitsumkalum's relatively large traditional territories into small reserves by the Indian Reserve Commission in 1891 was an expression of this appropriation, as was the subsequent reduction of these reserves for the rights of way. Reductions such as these were encouraged by Department of Indian Affairs policies for Indian economic development, but some historians have noted that land transactions also generated monies which financed the Department's administration (for example, Patterson, 1972:26; Ware, 1974:54-55). Unfortunately, the problem of rights of way has continued to affect the reserves, with a series of other encroachments occurring or being attempted since, including an unsuccessful attempt by Canadian National Railways, successor to the Grand Trunk Pacific, to cross I.R. 1 during the 1970s (Chief S. Roberts, interview, 1979). Rights of way constitute a type of problem so prevalent that Indian leaders in British

TABLE 2: A Chronology

1891	Kitsumkalum allotted Indian Reserves.
1902	Government/GTPR agreement to build a second transcontinental railroad.
1908	May 7 - first sod turned in Prince Rupert. May - GTPR enters Kitsumkalum's reserves. June - GTPR camps on Kitsumkalum and trespasses on timber resources.
1909	January - GTPR makes application for right of way. February - Kitsumkalum stops company at graveyard. October - Government recommends alienation of land. Graveyard dispute settled, Company proceeds.
1910	March - grading of culverts finished in first 100 mile section to Copper River. July - Zenardi Rapids crossed. September - steel laid to 70 mile.
1911	Spring - Kitsumkalum complains over borrow pit. September - GTPR construction camp vacates Kitsumkalum Fall - GTPR engineers destroy construction camp buildings for fuel
1912	GTPR arranges to buy one acre for borrow pit. March - Company withdraws request on grounds it is finished with the pit.
1913	Camp issue settled. Royal Commission established. December - Kitsumkalum complains formally about timber trespass
1914	D.I.A. investigates timber trespass April - tracks from east and west meet. First train through to Prince Rupert. August 24 - regular freight service begins. September 6 - regular passenger service begins.
1915	December - settlement of timber trespass.
1916	Royal Commission Report.
1919	Kitsumkalum requests footbridge, denied.
1922	Final survey of Reserves by the Company.
1923	Payment made for right of way.
1924	Dominion Government accepts recommendations of Royal Commission.
1936	British Columbia accepts recommendations of Royal Commission.

Columbia sometimes describe their reserves as powerful magnets which attract every roadway, hydroline, etc, that appears in the region.

Did geographic necessity force the Grand Trunk Pacific to use reserve lands? This was probably not the case. Current and past land use patterns indicate that different arrangements could have been made: other, nearby flat land could have provided suitable campsites for crews; the entire region was well wooded and just as accessible for timber as the reserve lands; other sites for gravel could have been utilized.

The railway bed may have been following excellent gradients offered by the river's edge, but it is difficult to imagine that minor deviations could not have been accommodated, as they were for the temporary road around the graveyard. At the village, the terrain would have permitted the roadbed to swing further away from the riverside, away from the houses and gardens, and along a path that would not have divided the village, cut off river front property from effective use, and destroyed property. Indeed, this would have left the tracks safer from the river's floodwaters, which have on occasion caused damage, sometimes severe, such as that which resulted from floods in 1936 and 1978 (see Muller, 1980).

This concludes my account of the specific story of Kitsumkalum's encounter with the transcontinental railway scheme. I wish, however, to return to the general context mentioned at the beginning of the paper in which the arrival of the Grand Trunk Pacific was but a moment in the Tsimshian experience with economic development under Canadian hegemony. The larger perspective I want to take is that, given the national and international interests represented by the railway company, the events described here could have occurred anywhere in the capitalist social formation. That they occurred in northwestern British Columbia gave them a particular nuance but not their basic meaning.

The problem is complex. For example, the problems discussed in this paper have illustrated the discrepancies in the power relationships among Aboriginal communities, governments and corporations. A recent international conference of non-governmental organizations discussing development issues (The Global Meeting on Environment and Development), identified one of the key criteria for development as "the empowerment of people to take action to solve their own problems with their own resources" (Global meeting, 1985:22, quoted in M'Gonigle, 1989:120), a conclusion subsequently reiterated by the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission). The events described in this paper are separated only by time from the situations that informed the conclusions in those two recent reports. I would agree that the failure to empower Aboriginal communities has been a leading factor in the failure of Euro-Canadian policies for Aboriginal economic development.

