

THE INDIAN POLICIES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT/RESUME

British and American policies towards Indians differed during the middle of the nineteenth century. This paper compares these policies as they were applied in the Pacific northwest coast region. The emphasis is on the nature and causes of violence and the maintenance of order among both native and non-native residents.

La politique américaine envers les indigènes au milieu du dix-neuvième siècle s'est beaucoup distinguée de la politique britannique en Amérique du Nord à la même époque. L'auteur de cette étude compare ces deux politiques, en ce qui concerne surtout leur application dans la région de la côte pacifique nord-ouest. Il décrit la nature et les causes de la violence dans cette région, et examine la question du maintien de l'ordre parmi les populations indigènes et non-indigènes.

We have a rather sanctimonious tendency in Canada to believe that our history is marked by less violence than that of the United States. We regard this as a commonplace and enshrine it in our beliefs. We pride ourselves on "evolution" rather than "revolution" and on "peace, order and good government" rather than on "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." We tend to cast suspicious eyes across the 49th parallel, and we rest rather contentedly in the belief that Hollywood's perception of American frontier wars is representative of the United States' drive to Pacific shores.¹

In the history of Indian affairs we are also led to believe that British and Canadian government policies towards native peoples were "better" and, if not that, then certainly "more beneficial" or "less violent" than were those of the United States. The academic pursuit of endeavouring to determine whether one nation's policy was "better" than that of another tends towards an exercise in futility. The reason for this is that the comparisons and contrasts are invariably facile and simplistic, and frequently lead the inquisitive reader into a rabbit warren. Moreover, historians of comparative frontiers, whose numbers are legion, inevitably find that their subjects constitute nothing less than a Pandora's box: they curiously open the box only to find that a swarm of evils erupts before them (Gough, 1979a:9-17; 1976-77:28-40). For this reason, in comparing the Indian policies of Great Britain and the United States in the Pacific Northwest in the mid-nineteenth century, I have attempted to describe the principles and the development of these policies. I have looked at the practice of these policies, but I have not strained to reach conclusions as to whether one was "better" or "more beneficial" than the other, even though observers at that time acknowledged that the British policies towards native peoples tended to be more beneficial, and certainly less violent than those of the United States. The principles of these policies may have been different in their pronouncement, in their practice, and in their implementation. Yet in their end results were they very much different? I have therefore included some future lines of inquiry that might be undertaken to reach more concrete conclusions than I have dared reach here.

In the mid-nineteenth century British policies centered around the principles of the Pax Britannica. The mission of British imperialism was to bring peace, order and good government to the areas of British settlement and to carry civilization and Christianity to the uttermost extremities of the earth. The security of British commerce and settlement was made by skilful diplomacy and military influence, most notably by the Royal Navy. The extension of the rule of law was the primary goal of British government.² Wherever possible, however, policy makers preferred informal empire: in the case of Old Oregon, the imperium of the Hudson's Bay Company. However, the pressures of the United States in the 1840's to reinforce the interests of land seekers into Old Oregon made the division of territory between Russian America and Alta California only a matter of time; thus, in 1846, by the Treaty of Washington, the Colonial Office was faced with new challenges in the direction of Indian affairs.

Between the years 1820 and 1840 approximately, British policies towards aboriginal populations in the British Empire had undergone drastic reassessment.

Humanitarian influences developed by groups such as the Aborigines Protection Society, anti-slavery groups, and various missionary societies had strong support at the Colonial Office in the form of the permanent undersecretary of state for the Colonies, Sir James, Stephen, 1836-47. Stephen possessed a high sense of moral obligation for "alien races" in the empire and embodied Edmund Burke's perception that empire was trust and responsibility. In 1834 colonial governors were ordered to "secure to the Natives the due observance of justice and the protection of their rights, promote the spread of civilization among them, and lead them to the peaceful and voluntary reception of the Christian Religion" (Mellor:27). In 1837 a parliamentary inquiry reported abuses on imperial frontiers, and "a new standard" was introduced "by which to judge the empire." The policy was adopted.³ But in the pursuit of policy, practice often departed from principle. In every imperial locale the methods of protection remained in doubt through the 1860's and afterwards. As one popular commentator on the Victorian empire has put it: "in the scale of the imperial motives, the philanthropic was nicely balanced by the belligerent" (Morris:86).

Stephen's successor, Herman Merivale, was much more realistic than his idealistic predecessor. He realized that the control of native policy was moving away from the mother country to the frontiers of empire, and that Colonial Office directives (which had never been particularly effective in any case) were being supplanted by the exigencies of meeting the needs of settlers for land - land to be taken from native peoples. Considering the two possibilities of "amalgamation," that is, gradual union of races leading to assimilation, and "insulation," that is, a reservation policy, this political economist-turned-administrator argued cogently for amalgamation. Merivale may have been "both naive and at times utopian" in trying to find a solution. However, his policy was based on his reading of existing conditions on the frontiers of empire (McNab, 1977:359-84). For this reason, British colonial policy in the mid-Victorian age centered around two interrelated issues: how consistent with colonial self-government was the reliance of colonies on imperial military force for internal and external security, and how should colonists in the name of "self-government" control and govern natives and emancipated slaves within their borders (Morrell, 1969:2-3; Cell, 1970:19, 141-2; Cell, 1979:195, 197-8)? On the other hand, he knew that settlers had needs as well, and at that time the British government was encouraging colonial "self-government" to foster, among other things, colonial self-defence.

In the case of British Columbia, British policy was already grounded in the principles and practices of the Hudson's Bay Company. From 1821 to 1846 in the Pacific Northwest, the principles of the Company's Indian policy were to maintain the goodwill of Indians and to have "peace for the purpose of profit" (Shankel:3). The company's practice was to deal forcefully with the Indians but only when they interfered with Company persons and Company property. Indians, we are told, generally respected the Bay traders for their rigidly-held guideline "never to suffer the blood of a white man to be shed by a savage with impunity."⁴ "The policy of the H.B. Co. was a standing one," a trader wrote, "-one order was to hunt up murderers at all cost & hence is due a good deal of

good feeling etc. between the Indians & H.B. Co.'s employees[sic]. The natives here [Fort Victoria] & on the Sound [Puget] were considered a cruel & treacherous set & they would be now, but for fear of the whites."⁵ For a few years after the 1846 boundary was established Hudson's Bay Company Indian policy remained the only authority. This primitive law of an eye for an eye, based on the talionic law rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, continued even after British and American civil authority was proclaimed on either side of the border. By about 1850 Company policy gave way to British and American variants on respective sides of the border, though more slowly north of it than south of it.

When, in 1846, Britain found itself possessing a large tract of territory in northwestern North America, government gave much consideration to the subject of Indian policy. The Colonial Office undertook extensive discussions with officials of the Hudson's Bay Company on the matter. This was partly because opponents of the Company questioned whether a business concern could pursue an Indian policy that would take into account Indian particularities and interests. Nonetheless, government decided to give a charter of grant to the Company for Vancouver Island, leaving the continental area as a Company trading realm under license. In recommending this course to his superiors, Merivale at the Colonial Office wrote that the Indians of the island were little known, in numbers or in character. They were best understood by the Company, he said, whose "dealings with and knowledge of the North American Indians are of course very extensive; and inasmuch as, notwithstanding the many accusations of which that Company has been object, no distinct charges of cruelty or misconduct toward the Indian tribes under its control have been made out by reasonable evidence; while every year brings painful accounts of mutual wrongs and mutual revenge between Indians and whites from the neighbouring regions not under their control"⁶ Merivale rightly understood that the fur trade would soon decline, that the area would not remain as a game preserve but become a place for trade, and that the mercantile interests of the Company would expand and diversify in relationship to growing markets in adjacent American territory and China.

Merivale's superior, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, the third Earl Grey, strongly preferred the Company over several rival applicants. The Company had capital. It also possessed a proprietary interest in trade and colonization. Not least, it had a good record of Indian treatment. Grey opposed the immediate introduction of colonial self-government on Vancouver Island. He argued that the principal barrier to the introduction of that form of government in colonies such as British northwestern North America was "their being inhabited by a population of which a large proportion is not of European race" (Grey, I, 27; Galbraith: 284-92; Morrell, 1930: 444-45).

