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# THE DISPOSSESSED

Interior Indians in the 1800s



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by Mary Balf, Kamloops Museum, 1978

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## INTRODUCTION

Before the arrival of the first white men the Interior Salish Indians occupied the whole of the Thompson River drainage basin, and in addition extended eastwards to include a considerable part of the Columbia system, and to the northwest to encroach on the Fraser district. Most of the immediate Kamloops area belonged to the largest tribe, the Shuswap, while the Nicola valley was part of the Okanagan territory, and the upper North Thompson was Shimpoo land.

The Interior Salish were a remarkably successful stone-age people; their stone, bone and wooden tools were very precisely made. In our relatively harsh climate the leisurely life of coastal Indians was not possible, so that no highly elaborate artistic tradition developed. But there was enough spare time for carving, and the woven root baskets with a wide range of intricate designs are perhaps the finest made anywhere in the world. They are not only beautiful but also extremely durable, and so well-made that they served to carry water and cook food.

The Shuswap people were essentially nomadic, settling only in winter, when the climate necessitated the use of heated pit-houses. Such winter villages can still be recognized from depressions and sometimes quite deep hollows in the ground; a vast number have been destroyed at Tranquille, Westsyde and Valleyview as Kamloops has engulfed them in its rapid riverside sprawl. Some may still be seen on the north shore of the South Thompson, and many more survive in the less damaged terrain of the North Thompson valley.

There was no cultivation of the land. Berries, lichens and roots were gathered, and deer and other mammals rewarded hunting parties. Wild-fowl were probably extensively used, to judge from arrowhead concentrations found at low water where there is a continuing concentration of ducks, geese and swans along the South Thompson River. Clams were also important here; in fact Lafarge Cement plant is practically built on a deposit of broken shells. A variety of fresh fish were also used in season - but the chief article of diet was undoubtedly dried salmon, which could be kept in storage pits throughout the winter. The fishing season was a busy time for every band, and it was a long one. The current mid-October sockeye run provided huge numbers, and there was then another, apparently almost as big, somewhat

earlier, with the fish running much farther - up the upper Adams River and on to Tum Tum Lake. This was completely destroyed in this century by the erection of the Adams River Lumber Company dam at the lower end of Adams Lake. Trips were also made in August to the Fraser, notably at the Fountain, to accumulate some of the bounty of that river, perhaps in trade with the Lillooet tribe.

Deer not only provided welcome variation in the menu but were of prime importance as the basic fabric of clothing. Fur-bearing animals were also valuable in this regard as, fur side inside, offering insulation in rough weather, and, with the fur exposed in all its glory, for ceremonial robes. Buckskin was decorated with a wide variety of animal products - teeth, shells, porcupine quills and feathers.

Stone tools were superbly made. Black basalt was generally favored for points, with an extensive source near Cache Creek, but agates and other hard rocks were also used, especially for spearheads and the larger arrow points. "Jade" (serpentine) for chisels had to be obtained from the Fraser River, since there is none in Shuswap territory. Bone was extensively used and finely worked, while elk antler also provided durable tools. Elk were then common in this district, and their final extinction locally may have been due to the introduction of guns, but was more probably due to disease. There were no moose here in the early period; they came south in the 1920s. Wood, of course, does not survive the centuries, and hence museums have few examples of wooden tools - but they too seem to have been very efficiently fashioned.

Tradition claims the Shuswap as a warlike people, but there seems little evidence for this in the later pre-contact period; probably there were occasional small-scale skirmishes and raids on adjacent territory, and some single killings for personal enmity or revenge. Most intertribal contact, however, was undoubtedly for trade and sociability; fairly regular meetings with coastal peoples occurred at favored places like the Botanie valley, the Fountain, Green Lake and Penticton. Whale bone clubs and various sea shells found in the interior must have been traded on such occasions, most probably in exchange for salmon oil or baskets woven from spruce or cedar roots. Red ochre used cosmetically and for pictographs could be found at Squam Bay,

but most probably was traded from Princeton, a famous source as judged by its early name of Vermilion Forks. A few much-prized horses had percolated north, at least by 1800, from the European introductions onto the continent, presumably from trade through successive tribes. But travel was mainly on foot or by dug-out canoe, made of cottonwood. Small native dogs were sometimes used for packing bundles - or, indeed, for food if times were hard.

The various bands of the Shuswap people seem to have been close-knit social communities, with a chief elected more or less by the modern democratic process. Medicine men and hunting leaders also had considerable power. Some bands - Kamloops itself, for instance, developed their own drum songs and dances as well as performing those common to the whole Interior Salish nation.

A non-Indian learns little of the religion, and different writers have given varying views. It is obvious, however, that these people revered the forces of nature - the topography, vegetation, climate and particularly the salmon-bearing water-ways. They respected all forms of wild life found in their territory. They killed for food, not sport, giving thanks to the species for its bounty. They lived, indeed, in harmony with their environment to a degree that has been totally swept away by succeeding waves of immigrants.

### THE FUR TRADE ERA

Three men from J.J. Astor's ephemeral Pacific Fur Company explored north through the Columbia and Okanagan valleys late in 1811, proceeding over the divide to meet the Shuswap tribe at Kamloops. They found the people very friendly, and eager to trade furs for cloth and trinkets, and stayed with them for a couple of months until the weather eased, promising to return to establish a trading post.

This they did in the summer of 1812, and very shortly afterwards the North West Company, based in Montreal, came through the Rocky Mountains to set up a rival post. Next year the latter bought out the Pacific Company, and retained a monopoly on the fur trade until 1821, when they amalgamated with the English-based Hudson's Bay Company, using this older name.

Unfortunately no records survive for this very early period, but the relationship between the races seems to have been a very happy one. It was lucky for the whites that this was so, because the staff at the post was very small, and would easily have been overwhelmed had the Indians wished to attack. But the Shuswap were delighted with their new riches; in exchange for hunting pelts they obtained guns and ammunition, axes, traps, pots and pans, tobacco or brightly colored cloth and beads, which all made life easier and pleasanter. Beads in fact led to a completely new art form as the women devised charming patterns to enliven the habitual buckskin costumes. The new way of life was obviously exciting for a stone-age people. The small amount of land appropriated by the traders for their post was not resented; there was plenty for all.