Another manifestation of the disparities in economic and political power that existed in 1908 was the contemptuous attitude taken by project

organizers towards Kitsumkalum, as demonstrated by the delays and casualness in dealing with the Band's complaints. Such responses are expressions of political domination and are experienced by other groups of people at the hands of developers (Muratorio, 1981). But who was being dominated by the railway, Indians? Yes and no. As Kitsumkalum was an Aboriginal community, part of the answer must be 'yes'. However, other histories of the Grand Trunk Pacific show that its domination of local populations was not restricted to Indians (see especially Lower, 1939). For example, while laying track, the Company's general philosophy was to advance continually, regardless of potential conflicts, and to entrust the Company's legal department to resolve problems which might arise, subsequently (Leonard, 1988:11).

Many of the differences that did exist in the Company's expression of domination towards Aboriginal peoples can be traced back to differences created by the Indian Act and the Department of Indian Affairs. Both of these colonial instruments conditioned the legal relationships governing the encounter I described in this paper. Both encouraged stereotyping of the people and of their problems, for example, by the use of generic and impersonal terms of reference such as <169>the Indians<170> when discussing individuals from Kitsumkalum. As in other colonial situations, such usages did not increase the understanding of the issues but rather dehumanized the situation and, with it, the personality of the village and its residents.

When Frantz Fanon (1965) described how race replaces class as a key organizing principle in the colonial world, he showed how this replacement affects the way development questions are reconstructed in the colonial encounter. More specifically to the British sphere, a central tenet of the colonial project was the need to civilize the Native "races" (Kelly, 1989:383). In Canada, this vision of the social world, which is still represented by the Indian Act and The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, imposed a powerful structure on the discussion of the railway issues, diluting and deflecting the content with considerations of such perennial topics as the "Indian problem", the limitations of "traditional tribal society", and the follies of the "primitive mind". As elsewhere, the distraction of such colonial concerns greatly interfered with a much needed analysis of the development philosophy underlying the organization of the railway scheme, and of the implications for future development plans. The information needed for the crucial discussion of economic and political issues was available to all parties in the form of the experiences gained from the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway as well as from numerous other colonial projects around the world (railways were a standard bearer of development throughout the British Empire). Unfortunately, the lessons offered either were not carefully considered or were ignored. Instead, the Department of Indian Affairs perpetuated its general sphere of interests, mystifying, in the process, the relationship

between Aboriginal people and economic development at the same time that economic and political power were alienated from the community. Unable to overcome such specific colonial obstacles or the joint power of the Government and Company, Kitsumkalum was forced to accept development on terms laid down by those parties.

Although numerous other communities from Winnipeg to the coast experience similar results, the implications of the terms dictated by an industrializing society were more revolutionary for the distinctive Aboriginal societies in the path of the tracks, than for the more entrepreneurially organized Euro-Canadian communities. Kitsumkalum was allowed no alternatives to the development philosophy of the dominating Canadian society. The approach represented by the railway did not contribute to the economic development of the community for itself and by itself, which was the direction Kitsumkalum had taken, on its own, prior to the establishment of Canadian hegemony in the 1880s (McDonald, 1987; 1985) and which was the direction to which Kitsumkalum was returning in the 1980s (McDonald, n.d.). Instead, the fate of Kitsumkalum was merged with that of the entire region on the assumption that what was good for one was good for all. However, the structure of the political and economic relationships did not complement that assumption: the playing field was not level, and has not been level for most of the 20th century.

The events described here contributed to the distortion and dependency of the Tsimshian economy. In 1891, their territorial resources had been reduced to three small reserves, and with projects like the Grand Trunk Pacific, even those reserves were reduced. From the perspective of the people of Kitsumkalum, the problems they face today are the result of the "cumulative impact" (Brody, 1988:246) of projects such as the railway, the progressive loss of economic resources, and the erosion of their ability to exercise economic options (McDonald, 1985; n.d.). As one of their leaders poignantly said to the Royal Commission in 1915: "The Kitsumkalums are like any other tribes - they have been bleeding day and night just on account of the way we have been treated and handled" (Charles Nelson, quoted in Ware, 1975:16). What happened with the Grand Trunk Pacific represents not only a single, badly planned project, but also an example of the arbitrary exercise of power and authority over Indians by the government and the controllers of capital. From Kitsumkalum's position, more was involved than the particular organizational problems that affected the Company, well described in Leonard (1988). In fact, it mattered little from a practical point of view whether the company was exercising power in a flagrant or an incompetent way. What was at the heart of the problem, in this case as others, was Kitsumkalum's exclusion from meaningful participation in decision making and the ignoring of their Aboriginal claims and rights.

