Industry, Ideology, and Social Formation in British Columbia, 1849-1885

by

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Supervisor: Dr. Peter Baskerville

Abstract

This study examines how the systems of production of the commodity exporting industries of pre-1885 British Columbia contributed to the social formation of the region. Such industries provided the economic base for post-contact development and non-Native settlement of the region, mediated by the cultural values of immigrant and indigenous populations. The intent here is to synthesize a more inclusive model to clarify how these economic and cultural factors intersected to produce a distinct regional society. Beginning with Ian McKay's suggestion to interpret the history of Canada as a process of naturalizing the liberal order, this study moves the analysis away from microstudies of individual industries or social groups in order to emphasize the way in which a broader vision became naturalized. This approach avoids some of the simple dichotomies of class and race that have informed much of the historiography of BC, in favour of a more nuanced analysis that emphasizes the negotiated process that leads to social consensus.

Beginning with the merchant capitalist relations of the fur trade, and accelerating with the 1858 gold rush, BC became understood as a place that provided opportunities for economic and social mobility through participation in commodity exporting ventures. A consensus emerged that emphasized the producer ethic [the economic and cultural value of independent producers], and the creation of a meritocratic socio-political environment to support opportunities for achieved, rather than ascribed, social position. This attracted Euro-North American immigrants hoping to escape social restrictions or proletarianization by achieving independent producer status.

Such a goal meant that these immigrants resisted waged labour, creating a chronic shortage that impeded industrial development. This was filled with Chinese immigrants or Aboriginal participants, attracted by the prospect of converting earnings into increased status in their originating societies. Combining the demand for labour with racial ideology, certain jobs were racialized, and BC industries were typified by split labour markets, with an upper echelon comprised of occupationally-mobile Euro-North American

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workers, and a lower echelon defined by race as well as skill, with little opportunity for mobility. In turn, this contributed to naturalizing ideology concerning race, class, and social position.

The emphasis on the producer ethic contributed to an artificial division between "producers" and "agents," with the former celebrated, while the latter, arguably more important to the systems of production by providing links to export markets, are portrayed less favourably. A commodity exporting, producer-centric variant of the liberal order was naturalized in nineteenth century BC, providing the logic for social and political development, and explaining how certain groups were valued, and either integrated into or excluded from hegemonic society. The degree to which individuals or groups conformed to the naturalized values of the emerging society largely determined their social position in the nineteenth century, and their subsequent treatment in the historiography.

Supervisor: Dr. Peter Baskerville (Department of History)

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Since beginning this program I have worked as a public historian for Parks Canada, a curator for the Oregon Historical Society, and a historical consultant to the National Parks Service, before starting my current teaching position at North Island College. Working as a public historian gave me the opportunity to investigate some lines of research that may not have been possible otherwise. In particular from Parks Canada I would like to recognize the support of Dr. Rick Stuart, who supervised the writing of my first fur trade monographs, and Dr. Jim Taylor, who encouraged my interest in industrial history, provided a model for a public historian pursuing academic history, and has continued to provide constructive support. David Hansen, of Fort Vancouver NHS, as well as being a friend and colleague, provided me with some intriguing contract assignments, which led into some parts of the current study. I have also enjoyed writing, and used some of the research from, the biographies prepared for the last two editions of the *DCB*. Such work, combined with the public history assignments, have let me approach BC history from a variety of perspectives, for a variety of reasons, and I think has broadened my perspective on the larger processes at play. A paper based on one of the *DCB* entries presented at the BC Studies Conference in 2003 led to a correspondence with Dr. Roderick Barman, who provided some useful insights concerning racialization, the producer ethos, and respectability, for which I am grateful.

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For Kerry,

with all my love

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Introduction

The intent of this study is to identify some key factors contributing to the social development and regional identity of British Columbia from the beginnings of "resettlement" in the 1840s and 1850s to the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885.[1] Scholars studying the history of the province generally support the existence of a regionally-distinct society and economy, an assumption that informs the present study.[2] The economic and social patterns examined in the following chapters will contribute to explaining the author's acceptance of this model of BC exceptionalism. When the province joined Confederation in 1871, profound changes were in store for the "distinct society" that developed in the colony over the preceding century. With the introduction of the Macdonald Conservatives' National Policy in 1878, British Columbia was reconstructed as an economic satellite of central Canada, a status more fully realized with the completion of the CPR, and the direct physical linkage it provided to central Canada. Until Canadian economic and political forms were imposed through mechanisms such as

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1. The term resettlement is based on that used by Cole Harris to differentiate between indigenous and immigrant settlement of the region known as British Columbia. Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

2. For instance, in her mid-1990s study of colonial British Columbia, Tina Loo argued that the models that Canadian historians use to make sense of the nation may not be comfortably applied to BC. Tina Loo, *Making Law, Order, and Authority in British Columbia, 1821-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 15. I am not arguing for a strictly "regional" or "Western exceptionalism" approach, that sees events in BC as entirely distinct from those in other regions. I simply intend to acknowledge that the particular economic and structural conditions, and socio-cultural factors, that converged in British Columbia in the period under investigation were particular to the time and place. The integration of the BC economy into the Pacific and world capitalist economy, and locating the ideology and cultural values of the population in larger North American and world trends, form a central part of this study. Without such context, "regionally distinctive" can become a dominant, and relatively meaningless, explanation for the evolution of a society. Mark Leier argued that such a focus on region combined with a liberal bias, which attempts to portray BC as unique, has impeded the application of Marxist or class analysis, by privileging the extraordinary or distinct over the larger trends of capitalism and its institutions; Mark Leier, "W[h]ither Labour History: Regionalism, Class, and the Writing of BC History," *BC Studies*, No.111 (Autumn 1996), 61-67.

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tariff restrictions and the CPR, social formation in British Columbia progressed in a more "natural" fashion, in response to an unique mix of economic and cultural factors. This study will attempt to integrate the structural framework of a commodity-exporting industrial economy within a capitalist mode of production with the cultural perspectives applied by both indigenous and immigrant populations to their situations. The resettlement of BC occurred within a context involving aspects of both merchant and industrial capitalism, and at times the two forms merged. The key features of the introduction of capitalism to the region included a reliance on export markets, the introduction of production for exchange, and a complex and mutable set of systems of production, based on the nature and availability of inputs. Following Dale Tomich, whose model suggested that "production and exchange are understood as relations that presuppose, condition, and are formative of one another as distinct parts of a whole," I propose that the division between production and exchange in nineteenth century British Columbia society should be minimized.[3] Production normally was initiated due to some clear demand on export markets for commodities, so exchange was as essential as production to the formation of the economy, and so social systems of production.

I propose in this study to attempt to formulate key elements of the ideology or *mentalité* that motivated immigrants to come to the region in the mid-nineteenth century, and to remain to participate in the formation of a distinct regional society. Although the California gold rush of 1849 and the BC gold rush of 1858 were key events in attracting migrants to the region, it is important to locate such emigration in search of fortune within the broader cultural values of the immigrants. How did people view the relations and

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3. Tomich discussed the split between models dealing with the introduction of world capitalism, with one defining capitalism primarily as production for market, regardless of the type of labour involved, and the other emphasizing relations of production and defining capitalism as a specific form of production that uses wage labour. He argued that a synthesis of the two forms would permit stronger analysis of both the introduction of world capitalism, and the formation of social classes within systems of production. Dale Tomich, "World of Capital/Worlds of Labor: A Global Perspective" in *Reworking Class*, ed. John R. Hall (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 287-311, quote from 300.

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divisions between social groups or classes? Were these attitudes imported, retained and institutionalized in immigrant society, or did they evolve in response to distinctive structural conditions in British Columbia?

In analysing the development of BC as a distinct region, this study will emphasize those factors that contribute most to an identifiable regional character. Although the introduction of capitalist economic and social relations applies to all of North America, an underlying assumption is the variable nature of how they were enacted, depending on the nature of the local resources, economy, and populations. In this study, the examination of structural factors will focus on the commodity-exporting economy that typified nineteenth century BC. The capitalist economy was introduced to the region in the form of the fur trade, and the subsequent development of Pacific markets for commodities such as forest products and provisions resulted in a process of diversification into those trades. The California gold rush of 1849 created new opportunities on export commodity markets around the Pacific, and established a model for the later gold rushes to Australia and British Columbia. Beginning with the Fraser River rush of 1858, the extraction and export of gold dominated the economy of BC for the next two decades, and provided the impetus to attract large numbers of migrants to the region. However, many immigrants found the pursuit of gold more uncertain than the production and export of other commodities, and shifted their focus to the production of coal, forest products, and salmon for export. By the 1880s these industries overtook gold mining as the central component of the province's economy, and arguably this economic dominance had a profound effect on social formation. The focus of this study will be on the systems of production that developed in these industries, how they were influenced by imported ideology and how they contributed to the development of social divisions and conventions.

Retail merchants and the service industry that grew around the framework of the primary commodity-exporting economy will not be addressed in this study. It was noted in 1864 that even in Victoria, the centre of the retail and secondary manufacturing industries, that the fortunes of such businesses depended entirely on the state of the gold

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mining economy.[4] Although in the post-1885 period the retail and service economy began the rise to the dominant position it enjoyed by the late twentieth century, it did not create the economic base in which social attitudes developed in the 1860s and 1870s. Additionally, the retail and service economy appears more "generic" in character, common to most colonial or settler societies in North America, and so demonstrating little about specific circumstances in BC. Likewise, agriculture and the agricultural economy will not be incorporated in this study. Agricultural settlement provided the central logic for the resettlement of much of North America, and certainly some of the immigrant population attracted by the gold rush remained in BC to pursue a farming career. However, as will be discussed on pages 32-34, in 1871, at the beginning of a period of rapid expansion in the commodity exporting industries, only about 16-17 percent of the immigrant population was engaged in agriculture. BC remained an importer of agricultural products throughout this period. As with the retail and service sectors, agricultural systems of production arguably evolved in a way less specific to the region. The premise followed in this study is that the commodity exporting industries of nineteenth century BC had the greatest impact on social formation because of their economic importance, the numbers of people involved in them, and the distinctive systems of production that developed to permit their viability.

To emphasize distinct regional factors, this study focusses on the period before Canadian hegemony was realized. The original intent was to limit the investigation to the post-gold rush introduction of commodity exporting industries, but to contextualize this introduction, particularly concerning the incorporation of indigenous populations, the temporal framework was extended back into the HBC fur trade era. By ending the study in 1885, the focus remains on the economic and social evolution of the region prior to direct Canadian intervention. This was also roughly the period in which what has been termed a new, permanent proletariat began to form in North America, changing the relationship between capital and labour in significant ways, as the potential for mobility

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4. BCA, GR-2078, Diplomatic Despatches, United States Consuls in Victoria 1862-1906, film B9747, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 18 January 18 1864.

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decreased.[5] Much of this study reflects on the theme of occupational and social mobility, and how structural and cultural factors combined to enable or block such mobility. This has led to an emphasis on the role played by a group of immigrants, who through their economic success, and the perception that they contributed to the larger project of constructing a society that supported social mobility, formed an emerging "neo-elite." Because of its growing economic and cultural power, not to mention the symbolic power its members assumed as examples of social mobility, this group was able to naturalize its cultural values and ideology, and so played a significant part in shaping BC society.

The received version suggests that the society of the BC frontier represented a synthesis of British cultural and political forms and American economic forms. Usually, following the staples model, traditional economic factors such as geography and regional resources are seen as having significant social impact, with the requirements of export industry shaping the form of settlement. Additionally, nineteenth century demography of the region is seen as having a social impact, both on gender, due to the shortage of women in the settler population, and on race, due to the First Nations majority, and a significant minority of Chinese immigrant workers. All these factors are important, but there is a certain focus on describing what happened, rather than looking at explanations for how ideology relating to political organization, economic activity, and relations between social groups defined by class, race, and gender, became entrenched or naturalized. This study is intended to develop a broad analytical approach, that is intended to explain and describe the integration between the economic and cultural, or structural and social, development of BC in the nineteenth century, in the hope of identifying the underlying character of the emerging society of the region. It will be useful to review some of the approaches and trends in the historiography of British Columbia that relate to this goal.

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5. Much BC historiography crosses over between the post-1890 period, and the arguable presence of a working class, and the pre-1880s period, when, as will be discussed in this study, the dichotomy between capital and labour was much less clearly delineated. This "critical second moment" of working-class formation is discussed in Kim Voss, *The Making of American Exceptionalism: The Knights of Labor and Class Formation in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 5-9.

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Historiography of Nineteenth Century British Columbia

Although approaching it from very different ideological and methodological perspectives, and with varying degrees of transparency, most scholars studying the history of the province have attempted to balance economic and cultural factors in their explanatory models. Although now rather out of favour, much of the pre-1960s historiography of the province followed larger Canadian patterns, by applying a liberal or "neo-Whiggish" evolutionary model, interpreting the process of resettlement as the conversion of the region from non-productive "wilderness" to productive "civilization."[6] Such "national-political" history is often organized around the assumption that the domination and naturalization of an Anglo-North American version of the liberal order and capitalism was inevitable.[7] With an emphasis on "firsts" and "pioneers," this approach continues to be popular in regional history, biography, and popular history, although less frequently employed in scholarly writing.

In the 1960s and 1970s the "path of liberal progress" model was augmented by one focussing on the conflict between social groups defined by class, in particular their relation to the means of production within primary industries.[8] A number of these works were

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6. A limited number of scholars, such as Michael Bliss and Jack Granatstein, recently have assumed the role of defenders of the "national-political" approach to Canadian history, suggesting that it is essential to the creation of a national identity, and that the role of the historian is that of nation-builder. For example, Michael Bliss, "Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, the Sundering of Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.26, no.4 (Winter 1991-92), 5-17; J.L. Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998).

7. Elizabeth Furniss described such histories, that commemorated the introduction of non-Native people, culture, and industry, as the "master narratives of Canadian nationalism." Elizabeth Furniss, "Pioneers, Progress, and the Myth of the Frontier: The Landscape of Public History in Rural British Columbia," *BC Studies*, Nos.115-116 (Autumn 1997-Winter 1998), 7.

8. Although many studies have addressed this topic, one of the earliest of them remains perhaps the most influential in contextualizing a narrative of labour or class conflict in BC, Paul Phillips, *No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in British Columbia* (Vancouver: BC Federation of Labour and Boag Foundation, 1967).

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written by advocates of liberal ideology, who emphasized the "exceptional" polarization found in the class struggle in BC, portraying labour radicalism as "foreign," and anomalous to the course of naturalizing the liberal order. Scholars writing in the late 1970s and early 1980s from the larger tradition of labour and working class history, grounded in Marxist analysis largely discredited this "exceptional" model, that saw class conflict in BC as deviant. Regardless of ideology, most class analysis studies assumed a rapid expansion of industrial capitalism which polarized society into the oppositional classes of workers and owners, with the working class adopting patterns of resistance brought by British and American immigrants.[9]

Beginning in the 1980s, Marxist-influenced "conflict" approaches which applied a materialist or class division as their primary analytical device were augmented in turn by models that privileged divisions of race or gender. Patricia Roy and Peter Ward led the way in their examination of responses to Asian immigration in the province. Roy extended from class analysis, based on material competition, to racial division, while Ward assumed a more culturally-based model, identifying how imported racial ideology contributed to the primary division in BC society.[10] At the same time, the women's history movement

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9. An early example of a study presenting a working class struggling toward the goal of social change is found in Jack Scott, *Sweat and Struggle: Working Class Struggles in Canada* (Vancouver: New Star, 1974). Liberal values and the "deviant" nature of regional labour radicalism are emphasized in David Bercuson, "Labour Radicalism and the Western Industrial Frontier, 1897-1919," *Canadian Historical Review 57* (June 1977), 154-177; David Bercuson, *Fools and Wise Men: The Rise and Fall of the One Big Union* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978); A. Ross McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement, 1899-1919* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977). The critique of the exceptionalist model, and the scholars that have contributed to it, is outlined by Mark Leier in "W[h]ither Labour History," 64-69, as part of his argument for a greater emphasis on Marxist analysis of the labour history of the province, within a larger, non-regional context.

10. Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989); W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia*, Second Edition (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).

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brought gender analysis to British Columbia, led by scholars such as Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag, often incorporating the factors of class and race in the analysis.[11] These conflict studies emphasize social structures and the mechanisms whereby one group dominates another, along vectors of class, race, or gender, often privileging one factor over the others. The recent historiography of British Columbia, following Canadian trends, seems to have naturalized an approach evolving out of these trends, sometimes referred to as "socio-cultural" or poststructualist history. Advocates of national-political history, as well as of Marxist, or materialist analysis, are often critical of the focus of socio-cultural historians, for different reasons. The former consider socio-cultural historians to focus too closely on "narrow" questions, while the latter believe that pre-eminence must be given to materially-based class divisions, as opposed to other vectors of power. The strong emphasis placed on the agency of historical actors in socio-cultural history is sometimes considered problematic by advocates of both the other approaches.[12]

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11. The shift to this approach is well-represented by Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag, eds., *British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women* (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1992). The move to include analysis explicitly based on race and class was discussed by these scholars in Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag, "Taking Gender into Account in British Columbia: More Than Just Women's Studies," *BC Studies*, nos.105-106 (Spring-Summer 1995), 9-26. This was reiterated by Strong-Boag in a response to Mark Leier's call for Marxist analysis, when she suggested that simple dichotomies like class did not provide a powerful enough analytical model, as "class is simultaneously raced, gendered, and sexualized," creating multiple axes along which people are subordinated. Veronica Strong-Boag, "Moving Beyond Tired 'Truths': Or, Let's Not Fight the Old Battles," *BC Studies*, No.111 (Autumn 1996), 84-86.

12. In this three-way debate in Canadian historiography, Michael Bliss and J.L. Granatstein acted as advocates of the national-political approach, the latter rebutted by A.B. McKillop, advocating for the power of a pluralist or socio-cultural model, described in turn by Bryan Palmer as an inclusive and self-satisfied approach that had been naturalized in the "thoroughly liberal mainstream" of the historical profession in Canada. Bliss, "Privatizing the Mind," 5-17; Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?*; A.B. McKillop, "Who Killed Canadian History? A View from the Trenches," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol.80, no.2 (June 1999), 269-299; Bryan D. Palmer, "Of Silences and Trenches: A Dissident's View of Granatstein's Meaning," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol.80, no.4 (December 1999), 676-686. In the case of British Columbia historiography, essentially the same debate appeared in 1996 in *BC Studies*, with Mark Leier advocating

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The "impasse" between these approaches impelled Ian McKay to suggest his "naturalization of the liberal order" model, which, adapted to the "exceptional" structural factors encountered in British Columbia, will be largely followed in the present study.[13]

Regardless of the analytical approach, and contrary to Mark Leier's call for a supra-regional approach, most historians of nineteenth century BC have privileged the idea that a distinctive constellation of economic and cultural circumstances led to a regionally-distinctive trajectory of social development. First, there are models that examine how what might be considered "traditional" factors, such as geography, resources, demography, capital, and markets act to determine regional development. In the historiography of British Columbia the distinctive geography of the province, and how, specifically, a coastline comprised of individual fiords and an interior divided by a series of mountain ranges into valleys influenced development, is frequently invoked. For instance, in the introduction to her broad interpretive history of BC, *The West Beyond the West*, Jean Barman stressed the importance of this geography, in particular how it contributed to settlement distributed among a series of dissimilar and somewhat isolated regions. She emphasized as well the dichotomy between the Coast and the Interior Plateau, due to their distinct and very different physical environments.[14] Similarly, in his explicit attempt to define the character of the British Columbia frontier, Barry Gough emphasized its

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for Marxist or materialist analysis, a position generally supported by Bryan Palmer, and opposed for slightly different reasons by Veronica Strong-Boag and Robert McDonald, advocates of a more pluralist or socio-cultural approach. Leier, "W[h]ither Labour History," 61-75; Bryan D. Palmer, "Class and the Writing of History: Beyond BC," *BC Studies*, No.111 (Autumn 1996), 76-84; Strong-Boag, "Moving Beyond Tired 'Truths,'" 84-87; Robert A.J. McDonald, "*The West is a Messy Place*," *BC Studies*, No.111 (Autumn 1996), 88-92; Mark Leier, "Response to Professors Palmer, Strong-Boag, and McDonald," *BC Studies*, No.111 (Autumn 1996), 93-98.

13. Ian McKay, "The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History," *Canadian Historical Review*, vol.81, no.4 (December 2000), 617-645.

14. Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), particularly ch.1, "In Search of British Columbia."

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distinctive geography.[15] Historical geographer Cole Harris argued for the regionally specific responses to the "Indian land question" in BC, due to its different geography, as well as cultural factors.[16] In her conflict-based analysis, Patricia Marchak identified "region" as one of the three factors contributing to class conflict in British Columbia.[17] Within this model, another determining factor often alluded to is the lack of large tracts of land suitable for agricultural settlement by small producers. This is perceived to have led to a distinct form of development, with less focus on agricultural settlement, and more on the development of an industrial economy.[18] Such approaches emphasize the impact of geographic circumstances on the social evolution of the region.

Extending from this broad "geographic determinism," many analyses invoke aspects of the staples model of Harold Innis or the metropolitan model of J.M.S. Careless by analysing the impact that geography has on developing systems of production, based on resource industries and patterns of settlement. The nineteenth century settler economy of British Columbia was built upon a number of exportable commodities, dominated by gold, coal, forest products, and salmon. Each of these activities had specific requirements in terms of capital, market, technology, transportation, and labour, that permitted the development of export industries. The approaches following the staples or metropolitan models, predicated on the primacy of geography and the traditional economic factors of production, have been seen as particularly applicable to British Columbia. An example is provided by Barry Gough's 1976 definition of the character of the British Columbia

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15. Barry M. Gough, "The Character of the British Columbia Frontier," *BC Studies*, No.32 (Winter 1976-77), 40.

16. Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), Introduction, particularly xxv-xxvi.

17. Patricia Marchak, "Class, Regional and Institutional Sources of Social Conflict in BC," *BC Studies*, No.27 (Autumn 1975), 30-49.

18. Carlos A. Schwantes, *Radical Heritage: Labor, Socialism, and Reform in Washington and British Columbia, 1885-1917* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1979), 7-11; Barman, *The West beyond the West*, 5.

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"frontier." He began by focussing on how the environment, and the resulting structural requirements of commodity export trades, fostered a hinterland-metropolitan pattern of development. Once he established a structural framework within this tradition, Gough introduced a less materialist dimension to his analysis, by considering the impact of cultural factors, in particular the role of British colonial society and politics, in determining the form of the resulting development.[19] A more recent example is provided by Richard Mackie, in his study of the strategies of the Hudson's Bay Company in operating its Columbia Department, in which corporate strategies intersected with the geography and resources of the Pacific slope of North America and emerging market opportunities around the Pacific.[20]

Others have adopted this more culturally-based analysis, generally examining how imported cultural values were incorporated into the physical context of BC's distinctive geography, and the structural context of a staples exporting economy. In her 1958 history of the province, Margaret Ormsby relied heavily on cultural factors. In particular, she focussed on the "Britishness" of the culture, the economic and social effects of the Fraser River and Cariboo gold rushes, and the actions of "great men," the political and economic elite of the colonies and province, in shaping the region.[21] By adopting an approach that emphasized not the distinct structural factors, but rather extraordinary or atypical events and people, Ormsby created a different version of exceptionalist history for BC. J.M.S. Careless attempted to integrate structural or economic factors with cultural factors, by emphasizing the impact of the Victoria business community on economic and social development, as an alternative to Ormsby's more "romantic" focus on the gold rush, fur

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19. Gough, "The Character of the British Columbia Frontier," 40.

20. Richard Somerset Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade on the Pacific 1793-1843* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1997).

21. Margaret Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press,1958).

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traders, and politicians.[22] Careless argued that the range of ventures and resulting opportunities for workers initiated by the Victoria businessmen contributed to distinct systems of production and social relations, and that the cosmopolitan or heterogeneous demography of the business community produced a more sophisticated social and political ambience than would be expected on a "frontier."[23]

More recent historiography, regardless of its theoretical or ideological approach, has integrated to varying degrees, and with varying degrees of success, the distinctive structural and cultural factors encountered in BC to interpret regional development. In a 1975 study, Patricia Marchak emphasized the structural factors, class, institutions, and region in explaining social conflict in the province.[24] In her later explanation of the development of the social structure of the BC fishing industry, Marchak emphasized the role of the salmon canning companies in introducing an imported system of production, that did not evolve from traditional or pre-capitalist forms.[25] In this case, she seemed to privilege these imported economic structures [or institutions] over those of region, resource, or the cultural context of industry. While not dismissing the impact of geography and other "traditional" economic factors on the social system of production, Marchak

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22. J.M.S. Careless, "The Business Community in the Early Development of Victoria, British Columbia," in *Readings in Canadian History: Pre-Confederation, Third Edition*, eds. R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith (Toronto, Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Ltd., 1990), 473-492. The critique of the "romantic" version, and suggestion of the "business" alternative, is on 473, while the economic, political, social, and cultural impact of the merchants is summarized on 489.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Patricia Marchak, "Class, Regional and Institutional Sources of Social Conflict in BC," *BC Studies*, No.27 (Autumn 1975), 30-49.

25. Patricia Marchak, "Uncommon Property," in *Uncommon Property: The Fishing and Fish-processing Industries in British Columbia*, eds. Patricia Marchak, Neil Guppy, John McMullan (Toronto: Methuen, 1987), 20-22.

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seems to be privileging the impact of the "imported" system of industrial production.[26] In the same anthology, John McMullan followed Marchak's model, attributing the "social relations of production" in the BC fishery to the processors. The canners imported a system of production, that evolved in response to problems that were generally related to traditional economic factors.[27] Although these interpretations emphasize the importance of economic structures, they recognize the role of the canners or canning companies in introducing these systems. This seems to support an acknowledgement of cultural factors, and the agency of the entrepreneurs, in mustering inputs, and contributing to the formation of regional structures.

Although grounded in materialist or conflict theory, this echoes the emphasis J.M.S. Careless placed on the contribution of BC-based entrepreneurs. This was supported by Keith Ralston, who adopted a materialist or class-based model, but noted the central role of Victoria commission merchants in the BC salmon canning industry in the late nineteenth century, both capitalizing canneries and marketing the product.[28] He attempted to refute the assumption that San Francisco was the metropolis for pre-railway BC, instead describing a "triangle of trade" which linked Victoria, the United Kingdom, and San Francisco.[29] This interpretation augments the Careless one of heterogenous cultural influences on the region, as well as a certain complexity in the structure of the

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26. In the case of the salmon canning industry, the technology, the early managers, as well as the basic contours of the social system of production were largely imported from the east coast of North America, including New Brunswick and Maine, or from northern California and the Columbia River, where earlier west coast fish canning industries had developed. *Ibid.*

27. John McMullan, "State, Capital, and the BC Salmon-Fishing Industry," in *Uncommon Property: The Fishing and Fish-processing Industries in British Columbia*, eds. Patricia Marchak, Neil Guppy, John McMullan (Toronto: Methuen, 1987), 107.

28. H. Keith Ralston, "Patterns of Trade and Investment of the Pacific Coast, 1867-1892: The Case of the British Columbia Salmon Canning Industry," in *Historical Essays on British Columbia*, eds. J. Friesen and H.K. Ralston (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1976), 171-172.

29. *Ibid.*, 173-175.

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export commodity trades. Ralston demonstrated that in terms of both cultural influences and economic linkages, it is necessary to think of multiple influences on BC's development. Although more liberal or positivist than conflict-based, the analysis of D.G. Paterson focussed on how the group he labelled "local entrepreneurs" contributed to development by mobilizing foreign capital to develop resource extractive industries. This made this group the essential mediators between foreign markets and capital and how systems of production were developed in BC.[30] In spite of a different ideological approach, this corresponds well to the Marchak model, as these men were portrayed as the "importers" of new social systems of production. Robert McDonald reiterated the importance of the Victoria commission merchants in establishing nineteenth century resource industries, and how changing political and economic structures in the commodity exporting economy contributed to changes in the key metropolitan-hinterland relationship in British Columbia.[31] In his later history of Vancouver, McDonald explicitly applied Max Weber's refinements to materialist theory, by incorporating the way in which cultural factors contributed to social status. McDonald added the concept of status to acknowledge the complexity of inter and intra-group relations in Vancouver, which did not always divide along neat structural lines of class or race.[32]

The relative importance of agency and economic determinism was central to the early 1980s debate in which historian Peter Ward argued that race, rather than class, formed the primary social division in BC, and sociologist Rennie Warburton defended the

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30. D.G. Paterson, "European Financial Capital and British Columbia: An essay on the Role of the Regional Entrepreneur," *BC Studies*, No.21 (Spring 1974), 33-46.

31. Robert A.J. McDonald, "Victoria, Vancouver and the Economic Development of British Columbia, 1886-1914," in *British Columbia: Historical Readings*, eds. Peter Ward and Robert McDonald (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1981), 371-380.

32. Robert A.J. McDonald, *Making Vancouver: Class, Status, and Social Boundaries, 1863-1913* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), Introduction, xi-xx.

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materialist position.[33] Ward cited E.P. Thompson in advocating a "subjective" definition of class, based on the individual's self-ascribed identity as part of a certain social group, rather than one based strictly on materialist criteria.[34] Although acknowledging structural factors, such as employer power, state support for capital, seasonal industries, and labour movement schisms, Ward argued that ideology grounded in the potential for personal advancement overmatched that which contributed to the development of collective or class-based action. He attributed this "stunted class consciousness" to the fluidity of the BC labour market, which encouraged mobility as an alternative to workplace reform, so encouraged speculation by labour as well as capital, contributing to a perception of opportunity for social mobility.[35] Ward suggested that in the absence of a strong class identity, racial differences formed the primary social cleavage, with imported European ideology of race supporting the subordination of Asian and Aboriginal populations. As part of this process, he raised the issues of racialized jobs and split labour markets, although without using these terms.[36]

In defending the primacy of class rather than racial divisions in BC society, Rennie Warburton criticized Ward's emphasis on ideology, which may be equated with culture or

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33. W. Peter Ward, "Class and Race in the Social Structure of British Columbia, 1870-1939," *BC Studies* 45 (Spring 1980), 17-36; Rennie Warburton, "Race and Class in British Columbia: A Comment," *BC Studies* 49 (Spring 1981), 79-85.

34. For his subjective definition of class, Ward cited E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), introduction. Ward, "Class and Race in the Social Structure of British Columbia," 17-18.

35. *Ibid.*, 21-27.

36. In alluding to racialization of the labour market, or the idea that certain jobs were only suitable for workers of a certain race, Ward suggested that First Nations lost their central role in the province's economy, and were limited to a few specific employment niches, while Asians usually were limited to low-paid, low-skilled jobs. He went on to suggest the structure of a split labour market, in a racially-defined form, in which Asian sojourners were willing to accept conditions of employment unacceptable to White workers, and which became institutionalized, forcing other Asian immigrants to follow suit. This meant that within a given workplace there were two or more mutually exclusive labour forces, or a split labour market. *Ibid.*, 29-34.

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superstructure, rather than on the economic structures underpinning society. For instance, Warburton criticized Ward's acceptance of "individualist thinking" and a racial hierarchy as naturalized ideologies, without examining how the process of naturalizing them contributed to legitimizing a capitalist mode of production.[37] Following the "topographical metaphor" of Marxist theory, and opposed to Ward's model, Warburton argued for the importance of a determining "base," in which economic forces determine social forms, over the agency of historical actors in developing a social "superstructure" based on cultural or ideological factors.[38] For the purposes of the current study, perhaps the key point raised by Warburton was the call to integrate base and superstructure more fully:

> The comments made here are intended to show that the inter-relationships of race, class, and for that matter, gender, in British Columbia as elsewhere, need to be understood in a framework that incorporates the development of capitalist relations, the recurrent contradiction and crises to which they lead and the manner in which they are temporarily resolved. To study boundaries and divisions without a sense of their place in the developing economic and social totality is to provide a very partial and unobjective account of this province's social structure.[39]

Warburton's call for a contextual framework in which capitalism could develop is echoed in the work of Douglas Harris, who suggests that the imposition of a "British" legal system was at the core of this process. It created exactly such a framework, by

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37. Rennie Warburton, "Race and Class in British Columbia: A Comment," *BC Studies* 49 (Spring 1981), 80-84.

38. Ward and Warburton offered opposing interpretations of E.P. Thompson's work on class formation, with the former emphasizing superstructure, or agency, and the latter emphasizing base, or economic determinism. Discussing this balancing of the relationship between determination and agency in the work of E.P. Thompson, Keith McLelland grouped Thompson with what he termed "socialist humanists" who privileged cultural factors as highly as economic factors in determining the development of class consciousness. Keith McLelland, "Introduction," in *E.P. Thompson: Critical Perspectives*, eds. Harvey J. Kaye and Keith McClelland (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 3.

39. Warburton, "Race and Class in British Columbia," 84-85, quote from 85.

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justifying the colonial project, providing mechanisms for social control and the regulation of populations and resources, and creating "discursive spaces" in which social groups could negotiate their relationships.[40] Although focussing specifically on the salmon resource, and the ways in which it was converted from an Aboriginal resource into an industrial resource, and how Natives were converted into industrial workers, Harris's approach has some similarities to that of Tina Loo. Loo argued that the introduction of civil and criminal law privileged a particular set of values, in particular those of laissez-faire liberalism, in colonial BC. The discourse of liberalism was embedded in the legal codes, and so tended to direct the development of the larger social, political, and economic systems.[41]

Warburton's acknowledgement of gender as a primary social division is a theme developed in recent interpretations, with some emphasizing larger structural or economic factors, while some favour a poststructural or discourse-based approach, privileging cultural factors. Alicja Muszynski provided an example of the former approach in her study of the development of a shore work force in the BC fishing industry. Like Warburton, she called for an examination of the factors of race, gender and class as "interpenetrating relations," and explicitly explored the linkages between the capitalist system and patriarchy. She suggested that the subordination of certain social groups, was based primarily on patriarchal social relations, and considered that race was subsumed into that division. Reinforcing Warburton, perhaps the strongest point made by Muszynski is the need to include cultural factors, particularly discourses of gender and race, to the "base" of Marxist economic determinism, and how this influenced the formation of a labour force, and by extension, social relations.[42] In comparison with the Marxist feminist

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40. Douglas Harris, *Fish, Law, and Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), particularly ch.4, "Law and Colonialism."

41. Loo, *Making Law, Order, and Authority in British Columbia*, Introduction.

42. Alicja Muszynski, *Cheap Wage Labour: Race and Gender in the Fisheries of British Columbia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), particularly chapter 1.

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analysis of Muszynski, a more culturally-based post-structuralist gender approach was taken by Adele Perry, in her examination of how constructs or discourses of race and gender contributed to the shaping of colonial British Columbia. Perry explicitly acknowledged the material basis of historical change, and the importance of class relations, although her focus remained solidly on discourses of appropriate gender and racial behaviour in support of the "colonial project."[43]

From the literature reviewed above, it is evident that most scholars recognize elements of both material and cultural factors in attempting to explain the nineteenth century development of British Columbia. Explicit attempts to acknowledge the interaction between these factors have been less frequent. Most scholars have tended to favour one side or the other of this equation, usually privileging one particular field of inquiry, ranging from geographic determinism, variations on the staples or metropolitan theses, transplanted culture, race, class, gender, or even "great men." Perhaps the most attractive option lay in the direction pointed out by scholars such as Warburton and Muszynski, who emphasized the importance of the interpenetrating relations of race, class, and gender. Warburton's point concerning the link between the introduction of capitalism and the naturalization of cultural features that support it is key to the study at hand. Additionally, Robert McDonald's efforts to explicitly introduce Weberian analysis, acknowledging cultural as well as material influences on social development provides a link to post-structuralist models such as Perry's. Again following from Warburton's comments, the most powerful analysis will be that which acknowledges various vectors of power and inequality, and identifies how individuals and social groups negotiated their places in the social context of nineteenth century BC.[44]

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43. Perry outlined her methodological intent in her introduction, recognizing influences from feminist, Marxist, post-colonial, and post-structural models. Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 3-5.

44. Cole Harris applied the term "vectors of external power" to the structural and cultural influences introduced to BC by the capitalist world. In the present study, I will attempt to acknowledge a variety of such vectors, both economic and ideological, that connected

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Toward an Interpretive Framework: The Naturalization of the Liberal Order

To adequately explain the development of BC society, it seems essential to develop a model that will capture aspects of both determination and agency, or economic structure and cultural responses. For the purposes of this study, I propose adopting to this regional case the broad approach suggested by Ian McKay for national history, utilizing what he termed the "reconceived category 'Canada'" as a context for naturalizing the liberal order. He raised the idea that examining the evolution of the construct of Canada could permit the integration of various levels of analysis, including materialist or structural as well as cultural or social factors. McKay based his suggestion on the work of theorists such as Foucault and Gramsci, who dealt primarily with state formation, law and order, and ideology.[45] Following this approach, I suggest that identifying pre-CPR British Columbia as a regional experiment in the introduction and naturalization of the liberal order provides a strong conceptual framework for explaining the development of provincial society. By focussing on how different groups of people negotiated their social positions within the context of a commodity-exporting capitalist economy, it should be possible to move beyond some of the limitations of existing historical interpretations.

McKay's model would appear to apply to much of North America, given the overall context of resettlement and the naturalization of capitalist, liberal order values. The central tenets of the liberal order outlined by McKay included liberty, equality, and property. Liberty, manifested in forms like free labour, free trade, a free press, and so forth, provides scope for negotiated action within society, rather than state domination, as in a dictatorship. The cultural consensus on liberty defines the limits beyond which people will not be pushed, and beyond which authority will not press, for fear of provoking

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social groups, and contributed to the development of nineteenth century BC. Cole Harris, "Social Power and Cultural Change in Pre-Colonial British Columbia," *BC Studies*, No.115/116 (1997/1998), 48-66.

45. McKay, "The Liberal Order Framework," 617-645.

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resistance or revolution.[46] The concept of equality supports the underlying ideology of the "level playing field," in which the same opportunities are available to all, although in practice this doctrine of "fairness" is often subordinated to the need for liberty. Finally, the acquisition of property is seen as essential to liberty, providing economic independence, and so personal autonomy. The pursuit of property, in McKay's view, provides the underlying logic for the structure of society; both the freedom to pursue property and the freedom provided by property once acquired are seen as central to the liberal order.[47] This strong link between freedom and property presupposes an economic or materialist interpretation of power relations in society, in which economic factors are favoured most. McKay suggested that more than a political ideology, the liberal order acts as a secular religion or totalizing philosophy. The development of British Columbia from the 1840s to 1885 may be interpreted as the emergence and naturalization of a form of the liberal order negotiated, and at times contested, in a distinct economic and social environment. The naturalization of a liberal order would result in a meritocracy, which in the sociological sense refers to a system in which status may be achieved through individual effort, rather than through ascription or inheritance. Following this model, those who work hardest to acquire human and economic capital will be rewarded with the greatest status, regardless of their origins. The process of normalizing the liberal order would differ from region to region because of variations in residual and emergent cultural forms that would mediate the way in which consent for the liberal order was negotiated, how it was resisted, or how dissenting groups were co-opted.[48] Following Antonio Gramsci, residual forms were older cultural forms incorporated in a new social situation, while emergent forms were those that evolved in new social situations.

In applying McKay's broad model to nineteenth century British Columbia, this

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46. E.P. Thompson deals with the British consensus on appropriate levels of freedom in chapter 4 of *The Making of the English Working Class*, "The Free-Born Englishman." E.P.Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 79-80.

47. McKay, "The Liberal Order Framework."

48. *Ibid.*

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study will examine the introduction of a commodity exporting form of capitalism, with an associated constellation of liberal values, within the context of demographic change brought by resettlement. The emphasis will be on the broad processes by which individuals or social groups acquired either ascribed or achieved identities, and how social divisions were formed, along with the hierarchies of power and status inherent to such divisions. How did people come to see themselves as definable groups, or "classes," in the usage of the time, and how did this intersect with the development of a dominant or hegemonic culture in the province? These definitions developed within the determining framework of a commodity exporting economy, but also depended on the residual and emergent cultural forms that provided the ideologies that informed the expressions of agency on the part of historical actors. This approach owes something to that of E.P. Thompson and his examination of how economic and cultural factors contributed to the development of working class consciousness in Britain:

> The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born - or enter involuntarily. Class-consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutional forms.[49]

Thompson argued for a causal relationship leading from these determining relations of production to the development of class consciousness, based on the mediating influence of "experience." This introduces agency, based on cultural values and the lived experience of the group, as a factor moderating the Marxist concept of economic determinism.[50] Thompson's use of "experience" as an analytical device troubles some commentators, but one of its acknowledged strengths lies in its exploration of "wider processes of popular ideological negotiation than are normally encompassed in most political histories." In other words, Thompson looked at how the changing power relations in society as a result of capitalism influenced the power of various social groups,

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49. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 11.

50. Thompson's innovations, and his focus on "experience" as a key aspect of the development of class consciousness, is outlined in, McLelland, "Introduction," 3.

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demonstrating some parallels to Gramscian hegemonic theory.[51] Antonio Gramsci, looking for an explanation of why subordinated groups did not rebel, but rather accepted their lower social position and life chances, developed a model of hegemonic theory, based on values and cultural factors, rather than simple domination by force.[52] Gramsci defined his form of hegemony as:

> the "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is "historically" caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.[53]

Gramsci described a form of negotiation between social groups, in which the domination of certain groups is supported not by force, but by the subordinated groups granting consent to the cultural values of the dominant or hegemonic groups, in the belief that these values are legitimate. Gramsci also discussed the "complexity of popular consciousness under capitalism," an interesting contrast to Thompson's focus on experience. Gramsci identified a two-part ideology among the working class, with one part based on shared experience, and the other on the "naturalized" ideas from dominant groups. Following this, the maintenance of hegemony depends on the inability of subordinated groups to cross over from lived experience to a consistent pattern of resistance and challenge to hegemonic control, rather than consciously granting consent. Gramsci anticipated post-modern theorists such as Michel Foucault in emphasizing the

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51. Geoff Eley, "Edward Thompson, Social History and Political Culture: The Making of a Working-class Public, 1780-1850," in *E.P. Thompson: Critical Perspectives*, eds. Harvey J. Kaye and Keith McClelland (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 16-17.

52. Douglas Litowitz, "Gramsci, Hegemony, and the Law," *Brigham Young University Law Review*, Vol.2000, issue 2 (2000), 519-522.

53. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 12.

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power of discourse and language in this process of naturalizing dominant cultural values.[54] Gramsci referred to social groups as "historical blocs," defined by their economic and cultural solidarity, and a sharing of core values and naturalized ideology and epistemology:

> The idea of historical bloc departs significantly from notions of class embedded in the Marxist tradition: it promotes analysis of social formations that cut across categories of ownership and nonownership and that are bound by religious or other ideological ties as well as those of economic interest. A historical bloc may or may not become hegemonic, depending on how successfully it forms alliances with other groups or classes. The keys to success are ideological and economic: to achieve cultural hegemony, the leaders of a historical bloc must develop a world view that appeals to a wide range of other groups within the society, and they must be able to claim with at least some plausibility that their particular interests are those of society at large. This claim may require selective accommodation to the desires of subordinate groups. The emerging hegemonic culture is not merely an ideological mystification but serves the interests of ruling groups at the expense of subordinate ones.[55]

Such historical blocs are defined by group consciousness or identity rather than by their relation to the system of production. This means that rather than a standard Marxist chain of causality from base to superstructure, the base and superstructure are united into a symbiotic unit, permitting the inclusion of causal factors beyond the system of production, and showing how economic and cultural factors combine to shape lived experience. Gramsci's model also incorporated the state as a manifestation of the hegemony of one social group, representing a balance between political and civil society.[56]

Immigration and the Liberal Order

The liberal order was not indigenous to British Columbia. Pre-contact First

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54. Much of this summary of Gramsci's approach to hegemony is adapted from T.J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *American Historical Review*, Vol.90, no.3 (June 1985), 569-570.

55. *Ibid.*, 570-571, quote from p.571.

56. Litowitz, "Gramsci, Hegemony, and the Law," 528; Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony," 570.

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Nations societies had naturalized different values, in particular with respect to the ownership of property and the relative importance placed on individual or community. However, it may be argued that by the act of immigration, those who chose to come to British Columbia, whether Euro-North American or Asian, were acting in a way not inconsistent with liberal values. By attempting to improve their life chances by placing themselves in a new economic and social system, they were affirming the importance of personal effort and "progress." This applies, although perhaps to a lesser degree, to Aboriginal participants in the introduced capitalist economy, who made a similar decision to participate in a new mode of production. As well as the physical act of moving to a new region, immigration was a symbolic adoption of new values. Although the "push" and "pull" factors that contributed to decisions to emigrate varied, in every instance the emigrant, whether from England, Nova Scotia, China, or the Skeena River, must have perceived that their life chances would be improved by their actions.[57] In the case of British Columbia, the defining large-scale pull for immigration was the gold rush that began in 1858. This formed part of the larger pattern of the introduction of the world capitalist system to the Pacific Rim, which began in the late eighteenth century, and took a quantum leap with the sequential mid-nineteenth century gold rushes of California, Australia, and British Columbia.[58] The population of adventurers attracted by these events, bringing with them some liberal values relating to achieving mobility through

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57. Alejandro Portes and Robert Bach, in their examination of Latin American immigration to the United States, discuss the "push-pull" theory of immigration, where factors in the originating society provide incentives to emigrate, while factors in the accepting society attract immigration. This seems to provide a more balanced view than the "land of opportunity" or "pull" model. Alejandro Portes and Robert L. Bach, *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 5-7.

58. The Pacific Rim, in this instance, will be taken to mean the regions bounding the Pacific that were included in the Atlantic economy, where the commercial precursors of the liberal order were actively engaged in entrepreneurial activity. Examples would include the Sandwich Islands, Australia, Chile, Peru, California, Alaska, China, and so forth - the outposts of the Euro-North American world system.

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personal effort, had a profound impact on the region. I suggest that an analysis of the social development of BC needs to move away from a simple dichotomy of American economy and British culture to incorporate the impact of the broader economic structures and cultural values of the world capitalist economy, as mediated by the lived experience of the participants. A majority of those attracted to British Columbia by the gold rush came from California, although most were not American by birth. However, all had made a decision to migrate in search of improved life chances within the larger Pacific capitalist economy, most commonly in the gold rushes of California and Australia. Immigration to BC followed the larger pattern observed in the resettlement of North America, mediated by the nature of the mid-nineteenth century introduction of the capitalism to the Pacific.

As previously discussed, a voluntary act of emigration (as opposed to forced emigration, as for refugees or slaves) may be seen as an adoption of the ideological values of the liberal order. In examining the adoption of such values, I will follow Ian McKay's suggestion that the liberal order acts as a "totalizing philosophy."[59] It provides not only a blueprint for the state, but for civil society, for the development of an economic system or mode of production, and for the values of individuals. As noted earlier, the central tenets of the liberal order McKay identified are liberty, equality, and property, which also provide the framework for a meritocracy. Such a social environment is entirely consistent with the values that historically seem most important to immigrants, namely self improvement, social mobility and the achievement of individual freedom or autonomy. Social mobility is not always measured in strictly material or economic terms, but may be defined in terms of less tangible culturally-derived values such as "self-improvement" and "usefulness" or productivity. One value that seems central to all definitions of appropriate behaviour within the liberal order is the notion of "autonomy," which generally appears to be the goal of the doctrine of self-improvement.

This supports McKay's contention that liberty (in dictionaries and thesauri given as a synonym of "autonomy") is the most important aspect of the liberal order. In the

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59. McKay, "The Liberal Order Framework."

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materialist tradition, he saw control of property as a precondition of liberty, and viewed equality as subordinated to liberty, and by extension to property. This supports his premise that the structure of liberal society is predicated on the pursuit of property, the acquisition of which provides liberty, and by extension, social position. Extending this argument to privilege cultural factors as well as material ones, I would suggest that it was not the property itself that defined social success, but the autonomy that it could provide. Property would provide its owner with economic power or liberty, but there were other ways to achieve a cultural understanding of autonomy. As an example, for wage labourers, who in general lack the economic power provided by property, collective as opposed to individual action remained more important. Such collective action, whether in the form of withholding work, drinking in taverns, or lobbying for changes in the workplace or in the state, becomes a mechanism for resisting the domination of the propertied classes. For wage earners, such rejection of economically-based subordination provided a symbol of liberty or autonomy in the same way as property provides a symbol of autonomy for its owners. Although its manifestation differed depending on structural and material factors, autonomy seems to have comprised a core cultural value for all groups. An inability to compete in economic power with the propertied class did not prevent wage earners from demonstrating their autonomy through alternative strategies.

The emergence of liberal values and a meritocratic social system created a context in which the myth of the "self-made man" was embedded. Although the concept of the person who rises in society through their own efforts exists in most cultures, it has a particular resonance in immigrant societies, providing an organizing principle for immigration. In order to escape the restrictions on social mobility in a hierarchical society in which ascribed position is most important, the immigrant must reinvent their social position in the context of a meritocratic system.[60] The act of self-improvement, or self-

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60. For instance, historian of colonial America Perry Miller argued that a defining characteristic of American mainstream culture is that the population of the United States, excepting Natives and Blacks, made a conscious decision to emigrate to their new home. Perry Miller, "The Shaping of the American Character," in *Nature's Nation* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967), 1-13.

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help, becomes an act of choosing, and then moving to, an economic and cultural environment that presents opportunities consistent with one's aspirations. A myth that supports the wisdom of such a decision would clearly resonate and find support within a society of immigrants, as it supports the positive, or "pull" reasons for immigration, rather than the often equally-significant negative, or "push" factors.[61]

The spectrum of liberal values naturalized in California, and so brought by gold rush immigrants to BC, was based on the broader American commitment to opportunity, social mobility, and the meritocracy. Its emphasis on mobility and an absence of class boundaries fit well with the economic opportunities and fluid social conditions of gold rush California. Based on Jacksonian Democratic ideology, it incorporated a strong commitment to the "producer ethic," highly valuing the contribution of the "productive classes" who contributed to progress and wealth, and critical of monopolists or speculators who profited from the work of others. The test of "useful doing" meant that no real distinction was drawn between farmers, artisans, miners, or workingmen, as all these groups contributed to production. The primary social division was between those who embodied the producer ethic and those who were seen as non-productive.[62] This ideology of social mobility and success based on a variant of the liberal order emphasizing the producer ethic resonated with the adventurers attracted by the gold rush, so was naturalized and brought north to British Columbia in 1858.

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61. Discussed in Portes and Bach, *Latin Journey*, 5-7.

62. This summary of American ideology and its application to California is taken primarily from Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 15-24, 50-58; Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 20-35, 51-57. Although these are older sources, they, together with Ira B. Cross, *A History of the Labor Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1935), continue to provide the broad authority for later generations of scholars, such as the social historian Martha Mabie Gardner, who cites all for overall ideological context. Martha Mabie Gardner, "Working on White Womanhood: White Working Women in the San Francisco Anti-Chinese Movement, 1877-1890," *Journal of Social History*, Vol.33, No.1 (Fall 1999), pp.73-95.

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A critical aspect of this ideology involved the limits placed on equality, liberty, and the access to property. The perceived equal opportunity to find and extract gold was viewed as a property right that adhered only to those who shared an Anglo-North American identity, or were perceived as capable of assimilation into that hegemonic group. For those who were seen as deviant, including indigenous people, Mexicans, and Chinese immigrants, such opportunities were not considered appropriate.[63] The ability to define certain groups as normal, and certain groups as deviant, is an indicator of the hegemonic power of the group creating the discourse, and evaluating other groups for inclusion or exclusion. Such racially or ethnically-defined restrictions on opportunity may be linked to the "split labour market" model that Edna Bonacich developed to explain the origins of racial and ethnic conflict in immigrant societies due to economic competition between definable groups in a labour market.[64] The split labour market theory focusses on the interaction between three groups, "business, higher paid labor, and cheaper labor," and particularly the conflict between the last two. The two strategies employed by the powerful, entrenched, and usually White labour group are exclusion of cheaper labour, and the creation of a caste system, whereby the cheap labour group is denied access to higher paid positions.[65] Within the ideology of the liberal order, I suggest that this model may be extended to include the concept of "opportunity." For the hegemonic Anglo-North American group, in the larger North American context, and more particularly in that of the California gold rush, there were clear strategies of exclusion and restriction directed at less-powerful ethnic or racial groups. By denying "othered" groups access to opportunity, a racialized underclass of workers was created, who by filling the waged positions considered undesirable, would provide a "neo-proletariat" to support the pursuit of opportunity by members of the hegemonic group. The presence of split labour markets

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63. Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 52, 56-57.

64. Edna Bonacich, "A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market," in *From Different Shores: Perspectives on Race and Ethnicity in America*, ed. Ronald Takaki (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 139-140.

65. *Ibid.*, 143-148.

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defined the commodity exporting industries of British Columbia, and the ideology of opportunity and restriction that underlay it may be linked to this North American context.

Essential to the immigrant goal of upward social mobility through personal effort is a mechanism for measurement and evaluation. Following McKay's model, the emphasis would be on economic success, but John Cawelti, in his examination of the "idea of success" presented in American literature, characterized two culturally-based approaches to defining success. Although his "secular" tradition measured only financial progress, his "conservative" tradition focussed on the individual fulfilling their culturally-defined role in society in a exemplary fashion, while the "self-help" tradition stressed individual fulfilment and social progress.[66] The latter two related more strongly to cultural than to materialist or structural measurement. Cawelti's conservative measure of success may be restated as achieving "respectability," the recognition that an individual conforms to the norms and values of their society in an exemplary fashion. Success, or respectability, does not depend on material status alone, but on conformity with cultural values. Following the producer ethic so deeply embedded in the California gold rush variant of the liberal order, high value was accorded to those who contributed to the larger society through their useful doing.

The transmission and naturalization of liberal values took place in BC within the structural context of a commodity exporting economy, extracting and transforming natural resources for sale on foreign markets. In most regions of North America, resettlement within the liberal order took place within economic structures based on agricultural land ownership, and the goal of becoming an independent yeoman farmer. This agricultural variant drove the resettlement of the nearby American Northwest, and was also the prevalent pattern in the British North America colonies. The viability of this approach to economic and social mobility depended on a variety of factors including the physical environment, the availability of land, the expertise of the farmer, and the existence of markets. If conditions were favourable, as in Upper Canada, independent yeoman status

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66. John G. Cawelti, *Apostles of the Self-Made Man* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), 3-6.

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could be achieved. The high proportion of successful, autonomous farm proprietors created the basis for the region's prosperity.[67] Agriculture was well integrated into the larger economy, and was supported by the presence of both domestic and export markets.[68] The potential for social mobility through land ownership had an impact on social formation. The comparatively open access to land meant that attempts to replicate the polarized British form of a landed gentry and landless labourers were difficult, while it supported the liberal order model of equal access to resources.[69] The perceived

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67. Kris Inwood and James Irwin suggested that in the British North American colonies the agricultural economy, and agricultural production, was the primary determinant of the wealth of a region. They felt that the proportionately greater agricultural production of Canada West explained its economic advantage over the Maritime colonies at the time of confederation. Kris Inwood and James Irwin, "Canadian Regional Commodity Income Differences at Confederation," in *Farm, Factory and Fortune: New Studies in the Economic History of the Maritime Provinces*, ed. Kris Inwood (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1993).

68. Douglas McCalla emphasized the dominant position of the agricultural economy in the development of mid-nineteenth century Upper Canada. He argued that it achieved this status through the integration of domestic as well as export markets. Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993). Darroch and Soltow concluded that the ownership and use of agrarian lands provided the central economic and social resource in Victorian Ontario, with almost two thirds of farmers owning their lands in 1871. The viability of this "independent yeoman" dream made for a high cost of waged labour, as a less desirable alternative to independent proprietorship. Gordon Darroch and Lee Soltow, *Property and Inequality in Victorian Ontario: Structural Patterns and Cultural Communities in the 1871 Census* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

69. The labour historian Bryan Palmer, writing from a Marxist or structuralist presepctive, reiterated the importance of agricultural social structures in British North America, arguing that they attempted to replicate British social structures and so supported the development of class divisions and elite hegemony; Bryan D. Palmer, *Working-class Experience: The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800-1980* (Toronto: Butterworth & Co., 1983), particularly ch.1, "Producing Classes, Paternalist Authority, 1800-1850." Paul Phillips, in his introduction to Clare Pentland's pioneering *Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1860*, offered a corrective to this position, as advocated by Pentland, Palmer, and fellow labour historian Gregory Kealey. Phillips suggested that by emphasizing the classic materialist split between capital and labour, they ignored the importance of what Phillips termed the "third major class," the agrarian *petite bourgeoisie*

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opportunity for social mobility and the absence of a rigid class system in this agricultural economy was thought to provide a better social environment than that of industrial Britain, so provided an attraction for emigrants.[70]

Agriculture remained central to the economy in regions such as Nova Scotia and New Brunswick that lacked Upper Canada's structural advantages. There was less potential in these colonies to become an independent proprietor through agriculture alone, so that goal became more ideological than achievable. To realize a level of independence or autonomy on smaller or less productive farms, landowners adopted strategies of occupational plurality to augment their family economies. This inability to rely only on the agricultural economy made for a relatively larger potential waged workforce than existed in Upper Canada.[71]

[or independent yeomen]. Paul Phillips, editor, "Introduction" to H. Clare Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1860* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1981). Although appearing in 1981, this was a published version of Pentland's 1960 thesis.

70. For example, this perceived equality of opportunity and lack of a restrictive class system in an agrarian context provided the primary attraction for programs of assisted child emigration to Canada in the later nineteenth century. Joy Parr, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1980), particularly ch.3, "The Promised Land."

71. Rusty Bittermann described a situation in which agrarian settlers on generally small and non-productive farms adopted a "multiformity" of wage-labour strategies. This augmented the agricultural economy and supported the settlers in their goal of achieving independence. Rusty Bittermann, "Farm Households and Wage Labour in the Northeastern Maritimes in the Early 19th Century," in *Labour and Working-Class History in Atlantic Canada: a Reader*, eds. David Frank and Gregory S. Kealey (St. John's: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University,1995), 9-40. In his examination of the role of agriculture in nineteenth-century New Brunswick, T.W. Acheson noted that it was the most important economic activity in the colony, but is often ignored in favour of the forest and shipbuilding industries. Acheson divided the agrarian settler population into three groups, based on how well they conformed to the model of the independent yeoman. The first was comprised of entrepreneurial farmers that derived their primary livelihood from their holdings, so best fitted the model. The second group was made up of marginal agriculturists, who were less autonomous, depending more on strategies of occupational plurality and the support of family and community. The third group Acheson described as "the cottars of the community," who often owned land, but

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While the nineteenth century resettlement of Upper Canada by Loyalists and British immigrants or the Oregon Territory by American immigrants was largely driven by the "agrarian" form of liberal ideology, this did not apply to British Columbia. Statistics gathered in conjunction with confederation in 1871 noted the lack of agricultural development. It was estimated that 13,384 acres were under cultivation, almost exclusively in the New Westminster and Victoria districts. The 1870 census data prepared for H.L. Langevin, the federal minister of public works, gave a non-Native population of 10,586 people. Langevin estimated that only about a sixth [1,830 individuals or 17%] of it was engaged in agriculture, compared to 2,350 [22%] in mining, 1,300 [12%] in trade, and 400 [4%] in manufacturing.[72] These numbers were prepared in advance of the 1870s boom in the commodity exporting industries, including the establishment of the salmon canning industry, massive expansion of the Vancouver Island coal mining industry, and ongoing expansion of the Burrard Inlet lumber industry [Chapters 6-8]. The lack of emphasis on agriculture was apparent even in the New Westminster district of the fertile Fraser Valley, which lacked any industrial mining activity. In 1869 this district's non-Native population was 838, with 137 [16%] engaged in agriculture, 49 [6%] in trade, and 280 [33%] in manufacturing. The following year, of a non-Native population of 1,356, 286 [21%] were engaged in agriculture, 38 [3%] in trade, and 192 [14%] in manufacturing.[73] The drop in manufacturing employment may relate to a falling-off of

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were unable to support themselves on it, so formed an underclass providing agricultural and other unskilled labour. T.W. Acheson, "New Brunswick Agriculture at the End of the Colonial Era: A Reassessment," in *Farm, Factory and Fortune: New Studies in the Economic History of the Maritime Provinces*, ed. Kris Inwood (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1993).

72. The non-Native population was broken down into 8,576 European, 462 Coloured, and 1,548 Chinese residents. Canada, Sessional Papers, *British Columbia. Report of the Hon. H.L. Langevin, Minister of Public Works, 1872*, 152, Appendix 2, "Return of the Population of British Columbia for the year 1870."

73. In 1869, 665 of 838, and in 1870 951 of the 1,356 non-Native residents were male. The largest change between the two years was the increase in the number of White females from 159 to 401. "The Census," *Mainland Guardian*, 6 May 1871, 3.

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export markets for Burrard Inlet lumber in 1870 [see Chapter 7].

This lack of agricultural development may be explained with both structural and cultural factors. In the former instance, very few of the lands in the region were suitable for agriculture. It has been estimated that under three percent [or 6,500,000 acres] of BC's land area is arable, and such regions were often separated from each other and potential markets by geographical barriers in the nineteenth century.[74] Compared to Ontario, the American Northwest, or California, BC offered limited possibilities for agriculture. However, the ideology of agrarian settlement as the cornerstone of a viable society was deeply entrenched in the Euro-North American consciousness, based on earlier models of expansion in the United States and British North America.[75] This was manifested in the active promotion of the agricultural settlement of BC by both writers and the colonial state in the 1860s.[76] In spite of these efforts, the gentler pull of agriculture as a strategy for achieving independent producer status could not compete with the prospect of sudden social mobility presented by the gold rush. In 1864, the colony of Vancouver Island was offering inducements for the "settlement and cultivation" of newly located agricultural lands, but "met with but little success" due to the greater appeal of the gold

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74. As late as the 1950s, only about a quarter of the arable lands, about 1,600,000 acres, had been developed as agricultural lands. Robert E. Cail, *Land, Man, and the Law: The Disposal of Crown Lands in British Columbia, 1871-1913* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1974), 5.

75. The nineteenth century idea that an agricultural economy provides the only basis for permanent settlement has not been entirely abandoned, in spite of abundant evidence to the contrary in BC. For instance, Jean Barman noted that "[f]arming was one of the most feasible means of making a living" in the colonies from 1858 to 1871, although admitting that the region remained a net importer of agricultural products throughout the period. *Ibid.*, 87-88.

76. The agricultural potential of British Columbia was touted by many, including the tireless promoter Donald Fraser, in *The London Times*, 14 December 1861; *ibid.*, 10 December 1862; *ibid.*, 8 August 1863; *ibid.*, 26 August 1863. More detailed information concerning the agricultural potential of the colonies was offered in 1864 in Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, chs.VI and XI.

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rush economy for immigrant populations.[77] For the immigrant population in British Columbia, the shortest path to the goal of success and respectability was not through farming, but through assuming the role of independent commodity producer. It was the prospect of independent commodity production that attracted immigrants to BC, at first dominated by the gold resource, but with the focus soon expanding to include other export commodities.

The chapters that follow will define the primary features of the pre-1885 economic and social systems of production involved in the commodity-exporting industries, beginning with the fur trade, and emphasizing the forest, coal mining, and salmon trades. There are some important points of congruence in the operation of all these industries. First, it may be demonstrated that the systems of production, meaning capital, managers, technology, and the majority of the workforces, were imported specifically for the purposes of each industry. They did not evolve from traditional subsistence, or pre-capitalist economic, activities, and did not rely on "capturing" an existing pre-industrial workforce. Second, almost from the start, there was a set of assumptions, based on social constructions of race, class, and gender, about whom should do what kind of work, and in turn where that placed identifiable groups in the evolving social structure. Third, it becomes clear that a relatively small number of individuals, generally those with linkages to export markets for commodities, played a central role in initiating these ventures, and so shaping the economic and cultural landscape of the region. Examples of such influential entrepreneurs, who played a critical role in bringing existing systems of production to BC, include Edward Stamp, Andrew Welch, and R.P. Rithet.

The systems of production introduced by these people were based on those previously developed in existing commodity-exporting regions. For instance, gold mining ventures were based on those developed in the earlier mining centres of California and Australia, and the prototype export sawmill, Alberni Mills, was modelled on the Puget Sound export mills of the preceding decade. Salmon canneries followed the pattern of

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77. BCA, GR-2078, Diplomatic Despatches, United States Consuls in Victoria 1862-1906, film B9747, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 29 December 1864.

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those on San Francisco Bay and the Columbia River, which were in turn based on those of New Brunswick and Maine. Coal mining protocols were grounded on those in the British industry. These systems of production were introduced into an environment in which social relations were extremely fluid. This meant that the relations of production had a profound impact on influencing and shaping social structures, divisions, and conventions. However, cultural factors had a profound impact on the development of systems of production, with demography and racial ideology in particular driving changes and adaptations in imported social systems of production.

The technology and specialized knowledge required in the labour force also came from earlier centres of production. For instance, when Alberni Mills was established in 1860, descriptions of the workforce make it clear that it was predominantly Anglo-North American. Most of the construction and millwrighting (construction and installation of machinery) was performed by British skilled labour, and most of the loggers were American and Canadian workers, with prior experience in similar work. Attempts to "capture" local Aboriginal labour in this venture were unsuccessful, and on the few occasions when such labour was utilized, the workers were seen as appropriate in certain jobs, but not in others. This demonstrated the early racialization of certain parts of the production process; in this case Natives were seen as suitable unskilled "outdoor" labour, clearing brush, or working as boatmen or fishermen. It was considered appropriate for them to be working in the forest or on the ocean, but less appropriate to have them working in a "factory" environment. This seems to relate to a discourse surrounding indigenous populations that stressed "freedom," or in less flattering terms, "wildness" or "irresponsibility." The early racialization of industrial workplaces in BC provides a clear example of how economic structures intersected with cultural values and ideology to produce distinctive forms of industrial labour, and to shape larger social attitudes.

This racialization of the systems of production intersected with the development of class distinctions in the various industries, primarily in the form of split labour markets. In very broad terms, the industrial labour market, regardless of the industry, was split into two parts. One of these was an upper echelon, or labour elite, that had some special skills

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or knowledge that made them essential to the industrial process. This gave them a high degree of autonomy, a high degree of job security, and the potential of mobility into the ranks of industrial owner/operators. The other group may be defined as common or rough labour; individuals that had no particular skills or knowledge, and as such were part of a floating body of workers, often transient, that could be employed in any industry as unskilled labour. Such positions did not offer the potential for upward mobility. This definition of varieties of labour intersected with the racialization of the workplaces, to create a situation in which the labour elite was principally Anglo-North American, while common labour included workers of all races. Definitions of respectability, based on one's place in the labour market and access to opportunity for social mobility, were further affected by cultural attitudes of desirability. For example, loggers were held in higher esteem than men working in sawmills, although the former were as likely to be uneducated and transient as the latter. It would seem that a hierarchy of desirability was established, predicated on the discourse of respectability current in the immigrant society. Respectability relied on autonomy, which was also central to the discourse of "manliness." Logging was considered more autonomous than the factory work in a sawmill, so was viewed as more "manly," and therefore more highly ranked. The discourses of race, class, and gender provided the attitudes and values of the society, which provided the framework for interpreting and mediating the structural conditions present in the commodity export industries. This in turn determined how individuals and social groups, both indigenous and immigrant, were accommodated into the larger community of British Columbia.

A significant nuance within the social development of BC concerns the relatively "flat" starting point that typified most of the immigrant community in the 1850s-1870s. That is, agents and merchants like Edward Stamp or Andrew Welch were not that much above skilled, or even common labour, in terms of their original (British or North American) socio-economic position, but were able, through their knowledge (human capital) and social and business linkages (cultural capital), to leverage their way into becoming a sort of nouveau-elite, within the context of a fluid and meritocratic society.

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This evokes Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "habitus," the ideological, epistemological, or cultural forms that mediate the lived experience of the individual. In his model, the construction of habitus depends largely on cultural capital, but also depends on access to economic and human [which he terms "educational"] capital. Following Bourdieu, one form of capital may be converted into another. Arguably, for skilled workers, human capital could be converted into economic and cultural capital, while for the agents, cultural capital, represented by their personal linkages to markets and sources of finance, could be converted into economic capital. A fluid immigrant society adhering to the precepts of the liberal order could be conceptualized as an environment that facilitated the conversion of one form of capital to another.[78]

Accepting that immigrants came to BC to improve their life chances, I would like to follow Cawelti in extending the definition of success beyond the simple acquisition of wealth. Although acknowledging the importance of economic power to the socio-political power of individuals or groups, it should be recognized that the power of a historical bloc may relate to the possession of other forms of capital, that following Bourdieu, may be converted into other forms. Working from Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, the construct of ideological, epistemological, or cultural forms that mediate the lived experience of the individual, I offer the suggestion that the habitus of the society of commodity-exporting British Columbia is reflected by portrayals of "respectability."[79] Although generally perceived as an entirely subjective term with no analytical power, the attributes that contribute to the definition of an individual or group as respectable offer a great deal of information about larger cultural values. Respectability implied a high level of conformity with the norms of the society, with any deviation contributing to non-respectable status. Although this creates its own dichotomy, of respectable/non-respectable, I believe that such a model, based on the level of conformity to an idealized habitus, more effectively

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78. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass,: Harvard University Press, 2000),particularly 80-83, 301-304 [for transformations between forms of capital], 101-103 [for habitus].

79. *Ibid.*, 101-103.

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captures the complexity of social development than the dichotomies commonly applied in the historiography of BC, such as capital/labour, White/non-White, Native/non-Native, British/American, and male/female.

The concept of respectability seems particularly relevant in the context of an emerging, fluid society like that of nineteenth century British Columbia. Definitions of respectability would be expected to evolve in concert with the society, and to reflect core cultural values. The discourse of respectability would serve to reinforce certain values or attributes by defining them as normal, and others as non-respectable or deviant. The ability to create social norms by naturalizing certain values would demonstrate the power of a historic bloc, and contribute to its ability to achieve hegemonic status. The discourse of respectability not only defined who best typified the values of the society, but served as a way of defining and affirming those values, and by extension, the hegemonic ideology of the society. In nineteenth century BC, it would be expected that concepts of respectability would be as fluid as the society itself, shaped by the structural factors surrounding the commodity exporting economy, and the distinctive mix of residual and cultural forms contributed by immigrant and indigenous societies. To attain respectable status in colonial and early provincial BC did not entail the same set of attributes that it would in industrial England, or the agricultural districts of the United States or Canada. The process of negotiation between historical blocs, and the establishment of a hegemonic or dominant culture, was a process that took place almost entirely within the systems of production of the commodity exporting industries. At the same time, these industries were initiated within and shaped by the imported values of the liberal order.

To date in historical scholarship, respectability has been used principally as a descriptive device, applying to appearance and behaviour, or style of personal presentation. In his examination of respectability in Victorian Britain, Simon Cordery reviewed the historiographical treatment of respectability, and then offered the suggestion that workingmen's institutions like Friendly Societies attempted to redefine respectability in a distinctively working-class form, "based on collective self-help and independence from external control," in contrast with what he considered the middle-class definition, based on

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individualism and self-help. It will be noted that his distinction focusses on a *collectivist* working-class versus an *individualist* middle-class ideology, with self-help, which may also be formulated as "self-improvement" or "progress," central to both.[80] If one was to reformulate the working class goal of "independence from external control" as "autonomy," it would seem that it may not have been so different from the "individualism" of the middle class. Perhaps in the British tradition, for either workingmen or the emerging middle class, the defining feature of respectability was not clothing or behaviour, but the degree of autonomy, or control over one's own life chances, that an individual experienced. Different levels of cultural, human, or economic capital would require different strategies to achieve autonomy, with a collective response the only possible option available to wage labourers, lacking all forms of capital. As discussed earlier, autonomy may have figured as part of the central definition of respectability, regardless of class position, but how it was achieved or expressed was class-specific, determined by structural factors. It should be noted that the three common elements in the doctrine of nineteenth century British respectability, that is self-help or self-improvement, progress (into which social mobility could be subsumed), and the achievement of autonomy or freedom from external control, are consistent with the goals of emigration. For many, I would suggest, the goal of emigration to a developing region, with a social structure based on the values of the liberal order, was to achieve respectability, in a way that would not have been possible within the social conditions in the place of origin.

The dictionary definition of respectability is "those who are, *a* person who is, socially respectable." The third definition of respectable in the same edition is the one that directly relates to this; "3. Of fair social standing, having the qualities necessary for such standing, not disreputable, honest & decent in conduct."[81] The key phrase here is "of fair social standing." I offer the idea that the goal of achieving respectability, that is, to create

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80. Simon Cordery, "Friendly Societies and the Discourse of Respectability in Britain, 1825-1875," *Journal of British Studies* 34 (January 1995), 37-40.

81. These definitions are from *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964.

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a perception that the actions of the individual or the social group were congruent with the habitus of the broader society, provided the underlying logic for the rise of a liberal order in BC. It was not simply the pursuit of wealth, but a complex understanding of what was appropriate behaviour and action within the context of an emergent liberal order. Property and economic power was simply one aspect of this "totalizing philosophy." This use of respectability relates strongly to Cawelti's "conservative" tradition, in which the measure of success was how well the individual fulfilled their culturally-defined role in society.

Such evaluations of success, or the achievement of respectability, are most famously represented in the novels of Horatio Alger, which provided lessons in capitalist citizenship for the youth of America in the last third of the nineteenth century, contemporary with the emergence of liberal values in BC. Alger's definition of success did not require enormous wealth, but rather, through demonstration of the "employee virtues," such as industrious and ethical behaviour, for the individual to assume a comfortable and respectable position within their social group.[82] Although Alger's definition of respectable in late nineteenth century America did not resemble that in mid-nineteenth century BC, the point to be taken is that respectability was more a measure of cultural than of material achievement.

As with all other cultural constructs, the discourse of respectability in nineteenth century BC was mutable, depending on race, class, and gender, and constantly subject to negotiation between historical blocs. The ability to naturalize a particular definition of respectability signalled the attainment of hegemonic power by a given historical bloc. The ability to meet the terms of that hegemonic definition gave some people higher levels of respectability, hence social power (or cultural capital), than others. In some respects, this is a restatement of the models of postmodern theorists, such as Michel Foucault and Pierre

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82. For example, in the novel *Bound to Rise or Up the Ladder*, the adolescent farm boy Harry Walton achieves respectable status as a result of maintaining his industrious and ethical behaviour through a series of adventures. Horatio Alger, *Born to Rise or Up the Ladder* (New York: Hurst & Company, n.d.).

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Bourdieu, who see social formations determined by more than economic relations. Rather than top-down economic domination, subordination becomes largely invisible because it is encoded within institutions and discourses that appear natural.[83] Within this model, discourses of normality and abnormality, or deviance, become the key mechanism of control or social power for those social groups able to naturalize their definition of "normality," and so become dominant. Gramsci anticipated Foucault and other postmodernist theorists in his emphasis on forms of domination outside of economic relations and state actions, and by emphasizing the power of discourse and language in the process of naturalizing the hegemonic situation.[84] The focus here largely will be on how a neo-elite group was able to establish a definition of normality, and how this was supported by mechanisms of social control, and reinforced by recognition of social status. The concept of respectability will serve to identify some of the values of the emerging elite. Following McKay, this will permit an examination of the attributes that were central to the form of the liberal order emerging in nineteenth century BC, and to analyse to what extent they related to residual or emergent cultural forms, or to the constraints of the structural features of the commodity exporting economy. This should contribute to identifying why some people were able to achieve social mobility, while others could not. While pre-1885 British Columbia seemed to present a fluid economic and social situation in which, following Bourdieu, one form of capital could be converted easily into another, it seems apparent that as the habitus of the neo-elite emerged, and became accepted as commonsense, it led to a situation in which the construction of social divisions or classes compromised the equality of opportunity celebrated in liberal values.

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83. Examples of definitions of normality and abnormality and resulting social controls include the medicalization of "deviants" such as homosexuals, aggressive women, etc. Postmodern theory extended the analysis of social power inequities from the Marxist focus on class to incorporate various vectors of power, within the analytical device of "discourse." Litowitz, "Gramsci, Hegemony, and the Law," 533-534.

84. *Ibid.*, 535; Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony," 569.

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Chapter 1: Merchant Capitalist Relations of Production: The Hudson's Bay Company and First Nations, 1821-1849

Capitalist economic and social relations arrived in British Columbia with the maritime fur trade in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. With the establishment of a network of permanent land-based fur trade posts by the North West Company (NWC) in the 1790s, and its takeover by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in 1821, the indigenous population of British Columbia became a permanent part of the commodity-producing periphery of the World/Atlantic capitalist system.[1] The presence of the fur trade companies introduced new social forms and cultural values to British Columbia. First, the HBC system of production and corporate social system, second, the indirect and direct impacts of capitalist social relations on First Nations societies, and finally, the development of new cultural values. The last developed out of the negotiation between corporate and indigenous societies, and defined intergroup relations, including ideology and attitudes, in advance of Euro-North American resettlement. The cultural values naturalized in the corporate fur trade had a profound impact on the relations between Euro-North American and Aboriginal populations within the context of industrial capitalism. For the purposes of this study, this process of negotiation and naturalization in the context of the fur trade will focus temporally on the first half of the nineteenth century, and geographically on the Hudson's Bay Company's "Columbia Department."[2] This

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1. The concept of the world capitalist economy was articulated by Immanuel Wallerstein, in a series dealing with its formation in Europe and consequent expansion out into the world. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

2. Columbia Department is used here to apply to the Hudson's Bay company administrative unit that existed from the 1826 integration of the New Caledonia and Columbia trading districts until 1849, when the departmental depot shifted from Fort Vancouver to Fort Victoria as a result of the boundary settlement between Britain and the United States. Throughout this period the Columbia Department was included in the larger administrative unit of the Northern Department, which included Rupert's Land, and was managed by Governor George Simpson. Until his retirement in 1846 Dr. John McLoughlin was the superintendent of the Columbia Department, reporting to Simpson.

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administrative unit subsumed much of the Pacific Slope of North America, including parts of what is now the United States. In the period during which economic and social relations developed between fur traders and indigenous populations, neither the HBC or Aboriginal producers recognized the later political construct of British Columbia; its use here would be ahistorical in the extreme.

The HBC System of Production

The system of production employed by the Hudson's Bay Company in its "mature" Pacific Slope fur trade of the 1830s and 1840s had evolved out of two institutional or corporate traditions. The London-based Hudson's Bay Company had been created in 1670 for the purpose of trading furs, principally of the beaver, from the Native producers in the Hudson's Bay drainage [or Rupert's Land] for sale in England. By the end of the eighteenth century, this company found itself in an intense commercial struggle with the recently-formed North West Company. This partnership of Montreal-based British merchants pushed west into the continent, seeking new fur territories and establishing posts across the northern Prairies. In the 1790s NWC exploration crossed the continental divide, and by 1806 the company established a network of posts along the Peace River and in the productive trading district, centred on Stuart Lake, later known as New Caledonia. Due to the length and difficulty of the route to Kaministiquia [after 1803 Fort William], the inland depot of the NWC on Lake Superior, the partners of the NWC continued to search for an alternate supply route.[3] By 1812 the plan was to integrate all transmontane

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Geographically, the Columbia Department extended from northern California to the Alaska Panhandle, and from the Pacific to the Rockies. The Columbia Department was replaced by the Western Department, administered out of Fort Victoria and separate to the Northern Department, in 1853.

3. The preceding summary is based primarily on information from John S. Galbraith, *The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor 1821-1869* (New York: Octagon Books, 1977); W. Kaye Lamb, editor, *The Letters and Journals of Simon Fraser 1806-1808* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1966); W. Stewart Wallace, *Documents Relating to the North West Company* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934).

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operations, connecting New Caledonia to the Pacific Ocean with a route following the Fraser, Thompson and Columbia Rivers.[4] The following year the NWC acquired the assets of its primary competitor in the region, John Jacob Astor's New York-based Pacific Fur Company [PFC], which since 1810 had established itself throughout the Columbia River drainage, with headquarters at the mouth of the river.[5] With this, the NWC consolidated its control of the fur trade west of the Rockies, with an expanded network of posts and a maritime supply option.

With the 1818 agreement for joint occupation of the Oregon Territory by Britain and the United States following the War of 1812, by 1820 the North West Company was using a Columbia River route to supply its posts, with Fort George as the depot at the river's mouth.[6] In 1821 the NWC and the Hudson's Bay Company ended their commercial rivalry through merger, under the identity of the latter company. With this, the existing network of NWC posts west of the Rockies became part of the Northern Department of the HBC. The new company was granted exclusive trading privileges with the indigenous populations of British North America west of the Hudson's Bay drainage, including the Pacific Slope.[7]

At first, the HBC ignored the southern part of the network, instead focussing on the productive New Caledonia and Peace River districts, which were integrated into the

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4. Jamie Morton, *Fort St. James 1806-1914: A Century of Fur Trade on Stuart Lake* (Ottawa: Canadian Parks Service Microfiche Report Series No.367, 1988) 26-30.

5. Richard Glover, editor, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812*, Toronto, The Champlain Society, 1962, pp.xlvii-liv,322,339 note 2, 344-345,358; Alexander Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia River* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1923)154-163, 215-222; Gabriel Franchère, *A Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America* (Chicago: R.R. Donnelly & Sons Company, 1954)129-143.

6. Barry M. Gough, *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America 1810-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1971) 28. The arrival in New Caledonia of the goods shipped in from the Columbia in 1820 is recorded in HBCA., B.188/a/1, Fort St. James Journal, p.25d, 20 October 1820.

7. Galbraith, *The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor*, 5-8.

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existing HBC trans-Prairie supply route to York Factory, on Hudson's Bay.[8] Within a few years the advantages of maritime supply and a consolidated transmontane department was accepted by the management of the Hudson's Bay Company. By 1826 the various Pacific Slope fur districts were integrated into the Columbia Department, with headquarters at Fort Vancouver, a new depot constructed on the lower Columbia River.

The Yearly Round of the Fur Trade

Until the late1840s the HBC trade on the Pacific slope followed conventions established in the later 1820s, and dating back to the consolidated operations of the NWC a decade earlier. The most consistent fur returns came from the central and northern interior of the area, in the district known as New Caledonia. This district was the economic backbone of the Columbia Department, typically producing between 100 and 150 bales of furs per year. The more southern districts on the upper Columbia drainage, such as Colvile and the Snake River country, were also significant producers. The north coast could produce large numbers of furs, but returns seemed more variable than those of the interior districts. Although the fur trade remained the focus of HBC operations through the 1850s, diversification into other exportable commodities was prominent on the Pacific Slope, and will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 2.

The Hudson's Bay Company business was a carrying trade, based on the sale of a high value, and relatively light and compact commodity, specifically beaver fur, on European markets.[9] Given the enormous geographical range of the business, managing

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8. Morton, *Fort St. James*, 54-85.

9. Nick Kardulius listed the attractions of a trade in furs from North America for European traders. He suggested that scarcity, light weight and high value, and the presence of willing Aboriginal suppliers made the trade appealing. P. Nick Kardulius, "Fur Production as a Specialized Activity in a World System: Indians in the North American Fur Trade," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 14, no.1 (1990): 36. The durability of the commodity was also important. Although fur had to be kept dry and free of insects, it was not fragile or subject to rapid spoilage, so was suitable for a trans-oceanic carrying trade.

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the logistics of transportation was key to the success of such a trade. The HBC fiscal or business year was referred to as an "Outfit." It ran from June 1 of one year to May 31 of the next year, to accommodate the transportation of returns and outfits between London and the individual trading posts in the Columbia Department. The returns of the previous fur hunting season would be gathered, packaged and sent to the departmental depot, Fort Vancouver, by way of an annual "brigade," a transport party of employees using horses and boats. The outfit for the department (the term also referred to the stock of trade goods required for the next trading season) would be divided and packaged at the depot, and shipped by the return brigades to the various trading districts. In the same way, ships from London would arrive with the departmental outfits at Fort Vancouver before the arrival of the brigades, and would take the returns (the furs and other commodities shipped out to market) back to London in the fall. The net value of the returns when sold at auction in England each year, minus the cost of the outfit which had been traded for the furs and the cost of operating the posts (supplies, wages, etc.), provided the profits of the company. With its returns, each district would submit a requisition for the next outfit. This would include the stock required for the trade, as well as anything needed for post operation and maintenance. These requisitions would be assembled at Fort Vancouver, and then shipped to England by way of the overland express to York Factory, on Hudson's Bay. The goods, supplies and provisions in the requisitions were purchased from British manufacturers or wholesalers, while the furs were sold at auction, providing the capital required for the continuing operations of the Company, as well as any profit. With the trip to or from London taking five or six months, and the round trip of the brigades up to four months, the need for ensuring a high degree of predictability of the trade itself becomes clear. The systems developed for the operation of the Columbia Department were effective in commercial terms. From 1830 to 1843, it showed substantial returns and profits every year. The returns ranged from £30,000 to over £47,000, while the profits varied between £13,000 and £28,000, with the average about

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£18,000 to £20,000.[10]

Although the HBC held a monopoly on the Indian trade in British North America, there were attempts to compete with it to the south, without notable success. The advantages of familiarity, scale, and effective transportation routes made it possible for the HBC to resist any challenges to its business. This effective monopoly situation meant that the economic and social relations between indigenous and Euro-North American populations was shaped primarily by the commercial considerations of the Company. Aboriginal participation in the capitalist system in what is now British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon almost always involved the mediation of the Hudson's Bay Company.

In the mid-1840s, at the peak, and the start of the decline of the HBC fur trade in the Columbia Department, the British military officers Warre and Vavasour estimated the Aboriginal population of the region at just under 87,000 individuals. They based their figures on the various records kept, and censuses taken, by the Hudson's Bay Company.[11] The Company's permanent workforce in the department at the same time was just over 600 men, stationed at about 23 posts in nine trading districts, and on the ships of the marine department. About a third of these employees were based at the departmental depot, Fort Vancouver.[12] The total population associated with the posts was much

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10. Richard S. Mackie, "The Hudson's Bay Company on the Pacific, 1821-1843" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1993) 347, Table 6, "Columbia Department, Returns and Profits, 1813-1843."

11. Hudson's Bay Company Archives [hereafter cited as HBCA], B.223/z/4, Fort Vancouver Miscellaneous, H.J. Warre and M. Vavasour to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1 November 1845, 211d-213. This suggests more than a 50 percent decline in population from the estimated 200,000 pre-contact inhabitants of the region; see the section on "Demographic Impact" that follows.

12. HBCA, B.223/z/4, Fort Vancouver Miscellaneous, H.J. Warre and M. Vavasour to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, November 1, 1845, p.211. The Company's total workforce in the Department had risen steadily from 184 men at the time of the amalgamation in 1821 to 572 men in 1843: Richard Mackie, "Finding home: British settlement on the west coast before 1858" (Paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, Victoria, May 1990) 3.

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greater, including the wives and families of the employees, as well as some Natives engaged as temporary labour. Most of the servants were in country marriages with Aboriginal women, and raising "country-born" families within the social sphere of the HBC.[13]

In his broad contextual analysis of the North American fur trade, Eric Wolf identified two recurrent themes, or outcomes of the fur trade; declining indigenous populations, and a change in the nature of economic activities [or system of production], leading in turn to a change in social relations.[14] The demographic and social impacts of the fur trade have proven contentious in studies of the history of contact and the fur trade in British Columbia. A brief review of some of the existing interpretations will provide some context for the more detailed examination of the fur trade system of production.

Demographic Impact

The point of contention in this case is the extent of Aboriginal population loss, particularly on the northwest coast, due to introduced diseases. The current consensus is that the mortality from pre-contact [mid-eighteenth century] population levels until 1881, when the first federal census was taken, was on the order of 80-90 percent, from an estimated pre-contact population of some 200,000 to about 25,000 people. This rate of decline is close to the average described throughout the Western Hemisphere.[15] The primary defender of

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13. The formation of country families is discussed frequently in recent fur trade literature, within the contours set by the two most influential books on the subject, Jennifer S.H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1996); Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer Publishing Ltd., 1993).

14. Wolf described the fur trade as "not a North American but an international phenomenon." He used the Abenaki as an example of the demographic and economic/social impact of the fur trade. Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) 159, 161-163.

15. For example, Cole Harris estimated a pre-contact population within the political boundaries of BC of over 200,000, after arriving at an estimated 90 percent mortality rate,

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the other interpretation, suggesting that population loss has been massively overestimated, and suggesting that the pre-contact population was not much larger than that of the later nineteenth century, is Robin Fisher. He asserted that other scholars have created an erroneous construct of catastrophic population loss. For instance, Fisher argued that the deserted villages described in ships' logs were due to seasonal occupation patterns, rather than high mortality. Further, he suggested that high birth rates compensated for high death rates. As this contention was based on comparative examples from a very different contact period in the South Pacific, it does little to strengthen his argument.[16]

Contemporary accounts of Native populations, related by people with a long history of face to face contact with indigenous populations, tend to support the consensus, rather than the Fisher, interpretation. For fur trade employees and managers, the decline in Aboriginal populations was a serious matter, and one that merited attention, as it removed fur producers from the system of production. The loss of population was described by Samuel Damon in the course of his trip up the Columbia in 1849:

> We have passed one or two Indians lodges, but alas, the once lords of the forest are no more to be seen. Their hunting and fishing grounds are nearly deserted. The small pox, measles, and other diseases, and I may add, rum

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in relation to the 1881 census Native population of 25,661. He also offered the possibility that mortality in this period was as high as 95 percent, suggesting a pre-contact population of some 400,000. Cole Harris, "Voices of Smallpox around the Strait of Georgia," *The Resettlement of British Columbia*, 3-30, 281, note 114. Robert Boyd estimated a pre-contact population in the Northwest Coast culture area of between 188,000 and 200,000, declining by 1874 to about 33,000 people. This would represent mortality of between 82 and 84 percent. Robert T. Boyd, "Demographic History, 1774-1874," in *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7, Northwest Coast*, ed. Wayne Suttles (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1990) 135, 147, figure 5.

16. Fisher presents his basic argument in the section of his book dealing with the early years of the fur trade; Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 21-23. In the preface to the second edition of his book, he targets several scholars that he believes have inflated death rates and ignored birth rates, including, Boyd, "Demographic History"; Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990) ch.1; James R. Gibson, *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods. The Maritime Fur Trade of the Northwest Coast, 1785-1841* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992) 268-278.

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> have well nigh swept them all away. Our intelligent pilot, who has been twenty years in the country, remarked that since his arrival, "95 per cent. of the Indians had died off."[17]

Samuel Parker, on the Columbia in 1835 to 1837, noted an indigenous population around Fort Vancouver at that time of about three hundred people. He suggested that this was probably about 10 to 20 percent of the 1829 population, or an 80 to 90 percent decline in the preceding few years.[18] This pattern is broadly consistent with that observed throughout British Columbia, although with wide local variations. There appears to be an overall pattern of higher mortality in regions with ongoing but infrequent contact, compared to regions with little or no contact, or regions with continuous contact. For instance, the Gulf of Georgia area, where populations were in fairly continuous contact with Euro-North American groups from the 1820s, mortality was much lower than among regional populations with more sporadic contact.[19] An example of the latter involved the southern Haida of Moresby Island, Haida Gwaii. When John Work prepared a census for the HBC c.1839, he recorded a population of 984 people in the two major villages in the region, Tanu and Skedans. He noted that many of these southern Haida "scarcely ever visit any establishments or see Whites."[20] The 1881 census counted a combined

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17. Oregon Historical Society Manuscripts [hereafter cited as OHS], Mss 803, Samuel C. Damon, "Journal, May 1849," 7-8; Mr. Lattie, a former employee of the North West Company and later the HBC, was the pilot; his name is given on p.1 of the document.

18. Parker estimated seven-eighths of the population had died, while Dr. McLoughlin, the HBC superintendent of the Department, thought nine-tenths of the population had died, mostly from fever and ague. Samuel Parker, *Journal of an Exploring Tour Beyond the Rocky Mountains, Under the Direction of the American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions, in the years 1835, '36, and '37* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Samuel Parker, 1840) 146, 188.

19. Boyd, "Demographic History," 145-146. Boyd also notes a higher birth rate among groups in this region compared to many others; he also suggests the possibility of access to European medical treatment, particularly smallpox vaccine, as a mitigating factor. *Ibid.*

20. Work, appointed the Chief Trader in charge of Fort Simpson in 1835, arrived at a total population of 6,607 in Haida Gwaii, with 2,664 of those south of Skidegate Inlet, and 984 of those in the two major villages mentioned. BCA, B/20/1853, Private Papers of Sir

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population of 136 in Tanu and Skedans.[21] Ten years later the two villages had been abandoned in favour of the new consolidated mission village of New Clew, with 90 people recorded.[22] This village was abandoned in turn in 1898, and its remaining 66 people joined the population of Skidegate, leaving no permanent Haida village in the southern region.[23] In the 60 years from 1839 to 1898 the population of the two villages had declined from 984 to 66 people, or by roughly 93 percent. Prior to the Work census there had been at least one major smallpox epidemic in 1775 that affected the area, and is thought to have caused a 30 percent mortality rate.[24] This suggests that with these two villages, a pre-contact population of roughly 1,300 was reduced to 66 people, or a 95 percent drop in population, by 1898. Based on such examples from the south and the north of the Hudson's Bay Company's Columbia Department, it would seem that the consensus concerning population loss in the first century after contact is generally accurate. Even if such a 80-90 percent mortality rate is not accepted, it may be assumed that a majority of the indigenous population was lost, and that this would have a significant impact not only on the Aboriginal societies suffering through this experience, but on the way the HBC system of production developed in the region. For the purposes of this study, the way that this rapidly declining population supported a naturalized perception of Aboriginal people as a "disappearing race" is a key issue. The construction

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James Douglas, Second Series, 27-28. A date is not specified, but the New Caledonia census is dated 1839, as is the Fort Langley one. *Ibid.*, 7, 11.

21. There were respectively 104 and 32 people in Tanu and Skedans in 1881. BCA, GR 469, film B389, 1881 Census, British Columbia, 187 New Westminster, D 11 - S.D. Coast of Mainland, 28-31, 34-35, George Sneath, enumerator.

22. BCA, GR 288, film B7040, 1891 Census, District #2, New Westminster, Coast, B.C., Q.C.I., Division 33, 73-77.

23. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, 1898* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1898) 360. A different reference from the same source lists the number of Clew people in Skidegate as 68. *Ibid.*, 86.

24.Boyd, "Demographic History," 137-138.

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of First Nations, equated with the wilderness, fading away in the face of the progress of Euro-North American "civilization," formed an important part of how Aboriginal groups were integrated into the industrial economy, and into the larger society. The construct of the disappearing race and its influence will be revisited in later sections of this study.

The Impact of the Fur Trade on Aboriginal Economies and Societies

The second "universal" outcome of the fur trade posited by Wolf was a change in the nature of economic activities, and a resulting change in social relations.[25] The extent of such changes has been debated both in a North American and a regional context. The two extremes of the spectrum of interpretations concerning the impact in BC are probably those of Robin Fisher, who argued for the agency of First Nations, and a consequent lack of social impact, and Cole Harris, who contended that shortly after initial contact First Nations were reduced to a subordinated role, due to the strategic power of the fur trade companies, employing superior weaponry and violent tactics.[26] Both these interpretations focus on the power relationship between indigenous and immigrant populations, and differ on the point at which that power relationship becomes asymmetrical. Unlike Wolf, who presented the idea that a change in the economic system, or system of production, led to social change, both Fisher and Harris suggested that social change led to economic change. Fisher argued that in the fur trade period, indigenous societies were unaffected, and so there was no change in economic activity. Harris suggested that the military domination of the fur traders let them force subjugated Aboriginal populations into commodity production, so economic change was an outcome of political change.

Fisher's interpretation was based on the "enrichment" thesis of mid-twentieth century anthropologists, which suggests that the fur trade brought in new technology,

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25. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, 163.

26. Fisher, *Contact and Conflict,* ch.2, "The Land-Based Fur Trade"; Harris, "Strategies of Power," 31-67.

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material culture, and wealth, without disrupting the structure of indigenous societies.[27] The enrichment thesis was intended as a corrective for the earlier "dependency" theory, in which it is inevitable that a "primitive" society exposed to a "civilized" society will abandon their own material culture in favour of "superior" imported goods, and by doing so their society will become dependent on, or subordinated to, the introduced version.[28] Although both the dependency theory and the "strategic" theory advocated by Harris focus on the subordination of indigenous society, the former argues for a voluntary adoption of the "superior" culture, while the latter emphasizes the forced imposition of capitalism. In the dependency theory the subordination is seen as an inevitable evolutionary outcome, while in the strategic theory, it was purposefully created by force of arms.

As would be expected, advocates of the enrichment and strategic models portray the events of the contact period in very different ways. Fisher argued for mutual benefit demonstrated by the "absence of major interracial conflict," while Harris wrote of a reign of bloody terror by the fur traders. Fisher extended aspects of the dependency theory to raise the idea of mutual interdependence, with Native populations dependent on trade goods, but the HBC at the same time dependent on the cooperation of Natives for the supply of commodities. He argued against the existence of systemic violence, while Harris asserted that the whole system of commodity production was based on systemic violence against indigenous people. Fisher suggested that indigenous societies were not disrupted, due to the agency retained by First Nations to choose their level of interaction and what aspects of immigrant culture they wished to adopt. In his interpretation, the impact of the fur trade was creative rather than destructive. Harris, on the other hand, described a

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27. Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, ch.2: "The Land-Based Fur Trade."

28. It was in reaction to this Whiggish interpretation, as applied by nineteenth and early twentieth century historians such as H.H. Bancroft and F.W. Howay, that Fisher adopted the enrichment theory more popular among ethnologists in the mid-twentieth century, and emphasized the idea of agency, rather than objectification, for First Nations. *Ibid.*, preface to the first edition.

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situation in which the fur trade companies acquired sovereign power over First Nations. Following Michel Foucault, he argued that this was achieved through the episodic demonstration of power over property and life, intended to gain compliance through fear.[29] Although the interpretation remains contested, there seems to be some preference among scholars for variations on the "agency" version, emphasizing the ways in which First Nations accommodated or resisted European influences. This follows current historiographical trends emphasizing the resistance of subordinated groups, as well as the political agenda of First Nations wishing to demonstrate their autonomy with respect to Canadian economic and social systems.[30]

Both Fisher and Harris attempted to link the social relations of the fur trade to those experienced in the later colonial era, although as would be expected, their interpretations differ concerning the degree of change or continuity this involved. Fisher suggested that by mediating a peaceful relationship between First Nations and immigrant societies, the fur trade inadvertently created the conditions for the latter to become dominant. Harris, on the other hand, saw a significant degree of continuity between the company-sponsored violence of the fur trade era and the state-sponsored violence of the colonial era. For him, the primary difference was that sovereign power supported the state rather than a corporate entity. Fisher and Harris both acknowledge the subordination of First Nations, although for Fisher, this was an outcome of the immigration boom in the

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29. *Ibid.*, particularly ch.2; Harris, "Strategies of Power," particularly 64-65.

30. A broad history of relations between First Nations and Canadian society that incorporates aspects of this model is J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991). John Lutz's study of the Songhees nation and its reaction to capitalism emphasizes the ways in which Aboriginal populations demonstrated agency by selectively using and incorporating the capitalist economy into their traditional social structures, John S. Lutz, "Work, Wages and Welfare in Aboriginal-Non-Aboriginal Relations, British Columbia, 1849-1970" (PhD diss.: University of Ottawa, 1994). An example of a work commissioned by a single First Nation, that emphasizes autonomy and agency rather than subordination and cultural loss is Keith Thor Carlson, ed., *You are asked to witness: the Stó:lo in Canada's Pacific Coast history* (Chilliwack, BC: Stó:lo Heritage Trust, 1997).

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1858-1862 gold rush, while for Harris, it occurred almost at first contact due to the strategic power advantage of the fur trade companies. Although they differ on when immigrant society assumed a dominant position, both Fisher and Harris emphasize socio-political factors, such as demography and strategic power, rather than economic factors, in explaining the transition.

However, the changes to the pre-contact mode of production that were introduced as a result of the fur trade may not be lightly dismissed. Whether entered into as a result of choice [Fisher] or coercion [Harris], the production of commodities for exchange within a capitalist system, rather than production for use, or for exchange and consumption within a socially-integrated economic system, had a profound impact on indigenous societies. The social impact of such economic change is central to Eric Wolf's larger-scale analysis of contact between European and indigenous North American societies, and has been developed further by Nick Kardulius. Combining Wolf's approach with the world system model of Immanuel Wallerstein, Kardulius developed a model in which Aboriginal fur producers were subsumed into capitalist world system as "craft specialists" in commodity production.[31] His model, like Wolf's and Fisher's, incorporates the agency of Aboriginal producers, but emphasizes how this agency and the impact of contact were mediated through the underlying structures of world capitalist economy, as defined by Wallerstein. Kardulius contended that fur acquisition became the primary focus of Aboriginal economies, as indigenous people became "procurement specialists" in the world economy.[32] He suggested that significant social changes resulted from this specialization, including a dependence on imported goods, changes in territory and settlement patterns, and changes in social structure to facilitate commodity production.[33]

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31. Kardulius, "Fur Production," 25-60. In his analysis, Kardulius relies primarily on the first of Wallerstein's volumes dealing with the development of the world system, *The Modern World-System*, particularly 301-302, 348-350.

32. Kardulius, "Fur Production," 27-33.

33. *Ibid.*, 44-52. Kardulius also suggested a measurable effect on animal populations as a result of this economic focus. *Ibid.*

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Rennie Warburton and Stephen Scott followed Fisher in asserting that the fur trade resulted in minimal disruption to, and even enrichment of, indigenous societies, as First Nations retained control of their labour power, land, and resources.[34] However, they attributed the changing power relationship between immigrant and indigenous populations explicitly to changing economic conditions, specifically the introduction of industrial capitalism. Unlike Kardulius, they argued that participation as commodity producers in a merchant capitalist system did not affect indigenous cultures because "respective requirements were complementary."[35] They saw the change occurring with the shift into export trades that required Aboriginal wage labour, signalling the transformation into industrial capitalism, and the consequent "full commodification of labour and resources." Their contention is that this was the moment in which Aboriginal producers were converted into a proletariat, selling their (commodified) labour power. This placed Aboriginal populations in a dependent, or subordinate position, based on low wages, unequal exchange, and exploitation. Warburton and Scott suggest this conversion of Native producers into a proletariat was second only to the alienation of Native land and resources in its impact on indigenous societies.[36] The net result of this analysis is not dissimilar to Fisher's, in that the fur trade resulted in the enrichment of First Nations, while the settlement era saw their subordination. However, Warburton and Scott more clearly acknowledged the structural impact of capitalist economic relations on indigenous society. This impact will be incorporated in the present study, with additional nuances, based on the extent to which indigenous populations participated in the capitalist economy, and how Euro-North American and indigenous ideology combined to shape a discourse of appropriate Aboriginal involvement in the capitalist economy.

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34. Rennie Warburton and Stephen Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* V, no.1 (1985): 27-46.

35. *Ibid.*, 28-29, 40-41.

36. *Ibid.*, particularly 37-39.

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Economic and Social Relations of Production: "Simple" Systems of Production

To clarify the economic and social roles of Aboriginal people and societies in the fur trade system of production, it will be useful to examine the trading practices and conventions that were followed. The base, or structural factors in the fur trade revolved around the procurement, shipping and marketing of particular high value commodities. The commodities exported by the Hudson's Bay Company were provided almost exclusively by Native producers. On rare occasions, particularly in the years just after the amalgamation with the North West Company, the HBC sent out employees in trapping parties, but this was the exception. For the purposes of this study, a "simple" system of production is one in which the HBC, as merchant capitalist, obtained "finished" commodities from Native producers. The furs were ready to be shipped to, and sold on, European markets, with no further processing by the HBC. The preparation of such commodities often involved a division of labour within the producing group, following established gender and age divisions. For instance, commonly fur-bearing animals would be hunted or trapped by men, while preparation of the furs, including scraping, stretching, and drying, was generally done by women.[37] Such processing labour would be invisible to the HBC traders, who were simply exchanging manufactured goods for a finished and exportable product.

Trading for commodities was carried out in a relatively formalized, and mutually understood, fashion, using conventions that had developed over more than a century of operation.[38] A "tariff" or price guide specified the values of each of the furs or other

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37. In some instances, this gendered division of labour led to significant social change in the context of the fur trade. Among the Blackfoot, it was manifested in a higher incidence of polygyny, with hunters acquiring up to twenty or thirty wives to cope with the demands of preparing buffalo hides and other skins for trade. Kardulius, "Fur Production," 49-50, citing Oscar Lewis, *The Effects of White Contact Upon Blackfoot Culture with Special Reference to the Role of the Fur Trade*, Monograph No.6 (Washington: American Ethnological Society, 1942) 38-40.

38. A number of sources describe the early development of the fur trade relationship between the HBC and Aboriginal producers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including Arthur J. Ray and Donald Freeman, *"Give Us Good Measure:" An Economic*

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commodities desired, described in terms of "made beaver" [or MB], the value of a prime adult beaver skin. As the most desired, and most traded fur, beaver became the standard of value and exchange in the fur trade.[39] Aboriginal producers understood that if they brought in one prime beaver, or its equivalent in other furs or commodities, they could purchase goods also valued in the tariff at one MB. As examples, in Outfit 1843, fifteen muskrat equalled one MB, as did five marten, or 120 dried salmon, while a large dugout canoe was valued at four MB. The credit acquired by Aboriginal producers could then be applied to purchases of the trade goods imported or produced by the HBC. In the same 1843 tariff list, a plain 2 ½ point blanket cost 1 MB, as did 2 striped cotton shirts, while a trade musket was worth 4 MB.[40]

The predictability of economic exchanges guided by such a tariff was important to developing a stable trading relationship between the two disparate cultural groups involved. A naval visitor to Fort Victoria in July 1846 noted the benefits of establishing and rigorously observing a tariff under such conditions:

> Mr. Finlayson, the gentleman in charge of the establishment appears to be an intelligent man, who by perserverance and a uniform system of adhering to his work and offering stated prices in barter, never receiving or offering less, seems to have succeeded in impressing the natives with a considerable

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Analysis of Relations Between the Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company before 1763 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978) particularly 53-62, "Fur Trading Institutions."

39. In the first years of the land-based fur trade, *hiaqua* or dentalium shells served as a standard of exchange around the Columbia River, but by the 1830s the HBC Columbia Department trade was based on the MB [made beaver] standard. Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 284-285.

40. Huntington Library, FN 1245, "Tariff for furs and Provisions at Fort Albert, Ot '43 and '44," cited in; John Hussey, *Fort Vancouver Historic Structures Report, Historical Data*, Vol.2 (Denver: National Park Service, 1976) 56-58. Fort Albert was a name sometimes assigned to Fort Victoria at its founding; the tariff is annotated "copied from that of Fort Langley," suggesting a consistent regional tariff.

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degree of respect for himself and the fort.[41]

The observation of a tariff meant that Aboriginal producers could predict that if they supplied certain products, they would receive certain payment in goods. To encourage the supply of certain commodities, or to encourage certain groups to trade, there was some flexibility in the tariff, more evident when dealing with transient commodity suppliers. George Simpson described the trading process on board the *Beaver* in McNeill's Harbour in the fall of 1841, where a mutually agreeable tariff had to be established before trading could proceed:

> The standard of prices being fixed after two hours of higgling, the business then went on briskly. To avoid the inconvenience and danger of a crowd, half a dozen only of the savages were to be admitted on deck at once; and, in order to enforce the regulation, five sentinels were stationed ... Stationing himself at the steerage hatchway, Captain McNeill threw down each skin, as he examined it, with its price chalked on it - the equivalents being handed up from below by the two or three men that were in charge of the store.[42]

Edward Huggins noted the selective application of the tariff at Fort Nisqually in the early 1850s, to encourage the supply of certain commodities. When Patlaynum, a Snoqualmie chief, with fifty or sixty of his people came to the post to trade, the fixed tariff was observed only for the preferred export commodity of furs: "A miscellaneous assortment, composed of Furs; Mats; dressed deer skins, (Chevrueil skins) Baskets, Fish and Game, and sometimes Fish Oil. We bought everything they brought, but gave very little for anything, except Furs, which alway's [sic] brought the going market price."[43] Items for the maintenance of the posts, or of lesser value as exports were purchased, to satisfy the expectations of the producers, but the prices paid would encourage an

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41. Berthold Seeman, *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Herald* (London: Reeve and Co., 1853) Vol.1, 105.

42. George Simpson, *Narrative of a journey round the world during the years 1841 and 1842* (London: H. Colburn, 1847) 188.

43. OHS, Mss 1089, Eva Emery Dye Papers, Box 1, file "Letters from Huggins, Edward", E. Huggins to E.E. Dye, 22 May 1905.

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increased supply of the more valuable commodities desired by the HBC.

Within the parameters of a mutually understood tariff, the trading process in the early years of HBC operation on the Pacific Slope seems to have followed a payment on delivery model in which commodities were brought to the post, and Aboriginal suppliers received goods in exchange. In the 1820s and 1830s the seasonal pattern involving long-term debits and credits practised in some of the other trading departments of the HBC seems to have been absent. Reminiscences of Fort Vancouver in 1832 noted that the Columbia trade was conducted along the same lines as that east of the Rockies, except that in the east Native producers were outfitted in the fall, and were expected to bring in their fur returns in the spring.[44]

The records from Columbia Department posts outline how this system of "prompt" exchange operated. At Fort Simpson in 1840 the trade was recorded on a day to day basis, the daily trade ranging from one or two to thirty or forty furs. The First Nations bringing the furs to the post were identified in the journal, but not individuals.[45] As the primary regional post on the north coast, Fort Simpson served a large number of transient customers from other nations, such as the Haida of the Queen Charlotte Islands.[46] Without constant contact, many of these people were not known personally by the HBC traders, possibly explaining the focus on groups rather than individuals.

At Fort Nisqually, in spite of a much smaller incidence of transient Aboriginal producers, the records of the Indian trade reflect the same sort of payment on delivery model. Furs or commodities brought in were generally listed directly across the page from the trade goods used as payment. For example, some of the entries on two loose leaves of

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44. [George T. Allan], "Reminiscences of Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River, Oregon, as it Stood in 1832...," in *Transactions of the Ninth annual Re-Union of the Oregon Pioneer Association; for 1881* (Salem, OR: E.M. Waite, 1882), 79.

45. HBCA, B.201/a/5, Fort Simpson Journal 1840, throughout.

46. *Ibid.*; HBCA, B.201/a/6, Fort Simpson Journal 1841-1842, throughout.

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records from 1843 include:[47]

2 Beaver Traps 30 plain Blanket BB 2½ pts	32 Large Beaver
8 ft Blue Strouds 7 " Red Baize	3 Mdg Do [medium beaver]
1 comm cotton shirt 1 yard Blue strouds 10 Ball & powder	3 small Do [beaver]
2 Gunflints	1 Cub Do [beaver]
5 fth'ms Red Baize 1 yard Blue Strouds	6 Large Land otters

These may have been rough notes of the trade; most of the Indian shop blotters had the month noted at the top of the page, then individual days listed down the page. Usually furs were listed on the left side of the page and trade goods on the right side, often straight across from each other, with one item or group of items equated to another. The names of individuals were often, but not always, given.[48] An example of one day's Indian trade at Nisqually in March 1844 demonstrates this pattern of record keeping, and presumably form of exchange:[49]

47. Huntington Library, FN 1245 - "Fur Trade Book Comg June 1st 1868." Miscellaneous loose material, including 2 leaves "Fur Trade from 1st up to 14th July 1843."

48. Huntington Library, FN 1241, Vol.1, Fort Nisqually Indian Shop Blotter Outfit 1847. The patterns in this book were consistent in the others examined, through Vol.4, 1858.

49. Huntington Library, FN 1247, Vol.3, Fort Nisqually Blotter 7 February, 1844 - 31 December, 1844, 14.

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Wednesday 20th [March, 1844]

Portage Indian	2. Lar Beaver 1. Land Otter 5. Raccoons 2. Musquash	2 Blkts 2½ pt 1 Shirt 2 ch Amm 10 Ball Buttons 4 Trout Hook
	Gratis 10 ch. Amm 4 In tob	1 Awl 1 fl'nt
Sahalet	1 sm: Land Otter 21 Cod	3 ft. tobacco 1 Worm 12 Ch. Amm 2 Leaves tobacco
	Horse hire 8 Ch: Amm 4 In tob	Indian Rations ½ Bag Acorns 10 cod

The use of individual names may have indicated a more stable market, and a closer relationship between Native producers and HBC traders than existed at Fort Simpson.[50] This excerpt also provides an example of the convention of reserving higher value, durable goods, in this case blankets and a shirt, as payment for preferred export commodities, such as beaver furs. For lower value furs, provisions, or "Horse hire," consumable goods were paid. Following HBC practice, musket ammunition, fishing supplies, and tobacco were typical of payment offered for supplies or labour required for post maintenance, rather than commodities with significant export value.[51]

By the end of the 1830s the conventions of the trade were changing, with less

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50. To some extent this greater familiarity is substantiated by entries in the blotter. On January 9, 1846, a three point blanket was given to one of the Native men; he was to pay for half, but the other half was a New Year's gift. A few days later two Aboriginal men were trusted with the loan of some tools: "2 axes lent to Sahalet and Tuanisapum to be returned when the weather becomes mild. Ret. June." *ibid.*, 1, 9 January 1846; *ibid.*, 4, 18 January 1846.

51. This convention is demonstrated in many documents, including the Outfit 1843 tariff cited earlier. For most trade goods, there was a parallel price list for furs ("Plus Furs") and provisions ("Plus Provisions"), with higher prices for "durable" goods if paid in provisions. The intent was to reward the trade in furs with easier access to the more desirable goods; Huntington Library, FN 1245, "Tariff for furs and Provisions at Fort Albert, Ot '43 and '44," cited in; Hussey, *Fort Vancouver Structures*, Vol.2, 56-58.

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dependence on transient or incidental fur suppliers, and greater reliance on small groups of specialized Aboriginal commodity producers, operating in a closer economic and social relationship with the various HBC posts. This included the adoption of the practice of equipping such Native producers on credit, as previously seen east of the Rockies, to posts such as Fort Nisqually and Fort Vancouver. This shift could have been due to several factors, including population decline, growing familiarity between HBC employees and indigenous people after a generation of continuous contact, and a larger network of permanent trading posts. Encouraging a cadre of commodity producers dedicated primarily to supplying the posts provided a clear benefit to the HBC. It increased predictability, as traders could anticipate with some accuracy that a certain number of producers would be bringing a certain quantity of furs in. It would also provide an opportunity for designated Aboriginal producers, through preferential treatment and a guaranteed market for their commodities. An 1839 letter from James Douglas to James Yale, in charge of Fort Langley, outlines the development of the fur trading system of production at Fort Vancouver and Fort Nisqually:

> I send you the number of traps suggested for trading and you will of course turn them to account, as soon as possible, reducing the sale price to a Beaver each. It would be proper to fit out small parties of Indians to trap in your neighbourhood, and if they want means or appear unwilling to purchase traps, you may lend one or two, each, to such trusty men of good character as you think deserving of such indulgence. Our object in so doing is to call forth the dormant energies of the Cowechins; we hope that a relish in the active and manly duties of the chase will grow upon them, & when they have tasted its sweets, they will follow it for its own sake, and do cheerfully, what they are now constrained to attempt. This plan has been found to work well, both here and at Fort Nisqually & I see no cause to prevent its succeeding at your Post.[52]

This strategy of outfitting "trusty men of good character" and encouraging them to trap for the Company was successful enough to be institutionalized at Fort Vancouver and Fort Nisqually by 1839. Of particular interest are the cultural values expressed in this passage. By adopting an "active and manly" role as beaver trappers, or commodity

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52. HBCA., B.223/b/24, 13d-15, J. Douglas to J.M. Yale, 10 May 1839.

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producers, Aboriginal men were expected to find intrinsic rewards. It was hoped that such a commitment to personal progress and appropriate gender behaviour would make them more culturally congruent with the Anglo-North American definition of respectability. "Active" and "manly" were key attributes within the consensus concerning culturally appropriate behaviour within the liberal order.

The adoption of such a strategy demonstrates a trading relationship different to that portrayed in the naturalized interpretation. Rather than universal, incidental, Aboriginal participation in the capitalist economy, this strategy depended on a small, select group of specialized commodity producers. These individuals, sometimes using borrowed traps and equipped on credit, were in a close and interdependent economic relationship with the HBC, which made for a higher degree of economic predictability on both parts. In the first years of the Columbia Department fur trade, a "universal and incidental" trading model may have applied, but by the 1840s, it had evolved into a new economic and social relationship, as a result of changing structural and cultural conditions brought to the region by contact and the fur trade.

The example of the Indian trade at Fort Vancouver in the 1840s clarifies the number of fur producers present in an indigenous population, so acts as a corrective to the received portrayal of universal Aboriginal participation in the fur trade. Fort Vancouver, as the depot, and the largest post in the HBC's Columbia Department, relied on a small group of commodity producers for its fur returns. A census prepared by the HBC in 1839 listed three "tribes" as the "Fort Vancouver Indian Population" suggesting a close relationship with the post. The largest of the three was the Klickitats, with a total population of 345 people in 61 households. Ten men were designated as "Beaver trapper," providing the most-desired export commodity, and eight as "Deer hunter," supplying the meat and hides useful to the operation of the fur trade district. The "most enterprising of their hunters" were making long trips to the west of the Willamette River, far out of their traditional territory, in pursuit of game.[53] This geographic expansion of

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53. HBCA., B.223/z/1, Fort Vancouver Miscellaneous 1838-1839, fos. 26-27d.

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activity demonstrates how the specialized pursuit of commodities within the context of merchant capitalism broke down culturally-defined conventions and regulations. Production for sale rather than for use provided a challenge to established physical boundaries as well as traditional socially-integrated systems of production.

The other two, much smaller, Fort Vancouver-affiliated groups both spoke Chinookan languages. The first was the "Cath-la-cana-sese Tribe," of 37 people, in 9 households, located about ten miles downstream of the fort, with one man called a "Beaver trader" and one a "Deer & Seal Hunter."[54] The second was the "Cath-lal-thlalah Tribe" who summered at the Columbia Cascades, and wintered across the river from Fort Vancouver. This group contained 142 individuals, in 29 households, with one man designated a "Beaver trapper."[55]

Correlating the size of the Fort Vancouver fur trade with the demographic information from the census provides some perspective on the penetration of the fur trade into Aboriginal society. First, the number of furs traded at the post may be estimated from the total returns for the three posts comprising the "Fort Vancouver Indian Trade" in Outfit 1844. With the generous assumption that one third of the total returns were from Fort Vancouver itself, this would give a total number of 1,146 furs traded through the post's Indian trade shop.[56] Prominent in this total were 589 large and small beaver skins, 224 land otter skins, and 184 muskrat skins.[57] An average daily trade of three to four furs

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54. *Ibid.*, fo.28.

55. *Ibid.*, fo.28d.

56. The other posts were Fort George and Fort Umpqua. Unlike Fort Vancouver, which was the departmental depot, with a diversified role, these two outposts were maintained exclusively for their Indian trade. It is on this basis that it may be assumed that their contribution to the combined returns of the Fort Vancouver Indian trade were more substantial than those of the headquarters post, where the Indian trade was incidental to the overall operation of the post.

57. Hussey, *Fort Vancouver Structures*, Vol.2, 66-67. The 1844 returns, which would have been shipped out in the summer of 1845, were divided by three and rounded off to provide these figures.

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at the Fort Vancouver Indian Trade Store would have produced these putative totals. The post's returns could have been reached if each of the 105 households included in the "Fort Vancouver Indian Population" provided eleven furs in the year. The post's total annual beaver returns would have required each of the eleven designated "beaver hunters" and one "beaver trader" to provide 49 beaver skins, or roughly four furs per month. If these designated commodity providers each delivered 96 furs of all sorts per year, or eight per month, this would provide the total fur returns of the post. As it would be almost certain that at least a small part of the furs were supplied by transient, rather than resident producers, the average number provided per individual was probably even lower than suggested by this correlation.

The data above confirm that the annual fur returns of a major post could be provided by a small number of Aboriginal suppliers.[58] They corroborate that by the 1840s certain Aboriginal individuals were identified as commodity producers, who appear to have participated in the trade in a systemized and purposeful manner. The pattern was not one of universal participation, but one in which a small group specialized in the production of commodities for the capitalist economy. The twelve men identified as beaver suppliers made up 2.3 percent of the total "Fort Vancouver Indian Population." Even looking at this from the perspective of household involvement, this would represent just 11.4 percent of households identified as participating in fur production. Extrapolating from this data to the larger Columbia Department, in November 1843 the barque *Vancouver* was taking the annual fur returns to London, totalling 61,118 "whole skins total." The most represented species within this total were 17,438 muskrat, 14,820

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58. This is less surprising if the relatively small scale of the overall Columbia Department fur trade is considered. The total annual fur returns of the department were usually shipped on a single vessel, which often also carried lumber and salt salmon for the Honolulu market. For example, in November 1843, the barque *Vancouver* was taking the returns to London, totalling 61,118 "whole skins total." Although a significant number, many of the smaller furs, such as mink, marten, and muskrat did not occupy much space; in 1844 one puncheon [large barrel] held 1,800 marten, while another held 288 marten and 2,570 muskrat. *Ibid.*, 33-34, 21, citing HBCA, B.223/z/4, Fort Vancouver miscellaneous; HBCA, B.223/d/154, Fort Vancouver accounts, fos.2d-6.

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beaver, 9,449 marten, and 7,671 mink.[59] These numbers are somewhat misleading, as the economic importance of the beaver returns was disproportionate to the gross numbers of furs. Following the Outfit 1843 tariff cited earlier, the beaver returns, making up 24% of the total, were worth nearly four times as much as the 57% of the furs made up by the other three varieties.[60] The corollary of this was the emphasis put on the beaver trade, and the importance of the beaver suppliers to the system of production. By correlating the returns of the Columbia Department with its total Aboriginal population, mediated through the patterns of the Fort Vancouver Indian trade, it is possible to estimate the number of fur producers, and more specifically beaver producers, that would be required to generate the returns of the Columbia Department.

Table 1.1: 1843-1845 Columbia department population, with estimated numbers of households and commodity producers based on total fur returns correlated using Fort Vancouver data.[61]

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59. Other numbers included 2,161 deer, 1,904 wolf, 1,828 bear, 1,663 raccoon, and 1,028 land otter. All other varieties totalled 3,156, ranging from 4 panthers to 756 fox. Hussey, *Fort Vancouver Structures*, Vol.2, 33-34, citing HBCA, B.223/z/4, Fort Vancouver miscellaneous.

60. The comparative values of the returns were calculated using the previously cited tariff list. Hussey, *Fort Vancouver Structures*, Vol.2, 56-58, citing Huntington Library, FN 1245, "Tariff for furs and Provisions at Fort Albert, Ot '43 and '44." Assuming 3/4 large and 1/4 small beaver, the usual ratio in Columbia Department returns, the beaver was worth 12,968 MB. Muskrat, at 1/15 MB, was worth 1,162 MB, marten, at 1/5 MB, was worth 1,890 MB, while mink, at 1/15 MB, was worth 511 MB. The total value of the three varieties was 3,563 MB, or 27% of the value of the beaver returns.

61. The 1845 Aboriginal population of the region is from; HBCA, B.223/z/4, Fort Vancouver Miscellaneous, H.J. Warre and M. Vavasour to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1 November 1845, 211d-213. The 1843 fur and beaver returns are from Hussey, *Fort Vancouver Structures*, Vol.2, 33-34, citing HBCA, B.223/z/4, Fort Vancouver Miscellaneous. The number of households and the estimated number of commodity producers are calculated on the ratios observed in the "Fort Vancouver Indian Population" census of five people per household, 2.3 percent of the overall population defined as beaver suppliers, and beaver returns equal to 96 furs supplied by each designated supplier. HBCA., B.223/z/1, Fort Vancouver Miscellaneous 1838-1839, fos. 26-28d.

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	Columbia Dept. Aboriginal population 1845	Columbia Dept. total fur returns 1843	Columbia Dept. beaver returns 1843
totals	87,000	61,118 furs	14,820 beaver skins
households	17,400 @ 5 people per household	would require 5,556, each producing 11 furs per year	
beaver producers, Fort Vancouver rate of production	2,001 @ 2.3% of total population	would require 637, each producing 96 furs	would require 302, each producing 49 beaver skins
beaver producers, at half Fort Vancouver rate of production		would require 1,273, each producing 48 furs	would require 618, each producing 24 beaver skins

In 1857 the HBC estimated the Aboriginal populations around its major coastal posts in what is now British Columbia.[62] For the company, these numbers represented the potential trading markets in the "catchment" for each of the posts.

Table 1.2: 1857 Aboriginal population of coastal British Columbia, with estimated numbers of households and commodity producers among it based on Fort Vancouver data.[63]

	total surrounding population	households	commodity producers
Fort Simpson	10,000	2,000	230
Fort Langley	4,000	800	92
Fort Rupert	4,000	800	92
Nanaimo	3,000	600	69

62. Richard Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital: The Economy of Vancouver Island, 1849-1858" (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1984), 271, citing HBCA, E.18/8-9, fos.28-75, Sir George Simpson, "Notes Regarding the Hudson's Bay Company."

63. The overall post-associated populations are from *ibid.*, 271, citing HBCA, E.18/8-9, fos.28-75, Sir George Simpson, "Notes Regarding the Hudson's Bay Company." The estimated number of households and commodity producers are calculated on the ratios observed in the "Fort Vancouver Indian Population" census, with five people per household, and 2.3 percent of the overall population designated as beaver suppliers. HBCA., B.223/z/1, Fort Vancouver Miscellaneous 1838-1839, fos.26-28d.

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	total surrounding population	households	commodity producers
Fort Victoria	5,000	1,000	115
total	26,000	5,200	598

It would be expected that the proportion of commodity producers would be lower among larger populations further from HBC posts than that of Fort Vancouver, given a less immediate opportunity to trade. This is supported by the analysis in Table 1.1 above, that suggests that at the peak of the fur trade in the 1840s something between 1,000 and 2,000 Aboriginal people over the entire Columbia Department were engaged directly in beaver production for the HBC. Following the same proportions, this extrapolation suggests that in coastal British Columbia in the last half of the 1850s there were fewer than 600 Aboriginal fur producers serving the coastal posts of the HBC. The detailed data from Fort Vancouver, as well as the inferences drawn from other sources, makes it clear that a very small minority of the indigenous population was involved directly in the capitalist economy introduced by the Hudson's Bay Company.[64]

This was not a casual or incidental relationship, but was based on a mutual understanding of the obligations of both sides in the exchange. These people were independent commodity producers, in that they were able to set their own terms of production, and control their work process, but were dependent on the willingness of the HBC traders to purchase their products. Because the British government had granted monopoly trading privileges to the HBC, for Aboriginal producers the HBC was in a

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64. This pattern of a limited cadre of commodity producers attaching themselves to a post is demonstrated in extant HBC post journals. For example, at Fort St. James, the principle post in New Caledonia, Qua [or Kwah] and his brother Hoolson, and their families, are consistent fixtures in the post journals of the 1820s, with any other fur suppliers only infrequently mentioned. Qua and Hoolson were described as good hunters, but "infamous Rascals," the latter appellation perhaps due to what seem to have been effective bargaining skills. The debt system was already applied at this time, and the brothers were actively using it for their own purposes. For example, HBCA, B.188/a/2, Fort St. James Post Journal, 13d-25, 9 August - 9 November 1823; HBCA, B.188/a/8, 60-68, 29 September - 14 October 1826.

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position of monopsony as the only market for commodities. In this region, participation in the capitalist economy implied participation in the HBC system of production.

The presence of a cadre of specialized commodity producers among Aboriginal populations by the 1830s seems to call for a refinement of the various models that emphasize "enrichment" and "agency," such as those of Ray, Fisher, and Warburton and Scott.[65] These models are based on the idea that Aboriginal responses to the fur trade were informed by economic self-interest, and were not constrained by a lack of political power compared to the Euro-North American traders. Until the point at which First Nations were politically subordinated, this made for a relatively equal exchange, so an overall enhancement or enrichment of Aboriginal societies. Focussing on rational economic behaviour, these interpretations assume universal Aboriginal participation in the fur trade. This assumption follows from the position that the trade was beneficial, and that indigenous people acted out of economic self-interest. The example of the Fort Vancouver Indian trade, and the ongoing challenges to the HBC in ensuring a supply of furs and other commodities, act as a corrective for this assumption of universal participation. The data portray a small group of Aboriginal producers that formed an integral part of the capitalist system of production, leaving the majority of the indigenous population peripherally involved, or not involved at all. However, limited participation raises the question of motive; why did some people choose to assume such a role, while most did not? There must be some determining factor beyond the desire for economic and material progress advocated by the "enrichment" school.

It seems likely that such voluntary and systematic participation in the capitalist economic system reflects, following Gramsci, an emergent cultural form. By becoming a specialized commodity producer, an individual was taking advantage of a new economic opportunity presented by the introduction of capitalist exchange. By engaging in this trade, they acquired economic resources that were not located within, and so subject to the restrictions of, indigenous social hierarchies. However, this "external" economic

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65. Ray and Freeman, *"Give Us Good Measure"*; Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*; Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development."

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power could be converted into social status and prestige within the culturally-defined parameters of most indigenous societies in the region.[66] This mixing of liberal values, emphasizing the idea of self-improvement and progress through individual effort, and the acquisition of personal property from a non-traditional source, could create stresses within traditional societies that were already experiencing significant disruption due to introduced diseases and population loss.[67]

James Deans, who came to Vancouver Island as an HBC agricultural worker in 1850, and spent the rest of his life on the coast in contact with indigenous populations, commented on the impact of capitalism on the Haida of Haida Gwaii [Queen Charlotte Islands]. He noted that until about 1830, and direct Haida participation in the capitalist economy, only hereditary chiefs had the right to erect totem poles which validated their lineage and social position: "From that date on to 1880 the Hidery began to go abroad as sailors and otherwise mix with the white settlers, where by labor and other means they

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66. This conversion of wealth into status follows the model of Pierre Bourdieu, who introduced the idea that the various forms of capital were mutable and interchangeable, with the potential to transform one into the other. In the case of the fur trade, a new source of wealth or economic capital was available to the commodity producer due to their human capital [skills and training]. This "new" economic capital was turned into cultural capital, or status, through mechanisms of distribution and display available in traditional society. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, particularly 80-83, 301-304.

67. Prior to contact and the fur trade, property rights were allocated on an ascribed basis. Rights to utilize certain resources, and ownership of both corporeal and incorporeal property was inherited. The fur trade presented a mechanism for acquiring wealth goods external to the socially-proscribed and integrated systems of production and consumption. As an opportunity for aspirant fur producers, its impact may be compared to that of the later gold rushes on Euro-North American populations; it presented the possibility of "found wealth" that could enhance one's social position. In developing this "social mobility" model for Aboriginal participation in the fur trade I am extending from the various "economic self-interest" models prominent in the 1970s, led by scholars such as Ray and Freeman, Fisher, and Warburton and Scott, all cited in the previous note, who emphasized market factors and economic motivation for Aboriginal traders. The nuance I am introducing is the specific, as opposed to universal, nature of Aboriginal participation in the commodity exporting capitalist economy. Not every indigenous inhabitant of British Columbia wished to, or could, become involved in this new system of production.

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acquired money and goods. These were sent home to their relations, in order to help them to have fine houses and totem poles."[68] Deans thought that such manifestations of economic and social progress, evoking liberal values, contributed to the breakdown of traditional Haida culture. Commoners could become wealthier than hereditary chiefs, build finer houses and raise more ostentatious totem poles.[69] Participation in the capitalist economy challenged traditional social order as it contributed to the creation of a *nouveau-riche* class within some First Nations, able to raise their social positions and thereby challenge traditional hierarchical allocations of resources and social prerogatives. By taking advantage of economic opportunities that were not defined and constrained by the socially-integrated traditional economy, Aboriginal participants in the capitalist economy could shift their social position in a way not possible within established social hierarchies.

In spite of its potential social impact, the formation of a cadre of specialized commodity producers served the interests of both the Hudson's Bay Company and Aboriginal participants. For a capitalist enterprise such as the HBC, it offered a more reliable supply of export commodities, and so greater profits. For Aboriginal producers, it provided an opportunity for economic and social mobility that was not available in indigenous societies, in which social position, and so access to resources, usually was ascribed at birth. By becoming suppliers of commodities for capitalist exchange, First Nations producers were adopting a strategy in which achieved, or earned status, could enhance their ascribed, or inherited status. Like immigrants from other regions, they intended to improve their social position through personal effort and progress.

A central feature of this shift to commodity production for exchange with the HBC was its voluntary nature, demonstrated by the small size of the commodity producing group. In BC in this period, it is difficult to support a dependency model of intercultural

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68. James Deans, *Tales from the Totems of the Hidery*, Archives of the International Folklore Association, 2 (Chicago: International Folk-Lore Association, 1899), 2.

69. Deans also introduced a moral dimension, in that he thought that the drive for wealth and resulting social mobility contributed to the phenomenon of Haida prostitution in Victoria and on Puget Sound, with its negative implications for health. *Ibid.*, 2.

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contact, in which First Nations were compelled to trade because of their inability to survive without Euro-North American trade goods. Participation in the fur trade was not essential to survival as long as the "traditional" economies of the region remained relatively uncompromised, a situation that prevailed until later in the nineteenth century.[70] Limited participation in the capitalist economy suggests that it was a choice, supporting the agency interpretation rather than the cultural or strategic subordination of First Nations assumed by the dependency or "sovereign power" models. If such subordination existed, the entire indigenous population could have been converted into commodity producers, and the HBC would not have required strategies to ensure a supply of furs. This "independence" was an irritant for the managers of the HBC, whose income was predicated on a reliable and profitable supply of furs. In 1852 the Chief Trader of Fort Langley, James Yale, offered a clear statement concerning the voluntary nature of Aboriginal participation in the capitalist economy:

> The natives of these quarters are not habituated to the pursuit of the chase, and when they can get all their wants and even a superfluity by a course congenial to them, it would be erroneous to suppose that they may be easily persuaded to follow an occupation they dislike and which is less remunerative, merely to gratify our will.[71]

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70. This point is made strongly by scholars advocating the "agency" interpretation of the fur trade. The voluntary, as opposed to forced participation in the capitalist economy was made possible by the continuing "domestic" or subsistence economy of First Nations, that provided the means of living. John Lutz noted the continuation of the subsistence economy into the post-1885 period, "Work, Wages and Welfare," 129-130. Robin Fisher recommended closer study of the subsistence economy in *Contact and Conflict*, "Preface to the Second Edition." Warburton and Scott noted its importance in "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development," 37. Dependency theory, or the coercive control theory of Cole Harris, imply that First Nations were compelled, by economic necessity or by strategic subordination, to participate whether they wished to or not.

71. Yale was explaining the declining fur returns of Fort Langley. He attributed these not only to a lack of inclination on the part of potential commodity suppliers, but on the influence of the "great emporium" of Fort Victoria, which was "stealing" existing linkages with Aboriginal commodity producers. BCA, MS-182, Yale Family Papers, folio 6, no.41, J. Yale to G. Simpson, 22 October 1852.

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John Lutz, following in the tradition of the "agency" interpretation, and extending from Helen Codere's work on the Kwakiutl potlatch, offered the idea that such ceremonies were central to Aboriginal participation in the capitalist economy. A form of the potlatch existed in almost all coastal, and many interior, First Nations societies. It provided a way of recognizing or validating social position or status through the distribution of goods. Codere noted the elaboration of Kwakiutl potlatches after contact, suggesting that they provided a way to affirm traditional social structures in a time of massive demographic and social upheaval. Lutz accepted the cultural importance of the potlatch, and suggested that the demand for wealth and goods it created provided the primary motivation for Aboriginal participation in the capitalist economy. Taken together, these interpretations provide a linkage between attempts to maintain existing, "traditional," First Nations social structures and engaging in new economic structures.[72] This offers a cultural explanation for economic behaviour. Reinforcing the inferences drawn from the data above, Lutz noted the voluntary nature of Aboriginal participation in the capitalist economy, above and beyond the basic needs of subsistence. This meant that Native people would participate in the capitalist economy as it met their desire for wealth and goods, rather than meeting potential employers' desire for a stable labour force.[73] The key features of this model are the voluntary nature of Aboriginal participation in capitalist exchange, and the existence of a social mechanism for converting "found" economic capital, unconstrained by existing systems of resource allocation, into cultural capital.

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72. John Lutz, "After the Fur Trade: The Aboriginal Labouring Class of British Columbia, 1849-1890," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, Vol.3 (1992), 69-93; Lutz, "Work, Wages and Welfare," particularly ch.3; Helen Codere, *Fighting with Property: A Study of Kwakiutl Potlatching and Warfare, 1792-1930* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966).

73. Lutz, "Work, Wages and Welfare." Lutz suggested that the concern with ensuring a stable workforce relates to the introduction of a law banning the potlatch in 1884, "just as aboriginal peoples reached their peak importance in the economy." He pointed out the irony that the potlatch, which had induced Native participation in the capitalist system, was outlawed because it was no longer congruent with the requirements of capitalism. Lutz, "After the Fur Trade," 91.

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These two factors created the opportunities for Aboriginal participants in the capitalist economy to challenge traditional hierarchies.

The introduction of the capitalist economy, and the incorporation of Aboriginal producers into it, demonstrates the interaction between economic and cultural forces, as well as the effect of congruence between indigenous and immigrant cultural values. Key elements in this interaction, or negotiation, included first, the continuing importance of "traditional" economies, that made participation in the capitalist economy optional for Aboriginal people, rather than essential to their survival. Second, because it was voluntary, only a certain portion of indigenous populations were motivated to participate fully in the capitalist economy. Third, the motivation for participation seems to have been primarily cultural, based on the ability to convert economic capital into cultural capital in originating societies. Fourth, this same feature intersected with liberal values, so the individuals that chose to assume the role of commodity producer could achieve social mobility in their originating society, within the conditions of social flux that existed as a result of contact. The primary motivation for Aboriginal participation seems to have been a desire for upward social mobility in the originating society, realized through the economic opportunity presented by the fur trade.[74]

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74. Although in a very different cultural context, some interesting parallels exist between such Aboriginal participation in the fur trade economy and European proto-industrialism, defined as "the expansion of domestic industries producing goods for non-local markets which took place in many parts of Europe between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries," Sheilagh C. Ogilvie and Markus Cerman, "The theories of proto-industrialization," in *European proto-industrialization*, ed. Sheilagh C. Ogilvie and Markus Cerman (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996) 1. In both cases, populations relying on a traditional economy, agricultural in the case of Europe, augmented it with the domestic [non-factory] production or partial production of commodities for export, often under a putting-out system organized by merchants. Some have portrayed this as an intermediate stage toward industrialization and factory production, while others have suggested it forms an independent system of production. This model of production for subsistence combined with commodity production may have potential for further development in interpreting First Nations commodity production. There is a substantial body of literature dealing with proto-industrialization, including: Ogilvie and Cerman, *European proto-industrialization*; Peter Kriedte, Hans Medick, Jurgen Schlumbohm, *Industrialization before Industrialization: Rural Industry in the*

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Euro-North American Attitudes Concerning Indigenous Populations

By the 1830s and 1840s, contact between indigenous populations and Euro-North American newcomers, particularly under the corporate aegis of the HBC, exhibited some clear patterns. These broadly followed the outcomes of contact postulated by Eric Wolf; population loss, and social changes resulting from economic change due to the introduction of the capitalist system. Following the models of Wallerstein and Wolf, as developed by Kardulius, Aboriginal producers were integrated into the world capitalist system in a specific role. This provided certain economic benefits both for the HBC and for Aboriginal participants, which for the latter group, could be converted into social benefits. At the same time that demographic change was occurring, participation in economic systems was being negotiated, and some liberal values were emerging, a construct of "Indian" was forming in the Columbia Department. This was shaped by the cultural attitudes of Euro-North American immigrants, in concert with lived experience shaped by the juxtaposition of traditional and introduced economic and social systems. Once naturalized, the construct of Indian mediated the way in which First Nations were accommodated or rejected within British Columbia society in the second half of the nineteenth century. The most prominent elements in the construct, declining population and loss of cultural values, relate strongly to the two primary outcomes of contact and the fur trade. Positive or negative portrayals often rested on how indigenous people were seen as contributing to or hindering the development of the capitalist economy.

For the Hudson's Bay Company, population loss was a concern, as it could contribute to a decline in the fur trade, and so profits. The observed mortality following contact in the Columbia Department reinforced the Euro-North American perception of a "disappearing race." This perception was linked to that which viewed the Aboriginal

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Genesis of Capitalism (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981); Maxine Berg, Pat Hudson, and Michael Sonenscher, eds., *Manufacture in town and country before the factory* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983); and the originator of the term, Franklin F. Mendels, "Proto-industrialization: the first phase of the industrialization process," *Journal of Economic History* 32 (1972), 241-261. I am indebted to Dr. Larry McCann for the references to proto-industrialization.

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population as inextricably entwined with the "wilderness." Following this model, the introduction of "civilization" to the wilderness was inimical to the physical and moral well-being of First Nations. The Hudson's Bay Company, with its post-1821 exclusive [British] right of trade with indigenous people, made some effort to maintain the wilderness, and so by extension the system of production in its "trade preserve." By excluding disruptive influences such as agrarian settlement, disease, and alcohol, the HBC hoped to ensure continued Aboriginal fur production. The former HBC clerk J.W. McKay attributed the declining Indian trade around the Columbia River in the 1840s to growing American immigration: "On account of this many of the Indians had shifted their location, hunting was neglected and our business very poor."[75]

In addition to the perception of a disappearing race, Euro-North American portrayals of indigenous people often included cultural ranking. An example of this was the "hierarchy of desirability" suggested by the Reverend Herbert Beaver, the English chaplain of the HBC at Fort Vancouver, in 1837. He described the Natives immediately around the post, presumably members of one of the Chinookan groups, as the most "debased," due to their perceived dependency on the HBC for clothing and gunpowder for hunting.[76] Beaver commented more favourably on the Klickitat people that had gathered on a plain some miles from the fort, seeing them as having a "more harmonious" language and being less depraved than the Chinookans. As a result, he considered this group of Klickitat the most likely subjects of missionary activity around Fort Vancouver.[77]

Beaver's attitudes, as an educated recent arrival from Britain, reveal a commitment to the construct of the "noble savage." He demonstrated a preference for the group that related better to a stereotype that emphasized linkage to the wilderness, self-sufficiency,

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75. BCA, MS-1917, J.W. McKay Papers, file 32, "Recollections of a Chief Trader in the Hudson's Bay Company" [1878], 2.

76. Thomas E. Jessett, *Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver 1836-1838: Chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company and Missionary to the Indians at Fort Vancouver* (Portland: Champoeg Press, 1959) 40 - second report, 10 March 1837.

77. *Ibid.*, 58, third report, 19 March 1838; *ibid.*, 130, fifth report, 2 October 1838.

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and autonomy or freedom. Association with Euro-North American culture, or civilization, was believed to compromise noble savage status. Beaver saw the Chinookans as "debased" because they fished rather than hunted, and their autonomy had been compromised by contact with European culture. Beaver preferred the Klickitat, because of their perceived status as noble savages, although in fact they seemed just as closely linked economically and socially to Fort Vancouver as the Chinookans.

These attitudes are consistent with those described by Elizabeth Vibert in her discussion of fur traders' perceptions of Aboriginal people further up the Columbia in the first half of the nineteenth century. The populations of "fishing" groups often were described as indolent, and their behaviour as deviant compared to British gender norms and concepts of "manliness." The men of these fishing nations were seen as lazy, while the women worked hard to support them, in direct conflict with naturalized European notions concerning male breadwinners and female dependency, and self-improvement through hard work.[78] This lower ranking of "fishing Indians" seems fairly consistent in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century. For the HBC, such rankings related primarily to how a group contributed to profits. Fishing was seen as a subsistence activity, while hunting produced furs. A poor opinion of a group often related as much or more to a lack of fur production, which would compromise profits, as it did to a perception that cultural values were dissonant. Those cultural features that were commented on by the managers of the HBC tended to be those that compromised commodity production.[79]

The point was reiterated by Robin Fisher, who observed a hierarchy of desirability

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78. Elizabeth Vibert, *Trader's Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807-1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), ch.4, "Traders and Fishers."

79. There are countless examples of this in HBC documents, including many from Fort St. James, the headquarters post of the trading district of New Caledonia, such as Fall 1826 journal entries that complain of various cultural features including the wish of Native men to have their wives with them, the autumn feasts, and the suggestion that hunters were not exerting themselves. In each case these factors were mentioned not as primarily ideological issues, but for their probable negative impact on fur returns. HBCA, B.188/a/8, Fort St. James Post Journal, 63, 67-68, 5 October, 14 October 1826.

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based on whether a group's economy was based on hunting or fishing, and added a second form of ranking based on geographic location, with north coast and interior groups favoured over those on the south coast. Fisher noted that these hierarchies demonstrated the convergence of cultural traits perceived as positive by immigrant populations. He argued that fur traders valued "producers," who captured the furs, more highly than the Aboriginal traders who supplied the furs to the HBC.[80] This echoes the nineteenth century producer ethos, in which production or usefulness was viewed more highly than merchant activity and speculation. Positive terms like "industry" or "industrious" were applied to Aboriginal producers who were seen as conforming to the producer ethos.

Fisher suggested that the preference for interior and northern groups, like the Haida, rested on a perception that their appearance, intelligence, and industry conformed better to the construct of the "noble savage." However, they were viewed as less docile, so presenting a greater threat to the immigrant population. Noble savage status could only be maintained in the absence of exposure to Euro-North American society.[81] Two important inferences may be drawn from these fur trade interpretations of Aboriginal societies. First, those First Nations held in the highest regard were the most "savage," living in wilderness conditions and so avoiding the contagion of "civilization." This perception of an integral link between First Nations and the wilderness played a central part in defining intercultural relations in BC throughout the nineteenth century. The second inference is how important a high degree of autonomy was in the construct of the noble savage. Those groups thought to be the least dependent on the capitalist economy, and to have higher levels of political and military power - that is, to present a strategic threat to other First Nations as well as immigrant populations - were the most respected. The higher level of independence exhibited by such groups was perceived as more congruent with Euro-North American values, and so these groups were held in higher regard than those thought to be weaker strategically or economically dependent. The role

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80. Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, ch.4, "The Image of the Indian."

81. *Ibid.*, ch.4, "The Image of the Indian."

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of familiarity in breeding contempt likely figures, as a romantic perception would have been easier to sustain for a distant group than for one in constant and intimate contact.

Fisher noted that HBC managers considered it important to maintain some cultural distinction between company employees and Aboriginal populations. There was a fear of "going Native," based on the certainty that Anglo-North American culture was superior. Additionally, the traders, due to their close ongoing contact with First Nations, generally expressed a less stereotypical view of Aboriginal groups or individuals, better understanding the common humanity of the groups they were dealing with.[82] In spite of this, the value assigned to First Nations was determined primarily by the economic relationship. Those groups or individuals described in the most flattering terms by the gentlemen of the Hudson's Bay Company tended to be those who were the most "active" or "industrious" in the supply of commodities.[83]

Conclusion: The Legacy of HBC Merchant Capitalism

The lived experience of the contact between Euro-North American and indigenous populations was shaped by the merchant capitalist system of production of the Hudson's Bay Company. The resulting intercultural relationship was mediated through, and often tended to reinforce, existing cultural values of both Aboriginal and Euro-North American populations. The pattern of selective Aboriginal participation in the capitalist economy

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82. *Ibid.*, ch.4, "The Image of the Indian."

83. This corresponds to the analysis of "goodness" of Aboriginal people revealed in the records of the Albany River District of the HBC done by Elizabeth Arthur. She broke down Aboriginal participants in the nineteenth century fur trade into hunters, locals, and employees. The first group was deemed "good" if they reliably brought in large numbers of high quality furs. Unreliable or irregular suppliers were considered "vagabonds." Arthur thought that the definition of goodness for hunters, as well as for Natives that were resident, or employees of the HBC, depended more on their behaviour and lifestyle than their race. She concluded that the perceived goodness of Aboriginal people was a "cultural characteristic, not a racial one." M. Elizabeth Arthur, "The Concept of the Good Indian: An Albany River 19th Century Managerial Perspective," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, V, no.1 (1985), 1-74.

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contributed to a naturalized view of indigenous people as independent commodity producers. The HBC attempted to create a corps of more dependent commodity producers, as seen in the 1839 instructions to Yale, but this was resisted. Participation remained voluntary, involving only a minority of the indigenous population, and was predicated on the mutually understood pattern of payment on delivery for a specified quantity of the desired commodity. When engaged as day labour, indigenous workers were paid in consumable goods, such as tobacco or ammunition. The company reserved durable and higher-value trade items as payment for commodities suitable for export.

Some, like Warburton and Scott, have argued that participation in commodity exchange created the conditions for later proletarianization of First Nations. However, the clearest outcome of the trade was the naturalization of conventions of exchange between indigenous and immigrant populations. That is, an economic relationship based on generally accepted tariffs for specific commodities, products, or services that First Nations would voluntarily provide to non-Native purchasers. Unlike in some other colonialised regions, Aboriginal people in BC had an economic value as commodity producers in the introduced capitalist economy, rather than being viewed as dangerous obstacles to settlement and "progress."

Additionally, the lived experience of the fur trade contributed to the development and fixing of the cultural construct of "Indian" that was applied in later nineteenth century BC. Grounded in earlier Euro-North American ideology, such as the "noble savage," the construct was shaped by how Aboriginal people contributed to the economic performance of the fur trade. For example, HBC men observing the decline in populations, and concerned about its impact on returns, accepted and contributed to the idea of a "disappearing race." Equating Aboriginal people with "wilderness" following the ideology of the noble savage, resonated with HBC employees, who saw areas untouched by settlement and agriculture as the most productive fur regions. The maintenance of such "wilderness" fur trade preserves, free of the taint of civilization (and competition from other traders), was important to the HBC, reinforcing the conceptual linkage between Aboriginal populations and wilderness.

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This congruence between the ideology of the noble savage and the economic goals of the HBC underlay the formation of broader Euro-North American attitudes. Generally, the more closely a group resembled the construct of the noble savage, the more highly valued it was, particularly if these attributes also supported profits. This applies to the expressed preference for hunting over fishing Indians, which was consistent with the HBC preference for fur producers over those not participating in the trade. Ironically, given the attempts of the HBC to create a more dependent group of commodity producers, those producers that were seen as the most autonomous, supporting themselves in the wilderness, met the criteria of the noble savage most closely. Freedom and autonomy were seen as key attributes of the most highly valued Aboriginal people.

The construct of "Indian" adopted by the men of the HBC, which may be seen to have established patterns for later economic and social contact, ranked people largely by their "usefulness" to the Company system of production. The Aboriginal people of greatest economic use to the HBC were viewed in the most positive light, following the ideology summarized above. This "usefulness" as viewed by the HBC may be seen as serving also as a restatement of liberal ideology. The Aboriginal producers that were most highly valued demonstrated a high degree of congruence with liberal values. Their participation in the capitalist economy showed some desire for social mobility or progress, they were commended for being active and hard-working, and were seen as self-sufficient or autonomous. The "goodness" or "badness" of Aboriginal individuals or groups, and their placement in Euro-North American ideology, rested on their congruence with liberal ideology, which related well to the commercial mandate of the HBC. I offer that in the last half of the nineteenth century, perceptions of, and attitudes towards, Aboriginal people, were largely mediated through this liberal perspective. It related to the economic structures of merchant capitalism and the fur trade, but was also shaped by cultural values held by indigenous and immigrant societies. The economic practices and naturalized values developed in the fur trade served to determine the way in which First Nations were included or excluded from the "development" of the colonies and province in the rest of the nineteenth century.

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Chapter 2: HBC Diversification into Other Export Commodities: Complex Systems of Production

The incorporation of the Aboriginal population of British Columbia into capitalist relations of production often has been presented as a fairly linear transformation of independent producers into a kind of colonial proletariat.[1] This interpretation rests on broad assumptions concerning universal Aboriginal participation in the capitalist economy, and the impact of this participation on First Nations. Extending from the interpretation of Aboriginal commodity production in Chapter 1, it will be useful to apply a more nuanced approach to the issue of the integration of First Nations into diversified systems of production. For the purposes of this study I will refer to such systems, in which raw materials required further processing to convert them into exportable commodities, as "complex systems of production." These systems integrated Aboriginal commodity production, as examined in Chapter 1, with various forms of waged processing labour, incorporating both HBC employees and Aboriginal workers. These complex systems came about as a result of larger HBC business strategies. Following a tour of inspection in the late 1820s, George Simpson, the Governor of the Northern Department of the Hudson's Bay Company, adopted a policy of economic diversification in the firm's Pacific Slope trading districts. At first intended to cut the cost of operations, this focussed on subsistence agriculture and food production, but soon shifted into revenue generation with new carrying trades aimed at Pacific markets. By 1830 lumber and other forest products and salt salmon were the two principal commodities developed for export under Simpson's strategy. Unlike furs, these could not be obtained from Aboriginal producers in ready to ship form, so required the development of complex systems of production.

In such export trades, Aboriginal producers supplied the HBC with raw materials,

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1. For instance, Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, particularly chapter 12; Lutz, "After the Fur Trade," 69-93; Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development," 27-46. Warburton and Scott perhaps make this point the most explicitly, suggesting that under the HBC system Native labour was transformed into an exchangeable commodity, and that the impact of this transformation was "second only to alienation of native land and resources" in its impact on Aboriginal society.

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which were transformed into something suitable for export in a system involving both HBC employees and Aboriginal workers, using imported materials and technology. Anticipating later systems of industrial commodity production, these complex HBC systems used local resources, which were transformed into a product desired on Pacific markets, using imported technology and a combination of skilled and unskilled labour. A process of negotiation between Aboriginal and HBC economic and cultural values determined the way in which gendered and racialized workforces developed in these complex systems of production. Indigenous and immigrant ideology concerning appropriate economic behaviour for identifiable social groups, based primarily on race or ethnicity and gender, combined to shape the labour market. In many cases, Aboriginal men retained a place as independent commodity producers, while Aboriginal women assumed new roles, particularly as day labour, in agriculture and fish processing. This assumption of these new roles was not "universal," but involved relatively small groups of Aboriginal producers or workers. For HBC workers, these new complex systems of production presented a way to achieve occupational and social mobility. The divide between the gentlemen, or managerial class, and the servants, or labouring class, was clearly delineated in the paramilitary hierarchy of the HBC. However, the viability of these systems depended on the human capital of skilled servants, so affected the power balance between such essential workers and their managers. By participating in such complex systems of production, Aboriginal commodity producers and waged workers, along with the skilled HBC workers also required, could realize economic and social mobility. In broad terms, these ventures provided prototypes for later industrial ventures, by conceptually linking participation in the commodity exporting economy to that of social mobility. Additionally, in the way that social groups were integrated, these ventures established patterns of thought and practice that became entrenched in the later industrial economy.

Hawaii and the Development of an Export Market

In the fall of 1827, after participating in establishing Fort Langley and trading on

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the coast through the summer, the schooner *Cadboro* was sent to Monterey and San Francisco, on the coast of [Mexican] California, to obtain "a supply of Salt & Provisions" and explore the trading possibilities in that region.[2] The following year an HBC lumber trade to "Woahoo" [Oahu], also known as the Sandwich Islands, began with a cargo delivered by the *Eagle*, followed by another in early 1829.[3] Following abortive consideration of North and South American markets, by 1830 the Sandwich Islands market for HBC "country produce" proved the most reliable, beginning a large-scale commodity export trade from Fort Vancouver to Honolulu.[4]

Richard Mackie listed twenty-eight shipments of lumber from Fort Vancouver in the period from 1828 to 1842. One was diverted to Valparaiso, Chile in 1836, three were shipped to California in 1830 and 1834, and the other twenty-four went to Oahu.[5] Mackie listed eighteen shipments of salmon exported from the Columbia River between 1830 and 1843. Two early ones, in 1830 and 1834, went to California, three late ones, in 1842, 1843, and 1843, respectively went to London, Canton, and Boston, and all the rest to Oahu.[6] It seems clear that the Sandwich Islands provided the primary market for export commodities other than furs through this period.

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2. E.E. Rich, editor, *Part of a Dispatch from George Simpson Esqr Governor of Ruperts Land to the Governor & Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company London, 1829*, (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1947), 72-73.

3. Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 206, Table 5. The *Cadboro* arrived in Oahu on 21 January 1829, where a shipment was left on commission with the "British Consul General in the Pacific," Richard Charlton; Rich, *Part of a Dispatch from George Simpson, 1829*, 109-110.

4. It was thought that west coast markets could be reached through the Lima, Peru-based John Baggs & Co., which did "a great deal of business" up the coast as far as California; Rich, editor, *Part of a Dispatch from George Simpson, 1829*, 87. With the success of shipments to Oahu, no further attention was given to South American markets. Rich, *The Letters of John McLoughlin, First Series, 1825-38*, 95, John McLoughlin to the Governor and Committee, 24 November 1830; Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 196.

5. Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 206, Table 5.

6. *Ibid.* 197, Table 4.

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Once it was established that a strong market existed for these commodities, and the logistics of shipping and agency were arranged to get them to market and sell them in the Sandwich Islands, the systems of production in the Columbia Department needed to be adjusted accordingly. Forest products and salt salmon had to be available in quantities great enough to meet the demand of the Oahu market, at a high enough level of quality to ensure ongoing demand, and cheaply enough to compete with commodities from other producing regions, such as Russian Alaska. Some products, such as cedar shingles, required minimal change to the existing system of fur production, in spite of some interpretations that present their production as waged "labour."[7] A specification for the product would be defined, and given to Aboriginal producers.[8] Following trade protocols, the HBC would establish a mutually understood tariff, or price that would be received on delivery. The tariff for shingles at Fort Rupert in 1857 was adjusted downward, due to limited demand in Oahu, to "8 Bundles, or 2000 shingles" for a 2 ½ point best blanket, or roughly the equivalent of one prime beaver skin [or 1 MB] at the prevailing exchange. In 1853 Douglas had estimated that 1,000 shingles, selling for 40 shillings [$10] in the Sandwich Islands, cost about three shillings and sixpence [87¢] to produce at Fort Rupert.[9] In the 1850s the export shingle trade seemed to be focussed on the post of Fort

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7. For example, Richard Mackie suggested that "in its total reliance on Indian labour, the shingle enterprise demonstrates the Company's willingness to employ Indians as something very different from fur gatherers." Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 141. However, it is clear from contemporary descriptions that this trade was carried out under precisely the same terms as the fur trade, involving the delivery of "finished" products, suitable for export, in exchange for manufactured goods. The HBC purchased commodities from independent producers, rather than paying for the labour of employees. The system of production was identical to that employed for furs, although in one case it involved capturing and preparing animal products, and in the other locating and preparing forest products.

8. An example of this comes when the clerk in charge at Nanaimo in 1852 requested sample shingles from Fort Victoria to provide local Natives with a model. *Ibid.*, 144.

9. *Ibid.*, 146, citing BCA, Fort Victoria, correspondence outward 1850-1858, James Douglas to Robert Clouston, 16 March 1857; *ibid.*, p.189, note 243, citing HBCA, A.11/11/74, fos.392-392, James Douglas to Barclay, 2 November 1853.

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Rupert, although some were traded at other posts as well.[10] The shingle trade did not require any change to the simple system of production developed for the fur trade.

HBC Labour and Complex Systems of Production

Salt salmon or lumber needed to go through extra stages before export, creating a notably more complex system of production, under the direct supervision, and requiring the labour, of HBC employees. For the first time, company workers became an integral part of the commodity production process, rather than working in support of a carrying trade in Aboriginally-produced commodities. To understand the way in which Company employees were integrated into complex systems of production, it is useful to examine briefly the larger HBC "corporate" social system. Society within the posts conformed to HBC corporate organization, loosely following a hierarchical, paramilitary model. Employees fell into two overall classes, gentlemen and servants, the former analogous to military officers, and the latter to enlisted men. At the top of the hierarchy in the Columbia Department were the "commissioned gentlemen," that is, the Chief Factors and Chief Traders that administered posts or districts, who held shares in the HBC, and so whose earnings were based on the success of the company.[11] The business in the Columbia Department until 1845 was superintended by Chief Factor John McLoughlin,

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10. *Ibid.*, 141-148.

11. The structure and nature of this hierarchy is discussed in a number of works, including Michael Payne, *The Most Respectable Place in the Territory: Everyday Life in Hudson's Bay Company Service: York Factory, 1788 to 1870* (Ottawa: Environment Canada, 1989), 28-30; Philip Goldring, *Papers on the Labour System of the Hudson's Bay Company 1821-1900*, Vol.2 (Ottawa: Parks Canada Manuscript Report Series No.412, 1980), 37-41. In her study of Hudson's Bay Company labour relations, Edith Burley argued that commissioned officers were also workers, in that the elite making the management decisions were far above them in the hierarchy, and removed from them physically. It is unclear how she reconciles this with their ownership of shares. Edith Burley, *Servants of the Honourable Company: Work, Discipline, and Conflict in the Hudson's Bay Company, 1770-1870* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), ch.2, "The View From the Top."

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and after that by a Board of Management comprising three Chief Factors.[12] Ultimately financial and strategic decisions came from London, although based on information provided by the regional administrators. Additionally, local managers were responsible for the implementation of the Governor and Committee's directives, so mediated both the information on which decisions were made, and the way in which decisions were enacted. In this way, local managers held a high level of autonomy and control over departmental operations.

The workforce of the HBC demonstrated some racial and ethnic conventions, although some scholars, like Edith Burley, proposed that the class division between gentlemen and servants superceded racial and ethnic divisions.[13] Burley argued that the uncrossable divide between gentlemen and servants led to a sense of group solidarity, or class consciousness, among the servants.[14] In the long-established hierarchy of York Factory or other Rupert's Land posts, and with a relatively homogenous, British-dominated labour force, perhaps class became a more important signifier of social divisions.[15] However, the formation of such divisions seemed to vary depending on local

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12. E.E. Rich, ed., *The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, Third Series, 1844-1846* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1944), lvi, lix, 142n.

13. This parallels the debate between Peter Ward and Rennie Warburton concerning race and class in BC historiography. Ward, "Class and Race"; Rennie Warburton, "Race and Class." Carol Judd analyzed some of the ethnic patterns and conventions in her study of the origins of HBC servants. Carol Judd, "Mixt Bands of Many Nations: 1821-70," in *Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference*, Carol M. Judd and Arthur J. Ray, eds., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 127-146. Burley presented her argument about the class division, and the idea of class consciousness among the servants, in *Servants of the Honourable Company*, ch.7.

14. *Ibid.*, ch.7.

15. The demographic analysis of the 1824-1870 York Factory labour force, including servants and officers, reinforces the perception of a more homogenous employee population in Rupert's Land, as compared to the Columbia Department. At York Factory 63.5% of the men were Scottish, 5.7% English, 11.5% from Canada, and 17.9% from Rupert's Land. Payne, *The Most Respectable Place*, 47, Table 5.

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demographic conditions, including the size of the post, the numbers of workers, and the heterogeneity of the workforce. In the Columbia Department by the 1840s, the majority of the gentlemen were of British origin, recruited primarily in Great Britain or in some cases in Lower Canada.[16] The ethnicity of the servants varied through time, but in the 1840s and 1850s, at the time of intense export trades, roughly half the servants were French-Canadian and Iroquois, with significant minorities of British, country-born, and Kanaka/country-born Kanaka employees.[17] At a number of posts the Kanaka population approached the Canadian one.[18] This heterogenous employee population, and more fluid occupational and social situation, in the less-entrenched structures west of the Rockies, means that it is difficult to equate social divisions with class in the way presented for HBC society in the Northern Department.

Burley suggested that to ensure a docile and productive labour force, the HBC recruited "hierarchy-friendly" servants, in regions where "traditional social relations

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16. Michael Payne's study of the depot post of York Factory, on Hudson's Bay, revealed an officer group that averaged 79% British origin from 1824 to 1870, with 15.3% from Rupert's Land, and 5.6% from Canada. *Ibid.*, 34-35, Table 1. This pattern of British domination of this group was generally repeated in the Columbia Department, although in an even more extreme form, without the population of officers' country-born sons that made up a significant minority of the York Factory officers.

17. Hawaiian employees were designated in several ways, at first as Owyhees, after the island of Oahu, later as Sandwich Islanders or Kanakas, and by the 1850s the term Hawaiians appeared. Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 351n.

18. For instance, Fort Langley in the late 1850s had an Anglo-Canadian Chief Trader, a British clerk, managing 14 French-Canadian or Iroquois servants [48.3%], 6 British servants [20.7%], 4 country born servants [13.8%], and 1 Kanaka and 3 country-born Kanaka servants [13.8%]. HBCA, B.226/g/5, Western Department Abstract of Accounts, Outfit 1857, pp.6d-18; HBCA, B.226/g/6, Western Department Abstract of Accounts, Outfit 1858, pp.4d-18. The percentages of the various ethnic and racial groups among the workforce varied from post to post. At Fort Vancouver in Outfit 1843, Kanakas comprised 57 of 134, or 43%, of the employees. Tom Koppel, *Kanaka: The Untold Story of Hawaiian Pioneers in British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest* (Vancouver: Whitecap Books, 1995), 21.

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prevailed," such as the Orkney Islands and Lower Canada.[19] The Hawaiian employees prevalent in the Columbia Department were thought to fit this model, although their motives for engaging with the HBC may have differed from those of British or Canadian servants.[20] For the latter two groups, the accepted explanation of their signing on with the HBC revolves around their status as land-owning peasants, who intended to spend a period as sojourning labour in order to save money to support their "traditional" way of life at home.[21] What has been overlooked is the inherent irony of the situation. Such workers appealed to the HBC because of the belief that they held traditional, hierarchical values contributing to an acceptance of subordinate positions within the company. However, these workers, by employing a strategy of engaging with the HBC as a way of improving their positions in their hierarchical originating societies, demonstrated some commitment to the search for social mobility. The hierarchical HBC incidentally created the opportunity or structural conditions which contributed to the opportunities for social mobility among both its employees, and Aboriginal participants in its trading system.

To develop complex systems of production required human capital, in the form of the knowledge and skill to construct and operate sawmill machinery, or to build barrels

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19. Burley, *Servants of the Honourable Company*, ch.3, "The Source and Supply of Labour."

20. The motivation of Hawaiian workers is discussed at greater length in the following sections. Hawaiians were engaged for work on the Columbia by Astor's Pacific Fur Company in 1811, and the practice of hiring labourers for the Columbia Department continued therafter. There seems to have been significant [Hawaiian] state involvement in their participation in the Columbia fur trade, as in 1840 when the governor of the islands gave permission to the HBC agent in Honolulu to recruit workers under specified conditions to work on the Columbia. Koppel, *Kanaka*, 12, 18, 21. For the HBC, this source of labour, on the existing shipping route between London and the Columbia Department, replaced retiring workers at a lower cost than bringing them from Britain or Canada. Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, p.162.

21. For instance, Burley, *Servants of the Honourable Company*, ch.3, "The Source and Supply of Labor." Michael Payne made the same point concerning the strategy of Orcadian and Canadian sojourning servants saving their earnings to improve their position in their country of origin. Payne, *The Most Respectable Place*, 43, 47.

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and cure fish in such a way that the commodity would reach market. In more established districts and at headquarters posts, like York Factory, the company maintained a cadre of tradesmen to manufacture and repair goods for the trade as well as post maintenance. Hired as time-served or skilled tradesmen, these men were differentiated from "semi-skilled" labourers, who had acquired "country skills" in the employ of the HBC. The former, including blacksmiths, armourers, and coopers, produced goods, while the latter, including fishers, farmers, and sailors, generally performed services.[22] However, in the more fluid labour environment of the Columbia Department such a distinction did not always apply. Greater opportunity existed to rise from the ranks of unskilled labour to skilled labour than in the eastern trading districts.

The complex systems of production required for the commodity export trades, in the context of a more fluid hierarchy and more heterogenous workforce, created an opportunity for occupational mobility. The salt salmon export trade demonstrated the way in which the requirements of a complex system of production intersected with existing social structures and ideology to produce such opportunities. As this system of production developed, certain groups of producers or workers were associated with certain stages of the process. Aboriginal men supplied the fresh fish, while Aboriginal women prepared it for curing. HBC employees traded for the salmon, prepared barrels, performed the actual curing, and supervised the processing. The assignment of processing roles, based on racial and gender ideology, anticipated aspects of later industrial systems of production, and perhaps signals the beginnings of a split labour market in British Columbia.

The Salt Salmon System of Production of the Hudson's Bay Company: Aboriginal Inputs

The HBC relied entirely on Aboriginal producers for the supply of fresh salmon, perceived as the most economical and least risky option for the company. This trade followed the conventions of the fur trade, with suppliers paid for the quantity of salmon

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22. This distinction is drawn by Michael Payne in *ibid.*, 45.

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delivered to the salting location on a mutually understood tariff. At the inception of the export trade, in spite of successful fishing trials, the uncertainty and cost of maintaining a dedicated fishing workforce led to the decision to rely on trade with Aboriginal producers as the preferred option for obtaining fresh fish.[23] This convention was followed for the duration of the HBC salmon export trade. During the run, Aboriginal producers delivered salmon on an ongoing basis, with payment received on delivery. The purchasing process at Fort Vancouver in the 1830s was described by John Dunn:

> As soon as a cargo of salmon is caught, the natives bring it to the trading post in their canoes. A number of Indian women are employed by the trader, seated on the beach, with knives, ready to cut up the fish. The salmon are counted from each Indian, for which a ticket is given for the quantity, large or small. After the whole of the salmon are landed, the Indians congregate around the trading shop for the payment, and receive ammunition, baize, tobacco, buttons, etc.[24]

At Fort Langley the post's Indian trader handled the salmon purchasing: "He used to stand at the wharf with two or three trunks full of the Indians favourite stuffs such as vermilion for the women to give themselves rosy cheeks, and Tobacco for the men."[25] When a salmon saltery was set up on San Juan Island in 1851, the indigenous population welcomed the opportunity to participate in an exchange with the agents of commercial capitalism: "The natives were pleased to have an establishment so near them where they

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23. Archibald McDonald wrote: "...but our success by no means proved that we could do without Indian trade, nor does ever this appear to me a source of great disappointment as in years of Scarcity the best regulated fishery of our own would miscarry while in years of plenty such as last the expense in trade would hardly exceed the very cost of Lines and Twine." Mary K. Cullen, *The History of Fort Langley, 1827-96*, Canadian Historical Sites Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History 20 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1979) 83-89, Appendix A; Morag Maclachlan, ed., *The Fort Langley Journals, 1827-30* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998) 218-227, Appendix C, both citing HBCA, D.4/123, 118-129, McDonald's Report to the Governor and Council, 25 February 1830.

24. John Dunn, *History of the Oregon Territory and British North-American fur trade, with an Account of the Habits and Customs of the Principal Native Tribes on the Northern Continent* (London: Edwards and Hughes, 1846), 163.

25. BCA, E/E/M31, Aurelia Manson, "Reminiscences of Old Langley," 2.

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could get work and goods. The natives brought in salmon and gave sixty for a blanket worth four dollars."[26] The descriptions reveal that at the established, diversified trading posts of Fort Vancouver and Fort Langley, salmon was purchased with consumable goods, but at the salmon curing-specific venture on San Juan Island, payment was in blankets. This difference suggests that at the established posts Aboriginal producers viewed this trade as optional, to provide some luxuries, rather than forming the central aspect of their involvement in the capitalist economy, as seems to have been the case on San Juan Island.

As in the trade for furs, these accounts of the salmon trade describe a pattern of prompt exchange, perhaps more incidental and spontaneous than the older trade. Unlike beaver and other furs, salmon was central to the indigenous economy, and so its capture and preparation involved most of the population. For the HBC, this meant that unlike in the fur trade, no effort was made to convert part of the population into specialized commodity producers. By producing a surplus over subsistence requirements, nearly any Aboriginal man could become a producer of this commodity for capitalist exchange. Although not visible in HBC records, ethnographic studies of Aboriginal cultures in the region where the company packed salmon suggest a gendered division of fishing and fish processing. Fishing appears to have been a male prerogative, while cleaning, preparing, and preserving salmon for winter stores was considered women's work.[27] It is probable that male producers supplied the majority of salmon traded to the HBC. In the 1843 season on the lower Fraser River the tariff was fixed at 1¼ MB for 20 large, or for 60

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26. Public Archives of Canada, MG29/C15, Bancroft Papers, folio C-4, "British Columbia; Sketches; Lewis, Muir, and MacDonald," 12.

27. Examples of these conventions from First Nations in the Columbia Department are given in Ann M. Renker and Erna Gunther, "Makah," in *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7, Northwest Coast*, Wayne Suttles, ed. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 425; Dorothy I.D. Kennedy and Randall T. Bouchard, "Northern Coast Salish," in Suttles, *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7, Northwest Coast*, 444-445; Wayne Suttles, "Central Coast Salish," in Suttles, *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7, Northwest Coast*, 457-459.

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small salmon.[28] For salting and export, it appears the smaller varieties were preferred, probably sockeye or pinks, based on the correspondence between their annual runs and the packing season.[29]

The salmon was delivered to the salting stations of the HBC, where the rest of the processing took place, as described by the former postmaster John Dunn on the Columbia River:

> The women employed by the trader commence cutting out the backbones, and cut off the heads of the salmon. They are then taken to the salter, and placed in a large hogshead [barrel], with a quantity of coarse salt. They remain there several days, until they become quite firm. The pickle produced from these is boiled in a large copper kettle; and the blood, which floats by the boiling process to the top, is skimmed off, leaving the pickle perfectly clear. The salmon are then taken from the hogshead and packed in tierces [smaller barrels], with a little more salt; the tierces are then headed up, and laid upon their bilge, or widest part, leaving the bung-hole open; the pickle is next poured in, until the tierce becomes full; a circle of clay, about four inches high, is then made round the bung-hole, into which the oil from the salmon rises. This oil is skimmed off; and, according as the salmon imbibes the pickle, more pickle is poured in, so as to keep the liquid sufficiently on the surface, and afford facility for skimming off the oil. After the oil ceases to rise to the circle round the bung hole, the salmon is then supposed to be sufficiently prepared; the clay circle is cleared away, and the hole is bunged up.[30]

In her reminiscences, Aurelia Manson, the daughter of the chief trader at Fort Langley, described the processing on the Fraser River in similar terms:

> W. Cromarty at the big cauldron, making brine, and ever so many boys, and a man or two, would be running from the wharf withe [*sic*] the

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28. The tariff for small salmon was given as 1 15/60 MB for 60 fish, a fraction applied for reasons that are not evident, as it reduces to 1/4 as well. Hussey, *Fort Vancouver Structures*, Vol.2, 66-67, citing Huntington Library, FN 1245, "Tariff for furs and Provisions at Fort Albert, Ot '43 and '44."

29. Cullen, *The History of Fort Langley*, 83-89, Appendix A; Maclachlan, *The Fort Langley Journals*, 218-227, Appendix C, both citing HBCA, D.4/123, 118-129, McDonald's Report to the Governor and Council, 25 February 1830.

30. Dunn, *History of the Oregon Territory*, 163-164.

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> salmon, which they piled before the women of the fort and others who were seated in a circle in the shed where they cut the salmon. No rest for the boys. They had to continue their running, this time with the cut salmon to the men in the big shed where they were salting the salmon. And so they worked all the week, early in the morning to late at night till the salmon run was over.[31]

From the early years of the trade until the late 1850s, the salt salmon produced by the HBC in this region had the backbone and head removed, contrary to the practice for Atlantic salmon intended for the English market. This may have been determined by the market, as in 1839 there was no demand in Oahu for fish cured with the head and backbone attached.[32] It also may be attributed to Aboriginal processors maintaining traditional practices in salmon preparation, such as returning bones to the river to ensure future runs.[33] If the latter, this could represent an early example of negotiation between two historical blocs in determining the processes involved in a complex system of production.[34] When Aboriginal workers were employed as processing labour, rather than as "pure" commodity producers, they would have greater opportunity to influence the

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31. BCA, E/E/M31, Aurelia Manson, "Reminiscences of Old Langley," 2.

32. As well as in the quote from Dunn above, the practice of removing the head and backbone, and the market reaction in Hawaii, is noted by Cullen, *The History of Fort Langley*, 50, 51, 114, note 63.

33. For instance, this practice is consistent with the First Salmon ceremonies described in ethnological accounts of the Central and Southern Coast Salish, in the Gulf of Georgia, Fraser Valley, and Western Washington areas, described by Suttles, "Central Coast Salish," 468; Yvonne Hajda, "Southwestern Coast Salish," in Suttles, *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7, Northwest Coast*, 505-506.

34. This negotiation continued. In 1842 a shipment of salmon was sent to London cured with the backbone in, but reached that market in bad condition and so sold cheaply. The poor condition of the fish was attributed both to inadequate preparation and poorly made barrels, that had allowed the pickle to leak. Rich, *The Letters of John McLoughlin, 1839-1844*, 265, 274, 305, citing George Simpson to John McLoughlin, 1 March 1842; John McLoughlin to George Simpson, March 1, 1842; Governor and Committee to John McLoughlin, 27 September 1843. As noted above, after this unsuccessful trial the convention of removing the head and the backbone, more consistent with indigenous protocols, was reinstated for the Oahu market.

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process creating the export commodity. The existence of such an alternate processing tradition argues for the development of conventions negotiated between the market and the producers, within a distinctive mix of economic and cultural values.

Due to the requirements of this system of production, the labour of Aboriginal women, that had been subsumed into the process of independent commodity production in the case of furs, became visible. The HBC had to pay for such labour over the cost of the "simple" commodity, and additionally encountered the problem of recruiting a local workforce large enough to prevent the possibility of a bottleneck in the processing, and resulting spoilage. The Manson reminiscences suggest that "the women of the fort," the Aboriginal country wives of Company servants, provided the core of this workforce. Presumably the HBC recruited the "others" she mentioned from surrounding Aboriginal populations, through existing linkages, perhaps mediated through the agency of the servants' wives. The demand for processing labour in the 1840s and 1850s, with over 2,000 barrels of salmon cured each season, would have been considerable.[35] By this time the HBC designated barrels of 180-200 pounds or 24 gallons as the "standard" barrel for salt salmon.[36] Calculating from the number of salmon required to fill the larger barrels, or "tierces," used in 1829, it required about 60 small salmon to fill each 24 gallon barrel.[37]

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35. Recorded production of the three fishing stations associated with Fort Langley varied widely, with peaks of 2,610 barrels in 1849, 2,000 in 1853 and 1854, and just over 1,800 in 1852. Cullen, *The History of Fort Langley*, 96-97, Appendix E, Salmon Cured at Fort Langley 1830-73.

36. *Ibid.*, p.51; Jamie Morton, *Fort Langley: An Overview of the Operations of a Diversified Fur Trading Post 1848 to 1858 and the Physical Context in 1858* (Ottawa: Canadian Parks Service Microfiche Report Series No.340, 1988), 190-191. The size of the country-made barrels does not seem to have been precise, but there seems to have been some general correspondence between 180 pound, 200 pound, and 24 gallon barrels made under Cromarty's direction. *Ibid.*, 190-191.

37. The barrels used in the first packing season of August 1829 were "tierces" [defined as one-third of a "pipe" of 105 gallons] of 35-36 gallons, or about 300 pounds weight. Maclachlan, *The Fort Langley Journals*, 124-126. The definition of tierce is from *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964. Tierces were also used on the Columbia River fishery of the HBC in the early 1830s, noted in

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The tariff of for small salmon, based on 60 fish, indirectly supports this estimate, assuming it had some relationship to the quantity required to pack one barrel.[38] At this ratio, the HBC traded and processed some 120,000 salmon over the course of a season to achieve the recorded exports from the Fraser River fishery. Assuming a two month long season, and seven working days per week, the salteries associated with Fort Langley must have processed about 2,000 salmon per day.[39] If, as suggested by Manson, a twelve hour or longer day was worked, and if workers took an average of five minutes to remove the head, backbone, and guts of each fish, about fifteen women could meet the labour demand. If the approximately twenty or so "women of the fort" wished to, they could supply most of this labour.[40] However, given the length of the season and the intensive

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Dunn, *History of the Oregon Territory*, 163-164. In March 1830 the labourer working on cooperage at Fort Langley was finishing up some 36 gallon barrels, that would correspond well to the tierce size, although the previous month he and a crew were working on a larger number of "very indifferently made" 25 gallon barrels, approximating the standard size used in the 1840s and 1850s. Maclachlan, editor, *The Fort Langley Journals*, 143, 139. Based on an average fish size of six pounds, it was noted that 90 fish were required to fill each tierce in the 1829 season, or approximately 2.5 fish per gallon. *Ibid.* 124-126.

38. As mentioned above, the tariff for large salmon was 1 1/4 MB for 20 fish, and for small salmon 1 15/60 MB for 60 fish. Hussey, *Fort Vancouver Structures*, Vol.2, 66-67, citing Huntington Library, FN 1245, "Tariff for furs and Provisions at Fort Albert, Ot '43 and '44."

39. In McDonald's 1830 report on Fort Langley, he noted a 20 day salting season in 1829, but anticipated extending the season to 55 or 60 days with satellite facilities further up the river. As these facilities were in place by the period of high production in the 1840s and 1850s, it may be assumed that the season by that time was about two months long. Cullen, *The History of Fort Langley*, 83-89, Appendix A; Maclachlan, *The Fort Langley Journals*, 218-227, Appendix C, both citing HBCA, D.4/123, 118-129, McDonald's Report to the Governor and Council, 25 February 1830. The satellite, seasonally-operated salteries on the Fraser River in the 1840s and 1850s were at the mouth of the Chilliwack River and at Fort Hope, as well as the "local" fishery at the mouth of the Salmon River. There were also temporary salting facilities operated from time to time, such as at the mouth of the Harrison River. Morton, *Fort Langley*, 131-133.

40. McDonald's 1830 report on Fort Langley noted that all the men had taken country wives from the Aboriginal population. Cullen, *The History of Fort Langley*, 83-89, Appendix A; Maclachlan, *The Fort Langley Journals*, 218-227, Appendix C, both citing

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nature of the work, it seems likely that the HBC also employed non-resident Aboriginal women. Company records do not reveal he mechanisms for, and rate of payment to, female salmon processors. It seems probable that practices followed those applied in mustering an agricultural work force, which also involved a seasonal waged workforce largely composed of female workers. In both instances, workers were paid not on the basis of products delivered, but on the basis of time worked.

Conventions in Aboriginal "Wage Labour"

Unlike the supply of commodities, such Aboriginal involvement in the capitalist economy took on the characteristics of wage labour. However, unless one accepts a model in which Aboriginals were forced to work for wages through military force, or due to a dependency theory-based abandonment of indigenous economy and culture, the form of such employment differed from that of contemporary European proletarian groups. The latter depended on waged work for subsistence, in the absence of any other economic resources. For Aboriginal waged workers, participation in agriculture or salmon processing in this period remained voluntary or optional. The motivation, as for those participating as fur or salmon suppliers, was to realize economic progress, that could be converted into cultural capital within the originating society, to provide the possibility for social mobility. Whether waged workers originated as the Aboriginal wives of employees, or as non-resident Aboriginal workers, the income earned provided a surplus to augment HBC salaries or subsistence within an indigenous economy.

The demand for waged Aboriginal labour rose dramatically with the expansion of HBC agricultural activity, in turn due to an 1839 agreement with the Russian American Company which stipulated the supply of large quantities of agricultural produce to Russian

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HBCA, D.4/123, 118-129, McDonald's Report to the Governor and Council, 25 February 1830. This pattern continued through the 1850s, with many of the relationships regularized by clergy, and as will be seen below, some country-born children assuming positions in the HBC workforce at Fort Langley. Morton, *Fort Langley*, 258-259.

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Alaska.[41] As in salmon processing, this agricultural expansion depended on large numbers of seasonal workers willing to work for relatively short period on labour-intensive activities, like planting and harvest. For such intensive seasonal work, the HBC favoured "capturing" temporary Aboriginal labour, employed as required, over incurring the cost of paying and housing full-time servants to meet a seasonal need. At Fort Vancouver in 1840-41, Dr. W.F. Tolmie, the former Indian trader, recalled Klickitat workers, whom he described as "friendly and useful in every way," ploughed most of the Company's fields.[42] George Simpson suggested that at about the same time there were 1,000 Indian hands in the Willamette.[43] This large figure, compared to the numbers reported in the 1839 census [see Chapter 1] may have described the total population of potential workers, rather than numbers actually employed.

More information about the nature of Aboriginal labour comes from the records of Fort Nisqually, on Puget Sound, which developed as an agricultural centre after the 1839 agreement. Trade blotters kept at the post contain details of the Native labour performed around the post, and the goods paid out in exchange. Work listed varied from "ferryage across Nisqually River" to "picking wheat" to acting as "Sheepwashers &c." The Fort Nisqually blotters demonstrate a clear relationship between the types of goods paid and the types of labour performed. For casual labour and day work, wages were paid in consumable goods, such as tobacco, ammunition and fish hooks, but for more regular work, such as sheepwashing, that extended over a period of several days or more, more durable goods were paid, including fabric, handkerchiefs, and knives.[44] By the end of the 1840s, much of the business with Natives at Fort Nisqually was in the form of payment for

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41. Rich, editor, *The Letters of John McLoughlin, 1839-1844*, xi-xii.

42. Mackie, "The Hudson's Bay Company on the Pacific," 361, citing BCA, MS-570, W.F. Tolmie Papers, W.F. Tolmie to J. Howe, 6 October 1871.

43. Cited in James R. Gibson, *Farming the Frontier: The Agricultural Opening of the Oregon Country, 1786-1846* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1985) 136.

44. Huntington Library, FN 1241, Vol.1, Fort Nisqually Indian Shop Blotter Outfit 1847, for example, 1, 2, 94.

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waged labour on the farm or around the fort, rather than for the production of furs and other commodities.[45] However, for HBC managers, Aboriginal workers were still considered an available casual workforce, rather than employees. All Aboriginal labour was recorded in the trade blotters and Indian account books, rather than in employee records. The HBC engaged Aboriginal workers by the job, the day, or the month, depending on the specific labour requirements of the Company, but did not include them among the servants of the company, employed with multi-year contracts.

Although all Aboriginal labour was viewed as auxiliary to that of HBC servants, evidence exists for a pattern like that in commodity production, with a certain group of workers developing a closer relationship with the company, and providing a disproportionate share of Aboriginal labour. This core and casual structure of the Aboriginal waged workforce was described in the Fort Rupert journal in 1849: "Although not noted down daily Indians are constantly employed working for the Establishment sometimes as many as 100 per day. Six are paid monthly at 1 Blanket per month."[46] The journalist drew a clear distinction between "monthly" and "daily" workers, as well as the comparatively small number of the former.

The HBC practice of paying for day labour in consumable rather than durable goods noted at Fort Nisqually prevailed at most posts. At Kamloops in 1842 the rate of pay for daily work was high, a "skin each for two days work," although it was to be paid in "ammunition or any small articles such as beads, knives or tobacco."[47] In 1856 the manager at Fort Simpson paid Aboriginal women working in the garden 15 leaves of tobacco per day, or one ounce of vermilion per two days, with a gratuity of two gallons of

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45. For example, Huntington Library, FN 1242, Vol.2, Indian Account Book 49/50 lists a large number of Natives, most of whom are being paid, in dollars and cents, for work performed for the HBC.

46. HBCA, B.185/a/1, Fort Rupert Journal 1846-1850, 23, October 25, 1849.

47. BCA, A/B/20/K12A, Thompson's River Journal 1841-1843, 36, 27 April 1842.

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potatoes each when the job was finished.[48] At Fort Rupert in 1850 the standard rate of pay rose from seven to nine "sticks" of tobacco, after Aboriginal workers refused to work the previous fall unless their wages were raised.[49] The types of goods paid for day labour comprise essentially the same list that was traded for provisions, including salmon.

For monthly engagements, the HBC normally paid in blankets and other higher value durable goods, following the conventions in the trade of furs for export. In the late 1840s the standard rate on Vancouver Island seemed to be one blanket per month.[50] This escalated sharply in the 1850s, after the establishment of the colony of Vancouver Island [discussed in Chapter 3]. Rates of pay at the Esquimalt Farm in 1856-1857, stated in terms of 2 ½ point blankets, ranged from two to three blankets per month, depending on the sort of work and terms of employment. Most of the jobs related to cultivation and harvesting, while most terms of employment specified one or two months.[51] The doubling or tripling of Aboriginal monthly wages post-1849 suggests that the demand for Aboriginal agricultural workers exceeded the supply available to the colonial economy. This reinforces the idea of a specialized cadre of Aboriginal people willing to participate in the capitalist economy, rather than universal participation of the majority population. Universal participation would have more than filled any demand for labour, and so obviate

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48. HBCA, B.201/a/8, Fort Simpson Journal 1855-1859, 36d, 3 March 1856.

49. BCA, E/B/M91A, Andrew Muir, Private Diary 1848-1850, 115, 116, 28 May 1850, 3 June 1850; HBCA, B.185/a/1, Fort Rupert Journal 1849-1850, 24, 28 October 1849.

50. This was the rate at Fort Rupert in 1849 given in HBCA, B.185/a/1, Fort Rupert Journal 1846-1850, 23, 25 October 1849. Two years earlier, twelve Aboriginal workers were hired at the headquarters post of Fort Victoria, to be paid the slightly lower rate of five blankets each for a six month engagement. HBCA, B.226/a/1, Fort Victoria Journal 1846-1850, 34, 18 January 1847.

51. Rates per month noted include 2 blankets for "hoeing turnips and thrashing," 2 blankets, or 3 blankets "without eating" for [general] labour, and 3 blankets for harvesting or acting as a bullock driver. BCA, A/E/M19/M19.11, Kenneth McKenzie, Correspondence Accounts etc. re Esquimalt Farm, promissory notes Thomas Cooper and E.E. Langford to K. McKenzie, 5 February, 13 February, 10 April, 8 August, 15 September, and 26 September 1856; 10 January 1857.

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the need to increase wages. At Fort Rupert Aboriginal monthly workers comprised only about six percent of the labour force hired on a casual or day basis. This echoes the situation encountered in the fur trade, which depended in large part on a small group of specialized commodity producers, with a much larger group peripherally involved.

The larger group of casual or day labourers still represented a small fraction of total indigenous populations. In the 1850s the Aboriginal population around Fort Rupert represented some 4,000 people. Following the proportions described at Fort Vancouver, extrapolated in table 1.2, an estimated 92 of these people acted as specialized commodity producers. This corresponds closely with the number of day workers noted around the post.[52] This limited participation as day labour, and the even more limited number of monthly workers from a total regional population of 4,000 points out just how limited the penetration of Aboriginal society by the capitalist wage labour market was in this period.

In the Fort Nisqually blotters a significant number of women were included among the agricultural workers listed.[53] Extending from gender ideology in indigenous cultures, men often performed waged work that permitted some autonomy, or involved interaction with domestic animals, such as transportation and animal husbandry. Other types of work, such as cultivation, linked more closely to traditional female food gathering roles, and so seem to be conventionally assigned to Aboriginal women. At Fort Nisqually the beans were hoed and the wheat was weeded by women.[54] On San Juan Island a crew of

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52. The overall post-associated population is from Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 271, citing HBCA, E.18/8-9, fos.28-75, Sir George Simpson, "Notes Regarding the Hudson's Bay Company." The estimated number of commodity producers is calculated from the ratios observed in the "Fort Vancouver Indian Population" census, in which 2.3 % of the overall population was designated as beaver suppliers. HBCA., B.223/z/1, Fort Vancouver Miscellaneous 1838-1839, fos.26-28d.

53. For instance, this is demonstrated throughout Huntington Library, FN 1241, Vol.1, Fort Nisqually Indian Shop Blotter Outfit 1847.

54. University of Washington Library Manuscripts, H867, Vol.2, Fort Nisqually Journal 1846-1852, 18, 21 May 1846.

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Aboriginal women and one Company servant weeded turnips in 1858.[55] At Fort Simpson between 1855 to 1862 as many as 24 Aboriginal women, consistently under the supervision of one company servant, cultivated the potato crop.[56] An exclusively female workforce under the supervision of HBC servants also harvested the potato crop at this post: "60 Indian Women and Girls taking up Potatoes in the Garden no men employed except Six of our own which are looking after the Indians, and three to carry the Bbls [barrels], Two of our men gave out, the Indians stand it well."[57] The journalist emphasized how unusual he considered a female labour force with his underlining of "women" and "girls" and the mention of "no men employed." This emphasizes the convention of an agricultural labour force of Aboriginal women managed by HBC servants. A reference made to the "thrashing mill women" on the HBC's Cowlitz farm in 1847 may augment that made to the "harvest Indians" at the same facility, suggesting that Aboriginal women participated in the further processing of grain for storage and preservation after harvesting.[58]

The conventions observed in the agricultural labour force would appear to apply equally well to the fish processing labour force, although it is unresolved whether fishery workers worked on a monthly or daily basis. It is possible that both strategies were employed, with a core labour force made up of the wives of HBC servants, augmented by casual day labour recruited as needed. In both agricultural and salmon curing labour forces, the high rate of female participation probably related to congruence between indigenous and imported gender ideology. Both these activities related to food preparation, clearly defined as being "women's work" in most pre-contact societies.

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55. HBCA, B.15/a/2, Belle Vue Farm Journal 1858-1862, 5d, 21 June 1858.

56. The supervising servant was referred to as Leplante, suggesting Canadian origin. HBCA, B.201/a/8, Fort Simpson Journal 1855-1858, 8d, 49d, etc.; BCA, A/C/20/Si, Fort Simpson Journal 1859-1862, 27 June 1860, 2 July 1861, etc.

57. HBCA, B.201/a/8, Fort Simpson Journal 1855-1858, 114d, 17 October 1857.

58. George B. Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* LXIII (June-September 1962), 123, 118.

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Preparing fish for the winter and gathering and preparing plant materials for food were clearly gendered activities.[59] In some of the strongly hierarchical cultures of the Pacific coast, for a man to work for another was seen as tantamount to slavery. The latter relationship, in which the owner had the power of life or death over the slave, was seen as the only reason people would labour on behalf of someone other than themselves or their family unit.[60] In indigenous cultures, working for another admitted a lack of autonomy or freedom on the part of the worker. This negative cultural perception of working for another, particularly in jobs such as cultivation and fish processing, seen as female work, made for significant resistance to such work on the part of Aboriginal men. This drew the attention of Euro-North American observers, such as the Catholic missionary Modeste Demers: "Generally the women are treated as slaves; they are assigned rough work, while the husband is occupied with smoking or walking about."[61] Gender ideology in indigenous cultures created a situation in which men would be expected to resist waged work more strongly than women. Established gender roles for the latter were more

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59. In most pre-contact societies on the coast, the gendered division of labour, in a very generalized way, saw hunting and fishing restricted to men, while gathering shellfish and plant material was restricted to women. Women also had the primary responsibility for food preparation and preservation. Examples of these conventions from First Nations in the Columbia Department are given in Ann M. Renker and Erna Gunther, "Makah," in Suttles, *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7, Northwest Coast*, 425; Kennedy and Bouchard, "Northern Coast Salish," 444-445; Suttles, "Central Coast Salish," 457-459.

60. The importance of social relations in making co-operative or "waged" work in pre-contact Coast Salish society is emphasized by Wayne Suttles, who noted that the "only other relationship in which one worked for another was that of master and slave." Wayne Suttles, "The Ethnographic Significance of the Fort Langley Journals," in Maclachlan, *The Fort Langley Journals*, 208. The issue of slavery as a cultural factor working against the supply of Aboriginal labour to the HBC is discussed in Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 293, 303.

61. Modeste Demers, "General Notes on the Territory of the Columbia," 13 February 1844, in *Notices & Voyages of the Famed Quebec Mission to the Pacific Northwest, Being the Correspondence, Notices, etc. of Fathers Blanchet and Demers, together with those of Fathers Bolduc and Langlois ... 1838 to 1847*, Carl Landerholm, translator, (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1956), 186-187.

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congruent with the requirements of a casual waged workforce.

Euro-North American ideology concerning First Nations, as discussed in Chapter 1, may have reinforced this existing male resistance to proletarianization. For immigrant culture, those Aboriginals [men] held in the highest esteem were those who were viewed as the most autonomous, the "wildest," or least tarnished by European civilization, and preferably hunters. Although a requisite of developing export trades in salt salmon or agricultural products was a seasonal labour force, these attitudes would mean that any Aboriginal men that accepted such work would not only be going against indigenous social norms, but would be placing themselves in an unfavourable light among the very people employing them. By working for wages, in the context of an integrated system of production, they would be seen as giving up the "nobility" that otherwise would attach to them as independent commodity producers.

The combination of indigenous and immigrant gender ideology and immigrant racial ideology created the convention that independent commodity production was most appropriate for Aboriginal men, while waged labour was considered more suitable for Aboriginal women. Bringing in furs, or even salmon, to trade with the HBC remained consistent with Aboriginal social norms for men, and corresponded to Euro-North American expectations of "noble savagery." For Aboriginal women, accepting waged work in agricultural cultivation and harvesting, and in salmon processing corresponded well to pre-contact gendered division of labour.[62] Although the idea of productive women and indolent men seemed central to the negative Euro-North American construct of "fishing Indians," the HBC was not adverse to hiring women to meet the labour requirements of its agricultural and salmon curing initiatives. In the negotiation between

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62. Beside the appropriately gendered nature of the work itself, women also apparently were seen as "valuable property" in Coast Salish society, although high-ranking women were seen as capable of trading and carrying on other "commercial" activities. The inference drawn by the leading ethnographer of the First Nations on the lower Fraser is that women were subordinate to, and their economic value was co-opted by, male relatives including their husbands. Following these cultural values, there would not be the same social resistance to women working for others as there would be for men. Suttles, "The Ethnographic Significance of the Fort Langley Journals," 188-189.

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indigenous and imported cultural values within the economic structure of the Hudson's Bay Company, the group most susceptible to proletarianization was Aboriginal women. Although racial ideology contributed to this role, gender seems the more important factor in this transition. The construct of the noble savage, with the autonomy it implied, reflected the indigenous construct of maleness, also based on autonomy, and together they worked against an acceptance of proletarian status. For women in indigenous societies, working for others was more culturally acceptable, and the waged work offered by the HBC was consistent with cultural definitions of women's work.[63] Using the Outfit 1843 Columbia Department tariff as a point of departure, it is possible to estimate the relative value of waged work compared to commodity production for Aboriginal populations.[64]

Table 2.1: Comparative Pay - Commodities and Labour Provided to the HBC by Aboriginals[65]

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63. In presenting her argument that Carrier women, in the Hudson's Bay Company's former New Caledonia district, were able to maintain a basic subsistence economy, to their long-term benefit as socially-integrated producers, Jo-Anne Fiske argued against what she considered the "standard" model of gender relations under colonization: "The colonization of indigenous peoples generally displaces women from social production, and, in the process, subordinates women to men." Fiske follows the accepted pattern of males engaging in the capitalist economy, at first as commodity producers and later as wage labour, to their initial economic and social benefit. However, women maintained a greater connection with the traditional economy and resources, and Fiske argues that this stability and linkage to traditional forms has given greater political power to Carrier women. Jo-Anne Fiske, "Fishing is women's business: changing economic roles of Carrier women and men," in *Native People, Native Lands: Canadian Indians, Inuit and Metis*, Bruce A. Cox, ed., (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1987), 186-198, quote from 186. This model of male engagement with, and female exclusion from, the capitalist economy does not seem to apply in the fur trading regions where diversification into export commodities other than furs occurred. Rather, gender ideology of both Aboriginal and fur trade societies combined to integrate men as independent commodity producers, and women as a sort of "proto-proletariat."

64. Hussey, *Fort Vancouver Structures*, Vol.2, Denver, 66-67, citing Huntington Library, FN 1245, "Tariff for furs and Provisions at Fort Albert, Ot '43 and '44."

65. BCA, A/B/20/K12A, Thompson's River Journal 1841-1843, 36, 27 April 1842; Hussey, *Fort Vancouver Structures*, Vol.2, Denver, 66-67, citing Huntington Library, FN

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	1 beaver fur	60 small salmon [1 barrel]	monthly labour -per month	daily labour - per day	daily labour - for 26 days [or 1 month]
Fort Kamloops 1842				½ "skin" in ammunition beads, knives or tobacco	13 "skins" [or MB?]
Fort Langley, Fort Victoria 1843	1 2 ½ point blanket	1 15/16 MB			
Fort Victoria 1847			5/6 blanket		
Fort Rupert 1849			1 blanket	7 "sticks" tobacco	4.2 MB in tobacco
Fort Rupert 1850				9 "sticks" tobacco	5.4 MB in tobacco[66]
San Juan Island 1851		1 blanket [$4.00]			
Fort Simpson 1856				15 leaves tobacco or ½ ounce vermilion	3.25 MB in vermilion

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1245, "Tariff for furs and Provisions at Fort Albert, Ot '43 and '44"; HBCA, B.226/a/1, Fort Victoria Journal 1846-1850, 34, 18 January 1847; HBCA, B.185/a/1, Fort Rupert Journal 1846-1850, 23, 24, 25 and 28 October 1849; BCA, E/B/M91A, Andrew Muir, Private Diary 1848-1850, 115, 116, 28 May 1850, 3 June 1850; Public Archives of Canada, MG29/C15, Bancroft Papers, folio C-4, "British Columbia; Sketches; Lewis, Muir, and MacDonald," 12; HBCA, B.201/a/8, Fort Simpson Journal 1855-1859, 36d, 3 March 1856; BCA, A/E/M19/M19.11, Kenneth McKenzie, Correspondence Accounts etc. re Esquimalt Farm, promissory notes Thomas Cooper and E.E. Langford to K. McKenzie, 5 February, 13 February, 10 April, 8 August, 15 September, and 26 September 1856; 10 January 1857.

66. The MB value of tobacco "sticks" paid at Fort Rupert is based on the four inch lengths of tobacco used for trade and gifts at Fort Nisqually some five years earlier, and the exchange at the same post of 36 inches of tobacco and one gunworm for a small land otter skin. Assuming the four inch lengths to follow an HBC convention for "sticks" of tobacco, nine would be equivalent to 36 inches of tobacco. Knowing that a small otter was worth roughly 1/4 MB, and a gunworm cost 1/24 MB, 36 inches of tobacco would be worth about 5/24 MB, giving an approximate day rate for Fort Rupert in 1850. The Fort Nisqually tobacco data is from Huntington Library, FN 1247, Vol.3, Fort Nisqually Blotter 7 February 1844 - 31 December 1844, 14.

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	1 beaver fur	60 small salmon [1 barrel]	monthly labour -per month	daily labour - per day	daily labour - for 26 days [or 1 month]
Esquimalt Farm 1856-1857			2 2½ point blankets with board, 3 blankets without board		

This comparison brings forward some interesting points. First, contrary to expectation, if extrapolated to a monthly rate, the pay for day labour seems consistently higher than that for monthly labour. This would be mitigated by the consumable nature of the goods normally traded for provisions or day labour, as opposed to the more durable, and higher-value goods, such as blankets, traded for monthly labour. Another anomaly was the high price paid for salmon relative to beaver skins, considering the amount of specialized knowledge, labour, and overall effort required in producing the latter. This suggests the economic importance of the salt salmon trade to the HBC. It is consistent as well with the higher "casual" wages for day labour, in that specialized fur producers would be earning more consistently throughout the year, rather than just for the few weeks of the salmon packing season.

The Salt Salmon System of Production of the Hudson's Bay Company: Hudson's Bay Company Inputs

As well as the Aboriginal inputs of salmon and the labour to process it, the export of salt salmon required a number of other inputs directed at the curing and packaging of the salmon for export. To ensure that the commodity could be sold on retail markets, these aspects of the process were crucial. Changes in the system of production came in response to complaints from the market, often regarding the soft or spoiled condition of the salmon. In HBC records, most of these problems were attributed to the poor quality of the country-made barrels, permitting the pickle to leak out, the poor quality of the salt, and the "improper" Aboriginal-style butchering of the salmon, already discussed.[67] All

67. These issues are discussed in Cullen, *The History of Fort Langley*, 50-51; Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 34-36.

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three complaints related to the ways in which the commodity differed from the "normative" version produced in Britain. That is, British-made barrels, British salt, and a British style of butchering would comprise the ideal form of the commodity, in the perception of senior HBC managers.

The salting of thousands of barrels of salmon required significant quantities of imported materials, particularly salt and hoop iron for the barrels. To ensure effective curing and preservation, each barrel of salmon cured required about eighty pounds of salt.[68] When Fort Langley exported 2,000 barrels of salmon in Outfit 1854, at least 3,870 bushels of salt [roughly 1,290 barrels] were supplied to the post, supporting the relative quantity required.[69] Most of the salt originated in the Sandwich Islands, as return cargo in the carrying trade to Oahu, but on occasion the HBC shipped "Liverpool salt" from England in response to the complaints about curing and preservation.[70] In the same way, at first HBC coopers used wooden hoops on their salmon barrels, but by 1841, in response to complaints of leaking barrels and spoiled fish, the practice changed to use iron hoops as the end, or chine, hoops of some of the salmon barrels. These were stronger, and so could be driven on harder, to prevent leaks, but unlike Aboriginally-supplied wooden hoop material, had to be imported from England. In spite of this, by 1854 the orders were for at least two thirds of the salmon barrels to be constructed with iron hoops.[71]

With a supply of salmon from Aboriginal commodity producers, and a processing workforce of Aboriginal women, with salt for curing, and iron for hoops, all that was left

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68. This quantity, specified in 1870, probably provided for all phases of curing, from first placing the cut fish in salt to the final filling of the barrels with brine. HBCA, B.113/b/3, Fort Langley correspondence out, 73, Ovid Allard to Roderick Finlayson, 1 October 1870.

69. The salt was shipped in barrels containing approximately three bushels each. Mary Cullen, *Appendices to the History of Fort Langley 1827-96*" (Ottawa: Parks Canada Manuscript Report Series No.222, 1973) 183, 192, 194.

70. The supply of salt from Oahu is discussed in Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 163-164. The reference to [unsuccessfully] trying Liverpool salt is from Cullen, *The History of Fort Langley*, 51.

71. Morton, *Fort Langley*, 189.

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was to integrate these material and labour inputs into a viable export commodity. First and foremost, no export trade would be possible without strong watertight containers for preservation and shipping.[72] Wooden barrels were the preferred option, with the most common size weighing 180-200 pounds, and of roughly twenty four gallons capacity.[73] Cost and shipping considerations argued for the "country" production of such barrels. The HBC required skilled labour, in the form of coopers, who would transform local wood into suitable barrels. In the 1820s, the high quality wood needed for barrel staves and the flexible saplings used to fabricate barrel hoops at Fort Langley were gathered by parties of HBC employees.[74] By the 1840s at least part of this requirement was met by Aboriginal producers, as the Outfit 1843 tariff listed "Sticks for Hoops," with 250 such sticks worth 1 MB.[75]

Like most HBC tradesmen, generally the men acting as coopers had not served a British apprenticeship and achieved journeyman status, but rather had some "practical" knowledge of the trade, often acquired by working with more skilled employees in major

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72. The relative importance of barrels and salt to this export trade is suggested by an 1865 reference to the cost of both fresh and pickled [salt] salmon. At this time, fresh salmon cost $1 per hundredweight, and salt salmon $4 per barrel, with the cask and the salt costing more than the fish in the latter instance; BCA, GR-2078, Diplomatic Despatches, United States Consuls in Victoria 1862-1906, film B9747, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 10 January 1866.

73. Cullen, *The History of Fort Langley*, 51; Morton, *Fort Langley*, 190-191. Unsurprisingly with barrels made by different, and sometimes underskilled coopers, the size of the country-made barrels does not seem to have been precise; there seems to have been some general correspondence between 180 pound, 200 pound, and 24 gallon barrels. *Ibid.*, pp.190-191.

74. Maclachlan, *The Fort Langley Journals*, 128-129, 139, 142-144. Salt fish barrels were usually made of softwood. In the Scottish fishery, spruce and fir were used. On the Fraser River, white pine seems to have been the preferred species at first, but by the 1840s red pine, or Douglas fir, was being used. Douglas fir remained the standard material for salt fish barrels from BC through the 1950s. Morton, *Fort Langley*, 186-187.

75. Hussey, *Fort Vancouver Structures*, Vol.2, Denver, 66-67, citing Huntington Library, FN 1245, "Tariff for furs and Provisions at Fort Albert, Ot '43 and '44."

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posts. In the case of the salmon fishery, after encountering significant problems in the early years of the salmon trade, the HBC attempted to hire men already experienced in softwood cooperage and in fish curing. In both 1839 and 1840 the Council of the Northern Department of the HBC requested in both 1839 and 1840 that "2 coopers, fish curers" be engaged in Britain, at a salary of £25 to £30 per year.[76] There was both a salmon and a herring fishery on the Scottish coast, and the latter in particular required huge numbers of barrels made of fir or spruce, as well as expertise in processing salt fish for export. This closely parallelled the technology demanded in the Columbia Department salt salmon trade. Although the Scottish barrels held liquid without leakage for a long period, so were considered "tight cooperage," the Coopers' Company did not admit the semi-skilled men that produced them. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, the Scottish herring fishery provided a workforce from which the HBC could recruit skilled "coopers, fish curers" by the 1830s.[77] It is likely that the company hired William Cromarty, described as overseeing the HBC salmon salting operation on the Fraser River, from the Scottish fishery in this dual capacity. The problem of leaking barrels, spoiled fish, and decreasing profits resulted in a resolution to send two coopers to Fort Vancouver with the 1844 Express.[78] Cromarty, hired in the Orkneys in 1843, arrived in the Columbia Department as a cooper in 1844, and at Fort Langley for Outfit 1845, where he supervised

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76. Isaac Cowie, ed., *The Minutes of the Council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land, 1830 to 1843*, Vol.4, ([no place of publication]: reprinted from the Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota, n.d.), 775, 790.

77. Malcolm Gray, *The Fishing Industries of Scotland, 1790-1914: A Study in Regional Adaptation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 27-29.

78. This was enacted as Resolution 60 of the Council of the Northern Department. Cowie, *The Minutes of the Council, 1830 to 1843*, Volume 4, 834. The problem of unskilled workers producing low-quality barrels existed from the beginning of the trade on the Fraser River. The Fort Langley post journal of 1829 notes that a labourer "who never made a Keg in his life" was producing salmon barrels, "none of them what may be Called pickle tight." Maclachlan, *The Fort Langley Journals*, 137, 127. The issue of leaking barrels was repeated throughout the period of salmon export. Cullen, *The History of Fort Langley*, 50-51; Rich, *The Letters of John McLoughlin, 1839-1844*, 264-265.

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the production of salt salmon production until 1860.[79] The importance of his specialized knowledge and skills was reflected in an annual salary far above that of other Company servants at Fort Langley. By Outfit 1850 his contract stipulated £50 per year, with a £5 "gratuity or commission on casks made," rising to £60 by Outfit 1858.[80] For the HBC, the justification for such pay came with the elimination of the bottleneck created by limited production of barrels and unskilled fish curers. In Outfit 1846, after Cromarty's arrival at Fort Langley, the number of barrels of salmon produced rose to 1,600, double that of the previous outfit.[81] Human capital was converted into increased production, and so was rewarded accordingly.

When Cromarty started at Fort Langley in 1845, HBC records listed two other coopers, John Bell and Peeopeeoh, while Ohia, a labourer at that time, joined the coopering workforce in 1850. John Bell and Joseph Maayo, the country-born son of Peeopeeoh, were the two coopers listed in 1857-1858 in addition to Cromarty. Throughout the 1850s, Cromarty's subordinates earned from £25 to £30 per year, significantly above the £17 to £22 typical for HBC labourers in the 1840s and 1850s.[82]

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79. HBCA, B.226/g/5, Western Department Abstract of Accounts, Outfit 1857, 7d-8. HBCA, B.226/g/6, Western Department Abstract of Accounts, Outfit 1858, 5d-6; *Mainland Guardian*, 15 December 1875, 3; Cullen, *Appendices to the History of Fort Langley*," 14, 19.

80. BCA, MS-105, James Murray Yale Papers, folio 3, 14-15, Agreement of Employment, W. Cromarty, 12 February 1850; HBCA, B.226/g/6, Western Department Abstract of Accounts, Outfit 1858, 5d-6. In the pre-gold rush period, this was three times or more the income of unskilled employees at the same post, who earned in the range of £17 to £22 per year; HBCA, B.226/g/5, Western Department Abstract of Accounts, Outfit 1857, 6d-18; HBCA, B.226/g/6, Western Department Abstract of Accounts, Outfit 1858, 4d-18.

81. The barrels for the 1845 curing season would have been made prior to Cromarty's arrival at the post. 800 barrels were packed that year, compared to the 1,600 packed in 1846 after Cromarty had been placed in charge of cooperage operations. Cullen, *The History of Fort Langley*, 96-97, Appendix E, Salmon Cured at Fort Langley 1830-73.

82. Cullen, *Appendices to the History of Fort Langley*," 14, 16-17; HBCA, B.226/g/5, Western Department Abstract of Accounts, Outfit 1857, 6d-18; HBCA, B.226/g/6, Western Department Abstract of Accounts, Outfit 1858, 4d-18.

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What makes this more significant is that Peeopeeoh and Ohia were native Hawaiian employees, while John Bell and Maayo both were country-born, implying Aboriginal mothers. Maayo was the son of an Hawaiian man and an Aboriginal woman. The evidence from this post suggests a convention of employing Hawaiian workers as coopers, and probably by extension as fish curers. Additionally, it may demonstrate a pattern of occupational succession, with sons taking over their fathers' occupational roles. When Donald Fraser, the correspondent of the London *Times*, visited Fort Langley in the fall of 1858, he noted "young Indians" employed as coopers, as well as at other tasks.[83] It is probable that Fraser in fact observed these second generation, country-born HBC employees, who would have had a status within fur trade society quite different to that of "Indian" attributed to them by the British visitor, Fraser.

The HBC workforce involved in coopering and salmon curing demonstrates some meaningful patterns. First, the evidence suggests a racialized workforce comprised of Hawaiian and country-born employees. It seems that with the exception of Cromarty, who directed the system of production, no other British or Canadian servants of the Company participated. This convention is not explained in the records. Considered a "country product," with a recently-developed regional market, salt salmon did not fit into the primary business of sending furs to Europe. HBC managers may have followed racial and business ideology to consider country-recruited or country born employees the most appropriate workforce for such a "country trade." An assumption that Hawaiian workers would have experience with cooperage in the maritime industries around the Sandwich Islands could explain the managers' inclination to place this group in these positions. Regardless of the motivation, this provides an early example of a particular racial or ethnic group being identified as the most appropriate for a certain variety of work.

Although in the ethnically-stratified workforce of the HBC, Hawaiian employees and their descendants generally were considered the lowest ranking servants, the importance of coopering provided increased status, so created the opportunity for some

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83. *The London Times*, 30 November 1858, 4.

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mobility. This was demonstrated by their salaries, significantly higher than those of most other Canadian or Kanakan servants, and similar to those paid to the British coopers and fish curers recruited in the late 1830s. In this instance, members of an identifiable and subordinated group in the HBC workforce provided a form of skilled labour essential to the system of production, and so enhanced their position in the HBC social hierarchy. Mobility was possible in spite of their ethnic or racial ascription, due to the requirement for human capital in such a complex process. Put another way, the social location of these men was determined more by their economic contribution than by the racial ideology carried by the Anglo-North American managers of the HBC. The complex system of production had the greatest impact on determining how these workers were accommodated into post society.

Without the disadvantage of being part of a subordinated social group, even greater opportunity for social mobility was available to British employees essential to the system of production, such as Cromarty. He received the highest salary of any servant at Fort Langley, and was presented with other perquisites that supported personal mobility. His contract for Outfits 1852 and 1853 included the proviso: "He is to be allowed to purchase one cow on his a/c. [account] and to receive another as a gratuity for past services which I beg you will cause to be delivered to him."[84] Combined with later references to Cromarty's private holdings, located just outside the HBC post, and including a house, barn, garden, and cow, it seems clear that within the limitations of an HBC-dominated social environment, by the early 1850s he was approaching the status of an independent proprietor or yeoman farmer.[85]

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84. HBCA, B.226/b/7, 5-5d, James Douglas to James Yale, 13 September 1852.

85. One of the limitations on this status was the inability to acquire personal title to land. Information on Cromarty's establishment is found in John Gibbard, "Early History of the Fraser Valley 1808-1885" (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1937), 112-113. Its location was supported by a reference to Cromarty's fence in locating a school site in 1868, while its scale was suggested in an 1870 reference to his house, garden, and cow. "Cromarty's Old House & Bayrn [*sic*]" was demolished after his death, in 1879; HBCA, B.113/b/2, 24, Ovid Allard to Board of Management, 31 March 1868; HBCA, B.113/b/3,

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A parallel example of mobility based on human capital is found in the case of Samuel Robertson, the boatbuilder at Fort Langley in the 1850s. Also from the Orkneys, he engaged with the HBC in 1843 for a five year term as a labourer, at an annual salary of £16, and arrived at Fort Vancouver in Outfit 1844.[86] There he acquired some boatbuilding skills, as in 1847 he was sent to Fort Langley to construct a fleet of vessels for use on the Fraser River.[87] In 1850 James Douglas authorized a rise in Robertson's salary from a labourer's £22 per year to a tradesman's £40 per year. Robertson's services were seen as indispensable, "though that is a very high rate of pay for the services of a half tradesman like him, and much more than he could earn, in any other country."[88] This provides a clear statement of the opportunity for occupational and social mobility provided in the context of the HBC's Columbia Department. By 1853 Robertson's contract referred to him as "Labourer, Boat Builder, and Carpenter," at an annual salary of £45, and a gratuity comprising "an allowance of tea and sugar, and 2 blankets for firewood."[89] With the 1858 Fraser River goldrush, Robertson decided not to re-engage with the HBC, but instead took advantage of the opportunity to open a small tavern, the "What Cheer House," and later established himself as a farmer and independent boatbuilder in Maple Ridge, across the Fraser from Fort Langley.[90]

46, Ovid Allard to Board of Management, 8 March 1870; HBCA, B.226/z/2, 197, John Work to Munro, 4 July 1879.

86. HBCA, B.239/u/1, Northern Department Engagement Register, 298d-299, #1788.

87. Due to the 1846 boundary settlement, Fort Langley was to replace Fort Vancouver as the inland depot, necessitating the fleet on the Fraser. Cullen, *The History of Fort Langley*, 47.

88. HBCA, B.226/b/3, Fort Victoria, Correspondence Book, 28-28d, James Douglas to James Yale, November 8, 1850.

89. The blankets could be used to purchase wood from Aboriginal woodcutters. BCA, MS-105, Yale Family Papers, folio 1, 15, James Douglas to James Yale, July 19, 1853

90. HBCA, B.226/g/5, Western Department Abstract of Accounts, Outfit 1857, 14d-15; BCA, Film No.204A, Samuel Robertson, Diary, 1858-1889.

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As expressed by Douglas, the occupational and social mobility that Cromarty and Robertson achieved through emigrating in the service of the HBC could not have been achieved in "any other country," including their native Orkney Islands. Significantly, they, the Hawaiian coopers, and many other employees of the HBC, decided to remain in the Columbia Department/BC on their retirement from Company service, in spite of terms of employment that guaranteed free passage back to their place of engagement.[91] The introduction of complex systems of production required special skills and knowledge, and so created opportunities for those with appropriate human capital. Apparently these workers understood that such opportunity was only possible within the fluid economic and social conditions they encountered in the region, and so they rejected the option of retiring to the more restrictive social environments they had left in the service of the HBC.

The Forest Industry System of Production of the Hudson's Bay Company

The Oahu market, the motivation for the salt salmon trade, also demonstrated a strong demand for sawn lumber and other forest products, leading to the development of an HBC export trade in these commodities. As in the salmon trade, the Sandwich Islands market dominated this trade, with twenty-four of twenty-eight shipments of lumber from Fort Vancouver in the period from 1828 to 1842 intended for Oahu.[92] With the identification of a market, and the pre-existing transportation linkage that existed with the location of the Sandwich Islands on the sailing route to and from Britain, the HBC had to develop a system of production for the commodities. In some cases, as the shingle trade, this simply involved an extension of fur trade conventions, with Aboriginal producers paid

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91. The "transportation home" clause was written into the standard printed employment agreements of the Hudson's Bay Company, in both French and English forms; the latter normally specified transportation back to Europe. For example, French agreement form, Kea, 1852, Fort Langley National Historic Site, LL 71.3.2; English agreement form, Ohia, 1854, Fort Langley National Historic Site, LL 71.8.3.

92. The exceptions were one shipment that was diverted to Valparaiso, Chile in 1836, and three sent to California in 1830 and 1834, listed in Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 206, Table 5.

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on the basis of commodities delivered. With the Russian American Company monopolizing the Oahu market for shingles, the HBC did not develop this trade beyond a simple exchange form of production. It continued to place shingles on the Sandwich Islands market in the 1840s and 1850s, generally produced at Nisqually, Fort Victoria, or Fort Rupert, but on a small scale. At some posts, such as Fort Langley, if the men had "no other employment" they were ordered to saw boards for export, but such "incidental" exports could not compete in quantity or quality with lumber produced by saw mills.[93] To provide suitable export commodities, the HBC introduced a more complex system of production at the headquarters post of Fort Vancouver to meet the Oahu demand. Starting with the construction of a small water powered sawmill in 1827, a system of production developed that incorporated some existing HBC forms, and demonstrated some organizational linkages to the contemporary salt salmon trade, and to the later forest industry.[94]

Aboriginal Inputs:

The Fort Vancouver sawmill remained the only significant Columbia Department producer of lumber for export. Within the system of production developed and regularized there in the 1830s and continuing through the 1840s, there is no evidence of independent Aboriginal commodity producers supplying raw materials to the mill, nor is there any evidence of Aboriginal wage labour being utilized. The contemporary descriptions are consistent in noting an immigrant workforce, after 1840 made up almost exclusively of Kanakas [or Hawaiians]. At other posts where logs were intended for local use, or for milling into lumber for local use, Aboriginal producers supplied logs, following

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93. Only one cargo of 300 "deals," or rough planks produced this way was shipped from Fort Langley. *Ibid.*, 230-231; Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 148, Table 8.

94. Rich, editor, *Part of a Dispatch from George Simpson, 1829*, 84-85; Thomas R. Cox, *Mills and Markets: A History of the Pacific Coast Lumber Industry to 1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 9.

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the simple system of production utilized in the fur trade.[95] The larger convention was that a specified product was delivered to the HBC, and the Aboriginal producers received payment based on a mutually understood tariff. The absence of Aboriginal producers at Fort Vancouver seems to have been the exception to this pattern. It was also the only post that had a system of production directed explicitly at the export of forest products, rather than production for local use.

The Fort Vancouver Sawmill System of Production

The focus of the lumber export trade with Oahu was the sawmill first established in 1827 on the Columbia River just east of the headquarters post of Fort Vancouver. Like the salt salmon trade, this industry involved a complex system of production, and a split labour market, although there were some important distinctions between the two systems. The Fort Vancouver sawmill went through several phases of renovation and expansion over a twenty year period beginning in 1827. The initial version of the mill utilized machinery imported from England, with a single saw powered by a water wheel. Two yoke of oxen yarded the logs to the mill, where they were cut into deals or rough planks. In the spring of 1829 the cutting capacity of the sawmill was 70 to 100 deals per day.[96] In the same year George Simpson estimated the annual cost of operating this "experimental" mill at about £150, producing some 300,000 board feet of deals with a workforce of eight

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95. Examples of this simple commodity trade include during the construction of Fort Victoria, when James Douglas offered Native producers "a blanket (2½) for every forty pickets of 22 feet by 36 inches which they bring." BCA, A/B/40/D75.4A, James Douglas, Diary 1843, 13, 16 March 1843. In the next decade the HBC sawmill at Nanaimo depended exclusively on Aboriginal producers, paid one blanket for each eight logs delivered, of at least fifteen feet in length and fifteen inches diameter at the small end, or half that if the log was smaller. BCA, A/C/20.1/N15.2, Nanaimo Journal 1855-1857, 29 August 1855. From 1855 to 1857 the Sne ney mux provided some 2,715 saw logs to the HBC at Nanaimo, presumably under these terms. Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 149.

96. Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 205.

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men.[97] At 10 shillings [$2.50] per thousand board feet, this cost of production provided scope for profits in Oahu even allowing for expenses of transportation and agency. In 1833 the sawmill was managed by William Canning, who had a Canadian, a Sandwich Islander, and four other company servants working for him.[98]

The HBC constructed a new, larger, water powered sawmill in about 1834, in response to the expansion and increasing stability of the Oahu lumber market. It occupied a building of about 100 by 40 feet, and again used imported machinery. A 20 foot diameter by 10 foot wide overshot waterwheel provided power to eleven saws, nine arranged in a gang, and two more in a sash frame. William Crate, the millwright who worked on it, estimated the cost of this mill at about $80,000.[99] However, an American visitor thought this large mill to be no more productive than single saw mills in the United States.[100] James Douglas noted the new mill had twelve saws, and could cut 3,500 feet of

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97. Rich, *Part of a Dispatch from George Simpson, 1829*, 84-85; Frederick Merk, editor, *Fur Trade and Empire; George Simpson's Journal; Remarks connected with the Fur Trade in the Course of a Voyage from York Factory to Fort George and Back to York Factory, 1824-25; together with Accompanying Documents* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 309.

98. Mackie, "The Hudson's Bay Company on the Pacific," 283 citing HBCA, B.223/b/9, Fort Vancouver correspondence outward, fo.5, "List of men at Fort Vancouver 21st March 1833."

99. This description is from the deposition of William F. Crate, the long-serving millwright at Fort Vancouver, in *British and American Joint Commission for the Final Settlement of the Claims of the Hudson's Bay and Puget Sound Agricultural Companies*, Vol.II (Washington and Montreal, 1865-1869), pp.104-118. Crate recalled only that the "new" mill was built before 1843, but the American missionary Jason Lee noted a fine new mill being built in September 1834; *Ibid.*; OHS, Mss 1212, file 1, Journal 1833-38, September 16, 1834. There is some ambiguity concerning when Crate arrived at Fort Vancouver. Richard Mackie suggested that Crate was imported to erect the original 1827 mill machinery, while Crate himself recalled 1832 as the year. Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 205; *British and American Joint Commission*, Vol.II, 104-118.

100. Rev. Samuel Parker, *Journal of an Exploring Tour Beyond the Rocky Mountains Under the Direction of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Performed in the Years 1835, 1836, and 1837* (Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, 1838), 173.

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one inch boards in a 24 hour day.[101] This output was supported by John Dunn's description of the operation in the 1830s, with "scores of woodcutters, employed to fell timber," and production of 3,000 feet of lumber per day.[102] Samuel Parker described the logging and milling establishment he encountered in 1835, including "two white men with a yoke of oxen drawing logs for sawing. ... Soon we came to a very large saw-mill, around which were large piles of lumber and several cottages." Parker found "several Scotch laborers" and "their Indian families" at the mill.[103] This suggests a European workforce, raising country families in a residential situation determined by the sawmill, as a satellite of Fort Vancouver. The discrepancy between the seven men noted in the HBC document, the larger number suggested by the Parker description, and the "scores" mentioned by Dunn, could relate in part to the HBC practice of only classifying skilled or semi-skilled workers by their position or duties; all others were simply "labourers," who could be used interchangeably for various sorts of work. However, the greatly increased production of the post-1834 mill compared to the earlier one, up from 300,000 to potentially 900,000 feet per year of lumber, probably accounted for most of the difference. Given a similar system of production, it would follow that to produce three times the lumber would require about three times the workforce.

In 1838 the company rebuilt the Fort Vancouver sawmill again, but without a significant increase in size. However, the configuration had changed, with the new mechanism having double gearing, lighter frames, smaller cranks, and an increased stroke.[104] At this time the mill was employing 25 or 26 men, "classed as Hewers, carters,

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101. BCA, MS-0678, James Douglas, "Journal of a Journey from Fort Vancouver to York Factory and back 1835."

102. Dunn, *History of the Oregon Territory*, 153.

103. Parker, *Journal of an Exploring Tour*, 138.

104. E.E. Rich, ed., *The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, First Series, 1825-1838* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1941) 259-260, James Douglas to Governor and Committee, October 18, 1838. Richard Mackie described this rebuild as involving the resurrection, shipping, and

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fodderers Rafters sawyers, and one overseer."[105] In spite of Douglas emphasizing the difference between this 1838 sawmill and the earlier version, it sounded much the same on the 1846-47 inventory of Fort Vancouver buildings, as a "substantially built saw mill, 91 x 30 feet, and capable of working a gang of 11 saws, with an overshot wheel of 16 ft diameter." There was a second mill listed alongside this one, described as a "new single saw mill, 60 x 19 ½ ft., cistern 16 ft long, 8 ft square."[106] In spite of the changes to the 1838 mill, the first sawmill sounds much like the 1834 version; the addition of the new single mill would have resulted in increased production capacity for the complex as a whole.

The expansion and changes to the sawmill resulted in changes to the complex around it, and the workforce exhibited some changes as well. A post-September 1844 map of Fort Vancouver showed seventeen buildings clustered in the area, while the 1846-47 inventory of buildings noted a complex of industrial and residential structures surrounding the mill.[107] At least one of these was a blacksmith's shop, that supported the

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installation at Fort Vancouver of a Napoleonic war era (1811) steam sawmill mothballed at Moose Factory, possibly accounting for the somewhat modified configuration. Fort Vancouver inventories from the 1840s make it clear that the mill on the Columbia remained water powered. Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 211-214; HBCA, B.223/z/5, Fort Vancouver Inventory of Buildings, 1846-1847.

105. Rich *The Letters of John McLoughlin, 1825-1838*, 259-260, James Douglas to Governor and Committee, 18 October 1838; *ibid.*, 285, James Douglas to George Simpson, 18 March 1838.

106. HBCA, B.223/z/5, Fort Vancouver Inventory of Buildings, 1846-1847. The "new" single mill was apparently built in 1845, when clerk Thomas Lowe referred to the preparation of "timber for another Saw mill." HBCA, E.25/2, Thomas Lowe Private Journal 1842-1850, 31 July 1845.

107. HBCA, G.1/125, Sketch of the Environs of Fort Vancouver, by H.N. Peers, c.1844; HBCA, B.223/z/5, Fort Vancouver Inventory of Buildings, 1846-1847. The inventory lists the two sawmills and a number of other buildings, including "One new lumber shed, 45 x 23 ½ feet; One new ox byre, 34 x 29 feet; One new store, 30 x 18 feet; One new stable, 30 x 18 feet; Men's houses, forge, etc." *Ibid.*

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sawmill operation, and in addition produced country-made trade goods.[108] Descriptions of the sawmill and its workforce from the early 1840s are remarkably consistent. Thomas Farnham, at Fort Vancouver in 1840, noted the mill was in constant operation, producing between 2,500 and 3,000 feet per 24 hours: "Thirty or forty Sandwich Islanders are felling the pines and dragging them to the mill; sets of hands are plying two gangs of saws by night and day; nine hundred thousand feet per annum."[109] In 1841-42, Duflot de Mofrás noted a sawmill capable of cutting 3,000 feet of lumber per day: "This plant employs a score of workers, all men from the Sandwich Islands, and has horses, oxen and carts in proportion."[110] A similar report was offered by Lieutenant George Emmons in 1841, who noted an operation employing 25 to 30 men and 12 yoke of oxen, running nine saws, and producing about 2,500 feet of lumber per day: "Most all of these men I observed were Sandwich Islanders, their ration consists principally of smoked salmon – sea biscuit, and the pay of each 17 pounds per an."[111]

Two issues coalesce in these descriptions of the HBC system of export lumber production. First, in spite of the various "improvements" made to the sawmill, its output and workforce remained remarkable consistent, with about 25 workers, and production of 3,000 feet per day. This suggests that the level of production achieved was adequate to meet the demand on the Oahu market, and further increases were not required. It is possible that it was a growing local market for lumber, due to the burgeoning American population, that led to the construction of the second sawmill in 1845. Second, the

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108 Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition During the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841 and 1842*, Vol.4 (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845) 336.

109. Thomas J. Farnham, *Travels in the Great Western Prairies*, Vol.2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1843), 266.

110. In another sentence, de Mofrás modified this statement, including Canadians among the 20 men working at the sawmill. Marguerite Eyer Wilbur, ed., *Duflot de Mofrás, Travels on the Pacific Coast*, Vol.2 (Santa Ana, CA: Fine Arts Press, 1937), p.99.

111. George Thornton Emmons, *The Emmons Journal* (Eugene, OR: Koke Tiffany Co., [n.d.]), 6.

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workforce underwent a demographic transformation in the 1840s. Descriptions from the 1830s referred to a "white" or "Scotch" workforce, except for one Hawaiian, but by the 1840s this changed to an Hawaiian workforce, with occasional reference to a minority of Canadians. This change may reflect the problems encountered by the HBC in recruiting workers from Britain or Canada for the distant Columbia Department. Hiring Hawaiian workers was one solution to this issue. In 1840 the governor of Hawaii gave permission to the HBC agent in Honolulu to hire 60 Kanaka employees on three year contracts for service on the Columbia. This pattern of hiring continued, until by 1843 nearly half [57 of 134 employees] of the Company employees at Fort Vancouver were Hawaiians. Hired as labourers at the standard HBC rate of £17 per year, most of these men worked in the lumber trade or in agriculture.[112] Kanaka workers were identified with all phases of the forest industry, including falling, and acting as teamsters for oxen yarding the logs. Although such jobs became identified as skilled, high-prestige positions in the post-HBC forest industry, there is no evidence for this sort of definition at Fort Vancouver.

The complex system of production established for sawmilling was similar in some ways to that described for the salt salmon industry. First, it followed the HBC hierarchical model, with overall regional strategies set by the Superintendent or Board of Management, and the operation of the sawmill, and a nearby grist mill, under the direction of a resident Company clerk. The clerk would be responsible for ensuring that appropriate records were kept, financial arrangements made, and generally overseeing the "business" aspect of the sawmill's operation. In the 1840s, this position was filled by Daniel Harvey, resident in a house near the mills, who was viewed primarily as a farmer and miller.[113] "Practical" matters were handled by skilled or semi-skilled workers. At first, this role was filled by William Canning [or Cannon], who seemed to fit the country-trained, semi-skilled category like the Fort Langley workers discussed above. Canning was listed as the

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112. This comprised 43% of the Fort Vancouver workforce. Koppel, *Kanaka*, 21-22.

113. Rich, *The Letters of John McLoughlin, 1839-1844*, 162-163, John McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, 18 November 1843; Hussey, *Fort Vancouver Structures*, Vol.2, 152.

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manager of the mill in 1833, and seems to have retired in Outfit 1836, after William Crate arrived at the post. Canning worked for the North West Company on the Columbia prior to the 1821 amalgamation, and then for the HBC at Fort Vancouver since its founding in 1825.[114] Typical for such country-trained or semi-skilled workers, his designation in personnel lists was ambiguous, such as the 1833 reference to managing the sawmill, and other identifications as a millwright or a blacksmith. Canning's privileged position was demonstrated by his £45 per year salary in 1835, more than double that paid to a labourer. Canning brought two assets or forms of human capital to the system of production in the establishment of a sawmilling system of production at Fort Vancouver. First, he had some specialized knowledge, or mechanical skill, as a blacksmith. Although this may not have related directly to sawmilling, it would give him an advantage over other employees in the installation, maintenance, and operation of the mechanical aspects of the process. Additionally, he had been resident on the Columbia for two decades, and in that time presumably developed extensive business and social contacts among the Aboriginal population. It may be speculated that he could ensure that an adequate quantity of logs was supplied by Aboriginal producers, following the pattern of exchange later noted on Vancouver Island. The radical increase in workforce size in the 1830s may have reflected the inclusion of company logging crews, presumably not included in the small crew of sawmill workers listed in 1833. The log supply, in the absence of such crews, would have depended on Aboriginal producers, a linkage Canning might have provided.

Canning's successor, William Frederick Crate, was engaged specifically as a

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114. Canning's presence on Fort Vancouver rolls in 1825, his presence at the sawmill in 1833, and his putative retirement in 1836 are from *ibid.*, 213-215. His role as manager of the mill in 1833 is from Mackie, "The Hudson's Bay Company on the Pacific," 283, citing HBCA, B.223/b/9, Fort Vancouver correspondence outward, fo.5, "List of men at Fort Vancouver 21st March 1833." Canning's identity as a former Astorian of the North West Company is from *ibid.*, p.281. Mackie referred to William Crate arriving in 1827 to install the "experimental" sawmill machinery, but this is not supported by other materials, such as the 1833 list of sawmill employees previously cited, and Crate's own recollection of 1832 as the year he arrived at Fort Vancouver. Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 205; *British and American Joint Commission*, Vol.II, 104-118.

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millwright, a skilled worker with the specialized technical knowledge to maintain and operate the sawmill.[115] This parallels the situation in the salt salmon industry on the Fraser River. In both instances an "experimental" trade developed, and when it showed promise, was more intensively developed under the direction of an imported specialist. Like Cromarty at Fort Langley, Crate was identified with restructuring the system of production, and increasing production to a level capable of meeting the market demand in Oahu. Another parallel was the employment of Hawaiian workers in these export trades. In both instances, the majority of the HBC servants involved in the business were from the Sandwich Islands [or children of Sandwich Islanders]. This suggests a convention involving the use of "country-hired" employees to manufacture "country produce" for sale on a Pacific market. Such trades may have been viewed as outside the traditional economic purview of the fur trade, and so outside traditional geographic and workforce relations. A new regional trade would require a new regional workforce, so the system of production would be self-contained, rather than impinging on the traditional HBC fur trade system of production. This also resulted in the formation of ethnically-split labour markets in both trades, in which the managers and the skilled or semi-skilled supervisor were of Anglo-North American origin, while the majority of the dedicated workforce was Hawaiian.

The absence of Aboriginal participation, either as independent commodity producers or as waged labour, in the forest industry seems unusual in the HBC's Columbia Department. The Company clearly valued Aboriginal labour in its agricultural activities at Fort Vancouver, Cowlitz Farm, and Fort Nisqually. However, in the forest industry there was a clear preference for labour supplied by Company employees, generally Sandwich Islanders. This notable variation in the system of production may have been influenced by a number of factors, including the dramatic post-contact Aboriginal population decline on the Columbia. However, I believe that there are two factors more important in shaping this Hawaiian-dominated forest industry labour force. First, sawmilling was not seasonal,

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115. Deposition of William Crate, in *British and American Joint Commission*, Vol.II, 104-118.

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unlike the salmon fishery that depended on a brief annual run of fish. In the physical environment on the lower Columbia, it would be possible to log and mill for most of the year. Neither the raw material nor the finished commodity were subject to rapid spoilage, so the system of production was not subject to the same temporal constraints as that in the salt salmon trade. In the forest industry, work could proceed at a more measured pace throughout the year, and so the disadvantages of paying and maintaining a full-time employee workforce were much less. With the development of the forest industry, the HBC, such a workforce was imported, essentially as a proletarian group, to provide this labour, rather than attempting to convert Aboriginal workers into a proletariat. The racialized perception of Sandwich Islanders as docile and willing workers, and their post-1840 availability at a lower cost than recruiting and transporting British or Canadian workers, made them an obvious choice.

Another factor in this decision to import an industry-specific proletariat probably related to gender ideology, extending from the discussion in the section on Aboriginal wage labour above. Based on cultural values, both indigenous and immigrant societies viewed Aboriginal women as most suited for waged labour. Although Aboriginal men would participate in the capitalist economy as independent commodity producers, for them waged labour was considered degrading, or even as analogous to slavery. Both cultures also had specific gender expectations concerning which types of activities were suitable for men or women. Working as agricultural or fish processing labour matched gender expectations in both cultures, so was considered fully appropriate for women. On the other hand, both societies considered activities such as hunting and "mechanical arts" as male prerogatives. Female loggers and sawmill workers would deviate too far from cultural norms to be acceptable.

With such ideological barriers to developing an Aboriginal proletarian work force for this industry, the HBC instead hired Sandwich Islanders. Ironically, these workers originated in an indigenous society in transition under the assault of the capitalist world system. In Hawaii, the indigenous population was perceived by Euro-North American immigrants in much the same terms as that of the Columbia Department. The ability of

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Hawaiians to "subsist" within their traditional economy was seen as the cause of their resistance to proletarianization, described as "independence" and "idleness," the same terms used to characterize First Nations. Through state intervention in the 1830s, and the introduction of a constitutional system in 1840, a "capitalist political economy" assumed dominance in Hawaii, replacing the traditional hierarchical, lineage-based system. These changing social relations created a "newly defined laborer – the Hawaiian commoner."[116] Perhaps not coincidentally, 1840 was when the hiring of Hawaiian workers by the HBC was facilitated, and they came to dominate the forest industry workforce.[117]

Around Fort Vancouver and its subsidiary posts, most of these workers were engaged as labourers working at milling or agriculture. There was no direct cost advantage in hiring Kanakas over Canadian or British servants, as all labourers, regardless of origin, were paid a basic salary of £17, with increases to as much as £25-27 possible, depending on time served and extra functions assumed.[118] However, there were cost advantages in mustering a workforce on existing routes in the Pacific, as well as the less tangible issue of a racialized perception of Hawaiian workers as most compatible with the types of work involved. Anticipating later industrial systems of production, the HBC managers imported all the required inputs, including technology and machinery, human capital or expertise, and the waged labour force. Without these inputs, made possible by

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116. Edward D. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii: A Labor History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), 24-25.

117. Tom Koppel noted that the Hawaiian labourers coming to the Columbia Department were "young men ... from the class of commoners." Koppel, *Kanaka*, 21.

118. Koppel referred to Hawaiian labourers earning from £17-27 per year at Fort Vancouver. *Ibid.*, 22. This is exactly the range noted for labourers or midmen generally in the Columbia Department in the 1850s, for instance HBCA, B.226/g/5, Western Department Abstract of Accounts, Outfit 1857; HBCA, B.226/g/6, Western Department Abstract of Accounts, Outfit 1858. An example of an extra function resulting in extra pay was the provision in the "Standing Rules and Regulations" of the HBC that "Commissioned Gentlemen" in charge of a post or district could appoint a labourer as "Cook or Servant, in addition to his ordinary duties" for a premium of £3 per year. BCA, MS-220, HBC Rules and Regulations, 13-14, Rule 19.

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the capital and existing links to markets of the HBC, the identified resource could not be converted into exportable form. The importation of a Hawaiian workforce was extremely significant, as it anticipated future situations in which workforces were mustered not just on the basis of economic factors, but on the perception that certain social groups, defined by gender and race, were best suited for certain types of industrial work. The workforce was not "captured" by chance, but rather was mustered through a series of economic and ideological decisions. In the course of this, the HBC created a clearly racialized workforce, with the administrative and management roles filled by Euro-North American workers, and the much larger common or unskilled labour component filled by Hawaiian workers. The motivation for these workers to engage with the HBC resembled that of Canadian or British workers. It was seen as a way of improving their life chances that would not be possible in Hawaii. As unskilled labour they could earn much more, and the "all-found" terms of the engagement meant that if they lived frugally, their earnings could be saved, providing the possibility of economic and social mobility. The basic HBC labourer's salary of £17 per year was more than double that paid to Chinese agricultural workers brought to Hawaii in 1852.[119] Many viewed this as a sojourning position, intending to return to Hawaii in better economic circumstances. For others, as for British and Canadian employees, the Columbia Department became their permanent home, as liaisons were formed with Aboriginal women and country families established.[120] As noted on the Fraser River, many decided not to return to the strictures of their originating

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119. These Chinese contract workers, brought in August 1852 and distributed to a number of sugar plantations, were hired on five-year contracts at $3 per month. Their terms, like those of the HBC employees, were all-found, including food, housing, and passage. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 62-64. Assuming the usual exchange rate in the mid-nineteenth century of from $4.85-5.00 per pound, this would be equivalent to about £7/4/0 to £7/8/5 per year, or about 44 percent of a basic labourer's salary in the Columbia Department.

120. Of a sample of 310 Kanaka employees in the post-1842 period, 91 returned to Hawaii when their contract ended (although 26 later re-engaged with the HBC), 119 stayed in North America, 49 died in service, and there is no evidence for 51. Koppel, *Kanaka*, 21.

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society, anticipating greater opportunity in the fluid society of the Columbia Department.

Conclusions

The complex systems of production set up in the 1830s and 1840s to permit the export of salt salmon and lumber from the Columbia Department of the HBC to Oahu were shaped by many factors, including the demands of the market, the nature and location of the raw materials or resources, and the availability of labour. Both the salt salmon and lumber trades developed in response to the demand in the Sandwich Islands. Arguably, without the Oahu market neither of these complex systems of production would have been required. In both cases the raw materials were abundant, but needed to be transformed into a commodity suitable for sale on the export market, requiring the establishment of complex systems of production. The primary way that these differed from the simple system of production used in the fur trade lay in the integration of different inputs, including independent commodity production, skilled and unskilled wage labour, and imported technical expertise and materials or machinery. The way in which various historical blocs negotiated this process of integration, and conventions were established, was determined not simply by economic or material considerations, but also by cultural factors, including the ideology of race and gender.

Both Aboriginal men and women participated in the salmon salting industry, although in very different ways, based on cultural understanding of appropriate behaviour. Men could extend from their traditional role of fishers to become suppliers of raw materials as independent commodity producers, often on an incidental basis. Aboriginal men did not become involved as wage labour, as this status would be contrary to culturally-constructed understandings of normative behaviour, as understood in both Aboriginal and Anglo-North American societies. The understanding of appropriate women's work, again from the perspective of both participating cultures, made Aboriginal women more susceptible to accepting waged labour, so becoming proletarianized. This was facilitated by existing gendered power relations and role definitions in indigenous societies that made women working for men more acceptable than men working for men.

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Central to this difference in the integration of women and men into this capitalist system of production was the concept of autonomy. The construct of masculinity in both indigenous and immigrant cultures depended heavily on concepts of freedom and autonomy. These would not be compromised by Aboriginal men acting as independent commodity producers; the work process would be chosen and controlled entirely by the producer, and so autonomy maintained. To become waged workers would mean accepting terms of employment and a work process determined by the employer, or giving up this autonomy. For Aboriginal women, the terms of employment and work process, either in the salmon industry or in agriculture, were not radically different to conditions encountered in traditional culture. The primary difference was that rather than being directed to social production, it would now be directed to production for profit.

As in the fur trade, both men and women participated in this industry because of the opportunity to achieve social mobility through economic growth. The payment for fresh salmon was high, considering its ease of capture during the runs on the Columbia or the Fraser. It required little adjustment to traditional economic pursuits. Salmon that was captured within the context of the indigenous economy, but proved surplus to its requirements, found a ready market with the HBC. The goods earned contributed to economic mobility. The salt salmon industry and agricultural pursuits of the HBC created an opportunity for Aboriginal women to participate directly in the capitalist economy, a new source of wealth. Whether within indigenous society or within the society within the trading posts, their earnings would supplement the family income with goods that would not otherwise be available, and so improve their social position. Complex systems of production such as that in the salt salmon trade created economic opportunities for both Aboriginal men and women. However, based on the cultural values and ideology of both indigenous and immigrant societies, men and women participated in very different ways.

For Hudson's Bay Company employees as well, the salt salmon industry created significant opportunities for social mobility. The economic viability of this trade depended on the availability of specialized forms of human capital to construct the barrels and cure the salmon. It may be argued that this created a labour elite, able to convert their human

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capital into a privileged situation in the HBC workforce. This was reflected in high wages and perquisites, and also in the way that human capital, and the resulting central role in a complex system of production, could counteract the naturalized racial and ethnic order existing in the hierarchy of servants in the Company. Sandwich Islanders and their country-born, half-Aboriginal children comprised much of the semi-skilled workforce associated with the salmon trade, achieving salary levels well above the usual for either Kanaka or country-born labourers. The inter-generational succession of these semi-skilled positions is interesting, suggesting that such achieved status could be transmitted, or ascribed. A key feature of the salt salmon system of production is the clear divisions in the labour force, with each phase of production performed by a particular group defined by race, gender, and skill. These factors converged within the complex system of production to entrench certain social features in anticipation of later systems of industrial production.

The different system of production in the lumber export industry, reflecting the nature of the resource, contributed to a different set of social relations. Most prominently, Aboriginal workers were not integrated into this system, a feature which probably relates most directly to racial ideology and gender ideology in both indigenous and immigrant societies. While fish processing or agricultural labour were considered suitable forms of waged work for Aboriginal women, neither indigenous or immigrant cultures considered the forest industry to be appropriate women's work. The examples of log production on Vancouver Island suggest that Aboriginal men could fill this role as independent commodity producers. However, the same cultural proscription against giving up autonomy and masculinity by accepting waged labour applied to the participation of Aboriginal men in waged sawmill or other forms of labour. These cultural factors, combined with the year-round nature of this enterprise, created workforce conditions considered better met by imported labour.

As with the salmon trade, this led to a clearly racialized work force, although in this case exclusively male. The managers and skilled workers were Euro-North American, while the rest of the work force was Hawaiian. The HBC imported an already-proletarianized group of indigenous people as a preferable alternative to "capturing" an

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Aboriginal workforce. This suggests the level of difficulty inherent in modifying cultural values in a way that would permit the transformation of Aboriginal men into waged workers. The motivation for the Sandwich Islanders seems to have been the opportunity for social mobility, and escape from both the traditional and the new hierarchies developing in the Hawaiian Islands at the time. What is most interesting about this system of production is how it anticipates later industrial developments, when all the factors of production, including the labour force, were imported into British Columbia to produce export commodities.

Two major themes that come forward in the operation of these complex systems of production are social mobility and the racialization and "genderization" of the workforce. The identification of specific processes, or ways of working, with specific groups, based on race or gender, anticipates the situation in later nineteenth century BC. The HBC systems of production may have played a role in fixing some of the conventions, based on cultural values and negotiation between historical blocs, followed in later commodity-exporting industries. Participation in these trades by Aboriginal men and women, as well as HBC employees, seems principally motivated by the opportunities presented for economic and social mobility. Such opportunities would not have been available to those choosing to remain in traditional hierarchical situations, be they in Aboriginal societies, in the Orkney Islands, or in Hawaii. The major contribution of these systems of production may have been the way they naturalized the understanding that human capital could be converted into economic and cultural capital through participation in commodity exporting industries. This anticipated the emergence of an alternative form of the liberal order, in which social mobility did not depend on the ownership of agricultural land, but could be achieved within the context of extractive industry within a commodity exporting economy.

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Chapter 3: The Liberal Order Ascendent: The California Gold Rush and the Colony of Vancouver Island

The entrenching of the world capitalist system around the north Pacific created the conditions for a British Columbia economy based on the industrial production of commodities for export. The fur trade defined the broad commercial and geographic contours in which this development occurred. The business of the Hudson's Bay Company linked its Columbia Department in particular to the Sandwich Islands, California, and Alaska, connecting outriders of the recently-introduced world capitalist system. For example, in the Sandwich Islands, whaling provided the impetus for capitalism, followed by maritime-oriented mercantile activity, and then by the sugar industry in the later nineteenth century. In 1849 to 1862 a number of gold rushes around the Pacific provided the impetus to convert the introduction of capitalism from a pattern of relatively slow and uneven creation of capitalist enclaves into an unprecedented wave of speculative capitalist activity. In turn attracting significant populations of adventurers and immigrants to California, Australia, and then British Columbia, these events created new markets for commodities, new ventures making use of the resources identified by immigrant entrepreneurs, and led to the reformulation of economic and political structures to support capitalism. The boom conditions surrounding the Pacific gold rushes created an environment that supported the emergence of a distinct form of the liberal order. "Adventurers" came intending to improve their life chances by investing their economic and human capital in costly, risky, and often disappointing, ventures into the unknown.[1] Seeking social mobility, this population not only provided markets for products, commodities, and services, but operated in a fluid economic and social environment, conducive to entrepreneurial activity. The factors that impelled people to pursue the

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1. "Adventurer" was a contemporary term often used to describe the participants in the gold rushes, as in the letters from the American consul in Victoria during the 1862 Cariboo gold rush. Examples of its use are found in BCA, GR-2078, Diplomatic Despatches, United States Consuls in Victoria 1862-1906, film B9747, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, September 30, 1862; *ibid.*, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, October 1, 1862; *ibid.*, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, December 31, 1862.

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dream of gold made them willing to seek other opportunities, and take other risks, resulting in the expansion into ventures other than gold mining.

Before the gold rushes, the Hudson's Bay Company diversified into ventures that linked newly-identified resources and markets in a manner compatible with its existing system of production, such as the salt salmon and lumber trades to the Sandwich Islands. However, as these trades expanded, the HBC found that its system of merchant capitalism, involving exchange, transportation, and resale of commodities, could not meet the market demand. For both the lumber and salt salmon trades, the Company adopted the modified, complex system of production described in Chapter 2, that approximated some features of industrial capitalism. This change was a direct outcome of the market demand for certain commodities in the new capitalist economy of Hawaii.

The HBC, as the primary commodity exporting business in the region in the late 1840s and early 1850s, expanded its Pacific trade and systems of production in response to the gold rush-driven market demand in California and Australia. Although Hawaiian markets remained important, they were overshadowed by a reconfigured Pacific commercial orbit centred on the rising gold rush metropolis of San Francisco. This new capitalist geography provided new markets for commodities, led by a demand for forest products and coal. This led to the extension and elaboration of HBC systems of production, and precipitated the first ventures by "independent" merchants and producers, other than the HBC.

As well as this market-driven impact, creating new opportunities for capitalist ventures, the economic and cultural impact of the California gold rush contributed to the emergence of socio-economic conditions supportive of the evolution of liberal values in the region. Until this event provided an alternative, the Hudson's Bay Company provided the economic and cultural framework in which the world capitalist system was introduced to BC. Although Aboriginal participants and a few employees had achieved social mobility within its system of production [Chapters 1 and 2], this was incidental to the ordered, hierarchical corporate structure of the HBC. The California gold rush provided a model of a social system strongly grounded in liberal values, which presented a powerful

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challenge to the maintenance of the more restrictive and hierarchical system of the HBC. As San Francisco grew in economic and cultural power to become the metropolitan and commercial centre not just of California, but of the entire capitalist Pacific, its influence on BC outstripped that of the HBC. The monopolist, hierarchical values of the company were challenged and eventually superceded by a meritocratic constellation of liberal values, strongly influenced by American ideology.

Ideological Change, the Company Colony and "Independent" Immigrants, 1849-1858

The ideological shift to "independent," as opposed to corporate, resettlement, and the naturalization of British Columbia as an environment in which social mobility could be achieved, was led by the 1849 California gold rush, and the establishment of the Colony of Vancouver Island in the same year. Although it may be claimed that the 1858 Fraser River gold rush played a leading role in bringing liberal values to the region, the economic and cultural forms that coalesced at that time may be traced back to the events of 1849. Colonial immigrants seeking social mobility negotiated with entrenched commercial and political hierarchies, within a conceptual framework strongly influenced by the economic opportunities and liberal ideology inherent in the California gold rush. The economic and social forms that developed took a form quite different to those envisioned by the Colonial Office and the Hudson's Bay Company when the colony was established in 1849.

A similar ideological transformation took place in that portion of the HBC Columbia Department south of the forty-ninth parallel, and contributed to it becoming part of the United Sates in the 1846 boundary settlement with Britain. The economic structure underlying the transformation was different, in this case based on land ownership and achieving the status of independent agricultural yeoman. This difference may be accounted for by the availability of large quantities of high quality agricultural lands south of the border. To the north, in the absence of such a resource, the aspiration to social mobility was based on the extraction of resource-based commodities. The "agricultural" model of achieving respectability fell broadly into the tradition of Jeffersonian Democratic thought, while the "industrial" model related more strongly to the doctrines of the later

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producer ethos, advocated by both Jacksonian Democratic and Republican ideology of the period. The primary goal in both instances involved achieving respectable status through becoming an economically autonomous, independent producer.

The hierarchical social system of the HBC in the Columbia Department was seen as antithetical by Americans imbued with the expansionist doctrine of manifest destiny.[2] Their rhetoric demonized the "foreign monopoly," that was seen as opposing the creation of an egalitarian society built on agrarian yeomanry, in favour of a hierarchical society composed of a small, subordinated group of company employees or former employees. Charles Wilkes, the leader of a military expedition sent to inventory the potential of the region in 1841, described the latter as "a sort of vassal" of the HBC, entirely dependent on it for survival.[3] American immigrants responded to the missionaries' promotion, with the goal of social mobility: "They come generally from among the poorer classes of the western States, with the praiseworthy design of improving their fortunes."[4] After 1844 the incentive was land ownership, as the provisional government permitted each [non-Native] male resident to claim 640 acres of land, considered adequate for self-sufficiency.[5] Intending to construct, and become part of, an American society that encouraged social

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2. Congregationalist missionaries took the lead in promoting the Oregon or Columbia region as a suitable region for "independent" American agricultural settlement. In the late 1830s interest in the region surged as the missionaries offered "overcharged pictures of its fertility and commercial importance" to attract settlement. By the early 1840s the managers of the HBC considered this a strategy to establish American political sovereignty in the region. Rich, *The Letters of John McLoughlin, 1839-1844*, 226, 313, citing HBCA., A.11/50, J. Douglas to Governor and Committee, 14 October 1839; HBCA, A.6/26, fos. 78d-85, Governor and Committee to J. McLoughlin, 27 September 1843.

3. Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition*, Vol.IV, 330.

4. Neil M. Howison, *Oregon, A Report* (Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1967), 32.

5. Rich, *The Letters of John McLoughlin, 1839-1844*, 237. An 1851 immigrant later stated that the "object of all who came to Oregon in early times was to avail themselves of the privilege of a donation claim." Arthur A. Denny, *Pioneer Days on Puget Sound* (Seattle: The Alice Harriman Co., 1908), 33.

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mobility through agricultural proprietorship, these immigrants considered the Hudson's Bay Company an evil monopoly, that opposed the larger project of manifest destiny.[6] John McLoughlin, the HBC Superintendent of the Columbia District, explained the conflict in terms of a "national and commercial" competition for profits, rather than in competing ideological systems:

> But we are a Monopoly, though every one of them [Americans] must admit that we are no Monopoly in regard to them, and which they do admit. But then we are British, and maintain and extend British influence in opposition to American Interests and influence, and it is this which annoys them.[7]

McLoughlin thought that this "national" conflict would decline as British and American populations on the Columbia became more familiar with one another.[8] This proved an over-optimistic assessment, as the Hudson's Bay Company was unable to maintain its system of production with a growing American population and the introduction of American political institutions. Culminating with the 1846 boundary settlement that granted the lands south of the forty-ninth parallel to the United States, so split the corporate Columbia Department, this confirmed American political hegemony in the region, and with it, the naturalization of a form of the liberal order.[9] This political and

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6. For instance, Caleb Cushing, a politician from Massachusetts, and one of the leading opponents of the HBC, described it as "a great foreign power," and "one of the corrupt monopolies of the reign of Charles II." *Speech of Mr. Cushing, of Massachusetts, on the Subject of the Oregon Territory. Delivered in the House of Representatives, May 17 and 22, 1838* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1838), n.p. Cushing was frequently mentioned as having business interests in the Willamette settlement in competition with the HBC. Most of the authorities he cited in his attacks on the HBC were those who had been out-competed by the British company. Howison, *Oregon, A Report*, 5.

7. Rich, *The Letters of John McLoughlin, 1844-46*, 73-74, citing HBCA, B.223/b/33, fos.170-172, J. McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, 28 March 1845.

8. *Ibid.*

9. The HBC managers at Fort Vancouver expressed concern about the territorial aspirations of the United States in California in the summer of 1846: "This is in our opinion the opening scene of the gigantic plan of usurpation through which the United States hope to extend their dominion on the shores of the Pacific." HBCA, B.223/b/35,

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ideological domination created the conditions in which the California gold rush took place, and so shaped the way the economic power of the region developed. As anticipated by its managers, the HBC system of production was incompatible with the American liberal order, so the company retrenched its fur trade north of the forty-ninth parallel. In 1849 the departmental headquarters moved to Fort Victoria, at the same time that British political structures arrived with the establishment of the colony of Vancouver Island.

Not all employees of the Hudson's Bay Company followed the company north. Many servants and a number of gentlemen decided that the opportunities presented by the liberal order of the United States was preferable to the hierarchy of the HBC. For example, the retired HBC Chief Traders George Traill Allan and Archibald McKinlay, and the retired clerk Thomas Lowe formed the Oregon City firm of commission merchants, Allan, McKinlay, Lowe & Co.[10] Successor firms that evolved out of this company played a significant role in the later development of export commodity industries in British Columbia. Allan worked as a clerk at Fort Vancouver from 1834-1842, transferred to Oahu and became a Chief Trader, then retired in 1849, intending to settle in San Francisco, but joined the Oregon City firm by 1851.[11] McKinlay served in the New Caledonia and Walla Walla districts, until being promoted to Chief Trader and put in charge of HBC business in Oregon City in 1846. He took a leave of absence in 1849, then retired and entered the partnership in 1851.[12] Until retiring in 1850, Lowe was a clerk working for James Douglas at Fort Vancouver. Presumably the three partners shared

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Fort Vancouver letters outward 1845-47, 53, J. Douglas and P.S. Ogden to Governor and Committee, July 28, 1846. By December 1846 the HBC Board of Management learned of the boundary settlement, and anticipated the end of the existing fur trade system of production. *Ibid.*, 85-86, J. Douglas and J. Work to Governor and Committee, 7 December 1846 [from Fort Victoria].

10. J.M.S. Careless, "The Lowe Brothers, 1852-70: A Study in Business Relations on the North Pacific Coast," *BC Studies* 2 (Summer 1969), 3-4.

11. Rich, *The Letters of John McLoughlin, 1839-1844*, 383-384.

12. *Ibid.*, 394-395.

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some cultural values, as all came from Perthshire in Scotland.[13] Further, they remained in the United States after retirement, attracted by the economic opportunities presented by the California gold rush. A branch of the business known as Allan, McKinlay, Lowe & Co. was opened in the gold rush centre of San Francisco in 1852, with Lowe in charge.[14] The linkages established by these men in their HBC service in the Columbia Department, and in the Sandwich Islands, contributed to the viability of their business, one that was supported by the liberal order ideology and state of the United States. The economic opportunities of the gold rush contributed to the initiation of the partnership, but as well as that economic "pull," there was also some "push" as a result of cultural incompatibility. Lowe decided to retire after marriage, as the life of a married HBC gentleman was "anything but suited to my ideas of independence," due to the paramilitary separation of the officers' mess from the family environment.[15] This corporate control of his private life could not be reconciled with his cultural values, and construct of respectable marriage. As well as economic factors, cultural factors contributed to his departure from the hierarchical and paternalistic HBC social system.

A similar ideological conflict between hierarchical and liberal values played out over the next decade on Vancouver Island. The Colonial Office established the colony of Vancouver Island to maintain British sovereignty, and so opportunities for profits for British firms, following the loss of the valuable Oregon and Washington territories. For practical reasons, the Colonial Office chose the Hudson's Bay Company as its agent of

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13. *Ibid.*, 393, 383, 394.

14. When the San Francisco company was formed in the spring of 1852, it was half ($7,500) owned by the earlier company of Allan, McKinlay and Co., with the other half owned by three silent partners, John Ballenden, J.A. Grahame, and A.C. Anderson, all still-active commissioned gentlemen of the HBC stationed at Fort Vancouver, with each holding a share worth $2,500. Careless, "The Lowe Brothers," 6, 3-4.

15. *Ibid.*, 3, citing BCA, Thomas Lowe, Letters Outward, May 14, 1852 to December 10, 1859, T. Lowe to D. McTavish, 14 May 1852.

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colonization.[16] The Royal Grant that created the colony, and placed its administration in the hands of the HBC, offered a rationale based on British colonization and business opportunities, and for the benefit of indigenous populations:

> Whereas it would conduce greatly to the maintenance of peace, justice and good order, and the advancement of colonization and the promotion and encouragement of trade and commerce in, and also the protection and welfare of the native Indians residing within that portion of Our territories in North America, called Vancouver's Island, if such Island were colonized by settlers from the British dominions, and if the property in the land of such island were vested for the purpose of such colonization in the said Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay;...[17]

The economy of the colony would be based on the land granted to it. The sale of lands, and the granting of licenses and leases for its use, would generate the revenues required for the administration of the colony. If a settler colony was not established within five years (by January 13, 1854), the grant could be revoked by the Colonial Office.[18] James Douglas was proposed as the first interim governor of the colony, and the names of fourteen men were submitted as being qualified to hold commissions of the peace [equivalent to later Justices of the Peace]. These were individuals that were seen as being respectable, representing the values that were central to the nascent colonial society. With the exception of Robert Staines, the recently-arrived chaplain and schoolmaster of the HBC at Fort Victoria, all of these men were commissioned gentlemen, or managers of the

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16. A number of proposals were considered in the 1846-48 period, prior to the choice of the HBC. Mackie, "The Colonization of Vancouver Island," 5.

17. Cited in E.O.S. Scholefield and F.W. Howay, *British Columbia from the Earliest Times to the Present*, Vol.1 (Vancouver: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1914) 500. The Charter of Grant is reprinted in its entirety in James E. Hendrickson, ed., *Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, Vol.1 (Victoria: Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1980) 374-378. The protection of aboriginal populations had become a significant issue for the Hudson's Bay Company south of the 49th parallel, since the outbreak of the Indian Wars in 1847, beginning with the Whitman incident.

18. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.1, 501-502.

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Company.[19] The coercive mechanism of the new colonial state took on the same hierarchical form as the administrative mechanism of the HBC. In spite of this congruence between corporate power and state power, all parties, including James Douglas, understood the ideological conflict between the HBC system of production and the requirements of colonial settlement:

> ... the interests of the Colony, and Fur Trade will never harmonize, the former can flourish, only, through the protection of equal laws, the influence of free trade, the accession of respectable inhabitants; in short by establishing a new order of things, while the fur Trade must suffer by each innovation.[20]

The impact of post-1838 American settlement on the formerly profitable trading districts south of the forty-ninth parallel supported Douglas's comments on the incompatibility of a settler society and the fur trade.[21] Lieutenant Adam Dundas of the Royal Navy echoed this incompatibility in his report to the Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey. Dundas, imbued with the current free market ideology, saw the HBC as hierarchical and autocratic, an approach he considered appropriate in dealing with "Savages," but one that would prove repugnant to potential colonists. He argued that Aboriginal populations could not coexist with "civilization," so considered it unrealistic to expect the HBC, with

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19. Along with Staines, the men listed were James Douglas, Peter Skene Ogden, John Work, Archibald McKinley, Dr. William Fraser Tolmie, Alexander C. Anderson, James M. Yale, John Tod, Dugald McTavish, Richard Grant, Donald Manson, George T. Allan, and John Kennedy. *Ibid.*, 503-504.

20. Rich, *The Letters of John McLoughlin, 1825-1838*, 242, citing HBCA, B.223/b/33, fos.170-172, J. Douglas to Governor and Committee, 18 October 1838.

21. Much of the correspondence from the HBC managers in the 1840s dealt with the larger implications of protecting the overall fur trade in the southern regions of the Columbia District. At times, this involved making concessions in existing retail and local arrangements, as Douglas and Ogden wrote in 1846: "...to maintain, not the interests of a particular district, but of the fur trade at large; the enemy [American traders and merchants] must be kept at bay on this field [Fort Vancouver and the Willamette], when it can be done with greater effect; than at any point more remote from the sea coast." HBCA, B.223/b/35, Fort Vancouver letters outward 1845-47, 16, J. Douglas and P.S. Ogden to G. Simpson, 19 March 1846.

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its dependence on Aboriginal producers, to support the growth of non-Native settlement.[22]

The blueprint for settling the colony was developed by the Hudson's Bay Company under the influence of the Colonial Office, following the colonial theory of Edward Gibbon Wakefield. The Wakefield theory depended on the implementation of high land prices, and a franchise based on land ownership, in order to replicate hierarchical British society. A landed gentry, comprised of those immigrants with enough capital to purchase land, would form the colonial elite. Their estates would be maintained by landless labourers, a workforce made up of those immigrants who could not afford to purchase land. The Wakefield system assumed an agricultural economy, with land the most important factor in the system of production. Ownership or non-ownership of land determined social divisions, and so would support the development of a hierarchical, "British" colonial society. Emigrants with capital could acquire land and assume a position as landed gentry, while those without capital could work and save to eventually acquire land.[23] Social mobility was possible, as the purchase of land would result in enhanced social position, or achieved status, as opposed to the emphasis on ascribed status and inheriting land more typical in Britain. Local conditions, including the limited agricultural potential of the region, a chronic shortage of waged labour, and free land in the American Northwest, meant that opportunities presented by this policy could not attract immigrants to Vancouver Island.[24] Some scholars saw this as the result of a strategic mistake on the part of the Colonial Office in applying the Wakefield system,

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22. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.1, 506-507.

23. This summary of the Wakefield system as applied to Vancouver Island is largely based on that provided by Mackie, "The Colonization of Vancouver Island," 7-11; Galbraith, *The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor*, 283-307. The use of the Wakefield system to replicate British social structure is noted by Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, ch.4, "Impetus to Settlement 1846-1858"; Loo, *Making Law, Order, and Authority*, ch.2, "*A Squatocracry of Skin Traders*: Law and Authority on Vancouver Island."

24. Mackie, "The Colonization of Vancouver Island," 10-15.

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while others suggested that it was simply a case of better opportunities elsewhere.[25]

Regardless, the results suggest that the system did not provide a strong "pull" for emigrants. At the end of 1854, there were 774 non-Native residents of Vancouver Island, the vast majority affiliated with, or formerly affiliated with, the HBC.[26] Those who chose to emigrate were governed by the company's regulations. Land was available for purchase in minimum blocks of 20 acres, at £1 per acre. Colonists paid their own passage to Vancouver Island, with large-scale buyers directed to bring labourers at the rate of five single men, or three married couples, for each hundred acre purchase. Resources on the land could be used freely, with the exception of a royalty on coal, and seaports were open for colonial and foreign shipping. Anglican clergy and government reserves would make up one square mile each for each eight square miles of land sold. The HBC prospectus provided for the appointment of a governor, council, assembly, and the establishment of a legislative process.[27] In July of 1849 English law was introduced to the colony with "An Act to Provide for the Administration of Justice in Vancouver's Island," and in December of the same year James Douglas was authorized, on behalf of the Crown, to extinguish Native claims to the lands of Vancouver Island.[28]

Although incapable of attracting colonists not affiliated with the HBC, in practice the Wakefield system underwent modifications that made it congruent with the existing

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25. For example, the "strategic mistake" model is applied by Galbraith, *The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor*, 283-307. The "other opportunity" model is represented by Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 58.

26. Of this population, 232 were in the town of Victoria, 154 on the nearby farms of the HBC subsidiary, the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, and 151 in Nanaimo. Most of the rest of the population was in the greater Victoria area, between Saanich and Sooke. W. Kaye Lamb, "The Census of Vancouver Island, 1855," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol.4, no.1 (January 1940), 54-58.

27. Mackie, "The Colonization of Vancouver Island," 7, citing [Hudson's Bay Company], *Colonization of Vancouver's Island*, HBCA, A.37/42, fos.13-14d.

28. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vancouver, Vol.1, 680-681; Wilson Duff, "The Fort Victoria Treaties," *BC Studies* 3 (Fall 1969), 3-57.

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social structure and hierarchy of the HBC.[29] The surveying and subdivision of the region around Victoria in 1851 designated three classes of land.[30] Known as town lots, suburban lots, and country lands, these designations correlated with the class divisions in the HBC. The cheapest, the "urban" town lots, targetted current or former HBC labourers, as well as former employees moving into commerce. The five acre lots in the suburban lands of Esquimalt and Victoria met the demand of tradesmen or higher-level employees of the HBC, together with employees of the colony or Royal Navy. There were two loosely defined groups of country lands. Labourers who successfully worked off indentures to the HBC or its subsidiary Puget Sound Agricultural Company received small parcels, ranging from the minimum size of 20 acres to about 50 acres. Finally, the gentlemen of the HBC, and a very small number of "independent" immigrants purchased generally larger parcels of country lands.[31]

In an alternative interpretation, Richard Mackie referred to the "unexpected success of this Wakefieldian colony." He admitted that this success led to "a conservative, atavistic, hierarchical, and land-based political culture dominated by those who could afford to buy land, most of whom were former and active Hudson's Bay Company employees." However, because the land was not inherited, but acquired through occupational pursuits, Mackie argued that the hierarchy differed from that of Britain. Although not attractive enough to draw emigrants, some potential for social mobility existed for already-present HBC employees, who could save money, acquire land, and by extension political power and citizenship rights.[32] The management cadre of the HBC,

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29. Aspects of the modifications, and the resulting congruence with the HBC system, are described in Mackie, "The Colonization of Vancouver Island," 23, 30-32.

30. Harriet S. Sampson, "My Father, Joseph Despard Pemberton: 1821-93," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol.8 (1944), 115.

31. A summary of the alienation of land in the colony prior to the arrival of the gold rush population in the spring of 1858 is given in Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 231-259.

32. Mackie, "The Colonization of Vancouver Island," 24, 31, 9, 32.

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holding greater economic power, established themselves as a land-owning, and by extension political elite, leading to the dominance of what was later termed the "Family Company Compact."[33] In the absence of competition for colonial lands, this group assumed an hegemonic position, by converting their occupational dominance in the HBC into land ownership, by extension into political dominance in the colony.

While it could be, and has been, argued that this group of Hudson's Bay Company officers and retired officers, and their relatives and in-laws, comprised a colonial elite, they achieved this status through occupational and geographic strategies. They did not originate in the land-owning elites of Britain, but realized social mobility through their careers in the HBC. The fur trade companies recruited these men as apprentice clerks, generally from middle class Anglo-North American social groups. The prospect of adventure may have motivated some, but for most their engagement related more to a lack of opportunity in Britain or Canada East. James Douglas, the dominant figure in the late fur trade and early colonial period, provides an example, due to his socially compromised middle class background. In Britain, his ascribed status as the son of a Scottish merchant, apparently born out of wedlock to a mother of partial Black ancestry, would have disqualified him from achieving respectability.[34] The HBC provided opportunities for such youths, who were judged primarily on the efficiency and diligence of their service in furthering the company's commercial interests. They could escape their culturally-ascribed status, and place themselves in a position where achieved status took precedence, and social mobility was possible. Ironically, this meritocratic possibility existed within the highly hierarchical corporate structure of the HBC. When the men who achieved social

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33. Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, ch.4, "Impetus to Settlement 1846-1858."

34. Sir George Simpson, the long-time governor of, and dominant figure in, the Northern Department of the HBC, was another example of a child born in "non-respectable" circumstances, out of wedlock, who was able to rise to the top of the Company hierarchy. The attempts of Douglas to behave as a statesman and aristocrat, fulfilling his self-perceived role as the leader of the colonial neo-elite, were viewed as "pretentious" by some gold rush-era colonial arrivals, as noted by Matthew Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia* (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1972), 393-395.

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mobility in the Company converted their economic and cultural capital into land ownership and political power in the colony of Vancouver Island, they transformed themselves into the "nouveau elite" known as the Family Company Compact. This differed from the Jeffersonian ideal of economic independence and social mobility as an outcome of land ownership. In this case, land ownership, and the political power it provided, arose from mobility achieved through commercial activity within the corporate structure of the HBC.

Although this hegemonic group had achieved their status as "self-made men," their attitudes, and the colony's system of land alienation seemed intended to discourage emigrants seeking opportunities for social mobility. The nineteenth century California historian H.H. Bancroft offered an explanation for the lack of settlement in the colony of Vancouver Island. He noted economic factors, such as the high cost and agricultural unsuitability of the land, but emphasized cultural factors and ideology, in particular the "crushing monopoly" of the HBC. He suggested it entirely controlled the political and economic life of the colonists, so repelled those seeking social mobility.[35] Bancroft's late nineteenth century American critique provided a restatement of the liberal order, in which immigrants sought freely-available agricultural land, with which they could achieve self-sufficiency or autonomy, without "crushing" or "stifling" hierarchies limiting their opportunities. As an environment that did not support liberty, equality, and property, Vancouver Island was unattractive to emigrants. The small group of "independent" colonists that emigrated to Vancouver Island in spite of this found themselves engaged in an ideologically-based struggle with the hegemonic group.[36] Fifteen of these "independent" colonists, led by the HBC chaplain, Robert Staines, sent a memorial to Richard Blanshard, the lame duck first governor of the colony, when he resigned and

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35. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of British Columbia, 1792-1887*, Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Vol.32 (San Francisco: History Company, 1887), 311.

36. This conflict between "autocratic" or "fur trade" values and "liberal" or "colonial" values is described in many sources, including Loo, *Making Law, Order, and Authority*, ch.2, "*A Squatocracry of Skin Traders*: Law and Authority on Vancouver Island."; Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, ch.3, "The Transitional Years, 1849-1858."

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returned to England. The colonists claimed to be the only ones representing the "interests of the island as a free and independent British colony." Although claiming independent status, most of these men came to Vancouver Island as employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, many as skilled British miners for the Fort Rupert coal mining venture.[37] Dissatisfaction with the economic and social conditions in the colony of Vancouver Island grew almost from the start, as the gold rush-driven boom in California in 1849 offered a vision of limitless opportunities, in an environment conducive to the formation of a liberal order. This alternate version of immigrant society precipitated a variety of responses from the immigrant population of Vancouver Island, based on how the opportunities related to their group. The official response of the Hudson's Bay Company involved provision of the commodities and supplies demanded by the new California markets. The possibility of individual mobility led to a wave of desertion by HBC servants, creating operational issues for the company. Additionally, the new California markets led to the establishment of commodity exporting ventures that were independent of the HBC. For the first time in the region, there were capitalist markets external to the highly regulated system of production of the HBC, creating opportunities for the development of new producers and exporters.

The California Gold Rush and Commodity Markets

The California gold rush created a demand for certain products, that in turn determined the way in which a regional commodity exporting economy developed. As the commercial centre of the gold rush, San Francisco grew from about 200 people in 1848 to 35,000 in 1853 to 57,000 in 1860.[38] This rapid growth made for a strong demand for those commodities related to constructing and maintaining a nineteenth century urban centre, such as forest products and coal. Until Britain became a significant consumer of

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37. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.1, 524-526, "Independent Colonists to Richard Blanshard."

38. John Douglas Belshaw, *Colonization and Community: The Vancouver Island Coalfield and the Making of the British Columbian Working Class* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 32-33.

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canned salmon in the 1870s and 1880s, California and the larger Pacific provided the principal markets for British Columbia-produced commodities. In the absence of a large settler population and domestic markets prior to the 1858 Fraser River gold rush, industrial commodity production in British Columbia began in response to the demand of foreign, rather than domestic markets. Almost universally, these outward-looking economic initiatives demonstrated linkages to the rising metropolis of San Francisco. This applied to the forest industry, the coal mining industry, and later the salmon canning industry. Emerging markets in gold rush California, and emerging Pacific markets linked to San Francisco, created the opportunities that encouraged the development of industries to extract and export the resources of British Columbia. Located at the commercial hub of the region, San Francisco businesses often provided capital and expertise to support such ventures. The rising economic power of the city meant that it dominated commerce around the shores of the Pacific, and became the primary link between capitalism in the Pacific and the rest of the world system.

Potential exporters in British territory found their access to the critical San Francisco market compromised by the political situation in the late 1840s. At the time of the boundary settlement in 1846, this affected only the Hudsons's Bay Company, which retrenched its primary system of production north of the forty-ninth parallel. The HBC continued activities south of the border, but the imposition of duties and tariffs, and the impact of American settlement on the fur trade, led to the decision to abandon this business in 1860. Designed to favour American interests, and create the conditions to encourage American independent producers without competition from foreign "monopolies" like the HBC, tariff structures changed in response to broader economic conditions. When the California economy slumped in the mid-1850s, the American-dominated Hawaiian Legislature imposed a ten percent tax on goods entering from the Hudson's Bay Company, but no tariff on American goods.[39] This support for American producers placed British or other foreign producers at a competitive disadvantage by

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39. Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 291, citing BCA, Fort Victoria, Correspondence Outward, 1850-1858, J. Douglas to Smith, 26 October 1855.

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raising the gross price of their products on the market. James Douglas, in his dual capacity as governor and regional manager of the HBC, lobbied unsuccessfully for the extension of the 1854 Reciprocity Treaty between the eastern British North American colonies and the USA to Vancouver Island.[40] The tariffs significantly added to the selling price of exports on the San Francisco market, with the duty on foreign coal rising from 20 percent in 1859 to 24 percent in 1860.[41] Such restrictions made products from British Columbia less competitive in this most important of Pacific markets, with obvious economic implications for the colony.[42]

Transportation of commodities to export markets provided another basic economic factor that potential British Columbia producers had to consider. The logistical issues of transportation and shipping figured into the choice of export commodities, and the economic viability of moving them to market. For the HBC, its highly regularized and efficient transportation systems that moved commodities to markets, and trade goods and supplies to its wide-flung system of posts, provided the prerequisite for viability. Ships' captains or commission merchants, men with prior experience in the transportation of goods to market, comprised the majority of the first wave of "independent"export ventures not associated with the HBC. This is unsurprising, given the centrality of transportation in establishing a successful venture exporting to foreign markets.

The demand on Pacific markets for salt salmon, forest products, and coal determined the commodities produced in BC in the years from 1848 to 1860. The first two trades developed to meet the demand on the Oahu market in the 1830s, with production stabilizing in the 1840s to meet the needs of that market.[43] With the

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40. Hendrickson, *Journals of the Colonial Legislatures*, Vol.II, 5-6.

41. Daniel Thomas Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines: Studies Comparing Colliery Operations and Factors of Production in British Columbia's Coal Industry to 1891" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1979) 275, citing Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 17 June 1859; *ibid.*, 29 December 1860.

42. Ormsby, *British Columbia*, 128.

43. See Chapter 2.

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Californian gold rush of 1849 and the Australian gold rush of 1852, the demand for both building materials and provisions expanded rapidly, a new opportunity that was investigated both by the Hudson's Bay Company and "independent" producers on Vancouver Island. As well as increasing the scope of existing export trades, the gold rush boom in California contributed to the establishment of new export trades, most prominently the Vancouver Island coal venture of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The Forest Products Market

The California gold rush presented a brief opportunity for lumber producers already established on the west coast of North America, such as the Hudson's Bay Company. Some Vancouver Island residents initiated new ventures in response to the opportunity presented by the booming California market. This gold rush-fuelled demand peaked in 1853, when eighteen of the nineteen vessels that had cleared Victoria or Sooke carrying forest products had been destined for San Francisco. However, the same demand led to the expansion of American producers from the redwood forests of California to the Douglas fir and cedar forests around Puget Sound by the same year. Within two years, and the end of the first phase of the gold rush, both California and Puget Sound were in a state of depression. For the nascent producers of Vancouver Island limited opportunities remained in the face of stiff competition from Puget Sound producers, declining demand, and high tariffs.[44] Some demand persisted from the "traditional" HBC export market in Oahu, but Vancouver Island producers faced stiff competition there from American cargo mills. Many export ventures simply ended operations with the loss of the California market, but some producers, such as the Muir family, began exporting to other Pacific Rim markets, as well as Britain. The Muir operation in Sooke exported a variety of products, with an emphasis on piles and spars, to Shanghai, Hong Kong, the Sandwich Islands, Australia, South America, and England, as well as San Francisco, throughout the

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44. Cox, *Mills and Markets*, 54-63; W. Kaye Lamb, "Early Lumbering on Vancouver Island. Part II: 1855-1866," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol.2 (April 1938), 116-117.

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1850s.[45] This strategy of exporting "foreign" markets on the Pacific sustained the forest industry in BC until the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Coal Markets

Market demand as a result of the California gold rush led directly to the intensive industrial development of the coal resources of Vancouver Island by the Hudson's Bay Company. Until 1862, only the HBC produced and sold coal in any quantities. From its identification on Vancouver Island in 1836, the coal resource supplied "country produce" for the HBC, replacing imported coal in post blacksmith's shops, and as fuel for steam engines, such as on the new trading vessel, the *Beaver*. This low level of utilization was converted into a complex system of production intended to provide exportable quantities of coal due to an 1848 agreement between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Pacific Mail Steamship Company of New York. The Governor and Committee of the HBC entered this arrangement after prompting from George Simpson. The HBC contracted to supply the steamship company at San Francisco with 500 to 1,000 tons of coal at a price of twenty shillings [or £1, roughly $5 American] per ton, for the year beginning May 1849. Simpson believed that the stipulated quantity of coal could be produced by developing the coal fields at Beaver Harbour, or Fort Rupert, under the direction of Scottish miners imported specifically for this purpose.[46] Although the steamship contract provided the impetus for the industrial development of the coal resource, HBC managers anticipated developing markets in the new metropolis of San Francisco, in the Royal Navy fleet on the Pacific, and in the merchant steamship fleet in the region.

In the 1850s, James Douglas arranged to market Vancouver Island coal in San

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45. *Ibid.*, 95-96; W. Kaye Lamb, "Early Lumbering on Vancouver Island. Part I: 1844-1855," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol.2 (January 1938), 48-53.

46. Hartwell Bowsfield, ed., *Fort Victoria Letters 1846-1851* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1979), xxxix-xl; Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 159; Barry M. Gough, *Gunboat Frontier: British Maritime Authority and Northwest Coast Indians, 1846-90* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1984) 38; Lynne Bowen, *Three Dollar Dreams* (Lantzville: Oolichan Books, 1987) 18.

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Francisco through Thomas Lowe, his former clerk in the HBC at Fort Vancouver, and now the San Francisco partner in the commission merchant firm of Allan, McKinlay, Lowe and Co., discussed earlier in this chapter.[47] Although the first shipment of 4,500 tons consigned to Lowe in 1852 only realized $15-16 per ton, rather than the $30-40 per ton that Douglas anticipated, Lowe made an effort to keep the HBC active on the San Francisco market. He told HBC management it was a good result, and encouraged Douglas to support the development of a large-scale market in San Francisco, rather than focussing on the smaller markets serving naval and merchant fleets on Vancouver Island. Lowe, demonstrating the dissonance between his personal values and those of the HBC on Vancouver Island, bemoaned the Company's "very leisurely" approach to business, when he felt it could make a "perfect little pile" on the San Francisco coal market if it pushed its efforts. Whether unwilling or unable, the HBC did not increase its coal exports to the point where it could offer a legitimate challenge to its competitors on the San Francisco coal market.[48] In 1859 A.G. Dallas, James Douglas' successor as HBC Chief Factor at Victoria [and also his son in law], turned down Lowe's application for more coal consignments to San Francisco, in favour of the local market that developed with the stationing of Royal Navy ships on Vancouver Island.[49]

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47. There was a related company in Oregon City, Allan, McKinlay and Co., owned by the retired HBC Chief Traders George Traill Allan and Archibald McKinlay, as well as the retired clerk Thomas Lowe. When the San Francisco company was formed in the spring of 1852, it was half ($7,500) owned by the earlier company, and the other half by three silent partners, John Ballenden, J.A. Grahame, and A.C. Anderson, all still-active commissioned gentlemen of the HBC stationed at Fort Vancouver, who each held $2,500 shares. Careless, "The Lowe Brothers," 6, 3-4.

48. Dan Gallacher suggested that the HBC was unable to increase its production to adequate levels to compete on the San Francisco market, while Thomas Lowe implied that it was unwilling to do so. Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 70-71; Careless, "The Lowe Brothers," 6-7.

49. *Ibid.*, 11, citing BCA, Thomas Lowe, Letters Outward, August 31, 1852 to November 17, 1863, T. Lowe to J. Lowe, 4 October 1859.

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The Hudson's Bay Company's System of Coal Production

At first the HBC employed a simple system of production for the coal used at the posts or in the carrying trade, following the pattern of other commodity trades, with Aboriginal producers supplying a ready to ship commodity. The coal was purchased with imported trade goods, at a fixed tariff, and was then assembled and shipped to markets. When George Simpson proposed the establishment of a post on northern Vancouver Island in 1848, an "exploratory" coal production venture was ancillary to its primary function as a "normal" fur trade post. The existence of coal in the region had been identified as early as 1835-1836, but did not merit further action prior to 1848.[50] A parallel may be drawn between Simpson's "exploratory" system of coal production at Fort Rupert and his "experimental" system of lumber production on the Columbia two decades earlier. In each case he introduced a new system of production to meet the perceived demands of new "country," or non-European, markets for commodities.[51] The rising market demand for coal apparently contributed to the decision to establish the post, as Simpson rejected an earlier proposal by James Douglas and John McLoughlin to establish a post in the region without that component.[52] When Simpson recommended the "exploratory" investigation of the coal resource, he followed the pattern of the earlier lumber and salmon export trades, by calling for skilled and semi-skilled workers from

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50. The initial identification of the coal resources around Beaver Harbour are described in Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 240-241; H. Keith Ralston, "Miners and Managers: The Organization of Coal Production on Vancouver Island by the Hudson's Bay Company, 1848-1862," in *The Company on the Coast*, ed. E. Blanche Norcross (Nanaimo: Nanaimo Historical Society, 1983), p.43, citing HBCA, D.4/69, fo.509, George Simpson to Governor & Committee, 17 March 1848; Rich, *The Letters of John McLoughlin, 1825-1838*, 334-335, Duncan Finlayson to John McLoughlin, 29 September 1836.

51. The experimental nature of the Fort Vancouver sawmill venture is mentioned in Rich, *Part of a Dispatch from George Simpson, 1829*, 84-85.

52. Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 43-44, citing HBCA, B223/b/28, fos.40-51, James Douglas to John McLoughlin, 1 October 1840; Rich, *The Letters of John McLoughlin, 1839-1844*, 24, John McLoughlin to Governor & Committee, 20 November 1840.

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Britain to direct the activity. In this case, he requested that a foreman and six workmen with experience in the coal mining industry be sent from Britain. Kwakiutl commodity producers would supply the coal following established protocols until the British coal miners arrived.[53]

Applying a "simple" system of production accorded with the wishes of the Kwakiutl First Nation, whose members attempted to prevent Company coal mining at Fort Rupert, insisting that they would be the providers of all coal the HBC required.[54] This system of coal production began in 1836, when the Company steamer *Beaver* visited Beaver Harbour to assess the coal resource. As described by the HBC postmaster John Dunn, on board for this voyage: "The natives were anxious that we should employ them to work the coal; to this we consented, and agreed to give them a certain sum for every large box. The natives being so numerous, and labour so cheap, for us to attempt to work the coal would have been madness."[55] At Fort Rupert in 1850, the tariff was one 2 ½ point blanket paid for each two tons of coal.[56] Aboriginal producers took an active role in establishing this system of production. They were not forced or coerced into producing commodities, but participated voluntarily, based on the perception of economic benefit that could be realized. The appeal for the HBC rested on the same logic applied in the salmon trade, where the cost of purchasing from Aboriginal producers was lower than the cost of fishing equipment and supplies, not to mention the labour costs of employees. This simple system of production attracted up to 800 Aboriginal coal producers in the

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53. The coal venture was only a small part of the overall operation of the new post, which employed about 40 men in total. Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 43, citing HBCA, D.4/69, fo.589, George Simpson to Governor & Committee, 24 April 1848; HBCA, D.4/69, fos.713-714, George Simpson to Governor & Committee, 24 June 1848.

54. Knight, *Indians at Work*, 254.

55. Dunn, *History of the Oregon territory*, 241.

56. Bowsfield, editor, *Fort Victoria Letters*, 132. This rate of exchange seems relatively consistent with that paid for saw logs, in terms of the labour required to produce the commodity, but much less favourable than that paid for salmon, see Chapter 2.

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summer of 1850. Their per-capita production was low, due to the labour-intensive process of removing the overburden from coal beds near the surface, and then hacking loose the coal.[57] When the HMS *Driver* put in to Beaver Harbour in 1850, the ship's captain reported some 1,200 tons of coal on the beach, that had been supplied exclusively by Aboriginal producers.[58] At the prevailing exchange rate, this would have meant earnings of about 600 blankets for the local Kwakiutl people.

From the start, it was believed that a more complex and intense industrial system of coal production would be required to supply the coal needed for the Pacific Mail Steamship Company contract. The "voluntary," and so uncertain, nature of a system of simple commodity production based on Aboriginal suppliers made it difficult to ensure that specific production goals would be met. The key element in establishing an industrial system of production, following the British model, was the mustering of a workforce, comprising both skilled and unskilled labour components. The options available to the HBC in the 1850s were to import a European labour force, to attempt to "capture" an Aboriginal labour force, or some combination of the two. From the beginning of the coal mining venture, the HBC focussed on recruiting skilled labour, such as hewers [who cut the coal from the seams underground] and oversmen [foremen], from British coal-mining centres.[59] The human capital carried by these men made them indispensable in establishing an effective system of industrial coal production on Vancouver Island. This purposeful recruitment of the first hewers and oversmen created a convention in which the ranks of skilled labour on the coalfield were dominated by British workers through the remainder

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57. Bowsfield, *Fort Victoria Letters*, 140, 84.

58. Gough, *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast*, 102.

59. The first recruiting was directed at, and the first two groups of skilled miners came from, the Scottish coalfields of Ayreshire. Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 43-47; William J. Burrill, "Class Conflict and Colonialism: The Coal Miners of Vancouver Island During the Hudson's Bay Company Era, 1848-1862" (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1987), 18.

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of the nineteenth century.[60]

The call for skilled workers in Britain was answered by John Muir, of Ayrshire, and his extended family, consisting of his children, cousins, nephews, their families and associates.[61] With John Muir (senior) as oversman, and six miners assembled from his relatives and associates, this first group of skilled workers and their families arrived at Fort Rupert in the summer of 1849. Soon they were in conflict with the HBC post managers concerning their terms of employment, and in the spring of 1850 all the miners except Muir and his youngest son deserted for California on board one of the coal ships. Immediately the HBC recruited a second group of four Ayreshire colliers, under the direction of oversman Boyd Gilmour, who continued the exploration and development of the coal resources at the post.[62]

Scholars have emphasized the different expectations of the miners and HBC managers in their analyses of the conflict between the two groups. The gentlemen assumed all servants, including tradesmen or skilled labour, would follow their orders in contributing to the general upkeep and maintenance of the post. The miners assumed their roles would replicate those in the specialized system of production in the Ayreshire coal

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60. For example Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 62, Table 2, "National Origins of Nanaimo-Area Miners, 1881, 1891," based on census data, notes that 248 of 313 men (79.2%) of those reported as "miners" in 1881, and 527 of 861 men (61.2%) in 1891, were of British origin. In 1881 these skilled British miners represented about 30% of the total workforce of 819 (skilled and unskilled) workers in the coal mines. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines, 1881* (Victoria: Queen's Printer, 1882), 407-408.

61. Barry M. Gough, "Fort Rupert, Its Coal and Spar Trades," in *The Company on the Coast*, ed. E. Blanche Norcross (Nanaimo: Nanaimo Historical Society, 1983) 35; Burrill, "Class Conflict and Colonialism," 23.

62. *Ibid.*, 23-48; Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 43-47. The pattern of family-based immigration continued. One of the miners arriving with Gilmour was his nephew, Robert Dunsmuir, later the most prominent figure in the coal mining industry in British Columbia. Daniel T. Gallacher, "Dunsmuir, Robert," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol.XI* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 291.

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fields, in which they were not expected to do "common" labour.[63] This dispute, generally presented as class or industrial conflict, also may be interpreted as an example of competing cultural values. The Hudson's Bay Company was organized as a paramilitary hierarchy, with the primary division between gentlemen and servants parallelling that between officers and enlisted men. Managers saw tradesmen and skilled workers as servants, on the other side of the divide, in spite of according them higher wages and status to acknowledge their essential contribution to the viability of export trades.[64]

In the British coal mining system of production, because of the demand for skilled miners, by the early nineteenth century such men achieved a significant level of autonomy in defining their work process and terms of employment. In the mid-nineteenth century, changing conditions in the British coal fields created a more industrialized and polarized system of production, with higher levels of capital investment, more safety issues and labour strife, and less power for independent colliers.[65] These changes threatened the autonomy of skilled miners, and the resulting labour strife demonstrated their resistance to being reduced to a proletariat. This also provided a "push" for emigration, reinforced by the perceived opportunity for social mobility in the more fluid social conditions found in colonial environments. The HBC made these "pull" factors even more appealing with the economic incentives of free passage and high income levels by British standards.[66] These skilled workers based their decision to emigrate in part on economic factors, but the form of their migration additionally suggests a desire to escape proletarianization. They emigrated as an extended family, including wives and children, making it clear that they

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63. Discussions of the reasons leading to the strikes and desertion of the Fort Rupert miners are presented in a number of sources, including Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 44-47; Burrill, "Class Conflict and Colonialism," 23-46; Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 27, 85-86, 92-93, 95.

64. See chapter 2 of this study for a discussion of the position of tradesmen and skilled labour in the Hudson's Bay Company's system of production.

65. Bowen, *Three Dollar Dreams*, 24-25; Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 37-39.

66. *Ibid.*, 39-40.

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were not intending to be sojourners, but rather permanent residents of the colony of Vancouver Island, anticipating improved life chances from those on the British coal field.

At Fort Rupert they did not find the opportunity for social mobility that motivated them, but rather a new and different attempt, within the hierarchical management system of the HBC, to proletarianize them. Although the miners complained constantly about the conditions they encountered at the post, active resistance came in response to an order to dig a drain. The miners struck, with the post manager responding by imprisoning most of them, followed by the desertion of most of the miners.[67] Being forced to perform such common labour was seen as antithetical to the reasons for coming to Vancouver Island, so precipitated extreme responses. Rather than realizing the immigrant dream of upward social mobility, through higher income, the possibility of land ownership, and becoming autonomous independent producers, these men found themselves subjected to conditions that they equated with downward social mobility. Their motives for emigration related to the dream of progress, but instead they encountered the hierarchical and "illiberal" order of the Hudson's Bay Company. The desertion and escape of the miners to gold rush-era California, portrayed as a liberal order Utopia, with well-publicized opportunities for economic and social mobility, becomes entirely understandable within the logic of immigration. The desertion may not have been a challenge to the "emergent industrial order," or a conflict over management practice, but part of the ongoing attempt to resist proletarianization and pursue success and respectability within socio-economic conditions conducive to the immigrant dream of social mobility.[68] Later terms of engagement for

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67. The narrative of events is provided by Bowen, *Three Dollar Dreams*, 32-42; Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 47. Ralston viewed the conflict as one of management practice and organizational forms. I offer that this should be extended to include basic cultural values and ideologies as well.

68. The idea that this action was an early example of "[c]hallenges to this emergent industrial order" was presented in Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 27. The assertion that the "whole episode points up the difficulties of adapting management practice in the Hudson's Bay Company to the specialized needs of coal development" was made by Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 47.

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skilled miners hired by the Hudson's Bay Company make it clear that a high degree of autonomy and control over the work process was demanded by these workers, and was acknowledged by the company.

Due to marginal coal seams, and perhaps influenced also by the labour strife at Fort Rupert, by 1852 the managers of the HBC decided to relocate its coal mining venture to Nanaimo.[69] As early as 1850, before the arrival of British miners or the construction of the post, the Sne ney mux First Nation gathered coal from surface outcroppings to sell by the canoe load at Fort Victoria.[70] With the establishment of the Nanaimo facility in 1852, the HBC employed a system of coal production similar to that used at Fort Rupert. Aboriginal producers gathered coal from surface seams, and traded it to the Hudson's Bay Company through existing fur trade accounts, earning about one shirt per day.[71] At Nanaimo in the 1850s the company paid one blanket for each eight barrels of coal, similar to the rate of one 2 ½ point blanket for each two tons of coal employed at Fort Rupert in 1850.[72] It appears that after the start of full-scale industrial operations in 1853, Native producers lost their role as primary coal suppliers, but continued to provide labour in support of industrial coal mining, and to supply provisions and construction materials.[73]

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69. The coal seam at Fort Rupert was perhaps only ten inches thick, rather than the three feet reported by James Douglas in his reports. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 28. Belshaw suggested that Douglas was disingenuous, possibly presenting an over-optimistic view in response to the negative reports of Governor Richard Blanshard.

70. Knight, *Indians at Work*, 255.

71. Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 49, citing HBCA, A11/73, fo.590, James Douglas to Barclay, 6 October 1852. The one shirt per day rate is reported by Burrill, "Class Conflict and Colonialism," p.124, citing BCA, Nanaimo Correspondence 1852-1853, McKay to Douglas, 9 September 1852. Rolf Knight, citing the popular historian Bruce McKelvie, reported that some 1,400 barrels of coal mined this way shipped on the first coal vessel leaving Nanaimo. Knight, *Indians at Work*, 255.

72. Frederick Whymper, *Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska* (London: John Murray, 1868) 59-60; Bowsfield, *Fort Victoria Letters*, 132.

73. Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 49. The idea of Native labour being excluded from the mines was echoed in Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital,"

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Due to problems with the resource and the imported workforce, the system of production at Fort Rupert remained principally a simple commodity exchange with First Nations producers. At the new coal mining centre of Nanaimo, a complex system of production developed, based on the model of the British system, but with distinctive features relating to the demography of Vancouver Island, and to the ideology of race and culture that accompanied the immigrant miners and managers. Conditions in the colony exaggerated the division between skilled and unskilled labour that existed in the British coal mining system of production. In Britain, there was essentially one labour market, with the split between skilled and unskilled workers not based as much on race or ethnicity as on knowledge and experience, or human capital. The men central to the process, who actually mined the coal at the face of the seam, were skilled workers known as hewers. The rest of the workers were known in British coal mining as "oncost" workers, performing tasks essential to the system of production, but not directly involved in hewing coal. This group included skilled workers who operated machines, sunk pits, or filled other positions seen as having a high degree of autonomy and responsibility. Oncost workers included common labour as well; those workers with no special skills or knowledge, who filled the menial, but still essential roles around the mines, such as sorting and transporting coal.[74] In the British system of production there was essentially a single labour market, following an age-based hierarchical structure. Occupational mobility from unskilled labour to labour elite was possible, with boys, generally the sons or relatives of miners, entering the mining workforce in unskilled positions. Over a period of years they

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74. For the purposes of this study, Roy Church's definition of oncost workers as those who were not directly involved in hewing coal will be adopted. This included above- and below-ground workers, skilled workers, such as blacksmiths, steam engineers, etc., as well as unskilled workers such as pushers and sorters. This was based on the accounting split in the industry between "getting," or hewing costs, and "oncosts." Roy Church, *The History of the British Coal Industry*, Vol.3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 209. Sometimes this was referred to as "offhand" work; M.J. Daunton, "Down the Pit: Work in the Great Northern and South Wales Coalfields, 1870-1914," *The Economic History Review*, Second Series, Vol.XXXIV, no.4 (November 1981), 578-597.

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would acquire the specialized knowledge and experience required to take a place in the "labour aristocracy" of coal hewers and skilled workers, at the top of the hierarchical system.[75] Occupational mobility based on human capital within a single, and relatively homogenous, industrial workforce was a central tenet of this system.

The existence of such a system assumed a lack of other barriers to social, and so occupational, mobility among workers or potential workers. The relatively homogenous population of potential workers in the coalfields of Britain contributed, as did a steady supply of young workers from densely settled, established communities. In areas where adequate supplies of juvenile labour were not available, unskilled adult workers were recruited. For these adult workers, there was not the same level of occupational mobility as was available to boys. Women were occasionally hired as unskilled labour, within certain clearly defined parameters, such as surface work only. In many Scottish mines, and some English ones, Irish immigrants provided unskilled labour. The employment of unskilled workers defined by gender or ethnicity would result in a split labour market, with an upper and a lower echelon, with the division between them defined not only on the basis of knowledge and experience, but on the basis of culturally-defined attributes. The occupational mobility possible for miners' sons and nephews in a single labour market would not be available to unskilled workers separated from the labour elite by either gender, ethnicity, or religion.[76] The division between the two labour markets was rendered less permeable by the cultural barriers, blocking occupational mobility, and so creating a split labour market that excluded lower echelon entrants from being able to rise to upper echelon positions and status.

Unlike the British coalfields that evolved over time in regions that provided a large

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75. The employment of boys as standard practice in the British coalfields is noted in Church, *The History of the British Coal Industry*, Vol.3, 193-204; Michael Pollard, *The Hardest Work Under Heaven: The Life and Death of the British Coal Miner* (London: Hutchinson & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 1984), 30-31; Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 87, 81-82.

76. *Ibid.*, 87.

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pool of potential workers, the Vancouver Island coalfield was created quickly in response to the demand for coal on the California market. The island had a large Aboriginal population, but there was no pool of culturally-congruent potential industrial workers as in Britain. While the Hudson's Bay Company managers focussed on importing the skilled workers that they considered essential, they seem to have assumed that the unskilled workers required for the system of production could be "captured" from local populations.[77] This implied recruiting Aboriginal labour, and it appears that in the HBC coal mining era, most of the unskilled labour was provided by such workers.[78] Under these circumstances, there clearly existed a strongly split labour market, with the occupationally-based division between skilled and unskilled workers reinforced by the racial and cultural divisions between the two groups. Skilled labour was British immigrant labour, while unskilled labour was Aboriginal labour.

Skilled Labour

For the skilled labour component of the workforce, the industrial system of production at Nanaimo from 1852 to 1862 represented an ongoing effort to maintain or enhance their autonomy and opportunities for social mobility. This applied first to the manner in which they were paid. The first two groups of Scottish miners engaged by the HBC in 1849-1850 came from a work situation in which terms of employment were based on the customary "darg." This defined an appropriate day's work based on time and tonnage, for which a fixed wage would be paid. The Fort Rupert miners were to receive a production bonus of two shillings and sixpence for every ton of coal over thirty tons produced per month.[79] The darg, as adapted to Vancouver Island, combined elements of

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77. Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 206; Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 81.

78. Mark Bate, "Reminiscences of Early Nanaimo Days," *Nanaimo Free Press*, 16 February 1907, 1; Burrill, "Class Conflict and Colonialism," 125-126.

79. Bowen, *Three Dollar Dreams*, 25, 28; Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 45-46; Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 92-93; Burrill, "Class Conflict and Colonialism,"

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wage labour with an incentive for greater production. For workers in this system, it provided significant levels of autonomy in deciding schedules and controlling the work process, as long as a minimum of thirty tons of coal per man was raised each month. The Staffordshire miners hired in 1854 were employed on a similar basis, with a fixed wage of £78 per year, assuming a base output of forty-five tons per month, plus a production bonus of two shillings and sixpence for every ton of coal produced per month above that target. Assistant miners were to be paid about half as much, and all workers were expected to contribute their labour to the overall maintenance of the establishment. The company agreed to provide the miners with food at a reasonable cost, as well as coal for domestic use.[80] As with the earlier agreement, these terms of employment gave the miners a relatively high degree of control over the work process, and were generous, in terms of pay and benefits such as provisions, compared with the usual HBC employment contract. At the time a "midman," or unskilled labourer working for the HBC, received £17 per year, with no possibility of any bonuses.

A key change in the terms of employment of skilled coal mine workers was introduced in 1856 by the Hudson's Bay Company at the Nanaimo mines. There may be a causal relationship between the labour problems affecting the operation in 1855 and the revised terms. As at Fort Rupert, the expectations of opportunities for social mobility that drove emigration were disappointed by the HBC system of production, so the miners resisted with strikes and desertions.[81] A new form of payment was introduced, emphasizing autonomy and individual effort, more in line with the liberal values carried by

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80. Bowen, *Three Dollar Dreams*, 70-71; Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 92-93; E. Blanche Norcross, *Nanaimo Retrospective: The First Century* (Nanaimo: Nanaimo Historical Society, 1979) 31-34, Indenture, HBC and John Thompson of Brickmoor, 10 May 1854.

81. Although in no way associated with the ideological conflict between the liberal and hierarchical orders, the labour strife of 1855 is described in Bowen, *Three Dollar Dreams*, 80-84. The dissatisfaction of the miners, their resistance and strikes in the same period is also described in Burrill, "Class Conflict and Colonialism," 106-111.

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the immigrant miners. It eliminated the annual wage, and instead payed a piecework rate of 4 shillings 2 pence [roughly $1.01-$1.04 at the usual exchange rates of $4.85-$5.00 per pound] per ton of coal raised, plus 1 shilling 4 pence [32¢-33¢] in lieu of rations, and with tools and medical services provided by the company. From this point on the earnings of hewers were based on production, specifically the number of tons of coal raised, rather than on a daily or yearly wage. Production increased until the HBC sold its operation in 1862, suggesting that this represented a successful accommodation of the ideological desires of the skilled miners on the part of the employer.[82] This process of negotiation resulted in some modest increases in the rates paid in the early 1860s, in the face of competition from the opportunities presented by the Fraser River gold rush.[83]

The shift in the terms of employment of the skilled miners from a wage, with bonuses for production, to a contracted payment per ton of coal raised, provides an interesting contrast with the process of proletarianization of workers in the Canadian mining industry described by Wallace Clement. He summarized this as a shift from petty production, in which miners controlled the means of production, to capitalist production, in which the miners worked for wages paid by an owner that controlled the means of production. Clement described the first stage in this process as involving "tribute" or "tut-work" systems, which essentially involved miners contracting with the owner of the mine to sell the products of the mine back to the owner. The second stage involved waged labour, but retaining some of the appurtenances of independent production, such as production incentives, easing the transition to full proletarianization.[84] It will be noted that

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82. Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 72-73.

83. The recorded income of skilled miners in 1861 and 1862 ranged from $1.50 [6 shillings] per day to 10 shillings 3 pence per day, plus 1 shilling 4 pence per day for rations [a total of roughly $2.90 per day], or 5 shillings 2 pence [$1.25] per ton of coal raised. Although the HBC considered an annual salary, it maintained a production-based system, which John Belshaw attributed to the earlier labour problems at Fort Rupert. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 93.

84. Wallace Clement, *Class, Power and Property: Essays on Canadian Society* (Toronto: Methuen, 1983). This transition is described both in ch.7, "Transformation in Mining: A

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the terms of engagement of the skilled miners on Vancouver Island evolved in the opposite direction. Escaping the increasing threats to their autonomy and control over the work process in Britain, they engaged in a system resembling the British one, with a fixed wage, bonuses for production, and a relatively high level of control over the work process. Within six years, they negotiated this into what Clement described as a tut-work system, in which the miners contracted to raise coal at a prearranged price, essentially selling it to the owner of the mine, the HBC.[85] Rather than being forced into proletarian status, these skilled coal miners successfully negotiated a new, more autonomous status, closer to that of petty producer. This provides a clear example of successful resistance to proletarianization. Without the specialized knowledge and experience, or high human capital, of these workers, the HBC could not pursue its coal venture. The company recognized this with increased rates of compensation, but more importantly with essential changes to the relationship between itself and the miners. Confirming their status as autonomous or independent producers, this also gave them a high level of control over the work process. By entrenching a position in the system of production that combined high earnings and high autonomy, the HBC presented these men with an opportunity competitive with those available in gold rush-era California. In this process of negotiation between HBC managers and skilled miners, the miners successfully resisted and even reversed the process of proletarianization. This was only possible in the fluid economic and social structures of the colony, supporting their decision to emigrate in search of economic, occupational, and social mobility.

John Belshaw called the coming of the Scottish miners to Fort Rupert "the establishment of the first proletariat on Vancouver Island, and later defined the British

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Critique of H.A. Innis," and ch.8, "The Subordination of Labour in Canadian Mining."

85. Under the fixed wage system, a worker producing the base 45 tons of coal per month would be paid £78 or $390 per year, without production bonuses. Under the piecework system, assuming a rate of about $1.35 per ton for coal and provision allowance, the same base production would result in a nearly doubled annual earnings of $729. The increase would be proportionately greater if production was higher than 45 tons per month.

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emigrant miners as "archetypal proletarians." He also, acknowledging the model of E.P. Thompson, alluded to the making of a "colonial proletariat" in the coalfield of Vancouver Island.[86] The evidence seems to present a stronger case for the unmaking of a proletariat within the coal mining venture of the Hudson's Bay Company. Emigration itself showed a commitment to liberal values and social mobility, and the miners' successful resistance to the attempts of the Company to reduce them to the lower status of waged labour culminated in their reinvention as a group of relatively autonomous commodity producers. Although they did not own the means of production, they controlled the work process, and behaved as petty producers supplying commodities to the Hudson's Bay Company.

James Douglas acknowledged the special status and autonomy of the skilled British miners in his instructions to Joseph McKay, the clerk in charge of Nanaimo at the inception of the venture: "The Miners are under the special orders of Mr Muir, and you will please to avoid all interference with them directly, giving any instructions you have to give through Mr Muir himself, but in no case to the men under his orders."[87] John Muir Sr., and Boyd Gilmour, the two Ayreshire overmen brought to Fort Rupert, with members of their respective parties, assumed the lead in developing the new coal mines. By 1855 Robert Dunsmuir, of the Gilmour group, and John McGregor, of the Muir group, led independent exploration and development ventures in the Nanaimo region.[88] When his original contract expired in 1855, Dunsmuir obtained a free-miners' license to work an abandoned mine on his own account.[89] The HBC granted similar privileges in 1855 to Edward Walker, also of the Gilmour party, and later to George Baker, one of the Staffordshire miners who arrived in 1854. These two men organized "companies," that

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86. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 18-20, 113-114, 213-214.

87. *Ibid.*, 137, citing BCA, Nanaimo Correspondence, James Douglas to Joseph McKay, 26 August 1852.

88. Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 50

89. Gallacher, "Dunsmuir, Robert," 291; Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 165.

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apparently produced coal for the HBC outside the parameters of the "official" Company operations.[90] It has been suggested that Dunsmuir acquired his special status as a reward for not joining the 1855 labour actions, or that these contractors provided the most effective way of organizing production in the absence of specialized coal mining managers.[91] Although the precise nature of the relationship between these independent producers and the HBC is unclear, it appears not radically dissimilar to the terms of employment of all the skilled coal miners; a mutually-understood rate paid for the tonnage of coal raised. The innovation under the terms of the free-miners' licenses concerned the geographic range of the production process, which could apparently move outside the HBC holdings. The pattern of licencing independent producers seems consistent with the HBC strategy of placating skilled miners by permitting them greater autonomy, intersecting with the desire of emigrant miners to achieve higher levels of autonomy and potential opportunity for social mobility as independent proprietors. The larger company seemed to retain some control over the "independents," with the overall direction in the hands of George Robinson, specifically recruited with the Staffordshire miners in 1854 as the superintendent or mine manager.[92] In 1857 Robinson was threatening to fire Dunsmuir for "insolence," suggesting that a supervisory relationship still existed.[93]

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90. The Dunsmuir and Walker licences are mentioned in Bowen, *Three Dollar Dreams*, 80-81. The Dunsmuir and Baker licences are mentioned in Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 165-166.

91. The theory of a reward for loyalty is from Gallacher, "Dunsmuir, Robert," 291. The "efficiency" argument is from Richard Mackie, who drew it from Ralston's suggestion that the HBC had trouble adapting to the specialized management requirements of coal mining. Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 165-166; Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 47.

92. Robinson and his family accompanied the 23 Staffordshire miners and their families arriving on the *Princess Royal* in November 1854. Barrie H.E. Goult, "First and Last Days of the 'Princess Royal'," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol.III, no.1 (January 1939), 17, 20; Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 52.

93. Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 166.

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Unskilled Labour, Racialization, and the Work Process

The coal mining system of production employed by the Hudson's Bay Company was built around a split labour market, based on the skilled-unskilled or human capital split found in the British coalfields, but with the added factor of racialization added. The workforce was composed of an upper echelon of autonomous and occupationally mobile skilled workers from Britain, and a lower echelon primarily comprised of Aboriginal unskilled workers, "captured" locally.[94] The occupationally-based division between skilled and unskilled workers that existed in the coalfields of Britain was made less permeable by the racial and cultural divisions between the two groups. At Nanaimo, the industrial or underground production of coal relied on a skilled workforce of British immigrant hewers, who would chop the coal out of the seam. The skill and knowledge, or human capital, of this group was converted into status and income in this system of production, and its members guarded their privileged position. Their arrival signalled the exclusion of Aboriginal producers from such work, and relegation to work defined as unskilled. The assumption that skilled positions should only be filled by British workers, and the corollary that Aboriginal workers were only suitable for unskilled labour, demonstrates the way in which racial ideology could intersect with definitions of skill and prestige to produce a racialized labour force. The presumption that certain attributes of an identified social group suited them best for certain types of work divided the industrial workplace along contours of race as well as skill. In this instance, such ideology created a situation in which access to the opportunity for joining the upper echelon of the workforce, was limited to a particular group, defined by skill and race. The exclusion from underground hewing meant that Aboriginal workers could not aspire to the upper echelon, regardless of human capital, strengthening the racialized division of the labour market.[95]

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94. Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 206; Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 117-118; Mark Bate, "Reminiscences of Early Nanaimo Days," *Nanaimo Free Press*, 16 February 1907, 1.

95. This linking of race to access to opportunity, and by extension social mobility, was not exclusive to the Vancouver Island coalfields. In his discussion of the California gold rush,

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Work that was considered appropriate for Aboriginal people often involved simple commodity production, following the model established in the fur trade, such as the supply of provisions, and materials required around the mines like timber and clay. Aboriginal workers assumed positions in unskilled support positions, in particular the transportation and loading of coal on shipboard.[96] Within the complex coal mining system of production, economic opportunities for Aboriginal workers took the form of independent commodity production, or "casual" unskilled waged work, both congruent with the forms of Aboriginal participation previously seen in the fur trade economy [see Chapter 2]. The HBC welcomed the economic contribution of Aboriginal people, but only within certain culturally-defined boundaries.

The work most closely identified with Sne ney mux workers involved the transportation of the coal cut by the skilled workers. Underground at the coalface, Aboriginal "pushers" loaded the coal produced by the hewers onto sleds and moved them to the shaft. From the pithead, Aboriginal men and women carried baskets loaded with coal on their backs to the shore. From there it was taken to ships moored in the harbour: "Hundreds of natives, mostly women, being employed who conveyed the coal alongside the ships in canoes which was paid for by tickets so many representing a ton or its proportion."[97] The description of payment by quantity of coal loaded seems to describe "piecework" employment, consistent with racialized perceptions of appropriate work for Natives. As the system of production evolved, wheeled wicker or wooden carts known as "skiveys," either pushed by Aboriginal workers or hauled by a horse, replaced carried

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Alexander Saxton noted how American gold miners came to see the "opportunity of finding and exploiting gold deposits as a kind of property right," inherent to their Anglo-Saxon-American identity. This right could be extended to other groups perceived as assimilable, but not to those in racialized or othered groups. Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 56-57.

96. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 118.

97. Mark Bate, "Reminiscences of Early Nanaimo Days," *Nanaimo Free Press*, 16 February 1907, 1; Burrill, "Class Conflict and Colonialism," 125-126.

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baskets to move coal above ground.[98] Flat-bottomed vessels known as lighters replaced Aboriginal canoes to transport coal to the ships, and in turn were replaced in 1857 with the construction of a wharf to permit the direct loading of ships.[99] The broad pattern of advances in transportation and loading involved the substitution of capital investment and technology to reduce the unskilled, or in other words, Aboriginal workforce required to move the coal.

The reference to an Aboriginal labour force with a large proportion or majority of female workers suggests that Sne ney mux culture continued to perceive waged labour as more acceptable for women than men. The nature of this "waged work" was not dissimilar to that described in association with agriculture or salmon processing in Chapter 2, and apparently women remained more susceptible to proletarianization. Probably the HBC hired most of these people as required on a day labour basis, although it may have filled some more specialized jobs, such as underground pushers, on a monthly labour contract. There is no reason to assume that levels or mechanisms of payment would have changed significantly from those seen in the other forms of waged labour.

The same pattern of racialization excluded Aboriginal workers from non-mining positions that involved higher levels of skill, responsibility, and status. The response to a request in 1852 for "2 steady men" to operate the lifting winch which raised the coal to the surface provides an example. The managers dismissed the idea of Aboriginal workers filling such a position due to the perception that they were untrustworthy, so would present a danger in such a responsible position. Instead, the oversman John Muir requested that the jobs be filled by "good Sandwich Islanders as being the most

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98. *Ibid.*, 1. A later reference referred to the coal carts used underground as "skivvers," suggesting similar technology was used both in underground and surface transportation. "Noah Shakespeare: who by industry alone makes success of life," *Victoria Daily Times*, 10 March 1917, 11.

99. Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital,"162-163.

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manageable."[100] This provides a clear case of a racialized workforce, with the suitability of a group for a certain type of work based on perceived "racial" attributes. As at the Fort Vancouver sawmill, Hawaiian workers were seen as more suitable for "regular" industrial work than Aboriginal workers. The distinction was made explicitly on the cultural traits believed to adhere to the respective groups, and as a result one non-European group was preferred over the other. This acts as evidence for the importance of ideology and other cultural factors, as well as economic ones, in shaping the coal mining system of production of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The California Gold Rush and Independent Ventures

For the post-1849 immigrant population of Vancouver Island, gold rush-era California had a profound ideological impact, as a land of opportunity and social mobility. For some, the attraction led them to desert the hierarchical order of the HBC on Vancouver Island, an act of resistance to their subordination. For others, it presented new regional markets for a variety of commodities and products that could be produced in the colony, and led to the creation of new export trades. First to take advantage of the demand for building supplies was the Hudson's Bay Company, shipping a small amount of lumber produced at its water-powered Millstream sawmill, built in 1848, and destroyed by flood in 1854.[101] In late 1851 sixteen HBC managers, all officers or ships' masters, initiated an independent venture, the Vancouver's Island Steam Saw Mill Company, capitalized at just over £2,000. None of the shareholders left their positions with the Company to engage in this venture.[102] The new firm imported the steam-powered mill that

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100. *Ibid.*, 162, citing Nanaimo Centennial Museum Archives, Nanaimo Letterbook, 24 August 1852 - 27 September 1853, W. McKay to J. Douglas, 16 September 1852.

101. In late 1849 a shipment of 42,270 feet of lumber was sent to San Francisco, and in January 1850 100,000 feet was sold to the American brig *Cayuga*, followed by other shipments over the next few years. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 39-40; Bowsfield, *Fort Victoria Letters*, 72.

102. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 42-43; Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 203-204, 208.

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gave the venture its name, and the skilled labour to operate it, from England. Exclusive of the boiler, the machinery cost some £720, or over a third of the subscribed capital. The company hired John Hall, who accompanied the machinery, on a five year contract as the millwright, engineer and sawyer for the company. Construction of the mill proceeded through 1853 on the north shore of the lagoon at Albert Head, with a steam powered winch, or donkey, to haul logs up from the water for processing.[103] Following various problems with machinery and labour, cutting began by 1854, when the Saw Mill Company contracted with Captain James Cooper to deliver 2,000 logs from Port San Juan to the mill.[104] In the absence of any non-Native settlement around Port San Juan, this suggests that the saw logs were purchased from Aboriginal producers. Although immigrant workers apparently cut the lumber in the mill, in this complex system of production, Aboriginal commodity producers supplied the raw materials, with Cooper, a colonial landowner and ship's master, acting as the broker connecting these geographically separate aspects of the system of production.

Unsuccessful, probably due to the drop in demand due to the California recession, the steam sawmill was sold in 1857 to James Duncan of Victoria for £2,000. The mill itself burned in 1859, while his debt to the Saw Mill Company was being contested in court. The only evidence of the mill producing lumber comes from a reference to a heap of sawdust in connection with the fire. The reason given for the failure centred on factors of production, particularly the lack of "zeal and uprightness" exhibited by the millwright John Hall in carrying out his duties. The shareholders, with their HBC duties, did not participate directly in the management of the venture, so relied on a hired manager. Additionally, the venture may have suffered from undercapitalization, but it is likely that market factors, specifically falling demand in San Francisco, played the largest role in its

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103. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 43-44.

104. Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., *The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1975), 126.

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failure.[105] By initiating this venture, the HBC managers demonstrated a personal commitment to liberal values, outside the parameters of their positions in the Company. Ironically, at the same time they continued to maintain the hierarchical system of the dominant "monopoly."[106] The failure of the venture demonstrates two central factors in the commodity exporting economy. First, the reliance on imported human capital in developing systems of industrial production, and second, the dependence on foreign markets, and susceptibility to their fluctuations. For this venture, it appears that some weakness existed in the management of the process of producing the commodity, which when combined with a lack of market demand, resulted in the failure of the business.

Previously, a number of the same Company managers invested in a venture intended to meet the Royal Navy and European demand for spars. Described as a "tale of frustration and failure," Captain William Brotchie initiated this venture in 1848, and oversaw it until his death in 1859.[107] Brotchie observed the timber resources of the region, and established linkages with his future investors, as a former captain in the marine service of the HBC on the Pacific.[108] The system of production he introduced relied on Aboriginal workers in the vicinity of Fort Rupert. A visitor in 1852 commended Brotchie for "the patience and perseverence he had displayed in teaching the Indians to square and

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105. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 44-45.

106. The potential for conflict of interest appeared substantial. James Douglas held two shares in the venture, at the same time acting as the regional superintendent of the HBC and the colonial Governor. Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 208, Table 10, "1853 Shareholders in Vancouver's Island Steam Saw Mill Company."

107. The misadventures of Brotchie are described in Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 33-38. The involvement of the HBC officers in the venture is described in Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 209-213.

108. *Ibid.*, p.209; Captain John T. Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names 1592-1906: Their Origin and History* (Vancouver, J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1971), p.64-65, "Brotchie ledge" entry.

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trim spars of such large dimensions."[109] Available sources do not reveal the terms of employment. The Aboriginal producers would have required specialized tools, such as broadaxes, and some instruction concerning specifications, to fall and hew the spars, implying a fairly high level of interaction between them and Brotchie.[110] The "teaching" may have involved providing specifications, and possibly tools, then contracting with independent commodity producers to deliver spars at a set price, following the HBC pattern of simple commodity production. It is also possible that Aboriginal workers were hired on a daily or monthly basis, as already noted in chapter 2 around Fort Rupert. Regardless, James Douglas gave the the cost of production, "entirely by Indian labour," as forty shillings [£2, or roughly $9.70-10.00] per spar, delivered on board the ship.[111] As such spars were estimated to be worth about £100 [$485-500] each in England, large profits seemed possible, even accounting for shipping and other costs.[112] For this venture, even more clearly than in the case of the Steam Saw Mill Company, its failure must be attributed to market factors. Whether working as independent commodity producers or as waged workers, it seems evident that a system of production based on Aboriginal participation, following the models established by the HBC, produced suitable commodities at an extremely attractive cost. The failure can not be attributed to the disinterest of the manager, as Brotchie not only initiated it, but tried to make it work for a decade. Shipping to Europe presented logistical obstacles, and added cost, but given the low cost of production, this could be accommodated. It appears that venture failed

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109. Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 209-210, citing BCA, Thomas Lowe, Letters Outward, 14 May 1852 to 10 December 1859, T. Lowe to J. Birnie, 30 July 1852; Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 35, citing BCA, Hudson's Bay Papers, Colonial Office, Vol.726, 57, Kuper to Moresby, 20 June 1852.

110. This would have parallelled the relationship that existed between the Hudson's Bay Company and Aboriginal people in earlier years, when steel traps were lent or sold on debt to specialized commodity producers; see Chapter 1 above.

111. Bowsfield, *Fort Victoria Letters*, 162.

112. *Ibid.*, 162-163, 246.

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because it could not place its spars on the market.[113] Either the Royal Navy did not need spars, or competing sellers were able to block access to that market. With a committed owner/manager and a workable and inexpensive system of production, it seems clear that the key factor in the failure of this venture was the lack of an export market.

Former employees of the HBC applied the production practices of the company to a number of ventures initiated in the 1850s to take advantage of the California gold rush market. This group, by leaving the company to become entrepreneurial "owner-operators," or independent petty producers, showed a stronger commitment to liberal values than the HBC managers who invested in the Saw Mill Company and Brotchie's spar venture. Their decisions to leave the hierarchical safety of the HBC were made because of the economic opportunities they perceived due to market demand in California. By establishing businesses producing and shipping commodities such as cranberries, salt salmon, and many others, to San Francisco, they seemed to be demonstrating an acceptance of some liberal values.[114] The market for dogfish oil in the forest industry of Puget Sound supported the rise of a number of independent traders supplying that commodity on the west coast of Vancouver Island in the 1850s.[115] Such ventures followed the systems of production developed by the Hudson's Bay Company.

Arguably the most successful example of such a transition from the hierarchical system of the HBC to social mobility and achieving respectable status is found in the miners of the Muir party that were sent to Fort Rupert in 1849. From their arrival, they resisted attempts to reduce them to proletarian status, and by taking advantage of the opportunities that were presented, they were able to make the transition from waged workers to proprietors, independent producers, and landowners. Like the HBC managers involved in the sawmill and spar ventures, these men initiated their private ventures while

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113. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 37; Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 213.

114. The best summary of a number of such ventures, which are termed "independent merchants," is found in *ibid.*, 217-226.

115. *Ibid.*, 55-57.

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working for the Hudson's Bay Company. However, their structural position in the hierarchy, as skilled workers considered essential to the coal mining system of production, gave them significant power in dictating their terms of employment in the 1850s. As discussed earlier, the majority of the Muir party deserted for California in the spring of 1850, leaving the oversman John Muir Sr. and his youngest son in the colony, where they continued to work at coal exploration and development for the HBC.[116]

The possibilities of the Sooke region must have impressed John Muir on his 1850 prospecting trip. He was later described as having "resided" there since 1850, and in about 1852, he and his sons, returned from California, received a contract to provide piles for the San Francisco market. Lamb suggested that following this, "the sons devoted all their time to the lumber trade and the farms at Sooke, though John Muir, Sr., retained his position as foreman of the miners at Nanaimo for some time."[117] There is some ambiguity about the working and residential arrangements of the extended Muir family in the 1850s. In 1852, the initial development of the Nanaimo mines began under the direction of John Muir, Sr., with some of his party who had returned to Vancouver Island. John McGregor, one of the deserters from the Muir group, was at Nanaimo in early1853, and directing the independent exploration and development of coal mines there in 1855.[118] However, in spite of working for the Hudson's Bay Company coal venture around Nanaimo, all seven members of the Muir party of miners were signatories of the 1851 memorial to the departing Governor, Richard Blanshard, and all designated their status as "Settler,

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116. The desertion is described in; Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 43-47. In 1850 John Muir Sr. explored west of Victoria, toward Sooke, in search of coal, and the following year prospected for coal on Burrard Inlet and along the Fraser River. Bowsfield, *Fort Victoria Letters*, 139, 158, 162.

117. Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, 465, "Sooke inlet" entry; Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 48.

118. Norcross, *Nanaimo Retrospective*, 3, 9, citing J. McKay to J. Douglas, 9 September 1852, J. Douglas to J. McKay, 31 May 1853; Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 50

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Sooke."[119] By 1858 five of the seven had purchased country land holdings in the Victoria-Sooke area, totalling 580 acres, and at a cost of £520 [about $2,522-2,600].[120] It is clear that for this socially-mobile group, land ownership formed an important component of achieving respectability, and it is also clear that they had significant capital for land purchase; the size and prices of their holdings are similar to those purchased by members of the officer cadre of the HBC.[121]

As well as the direct purchases from the colony, in the fall of 1853 John Muir [Sr.?] purchased the previously developed property of W.C. Grant, who generally is recognized as the first "independent" colonist to set up an establishment in the Colony of Vancouver Island.[122] Grant, preceded by a party of eight hired men, arrived in 1849, and purchased 100 acres of land at Sooke due to its abundant timber, and a stream suitable for a water-powered mill. He intended "to build a Saw Mill and prepare deals and house frames for the California Market, where the former, by our latest advices, were selling at

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119. The fifteen "Independent Colonists" that signed included John Muir, Sr., Andrew Muir, John M'Gregor, John Muir, Jr., Michael Muir, Robert Muir, and Archibald Muir; Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.1, 524-526, "Independent Colonists to Richard Blanshard."

120. John McGregor purchased 220 acres at a cost of £191, Andrew Muir 100 acres at a cost of £89, Archibald Muir 100 acres at a cost of £100, and John Muir and Michael Muir each purchased 80 acres at a cost of £71. Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 247-252, Table 13, "Country Landowners in the Victoria Area 1851 to 25 April 1858." McGregor seems to have relocated in Metchosin, to the west of Sooke, between 1851 and 1857. In another source he is noted as having acquired 180 and 100 acre lots [Lot 5 and Lot 32] in Metchosin in 1857 and 1858, respectively. Marion I. Helgeson, ed., *Footprints: Pioneer Families of the Metchosin District Southern Vancouver Island 1851-1900* (Metchosin, BC: School Museum Society, 1983), 169.

121. Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 247-252, Table 13, "Country Landowners in the Victoria Area 1851 to 25 April 1858."

122. Willard E. Ireland, "Captain Walter Colquhoun Grant: Vancouver Island's First Independent Settler," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol.17, nos.1-2 (January-April 1953), 116-117; Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 95.

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250 Dollars a thousand square feet."[123] Again, his venture came in response to the gold rush-driven market demand in California. Three of his hired men were to provide the human capital required for such a business. James Rose was a blacksmith and engineer, William McDonald a joiner and house builder, and Thomas Tolmie a carpenter. Grant also brought to establish a farming operation, including a gardener, Thomas Munro [or Monroe], James Morrison, William Fraser, and William McDonald, all listed as farmers and labourers, and John McLeod, a labourer.[124] The California boom, which provided the market for Grant's intended business, also provided potential opportunities and so a distraction for his hired men, creating problems in his workforce. To induce his men to stay in Sooke, he nearly doubled their wages in late 1849, only to fire half of them by March 1850 for misconduct, with the rest deserting by September. In spite of the labour problems, in 1850 Grant had a water-powered sawmill on his property.[125] Throughout this period, Grant spent extravagantly, using money borrowed from relatives, friends, and the Hudson's Bay Company, while neglecting the surveyor's duties that the HBC paid him for. He resigned as colonial surveyor in April 1850, and with the desertion of his men sailed for Hawaii, leaving a labourer in charge of his holdings. Returning briefly in 1851, and again in the summer of 1853 to sell his Sooke property, he seems to have made no further improvements, and there is no evidence of Grant exporting forest products.[126]

As well as all the members of the Muir party who represented themselves as settlers at Sooke in 1851, three of Grant's eight former employees signed the memorial to Governor Blanshard. They were Thomas Monroe, "Lessee of Captain Grant's Land at Sooke," William M'Donald, "Carpenter and House-builder," and William Fraser, listed

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123. Ireland, "Captain Walter Colquhoun Grant," 100, citing HBCA, A.11/72, Douglas to Barclay, 3 September 1849.

124. Ireland, "Captain Walter Colquhoun Grant," 94.

125. *Ibid.*, 102-103, 113, 108-109.

126. Grant's debt to the Hudson's Bay Company, exclusive of family and private debts, was nearly £2,200 on his return to the colony in the summer of 1853. *Ibid.*, pp.98-117.

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like the Muirs as "Settler, Sooke."[127] It appears that from 1851 to 1853 Monroe and the Muirs were in partnership, operating the establishment and mill leased from Grant. The company known as "Munroe and Muir" prepared three shipments of spars, piles, and timber on behalf of San Francisco merchants in 1853.[128] This confirms in general terms Lamb's assertion that in 1852 "the Muirs secured a contract to supply piles, which were then in great demand in San Francisco."[129] Presumably the arrangement ended with Grant's sale of his 100 acre property and improvements, including the sawmill, to John Muir Sr. Prior to that, as the lessee of Grant's land, Monroe's participation was required to provide access to its resources. McDonald's continued presence at Sooke probably signifies participation in the same venture, providing human capital in the form of his knowledge and experience in woodworking. The Vancouver Island census, enumerated in late 1854, listed seventeen settlers at "Soke," thirteen of them male, and four female. There was a man and a woman each aged fifty to sixty, one man forty to fifty, and nine men twenty to thirty. There were two young women aged fifteen to twenty, a boy and a girl between ten and fifteen, and a boy between five and ten.[130] This population was dominated by the ten or eleven men of working age. The Muir party, along with those of Grant's former employees who remained in Sooke, probably accounted for ten of these eleven men.

Descriptions of the exports of forest products from Vancouver Island at the 1852-

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127. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.1, 524-526, "Independent Colonists to Richard Blanshard."

128. As noted above, Monroe identified himself as the lessee of Grant's land in 1851. Grant is noted as leasing the mill to John Muir and family in June 1851. Bowsfield, *Fort Victoria Letters*, 190. The three shipments from Munroe and Muir are listed in Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 222, citing BCA, Vancouver Island, Victoria Harbour Master, Entry of Vessels, Port of Victoria, November 1852 - December 1856.

129. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 48.

130. W. Kaye Lamb, "The Census of Vancouver Island, 1855," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol.4, no.1 (January 1940), 54-55.

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1853 peak of the San Francisco demand suggest an emphasis on spars, squared timbers and piles.[131] The total quantity exported in 1853, quantified by W.C. Grant, amounted to 128,800 feet of piles, 16,500 cubic feet of squared timber, 22,000 feet of spars, and 10,000 feet of sawn lumber.[132] The emphasis on "raw" forms of forest products should be noted. The twenty percent tariff on exports to the United States was a factor in exports to the United States, but was counterbalanced by the decreased cost of shipping. The trip into and out of Puget Sound often added two weeks to round trip transit times to San Francisco, compared to loading at Sooke.[133] The production remained significant through the following year. John Muir wrote in 1855 that he had "been engaged in the Spar trade" for two years, having loaded fourteen vessels of from 200 to 800 tons, intended for the San Francisco, Valparaiso, and Chinese markets.[134] Muir alluded to receiving three shillings per foot for large spars, "delivered afloat,"equivalent to £12 or $60 for an eighty foot spar.[135] Grant stated that in 1853 piles were purchased at six cents per foot, and squared timber at twelve cents.[136] If these values are applied to the quantity of each product shipped in 1853, spars were by far the most valuable export, with an approximate value of £3,300 [$16,500]. The much larger quantity of piles represented £1,546

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131. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 48-52. Lamb suggested that this was due to the Muirs' lack of an operating sawmill at the time. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 95.

132. Captain W.C. Grant, "Description of Vancouver Island, by Its First Colonist," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 27 (1857), pp.312-313.

133. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 48, citing J. Douglas to A. Barclay, 16 May 1853.

134. As well as promoting the merits of his spars, Muir also noted that four of the vessels loaded belonged to Messrs. Barrows & Sons of San Francisco, implying a commercial relationship with a company in that city. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 52, citing John Muir to Commander A.J. Curtis, 30 July 1855.

135. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 52-53.

136. Grant, "Description of Vancouver Island," 311. Grant also reported the price of spars as twelve cents per foot, the same as squared timber, which seems very low compared to the price cited by Muir.

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[$7,728], while squared timber would have represented £396 [$1,980]. The total value of these products would have been £5,242 [$26,210]. Lamb's list of shipping for 1853, based on Grant's *Description* and the Victoria port register of the period, arrived at a total $30,200 [£6,040] value for sixteen of nineteen shipments, with unknown values for three of them.[137] This total value also included other products such as salmon and coal; given these factors, the correspondence between the values seems relatively good.

Lamb claimed that the majority of the forest products exported "came from limits owned by the Muirs and others." In 1853 legislation was passed by the Legislative Council that forbade the cutting of timber on public lands by those who were not considered British subjects and residents of Vancouver Island. There was also a duty to be paid on all timber cut on public lands for export, amounting to tenpence on each fifty cubic feet of timber. This did not have a huge impact, as most of the forest products exported at this time came from private lands.[138]

With the acquisition of a salvaged steam engine in 1855 the Muirs erected a steam sawmill, facilitating the production of sawn lumber and engaging in a local market and export venture over the next few years.[139] Curiously, and apparently in contradiction of Lamb's interpretation, a "Saw Mill," as well as a flour mill and a threshing mill, was noted at Sooke in the 1855 census of Vancouver Island, based on enumeration at the end of 1854.[140] Presumably this was the Grant-era water powered sawmill. Lamb observed that little is known about the operation of the Muir sawmill in the 1850s. In October 1859 a

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137. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 50.

138. *Ibid.*, 51, 49. Lamb suggested that this nativist legislation was precipitated by the desire of James Douglas to resist the overtures of a "crafty American Adventurer," Mr. Webster, who attempted to monopolize the timber exports from Sooke earlier in 1853, at the expense of the Muirs among others. *Ibid.* 49.

139. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 95.

140. Lamb, "The Census of Vancouver Island," 58. The saw mill was one of six on the Island, the flour mill one of three, while the threshing mill was the only one.

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cargo of spars and sawn lumber was shipped to London, suggesting an export focus.[141] In 1860 Michael Muir announced the opening of a retail lumber yard in Victoria, and both the export and domestic markets continued to be served through the early 1860s by the Muir sawmill.[142] The Muir spar and lumber operation continued with some gaps in ownership, and with varying degrees of intensity, until 1892. Although it maintained an interest in domestic markets, the emphasis that was placed on export markets, and in particular the strategy of developing markets for Vancouver Island products on non-American markets around the Pacific, forms one of the primary contributions of the Muir venture to BC's commodity exporting economy.[143]

The Muirs engaged in a number of other enterprises along with the production and export of forest products. Their farming establishment at Sooke in 1854 was sizable, with 60 acres of improved land and 940 acres of unimproved. In 1854 their 1,000 acre farm, with 60 acres improved, was at £4,000 the third most valuable in the colony, behind the two largest HBC establishments, and only one of these, Craigflower Farm, held more than the £2,000 value of implements and machinery on the Sooke farm. In production of crops and livestock, the Muir farm was among the most productive of the "independent" farming operations.[144] Their various ventures provided one of the few examples of viable commercial activity, outside the purview of the Hudson's Bay Company, in the

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141. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 95, citing *Daily Colonist*, 10 October 1859.

142. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 95, citing *Daily Colonist*, 28 February 1860, 20 December 1862, 14 April 1863, 19 March 1863; Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 135.

143. By the early 1860s, the Muirs were exporting spars to England in competition with products from the Baltic countries, as well as selling lumber and shingles on the local market. Victoria *British Colonist*, 28 February 1861, 2; Joseph Collins Lawrence, "Markets and Capital: A History of the Lumber Industry of British Columbia, 1778-1952" (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1957), 6-7. The ownership history of the Sooke sawmill, and the Muirs' emphasis on Pacific markets, particularly Chile and Australia, is outlined in Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 96-97.

144. Lamb, "The Census of Vancouver Island," 56-57.

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environment of the colony of Vancouver Island.[145]

The Muir & Company System of Production

The record suggests that in the early 1850s, the Muir family and their partners focussed on the production of piles, squared timber, and spars, with the first two aimed at the San Francisco market, while the spars were shipped to other Pacific markets, to California, and at times to Europe. Following the construction of a steam sawmill, in the later 1850s the emphasis shifted to sawn lumber, although spars were still being shipped. In part this may represent an outcome of the declining California market, that emphasized piles and squared timber, while domestic and non-American markets emphasized sawn lumber. The systems of production required for piles, squared timber, and spars was significantly less complex than that required to produce sawn lumber. The primary requirement was falling and trimming the trees, and in the case of squared timber and spars, the additional stage of hewing to a specified form. At the time, all of these involved manual processes. James Douglas noted that the demand in California for such products afforded "highly remunerative employment to the labouring classes, and adds both to the scarcity and price of labour, as a good axeman can make from 4 to 6 dollars a day in that line."[146] This again points out the value of human capital in the colony, and the position of power that skilled workers held, given their scarcity, and how essential they were to nascent systems of export commodity production. This wage would equate to about $100 to $150 [£20-30] per month, roughly the same as labouring employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, including skilled axemen, were paid annually.

In spite of the economic inducement, it is unlikely that only immigrant workers were involved in this industry. The 1855 Vancouver Island census counted only non-

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145. This follows an idea presented in J.M.S. Careless, "The Business Community in the Early Development of Victoria, British Columbia," in *Readings in Canadian History: Pre-Confederation, Third Edition*, eds. R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Ltd., 1990), 474-475.

146. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 49, citing J. Douglas to A. Barclay, 12 July 1853.

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Natives, and so enumerated a relatively small potential immigrant labour force at Sooke at the end of 1854, consisting primarily of eleven adult males.[147] With a substantial agricultural operation, a flour mill and threshing mill, and a sawmill, and with the Muir family's continued involvement in HBC coal mining, it seems unlikely that the forest industry occupied all of these men. Probably the Muirs applied a model utilizing Aboriginal producers or waged workers, following the protocols seen in the HBC's export ventures and in the Steam Saw Mill and Spar Company ventures.[148] Unlike Brotchie's exclusively Aboriginal system of production, the reference to the "labouring classes" in Douglas' description of the California export trade suggests that skilled work, such as hewing, was performed by immigrant workers, while less skilled jobs were performed by Aboriginal workers. Muir sold his spars at a price of three shillings a foot for large spars, "delivered afloat,"equivalent to £12 or $60 for an eighty foot spar, several times the £2 [$10.00] cost of production per spar under Brotchie's system.[149] Even allowing for a large profit margin in this selling price, as opposed production cost, this seems significantly more expensive, perhaps reflecting the additional cost of employing skilled immigrant labour.

A central feature of this trade in piles, timber, and spars, that carried over into the trade in sawn lumber, was its "contract" structure. An operation such as the Muirs would contract with a shipper or commission merchant to supply specified products at a certain price. The contractee would enter such an agreement in response to their linkages to, and understanding of conditions on, retail markets either in San Francisco or other Pacific centres. Market conditions would determine the initiation of such an undertaking to

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147. Lamb, "The Census of Vancouver Island," 54-55.

148. See the discussion of Brotchie's operation above. Aboriginal participation in it is described in Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 209-210, citing BCA, Thomas Lowe, Letters Outward, 14 May 1852 to 10 December 1859, T. Lowe to J. Birnie, 30 July 1852; Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 35, citing BCA, Hudson's Bay Papers, Colonial Office, Vol.726, p.57, Kuper to Moresby, June 20, 1852.

149. Bowsfield, *Fort Victoria Letters*, 52-53, 162.

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obtain a cargo, and the price the contractee was willing to pay. If a contractor such as Muir & Company agreed to the terms offered, they would produce the commodity, delivered to the contractee, at which time it became the responsibility of the shipper or merchant. Once the contractor met the terms of the agreement, the onus shifted to the commission merchant to get the cargo to market and sell it at a profit.[150]

The contract system provided advantages in terms of predictability on both sides of the system of production. The commission merchant would know in advance the global cost of a cargo, and so would only initiate a contract if market conditions indicated a profit. The producing company would only agree to the contract if the wholesale price provided a profit over the anticipated cost of production. The primary risk for the commission merchant would be a dropping off of retail demand and prices between initiating the contract and bringing the cargo to market, while the primary risk for the producer would be a higher than expected cost of production compared to contract price. The largest factor in the cost of production was the cost and availability of labour. This "contract" structure made for a marked split in the overall system of production between the "producer" and the "agent." This perceived split was entrenched, and remained evident throughout the nineteenth century, even as the classifications merged and became meaningless in later years.

This structure also included subcontractors, as when Captain James Cooper contracted in 1854 to supply raw materials, in the form of 2,000 saw logs, to the Vancouver's Island Steam Saw Mill Company. This would ensure a supply of logs at a fixed and predictable price to the sawmill, with Cooper anticipating a price that would cover the cost of production and shipping and provide him with a profit. In turn, to fulfill his end of the contract, Cooper almost certainly depended on Aboriginal handloggers, or independent commodity producers, that would supply the logs to him on a similar basis of

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150. This division within the contract system of production was implied in John Muir's 1855 reference to spars "delivered afloat," which made it clear that the contracted responsibility of the producer ended when the products were in the water. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 52-53, citing John Muir to Commander A.J. Curtis, 30 July 1855.

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price paid per log delivered.[151] Following the patterns of exchange established by the Hudson's Bay Company, Cooper's role was to acquire the logs from Aboriginal producers, muster them, and transport them to the sawmill, for a set contract price.[152] A large part of his role was as an agent or mediator, connecting geographically and culturally disparate producers and markets.

Conclusions

The formation of immigrant society in the colony of Vancouver Island took place in a regional economic and social environment deeply affected by the California gold rush. With the introduction of the Wakefield system, both the British Colonial Office and the colonizing agent, the Hudson's Bay Company, signalled an intent to replicate a colonial form of the British hierarchical system in which economic and political power was based on land ownership. However, this intent could not compete with the ideological and economic influence of the California gold rush, which presented ideal conditions for the evolution of a particular form of the liberal order. In California, potential migrants perceived unlimited opportunities for economic progress and social mobility, ultimately based on the extraction of gold. This provided a standard by which other potential emigrant destinations were judged. On Vancouver Island, the opportunities were limited by a number of factors, including the cost and poor quality of agricultural land, but perhaps most importantly, a hierarchical state inextricably linked to the interests of the HBC, a hierarchical company that controlled the economy and society. Under this "monopoly" control the socio-economic environment was considered antithetical to liberal values, as it severely compromised the core values of liberty, equality, and property.

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151. Smith, *The Reminiscences of Doctor John Helmcken*, 126.

152. Cooper, a former master of the annual HBC supply ships, had emigrated to Vancouver Island in 1851, complete with a small iron schooner, the *Alice*. He became heavily involved in the export of commodities, including coal, potatoes, cranberries, and forest products to the San Francisco market in the early 1850s. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part I," 47.

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However, with the influence of the California gold rush, the hierarchical values of the colony and company were challenged, creating conditions which supported, in a limited way, liberal values and ideology.

The unattractive conditions on Vancouver Island did not encourage the intended emigration of either a landed gentry or a landless labouring population. However, a high degree of congruence between the Hudson's Bay Company social hierarchy and that of the colony resulted in the creation of the Family-Company Compact, essentially a socially-mobile group of HBC officers who used their economic power to acquire land and so political power in the colony. In effect, a new elite or hegemonic group was created. It was not equivalent to the land-owning elites of Britain, but rather was a group that had acquired land, and by extension political power, through a process of occupational and social mobility available within the hierarchy of the Hudson's Bay Company. They had converted human capital, their skills, training, and ability, into economic and cultural capital in a way not anticipated by the architects of the colony.

With the California gold rush, significant regional markets developed for various commodities, creating opportunities for potential suppliers including the Hudson's Bay Company. The HBC moved to take advantage of these opportunities as merchants, and by introducing new industrial systems of production to supply forest products and coal to meet the demand in California. The Vancouver Island coal mining industry owed its existence specifically to the California market. In addition to such corporate reactions, the new elite of the Family-Company compact invested their own resources in "independent" ventures such as the Vancouver's Island Steam Saw Mill and Brotchie's Spar Company. Although unsuccessful, such partnerships demonstrated a commitment to liberal values, as they were intended to support individual economic and social mobility, outside of the rigid hierarchy of the HBC. Although forming the dominant historical bloc in the colony, with their actions this group appeared to have a stronger commitment to the doctrine of personal progress and their own status as self-made men, than to the stability of the state and corporate hierarchy.

To this resident "neo-elite," who achieved this status through occupational

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success, and interpreted the gold rush as an opportunity for further mobility, a new explicitly aspirant group was added. To take advantage of the opportunity presented by the new California coal market, the HBC had to establish a complex industrial system of production. Within this system of production, and within the overall values of an emerging liberal order, the relationship between identifiable social groups evolved in distinct ways. To establish industrial systems of production required specialized skills and knowledge, or human capital, which the company acquired by recruiting skilled British coal miners. Resisting their proletarianization in the British coalfield by emigrating, these men were able to significantly change their status in the colony. Because of their essential roles in industrial systems of production, skilled British workers acquired a significantly greater level of power than would have been possible in British industry. They successfully resisted the attempts of HBC managers to impose proletarian status on them, and negotiated positions of considerable autonomy, responsibility, and high income for themselves. As the British miners monopolized certain types of high skill and high status work, they excluded less-powerful groups from high prestige work and relegated them to jobs less conducive to occupational and social mobility. The skilled British workers appropriated the role most closely approximating the definition of respectability under an emerging liberal order, independent commodity producer, for themselves. In doing so they resisted their own proletarianization, at the same time limiting the participation of Aboriginal independent producers in coal mining. When combined with racial ideology, this resulted in the racialization of some jobs, usually those considered not conducive to occupational and social mobility, and creating a workforce split along divisions of race as well as skill. This new racialized division meant that the liberal ideal of equal access to opportunity only extended to the skilled, British upper echelon of the workforce.

Given the imposition of a racially split labour market in the coal mining system of production, Aboriginal participation in the industrial economy remained generally consistent with the attitudes and practices established during the Hudson's Bay Company fur trade. Usually Natives were incorporated into industrial production either as independent commodity producers, or as waged workers, on a daily or monthly basis.

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Aboriginal participation in the forest and coal mining industries appears to have taken both forms. The gendered nature of waged work seems to have followed the pattern discussed in Chapter 2. At Fort Rupert and Nanaimo, when coal was traded from Aboriginal independent commodity producers before British workers became dominant, they were generally male, but later, when Aboriginal workers were restricted to unskilled jobs such as transporting coal, women appear prominently as waged workers. In Brotchie's spar venture, Aboriginal producers may have performed jobs that would be considered skilled labour, but in general there seems to have been a move toward limiting Aboriginal workers to independent commodity production, or unskilled work.

The opportunities for occupational and social mobility that the skilled immigrants negotiated in the industrial system of production contributed to their overall economic and social success in the colony. Immigrants like the Muirs [and later Robert Dunsmuir or Noah Shakespeare - see Chapter 6 and Conclusion] who converted human capital into economic and cultural capital and achieved success within an emerging liberal order, provided powerful symbols for social mobility through migration. This encouraged emigration, and served to encourage liberal values in the developing colonial state of Vancouver Island. They provided the Horatio Alger stories of the colony, rising from the threat of becoming fully proletarianized industrial workers in Britain to achieving the status of independent commodity producers and landowners in the colony. They embodied the producer ethic, as their social status and cultural value was not inherited, but was achieved through their own efforts. In spite of the complaints of the "independent" immigrants like the Muirs, this also applied to the members of the Family Company Compact. A strategy of emigration in search of social mobility united these immigrant social groups, who both by their actions and their expressed commitment to a meritocratic system, contributed to a broader challenge to hierarchical society. In the colony of Vancouver Island, the opportunities that supported this ideological shift were inextricably linked economically and culturally to those found in more developed form in the liberal order Utopia of California.

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Chapter 4: The Fraser River and Cariboo Gold Rushes: British Columbia as a "Social Mobility Magnet" from 1858 to 1865

The California gold rush profoundly influenced the introduction of liberal values to the west coast of North America. For almost a decade, this impact was felt indirectly in the regions that later comprised British Columbia; the British colony of Vancouver Island and in the mainland trading preserve of the Hudson's Bay Company. California provided an economic opportunity both for the HBC and for independent colonists, as a new export market for commodities such as coal, timber, and provisions. The gold rush service centre of San Francisco became the metropolis of the Pacific, and competed with Britain for commercial linkages from the independent colonial ventures and the Pacific operations of the HBC. Additionally, the economic opportunity presented by the California gold rush supported the development of a particular variant of liberal ideology. By choosing to migrate to this region in search of gold, adventurers were demonstrating a commitment to achieving economic and social mobility through individual effort. The understanding was that in the context of the gold rush all would have an equal opportunity of striking it rich, regardless of their prior social position.

The gold rush provided a powerful symbol in support of a particular variation of the myth of the self-made man, in which migration to a new land of opportunity created the conditions in which success could be realized. This model was applied to Australia a few years later when gold was discovered, and to British Columbia in turn in 1858, after the dissemination of the news of large-scale gold discoveries. This model may have provided a broader inducement for migration than the "independent yeoman" alternative, based on agricultural settlement. Rather than a long-term strategy of acquiring land and bringing it into production, thereby achieving autonomy and so respectability, a gold rush presented a more egalitarian, and dramatic, alternative. Following the agrarian model required enough wealth for land acquisition and improvement, specialized knowledge, and a significant commitment of time. For those lacking economic and human capital, and patience, placer mining became more attractive, due to the perceived equality of opportunity, with all participants sharing a possibility of striking it rich. It still would

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require enough capital to emigrate to the gold fields and purchase equipment and supplies, enough knowledge to choose and work a claim, and depended on luck to a great degree, but gold mining was seen as more accessible to a wider range of the population. The appeal was more general in the context of the mid-nineteenth century than that of achieving the status of an agricultural yeoman.

British Columbia historiography generally treats the 1858 Fraser River gold rush and the 1862 Cariboo gold rush as discrete events, but for the purposes of this study I will treat them as continuous. The unifying factor is ideological, in that for some seven or eight years, immigrants were attracted to the region by the perceived opportunity presented by the gold rush; British Columbia became a social mobility magnet. In British Columbia and Vancouver Island, the gold rush dominated the economy and the minds of the population from its inception in 1858 through 1865, then gradually lost this status as it faded in the 1870s. In spite of its decline, the export of gold remained the largest single component of the colonial and provincial economy until 1884. As well as its economic impact, the gold rush shaped perceptions of British Columbia for residents and for potential immigrants. It was seen as a region where dreams of economic and social mobility could be realized, following the model of California, but was seen as different culturally, due to its "Britishness." For many, excluded from the opportunities of the California gold rush because of its American-dominated economic, cultural, and political structures, the British Columbia gold rush provided a more inclusive second chance for success. Due to its social and cultural context, quite dissimilar to that of gold rush California, more fluid, but equally located in the values of the liberal order, a different set of liberal values became naturalized, contributing to the development of a distinctly British Columbian identity.

The Hudson's Bay Company was the capitalist organization to first identify and export gold from British Columbia in meaningful amounts. A number of competing narratives exist concerning the beginnings of this HBC gold trade, but for the purposes of this study, there are two salient points about this first phase of production. First, most of the gold traded to the HBC prior to the "official" start of the Fraser River gold rush in

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April 1858 came from Aboriginal producers, following the logic and conventions of the earlier simple commodity trade. The second issue involved the transformation of this simple commodity trade into an opportunity for immigrant miners from Europe, Australia, but primarily from California. Through the dissemination of information about the resource, and the construction of British Columbia as a land of opportunity, the gold rush developed, leading to a two-stage wave of immigration to the region, in 1858 and 1862.

Gold was located in various streams around the Thompson and Fraser Rivers in 1856 and 1857, and by the summer of 1857 Aboriginal producers traded significant quantities to the HBC post at Kamloops.[1] As alluvial gold could be shipped to market without any further processing, this represented a "simple" trade in commodities, with independent producers controlling all aspects of production, including their work process. In this phase, the HBC maintained its monopsony as the sole market for these Aboriginal producers, again following the fur trade model. Likewise, Aboriginal producers had a monopoly on providing the commodity, and made some efforts in 1857 to restrict the access of the first immigrant gold-seekers to the resource.[2] This echoes the desire of the Kwakiutl First Nation a few years earlier to maintain control over coal production at Fort Rupert. As part of its attempt to maintain these relations of production, the HBC outfitted Native producers with the equipment required to placer mine for gold.[3] Under this simple system of production, with principally Aboriginal producers, the reported production of

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1. HBCA, B.226/b/13, Fort Victoria correspondence out, pp.66-68, James Douglas to W.G. Smith, 8 July 1856; *ibid.*, pp.70-71, James Douglas to W.G. Smith, 29 July 1856; *ibid.*, pp.96-98, James Douglas to W.G. Smith, 19 February 1857. Donald McLean, in charge of the Kamloops post, noted that 49 ounces of gold dust was supplied by Aboriginal producers in August 1857. HBCA, B.113/c/1, Fort Langley correspondence in, p.110, Donald McLean to J. Yale, 20 August 1857.

2. HBCA, B.226/b/15, Fort Victoria correspondence out, 2-3, James Douglas to W.G. Smith, 20 July 1857; Great Britain, Parliament, *Copies or Extracts of Correspondence Relative to the Discovery of Gold in the Fraser's River District of British North America*, (London: Queen's Printer, 1858), 7, citing James Douglas to Labouchere, 15 July 1857.

3. Great Britain, *Correspondence Relative to the Discovery of Gold*, 6-7.

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gold in 1857, prior to the gold rush, was 1,000 ounces.[4]

Perhaps more important for the future of British Columbia was the news that in February 1858 the HBC shipped 800 ounces of gold from Victoria to the mint in San Francisco.[5] This dissemination of information signalled the beginning of the Fraser River gold rush, and attracted at least 30,000 "adventurers" to the region, nearly all of them from the earlier gold mining centre of California.[6] Although many of these people did not originate in California, but had been attracted there by its gold rush opportunity, common elements of their experience there would have influenced the attitudes and values they brought with them to British Columbia. The rush to the Fraser River was mediated through the culture that arose in California over the preceding decade, and the social relations that had developed there. By comparison, direct European immigration was negligible, with 81 official emigrants from Britain to both the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia in 1858.[7] Not all of the 30,000 plus adventurers arriving in 1858 made it as far as the gold fields, or remained in the colonies for any time. By November 1858, and the end of the gold mining season, there were about 10,600 miners along the Fraser River. The mining population was concentrated on the lower Fraser, below the

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4. HBCA, B.226/b/15, Fort Victoria correspondence out, 27, James Douglas to W.G. Smith, 4 January 1858.

5. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 14.

6. The number usually cited, 30,000 arrivals, seems to be based on that of "at least twenty-five thousand persons" presented by Scholefield and Howay, based on their analysis of registered departures from San Francisco for Vancouver Island or British Columbia, and emphasizing the conservative nature of these figures. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 18. In his recent examination of the 1858 gold rush, Dan Marshall suggested 23,000 departures by sea, and "at least" 8,000 overland. Furtherm he noted that various authors had suggested a range of from 30,000 to 100,000 participants in the event. Daniel Patrick Marshall, "Claiming the Land: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to British Columbia" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2000), 2, 26, note 3.

7. Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers, *Nineteenth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners, 1858* (London: Queen's Printer, 1859), 68-69.

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region around Yale, and on the upper river, between Lytton and the Fountain.[8] To mid-November, more than 106,000 ounces of gold had been dug along the river, at $16 per ounce representing a value approaching $1,700,000.[9]

Boom, Bust, and Boom

Although there were some defenders of the opportunities presented in the colonies, the general attitude concerning the prospects of British Columbia in the 1859-61 period was one of disappointed expectations. The scale of the Fraser River gold rush, and the quantity of gold produced in its first year, did not match the high expectations developed in the California gold rush. The number of adventurers that actually made it to the gold mining districts was judged to be about 10,600, or not much more than a third of the conservative estimate for Fraser-bound adventurers. The other 20,000 [or more] emigrants had returned to California or moved on to other adventures. However, some of those remaining in British Columbia continued to push the search into new districts, and in 1861 the excitement over gold mining began to pick up again, as intensive mining moved into the Cariboo region.[10]

The results of the 1861 mining season were very good, with about 4,000 miners raising an estimated $7.5 million worth of gold, about half of that exported to the United States.[11] News of these results spread quickly, leading to a new rush to the gold fields of British Columbia for the 1862 mining season. Some 15,000 adventurers headed for the

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8. The estimated populations, heading up the river, were: Cornish [Murderer's] Bar to Yale, 4,000; Yale, 1,300; Hope, 500; Yale to Lytton, 300; Lytton, 900; Lytton to the Fountain, 3,000; Port Douglas and Harrison River, 600. Great Britain, Parliament, *Papers relative to the Affairs of British Columbia, Part II* (London: Queen's Printer, 1859), 29.

9. D. Sage, "Gold Rush Days on the Fraser River," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 44 (1953), 161.

10. The expansion of the gold mining activity in these years is summarized in Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 69-80.

11. BCA, GR-2078, Diplomatic Despatches, United States Consuls in Victoria 1862-1906, film B9747, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 30 September 1862.

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mines, of whom fewer than 2,000 were successful, with production down about $3 million from 1861.[12] The bust of 1862 meant a sharp decline in the number of migrants attracted for the 1863 season, estimated at about 3,500 miners, and perhaps due in part to this decrease, lowering competition and the cost of provisions, some fortunes were taken out that year.[13] Reports of this meant that for the 1864 season 7,000 adventurers were attracted to the gold fields, but with poor results, with production down "nearly a million of dollars" compared to the previous year, and only ten or twelve claims producing well.[14] As before, the failure led to a sharp decline in the 1865 season, when about 2,000 miners headed for the gold fields, with about half remaining for the season.[15] Although the production and export of gold remained a major part of the total economy of British Columbia into the 1880s, the gold rush proper was effectively over at the end of the 1865 mining season.[16] This declining cycle of boom and bust lessened the perception of the opportunity presented by gold mining in the region.

Promoting British Columbia

An important factor in the 1858-65 gold rush was the promotion of British Columbia and Vancouver Island as a land of opportunity. Many guidebooks and periodical articles were published, often written by British visitors or immigrants, and often with an emphasis on encouraging British emigration to the new colonies. This British literature converged with the results of the successful 1861 season to create a more "British" wave of immigration in 1862, as opposed to the "Californian" nature of the 1858 rush. Pre-gold rush descriptions of Vancouver Island, such as those in the *Journal of the*

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12. *Ibid.*, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 1 October 1862.

13. *Ibid.*, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 18 January 1864.

14. *Ibid.*, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 29 December 1864.

15. *Ibid.*, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 10 January 1866.

16. In 1884, for the first time, gold was not the single largest export from British Columbia, when its value was exceeded by coal.

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Royal Geographical Society by James Douglas and W.C. Grant, focussed on broader "scientific" dissemination of information about the new colony.[17] The gold rush-oriented works tended to emphasize the economic and social opportunities available to immigrants. An early example, and apparently the first "independent" publication on the topic published in the colonies, was Alfred Waddington's *The Fraser Mines Vindicated, or the History of Four Months*.[18] As suggested by the title, this was intended as a corrective to the "humbugging" of the Fraser River gold rush and British Columbia. Born in London, Waddington emigrated to California for the 1849 gold rush, and by 1854 was a partner in a grocery firm, Dulip and Waddington. With the Fraser River boom, Waddington came to Victoria to open a branch of his California business.[19] As part of the San Francisco merchant emigration, Waddington clearly had an interest in fostering the immigration of gold miners to British Columbia. Waddington consistently advocated the ideology of opportunity and social mobility through emigration, as an author, and as a colonial legislator, fighting against anything that he saw as impinging on the equality of opportunity for immigrants.[20]

Donald Fraser, the colonial correspondent of *The London Times*, played a key role in encouraging British gold rush emigration, particularly in the 1862 rush. A Scottish lawyer, Fraser's geographic trajectory mirrored that of Waddington. He acted as the

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17. James Douglas, "Report of a Canoe Expedition along the East Coast of Vancouver Island," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 24 (1854), 154-171; Grant, "Description of Vancouver Island," 268-320.

18. Alfred Waddington, *The Fraser Mines Vindicated, or The History of Four Months*, (Vancouver: Robert R. Reid, 1949).

19. Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, 516-517; Stella Higgins, "Colonial Vancouver Island and British Columbia as Seen through British Eyes: 1849-1871" (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1972), 15.

20. A strong expression of this ideology was included in Waddington's objections to Edward Stamp bringing in an indentured workforce from Britain in 1860. He argued they "would be nothing less than serfs," entirely under the control of the company, rather than autonomous producers. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 5 April 1860, 2.

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California correspondent for the *Times* during that gold rush, and as many other expatriates, followed the rush north in 1858.[21] The enormous readership of the *Times*, and Fraser's glowing reports of the mining, agricultural, and other possibilities of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, combined to have a profound impact on British emigration. Significantly, both Fraser and Waddington were participants in the colonial government of Vancouver Island within months of their arrival, so were combining their advocacy of the region with direct involvement in the apparatus of the state. Both had extensive real estate and business interests, supported by their promotional and legislative activities in these years before conflict of interest legislation.[22]

The focus of these portrayals of the "possibilities" of the region was gold, as the economic attraction underlying the interest and the immigration. In the articles submitted to the *Times* throughout 1859 and 1860, Fraser emphasized the abundance of the gold resource in British Columbia.[23] With the end of the productive mining season of 1861 in the Cariboo, Fraser wrote glowing endorsements of the gold resources of BC, supported by interviews with successful miners returning to Victoria for the winter. He reported that few claims in the Cariboo paid less than $50 to $100 per day, and emphasized this with examples of big strikes. Fraser declared that the whole interior of BC was auriferous, with gold there for the taking, and no real possibility of low earnings.[24] This portrayal of a

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21. Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, 190; Higgins, "Colonial Vancouver Island and British Columbia," 25.

22. Fraser was appointed to the Legislative Council on November 15, 1858, while Waddington was a prominent member of the House of Assembly by early 1860. Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, 190, 516-517; Higgins, "Colonial Vancouver Island and British Columbia," 15, 25; Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 5 April 1860, 2

23. *The London Times*, 17 February 1859, 10; *ibid.*, 3 June 1859, 12; *ibid.*, 28 June 1859, 10; *ibid.*, 26 July 1859, 5; *ibid.*, 30 January 1860, 4.

24. These stories, appearing in England in early 1862, were posted from Victoria in late 1861, as the reports of the preceding gold mining season were received there. *The London Times*, 5 February 1862, 10; *ibid.*, 6 February 1862, 10; *ibid.*, 25 March 1862, 10-11.

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general opportunity without significant risk was disseminated in a variety of sources. An article in *The Illustrated London News* referred to gold by the spadeful, and expressed the opinion that the British Columbia gold fields would prove richer than those of California or Australia.[25] Even the newly-arrived Anglican bishop George Hills added to the promotion of the gold wealth of the Cariboo with stories of the richness of the claims he saw in 1861 on William's Creek.[26] There were few dissenting voices evident in the media portrayals of the gold fields in 1861-1862. An editorial in the *Glasgow Herald* believed that Fraser's reports in the *Times* were overstated, and that riches may be available for a few, but that the obstacles to achieving them were greater in British Columbia than in California or Australia.[27]

Such more reasoned accounts did not evoke the same response as the ones arguing for unlimited possibilities, encouraging the immigration of some 15,000 gold seekers for the 1862 season. The lack of success of this wave of miners supported the reservations expressed in the *Glasgow Herald* editorial. The hysteria associated with the 1862 rush was seen as the cause of the huge rate of failure: "The reckless rush into the gold region in advance of provisions, had the effect of putting up their price so high before mining operations could be commenced that a large majority became destitute. The consequence was thousands returned. Those having means and remaining during the season have done well."[28] This emphasis on individual responsibility for failure or success demonstrated a commitment to the liberal values, consistent with that expressed by the editor of *The British Columbian* in June 1862. Commenting on the first contingent of disappointed gold miners arriving back in New Westminster, he attributed their failure to a lack of

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25. *Illustrated London News*, January 4, 1862, 3.

26. *Report of the Columbia Mission* (London: Rivingtons, 1862-63), p.40.

27. Higgins, "Colonial Vancouver Island and British Columbia," 85, citing *Glasgow Herald*, 14 February 1862, 4.

28. BCA, GR-2078, Diplomatic Despatches, United States Consuls in Victoria 1862-1906, film B9747, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, September 30, 1862.

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preparation and making the error of arriving on the gold fields too early. Their lack of success was not due to a lack of opportunity presented by the region or the resource, but simply that the miners were inadequate to meet the challenge.[29] However, the overblown portrayals of opportunity may have contributed to unfulfilled expectations. A friend in England wrote to Thomas Theobald, a London law clerk attracted to British Columbia in 1862: "The account you give is the Same as we have seen in the papers. But I heard no bad account of the Colony untill [sic] some time after you were gone the previous accounts drew too many there which I expect soon put a different shade on the views of those that were already there But I hope to hear of your being more successful."[30] By 1863 there was a perception that the portrayal of opportunity in British Columbia was exaggerated.

The population attracted by the gold rush held values consistent with the liberal order, although very different to those underlying the agricultural settlement of the western United States in the same period. Both groups sought economic independence and social respectability, following variants of the producer ethos, but the gold rush strategy depended more on speculation and luck. The American consul estimated that three quarters of the 1862 gold rush immigrants were members of a floating population of "adventurers" moving around the western United States seeking their fortunes. Their transient nature was considered an obstacle to the "settlement and cultivation" desired by the colonial government: "The population here, and it is characteristic of the people on the whole Pacific coast, are so easily led away by gold discoveries and excitements, that it will be a difficult matter for many years to come to induce any permanent settlement upon the public lands any distance from Victoria."[31] In 1860 a "sturdy miner" explained why he had

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29. "The Reflux," *The British Columbian*, 25 June 1862, 2.

30. BCA, GR-0485, British Columbia, Attorney General, Papers from Intestate Estates 1861-1886, Box 14, Thomas Theobald, file 1, George Cable to Thomas Theobald, 16 April 1863.

31. BCA, GR-2078, Diplomatic Despatches, United States Consuls in Victoria 1862-1906, film B9747, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, December 29, 1864.

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not achieved economic success after ten years in the gold fields of California and British Columbia: "He said, 'because Sir the miner is always agitated by any news of richer diggings & frequently spends all and comes back poorer than he went. I myself, if I hear of anything better, cannot keep quiet, I must be off. I once had 6000 dollars, but it all went away.'"[32] For this population, the appeal of the "adventure," the search for social mobility within this version of the liberal order, apparently outweighed more conservative approaches to autonomy, such as agricultural land ownership.

California Ideology and the Fraser River Gold Rush

Dan Marshall, in his recent analysis of the "Americanness" of the 1858 Fraser River gold rush, argued that the primary motivation sending this population of adventurers north was the loss of opportunities in placer mining in California. This "marginalised the average sourdough, or made him a wage labourer at best," leaving these [almost exclusively] men desperate to locate a new opportunity.[33] For members of the gold mining population, accepting waged labour was antithetical to their central motivation for undertaking the adventure to California. It meant abandoning the dream of social mobility, and accepting a subordinate position in an economic and social hierarchy, replicating the situations they intended to escape through migration. These men were willing to travel to the Fraser River to seek new opportunities because it provided a way of resisting, and avoiding, their proletarianization. Rather than accepting waged labour in the new forms of industrial mining developing in California, they would invest their economic and human capital in the pursuit of new opportunities.

Studies of gold rush-era California emphasize two aspects of the society that developed in the early, placer-mining, years of the rush. First, it is consistently described as egalitarian or democratic. Second, California's population is characterized as economically speculative, contributing to a fiscal situation typified by booms and busts.

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32. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, June 14, 1860.

33. Marshall, "Claiming the Land," 2-3.

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Ira Cross, in his definitive study of the labour movement in California, noted that in the context of the first wave of placer mining, distinctions between employers and employees did not exist, as everyone laboured for themselves. Cross argued that this classless, "egalitarian" social environment, with everyone a labourer, shaped the character, institutions, and life of the people of northern California.[34] Alexander Saxton refined this "value of labour" argument to suggest that the community of placer miners provided "a model of the Jacksonian producer ethic." In his opinion, the gold rush created a unique situation in which "the producer ethic found a basis of genuinely equal opportunity," eliminating the need for prerequisites, such as economic and human capital, required to achieve liberal order success in other regions or occupations.[35]

Within this egalitarian environment, Cross suggested that the gold rush population of California was imbued with a "speculative spirit," which encouraged financial risks. He argued that this underlay the boom and bust economy of California, attributing it to the sojourning intent of many adventurers, who expected to make their fortune and then return to their previous homes.[36] This focus on material gain, rather than a commitment to developing the mining region, would predispose such a population to pursue more attractive possibilities. If the first defining trait, equal access to opportunity, was compromised for an individual or group, the second trait, focussed on speculation and mobility, would encourage adventurers to investigate other opportunities, such as presented in BC.

In spite of the portrayals of an egalitarian gold rush society, only a certain portion of the population of gold rush California were able to fully participate in the form of the liberal order that developed. Access to mining claims was central to the equality celebrated in this mythic democracy, and if such access was limited or barred an individual

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34. Cross, *A History of the Labor Movement in California*, 12-13, quote from p.13.

35. Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 51-52.

36. Cross, *A History of the Labor Movement in California*, ch. III, "A Period of Beginnings, 1851-1859," particularly 19-20.

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did not have the same opportunity as claim owners. In the fluid social conditions of the California gold rush, an American hegemonic group developed quickly, probably due to the size of the population combined with its consistently-held nationalist and nativist ideology.[37] With hegemony came control of access to the gold resource. Saxton noted how American miners saw the "opportunity of finding and exploiting gold deposits as a kind of property right," inherent to their Anglo-Saxon-American identity. This right could be extended to other groups perceived as assimilable, but not to those in socially excluded groups.[38] The hegemonic group defined which groups were "non-American," or deviant, using cultural ascriptions such as race and ethnicity. These social divisions were naturalized, and then fixed by legislation that entrenched the hegemonic group as the only one that enjoyed the celebrated equal opportunity of gold rush society. Democracy may have been the ideology that informed the dominant group in the gold fields, but many were excluded from social mobility following the producer ethic by social constructions of race and ethnicity.

Groups targeted for exclusion included Spaniards and Latin Americans, African-Americans, indigenous populations, and Chinese immigrants. In 1850, the state legislature introduced a $20 per month tax on foreigners, which was repealed the following year. It was reinstated at a much lower $3 per month, but rose, then dropped again in 1856, but remained in place with such fluctuations until 1870.[39] Other racialized legislation limiting citizenship rights included the 1850 law excluding the testimony of African-Americans and Indians from legal cases, later extended to include the Chinese. The state legislature petitioned Congress for a Chinese head tax in 1854, and the following year introduced a

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37. Saxton estimated that the gold rush-era labour force in California was about 40% American-born, 25% Chinese, 15% Irish, 6% German or Austrian, 6% English, Scotch, Welsh, or Anglo-Canadian, and 8% other foreign-born. Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 11-17. Based on these figures, Americans made up more than 53% of the non-Chinese labour force.

38. *Ibid.*, 56-57.

39. Cross, *A History of the Labor Movement in California*, 16-18.

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$50 tax for Asian sojourners who could not become citizens. It was declared unconstitutional by the state Supreme Court in 1857, starting a pattern of racialized legislation being introduced by the state and then overturned by the judiciary, that continued through the next decade.[40]

To such subordination along divisions of race or ethnicity was added a growing division between Euro-North American claim owners and non-owners in the 1850s, following more traditional materialist or Marxist cleavages between social classes, based on their relationship to the means of production. Even for those granted access to the resource, gold rush opportunities turned out to be more dependent on luck than on adherence to liberal values. Those with productive claims often required waged labour to help them mine, while those with failed claims were reduced to a gold mining proletariat, supplying this labour. This process accelerated with the movement into more industrial forms of mining, such as quartz claims and hydraulic mining, that required a complex system of production, rather than the manual labour of one person as in placer mining.[41] Although imbued with the speculative spirit that brought them to California originally, members of this "neo-proletariat" could not realize their dream of social mobility as independent producers. However, this was seen as a temporary state, that could be remedied by migrating in search of new opportunities, such as the Fraser River gold rush. By leaving the more constrained economic and social structures of California, these men were asserting their autonomy, and emphasizing their commitment to the liberal system, in a form that reinforced the producer ethic. Their resistance to proletarianization did not involve developing class consciousness, or organizing against the owners, but through migration in search of new opportunities for social mobility.

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40. *Ibid.*, 77. This pattern of racialized legislation introduced by a regional government and overturned by the national state was repeated prominently in British Columbia in the 1870s.

41. This process of schisms developing among the formerly egalitarian Euro-North American gold rush population, culminating with the absentee owners and waged labour on the Comstock Lode in Nevada in 1859, is described in Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 54-57.

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Whether limited by race, national origin, or a lack of economic success, a significant part of the gold mining population of California encountered structural obstacles to achieving success. Members of the groups experiencing such disadvantages, ranging from overt racism to a lack of citizenship rights, and from punitive taxes to a lack of autonomy, were predisposed to improve their situations through migration.[42] For many, the move to a "pre-colonial" region, with Anglo-North American cultural values, but free of American hegemony and political structures, may have provided a way of escaping the American domination of California. Although Americans probably made up the largest single component of the 1858-65 gold rush population, many of the people making up the heterogenous and relatively transient group arriving from California had been attracted there by the gold rush from other parts of the world. James Douglas noted in the summer of 1858 that native-born Americans made up only a minority of the arrivals from that state:

> About two thirds of the emigrants from California are supposed to be English and French; the other third German and native citizens of the United States. There is no congeniality of feeling among the emigrants, and, provided there be no general felt grievance to unite them in one common cause, there will, in my opinion, always be a great majority of the population ready to support the measures of government.[43]

Douglas described a population with national origins significantly different from those of the gold rush-era labour force in California. Saxton estimated that the combined American and German component in California was about 46 percent, with about 21 percent British or Anglo-Canadian, 8 percent other foreign-born, and 25 percent

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42. For instance Dan Marshall suggested that for many, gold rush migration represented more than an economic decision, but one that was made to escape racial and ethnic discrimination or persecution. Marshall, "Claiming the Land," 123-124.

43. Clarence G. Karr, "James Douglas: The Gold Governor in the Context of His Times," in *The Company on the Coast*, ed. E. Blanche Norcross (Nanaimo: Nanaimo Historical Society, 1983), 64, citing J. Douglas to Lord Stanley, July 1, 1858, *British Parliamentary Papers*, vol.22, p.38.

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Chinese.[44] When Douglas wrote, Chinese immigration was not yet a large factor, but the proportion of British and French immigrants, compared to that of American immigrants, is telling. Douglas described a population dominated by those groups handicapped by the nativist social and political environment of California. African-Americans experienced greater disadvantages, as they were subject to various restrictions on their citizenship rights after the 1849 California constitutional convention. They could not vote, serve in the militia, or give testimony in legal cases. Although California was an anti-slavery state, in 1858 the state House of Representatives passed a law compelling African-American citizens to carry registration papers. Their restricted rights in California, combined with news of economic opportunities in the British territories, led to a consensus decision among leaders of the African-American community to emigrate to Vancouver Island as a group.[45] This was unusual in that the group acted consciously as an historical bloc, collectively seeking a new opportunity to eliminate the obstacles presented by certain structural conditions.

Chinese immigrants may have suffered the greatest racially-based subordination in California, in part due to the size of this visible minority, rising from 791 people in 1849 to 25,116 in 1852.[46] Specifically excluded from claim ownership and other citizenship rights, this group responded by specializing in service work such as laundry or cooking, or as waged labour in mining. Chinese workers created and filled a niche as a proletarian workforce, that was seen as "indispensable if American miners were to exploit their equality of opportunity to the full."[47] The mustering of this Chinese labour was often controlled by Chinese merchants or labour brokers established in San Francisco, also

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44. Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 11-17.

45. These community leaders approached Governor Douglas of the colony of Vancouver Island about the feasibility of immigration, and his supportive response contributed to the decision of much of the San Francisco African-American merchant community to emigrate as a group. Marshall, "Claiming the Land," 127-129.

46. Cross, *A History of the Labor Movement in California*, 16-18.

47. Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 52-53.

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constrained by nativist American legislation. Three of the leading Chinese merchants of San Francisco travelled to Victoria on the *Panama* at the beginning of the rush, in order to reconnoitre the business possibilities.[48] Apparently they reported favourably, as in June the Chinese firm of Hop Kee & Company contracted with Allan Lowe & Company, the Hudson's Bay Company's San Francisco agents, to transport 300 Chinese to Victoria. The *Caribbean* departed with 350 passengers from San Francisco in July, consistent with the rider to the agreement offering more pay for more passengers.[49] Also in 1858 the important Chinese merchant firm of Kwong Lee Company established a Victoria operation.[50] Within a few months of the start of this rush, there was an established Chinese merchant structure in place, including mechanisms for Chinese labour to be mustered and shipped to Vancouver Island and British Columbia.

The British Columbia gold rush attracted a diverse population, generally motivated by a perception of greater opportunities for social mobility than existed in California, and so produced a heterogenous immigrant population. In September 1858 Americans made up most of the 3,000 inhabitants of Yale, with Germans, French, and Chinese being the next largest groups identified.[51] An 1860 "census" of Douglas, the gold rush transportation centre on Harrison Lake, noted a population of 206 people, including one woman and one female child. Racial or ethnic groups represented included 73 Americans

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48. Marshall, "Claiming the Land," 126. This may have been on the May sailing of the ship. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 17. An alternate "origin myth" is presented by Howay and Scholefield, suggesting one man was sent to reconnoitre, and reported back to San Francisco with stories of gold by the bucketful, and an offer of $20 a day and board for him to work as a cook, thereby precipitating a Chinese gold rush. *ibid.*, 567, citing *San Francisco Globe*, 16 May 1858.

49. BCA, MS-1053, Knowlton, Wilson E., agreement, Allan Lowe & Company and Hop Kee & Company, 24 June 1858.

50. James Morton, *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains: The Chinese in British Columbia* (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1974), 8.

51. Robie L. Reid, "Two Narratives of the Fraser River Gold Rush," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol.5, no.3 (1941), 226-227.

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[35.4%], 37 Chinese [18.0%], 35 British [17.0%], 29 Mexicans and Spaniards [14.1%], 16 French and Italians [7.8%], 8 Blacks [3.9%], and 4 central Europeans [1.9%]. The ratio of one woman to each 200 men was said to also apply to the mining districts in the interior.[52] These figures, from the period between the 1858 and the 1862 rushes, are enlightening. Americans made up just over a third of the population, while the "non-American" groups that were subordinated in California comprised most of the other two-thirds. This suggests that such groups were less likely to return to California than Americans, who presumably had greater opportunities available there. Douglas probably was correct that there was no ideological unanimity among these immigrants from California. Nevertheless, their migration does suggest a shared quest for independence, for a rapid accumulation of wealth and property, and for individual autonomy and respectability rather than proletarianization.

The retail merchants and businessmen who followed the rush north exhibited a similar commitment to the liberal values, attracted by the potential service economy associated with the BC gold rush. This cohort, and this aspect of the gold rush economy, focussed on Victoria, as the metropolitan or service centre of the region.[53] Although important to the economy of the colonies, this group will not be examined closely in this study, as the features of retail and service industries are consistent across a variety of "base" economies. That is, the retail and service sector systems of production do not change markedly between regions where the economy is based on agriculture, where it is based on manufacturing, or where it is based on commodity exporting. However, a key element in the descriptions of the commercial community that developed in response to the gold rush was its ethnic and racial heterogeneity, with British, French, German,

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52. CIHM microform no.17108, [George Hills], "Episcopacy in the Rough," *All the Year Round*, 23 February 1861, 472.

53. The growth of this sector in 1858 Victoria was described by Waddington, *The Fraser Mines Vindicated*, 32; Kinahan Cornwallis, *The New El Dorado or, British Columbia* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), p.271.

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Jewish, African-American, and Chinese businessmen all represented.[54]

From the beginning of the gold rush, Victoria, as the point of entry, assumed the role of metropolis for the hinterlands of the gold fields, economically and socially. Following the model of San Francisco and California, this set up an economy split along geographic and functional contours, with a service economy including secondary manufacturing based in Victoria, and a commodity exporting economy centred on the gold fields of the Interior. Victoria's metropolitan status was supported with legislation when James Douglas declared it a free port in 1860.[55] The newly-arrived American consul, Allen Francis, referred to Victoria in 1862 as the "great depot" for British Columbia and Vancouver Island.[56] He noted that "[n]early half of the commercial business of Victoria is in the hands of Americans. The amount of capital employed by them is estimated at $500,000. Their trade is principally with the packers and traders to, and in the gold mines of British Columbia."[57] The gold rush created social problems for Victoria as well as economic opportunities for its businesses. Many of the 13,000 miners disappointed by the 1862 season returned to Victoria without the resources to support themselves or return home. Some relied on the charity of ships' captains for passage, but many were left destitute around Victoria.[58]

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54. The heterogeneity of the business community is discussed in Careless, "The Business Community of Victoria."

55. Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 80.

56. In spite of the settlement's free port status, "landing permits" were required to put goods ashore, with their cost based on the value of the goods landed. BCA, GR-2078, Diplomatic Despatches, United States Consuls in Victoria 1862-1906, film B9747, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 30 September 1862.

57. *Ibid.*

58. Some Americans were desperate enough to offer to join the Union Army in return for passage to a place in the United States where they could enlist. *Ibid.*, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 1 October 1862. In the last quarter of 1862 over 200 Americans applied to the consulate for relief. It had been granted to 28 destitute and sick seamen, but most of the rest, made up primarily of miners and "adventurers," had either found employment or

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The commercial economy depended almost entirely on the gold mining economy, so waxed and waned with the fortunes of the latter: "[e]very branch of industry seems dependent upon the success of gold miners." At the beginning of 1864 Victoria was "moderately prosperous," with a population of 5-6,000 people and about 100 buildings.[59] This optimism faded later in the year: "The general prospects of this region of country is not very encouraging. Trade, during the last three months has been languishing; emigrations limited to a small number; many of the returning miners are penniless; building and improvements in the city are at a stand; a large number of mechanics and laborers are unemployed, and real estate is fast depressing in value."[60] Secondary manufacturing followed the same pattern, with two foundries and machines shops established in Victoria to build industrial machinery employing about 100 mechanics in 1864. By the following year there were three such businesses and one boiler maker, but due to fading gold rush and consequent drop in demand, only one foundry operating.[61] Victoria was moribund, with no new development, and a declining population. The winter population, swelled by miners who would remain in the city until the gold fields reopened in the spring, had been as high as 7,000-8,000 people, but by the winter of 1865-66 declined to less than half that size.[62] The same economic and social linkages that supported the growth of Victoria in 1858-1864 period led to its depression in 1865-66, as the gold rush ended. Victoria and the gold fields formed an economic and social unit, and opportunity in the service economy depended almost entirely on the state of the commodity exporting economy. Whether attracted to the opportunities in gold mining, or those in the service economy, it was the possibility of social mobility, and so achieving respectable status, that impelled

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left Victoria. *Ibid.*, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 31 December 1862.

59. *Ibid.*, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 18 January 1864.

60. *Ibid.*, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 4 October 1864.

61. *Ibid.*, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, December 29, 1864; *ibid.*, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, January 10, 1866.

62. *Ibid.*, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, January 10, 1866.

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migrants to come to British Columbia and Vancouver Island. It was seen as a second chance to achieve such status, in the absence of the social and legal restrictions on full citizenship rights encountered in California.

The Impact of the Gold Rush: Naturalized Ideology

Whether arriving from California, Britain, or elsewhere, the motivation for emigrating to gold rush-era British Columbia or Vancouver Island was the perceived opportunity for economic and social mobility. Central to this was the concept of equality of opportunity, so that status could be achieved by the individual, rather than ascribed due to structural advantages in a social hierarchy. This conflict between hierarchical and meritocratic systems, and between ascribed and achieved status, had been played out in the politics of the colony of Vancouver Island prior to the 1858 gold rush. An appointed Governor and Council made up of a land-owning elite represented the former, opposed by the "independent" settlers, seeking representative and responsible government. James Douglas, the central political figure in the region, was identified with the hierarchical system, and values that were seen as incompatible with more recent British ideology, as noted by the newly-arrived Bishop Hills in 1860:

> The Governor is a self made man. He has not been in England for many [years] & is unacquainted with the feeling there upon many points, hence mistakes in dealing with those who represent here English society. Yet he is most anxious to do the right thing. He has been accustomed to be absolute in the Hudson's Bay Company & secret in his plans & to deal with inferiors. His position is difficult when in contact with accomplished men of the world, as our naval & military people, & where a legislature & council are concerned. He is resolute in his own view.[63]

The Congregationalist clergyman Matthew Macfie also saw Douglas as representing outdated and inappropriate ideology for the circumstances, but took exception to the governor's inflated sense of his own importance. Macfie considered Douglas' "efforts to appear *grand*, and even *August*," following the protocols of

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63. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 21 March 1860.

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hierarchy, to be ridiculous in the circumstances.[64] Both clergymen viewed the autocratic, top-down approach taken by Douglas, based on his experience in the HBC, as outdated, and less appropriate in the colonies than a form based on the precepts of liberalism, with an elected legislature and council. This use of Douglas as the symbol of hierarchical rule is made ironic by Hills' entirely appropriate description of Douglas as a self-made man. His position at the top of the administrative hierarchy in the colonies had been achieved through occupational success in the HBC, rather than ascribed through birth. However, by upholding hierarchical relations from his achieved position, he became an obstacle to those seeking equality of opportunity to realize their own aspirations of social mobility within the liberal model of success.

Equality of opportunity depended in large part on open and equal access to resources, including land. Tenure over land and resources underlay the producer ethos, in that it provided the inputs that would permit the individual to achieve economic competency and independence. An 1862 editorial in *The British Columbian* expressed this in its criticism of land speculation, manifested in the: "abuse of an imperfect Pre-emption Act, and the evil of selling surveyed land at auction without limitation as to quantity, or conditions as to occupation of improvement."[65] Although opposing large or monopolistic landholdings, this editorial focussed more on the doctrine of utility and progress with respect to land ownership. It noted that "honest" immigrants would be repelled by land speculation, a situation that could be improved by enforcement of the existing occupation provisions in the Pre-emption Act. The editorialist suggested that this be extended by making occupation and use the sole criterion for land tenure, so that "all allotments not in *actual use* [italics in original], are open to pre-emption by anyone that may come along."[66] This provides an explicit restatement of the producer ethos. The sole justification for granting land tenure should be its occupation and productive use. Without

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64. Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 394-395.

65. "Land Speculation," *The British Columbian*, 11 October 1862, 3.

66. *Ibid.*

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adhering to this principle, speculation would be possible, which in turn would impede equal access to the means of production, one of the key values within the liberal order.

This ideology extended to other resources perceived as having economic value, in particular determining access to the gold resource. Such access defined membership in the hegemonic American group in California, and lack of access provided the "push" to British Columbia, where the less restrictive situation redefined the ethnic and racial boundaries, and so broadened the opportunity for mobility. In BC, James Douglas, anticipating the 1858 gold rush, proclaimed Crown ownership of the gold resource in December 1857. The purchase of a mining licence in Victoria at ten shillings [$2.50] per month granted an individual permission to mine for gold, with the threat of prosecution otherwise. A claim had to be formally staked by the miner in order to obtain the rights to mine on it.[67] Dan Marshall saw these regulations following California mining law, and interpreted this as part of a larger project of importing California-style "frontier democracy" to the region, against the wishes of the Douglas administration.[68] Although Marshall suggested that these gold mining regulations demonstrated the extension of American hegemony, it may be more accurate to interpret them, as clarified in the Gold Fields Act of 1859, as the outcome of negotiation between the ideologies of British colonial administrators and immigrant miners. The provisions of the Act encouraged "independent" mining and supported the producer ethos. However, as seen in the ideology surrounding land, the producer ethos took a similar form, whether it was held by American or Anglo/French/German-American or British immigrants. Under the 1859 Act an individual obtained the right to mine for gold, and to register a pre-empted gold mining claim, by purchasing a free miner's certificate from state-appointed gold commissioners, at a cost of £1 or $5 per year. The discoverer of a new mine was entitled to two such claims, and an unlimited number of claims could be acquired by purchase. Reflecting the

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67. Great Britain, *Correspondence Relative to the Discovery of Gold*, 9, "Proclamation," 28 December 1857.

68. Marshall, "Claiming the Land," 135-136.

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producer ethos, there were rigid restrictions on the size of the pre-empted claims, based on what it was expected that an individual placer miner, or independent producer, could work. Bar diggings, below the high water mark of the river, could be 25 feet wide, dry diggings, above the high water level, could be 25 by 30 feet, and quartz claims could extend along the seam 100 feet.[69] The philosophy behind the free miner's certificate and the tenure on gold-bearing properties was very much in accordance with the producer ethos, and the ideal of economic and social mobility through individual effort.

Following the pattern seen earlier in California, the placer mining process evolved into a proto-industrial form of production, as successful miners or companies of miners hired less successful adventurers as waged labour. This increase in scale and elaboration led to the creation of an important ancillary business, supplying water through extensive gravity-fed waterworks, or flumes, to wash away overburden, and for sluicing the excavated gravel to reveal the gold. Dan Marshall considered the formation of at least twenty-one of these "water companies" along the Fraser in 1858 as the most definitive example of the introduction of California-style "frontier democracy." He argued that these companies had moved from California to realize quick profits in the new boom, and were generally owned and operated as joint-stock companies by miners who held strongly democratic ideals, and were actively anti-monopolist and anti-elitist.[70]

Bishop Hills visited one such operation at Hill's Bar in 1860, constructed at a cost of $12,000 by a company divided into twelve shares, with eight of them held by Mr. Perrier, one of the most successful miners and claim holders on the bar. The flume provided water to as many as forty claims, each paying five dollars per day for their "head

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69. Gold Fields' Act, 1859, discussed in Cail, *Land, Man, and the Law*, 72-73.

70. Marshall attributed the California origins of these companies to their American-sounding names, while his statement concerning the owners' ideology was based on the interpretation of Donald Pisani. Marshall, "Claiming the Land," 136-137, citing BCA, GR-1770, Box 1, file 1, BC Lands and Works Department, Richard Hicks, "List of Water Companies on Fraser River between Fort Hope & Fort Yale," 1858; Donald J. Pisani, "The Origins of Western Water Law: Case Studies from Two California Mining Districts," *California History* LXX, no.3 (1991), 243.

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of water," so providing income of up to $200 [£40] to the company.[71] The gross earnings of this operation in one three month long season could have exceeded $18,000, more than a 50 percent return on the capital investment, with even higher returns in post-construction seasons. Some aspects of this venture are difficult to reconcile with the "democratic" values suggested by Marshall. Effectively, such companies acted as limited monopolies, controlling the supply of water to claims within a mining district defined by the configuration of the flumes themselves. The claim holders formed a captive market, explaining their willingness to pay a comparatively high daily cost for a water supply. In this "joint-share company," one man held two-thirds of the shares. This concentration of ownership, and the lack of competition between water suppliers, suggests that this essential input was converted into privately-controlled asset that could be sold at high prices to the independent producers working their claims. Rather than embodying democratic and anti-monopolist values, this seems more consistent with the antithetical values of speculation and monopoly. However, perhaps more important in shaping the emergence of a liberal order in British Columbia was the success of migrant producers such as Perrier, and their resulting symbolic power. This affirmed the range of opportunities presented by gold rush BC and so supported the central motif of achieving social mobility through migration.

Defining Hegemony

The heterogenous immigrant population attracted by the 1858-1865 gold rush, and the elements of ideology that came with it, led to the naturalization of certain cultural values, in forms that owed something to those of gold rush California, but with a number of new and distinctive features. Dan Marshall argued that in 1858 a balance between the fur trade [HBC and Native], Californian, and British "worlds" was replaced by Californian dominance, due to demographics and strategic power. This forced the British colonial administration to accept California conventions concerning mining claims, water rights,

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71. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 14 June 14, 1860.

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and relations with First Nations.[72] Marshall's interpretation depends on the assumption that the "Californian" bloc acted in concert to overpower the other historical blocs in the gold rush, implying the former was homogenous, and universally carried the values of the hegemonic American group in California. This model was intended as, and provides, a corrective, "contrary to [interpretations of] historians such as Frederick Howay, Margaret Ormsby, and Barry Gough, to name a few," that British law and order, and a British colonial state, was imposed during the Fraser River gold rush.[73] However, the corrective replaces one dominant national/ethnic group with another, and does not fully accommodate the negotiation between historical blocs, within some of the factors presented earlier in this chapter.

First, contemporary descriptions of the demography of the gold rush emphasizes the heterogeneity of the population. Although most arrived from California, so were subject to classification as "American," it appears that a majority originated elsewhere, in particular Britain and France, in a process of sequential gold rush migration. In fact, groups that had been excluded from the opportunities in California by not being American enough made up a significant part of the immigrants to BC. Second, the form of liberal ideology identified with the California gold rush was relatively congruent with that underlying the broader pattern of European migration to North America. Both were based on the idea of achieving social mobility through geographic mobility, were strongly rooted in the producer ethos, and on the idea of productive populations as the value carriers for a society. The hierarchical "British" ideology represented by James Douglas was considered outdated and inadequate by representatives of British as well as California society. The congruence between British and American views of a liberal order was illustrated when Colonial Secretary Sir E.B. Lytton overturned the obstructive policy that Douglas had introduced in May 1858 to control the flow of immigrants and goods into British Columbia. Lytton wished to maintain British sovereignty, but not at the cost of

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72. Marshall, "Claiming the Land," 140-141.

73. *Ibid.*, 330-333.

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excluding "Americans and other foreigners from the gold fields."[74] By his actions, Lytton provided a political environment intended to create equal opportunity for all, regardless of national origin, consistent with the core values of the liberal order. This intent appears again in Lytton's instructions concerning the establishment of a company of Royal Engineers in British Columbia, showing that he did not view it as a coercive force to support a hierarchical colonial state, but rather one that would help create the conditions consistent with the development of a liberal order:

> This force is sent for scientific and practical purposes and not solely for military objects. As little display as possible should, therefore, be made of it. Its mere appearance, if prominently obtruded might serve to irritate, rather than appease, the mixed population which will be collected in British Columbia. It should be remembered that your real strength lies in the conviction of the emigrants [sic] that their interests are identical with those of the Government which should be carried on in harmony with, and by means of the people of the country.[75]

In this passage, Lytton encouraged the development of a state that accommodated immigrant ideology and "interests," rather than one that attempted to enforce a top-down hierarchy. He saw the Royal Engineers' primary roles as assisting in the inventory of potential resources of the region ("scientific" purposes) and developing infrastructure ("practical" purposes). Lytton's vision of the colonial state was not one that attempted to control the "mixed" immigrant population with coercive mechanisms, but one that would negotiate the creation of a state compatible with the values of the immigrant populations attracted by the gold rush. By extension, this would facilitate the naturalization of the doctrine of progress and development, to create a viable and self-sufficient British colony. By encouraging foreign participation in the gold rush, as long as it supported development of the colony in a form congruent with British colonial ideology, the policies advocated by Lytton contributed to a less exclusive definition of who could be included in the

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74. Great Britain, *Correspondence Relative to the Discovery of Gold*, 17, E.B. Lytton to J. Douglas, 1 July 1858.

75. Great Britain, Parliament, *Papers relative to the Affairs of British Columbia, Part I* (London: Queen's Printer, 1859), 45, E.B. Lytton to J. Douglas, 31 July 1858.

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hegemonic group. Rather than California's narrowly-defined "American" group, in BC non-British "foreigners" had equal access to gold claims, and so the opportunity of achieving economic and social mobility.

Those, like George Perrier, who achieved success and respectable status through gold rush migration, provided symbols in support of this more "British-inclusive" iteration of emergent liberal values. Perrier arrived in the first wave of migrants to the Fraser, and by June 1858 located a claim on the rich diggings of Hill's Bar. James Douglas appointed Perrier a Justice of the Peace for the district the same month, making Perrier the official representative of the colonial state.[76] To merit such an appointment the individual had to embody the core values of the society, and be acknowledged as respectable. Perrier, as a self-made British immigrant who had achieved economic success and autonomy within the opportunities of the gold rush, met the criteria. Bishop Hills identified Perrier as one of the leading miners of the district, the majority owner of the local flume company [see above], and the largest local employer of Euro-North American and Chinese labour in his various ventures.[77] Through his domination of the local economy, and the state's recognition of his respectable status, Perrier provided a symbol of the self-made man, and demonstrated a high degree of social mobility in joining the colonial elite. As a British subject, such success would have not been as easily available to him in California.

The active promotion in Britain of the opportunities for immigrants in gold rush British Columbia made for a more "British" wave of adventurers by 1862. The disruptive economic conditions and anti-British sentiment brought about by the American Civil War at the same time made Vancouver Island and British Columbia more attractive than the United States for emigration or investment. This also attracted some American emigration and investment from California, Oregon, and Washington, anticipating that the more stable

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76. Marshall, "Claiming the Land," 164-166, citing CO 60/1, Douglas to Stanley, 15 June 1858; CO 305/9, Douglas to Stanley, 19 June 1858.

77. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 13 June 1860; *ibid.*, 14 June 1860.

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conditions in the British colonies would be safer for life and investment.[78] Of the 15,000 adventurers arriving in the colonies in 1862, some 1,194 were listed as "official" British emigrants, still a small minority of the total, but up significantly from the preceding years.[79] To this group, arriving directly from Britain, was added a population of British expatriates already in western North America or Australia from the earlier gold rushes. Further, a significant portion of the emigrants from California originated in British North America. Such immigrant populations combined with the already-present managers and skilled workers of the HBC, independent immigrants on Vancouver Island, and colonial functionaries, to form the nucleus of a dominant or hegemonic Anglo-North American group in the colonies. This population was united by shared cultural elements, including the English language, often Protestant religion, and a broad commitment to "British" values, including the importance of individual freedom or autonomy. However, attaining membership in the hegemonic group was possible for other Euro-North American populations, who held cultural and ideological values congruent with the emerging Anglo-North American hegemonic group. This group, generally imbued with a speculative or entrepreneurial ethos, proved to be central to the "progress" of British Columbia over the next quarter century, contributing many of the inputs required for industrial development. This loosely-defined population may be divided into three smaller cohorts, based on their later economic strategies and the inputs they provided to colonial and provincial development. The divisions between these groups were imprecise and permeable, in the fluid economic and social conditions encountered in the colonies. They will be typified here as a "commission merchant" cohort, a "producer" cohort, and an "employee" cohort.

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78. C.E. Barrett-Lennard, *Travels in British Columbia* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1862), 220; John Logan Hughes, Jr., "The Economic Development of British Columbia, 1858 to 1885" (MA thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1929), 23.

79. These would include only those individuals emigrating directly from Britain, rather than those migrating from Australia or the United States. 70 men and 5 women emigrated to BC, while 887 men and 232 women emigrated to Vancouver Island in 1862. Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers, *Twenty-third General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners, 1862* (London: Queen's Printer, 1863), 66-67.

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As previously noted, this study focusses on the commodity exporting industries that shaped the economy and society of BC, rather than the retail economies that developed around them. Although those attracted to retail opportunities arguably held a similar vision of opportunity through migration, the retail system of production was common to much of the capitalist nineteenth century world. However, a particular group of commission or wholesale merchants, sometimes referred to as agents, played a central role in supporting the commodity exporting industries of the region. This group engaged in a variety of activities, including shipping, insurance, and the import and export of goods and commodities. Commission merchants formed an integral component of the California gold rush economy, and moved easily into the BC economy, beginning with HBC-affiliated agents such as the Lowe brothers, augmented in much larger numbers during the BC gold rush by others, such as Edward Stamp, who directed the industrial development of the region. These commission merchants provided access to export markets and sources of capital through their contacts in the business centres of London and San Francisco. They were the entrepreneurs that put together the overall factors of production for export industries, based on the identification of markets, capital, and resources that could be transformed into export commodities.

Rather than business and commercial linkages, which may be termed cultural capital, the producer group arrived in British Columbia with human capital. They had the technological knowledge and experience to establish systems of production. Most members of this group were willing to risk their gold rush earnings in other opportunities, particularly if success would provide economic autonomy and social respectability. In symbiosis with the commission merchant group, who identified and created opportunities, these individuals transferred their efforts and capital from the pursuit of gold to the production of export commodities. Both the merchants and the producers contributed essential inputs to the overall systems of production, with the producer group assuming the lead role in creating the commodities for export, and so the creation of industry-specific systems of production.

Finally, there were those immigrants that lacked the inputs required to become

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autonomous entrepreneurs. While they may have shared a similar vision of the liberal order, they lacked access to capital or export markets, or the specialized knowledge required for membership in the second group. If unsuccessful within the context of placer mining, with its minimal requirements for economic and human capital, these adventurers were driven to assume places in the waged labour force. Often this was viewed as a temporary situation, as waged labour was seen as a way to sustain life, but not a way to provide the social mobility that motivated these immigrants. It was this imperative that drove those who were unsuccessful in a particular gold rush to migrate to the next mining opportunity, rather than continuing as waged labour.

By the time of the disappointing gold mining season of 1862, members of this group were investigating the possibilities of other resources, and the development of a permanent, and more diversified colonial economy and society. For the hegemonic group, the colonies were seen as rich in resources, to supply the raw materials of a colonial economy, but would require the importation of capital and labour to realize this goal. The Civil War was seen as an advantage in the former case, as it left large amounts of English capital, previously invested in the American cotton industry, "upon the market," or available for investment in the colonies: "The grand characteristic of all raw countries is natural resources in an undeveloped state. Most of them teem with raw material which awaits only capital and labor to make it available as a great source of wealth. Let capital come and labor will follow quickly enough."[80] Perhaps due to the disappointed expectations in the gold rush in 1862, the call was to diversify any such investment, rather than concentrating on gold mining.

This economic diversification was supported by the Anglican missionaries in the region, who suggested that British Columbia's "chief value lies in its capabilities for successful colonization." It was thought that extremely high wages, particularly for skilled trades, but also the "startling value of muscle" in jobs requiring physical labour, would

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80. Victoria *British Colonist*, 29 December 1862, 2.

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attract immigrants, and subsidize the development of the region.[81] Both capital and labour were considered necessary for the economic and social development of the colonies, and it was hoped that they could be attracted. However, most of the population attracted by the gold rush did not have enough surplus capital to invest, and emigrated to avoid a proletarian life of waged work. They could not provide capital inputs, and did not emigrate to accept waged work, except as it would facilitate their achieving autonomous status. However, in the absence of success in the gold fields or the service economy, many were reduced to accepting waged work, as in the four cases of "Vicissitudes" described by Bishop Hills in early 1860. The first, G. Harding, a young man with friends in common with Hills, had just obtained a job as a wage labourer for an American miner, after labouring on a farm. Hills considered him "pretty well paid" at $2.00 per day and board, although "less than an ordinary labourer demands here [Victoria]."[82] The second left England a decade earlier, and spent time in Australia and California before coming to BC. The third example was the Wilby family, "respectably connected in England & Portugal," but now depending on the husband's work as a drayman: "They had been in California but for their children's sake they dare not remain there & were thankful to be where at least a better example was set." Finally, a young man named Moore left his situation in England expecting a post in the colonial government. He worked as a farm labourer at £3 per month and board, which Hills stated "no working man would take," after stints as a Special Constable in the 1858 gold rush, and later as a policeman in Victoria.[83]

The expressed strategies of these less than successful English immigrants provide some insight into their motivation and ideology. At least two of the four followed the pattern of sequential migration, following the perceived opportunities from England to

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81. [Hills], "Episcopacy in the Rough," 473.

82. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 4 February 1860, "Vicissitudes, Case 1."

83. *Ibid.*, "Case 2"; *ibid.*, "Case 3"; *ibid.*, "Case 4."

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California, Australia, and then British Columbia. Hills considered all his examples "respectable" in England, in spite of this, they ventured overseas in search of economic and social progress.[84] Hills' definition of vicissitude depended on the acceptance of common or unskilled waged labour for survival, rather than achieving the success they expected. The Wilby family illustrated a migration strategy based more on cultural than economic considerations, viewing the social environment of BC as more suitable for their children than that of California. There were many examples of gold rush-era immigrants who chose British Columbia as an alternative to California or the United States on the basis of cultural congruence with British values, such as J.W. Trutch and Richard Carr.[85]

In the perception of the hegemonic group, the successful migrant should embody the cultural values held in highest regard, those of the producer ethos and the doctrine of development. For instance Matthew Macfie saw the resources of BC as the "inducements" to attract those "desirous of improving their condition." Along with

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84. The same applied to the unsuccessful gold rush immigrant and former London law clerk, Thomas Theobald, who arrived in 1862 with letters of reference testifying to his and his family's respectability and his usefulness. BCA, GR-0485, British Columbia, Attorney General, Papers from Intestate Estates 1861-1886, Box 14, Thomas Theobald, file 1, letter of reference, James Colbourne, 30, 31, & 32 High Street, Kensington, 15 February 1862; *ibid.*, letter of reference, Stopford A. Brooke, Curate of Kensington, 12 March 1862; *ibid.*, letter of reference, Moseley Tayler & Moseley [Theobald's former law firm].

85. Joseph William Trutch emigrated from England to California for the 1849 gold rush, then lived in the United States until he was attracted to British Columbia by the Fraser River rush. Trutch believed that Englishmen could live there "under our own laws and flag." He began his career in 1859 as a surveyor and a contractor on the Cariboo wagon road project, eventually rising to become the first Lieutenant Governor of the province in 1871. Robin Fisher, "Trutch, Sir Joseph William," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol.XIII, 1901-1910* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 1034-1037. Richard Carr, a successful merchant now known more as the father of the painter Emily Carr, similarly was attracted to the United States by the California gold rush. Disliking American society, he attempted to return to England, but found it too closed and limited for his taste. He eventually settled on emigrating to Vancouver Island as a location that offered similar potential for social mobility as the USA, but within a cultural environment that he found more compatible than that in the United States. BCA, MS-610, Richard Carr, Diary, 1836-1881.

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capitalists who could create opportunities for labour, he encouraged artisans or skilled workers possessing some capital [between £100 and £500 ($500 - $2,500) was suggested], to emigrate and establish themselves as proprietors. He felt that respectable women were "urgently required on social and moral grounds" to permit the formation of settler families and a stable population. Unwanted groups included "[c]lerks, poor gentlemen of education and breeding in quest of Government appointments, governesses, schoolmasters, [and] adventurers without funds and trained to no particular employment."[86] Macfie provided a clear endorsement of the producer ethos. Capitalists were acceptable as long as their money created opportunity for labour. The immigrants most desired were small proprietors, who utilized local resources to foster the development of the region in a manner consistent with liberal values. The increased opportunities for economic and social mobility created by the capitalists and small proprietors would encourage further immigration.

Following Lytton's directive, political and administrative power was concentrated in the hands of British subjects, presumably attracted by the opportunities presented in the context of the gold rush. By the time of the retirement of James Douglas as the governor of both colonies in 1864, such men were emerging, with successful producers, to form a new elite group. Their values were more congruent with those of the larger immigrant population than those of the pre-existing group of HBC-oriented "self-made" men comprising the Family Company Compact. Members of the latter group often were concerned more with maintaining their neo-elite status than with maintaining a hierarchical social system, and so made a smooth transition into membership of the emerging "liberal" elite group. The larger hegemonic group, that could be characterized as being of broadly Anglo-North American origin, and imbued with a speculative or adventurer's variation of the producer ethos, was overwhelmingly male, which implied a certain set of gendered expectations within those values. Perhaps the defining element of membership in the hegemonic group was success, within the parameters of liberal ideology and the self-made

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86. Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 493-497.

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man. Those who had succeeded as miners, or in other ventures, had demonstrated their ability to achieve economic power, and as a result social power, within the model of the meritocracy. They validated the strategy of social mobility through migration, and so became avatars of the ideology that underlay such a choice. Within the fluid social conditions of an aspirant migrant population, these people assumed a place as a neo-elite at the top of an evolving social hierarchy. Defined by their economic, social, and political power, they became the value carriers of gold rush society. If their newly acquired power was expressed in a way that was congruent with the values of the larger migrant society, these people achieved respectability.

This hegemonic group established social norms that supported its own ideology, based on maximizing the opportunity for personal mobility within the context of the resource-based development or progress of the region. It was the general acceptance of these values on the part of the immigrant population due to their larger commitment to social mobility within the producer ethos, that made it possible for the hegemonic group to minimize organized resistance to the naturalization of liberal values. The construction of a society, and a state, consistent with such values also had a profound impact on the way that nonconforming social groups, principally First Nations and Chinese immigrants, were incorporated into the broader society.

Aboriginal Populations and the Gold Rush

The gold rush-induced wave of immigration changed the demography of the region, by attracting a new, larger, and more heterogenous immigrant population, which in combination with previously established British colonial immigrants, acted to naturalize cultural values united by a desire to create opportunities for social mobility consistent with the producer ethos. This new social order based on usefulness, progress, and personal achievement intersected with existing racialized ideology to renegotiate relations between immigrant and indigenous societies. The post-gold rush subordination of First Nations is naturalized in BC historiography, generally presented in terms of a simple shift in demographic, and so strategic power, allowing the colonial state to exert its coercive

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power and dominate First Nations in a way consistent with imported racial ideology. This transition to subordination has been presented along a spectrum ranging from the military imposition of Californian race relations to the simple disregard of Aboriginal populations.[87] I would like to offer a modified analysis, in which the structural factors surrounding the gold mining system of production created an environment in which First Nations and immigrant society negotiated within their respective cultural superstructures to define First Nations participation in the larger economy and society of BC.

Recently Dan Marshall argued that it was the catastrophic events of the "Fraser River War" between California miners and Aboriginal people that ended the resistance of the latter group, and "created a frontier defined and segregated by race," replicating that of California, rather than following British political forms.[88] Marshall contended that an American majority forced the British colonial administration to accept political forms compatible with American ideology, including the exclusion of Aboriginal people from the economy and society of the region. Robin Fisher argued for the same sort of quantum shift to Anglo-North American hegemony as a result of the 1858 gold rush, but due to economic rather than military conflict. Fisher thought the increasing size of the immigrant population, and the coercive power of the state supporting settler utilization of land and resources contributed to this.[89] Jean Barman considered "disregard," rather than conquest or elimination, to define the nature of immigrant responses to First Nations, an approach based on cultural assumptions carried by immigrants, including those of the "dying race,"

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87. Of course, some scholars, such as Cole Harris [discussed in Chapter 1], contend that the transition to Anglo-North American domination occurred long before the gold rush. He argued that within a few years of initial contact First Nations were reduced to a subordinated role, due to the power advantage provided to the fur trade companies by the latters' superior weaponry and extremely violent tactics. In this case the gold rush only resulted in an increase in the degree of subordination, rather than a quantum shift in the power relationship between historical blocs. Harris, "Strategies of Power in the Cordilleran Fur Trade," 31-67.

88. Marshall, "Claiming the Land," 199-200, 243-244.

89. Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 96-106.

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Euro-North American racial superiority, and an ethnocentric view of appropriate land use.[90] This immigrant belief that "underutilized" land could be seized by those intending to a "higher" use was noted by Fisher as well.[91]

Although certainly affected by ethnocentrism, it may be argued that the primary influence on immigrant responses to Aboriginal populations was the existence of two competing ideologies concerning the use of resources and land. The economic and military conflict associated with the coming of the gold mining population may be conceptualized as two historical blocs attempting to impose systems of production, each based on independent commodity production, on the same resource, or means of production. Aboriginal producers understood that the gold resource was theirs to extract and sell, as with other commodities desired by the Hudson's Bay Company.[92] It is likely that access to the resource for Aboriginal gold producers was determined within the guidelines of the social hierarchy of each group. This would have followed the pattern for access to fishing stations, berry patches, or any other economic resource, including those previously commodified through trade with the HBC. Such cultural guidelines for the use of resources would have been naturalized and understood by members of the relevant First Nation, but invisible to immigrant gold-seekers, or even to colonial functionaries. On the other hand, the colonial government assumed that the Crown owned the gold resource, regardless of the ownership of the land on which it was situated, as proclaimed by James Douglas in anticipation of the gold rush.[93] The legislated regulations governing gold

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90. Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, ch.8, "Disregard of Native Peoples 1858-1945."

91. Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 104-105.

92. Dan Marshall suggested that under the HBC system of production, Aboriginal people along the Fraser River had grown accustomed to being paid for "all resources" [his emphasis] that were traded to Euro-North Americans. Marshall, "Claiming the Land," 210.

93. Great Britain, *Correspondence Relative to the Discovery of Gold*, 9, "Proclamation," 28 December 1858. The particulars of obtaining access to the gold resource were described at greater length in the preceding section of this chapter.

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claims and mining through a system of licences and payments effectively excluded First Nations from access to the gold resource. The state entrenched practices consistent with the "equal opportunity" demanded by the hegemonic group, and enforced this form of access through its coercive mechanisms. While no racially-based barrier existed, the dissonance between these practices of registration and licencing and those followed in Aboriginal cultures was enough to exclude equal participation.

While excluding First Nations from equal access to the primary economic resource of the region, the hegemonic group developed racial ideology to fit the changing circumstances, emphasizing how a group was believed to support or oppose the emergence of the liberal order, and so the creation of opportunity. For Aboriginal populations, the broad assumption, supported by the observed decline in numbers, was that of the "the disappearing race." Within this, the construct of the noble savage evolved into two less appealing forms, attributed to contact with Anglo-North American culture, and the loss of the wilderness. These new constructs were the "ignoble or debased Indian," and the "savage Indian," conforming closely to those identified by Ray Allen Billington. In his model, the "fall from grace" of the construct of the noble savage took the form of two new constructs, the "bad Indian," resisting the development of immigrant society, and identified with savagery and inhuman behaviour, and the "ignoble savage," degenerating due to contact with a superior civilization, demonstrated by moral shortcomings, such as laziness, drunkenness, and promiscuity.[94] Billington noted how these constructs were subsumed into the larger assumption of a disappearing population.[95]

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94. Ray Allen Billington, *Land of Savagery, Land of Promise: The European Image of the American Frontier in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Norton, 1980), ch.5, "Native Americans: From Noble to Ignoble Savagery."

95. *Ibid.*, ch.6, "Native Americans: Doomed to Extinction." The same basic theme, in which the perception of a disappearing race served more to form attitudes than the coping strategies and persistence of Aboriginal people, is addressed in Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), Part 1, "And Then There Were None: A 'Bold, but Wasting Race' of Men."

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In gold rush BC, perceptions of Aboriginal populations as ignoble or debased meant that they were not seen as supporting the creation of opportunities in the colonies. A group that was disappearing from disease, "debased" to the point where it was no longer productive, or actively resisted Anglo-North American hegemony, provided a clear obstacle to colonial progress.

Apparently indigenous people saw themselves as declining in numbers and experiencing social damage from contact, as Bishop Hills heard from Michelle, the chief of the Katzi nation in May 1860: "He said they were fewer & fewer. Liquor especially was making sad havoc. He was grieved in heart to see them fading away. He would like to have his children educated."[96] This perception of demographic and social damage as a result of contact was general at the time. In 1862 the American consul in Victoria, Allen Francis, considered the 18,000 Aboriginal inhabitants of Vancouver Island in 1862 to be in a "very degraded state," with that year's smallpox epidemic a contributing factor.[97] Starting with the infection of about 600 people in Victoria in the late spring, this outbreak precipitated an editorial in New Westminster suggesting a strategy for dealing with indigenous populations. This recommended the relocation of the resident Aboriginal population away from New Westminster onto permanent reserves amounting to forty acres per family, and restricting travel. The problems in Aboriginal societies, including disease, were attributed to contact with Euro-North American populations, so removal would alleviate them: "Consequently, it behooves us to see that in our intercourse with these people we have due regard to their rights, while at the same time the more important interests of the country are conserved."[98] The editorialist believed that the hegemonic group was obliged to treat Aboriginal populations in a humane fashion, but it was equally clear that this should not to interfere with the "more important interests of the country," in

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96. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 26 May 1860.

97. BCA, GR-2078, Diplomatic Despatches, United States Consuls in Victoria 1862-1906, film B9747, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 30 September 1862.

98. *The British Columbian*, 21 June 1862, 1.

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other words the doctrine of progress and improvement. The relocation of the New Westminster Aboriginal population of 200 people was accomplished within the year, when fifty acres of land outside the city was appropriated as a reserve, a fraction of the forty acres per family suggested the previous year. This population subsisted "chiefly by doing such work as is offered by the white population."[99]

Although the attitude expressed in the 1862 editorial subordinated the needs of First Nations to the progress and development of the colonies, it urged some sympathy for a population perceived to be harmed or debased by contact with immigrant society. This attitude survived the "Fraser River War" of 1858, but was converted into a less conciliatory one by the Chilcotin War of 1864. Much celebrated as an example of significant interracial conflict in British Columbia, this broke out as a result of Alfred Waddington's efforts to establish an alternate route from Bute Inlet to the Cariboo gold fields.[100] The narrative of the hostilities and the retribution claimed by the colonial state are outside the scope of this study, and have been presented and interpreted already by many scholars.[101] The key outcome of these events on racial ideology lay in the response of the media and the broader settler population to this violence, constructing Aboriginal populations in the region as "savage Indians." Reflecting on the "Indian Troubles" at the end of 1864, the American consul differentiated between regional groups, but ascribed to the tropes of the disappearing race and the savage Indian. He considered coastal First

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99. *Ibid.*, 3 June 1863, 2.

100. Waddington, as noted earlier in this chapter, was an English merchant attracted from San Francisco to Victoria in 1858, who acted as a strong promoter of a British Columbia providing equal opportunity under the liberal order.

101. These events were covered extensively in contemporary sources, including *The British Columbian* in New Westminster and the *British Colonist* in Victoria, beginning in May 1863. They were reported by Matthew Macfie in 1865 in Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 463-465. Historians from Howay and Scholefield to the present have reviewed and interpreted these events. See Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 177-189; Loo, *Making Law, Order, and Authority*, particularly ch.7; Canadian Historical Mysteries, "We Do Not Know His Name: Klatsassin and the Chilcotin War," <http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/sites/klatkassin/home/indexen.html>.

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Nations "generally harmless," with populations that formerly numbered in the thousands "now reduced to as many hundreds," suggesting the scope of the decline. However, presumably due to the impact of the Chilcotin War, he described the First Nations of the Interior of British Columbia as "perfect savages... in their natures and habits... treacherous and inhuman."[102] Tina Loo suggested that dominant social groups utilized the events surrounding the Chilcotin War and the subsequent trial of the Aboriginal participants as a discursive device with which the hegemonic group [although she does not use that terminology] constructed itself. This was accomplished by focussing on how "othered" groups deviated from the norms of the dominant group. Loo contended that constructing Aboriginal populations as savage Indians was a clear example of this, but the same process took place when the hegemonic group supported its British identity by emphasizing undesirable traits of Americans. Although she noted the dissonance between constructing First Nations as the savage other and dealing with the killers under the rule of law, with a state-sanctioned trial, this may be interpreted to demonstrate the liberal values embedded in hegemonic culture.[103] The equality before the law of all people regardless of race provided a key example of the "level playing field" provided in the colonial society of British Columbia.

Largely excluded from the independent production of gold, and viewed as a group that did not support the larger project of fostering an environment supporting opportunity, Aboriginal workers generally were incorporated in the gold mining system of production in "support" positions, like Chinese workers in California. Offering no potential for social mobility, but just wages or payment for services or products, such positions did not attract the hegemonic group, and were viewed as subordinate to independent gold mining. Groups excluded from the gold resource, such as First Nations, were considered suitable for these less-desirable jobs, and placed in certain jobs based on racial ideology and

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102. BCA, GR-2078, Diplomatic Despatches, United States Consuls in Victoria 1862-1906, film B9747, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 29 December 1864.

103. Loo, *Making Law, Order, and Authority*, particularly ch.7, "Bute Inlet Stories: Law, Crime, and Colonial Identity."

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stereotypes. Chinese workers, seen as fully proletarianized "living machines," were considered suitable for tedious labour and domestic work, while enough of the "noble savage" stereotype still adhered to First Nations to make relatively autonomous, "piecework" jobs in the context of the wilderness seem the most appropriate. The support jobs that became racialized as "Indian work" often related to transportation, packing, guiding, and the supply of provisions such as salmon and game. The subtext of racialization was evident in Bishop Hills' comments that Aboriginal men were "invaluable" in the roles of "guides, huntsmen, and fishermen," so were "universally employed," earning from ten to twelve shillings [$2.50-3.00] a week."[104] As packers, guides, or suppliers of provisions, the economic relationship followed that established between Aboriginal suppliers and the Hudson's Bay Company.[105]

The 1863 description of the dislocated New Westminster Aboriginal population suggested dependence on jobs on the periphery of the mining economy, but three years earlier Bishop Hills noted the autonomy of Aboriginal providers in the Fraser Valley. An upriver chief, Seemium, had agreed to transport Hills' party from Langley to New Westminster: "We kept him waiting rather longer than he liked & he disappeared. We had agreed for five dollars. These Indians are well paid. I understand at Hope they get four dollars a day (i.e. sixteen shillings). So they are becoming very independent." Seemium's work was assumed two other Aboriginal men, reinforcing the racialized nature of transport jobs on the Fraser.[106] Hills' perception of the "independence" of Aboriginal workers, who could chose whether not to participate in the capitalist economy is significant. He believed this independence was a result of higher pay, but higher wages

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104. [Hills], "Episcopacy in the Rough," 473.

105. The ease of this economic relationship was attributed to the conventions established under the HBC: "No one who has travelled much among the natives of British Columbia can fail to be convinced that one result of the Company's rule has been that the white man is respected by them everywhere." Richard Charles Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island* (London: John Murray, 1862), 354.

106. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 26 May 1860.

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could better be interpreted as a outcome of independence, acting as an incentive to make participation in the capitalist economy more attractive. Independence may be attributed to the continued existence of a traditional economy, making such work voluntary rather than essential to survival.

Hills' later comments reinforced the central role of Aboriginal people in transportation along the Fraser River: "The traffic between Yale & the upper country (i.e., to Lytton about 80 miles) is carried on the backs of Indians through the winter, and now also in the want of sufficient animals." With the aid of a tumpline, a strap across the forehead to hold the pack in place on the packer's back, packs of more than 100 pounds weight were carried. Aboriginal men, women, and children were employed, like the father, mother and two girls who Hills encountered packing heavy loads of flour and bread along the trail north out of Yale. In this pre-Cariboo wagon road system, merchants in Lytton sent down Aboriginal packers with orders and cash, which was exchanged for goods by the selected merchants at Yale. "They [Aboriginal packers] are then entrusted with the goods & are never known to betray their trust." The packers would be paid between sixteen and twenty shillings [$4.00-5.00] per day to deliver the orders back to Lytton.[107]

This central role in between the coast and Cariboo only lasted a few years until the completion of the Cariboo wagon road. The economic dependency noted around New Westminster in 1863 may correspond to the resulting loss of opportunities for racialized transportation and packing jobs. By June 1863 much of the road was serviceable: "Packers are offering to carry freight from here [New Westminster] to Richfield for 50 cents per lb., which is very much under former prices, and when the road is completed it will in all probability be carried for half that price."[108] By 1864, with the completion of toll bridges across the Fraser and the Thompson Rivers, the wagon road connected the lower

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107. Hills noted pack weights ranging from 100 to 130 pounds, which were carried over difficult terrain. The mother of the family noted carried a pack of about 80 pounds, and one of the little girls about 40 pounds. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 18 June 1860; *ibid.*, 19 June 1860; *ibid.*, 15 June 1860.

108. *The British Columbian*, 3 June 1863, 2.

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Fraser and the Cariboo gold fields.[109] As wagons, carriages and pack animals now could be used, this led to a transportation boom, with numerous transport and express companies active on the Cariboo Wagon Road.[110] Such new options, generally cheaper and more efficient than employing Aboriginal packers, largely eliminated one of the primary opportunities for Aboriginal work within the capitalist economy.[111] At the same time, increasing restrictions on land occupation and use, such as those noted at New Westminster, were beginning to erode the traditional economy in the region.

For Aboriginal populations, the gold rush meant the acceleration of trends established in the fur trade, including population loss and social change due to participation in the capitalist economy. Based on racial constructs, they were viewed as too degraded or too savage to support the implementation of the liberal order. To this was added the general exclusion of Aboriginal producers from gold mining, and the beginnings of land alienation that compromised the existence of traditional economies. Aboriginal populations were still considered a source of labour for the growing capitalist economy, but only within certain racialized forms of work, jobs considered congruent with the construct of "Indian" applied by the hegemonic group.

The Impact of the Gold Rush: Visible Minority Immigrants

The portion of the San Francisco African-American community that decided to move to the British colonies was largely made up of merchants, businessmen and small proprietors. With a few exceptions, this group does not figure into the study at hand. However, the degree to which it was motivated by the ideology of the liberal order, as expressed by one of its leaders, Mifflin Gibbs, is telling: "We understand the rules of society quite well enough to know that social position must be made, each for himself & that character &

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109. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 103-104.

110. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 102-111; Mark S. Wade, *The Cariboo Road* (Victoria: The Haunted Bookshop, 1979), 84-96.

111. The inability of Native packers to compete economically with transport companies is described in Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 102.

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influence & worth must make that position."[112] This is a clear statement of the ideology of the self-made man. Although this group anticipated that the move would provide them with the equality of opportunity not available in California, they still encountered prejudice and social obstacles in California, which Gibbs attributed to a "deeply seated" tendency in "human nature to hate those you injure."[113] He saw such prejudice as the way that the dominant group used its power to construct subordinate groups as deviant, and so support its own dominance.

Chinese Immigration

Such prejudice was most strongly directed in BC, as in California, at Chinese immigrants. The first Chinese emigrants from California were beginning to arrive in Victoria in the summer of 1858, as an extension of a long-standing, and steadily expanding pattern of sojourning labour from China. The factors which contributed to the pattern of sojourning were a strong sense of family and clan loyalty, and limited opportunities in the local economy, leading to a seeking of such opportunities elsewhere. An initial phase was represented by rural peasants travelling to domestic cities to provide itinerant labour, sending money back to their families and thereby maintaining their place in the originating society. This expanded to include Indochina and Malaysia, and was accelerated by the internal chaos in China resulting from the First Anglo-Chinese War [1839-1842] and the Taiping Rebellion [1851-1864]. The resulting economic problems, combined with the opportunities presented by the overseas gold rushes, meant that the established pattern of sojourning in Malaysia was extended to include California and British Columbia. The patterns of labour procurement and conditions of employment which were seen in North America in the second half of the nineteenth century were long-established in Indochina

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112. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 26 March 1860.

113. *Ibid.*

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and Malaysia.[114] Jin Tan argued for the centrality of what he called the "crucial link between sojourning and the working of the family (*jia*) economy - the link which sustained entire communities in China," in order to analyze the economic and cultural strategies of Chinese immigrants.[115] He suggested that "sojourning had its own internal logic, independent of external conditions," based on the imperative of preserving the *jia* as a "corporate group." Tan considered that this logic could not be equated with "push-pull" theories of immigration, as it was predicated on supporting a social form in the originating country.[116] A similar point was raised by Adam McKeown in a study of transnational Chinese families, in which he noted the general lack of a larger context in examining overseas Chinese society:

> The emphasis on obstacles to immigration and integration emerges from a nation-centred perspective which delegitimizes attention to dynamics that span beyond the cultural and political boundaries of the United States, and do not conform to common historical narratives of the United States as a land of immigrant settlers.[117]

McKeown contended that migration must be analysed as a strategy to sustain the patrilineal social structure of nineteenth century China, and how for the Chinese sojourners, migration was viewed as a circular, rather than one-way process.[118] Key to the decision to migrate for work was the agency of the individual in making the decision to

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114. Gunther Barth, *Bitter Strength: A History of the Chinese in the United States 1850-1870* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), 26-31, 50-51. This "Chinese Diaspora" is well-summarized in many other sources, including Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), chs.1 and 2.

115. Jin Tan, "Chinese Labour and the Reconstituted Social Order of British Columbia," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, XIX, 3 (1987), 70.

116. *Ibid.*, pp.70-71.

117. Adam McKeown, "Transnational Chinese Families and Chinese Exclusion, 1875-1943," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol.18, no.2 (Winter 1999), 74-75.

118. *Ibid.*, throughout, particularly 97-101.

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undertake this strategy, although often under pressure from the family unit. The opportunity was presented by the convergence of the world capitalist system on China, and the actions of Chinese merchants acting as labour brokers. The sojourners were, in the words of Yong Chen in his study of the trans-Pacific Chinese society, "willing to venture away from home to pursue money-making opportunities."[119] In the same way that Aboriginal participants in the capitalist economy of the fur trade were attracted by the opportunity to acquire "new" resources, not subject to the hierarchical order of the originating society, the logic of sojourning evoked some of the values of the liberal order. Rather than accepting a position in an ordered, hierarchical society, the sojourners made the decision to migrate and work in a capitalist economy, in order to acquire economic resources that could be converted into cultural capital within their originating society. Such strategies were intended to maintain or enhance the social position of the family unit within the "traditional" society, by utilizing opportunities provided by the capitalist world.

Gunther Barth identified three types of Chinese sojourners, divided by the form of recruitment. The first variety was indentured labourers, whose passage was paid on a credit-ticket system, under which they were required to work off the debt incurred. The second group was comprised of contract labourers, engaged to meet a specific demand for workers in an overseas industry. Barth saw "foreign importers and Chinese middlemen" as the initiators of these contract hirings. The third group, coolie labour, was defined by having been "pressed into service by coercion," often involving kidnapping.[120] Barth stated that the majority of the Chinese immigrants to California in the early period came on a credit-ticket system, in debt to Chinese merchants or brokers, who controlled their labour power. He felt that the flow of Chinese labour to San Francisco was controlled by these Chinese merchants, in close association with Euro-North American commission

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119. Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943: A Trans-Pacific Community* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 12.

120. Barth, *Bitter Strength*, 51.

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merchants.[121]

This pattern of immigration was not unique to Chinese workers. Alejandro Portes and Robert Bach, in their examination of Latin American immigration to the U.S., discussed the "push-pull" theory of immigration, where factors in the originating society provided incentives to emigrate, while factors in the accepting society attracted immigration. They concluded that the "pull" of U.S. wages "had to be actualized...by organized recruitment" to attract immigrants, invoking the "labor recruitment theory."[122] Portes and Bach offered an integrated model for migration, which analyzed the process not as involving two autonomous nations and economies, but rather as a global phenomenon. It was often precipitated by "the expansion of a global economic system," and the introduction of capitalism into the country of origin:

> Hence, the pull from advanced economies is based not primarily on invidious comparisons of advantage with the outside world, but on the solution that migration represents to otherwise insoluble problems *internal* to the sending countries.[123]

This evolved version of the push-pull theory, accounting for world systems and organized labour recruitment to address problems in the country of origin, addresses the "logic of sojourning" issue presented by Jin Tan. The Chinese immigration to British Columbia was related to a constellation of factors, including a commitment to the *jia* or corporate unit in China, the "push-pull" of economic conditions in the global economy,

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121. The most prominent of these San Francisco-based labour brokers seems to have been the Dutch merchant Cornelius Koopmanschap, who claimed at a planters' convention in Memphis in 1869 that he had brought 30,000 Chinese into California in the previous few years, and could import workers on five-year contracts for as little as $10-12 per month. These workers had been imported as agricultural, mining, and domestic labour, along with providing the contract labour crews for the construction of the transcontinental railway. *Ibid.*, 60, 190-193; Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 65.

122. The pattern of recruitment was noted in the migration of canal workers from Ireland and the Continent in the early nineteenth century, and for later Mexican and Puerto Rican migration to the USA; Portes and Bach, *Latin Journey*, 5.

123. *Ibid.*, 6-7.

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and the existence of a highly organized system of recruitment, transportation, and labour management through Chinese merchants and labour brokers on the west coast. The same factors would affect the lived experience of Chinese immigrants, whether their intention was to sojourn or to relocate permanently.

One of the questions surrounding this gold rush-era migration is whether the Chinese workers were arriving as independent or indentured immigrants. The historical record is somewhat ambivalent concerning the relationship between early Chinese arrivals in Vancouver Island or British Columbia and Chinese merchants and labour brokers. The 300 people sent north by the San Francisco merchant firm of Hop Kee & Company in 1858 seem to fall into the indentured category. Under the terms of its agreement with Allan Lowe & Company, a firm with strong links both to the Hudson's Bay Company and Victoria, Hop Kee would pay $3,500 "for as much space as may afford passage room for three hundred Chinese to Victoria Vancouver Island & fifty tons of mdise to be carried therewith free." Feeding the emigrants in transit, and ensuring they could enter the colony, remained the responsibility of the Chinese firm: "Head money or State Tax to be paid by Hop Kee & co. or agents & provisions for twenty five days to be also put on board by them for use of Chinese passengers as above."[124] These arrangements suggest that the Chinese passengers were not acting independently, but within a subordinate or indentured relationship with Hop Kee & Company.

Edgar Wickberg interpreted the Hop Kee contract with Allan Lowe to mean that Chinese immigration during the gold rush was highly controlled by the large Chinese

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124. The $3,500 was to cover all the requirements of the passengers on board the ship, including 2 x 6 foot berths for each person, water closets, cooking facilities, firewood, and so forth, for the duration of the passage. There was also an incentive of $3 per head to be paid to Allan Lowe for "procuring" any extra Chinese passengers, and an extra $20 per head to be paid for the passage of any passengers over the specified 300. The agreement was annotated with a note that the final payment was made on 5 July 1858, and another that the passage was on the ship *Caribbean*. BCA, MS-1053, Knowlton, Wilson E., agreement, Allan Lowe & Company and Hop Kee & Company, 24 June 1858. The *Caribbean* sailed from San Francisco in July, with 350 registered departures. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 17.

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merchant firms: "This contract indicates that Chinese migration to British Columbia began in an organized manner, and implies that subsequent charters were similarly arranged by companies in San Francisco and Hong Kong."[125] Peter Li and Jin Tan both argued the contrary position, maintaining that the miners and labourers following the gold rush to Vancouver Island and British Columbia arrived as independent immigrants.[126] Li speculated that "Many of those who immigrated during the mining period of the 1860s and 1870s no doubt came as independent miners and labourers," although he did not support this contention with historical evidence.[127] Tan suggested, contrary to some of his own evidence, that the majority of the Chinese immigrants to BC came from California during the gold rush, rather than directly from China.[128] Tan implied that this supported his idea that most of them were not bound to labour contracts, as they had already immigrated to North America. He admitted that many of them were arriving under a form of "debt-bondage" for their passage, but felt they could quickly pay this off and then join the "independent work force."[129] Tan cited the "ubiquity" of Chinese residents, the number of them that owned claims, and the number of legal cases for wages against White employers as evidence for this independence: "There was little point for the labour contractor to try and prolong the men's servitude, as the absence of industrial production, the scale of small

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125. Edgar Wickberg, ed., *From China to Canada: a history of the Chinese communities in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1982), 13.

126. Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), 16-18; Jin Tan, "Chinese Labour," 71-73.

127. Li, *The Chinese in Canada*, 16-18.

128. Concerning immigration from California, Tan stated: "The majority came north from California during the gold rush rather than directly from Hong Kong." Tan, "Chinese Labour," 72. This seems to contradict his statement on the preceding page that 16 freighters arrived in Victoria directly from Asian ports, mainly Hong Kong, from 1860 to 1865, most carrying 200 to 600 passengers. *Ibid.*, p.71. This would imply at a minimum 3,200 Chinese immigrants from Asia, consistent with the more than 1,500 arriving from Hong Kong in early 1860 noted by Morton, *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains*, 9.

129. Tan, "Chinese Labour," 72.

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mining operations and the nature of the gold mining economy made a large standing work force unnecessary."[130] Tan cited Bishop Hills' 1860 interview with a nineteen year old Chinese immigrant, Wong Chan Yun, in support of his contention of independence. Wong had travelled from Canton to California in 1857, and then on to British Columbia during the 1858 rush: "The Chinese here, he said, have come upon their own hook. In California they are bound to some head men who receive part of their earnings."[131]

What Tan overlooked, in order to support his interpretation of the democratic nature of Chinese immigration to British Columbia, was the power disparity within the Chinese population. For the labour contractors and merchants, there was every advantage in maintaining crews of workers in a subordinate position. The majority of the lawsuits for wages alluded to were initiated by the labour contractors on behalf of their workers, as well as themselves.[132] The contractors or merchants set themselves up as the mediators between the Chinese work force and the hegemonic group in society, and by doing so were able to achieve economic and social mobility for themselves. For instance, in June 1865 Kwong Sing wrote to the colonial administration offering his services as a labour broker: "Being an agent for the 'Chinese coolies' lately arrived & to arrive I am in a position to at all times supply any number you may require If you will kindly write me

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130. *Ibid.*, 72.

131. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 5 June 1860. Jin Tan cited this passage from Hills' journal to support his contention that contract labour did not exist in British Columbia. Tan, "Chinese Labour," 72, citing UBC Library, Special Collections, Bishop Hills' Diary, 1860.

132. For example, in June 1865 Governor Seymour received a "Memorial" from Koo Loo, a labour broker who was representing "twenty nine of his Chinese countrymen, who came to this colony last Autumn," who were not paid the $708.50 they were owed for the work performed for Mr. Scott, a road contractor on the New Westminster-Burrard Inlet road. Koo Loo was clearly the Chinese mediator or labour broker in this instance, as he noted that he was acting on the part of "his Country men, who trusted to Your Memorialist [Koo Loo] for their Wages." BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 889, "The Memorial of Koo Loo, a Chinaman" to Seymour, 21 June 1865.

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when you are in want of Workmen."[133] Hills noted that Wong Chan Yun, the young man cited by Tan as the authority for the independence of Chinese immigrants, spoke English "very fairly & acts as interpreter."[134] It is likely that in such a role he was affiliated with the upper echelon of Chinese immigrants, the merchants and labour brokers who mediated on behalf of Chinese labourers.

The merchant firm of Kwong Lee, earlier established in San Francisco, arrived in Victoria in 1858, and assumed a leading role in facilitating Chinese immigration. Lee Chang, the Victoria representative of the company, was described as a cultured man, and as one of the few Chinese immigrants who brought a wife and child to Victoria with him.[135] The economic power of this company, achieved through merchant capitalism, and through mediating for Chinese immigrants, was reflected by the cultural power of its resident manager. In the perceptions of the hegemonic bloc, his "cultured" status, and the presence of a resident family, meant that he conformed to the construct of respectability in a way that the majority of Chinese immigrants could not. By April 1860 Kwong Lee & Company was bringing immigrants directly from China, such as the group of 264 that arrived in Victoria on board the *Hebe*, from Hong Kong. It was clear that this merchant firm was responsible for their presence: "The Chinese arrived on the Hebe the other day, have pitched their tents in the neighbourhood of Pandora and Cormorant streets. They are under the fostering care of Kwong Lee & Co."[136] The picture presented in contemporary sources of Chinese immigration in the era of the gold rush is one consistent with the labour recruitment theory of Portes and Bach discussed above. A relatively small number of elite Chinese merchants and labour brokers mediated between the existing sources of sojourning labour from southern China and the demands for labour from the gold rush

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133. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 889, Kwong Sing to William Moberly, 26 June 1865.

134. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 5 June 1860.

135. Morton, *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains*, 8.

136. *Daily Colonist*, 26 April 1860, 3; *ibid.*, 28 April 1860, 2.

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economy, and using those inputs, directed the overall form of Chinese immigration from California and Hong Kong. The control exerted over the Chinese labourers in British Columbia was recognized by Matthew Macfie in 1865:

> They are generally under the direction of shrewd merchants among their own countrymen, who never encourage the poorer classes to leave China without being certain that a fair prospect of occupation exists for them in the parts to which they are imported; and in this respect the judgement of those leading Chinamen is rarely at fault.[137]

This integration of labour demand and supply, under the direction of merchants, supports Wickberg's contention that the immigration was an "organized" one. Once Chinese immigrants were in the colonies, they could potentially achieve a higher degree of independence or autonomy by paying off their indenture, although the degree of autonomy achieved depended on their ability to deal successfully with the hegemonic group, that provided most of the opportunities for waged labour. The Chinese merchants and labour brokers often filled this essential mediating role a position that gave them not only economic benefits, but significant power over other Chinese immigrants, as well as influence over the broader labour force in British Columbia. It was a position worth defending.

The cost and logistical problems of emigrating to North America from China were considerable, explaining why specialized merchants or labour brokers tended to control the migration. They had the combination of capital and business contacts to underwrite the movement of workers, as well as access to employment opportunities for them on arrival. A fare to San Francisco in the later 1860s cost about $55.[138] Presumably the fare from Hong Kong to Victoria would have been comparable.[139] Based on the 1858

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137. Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 382.

138. Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil*, 28.

139. The return voyage could be considerably less expensive, by taking advantage of existing shipping. In the fall of 1860, Bishop Hills noted that Captain Edward Stamp could arrange a passage to China for $30 or £6. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 30 October 1860. This fare would presumably be offered on one of the ships

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agreement cited above, the "wholesale" cost of travel from San Francisco to Victoria was just under $12 per person. To put these transportation costs in context, Bishop Hills noted in 1860 that Chinese labourers were happy to be paid one or two dollars a day, while a miner who employed Chinese workers claimed to pay them $2.50 per day.[140] By the later 1860s, the usual salary paid to Chinese labourers in British Columbia in was one dollar a day, or about $25 per month. Just under 20 percent of a labourer's gross annual salary would cover the cost of transportation from China. It would be possible to pay off the debt to a merchant or labour broker, but the Chinese labour contracting system seemed to persist regardless. This may be related to the power differential that existed between labour brokers and workers, and the desire of the former to maintain their privileged position.

The number of Chinese immigrants, mostly arriving within this "managed" model, was substantial. In three months in early 1860 some 1,577 Chinese, mostly from China, arrived in Victoria. By comparison, the Vancouver Island census of May 1860 counted 2,884 in the Euro-North American settler population.[141] The number of "official" British emigrants to the two colonies from 1858-1860 totalled 182, a small fraction of the number of Chinese immigrants arriving just in 1860.[142] The total number of Chinese immigrants attracted by the gold rush is difficult to estimate. Jin Tan stated that from 1860 to 1865 sixteen freighters arrived in Victoria directly from Asian ports, mainly Hong Kong, most carrying between 200 and 600 passengers.[143] Even using the minimum number of passengers per ship, this would imply that at least 3,200 Chinese immigrants arrived from

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carrying lumber from Vancouver Island or Puget Sound to China for Stamp's company (see Chapter 5).

140. *Ibid.*, 13 June 1860.

141. Morton, *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains*, 9.

142. Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers, *Nineteenth to Twenty-first General Reports of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners, 1858-1860.*

143. Tan, "Chinese Labour," 71.

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Asia in this period, not including any people emigrating from California or other locations. However, this seems to have been a highly mobile population, that would wax and wane with the demand for labour in a region. By 1864 it was stated by Lee Chang of Kwong Lee & Company that about 2,000 Chinese people lived in British Columbia and Vancouver Island, with 300-400 of them on the Island. Most of the men on the mainland were engaged in mining.[144] These numbers were significantly lower than would be expected by the descriptions of numbers of arrivals, suggesting that many of these people were moving on, presumably due to regional economic conditions and labour markets. It is also possible that this population was underestimated by design, to prevent a public outcry or reaction from the colonial government. In June 1865 an editorial in *The British Columbian* suggested a much greater Chinese population, of about 6,000 people, compared to a Euro-North American population of about 10,000.[145]

Bishop Hills described the 1860 influx of Chinese immigrants in generally positive terms, although with an undertone of racial stereotyping. He noted that they were "flowing" into Vancouver Island and the mines of the interior by the thousands: "They are peaceably conducted, as a rule; funny, rather immoral, full of good humour, and very friendly. They respect the English much, and are the universal clothes-washers everywhere."[146] In his journal, he reflected at more length on this immigration:

> The Chinese are coming up in great numbers & spreading themselves over the bars. They work over again the claims which have already been searched by the European. They are content with a dollar or two dollars a day & will frequently make much more. They have been buying up claims & paying as much as from 500 to 4000 dollars. In California they have not been liked. They are heavily taxed & recently a law has passed which prohibits the arrival of any more.

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144. "Chinese Address to the Governor," Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 5 April 1864, 3. Kwong Lee & Company was the dominant Chinese merchant firm in Victoria; the lead role it assumed in representing the Chinese community to the new governor may be significant.

145. *The British Columbian*, 15 June 1865, 2.

146. [Hills], "Episcopacy in the Rough," 472.

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> Whether here we shall find them troublesome remains to be seen. At present they are helping us to develop the land, they are consumers of manufactures, they are cultivating gardens out of barren wastes, & Mr. Perrier, a leading miner on Hill's Bar, told me today he employed them as labourers & preferred them greatly to white men. They worked for two and a half dollars instead of four dollars, worked longer & more obediently, so that their labour was a great saving.[147]

It is clear from this that Hills believed most of the Chinese to be arriving from California, and linked their emigration to the push factors there, including the animosity of the American population and the lack of citizenship rights. In his perception, the Chinese were making a contribution to British Columbia, as inexpensive and tractable workers, as well as by acting as consumers, and contributing to the progress and development of the region. However, he did not discount the idea of Chinese immigrants becoming "troublesome," as they had in California, although without enlarging on what that meant. Hills' reference to the Chinese purchase of mining claims confirms the absence of a racial proscription on claim ownership, while the claim prices make it clear that the purchasers were not Chinese labourers earning "a dollar or two dollars a day," but rather wealthy merchants. Logically, the same merchants that acted as agents to bring the Chinese workers to the region were purchasing the claims, giving them total control over the system of production, both the resource, and an inexpensive workforce to extract it.

The perception among the general population was that Chinese workers were not independent immigrants, but operated in a form of debt-bondage to the dominant merchants. Sometimes, as in an 1865 editorial from *The British Columbian*, this perception was rendered in somewhat more hyperbolic terms:

> The great bulk of these people are mere slaves, and as such may be considered poor in a sense. But that poverty is not the result of unsuccess in mining, but is owing to the fact that their wealthy, grinding owners exact all their earnings save what will suffice to keep them in working order. To remit taxes in favour of such is, therefore, simply to legislate in favour of the pockets of the "Shylocks" who traffic in their toil, and not in any way

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147. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 13 June 1860.

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to ameliorate the condition of the poor slaves themselves. [148]

This provides an early example of the "slave" versus "free labour" ideology that figured into so much of the later anti-Chinese movement. The identification of indentured Chinese workers with slaves was a way of othering them; the ideology of autonomy and freedom was central to the cultural values held by the hegemonic group in British Columbia, and the relationship between the Chinese merchants and the workers did not fit the model of individual effort leading to success. This construction of Chinese workers as slaves controlled by the merchants formed part of the unfavourable racial ideology brought with Euro-North American immigrants from California. The latter made efforts to keep Chinese migrants away from the Fraser River, generally without success.[149] The anti-Chinese attitudes of the California immigrants were echoed by those expressed by First Nations concerning the large Chinese population on the Fraser in 1860. Bishop Hills' Aboriginal canoe crew "seemed to hold them [the Chinese] in great contempt," while he thought that the Chinese feared the indigenous people.[150]

The majority of Chinese immigrants attracted by the gold rush apparently worked as labourers, with the prominent exceptions of the merchants and labour brokers. Jin Tan's analysis of seventy-two passage tickets from an 1865 voyage of the barque *Maria* revealed that over half of the immigrants on that trip identified themselves as labourers, with the rest described as artisans or peddlers.[151] However, this self-ascription does not

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148. *The British Columbian*, 2 March 1865, 3.

149. Various anecdotes exist, such as one in which Californian resistance to landing Chinese passengers at Hope was overruled by the "British" authority of the HBC Chief Trader Donald McLean, who invited the Chinese immigrants to stay in Fort Hope for protection. J.C. Bryant, "A Sturdy Prospector," in *Stories of Early British Columbia*, ed. W.W. Walkem (Vancouver: *News-Advertiser*, 1914), 123.

150. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 23 June 1860.

151. This sample was less than a third of the total surviving tickets. The artisans were enumerated as eight carpenters, five tailors, two cooks, one blacksmith, one shoemaker, while the peddlers included seven grocers, six rice sellers, four oil sellers, and one rice dealer. Tan, "Chinese Labour," 71, citing BCA, K/EA/C43, Chinese letters, account

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identify where they were placed in the BC workforce, or their relationship with the merchants or labour contractors. The pattern was not dissimilar to that found in the Euro-North American gold rush population, in that migrants were seeking generalized economic opportunities, rather than attempting to replicate their occupational roles in their region of origin.

When interviewed by Bishop Hills, Wong Chan Yun expressed his desire to return to China at some time, confirming his self-ascription as a sojourner. Wong enlarged a little on the circumstances of Chinese immigrants: "They live principally upon rice & tea at their three meals, sometimes chicken & pork & potatoes. They send home the bones of their dead. ...for the comfort of friends. He knew no other reason."[152] The return of remains to China confirms the sojourning intent of the migrants. Significantly, the "rice & tea" which formed the principal diet of the workers would all have been supplied by Chinese merchants; the meat and potatoes were locally produced. This provides a further insight into the economic benefit for Chinese merchants or labour brokers in retaining an indentured workforce, as it would provide a ready retail market for the commodities they were importing.

In spite of the social hardships, the dream of riches continued to motivate Chinese immigration through 1866. Bishop Hills referred to the case of thirty-two Chinese workers who returned to China in 1860 after "but a few months in British Columbia," with earnings of $23,000 [£4,600], or something over $700 each. Even after paying for passage home, this would leave each man with "a fortune to a poor man in China."[153] The earning of such a fortune in a few months, and being able to return with it to China, presumably to realize an enhanced social position, provided a classic example of the

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books, vol.1.

152. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 5 June 1860.

153. This success story was reported to Hills by Captain Edward Stamp (see Chapter 5), who may have arranged the return passage to China for these men as part of his ongoing shipping of forest products. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 30 October 1860.

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sojourning Chinese worker's dream. Such examples would support the construct of British Columbia as a land of opportunity, and so encourage the migration of such sojourning workers.

The hegemonic group in British Columbia responded to these workers based on its perception of how great a contribution they made to the development and progress of the colonies, illustrated in the mid-1860s debate over the imposition of specific "Chinese" taxes. An 1865 editorial in *The British Columbian* defended the imposition of a heavy duty on imported rice and opium. The affected Chinese population was portrayed as sojourners, who were taking wealth out of British Columbia, without materially contributing to the progress or development of the colony:

> That portion of the Chinese who are mining on their own account are, as a whole, more successful and better off than are the bulk of the European miners in this colony. They live sparingly, work steadily, and carefully hoard all they make, and are at all times ready to conceal the truth in order to keep competition away or evade a tax. We unhesitatingly repeat, what we have asserted before, that Chinese take out more gold in proportion to the capital expended in mining operations than any other class of our miners. The champions of "John Chinaman" appear to forget, in their yearning compassion for their Celestial *protege*, the hundreds, nay thousands of poor, "strapped" white miners, who, having expended their hundreds and thousands of dollars in prospecting and opening up our mineral districts, find themselves with broken constitutions and without the means to buy a meal of victuals or to get out of the country. We are asked to express all our sympathy upon the most worthless class of our miners, who never become colonists, who never prospect the country; but who, Jackall [*sic*] like, follow upon the heals [*sic*] of the hardy pioneer, and by their economy and industry amass large quantities of gold, all of which goes to enrich a country which is closed against civilization, and which shows precious little consideration for British subjects in its legislation. Every time this question is turned over we see additional reasons why some means ought to be used in order to compel Chinamen to contribute more towards the revenue of the country than they do even, under the new tariff, with its "enormous" rates upon the articles of rice and opium."[154]

Although this excerpt illustrates an early version of the "unfair economic

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154. *The British Columbian*, 2 March 1865, 3.

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competition" argument that figured prominently in later anti-Chinese rhetoric, the editorialist's primary objection to Chinese miners was their lack of commitment to the development of the colony. They were seen as not contributing to the formation of British Columbia as a new and distinct socio-political manifestation of the liberal order, but rather to be extracting wealth for the maintenance of the illiberal economy and social system of China. Their crime was that they were not contributing to the creation of opportunity, but taking advantage of the opportunity created by others to maintain a hierarchical system. For the editorialist, the tariff was simply an enforced economic contribution to the progress of the colony

A few, such as the correspondent "Justicia," were supportive of Chinese labour, primarily due to its contribution to the overall development and productivity of the colony. They argued that without Chinese labour, some of the resources of the region would not have been developed at all: "But, at the same time, we must not forget that a very large proportion of these people are at present working diggings that barely afford them support, and that placing an undue tax on their very necessities of life is simply putting it out of their power to render productive what can never be made so by any other description of labor."[155] The ability of Chinese workers to contribute to the central project of developing or improving the colony was of primary importance. Both those arguing for and against the tariff agreed that this was the ultimate goal, although their interpretations of whether or not Chinese workers supported that goal varied widely.

Liberal thought in British Columbia emerged together with, and even grew out of, the perception of a racial "other." Liberal thought assumed the realization of opportunity by hardy independent pioneers who were opposed to a constructed non-liberal "other" comprised of Asian hoarders who did not intend to stay and acquire property. Thus racial othering was present at the birth of a liberal order in BC. There was then a risk of contradiction - how could a liberal reconcile the ideal of equal opportunity with the denial of opportunity to Chinese? The long quote from an editorial in the liberal newspaper *The*

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155. "The Celestial Element," *Ibid.*, 3.

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British Columbian shows how this contradiction was resolved or evaded, as it railed against the colonial administration's "doctrine of 'no class legislation' – treating all alike, without respect to color, creed, or origin."

> The cry about class legislation is mere empty bunkum. The population is composed of two classes, *essentially* different in their habits and destination. God has made them to differ, and all the moralizing of Exeter Hall or the dictum of Downing Street will not harmonize them. The same laws are not applicable to both, and why should we be hindered from legislating for each? Other colonies have been permitted to exact a special tax from that class of miners; and why should a similar right be denied to British Columbia? In South Australia there are 80,000 Chinese, from whom the Government collects a special tax of thirty shillings a head, thus raising annually the handsome sum of £120,000 from that source alone. And we are assured that the tax is paid without a murmur, as taxpaying goes. Why should our six thousand Chinese in this colony be allowed to get off almost scot-free when the small and straggling white population is ground to the very earth by taxation? Do they make better colonists or better subjects that they should be thus practically exempted? Who ever heard of Chinese becoming permanent settlers – turning British subjects? Is it to that class of the population that the Government will look in time of war to protect the soil against the invader? Why then all this prattling about "equal rights?" The same laws applied to two classes so essentially different will not confer equal rights, but the very opposite. But this "no class legislation" cry will not bear investigation. Do we treat all alike without respect to origin &c., when we place certain disabilities upon the foreigner in the matter of acquiring land, and voting at elections? Is not the Indian, although a British subject, virtually disenfranchised? If it is possible to make fish of one, and flesh of another in respect to political rights and the acquisition of property in the country, why should it not be allowable by special legislation to meet specific cases in respect to mining privileges and matters affecting our revenue? But it is useless to kick against the pricks. The "instructions" from Downing Street in this as in many other matters clog the wheels of enlightened and progressive legislation. The Imperial "thou shalt not" puts an insuperable barrier in the way, and we must needs submit, for the present at least.[156]

The editorialist wished to force the Chinese miners to contribute more to the revenues of the colony. Existing tariffs on consumption were seen as placing a greater

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156. "The Chinese Question," *Ibid.*, 15 June 1865, 2.

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load on Euro-North American immigrants, as they did not live as frugally as Chinese immigrants. This editorial repeats the other, decrying those seen as reaping the benefits of the economic opportunities, without conforming to the hegemonic values of the editorialist in the formation of a liberal state. The reference to Aboriginal populations as "virtually disenfranchised" in spite of their status as British subjects is particularly telling, as an example of specialized "class legislation." The central motif of development and progress is evident again in this editorial, with the complaint being that the Chinese sojourners were not contributing enough either materially or socially to the construction of British Columbia.

Waged Work and Intergroup Relations

Even without the structural disadvantages of Aboriginal or Chinese populations, not all gold rush-motivated migrants achieved success as independent producers or as entrepreneurs within the service economy. Unsuccessful migrants, Aboriginal, and Chinese workers formed the core of the waged labour force in gold rush BC. In the same way that access to resources was contested between immigrant and indigenous societies, access to waged work became a point of contention between different social groups in British Columbia. Although not providing the potential for riches of independent production, wages in gold rush BC were high by international standards. Some examples include the $2.00 per day and board offered to a British gold mining labourer in 1860, still "less than an ordinary labourer demands here [Victoria]."[157] Mr. Perrier, the dominant miner on Hill's Bar, paid Euro-North American workers $4.00 per day, but claimed to prefer Chinese workers, paid $2.50 per day.[158] Outside of the gold fields, Hills noted that an Englishmen hired as agricultural labour was to receive £3 [$15.00] per month and

157. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 4 February 1860, "Vicissitudes, Case 1."

158. *Ibid.*, 13 June 1860.

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board, described as "wages which no working man would take."[159] In Victoria in 1863, skilled workers, such as "mechanics, carpenters and stone-masons," were earning $5.00 to $6.00 [£1- £1/4/0] per day.[160] Most of these wages were well above those paid for comparable work in Europe or the United States. In 1870, the government of Hawaii prepared a comparison between wages paid in agriculture in Hawaii and other countries. The close commercial linkage between Hawaii, San Francisco, and Victoria makes this relevant to British Columbia wages. These monthly wages included board, and were based on twenty-six working days. Hawaiian farm labour, $7.50; American farm labour (1861), $9.00; American farm labour (1869), $10.50; Welsh farm labour, $8.50; English farm labour, $6.50; Irish farm labour, $4.25; Swedish, Norse, or German farm labour, $3.30; and Hawaiian coastal seamen, $16.00.[161] It may be noted that the agricultural wage paid in British Columbia was double that paid in Hawaii, and more than fifty percent higher than that paid in the United States. The $52.00-$104.00 per month for Euro-North American gold mining labour was eight to sixteen times as high as agricultural wages in Britain. The $65.00 per month Perrier claimed to pay Chinese labourers in gold mining was many times more than would be possible in regions with easier access to labour.

The high wages may be attributed to a chronic shortage of waged labour during the gold rush, in turn due to the ideology of the immigrants attracted, and in particular their resistance to being proletarianized. If members of this highly mobile population had enough capital to move on to another potential opportunity, that would be the option chosen. This was illustrated clearly in the waxing and waning of the gold rush population in the years 1858-1865, as it reacted to the perceived opportunities of British Columbia with in-migration and out-migration depending on the potential for economic and social mobility. Only those who were essentially destitute would remain to accept waged work.

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159. *Ibid.*, 4 February 1860, "Vicissitudes, Case 4."

160. BCA, GR-2078, Diplomatic Despatches, United States Consuls in Victoria 1862-1906, film B9747, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, January 18, 1864.

161. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 107, Table 6, citing the Hawaiian Minister of Finance, Biennial Report, 1870, Table O.

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The group that provided an obvious exception to this pattern was Chinese immigrant workers, the vast majority of whom were brought to the region as a proletarian group, with the full expectation of performing waged work, following the pattern of sojourning.

The gold mining industry employed a large waged work force, and smaller numbers were employed in agriculture and transportation. When the colonial government initiated its program of public works, in particular roadbuilding, it created a large additional demand for waged labour. This program of roadbuilding fit into the colonial government's creation of conditions supportive of the liberal order, permitting more convenient transportation between Victoria and the gold fields. Such infrastructure development had been part of the Royal Engineers' mandate, as outlined by Lytton, but because the scale of the development was beyond the capability of one company of Engineers, the state contracted with private companies to perform the work. Tenders were let, under which contractors could bid on the construction of sections of road, bridges, or highways, in exchange for both lump sum payments and for the right to charge tolls on roads and bridges. The Harrison Lake-Lillooet route connecting the lower Fraser River to the Cariboo was constructed first, with the Royal Engineers doing some of the work, and private companies the rest. A contract was let in August 1861 for a wagon road connecting Lillooet Lake to Anderson Lake, which after non-completion by the first contractor, was assumed by Joseph W. Trutch, an American-based English surveyor and engineer attracted by the British Columbia gold rush, who employed 150 men on the road.[162] With the exception of surveying and laying out the roads, and the construction of some of the more challenging sections, these key public works were built by contractors. By employing this strategy, the colonial state avoided the responsibilities of mustering and managing a workforce, and maintaining the equipment and machinery required for construction. The inducement for the contractors included both direct payments from the

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162. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 92-93; Fisher, "Trutch, Sir Joseph William," 1034-1035.

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state, and in some cases the prospect of collecting tolls after the work was complete.[163] It also provided a significant entrepreneurial opportunity for the contractors, for instance starting J.W. Trutch on the trajectory to become colonial Commissioner of Lands and Works, and the first Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia when it joined Confederation.[164] It may be argued that the contractors achieved success, and their assumption of leading roles in the hegemony of British Columbia, through their willingness to undertake these roadbuilding contracts for the colonial government. Not only did they achieve economic power, but achieved cultural power as examples of self-made men taking advantages of the opportunities presented in developing the new colony. This provided an alternate mechanism for achieving respectability.

The colonial administration's primary focus was the development of a system of wagon roads leading from the Fraser River to the gold fields of the interior. In October 1861, as construction proceeded on the Harrison Lake route, James Douglas decided to concentrate instead on a wagon road from Yale to the interior, following the Fraser River. The Royal Engineers were ordered to survey the route, select the site for a bridge across the river near Yale, and to commence work on some of the more difficult sections around Yale. In early 1862 contracts were let for construction of the various components of the Cariboo Wagon Road, which created a heavy demand for waged labour. The contracts for most of the road from Yale to Lytton were granted separately to Joseph Trutch and Thomas Spence, although the two men were working as partners.[165] Charles

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163. As well as a government toll intended to contribute to the cost of the Cariboo Wagon Road, Trutch was entitled to charge a toll for seven years on the Alexandra Bridge, near Chapman's Bar, that he had built in 1863-64. Spence was given the same right on Spence's Bridge across the Thomson River, built in 1864, and Wright was permitted to charge a toll for five years on the road from Lillooet to Alexandria. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 103-104.

164. *Ibid.*, Vol.2, 329; Fisher, "Trutch, Sir Joseph William," 1034-1037.

165. The Royal Engineers built the first six miles of the road, to Pike's Riffle, or Six Mile. Spence had the $47,000 contract for the seven miles to the bridge site near Chapman's Bar. Trutch had the $75,000 contract for the twelve mile stretch from Chapman's Bar to Boston Bar, and Spence had the $88,000 contract for the thirty-two mile portion from

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Oppenheimer, Walter Moberly, and Thomas B. Lewis won the contract for the wagon road from Lytton to Cook's Ferry [later Spence's Bridge]. In August 1862 Gustavus Blin Wright won the contract to construct a wagon road over the 244 miles from Lillooet to Alexandria.[166] In April and May Spence advertised for 300 men to work on the road from Boston Bar to Lytton, and G.B. Wright attempted to recruit 500 men for the Lillooet to Mud Lake stretch, with the incentive of paying "Cash on the Road."[167] In May there was an additional call for 1,000 workers required by Oppenheimer, Moberly, and Lewis for the "Lytton Route," and in late June Joseph Trutch placed an advertisement calling for 250 men to work on the Chapman's Bar to Boston Bar stretch of the road.[168] By this time, in addition to a contingent of Royal Engineers working on some of the more difficult stretches of the route, there were in all about 750 men working for the three major contractors on the wagon road.[169] Considering that only some 2,000 miners were active in the Cariboo in 1862, this was a high number of waged labourers engaged in road construction. By the fall of 1862, the colonial government was displeased with the progress made on the road from Lytton to Alexandria, a problem attributed to an inadequate workforce. R.C. Moody was insisting that the contractors, "Charles Oppenheimer, Walter Moberly, and all others whom it may concern," employ at least 300

Boston Bar to Lytton; Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 100; Wade, *The Cariboo Road*, 61-62.

166. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 100-101; Wade, *The Cariboo Road*, 62.

167. For example, the call for tenders for the road from Lytton to Thompson River was placed in *The British Columbian*, 13 March 1862, 3. The Spence and Wright advertisements were in *ibid.*, 3 April 1862, 2, 3; *ibid.*, 3 May 1862, 2, 3.

168. The call for workers for the Lytton route was in ibid. 3 May 1862, 4, while Trutch's advertisement was in *ibid.*, 21 June 1862, 3.

169. In this report, Trutch had 100 men, Spence had 350-400 men, while Oppenheimer & Co. had 250 men working. *Ibid.*, 21 June 1862, 2.

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men on the project.[170] As this condition was not met, the colonial government took over the road and the assets of the contractors, to complete the project as a state initiative.[171]

Recruiting labour was the single greatest obstacle to the success of these contractors. As already discussed, the population attracted by the gold rush was not seeking proletarian status, so waged work was seen as a measure of last resort, when survival was threatened. Fortunately for the road contractors, if not for the aspirant miners, as many as 13,000 of the 1862 influx of gold rush immigrants were unsuccessful in British Columbia, and so provided a large pool of impoverished potential wage labour. According to the American consul in Victoria, waged work provided by the various contractors on the government wagon road was all that saved many of the failed miners in the 1862 cohort from starvation.[172] However, such workers could be unreliable, simply waiting for the payment of wages to facilitate their return to the gold fields, or their passage back to their country of origin. It would seem that the contractors were as unreliable as the labourers. One of the adventurers attracted by the 1862 rush, formerly a law clerk in London, had been "so very unfortunate" in British Columbia that he took work on the roads. A friend in England wrote him the next year, and expressed satisfaction "that you have received your wages for the laborious work you did for the Swindling Contractors."[173] The failed miners were in a relatively powerless position, and perhaps some of the contractors took advantage of this.

The contractor Walter Moberly recalled later that "he sublet part of the contract,

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170. *Ibid.*, 1 October 1862, 3; *ibid.*, 15 October 1862, 4.

171. F Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 101; Wade, *The Cariboo Road*, 64-67. In this section Wade quoted extensively from Walter Moberly's reminiscences of the events in *The Inland Sentinel*, a Kamloops newspaper.

172. BCA, GR-2078, Diplomatic Despatches, United States Consuls in Victoria 1862-1906, film B9747, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 1 October 1862.

173. BCA, GR-0485, British Columbia, Attorney General, Papers from Intestate Estates 1861-1886, Box 14, Thomas Theobald, file 1, William Cable to Thomas Theobald, 17 March 1863.

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from Nicomen to Cook's Ferry, to a gang of Chinese," due to the problems inherent in recruiting Euro-North American immigrant labour.[174] This provides an early example of the application of a Chinese contract crew, supplied and controlled by Chinese merchants or labour contractors, as a strategy to muster labour in the absence of a suitable Euro-North American labour force. Moberly and his partners also utilized Aboriginal workers, although this source of labour was compromised when the 1862 outbreak of smallpox among First Nations spread to the Fraser River.[175]

It appears that the practice of employing Chinese contract crews on public works such as road building spread quickly after this initial "gang" was hired by Moberly in 1862. Sometimes the primary workforce was made up of Chinese workers, as in the summer of 1864 when G.B. Wright had 100 White and 200 Chinese workers engaged in the construction of the road from Quesnelmouth to Cottonwood. In 1865 the labour broker Kwong Sing approached Moberly, by now an elected member of the BC Legislative Assembly, with the offer of any number of "Chinese coolies" that the government may wish to employ as "Workmen."[176] This offer, made directly to a member of the colonial government, appeared to be targeting employment opportunities on public works. Road

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174. Wade, *The Cariboo Road*, 62.

175. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, p.101; Wade, *The Cariboo Road*, 64-65.

176. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 889, Kwong Sing to William Moberly, 26 June 1865. It is likely that this letter was intended for Walter, rather than "William" Moberly. After the failure of his contract roadbuilding partnership with Oppenheimer in the fall of 1862, the civil engineer Moberly was appointed by the colonial government to take charge of the same project on behalf of the colony. In 1864 he was elected as the member of the Legislative Assembly for Cariboo West. Moberly resigned his elected position in the fall of 1865 to accept the civil service appointment of Assistant Surveyor-General, in which position he concentrated on the identification of potential railway routes from Canada. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 101, 189-190, 193, 347-348; Wade, *The Cariboo Road*, 66-67. Walter Moberly's ongoing involvement in roadbuilding, his 1862 hiring of a Chinese contract crew, and his role in the government as both an elected official and as a senior civil servant makes it likely that he would be a representative of the colonial state that a Chinese labour contractor would choose to approach.

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contractors continued to utilize Chinese contract crews to meet their labour requirements. In June 1865 Koo Loo, a Chinese labour contractor, was petitioning Governor Seymour to recover wages for a twenty-nine man crew left unpaid by their employer, Mr. Scott, for work performed on the Fraser River to Burrard Inlet "Douglas Street Road." They were paid "very low wages" and provided "every satisfaction," but Scott refused to pay the $708.50 they were owed. The Governor was asked to divert that portion of the government payment to the contractor to the Chinese crew instead.[177]

The prevalent employment of Chinese labour on road construction and other public works was considered controversial, due to the perception that it involved unfair competition for Euro-North American labour. This issue was raised in an article from *The British Columbian* written at nearly the same time as the Chinese contractors noted above were actively involved in supplying workers:[178]

> Very great dissatisfaction is felt on account of the employment of Chinamen upon Government works. With respect to the employment of these people by contractors it is perhaps hardly fair to hold the Government responsible, although we are by no means sure that it would not be proper, in giving out contracts, to make it a condition that Chinese should not be employed when white labor can be had at a reasonable price. But in cases where the work is carried on directly by the Government it is quite different, and the employment of these people, when white men can be had, is, to our thinking, altogether unjustifiable. It is unreasonable to place white men in competition with a race of creatures who can, and do, subsist upon a shilling a day – who are content with a couple of pounds of rice per diem. If they are to have a preference simply because they are willing to work for half a dollar or even a dollar a day less than other men, then there is an end to white labor, and the colony may as well be turned into a Chinese settlement at once. We are not so sure that, taking the narrowest and most mercenary view of the subject, anything is saved, after all, by employing Chinese labor upon public works. Indeed we have been assured by those who have tried the experiment that, for general purposes of even unskilled labor, two white men are worth three Chinese. But we must view

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177. The contractor had already been paid by the colony, so there was no such recourse available in this case. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 889, Koo Loo to Seymour, 21 June 1865.

178. *The British Columbian*, 6 May 1865, 2.

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> this question from a higher and more patriotic stand-point. We are just now engaged in building up, creating, so to speak, a British, *not* a Chinese colony. A most important point is to get a population and *keep it*. Chinese are free to come and go, but nobody expects ever to make colonists of them; they are of no use as members of society – utterly valueless for purposes of offence or defence. ...
>
> If such a class of people as these are to be placed in competition with whites what right have we to expect the latter to remain in the country? The constant cry is for population. An immigration scheme, upon a small scale, has just been inaugurated by the Government, by which it is proposed to assist immigrants to come here – the laboring classes chiefly. Immigration indeed! Let the Government be honest in the matter, and tell the people in England that if they come here expecting work they must be prepared to compete with Chinese, and see how many will come. Immigration indeed! There are now in this colony hundreds of white men, English, Irish, Scotch, Canadians, &c., in want of employment, who are ready to work for moderate wages in order to earn a little money to try the mines or improve their farms, some of them in such straitened circumstances that they have to trust Providence for their next meal, and yet they are refused work, and they see Chinamen get the preference! Immigration indeed! Let us find something for those who *are* here by which they may be enabled to keep body and soul together, before going to England or anywhere else and inviting others out, *assisting* them to come here. We are not now writing at random – drawing upon our imagination, nor do we thus find fault without regret. But the case is too glaring to be passed over. There are <u>respectable</u> [my emphasis], honest colonists at our very door who are in urgent need of employment, and have been refused it by those carrying on Government works, because Chinamen can be got for a trifle less. We do not believe the fault lies with the head of the Government, but are disposed to think it is the work of subordinates; and it is with the hope that it is only necessary to draw attention to the matter in order to have it remedied that these lines are written. Another important question, in some sense connected with the present one, viz., the policy of constructing public roads by day labor, instead of letting them out by contract, is a matter which shall receive our early attention.

This excerpt confirms the importance of Chinese labour in carrying out public works contracts in this period, and raises the issue of unfair economic competition. It further emphasizes the central place in colonial ideology of progress, development, and the construction of a social environment in which immigrants could achieve social mobility.

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To attract the sort of population desired, the conditions needed to be created in which their aspirations could be realized. Put another way, the cultural value of equality of opportunity was being valued more highly than the strictly economic value of less expensive labour. Those among the Euro-North American immigrant population reduced to seeking waged work expected to deal with a single labour market, in which the same opportunity, and similar levels of pay, were to be offered to all. However, when they were placed in competition with the fully proletarianized Chinese immigrant workers, who were mustered and managed by Chinese merchants and labour brokers, this equality broke down. Essentially, the workers were encountering a racially-split labour market, with two quite different mechanisms for recruitment and management, different wage schemes, and different levels of opportunity for occupational and social mobility. Chinese wages were predicated on those found in other components of the Pacific sojourning economy, not those of British Columbia. The argument presented by the editorialist was not to increase the cost of Chinese labour to the higher level of White labour, but rather to get the state to restrict access to cheaper sources of labour; rather than compressing the waged workforce into a single labour market, the call was to eliminate the lower echelon in the split labour market. The clearly expressed motivation was a desire to attract and retain the sort of population wanted to develop a "British" colony. Progress and development remained paramount, but within the cultural parameters established by the hegemonic forces in colonial society. These roadbuilding and other public works contracts were one of the first environments in which such calls to restrict the access of Chinese workers to the labour market developed in British Columbia. They provided early forms of the ideology later adopted and refined by the anti-Chinese movement of the 1870s and 1880s.

Conclusions

The gold rush of 1858 to 1865 had a profound impact on the demographics of British Columbia, but perhaps an even greater impact on the formation of cultural values in the region. It led to the emergence of a distinctive local form of the liberal order. Inherent in this was the definition of a hegemonic group, as part of the formation of a new

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social hierarchy in the fluid social conditions of the period. The newly introduced populations of Euro-North American and Chinese immigrants did affect the balance of power between Aboriginal and non-Native populations, but there remained a significant majority of the former. More than changes in the proportions of populations, it was the way in which gold rush immigrants were motivated by some common ideological elements that changed the power relations between historical blocs in British Columbia. The search for individual social mobility, and the construction of a social and political environment that fostered opportunities for such social mobility, universally informed the actions of the immigrant populations.

The new social hierarchy was based on who had succeeded within the context of the opportunities presented by the gold rush. Those who did strike rich claims, or developed viable ventures in the service sector, and raised their economic status, along with those who assumed positions in the colonial administration, and raised their cultural status, assumed places at the top of this hierarchy. They were able to assume a position in the emergent elite because they provided affirmation for the emigrant dream of a meritocracy, in which social mobility was possible based on one's own efforts and achievements. Their symbolic value as successful self-made men gave them significant social status and power, which combined with their economic power, permitted them to assume their places at the top of the social order. As economic and political leaders of gold rush society, who believed they had gained their positions through adherence to the values of the liberal order and meritocracy, these people were concerned with maintaining conditions that supported individual social mobility; the conditions that made their own success possible. Members of the pre-existing Family Company Compact, with their more hierarchical vision of society, either retired, like Douglas, or adopted more liberal values and assumed places in the emerging liberal elite. As men who achieved self-made status within the hierarchy of the HBC and the colony, this did not imply an essential ideological transformation.

The liberal ideology that became naturalized extended from that which underlay the California gold rush of a decade earlier - the dream that every migrant had the same

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potential opportunity of striking it rich, thereby realizing economic and social mobility, or put another way, achieving success. The liberal order paradise of California soon proved to be less egalitarian than anticipated due to the early definition of a hegemonic group based primarily on concepts of race and nationality; if one was not American, and of European descent, there was not equal access to the opportunities of the gold rush. Those adventurers who were excluded from the hegemonic group in California saw British Columbia as a second chance to realize their dreams of social mobility. Given the specific instructions from the Colonial Secretary to encourage access to the gold resource by "foreign" adventurers, as well as British subjects, this dream appeared to be well-founded. Claim ownership was possible even for Chinese immigrants, who had been specifically excluded under racialized California legislation. Reinforcing liberal ideology, as politically supported by the Colonial Office, the equality of opportunity was greater in British Columbia than in California.

Although access to the opportunity was more equal, the scale of the opportunity was a pale reflection of that in California. This was demonstrated in the pattern of promotion, resulting rushes of migration, and ultimate disappointment that may be observed during the years from 1858-1866. There were enough examples of successful adventurers to keep the myth of the self-made man in the gold fields of British Columbia alive, and to keep emigrants interested, but the resource would not support ongoing production at the levels encouraged in 1858 or 1862. In the decade from 1866 to 1876, the number of men engaged in gold mining averaged around 2,500.[179] This relatively stable workforce suggests a more accurate reflection of the scale of production that was possible with the available resources, rather than the 30,000 or 15,000 miners attracted in 1858 or 1862 respectively. Within the context of intensive promotion, the perception of opportunity exceeded the reality of opportunity. Disappointment and failure was an ongoing motif for many of the hopeful gold rush immigrants. The number of success stories was small, while the number of disappointed immigrants was considerable.

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179. Hughes, Jr., "The Economic Development of British Columbia," 87, Appendix A.

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The usual mechanism for dealing with this disappointment was to move to another location, where the possibilities were thought to be greater. This physical mobility is a central feature of the gold rush era in British Columbia, illustrated by the wild fluctuations in the immigrant population, particularly in the years of intensive promotion and disappointment in 1858 and 1862. Adventurers attempting to escape proletarianization through migration would be prone to continue the strategy. Clearly documented among the Euro-North American gold rush population, the same phenomenon apparently occurred among Chinese populations. The immigration to British Columbia was managed by Chinese merchants and labour brokers, that were tied into a larger Pacific system of labour recruitment and management. What appear to be radically different estimates of populations of Chinese immigrants in British Columbia may well relate to the movement of workforce resources between various regions in which Chinese sojourners formed an important component of the labour force.

For those migrants that were not successful in the gold rush, and either had no mechanism for moving to the next opportunity, or decided for some reason that they would continue to strive for social mobility in British Columbia, there was the option of waged labour. During the gold rush, this was generally found in mining, public works, or to a lesser extent in the service and commercial sectors. For most, this was seen as a temporary expedient to carry them over until they could again attempt to become successful autonomous producers. Generally accepting waged work was seen as an admission of failure, and acceptance of a proletarian role, without potential for social mobility. The exception to this was for Chinese labourers, who were brought in by the merchants and labour brokers specifically as a proletarian group, to provide convenient and inexpensive labour to meet the demands of the developing colonies. As noted, such a fully-proletarianized group, accepting wages based on the expectations of Chinese sojourners rather than aspirant Euro-North American migrants, was thought to present unfair competition for the development of a British Columbian working class.

The objection to such competition was based on cultural rather than economic factors. The intent of the generally Anglo-North American hegemonic group was to

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construct a state, and the combination of the cultural "otherness" of the Chinese immigrants, as well as their sojourning rather than settling intent, was seen as antithetical to the sort of state that was wanted. The use of inexpensive and tractable Chinese labour to develop the economy and infrastructure of such a state was acceptable, in the absence of other sources of labour. However, if such labour was thought to compromise the appeal of the colonies for the Anglo-North American immigrants desired by the hegemonic group, it was another matter. Although the need for waged workers was evident, apparently it was hoped to attract a group more congruent with Anglo-North American values than Chinese sojourners.

The state that was being constructed could in some ways be described as a British-American hybrid. It resembled the American system in that it advocated a liberal economic system, emphasizing the potential for escaping ascribed hierarchies in favour of a meritocratic system. However, many "American" values were rejected in favour of "British" ones. The newly fledged elite appeared not adverse to a form of hierarchy, as opposed to democratic or republican ideals. They exhibited no reluctance to demonstrate their social status, although it was determined by economic success and congruence with the values of the producer ethos, following the American model more closely and rejecting the fixed class locations prevalent in Britain. Essentially, the cultural values were those of a *nouveau riche* group, who had realized their goal of social mobility through pursuing the economic opportunity of the gold rush.

In solidifying their position as a neo-elite, the hegemonic group confirmed their values, ideology, and behaviour as normative, or respectable. This construct of respectability was supported with discourses that defined non-conforming social groups as deviant, or non-respectable. The economic, social, and political power of the hegemonic group made these constructs of respectability and non-respectability meaningful. The success of its members, and the examples of social mobility they provided, seems to have resonated among the larger Euro-North American immigrant population attracted by aspirations of social mobility. To be respectable involved being economically autonomous, or "successful," within the precepts of the producer ethos. This would be

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achieved through a commitment to self-improvement, usefulness, and productivity. All of these would in turn contribute to the development of a social and political environment which encouraged social mobility.

Some insight into the process of negotiation between the reality of life for of British immigrants who aspired to join the neo-elite and this naturalized ideology is illustrated in a letter sent to Thomas Theobald, one of the less than successful English immigrants of 1862.[180] He apparently continued the pursuit of gold through 1864, when he was involved in the Leech River excitement near Victoria. He received a letter from another English immigrant, C.J.D. Agar, who had remained in the interior, and described how he had adapted to local conditions:

> I have now given up business altogether and have accepted a situation at the Fountain as clerk and general manager at a salary of $1500 a year, and altogether I have reason to congratulate myself on my prospects. I have the best of horses to ride, a French cook under my directions, a siwash servant to wait upon me, a plentiful supply of everything at hand, and the best stock of wines, liquors & cigars in the colony under my charge. I am thoroughly and entirely my own master and have every want cared for, and every wish gratified.[181]

Written during the fluctuating, but still ongoing optimism of the gold rush, Agar felt himself fortunate, due to the comparative luxury he was enjoying in his new situation as an employee. By abandoning "business" in favour of a highly-paid salaried position, he was giving up on the goal of economic autonomy, and clearly could justify this only by maintaining the posture that he was "thoroughly and entirely [his] own master." It was clear that maintaining this stance of autonomy was central to his personal ideology. Accepting the position had let him assume the appurtenances of success, allowing him to

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180. After his stint as a gold miner, Theobald eventually received an appointment to the civil service. When he was later laid off, he made strenuous efforts to regain the position. BCA, GR-0485, British Columbia, Attorney General, Papers from Intestate Estates 1861-1886, Box 14, Thomas Theobald, file 6 [sic - there are two files numbered 6], notebook; *ibid.*, file 3, undated draft; *ibid.*, file 3, W.A.G. Young to Thomas Theobald, 7 January 1867.

181. *Ibid.*, file 2, C.J.D. Agar to Thomas Theobald, 18 December 1864.

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rationalize his less desirable status as an employee.

The ideology that developed and was naturalized among the hegemonic group, and among the aspirant Euro-North American immigrant population, contributed to the restricted opportunities available to other historical blocs. In particular, convention and legislation excluded Aboriginal populations from equal access to the full range of opportunities presented by the burgeoning capitalist economy. Although Aboriginal participation in this economy was extensive, in most cases it was limited to certain types of work or supply roles defined as appropriate by racial ideology.[182] Such roles were intended to support, but in no way impinge on, the opportunities that were considered to adhere to members of the emerging hegemonic group. This relegation to a support role rested on the acceptance of the "disappearing race" model, and the perception that First Nations acted as an impediment to productivity and opportunity, through savage or passive resistance. In addition, there was an assumption that land and resources should be used in a manner that was consistent with maximizing productivity and progress, as understood by the hegemonic group. These attitudes underlay the state's development of policies and legislation that eroded the rights of First Nations to use and occupy land, and profoundly affected traditional economies. In the first few years of the gold rush there were opportunities, such as placer mining and transportation, for Aboriginal participation in the capitalist economy. The first of these was eliminated by mining regulations consistent with the values of the hegemonic group, while the packing jobs that had formed a racialized Aboriginal occupational niche ended with the development of the Cariboo Wagon Road. Aboriginal subordination in this period was largely based on the ideological perspective that First Nations were incompatible, except in a limited way, with the central goals of progress, productivity, and constructing a liberal state.

The lack of an in-situ proletarian group, or of an agrarian peasantry that could be

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182. Although Robin Fisher suggested that Aboriginal people had little place in the post-gold rush economy, others, particularly Rolf Knight and John Lutz, have emphasized the central role of Aboriginal labour in the development of a capitalist economy. Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, chs.5-7; Knight, *Indians at Work*; Lutz, "Work, Wages, and Welfare," ch.3; Lutz, "After the Fur Trade," 69-93.

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converted to industrial workers, meant that labour requirements in the gold rush had to be served either by Aboriginal, failed Euro-North American miner, or Chinese cohorts. Due to cultural stereotypes, Aboriginal workers were limited to racialized jobs such as packing and agricultural labour, already defined as appropriate in the fur trade. The "slave" and "sojourner" ideology that surrounded the fully proletarianized Chinese immigrant workers made for ambiguous attitudes toward them. They were seen as a way to foster progress, but were also considered a cultural threat to the desired form of state development. However, because they were mustered and controlled in contract crews, they provided a more reliable form of labour than unsuccessful Euro-North American adventurers, who were expected to follow autonomous pursuits as soon as they had earned enough money. The way that these groups of potential workers were incorporated into the industrial economy was determined very much by the naturalized ideologies of race and liberalism.

It is important to consider that this ideology was introduced within the context of the gold rush, and an economy based on resource extraction and export. As mentioned, the Victoria-based service and commercial economy was dependent almost entirely on the fortunes of the gold fields. There was no pre-existing agricultural settler society, and with the exception of the HBC, no pre-existing domestic capitalist economy. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, there was a nascent industrial export economy developing, based on the demand for commodities in San Francisco and around the Pacific, which soon expanded under the impetus of the domestic gold rush. The construction of the image of British Columbia and Vancouver Island as a land of opportunity, and the creation of a colonial state that would facilitate the goals of wealth creation and social mobility, created a surge of entrepreneurial interest in the region. In some cases, it was those attracted by the gold rush who looked to other opportunities, and in some cases potential industrialists were attracted by the spotlight on the region. The key contribution of the gold rush was to embed the view that the extraction of resources and export of commodities could create an environment of opportunity for immigrants seeking social mobility, within a cultural environment that was not American. It also established the basic parameters in the relationships between Aboriginal, Euro-North American immigrant, and Chinese

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immigrant populations. Within the context of industrial capitalism, and the commodity export industries, the ideologies of productivity and progress, social mobility and respectability, that were embedded during the gold rush, shaped the development of British Columbia society over the next quarter century.

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Chapter 5: Alberni Mills and the Development of Industrial Sawmilling

Due to the market demand in gold rush California, a relatively small scale forest product export industry developed on Vancouver Island in the 1850s. In response to the San Francisco market, this trade focussed on piles, squared timber, and spars, none of which required machine or factory processing, and could be obtained by contract from either immigrant or Aboriginal independent producers. In the last half of the 1850s a limited lumber export industry developed, led by Muir & Company, a firm that evolved from the pile and spar export trade of the early part of the decade. Such an export trade was limited not only by factors of production, including the chronic colonial shortage of labour, but by market factors, in particular American tariffs that lowered the viability of foreign products on that market, and the growth of the industrial lumber industry on Puget Sound. Because of the difficulties presented in accessing the San Francisco market, Muir & Company employed a strategy of supplying non-American markets, particularly in Chile and Australia, created by the introduction of the world capitalist system to the Pacific.[1] This venture set the broad contours of the system of production followed in later commodity exporting industries, by converting the resources of Vancouver Island into an exportable commodity, to be distributed and sold on non-American Pacific markets through the mediation of a commercial network based in San Francisco.

The population attracted by the gold rush observed the variety of economic and social opportunities presented by the resources of British Columbia and Vancouver Island. The high demand for lumber on the Victoria, New Westminster, and Fraser River markets in the first wave of gold rush development made for a lumber price as high as $100 per thousand board feet in Victoria, which fell to as low as $12 per thousand with the bust. This "local" demand attracted some lumber merchants to the region, and the establishment of some small scale sawmilling ventures, such as those of W.J. Armstrong and J.A. Homes in New Westminster.[2] An early lumber dealer attracted by this market was William

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1. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 96-97.

2. Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 9-11.

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Parsons Sayward, a carpenter and lumber merchant from Maine who had prospered as a lumber dealer in gold-rush California.[3] He became involved in the production of lumber on Puget sound in the early 1850s, and moved his operation to Victoria in 1858. By the summer of 1861 he acquired a sawmill on Mill Bay, north of Victoria, to supply his product. In the 1870s Sayward expanded the cutting capacity of his operation, and moved into export sales, but simply following the model set by other ventures, such as Muir & Company and Alberni Mills.[4] Although proving profitable, and continuing to expand in to the last decade of the century, Sayward's venture did not contribute to the commodity exporting system of production, so is outside the focus of this study. However, another venture extending the American lumber industry to the newly-promoted opportunities of Vancouver Island, the Alberni Mill, combined the Pacific export markets of the Muir venture with the industrial system of production employed in the cargo mills on Puget Sound to provide the prototype for the industrial forest industry of British Columbia. This venture provided the prototype for the system of production employed by the export sawmills of British Columbia until the completion of the CPR and the Prairie wheat boom combined to create a viable Canadian market for forest products.

Edward Stamp and the Alberni Mill

Like Sayward's lumberyard, this sawmill represented a northern extension of the American forest industry in response to the 1858 gold rush, but with an essential difference. While Sayward intended to profit from market demand with a lumberyard presumably supplied from existing mills on Puget Sound, Edward Stamp wished to establish a new centre of lumber production, in direct competition with the Puget Sound

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3. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 114.

4. The move to Puget Sound is described in Cox, *Mills and Markets*, 62, 117; <http://www.portludlowchamber.org/plchamhis.html>. Sayward's career on Vancouver Island is summarized in Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 113-114; Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 8-9. Lawrence also noted a biography of Sayward in *British Columbia Magazine*, vol.10-11 (May 1914), p.245.

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sawmills. Part of this may have been motivated by nationalism, and the desire to establish a "British" forest industry in the region, but Stamp appeared to believe that advantages in access to resources and decreased shipping times could provide a competitive advantage over the American sawmills. Already, in the HBC-dominated colonial era, the timber resources of the west coast of Vancouver Island had been inventoried and described, primarily by William E. Banfield, a retired sailor, Indian trader, and colonial functionary in the Barkley Sound area.[5] Captain Edward Stamp, described as "an English shipmaster and commission agent" was the individual who took the necessary steps to exploit and commodify the identified resource for export.[6] Although born in 1814 in the agricultural region of Alnwick, Northumberland, England, Stamp chose a career at sea. He obtained a master's certificate in 1851, and by 1854, during the Crimean War, commanded the steam transport *Emeu*.[7]

Stamp came to Vancouver Island in1857, with a letter of introduction to James Douglas from the Governor and Committee of the HBC: "Mr. Edward Stamp ... is about to proceed to Vancouver's Island with the intention of becoming a settler, and opening a Timber trade with Australia and this country."[8] Arriving at Port San Juan in August, he was shown the timber resources of the area by Tom Laughton and Tom Pamphlet, independent traders already in the region:

> In 1857 a man named Laughton and I were trading at Pachina, San Juan Harbor, when the brig *Island Queen*, Captain Stamp, anchored in the harbor. The captain came ashore, stating that he was looking for timber. He was much impressed by the size and quality of the timber. He suggested that we should hire Indians to get out spars for him. He was

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5. Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, 31-32, "Banfield Creek" entry; Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 97-98.

6. *Ibid.*, 98.

7. W. Kaye Lamb, "Stamp, Edward," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol.X* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 664.

8. Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 224 citing HBCA A.16/32, fos.233-234, Smith to Douglas, 11 February 11, 1857.

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> impressed that it was impossible with the limited means at our command. He then started for Victoria, from there to Puget Sound, eventually making a contract with the Port Gamble mill company to supply him spars.[9]

Stamp may have taken a cargo of lumber from Puget Sound to Australia, then sailed on to England, before returning to Vancouver Island in the gold rush year of 1858, and setting up in Victoria as E. Stamp & Company, commission merchants.[10] Part of this business involved acting as a shipping agent or broker on behalf of lumber operations on Puget Sound, linking them to export markets, as he had been doing in 1857.[11] Meanwhile, Stamp acquired land in both the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia. By late 1858, he had purchased land on Vancouver Island, including a suburban lot in Esquimalt, and on the mainland at Langley, and was inquiring about purchasing another 300-400 acre parcel of wooded land towards the south end of the new Semiahmoo Trail, that connected Boundary Bay to the Fraser River. This route, linking the new American town of Whatcom [now Bellingham] to the gold fields, was probably seen as having significant commercial potential at this time, as an alternative to the "British" access through Victoria. In spite of his land acquisitions, Stamp insisted he was not a land speculator, but merely was attempting to provide for his six sons.[12] In protesting against

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9. Tom Pamphlet, "Early Timber Days (A letter from Tom Pamphlet)," *Western Lumberman* vol.5 (April 1908), 17.

10. Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, 469, "Stamp harbour" entry; Pamphlet, "Early Timber Days," 17.

11. Stamp wrote to one of the major mills that he was "open to contract for a cargo of spars," like the cargo he was then handling from the Puget Mill Company. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, E. Stamp to the proprietors of the Washington Saw Mill, Seabeck, 1 June 1858.

12. The reference to owning property on Vancouver Island and Langley, along with his interest in the Semiahmoo Trail property, about 11 miles from Langley and 4 miles from Semiahmoo, is from *ibid.*, E. Stamp to Col. Moody, 24 December 1858. The purchase of Suburban Lot Number 50, Esquimalt, in early 1858 is listed in Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital," 253-254, Table 14, "Owners of Suburban Lots, Victoria and Esquimalt, 7 February 1852 - 2 March 1858."

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the label of "speculator," Stamp argued that he was only acquiring the land required for his family and himself to survive. This is congruent with the "producer ethic" prevalent in the United States at this time, one branch of which equated the ownership of land with the ability to survive as an "independent producer," following longstanding Democratic ideology.[13] It appears that Stamp presented himself to the colonial government in his land applications as a producer, in spite of the fact that his principal business was as a commission agent, who bought and sold the goods produced by others.

As discussed in Chapter 4, central to the attraction for migrants seeking opportunity was the perception of equality of access to land and resources, and that the right to them was earned by their productive use. When such ideology was integrated into land policy in the colonies, it followed the contours of this expression of the producer ethos. As expressed by the historian Robert Cail, the legislation was designed to ensure that lands were taken by "genuine" settlers, who would support themselves with the land, as opposed to speculators:

> For fifty years the official documents, correspondence, and reports dealing with land were filled with innumerable references to the existence of speculators, or to the fear of their existence. Starting with Douglas and continuing to the present, the land acts have tried to make it impossible for land to be taken except for beneficial purposes. For many years, provided that the land was to be used in all good faith, unlimited quantities might be had for practically nothing.[14]

Apparently the intent underlying this concern was to encourage a settler population of producers, that would form the self-supporting core population of the colony, and in addition create the opportunities that would attract more migrants.

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13. This follows the Jeffersonian version of Democratic ideology, in which the precondition for a true democracy is that each citizen should be an economically independent landowner, or yeoman farmer. The autonomy provided by their self-sufficiency would permit them to act as "value carriers," maintaining conditions consistent with individual social mobility by resisting the concentration of wealth and special privilege. Cawelti, *Apostles of the Self-Made Man*, 24-29; Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 21.

14. Cail, *Land, Man, and the Law*, xiii.

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Although as seen in Chapter 4, the 1860 Pre-emption Act was seen as "imperfect," it, along with most other land regulations stipulated penalties if provisions relating to occupation and use of the land were not met.[15] Apparently Stamp understood this social and political bias against land speculation, as it figured prominently in his application for this property.

A second element expressed in colonial land legislation was the imperialist imperative. Although less exclusive about who could own land than politicians in California, the colonial administration was concerned about maintaining British sovereignty, and a less formalized social preference for Anglo-North American cultural forms existed. For its growth, the colonies had to attract producers, who could support an economy and so a colonial society by exploiting the resources of the region, but as early as 1859 there was a demonstrated preference for "British" producers. James Douglas expressed this concern about encouraging the right sort of immigrant population to Lord Lytton in early 1859:

> We think it a matter of the greatest importance to encourage emigration from England, in order to supply the want now so much felt of an English element in the population, a want which, in fact, lies at the root of all the difficulties which now so much embarrass all attempts at legislation for the country. We are, therefore, especially desirous of placing before the English public the attraction of cheap land.[16]

Douglas worried that the "sturdy yeomen expected this year from Canada, Australia, and other British Colonies" would settle in the American Pacific northwest rather than in the British colonies, due to the attraction of free land.[17] To encourage the

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15. The stance that these regulations were not enforced strongly enough was presented in the editorial "Land Speculation," *The British Columbian*, 11 October 1862, 3. The broad contours of the legislation is discussed in Cail, *Land, Man, and the Law*, xiii. Normally "use" was assessed in terms of "improvements," such as acres under cultivation, fences, buildings, drainage, etc.

16.Great Britain, *Papers relative to the Affairs of British Columbia*, 64-65, James Douglas to Lord Lytton, 19 February 1859.

17. *Ibid.*, 64-65, Douglas to Lytton, 19 February 1859.

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immigration of the sort of Anglo-North American population that he felt would best contribute to the development of the colonies, Douglas thought that the terms of land ownership needed to be made competitive with those in the northwestern United States. This suggests that he continued to think in terms of agrarian, rather than industrial settlement, although in either case it would involve the opportunity presented to the emigrant, whether land or resources.

In March 1860, the Council of the Colony of Vancouver Island was advocating a pre-emption system as the most effective form of land alienation to facilitate the project of constructing a settler colony within the liberal order. It would provide a mechanism whereby those who lacked economic capital, but aspired to social mobility, could acquire title to land by demonstrating a commitment to living on it and "improving" it, rather than through simple cash purchase. This was seen as a way to compete with land alienation regulations in the United States, and to provide an incentive for a resident population. Although the pre-emption regulations suggested 160 acres as the standard allocation, it was believed important to maintain some flexibility. This would permit the state to encourage larger-scale ventures that would hasten the economic development of the colony, or "enable a capitalist to procure extensive quantities of land when required for laudable objects." Such capitalists might be subject to charges greater than the upset price of four shillings per acre, and "conditions might be attached to them to prevent abuse."[18]

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18. Hendrickson, *Journals of the Colonial Legislatures*, Vol.1, 45, 26 March 1860. The upset price of four shillings was roughly equivalent to one dollar per acre, at the approximate exchange rate of five dollars to one pound, that seems to have been often employed at the time. The upset price for purchasing waste land seemed constant in the 1860s at one dollar, or four shillings and two pence, per acre, as on Vancouver Island in 1861. Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 527-531, *Land Proclamations by His Excellency James Douglas, C.B., Etc., Etc.* [19 February 1861]. The price actually paid by Stamp when negotiating with the colony of British Columbia over his Burrard Inlet mill venture in 1865, when the exchange rate was approximately $4.85 per pound, was the same four shillings and two pence per acre. BCA, MS-120, file 1, Stamp's Mill: Corres. re Sawmill on Burrard Inlet, 3-6, Arthur N. Birch to E. Stamp, 20 May 1865; *ibid.*, file 2, Stamp's Mill: Indentures - B.C. & Vancouver Island Spar Lumber Co. - 1865 - BC & Jeremiah Rogers, 1867, 1-9.

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To support his application for land for his sawmill venture, Edward Stamp invoked both the Imperial connection and that of a capitalist pursuing a "laudable object," a venture that would support the development of the colony and so attract emigrants. Stamp investigated other ventures in the colonies before initiating the sawmill project. Earlier in 1859, he attempted to organize a British steamer service in opposition to the dominant American carriers connecting Victoria and San Francisco, a plan that did not come to fruition.[19] In the wake of this failure, Stamp wrote to Governor James Douglas on December 21, 1859, "on behalf of myself and persons in England with whom I am connected." In his letter he presented a scheme to establish a sawmill with a capacity of 50,000 board feet per day, a "fishery and fish curing establishment," and "other projects." Such development would entail a purported outlay of several thousand pounds and was anticipated to employ about two hundred labourers. Stamp expressed his desire to establish this venture in British territory, rather than on Puget Sound, but only if certain terms or conditions could be met by the Colonial government. Two of the three concessions Stamp was requesting dealt with land and resource tenure, as he wished to have "somewhat equal advantages" compared to the land situation in Washington Territory. He wanted a 2,000 acre site for the support of an industrial and agricultural settlement of 300-400 people, and exclusive possessory or timber cutting rights to 10-12,000 acres of woodland. The third concession dealt with the political details of transportation, as he felt port of entry status would be essential for the settlement, to facilitate foreign shipping.[20] The venture was couched in terms of its benefits to colonial

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19. In a second letter to Douglas, Stamp pressured for a quick response to the sawmill proposal, as recently he had invested and lost much of his own money in trying to establish the mail service. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to James Douglas, 30 December 1859. Five years later, in a letter discussing a similar proposal for a direct mail steamer from New Westminster to San Francisco, Stamp noted the reasons for the failure of the earlier attempt. The contract had been drawn up, but the British government changed, precipitating a long delay in execution. Stamp wrote that "my engagement obliged me to return to this country [BC] and give the matter up." *Ibid.*, Edward Stamp to A. N. Birch, 19 April 1865.

20. *Ibid.*, Edward Stamp to James Douglas, 21 December 1859.

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progress. It would not only bring several thousand pounds of investment capital to Vancouver Island, but would increase the settler population by some two hundred workers, and perhaps their families. The combination of a new, large-scale industrial venture, a growing population, and the prospect of opening up a new region of the Island for development and settlement were all key to the Colonial ethos of progress and development.

The "persons in England" from whom Stamp received support for his venture were two London companies involved in shipping and the spar trade. Their motivation for becoming involved in the forest industry on Vancouver Island has been interpreted in several ways. As related by John Walbran, these firms, Thomas Bilbe & Company and James Thomson & Company, were concerned about the potential impact of the brewing American Civil War on their supply of spars from the southern United States, so looked to the Northwest Coast as an alternative source. Stamp was engaged as their agent in Victoria, and was given an interest in their contracts to supply spars to Europe. It was understood that the spars would come from producers already active on Puget Sound.[21] W. Kaye Lamb reiterated the involvement of the firms of Thomas Bilbe & Company and James Thomson & Company in the venture, with Stamp as a minority owner. The English companies were associates in the ownership of a shipbuilding business on the Thames, explaining their interest in shipbuilding materials. Lamb cited Walbran concerning the Civil War as the factor that turned their interest to the Northwest Coast.[22] Lamb suggested that while Stamp was in England in 1859 promoting the abortive steamer service between Victoria and San Francisco, he was able to convince a group of London

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21. Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, 469, "Stamp harbour" entry, citing Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 5 April 1860. Walbran also interviewed Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, active in the Alberni mill venture from 1860, and later its manager, in the preparation of the latter's book. *Ibid.*, 468-469, 8.

22. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 100-101.

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capitalists, including Bilbe and Thomson, to back a sawmill venture.[23] The more contemporary version of Matthew Macfie had "Anderson & Co.," which operated the Alberni mill after 1862, active in the region prior to Stamp's proposal. The firm was "practically conversant with the lucrative nature" of sending "profitable shipments of timber from Puget Sound to various foreign ports" for some years before deciding to establish its own production facility.[24] In all accounts, Stamp acted as the initiator of the venture, and by 1859 was in the position to bring together the required inputs to make it possible. Established for a year as a commission merchant in Victoria, he was familiar with the timber resources and shipping arrangements from the region, and had linkages with British firms that had access to markets for commodities and capital. The interpretations vary concerning the extent to which he was an "independent" entrepreneur, as opposed to an employee of the British firm[s]. The Alberni Mills proposal signalled Stamp's move into producing, in addition to shipping and marketing, forest products, and so the transition to industrial capitalism. This followed the pattern followed on Puget Sound in the earlier 1850s, when San Francisco-based timber merchants such as Pope & Talbot expanded into sawmill operations as well as acting as brokers for other producers.[25] For British timber merchants active in the same region, such as Stamp, there may have been a certain politico-economic motivation to establish such a facility in a British colony, rather than trying to compete head to head with the established American producers on Puget Sound. In initiating this venture as a producer as well as a commission merchant in this new colonial context, Stamp followed the established, and proven, model of the California lumber industry.

The proposal was congruent with the values of the colonial administration, on the

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23. *Ibid.*, 100-101, 98. Lamb went on to describe the evolution of James Thomson & Company into Anderson, Thomson & Company and then Anderson & Company, and finally into the 1930s company Anderson, Green & Company, managers of the Orient Line of steamers running between England and Australia in 1938. *Ibid.*, 101.

24. Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 134-135.

25. Cox, *Mills and Markets*, 101-137.

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basis of its economic and demographic intent, that would support the project of developing a liberal order colonial state. In spite of some ambiguity concerning the legal ability of the colonial administration to grant secure title to lands, this congruence led the Colonial Assembly to decide to support the proposal in April 1860. Foremost among a number of contentious issues was the unprecedented amount of land requested. Some members of the Assembly expressed concern about establishing an industrial enclave linked primarily to London, where the company was based, and so channelling profits there rather than supporting the development of the colony.[26] This echoes the discussion in Chapter 4 concerning anti-Chinese rhetoric based on the perception that Chinese immigrants did not make a contribution to the local economy and the progress of the colony. In addition to this economic consideration, Assembly member Alfred Waddington [see Chapter 4] articulated an ideologically-based concern about Stamp's commitment to bring out "150 colonists," suggesting that these people "would be nothing less than serfs" entirely subordinated to the company.[27] Waddington saw such the company-controlled immigration of such a labour force as an affront to the ideology of the "independent" immigrant so central to his gold rush ideology. To partially offset this concern, the Assembly resolved that "the Government shall make the most liberal terms of purchase to the Colonists introduced by Captain Stamp after the completion of their contract with Captain Stamp."[28] Although the colonial legislature would accept Stamp's use of an

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26. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 3 April 1860, 3; *ibid.*, 5 April 1860, 2; reporting the proceedings of the House on April 2 and April 3, respectively. This concern echoes the findings of Rosemary Ommer, who noted the effect of such a "theft" of linkages in her study of regional underdevelopment in the Gaspé. Because the dominant export trade there was controlled by a single European-based firm, "whose purpose was profit, not regional development," the benefits flowed to the metropolis, rather than supporting the development of the hinterland; Rosemary E. Ommer, *From Outpost to Outport: A Structural Analysis of the Jersey-Gaspé Cod Fishery, 1767-1886* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), particularly 107-140 and 192-199.

27. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 3 April 1860, 3; *ibid.*, 5 April 1860, 2. The Waddington quote is from the April 5 issue.

28. Hendrickson, *Journals of the Colonial Legislatures*, 176-177, 3 April 1860.

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indentured workforce, the terms of this resolution demonstrates an intent to facilitate their conversion into "independent" settlers. In spite of these ideological reservations, the Assembly resolved that Stamp could choose 2,000 acres of land for settlement, and up to 15,000 acres of timber limits. Stamp would not have to pay more than £1 per acre for these lands, if and when the colony made them available for sale, nor would he be expected to pay for improvements. Stamp agreed in turn to make £7,500 worth of improvements to the property before the end of 1860.[29]

Editorials written by Amor de Cosmos in the Victoria *Daily Colonist* of April 5 and April 17, 1860 raged against "The Stamp Land Scheme." The later one described an unholy alliance between the HBC, the Colonial government, and big capital, that was perceived to be detrimental to the plans of all other potential settlers. De Cosmos argued that the colony applied standards to Stamp's proposal different to those that governed other colonists. Particular irritation seemed to relate to the granting of some 17,000 acres of land, as well as "other privileges" that were alluded to.[30] These complaints all related to a perception of unfair or unequal access to land, resources, and opportunities, due to the complicity of institutions seen as "illiberal." This comprised an affront to the liberal ideology of social mobility through migration, that depended on equal access to resources. While de Cosmos railed, Stamp selected the site for his sawmill venture:

> In the spring of 1860 he [Stamp] purchased the schooner *Reporter*, renamed her *Meg Merilees*, appointing the writer captain of her; later on

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29. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 3 April 1860, 3; *ibid.*, 5 April 1860, 2; BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to James Douglas, 21 December 1859; *ibid.*, W.A.G. Young to Edward Stamp, 2 January 1860; *ibid.*, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 6 January 1860; *ibid.* W.A.G. Young to Edward Stamp, 10 January 1860; *ibid.*, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 13 January 1860. Douglas reported the agreement to the Colonial Office in London on 26 January 1860, and approval was granted by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in April; *ibid.*, Duke of Newcastle to James Douglas, 6 April 1860. The exchange rate at the time was approximately $4.85 US currency to 1 pound sterling, although the "working" exchange rate was often given as $5.00 to the pound. The anticipated cost of the physical plant of the mill operation was about $36,375-37,500.

30. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 5 April 1860, 2; *ibid.*, 17 April 1860, 2.

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> went to Barclay Sound, taking with him two timber cruisers – Jeremiah Rogers and John Walton. On arriving at what is now called Alberni, he sent the two men up the river prospecting for timber. They returned the same night, Rogers giving a most favorable account of the size and quality, but Walton's account of the timber was very indifferent. Captain Stamp was satisfied with Rogers's report and returned to Victoria.[31]

At the end of June nine workmen arrived at Alberni on the *Meg Merilees* to begin advance work.[32] At the end of August, the schooner *Woodpecker* arrived from England, with six more workmen, together with the machinery for the mill and general merchandise.[33] Stamp, together with Gilbert M. Sproat, sent out from England as the representative of James Thomson & Co., arrived at the beginning of September, and arranged a purchase of land from the Natives, for about £20 worth of goods. Another twelve "Mechanics" arrived with Stamp, as well as oxen and more merchandise.[34]

The venture was well underway by the fall of 1860, as described by the Anglican Bishop George Hills, who visited the "new town to be called Somass" in October on board the Royal Navy vessel *Grappler*:

> A schooner was lying at anchor & a large Store and several [Misc?] buildings had been erected. Men were at work laying the foundation of a saw mill to be worked S [*sic*] Steam. I went on shore with Capt Stamp & Mr Sproat the proprietors & with Capt Helby. We visited the works & walked over the excellent site for a [town?].[35]

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31. Pamphlet, "Early Timber Days," 17.

32. Pamphlet was the ship's master, as mentioned in his reminiscences above. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 107, W.E. Banfield to W.A.G. Young, 3 July 1860.

33. *Ibid.*, W.E. Banfield to W.A.G. Young, 6 September 1860.

34. *Ibid.*, file 107, W.E. Banfield to W.A.G. Young, 6 September 1860; T.A. Rickard, "Gilbert Malcolm Sproat," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol.1 (1937), 21-32; Gilbert M. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1987), 3.

35. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 20 October 1860. Bishop Hills' visit to Alberni in October is also described in *Report of the Columbia Mission*, London, 1860, 86-88.

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Hills noted that work began some six weeks earlier, and the settler population numbered about forty, including two English women, the wives of employees.[36] A newspaper report in December echoed Hills' observations, including the two "English ladies," although by then the immigrant population had increased to fifty-two people. Spars were being produced, the mill foundation was completed, and along with the store, five dwelling houses and several outbuildings were noted.[37] Based on earlier figures, at least twenty-seven workmen or "mechanics" came to the operation in the spring of the year, so it is likely that over half of the fifty male inhabitants were skilled labourers. With the help of these British workers, the mill was completed by April 1861.[38] Richard Mayne, on board the survey ship *Hecate*, arrived at Alberni April 19, and described what he called "by far the largest and most important" sawmill in the colony:

> They have been erected in a most solid fashion, and at a heavy outlay, by English labourers, and with English machinery. They contain two gangs of saws capable of cutting about 18,000 feet of lumber (plank) daily, and in the best way, as is proved by the high price obtained for it at Melbourne. Seventy white men are employed at and about the premises, so that the place has all the appearance of a flourishing little settlement. Two schooners and two steamers are also employed by the Company here, the former trading with Victoria and bringing the necessary supplies to the place. One of the steamers, the 'Diana,' a little tug, also trades to Victoria, and is used besides for towing vessels up to and away from the mills. The second steamer, the 'Thames' has not yet reached the colony, but is on her way out from England. In addition to these, several ships are employed in the spar trade between the colony and Europe, but the desire of the company is to sell on the spot.
>
> The Alberni Mills possess several advantages over similar rival undertakings in Puget Sound, which are now beginning to be appreciated by merchants, and still more by the masters of ships. One of the chief of these lies in its accessibility, for Alberni being situated on the outside coast of the island, the navigator avoids all the journey in and out of the Straits of Juan de Fuca and Admiralty Inlet, which occupies ordinarily a week: so

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36. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 20 October 1860; the women, Mrs. Fuller and Mrs. Young, were both from Norfolk; *ibid.*, 25 October 1860.

37. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 8 December 1860, 3.

38. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 10 April 1861, 3.

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> that a vessel bound to Alberni, making Cape Flattery at the same time as one bound for Puget Sound, would be half-loaded by the time the other reached its destination. Again, when loaded, the tug takes him to the entrance of Barclay Sound, where he can wait for a fair wind, while the other, in consequence of the more prevalent winds blowing into the Strait, has to beat for two or three days to get outside. In winter this is by no means a desirable spot to beat about in, for the squally from the Olympian Mountains are sudden and heavy, and fogs come on very rapidly. Another consideration, which carries much weight with the skipper, is that there are no opportunities for men to desert at Alberni. Of course, when the trade becomes greater and the country more opened up, this advantage will cease to exist, but for some time to come men will be very safe there.
>
> There are no port charges whatever at Alberni, and it is a port of entry, so that vessels can clear from the mills; whereas in Puget Sound they cannot, and have to call at Port Townshend [*sic*] or some other port to get their clearance. The scarcity of white pine in the American territory will probably enable the Alberni mills to compete with their Puget Sound rivals successfully even in the San Francisco market, and they are admirably placed for the supply of America, China, and Australia, with the latter of which countries a remunerative trade has already been opened. Several foreign governments have entered into contracts for these spars, and our own has ordered two cargoes of topmasts to be supplied.[39]

For export mills, relying primarily on sailing vessels to carry their products to market, the advantages of location are evident from Mayne's description. Much the same points in favour of the mill were made in a company advertisement in the Victoria *Daily Colonist* in the spring of 1863 [see below].

The expectation that the mill would be working by April 20, 1861 proved optimistic, but it was in full operation by the end of May.[40] A first shipment of 40,000 board feet of lumber was shipped to Victoria in July.[41] In the same month a shipment of lumber was sent to Callao, Peru, as well as a shipment of "cured fish" to the same

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39. Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia*, 228-230.

40. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 10 April 1861, 3. The mill was not running in mid-May, but it was noted it "will be started again in a few days," implying it had been working previously. *Ibid.*, 16 May 1861, 3; The mill was described as being in full operation by 25 May in *ibid.*, 28 May 1861, 3; *ibid.*, 30 May 1861, 1.

41. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 11 July 1861.

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destination. In August Alberni was made a port of entry, with Stamp as the collector of customs. Banfield reported the mill cutting about 14,000 feet of lumber per day, using the gang saw system noted by Mayne, but an increase to 50,000 feet per day was anticipated when a circular saw system was installed.[42] By this time Stamp had decided that the 6,000 acres already "occupied" and utilized by the company was adequate for the purposes of the venture. In exchange for not taking more of the 15,000 acres originally agreed to, he requested 2,000 acres of land to the north of Barkley Sound.[43] Stamp travelled to San Francisco "to charter two ships to run between Barclay Sound and San Francisco, and one, between the Sandwich Islands and Barclay Sound." A steam tug was on its way from England to serve the "Alberni settlement."[44] En route to San Francisco, Stamp attempted to recruit twenty men for his operation in Victoria. In spite of salaries ranging from $20 to as high as $130 per month, depending on qualifications, and Stamp's "great exertions," he succeeded in hiring only three men, to be sent to Alberni by the return trip.[45]

After two years of full operation, the company operating the Alberni sawmill reorganized in a way apparently designed to put control more directly in the hands of the British partners. In November 1862 it was announced that E. Stamp & Company, "Agents for James Thomson & Co.," would in future do business as Anderson & Company, "Merchants and Commission Merchants." G.M. Sproat, identified as the representative of James Thomson & Company in the sawmill venture, would remain on as Anderson & Company's "resident partner" on Vancouver Island. Affiliated companies included Thomson & Company and Thomas Bilbe & Company in London; Falkner, Bell & Company in San Francisco; Gilchrist, Watt & Company in Sydney; and Dutton &

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42. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 22 August 1861; BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 107, W.E. Banfield to W.A.G. Young, 10 August 1861.

43. *Ibid.*, file 1643, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 22 August 1861.

44. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 23 August 1861, 3.

45. *Ibid.*, 27 August 1861, 3.

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Company in Adelaide.[46] Stamp arrived in Victoria just before Christmas 1862, signalling the end of his direct involvement with the operations of Alberni Mills.[47] In January 1863 the Chief Justice of the colony was hearing arguments for a "petition sought to be filed in equity by Messrs Thompson [*sic*] & Co., of Billiter Court, London, against Capt. Edward Stamp, of this colony, for dissolution of partnership."[48] In spite of the legal proceedings, the partnership of Edward Stamp & Company, of Victoria and Alberni, was dissolved by mutual consent on February 3, 1863. The assets and liabilities were to be accepted by Anderson & Company, and the dissolution was signed "For self and the partners other than Edward Stamp" by James G. Anderson and Edward Stamp.[49] The former was the "Anderson" of the new firm, who joined James Thomson & Company as a youth, and became a partner in 1842. As three of his nephews joined him in Thomson & Company from 1863 to1870, that firm evolved into Anderson, Thomson & Company, then Anderson, Anderson & Company, and finally into the 1930s shipping company Anderson, Green & Company.[50] The reorganization suggests that Thomson & Company assumed direct management of the sawmill venture.

While management changed, operations continued, with several vessels from San Francisco expected to arrive in the winter of 1862-63 to take on cargoes of lumber, repeating the pattern of 1861.[51] Alberni Mills continued production, and apparently flourished, through 1863 and 1864 managed by G.M. Sproat, and owned by Anderson & Company.[52] The firm continued to act as commission merchants based in Victoria, and

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46. *Ibid.*, 18 November 1862, 2.

47. *Ibid.*, 20 December 1862, 3.

48. *Ibid.*, 9 January 1863, 3.

49. *Ibid.*, 5 February 1863, 2.

50. *Ibid.*; Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 101.

51. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 20 December 1862, 3.

52. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 105-107.

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aggressively promoted and advertised its ventures, including wholesale grocery, spirit and wine, and building supply businesses. The firm emphasized the export focus of its "Alberni Steam Saw Mills," that produced spars, piles, and lumber of "First Quality and Full Dimension," "Furnished for Export at Moderate Prices." The company touted the advantages of the business, including the geographic factors Mayne noted, and adding the "accessible" and "commodious" wharf, and the regular communication with Victoria.[53]

In early 1863, shortly after becoming manager, Sproat applied to the colonial government to "take up more land under our Land Grant," with the extra land needed to "protect our large investment of capital in this place."[54] As noted above, in 1861 Stamp determined that the sawmill required just 6,000 of the 15,000 acres of timber lands granted at the inception of the venture in 1860.[55] Sproat's application may reflect a company economic strategy involving land acquisition in addition to the operation of the sawmill. Sproat raised the question of land tenure again in the fall of 1864, in response to the colonial government's intention to hold a public sale of land around Alberni. He reviewed the situation at Alberni Mills for the Colonial Secretary, in an attempt to forestall the sale, and ensure that Anderson & Company would retain its land holdings, if not continue in its sawmill business.[56] Sproat suggested that the colony "induced" Stamp to choose Alberni rather than Puget Sound as a mill site with the promise of large land holdings. However, Sproat viewed this as a "disastrous" decision, because the supply of

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53. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 14 April 1863, 2, Anderson & Company advertisement, making a specific reference to "Messrs. Falkner, Bell & Co.," the San Francisco agents of Anderson & Company.

54. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 17, Anderson & Company to J.D. Pemberton, 18 February 1863.

55. Stamp applied for a further 2,000 acres north of Barkley Sound in lieu of taking up more of the 15,000 acre grant. *Ibid.*, file 1643, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 22 August 1861.

56. Sproat requested that the land sale at Alberni not proceed on November 30, 1864, as had been advertised in the government *Gazette*. *Ibid.*, file 1638, G.M. Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 1 November 1864.

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timber was inadequate for a large export mill. He claimed that the company had "Sunk and Lost over £50,000" [roughly $250,000 at the approximate exchange rate of $5.00 US per pound sterling] in the venture, attributed to the lack of timber and problems in transporting logs due to the "broken character of the country." By late 1864, the company logged primarily around Sproat Lake, and used a complex two mile long water course employing a system of dams to float logs down to supply the sawmill. Sproat maintained that when the timber around the lake was exhausted, no new source was available.[57] The willingness of Anderson & Company to persevere with a money-losing venture is difficult to explain, unless its agenda related more to the 15,000 acre land grant than to the sawmill. The emphasis on acquiring more land immediately followed the change in management, and the rationale for the request seemed at odds with Stamp's assessment of the sawmill's timber land requirements in August 1861. The original grant stipulated that improvement, occupation and use of the property were conditions of tenure, so the post-1863 operation of the sawmill may have been considered more important in maintaining control of the land than as a business in its own right.

Some of the issues Sproat raised in his November 1864 letter reinforced the idea that Anderson & Company's interest was in the land, rather than the sawmill. He admitted ignorance of the precise nature of the arrangement between Douglas and Stamp, but understood that Anderson & Company "are proprietors, if they choose to buy it," of 15,000 acres of unsurveyed land on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Further, he itemized the benefits that he thought Anderson & Company brought to the region, apparently attempting to demonstrate some sort of moral claim, based on the contribution to colonial development and the creation of opportunities. Feeling that the colonial administration lacked knowledge of the Alberni operation, he began with the company's contribution to the local economy: "I have paid in cash more than $300,000 to traders and laborers in this place for supplies and wages, exclusive of supplies obtained from San Francisco." He included the role of the company as an employer, pointing out that for

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57. *Ibid.*

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nearly five years 150 men had been "employed on the place," resulting in significant development. He described how Anderson & Company entirely controlled the immigrant economy and society in the region, in the absence of any other settlers, or "anyone who is not in my pay." Establishing that without Anderson & Company's investment, no colonial development would have taken place in the region, Sproat argued against the intended land sale. Settlement or mining would disrupt the existing use of waterways to transport logs to the mill, which would lead to the closing of the mill and so the loss of all its jobs, negating the benefits of the development to date.[58] Ironically, Sproat based his argument for monopoly control of the land and resources of the region on the doctrine of development and progress.

With his letter arguing for more land for the Alberni venture, Sproat included a "Supplementary Letter," dealing with the issue of establishing a post-sawmill settlement in the region.[59] Evidently the colony did not grant the requested additional lands, or sponsor the company's settlement scheme, as within two months Anderson & Company abandoned its Alberni Mills venture. On January 2, the ship *Thames* arrived in Victoria from Alberni, carrying 78 "mill hands to be paid off." Just one ship, the *Egeria*, was loading at Alberni for China, and only one logging camp was working.[60] Alberni Mills continued to ship lumber well into 1865. In March the barque *John Stevenson* was carrying a cargo to Adelaide. At the same time the steamer *Thomas* was bringing 11 passengers, including two ladies and their families, to Victoria, leaving a Mr. and Mrs. George in charge of the

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58. *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.*, file 1638, G.M. Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 1 November 1864, "Supplementary Letter." The issue of settlement, and the desired role of Anderson & Co. in immigration to the colonies, will be discussed further below.

60. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 January 1865, 3. A variant of this story, noting 97 mill hands arriving in Victoria on January 1, 1864 is given in Jan Peterson, *The Albernis, 1860-1922* (Lantzville: Oolichan books, 1992), 35, citing the Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 1 January 1864[sic].

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mills.[61] Another cargo departed for Hawaii in April, and another to Callao, Peru, in July, when the Georges were replaced by a male caretaker.[62] Sproat continued his efforts on behalf of Anderson & Company to acquire land around Alberni, lobbying for a greater allocation of timber lands, and attempting to obtain title for the 2,000 acres encompassing the sawmill, residential settlement, and the farms, but without success.[63] The mill was abandoned by August 1866, with the exception of the caretaker, a Mr. Drane, although "a man named Taylor, a Scotchman," continued to occupy and work on the farm up the river. The last of the lumber stored at Alberni was brought to Victoria in July 1868, and the machinery was removed and sold to the Puget Mill Company at Teekalet, Washington Territory in early 1869 for $4,500.[64]

Alberni Mills: Production and Markets

The known output of the sawmill for the years 1861 to 1864 is presented in the tables below. It is clear that the primary focus of the operation was on export markets. In 1863 and 1864, respectively, 1,000,000 and 887,000 board feet of lumber were shipped to Victoria, while over 11,000,000 and nearly 9,000,000 feet of lumber, as well as other forest products, were exported. From the inception of this venture, the exports were directed to Pacific markets other than the United States, in spite of the clear linkages with the Pacific metropolis. From his first application Stamp understood that by locating on British soil he was cutting himself off from the lucrative San Francisco market, noting that if the company established its mill in Washington Territory "we would also have San Francisco market open to our lumber, which we cannot have if we decide to establish on

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61. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 30 March 1865, 3.

62. *Ibid.*, 20 April 1865; *ibid.*, 25 July 1865, 3.

63. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1638, G.M. Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 18 May 1865; *ibid.*, Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 16 June 1865.

64. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 109-110. The buildings of the mill accidentally burned in 1879. *Ibid.*, 110.

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British Territory."[65] In spite of the lack of access to American markets, San Francisco played a central role in the business of the company. There was an affiliated agency there, and in the summer of 1861 and in late 1862 arrangements were made in San Francisco to charter or otherwise secure ships to take export cargoes from Alberni.[66] The primary export markets over the period of operation seem to have been Australia, South America, and China, accounting for 8 of 10 known export cargoes in 1863, and 8,494,903 of 8,858,916 board feet of sawn lumber in 1864, as well as the majority of spars and square timber.

Table 5.1: Production of the Alberni Mill, 1861-1864[67]

1861	rough lumber	planed lumber	spars	squared timber	lath	pickets	salt fish	fish oil	furs
Victoria	5 cargoes 146,000'								
Australia	700,000'								
South America	1 cargo								
Hawaii	1 cargo								
China									
Philippines									
Batavia									

65. Pointing out this issue was part of the strategy of demanding large tracts of land to counterbalance the disadvantages of locating in the Colony of Vancouver Island. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to James Douglas, 21 December 1859.

66. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 23 August 1861, 3; *ibid.*, 20 December 1862, 3.

67. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 103-107; Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 134-135. The values estimated for spars, rough lumber [$12 per thousand feet], planed lumber [$20 per thousand feet], and square timber [$16 per thousand] in 1863 and 1864 tables are based on the 1862 value of spars, and on the values for square timber and lumber given by Macfie, *ibid.*, 134-141. Destinations and cargoes of ships loading at Alberni in 1863 are from Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 29 August 1863, 3.

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1861	rough lumber	planed lumber	spars	squared timber	lath	pickets	salt fish	fish oil	furs
Britain									
Unknown									
Totals	unknown								

1862	rough lumber	planed lumber	spars	squared timber	lath	pickets	salt fish	fish oil	furs
Victoria									
Australia									
S. America									
Hawaii									
China									
Philippines									
Batavia [Java]			1 cargo						
Britain			3 cargoes						
Unknown							370 barrels	193 barrels	11 packs
Totals	7,804,000' $85,844	270,000' $5,400	990 spars $28,673				unknown	unknown	unknown

1863	rough lumber	planed lumber	spars	squared timber	lath	pickets	salt fish	fish oil	furs
Victoria	14 cargoes 1,000,000'								
Australia	1 unknown cargo	1 cargo lumber & spars							
South America	1 unknown cargo								
Hawaii	1 cargo lumber								
China	2 cargoes lumber	1 unknown cargo							
Philippines		1 cargo lumber & spars							
Batavia									

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1863	rough lumber	planed lumber	spars	squared timber	lath	pickets	salt fish	fish oil	furs
Britain									
Unknown							470 barrels	239 barrels	
Totals	12,273,000' "sawn lumber" [$147,276?]		1,300 spars [$37,700?]				unknown	unknown	
1864	**rough lumber**	**planed lumber**	**spars**	**squared timber**	**lath**	**pickets**	**salt fish**	**fish oil**	**furs**
Victoria	702,118'	184,882'							
Australia/ New Zealand	1,598,517'	123,788'		528,304'					
South America	4,177,403'	566,651'	36 spars	1,354,877'					
Hawaii	269,563'	94,450'		15,184'					
China	2,028,544'		18 spars	190,657'					
Philippines									
Batavia									
Britain				3,054' of piles	796 bundles	120 bundles			
Unknown									
Totals	8,776,145' $105,314?	969,771' $19,395?	54 spars $1,564?	2,089,022' $33,424?	unknown	unknown			

The production of the sawmill rose rapidly from 1861 to 1862 under Stamp's direction, from three export cargoes to at least fourteen vessels that took cargoes at Alberni in 1862. The quantity of lumber shipped in 1862 rose to over eight million feet of rough and dressed lumber, valued at $91,244, along with four cargoes of spars, valued at $28,673.[68] Documented export shipments of lumber from the mill in the years 1862 to 1864 totalled 30,294,956 board feet. Adding in domestic sales, and undocumented

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68. The 1861 data is from Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 103. The 1862 totals were 7,804,000 feet of rough lumber at $11 per thousand, and 270,000 feet of dressed lumber at $20 per thousand, distributed as noted in Table 5-1 in *ibid.*, 104, citing the Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 9 January 1863.

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shipments, Kaye Lamb estimated a total output of some 35,000,000 feet of lumber in the operating period of the mill.[69] This figure seems to include just the sawn lumber and squared timber measured in board feet, excluding spars, pickets, and other forest products. Apparently the spars shipped to England were intended for other markets, as reference was made to "supplying the French, Spanish, and Sardinian Government dockyards with spars."[70] The largest single market for the Alberni Mill in 1864 was Callao, Peru, taking over 2.4 million board feet of sawn lumber, and 632,888 feet of squared timber, with Shanghai in second place, taking 1.8 million feet of lumber and 130,560 feet of squared timber.[71]

The value of the wood at the mill was given in 1862 as $12 per thousand for rough lumber, and $20 per thousand for dressed lumber.[72] Slightly lower prices of approximately $10.30 per thousand for rough, and $16.70 per thousand for dressed lumber were given for exports from the colony of British Columbia in 1865.[73] These figure relate well to those given for rough fir lumber at the mill in the United States in 1860 and 1864 respectively of $12 and $11 per thousand.[74] Key to the viability of an export forest industry was the cost of shipping and the price of cargoes of lumber on the destination markets. In the 1870s American cargoes of lumber were sold in China for $25 to $30 per thousand feet, while prices at the mill remained similar to the 1860s levels. This was slightly above the quoted $20 per thousand "retail" price, which would provide some

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69. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 110.

70. Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 135.

71. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 106-107; Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 4 January 1865, 3.

72. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 104.

73. BCA, GR-2957, British Columbia (Colony), Custom House Returns, 1859-1869 [*sic* ; actually 1858-1869], 105.

74. Cox, *Mills and Markets*, Appendix I, 297-298.

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margin to accommodate the cost of trans-Pacific shipping.[75] These figures correspond well with those cited by Matthew Macfie in 1865; "Shippers have assured me that 100 per cent has often been realized by them upon cargoes [of lumber] to China." Macfie cited an extraordinary example of a ship's captain who had realized sale prices of some £14 [$70] per thousand in Foochow on a shipment of lumber purchased in the Northwest for just over £2 [$10] per thousand, realizing nearly a 600% markup.[76]

The argument Sproat presented to the colonial government in his application for more land has been naturalized by scholars such as Kaye Lamb, who accepted that Alberni Mills closed down due to a simple lack of raw materials, or logs, given the technology of the era: "Sproat's failure does not prove he was incompetent; it simply reveals the extent to which the lumbering industry of the present is the product of modern logging methods and machinery."[77] This argument, based on Stamp's choice of a location with an inadequate timber supply for the mill, has been accepted by other authors since, most recently Gordon Hak.[78] This argument, based on traditional economic factors of production, resource and technology, presents some weaknesses. First, Stamp, working within the same environment, stated in 1861 that forty percent of the original 15,000 acre grant was sufficient. He reinforced this opinion when he initiated his post-Alberni Mills ventures in 1863 and 1865, and asked for almost precisely the same concessions from the

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75. *Ibid.*, 145-146; *ibid.*, Appendix I, 298.

76. This "British" captain had unloaded in Victoria and then loaded his cargo "in the vicinity of the colony," probably referring to Puget Sound. Assuming an exchange rate of roughly $5 to the pound, the purchase and sales prices were respectively in the range of $12.50 and $72 per thousand feet. Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 136.

77. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 108.

78. W.G. Hardwick argued that the failure of the Alberni mill was due to technological factors, rather than to a lack of markets, in "Geography of the Forest Industry of Coastal British Columbia," *Occasional Papers in Geography, No.5* (Vancouver: Canadian Association of Geographers, British Columbia Division, Department of Geography, UBC, 1963); Gordon H. Hak, *Turning Trees into Dollars: The British Columbia Coastal Lumber Industry, 1858-1913* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

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colonial administration as he had for the earlier venture.[79] If these basic input factors relating to land and resources, including land occupancy, timber leases, and so forth, were responsible for the failure of one venture, it seems strange that he would ask for essentially the same conditions at the time the earlier venture was shutting down. Rather, one would expect that greater concessions, more land, and more favourable land prices would be requested; none of these were the case.

Second, assuming Lamb's total production estimate of 35,000,000 board feet is accurate, and assigning the lowest documented price at the mill for rough lumber in 1865, $10.30 per thousand, the value of the lumber produced, exclusive of the higher-value spars and other products, was about $360,500. This figure may be assumed to be very conservative, as many higher prices were given, and it does not include the higher cost of planed lumber. Additionally, both Stamp & Company and Anderson & Company were commission merchant firms, so presumably would have acted on their own behalf in that capacity, and so avoided some of the costs of brokerage, commission, and shipping that were generally deducted from the price of a cargo.[80] The references to engaging ships in San Francisco to carry cargoes from Alberni supports this presumption. The value of such cargoes in markets such as China and South America may have averaged nearly double the mill price, based on the information above. The gross value of the forest products produced at Alberni Mills through its operation probably exceeded $360,000, and may have been as high as $750,000. In light of this, Sproat's point about the companies' investing and losing as much as $250,000 in the venture seems questionable. Market prices and the cost of production and shipping suggest that the venture was economically viable. The lack of "return or advantage to the proprietors" noted by Sproat in his plea to the colonial government may have been a bargaining ploy, or else provided evidence of

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79. BCA, MS-120, file 1, Stamp's Mill: Corres. re Sawmill on Burrard Inlet, 3-6, Arthur N. Birch to E. Stamp, 20 May 1865.

80. In the early years of the canned salmon trade, the usual commission charged was five percent; Cicely Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage* (Vancouver: British Columbia Packers Limited, 1969), 159. This may have reflected a convention followed in the forest industry.

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truly monumental mismanagement.[81]

In his study of the broader west coast forest industry, Thomas Cox suggested that a lack of markets, due to American tariff regulations, contributed more to the failure of Alberni Mills than a shortage of timber.[82] In the 1870s, Robert Brown offered a summary of the problems facing BC producers in which the distance to British and Canadian markets, and the tariff barriers to American markets, dominated.[83] Both these interpretations privilege market factors over factors of production, contrary to the generally accepted Sproat and Lamb model. However, this market-based argument does not explain why Stamp decided to proceed with this venture, understanding and accepting the loss of the San Francisco market.[84] His strategy from the beginning concentrated on exports to other Pacific markets, particularly South America and China, where BC lumber seemed more competitive. It is possible that the advantage in shipping from Alberni Mills, avoiding the extra navigation involved in entering the Strait of Juan de Fuca as well as Puget Sound itself, contributed to this emphasis on South American and Chinese markets. This was a factor noted by Stamp in his1859 application, and one emphasized by Mayne and Anderson & Company later. The easier access could mean a difference of several days in the time required to load and clear Cape Flattery.[85] The levels of production, the ease of navigation, the demand on non-American markets, and the prices reported in the 1862-1864 period, should have ensured a viable business, rather than one losing money on

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81. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1638, G.M. Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 1 November 1864.

82. Cox, *Mills and Markets*, 134.

83. Robert Brown, *The Countries of the World: being a popular description of the various continents, islands, rivers, seas, and peoples of the globe* (London: Cassel, Petter & Galpin, 1877), Vol.1, 250.

84. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to James Douglas, 21 December 1859.

85. *Ibid.*; Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia*, 228-230; Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 14 April 1863, 2, Anderson & Company advertisement.

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the scale described by Sproat. I believe that the end of this venture did relate to the factors of production rather than markets, but that it was not a shortage of resources, but the difficulty in mustering and maintaining a suitable industrial labour force in this remote enclave. This will be discussed at greater length below.

The Alberni Mills System of Production

Economic viability does not imply that the logistical problems of production were not formidable. In his missive to the Colonial Secretary, Sproat described the geography of log production in the 1860s:

> A large Saw Mill business is distinguished by peculiar conditions from a coalmine or other undertaking the works of which can be concentrated. It requires a large tract of land anywhere to furnish 20 million feet of logs every year for the use of a Mill, but especially in a country so totally unsuitable for large Sawmills as this Island... At Alberni there are roads from 6 to 8 miles in length for the purpose of transporting hay and bulky articles to the logging camps; a water course of two miles long, dams, piers and abutments constructed at a great cost to raise a lake and river and at any time if the mill can exist much longer, we may have to make a railway to convey logs for many miles.[86]

The complex of Alberni Mills and its support operations included a core area of about 2,000 acres, 1,750 acres for the sawmill and related settlement, and two farms of 125 acres each.[87] In addition, there were a number of logging camps spread over the 6,000 acres of timber land actually utilized by the operation. Sproat described a logging operation concentrated around the shores of Sproat Lake in 1863 and 1864, while in 1864 Frederick Whymper visited a logging camp on the Somass River, which connected the

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86. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1638, G.M. Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 1 November 1864.

87. The 2,000 acre figure was requested by Stamp in his original proposal, and repeated by Sproat when he lobbied the colonial secretary for title to the site. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to James Douglas, 21 December 1859; *Ibid.*, file 1638, G.M. Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 18 May 1865; *ibid.*, file 1638, G.M. Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 16 June 1865.

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lake to the mill site.[88] The workforce required to produce some 10-12 million board feet of sawn lumber per year, a variety of other forest products, and to manage the ancillary operations, like the farms, construction and operation of facilities, loading and unloading ships, and so forth, was substantial. In his largely ethnological 1868 book, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, Gilbert Sproat described the workforce of Alberni Mills: "I had on an average about 270 men at Alberni - perhaps three-fourths of these Canadian and American - stalwart, handsome fellows, accustomed to work with their hands."[89] This figure may have been inflated a little by memory. When the mill was phasing out in late 1864, Sproat gave two hints to the size of the operation in a letter to the Colonial Secretary advocating the idea of settlement around Alberni. He referred to "65 work cattle", or oxen, and a potential market for food, "for the use of on an average, 150 men."[90] When Stamp was proposing the venture to Douglas in late 1859, he anticipated a workforce of around "200 laborers," and discussion in the House of Assembly revolved around the 150 "colonists" he intended to bring in for the operation.[91] In the spring of 1861 Mayne noted that "[s]eventy white men are employed at and about the premises," a figure not greatly increased from the approximately 50 men present in November 1860.[92] Whymper provided the largest contemporary estimate, when he noted some 200 "workmen... representing a dozen nationalities, and including among the number, Kanakas from the Sandwich Islands, and the Indians and half-breeds of many tribes" in the sawmill and surrounding area. Whymper's figure may have included the crews of the seven ships

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88. *Ibid.*, G.M. Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 1 November 1864; Whymper, *Travel and Adventure*, 62.

89. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 27.

90. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1638, G.M. Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 1 November 1864, "Supplementary Letter."

91. *Ibid.*, file 1643, Edward Stamp to James Douglas, 21 December 1859; Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 3 April 1860, 3; *ibid.*, 5 April 1860, 2.

92. Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia*, 228.

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loading cargo at the time, which would explain his anomalous reference to a dozen nationalities and "many tribes."[93] The observed number of workers was generally lower than the numbers anticipated or remembered, with 150 men probably the best estimate.

Sproat described a workforce dominated by American or Canadian workers. He did not identify the origins of the other quarter of the men, although some may have been from the "polyglot" populations of Victoria and Puget Sound. The presence of skilled British workers was established by Stamp's 1859 reference to "several skilled artisans and their families" already engaged in Britain and on their way to the region.[94] Mayne's description of the mill establishment being erected "by English labourers" suggests that British workers may have made up more than a minority of the workforce.[95] Stamp's recruiting failure in Victoria in 1861 suggests that many of the workers came from outside the colony. Given the existing commercial and shipping linkages to Puget Sound, it seems likely that many of the workers at Alberni Mills were recruited there. An American component of the workforce is confirmed by a description of the Mayday celebration in 1861. "Some few citizens of the United States," together with their "British Colonial friends" celebrated the occasion, and some members of the Aboriginal community were also included.[96] Sproat's emphasis on the Anglo-North American character of the workforce was repeated in other contemporary sources.[97] The workforce seemed to be

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93. Whymper, *Travel and Adventure*, 62.

94. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to James Douglas, 21 December 1859.

95. Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia*, 228.

96. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 30 May 1861, 1.

97. The references by Sproat to individuals seem to reinforce the British and Anglo-North American composition of the workforce. They include: "[t]he American woodmen, who chiefly formed my party" at the start of the venture; a "Gaelic woman" who accused Sproat of bringing her to "the back of the world;" John Eyloc, "a New Brunswick shipwright;" "Jim" the woodman; Mr. [Matthew Trotter] Johnston, "a gentleman in our service;" an American foreman and Jack, his Yorkshireman assistant, on the farm; a jury that "consisted of Canadians, Americans, and Englishmen;" "a quick-witted woodsman

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divided by ethnicity, with a British group of artisans, millwrights, and skilled labour, a North American group of loggers, teamsters, rafters, etc., and a mixed Anglo-North American group of mill, agricultural, and other labour.

Sproat described the efforts made to engage Aboriginal labourers, although without specifying numbers. His descriptions imply that the indigenous people were peripheral to the industrial work force: "They [presumably Tseshaht people] worked occasionally as labourers, and with their wages bought new blankets and planks for their houses."[98] Of significance is the use of the word "occasionally" in respect to Tseshaht labour, and also the introduction of these workers to the cash economy. The blankets were brought in and sold to the workers by the company, so profit margins would have been substantial. Likewise, the planks purchased were part of the output of the mill itself,

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from Maine;" and George Reid, a "cooper in my service," promoted to superintendent of Indian affairs at Alberni. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 7, 14, 28, 38, 54-55, 77, 140. An inquest in early 1861 required a jury with British-derived names, including Charles Patch [the foreman], John A. Walton, Adam Petrie, Walter Thomas, Robert Todd, William Morrison, Andrew McLean, John C.B. Clark, Alexander McGowan, Edward A. Sharpe, Thomas Waller, and John Larkin. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 8 March 1861. The shipbuilder laying the keel of the company's schooner in the summer of 1861 was a Mr. Walker, from the "British Provinces." Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 23 August 1861, 3. When Stamp left the operation in early 1863, a meeting of the "workmen employed at the Alberni sawmills" resolved to present him with an inscribed gold watch and chain, worth $250. The men named were Mr. Ledgate and Mr. W. Morrison, the chair and secretary of the committee, and Mr. T. Pamphlet and E. Beadle, who made the presentation. *Ibid.*, 28 February 1863, 3. Pamphlet was in charge of the *Meg Merilees*, Stamp's schooner during the Alberni Mills venture; he later was in command of the steamer belonging to Stamp's Burrard Inlet mill. *Ibid.*, 10 April 1861, 3; Pamphlet, "Early Timber Days," 17; F.W. Howay, "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet 1863-1870," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol.1 (January 1937), 10. After the mill closed, the names of the watchmen and those remaining to farm were all British, such as Mr. and Mrs. George, the Scottish Mr. Taylor, Mr. Reid, and Mr. Drane. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 109-110.

98. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 186. Rolf Knight noted that Sproat "made some attempts to recruit native labour," although relying on a White workforce. Knight, *Indians at Work*, 236. John Lutz saw this effort as more significant, demonstrating the importance of First Nations to the industrial economy, in Lutz, "After the Fur Trade,"78-79.

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again providing for high profit margins for the company. Essentially the wage and purchase arrangement was not dissimilar to the earlier barter system described by Sproat:

> When I first employed Indians at Alberni, the price of their labour was two blankets and rations of biscuits and molasses for a month's work for each man, if he worked the whole time. The Indians became very tired after labouring for ten days or a fortnight, and many forfeited the wages already earned, rather than endure longer the misery of regular labour.[99]

These terms of employment were essentially the same as those noted for Aboriginal monthly workers at the Puget Sound Agricultural Company's Esquimalt Farm in 1856-1857. At the farm, the rate paid ranged from two to three 2½ point blankets per month, depending on the sort of work and whether the agreement included board.[100] The sawmill venture seemed to follow the labour conventions established between the Hudson's Bay Company and Aboriginal populations. Sproat suggested that the structured nature of industrial work caused real distress among Native employees, although some became "fair workmen," paid a wage of 50¢ per day plus rations, roughly a third of that paid to Euro-North American common labour. Sproat found the Tseshaht to be generally "unprofitable workmen" around the mill, but concluded that Aboriginal people were better employed as sailors than as general labourers.[101] His comments demonstrate a clear example of the racializing of certain forms of work, based on racial stereotypes. Sproat felt that Aboriginal workers were unsuited for the rigid hourly schedules of industrial work, where their work was valued at about a third that of non-Native workers. However, he perceived them as well adapted for transportation and marine work,

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99. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 40. Rolf Knight thought Sproat's refusal to pay until after a full month's work was a strategy to save money, which explained the overall lack of Aboriginal involvement in the venture. Knight, *Indians at Work*, 236.

100. The conventions of Aboriginal labour developed under the Hudson's Bay Company are discussed at greater length in Chapter 2, above. BCA, A/E/M19/M19.11, Kenneth McKenzie, Correspondence Accounts etc. re Esquimalt Farm, promissory notes Thomas Cooper and E.E. Langford to K. McKenzie, 5 February, 13 February, 10 April, 8 August, 15 September, and 26 September 1856; 10 January 1857.

101. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 40.

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occupations that offered more flexible schedules, and performed in the context of the "wilderness."

The non-Native work force at Alberni Mills arrived in several phases throughout 1860, starting with an advance party of nine workmen [presumably the "skilled artisans" Stamp referred to in December 1859] at the end of June. Six more followed with the mill machinery at the end of August, and another twelve "Mechanics," with oxen, accompanied Stamp and Sproat in early September.[102] By the fall work was well underway, and the immigrant population rose to fifty-two people including two Englishwomen. Some workers continued to construct and develop the sawmill and infrastructure, while others produced spars for export.[103] Based on the earlier figures, probably a significant portion of the fifty male inhabitants were "mechanics," or skilled workmen. Logically, those brought in the first party would be focussed on site preparation and construction. The second group, arriving with the machinery, probably were the millwrights, responsible for setting up the mechanical systems for the sawmill, while the men brought in at the same time as the oxen were probably the loggers who used these animals to yard logs out of the woods. The production of spars by the fall of 1860 implies the presence of loggers and oxen, confirmed by Bishop Hills' October 1860 observations of the work performed by the 40 employees of the company: "I went round amongst the workmen. Some were felling trees - others rolling logs - others preparing machinery for erection."[104] The sawmill, and the agricultural operation, was in full production by August 1861.[105] In June

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102. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 107, W.E. Banfield to W.A.G. Young, 3 July 1860; *ibid.*, W.E. Banfield to W.A.G. Young, 6 September 1860; Rickard, "Gilbert Malcolm Sproat," 21-32. Sproat described arriving in August 1860, with two armed vessels and about 50 men, "for the purpose of taking possession of the district." Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 3.

103. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 8 December 1860, 3.

104. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 25 October 1860.

105. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 22 August 1861.

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1862, Stamp gave an idea of the size of the workforce, when he wrote that there were "now living at this place about one hundred and twenty men, besides Indians."[106]

Extrapolating from information concerning the Dominion Sawmill in New Westminster some twenty years later, the approximate size of the Alberni operation may be determined. The Dominion Sawmill was supplied with wood by two logging camps, employing about 26 men and 12 yoke of oxen [or 24 oxen], with some 50 to 60 men employed in the mill itself.[107] Assuming that some of the oxen at Alberni were utilized in agricultural or other non-lumbering activities, and that the estimate of 150 workers was more accurate than Sproat's self-aggrandizing 1868 figure of 270 men, the Alberni Mills operation probably was about double the size of the later operation. This suggests that some four logging camps supplied raw materials to the mill. The January 1865 reference to the "logging **camps**" [author's emphasis] being "reduced to one" supports this inference in general terms.[108]

There are few descriptions of the social conditions at Alberni Mills in the early 1860s. Bishop Hills noted that economic motivation brought the English workers to Vancouver Island, starting with the high wages paid. Mr. Fuller, a carpenter and the husband of one of the Englishwomen mentioned, earned £6 per month in London. At Alberni, he was paid £10 per month, plus a company-supplied house and board. The unnamed chief engineer of the operation earned £16 per month, plus "board & house."[109] For Fuller, emigration had meant a 60% rise in wages, from £72 to £120 [$360 to $600 per year at the prevailing exchange rate]annually.[110] The second economic attraction was

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106. *Ibid.*, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 20 June 1862.

107. *The Resources of British Columbia*, Vol.1, No.10 (December 1883), 30.

108. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 January 1865, 3.

109. BCA, MS-1526, 25 October 1860.

110. The wages paid at Alberni were comparatively high, at $1.50 per day for unskilled White labour, £10 per month for a carpenter, and £16 per month for a chief engineers, with free housing and board provided for the last two. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of*

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the housing and board provided by the company. With this, the family's discretionary income probably more than doubled from its London situation, in exchange for living in such an hinterland enclave. Hills noted the cost of some provisions at Alberni; a goose cost a shilling, a duck was sixpence, and flour, "better than in England," was two shillings a "stone." He also mentioned that fresh meat was only available occasionally.[111] Presumably this referred to domestic beef or mutton, as wild game would have been available locally.

Although the benefits of emigration to Alberni in terms of economic mobility and progress were evident to Bishop Hills, he expressed concern about the moral condition of the settlement, a worry shared by the company's G.M. Sproat. Since his arrival in September 1860, Sproat attempted to hold a religious service every Sunday, and all forty of the settlers present in October were attending.[112] Hills assumed this function on his visit, and held services in the "large upper Room" of the mill store, attended by the 40 employees as well as 35 crewmen from the *Grappler*.[113] Hills recommended the

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Savage Life, 40; BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 25 October 1860. These may be compared to other wages by converting them to dollars per month, assuming 26 working days, and an exchange rate of $5.00 per pound. This would result in approximate earnings of respectively $39, $50, and $80 per month. By comparison, in the 1860s, unskilled farm labourers in the United States made from $9.00 to $10.50 per month, and English farm labourers $6.50 per month. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii*, 107, Table 6, derived from the Hawaiian Minister of Finance, Biennial Report, 1870, Table O, giving comparative agricultural and other wage rates. It will be noted that these wages are less than 25 percent of those paid to common labour at Alberni. In fact, the Aboriginal wage of 50¢ per day would give a monthly rate of $13, significantly higher than those paid to agricultural labourers in the United States or Britain. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 40. The increase in wage for emigrating was not as dramatic for a skilled worker, like the carpenter, but still went from $30 to $50 per month; the former was roughly equivalent to the highest paid skilled coal hewers in Britain in the 1880s, $22 to $35 per month. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 98-99.

111. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 25 October 1860.

112. *Ibid.*, 20, 24 October 1860.

113. *Ibid.*, 20-21 October 1860.

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establishment of a church, parsonage, and school, under the direction of a resident clergyman, to ensure the moral and religious welfare of the settlement.[114] Hills sent an Anglican minister, Christopher Knipe, to live at Alberni, who in spite of doing some missionary work with the Tseshaht had a less than successful tenure.[115]

The coercive power of the state was introduced to Alberni in November 1860, when Stamp was appointed a Justice of the Peace, in response to a letter he wrote to the Colonial Secretary expressing concern about maintaining order, both within the workforce, and between the immigrant and Aboriginal populations.[116] In June 1862 Stamp requested that the colony appoint a clerk to assist him in his legal duties, who could also act as the Port Master. Stamp pointed out the difficulty in getting anyone to volunteer to act as constable to police the population of 120 immigrants, the transient population of ships' crews, and the local Native population. He suggested that a local "gaol" would be useful, in the event of problems with the two latter groups.[117] With Stamp's departure the now 150 person immigrant population of Alberni, lost its designated representative of the state and British law. Anderson & Company expressed a desire for a replacement, to maintain order among the roughly 100 crewmen from ships that were usually in the vicinity, as well as among the Native population. These concerns were seen as interrelated. Employees of Alberni Mills were effectively indentured immigrants, dependent on the company for income and housing, and so subject to employer sanctions. Ships' crews presented more of a threat, as they could break laws and then leave with impunity. An area of particular concern was the sale of liquor, as its consumption was seen as a serious threat to the producer ethos and the doctrine of progress. It could

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114. *Ibid.*, 24 October 1860.

115. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 185-186, and note 77.

116. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 14 November 1860; *ibid.*, Edward Stamp, Appointment as Justice of the Peace, 21 November 1860.

117. *Ibid.*, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 20 June 1862.

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impede the production of the sawmill, and contribute to hostile and disorderly behaviour among First Nations. Although this could be regulated within the patriarchal relations of the Alberni Mills workforce, it was difficult to control the selling and consumption of liquor among transient and Aboriginal populations.[118] Given the many hats previously worn by Stamp, the need for a replacement customs officer and harbour master was also pointed out. An employee of the operation, Peter Birrell, was suggested as a candidate for these roles, but there was no prospect for a magistrate on the horizon.[119] Apparently none of the resident employees had achieved a level of respectability sufficient to merit such an appointment, a situation resolved when the company's manager, G.M. Sproat, assumed the role of JP.[120]

The Racialization of Industrial Labour and Intercultural Relations

The peripheral, and racialized, role played by Aboriginal workers in the labour force of the Alberni venture has been outlined earlier in this chapter. This may be attributed to Anglo-North American and Aboriginal attitudes and ideologies that evolved out of those developed in the HBC-dominated fur trade era. Aboriginal producers or workers participated voluntarily in the capitalist economy because of the opportunities for economic and social mobility it presented. The HBC most highly valued those Aboriginal people identified as the best producers, and who demonstrated the liberal order attributes of ambition, hard work, and autonomy. It may be observed that the last of these attributes was not only central to liberal ideology, but to the construct of the noble savage. For [male] Aboriginal producers, this role was socially acceptable because it fit within the

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118. This sentiment was supported by recent incidents in which crew on two English vessels loading at the mill had sold liquor both to Natives and to workmen employed by Alberni Mills, and so affected the production of lumber. *Ibid.*, file 17, Anderson & Company to W.A.G. Young, 22 April 1863.

119. However, Anderson & Company expected a new arrival from England in a month or two that may be able to fulfill the role of magistrate. *Ibid.*

120. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 76.

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broader ideology of gender and division of labour in indigenous cultures. As the HBC developed complex systems of production in its proto-industrial export trades of salt salmon and lumber, with their attendant requirement for waged labour, the situation became more complex. Certain aspects of the processing were racialized and "genderized." In particular, because of culturally-constructed understandings of normative gender behaviour in both Aboriginal and Anglo-North American societies, Aboriginal women integrated easily into the waged labour force, while Aboriginal men did not. For the latter, taking on waged work signified a loss of autonomy, so was perceived as deviant in both cultures, compromising an individual's social position in indigenous society, or their ascribed status of "noble savage" in immigrant society.

The conventions concerning Aboriginal participation in the capitalist economy continued to evolve and change in the context of industrial capitalism. Sproat noted the willingness of Aboriginal people to become involved in a system of wage, or exchange, labour with the company, but only up to a certain point. The Aht resisted proletarianization to the extent that they were willing to forgo earnings rather than make "waged worker" a primary identity. They could resist because their subsistence did not rely on waged work, which remained voluntary as an adjunct to the traditional economy. For the employer, this situation created the impression that Aboriginal workers were unsuitable as industrial labour. It also reinforced the tropes of autonomy and wildness found in the construct of the noble savage, so was consistent with racial ideology. However, Sproat considered certain roles, such as sailor, to be compatible with the construct of "Indian" that he was applying. Performed outdoors, in the context of "nature," or "wilderness," and in a way that did not require subordination to an industrial schedule, such jobs were congruent with the definition of the "noble savage," and Anglo-North American expectations of how Indians should behave. It provides a clear example of a racialized job, in which a particular group is identified as most suitable to perform a certain type of work, based on the racial stereotypes adhering to the group.[121]

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121. Fisher, for one, noted how for British immigrants in the context of Imperial expansion, "race was the principal determinant of culture," implying that cultural attributes

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As described in Chapter 4, the construct of "Indian" and the definition of goodness or badness attributed to Aboriginal people changed to some extent in concert with the broader emergence of a BC-specific understanding of the liberal order. In some cases this simply involved a restatement of the fur trade construct of "Indian character," as in Sproat's racialized perception of the suitability of Aboriginal workers as sailors. However, the larger pattern in this period demonstrated an increasing dissonance between the socio-economic aspirations of the immigrant population and the ability of First Nations to play a meaningful role in supporting them. The idea of progress was central to the *mentalité* of an immigrant industrial entrepreneur such as Stamp, as well as the members of the Assembly who supported his venture with an exceptional land grant to foster the economic development of the colony.[122] Such initiatives were thought to be the economic engines that would support the development of a settler society and state, and attract an immigrant population to the opportunities created. Within this ideology, anything thought to accelerate economic progress, and by extension, social development, was beneficial, while anything seen to impede progress was considered detrimental to the larger project of social and state creation. This test of economic progress determined how the immigrant culture perceived and interacted with First Nations in British Columbia, as illustrated in the negotiations between historical blocs at Alberni.

The objections in the House of Assembly to Stamp's venture concerned issues of "fairness," and ensuring that intending emigrants were presented with equal opportunities. Existing Aboriginal occupation and use of the land, and the potential impact of this land grant on First Nations did not enter the considerations.[123] Equality of opportunity only

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were fixed by ascribed racial identity. Fisher noted how this justified violence against racial groups, but this "racial determinism" may be seen to apply to the definition of a group's place in the workforce as well. Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 86-87. I am suggesting here that such constructs of race and culture were not fixed, but were adapted to fit the lived experience of immigrant and indigenous populations in BC.

122. Hendrickson, *Journals of the Colonial Legislatures*, Vol.1, 45, 26 March 1860.

123. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 3 April 1860, 3; *ibid.*, 5 April 1860, 2, reporting the proceedings of the House on April 2 and April 3, respectively.

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extended to those who would contribute to progress, with their "civilized," capitalist use of the land. Because the hegemonic group equated Aboriginal land use and occupation with an unchanging state of wilderness and savagery, it was not seen as contributing to the larger project of creating opportunity. This perception was strengthened by the trope of the disappearing race, that saw the population in the future dominated by immigrants, as indigenous populations disappeared. For the hegemonic group, these factors justified the granting of land tenure regardless of pre-existing use and occupation, as it would convert the land and resources into economic opportunities that would support the growth of a society consistent with its own values.

The Tseshaht nation did not accept the imposition of the liberal order, in the form of Stamp's venture, without resistance. Its members occupied the intended mill site when the construction party arrived at Alberni in September 1860. The crews of the two supply ships, the *Meg Merilees* and the *Woodpecker*, loaded their guns and turned them on the houses of the Tseshaht camp, while Stamp delivered an ultimatum to vacate.[124] William Banfield described these events in less confrontational terms, noting that Stamp and the Tseshaht chiefs reached an "arrangement amicable and satisfactory." The latter "quietly ceded" the selected land to Stamp, after some delay in removing temporary lodges erected on the site, "not their usual camping ground," after the first work party had arrived. "Captain Stamp made them a present of some 50 Bcts. [blankets], muskets, molasses and food, trinkets etc. I explained to the chiefs the nature of Captain Stamp's settling among them, which they thoroughly comprehended, and at present profess entire satisfaction." Banfield expressed the wishes of the colonial government that no harm be done to the settlers, and that the latter do no harm to the Tseshaht. The Tseshaht relocated their summer village about a mile away from the mill site.[125] The process of negotiation

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124. Pamphlet, "Early Timber Days," 17.

125. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 107, W.E. Banfield to W.A.G. Young, 6 September 1860; Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 3-4; G.M. Sproat, "The West Coast Indians in Vancouver Island," *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London*, n.s.5 (1867), 244-245. Sproat's account is consistent with the Pamphlet and

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between indigenous and immigrant groups included Stamp's use of "gun boat diplomacy," the Tseshaht building temporary lodges to establish their ownership of the site, the "purchase" of lands following HBC conventions employed in the Douglas Treaties of a decade earlier, and Banfield, as the representative of the colonial state, mediating between the two competing groups. The outcome seems to have been inevitable, as the state was committed to granting the land and so supporting the establishment of the venture. Robin Fisher used this episode as an example of a quantum shift in power relations between indigenous and immigrant societies, with the latter no longer able to resist the imposition of new economic and cultural forms.[126] However, the process seems to have been more complex than a simple change in the hegemonic group. Rather, the process of negotiation continued, with both indigenous and immigrant societies accommodating each other in ways defined by both economic and cultural factors. First Nations resistance to this industrial enclave continued for the duration of its operation, and probably contributed in part to its eventual winding up. The immigrant society on Vancouver Island interpreted such resistance to Anglo-North American hegemony within the broad models of savagery or the debased race discussed in Chapter 4. Such active or passive resistance, seen to comprise a threat to the larger project of constructing a society supportive of liberal values, was reported throughout the operation of Alberni Mills.

Stamp exhibited a concern about active, or "savage," resistance in one of his earlier letters to the Colonial Secretary, in which he asked for assurance that the colony would give assistance in the event of "any difficulty with the Indians on first establishing

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Banfield ones, with more emphasis on the threat of violence than in Banfield's. Secondary sources that detail the events surrounding the establishment of the sawmill and Tseshaht resistance, based on the three primary sources above, include Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 116-117; Gough, *Gunboat Frontier*, 113-114; James Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp: The Lives and Colourful Times of Vancouver's Lumber Pioneers* (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas, 1977), 21-23.

126. Fisher cited Sproat's version of the protests and attempted resistance of the Tseshaht, but concluded that "the opposition was futile," given the weapons and conviction of the immigrants, in Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 116-117.

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myself among them."[127] A few months later, in October 1860, Stamp complained that the Natives were "very troublesome, and are causing the men much alarm; some of whom with their families are just from England and do not understand the Indian character." He was concerned his labour force would desert, leaving £10,000 worth of property to the "depredations" of the Natives, so requested a visit from a military vessel.[128] The colonial administration demonstrated its commitment to his venture by sending the gunboat *Grappler* to Alberni, where she remained for several days to impress on the Tseshaht that the power of the state was behind the venture.[129]

A month later Stamp, in response to his concern about maintaining order among immigrant and indigenous populations, was appointed a Justice of the Peace, the legal representative of the state.[130] He applied these powers in the spring of 1861, in regard to the protection of property against Aboriginal theft. Such thefts were "so common" that they were thought to present a real problem in the settlement. Stamp sent an Aboriginal man to Victoria for punishment when the latter was convicted of theft for the second time,

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127. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 6 January 1860; *ibid.*, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 13 January 1860.

128. *Ibid.*, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 13 October 1860.

129. The gunboat was at Alberni for at least six days, based on the diary of the passenger George Hills; BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 20-25 October 1860. The *Grappler* and the *Forward* were wooden gunboats 106 feet in length, with steam screw power, a complement of thirty-six to forty officers and ratings, and designed to carry a 68-pound gun forward, a 32-pound gun aft, and two 24-pound howitzers amidships. They were highly mobile and "constituted a cheap and effective show of power." Gough, *Gunboat Frontier*, 12-13. Sproat noted that this short visit convinced the Tseshaht that the British colonists and colonial state were serious about this venture. Sproat, "The West Coast Indians in Vancouver Island," 245.

130. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 14 November 1860; *ibid.*, Edward Stamp, Appointment as Justice of the Peace, 21 November 1860.

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intending by this example to deter property crimes in the future.[131] In May 1861 a report from Alberni included the information that the "Indians [were] quiet," apparently unusual enough at the time to be newsworthy.[132] As mentioned earlier, law enforcement remained problematic at Alberni Mills throughout the existence of the venture, due to the three distinct populations of mill workers, transients ships' crews, and First Nations.[133] The administration of justice was not equal for all groups, and savagery did not only flow in one direction. A jury of Anglo-North Americans called by the local JP, G.M. Sproat, initially found that an Aboriginal man shot dead by an immigrant on the farm had died from a dog attack. After reconsidering, they established instead that he died as a result of falling over a cliff.[134] The strained intercultural relations continued until the end of the venture. A dispatch from early 1865, when the operation was being wound down, described a "disturbance" with the Natives. This began with the killing of a female slave, which provoked a negative reaction from the immigrant population, in turn leading to the Tseshaht becoming "incensed" and driving off the immigrants. The settler population was said to be armed and prepared for an attack.[135]

In his description of events at Alberni, Sproat included a number of anecdotes

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131. *Ibid.*, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 4 April 1861; Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 10 April 1861, 3.

132. *Ibid.*, 16 May 1861, 3.

133. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 20 June 20, 1862. This sentiment was supported by recent incidents in which crew on two English vessels loading at the mill had sold liquor both to Natives and to workmen employed by Alberni Mills, and so affected the production of lumber. *Ibid.*, file 17, Anderson & Company to W.A.G. Young, 22 April 1863.

134. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 76.

135. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 January 1865, 3. A description of what is probably the same incident, occurring in December 1864, has a ceremonial context provided in Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 106-107.

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dealing with Aboriginal-settler violence, or the perceived threat of violence.[136] Correspondence from his firm Sproat & Company [the Victoria successor to Anderson & Co.] in 1867 described the hostile attitude of the Aboriginal population on the northwest coast of Vancouver Island, in connection with thefts from the company's fishing station on Village Island, and concern over theft or vandalism at the idle mill site.[137] Meanwhile, hostilities between Aboriginals and immigrants escalated around Clayoquot Sound, on the west coast of Vancouver Island. First, the colonial agent William Banfield, who figured in the original negotiations with the Tseshaht, died under suspicious circumstances in October 1862. In 1864 the colony dismissed the case against the suspected murderer, Klatsmick, because of conflicting evidence from Aboriginal witnesses, and he returned to Barkley Sound boasting of the murder.[138] At the same time Aboriginal piracy on the west coast increased until, following the murder of the crew of the trading sloop *Kingfisher*, an official naval expedition was mounted against the Aht nations. A number of villages were shelled, about fifteen Aht killed, and those accused of the murders of the crew of the *Kingfisher* were brought to Victoria for trial. All were acquitted because the only witnesses were Aboriginal, who could not swear the standard Christian oath required to give evidence in court. This resulted in a serious loss of face for the British colonial authorities, and greatly enhanced the reputation of the chiefs participating in the piracy and resisting British hegemony.[139] These October 1864 acquittals, combined with that of

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136. *Ibid.*, for example 27-29, 54-57, 74-78, etc.

137. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1638, Sproat & Company to Colonial Secretary, 23 May 1867.

138. Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, 31-32, "Banfield Creek" entry; Gough, *Gunboat Frontier*, 114.

139. The events surrounding the piracy and the expedition sent out to deal with it are described in *ibid.*, 114-123. Shortly after this, in February 1865, the Native Evidence Ordinance was made effective, providing for the validity of Aboriginal testimony and correcting the oversight that made the acquittal possible. *Ibid.*, 249, note 45. The events are briefly described as an example of the coercive power of the state enacted against Aboriginals in Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 168-169.

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Klatsmick the same year, demonstrated that the balance of power on the west coast of Vancouver Island had not shifted entirely to immigrant society. First Nations resisted, with a significant degree of success, both the presence of immigrants, and the coercive power of the colonial authorities.

Contemporary sources portrayed the "savage" First Nations around Barkley and Clayoquot Sounds as presenting a real threat to immigrant society. The various acts of piracy and violence against isolated Euro-North Americans in the region reinforced this impression. The events surrounding the late 1864 wreck of the San Francisco-based barque *Iwanowna* illustrate how entrenched the perception of Aht savagery became. The captain and three of the nine crew survived, to be rescued by a local Nuu chah nulth group who took the survivors to a nearby "rancherie" [village]. Later, the survivors reported that they feared, "on account of the Indians stuffing them with dried fish, that they were preparing them for slaughter."[140] This American crew clearly believed that the Nuu chah nulth were cannibals, equating them with the most extreme and repulsive form of savagery.

The Anderson & Company manager G. M. Sproat later published ethnographic works, which emphasized the passive resistance of the Aht, following a variant of the debased race model. In his book *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, Sproat devoted a full chapter to the "Effects Upon Savages of Intercourse with Civilized Men." He suggested that colonization inevitably led to the "displacing and extinction of the savage native population," even in the absence of their mistreatment by "English colonists." Sproat postulated a sort of *anomie* suffered by indigenous people in the face of the superior colonizing race, leading to the former's demise.[141] He thought that imported food had a

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140. The ship had left Newport Mills, on Puget Sound, before being blown off course. They were taken from the Nuu chah nulth village by Peter Francis and the sloop *Leonede*, arriving in Victoria 14 January 1865. Both Francis and the Nuu chah nulth rescuers were paid for their trouble. BCA, GR-2078, Diplomatic Despatches, United States Consuls in Victoria 1862-1906, film B9747, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 16 January 1865.

141. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 183-191, quote from 183. The term *anomie*, used by the pioneer sociologist Emile Durkheim to describe a condition of

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negative physical impact, and that contact with a "superior race" led to "despondency and discouragement," both contributing to a declining population.[142] This may be seen to follow the "debased" variant of the disappearing race model, although Sproat considered the loss of confidence in traditional culture more significant than specific moral threats, such as liquor. He thought the Tseshaht benefited initially from contact, as they "worked occasionally as labourers," and acquired blankets, clothes, and imported provisions like flour, rice, and potatoes, to make their first post-contact winter more comfortable than usual. Sproat observed that a general "listlessness" and higher mortality soon replaced these short-term benefits, although denying the impact of "ill-usage," liquor, or debauchery.[143] In managing Alberni Mills Sproat attempted to control access to alcohol, viewing it as central to the corruption of Aboriginal people:

> The use of intoxicating liquors was forbidden to everyone in my employment, and though it was impossible altogether to exclude ardent spirits, yet owing to the remoteness of the place and the peculiar approach to the harbour - as I was legally authorized and even bound to prevent the introduction of spirits - I was able to make the settlement as nearly a temperance settlement as any village of two hundred colonists of English descent could be made, under the best regulations and most favourable conditions for making the attempt.[144]

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dislocation from a social system, was introduced in this context by Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, ch.5, "Gold Miners and Settlers." Fisher used Sproat's description of the Aht of western Vancouver Island and their response to contact to support his contention that in the "settler" era the disruptions to Aboriginal societies had become too fast, and too severe, for indigenous culture to accommodate. Essentially this would define the point of Anglo-North American hegemony, when indigenous people did not have the power to resist or mitigate the change for their own purposes. *Ibid.*

142. Sproat, "The West Coast Indians in Vancouver Island," 254.

143. *Ibid.*, 253-254. With some variations, this article, "Read July 10th, 1866," seems to be an earlier and less-edited version of what appeared as Chapter XXVII of *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life* two years later.

144. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 185. It should be noted that the figure of 200 "colonists" is given here, presumably including wives and families, again reinforcing a work force of approximately 150 men. The clergyman was Christopher Knipe, sent in by Bishop Hills. *Ibid.*, 186, note.

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In 1863 Sproat expressed a desire to assume more control over policing the interaction of immigrant and Native populations. Although he felt he had limited access to liquor at Alberni, it remained a problem on the West Coast, where the masters of trading schooners were selling liquor, "which may account for their [Natives] having become somewhat unruly of late."[145] In this, he was linking alcohol to such inter-First Nations violence, or savagery, more explicitly than he linked it to his "anomic" variant of the debased race model.

As members of the Anglo-North American hegemonic group, it is unsurprising that Stamp, Sproat, and the other commentators on the Alberni situation held attitudes concerning First Nations consistent with those discussed in Chapter 4. Beginning with the assumption of a disappearing race, they interpreted Aboriginal resistance to the introduction of liberal capitalism within the tropes of the savage or the debased Indian. In either case, an Aboriginal group that resisted the efforts of Anglo-North American society to establish hegemony would be defined as deviant. In the case of Alberni Mills, the Aht provided both an active and a passive impediment to progress. In their resistance to immigrant use of their traditional land and resources, their crimes against property of the immigrant community, and their often violent acts of piracy, they fit the construct of savage, or "wild Indian." In their unwillingness to form a proletarian industrial workforce, and their "despondency and discouragement," they were viewed as conforming to the construct of the "ignoble savage," or a degraded people.

I suggest that the naturalization of such ideology, and the intercultural behaviour predicated on its assumptions, contributed significantly to the winding-up of the Alberni Mills venture by making it almost impossible to muster and retain an industrial workforce. As discussed in Chapter 4, a general labour shortage existed in the colonies, as immigrants were attracted by opportunities for economic and social mobility, and not by the prospect of waged work. In the case of Alberni Mills, accepting such waged work meant accepting

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145. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 17, Anderson & Co. to W.A.G. Young, 22 April 1863.

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the restrictions inherent to a company-controlled industrial enclave, with no prospect of land ownership or other opportunities beyond those provided by the employer. The presence of a large Aboriginal population perceived as savage and hostile toward the immigrants aggravated the situation. A lack of opportunities and hostile resistance did not provide an attractive situation for immigrant workers seeking social mobility, as proven by Stamp's inability to recruit workers in Victoria. The problems of labour recruitment and retention this created could not be resolved by hiring Aboriginal workers, who had little desire to form a proletariat, and were perceived by the employer as entirely unsuitable to function as an industrial labour force. The construct of savage resistance and the lack of opportunity would have kept immigrant workers away, and the construct of Native anomie and disinterest argued against employing Aboriginal workers. I suggest that this venture, which based on output and reported prices, appeared financially viable, was abandoned prematurely in part due to the resistance of the Aht people of the region, which in turn contributed to the unattractiveness of Alberni Mills for immigrant workers seeking social mobility. The forms of Aht resistance resonated with the cultural beliefs that were held by immigrant populations concerning indigenous people. Constructs of Native savagery and Aboriginal unsuitability as waged workers appeared to correspond with observed behaviour, contributing to the difficulty in mustering labour, and so, I would suggest, to the abandonment of the venture.

Economic Diversification at Alberni Mills

As well as establishing the prototype for industrial sawmill operations exporting from British Columbia, the Alberni Mills venture did attempt some of the economic diversification suggested in Stamp's original application to Douglas. Much of this was directed at supporting the sawmill operation. For instance, by August 1861 a "sort of pilot house" was built on Craftory Island, in Barkley Sound, to assist ships in entering the Alberni Canal. Peas, barley, and oats were harvested over ten days on the 250 acre company farm, and an 87 foot schooner was under construction, for the local trade to

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Victoria.[146] Stamp initiated other export trades, such as the fishing station and saltery established on Craftory Island in the summer of 1861.[147] In 1862 and 1863 the exports from Alberni included 370 and 470 barrels of salt fish, respectively.[148] In the spring of 1865, after the sawmill closed, Anderson & Company established a successful new fishery on Village Island, and applied to the colonial administration to develop it further. The selected location provided convenient access for the Aboriginal producers who would trade the fresh fish, and for the coastal schooners that would take away the finished products. The site had "exposed rocks suitable for drying fish," and the company intended to build a dwelling house, warehouse, and cooperage.[149] The presence of a cooperage suggests that salted as well as dried fish was produced, but whether it was salmon or cod that was to be processed was not revealed. Consistent with the colonial administration's ideology of progress, the application to use the land was approved, "as the opening of Fisheries is of vital importance, especially now we have so many Chinese Emigrants."[150] As Anderson & Company wound down its venture two years later, a reference was made to the company having "several" fishing stations in the region.[151] Based on the application for the site, the system of production must have resembled that employed by the Hudson's Bay Company, with fresh fish brought to the facility and traded by Aboriginal producers. The presence of a cooperage implies the presence of skilled labour to prepare barrels and cure the fish. It is unknown if Aboriginal women or immigrant workers were used to

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146. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 23 August 1861, 3.

147. *Ibid.*

148. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 103-107; Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 134-135.

149. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 17, Anderson & Co. to Henry Wakeford, acting Colonial Secretary, 27 May 1865.

150. *Ibid.*, B.W. Pearse annotation, May 31, 1865. The application was approved a week later in *ibid.*, Henry Wakeford to Anderson & Co., 7 June 1865..

151. *Ibid.*, file 1638, Sproat & Company to Colonial Secretary, 23 May 1867.

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prepare the fish for drying or salting.

Both under Stamp and Sproat, the company investigated the potential of producing and exporting mineral resources from Barkley Sound. In early 1862 Stamp applied to the Colonial government for exclusive rights to mine "Copper and other Metals" on Santa Maria Island and the adjacent portion of Vancouver Island. He wished to ensure control over the resource to forestall the efforts of a group from Victoria that he believed had come to Barkley Sound to mine copper.[152] Although Stamp sent out prospecting parties, including his sons, and a few tons of copper ore were shipped, this venture did not advance further.[153] Early in the venture Stamp brought John Muir, Sr. [see chapter 3] from Sooke to Alberni to prospect for coal deposits suitable for mining.[154] Toward the end of the venture, in the summer of 1864, Anderson & Company located coal in a convenient location for shipping on Alberni Inlet, although the intended exploration did not proceed.[155]

Although the attempts to develop export commodity trades based on marine and mineral resources are entirely consistent with the emerging liberal order of BC, perhaps more interesting were the post-1864 efforts of Anderson and Company to develop an

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152. The application came in *ibid.*, file 1643, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 12 February 1862. The reference to men from Victoria intending to mine copper, Stamp's understanding that he owned half the island in question and had control of the other half, and had posted notices to that effect, was in a letter dated the following day. *Ibid.*, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 13 February 1862. The matter of his control over the copper deposits was raised again two months later in *ibid.*, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 10 April 1862.

153. Banfield reported on this copper exploration in *ibid.*, file 107, W.E. Banfield to W.A.G. Young, 2 March 1862; *ibid.*, W.E. Banfield to W.A.G. Young, 30 April 1862. Lamb speculated that this exercise may have been initiated by Stamp "on his own account," rather than for the sawmill company, as a possible alternative venture due to "strained" relations within the company. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 104.

154. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 8 December 1860, 3.

155. The company applied for a land grant to facilitate further exploration in BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 17, Anderson & Co. to Colonial Secretary, 22 July 1864.

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immigration and settlement scheme. In January 1864 the firm sent a proposal to the Colonial Secretary, W.A.G. Young, outlining its desire to act as an emigration agent on behalf of the colony in Britain. This followed a successful model for a temporary emigration agency employed in New Zealand. Consistent with the larger project of encouraging a meritocratic society, the company considered promotion of the opportunities of the colony to be the highest priority:

> As various misrepresentations of the condition of the colony from time to time appear with injurious effect in English newspapers, and are allowed to remain there without any authoritative contradictions, we are desired of bringing under the notice of His Excellency the Governor the advantages which the colony would in all probability derive from having an authorized representative in Great Britain instructed to disseminate correct information as to the capabilities, resources and actual conditions of the colony. ...
> Their practice would be, by advertisements, by statements, and by correcting mis-statements in the public press, by the distribution of handbooks and the appointment of agents in many of the chief towns and seaports of Great Britain - to attract to this quarter the Attention of intending emigrants. [156]

The understanding was that this promotional function would be taken over by the official British Emigration Commission, but that something was required on the short term, with Anderson & Company well-placed to assume the role on an interim basis:

> The nature of Mssrs Anderson, Thomson & Co's business, and the advantages in the proposed arrangement that might accrue to the line of vessels which they have continuously maintained between London and this port for the last four years would enable them to transact this business in London free of all remuneration, except the actual expenses of printing, advertising and postages incurred in distributing information throughout the country. ...
> From this side, on being paid the wages of an additional clerk, we would undertake to compile a handbook, and from time to time to transmit reports to the agency in London of the yield of the goldfields, the state of the labour market, the price of provisions, the progress of permanent settlements, the increase of population, and of other subjects interesting to

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156. *Ibid.*, Anderson & Co. to W.A.G. Young, 22 January 1864.

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emigrants.[157]

The company anticipated that the increase in passages on Anderson, Thomson & Co. ships would cover the cost of maintaining local agents in Britain, so the cost to the British government would be negligible. With this application, Anderson and Company proposed that it shift its primary business from the production and shipping of forest products to the shipping of passengers. The company made a similar proposal to the colony of British Columbia a year later, in January 1865, but this was rejected by that colony's administration.[158]

Sproat's November 1864 letter arguing against the public sale of lands at Alberni included a "Supplementary Letter" that dealt with the possibility of establishing some kind of post-sawmill settlement at Alberni. This may have been in response to a government inquiry about the feasibility of agrarian settlement in the region. Sproat noted the potential for a small permanent agricultural settlement. He suggested that Anderson & Company was only concerned about the sawmill business, and had no interest in land speculation, "having regard to their great expenditure and the unfortunate result of their business at Alberni."[159] He suggested that it was in the power of the government to form a settlement of the "right class" of farmers, and offered some suggestions to facilitate the conversion from lumber exporting to agriculture. The sawmill operation would require ongoing access to the roads and waterways it had established, as well as timber rights. He reiterated the idea that Anderson & Company would be designated as official "Colonial Government Agents" to select suitable families and facilitate their emigration. Finally, the land was to be surveyed and laid out in farms. Sproat believed such a settlement was viable, given the conditions, and potential markets such as the Royal Navy on Vancouver

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157. *Ibid.*, Anderson & Co. to W.A.G. Young, 22 January 1864.

158. *Ibid.*, Anderson & Co. to Colonial Secretary, British Columbia, 31 January 1865. The reply four days later was: "Not required at present I fear." *Ibid.*, Colonial Secretary's Office, British Columbia to Anderson & Co., 4 February 1865.

159. *Ibid.*, file 1638, G.M. Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 1 November 1864, "Supplementary Letter."

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Island.[160] Both the applications for emigrant agent status, and the suggestions in the supplementary letter above, suggest that Anderson & Company, and Sproat, were looking for ways to shift their interests from the forest industry to the business of immigration, and the shipping that accompanied it; to some extent this would represent a move back from industrial to merchant capitalism. Sproat's unsuccessful lobbying of the colonial administration for additional timber lands and title to the 2,000 acres encompassing the sites of the sawmill, the settlement, and the farms, continued through 1865.[161]

Sproat remained actively involved in the larger project of creating and promoting opportunities for British immigrants in BC. While involved in Alberni Mills, he had been an organizer of the female emigration committee. From his return to England in later 1865 to about 1876, when he returned permanently to British Columbia, he served as a sort of de facto representative and advocate for the region in England. To this end he organized the "London Committee for watching the affairs of British Columbia," and published ethnological works dealing with the Native population of Vancouver Island, as well as an emigrant's guide for the province.[162] However, in the case of acquiring title to, and developing a settlement scheme on, the lands utilized by Alberni Mills, and achieving status as the official emigration agency of the colonial administrations, he and his company were unsuccessful.

Conclusions

The Alberni Mills venture provided the prototype for later lumber producing and exporting businesses. A key change compared to earlier enterprises, such as that of Muir & Company, was the introduction of an integrated system of production. The earlier ventures formed situationally in response to specific market demands by integrating

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160. *Ibid.*

161. *Ibid.*, G.M. Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 18 May 1865; *ibid.*, Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 16 June 1865.

162. Hamar Foster, "Sproat, Gilbert Malcolm," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Volume XIV* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 962-963.

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disparate factors of production, transportation, and marketing. A retail merchant would contract with a shipper for a cargo, who would contract with a producer like Muir & Company, which would contract with independent producers, often Aboriginal, for raw materials. Under Stamp & Company and later Anderson & Company, these factors were all organized under central management. Sawlogs and spars were not traded from Aboriginal producers, or contracted for from local merchants or shippers, but were supplied by company logging camps, employing predominantly Anglo-North American waged workers attracted from earlier centres of the forest industry. The same situation applied to the sawmill itself, which employed a British immigrant-dominated workforce of skilled and unskilled waged workers. All these workers were paid by the month, with the rate depending on how essential their skill or knowledge was to the operation. In the absence of a requirement for independent commodity producers in this system of production, there was little opportunity for Aboriginal men, considered unsuitable as industrial waged labour. Within the context of racial ideology, the employer saw them as most suited for work as sailors, or in a limited way as casual, unskilled labour in logging. Additionally, Aht men resisted proletarianization by deserting their jobs, demonstrating an unwillingness to conform to the role of a full time waged worker. Although Aboriginal women were more susceptible to proletarianization, both immigrant and indigenous societies considered them inappropriate as forest industry workers, as it did not fit within culturally-constructed notions of appropriate gender behaviour. For the first time in what later became British Columbia, a labour force exclusively made up of male waged workers produced export commodities within a complex system of production, without the participation of independent commodity producers, either immigrant or Aboriginal.

The operating company controlled transportation directly, using either chartered, or Anderson & Company-owned ships, to take cargoes of forest products to market. Unlike the companies involved in the earlier pile, spar, and lumber trade, Alberni Mills did not simply provide cargoes at the shore or the wharf, but integrated marketing, shipping and commodity production within a single venture. Such vertical integration of the company's export lumber trade would have increased its efficiency and potential scale

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compared to earlier models, but it also made for a more hierarchical administrative structure, and a more typical relationship between owners and workers, in conflict with the values of the post-gold rush society.

A locally-based agent or commission merchant, in turn Edward Stamp and G.M. Sproat, formed the top of the local hierarchy, responsible for the overall management of the operation. Richard Mayne's 1861 account suggests that Stamp managed operations at the mill, while Sproat represented the company in Victoria. Mayne described Sproat as "the Barclay Sound Mill Company's agent at Victoria."[163] This seems consistent with other evidence. In October 1860 Bishop Hills noted Sproat's concern about the moral environment at Alberni when Sproat was gone, implying the latter's imminent departure.[164] The following month Stamp referred to "Somass" as the place he would "mostly reside" in the future.[165] As mentioned above, Stamp was made a Justice of the Peace, the representative of British law, in November 1860. By the following August Alberni had become an official Port of Entry, as requested by Stamp, and he had assumed the roles both of harbour master and collector of customs.[166] Stamp not only was in charge of the economic life of the settlement, but also of both the coercive and administrative mechanisms of the state.

Apparently Sproat became involved more directly with the sawmill operation after Stamp left the partnership. In November 1864 Sproat identified himself as the "partner and representative" of James Anderson, of London, presumably referring to the firm of Anderson & Company.[167] In the summer of 1863 Sproat assumed Stamp's previous role

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163. Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia*, 411.

164. BCA, MS-1526, Diary of Bishop George Hills, 24 October 1860.

165. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 14 November 1860.

166. *Ibid.*, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 22 August 1861.

167. *Ibid.*, file 1638, G.M. Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 1 November 1864.

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as the Justice of the Peace for Alberni Mills.[168] The management organization of the venture appears to have been essentially patriarchal, with the managers both acting as partners in the operating company, directing day to day operations at the mill, and in addition acting as representatives of the state. In spite of this power, Stamp seems to have evoked some positive feelings from his workforce, based on the response to his departure, which included a testimonial, and even more telling, a subscription by the workmen to present him with a $250 inscribed gold watch and chain.[169] Key to the initiation and short-term viability of this venture was the link to export markets, to sources of capital, and to the inputs required for commodity production.

It is telling that when Stamp left the venture, and Sproat and Anderson took over its direction, there was a shift of focus away from commodity production. Although the sawmill continued to cut in 1863 and 1864, the emphasis shifted to Anderson & Thomson's core commission merchant and transportation business, culminating with the attempts to acquire title to large quantities of land and serve as agents of colonization. Sproat based his rationale for this strategic shift to agency and transportation on money lost and shortcomings in the resource. However, it would appear that the primary factor affecting production was the difficulty in mustering a labour force, due to a combination of structural and cultural factors surrounding this venture. For immigrants, the lack of opportunity for social mobility within this model made it unattractive, a situation aggravated by the responses of Aboriginal people, who resisted proletarianization in ways that supported Anglo-North American constructs of "savage" and "degraded Indians." The first would tend to repel potential immigrant workers, and the second worked against the employing of Aboriginal industrial workers. For immigrant workers, the perception of

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168. He was appointed Justice of the Peace on July 24, 1863. Foster, "Sproat, Gilbert Malcolm," 962-963. In the fall of the year he presided over an inquest in this capacity. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1638, G.M. Sproat to Colonial Secretary, 19 November 1863.

169. The motion to honour him was unanimously resolved at a meeting of the workmen. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 28 February 1863, 3.

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danger was exacerbated by their proletarian status in this venture. Because of the uncertain terms of land tenure, they could not acquire land in the region, depended entirely on the company for wages and housing, and did not control their work process, with the partial exception of the men in the logging camps, beyond the range of continuous supervision. Although wages, and presumably the quality of life, was high compared to British standards of the day, to remain a member of a proletariat, even of a well-paid proletariat, did not justify the disruption of emigration. It was precisely this issue that Alfred Waddington referred to in the colonial Assembly as he objected to the "Stamp Land Scheme." He suggested that these people "would be nothing less than serfs," entirely under the control of the company.[170] The assisted immigration of a labour force brought in specifically to work for such a company was seen as an affront to the ideology of the "independent" immigrant so central to gold rush immigrants. The commitment of the colonial state to the producer ethic is demonstrated by the resolution of the Assembly to "make the most liberal terms of purchase [of land] to the Colonists introduced by Captain Stamp after the completion of their contract with Captain Stamp."[171] In other words, the government would afford them the same opportunity presented to "independent" immigrants to become land-owning, autonomous producers, as opposed to their landless, wage-earning proletarian status in the employ of Alberni Mills.

This relatively short-lived venture established conventions followed in commodity-exporting industries for the rest of the nineteenth century. It was vertically integrated, with all aspects of production, transportation, and marketing controlled by the firm of "shipping and commission merchants" that established it. The venture owed its existence to access to non-American Pacific export markets provided by this firm, mediated through the commercial metropolis of San Francisco. To produce the desired commodities, the company created an enclave situation in which all the factors of production other than the resources were imported. This imported "factory" system, combined with the constructs

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170. *Ibid.*, 5 April 1860, 2.

171. Hendrickson, *Journals of the Colonial Legislatures*, Vol.II, 176-177, April 3, 1860.

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of Aboriginal people adopted by the managers and workers of the company, and Aboriginal resistance to proletarianization, largely excluded Aboriginal people from the industrial economy. For the first time since the introduction of capitalism to British Columbia, Aboriginal participation was not integral to the system of production. Although Alberni Mills demonstrated the commercial viability of such an industrial export trade from the British colonies, it was abandoned due to problems with factors of production, specifically labour. Later ventures, such as those on Burrard Inlet [see chapter 7] achieved long-term viability by following the commercial strategy of Alberni Mills within structural conditions that better supported the mustering and retention of a labour force. The social system of production of Alberni Mills did not correspond with the expectations of immigrants seeking social mobility, or those of Aboriginal people willing to participate in the capitalist economy. The failure of the venture demonstrated the successful resistance of these groups to accepting proletarian status.

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Chapter 6: The Evolution of the Coal Mining System of Production

In some respects the Vancouver Island coal mining industry was anomalous among the commodity exporting industries. Unlike the others, it evolved directly from a pre-gold rush venture, as an English joint stock company, the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company [VCMLC], purchased the coal mining assets of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1862. In the other industries, locally-based entrepreneurs attracted to the region by the gold rush mustered new inputs and established new systems of production in response to export market opportunities, but in this case, the foreign investors in the new firm acquired an existing system of production. The directors of the VCMLC, a comparatively elite group, already were involved in coal mining in Britain, as well as in ventures in British North America. The timing of their acquisition of the HBC coal mines suggests that their interest was attracted by the intense promotion of the opportunities of British Columbia surrounding the gold rush.

In the 1870s, conforming more to the standard form of industrial development in BC, the ex-HBC and ex-VCMLC coal miner/manager Robert Dunsmuir converted his human and cultural capital into the inputs required to create a major competitor for the older company. With his success in this venture, he became a powerful symbol of the self-made man, who achieved his status within the opportunities for economic and social mobility presented in BC, so affirming the validity of the immigrant dream.[1] Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, these two companies dominated the coal mining industry. Both at the time, and in the historiography, distinctions were drawn between the two firms concerning their approaches to business, and overall effectiveness. Within common structural conditions of market, resource, and labour, there were strong similarities in the operations of the two firms, but the naturalized ideology of the region meant that they have been interpreted within a set of dichotomies. These begin with the division between "producers," such as Dunsmuir, and "speculators," such as the owners of

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1. Dunsmuir's symbolic power as a successful self-made man continues to form his primary identity, as when John Belshaw described him recently as the "most breathtaking case of vertical mobility" in the region. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 164.

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the VCMLC, and continue through others, such as capital and labour, the owners' attitudes toward labour, and racial divisions. In the course of this chapter I will attempt to introduce some nuances to such interpretations, as a corrective to these black and white models.

Central to the development of this industry in the 1860s and 1870s was the increased market for coal in San Francisco, to meet the demands of the growing metropolis. In the absence of a large settler population, and with the ready availability of firewood as a heating or cooking fuel, the domestic market for Vancouver Island coal remained small until after the 1886 arrival of the CPR on Burrard Inlet. The Royal Navy remained a consistent market, particularly after the establishment of the North Pacific Squadron at Esquimalt in 1865, but from 1874 to 1886 more than three quarters of Vancouver Island coal was exported, with almost all of that going to San Francisco.[2] Over the same period, the quantity of coal exported rose from 56,038 tons [69.2% of total production] in 1874 to 249,205 tons [76.3% of total production] in 1886. The value of these exports rose from $244,641 in 1874 to $979,908 in 1886, after exceeding $1,000,000 in both 1884 and 1885.[3] The growth in the scale and value of coal exports was tied directly to the growth of the city of San Francisco. In 1861, under Hudson's Bay Company operation, about 38 percent of the production of the Nanaimo mines was shipped to San Francisco, comprising about 5% of the state's total consumption, the rest contributed by coal imported from Britain, Australia, Chile, Japan, the USA, and Russia. By 1884 the two dominant coal mining companies on Vancouver Island, the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company and Dunsmuir & Sons, supplied about 28% of the total

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2. The proportion of coal exported in this period, starting with the formation of the Ministry of Mines in 1874, ranged from a low of 60.4% in 1875 to a high of 96.0% in 1878. The mean for the period was 76.6%. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Reports of the Minister of Mines,* 1874-1886 (Victoria: Queen's Printer, 1875-1887); Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 31-32.

3. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Reports of the Minister of Mines,* 1874-1886.

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coal sold on the California market.[4] Much of this supplied fuel for heating and steam generation, but an important aspect was the production of coal gas for urban lighting. Excepting some English coal, Vancouver Island coal was "reputed to be the best in San Francisco for gas-making. It yields over 10,000 cubic feet of gas per ton of 2,240 lbs.; has an illuminating power of 16 candles; and produces a good coke."[5] In 1887 it was reported that the San Francisco Gas Company used Vancouver Island coal for the past thirty years.[6]

The prices realized for coal produced around the Pacific Rim were less than those charged for British coal, universally recognized as being of higher quality. In 1865 a ton of Nanaimo coal sold at the pithead for $6-7, and in Victoria for $11. On the San Francisco market Nanaimo and Chilean coal sold for $12-15 per ton, slightly higher than Australian coal, but significantly less than the $15-20 price of a ton of British coal.[7] The duty charged on foreign coal at San Francisco rose from 20 percent in 1859 to 24 percent in 1860, and remained at that level through 1865. Comparing the prices at the mines and in Victoria to that offered in San Francisco, and subtracting the duty would leave a thin

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4. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 32-33; Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 143, 146. Macfie listed a total of 99,818 tons of coal imported into San Francisco from January 1-December 16, 1861, with Vancouver Island coal making up 5,204 tons of that [of a total Vancouver Island production of 13,774 tons]. The largest imports by far, at just under 25,000 tons, and just over 26,000 tons, respectively, were from England and New York, with just over 16,000 tons imported free of duty from the American Northwest, Coos Bay in Oregon and Bellingham Bay in Washington. Additionally, both Australia and Chile provided over 12,000 tons of coal. *Ibid.*

5. *Guide to the Province of British Columbia for 1877-8* (Victoria: T.N. Hibben & Co., 1877), 107.

6. "Our Collieries," *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 24 June 1887, 2, quoting from the San Francisco *Journal of Commerce*.

7. Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 144, "Comparative List of Prices of Coal at Vancouver Island and San Francisco."

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margin of profit on the portion of Vancouver Island coal shipped to San Francisco.[8] This was confirmed at the beginning of the decade, when coal was selling in San Francisco at $16.25 per ton, which after a duty of $4, and freight of $5.25 per ton was paid, meant that the Nanaimo Coal Company netted about $7 per ton, some of which went to its American agent.[9] Although this represented no gain over the selling price at the pithead, the lack of a local market meant that the San Francisco market remained essential, in spite of the challenges of transportation, duties, and marketing agents. The level of complication inherent in this export trade may have contributed to the decision of the Hudson's Bay Company's managers to sell its Nanaimo Coal Company operation. As mentioned in chapter 3, A.G. Dallas, who succeeded James Douglas as regional superintendent of the HBC, viewed the coal industry as too far removed from the company's primary business. By 1860 Dallas recommended the sale of the Nanaimo coal mining operation, and in the following year an opportunity for such a sale arose.[10] The inability of the HBC to directly control the various factors of production, transportation, and marketing probably contributed to his decision to sell this asset.

Company Organization: Owners, Managers and Agents

In 1862, the HBC agreed to sell its coal mining assets, including all land, improvements, and machinery, to the English resident James Nicol, the brother of Charles S. Nicol, the HBC's Nanaimo mine manager, for £40,000 [$200,000]. In turn, Nicol agreed to transfer his contract with the HBC to a newly-formed English joint-stock company, the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company for the consideration of £1,000

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8. The 1865 figure of 24% was reported in Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 144. The rise in tariffs between 1859 and 1860 is from Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 275.

9. *Ibid.*, 275-276.

10. Ralston, "Miners and Managers," 55. Ralston noted that the terms of the sale and the exchanges between the HBC and the purchasing company are contained in HBCA, F.33/1.

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and 400 shares in the new company.[11] The VCMLC was capitalized at £100,000 [$500,000], divided into 10,000 shares of £10 each, so Nicol's consideration for brokering the deal amounted to about £5,000 or $20,000]. Roberts, Lubbock and Company of London and the Victoria-based Bank of British Columbia and Vancouver Island would act as the new company's bankers. The six directors elected included George Campbell [a Victoria commission merchant], the Hon. C.W. Wentworth Fitzwilliam [a British MP], Joseph Fry and Prideau Selby of the Canada Agency Association, and James V. Irwin of London. The Hon. Justice Richard Haliburton, a former British MP, already the chairman of the Canadian Land and Emigration Company, and the author of the *Sam Slick* books, acted as chair.[12] George Campbell's Victoria commission firm, Dickson, Campbell & Company, was appointed the local sales agent of the VCMLC. Charles S. Nicol continued in his role as the manager of the Nanaimo mining operations of the new company.[13] To place the coal produced on the all-important San Francisco market, on its formation in 1863 the VCMLC engaged John Rosenfeld, "the popular shipping and commission merchant," and a "large dealer in coal," as its San Francisco agent.[14] With the exception of the changes in ownership and the marketing strategies, there seemed to be a high degree of continuity from the HBC operation, with no real change from the system of

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11. BCA, MS-0436, A.F. Buckham Collection, Vol.52, file 1, "Western Fuel Co., 1863-1917," notarized copy of indenture, 30 September 1862. The HBC, Nicol, and the VCMLC were the parties of the first, second, and third parts, respectively, named in this indenture.

12. The information on the company is from Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 April 1863, 2, "Notice of Incorporation." Additional information on the board of directors is from Belshaw, who described the company as effectively managed from London by its well-connected board of directors. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 25. The aristocratic Fitzwilliam family held significant coal mining interests in Yorkshire at this time. Church, *The History of the British Coal Industry*, Vol.3, 124, 241, 413.

13. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 April 1863, 2, "Notice of Incorporation."

14. "Our Collieries," *ibid.*, 24 June 1887, 2. Gallacher misinterpreted this reference, which quoted from the San Francisco *Journal of Commerce*, to mean that Rosenfeld was Victoria-, rather than San Francisco-based. Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines, 120.

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production developed in the 1850s.

The formation of the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company as a coal mining-specific industrial operation, with a socially-prominent group of directors and shareholders, set a precedent that encouraged entrepreneurs to engage in similar ventures. A relatively high rate of coal land alienation and development followed in the 1860s, supported by an 1864 Order in Council that liberalized access to coal lands. By 1866 new firms initiated a number of speculative ventures, concentrated in the Nanaimo and Comox Valley areas of Vancouver Island, around Burrard Inlet, and in the Queen Charlotte Islands.[15] The venture of the British Columbia Coal Mining Company in 1864-1865 on Burrard Inlet provides an example of the terms of coal land acquisition in the colonies in this phase of development. The proposal submitted to Governor Seymour in New Westminster requested 640 acres of land at $1 per acre. Seymour agreed, with the proviso that a 6.25 percent royalty would be paid on all coal raised from the operation.[16]

This unspecialized colonial land legislation of the 1860s was replaced in 1869 by the industry-specific Mineral Ordinance. This introduced a prospector's license for coal and base metals, permitting the exploration and mining of coal on vacant crown lands only. Additionally, for the first time a provision was included for the purchase, rather than lease, of coal lands. A company comprising at least ten persons could purchase up to 1,000 acres at $5 per acre. If at least $10,000 was expended on the development of the property before the company's license expired, and it was proven that the mine had been worked continuously for the preceding two years, the purchase price would be waived by the government.[17] Two key issues in the intent of the state are demonstrated in this

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15. These 1860s "minor" ventures, which did not evolve into significant producers, as opposed to the two dominant firms, the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company and the Dunsmuir-owned companies, are listed and discussed in Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 146-157.

16. F.W. Howay, "Coal Mining on Burrard Inlet, 1865-66," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 4 (1940), 1-20.

17. Cail, *Land, Man, and the Law*, 75-76.

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legislation, and relate strongly to the debate surrounding the granting of land to the Alberni Mills venture. First, the stipulation concerning the minimum number of participants in a company was a way to forestall individual or monopoly control of the coal resource. Theoretically, this would create economic opportunity for the maximum number of entrepreneurs or producers. Second, the waiving of the purchase price in exchange for proof of development and expenditure is consistent with the desire of the state to encourage development or "progress," reflecting the principle of "beneficial use" that was embedded in nineteenth century land alienation policies. The ideological basis of the Act, supporting equality of access and the doctrine of progress, seems directly linked to that which informed the pre-emption legislation a decade earlier. In 1873 the 1,000 acre allocation was reduced to 640 acres, and the purchase price reduced to $1 per acre. In 1883 an Act to Encourage Coal Mining provided access to up to 480 acres of Crown land to prospect for a year. If the prospector wished, coal lands east of the Cascades could be purchased at $10 per acre, and west of the Cascades at $5 per acre. If the land had already been granted, the coal rights could be acquired for $9 per acre, although the grantee had first refusal in this case, and the land would revert to them after the coal seams were exhausted.[18]

After the flurry of coal lands speculation following the formation of the VCMLC, the rate of exploration and development slowed down in the 1870s, with just eight coal licenses issued under the 1869 Mineral Ordinance, four of them in 1872. In 1883 the Act to Encourage Coal Mining resulted in the formation of ten new companies within a year, followed by less activity until 1885-1887, when eighteen new claims were made. This was probably in response to the completion of the CPR and the expectation, or hope, of new domestic markets for coal. Working from available documents, Gallacher arrived at a total figure of 71,857 1/4 acres of land alienated under coal mining legislation, with a total of 218 investors involved in the period until 1891. He felt both these numbers were low, so adjusted them to suggest that a maximum of 100,000 acres of land, and 300 direct

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18. Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 143; Cail, *Land, Man, and the Law*, 80.

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investors, were involved in the industry in this period.[19] Gallacher argued that the ultimate result of legislation regarding access to coal lands was not to increase the number of ventures, but rather to create a situation for the consolidation of the industry under two dominant companies, VCMLC and Dunsmuir.[20]

Whether or not Gallacher's inference is correct, it is indisputable that these two firms, evolving out of the HBC coal mining venture and employing its system of production, dominated the coal mining industry on Vancouver Island. Robert Dunsmuir, one of the skilled Ayrshire coal miners brought to Vancouver Island by the HBC, initiated the primary competitor of the VCMLC in the early 1870s, and by the end of the decade surpassed the production of the older company. Dunsmuir emigrated with his family as a young man in 1851, at the urging of his uncle, Boyd Gilmour, the overman of the party of miners brought in to replace the Muir party at Fort Rupert.[21] As discussed in Chapter 3, Dunsmuir obtained a free-miner's license in 1855, and seems to have behaved essentially as an independent contractor supplying the HBC coal operation until its sale and the formation of the VCMLC in 1862. For two years he worked for the successor company as a supervisor, until Horace Douglas Lascelles persuaded Dunsmuir to become the resident manager of the newly-established Harewood Coal Mining Company in 1864. This venture, one of several speculative attempts to emulate the VCMLC, soon failed. Its assets were acquired by the VCMLC, and Dunsmuir re-engaged as the mines' supervisor. He continued to carry out what were described as "secret" surveys, until he identified and established a claim on the Wellington seam in 1869.[22]

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19. Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 144.

20. *Ibid.*, 144-146.

21. Dunsmuir was twenty-six years old when he emigrated with his wife and three children in 1851. The son and grandson of Ayrshire coalmasters, he entered the trade a decade earlier under Gilmour, his uncle and guardian. Unlike Dunsmuir, Gilmour returned to Scotland after his contract with the Company expired. Gallacher, "Dunsmuir, Robert," 290-291.

22. *Ibid.*, 291.

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The establishment and development of Dunsmuir's company illustrates the central role played by coal merchants and commercial agents in the Vancouver Island industry. Because of the industry's dependence on the San Francisco market, the merchants that provided access to it had considerable influence in determining the form of systems of production. Apparently Dunsmuir received short term financing to develop his Wellington claim from the San Francisco-based coal merchants John Rosenfeld and J. Birmingham.[23] As noted above, the VCMLC had appointed Rosenfeld its San Francisco agent in 1863, and he continued to act in that capacity until at least 1887, making his support for a competing venture surprising.[24] In the early 1870s he purchased large quantities of coal produced by both the VCMLC and Dunsmuir, supplied to him through the Victoria commission merchant firm of R. Broderick & Company.[25] Even Rosenfeld's long-term relationship with the VCMLC is somewhat surprising, given the link between the Victoria agents of the VCMLC, Dickson, Campbell & Company, and the San Francisco commission merchant firm of Dickson, De Wolf & Company, which provided access to the San Francisco business community.[26] Presumably the producing company deferred to

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23. The merchants who financed Dunsmuir were identified as "Bermingham and Rosenfeldt of San Francisco" in Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 176. The 1880 United States census identified John Rosenfeld of San Francisco as a forty-three year old coal merchant, born in Bavaria. United States, Census Office, 10th census, 1880, San Francisco California, NA film T9-0079, p.405C.

24. "Our Collieries," *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 24 June 1887, 2.

25. For example, in September 1871, R. Broderick & Co. was sending 200 1/4 tons of coal to Rosenfeld, and arranging to resupply with 300-400 tons of unscreened & Newcastle coal [the latter from the VCMLC mines]. BCA, MS-1918, R. Broderick & Co., Letterbook, 1869-1873, 463-464, Engelhardt to John Rosenfeld ["Agent," San Francisco], 22 September 1871. Shortly after, references were made to Mr. Broderick himself arranging coal prices with Rosenfeld in San Francisco, and to coal shipped to J. Birmingham in the same city. *Ibid.*, 473-474, Engelhardt to John Rosenfeld, 9 October 1871; *ibid.*, 475-476, Engelhardt to J. Birmingham "Esqr," [San Francisco], 9 October 1871.

26. George Campbell, partner in the Victoria merchant firm, was also a director of the VCMLC, making the use of other agents even more curious. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2

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the specialized knowledge and contacts of the coal merchants. Certainly by the early 1870s Broderick & Company and John Rosenfeld provided the primary link to the San Francisco market for the two major coal producers on Vancouver Island.

Rosenfeld demonstrated his power when in 1880, acting on the authority of the board of directors of the VCMLC, he ordered mine superintendent John Bryden to settle a five week-long miners' strike immediately, on the best possible terms.[27] This indicates direct involvement in directing the operations of the producing company, well above what would be expected of a marketing agent. As well as having the power to make high-level operational decisions for the older company, Rosenfeld [and Birmingham] supported Dunsmuir's initial development of his claim, making the venture attractive to domestic investors. The coal merchants may have intended to create another supplier on Vancouver Island, which by competing with the VCMLC would act to lower wholesale costs. The interaction between the agents and the producing companies appears more complex than generally portrayed in the historiography. Correspondence from the Victoria commission firm of R. Broderick & Company reveals that wholesale prices were fixed between the Victoria agents and the San Francisco coal merchants.[28] The producers did not have a say in this price-setting, but were expected to keep their cost of production low enough to make the trade viable.

Through such direct intervention, apparently the agents played a central role in the growth of Dunsmuir's operation and the concurrent decline in the competitive position of the VCMLC. Throughout late 1871 and early 1872, Rosenfeld and other major

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April 1863, 2, "Notice of Incorporation." The affiliation between Dickson, Campbell & Co., Dickson, De Wolf & Co., H.N. Dickson's of London, and other agents in Liverpool, Boston, and Halifax, is noted in Careless, "The Business Community of Victoria," 478.

27. BCA, E/C/B84, John Bryden Diary and Letter Book, John Bryden to Samuel M. Robins, 9 April 1880. Bryden referred to his instructions coming in a telegram from "Mr. Rosenfield," but there is little doubt he meant the company's agent Rosenfeld.

28. For example, in the fall of 1871, references were made to Mr. Broderick himself arranging coal prices with Rosenfeld in San Francisco. BCA, MS-1918, R. Broderick & Co., Letterbook, 1869-1873, 473-474, Engelhardt to John Rosenfeld, 9 October 1871.

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purchasers complained about the quality of the coal supplied by the VCMLC. The response from the company did not satisfy R. Broderick & Company, which turned to Dunsmuir as well as to the VCMLC for its coal export orders in 1872.[29] Orders continued to go to both companies, but the correspondence from Broderick & Co. suggests ongoing dissatisfaction with the VCMLC.[30] The San Francisco coal merchants and their Victoria associates, with their interim financing and preferential purchasing, appear largely responsible for the formation and success of Dunsmuir's venture in the early 1870s. The "producer" Dunsmuir clearly relied on the involvement of these "agents" to make his initiative viable. Although his understanding of coal mining, and his business acumen, may have been considerable, it is unlikely that producer values alone, without the inputs of the commission merchants, would have produced these results. Ironically, the commission merchants decided to support Dunsmuir due to their dissatisfaction with Mark Bate, the manager of the VCMLC, with his "clerical and financial" background.[31] It would be expected that this common background would facilitate arrangements between the VCMLC and the commission merchants, but perhaps even the latter had naturalized the

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29. Much of the dissatisfaction was due to the response of the VCMLC's manager Mark Bate. BCA, MS-1918, R. Broderick & Co., Letterbook, 1869-1873, 465 *et. seq.* An order to Dunsmuir for a "Cargo of your best Coal" followed in March 1872. The notation clarifying payment options, that could be either in the form of a "draw upon us, or else we can pay the Invoice amount to Mr. Diggle here..." suggests that Broderick & Co. had not been purchasing previously from Dunsmuir. *Ibid.*, pp.589-590, Engelhardt to R. Dunsmuir, 12 March 1872.

30. For example, an order went to the VCMLC in March 1872, and orders went to both companies on 8 June 1872. BCA, MS-1918, R. Broderick & Co., Letterbook, 1869-1873, 591, Engelhardt to Vancouver Coal Company, 18 March 1872; *ibid.*, 634, M. Robinson [?] to Dunsmuir, Diggle Co, 8 June 1872; *ibid.*, 635, M. Robinson to Vancouver Coal Company, 8 June 1872. In the summer of 1872, Broderick & Co. was complaining both about the loading time on Newcastle Island, and the price charged for coal by the VCMLC. The merchant firm argued that because "All the Coal for the California Steamers is taken through us" the VCMLC should either should reduce the price due to the quantity of the orders, or give Broderick & Co. a commission on the coal purchased. *Ibid.*, 659-660, R. Broderick & Co. to Mark Bates [*sic*], 25 July 1872.

31. Bate is summarized this way in Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 120.

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producer ethos, and so preferred a self-made man like Dunsmuir.

In 1871 Dunsmuir formed a new company, Dunsmuir, Diggle & Company, using the £32,000 [$160,000] invested by several Royal Navy officers at Esquimalt, with Lieutenant Wadham Nestor Diggle earning his place in the firm's name by contributing £10,000 of this. In 1873 ten partners, including Dunsmuir, Diggle, Dunsmuir's two sons, and six other naval officers, incorporated Dunsmuir, Diggle Limited, with the same paid up capital of £32,000. In exchange for his claim to the resource and his coal mining expertise, Dunsmuir assumed half the shares in the company and full control over its operations.[32] The ten partners fulfilled the conditions for the purchase of coal lands stipulated in the 1869 Mineral Ordinance. With the capital provided by the naval officers, and the ongoing development of the mine, there was little doubt that the purchase price would be waived by the government under the same legislation.[33] By following the terms of the Mineral Ordinance, Dunsmuir obtained his material input, access to the resource, at no cost, while achieving control over the venture. Gallacher speculated that the growth of the firm in the 1870s was capitalized with the operating profits, in the absence of any evidence of additional share offers or other forms of financing. Over the next decade Dunsmuir secured personal ownership of the company by purchasing his partners' shares, a process culminating in 1883 when he acquired Diggle's shares for $600,000 [£120,000] and established the new company, R. Dunsmuir & Sons.[34]

John Belshaw described the economic and social trajectory of Robert Dunsmuir the "most breathtaking case of vertical mobility" found in the coal fields of Vancouver

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32. The ten partners in the firm were Robert Dunsmuir, Wadham Nestor Diggle, Radm Arthur Farquhar, James Harvey, S.H. Rickman, F.A. Herne [?], R. Williams, John Tweedie, James Dunsmuir, and Alexander Dunsmuir. *Ibid.*, 176-177; Gallacher, "Dunsmuir, Robert," 291. Diggle's middle name was given as "Weston" in his appointment as a Justice of the Peace in 1876 in *British Columbia Gazette 1876* (Victoria: Queen's Printer, 6 May 1876), 121.

33. Cail, *Land, Man, and the Law*, 75-76.

34. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 12 December 1883, 3; Gallacher, "Dunsmuir, Robert," 291-292.

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Island. Belshaw suggested that the crucial element in this atypical level of achievement was the discovery of the Wellington seam in 1869.[35] This interpretation privileges traditional economic factors, rather than any particular agency on the part of the entrepreneurs involved in coal production. Daniel Gallacher argued from the "great man" perspective, that Dunsmuir's remarkable achievements were due to his strong personal control, and later the control of his sons and son-in-law, over the company. Gallacher also saw the reliance on "local," rather than imported, capital as a key feature in the development of the company.[36] Both scholars stressed the importance of Dunsmuir's policy of vertical expansion around the coal mining industry, and diversification of investments, in achieving his lofty economic position. In particular, Dunsmuir realized success with the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway venture of 1884, that gave him control of about one fifth of the land of Vancouver Island, including resources.[37] In 1875, long before he became the richest man in British Columbia, the provincial government recognized Dunsmuir's achievement of respectable status by appointing him a Justice of the Peace.[38] His position in society was recognized again when he entered politics in 1882 and won a seat in the provincial legislature, successfully defended in the 1886 provincial election.[39]

Both Gallacher and Belshaw offered explanations of Dunsmuir's economic and social success based on factors of production. Belshaw privileged the happy accident of discovering the richest coal seam on Vancouver Island, while Gallacher emphasized Dunsmuir's ability to muster a cheap labour force, as well as maintaining a hands-on management style. However, the impact of the agents and coal merchants in Victoria and San Francisco should not be overlooked. Without their ability to place Vancouver Island

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35. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 164-167.

36. Gallacher, "Dunsmuir, Robert," 292.

37. *Ibid.*, 292; Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 26-27.

38. *British Columbia Gazette 1875*, (Victoria: Queen's Printer, September 4, 1875), 195.

39. Gallacher, "Dunsmuir, Robert," 293.

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coal on the San Francisco market, the regional coal mining industry would not have existed. They set the wholesale prices for the coal, provided capital and purchased coal to support the development of a competing company, and in 1880 ordered the end of a strike that was impeding the supply of coal. The task of making the cost of production low enough, and the quality of the coal high enough, to meet the terms established by the merchants, was left up to the mine operators and managers.[40] In this industry, factors of production were subordinated to market factors. The issues of "class" and group conflict that are emphasized in the historiography were precipitated by the pressure concerning the cost of production determined by agents such as Rosenfeld.

The Organization of Work and Labour

Although both economic and cultural factors determined the way in which the British coal mining system of production was adapted to Vancouver Island, it seems that the latter played a larger role in the departures from the earlier system. Although Vancouver Island offered a coal resource less predictable than that found in the British coal fields, changes in production seem to owe more to demographic and ideological differences than to traditional economic factors. The organization of the labour force formed the principal departure from British practice, due to the difficulty in mustering what was considered an appropriate industrial workforce on Vancouver Island. Demographic conditions, mediated through the ideology of race and culture that the immigrant miners and managers brought with them, created a coal mining labour market on Vancouver Island split not only by skill, as in Britain, but more prominently by race. Until the gold rush brought a larger Euro-North American population, skilled labour was performed by British workers, and unskilled labour by Aboriginal workers, engaged following the labour protocols developed by the Hudson's Bay Company.

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40. For instance, in early 1878 the VCMLC hewers were working in "thin coal," and were lobbying for a higher tonnage rate, but manager John Bryden noted in his diary that $1.00 per ton was as much as the company could pay. This restriction was presumably imposed by the wholesale price paid to the VCMLC. BCA, E/C/B84, John Bryden Diary and Letter Book, 14 February 1878.

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From the start of industrial coal mining in 1849-1854 the HBC focussed on recruiting skilled labour, such as hewers and oversmen, from the coalfields of Lanarkshire and Staffordshire. This core group appears to have been augmented in the following years primarily through chain migration, based on existing family, residential, and occupational associations.[41] This self-supporting system of independent chain immigration around the core mining population recruited by the HBC meant that British workers dominated the upper echelon of the split labour market on the Vancouver Island coalfield through the remainder of the nineteenth century. British immigrant miners comprised 79 percent of the "miners," or hewers, enumerated in 1881, with most of the rest of the hewers of Anglo-North American origin, along with a small continental European group.[42]

The composition of the unskilled or common labour component was more heterogenous, and less clearly identified with one group. Under the management of the HBC, Aboriginal workers, engaged following the practices developed in the fur trade,

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41. Family histories of Staffordshire immigrants to Nanaimo illustrate this pattern of chain migration, which was sometimes more systematic, as the Gough family. Mary Ann, the sister of immigrant miner Edwin Gough, was married to Richard Banks, a Black Country coal mine owner. She and her husband provided miners with information on Vancouver Island and financial assistance to assist in their emigration. Nanaimo Historical Society and Peggy Nichols, *From the Black Country to Nanaimo 1854*, Vol.2 (Nanaimo: Nanaimo Historical Society, 1992), n.p., "Edwin and Elizabeth Gough." Belshaw noted the patterns of proximity in the recorded birthplaces of miners killed in accidents later in the nineteenth century. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 52.

42. The online searchable data base for the Vancouver Island portion of the 1881 Canadian census lists 308 men in the Nanaimo & Nanoose Bay subdistrict under the occupation of "Miner." Of these, 244 (79.2%) were born in England, Scotland, Wales or Ireland, 44 were North American-born of British heritage, so 288 (93.5%) of the hewers may be classified as Anglo-North American. The 20 other hewers (6.5%) included 12 Italians, 3 Germans, and 5 other continental Europeans; Malaspina University-College, viHistory.ca, http://history.mala.bc.ca/content/census/1881/search/advanced.aspx. In 1881 these skilled British miners represented about 30% of the total workforce of 819 (skilled and unskilled) workers in the coal mines. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines, 1881*, 407-408.

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provided most of the unskilled labour.[43] With the 1862 takeover of the HBC coal mining operation by the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company, the reliance on Aboriginal labour seems to have declined. Reasons for this change were not offered, but probably relate to the ideologically-based perception that Aboriginal workers were unsuitable for "factory" work, as opposed to casual or "outdoor" work [see Chapter 5]. This racialized view of appropriate types of work may have been stronger under the English managers of the VCMLC, who lacked direct experience with First Nations, so may have held stronger racial stereotypes than HBC managers, who spent their careers dealing with Aboriginal people.[44] In 1878 John Bryden, the manager of the VCMLC noted the continuing problem of maintaining an unskilled labour force, particularly the "runners" that moved coal underground:

> We are still paying our Indian runners $1.25 but they are better worth that than a Chinaman is worth $1.00, they do not however care about working much as that it is hard to get them at any price. We have always to employ a few White men as runners, as we can never rely upon getting a full supply of Indians and Chinamen, and there is always some portions of our Mines where it would not be safe to trust the latter class in running, as that the former has of necessity to be employed, and to them we have as yet been paying $2.00 per day.[45]

Bryden demonstrated a preference for Aboriginal runners, but consistent with the attitudes and racial stereotypes discussed in the preceding chapters, saw them as an unreliable source of labour. In his evidence to the 1885 Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration Robert Dunsmuir echoed this view, expressing his belief that Aboriginal

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43. Mark Bate, "Reminiscences of Early Nanaimo Days," *Nanaimo Free Press*, 16 February 1907, 1.

44. This follows the model introduced and discussed by Lewis O. Saum, *The Fur Trader and the Indian* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965), and developed in more detail by Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, particularly ch.4, "The Image of the Indian," in which he presents the ideological perspective behind his thesis relating to the initial agency and later subordination of Aboriginal populations in British Columbia.

45. BCA, E/C/B84, John Bryden Diary and Letter Book, John Bryden to Samuel M. Robins, 17 October 1878.

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labour "could not be depended on for more than a month at a time."[46] Bryden noted that given the problem mustering Aboriginal workers, the unskilled labour force in the late 1870s relied on Chinese and Euro-North American labour. Dependence on the former group grew in the 1870s, but in the 1860s the VCMLC and other coal mining ventures seem to have relied on "capturing" workers from Aboriginal or Euro-North American immigrant populations. In the environment of chronic labour shortage that existed in BC until after the arrival of the CPR, this informal recruiting often proved inadequate. Euro-North American immigrants attracted by the gold rush [see Chapter 4] expected to achieve economic and social success within the opportunities presented by gold mining, but were often willing to accept waged work on a temporary basis to support the pursuit of their ultimate goal. Their need for paid work, but their desire to seek opportunities for social mobility, made them a useful but uncertain source of unskilled labour. Because of their congruence with the ethnicity and aspirations of the hegemonic group, this group, along with the local Anglo-North American youths sometimes hired, were not limited to the lower echelon of the split labour market. Unlike Aboriginal workers, if they acquired the human capital to fill a skilled mining [hewer] or skilled "oncost" position, they could take a place in the upper echelon.[47] In the case of this split labour market, the racial and cultural division superceded the division based on levels of knowledge, experience, and skill; cultural capital trumped human capital.

Although historians have portrayed an essential difference between the VCMLC and Dunsmuir operations, with the former a paternalistic, labour-friendly system, and the latter a hard-nosed, penny-pinching and anti-labour one, real differences in the systems of production appear insignificant. Some, including Gallacher, suggested that Dunsmuir achieved his competitive advantage by hiring a higher proportion of lower-paid Chinese

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46. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration 1885*, No.54a (Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1885), 129.

47. As noted in Chapter 3, note 74, Roy Church's definition of oncost workers as those skilled and unskilled workers who were not directly involved in hewing coal will be adopted. Church, *The History of the British Coal Industry*, Vol.3, 209.

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workers.[48] Ministry of Mines records from the 1876-1886 period confirm that the Dunsmuir mines had a higher proportion of Chinese workers, ranging from one-third to one-half the workforce, compared to the VCMLC mines, where Chinese workers comprised one-fifth to two-fifths of the workforce. However, the "boys" and "Indians" working in the VCMLC operation were generally absent from the Dunsmuir mines [see Table 6.1 below].[49] These workers would have filled the same unskilled labouring jobs that were held by Chinese workers. It may be speculated that the longer-established company, evolving out of the HBC operation, had access to pools of unskilled labour not available to Dunsmuir's newer company. The latter's higher proportion of Chinese workers may have been a result of problems in recruiting unskilled labour, with the slightly lower cost of Chinese labour compared to that of boys or Aboriginals an incidental result of this recruiting, rather than part of a conscious strategy to keep costs down. Ironically, the VCMLC piloted the introduction of Chinese unskilled labour in 1867, while Dunsmuir still acted as the company's mine superintendent.[50] As noted by John Bryden in the quote above, wages were not the only factor considered in recruiting unskilled labour. In many cases, the ability to muster a workforce outweighed factors of cost, or the perceived desirability of one "class" of workers compared to another.

The Work Process

The nature of the coal resource of Vancouver Island, in particular the type, size, and location of the coal seams, influenced the work process on the colonial coalfield. The

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48. Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 190-191.

49. For the Dunsmuir mines, the lowest proportion was in 1877, at 32%, and the highest in 1881, with 52%. For the VCMLC mines, the lowest proportion was in 1879, at 18%, and the highest in 1885, with 38%. These employee numbers are from BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Reports of the Minister of Mines,* 1876-1886.

50. The first reference to Chinese labourers came in the spring of 1867. At the same time, the VCMLC called for tender bids from coal miners, with the intent of turning them into independent commodity producers, eliminating the existing employer-employee relationship. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 27 April 1867, 3; *ibid.*, 8 May 1867, 3.

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seams on Vancouver Island varied significantly in their thickness, proving less predictable than those of Britain. The seams developed at Nanaimo, and later in the Comox Valley, were substantial, although official reports of the period varied widely concerning their richness and potential. Island coal could compete with other coal produced around the Pacific, and on the west coast of North America, but was considered second or third class compared to the best British coal. The same high hydrogen and oxygen content that made Island coal suitable for lighting purposes created a high risk of coal gas explosions in the mines. Additionally, in the geologically-active Vancouver Island coalfield, slippage and tremors presented a threat to mine safety.[51] The nature of the resource made for a dangerous working environment, and its unpredictability could compromise the earning potential of skilled hewers, who were paid on the basis of production.

The VCMLC and Dunsmuir mines extracted coal from three seams, known as the Douglas, Newcastle, and Wellington seams, in order of depth. The last of these, accessible around Nanaimo and to the west of Comox, was considered the most important coal seam on Vancouver Island. The thickness of these seams varied from a few inches to twenty-five feet, with the first two averaging six to eight feet, and the Wellington seam ranging from nine to ten feet. The seams were mined at various depths from surface slopes up to depths over 650 feet. A positive aspect of the geology of the Vancouver Island coal field related to the sandstone that made up the cover or "burden," strong enough to require less timber work to prevent the collapse of tunnels than in some other geological situations. The uncertain nature of the Vancouver Island coal seams meant that compared to British mines, a much higher proportion of slack, or unusable rock, was

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51. *Ibid.*, 29-30, 77-79. Belshaw compared fatalities on Vancouver Island, the United Kingdom, and South Wales in selected years from 1875-1899. In terms of deaths per year per thousand miners, the British coal fields were generally under 2 deaths, and always under 3 deaths per thousand workers per year. The range on Vancouver Island was from 1.37 deaths to 107.24 deaths per thousand miners per year, the latter due to the high mortality from the Nanaimo explosion of 1887. *Ibid.*, 79, Table 8.

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raised along with the coal.[52]

Regardless of the specific nature of the seams, the coal mining process involved chopping or hewing the coal from the exposed face of the seam, moving it to the shaft, raising it to the surface, sorting and cleaning it there, and finally transporting it to the wharves for shipping. Hewing the coal, sinking shafts, timberwork, and operating and maintaining machinery and tools were considered skilled and/or high responsibility positions, while dealing with the coal after it was cut, transporting it below and above ground, sorting, cleaning, loading, and so forth, were the unskilled or common labour positions. The mines of Vancouver Island employed the British-derived mining techniques known as pillar-and-stall and longwall. In the British coalfields there was a general shift from the former to the latter between 1830 and 1880, on the understanding that the longwall technique was more efficient, safer, and produced a higher proportion of larger, and so more valuable, coal. Pillar-and stall involved leaving pillars of coal to support the roof of the tunnel, while longwall involved removing all the coal simultaneously, and supporting the roof with packed spoil, or mining debris. The "squeezing" of the coal in the pillars resulted in the coal fracturing into smaller pieces in pillar-and-stall. Longwall also was considered more suitable for newly-introduced non-manual mining methods involving blasting and machinery.[53] In their descriptions of the Vancouver Island industry, Belshaw and Gallacher suggested that the adoption of one method or the other depended on the nature of the resource. Belshaw argued that longwall was more effective for thinner seams, and pillar-and-stall better for thicker seams, while Gallacher suggested that

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52. The coal seams were described in 1910 as part of the intended sale of the Nanaimo mining operation to Mackenzie and Mann, with the Douglas or upper seam the thickest. BCA, MS-0436, A.F. Buckham Collection, Vol.52, file 4, "Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) Ltd. 1910 Foster Brown Report," 7. In 1864, prior to Dunsmuir's identification of the Wellington seam, the thickness of the two other seams was said to average six to eight feet. Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 144. Belshaw described the Wellington seam as the thickest and most important, as well as noting the higher proportion of slack raised; Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 76-77.

53. Church, *The History of the British Coal Industry*, Vol.3, 336-337; Daunton, "Down the Pit," 580-583.

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the longwall method was considered more suitable at depths greater than 1,500 feet.[54]

The pillar-and-stall method involved one or two skilled miners, or "hewers," assisted by one or two unskilled labourers, working within a "room" or "stall" of coal, supported by pillars of coal left in place. The hewers extracted coal from the exposed seam in the room, backing out and taking out some of the coal pillars as they did, while the unskilled "runners" moved the coal from the face to the shaft for raising. The individual hewers experienced a high degree of autonomy and control over the work process following this technique, due to their spatial separation from the crews in other stalls, and from oversmen or managers.[55] The longwall method did not leave the pillars of coal, so wasted less of the resource. It was more spatially open, so permitted the deployment of more workers at the coal face, which in turn was thought to permit more direct supervision of workers. Although the longwall method generally was perceived to be more efficient and productive, the hewers resisted it, due to a perceived loss of autonomy and control over the work process. In some cases, it was accepted only through increasing the rates of pay for the hewers.[56]

On Vancouver Island, the mining companies generally employed the pillar-and-stall method was generally applied from the 1850s to the 1870s.[57] After that, there was little evidence for a clear preference for either method, with both longwall and pillar-and-stall

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54. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 81; Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 243.

55. The work process is described in Daunton, "Down the Pit," 589-590; Church, *The History of the British Coal Industry*, Vol.3, 201-205, 328-335. Belshaw applied it to the Vancouver Island case; Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 81.

56. The autonomy of the hewer in the pillar-and-stall system is emphasized in David A. Corbin, *Life, Work and Rebellion in the Coal Fields: The Southern West Virginia Miners, 1880-1922* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 38; Pollard, *The Hardest Work Under Heaven*, 26. Their resistance to longwall methods motivated by a concern over losing this autonomy is described in Church, *The History of the British Coal Industry*, Vol.3, 336-337; Daunton, "Down the Pit," 580-583.

57. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 82.

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methods employed until the 1890s, when most operations reverted to the pillar-and-stall technique.[58] The 1878 diary and correspondence of John Bryden, the mine manager of the VCMLC, notes some experimentation with the longwall method, in places where the coal seam was thinner, but without any real advantage noted; new stalls were being opened at the same time.[59]

The investigation of an 1879 accident in the Dunsmuirs' Wellington Colliery which killed seven White and four Chinese workers in a gas explosion provides some details of coal mining practices.[60] William Roberts, a skilled worker in a high responsibility position, summarized his job in his deposition: "My duty is to look after the Chinamen, the signal bell, and the hoisting of the coal."[61] Roberts was to ensure the efficient movement of the coal from the face to the surface. The terms of the "Coal Mines Regulation Act" of 1877 specifically excluded Chinese workers from such high responsibility jobs.[62] In his deposition Roberts noted that he "told two Chinamen to go to

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58. Belshaw claimed that the VCMLC switched most of its mines to the longwall method by 1875, as mines manager John Bryden thought that was the most suitable method for the conditions, although he preferred pillar-and-stall. In general the VCMLC reverted to pillar-and-stall by 1882 in its mines at Nanaimo, Wellington, Chase River, and Douglas. In 1887 the East Wellington Colliery was employing the longwall method, and over the next two years it spread to the Northfield Mine of the VCMLC, the No. 4 and No.5 pits at Wellington, and the Union Colliery. At times both techniques were used in the same mine. *Ibid.*, 82-83. Belshaw, in support of his model of mining method relating to seam thickness, summarizes mining methods compared to the thickness of seams in Table 9, "Mining Methods in Vancouver Island Collieries, 1875-1891." This general pattern holds up, although from the data in the table, there does not appear to be a clear point at which one method replaces the other. *Ibid.*., 84, Table 9.

59. BCA, E/C/B84, John Bryden Diary and Letter Book, 18 February 1878; *ibid.*, John Bryden to Samuel M. Robins, 27 March 1878; *ibid.*, John Bryden to Samuel M. Robins, 26 September 1878.

60. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines 1879*, 250-255.

61. *Ibid.*, 253.

62. Positions defined as exclusively Euro-North American included banksman, onsetter, signalman, brakesman, pointsman, furnaceman, engineer, or operating the windlass of a sinking pit; *The Consolidated Statues of British Columbia, 1877* (Victoria, Queen's

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83," also identified as "Horne's place," and sent two more Chinese workers to another location. Horne [a hewer] was "growling about having had no boxes and no Chinamen to run them; that is the reason I told those two to go; if the Chinamen did not understand me they would have asked a Chinaman who understands English; Banka's number is 82; the missing Chinaman is Banka's Chinaman while the pit's working." Roberts could not explain how a mistake could be made concerning the location he had assigned, as "they [Chinese labourers] know the place by the men's numbers."[63] The lack of coal carts and Chinese runners to move them from the face to the hoist compromised the hewer's ability to produce and be paid for, as much coal as possible, leading to his "growling" demand for carts and runners. Positions on the face, as well as the hewers themselves, were identified by numbers, with Horne's number and position given as 83, and Banka's as 82. The identification of such specific positions for the hewers seems consistent with the pillar and stall technique, with relatively autonomous production units made up of at least one hewer and two Chinese labourers moving the coal to the shaft. Finally, the reference to the missing worker being "Banka's Chinaman" suggests that labourers were assigned on a permanent or semi-permanent basis to individual hewers. Because the numbering system included the Chinese workers, they probably worked for the company. Runners employed by individual hewers would be unlikely to appear in the company's books and records.

Hewers and Skilled Workers

For the skilled miners, or hewers, the 1862 shift in ownership did not bring much change in working conditions. The piecework system established in 1856, in which the company paid the hewers for the quantity of coal raised, continued in effect. Gallacher suggested that this system, paying 4 shillings 2 pence [$1.01-$1.04] per ton of coal raised,

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Printer, 1877), 488, 40 Vict. Ch.122. Roberts seems to have been functioning in at least two of these roles, as an onsetter, supervising the loading and unloading of the elevators at the bottom of the mine shaft, and as a signalman, in addition to his supervision of Chinese coal runners. The roles of onsetter and banksman are defined in Pollard, *The Hardest Work Under Heaven*, 28-29.

63. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines 1879*, 253.

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plus 1 shilling 4 pence [32-33¢] in lieu of rations, and including company-supplied tools and medical services, resulted in higher production under the HBC.[64] Better results argued against the new owners changing the system of production. The daily rate reported for hewers in 1861 was $1.50 [6s. - 6s. 2d.] per day, while an 1862 source listed a rate of 5 shillings 2 pence [$1.25-$1.29] per ton or 10 shillings 3 pence [$2.49-$2.56] per day on shift work, plus 1 shilling 4 pence [32-33¢] per day for rations.[65] Over the next two decades, the rate varied, although fluctuating around the figure of $1.00 per ton. The Dunsmuir family's Wellington mine paid a rate of $1.20 per ton, consistent with that reported in 1862, until July 1876, and the start of a period in which wages declined and working conditions worsened. In the 1870s a hewer working on a good coalface could anticipate earnings of about $3.50 per day. By 1880 the rates dropped to between 80¢ and $1.00 per ton, although in spite of this, the average earnings of hewers increased from 1878 through the 1890s, suggesting this was offset by increased production.[66] This was confirmed by John Bryden's efforts to drop the VCMLC tonnage rates to those paid by Dunsmuir in 1879. The latter's hewers were accepting 75-80¢ per ton, rather than the $1.00 paid by the VCMLC, because it was easier to win a larger quantity of coal per shift in the Wellington seam.[67] The uncertain nature of the resource, combined with the

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64. Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 72-73.

65. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 93.

66. The 1876-77 decline in tonnage rates in the Dunsmuir & Diggle colliery is described in Terry Reksten, *The Dunsmuir Saga* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1991), 34-44. Belshaw outlined pay rates on 94, Table 11, and attributed some of this tonnage rate decline to the increase in the number of Chinese workers. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 93-95. However, if as he stated, earnings continued to rise through this period, the rate decline must have been more than offset by increased production per hewer. This increased production may be attributed to the increased employment of Chinese labourers, both by the companies and by the skilled miners [see the discussion of Chinese unskilled labour below]. It is more likely that the rate decline was an outcome of declining coal prices on markets, as previously discussed.

67. BCA, E/C/B84, John Bryden Diary and Letter Book, John Bryden to Samuel M. Robins, 27 August 1879.

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piecework system, could compromise hewers' incomes. To maintain peace in its skilled labour force, in the 1870s the managers of the VCMLC adopted the practice of switching to a flat daily rate to pay the hewers when the quality of the seams decreased.[68] When John Rosenfeld ordered Bryden to end the VCMLC hewers' strike in April 1880, Bryden was forced to accept the miners' terms, and institute a policy of paying the hewers on a three-tier scale, based on the thickness of the coalface.[69] Coming after a five week long strike, this provides an example of successful resistance by the hewers, assisted by the untenable situation created for the mine's manager between Rosenfeld's ultimatum and the demands of the skilled workers.

The central feature of the hewers' terms of employment was the piecework or production-based tariff that they were paid on. Although the secondary literature surrounding the Vancouver Island coalfield consistently applies the word "wages" to the earnings of skilled miners, for this group it is not an appropriate usage. The hewers depended entirely for their livelihood on a system of production established by the coal mining companies, so they were not independent commodity producers, but within that context these workers had a high degree of autonomy and control over the work process. Their status in the system of production, as discussed in Chapter 3, resembled that described by Wallace Clement for miners in a "tribute" or "tut-work" system, in which the miners contract with the owner of the mine to sell the products of the mine back to the owner. Clement saw this as one of the stages on a shift from petty production to proletarianization. In the Vancouver Island coal mines it represented the skilled workers reversing this process, acquiring greater autonomy than experienced in the more

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68. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 93; Bowen, *Three Dollar Dreams*, 149-150.

69. The divisions were based on whether the coalface was under five feet thick, five to six feet thick, or over six feet thick, and were much more generous than those offered by Bryden a month earlier; BCA, E/C/B84, John Bryden Diary and Letter Book, John Bryden to Samuel M. Robins, 9 April 1880; *ibid.*, John Bryden to Samuel M. Robins, 18 March 1880.

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proletarianized position they occupied in Britain.[70]

The ability of the skilled miners to successfully resist their subordination is illustrated by the tonnage rate settlement reached in 1880 [above], and by their success in determining the coal mining method used. As noted above, Belshaw and Gallacher both suggested that a decision in favour of either the pillar-and-stall or longwall technique would be determined by the resource. Both scholars acknowledged a cultural impact on the workforce as a result of the method employed, although their interpretations of benefit or harm differed. Belshaw, following the British and American literature, suggested that the underground geography of the pillar-and-stall technique fostered autonomy, while the longwall method "emphasized supervision and discipline," permitting large numbers of workers to be placed at the coalface under the direct supervision of overmen or foremen, and constraining the autonomy of the hewers.[71] Belshaw noted the impact of the method employed on the hewers, but attributed the choice primarily to resource factors, particularly the thickness of the seams. He supported this explanation in general terms, but the method chosen in the 1870s and 1880s seemed to change in a way that does not correlate easily with resource factors, before settling into an overall preference for the pillar-and-stall method.[72] I suggest that the ambivalence about which technique to employ may have related in part to the resource, but much more directly to the negotiation between owners and skilled miners. In spite of coal seams that may have been more suited to the longwall method, the industry-wide acceptance of the pillar-and-stall method by the 1890s demonstrated the successful resistance of the hewers to proletarianization. This was the group that benefited most economically and culturally from this method, and by convincing the mine owners to naturalize this system, the hewers also naturalized their status as highly paid, autonomous workers.

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70. Clement, *Class, Power and Property*, Chapters 7 and 8.

71. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 81-82.

72. *Ibid.*, 82-84, including Table 9.

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Table 6.1: Workforce and Identified Groups of Workers in Vancouver Island Coal Mines, 1876-1886[73]

	Nanaimo Collieries [VCMLC]	**Harewood Colliery**	**Baynes Sound Coal Mine**	**Wellington Colliery [Dunsmuir]**	**South Wellington Colliery**	**Total Workers & Group Percentages**
1876	304 White men 18 White boys 72 Chinese 47 Indians	47 White men no White boys 30 Chinese "occasional" Indians	42 White men no White boys 13 Chinese no Indians	Did not report	N/A	**573** 72% White 20% Chinese 8% Native
1877	301 White men 17 White boys 87 Chinese 23 Indians	40 White men 3 White boys 40 Chinese no Indians	7 White men no White boys, Chinese, or Indians	162 White men no White boys 80 Chinese 10 Indians		**770** 69% White 27% Chinese 4% Native
1878	237 White men 20 White boys 91 Chinese 25 Indians	N/A	N/A	165 White men no White boys 129 Chinese no Indians	17 White men 3 White boys 10 Chinese no Indians	**697** 63% White 33% Chinese 4% Native
1879	233 White men 17 White boys 58 Chinese 6 Indians	N/A	N/A	189 White men no White boys 123 Chinese no Indians	81 White men no White boys 25 Chinese no Indians	**732** 71% White 28% Chinese >1% Native
1880	229 White men 15 White boys 61 Chinese 7 Indians	N/A	N/A	259 White men no White boys 266 Chinese no Indians	N/A	**837** 60% White 39% Chinese >1% Native
1881	190 White men no White boys 65 Chinese 17 Indians	N/A	N/A	261 White men no White boys 286 Chinese no Indians	N/A	**819** 55% White 43% Chinese 2% Native
1882	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**East Wellington Colliery [from 1883]**	N/A
1883	293 White men no White boys 97 Chinese 8 Indians	N/A	N/A	283 White men no White boys 276 Chinese no Indians	42 White men no White boys 32 Chinese no Indians	**1,031** 60% White 39% Chinese >1% Native
1885	327 White men 15 "Boys & Indians" 208 Chinese	N/A	N/A	284 White men no White boys 131 Chinese no Indians	44 White men no White boys 40 Chinese no Indians	**1,049** 63% White 36% Chinese >1% Native

73. All these numbers are from BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Reports of the Minister of Mines, 1876-1886.*

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	Nanaimo Collieries [VCMLC]	Harewood Colliery	Baynes Sound Coal Mine	Wellington Colliery [Dunsmuir]	South Wellington Colliery	Total Workers & Group Percentages
1886	304 White men 16 "Boys & Indians" 170 Chinese	N/A	N/A	351 White men no White boys 132 Chinese 135 Chinese "Employed by Miners" no Indians	66 White men 2 White boys 93 Chinese no Indians	**1,269** 58% White 42% Chinese >1% Native

The size and composition of the coal mining labour force in the 1870s and 1880s, and the ways in which it was split, or divided along lines of human capital and race, are suggested by comparing demographic information from the 1881 Census of Canada to the statistics gathered by the provincial Ministry of Mines from the beginning of its reports in 1876 to the end of the study period [Table 6.1]. The census lists 308 men as miners, of whom 244, or 79 percent, were born in Britain. All the men enumerated as miners were of European birth or descent, with no Chinese workers included among them.[74] Later in the census year the Ministry of Mines reported 819 employees in the Nanaimo-area collieries, divided into 451 White workers, 351 Chinese workers, and 17 Aboriginal workers.[75] By acknowledging the conventions followed in the industry concerning the split labour market and the division between skilled and unskilled workers, the discrepancy between the number of miners reported in the census and the number of workers observed in the coal mines may be reconciled. In the same way that the ahistorical blending of tonnage rates with wages has distorted the status of hewers and wage labour, there has been a tendency in the historiography to blend skilled and unskilled workers under the device of "miner." In the 1880s, unskilled coal mine workers, by this time primarily

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74. The 1881 census enumerated 308 miners, including 244 born in Britain, divided into 127 English, 68 Scottish, 37 Welsh, and 12 Irish workers. The Anglo-North American born contingent included 16 from BC, 12 from British North America, 13 from the USA, and 3 from Australia. European-born workers included 12 from Italy; 3 from Germany, and 5 each from a different Continental European country. Malaspina University-College, viHistory.ca, http://history.mala.bc.ca/content/census/1881/search/advanced.aspx.

75. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines, 1881*, 407-408.

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comprised of Chinese workers, were not listed as miners, but rather as "labourers."[76] The only people designated "miner" were the hewers cutting coal at the face, such as the 308 men enumerated in the 1881 census. It may be concluded that the rest of the 819 men employed at the coal mines in 1881 were oncost workers, as defined earlier in this chapter, who did not cut coal at the face, so were not classified as "miners." Some of these workers held skilled or responsible positions, but the majority worked at transporting, sorting, and loading coal. Subtracting the 308 [37.6% of the total workforce] skilled Euro-North American miners from the totals in the Ministry of Mines report would leave an oncost labour force of 511 men. Chinese workers comprised the majority of this group [351 men, or 68.7% of the oncost workforce and 42.9% of the total workforce], followed by Euro-North American workers [138 men, or 27.0% of the oncost workforce and 16.8% of the total workforce] and a small number of Aboriginal workers [17 men, or 3.3% of the oncost workforce and 2.1% of the total workforce]. The Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1877 specifically excluded Chinese workers from skilled or responsible oncost positions, so they occupied only common labouring jobs such as transportation and sorting.[77] The demography and complexity of the coalfield workforce changes significantly when the oncost labour force is added to the group of skilled miners. As argued by Belshaw, British-born workers made up four fifths of the latter group [and Anglo-North American workers over 93% of it], but this represented only about 30 percent of the total coal mining workforce. Chinese workers, on the other hand, made up nearly 43 percent of the total workforce, and nearly 70 percent of the oncost workforce.

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76. This distinction is made clearly in the provincial government-gathered 1879 "Chinese Statistics," that refers to unskilled coal mine workers as "labourers." The report for Nanaimo clarifies the nature of the work carried out by these workers around the coal mines, confirming their status as unskilled labour; BCA, C/C/30.14/C44, British Columbia, Government Agencies, Chinese Statistics, 1879, 1880, Nanaimo, 11 December 1879, reported by Edward Prior. As the inspector of mines for the region, Prior was fully conversant with the role of Chinese labour in the coal mines.

77. Positions defined as exclusively Euro-North American included banksman, onsetter, signalman, brakesman, pointsman, furnaceman, engineer, or operating the windlass of a sinking pit; *The Consolidated Statues of British Columbia, 1877*, 488.

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The total of 351 Chinese workers in 1881 was remarkably consistent with the population of 347 Chinese labourers enumerated on the Vancouver Island coalfield at the end of 1879.[78] The split coal mining labour market noted in Chapter 3 in the 1850s, in which the upper and lower echelons were defined by race or ethnicity as well as skill, continued into the 1870s and 1880s, but with Chinese workers replacing Aboriginal ones as the primary feature of the unskilled lower sector.

A similar pattern is suggested by the numbers of miners who were affected when Dunsmuir & Diggle dropped its tonnage rates in the summer of 1876. The only workers impacted by this change would have been those hewers paid on a piecework basis. When they refused to accept the lower rate, 70 were laid off, and 36 continued to work at the previous rate. In February 1877, 100 miners went out on strike to demand an increase in tonnage rates, and to correct light-reading scales, again issues that would only be relevant to those paid on a piecework basis.[79] This number of hewers represented about 40-42 percent of the 252 men, including 90 Chinese and Aboriginal workers, who worked at the Wellington colliery in 1877 [see Table 6.1 above], corresponding well with the 38 percent of the total workforce made up of hewers in 1881.

Unskilled Workers

A significant obstacle to developing a coal mining industry on Vancouver Island was the difficulty in mustering a workforce, not just for the skilled underground work of hewing coal, but for the unskilled or common labour requirements of the process. For the coal mining companies, the shortage of unskilled labour presented a problem distinct to the Vancouver Island coalfield, and solving it resulted in the development of a distinctive form of a split labour market, in which a number of identifiable groups were included in the lower echelon.

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78. BCA, C/C/30.14/C44, British Columbia, Government Agencies, Chinese Statistics, 1879, 1880, Nanaimo, 11 December 1879, reported by Edward Prior.

79. Reksten, *The Dunsmuir Saga*, 34-35.

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Anglo-North American Youths

John Belshaw suggested that Vancouver Island miners demonstrated a preference for skilled miners' sons and nephews in unskilled positions, in order to replicate the social system of production that existed in Britain. However, with a newly introduced and expanding industry on Vancouver Island, the supply of sons and nephews of immigrant miners was inadequate to meet the demand for unskilled labour around the mines.[80] In the expansion of the coal mining industry in the 1850s the Hudson's Bay Company turned to other potential sources of unskilled labour, principally Aboriginal workers, including a large number of women, following the practices established in recruiting labour for other activities [see Chapters 2 and 3]. With the appearance of a larger gold rush-induced Euro-North American population, the option of hiring adult immigrant workers wanting or needing waged work presented itself. Although at various times on the Vancouver Island coalfield Aboriginal, young miner's relatives, and adult Euro-North American workers provided unskilled labour, Chinese workers provided the majority of such labour from the 1870s. In the 1860s it seems that the sons of Staffordshire miners entered the unskilled labour force working for their fathers. At nine years' age, Samuel Thompson began loading cars for his father, for board and pocket money, while George Bevilockway began working for his father at the age of fourteen.[81] This follows the British pattern, in which fathers working as hewers employed their sons as "putters" or "hurriers," other terms for runners.[82] John Belshaw argued that it was the presence of a "ready supply of low-wage unskilled adult labour," apparently meaning Chinese workers, that resulted in the breakdown of the age-based hierarchy that existed in British coal mining, and led to a

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80. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 88.

81. Nanaimo Historical Society, *From the Black Country*, Vol.2, n.p., "Samuel Thompson"; *ibid.*, Vol.3, n.p., "The Bevilockway Descendants."

82. The employment of boys this age, sometimes as employees of their fathers, as standard practice in the British coalfields is noted in Church, *The History of the British Coal Industry*, Vol.3, 193-195; 203-204; Pollard, *The Hardest Work Under Heaven*, 30-31.

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labour market split along racial as well as skill divisions.[83] Such an interpretation does not account for the racially split labour market that existed from the beginning of industrial coal mining in the 1850s, in which the unskilled or common labour component was predominantly Aboriginal women and men, and the skilled labour component was exclusively British [see Chapter 3].

Although Belshaw suggested that in the Vancouver Island coal industry there existed a preference for boys, in 1877 provincial coal mining legislation specifically restricted the participation of boys and women in the industry, particularly underground.[84] Belshaw believed that adult male miners tolerated these restrictions because they decreased competition for jobs, and that mine owners accepted them because an alternative Chinese workforce existed.[85] Although the second point may be supported, based on the vastly greater number of Chinese compared to youth employed as unskilled labour, the former only would make sense if the miners intended to compete for low-paid, low-prestige labouring positions rather than the high-paid, high skill positions they already occupied. This implies a denial of the existence of a split labour market in this industry, in spite of the evidence that the skilled miners made every effort to maintain their position in its upper echelon. This issue will be discussed at greater length below. It is probably more accurate to argue that the limits on the participation of boys and women in the mines, contrary to contemporary British practice, represented the evolving cultural values held by the majority of the voters on Vancouver Island.[86] For economic reasons,

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83. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 89.

84. The 1877 Act barred the employment of boys under 12 years of age, and limited those of 12 to 16 years, as well as women, to a maximum of 30 hours per week underground; *The Consolidated Statues of British Columbia, 1877*, 461-496, S.2-7.

85. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 89.

86. The political power of the Euro-North American coal mining population, and its influence on the electorate of Vancouver Island, was considerable. The provincial voters list of 1875 contained 3,168 names, with something over half of them on Vancouver Island, with Victoria and Victoria District containing the largest concentration, 1,026 voters. Nanaimo had the second largest population of voters after Victoria, with 285

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nineteenth century coal miners in Britain could not embrace the emerging ideology of the middle class concerning separate male and female spheres. However, the much higher earnings of skilled male miners on Vancouver Island provided them with a "family wage," that no longer required the economic contribution of wives, mothers, and children working outside the home. Achieving this goal, and meeting the standards or norms of separate spheres ideology, formed a powerful demonstration of social mobility, and met the cultural definition of respectability. Hiring male relatives as a strategy for ensuring occupational succession made sense in Britain, where until the 1890s there was almost no chance of intergenerational upward mobility from the working class. The situation was different on Vancouver Island, with miners not wishing to remain in what Belshaw termed the "proletariat" or the niche of skilled industrial workers.[87] There is no reason to assume that they had a stronger desire for their children to remain in this niche than they did for themselves. Given that emigration was intended to facilitate social mobility, and that the opportunities for such mobility were far greater in British Columbia than in Britain, it is probable that miners encouraged their sons and nephews to pursue alternatives rather than simply accepting their fathers' occupation. The negligible percentage of "boys" working in the coal mines even before the restrictive legislation was passed in 1877 suggests that there was not a preference for boys as unskilled workers in the evolving system of production on Vancouver Island.

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names, of whom 102 were specifically listed as "miner." This does not include the large number of labourers, machine operators, carpenters, blacksmiths, etc., many of whom would have been employed as oncost workers around the mines, or those specifically listed as colliery managers, clerks, etc. The property qualifications in the 1871 Voters Act, in effect in 1875, and eliminated in 1876, did not preclude the political participation of workingmen. It will be seen later in this chapter how issues on the coalfield could evoke a strong social and political reaction in Victoria. The electorate was in no way dominated by elite interests, so it would be expected that legislation would reflect the will of the majority of voters. BC, Sessional Papers, 1876 (Victoria: Queen's Printer, 1876), *Provincial Voters List, 1875*; *The Consolidated Statues of British Columbia, 1877*, 181-188, "Qualification and Registration of Voters Act, 1876."

87. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 161.

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Adult Euro-North American Immigrants

The population attracted by the gold rush of 1858-1865 provided a new group of potential wage workers, that sometimes supplied unskilled labour to the coal mines. These workers did not intend to form a colonial proletariat as waged unskilled industrial workers, but were willing to take advantage of the high wages paid to Euro-North American immigrant labour to facilitate their pursuit of success and respectability as independent producers or entrepreneurs. For them, waged work provided a means to an end, rather than a permanent state. One such immigrant was Noah Shakespeare, whose experience provides some information on the working life of Anglo-North American unskilled labour shortly after the formation of the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company. Born and raised in the industrial Black Country of Staffordshire, Shakespeare, who claimed a distant relationship to the famous author, went to work in a Brierley Hill chain factory at the age of eight. Later, he returned to school for two years, then took work in a local iron rolling mill as a furnace man and a sheet-iron roller.[88] These were considered responsible, relatively skilled industrial positions. Shakespeare demonstrated his commitment to the doctrine of self-improvement and individual progress with his return to school. His participation on the board of the Brierley Hill "ragged school" emphasized his devotion to these values, as well as to the social reform credo of Methodism, the religion identified with the respectable working class.[89] In 1862 Shakespeare decided to leave England in search of social mobility and a better life for himself and his young family. As discussed in Chapter 4, his choice of British Columbia

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88. The most complete description of Shakespeare's early life is from the biographical article based on an interview, "Noah Shakespeare: who by industry alone makes success of life," *Victoria Daily Times*, 10 March 1917, 11. The fact that he "left school at an early age" to work long, hard hours was repeated in the earlier biography in Geo. Maclean Rose, ed., *A Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: Rose Publishing Company, 1888), 297. The distant relationship to William Shakespeare is mentioned in various sources, including *ibid.*, 297; "Leading Laymen. 4. Mr. N. Shakespeare, Victoria," *Western Methodist Recorder*, Vol.1, no.4 (October 1899), 10.

89. "Noah Shakespeare: who by industry alone makes success of life," *Victoria Daily Times*, 10 March 1917, 11; "Leading Laymen. 4. Mr. N. Shakespeare, Victoria," 10.

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related to media portrayals of the opportunities presented by the region, including the glowing London *Times* accounts of the Cariboo gold rush, and the promotional material produced by steamship agents. Taking passage in steerage on the *Robert Lowe*, he arrived in Victoria January 10, 1863. Shakespeare obtained his job in the VCMLC coal mining operation through a process of chain migration, based on the Staffordshire origins of other immigrants. Mr Webb, a fellow passenger from Brierley Hill, had a brother already working in the Nanaimo coal mines, who met the ship in Victoria. Shakespeare travelled to Nanaimo with the Webb brothers, and was introduced to Mark Bate, the manager of the VCMLC, and another Brierley Hill immigrant, who hired Shakespeare. The latter's hiring related to the significant population of Black country immigrants already in Nanaimo at the time, dating to the HBC's 1854 recruiting of the cohort of miners from Staffordshire, a group later augmented by chain migration.[90]

Shakespeare, with a background in industrial work but no mining experience, hired on as an unskilled labourer, at first sorting coal on the surface, and later "pushing skivvers," or coal carts, underground, precisely the sort of unskilled and low-paid jobs performed by Aboriginal labour in the 1850s, and by Chinese labour in the 1870s. As a common labourer, he earned $2.00 [10 shillings] per shift, about double the wage paid later to unskilled Chinese labourers. By working double shifts Shakespeare saved enough within a year to bring his wife and son to Nanaimo, where the family occupied one of the old Hudson's Bay Company cabins.[91] Shakespeare worked for the VCMLC for about

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90. This narrative of Shakespeare's arrival in Victoria and obtaining work in the VCMLC mines is derived from "Noah Shakespeare: who by industry alone makes success of life," *Victoria Daily Times*, 10 March 1917, 11; Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 12 January 1863, 3; Rose, *A Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography*, 297; J.B. Kerr, *Biographical Dictionary of Well-Known British Columbians* (Vancouver: Kerr & Begg, 1890), 284; BCA, vertical files, film 130, 664, "Pioneers of Vancouver Island" form for Noah Shakespeare. Another article noted Shakespeare "helping to weigh coal" and then working in the Douglas coal pit, "Mr. Noah Shakespeare: Veteran Postmaster of Victoria," *The British Columbia Orphans' Friend Historical Number* (Victoria, 1913), 128.

91. "Noah Shakespeare: who by industry alone makes success of life," *Victoria Daily Times*, March 10, 1917, 11; BCA, vertical files, film 130, 683, "Pioneers of Vancouver Island" form for Eliza Jane Shakespeare, who arrived on Vancouver Island on board the

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eighteen months, then moved his family to Victoria, where he initiated a new career as a photographer, never again to work as a labourer.[92] Key issues illustrated by Shakespeare's tenure as an unskilled coal mine worker include recruitment, pay rates, and mobility. The company hired him through a relatively informal process based on affiliation by origin, relating to the model of "chain" migration, and contributing to a more homogenous "English" workforce. As an English immigrant in an unskilled position, Shakespeare received wages that were much higher than those paid to earlier Aboriginal or later Chinese workers in similar jobs. This suggests a preference for Anglo-North American workers, in spite of wages inflated by the shortage of Euro-North American waged labour in BC. The shortage related to the unwillingness of immigrants attracted by the gold rush-based opportunities for economic and social mobility to accept the sort of proletarian roles that provided the "push" to emigrate. Shakespeare was attracted to British Columbia by the emigrant dream of riches and social mobility, coalesced by the promotional material surrounding the Cariboo gold rush. He acquired his first job on Vancouver Island through his Brierley Hill origins, in the Black Country immigrant-dominated coalfield. His job as a common or unskilled labourer represented an occupational step down from the skilled positions he held prior to emigration.[93] However, for Shakespeare, the happy circumstance of a labour shortage and high wages let him quickly earn enough money to pay for his family's emigration to the colony. The two dollars per day paid for unskilled labour roughly doubled the earnings of skilled coal

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Napoleon III on 11 January 1864.

92. "Noah Shakespeare: who by industry alone makes success of life," *Victoria Daily Times*, 10 March 1917, 11; "Mr. Noah Shakespeare: Veteran Postmaster of Victoria," 128; David Mattison, "Victoria Theatre Photographic Gallery," *British Columbia Historical News*, Vol.14, no.2 (Winter 1980), 9.

93. "Noah Shakespeare: who by industry alone makes success of life," *Victoria Daily Times*, March 10, 1917, 11; Rose, *A Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography*, 297.

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hewers in Britain.[94] With the shortage of labour, a willing worker like Shakespeare had the option of working a second shift to earn even more. However, the considerable economic benefits of waged work could not divert Shakespeare from his larger goal of social mobility and achieving respectability. He rejected the option available to an English immigrant of acquiring human capital and joining the upper echelon of skilled coal mining labour. This demonstrates that he did not wish to simply replicate his occupational and social position prior to emigration, even with the incentive of a higher income and standard of living than would be possible in England. Rather, as soon his waged work let him establish his family on Vancouver Island and accumulate some capital, he pursued the dream of becoming an autonomous producer [of photographs]. The goal of achieving respectability involved strategies of both geographic and occupational mobility, with the latter facilitated by the former. In the fluid society of Vancouver Island, opportunities to become an independent proprietor existed in a way unavailable to a member of the working class in Britain. For such aspirant immigrants, a waged job facilitated the move to the colony in economic terms, but did not meet the test of providing opportunities for autonomy and social mobility, the primary cultural motivations for emigrating.

Chinese Immigrants

In the 1860s, with the VCMLC the only viable coal producing and exporting company, the demand for labour remained relatively stable. However, even under these circumstances, the VCMLC recognized a shortage of unskilled labour, presumably due to an inability to "capture" enough voluntary workers from the groups discussed above. This

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94. John Belshaw established some comparisons between British and Vancouver Island coal mining wages in the 1870s-1880s. He noted that the earnings of hewers in Northumberland in 1875 was equivalent to $11.00 per fortnight, or about 92¢ per day, while in Nanaimo a hewer would earn $33.00 per fortnight, or $2.75 per day. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 108, Table 15. After noting that Staffordshire wages were declining in this period, Belshaw observed that the highest wages for hewers in Britain in 1888 were between 3s. 5d. and 5s. 4d. [83¢ to $1.33] per day. *Ibid.*, 98-99. At the same time, urban labourers in Britain earned about 17 to 20 shillings per week, or 2s. 10d. to 3s. 4d. [69-83¢] per day. Higgins, "Colonial Vancouver Island and British Columbia," 30, 47, note 9.

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labour shortage became more acute in the 1870s, due to increasing demand on the San Francisco market, mediated through the commission merchants, and the resulting rise of Dunsmuir & Diggle as a major competitor to the VCMLC. Following the pattern described in Chapter 4, to fill this need the coal mining companies turned to Chinese labour brokers to obtain crews of Chinese labourers. Apparently the first use of Chinese workers as coal mining labour occurred when the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company hired a small crew in 1867: "The twelve Chinamen in the employ of the Coal Company are working above ground at $1 per day."[95] The key aspects included in this brief notice are the limitation of Chinese workers to above-ground labouring jobs, and a wage just half that paid to the British immigrant Shakespeare four years earlier for exactly the same work. By engaging such a crew, the VCMLC demonstrated its concern about mustering an adequate workforce even before the 1870s expansion of the industry. Contemporary stories reveal a hostile reaction by the British-dominated skilled miners, who made it clear that the Chinese labourers were not, under any circumstances, to intrude on the prerogative of the former group to hew coal underground:

> THE CHINESE COLLIERS - Considerable excitement, we hear, exists at Nanaimo in consequence of the introduction of Chinese labourers. The colliers threaten with violence the first Chinaman who forgets his Celestial origin so far as to descend to the 'bottomless pit' of a coal mine. On Saturday a notice was issued by the Company requesting tenders per ton from the white colliers for getting out coal, and when the schooner Black Diamond sailed the matter was under discussion by the miners. We hope that an arrangement will be effected by which the white population of Nanaimo - which is numerous and thrifty - may be retained. A community of Chinamen would scarcely be the thing.[96]

The concern of the writer with the construction of an Anglo-North American society, and how different immigrant groups were believed to affect that project, echoes that discussed in Chapter 4. The skilled miners were faced with two more immediate issues, first that the company intended to replace the unskilled Euro-North American

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95. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 27 April 1867, 3.

96. *Ibid.*, 8 May 1867, 3.

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labour force with Chinese workers, and second, that the VCMLC wished to change the nature of the system of production from the tut-work system to one in which the miners acted as contractors or independent commodity producers, who would sell their production to the company, and so assume all responsibility for the system of production. The miners organized as series of secret meetings to discuss these issues:

> The miners had held a second meeting on Wednesday [May 8], and although the proceedings were not made public, it was believed that the misunderstanding between the Company and miners would be amicably adjusted, and that the project of substituting Asiatic for European labor would be abandoned.[97]

Although it seemed that a settlement was reached between the hewers and the company regarding Chinese workers, the second issue was not resolved as quickly. Toward the end of May the company closed the mine in the absence of any proposals from miners to assume roles as independent contractors. This shutdown was editorialized as disastrous for the community of Nanaimo in particular, and for the colony as a whole:

> ...the works have been suspended! It appears that there was a desire on the part of the Coal Company to place matters on a different footing. Hitherto much of the work has been day labor and the blasting material and mining implements have been supplied by the Company. First the attempt to substitute Chinese for European labor was made. Next the Company proposed to have all the work done by contract, and invited tenders from the miners. To this invitation there appears to have been no response and the closing of the mines has been the result.[98]

The shutdown continued for more than a month, before operations resumed sometime in July.[99] Consistent with the historiography of this industry, these events have been described and interpreted as a strike for wages, to counter the threat of Chinese

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97. *The British Columbian*, 15 May 1867, 3. The secret meetings continued at least through the middle of May. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 13 May 1867, 3.

98. *The British Columbian*, 1 June 1867, 3.

99. In the third week of June, it was reported that there was still no definitive agreement, but a feeling existed that work would begin soon; *The British Columbian*, 19 June 1867, 3. The resumption of mining was reported by late July in *ibid.*, 24 July 1867, 3.

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economic competition, but this does not explain the situation adequately.[100] The company made an attempt to rejig the relationship between itself and both the lower and upper echelons of the split labour force. The skilled miners, perceiving these changes not to be to their advantage, resisted the company's strategy, and eventually negotiated a settlement with the company.

The first aspect of the company's strategy, the hiring of Chinese workers, was seen both by the company and by the miners as a way of replacing scarce, and highly-paid White workers. However, as low-paid unskilled workers employed only above ground, these men posed no competitive threat to skilled miners or hewers. For the company, they represented a way to muster an unskilled work force, without the uncertainty or high wages inherent in independent recruiting in a tight labour market. Due to the economic, social, and political limitations discussed in Chapter 4, the wages paid to Chinese workers were about half those paid to unskilled Euro-North American workers. Although not reported in contemporary accounts, usually such workers were hired through Chinese merchants or labour brokers, who arranged terms of employment, including wages, that were attractive to employers.[101] All responsibility for mustering, retaining, and managing an unskilled labour force would be turned over to such agents.

The second strategy also addressed the problems of recruiting a workforce, by offloading all responsibility for production on the potential contractors. By calling for tenders based on the quantity of coal supplied, the company attempted to place the miners

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100. Gallacher presented an interpretation suggesting that the colliers struck for better wages in response to the arrival of the Chinese workers. The mine managers shut the operation down in turn, but work resumed in about two weeks when the issue was settled. The threat of violence to the Chinese workers passed because they were restricted to "menial surface tasks." This interpretation does not address the shutdown of the mine that lasted for some six to eight weeks after the Chinese labour issue was resolved. Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 210-211.

101. An example of such services was offered in 1865 when Kwong Sing wrote to the colonial administration advertising his services; "Being an agent for the "Chinese coolies" lately arrived & to arrive I am in a position to at all times supply any number you may require If you will kindly write me when you are in want of Workmen." BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 889, Kwong Sing to William Moberly, 26 June 1865.

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in the position of independent commodity producers. With the exception of access to the resource, they would be made responsible for all aspects of the system of production, including mustering a labour force. This would relieve the company of all the problems inherent in maintaining such a system in the demographic and economic conditions of Vancouver Island, obligating it simply to purchase the commodity at an agreed rate from the contractors. In essence, this would recreate the relationship between Aboriginal independent commodity producers and the HBC, where the former were paid a flat rate for the each ton of coal delivered to the latter. The VCMLC appeared to be trying to reinvent itself as a merchant capitalist, rather than industrial capitalist, venture.[102]

The skilled miners saw both the employment of Chinese workers and the prospect of being converted into independent commodity producers as threats. In the first case, it involved the prospect of introducing a truly proletarian group, which would have emphasized the division between the two echelons in the split labour market. This was seen to threaten the wages paid to non-Chinese unskilled labour, as well as making the division between upper and lower echelons of the labour market less permeable, as the latter was racialized and reconceptualized into "Chinese" work. This would compromise the opportunities for occupational mobility previously available to unskilled Euro-North American workers. The introduction of a truly proletarian group was seen as the beginning of a process that could lead to the proletarianization of the larger workforce. The skilled miners directed their most vehement opposition to the possibility of Chinese workers being employed underground. While Chinese workers in the lower echelon of the

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102. One may speculate whether Edward Stamp, arguably the initiator of both the export lumber industry and the salmon canning industry from British Columbia [see Chapters 5, 7, 8], had a hand in this attempt to redefine the coal mining system of production: "In 1866, Captain Edward Stamp, a Vancouver Island sawmill operator, was appointed to investigate the colliery operation, which he did, and upon which he forwarded a series of recommendations to London that the directors expected would 'reduce the expenditure for the coming year', though they chose not to divulge precisely how such was to be achieved." Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 114, citing "VCMLC," *Mining Journal*, 2 June 1866, 344. Did the problems Stamp encountered in mustering and retaining a workforce at Alberni figure into the strategies presented to the miners by the VCMLC in 1867?

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labour market presented a generalized threat to occupational mobility, their presence underground was construed as a direct threat to the prestige and autonomy of the hewers.

However, the British skilled miners' lack of response to the company's call for tenders suggests that they had no desire to become too autonomous or independent. Becoming independent contractors supplying the company implied the assumption of all the risks inherent in coal mining, based on the nature of the resource, the cost of materials and supplies, and the problems and costs of recruiting labour. After a series of secret meetings the miners, as a group, decided to refuse to tender on a contract price for coal, which resulted in the company's closure of the mine. The six to eight weeks that the shutdown lasted suggests how important an issue the definition of the relations of production was to both sides in this dispute.[103] Until this time, the company paid the hewers on the basis of production, but with the company providing access to the resource and assuming the cost of all materials required, such as powder and "mining implements." Additionally the company supplied the skilled and unskilled oncost workers, as "day labor," essential to the operation of the mines, and so the hewers' production. The skilled miners, in this tut-work system, enjoyed a work experience that resembled that of independent commodity producers, with earnings based on production, and a high degree of autonomy and control over the work process, but with all the complicating economic and logistical issues taken care of by the company. Their resistance to the proposed change was not surprising as their existing role provided them with many of the economic and cultural benefits of independent producers, but without the responsibility, risk and uncertainty inherent in entrepreneurial activity.

It is important to recognize that the 1867 shutdown of the Nanaimo colliery was not a strike for wages, working conditions, or even for the exclusion of Chinese workers. Rather, it represented the negotiation between the skilled coal miners and the managers of the VCMLC over the basic system of production to be employed in coal mining on Vancouver Island. The issue was never wages, and the question of accommodating the

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103. *The British Columbian*, 15 May 1867, 3; Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 13 May 1867, 3; *The British Columbian*, 19 June 1867, 3; *ibid.*, 24 July 1867, 3.

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Chinese workers appears to have been settled within two weeks. However, one could argue that the skilled miners demonstrated class consciousness in their response to the company, as they maintained solidarity for the duration of the dispute, in order to defend the social relations of production that they achieved over the preceding fifteen years.

The concern of the miners about the employment of Chinese workers providing a mechanism through which the company could attempt to proletarianize the work force proved accurate within a few years. The hewers went out on a protracted strike in the fall and winter of 1870-71 in response to a proposed cut in tonnage rates. In the historiography, this is presented as the first long-term industrial strike in British Columbia, and has been interpreted as a strike for wages, aggravated by the interracial hostility it provoked.[104] This strike was the miners' response to a proposed "reduction in their wages," meaning in the tonnage rates paid by the company, which they were determined to resist.[105] In mid-November 1870 a proclamation came from the colonial administration, intended to support the ongoing operation of the mine in spite of the strike: "...all persons found using threats, resorting to force or otherwise illegally interfering with those who desire to continue in pursuit of their lawful occupations, will be prosecuted with the utmost rigor of the law..."[106] The state, by invoking its coercive mechanisms, was supporting the continued operation of the coal mine, favouring the economic interests of the owners over those of the hewers. In spite of the proclamation, the strike, and accompanying violence, continued into 1871. Coal sales in the month before Christmas exceeded those of any month since the operation started, so the VCMLC may not have been motivated to end the strike rapidly.[107] Although no formal labour organization or union represented the miners in this dispute, a "deputation" of miners negotiated with

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104. Phillips, *No Power Greater*, 5; Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 211-212.

105. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 6 November 1870, 3.

106. *Ibid.*, 16 November 1870, 3.

107. The same story that reported the record sales also noted that a miner had been stabbed and seriously injured by another miner. *Ibid.*, 22 December 1870, 3.

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VCMLC managers in late December. In early January 1871 this group, comprising Messrs. E. Gough, T. Wall, and G. Tranfield, placed an advertisement in the *Colonist* in connection with its trip to Victoria to seek support for the striking miners. The deputation suggested that the company intended to reduce the miners to less than "living wages," and received a generally positive response to its canvassing in Victoria for food, clothing, and money for the strikers.[108] The rhetoric of "living wages" formed an important part of the construct of working class respectability, and based on the positive response, resonated with the colonial population.

In later January the dispute escalated to a level that exceeded the tolerance of the colonial population, when the managers of the VCMLC decided to hire Chinese workers as replacements for the strikers: "Celestial Colliers. – It is reported that Chinamen have been engaged to work in the coal mines at Nanaimo and that the ship Shooting Star will bring up an 'invoice' of 100 on her next trip." The same issue of the *Colonist* contained a number of published letters and editorials all urging settlement of the strike.[109] The employment of Chinese replacement workers contravened cultural standards of the immigrant society and converted attitudes that had been moderately sympathetic to the strikers into a public outcry to end the strike. This strong opposition to replacing White with Chinese workers originated in the naturalized ideology of the hegemonic group in British Columbia. In the already-racialized coal mining labour force, the upper, socially-mobile echelon of the labour force was dominated by British skilled workers, congruent with the hegemonic group in the colonies. By employing fully proletarianized Chinese workers to do "White men's" jobs, the VCMLC would constrain or eliminate the opportunities that were central to the cultural values of Anglo-North American immigrant populations.

Although the argument against Chinese labour was often presented in terms of unfair economic competition, perhaps more central to colonial ideology was the need to

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108. *Ibid.*, 23 December 1870, 3; *ibid.*, 6 January 1871, 2; *ibid.*, 7 January 1871, 3.

109. *Ibid.*, 20 January 1871, 3.

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limit opportunity, or access to the "level playing field" of the meritocracy, to those who were perceived to be congruent with the values and culture of the hegemonic group. This assumption of conformity extended beyond the racialization of jobs and economic opportunities to include the racial and cultural attributes that were expected of colonists. The colony was perceived as a "British," meaning "White," settler society, and anything that acted against the settlement of a permanent Anglo-North American immigrant population was seen as striking at the very basis of the colonial society. The quote from the *Colonist* concerning the initial 1867 introduction of Chinese workers captures these values. The need to retain an Euro-North American settler population, and the concern expressed about a "community of Chinamen," demonstrates the centrality of race in constructing the colonial state of British Columbia.[110] The public rejection of the strategy of strikebreaking with Chinese workers illustrates how strongly embedded a particular vision of British Columbia was, and how it would affect the relationships between social groups and business ventures. This response demonstrated to industrial employers that they could utilize Chinese labour only in ways consistent with the social standards of the community, and not seen as threatening the construct of British Columbia, including the restriction of opportunities for social mobility to Euro-North American immigrants. In this instance it is enlightening that state intervention to ensure the operation of the mine provoked no major resistance, suggesting that this action was considered benign by the colonial population, supporting the doctrine of progress and development. However, a threat to the liberal order ideology of the hegemonic group, and in particular to its racially-defined access to opportunities supporting social mobility, provoked powerful resistance.

The negotiation of the role of Chinese workers in coal mining continued over the following decades, following the conventions established in the 1867-71 period, particularly their restriction to unskilled labour positions in the lower echelon of the split labour market. The discourse that limited Chinese workers to a strictly proletarian role had developed through negotiation between the mine operators and Anglo-North American hewers that dominated the system of production, and the wider settler society of

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110. *Ibid.*, 8 May 1867, 3.

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Vancouver Island, as demonstrated in the 1870-71 strike. It is telling that when the hewers at Dunsmuir's Wellington colliery went out on strike in early 1877, demanding a higher tonnage rate and more accurate weighing of their production, the company brought in Euro-North American strikebreakers from as far away as San Francisco, rather than attempting to use Chinese labour. In this strike the skilled miners accepted the company's terms and returned to work at the previous tonnage rate, after the state intervened on behalf of the owner, for instance by supporting the eviction of workers from company housing.[111] Even the draconian measures applied by the company and the state in this strike did not conflict with the cultural values of the hegemonic group in the same way as the employment of Chinese replacement workers. This suggests that Euro-North American access to opportunity formed a more central element of regional ideology than equitable and ethical treatment of a workforce. In 1880, when the skilled miners of the VCMLC went out on a prolonged strike, mine manager John Bryden considered recruiting Italian miners in San Francisco.[112] He made no reference to engaging Chinese workers as miners, suggesting that race was a defining element of the construct of "skilled miner."

The state entrenched some of the key elements of the discourse limiting opportunities for mobility to those congruent with the hegemonic group in drafting the 1877 "Coal Mines Regulation Act." This Act included various restrictions on labour based on age and gender, relating to who should be permitted to work underground or operate machinery, and appropriate hours of work.[113] The single racially-specific reference in the Act is found in No.33 of the "General Rules:"

> No Chinaman or person unable to speak English shall be appointed to or shall occupy any position of trust or responsibility in or about a mine subject to this Act, whereby through his ignorance, carelessness, or negligence, he might endanger the life or limb of any person employed in or about a mine, viz: As banksman, onsetter, signalman, brakesman,

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111. Reksten, *The Dunsmuir Saga*, 37-44.

112. BCA, E/C/B84, John Bryden Diary and Letter Book, John Bryden to Samuel M. Robins, 18 March 1880.

113. *The Consolidated Statues of British Columbia, 1877*, 461-464.

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> pointsman, furnaceman, engineer, or be employed at the windlass of a sinking pit.[114]

The Inspector of Coal Mines took measures almost immediately to enforce these restrictions. The correspondence with the companies reveals a racially-based intent as well as the purported culturally-based safety consideration in the "no Chinaman" clause. A letter to John Bryden, the manager of the Nanaimo Collieries, citing article 33 of the Act made it clear that "no Chinaman is allowed to be in a responsible position, such as attending a ventilating furnace, &c., whether he can speak English or not."[115] Apparently by this time some Chinese workers had assumed such responsible positions, as the Harewood Colliery was ordered to "make the necessary change in your [Chinese] furnace-man," operating the ventilation furnace for its mine.[116] Although the legislation purported to make the coal mines safer, it is clear that its primary intent was to limit any sort of occupational mobility on the part of Chinese workers, even if they had the human capital (language and technical skills) equipping them for more autonomous, higher-status positions. Dan Gallacher analysed the accident statistics from the Minister of Mines *Annual Reports*, finding a lower injury rate among Chinese workers than among the general mining workforce.[117] In spite of this, the state used the rhetoric of safety to control the occupational mobility of the Chinese workforce, and by extension to make

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114. *Ibid.* 482-488. This racial regulation was reiterated in the 1888 "Coal Mines Regulation Act," under Section 79, "Rules," Rule 34, which provided the same terms as the former Rule 33. *The Statutes of British Columbia to 1888 - Consolidated Acts*, (Victoria: Queen's Printer, 1888), 51 Vict. 1888 Ch.84,.711-746. The prohibited positions were the skilled or high responsibility oncost jobs, such as operating machinery or ventilating furnaces, or supervising the loading and unloading of the elevators at the bottom [onsetter] or top [banksman] of the mine shaft.

115. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines 1878*, 607, "Correspondence of Inspector of Coal Mines."

116. *Ibid.*, 608-609, "Correspondence of Inspector of Coal Mines."

117. For instance, Gallacher stated that in the Dunsmuir-owned mines from 1877-1890, 1.7% of Chinese workers, as opposed to 2.5% of the total workforce, was involved in accidents. Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 217-218, table 6-3.

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such mobility the exclusive prerogative of Euro-North American workers. This cultural rationale that suggested that Chinese workers were incapable of performing skilled jobs, and presented a danger underground, was maintained even after their legislative exclusion from responsible positions. The Scottish-born Inspector of Mines, Archibald Dick, wrote concerning coal mining accidents that occurred in 1883:

> But there is a class of men employed in the mines about here which I do not expect to know much about mining, although they may learn something about it, after being in some time, so that they can do light work. This class is the Chinese. You will have seen in the chapter of accidents that 12 of them are mentioned - two of them are fatal.[118]

What Dick neglected to mention is that the total number of accident victims was twenty-three. As Chinese workers made up just under half the total workforce, their accident rate was broadly proportionate to the overall rate, supporting Gallacher's findings. However, the ideology of the coalfield, as well as the legislation applicable to it, ensured the restriction of Chinese workers to truly proletarian positions, following a rationale based on factors of culture and safety.

It is difficult to establish the terms of employment of these Chinese workers, particularly the details of how, and by whom, they were engaged. Following the discussion in Chapter 4, it seems most likely that the coal mining companies hired through Chinese labour contractors or merchants in Victoria. The skilled miners, paid on the basis of tons of coal produced, accepted the hiring of unskilled Chinese labour because it presented the possibility of increased production, and so earnings. By the mid-1870s, some hewers employed their own unskilled workers, often demonstrating a preference for cheaper Chinese workers. The lower cost of Chinese labour meant that the hewers would net a greater percentage of the value of coal raised than by employing higher-paid boys, Aboriginal workers, or adult Euro-North American workers. The mining companies would support the presence of either company or hewer-employed unskilled workers, as

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118. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines 1883*, 420-421.

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both would enhance the productivity of the mine.[119] The employment of unskilled workers by both hewers and companies complicates coalmining labour statistics. For example, the 1876 *Report of the Minister of Mines*, listing the number of workers at the various active mines, was annotated: "The number of hands employed does not include Indians or Chinamen working for miners."[120]

A comparison between the data in the "Chinese Statistics" gathered by the provincial government in 1879-1880, as part of an initiative to collect taxes from the Chinese population of the province, and those gathered by the Ministry of Mines at the same time casts some light on the question of who employed the Chinese unskilled workers. Two communities listed in the "Statistics," Wellington and South Wellington, contained populations focussed on coal mining. Of the 239 Chinese inhabitants of Wellington, 196 were listed as "Labourer," while in South Wellington, 42 of the 43 residents were labourers.[121] The Ministry of Mines report for 1879 noted 123 Chinese

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119. Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 212. John Belshaw suggested on the other hand that the employment of Chinese unskilled workers had little impact on skilled hewers' wages as the production of a mine did not rise with more Chinese workers [citing his Table 16, showing production & ethnicity], but rather depended on the skilled workers. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 130-131, 132. Regardless of such global statistics, Belshaw's interpretation does not explain why hewers would employ unskilled workers individually; it is difficult to imagine any reason for complicating the work environment by becoming employers other than the prospect of increased production, so the perception of the hewers must have been that employing such workers increased production. Belshaw admitted that the "subcontract system" in Dunsmuir longwall mines "reduced racial tension by apparently improving the incomes of senior white hewers" by increasing production with workers hired at a low wage. *Ibid.*

120. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines, 1876*, 426.

121. BCA, C/C/30.14/C44, British Columbia, Government Agencies, Chinese Statistics, 1879, 1880, Nanaimo, 11 December 1879, reported by Edward Prior. The single exception in South Wellington was a butcher. Of the Wellington population, 4 were storekeepers and assistants, 5 were washermen, 1 was a vegetable dealer, 1 was a house servant, 3 were butchers, and 6 were barbers: *ibid.* The largest group counted other than labourers were 23 transient miners involved in the Cassiar gold rush: "Many of these are her today and gone tomorrow, for instance the 23 'Cassiar Miners'." *Ibid.*, E. Prior to Provincial Secretary, 1 December 1879.

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workers at the Wellington Colliery and 25 at the South Wellington mine.[122] Assuming that Prior's use of the word "most" meant that about 90 percent of the Chinese labourers worked at the coal mines, it may be postulated that about two-thirds of the unskilled workers in these mines in 1879 worked for the companies and one-third by individual hewers.[123] The percentage of the total Chinese workforce employed by miners rather than by the companies seems to have risen in the 1880s. The Ministry of Mines reports noted that Chinese and Aboriginal workers employed by miners were not included in the total numbers of workers reported in 1876 and 1878. The reports of 1878 and 1879 listed a similar number of Chinese workers at the Wellington Colliery, 129 and 123, respectively.[124] On the other hand, the reports for 1880, 1881, and 1883 more than doubled these numbers, to 266, 286, and 276 men, respectively.[125] The reported number dropped off to 131 in 1885, but rose the following year to 266 men, divided into 132 Chinese working for the company, and 135 "Employed by Miners."[126] The consistency of the size of this workforce, between 266 and 286 men from 1880 to 1883 and in 1886, combined with the nearly equal split between company-employed and miner-employed workers in 1886, suggests that in the 1880s the skilled miners and the company employed roughly an equal number of Chinese labourer, at least in this Dunsmuir-owned

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122. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines, 1879*, 258-260.

123. At Wellington 90% of 196 labourers would be 176 coal mine workers, with the 123 reported by the Minister of Mines representing 69% of them. At South Wellington 90% of 42 labourers would be 38 coal mine workers, with the 25 reported by the Minister of Mines representing 66% of them. The similarity in these percentages tends to support these inferences concerning company and hewer-employed Chinese labourers.

124. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines, 1876*, 426; BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines, 1878*, 385-387; BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines, 1879*, 258-260.

125. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines, 1880*, 437; BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines, 1881*, 408; BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines, 1883*, 422-423.

126. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines, 1885*, 510; BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines, 1886*, 249.

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operation.[127] This pattern of increasing hewer employment of labourers as assistants suggests that the skilled miners saw this strategy as an effective way to increase their output and earnings in a meaningful way. This strategy also placed the hewers in an ambiguous class location, as employees that employed others, perhaps not supporting Belshaw's identification of them as "archetypal proletarians," as they transformed themselves into employers.[128]

In the "Chinese Statistics" gathered for the provincial government in 1879-1880, Edward Prior listed a Chinese population of 435 men and 2 women (10.5 percent of the province's total Chinese population) on the Vancouver Island coalfield.[129] By far the greatest number of these, 347 men, Prior classified as labourers, a role he enlarged on: "Chinese labourers earn from 75/100 to $1.50 per diem. The large majority are paid $1.00 per diem. Most of the labourers are employed about the Coal Mines. They 'run' the coal in the Mines & load it into the waggons on the surface."[130] He commented on the transience of the Chinese workers, complicating the goal of collecting taxes from them: "The Mine Managers themselves do not know the difference between many of them [Chinese workers]."[131] The emphasis on transporting the coal, both underground and

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127. The Dunsmuir-owned Wellington Colliery and South Wellington Colliery consistently reported a higher percentage of Chinese workers and a lower percentage of Aboriginal workers than the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company mines. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Reports of the Minister of Mines*, 1876-1886, passim.

128. "Archetypal proletarians" is from Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 114, while he noted their employment of Chinese and Aboriginal helpers in *ibid.*, 96. Belshaw addressed the ambiguous class affiliation of the hewers by declaring them a "labour aristocracy," defined by higher pay, better living and working conditions, and more potential for social mobility. He suggested that this would distance them from the "rest of the proletariat," in a way that "would weaken working class unity and resolve in the class struggle." *Ibid.*, 140.

129. The total Chinese population of the province was 4,163 people; BCA, C/C/30.14/C44, British Columbia, Government Agencies, Chinese Statistics, 1879, 1880.

130. *Ibid.*, Nanaimo, 11 December 1879, reported by Edward Prior.

131. *Ibid.*, E. Prior to Provincial Secretary, 1 December 1879.

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above ground, noted in the "Statistics" seems consistent in other descriptions of Chinese labour in coal mining. For instance, the section on coal mine accidents from the 1885 *Report of the Minister of Mines* noted only one accident involving a Chinese worker that did not involve working as a "runner" or with "cars."[132]

The positions that were specifically barred by the 1877 legislation included some previously filled by Chinese workers. As noted above, the state made an effort to enforce these limitations, for instance with respect to the ventilating furnaceman at the Harewood Colliery.[133] However, at least one accident reported at the Wellington Colliery in 1878 involved a Chinese worker in one of the restricted occupations, brakeman, but without any comment about this apparent contravention of the Act.[134] It is possible that enforcement was more rigorous with respect to positions that extended beyond the transportation function, that seemed almost fully racialized by this time into a "Chinese job." Following the "safety" rationale underlying the legislation, an accident caused by a brakeman probably would affect only other Chinese workers, while one caused by an engineer, ventilating furnaceman, or windlass operator would have the potential to affect White workers as well.

The "safety" rationale was durable, applied to exclude Chinese workers temporarily from underground work in the late 1880s, following fatal explosions in the

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132. The one exception was when the labourer Ah Sing had his leg broken by rock while helping two timbermen in a tunnel. Timber work would still be classified as oncost work, as opposed to hewing, and the reference to "helping" makes it clear that Ah Sing was in a subordinate position to the skilled Euro-North American timbermen. All of the other injuries to Chinese workers seem to involve transporting coal. References in injury reports include: "shunting cars"; a "runner" "riding on the top of the cars"; "running coal"; hurt by "railway car"; two Chinese and two White workers "slightly burned" in an explosion; "hurt between two boxes"; jammed between boxes while "running coal"; jammed between railway cars; jammed by car; five men killed by "car falling on them" descending a shaft; jammed running coal; leg of a runner broken when hit by car; leg of a runner broken by box; BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines 1885*, 507-509.

133. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines 1878*, 608-609, "Correspondence of Inspector of Coal Mines."

134. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines 1878*, 382-383.

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Nanaimo No.1 Esplanade Pit in 1887 and the Wellington No.5 mine in 1888. Two hundred and thirty lives were lost, including many Chinese workers, and blame was assigned to the latter group, following the ideology expressed above.[135] Chinese labourers continued to work above ground at tasks such as screening and sorting, and by the 1890s some of them were working underground again, as practical considerations of cost and availability outweighed any purported concern with safety.[136]

Conclusions

The contours of the social system of production on the Vancouver Island coalfield were established by the early 1870s. Defining factors included the reliance on the San Francisco market, with access provided by specialized Victoria and San Francisco merchants, an industry dominated by two companies, and a labour market split along divisions of race and skill. The historiography of the industry has tended to focus on factors of production, particularly the "class conflict" between miners [labour] and owners [capital] over "wages" and working conditions. However, it is clear that without the San Francisco market, and the mediation of both Victoria and San Francisco agents and merchants, the Vancouver Island industry would not have developed as it did. It could be argued, following the discussion in the first part of this chapter, that without the direct financial intervention of the San Francisco coal merchants Rosenfeld and Birmingham, Dunsmuir & Diggle, one of the two dominant firms, would not have formed. The historical record reveals that the wholesale price of coal from Vancouver Island was not set by the cost of production, but by what the merchants considered competitive in San Francisco. The vagaries of that dominant market, as mediated, and sometimes, as in 1880, directed by the coal merchants of the metropolis and the agents and commission merchants

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135. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines 1887*, 283-284; BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines 1888*, 334-335.

136. The accident rates did decline, a statistic which current opinion attributed to the Chinese ban, although Belshaw suggested better ventilation technology contributed more. The VCMLC mines maintained the ban on Chinese workers underground into the 1890s, while the Dunsmuir mines did not; Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 119-120.

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of Victoria, had a profound impact on the coal mining system of production. Although most of the coal sold in San Francisco was shipped significant distances, so had a significant transportation cost added, foreign coal was subject to an additional duty of from one fifth to one quarter of its value.[137] These economic factors, combined with the dependence on the San Francisco market, sharply limited the viable cost of production on Vancouver Island. This market-based upper limit on the cost of production was challenged by the cultural and ideological factors that made for a shortage of Euro-North American labour, and the high price of such labour.

This, together with the perception that Aboriginal workers were not a reliable source of unskilled labour, provides an explanation for the attempts of the VCMLC in 1867 to engage lower-paid Chinese unskilled workers, and to offload the system of production on contractors. In the first case, this would address directly the high cost of [unskilled] labour, and in the second case, would deal with the labour issue by eliminating the problem of recruiting and managing labour, and would permit the company to purchase coal from contractors only if there was enough demand, at a price that would ensure a profit, from the San Francisco market. If demand or price dropped off, the company would simply cut down on the scale of its purchases from the contractors, rather than continuing to pay to maintain an idle work force and system of production. If it had been implemented, this proposed "merchant capitalist" solution would have essentially replicated the Hudson's Bay Company's earlier system of exporting commodities, although replacing independent Aboriginal producers with Anglo-North American independent producers.

Operating within the economic constraints of the San Francisco market and the actions of the merchants and agents a distinctive feature of the Vancouver Island industry was the existence of two dominant companies. None of the other ventures initiated in the flush of exploration in the 1860s and 1870s developed into viable producers. Gallacher suggested that these firms failed in the context of the "unsteady west coast economy

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137. The duty on foreign coal in San Francisco was 20 percent in 1859, rising to 24 percent in 1860. Gallacher, "Men, Money, Machines," 275.

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between 1865-85" due to their owners being "personally deficient in either technical knowledge, administrative skills, or entrepreneurial drive."[138] By extension, these are the factors that Gallacher viewed as essential for ventures to succeed in this industry. He argued that the decline of the VCMLC relative to Dunsmuir & Diggle was a result primarily of inept management in the former company, in particular targeting Mark Bate, with his "clerical and financial" rather than industrial background. Conversely, Gallacher suggested that Dunsmuir & Diggle flourished because Robert Dunsmuir effectively combined the roles of owner, manager, and supervisor. The owner-manager model was seen as more effective than the speculator and hired manager model in this industrial sector.[139] In expressing this attitude, Gallacher is restating the nineteenth century producer ethic - those who do something useful, or produce something, should be more highly valued than those who simply speculate. Robert Dunsmuir's vertical mobility not only had symbolic strength, as it provided a specific Vancouver Island variant of the myth of the self-made man, but his rise from the "shop floor" was seen as imbuing him with a legitimacy or moral gravity that was lacking in someone who was appointed a manager by absentee capitalist owners.

Dunsmuir was seen to have lost some of this moral power when he failed to acknowledge the claims of the upper, skilled labour echelon of the coal mining industry.[140] His hard line approach to dealing with labour is seen as contributing to the development of class conflict in British Columbia. In this widely applied model, Dunsmuir is portrayed as the evil owner, using any device, including eviction from tied housing and invoking the coercive power of the state, to attempt to subordinate the workers. He is converted from Horatio Alger into the wicked capitalist or monopolist oppressing the productive

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138. *Ibid.*, 166.

139. *Ibid.*, 120-121, 171, 178-191, 216.

140. *Ibid.*, 191. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 103-104.

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classes.[141] The irony inherent in this transformation is that Dunsmuir, as with most of the members of the economic, political, and social elites of British Columbia until the 1880s, could not have acquired his wealth and social position outside of the fluid economic and social environment of the colonies. In spite of having achieved this status through emigration, this neo-elite group clearly attempted to protect their newfound prerogatives and demonstrate their economic and social power. Class divisions were constructed on the level playing field, as those that achieved success attempted to distance or differentiate themselves from those less adequately meeting the emerging definition of producer respectability. This provides a framework for interpreting the call for tenders that the VCMLC presented to its hewers in 1867. When these miners collectively rejected an "independent producer" option in favour of maintaining a tut-work status quo in which they remained more dependent on the company, it may be that Dunsmuir and others saw them as deviating from the ideals of the producer ethos, weakening their respectable status. The hewers may have maintained a significant level of control over the work process, but their rejection of "opportunity" may have defined a division between them and the owners and operators of the coal mines. Regardless of such emerging distinctions, the electorate of Nanaimo, made up primarily of workingmen, not elite interests, voted Robert Dunsmuir to a seat in the provincial legislature in 1882, and again, with a larger majority, in 1886.[142] It may be speculated that for the workingmen of Nanaimo, Dunsmuir's value as a symbol of the opportunities for occupational and social mobility outweighed the animosity created by the subordination of workers in his coal mining operations. The structure of employment in mining supported a myth of independence and

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141. Belshaw noted the central importance of Robert Dunsmuir and his family to shaping political polarization and the emergence of class consciousness in BC in, *ibid.*, 146-147.

142. The 1875 voters' list suggests the nature of the electorate in Nanaimo, BC, Sessional Papers, 1876, *Provincial Voters List, 1875*. The property qualifications in the 1871 Voters Act, in effect in 1875, and eliminated in 1876, did not preclude the political participation of workingmen. *The Consolidated Statues of British Columbia, 1877*, 181-188, "Qualification and Registration of Voters Act, 1876." Gallacher, "Dunsmuir, Robert," 293.

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control over the work process, and Dunsmuir provided affirmation for its viability.

Through a process of negotiation between historical blocs, the Euro-North American component of the coal mining labour force had achieved a social position that was congruent with its values, and met its perceived needs, by the end of the 1870s. They had rejected the option of becoming independent commodity producers, preferring the tut-work system, that provided a higher degree of security and predictability, while ensuring a high level of control over the work process. In the same way, it may be argued that the general employment of the pillar-and-stall technique, rather than the longwall method, represented a position that had been achieved by the hewers. Although in many cases the longwall system may have been more effective, the eventual preeminence of the pillar-and-stall option clearly favoured hewer control over the work process. Although mine owners, managers, and even unskilled labour may have preferred longwall, the hewers were able to parlay their position as a labour elite into a practice that favoured their group. Finally, the accommodation of Chinese workers as the primary group of unskilled labour in the coal mines was shaped through a process of negotiation between skilled Anglo-North American workers, owners and managers, and the general population. The restrictions on Chinese opportunities that were defined in events up to 1871 were later formalized in legislation, restricting these workers to lower echelon positions in the industry. This was not to the advantage of owners, or to the Chinese workers, but was central to maintaining the perception of autonomy and opportunity, considered essential attributes for the Euro-North American mining workforce.

Central to this process of negotiation is the level of power over the system of production that each group or historical bloc possessed. The fully-proletarianized Chinese workers held the least power, so were least able to resist the terms presented. The owners and managers were constrained by the San Francisco market, and the power of the coal merchants and commercial agents that provided access to it. The group that generally seems to have possessed the most power in this period was skilled Euro-North American labour. The specialized knowledge and skills that it possessed was essential to the development and operation of the mines, and the cultural values of the group were entirely

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congruent with those of the larger colonial/provincial society, and the electorate. The social system of production was negotiated in a way that affirmed this power, and resulted in relations between social groups, or "classes," as they were known at the time, that reflected the values of the immigrant Euro-North American workingman. Central to this was the desire to create the greatest opportunity for the greatest possible number of those defined as desirable immigrants, that is, productive people who would ensure the progress of the region as they pursued their own goals of social mobility. Equality of opportunity was central to this ideology, although it is clear that this concept was only extended to those who conformed racially and culturally to the hegemonic group. In the case of the hewers, they had rigorously opposed the employment of Chinese workers in a way that was seen to threaten their prestigious and occupationally-mobile work situation. Although they had rejected the opportunity to follow Robert Dunsmuir's trajectory by becoming independent coal mining contractors, they wished to maintain the belief that such opportunity would always be available. The culturally naturalized, and later legislated, subordination of Chinese workers provided a way to emphasize the social distance between the two groups, and restricting the opportunities for occupational and social mobility to only members of the self-ascribed hegemonic group.

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Chapter 7: Gold Rush Entrepreneurs, Commission Merchants, and Industrial Development on Burrard Inlet, 1862-1870

The 1858-1865 gold rush attracted an immigrant population motivated by a search for individual social mobility, and the desire to construct a social, economic, and political environment that fostered opportunities for such mobility. Within the larger project of developing such a liberal order-based colonial state, a hegemonic group developed, defined primarily in terms of Anglo-North American cultural antecedents, high levels of human capital, and contribution to the progress and development of the region. Although gold was the largest attraction for immigrant populations in the 1850s and 1860s, the resources of British Columbia presented a wide range of potentially lucrative opportunities for aspirant immigrants, leading to the initiation of the forest products, coal, and salmon exporting industries. Members of the Anglo-North American hegemonic group with access to the critical inputs, including markets, capital, or technology, initiated every recorded instance of a commodity export venture until well into the 1870s. However, mustering an industrial labour force presented a formidable obstacle to a viable business. The waged labour force was made up of those lacking in human or cultural capital, included unskilled Euro-North Americans, who because of their racial and cultural congruence, could aspire to join the hegemonic group if they acquired human capital. These unskilled Euro-North American workers competed for jobs with structurally subordinated groups, including the majority Aboriginal population and already-proletarianized Chinese immigrants. The social mobility of the latter groups was constrained by their lack of racial and cultural congruence with the hegemonic group. Due to the ongoing labour shortage in the region, Aboriginal and Chinese workers formed an important part of the labour force, incorporated in a manner consistent with the racial ideology of the hegemonic group.

Key to the viability of commodity exporting ventures was access to export markets, provided by the commission merchants of Victoria, with their strong business linkages to San Francisco and England. Following the producer ethos naturalized in the region in the nineteenth century, the historiography of British Columbia has emphasized

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factors of commodity production, focussing on the "local" resources, companies, and workers as a discrete system of production, rather than as one part of a larger process of global capitalism. An artificial division between producers and agents, developed in narratives of producer virtue and agent avarice, seems to relate more to the continuing importance of the producer ethos in British Columbia, rather than to the ambiguous historical evidence concerning who initiated or directed commodity producing ventures.[1] The capital and the entrepreneurs active in the commodity exporting industries often have been identified by nationality, particularly dividing "British" and "American" ventures, although this often seems an arbitrary designation. The division between owner and worker was blurred by the understanding that in the fluid conditions of the commodity-exporting economy workers could achieve proprietor status, and the minimal social distance between owners and skilled workers. Even the more obvious racial division between Euro-North American, Chinese, and Aboriginal populations needs to incorporate a more nuanced approach, that examines how concepts of race figured into the creation of the larger economic and social environment.

In the sections that follow, the conventions developed by Alberni Mills and the VCMLC, including the relationship between producers and the network of commission merchants and agents linking Victoria, San Francisco, and London, will be tracked as they extended to other industrial ventures established in British Columbia. Further, the case of the Burrard Inlet export forest industry, that evolved following the winding up of the Alberni Mills venture, provides a clear example of how the dramatic and easily-presented dichotomies so prevalent in BC historiography do not account adequately for the complex

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1. This was discussed in Chapter 6, and will be examined further in Chapter 8 through the literature surrounding the salmon canning industry, which often portrays the producers as subordinated by the commission merchants, an interpretation which does not seem to be supported by the more complex and symbiotic picture in the historical record. This pro-producer view was advanced by H. Keith Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen" (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1965), p.20. It relies on primary materials which follow the producer ethos, including T. Ellis Ladner, *Above the Sand Heads* (Burnaby: Edna G. Ladner, 1979); BCA, I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries," c.1957.

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social positions of the participants. This industry provides an origin myth for the dominant metropolitan centre of Vancouver, and the entrepreneurs, managers, and workers that participated in it have been simplified in most cases into stereotypes that add symbolic strength to the myth.[2] The naturalized narrative is one of visionary "pioneer" producers struggling to survive in the face of oppression by greedy agents and speculators. The success or failure of the pioneers is attributed to their adherence to entrepreneurial values and the producer ethos, providing a construct of "pioneer virtue rewarded." The two dominant ventures, the Moodyville and Hastings sawmills, have been linked to this model, with the first the product of the visionary "Maine lumberman" Sewell Moody, presented as a classic producer, as opposed to the second, the venture of the grasping English speculator Edward Stamp, offered as the archetypical non-productive agent. However, on closer examination it becomes more difficult to differentiate individuals or operations along these producer/speculator or American/British divisions. The two sawmill operations apparently worked in close cooperation with one another, and strong linkages existed between the personnel involved at all levels from market-based merchants to logging contractors. In spite of this, the heroes of regional development are those constructed as producers, rather than the merchants and agents that made the ventures possible. The producer ethos coloured both nineteenth and twentieth century perceptions of respectability.

The Burrard Inlet industry evolved explicitly out of the earlier ventures, with a high degree of continuity exhibited by the commission merchants, producers, and skilled labour previously involved in the Alberni Mills and VCMLC ventures. Conventions developed in the earlier businesses underlay the expansion into new trades and new regions, led by those with experience in the "pioneer" ventures, who had acquired the ability to muster the various inputs required. Perhaps most important to this expansion

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2. A notable exception to this is the much more nuanced and complex approach of historian Bob McDonald, particularly in Robert A.J. McDonald, "Lumber Society on the Industrial Frontier: Burrard Inlet, 1863-1886," *Labour/Le Travail*, 33 (Spring 1994), 69-96; Robert A.J. McDonald, *Making Vancouver: Class, Status, and Social Boundaries, 1863-1913* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), chs.1-2.

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were the commission merchants who could place BC-produced commodities on foreign markets. Lacking a market, even the most virtuous pioneer producer would have little motivation to initiate an industrial venture. J.M.S. Careless divided the community of Victoria commission merchants during the gold rush years along "national" lines, emphasizing its initially American, and later British character. He did acknowledge some of the complexity of the situation, including how existing HBC and settler society mediated the American influence, and the multinational origins of the "American" businessmen.[3] Careless provided examples of prominent San Francisco commission merchant firms that set up in Victoria, including Samuel Price and Company, Dickson, De Wolf and Company, and Green Brothers.[4] In the model applied by Careless, this "American" mercantile community was overtaken by one made up of British wholesale merchants, aided by the British political structure, more cordial dealings with the HBC and colonial administrators, and strong ties to potential markets and suppliers in Britain. "British" merchants cited by Careless included J.J. Southgate, a San Francisco-based English commission merchant who came to Victoria in 1858, and the Lowe Brothers [see Chapter 3] who moved their operations from San Francisco to Victoria in 1861-62. He also listed R.C. Janion, "with Liverpool and Honolulu connections," J. Robertson Stewart, Robert Burnaby, and G.M. Sproat.[5] These gold rush era commission merchants formed a community closely linked personally and through business. For instance, when Southgate arrived in Victoria, he carried a letter of introduction to Governor Douglas from the Lowe Brothers, while when Edward Stamp died in 1872, Southgate acted as one of his

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3. Careless, "The Business Community of Victoria," 476-477.

4. J.N. Thain was the Victoria representative for Samuel Price & Co., while Dickson, De Wolf & Company was represented in Victoria by George Campbell, a partner in the Victoria commission merchant firm of Dickson, Campbell & Company. This company was also linked to the London firm of H.N. Dickson's, and to representatives in Liverpool, Boston, and Halifax. *Ibid.*, 478.

5. *Ibid.*, 478-479.

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executors.[6] This American-British dichotomy drawn by Careless becomes nebulous with such linkages between individuals, firms, and commercial centres, and given that many of the "Americans" were British expatriates. His suggestion that banking in the colonies was dominated by a "British element" seems more defensible. The London-based and chartered Bank of British North America opened a Victoria branch in 1859, augmented in 1862 by the also London-based and chartered Bank of British Columbia, which soon became involved in financing commercial ventures as well as the colonial government.[7]

Overall, it appears that the linkages and affiliations between these commission firms were more important than the divisions between them. All of the Victoria-based merchants or agents active in commodity exporting ventures in the 1860s and 1870s had agents or associated firms in Britain, and almost all of them had affiliated firms in San Francisco. Keith Ralston described this as a "triangle of trade" that "involved direct and independent links with Great Britain, as well as cross-connections" between Victoria and San Francisco.[8] Ralston's triangular model accounts better for the complexity of the situation than Careless's evolutionary dichotomy. Edward Stamp's establishment of the Alberni Mills venture fits nicely into Ralston's triangular pattern. Alberni Mills was initiated by a British entrepreneur, with British capital, and involved the expansion of a San Francisco-based industry to a British colony, to produce commodities sold on Pacific markets, with San Francisco remaining the hub of the industry. It combined aspects of both American and British ventures, and was initiated in the enthusiasm of the initial Fraser River rush, during what Careless designated an "American" phase of business activity. Stamp provides an exemplar of a commission merchant with access to world systems of capital, technology, labour, transportation, and marketing, which made such

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6. *Ibid.*, 478-479; Careless, "The Lowe Brothers," 1-18; BCA, E/B/St 2.9, Stamp, Edward, "Papers relating to will."

7. Careless, "The Business Community of Victoria," 479.

8. Keith Ralston, "Patterns of Trade and Investment on the Pacific Coast, 1867-1892: The Case of the British Columbia Salmon Canning Industry," *BC Studies*, Vol.1, no.1, (Winter 1968), 45.

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ventures possible. In turn, he introduced the prototype export sawmill [Chapter 5], advised the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company on its operation [Chapter 6], initiated other forest industry ventures [this chapter], and established a viable canned salmon export industry [Chapter 8]. Stamp was conscious of his role as he applied for land for a new venture in the 1860s, reminding the colonial government of his contribution to the utilization and development of the region: "I trust my exertions in opening up the resources of this country may not be overlooked by the government, especially as the result to myself has not been very beneficial."[9] This self-ascription as a producer, contributing to the primary project of development and progress, was recognized by others, as in 1874, two years after his death, when the *Mainland Guardian* described him as the person that paved the way for the export of canned salmon to England.[10]

In addition to Stamp himself, a number of those who accompanied him to Vancouver Island in 1860 went on to assume leading roles in the commodity exporting trades. Arguably Gilbert Malcolm Sproat and Andrew Welch were the former employees of Alberni Mills that had the greatest impact on the next phase of industrial development of British Columbia. Sproat assumed Stamp's role as the local partner in the Victoria commission merchant firm that operated the Alberni Mill. When Anderson & Company closed its office with the winding-up of the Alberni Mill operation [see Chapter 5], apparently in late 1865, a new firm known as Sproat & Company took over its interests in the colony. Sproat returned to London to manage the British end of Sproat & Company, leaving Robert P. Rithet, an 1862 gold rush immigrant from Scotland, in charge of the Victoria office.[11]

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9. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 22 September 1863.

10. "Our Salmon," *Mainland Guardian*, 1 August 1874, 2.

11. The demarcation between Sproat & Company and Anderson & Company is not consistently drawn in the literature. Howay and Scholefield, in their biography of Rithet, note that he entered the employ of Anderson & Company in 1865, remaining with the firm for "several years." Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.4, Biographical, 1134-1136, "Robert Patterson Rithet." Daniel Clayton's more recent biography stated that

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In July 1868 Sproat & Company was described as "Merchants and Commission Merchants," with foreign representatives including "G.M. Sproat, 12 Billiter Street, London" and "Sproat & Welch, San Francisco, California," following the triangular pattern of trade.[12] "Billiter Court, London" was given as the address of Thomson & Company in its 1863 petition against Edward Stamp [see Chapter 5], suggesting that there was a close geographic as well as business relationship between Thomson & Company and Sproat & Company.[13] A December 1869 Sproat & Company invoice no longer included Sproat & Welch, suggesting that partnership had ended, and provided a new London address; "G.M. Sproat, 11 King William Street, London."[14] The linkage to Anderson Thomson & Company continued at least through the end of the 1860s. R.P. Rithet was making out the accounts of Anderson & Company in Victoria in the fall of 1868, and Anderson Thomson & Company guaranteed a bank loan to Sproat & Company in the spring of 1869.[15] An 1871 invoice from Sproat & Company still gave the King William Street address, and added the name of Matthew T. Johnston as the firm's Victoria

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Rithet was employed by Sproat, "who represented" Anderson & Company on Vancouver Island. Daniel Clayton, "Rithet, Robert Patterson," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Volume XIV* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 873-875; Foster, "Sproat, Gilbert Malcolm," 962-963.

12. BCA, MS-264, Findlay, Durham and Brodie, Box 1, file 2, invoice to Findlay & Durham, 30 July 1868.

13. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 9 January 1863, 3. Sproat's 1860 letter of introduction to James Douglas presented him as belonging to the firm of James Thomson & Company, 6 Billiter Square, London; Rickard, "Gilbert Malcolm Sproat," 21.

14. BCA, MS-264, Findlay, Durham and Brodie, Box 1, file 3, invoice to Findlay & Durham, 3 December 1869.

15. BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Box 2, letterbook 1868-1871, 150-155, R.P. Rithet to M.T. Johnston, 15 October 1868; *ibid.*, 193, R.P. Rithet to G.M. Sproat, 12 March 1869.

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representative.[16] The firm of Sproat & Company, described as a partnership of G.M. Sproat and Matthew Trotter Johnston, dissolved on March 7, 1876.[17] Perhaps not coincidentally, Sproat returned to British Columbia at about the same time, where he gave up commerce to become one of the three appointees to a newly formed Indian reserve commission.[18]

Andrew Welch, Sproat's partner in San Francisco in the last half of the 1860s, came to Victoria with Sproat to work for Stamp & Company and its successor, Anderson & Company. When Sproat & Company took over the Victoria interests of Anderson & Company in 1865, Welch moved to San Francisco as a partner in the affiliated firm of Sproat & Welch which operated through 1868. By the following year, the partnership had ended, with Welch operating in San Francisco as Welch & Company, with a Liverpool affiliate, Andrew Welch & Company, under the management of Andrew's brother, Ralph D. Welch. Welch & Company was active in a wide variety of ventures, but in particular with the booming and lucrative sugar trade from Hawaii to the United States.[19] Welch became a wealthy and prominent member of the San Francisco business community.

Matthew T. Johnston, the Victoria partner in Sproat & Company in the 1870s, came from Scotland as a young man in the early 1860s to manage the operations of

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16. BCA, MS-264, Findlay, Durham and Brodie, Box 1, file 2, invoice to Findlay, Durham & Brodie, 15 June 1871.

17. *The British Columbia Gazette 1876*, 111.

18. In his biography of Sproat, Foster noted that Sproat probably returned to BC in 1876. Due to government resistance to the cost of the commission, Sproat was the sole working member of the commission from 1878 to 1880, when he resigned, and was replaced by Peter O'Reilly, J.W. Trutch's brother-in-law. Foster, "Sproat, Gilbert Malcolm," 963.

19. An 1868 Sproat & Company invoice notes Sproat & Welch as the former's San Francisco representative, while a late 1869 invoice no longer included the San Francisco company. BCA, MS-264, Findlay, Durham and Brodie, Box 1, file 2, invoice to Findlay & Durham, 30 July 1868; *ibid*, Box 1, file 3, invoice to Findlay & Durham, 3 December 1869. Welch's later business operations were summarized in his obituary. Obituary, Andrew Welch, Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 26 July 1889, 4.

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Anderson & Company at Alberni.[20] In the later 1860s, Johnston was Sproat & Company's representative in San Francisco, although it is not clear how his role integrated with the affiliated company of Sproat & Welch. When Rithet moved to San Francisco in early 1869, apparently Johnston returned to Victoria, to become the Victoria partner in Sproat & Company.[21] All of these firms, and the individuals involved in them, were linked through business and personal linkages developed in the Alberni Mills venture, and were to play a central role in the development of commodity exporting industries in BC in the 1860s and 1870s.

For example, after a brief stint as Sproat's representative in San Francisco, R.P. Rithet returned to Victoria, where he took a position with J. Robertson Stewart in April 1870.[22] With the assistance of Andrew Welch, Rithet acquired Stewart's business in September 1871, and set up the successor firm of Welch, Rithet & Company.[23] Before forming the partnership with Welch, Rithet had approached others about acquiring Stewart's business. James A. Raymur, then the manager of the Hastings Saw Mill, and yet

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20. In May 1864 a letter from Anderson & Company recommended "M[r] Matthew Trotter Johnston, who is in charge of our works at Alberni" as the new Collector of Customs at that point of entry. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 17, Anderson & Co. to W.A.G. Young, 4 May 1864. Johnston's age was given as thirty-nine years in the 1881 census of Canada, which noted him as having an English-born wife, four children, and one Chinese servant in the household. He was born in Scotland, was Anglican, and was described as a merchant or shopkeeper. Malaspina University-College, viHistory.ca, http://history.mala.bc.ca/content/census/1881, district 190, subdistrict D, family 4, record 1881, 2981.

21. Rithet wrote to Johnston at Sproat & Company in San Francisco in the fall of 1868, in a way that suggested he would be replacing Johnston in that city. BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Box 2, letterbook 1868-1871, 150-155, R.P. Rithet to M.T. Johnston, 15 October 1868; *ibid.*, 163-167, R.P. Rithet to M.T. Johnston, 30 November 1868. Rithet arrived in San Francisco on 8 February 1869; *ibid.*, 180, R.P. Rithet to G.M. Sproat, 5 March 1869.

22. In 1869 Rithet was noted in the Victoria directory as an employee of Sproat & Company, commission merchants. Mallandaine, *First Victoria Directory and British Columbia Guide, 1869*, 47,50.

23. Clayton, "Rithet, Robert Patterson," 874.

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another alumnus of the Alberni Mills venture, acted as Rithet's partner in these overtures to potential investors.[24] This provides a typical example of the succession and convergence of commission merchants and producers in resource industries, as well as the relative nature of definitions of producers and agents. Rithet's new firm was heavily involved in the forest industry in the early 1870s, acting on behalf of the Hastings Sawmill Company and Moody, Dietz & Nelson on Burrard Inlet, and heavily involved in the business of Muir Brothers' Sooke Saw Mill. This relationship with Moody's mill, later known as the Moodyville Saw Mill, continued for decades.[25]

Such overlaps in the business relationship between the two Burrard Inlet export mills [the Hastings Sawmill Company and Moody, Dietz & Nelson], and between the commission merchant firms, were evident in the 1870s. Edgar Crow Baker, a half-pay

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24. BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Box 2, letterbook 1868-1871, 251-253, R.P. Rithet and [for] J. Raymur to A. Welch, 3 August 1871; *ibid.*, 256-257, R.P. Rithet and [for] J. Raymur to A.J. Ralston, 3 August 1871; *ibid.*, 261-263, R.P. Rithet to A.J. Ralston, 5 August 1871. In a letter to Raymur, Rithet indicated that banker William Ward and retail and commission merchant Jacob Hunter Todd were also interested in participating in this venture. *Ibid.*, 264-265, R.P. Rithet to J. Raymur, 7 August 1871. Raymur was named the manager of Hastings Saw Mill when Edward Stamp left in early 1869, and was still there during the Canadian census of 1881. His age then was given as fifty years, and he had been born in Nova Scotia. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 4 January 1869, 3; BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district b North, 94, house 408. Stamp's retirement and Raymur's appointment are from *The British Columbian*, 9 January 1869. In early 1864 correspondence from Anderson & Company was signed "Pr. J.A. Raymur," suggesting he was working for the company at the time. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 17, Anderson & Co. to E.G. Nesbitt (acting Colonial Secretary), 20 March 1864; *ibid.*, Anderson & Co. to W.A.G. Young, 22 March 1864. At about the same time, Raymur and Sproat were attempting to pre-empt land at Alberni in the name of Sproat & Anderson, for the purpose of copper mining, in competition with Stamp's copper mining claims. GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1460, J.A. Raymur to W.A.G. Young, 12 March 1864.

25. In 1871 Welch, Rithet and Company was Moody, Dietz & Nelson's agent in Victoria, while in 1884 Welch and Company were listed as the San Francisco agents of the Moodyville Mill, and Welch, Rithet & Company remained the Victoria agents of the firm. BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Vol.8, Cash Book 1871-1874, 304-321; *The Resources of British Columbia*, Vol.1, no.12 (February 1884), 5.

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retired British naval officer, emigrated to Victoria in 1874, to take a position in the Victoria office of the Hastings Sawmill Company. The job and move to Victoria were facilitated by his wife, James Raymur's niece. Baker also acted on behalf of Moody, Dietz & Nelson, meeting ships, clearing ships with customs, and arranging for tugs and pilots. One of his duties was to manage the bonded warehouse of the Hastings Sawmill Company, which also was used by other companies.[26]

The contours of Welch, Rithet & Company's involvement in the forest industry are suggested by accounts from the later 1870s, when the firm seems to have been acting as principal agent for both the Moodyville Saw Mill Company [as it was by 1879], and the Muir Brothers' Sooke operation. The commission merchants ran accounts for the companies apparently covering advances paid for all the costs of operation, including the purchase of supplies, cash disbursements, and expenses such as insurance on cargoes. The term "financial agent" in this period implied handling all of the producing company's accounts, both debits and credits. The "Advance Accounts" of the producers would be paid with credits received on the transportation and sale of cargoes of lumber. These were often referred to as "adventures," identified by the name of the ship, as in the Moodyville Advance Account of December 1879, which noted: "Net proceeds of Account Sales of Cargo shipped p. "Forward" to Sydney p. statement of date See Act Bk folio 82," of $3,196.16.[27] The use of "net proceeds" suggests that this was the amount realized after the cost of transportation and marketing the products was covered. As opposed to the net proceeds of the sale of such a cargo, generally in the range of $2,000-$3,000 or more, the

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26. G.W.S. Brooks, "Edgar Crow Baker: An Entrepreneur in Early British Columbia," *BC Studies*, No.31 (Autumn 1976), 26-27.

27. Rithet, Welch & Company had constant dealings with Moody, Nelson & Company, as it was in 1878, as well as Muir Brothers, throughout that year, noting such "adventures" to Pacific markets including Hawaii. BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Vol.7A, Cash Book 1878-1879, 1-249. In January and February 1879, Rithet, Welch & Company was handling all the payables on behalf of the Moodyville Saw Mill Company Ltd., as it became that year, and continued with Muir Brothers. *Ibid.*, 265-282. The reference to the proceeds of the cargo of the *Forward* is from *ibid.*, 545.

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advances to cover the insurance on a cargo of lumber fell in the range of $100.00 to $125.00.[28] In the early salmon canning industry, the usual commission charged by financial agents was five percent, and this probably applied to the trade in forest products as well, as it involved the same merchants, and the same operation.[29] Usually the commission merchants were the representatives or agents of the insurance companies, so must have earned a commission on the sale of policies as well.

As financial agents, the commission merchants mustered capital to cover the cost of production. For example, Rithet's earlier firm of Sproat and Company took advantage of its close relationship with the larger London firm of Anderson Thomson & Company, and Rithet's personal relationship with William Ward, the Victoria manager of the [also London-based] Bank of British Columbia: "...the Bank of British Columbia advance for duties, under guarantee by Anderson Thomson & Co. $30,000. as required by us, and that for this guarantee we pay them two & a half per cent & the interest to the Bank."[30] This corresponds directly with the way in which Andrew Welch was reported to have provided Sewell Moody with financial backing in about 1867: "He [Welch] came over and told Moody that there was a credit of $100,000 at the bank for him."[31] As will be discussed in Chapter 8, the Bank of BC provided capital to canning ventures as promissory notes, with a specific schedule of repayment and costs designed to work with the business cycle of the exporting industry. It is important to note that the Victoria commission merchants acted as brokers, agents, or mediators between producers, capital, and markets. They did not

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28. Another "Net proceeds to Advance Acct" of the Moodyville mill in late 1879 was $1,930.88. Advances to cover the cost of insurance in the same period were in the amounts of $123.75 and $101.25, listed in BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Vol.7A, Cash Book 1878-1879, 539, 541.

29. Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 159.

30. This was written just after Rithet had replaced Johnston as Sproat & Company's representative in San Francisco. BCA, MS-504, Box 2, R.P. Rithet Letterbook 1868-1871, 193, R.P. Rithet to G.M. Sproat, 12 March 1869.

31. BCA, vertical files, film 68, p.2326,"Mose Ireland – Pioneer," from Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 21 May 1905.

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provide specific material inputs, such as capital, but rather a wide range of services which made the export trades possible, for which they received commissions on transactions.

The Introduction of Export Sawmills on the Lower Mainland, 1862-1870

The early success of Alberni Mills in defining and supplying Pacific markets, combined with a population of gold rush adventurers noting the forest resources of the mainland colony, made the rise of more export mills inevitable. The first sawmill ventures on the mainland of British Columbia, established while Alberni Mills remained in full operation, focussed more on supplying the local market created by gold rush development, rather than on export markets. The man identified with the first such "domestic" venture was Thomas O'Donahue, who came from San Francisco in 1858 and established a sawmill in Victoria, then moved it to New Westminster the following year. In failing health, he sold his sawmill for $2,400 in February 1860, apparently to Joshua A.R. Homer. Homer advertised the products of his mill in *The British Columbian* in the spring of 1861.[32] In 1863, T.W. Graham & Company, "contractors and builders" of New Westminster, built a sawmill on a 480 acre pre-emption on the north shore of Burrard Inlet, at the mouth of Lyn Creek. The owners intended this sawmill, like O'Donahue's, to supply the local market in the towns of New Westminster, Victoria and Nanaimo. "The Pioneer Mills," with two circular saws and a 22 inch planer powered by an overshot waterwheel producing an estimated 50 HP, began cutting by June 1863. Its cutting capacity was estimated at 40,000 board feet per [24 hour] day, using timber logged on the pre-emption, and yarded to the mill with oxen. The Pioneer Mill could not compete with existing mills on Vancouver Island, New Westminster, and Puget Sound, so was auctioned in December 1863, and Graham gave up on the industry.[33]

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32. Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 32.

33. Howay, "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet," 4-5; Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 17; Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 32-35. The Lawrence version referred to the "T.W. Graham Co. of New Zealand and New Westminster," and named Philip Hicks as Thomas Graham's partner in the mill venture.

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John Oscar Smith, a New Westminster grocer, purchased the mill for $8,000 and renamed it The Burrard Inlet Mills, maintaining the concentration on local markets, except for one export shipment to Adelaide Australia in November 1864. Because Burrard Inlet was not a port of entry, the ship had to enter and clear at New Westminster, extending the loading process to some two months. The shipment comprised 277,500 board feet of sawn lumber and 16,000 pickets, some of it supplied by the J.A.R. Homer mill in New Westminster. Smith's venture failed in a year, when the mortgagee foreclosed and offered the mill and its 480 acre pre-emption at auction in New Westminster in January 1865.[34]

Meanwhile, in 1862 an attempt was made to establish an export sawmill in New Westminster. Moses Ireland, a former logger from Maine, who emigrated to California in 1851 and then to the Cariboo for the profitable 1861 season, was returning to California with a $2,000 stake when he met another former Maine lumberman, Sewell Prescott Moody, in New Westminster. Moody claimed he could double Ireland's money, and Ireland observed the adventurer's credo: "I said I'd stay anywhere to make a stake."[35] With Ireland's money, and $600 from Moody, the men increased their stake to $9,000 importing beef from Oregon to BC. In 1862 they, and their partner James Van Bramer, built an export sawmill in New Westminster, at a claimed cost of $60,000. This figure seems inflated by memory, based on the recorded capitalization of later mills, as well as the sale price of the Burrard Inlet in 1863 and 1865 [above and below]. The mill shipped

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Mose Ireland recalled in 1905 that he and his partners "decided to move our machinery" from their failed 1862 mill in New Westminster to Burrard Inlet. BCA, vertical files, film 68, p.2326,"Mose Ireland – Pioneer," from Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 21 May 1905. Morton, assuming that the New Westminster mill was also built in 1863, suggested that this was not possible. However, as discussed in Note 42 below, 1862 seems a more likely construction date for the New Westminster mill. This could mean that the 1863 mill venture identified with Graham and Hicks had some involvement by Moody, Ireland and Van Bramer, well before their purchase of it in 1865 [see below].

34. Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 35-37; Howay, "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet," 5-6; Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 17.

35. BCA, vertical files, film 68, p.2326,"Mose Ireland – Pioneer," from Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 21 May 1905.

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one export cargo, but the ship carrying it grounded on a sandbar and remained stuck for six weeks, frightening off any other potential shippers, and resulting in the failure of the sawmill.[36] Key elements in this narrative include the entrepreneurial intent of these gold rush adventurers, and their ability to establish a venture with capital raised in the context of the gold rush. The economic success they realized in the gold rush, combined with their human capital acquired by participation in the Maine lumber trade, let them initiate a new venture, based on the extraction, transformation, and export of commodities.

S.P. Moody and the Burrard Inlet Lumber Mills, 1865-1870

At the January 1865 auction of Smith's Burrard Inlet Mills, the operation was purchased by S.P. Moody & Company of New Westminster for $6,900, and renamed The Burrard Inlet Lumber Mills.[37] This firm included Moody's partners in the New Westminster export mill venture, Moses Ireland and James Van Bramer. Moody's bid to purchase the mill at the 1863 auction failed when Smith outbid him, but he acquired the mill in 1865 for $1,100 less than its 1863 sale price. After some improvements, the mill began cutting again by February 1865. Although maintaining an agency in New Westminster for the local market, Moody & Company concentrated more on the export

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36. The story of the beef and initial mill venture is from an 1905 interview with Moses Ireland. BCA, vertical files, film 68, p.2326,"Mose Ireland – Pioneer," from Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 21 May 1905. Ireland's narrative was repeated in some other sources, including "One of Nature's Noblemen," *Lumberman & Contractor*, Vol.2 (May 1905), 16; "The Heroism of Mose Ireland, Timber Cruiser," *Lumberman & Contractor*, Vol.3 (April 1906), 21; Moses Ireland, "Lumbering," *Western Lumberman and Contractor*, Vol.4 (June 1907), 21. Secondary interpretations based on these "Ireland" sources include Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 16; Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 31-32. Morton concluded, apparently based on an October 1862 reference to Ireland in New Westminster, that he and Moody met in the fall of 1862, and so built their mill in 1863. However, as the 1862 mining season was a failure, and Ireland specifically referred to 1861, it seems most likely that the meeting and mill venture occurred in the fall of 1861 and 1862 respectively.

37. One of the versions has the partnership of Moody, Ireland & Van Bramer purchasing the mill. Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 17. The version in the text is from Howay, "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet," 6.

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trade, sending two cargoes to Australia and two to Mexico in its first year of operation. In the spring of 1865 the colonial administration declared Burrard Inlet a port of entry by the colonial administration, eliminating the need to clear customs in New Westminster and facilitating shipping.[38] This declaration came after Edward Stamp, lobbying for concessions for his new Burrard Inlet sawmill venture, added his voice to that of Moody. Both entrepreneurs considered convenient customs and shipping arrangements essential to any export venture.[39] Moody's initial 1865 shipments to Australia hit a glutted market, and only realized $400. In October 1865 Moses Ireland left the partnership to return to mining after this disappointing result, but Moody persisted, in spite of the sawmill losing money over the next two years, supported by capital provided by Hugh McLean.[40] Moses Ireland recalled later that a turnaround came in about 1867, when Edward Stamp's new sawmill could not keep up with the demand, and turned to Moody to help fill its orders.

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38. Immediately on acquiring the sawmill, S.P. Moody & Company stated that the export of spars and sawn lumber was the focus of their business;. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1159, S.P. Moody & Company to Governor F. Seymour, [replied to] 16 February 1865. The venture's operation in 1865 is summarized from Howay, "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet," 6-7. The Joseph Lawrence version of the story lists the same ships taking lumber to Mexico, but describes their destination as Valparaiso. Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 18. The statement of 1865 exports shows that no cargoes were cleared directly for Chile, but lumber was shipped to Mexico, confirming the Howay version. It is entirely possible that some of the lumber destined for Vancouver Island was shipped on from that port to other Pacific markets, including Chile. BCA, GR-2957, British Columbia (Colony), Custom House Returns, 1859-1869 [*sic*; actually 1858-1869], 105, "Exports for the Year 1865" from the Colony of BC.

39. BCA, MS-120, file 1, Stamp's Mill: Corres. re Sawmill on Burrard Inlet, 3-6, Arthur N. Birch to E. Stamp, 20 May 1865; BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1159, S.P. Moody & Company to Governor F. Seymour, [replied to] 16 February 1865.

40. Ireland sold his interest to the other two partners; *The British Columbian*, 7 October 1865. Ireland's reminiscences stated that Van Bramer also left the partnership at this time. This apparently incorrect version is the one reported in Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 18-19. In an 1871 census of Victoria Moses Ireland was listed as a resident of Victoria. BCA, GR-0428, Vancouver Island, Police And Prisons Dept. Esquimalt, 44. The 1871 Victoria directory repeated this, noting that Ireland was a miner, living on Government Street. Edward Mallandaine, *First Victoria Directory and British Columbia Guide, 1871*, (Victoria: E. Mallandaine, 1871).

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"He [Moody] took the surplus orders, and in five months cleaned up $40,000. Andrew Welch was agent for Moody at 'Frisco. He knew of the big clean-up, and he could command capital. He came over and told Moody that there was a credit of $100,000 at the bank for him."[41]

The explanations offered for the lack of success of these Lower Mainland ventures have focussed on factors of commodity production, particularly the shortcomings of inexperienced entrepreneurs, or difficult transportation. This is consistent with the producer ethos-centric historiography of BC. However, as a corrective, it should be noted that there is no record of the involvement of commission merchants in the initial New Westminster mill venture, or in the first two iterations of the Burrard Inlet mill. This is in contrast to the more successful export industries discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, which enjoyed strong linkages to markets through the commission merchant firms that initiated or were integrally involved from the beginnings of these ventures. It appears that agents or commission merchants to facilitate the shipping and marketing of the commodities formed an essential part of the system of production. When such merchants became involved directly in the Burrard Inlet sawmills in the last half of the 1860s, the export forest industry from the region suddenly became viable, suggesting that a causal relationship existed.

In spite of the small scale of the S.P. Moody & Company venture, and the poor results of its first shipments to the Australian market, the potential returns on investment in such a business were good. Assuming the accuracy of the estimated 40,000 feet of lumber per day, it would take only three or four weeks to produce the 700,000 feet of rough lumber with a wholesale price more than equal to the $6,900 purchase price of the mill. Even factoring in operating expenses and wages, the very low initial capital investment, including the plant and the timber supply, would ensure that substantial profit levels were possible if the commodity could be placed on markets. Moody's persistence seemed well-founded, particularly in the context of Alberni Mills selling off its remaining

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41. BCA, vertical files, film 68, p.2326,"Mose Ireland – Pioneer," from Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 21 May 1905.

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stocks of lumber in 1865 before ceasing exports. After that, there would be little direct competition from colonial producers, while the Alberni venture established a relationship between BC producers and cicum-Pacific markets. Intending to expand his business in this climate of optimism and limited local competition, Moody turned to "his agent in San Francisco," Andrew Welch to obtain capital.[42] This relationship was confirmed in 1869, when it was noted that Sproat & Welch "has always had the advantage of the Agency of Moody's Mills."[43] The word "always" implies that this arrangement dated to 1865, the year that saw the formation of Sproat & Welch and S.P. Moody & Company's purchase of the Burrard Inlet sawmill. More evidence of Sproat & Welch's involvement came in an August 1866 newspaper article that copied a letter from Captain Gray of the *Jeddo* to "Welsh [*sic*], Sproat & Co." in San Francisco, the firm that engaged his ship to take a load of lumber from Moody's mill to Australia.[44]

It is clear from the chronology of the ex-Alberni Mills merchants that from late 1865 Andrew Welch was the San Francisco-based representative of the firm of Sproat & Welch, in partnership with the London partner, G.M. Sproat. Sproat & Company, with a Victoria office managed by R.P. Rithet, had assumed the interests of Anderson & Company on Vancouver Island. Sproat & Company remained actively involved in the business of the London firm of Anderson, Thomson & Company through at least 1869. The linkage between these companies and individuals makes it inevitable that Welch's partner Sproat would have been involved to some extent when Welch became more directly involved in Moody's business in about 1867.[45] The various commission firms linked through the Alberni Mills venture apparently shifted their interest and investment in

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42. Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 25-26.

43. BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Box 2, letterbook 1868-1871, 201-202, R.P. Rithet to G.M. Sproat, 6 April 1869.

44. Gray commented on the high quality of the timber in the region, and how fine Burrard Inlet was as a harbour, contrary to what he had heard around San Francisco. "Burrard Inlet," *The British Columbian*, 25 August 1866, 3.

45. Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 16, 25-26.

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the forest industry to Moody's Burrard Inlet mill almost immediately upon the winding up of the operations of the older mill in 1865. The network of contacts and affiliations in San Francisco and London that applied to the earlier venture transferred to the newer one. This suggests that these commission merchants considered the export of forest products from BC to be viable, but shifted their focus to Burrard Inlet, apparently viewing it as more suitable for production than Alberni.

As well as the essential support of the commission merchants, Moody attracted the successful gold rush entrepreneurs George Dietz and Hugh Nelson to his venture in his 1866 expansion initiative.[46] They had an earlier business linkage with Moody through a proposed coal mining venture on Burrard Inlet in 1864-1865.[47] The Irish-born Nelson came to Victoria in response to 1858 Fraser River gold rush, and became involved in transportation to the mainland mines. In 1862 he acted as the secretary of the Yale Steam Navigation Company, and later the same year, in partnership with George Dietz, one of two brothers drawn by the gold rush, bought the Pioneer Express company from W.J. Ballou. Developing this into a successful transport company over the next five years, Dietz and Nelson diversified into other industries, including Moody's sawmill.[48] While

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46. The participation of Nelson and Dietz in S.J. Moody & Company is noted in; Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 71; Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 16, 25-26

47. Dietz and Moody applied for a 6 month lease on 640 acres, with the proviso that after spending £500 on development they could purchase the land. They were granted the lease at the end of 1864, and an extension on it in June 1865. In July 1865 the partners, with the addition of J.P. Cranford, were applying for 6-9,000 acres of land for their intended joint stock coal mining company. The land would provide "some real and striking advantages that would operate so as to overcome the reluctance of English Capital to go abroad." This application was based on the size of the land grants received by the coal companies on Vancouver Island. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 472, G. Dietz & S.P. Moody to Colonial Secretary, 24 November 1864; *ibid.*, A.N. Birch to Dietz & Moody, 30 December 1864; *ibid.*, Dietz & Moody to A.N. Birch, 8 June 1865; *ibid.*, A.N. Birch to Dietz & Moody, 13 June 1865; *ibid.*, Dietz, Moody & J.P. Cranford to A.N. Birch, 19 July 1865.

48. George Dietz was the brother of William Dietz, also prominent in the early Cariboo gold rush as the discoverer of Williams Creek, one of the major strikes; Scholefield and

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Lawrence explicitly credited Andrew Welch with the new investment in the company in 1866-68, Morton believed that it was capital provided by Dietz and Nelson that made this phase of expansion possible.[49]

The factors that probably contributed most to this new interest and investment in Moody's sawmill were the closing of the Alberni venture, and Edward Stamp's new initiative to develop an export mill on the south side of Burrard Inlet. Welch, and by extension Sproat and Anderson & Thomson, turned their interest directly from the abandoned production facility on Alberni Inlet to the newer one on Burrard Inlet. Given the potential profits of the operation, the entry of local investors is not surprising, but more than their capital, it would be the linkage with potential markets provided by Welch and Sproat that was essential to the mill's success. Welch's investor and agent role echoed that of Stamp & Company and Anderson & Company in the Alberni Mills venture. The relationship between agents or commission merchants and producers remained ambiguous. In this case, it seems that the presence of an existing small-scale production facility on Burrard Inlet was enough to attract a consortium of commission merchants already exporting forest products from British Columbia. Probably it was their direct influence that led S.P. Moody & Company to expand to meet the export market demand

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Howay and E.O.S. Scholefield, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 77. As well as his association with the S.P. Moody & Company, George Dietz was a director of the BC Coal Mining Company, and was involved in the Cherry Creek Gold and Silver Mining Company. "Billy" Ballou had been an expressman in California, and set up the first such business between Victoria and the Fraser River in June 1858. When the competing express company of F.J. Barnard won the government mail contract to the interior in July 1862, Ballou decided to retire from the business, selling it to Dietz and Nelson in October. Instead of competing directly with Barnard, the new partnership arranged to divide the route with his company, with Dietz and Nelson operating between Victoria, Yale and Lillooet, and Barnard handling the inland sections. Dietz and Nelson operated their express business until December 1867, when they sold out to F.J. Barnard. *Ibid.*, 127-129; Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 71-72.

49. Morton wrote that"it was probably their [Dietz and Nelson's] money which allowed Moody to expand," although it was unclear if they were actively involved in the venture at this time. Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 72.

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for commodities.

As part of this expansion, Moody took steps to guarantee the supply of logs essential to the system of production. At the end of January, 1866 the colonial administration granted a lease on 5,000 acres to S.P. Moody & Company, ensuring access to an adequate timber supply.[50] With new capital, new partners, and guaranteed land tenure and timber supply, Moody & Company began development, installing a new steam powered mill in the summer of 1868, that increased the capacity of the plant to 50,000 board feet of lumber per [12-hour] day.[51] From January 1867 to the summer of 1868, it was reported that Moody's mill cut some 5,832,000 board feet of lumber and produced 800,000 shingles, while thirty-three vessels had been loaded at the mill, although Stamp's mill on the south side of the inlet may have exported more lumber in this period.[52] Moody's sawmill produced an average of about 324,000 board feet of lumber per month, or just over 16,000 feet per day, assuming twenty working days per month. Joseph Lawrence claimed that the Moody & Company sawmill returned a profit, and that Welch's success with this investment "encouraged other San Francisco capitalists to investigate the Burrard Inlet industry."[53] Assuming a wholesale price at the mill of about $10 per thousand board feet of lumber, the production noted would have represented a gross value of about $38,500 per year, up nearly fifty percent from the roughly $26,000 [£5,262]

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50. BCA, MS-120, file 1, Stamp's Mill: Corres. re Sawmill on Burrard Inlet, 26-32, Indenture, January 1866; *ibid.*, 34-37, J. Trutch to Attorney General, 30 January 1866.

51. The Moody & Company steam sawmill was nearing completion in August 1868, and was to begin cutting in the first part of September. *The British Columbian*, 19 August 1868, 3; *ibid.*, 9 September 1868, 2. Other details of the company's development in this period are given in; Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 72-73; Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 16, 25-26.

52. Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 73.

53. Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 29.

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worth of sawn lumber exported in 1865.[54] These figures suggest that Lawrence's presumption of healthy profits is correct.

The historiography of this venture emphasizes the producer virtues and entrepreneurial skill of Moody, the venture's manager, suggesting this was central to the successful development of the export lumber trade from Burrard Inlet.[55] However, given the integral involvement of the commission merchants already active in the export lumber trade, the success of the venture may not be attributed to this one factor. The preference for Moody as a "producer," rather than the other partners as agents or capitalists, seems to reflect again the way in which the producer ethos affected not only nineteenth century attitudes in British Columbia, but how it has influenced the historiography of the province.

Sewell Moody lost his life at sea in November 1875, en route to San Francisco.[56] Hugh Nelson, already a partner in the company, took over as manager until leaving to assume political office in 1882. In January 1879 Moody, Dietz & Nelson became the Moodyville Sawmill Company, with an enlarged list of partners, including the long-time participants Hugh Nelson and Andrew Welch. Added were James Burns, the manager of the Bank of British North America in Victoria; M.W. Tyrwhitt Drake, a prominent Victoria lawyer; Peter McQuade; and Captain John Irving, of the New Westminster steamboating family. The company was eventually sold to a newly formed company, the Moodyville Land and Sawmill Company for $1,000,000 in 1891.[57]

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54. The $10 per thousand board feet figure is based on the estimates of rough lumber prices raised in Chapter 5, as well as the prices noted in 1865. Similar prices were confirmed in the 1870s, when the price of "ordinary" lengths of Douglas Fir sawn lumber was given as 40 to 44 shillings [$10.00 to $11.00]. Brown, *The Countries of the World*, Vol.1, 262.

55. Two of the more detailed studies of the venture both emphasize the entrepreneurial skill or "enterprise" of Moody. Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 27-28; Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, throughout.

56. This is reported in many sources, including McDonald, *Making Vancouver*, 8.

57. Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," p.28. Drake was one of the lawyers petitioning for dissolution of the Alberni Mills partnership in 1863, acting for Thomson & Company

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Edward Stamp and the British Columbia and Vancouver Island Spar, Lumber and Saw-Mill Company, Limited, 1865-1870

Edward Stamp re-entered the export lumber industry soon after leaving the Alberni Mills venture at the end of 1862. In March 1863, while T.W. Graham & Company built the first sawmill on Burrard Inlet, Stamp, in England, sent out a party to locate a new source for spar timber. They chose a location at Port Neville, on the mainland side of Johnson Strait, based on the quantity and quality of its timber. By May 1863 a party of "11 lumbermen, 8 work oxen, and a cargo of provisions and feed" was sent to initiate a logging and spar export operation, in advance of building "sawmills on a most extensive scale."[58] On his return from England, Stamp negotiated with the colonial administration for exclusive timber rights in the area, noting that "my agent J. Rogers" had already pre-empted land at Port Neville.[59] Stamp invoked the producer ethos, and the doctrine of highest use of natural resources in support of colonial development: "I trust my exertions in opening up the resources of this country may not be overlooked by the government, especially as the result to myself has not been very beneficial."[60] The "inducements" Stamp requested included 2,000 acres of land for the mill site and agriculture, together with 8-10,000 acres of timber land, either on the Mainland coast or on Vancouver Island, "for which I am willing to pay any reasonable amount of stumpage, cut per acre, or

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against Edward Stamp, so had a previous link to the ex-Alberni Mills participants now involved in the Moodyville mill. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 9 January 1863, 3.

58. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 18 June 1863; Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 26 May 1863, 3

59. *Ibid.*, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 18 June 1863. Jeremiah Rogers was the same logging contractor or timber cruiser identified as working with Stamp at the beginning of the Alberni Mills venture, and also as the primary contractor supplying Stamp's later mill on Burrard Inlet with logs. His identification as Stamp's "agent" here is interesting.

60. *Ibid.*, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 22 September 1863.

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otherwise."[61] Stamp headed off to England again, to purchase machinery, intending to return in the spring of 1864 and choose the lands he wanted.[62]

After more travels to and from England, Stamp arrived back in Victoria in March 1865, within two months of Moody's purchase of the Burrard Inlet sawmill and the winding up of the Alberni Mills operation. By May Stamp, after a search extending from New Westminster to Port Neville, selected a new site on Burrard Inlet, on the Government Reserve just inside the First Narrows [present day Stanley Park]. He believed that the chosen location would provide access to enough timber in the region of Fraser River, Burrard Inlet, and Howe Sound to supply a cargo mill. Stamp presented the colonial administration with a list of requests and conditions closely following those of the Alberni venture.[63]

The company formed to operate this venture was based in London, and claimed to have £100,000 [$500,000] of available capital. The board of directors gave Stamp "carte blanche" to establish a mill and direct all operations in British Columbia, focussing on spar and lumber production. The amount of capital, "command" of shipping, and access to foreign markets were presented as advantages of this operation over existing ones, such as the Burrard Inlet Lumber Mill. John Robson, the editor of *The British Columbian* applauded this new initiative as an economic and social panacea for its region of the colony, suggesting the additional shipping would provide new opportunities for existing mills, and that Stamp's access to the British market would result in a forest industry boom. The editorialist hoped that more shipping would improve the availability and price of consumer goods, and that the British North American model of ships bringing emigrants from Britain and returning with timber would be followed, to encourage the "British"

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61. *Ibid.*

62. *Ibid.*, Edward Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 2 October 1863. Stamp requested that "Hornsbys Island" be exempted from pre-emption, as it was his preferred agricultural site.

63. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 25 March 1865, 3; BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to A.N. Birch, 19 April 1865; *ibid.*, Edward Stamp to A.N. Birch, 17 May 1865.

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population desired in the colony.[64] The newspaper encouraged Stamp's latest sawmill initiative because it supported the doctrine of development, and the construction of a colonial economy and society along guidelines consistent with liberal ideology and the producer ethos.

The colonial secretary, Arthur Birch, responded positively to Stamp's proposal, demonstrating that the venture corresponded to the intent of the colonial administration. Burrard Inlet became a Port of Entry so that ships would not need to clear customs at New Westminster or Victoria, and machinery and supplies intended for the construction of the mill would enter free of duty. The colony permitted Stamp to purchase 100 acres, at $1 per acre, on the government reserve adjacent to his desired sawmill site, as long as it did not conflict with Moody's "Fort" site. Stamp received permission to cut timber on the government reserve, and was granted a right of way between his sawmill site and a stream on the reserve. He could lease up to 15,000 acres of "timbered land" for 21 years, at 1¢ per acre per year as long as he defined the boundaries, which could not impinge on existing claims. Following the earlier applications for Alberni and Hornby Island, Stamp could purchase, at an upset price of $1 per acre, 1,200 acres of grazing land for cattle. Birch allayed Stamp's concerns about the security of his tenure, suggesting that the process of pre-emption review protected existing occupants of a claim.[65] The terms and conditions demanded by Stamp to establish his new venture on Burrard Inlet closely resembled those presented for Alberni Mills over five years earlier. As discussed in Chapter 5, this lack of change suggests that Stamp considered the inputs of land, timber, and government financial concessions surrounding the Alberni Mills venture adequate and appropriate for the establishment of an export sawmill operation.

Echoing the situation at Alberni, the chosen sawmill location included the site of a First Nations settlement, identified by the surveyor, but dismissed as inconsequential by

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64. "The Lumber Trade," *The British Columbian*, 29 April 1865, 2.

65. BCA, MS-120, file 1, Stamp's Mill: Corres. re Sawmill on Burrard Inlet, 3-6, A.N. Birch to E. Stamp, 20 May 1865.

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Chartres Brew, the Justice of the Peace for the district.[66] The doctrine of progress and the highest beneficial use of land and resources took precedence again over the interests of Aboriginal use and occupation. Once development started on the Burrard Inlet site, Stamp encountered "obstacles," that led to him requesting a new site further east, midway between the original one and "the end of the new Road" from New Westminster, and within another government reserve.[67] Once the new location was settled, the required land grants and purchases were arranged in Stamp's name, as the agent of the "British Columbia and Vancouver Island Spar, Lumber and Saw-Mill Company, Limited."[68] The colony restricted the purchases to lands around Burrard Inlet, as the claims Stamp wanted. on Howe Sound and at Port Neville were not well known or surveyed.[69]

Stamp remained concerned about the security of his land tenure, but the colony assured him that any pre-emption applications must be approved both by the colonial administration and the mill superintendent.[70] By the spring of 1866, some conflicts arose between Stamp's claim and pre-existing claims.[71] While negotiating with the colonial administration, Stamp called for tenders on building a sawmill, including engine and boiler

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66. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 969, J.B. Launders to A.N. Birch, 3 June 1865; *ibid.*, file 194, Chartres Brew to A.N. Birch, 7 June 1865.

67. *Ibid.*, file 1643, Edward Stamp to A.N. Birch, 18 July 1865.

68. *Ibid.*, file 1643, Chartres Brew to Colonial Secretary, 11 August 1865; BCA, MS-120, file 1, Stamp's Mill: Corres. re Sawmill on Burrard Inlet, 7-9, Charles Good to Attorney General, 28 August 1865.

69. *Ibid.*, 10-12, Joseph Trutch to C.P.P. Crease, 6 September 1865.

70. *Ibid.*, E. Stamp to C.P.P. Crease, 28 September 1865; *ibid.*, 15-17, A.N. Birch to Attorney General, 30 September 1865.

71. A flume to carry water from a nearby lake to the mill's boilers cut across some privately held land. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, E. Stamp to Joseph Trutch, 21 March 1866, attached sheet of comments. The Stamp claim was also found to be in conflict with the pre-existing claim of the deceased Valentine Hall, apparently assumed by his brother. *Ibid.*, file 1643, Chartres Brew to [Colonial Secretary?], 27 March 1866.

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houses, grading the site, and laying a foundation. Significantly, the tenders were to be presented to Stamp, "at the office of Messrs. Dickson, Campbell & Co." in Victoria.[72] This provides the first direct evidence of participation in the venture by this firm or its San Francisco affiliate Dickson DeWolf & Company, in 1869-1870 identified as the financial agent and owner, respectively, of the BC & VI [later Hastings] Sawmill [see below]. The tenders ranged between $13,000 and $30,000, apparently higher than Stamp anticipated, as he decided to build the mill himself rather than employing a contractor.[73]

The colony and the British Columbia and Vancouver Island Spar Lumber and Sawmill Company Limited signed an indenture on November 17, 1865. For $245.78 US [annotated £50.13.6, an exchange rate of $4.85 per pound], the company purchased 1,200 acres of freehold land on the south side of Burrard Inlet. It acquired a lease on 15,000 acres of timber land, with the "reservation of preemptive and other rights," at a rate of a halfpenny sterling per acre per year. The lands previously alienated in the area, including the reservation on False Creek for the BC Coal Mining Company Ltd., and the 600 acre "Coal Reserve" of Dietz and Moody, were recognized in the document. The conditions imposed by the colony were fairly minimal. Of particular interest was the one stating that the land would only be held as long as there was no more than a three month hiatus in operations. This provides clear evidence of the colonial attitude that an occupant had no right to hold "idle" land. The privileges accorded to an entrepreneur such as Stamp were contingent on some evidence of contributing to the progress or development of the colony.[74]

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72. The plans and specifications were at the architectural office of F.W. Green. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 30 June 1865, p.3.

73. *Ibid.*

74. BCA, MS-120, file 2, Stamp's Mill: Indentures - B.C. & Vancouver Island Spar Lumber Co. - 1865 - BC & Jeremiah Rogers, 1867, 1-9. The 1,200 acres purchased was priced at 4 shillings and 2 pence per acre. The Crown Grant to Stamp was for Lot 196 Group 1. *Ibid.*, file 1, Stamp's Mill: Corres. re Sawmill on Burrard Inlet, 19-20, J. Trutch to Attorney General, 17 November 1865. A somewhat different version is given by Alan Morley as the Hastings Mill Land Lease of November 30, 1865. The figure of £50.13.6 is

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Curiously, considering the acrimonious circumstances in which Stamp had left the Alberni Mills partnership, Joseph Lawrence reported that Stamp was a minority owner in the new company, with most of the capital supplied by the same two English firms involved in the earlier venture, James Thomson & Company and Thomas Bilbe & Company.[75] Writing to the Legislative Council of the colony of British Columbia in 1868, Stamp noted he was acting on behalf of Mr. C.W. Fitzwilliam, the chairman of the British Columbia and Vancouver Island Spar Lumber and Sawmill Company.[76] As noted in Chapter 6, Fitzwilliam, an English MP and member of an aristocratic family holding extensive coal interests in Yorkshire, was a member of the initial board of directors of the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company. Both Stamp's sawmill and the VCMLC were linked to the Victoria commission merchant firm of Dickson, Campbell & Company, and apparently this link extended to the ownership of the ventures as well. Sproat & Company had a continuing business link to Anderson Thomson & Company in London, and Sproat was in a partnership with Andrew Welch of San Francisco, the agent and partner in S.P. Moody & Company. It seems possible that both of the export mills developing on Burrard Inlet in the mid-1860s shared much stronger business linkages than were made apparent at the time, or are reported in the literature.[77] The simultaneous

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repeated, for "Lot 196, Group 1, of 243 acres, 37 perches, in fee simple, to be known as the Sawmill Claim, in the heart of future Vancouver; also 5254 acres on the south shore of English Bay, 2897 acres on the North Arm of the Fraser River, 1920 acres on Howe Sound, 1280 acres at Port Neville, as timber leases; the right to select for purchase 1200 additional acres at four shillings, twopence an acre; the right to select 15,000 additional acres of timber leases, and whatever water rights necessary to the company's undertakings. The total payment was $244.04." Alan Morley, *Vancouver - From Milltown to Metropolis* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1974), 36-37.

75 . Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 24-25.

76. Hendrickson, *Journals of the Colonial Legislatures*, Vol.IV, 106, E.Stamp to Legislature, 18 August 1868.

77. Thomson & Company's address on "Billiter Court, London" was given in its 1863 lawsuit against Stamp, while G.M. Sproat's London address was given as "12 Billiter Street" some five years later. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 9 January 1863, 3; BCA, MS 264,

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construction of Stamp's mill and development of Moody's mill into an export facility may have been part of a larger strategy on the part of an affiliated group of capitalists and commission merchants based in Victoria, San Francisco, and London. The parallels to the structure of the Vancouver Island coal mining industry, in which overall systems of production were determined by a similar combination of commission merchants directing capital and providing access to markets, and a mix of local and foreign capital, are evident.

In spite of the references to the new sawmill company being capitalized at £100,000 [roughly $500,000, depending on the exchange rate applied], this seems to greatly exceed the capital requirements of establishing such a venture. Constructing the mill buildings and purchasing and installing the machinery were the most expensive elements, with the cost of the former suggested by the tendered estimates of $13,000 to $30,000. As noted earlier in this chapter, the Burrard Inlet sawmill operation, complete with land, building, and machinery, sold in 1863 and 1865 for $8,000 and $6,900 respectively. Even allowing for a heavy discount on such forced sales of unsuccessful businesses, this suggests the market value of such an operation. When the Royal City Planing Mills Company, with its extensive sawmill operation, was incorporated in 1880, its stated capitalization was $30,000, or around six percent of that claimed by the BC & VI Spar Lumber and Sawmill Company fifteen years earlier.[78] The fixed startup costs of Stamp's company included about $250 for freehold land, $150 per year for the timber lease, and presumably under $13,000 for the mill construction, given that Stamp rejected a construction tender for that amount. Added to this would be the cost of machinery and materials, as well as agents' fees and sawmill labour for the first year. Additional capital expenditures claimed for Stamp's venture included the construction of a steam tugboat, and the purchase of the machinery for the mill. The company built its 146-foot sidewheel

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Findlay, Durham and Brodie, Box 1, file 2, invoice to Findlay & Durham, 30 July 1868. The relationships between Sproat, Welch, and Thomson & Company are described in more detail earlier in this chapter.

78. *The British Columbia Gazette, 1880*, 214; BCA, GR-1438, Film B.4411, Register of Companies, No.10(1878), Royal City Planing Mills Company Ltd.

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tug, the *Isabel*, in Victoria for a claimed cost of $50,000. She was launched in July 1866 by Mrs. J.G. Shepherd, the wife of the manager of the Bank of British North America, suggesting a business relationship between that firm and the sawmill company.[79] In October 1866 the *British Columbian* reported that the company had spent $80,000 on its sawmill to date, but cutting could not begin until some necessary machinery arrived.[80] The late delivery of the anticipated machinery delayed lumber production about eighteen months, and led to a successful lawsuit against the supplier. Although the first shipment of machinery arrived in January 1866, the sawmill did not start cutting until June 1867.[81] It was not made clear if the $80,000 spent on the venture included the *Isabel*, so the reported total capitalization of the venture was $80,000 or $130,000, in either case far below the $500,000 capital claimed by the company. In early 1867 Stamp, in his role as the member for Lillooet in the legislative council of the newly-consolidated colony of British Columbia, lobbied for a road connecting his venture to the New Westminster road. He supported his cause by citing the £25,000 [$125,000] spent by his company on its Burrard Inlet venture.[82] By applying this argument, Stamp reinforced the emphasis placed on a contribution to progress and development of the colony, and incidentally provided a more realistic estimate of the cost of the operation.

Accepting Stamp's rhetorical, so quite possibly inflated, $125,000 estimate of claimed capital costs, the potential for profits remained substantial. The first shipment of 251 spars sent from the operation to Ireland in November 1865 was valued at $50,000,

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79. Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 56-57; Howay, "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet," 10.

80. "Our Forest Wealth," *The British Columbian*, 13 October 1866, 1.

81. Some of the parts missing from the January 1866 shipment arrived in November 1866, and the remaining ones in April 1867. The sawmill company was reported to have won damages in a lawsuit against the supplier. An attempt to gain higher damages in a lawsuit suggests a possible explanation for the very high price claimed for of the machinery; Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 49, 57-58; Howay, "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet," 10-11.

82. *The British Columbian*, 16 February 1867, 3.

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and a second, January 1866 shipment to Scotland at $59,000.[83] Although this $200-$220 price per spar was atypically high, the $109,000 gross value of these two shipments would have returned a significant profit for Stamp's company, even allowing for the payment to Jeremiah Rogers, the logging contractor, and shipping, insurance, and other costs. Given the high value of such commodities, it seems that rather than the cost of production, it was placing the products on export markets that determined the viability of a venture, repeating the situation observed in the Vancouver Island coal mining industry. The cargoes of the chartered ships carrying Stamp's first two spar shipments were completed with lumber cut by Moody's mill, with the two shipments totalling 238,705 feet. This supports the existence of a high degree of cooperation between the two ventures at this stage, with Stamp supplying spars and Moody supplying sawn lumber. Jeremiah Rogers, under contract to Stamp's firm, cut all the spars on the south side of English Bay, in the district later known as Jericho, a corrupted form of Rogers' name. This arrangement continued at least through June 1867, when Stamp's new steam mill began cutting.[84]

In 1867 and the first half of 1868, Stamp's operation produced 4,101,000 board feet of lumber, 100,000 shingles, and about 2,000 spars.[85] As the mill did not start cutting until June 1867, this represented an average monthly production of about 341,750 feet of lumber, or roughly 17,100 feet per day, assuming twenty working days per month. Assuming a wholesale price at the mill of some $10 per thousand board feet of lumber, this would have represented a gross value of sawn lumber of about $41,000 per year, roughly $10,000 less than Moody's sawmill. The value of spars could have ranged from a low of $38,700 to a high of $266,700, based on contemporary values. Assuming a conservative median value of $40 per spar would give a value of about $53,300.[86]

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83. Howay, "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet," 9-10.

84. *Ibid.*, 9-11.

85. Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 73.

86. This wide range of values reflects the variability of prices given for spars in the 1860s. They were usually priced per foot, with that figure based on their diameter and whether

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Together, a conservative estimate of the gross value of commodities produced by the operation in 1867 would be $80,000. Again, as in the case of the S.P Moody & Company mill, the potential for high profits, based on the wholesale value of commodities and the cost of production, is evident.

In 1865 Jeremiah Rogers cut spars on land controlled by Stamp's company, but in the fall of 1866, Rogers demonstrated an intent to become an independent producer, when he began negotiations to lease timber lands on the colonial government's Naval Reserve, today's Stanley Park. Understanding that he had a lease, he began to improve the land, at "considerable cost"to himself.[87] In February 1867 the Commissioner of Lands informed Rogers that his lease was barred by the prior claim of Edward Stamp. Rogers continued to log on the Reserve, and by the spring of 1868 this escalated into a criminal case, with charges of trespass laid against him. Rogers continued to seek timber lands, intending to continue logging to fill an existing contract for spars for England.[88] This conflict has been attributed to a falling out between Stamp and Rogers over a disputed financial claim by the

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they were in the round, or had been hewn to a square or octagonal section. Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 140. The average price of spars from Alberni Mills in 1862 was given as $29, while in 1865 the average value was given as $200. Spars exported to Mexico in 1873 averaged $87.50, while those sent to China averaged $38.00 each. Lamb, "Early Lumbering Part II," 104; BCA, GR-2957, British Columbia (Colony), Custom House Returns, 1859-1869 [*sic* ; actually 1858-1869], 105; BC, Sessional Papers, 1873-74, "Export of goods ... for the year ending June 30, 1873," 14-15.

87. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1533, J. Rogers to Frederick Seymour, 8 September 1868. Rogers' story is confirmed by the existence of an undated 1867 indenture between "Jeremiah Rogers Lumberer" and the colony of BC for land on the Naval Reserve. BCA, MS-120, file 2, Stamp's Mill: Indentures - BC & Vancouver Island Spar Lumber Co. - 1865 - BC & Jeremiah Rogers, 1867, 10-15.

88. If he was not to be granted the lease desired, Rogers requested compensation from the colonial administration for the improvements made and lost. He referred to ten years' "lawful residency" in the colonies in support of his claim to land, confirming that he had come with Stamp in 1858. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1533, J. Rogers to Frederick Seymour, 8 September 1868.

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latter against Stamp's company.[89] In the summer of 1868 charges of trespass on the Naval Reserve were brought against Rogers and Jonathan Miller, another logging contractor. In *The British Columbian,* John Robson attributed these charges to Edward Stamp's vendetta against potential competitors, manipulating the colonial state to maintain his dominance. Robson's objection was grounded in the ideology of the meritocracy and producer ethos, in which equal opportunity for all potential independent producers superceded the interests of "monopolists" or speculators. The colony demonstrated its support of the producer ethos in December 1868 with leases to Rogers and Miller to cut on the government reserves, which Stamp interpreted as state punishment for his dispute with Rogers. At a public meeting in July 1868, a resolution was presented to allow logging "in the public interest," and if it was later found to be illegal, that the loggers should be compensated.[90] This resolution reflects a general support for the exploitation of resources in support of the development of the colony that superceded the legal niceties of land and resource tenure.

At the same time that this question of land tenure was being considered, other economic and personal issues were rising. First, the economic viability of the sawmill was being questioned, due to the duties on materials and equipment levied by the colonial government. Stamp wrote to the Acting Colonial Secretary in early 1868 on this issue, asking if the "drawback of Fifty cents per thousand feet" on all lumber exported was to be

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89. Stamp suggested that the timber resources around Burrard Inlet were being taken from one company and given to another, on the basis of his perceived disputes with the logging contractors Miller and Rogers. He denied any conflict, or even dealings with, Miller, but acknowledged a falling out with Rogers, who: "had the misfortune to fall into the hands of dishonest and designing men who persuaded him to prefer a claim against the company for Fifty five thousand dollars when they only owed and were willing to pay him six thousand and which amount only was awarded to him by a competent tribunal." *Ibid.*, file 1643, E. Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 14 December 1868.

90. The resolution was presented on July 31 by Captain William Irving, a riverboat captain from New Westminster. This dispute is discussed in some detail in Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 81-84.

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enacted.[91] Stamp, as a member of the Legislative Council, moved that the colony grant relief from duties on materials and supplies imported for sawmills competing with those on Puget Sound. The counterproposal recommended by the Council in March 1867, was to instead grant 50¢ for each thousand feet of lumber exported.[92] Without such relief, Stamp wrote that the company "which I represent" would not continue to operate the sawmill. The owners had reached the conclusion that the heavy duties on supplies and materials made the venture uncompetitive with the Puget Sound mills. Noting that the "Saw Mill I represent is the property of English capitalists" Stamp cautioned that its failure "would injure the best interests of the Colony." In spite of this warning, by August 1868 the proposed drawback on exported lumber was dead.[93] The loss of timber lands to the logging contractors, and the perceived reneging of the colonial administration on land and financial arrangements may have contributed to the decision of the BC & VI Spar Lumber and Sawmill Company to wind up its operations the following year.

As well as these operational issues, conflict developed between Stamp and the "English capitalists" he represented, involving many of the commission merchant firms discussed earlier in this chapter. In late 1868 R.P. Rithet reported that Stamp wished to go to England to pursue a lawsuit with Anderson & Company. There had been friction between Stamp and the "Agents of of [*sic*] the Company [presumably meaning Anderson & Company] in San Francisco" for some time.[94] Writing to Matthew Johnston, in San

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91. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, E. Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 22 January 1868.

92. Hendrickson, *Journals of the Colonial Legislatures*, Vol.V, 55, 82, 6 & 22 March 1867.

93. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, E. Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 22 January 1868. Stamp wrote to the colonial administration again in August, on behalf of C.W. Fitzwilliam, the Chairman of the sawmill company, at which time his request for the drawback was denied. Hendrickson, *Journals of the Colonial Legislatures*, Vol.IV, 106, E.Stamp to Legislature, 18 August 1868.

94. BCA, MS-504, Box 2, R.P. Rithet Letterbook 1868-1871, 164, R.P. Rithet to M.T. Johnston (Sproat & Company), 30 November 1868. This could relate to Stamp's

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Francisco, Rithet noted that he was trying "to obtain some information regarding Stamp's arrangements with the Company," but without success:

> I am much pleased that there is still a chance of something resulting from Stamp's business as I beleive [*sic*] that it would be a most important arrangement for you. Considering of Course that the Company are all right and not likely to give up the Mill, but of this I know nothing beyond the inference that unless they are you would not have agreed to accept the appointment.[95]

Rithet identified "Nicholson & Raymur" at this time, in November 1868, as potential managers of the "Mills"[author's emphasis], in the event that Stamp left for England.[96] Discussions in 1866 concerning a firm to replace Dickson, Campbell & Company as the Victoria affiliate of Dickson DeWolf & Company offered Mr. Nicholson as a possibility.[97] Dickson DeWolf and Rithet viewed these men in the dual capacity of commission merchant and sawmill manager. In the same November 1868 letter, Rithet referred to an order for spars that had been put out to tender, but without any replies. Presumably on behalf of Sproat & Company, Rithet had "gone into the Spar Contract" with a willing Sewell Moody, but that he still had to see "Rodgers [*sic*] on the Subject and

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expressed desire on retiring from the management of the mill in January 1869 to "contemplate" visiting England. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 4 January 1869, 3.

95. BCA, MS-504, Box 2, R.P. Rithet Letterbook 1868-1871, 163, R.P. Rithet to M.T. Johnston (Sproat & Company), 30 November 1868. The "Company" that Rithet was referring to is probably Anderson & Company, as he referred to making out its accounts in an earlier letter to Johnston. *Ibid.*, 150-155, R.P. Rithet to M.T. Johnston (Sproat & Company), 15 October 1868.

96. *Ibid.*, 164-167, R.P. Rithet to M.T. Johnston (Sproat & Company), 30 November 1868.

97. There were two proposals raised by Dickson De Wolf & Company; one including George Campbell and Nicholson, the other involving setting Nicholson up on his own. Both were intended to take over the business of the older Victoria company. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 471A, Dickson, De Wolf & Company to C.W. Wallace, 25 September 1866.

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ascertain whether he will be willing."[98] A month later, this spar contract seemed to be the cause of some animosity from Anderson Thomson & Company directed towards Rithet and his partners in the contract.[99]

The information above suggests the close linkages between the individuals and firms involved, and portrays ongoing, and sometimes conflicting, intervention by the San Francisco and London agents in the operations of the BC & VI Spar Lumber and Sawmill Company. The relationship between Stamp and his British partners may have been ambivalent from the start of the venture. It would appear that an attempt was made to ease Stamp out of his role as a contracting agent in the lucrative spar business, which would explain the conflict between him and the logging contractors Rogers and Miller. If the latter controlled timber resources, they could supply Victoria or San Francisco merchants with spars directly, without going through Stamp's company. The animosity between Anderson Thomson & Company and Sproat & Company over the November 1868 spar contract could relate to the same issue. Anderson Thomson & Company appears to have dominated these dealings, and may not have wished to share its profits with other firms filling similar roles as agents. The dominant position of Anderson Thomson & Company was suggested by the financial arrangements made to pay duties by Sproat & Company in early 1869: "...the Bank of British Columbia advance for duties, under guarantee by Anderson Thomson & Co. $30,000. as required by us, and that for this guarantee we pay them two & a half per cent & the interest to the Bank."[100]

In January, 1869, Stamp retired from the management of the sawmill, replaced by James A. Raymur, who, as previously noted, worked for Anderson & Company, was closely linked to R.P. Rithet, and remained the manager of the mill until after 1881. The Victoria firm of Dickson, Campbell & Company, which as noted above was associated

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98. BCA, MS-504, Box 2, R.P. Rithet Letterbook 1868-1871, 164-167, R.P. Rithet to M.T. Johnston (Sproat & Company), 30 November 1868.

99. *Ibid.*, 175, R.P. Rithet to M.T. Johnston (Sproat & Company), 15 December 1868.

100. This was written just after Rithet had replaced Johnston as Sproat & Company's representative in San Francisco. *Ibid.*, 193, R.P. Rithet to G.M. Sproat, 12 March 1869.

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with Stamp from the beginning of the venture in 1865, would take over as the financial agent for the sawmill.[101] This designation of Dickson, Campbell & Company as agents reinforced the apparent linkages between the BC & VI Spar Lumber and Sawmill Company and the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company, given the commission merchant firm's role as sales agent for the VCMLC, and as the Victoria affiliate of the San Francisco firm of Dickson, De Wolf & Company.[102]

In July 1869, the London partners in the BC & VI Spar Lumber and Sawmill Company sent orders to wind up the business.[103] In October, the assets of the liquidated company were advertised for auction in December, with an estimated value of about $160,000, including the steam tug *Isabel*.[104] The timing of this auction may have been intended to provide the cash to pay the settlement granted to Edward Stamp in his suit against the company. In August Stamp claimed $27,900, and the court of Vancouver Island granted him $14,000, an amount confirmed after a series of suits and countersuits took the case to the court of British Columbia. In November the court gave him permission to take possession of the sawmill's assets, with the proviso that the company

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101. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 4 January 1869, 3. Raymur was in this role until after the 1881 census. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district b North, 94, house 408.

102. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, George Campbell, the Victoria partner of Dickson, Campbell & Company, was also a director of the VCMLC. Further evidence of convergence between these producing companies and agents is found in the fact that R.P. Rithet, as Sproat & Company's San Francisco representative, shared rented office space there with Mr. Nicol, of the Vancouver Coal Company. BCA, MS-504, Box 2, R.P. Rithet Letterbook 1868-1871, 193, R.P. Rithet to G.M. