

**Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs  
for the Province of British Columbia  
Minutes of Decision 1913-1916**

McKenna McBride Final Report accessed on the Union of BC Indian Chiefs website:  
[http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/final\\_report.htm](http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/final_report.htm)

The McKenna-McBride Royal Commission had a significant impact on Indian peoples' reserve land base by adding to, reducing and eliminating reserves throughout the province. The McKenna-McBride Royal Commission authorized such action through Minutes of Decision. These may be found in the Commission's four volume *Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia*, organized under the Indian agency to which a band was assigned.

**West Coast Agency**

Meeting with the Ohiat Band or Tribe of Indians, held on the 8th. day of May, 1914.

Mr. Commissioner Macdowall explains to the assembled Indians the scope, objects and purpose of the Commission, and William Dennis is sworn by the Chairman as Interpreter.

CHIEF LOUIS addressed the Commission as follows: I am glad to see you people come to see me. I have had no chance of seeing you people at all, and I have always wished to see you but could not. The Indians here we have our lands all right. All the lands that the Indians have we are using it. All the Indians are not here, some of them live where the other Reserves are. We get the wood from our own lands to sell so that we can make or get our food. When we go to cut wood on Government land, the whitemen always chase us away and put us in gaol - that is the reason we have to cut the wood from off our own lands; and towards summer all the Indians go on to small Reserves so that we can catch fish, halibut and cohoes. I would be willing to sell the land if the dispute between the two Government's were settled; that is to sell the smaller reserves, provided we got all the money.

MR. COMMISSIONER SHAW: Did you mention anything about selling claims

A. No, the Interpreter misunderstood me. I am willing to show you the posts where the Indian Reserves are. Sometimes the whiteman takes a few feet of the Indian Reserve and claims it, and I am afraid to say much to the whitemen. I often go to see the posts, and every time I go they are in a different place, and I always put it back again.

Q. Did you every complain to the Indian Agent about those posts being moved?

A. I told Mr. Neil, the former Indian Agent about it. He said "those surveyors know what they are doing but you do not." That is what he told me. There is one small Reserve that is not on the chart. The post is there yet, and I want to know how the Government got hold of that land.

MR. COMMISSIONER SHAW: What is the name of it?

A. Outsoah (marked "A" on the plan) There is a post there.

Q. Is that all that is there?

A. There used to be Indian houses there and then there is a post there.

Q. Do any Indians live there?

A. No. After the whitemen came there they chased the Indians away and they left their houses there.

Q. How long ago was that?

A. I don't know how long - probably 15 years ago.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do the whitemen use it now?

A. Yes, it is a life boat station.

MR. COMMISSIONER MCKENNA: Is it the life saving station or the land behind it you mean?

A. Right where the life saving station is - it takes in the whole point.

MR. COMMISSIONER SHAW to Indian Agent Cox: Might that not be an Imperis Government Reserve?

A. No, it never was. That land was taken up and bought I think in 1879 or 1880.

MR. COMMISSIONER MACDOWALL to the witness: Do you know Mr. Mekilson's land?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that part of your old Reserve?

A. No. I told Mr. Neil about it a long time ago.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there anything else you wish to say to us?

A. I am willing, when everything is settled. I don't want to say much more, but wish you people to help us and help us all you can.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are anxious to do that.

MR. COMMISSIONER MCKENNA: How do you come to be on this land here?

A. This land here belonged to my great grandfather a long time ago, and I have been living here ever since year after year.

Q. Were these houses built by the Indians?

A. Yes. The first time we had the cedar split up, and afterwards we built these houses.

Q. You mean you had a big rancherie built of cedar here, and afterwards you built these houses?

A. Yes.

Q. And this place was recognized as your great grandfather's place?

A. Yes.

MR. COMMISSIONER SHAW to Indian Agent Cox: Is this crown granted land?

A. Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: I suppose these lands were surveyed by Crown Surveyors?

A. Yes, by Mr. Ralph.

MR. COMMISSIONER CARMICHAEL to the Witness: Do the Indians live here all the year round?

A. No, I am away for about three months in the year and then I come back here again.

Q. This is your main habitation?

A. Yes of John Moses and myself.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you willing now Chief to be sworn so that we can ask you some questions under oath, or do you want someone else to answer the questions?

JOHN MOSES IS HEREUPON SWORN BY MR. COMM. SHAW.

MR. COMMISSIONER SHAW: Do you understand what an oath is?

A. Yes.

MR. COMMISSIONER MACDOWALL: Are you a christian?

A. Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you know Reserve No. 1 belonging to this Band, it is called nu-muk-a-mus?

A. Yes. I know it. I don't go there often only when the Indians go there.

Q. Where do you live?

A. Right here all the time.

MR. COMMISSIONER MCKENNA: On this particular piece of land?

A. Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you go to Nu-muk-a-mus in the winter?

A. Yes, I go there but not for very long.

Q. What do you do there?

A. I only go there when all the Indians get together and live there together.

MR. COMMISSIONER MACDOWALL: Do you go there to fish?

A. No, just to visit the other Indians.

MR. COMMISSIONER MCKENNA: Do you know that this land on which we are on now is not an Indian Reserve?

A. I know that I own this land because I live here. My great grandfather owned this land all the time, and when I was a youngster I used to go up the creek there and fish and bring it in and dry it.

Q. You claim it through your great grandfather having lived here?

A. Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Has anyone ever disturbed you since you have been living here, or tried in any way to collect rent from you?

A. No, no one has ever disturbed us. I always leave here and get my food up the Creek.

Q. How old are you?

A. I don't know exactly how old I am.

Q. Do you live in this house?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you born here in this house?

A. I was born up at the Creek. We used to have a little shack where we used to dry the fish and I was born up there, and I have lived here all the time.

MR. COMMISSIONER MACDOWALL to Indian Agent Cox: Wasn't there a lot of land taken up around here about 20 years ago; and was this a piece which was taken up at that time?

A. Yes, between 1880 and 1882. It belonged at one time to a man named Owens, I think he used to be on the "Quadra".

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there any one here who lives at Nu-muk-a-mus?

A. Most of the people here live there.

Q. Which one of these men knows anything about it?

A. Klanwanock.

KLANWANOCK VOLUNTEERS TO GIVE EVIDENCE.

I know nu-muk-a-mus, I was born there, and have been living there ever since.

THE CHAIRMAN: How many houses are there?

A. There must be about 40 houses or more, The houses a long time ago were built of cedar logs - that was a long time ago and there used to be lots of Indians there then - that is when I was youngster.

Mr. Commissioner Carmichael: How many houses are there now?

A. About 40.

THE CHAIRMAN: What do the people do there for a living?

A. I live there and some of them fish there and dry salmon.

Q. Have they any ground cleared there?

A. A small piece of land there is cleared. They gather there in the winter and have potlatches.

Q. Did you have any potlatches there last winter?

A. Only one. We hold a potlatch every year and give food and clothes to the old Indians.

Mr. Commissioner McKenna: Do the children go to school at all?

A. Yes they go to school - there is a schoolhouse there.

Mr. Commissioner Macdowall: And a teacher?

A. Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there a missionary there and a teacher?

A. Yes.

PETER TATOOSH IS SWORN BY MY COMMISSIONER SHAW TO GIVE EVIDENCE

Mr. Commissioner Shaw: Do you know pretty well all of the Reserves belonging to the Chiaht Band?

A. Yes, I know them well.

Q. Do you know just how many there are?

A. Twelve Reserves.

Q. No there are 13, but that is all right.

Q. Now which Reserve do you Indians mostly live on.

A. They all live on the Reserves - some live on every one. Some go away and then they come back again.

Q. Is Nu-muk-a-mus the chief Reserve of this Band?

A. Yes.

Q. Have all the Indians of this Tribe houses on Nu-muk-a-mus Reserve, and do they live there part of the year?

A. Yes, the most of the Indians have a house there, but some have none, but they go there and live there with other people

MR. COMMISSIONER SHAW: Any cleared land on Nu-muk-a-mus Reserve?

A. Only those that live there all the time.

Q. Do they grow any vegetables?

A. No they don't grow any vegetables - they are all short of money, and everything they raise anything they are short of money.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do they raise any potatoes?

A. Yes, some of them grow potatoes, some have one acre and some have two Lots there.

Q. What else do they grow there?

A. Turnips, carrots, cabbage and small berries, and some apple trees.

Q. Any hay?

A. No.

MR. COMMISSIONER MACDOWALL: Any cows?

A. Yes, there is lots of cattle?

Q. How many about?

A. About 200 or more, but they are all wild.

Q. Any horses?

A. No

Q. Any poultry?

A. Yes, lots of chickens.

MR. COMMISSIONER MCKENNA: Do these 200 head of cattle belong to the Indians?

A. Yes, many Indians own the cattle.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any pigs?

A. No.

Q. What do the Indians of this Band live on principally?

A. We live on fish.

MR. COMMISSIONER SHAW: Do all of the Indians of this Tribe own gasoline boats?