Today, the community is engaged in a prolonged process of internal discussion and experimentation to seek new remedies to the many

problems which have accumulated over a century of development projects, but rectification of the situation at this point is fraught with difficulties. The choices before them are not as black and white as the difference, envisioned by the dominate populist view of Indian issues, between becoming "assimilated into the North American social model ... [or else returning] to their pre-European invasion culture" (Parkinson, 1988:56). In reality, Aboriginal people already have made a myriad of cultural and social adaptations and accommodations to regional development, all of which confound finding solutions. The question of "What is to be done" is predicated by the conditions of contemporary Aboriginal society. Like the problems, the solutions will not be simple. Thus, throughout the 1980s, the politics of the community have been preoccupied with the question.

A fundamental demand that is emerging from the debates is the necessity for Aboriginal people to have control in formulating and implementing the solution. One thing has become clear: a major social effort is required from the people of Kitsumkalum if they are to regain control, define a future based upon community values, and find ways to achieve that future. Nonetheless, the endeavour will be worthwhile if, in the end, they are able to achieve the well being originally promised by schemes like the railway. But, they argue, this potential will be realized only when those expectations include the dreams of Aboriginal people.

There is a footnote to this story. Although the specific issues discussed here have passed into history, the general struggle has continued into the 1980s, the period during which I researched this paper. In fact, earlier versions of this work (McDonald, 1981a; 1981b) were prepared at the request of the Band as a contribution to understanding contemporary issues surrounding the presence of the railway on the reserve. In 1984 and 1986, specific claims were filed against the railway (now CN rail) regarding the amount of land appropriated, the use of adjacent reserve lands, damage to reserve lands, and compensation for reserve resources. These claims are currently under review (A. Bolton, pers. comm., 1990). Compensation from a previous court case involving the railway allowed the Band to launch several economic development projects of their own and to place the projects in the context of Tsimshian values. This path for development is part of a process the people of Kitsumkkaalum have labelled "a new beginning" (McDonald, n.d.). Initial results are providing encouraging indications that, when such actions are successful, the flow of history can be reversed and the communities can empower themselves to set their own development agendas.

NOTES

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2. The name of the Reserve is spelled with a "y".
3. This section was compiled using correspondence in The Public/Archives of Canada (P.A.C.), R.G. 10, v. 7673 in addition to the sources specifically cited.
4. This section was compiled using correspondence from (Department of Indian Affairs) 986/31-2-7-1, v. 2; D.I.A. 986/32-7-1-4; P.A.C., R.G. 10, v. 7673, in addition to the sources specifically cited.
5. This section was compiled using correspondence from P.A.C. R.G. 10, v. 7073 and v. 7079, in addition to the sources specifically cited.
6. This section was compiled using correspondence in P.A.C., R.G.10, v. 7079 and D.I.A. 986/31-2-7-1, in addition to sources specifically cited.
7. Information on this comes from D.I.A. 986/31-2-7-1
8. Information on this comes from correspondence in P.A.C., R.G. 10, v. 7673, and interview materials collected in 1980.
9. Information on this comes from P.A.C., R.G. 43A2a, vol.494.
10. The reference identifies this person as a Kitselas man, but that is not certain.

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The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway beginning at Winnipeg passed through the fertile belt of the prairies to Edmonton, continuing thence to Yellowhead Pass and across central British Columbia to a totally new port on Kaien Island in Canada just south of the Alaska Panhandle, which wasâ€¦ [Read More](#). Inspire your inbox â€” Sign up for daily fun facts about this day in history, updates, and special offers. Subscribe. By signing up for this email, you are agreeing to news, offers, and information from Encyclopaedia Britannica. [Click here to view our Privacy Notice](#). Easy unsubscribe links are provided in See McDonald, James A., â€œBleeding Day and Night: The Construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway across Tsimshian Reserve Lands,â€ Canadian Journal of Native Studies 10, no. 1 (1990): 33â€“69 and Frank Leonard, A Thousand Blunders: The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and Northern British Columbia (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 1996), 165â€“88.Â Information courtesy of the North Pacific Cannery Museum. 105 Paquette, Jerry, Aboriginal Self-Government and Education in Canada (Kingston, ON: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 1986), 35; see also Noel Dyck, Differing Visions: Administering Indian Residential Schooling in Prince Albert, 1867â€“1995 (Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 1997), 61. The Canadian Pacific Railway company was incorporated in 1881. Its original purpose was the construction of a transcontinental railway, a promise to British Columbia upon its entry into Confederation. The railway â€” completed in 1885 â€” connected Eastern Canada to BC and played an important role in the development of the nation.Â Canadian Pacific Railway employees, waiting for the train to take them east, pose near Donald, BC, on the day the Last Spike was driven on the CPR, 7 November 1885. Telegram to Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald announcing the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, 8 November 1885. [Previous](#) [Next](#).