Thus in 1849 the British government issued a charter of grant to the Company under which the latter obtained colonization rights on the basis that this "would conduce greatly to the maintenance of peace, justice, and good order, and the advancement of colonization and the promotion and encouragement or trade and commerce in, and also to the protection and welfare of the native Indians residing within that portion of Our territories in North America

called Vancouver's Island . . ."7 The colony would have an executive council and, in due course, an assembly. Meanwhile, full executive authority lay in the hands of the colony's first governor, Richard Blanshard. The pursuit of a native policy was left to the governor.⁸

Nonetheless, the pursuit of such a policy did not go unwatched in Britain. As in the discussions of aborigines' protection in the mid-1830's, so too was there a discussion, in 1857, on the subject of British Indian policy in Hudson's Bay Company domains. In 1857 a parliamentary inquiry into Hudson's Bay Company practices brought forward detailed complaints against the overbearing authority of the Company in Red River, New Caledonia and Vancouver Island. The inquiry also revealed considerable support for the Company. The British, as revealed in the committees and supported at the Colonial Office, were keen to avoid the American frontier experience of interracial violence, then well-known in Britain. For this reason no immediate recommendation was made to government to remove the Company from its imperial function.⁹ The discovery of gold on Fraser River tributaries, bringing forth the rush of 1858, brought a further reappraisal by the Colonial Office with government now anxious to bring an end to the Company's imperium. Parliamentary debate on the question also favoured the liberalization of trade.¹⁰ The newly-appointed Governor of British Columbia, James Douglas, who was also Governor of Vancouver Island, possessed strong executive authority for the protection of Indian "interests." A seasoned Company trader who was required by government to quit his corporate responsibilities, Douglas possessed discretionary powers in the direction of Indian policy. This was as it was for Governor Blanshard of Vancouver Island in 1849. However, his orders went further. They required him "to pay every regard to the interests of the Natives which an enlightened humanity can suggest" and to employ "the best means of diffusing the blessings of the Christian Religion and of civilization among the natives."¹¹

In colonial British Columbia, the control of Indian affairs remained vested in the Crown's representative. Successive holders of the office of governor, both on Vancouver Island and British Columbia (the two were united in 1866 to make, among other things, Indian policy and administration more uniform), maintained the general features of Douglas's policies, except in land policies, where they tended to bargain away Indian rights after 1864.¹² In the matter of law enforcement, sometimes their policies were forceful, as in Governor Arthur Kennedy's treatment of Ahousat pirates on the west coast of Vancouver Island in 1864. Sometimes they were more benign, as in Governor Frederick Seymour's reluctance to deal with warring Nishga and Tsimshians in 1869. But generally British governors made few departures from the time-honoured policy of bringing to trial Indians accused of crimes against persons and property. In many cases, officials ignored internecine violence, cannibalism, and civil crimes; but efforts were made to stop Indian slavery and the sale or gift of spirituous liquor to the Indians (Gough, 1978a:43-68; 1978b:159-68). In many "petty cases" of crime Indians remained a law unto themselves. In 1872 an Indian commissioner was appointed by the Government of Canada to superintend Indian affairs in British Columbia that had become a federal responsibility by a Domin-

ion Order in Council of 16 May 1871. But whether under Company, British or Canadian auspices, policy remained fundamentally consistent and unchanged - to extend and enforce the rule of law - though in matters of land policies and reservation there were variations.

Across the border, United States policy was different from that pursued in British Columbia during the colonial period. It was dictated by expediency and political whim. Dating from before the Royal Proclamation of 1763 government policy was to recognize aboriginal title and provide compensation for alienated title. The Proclamation explicitly allowed, firstly, for the non-disturbance of Indians on lands not ceded or purchased by the Crown and, secondly, for the continued reservation of those territories as hunting grounds (Kennedy, 1950: 29; Jacobs, 1972, Ch. 9). The intention of this policy was to restrict the westward movement of settlers.

Despite these intentions, under first British and then United States jurisdiction the "Indian line" moved west as settlers advanced and Indians retreated, the latter voluntarily or by force.¹³ Indians became an obstacle to "manifest destiny." During the 1830's Indians were not needed as an auxiliary force to support United States forces against foreign rivals, and there arose a further reason to clear land for national development. Removal of Indians to the "Great American Desert" became government policy. Gradually the theory of the eighteenth-century Swiss jurist Emmerich de Vattel based fundamentally in the concepts of John Locke became accepted: the possession of land obliged the owners to cultivate that property. Senator Thomas Hart Benton said in 1846 that it was the "divine command of whites, to subdue and replenish the earth." His policy for the Indian was essentially "civilization or extinction." Gradually the United States adopted a policy of denying the usufructuary right of occupation using "its righteous conviction and inordinate power to do anything... for the common good," in short, to resort to a forceful policy of removal. Thus began the "coercive period" in American Indian affairs.¹⁴

For the management of these matters, in 1824 Congress created the Office of Indian Affairs. Appropriately enough it was a division of the War Department and remained there until 1832, when Congress authorized the appointment of a Commissioner of Indian Affairs reporting to the Secretary of War. In 1849 the Office of Indian Affairs was transferred from the War Department to the new Department of the Interior. Under this structure, "Superintendents" had general responsibility in a geographic area such as a Territory. They possessed much latitude in policy, including choice of agents. Governors in newly created territories acted as *ex officio* Indian superintendents, much as governors did in Vancouver Island and British Columbia throughout the colonial period. But this dual role was unsatisfactory, for the joint responsibilities of governor and Indian superintendent were anti-thetical. Consequently separate superintendents were authorized by Congress. Answering to superintendents were "Agents" who had charge of agencies. They had responsibilities for one or more tribes. They supervised the work of sub-agents, whose work included gift giving, removing Indians from places of intended white settlement, and granting annuities. In addition special agents were appointed for resolving Indian claims (Hill,

1974:1). As far as personnel were concerned, appointments to superintendencies frequently went to military personnel, though appointees were obliged to resign their Army commissions, as in the case of Washington Territory's first Governor and Indian Superintendent, Isaac Stevens. In 1869 most civilian agents were replaced by Army officers but this was reversed in 1870 when Christian religious denominations were allowed to nominate persons as agents (*ibid*:3).

These structural changes represent a further shift in policy. Coercion had failed, and the Washington and Oregon experiences described below are ample testimony of this. In the mid-1850's the prevailing policy, under the administration of Commissioner of Indian affairs George Manypenny, proclaimed a need for new regulations. Removal of Indians had proven to be useless for no suitable land was available. In some cases, as with the Grande Ronde reservation in Oregon, the land's resources would not sustain the tribe. Hence policy focused more and more on making Indian tribes as "quasi independent nations." Assimilation became the obvious solution (Hoopes, 1932:48-9).

Yet this policy also did not work, for in the 1860's breakdowns in tribal government and corruption in the contract system or supplying and trading with Indians symbolized the bankruptcy of United States policy. In 1865 a Congressional investigation by a joint committee of the House of Representatives and the Senate found Indian numbers declining dramatically. The committee partly ascribed the decrease to "the irrepressible conflict between a superior and an inferior race when brought in the presence of each other."¹⁵ In 1867 Congress modified policy only slightly by establishing boards of inspection. Under the "Peace Policy" of the administration of Ulysses S. Grant religious denominations were encouraged to take active roles, as ameliorating agents between whites and Indians. This was in keeping with the view of Superintendent W.H. Waterman of Washington Territory, who said in 1865 that only Christian influence could save the Indian. Under this policy, the historian of it has written, "the government approached the Indians of mountain and plain with a Sharp's carbine in one hand and a Bible in the other." In a final act to destroy any separate Indian political identity and to encourage "assimilation" Congress passed legislation whereby no Indian nation or tribe would be recognized by the federal government as a nation or tribe with which a treaty could be signed. All thoughts of a separate Indian sovereign nation died with this legislation. In the 1870's "concentration" of tribes on reservations was tried but this, too, was unsuccessful and was eventually abandoned (Priest, 1942:6-13).

In evaluating the period 1840 - 1870 we can see that various policies were pursued without any significant degree of success. Meanwhile a number of serious Indian wars had occurred in Oregon and Washington Territories. In the years 1845 to 1848, 1.2 million square miles were added to the United States domain. "In no other part of the United States," one historian has written, "was the conflict between red man and white pursued with more persistence or more bitterness than along the lonely rivers, in the mountain defiles, and amid the dense forests of the Pacific Northwest" (Hoopes, 1932:69).

In Oregon the appointment of agents was directly related to the expansion

of the settlement frontier. In 1842, prior to the division of Old Oregon between Britain and the United States, Dr. Elijah White received a commission as Indian sub-agent among the Cayuse and Nez Perce. Actually, however, Indian affairs in Oregon remained under Hudson's Bay Company control: the corporate frontier was in advance of the settlement frontier there as in British Columbia. In 1848, however, Oregon became a Territory of the United States, a vast area between 42° and 49° North latitude and from the continental divide to the Pacific. Dr. White did not remain long in his position, and in 1846 the Commissioner on Indian Affairs reported that the growth of American sovereignty in the west made it "necessary to make some provision for conducting our relations with the Indian tribes west of the Rocky Mountains, for whom there are now no agents of any grade or description." Congress and the Commissioner looked for a more permanent mode for extending to the Indians "the benevolent and fostering care of the government."¹⁶

Successive reports of the Commissioner noted the gradual growth of appointments of superintendents and agents. In 1847 reference was made to the precarious position of American citizens in Oregon and of British interference, and in that year a sub-agent was appointed.¹⁷ In 1848, when Joe Lane became governor and ex-officio Indian superintendent, three sub-agents received commissions under the new territorial government.¹⁸ For the years 1849 through 1851 Washington knew very little about affairs in the far west and only in 1850 did a defined policy emerge for a territory that was still little known. Under the Act of 5 June 1850 Congress made provision for appointing commissioners and superintendents for extinguishing Indian title west of the Cascade Mountains and administering Indian affairs as a responsibility separate from the governor's duties. Anson Dart became Superintendent; three agents were appointed; and three commissioners were instructed to treat with the Indians to extinguish Indian title and, if possible, provide for their removal to the east of the Cascades, a task which proved impossible (Hoopes, 1952:76ff). In 1851 the Commissioner noted that all except the Snake and Rogue River Indians were submissive to the authority of the Superintendent, Dart. Only in 1853 did the Commissioner admit the unsettled state of affairs in Oregon, where settlement made Indian affairs "precarious," to say the least.¹⁹

In that year Washington Territory came into existence, leaving Oregon Territory as a smaller division. Major Isaac I. Stevens, a 35 year-old U.S. Army Engineer, became Governor of Washington and ex-officio Indian superintendent with wide responsibilities to map a northern route for a railroad, explore the Territory, learn the disposition of the natives, and establish a new government. His object was the cession of all aboriginal lands, the placing of Indians on reservations, and the compensation for this transfer by an annual shipment of goods - in other words, "the mode of removal practiced by the United States since the early years of the nineteenth century" (Hill, 1974:123-4). To this end in 1855 Stevens called Indians to three major treaty councils at Walla Walla, Hellgate (near Missoula), and Fort Benton. In that year, however, the Yakima War changed the movement towards peaceful resolution of conflict and resulted in the establishment of more sub-agencies (Fahey, 1974, Richards, 1972, 1979).

In Oregon, meanwhile, Major Joel Palmer, a United States Army Officer, had assumed responsibilities as Indian Superintendent for Oregon Territory. That Superintendency remained in force until 1873, when agents received instructions to report directly to the Office of Indian Affairs in the national capital. In the interim, Olympia remained headquarters for the Washington Territory Indian Superintendent, and Salem periodically was that for the Oregon Superintendent, except for 1853 - 1861 when Salem was the headquarters for the united superintendency (Hill, 1974:193-200). In other words, the centers of administration changed directly with the growth settlement and local territorial needs. Variety in the type and size of agencies reflected the process of treaty making, bureaucratic growth, and an official response to the Indians.

These profiles of British and United States Indian policies in the Pacific Northwest suggest that under British colonial jurisdiction the policy varied little except in minor structural changes in Indian administration. London set forth the guidelines; James Douglas and other governors conducted themselves within that general framework. Britain possessed an extensive corpus of imperial experience in dealing with aboriginal peoples that the United States did not have. In British Columbia, it was not "empire by experiment" as seemingly was the case in the American far west. British administrators sought rigorously to defend the rule of law, and that necessitated strong authority, an authority visibly present and recognizable to white and Indian alike. The British also had the Hudson's Bay Company experience and already established dominance to draw on.

Essentially the Colonial Office decision to trust to the experience of the Company in 1849 showed wisdom, and between 1846 and 1858 London made no decision to change the nature of Indian policy. Even in 1858 strong local executive action remained central to policy execution. That administration was backed up by courts, justices of the peace, and the sheriffs and the use of British gunboats, colonial militia and police when force was required. There were cases of interracial violence. In 1864 on the west coast of Vancouver Island nine Ahousat Indian villages were destroyed by British warships in a piracy and murder case which was never brought to a satisfactory conclusion. In the same year, force was sent to Bute Inlet and the Chilcotin region to bring Indians to trial for the murders of Alfred Waddington's surveying party and of other persons. These constitute major cases of violence, though minor cases are numerous. One scholar in comparing the degree of violence on these two frontiers, has argued that the Indians responded differently in these jurisdictions (Fisher, 1981:31-51). True enough, and one reason why this was clearly the case is that in British Columbia there was a smaller white population, in comparison to that of Washington and Oregon. The pressures placed by settlers on the Indians for land and resources were less extensive than those in American territory south of the border.

By contrast in Oregon and Washington the vigorous policy of alienating Indian land in keeping with the dramatic flood of settlement, particularly into the Willamette and Columbia Valleys and into the Palouse region and Puget Sound, placed pressures on Pacific Northwest Indians not witnessed in British

territory. In 1854 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs estimated that the acquisition of California and Oregon eight years before had resulted in the transformation of "much of the Indian wilderness into a great highway and thoroughfare," with 75,000 persons annually traversing lands to and from the Pacific. Developing the west constituted a "national necessity." In these circumstances, it is not surprising that numerous "inhuman scenes and atrocities" occurred in Washington and Oregon in the mid-1850's. In these, whites had shown themselves "to be as barbarous and cruel as the Indians," according to Commissioner Many penny. Instead of the military being used to protect the whites, the order of things had been reversed. As he complained: "the Army had to be used for the protection of the weak and helpless Indians from the persecutions and cruelties of the whites."²⁰

The Oregon Territory was settled prior to the extinguishing of Indian title, a necessary preliminary for the maintenance of peace on a settlement frontier. In 1840 - 1850 the federal government acquired title to 20,000,000 acres at a cost of \$3,000,000, leaving Indians with reserves of 4,000,000 acres. In 1853 - 1856 federal agents signed 52 treaties with various tribes, mainly in Oregon and Washington which resulted in a further acquisition of 174,000,000 acres of Indian lands.²¹ But in many cases these treaties were not ratified by Congress and this exasperated the Indians in question. At the same time, governors and Indian superintendents had resorted to force, and the frequency of the use of force was high. In fact, Oregon and Washington Indian affairs actually obtained the government's classification of "very critical" in 1857. As an official reported, war might break out from "any disturbing cause."²²

Under pressure from anxious citizens, civil authorities called upon the Army to quell disturbances and protect persons and property. By the mid 1850's the Army was a direct participant: to name major examples for this period, in the Yakima War of 1855, in the Battle of Seattle of 1856, in warfare against the Spokanes in 1858 in the Palouse district, and in Army retaliations and punitive expeditions under Colonel George Wright and other officers. Whether or not the Army itself was a cause of suspicion and violence is another matter. Superintendent Dart, reflecting on the differences of the early 1850's and late 1860's, thought the Army the major cause of interracial violence.²³ But the military could not be blamed solely for the violent encounters. In the Cayuse War of 1847, of which the famous murder of the Whitmans is but a part, the U.S. Army was not involved (Cline, 1974:182-3, 192; Meinig, 1968:138). The frontier was stabilized by the exertions of James Douglas and Peter Skene Ogden, then Hudson's Bay Company servants. The limited role of the U.S. militia there, raised to meet the alarm, was merely to prevent a combination of different tribes.²⁴

The character of the American settlement frontier in Oregon and Washington, authorities said, required the support of U.S. militia and the Army. The character of the British Columbia frontier was different. In the interior plateau the pressures for land were not as severe as in adjacent American territory. Environmental features were also different. During the critical Fraser River gold rush, Indians actually restrained themselves and other tribes from violent

acts against whites.²⁵ On the coast the pattern of British and American practice bore greater similarity. Both the United States and Britain, particularly the latter, employed gunboats. During the Battle of Seattle the British even aided the American authorities against a general Indian uprising which, in Governor Douglas's view, threatened whites on both sides of the boundary.²⁶ British gunboats also rendered support to the Russians in 1862 at the mouth of the Stikine River in Alaska and supported United States authorities in 1879 against possible Indian insurrection in Sitka (Gough, 1979b:228-50). In the pursuit of law and order, aiding the interests of fellow whites superseded differences of nationality.

Contemporary British and American observers believed that British policy was better than United States policy in the Pacific Northwest. For instance, an Indian agent on the Umatilla Reservation thought the British system had "a more constant and restraining influence upon the lawless class of society. There is more individual freedom with us, and consequently more room for departure from the normal line of conduct" (Davenport, 1907:355). General W.S. Harney found Indians more orderly in British than American territory, for British rule was "kind but firm" (Trimble, 1914:46). The British sought to maintain Indian goodwill (Fisher, 1981:49-50). Late nineteenth and early twentieth century perceptions tended to support the belief that the British Columbia experience in native administration was generally successful, while the comparable American one was not.²⁷

These comparisons tend to be facile and dangerous. They merit thorough and detailed inspection. Some possibilities for further inquiry include a breakdown, tribe by tribe, of tribal responses to authority, civil and military. Some Indians were tied more to the sea than others. Even among Coast Indians a wide variety of cultural differences existed. Personalities and characters of governors, superintendents and agents also varied. So did those of settlers and missionaries. One would also like to know more about lands and resources and the capabilities of the environment to support human occupation, both Indian and white. Obviously, Man must sustain himself. Thus the motivation for self-sufficiency lay behind much white-Indian conflict in the Pacific Northwest in the nineteenth century. The British and American Indian policies in the Pacific Northwest were clearly different. But the implementation and pursuit of these policies was another matter altogether. Other scholars have groped for conclusions but the numerous issues deserving of comparison and contrast are too intricate, too complex to warrant anything more than the temporary conclusion suggested here.²⁸

NOTES

1. My friend K. Ross Toole of the University of Montana's Department of History, a distinguished scholar of the history of the American West, was hired by a Hollywood film studio as historical adviser for "How the West was Won." Much of his advice was ignored, but his name appeared in the

credits.

2. W. Ross Johnston, *Sovereignty and Protection: A Study of British Jurisdictional Imperialism in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1973), pp. 13-16. The pursuit of law was a British mission: "The True strength of imperialism," the Earl of Carnarvon, Disraeli's Colonial Secretary, said in 1878, lay in building a powerful and munificent English community and in restoring law, order and liberty in "backward societies" and thereby creating a system "where the light of morality and religion can penetrate into darkest dwelling places." Quoted in C.C. Eldridge, *England's Mission: The Imperial Idea in the Age of Gladstone and Disraeli, 1868- 1880* (London: MacMillan, 1973), pp. xv-xvi.
3. Report of the Select Committee on Aborigines, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1837, VII (H.C. 425), pp. 4-80. The quotation is from Margery Perham, *Colonial Reckoning: The Reith Lectures, 1961* (London: Collins, The Fontana Library, 1963), p. 80. For a discussion of British "principles" of empire at this time, see William P. Morell, *British Colonial Policy in the Age of Peel and Russell* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), pp. 23-8.
4. J. Pelly (Gov., H.B.C.) to Earl Grey (Sec. of State, Colonies), 14 Jan. 1852, A.8/6, fol. 224, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg.
5. Roderick Finlayson, "History of Vancouver Island and the Northwest Coast" (typescript, n.d.; Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Victoria).
6. "Vancouver's Island," confidential memo by H. Merivale, [?] 1848, in Colonial Office Papers (hereafter C.O.), Public Record Office, London, 880/2, n.44, p. 3.
7. Vancouver Island, Royal Grant, C.O. 880/2, no. 45, p. 6.
- 8- As Merman Merivale at the Colonial Office advised Earl Grey in 1850; "To give orders from hence as to the conduct to be observed towards Indians in Vancouver Island seems rather unlikely to be of much service. If the colony is to maintain itself, as was the condition of its foundation, the local government much needs to be left very much to its discretion as to dealings with the natives in the immediate neighbourhood of the settled parts, although distant excursions against them may be discouraged." C.O. 305/3, ff. 108, quoted in David T. McNab, "Herman Merivale and Colonial Office Indian Policy in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 1:2 (1981), p. 294.
9. Great Britain, Parliament, *Report on Hudson's Bay Company* (London,

- 1857), pp. 290-92.
10. Great Britain, *Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd. ser., vol. CLI (1858), cols. 1786-1843, 1095-1122, 1345, 1505-8, 1762-70, and 2097-2103.
 11. Sir E. Bulwer Lytton (Sec. of State, Colonies) to James Douglas, 31 July 1858, in British Columbia, *Papers Connected with the Indian Land Question*, 1850- 1875 (Victoria, 1875), p. 12.
 12. The consistency of British/Canadian policy in British Columbia in the extension of law has not been as fully appreciated by historians as it deserves to be. Many have focussed on land questions and the variations of land policies (legitimate concerns, mind you, because they are at the focal point of Indian issues, but they are not the sole matter). See, for instance, Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1977), ch. 5, where policy is seen to change dramatically in 1858, and, by the same author, "Joseph Trutch and Indian Land Policy, *BC Studies*, 12 (1971-2), 3-33. See also, Forrest E. LaViolette, *The Struggle for Survival: Indian Cultures and the Protestant Ethic in British Columbia* (1961; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), pp. 98-132, and Robert E. Call, *Land, Man, and the Law: The Disposal of Crown Lands in British Columbia, 1871 - 1913* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1974), pp. 169-243.
 13. By the Treaty of Fort Stanwix the "Indian Line" was pushed west to the Ohio River, but after 1783 the United States government suspended the applicability of British statutes and regulations, including the Proclamation of 1765.
 14. On this subject, see particularly Henry E. Fritz, *The Movement for Indian Assimilation, 1860 - 1890* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963), p. 16. J.E. Chamberlain, *The Harrowing of Eden: White Attitudes Towards Native Americans* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), pp. 7, 8. Roy Harvey Pearce, *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization*, rev. ed. (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1965), p. 240. George Dewey Harmon, *Sixty Years of Indian Affairs: Political, Economic and Diplomatic, 1789 - 1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), pt. 2.
 15. Senate Report No. 156, 39th Cong., 2nd Sess.; quoted in Fritz, *Movement for Indian Assimilation*, p. 30. Also, Fritz, op. cit., pp. 47, 83 and 88.
 16. Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1846; in *New American State Papers: Indian Affairs*, vol. 2. *General* (Willmington: Scholarly Resources, 1972), p. 161.

17. Report for 1847; in *ibid.*, p. 188.
18. Report for 1848; in *ibid.*, p. 231.
19. Report for 1853; in *New American State Papers*, pp. 379-80.
20. Report for 1854; in *New American State Papers*, pp. 395, 400 and 417.
21. Harmon, *Sixty Years of Indian Affairs*, p. 325. Chamberlain, *Harrowing of Eden*, p. 10. See Wilcomb Washburn, ed., *The American Indian and the United States: A Documentary History, 4 vols.* (New York: Random House, 1973), I, 62, for the type of treaties signed at the time.
22. Abstract of the report of Commissioner Charles Mix, 1858; in *New American State Papers*, p. 530. Also, Report for 1857; in *ibid.*, p. 515.
23. Report of Indian Peace Commission 1868, appending Dart's report; in Washburn, ed., *American Indian*, I, 167.
24. General Joel Palmer's Narrative, 1878, P.A.58, p. 31, H.H. Bancroft Collection, University of California, Berkeley.
25. On Indian forbearance, see evidence of Chief Tedlenitsa in deputation to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 27 April, 1916, Borden Papers, MG 26 H1(a), vol. 38, pp. 16394-5, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.
26. James Tilton, "Correspondence with Governor Douglas on Assistance against Indians in Washington Territory," Western Americana Mss 475, Beineke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
27. 36th Congress, 1st Sess., Sen. Doc. 2, no. 2, p. 108. Statement by George Walkem, 17 August 1875, in *Report of the Government of British Columbia on the Subject of Indian Reserves* (Victoria, 1875), p. 4. W.J. Trimble, "The Indian Policy of the Colony of British Columbia in Comparison with that of Adjacent American Territories," *Proceedings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association* 4 (1913), 11.
28. I do not apologize for my tentativeness. Too many historians have sought to make finite conclusions and have done so in error.

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