A. Yes, we have some gasoline boats.

Q. How many have they?

A. 15 gasoline boats.

A. Any round bottom boats or canoes or sailing boats?

A. One sail boats, and lots of canoes.

Q. Do they build their own boats?

A. Yes, we build our own boats, and some of them buy their boats.

Q. Regarding the cows which you say you have do you milk any of them?

A. No.

Q. Do they very kill any of them for food?

A. Yes, we kill them for our own food.

Q. Do they ever sell any of them?

- A. No, we give them away to the different Indians.
- MR. COMMISSIONER MACDOWALL: How do you kill them - with a gun?
- A. Yes, with a gun.
- MR. COMMISSIONER SHAW:- Do you know No.2, Nuchukias?
- A. That is where we get most of our wood.
- Q. How many houses on that Reserve?
- A. No houses there now. No one lives there. They go there just to get wood.
- Q. Do they sell any of the wood, or do they use it for their own use?
- A. Yes, we sell some and keep the remainder for our own use.
- Q. Do you know No.3 Reserve, Dochsapple?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Are there any Indians living there?
- A. Yes, they have one there - they go there to dry fish
- Q. Do you know No.4, Sachsa?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How many houses on that Reserve?
- A. One. John Moses lives there all the time. He goes there to dry fish, but does not live there all the time. This is his home where we are now.
- MR.COMMISSIONER MCKENNA: Does anyone else live there besides John Moses?
- A. Yes, quite a few of them - they change about, and whoever wants to go there can go there and live and fish - They all use it in common.
- MR. COMMISSIONER SHAW: What is the quality of the land on that Reserve?
- A. Not very good. There is just a creek there to catch fish
- MR. COMMISSIONER MACDOWALL: Could they grow potatoes there if they cleared the land?
- A. Yes.
- MR. COMMISSIONER SHAW: Do you know No. 5 Sachawil Reserve, that is on an island?
- A. Yes, I know that one.
- Q. How many houses are there there?
- A. There used to be houses there but after the sealing stopped they did not use it any more - They only camp there for about two months in the year for trolling.
- Q. Do you know Kirby Point, No. 6?
- A. Yes, I know it.
- Q. How many houses there?
- A. Two houses there, but I have torn them down since my brother died.
- Q. Do any of the Indians use that now?
- A. Yes, it is a fishing station for trolling for salmon, and there is land there planted with potatoes fenced up.
- Q. Are there potatoes planted there this year?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How many acres would there be planted there?
- A. About two acres planted with hay and potatoes.
- MR. COMMISSIONER MCKENNA: Are there any cattle on this Reserve?
- A. Yes, 2 cattle.
- MR. COMMISSIONER SHAW: Do you know Hamilton Point No. 7?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do any of the Indians make their home there?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How many?
- A. Three families.
- Q. Any land cultivated there?
- A. No, only about two Lots - We grow some berries there. That is the place where the sealing schooners used to come in. After the sealing was done all the other Indians left.
- Q. Do they grow potatoes and berries there?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Any cattle?
- A. One cow.
- Q. Do you know Haynes, No. 8? - Oh that is including 7 and 8 - Now do you know No. 9 Keesham?
- A. Yes, We use that now. We grow potatoes, corn and berries
- Q. Any apples?
- A. No
- Q. How many houses are there there?
- A. No houses there.
- Q. About how much land is cultivated for vegetables?
- A. 4 acres under cultivation.
- Q. No. 10 Kichha - how many houses on that place?

- A. One big house.
- Q. How many families live there?
- A. Sometimes quite a few in that house - That is the place where they fish halibut, and they used also to catch whales and seals there.
- Q. Any land cleared or cultivated there?
- A. No.
- Q. No. 11 is Clutus - Do you know that Reserve?
- A. Yes, there are 4 houses there.
- Q. Anyone live there all the time?
- A. Only in the summer time they live there.
- Q. Why do they go there?
- A. It is a fishing ground.
- Q. What kind of fish do they catch?
- A. Halibut, and we troll for salmon.
- Q. Any whales?
- A. We used to catch some whales.
- Q. Any land cultivated there?
- A. No.
- Q. No. 12 is Anacla - Do you know that?
- A. Yes, I live there all the time.
- Q. How many houses on that Reserve?
- A. 2.
- Q. How many families live there?
- A. Sometimes quite a few go there. In the meantime only two families live there permanently.
- Q. Any land cultivated there?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How much?
- A. 5 acres cleared, and perhaps one acre cultivated.
- Q. What do you grow?
- A. Vegetables.
- Q. Do you sell any of the vegetables?
- A. No they haven't sold anything yet - They give it away to the other Indians.
- Q. Any cattle there?
- A. No.
- Q. Any fishing there?
- A. They only live there to clear the land and for making canoes and trapping for furs.
- Q. No. 13, Masitt - Do you know that place?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How many families live there?
- A. No one lives there now, but there is a house there. They only go there when they go trapping and for catching halibut. It is no good for cultivation because it is too rocky.
- MR. COMMISSIONER CARMICHAEL: Is it a good place for fishing?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Are there any schools on any of these Reserves?
- A. Only one school at Nu-muk-a-mus
- MR. COMMISSIONER MCKENNA: Who teaches there?
- A. An Indian from Alberni.
- Q. What is his name?
- A. Tommie Shewish.
- Q. Is he also the missionary?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How many months in the year is the school running?
- A. 3 months in the year.
- Q. Not more than 3 months?
- A. No. It is only open while the main body of Indians are there.
- Q. Do any of the children of this Tribe go to boarding schools?
- A. Some go to the Alberni boarding school.
- Q. Do any of the Indians of this Tribe do any sealing around this coast?
- A. No.
- Q. How is that?
- A. We are afraid to go out - We are afraid of getting into trouble because it is closed.
- Q. Don't you know that the Indians have a special privilege for sealing along the coast?
- A. No.
- Q. Do you know that the Indians further North along this coast go sealing?

A. No, I don't know.

Q. Are there any seals to be got here now?

A. I don't know whether there are or not - Perhaps they would be able to catch them.

Q. The Indian is allowed to take seals but not by shooting or not by the use of a motor boat. Any boat that is propelled by paddle or sail, and not manned by more than 5 men can kill seals by spears - but not by firearms.

A. They will know it now.

Q. You Indians are the only people who have that privilege. Whitemen or Japanese are not allowed to take seals in any way at all. It is one of the privileges that is accorded to you exclusively.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do the Indians of this Tribe hunt any during the winter?

A. Yes they go trapping all the time.

Q. What do they get?

A. Mink, marten, otter and raccoon.

MR. COMMISSIONER MCKENNA: Do they hunt any for food?

A. No they don't hunt, but when they see any they kill it.

MR.COMMISSIONER SHAW: Are there any black bear here?

A. Yes, there are bears.

MR. COMMISSIONER MACDOWALL: Any sea otter here?

A. No.

MR. COMMISSIONER CARMICHAEL: In the tribe generally, are there canneries here where they can dispose of their fish?

A. Yes.

Q. Do the Indians work in the cannery?

A. Yes.

Q. And do the women work in the cannery also?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you sell your fish at the cannery easily.

A. Yes, they buy all the fish they can get.

MR.COMMISSIONER MACDOWALL: What do they pay for the fish?

A. Salmon 15 cents a piece, and halibut 2 cents per lb.

MR. COMMISSIONER MCKENNA: Do you own your own boats, or do they belong to the cannery?

Q. They are our own boats and canoes. We are trolling all the time.

Q. You don't use nets in fishing for the cannery?

A. No, but the whitemen use a seine.

Q. The cannery has a licence for the seine and they employ whitemen to work it?

A. I don't know about the licence.

CHIEF LOUI MAKES A STATEMENT

The cannery men are using a seine for their fishing, and they catch all the fish going up the Serita river.

MR. COMMISSIONER MACDOWALL: Have they any posts at the mouth of the river beyond which they cannot fish?

A. There is a post there, but it is right on the point. In low water it is very dry, that is where the post is.

Q. The posts are up too far?

MR COMMISSIONER MCKENNA: Is that the only river that is closed by a seine?

A. It is the only one in this part of the locality

Q. What cannery owns that seine?

A. The Wallace Fisheries Limited.

Q. And they have a cannery at Uchucklasset?

A. Yes.

MR.COMMISSIONER MACDOWALL: Do the Indians fish altogether for the Wallace Cannery?

A. Only a few.

Q. And where do the others fish?

A. In the Fraser River.

MR.COMMISSIONER MCKENNA: This question of closing the mouths of streams by seines was discussed by the Commission with the Federal and Provincial Government fishery officers a short time ago.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have been very pleased to meet you Indians. We have listened to what you have said and have had notes made, and we will take everything you have told us today into consideration, and will do what we can for you all.