But the honeymoon could not last; some of the imported goodies had inherent disadvantages which soon became evident. As early as 1827 HBC Clerk Archibald McDonald reported, "The Beaver run on the verge of extermination", an obvious consequence of the use of efficient metal traps and the temptation to overtrap in order to obtain more trade goods. Similarly the introduction of guns led to overkill of deer, and this scarcity locally was increased by the fur brigades, needing huge numbers of horses who competed for winter grazing. Shortage of buckskin in turn led to an increased dependence on the white man's cloth - a vicious circle.

More seriously, the traders were also dependent on salmon as their staple diet; the standard allocation was three dried fish per man per day. They required huge numbers to supply Thompson's River Post at Kamloops and its Okanagan subsidiary, and often also to augment those obtained by the various New Caledonian posts in the north. These were traded from the Indians at the Upper Lakes (Adams and Shuswap) and at the Fountain (near Lillooet) and other Fraser sites. By the 1840s they were exerting strong pressure on the natives to trade much of their catch - and the latter were usually glad to do so, having acquired a taste for store goods which they could no longer satisfy with the diminishing fur returns.

Perhaps the Indians, with forethought, could have worked a little harder and erected more drying racks for the brief salmon runs, but perhaps they were already fishing at full capacity.

Perhaps, too, the HBC stock-piled more than were really needed, fearing a poor run in the following year. In any case during the 1840s and 50s there were many occasions when Indians throughout the district were on the verge of starvation by the spring, and in some years there were even deaths. Some of the HBC Journals of this period survive, and Chief Trader Paul Fraser, in charge here 1850-5, often expressed fears, which proved groundless, that the starving Indians would steal their cattle, and that their fur-hunting capacity would be reduced. The nearest he came to an expression of sympathy was his remark, ". . . found a Bull with his leg Broak, got him killed but the Meat was not Eatable so gave it to the Indians."

Fraser was notably harsh, to his white servants as well as to Indians. Others in charge of the Post were more concerned, and encouraged the establishment of potato gardens, the first Indian attempt at agriculture. In 1840 Chief Factor Samuel Black even lent his friend Chief Nicola a plough to help break ground. At first these gardens were just planted hopefully and left when the band departed on its nomadic trips, but the potato is a resilient vegetable and fair crops were obtained despite this, and by the 1850s there was often a surplus available from favored land to trade to the Post.

We have to assess this period from the white man's scant writings, since the Indians had no written language. And the HBC Journals, many of which were lost, are essentially business records rather than human documents, so that they generally estimated a "good Indian" as one who brought in many furs. Despite these difficulties, it seems fair to judge the fur-trade period as a friendly one, with no serious hassles between the Shuswap and the newcomers; they gradually became mutually dependent. Some few of the white men, who were mostly French Canadian, married Indian girls "according to the custom of the country", and in most cases these were apparently permanent alliances; sometimes, however, the men followed Governor George Simpson's example and made some provision for the "wife" when leaving the country, but others just abandoned their family when they left the service. Many current Indian surnames date from that period, being the father's Christian name - Michel, Jules, Ignace, Thomas, Narcisse, Antoine, Manuel, Bob and Tom.

There were, of course, some clashes. As early as 1817 Pierre Charette was killed by his Indian companion in a personal

quarrel; according to Alexander Ross this concerned their choice of campsite, and Deadmans Creek marks the site. And in 1841 Samuel Black was killed by the nephew of Chief Pacamoose (Tranquille), apparently owing to some misunderstanding as to the cause of Tranquille's recent death. This was doubly tragic, since Black and Tranquille were both particularly fine examples of their races and were friends, and since it engendered racial suspicion subsequently. A little later Clerk John Tod took charge at Thompson's River Post, and, in retirement near Victoria 40 years later, told various fearsome stories of how valiantly he had outwitted various Indians, including thwarting a massive uprising under Chief Nicola. Since there is absolutely no evidence for this in the journal of the period or in oral tradition, and since it can be proved that Tod was totally incorrect in some of his other statements, one has to conclude that these "recollections" were the colorful prevarications and exaggerations of an old man. He perhaps remembered the general nervousness of the traders following Black's death, and translated fears of an uprising into exciting fables - with the hero, of course, always Tod himself!

It is fascinating to speculate what would have happened if missionaries had not appeared, if gold had not been discovered, and if the incursion of settlers had been delayed another 50 years or so, until pressures of world population gradually brought "civilization" to the remaining global banks of wild land. It seems entirely possible that a happy Indian-white society might have evolved at this relatively leisurely pace, with the Indians gradually learning to supplement their wild food with agriculture and stock-raising, and the traders restraining their avariciousness for furs, accepting a lower return that would have been compatible with species conservation. If such reasonably slow development had been possible one can imagine stability, enhanced by the growing half-breed population, educated in white terms by learning to read and write, and yet retaining their Indian skills and culture. It was a potential Utopia.

### CHRISTIAN ETHICS

In 1842 the first missionary came into the area in the person of the Roman Catholic Father (later Bishop) Modeste Demers, and was received with great excitement by the interior Indians. They had become familiar with so many items and ideas - some of which, like guns, must have seemed magical - that they were apparently eager to believe that the white man's gods had great

power. The HBC deplored the visit as a distraction from hunting furs; on August 13 the Presbyterian John Tod wrote in his daily journal, "At midday Mr. C.F. Ogden with the N. Caledonians accompanied, thank God, with Mr. Demers started for their winter quarters. The object of the missionary is no doubt good and praiseworthy, but their endeavours to convert the natives have hitherto produced no good effect, nor while they pursue their present system will they ever succeed."

Father Demers apparently instructed the Shuswap to meet him on his return from the north. By February 19, 1843 Tod reported over 400 were gathered near the Post waiting his arrival, which did not occur till ten days later, by which time they were suffering severely from hunger and unusually severe weather. They must have been deeply impressed by the new religion to accept such physical hardships. Unfortunately no continuity was provided by the missionaries; Father Nobili came through in 1845, but there then seems to have been a long hiatus until 1859, when the new Okanagan Mission under Father Pandosy supplied occasional visits, and eventually established the first church in 1867.

In 1861 the Anglican Rev. Lundin Brown came from Cayoosh (Lillooet) to collect money to build a church there, and improved the occasion by baptising some children of the trading post and of the Indian village. Shortly afterwards Père Richard paid his visit from the Okanagan and upbraided the Indians so fiercely for accepting these protestant ministrations that it was audible across the river! This antagonism between sects must have been more than a little confusing to Indians who had been taught the basics of Christian kindness and tolerance.

There is no doubt that the Oblate Fathers in this district worked hard and devotedly with the Interior Salish, and some of them, notably Father Le Jeune, became greatly loved for their gentle humanity and practical help. Although they naturally believed their religion to be the only true one, their desire to destroy all aspects of Indian culture seems impossible to condone. Even in 1960s a woman educated on Kamloops Reserve was persuaded she had sinned by marrying a man who had attended St. George's Anglican School at Lytton. And at the same period the girls of the Kamloops Residential School were rightly famous for their dancing - Scottish reels, the Mexican hat dance, Irish

jigs and favorites from almost everywhere in the world except only their own impressive tribal dances.

Meantime the Shuswap language was classed as a pagan anachronism and almost lost; it is only very recently that the Indians themselves are attempting to revive it. Although the priests had noble motives, their convincing air of moral superiority destroyed the very real pre-contact Indian beliefs and their community life, giving them instead an alien set of rules of conduct; it would seem a poor bargain for a people who were already living in harmony with their environment.

### GOLD!

Every early historian claims a different date for the discovery of gold in B.C., but 1855 provides an informed guess, since in that year Chief Trader Donald McLean took charge of Thompson's River Post, and here it was he who first received gold from some Indians. The site is also uncertain, but was probably Nicomen Creek (near Lytton), followed very shortly by Tranquille River. McLean duly reported the finds to his superiors, who decided to keep it secret, realizing that a gold rush would gradually kill the fur trade. Nevertheless, he encouraged Indians to collect the yellow rocks, and the news leaked out in San Francisco in 1857, apparently because of small shipments sent there by the HBC.

Next year optimistic hordes swarmed into the country, at first mostly from California's dying excitement, but followed in the ensuing years by people from all over the world. With the huge influx there was now stern competition for limited amounts of wild food, and there were occasional clashes with the Indians, with a few deaths on both sides in the lower Fraser district and the Okanagan. The formation of the Colony of British Columbia in 1858 brought an end to the HBC trade monopoly, and the loose form of government practised by them and the Indian tribes was replaced, in effect, by English law. French, the everyday language of the fur traders, quickly yielded to the English of the aggressive Americans; an Indian who wished direct contact now has to become trilingual!

A few Indians took part in gold-mining; Jean Baptiste Lolo St. Paul had notable success at Tranquille. He was a French Canadian - Iroquois, not a Shuswap, but had lived here for

thirty years and was a powerful intermediary and interpreter for the Kamloops band. The Colonist of May 28, 1861, said, "St. Paul, a noted Kamloops Indian Chief, is there, and has staked off claims and set a large number of his tribe at work with rockers. None of the miners know what he is taking out per day, but, judging from the prospects they have obtained, and the quantity of dust he is known to have in his possession, his men must be making excellent wages." Meantime his daughters, Mary and Ann, ran a small store for miners near the mouth of the creek, apparently with some success.

By far the worst result of the mining boom was an accidental one, in so far as no malice was intended. Prior to the coming of the white man smallpox had been unknown on the North American continent, and consequently no immunity had been acquired. There had been earlier outbreaks during the fur trade era, notably around Fort Vancouver on the lower Columbia, but there is no evidence of its penetration into what is now the interior of B.C. In his old age John Tod claimed that in October, 1846, "News had reached men from Oregon of the prevalence of of smallpox among some of the Walla Walla Indians." He continued with one of his long stories of outsmarting the Fountain Indians, who wanted higher prices for their salmon, by frightening them into submitting to vaccination. This may have had some basis in fact, but certainly the dread disease did not reach our area.

The first incident in the horrors of 1862 was noted in the Colonist of March 18, when a case of smallpox was confirmed in Victoria, in a miner recently arrived from San Francisco. Two weeks later there was general concern, leading to general vaccination of the total white population of that city. By the end of April many cases had been reported among the Indians of the southern portion of Vancouver Island, and a few more among non-Indians. During May something approaching panic seized Victoria, where an isolation hospital had been hastily erected. An editorial in the newspaper of May 6 advocated removing Indians away from the city in order to protect the whites. This incredibly callous attitude to those worst affected by the disease brought in by white men was soon echoed by the authorities. On May 29 it was stated that all Indians had been ordered to leave, including even those women who were married to white men. Perhaps this latter clause was not rigidly

enforced, but the vast majority of native people were promptly herded to Ogden Point, beyond the city's outer wharves. Numbers were not given; indeed probably no count was made. But a week later only fifteen Indians were alive here; large numbers had died, while others had escaped up the coast - naturally, in their ignorance of the nature of the infection, accelerating the spread of the dire disease.

To this point there is no indication of any attempt to vaccinate Indians, or even to explain how smallpox was transmitted. John Tod was living in Victoria, but made no effort to emulate his earlier claims of preventative medicine. There was no restriction of movement for whites; in fact miners were actively encouraged to press on to the gold fields. Not surprisingly, the disease was rampant among the Indians at Harrison Lake by the end of June, and 170 died at Lillooet that year.

The first redeeming feature noted was the departure in mid-June of the Anglican Bishop Hills up the north coast to vaccinate Indians; the Colonist tersely commented, "Better late than never", but it was indeed too late, since the whole population of several villages near Fort Simpson died during the next two months. Another Anglican, Rev. J.B. Good, later of Lytton, did valiant work among the Nanaimo natives, and perhaps there were others whose efforts were not recorded. None the less, it is obvious that vastly more could have been done if government and medical men had instigated wholesale vaccination of Indians as well as whites at the beginning, instead of leaving such a massive public health emergency to the goodwill of missionaries.

News travelled slowly in 1862 to Thompson's River Post, where Joseph W. McKay, one of the kindest and most able of the Chief Traders, was in charge. The journal of June 24 noted, "Vaccinated a large number of Indians today". And two days later, "Did a little trading with the South Branch Indians and vaccinated a good many of them." Similar notes follow frequently in the next month and it is obvious - and in contrast with Victoria - that the Company did its best to protect any Indians coming to the Post. But in mid-summer this would be a small proportion of the total population, and the disease spread despite it.

On July 12, "Smallpox is said to be commencing among the Indians of the North River", and on the 25th. "It is reported that

Sill-pah-han and some others of his band have died of smallpox - he is a loss to us as a hunter as well as an influential and well-disposed Indian towards whites". The clerk was expressing a trader's view rather than that of a man of compassion, but it at least ensured continuing vaccination locally. But this offered no help to those far up the North Thompson, where the disease was spread by Indians travelling from band to band, and perhaps also by miners then penetrating that district. By August 3 conditions were dreadful. "Indians dying off with the Smallpox up North River. We do not hear anything of those of the South Branch."

For two months the HBC had been trying to trade from the Indians bark to complete the new Post south of the river, but on August 18 noted a visit from the young Shuswap chief Niskonlith. "Had a conversation with Skainlith about Bark, he says the Indians are afraid to come down from Fear of infection from those here - there were no less than 4 deaths took place yesterday." And on September 2 "An Indian arrived from North River and reports the death of Peter." He was another respected chief, and Mount Peter may have been named in his honor.

Surviving Indians were now desperate; on September 24 "Supplied some medicine to Indians who are now constantly applying for some", and on the 28th. "Smallpox still raging among the Indians". We have no record of total deaths, or of Indian opinion; it is not difficult to imagine the grief and despair that must have prevailed.

During October the North Thompson contingent of the Overlanders were arriving in Kamloops by raft. On the way down, according to M.S. Wade; "The sight of an Indian encampment gladdened their eyes and raised their hopes.....they ran the raft ashore. Not a living soul was to be seen. Cautiously the men approached the houses, and to their horror saw dead bodies lying exposed everywhere, the victims of an epidemic of smallpox that swept through B.C. that year and decimated the native population. The living had fled in terror, carrying the infection with them and spreading the disease farther afield."

The callous white reaction to devastation by disease in this area was blandly summed up in the Colonist of October 18, 1862.

At the end of an article extolling the promise and ease of North Thompson prospecting there was the added inducement of safety - "There is no Indians on the river, as they nearly all died of smallpox this year."

This drastic end to recent overpopulation probably solved the problem of food shortage, but it left the remaining Indians in a miserable state physically and mentally. Many of them perhaps felt it useless to struggle for their rights against the ever-increasing white incursions - and so began a long era of dispirited defeatism which has lasted up to recent years. All the experts - medical, sociological and governmental - believed the Indians to be a doomed people soon to become extinct, a belief that was probably shared by some Indians, and continued in vogue until at least 1910, since tuberculosis and other infections also became a scourge. The authorities genuinely believed the "noble savage" was destined to extinction within a generation or so. Gradually, however, immunity to white diseases was acquired, so that the population at last recovered, and increased rapidly in the modern era.

#### THE RESERVE SYSTEM

The influx of gold-seekers was followed very promptly by large cattle drives coming through Kamloops from the States on their way to the butchers of Barkerville, and then by settlers. The first farmers in our district were retired HBC men starting on a small scale in 1860, soon to be followed by those with larger ideas, mostly American drovers. The new colonial government therefore decided to set up reserves for the native population, supposedly for their own protection and that of the settlers. The first local reference came in a letter from Chief Trader Donald McLean to Magistrate H.M. Ball of Lytton, written March 12, 1860. He first dealt with the HBC claim of ten miles square, and continued somewhat spitefully:-

"I think it is my duty to address you relating to the foregoing matter, understanding some arrangements are about to be entered into relative to Indian Reserves."

"St. Paul, alias J. Baptiste Lolo, has been allowed to establish, pro tempore, and cultivate a portion of land on the east side of the North River. The said land was purchased originally from the Chief of the Aborigines by the Hudson's Bay Company's

agent in this District. The land was not given to St. Paul by deed of gift. He was merely permitted to cultivate the same by favour until such time as the Company, by their agents, should again demand it, and as the aforesaid St. Paul, alias J.B. Lolo, has been nearly the whole time a paid servant of the Hudson's Bay Company receiving a salary and rations for himself and family.

"I trust therefore he will not be considered as having any pre-emption right, should he lay claim to such either in person or by an agent."

Ignoring the very dubious statement concerning "purchase" of the land by the HBC, Ball forwarded the letter to Colonel Moody, Chief Commissioner of Lands, with a sensible comment that was later accepted as valid: "With respect to the land mentioned in the letter of Mr. McLean, which has been occupied by the Indian Chief St. Paul, it was many years ago the site of the old Hudson Bay Fort, but was abandoned when the Fort was transferred to the opposite side of the River. Since which time the old Fort has been occupied by St. Paul and the neighbouring land cultivated by him and therefore I should consider that it ought to be regarded in the light of an Indian Reserve." It had indeed been abandoned by the HBC in 1843.

It should be remembered that the Indians of B.C., with the exception of a very few coastal bands, had never made any agreement for the sale of their aboriginal rights, nor had they fought and been conquered by the whites. Unlike most of the tribes elsewhere in Canada, they are non-treaty Indians, and land laws were imposed on them without any recompense.

The work of defining Reserves in this area was given to Magistrate William G. Cox. He seems at this period to have been well liked by both races; St. Paul and other Indian dignitaries claimed him as a personal friend. In the Chilcotin "war" of 1864 he may well have forfeited this reputation by inducing Indians to surrender through making promises he knew he could not fulfil.

In 1862, however, he staked local land but, unfortunately for later clarity, his written descriptions were somewhat vague. On October 15 he defined two Bonaparte Reserves; the first was

"between Cache Creek and McLean's Restaurant (at the Hat Creek junction); it is bounded on either side by the mountains, and by Messrs. McLean's land claims on the northern and southern extremities. The soil is fertile in some places along the river bottoms, which are densely covered with brush and cottonwood; boundaries are substantially and prominently marked by stakes." The second lay "north of McLean's Restaurant, and adjoins Scotty's farm on the north end and McDonald's on the south, and bounded on either side by mountains. The soil is similar to that of the former reserve."

On October 24 he was a little more specific:- "Indian Reserve situated at Kamloops, and extends along the North River, east side, for about six miles, and along the Thompson River to the east for about twelve miles more or less, running back to the mountains in both cases. The soil in some cases is of the best description, and the pasture excellent - a quantity timbered with pine and willow."

Two days later he defined another:- "Indian Reserve situated on the common road, midway between Kamloops and the Lake Ferry (Savona), and a short distance west of the River Cerise (Cherry Creek), containing about 25 acres or less." This was presumably a traditional fishing camp that the Indians desired to retain, but it was later taken over by white settlers, possibly because the Indians no longer wanted it, or possibly to accede to settlers' demands.

By 1865 there was increased pressure in other areas from settlers wishing to acquire some of the more attractive Reserve land. Extracts from a letter by Gold Commissioner Philip H. Nind to the Colonial Secretary convey the white attitude at that time: "That branch of the Shuswap tribe which live on the upper Thompson and Shuswap Lakes, numbering, I am informed, less than 500 souls, claim the undisputed possession of all the land on the north side, between the foot of the Great Shuswap Lake and the North River, a distance of nearly 50 miles (actually 36), where lie thousands of acres of good arable and pasture land, admirably adapted for settlement. I have heard of one cattle owner who paid their Chief, Nisquainlth, a monthly rent for turning cattle on these lands.

"Another branch of the same tribe, not so numerous as the

first, claim all the available land on the North River, extending northward many miles above the mouth, which also possesses attraction for the settler. These Indians do nothing more with their lands than cultivate a few small patches of potatoes here and there; they are a vagrant people who live by fishing, hunting and bartering skins; and the cultivation of their ground contributes no more to their livelihood than a few days digging of wild roots; but they are jealous of their possessory rights, and are not likely to permit settlers to challenge them with impunity.....

"Already complaints have arisen from persons who have wished to take up land in some of this Indian territory, but who have been deterred by Indian claims. At present all the land pre-empted is on the south side of the Thompson Valley for no other cause than this. James Todd, an old settler at Kamloops, is anxious to take up land close to Nisquainlth's camp; but he is on friendly terms with the Chief, and says he can buy him over to his views with a horse or so. I have refused at present to record him the land, particularly as he wants to purchase, in addition to his pre-emption, 420 acres, until I put the matter of Indian claims to the Government. It seems to me undesirable that the principle of the settler purchasing or acquiring his right to land from the natives should ever be admitted.

"I believe the only method of settling this matter satisfactorily with equity to both Indians and whites will be for the Government to extinguish the Indian claims, paying them what is proper for so doing, and giving them certain reservations for their sole use. These Indians are now quiet and not ill-disposed to the whites; but they are capable of giving a good deal of trouble if they imagine their rights are invaded."

Nind obviously shared with most white men the error of believing that the Indians had no use for land unless it was cultivated. This was particularly unfair, since most white settlers also used very little of their land for arable farming; the rest was cattle range. And it should have been obvious that the Indians would no longer be able to survive by "hunting, fishing and bartering skins if settlers took over prime land and exterminated the wild animals thereon. Chief Commissioner J.W. Trutch, however, did not recognize these objections, but recommended to

the Colonial Secretary that urgent action was needed. The latter replied that "the Shuswap and Kamloops Reserves should be reduced, without further delay, to reasonable limits", and appointed Walter Moberly, who was already in the interior, to investigate and report on the feasibility of this.

In November 1865, then, Moberly talked with Chiefs Gregoire and Niskonilth (father and son), and with Hli hleh kan or Petit Louis, the Kamloops Chief. "I learnt from them that they claim these lands by virtue of certain papers given them by Mr. W.G. Cox, who they say told them at the time he made the above reservations, that he was acting under instructions from Governor Sir James Douglas, and that such portions of these reserves not cultivated by them would be useful for grazing their cattle upon.....

"As it appeared to me quite out of the question that Sir James Douglas could have given Mr. Cox instructions to make such extensive reservations for a tribe that I should say does not number more than 400 souls, and have not 100 acres under cultivation, I had various interviews with the Indians, the result being that those settled at Little Shuswap and Adams Lakes wished me to lay off the reserves in the manner I proposed, but the two Chiefs Niskaimlth and Petite Louis both objected to have the lands they claim below the Little Shuswap Lake reduced in extent, giving as one reason that they received considerable sums of money from white men for the use of their grass lands.....

"I think by showing the Indians in the first place that their titles from Mr. Cox are of no value, and by a judicious expenditure of a small sum of money, that arrangements can be effected to get the greater portion of these reserves quietly given up. It would be very desirable indeed to get all these lands from the foot of Little Shuswap Lake to Kamloops entirely out of their hands."

After further correspondence the authorities apparently decided that Cox's demarcation could be happily abandoned - and indeed suggested that the Shuswap Indians might have moved the stakes to enlarge their claims. In 1862 there were few settlers clamoring for land, but now whites were eager for all good land. However Moberly's suggestion of ousting the Indians completely was not accepted, although it would seem that his hint of a little bribery

of the Chiefs should be tried was well-received by the Colonial Secretary. His letter of May 29, 1866, instructed Trutch to "assemble the Chiefs at Kamloops, or other convenient spot, and endeavour to settle amicably and satisfactorily, not only to the Chiefs, but to the whole of the families of the tribes, the limits of their reserves".

"Should you find any difficulty in curtailing the limits already alleged by the Chiefs to have been marked out for them by Mr. Cox, you are authorized to offer a remuneration, either pecuniary or in the shape of presents, to such Indians as feel reluctant or refuse to relinquish any of the land which they imagine they are entitled to as a reserve. In this arrangement much will be left to your discretion; but we do not wish any expenditure incurred beyond \$500, without a previous reference being made."

This would indeed be cheap land for the Government! Meantime settlers were getting very anxious; A.G. Pemberton wrote a letter of concern, urging immediate settlement. So Trutch journeyed to Kamloops in August with surveyor Edgar Dewdney, and apparently met with the Indians and persuaded them to accept drastic reductions in their lands; we have no record of whether financial inducements or gifts were used. If not, Trutch must indeed have been a compelling orator to obtain this peaceable settlement. He left Dewdney in the district to make accurate surveys.

The surveyor was kept busy, and in the fall he reported to Trutch: - "The chiefs of the different tribes as well as several of their Indians accompanied me during the progress of the surveys, and made themselves thoroughly acquainted with the boundaries and stakes.

"On arriving at Adams Lake I found that the Indians had several small patches of land cultivated along the shores of the lake, four of which they wished reserved. I however gave them the piece of open bunch grass land situated on the southeast end of the lake, about 1¼ miles square, that being the only feed they have for their horses and cattle. This I surveyed. I also gave them 15 square chains on the west side of the lake, about 12 miles from the outlet of Adams Lake. This I did not survey, but gave them a board 24 by 12 inches, marked with marking

iron and coloured red, 'Adams Lake Indian Reserve 15 square chains', with instructions to place this in the centre of the ground they described to me. I was unable to visit this spot because of the high wind that prevailed when I was there.

"The Shuswap and Adams Lake Chiefs have each a plan of their respective reserves, but having no paper I was unable to give Petit Louis, the Kamloops Chief, his; it is now ready for him. The whole of the Indians appeared perfectly satisfied with their reserves as laid out by me, and I think that no trouble may be apprehended from any of them in future about their land."

Dewdney continued with the official definition of the reserves. For Kamloops: "Commencing at the NW stake marked K.I.R. about 3 miles up the North Branch of Thompson River, the west boundary follows the meanderings of the river to its junction with the South Branch, at which point a large cottonwood tree is blazed and marked K.I.R. for SW corner; for southern boundary continue the meanderings up the South Branch of Thompson River for a distance of 3 miles to a group of cottonwood trees, one of which is marked K.I.R. for SE corner; from this point the east boundary runs N 9' E, to a deep gully in the mountain which extends to the creek and crosses it at a distance of 2 miles and 10 chains from SE corner, at this point several trees are blazed; continue up a deep gully about 1 mile to a tree blazed and marked K.I.R. for NE corner; the north boundary follows along several bunch grass flats to a large bluff of rocks from which the line runs S 76 W to NW corner.

Similar descriptions followed for a small Shuswap Reserve between the present Niskonlith Lake and the South Thompson, with a second, even tinier, on Little Shuswap Lake, and also for the Adams Lake Reserve as outlined in Dewdney's letter.

Soon afterwards the Nicola and Bonaparte Indians were in trouble. Peter O'Reilly, County Court Judge, wrote to Chief Commissioner J.W. Trutch on June 19, 1868, to suggest that a proper survey of the Nicola Lake Reserve was necessary, since a considerable number of settlers were making claims in the vicinity. Trutch replied:

"His Excellency approves of the course recommended by you, and I am directed to instruct you to undertake the adjustment of

these reserves at as early a date as you can make it convenient to repair to the spot.

"I am also to direct you to visit the Bonaparte Indian Reserve, either on your way to or from Nicola Lake, and should you be of the opinion that it is, as has been represented, too extensive, you are to reduce it within such limits as you may consider proportionate to the numbers and requirements of the Indians living thereon.

"The extent of land to be included in each of these reservations must be determined by you on the spot, with due regard to the numbers and industrial habits of the Indians permanently living on the land, and to the quality of the land itself, but as a general rule it is considered that an allotment of about ten acres of good land should be made to each family.

"After a report from you has been received public notice will be given of any reductions you make in these reservations, and a date will be advertised on and after which records of pre-emption claims on the lands so thrown open will be received.

"I have instructed Mr. Mohun to go up to Yale by tomorrow's boat and accompany you to the reserves, for the purpose of surveying the boundary lines under your directions."

Neither at that time or later did the Government explain why they considered ten acres per Indian family was adequate, while a white man could pre-empt 160 acres in the same district - enough for some crops, a hayfield, and sufficient pasture for a few horses and cattle. Indeed, in 1870 pre-emption in the Interior was doubled to 320 acres, since it was decided the earlier allocation was too small to make a living in the dry belt. No such concession was made to Indians struggling to survive.

O'Reilly reached the Bonaparte in early August 1868. "I ascertained from Ceinshute their chief that the whole population of the Bonaparte tribe does not exceed 55 to 60, that they cultivate from 4 to 5 acres, and that their stock consists of 25 horses and 9 head of cattle, and that they claimed nearly 7 miles in length of the Bonaparte valley, averaging  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile in width.

"Having visited this reserve three times, I came to the

conclusion that the extent of land claimed by them was out of all proportion to their requirements. With the concurrence of the others I staked out about one mile square for their use, within which are situated their houses and the land they have been in the habit of cultivating.

"While on my way to Nicola Lake I was met at Deadmans Creek by the Savona Ferry Indians, and requested by them to define the boundaries of their land. I thought it advisable to comply with their demands, though the reserve for this tribe was not included in your instructions.

"Ceciasket, the chief of the Indians who inhabit the country in the neighbourhood of Savona's Ferry, informed me that this tribe consists of 62 families, numbering in all 122; their stock consists of 10 head of cattle and 28 horses, and that formerly they claimed, under a promise from Mr. Cox, about 9 miles on both sides of the Thompson River, commencing at the foot of Kamloops Lake, but, a portion of this having been taken possession of by white settlers, they moved to Deadman's Creek, where they have built a small church and a few houses, and have there been in the habit of cultivating their potatoes. I marked off for their use the whole width of the valley, which averages about half a mile, for a distance of two miles; their lower boundary commences about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles above the wagon road bridge which crosses the creek."

It was a very sad measure of the way settlers rode roughshod over the Indians, grabbing what they wanted, that this band had been completely ousted from their original Reserve - and the authorities had taken no action whatsoever to stop them.

O'Reilly continued his trip. "I found that at Nicola Lake the Indians are divided into two tribes, one occupying the eastern or upper end of the lake, and the other the western or lower end, Chillihetza being chief of the former and Nowistican of the latter. The tribe under Chillihetza represents a population of 150, owning 20 head of cattle and 130 horses. At their request I marked out a square block of land containing about 800 to 1000 acres for their use, situated at the mouth of a creek which flows into the lake on the SE side, about 4 miles from its head;  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles lower down, on the same side of the lake, I marked out for this tribe a second reserve of about 80 acres, embracing the

mouth of another creek which is particularly valuable to them on account of the fishing." (This allocation was considerably below even the ten acres recommended by Trutch.)

"The tribe under Nowistican consists of about 100, and possess 32 head of cattle and 200 horses. I had considerable difficulty in effecting any arrangement with this tribe, as they claimed a large extent of valuable land, but at last the chief consented that I should mark off about 1000 acres in one block situated on the Nicola River, commencing 9 miles from the foot of the lake.

"Mr. Mohun, whom you sent to make the surveys of these reserves, accompanied me and was present when I made the arrangements with the chiefs of the different tribes; and the boundaries were defined by blazed trees and lakes, so that no misunderstanding can arise, nor do the reserves as laid out interfere with the rights of any of the settlers. Before leaving Nicola Lake I provided Mr. Mohun with all the assistance he required. The survey of these lands will, I think, occupy him about a month."

As far as is known Chillihetza's band accepted their meagre allocation quietly, but Nowistican's reluctance had continuing repercussions. His friend, the Anglican Reverend J.B. Good of St. Paul's Mission at Lytton, now took up the cudgels on his behalf. It seems that three areas were claimed - Nehyig (Lower Nicola), To-tulla (at the junction of the Nicola and Coldwater Rivers) and Tootch (at the foot of Nicola Lake) "where Naweeshistan's elder brother Poash has lived for years past, and from which he has lately been driven in favour of a white settler who has been allowed to pre-empt over his head and to seize upon his improvements and lands without any compensation being offered him in mitigation of the loss and grief thereby occasioned him."

O'Reilly had ignored Nowistican's initial protests, so the latter approached his friend Mr. Good, literally weeping on his shoulder. Good in turn approached Judges Begbie and Crease, and was assured O'Reilly would re-assess the Nicola lands. When this was not fulfilled Good wrote an impassioned appeal to Governor Musgrave at the end of 1870, together with a formal petition from Nowistican. The reply, from the Colonial Secretary a month later, enclosed some comments from O'Reilly

and ended:- "There seems to be some difference of opinion as to the facts of the case. His Excellency does not think it advisable at present to make any change in the Indian Reserve already assigned, especially as all Indian affairs will soon be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Canadian Government."

O'Reilly's comments had included the statement that Good had never visited Nicola Lake (which was untrue), and the implication that he was an interfering buybody and gullible sentimentalist (which probably contained at least a germ of truth). Good's righteous indignation was aroused, and on February 3, 1871 he wrote a lengthy exercise in polemics, large sections of which were underlined. O'Reilly's reply was tersely factual to the point of being cold-blooded; he had designated reserves "to the utmost extent which I considered justifiable in the public interest, and far more so than their present limited and apparently decreasing numbers the Indians there can ever really require." So nothing was done; once again the Indian claim was lost "in the public interest".

#### CONFEDERATION

When B.C. became part of Canada on July 20, 1871, one of the terms of agreement was that the Dominion Government should be responsible for Indians. They learnt with something approaching horror of the tiny land allowance prevalent here - much smaller per head than elsewhere in Canada.

Two months later J.W. Trutch, now Lieutenant-Governor, sent a statement of B.C.'s past policy to the Secretary of State for the Provinces. There are many platitudes about the benefits conferred on the Indians by civilization in the form of roads and the white man's law and order, but his main theme is that none of the churches should be given charge of Indian welfare - possibly because the Bishop of Columbia had recently complained concerning their poor treatment. With two exceptions, he noted "the entire failure of Mission Stations to produce any good results in their neighbourhood" and added "in my twenty years experience among the Aborigines of this coast, I have not yet met with a single Indian of pure blood whom I consider to have attained even the most glimmering perception of the Christian creed. In fact the idiosyncrasy of the Indians of this country appears to incapacitate them from appreciating any abstract idea."

Trutch completely ignored the main - and far from abstract - problem, that of land. The Canadian Government allocated 80 acres to each Indian family, while B.C. had settled for only 10. This compared with the 320 acres pre-emption allowed each white settler east of the Cascades. Eventually the province agreed to double the ration, and the first Indian Commissioner was appointed in 1872. He was Dr. Israel W. Powell; he had to cover Indian welfare throughout the province and was also told to collect artifacts for the Ottawa Museum. Despite this ridiculous work overload, he managed to plead the Indian cause very well. At the end of 1873 he demanded 40 acres east of the Cascades, since "the interior Indians are nearly all possessed of horses and cattle, and I am convinced that 20 acres would not be found to be sufficient."

He made this urgent request just as he was leaving Victoria to investigate reports of serious unrest at Cache Creek and upstream. These were given much publicity on very scant information in the press, and a possible Indian uprising was feared.

Attorney-General George A. Walkem referred Powell to the present "in some cases enormous, and in all cases sufficient, reserves", and stated; "On the contrary you will, after looking at your plans copied from the official records, agree with me that many of the reserves must be cut down." He also repeated earlier governmental advice; "A few hundred dollars' worth of blankets, clothes, food, etc. would be well laid out if given to them." After consultation with Premier Amor de Cosmos, however, he added in a postscript that "there would be no difficulty in granting extra lands to the Indians if absolutely necessary."

John Tait, a dispassionate observer as clerk in charge of the HBC Post in Kamloops, found reports of imminent war "preposterously absurd. I firmly believe these reports were got up for Speculative purposes, with no regard for the Indians or the injury it might do them. There is little doubt the Instigators of the Excitement fancied they saw Military Posts being established, and companies of Troops looming in the distance..... The Indians have no doubt been disappointed by Dr. Powell not visiting them last season; they have their grievances to lay before him. Some of the Tribes think their reserves too limited, and

that they are encroached by Pastoral Leases.....others in dread that their Reserves will be taken away from them to make room for the railroad."

Dr. Powell found that extensive pastoral leases granted to white settlers had indeed upset the Indians. In County Court recently "an Indian was mulcted of comparatively large damages for alleged trespass on lands which were not fenced, but held under a lease from the Government for pastoral purposes.....If the leaseholder of an extensive tract of land is justified by law in driving Indian cattle off any unfenced portion and having the owner fined for damages, I fail at present to see how lasting disaffection is to be prevented unless, indeed, a far more liberal treatment is pursued towards them."

In fact the Indians were in an impossible position. Game had receded, and the white authorities had repeatedly told them they should settle to farming - but they had no money to fence reserves which, in any case, were far too small to carry horses, cattle and arable crops. They must have felt the world was closing in on them.

In 1874 they found an eloquent champion in Father C.J. Grandidier of Okanagan Mission. He had served in the interior since 1861, travelling throughout the district, and hence was well-qualified to appraise the situation. In August he wrote at length to the Victoria Standard; his letter was subsequently endorsed by Bishop D'Herbomez and by James Lenihan, who had recently succeeded Israel Powell as Superintendent on the Mainland, Powell retaining Vancouver Island and the N.W. coast. Grandidier wrote in part about:-

".....our native tribes and their present dissatisfaction about their lands; which dissatisfaction has not abated, for the visit of Colonel Powell has not had all the results which were anticipated from it. At Kamloops the Shuswap Indians gathered to greet him, expecting that their grievances would be redressed. They exposed to him their needs, their earnest and unanimous wish to have more land. By the improvements which they had already accomplished without help from anybody and by the census of their cattle, they showed him theirs was no idle wish. The Commissioner was pleased with them, and gave substantial proof of his interest, for which they feel very grateful, but on the land

question it was out of his power to settle it according to their wishes.....

"Before the settlement of this Province the natives were in possession of it. Their horses had wide pasture lands to feed upon. The whites came and took land, fenced it, and little by little hemmed the Indians in their small reservations. They leased the land that they did not buy and drove the Indian cattle from their pasture lands. Many of these reservations were surveyed without their consent.....Their reservations have been repeatedly cut off for the benefit of the whites, and the best and most useful part of them taken away, till some tribes are corralled in a small piece of land, as at Canoe Creek, or even not an inch of ground, as at Williams Lake. The natives have protested against these spoliations from the beginning, but they have not obtained any redress.....Not a cent has been given them to extinguish their title to the land. They have been left to struggle without any help, any agricultural implements from any quarter, and because they are forbearing and peacefully disposed, they are granted the minimum of land. Is that treatment according to justice?.....

"In former times the Indians did not cultivate the land; now, taught by the example of the whites, they see its value. They are not unwilling to let the whites have the greater and best portion of it, but not the whole or nearly so. Children and owners of the soil, they want a sufficient share to get a living from it. They do not think that, when a white man can preempt 320 acres and buy as much more, that they are unreasonable in asking 80 acres of their own land per family, and in that they are supported by the example of the Dominion Government towards other Indians.....They must not be judged by what they were in past times, but according to what they are and promise to be, useful and industrious men.

"Already the Indian begins to raise cattle, and the census taken last spring shows 436 head of horned cattle and about 1300 horses between seven tribes, and they are only beginning.....If a white man can scarcely eke out a living with his 320 acres how can an Indian do it with 20? Is it possible to believe that the Indians can, any more than anybody else, live with their families out of the produce of 20 acres, keep cattle and horses, and meet all expenses? Out of 320 acres a man may pick out the best spot to cultivate; out of 20 acres it is impossible; which white

family would like to try it? And yet they have more means and knowledge at their command than the Indian.

"Pre-emption is but a nominal right of the Indian, for whom it was not intended, and whose condition does not allow him to fulfil the provisions of the law. He has no provisions, no money, no implements.

"The Indians of this country are honest, peaceful, law-abiding, and well-disposed towards the whites.....Let not their good qualities be turned against their interests, but be one reason the more to secure to them the means of becoming useful members of society. If they obtain the rights which they claim, the good feeling that reigns between them and the whites shall be strengthened forever."

James Lenihan, Indian Superintendent for the Mainland, wrote to Provincial Secretary John Ash on October 8, 1874, heartily endorsing Father Grandier's indictment of the Provincial Government. Ash replied that he would bring these letters to the attention of the Lieutenant-Governor, and added: "In the meantime I desire to call your attention to the fact that all that 'it is reasonable and just' to demand of the Provincial Government is that the Terms of Union should be faithfully observed. Should the Dominion Government be of the opinion that concessions beyond those provided for in Section 13 are necessary, it becomes the duty of that Government to make provisions accordingly."

This really aroused Lenihan's ire. He replied at length; in contrast to Grandier's appeal to the emotions he used a coldly factual approach, quoting several examples of gross inequity between different reserves, and stressing that the letter of the law had perhaps been observed, but the spirit had certainly been harshly ignored. He continued:

"It may not be altogether out of place to remind the Government of British Columbia of the great advantage accruing to the Province by virtue of her Indian population, whereby she receives a handsome annuity from the Dominion Government anent her Indian population, which, in addition to the great advantages of the Indians as producers and consumers, and the assistance which they render in the development of the resources

of the Province - if no higher view is to be taken of the question - claims for the Indians at the hands of the Government of British Columbia very great consideration.

"Again, there is the large sum which the Dominion pays to the Province annually, over and above any revenue which she receives therefrom, which should entitle her to ask that the Government of British Columbia should put the largest possible construction on the spirit and meaning of the section of the Terms of Union Act to which you have done me the honour to call my attention."

Now that this stage of conflict and acrimony between the two governments had been reached it was obvious that no guide lines would be acceptable to both. It was therefore necessary to introduce some form of arbitration, and to this end a Commission was set up under the chairmanship of Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, who had been a colonial official before confederation. A.C. Anderson, who had earlier served the HBC throughout the interior, was the Dominion Government's representative, while Archibald McKinlay was appointed by the Provincial Government. He too was an old HBC man, having served mostly in the Oregon Territory, and had then settled at Lac La Hache to develop a good farm. All three members were familiar with the land and with the Indian ways of life; all seem to have been both honest and able.

McKinlay was supplied, on October 23, 1876, with instructions from the Provincial Government, signed by Charles Good, Deputy Provincial Secretary. He was exhorted to treat the Indians with "Friendliness and conciliation, listening with the utmost patience to their wishes and complaints" - advice surely redundant to a man of McKinlay's quality. While being polite to the Indians, however, he was to concede as little land as possible. "This Government does not desire to see apportioned any unnecessarily large reserves such as would interfere with the progress of White Settlement.....The Dominion Government by Order in Council of March 1873 contended for 80 acres for each Indian family, the Government of British Columbia demurring to this as an excessive grant, and suggested 20 acres (being 10 acres over that which had been usual before confederation).

"The agreement under which you are now acting was finally

arrived at, by which no particular acreage was fixed upon but each native has to be dealt with severally.....While you endeavour in all cases to act with a liberal spirit toward the Indians, you do not imperil the progress of white settlement by conceding unnecessarily large Reserves.

"The sooner the labours of the Commission are over the less the expenses will be. You must therefore use the greatest diligence and all convenient speed." This proved impossible, since the Indians were more in need of extra land than polite words. But there was some amelioration of their condition, particularly for reserves that had been drastically cut back from the original allocation. It was at this time, however, that most reserves took the size and shape that they occupy today, with several later Commissions appointed to study the various problems. The whole Indian Land question still remains an open one, obviously incapable of a solution that is just to all parties. It is a question, moreover, concerning which most white people are singularly ill-informed.

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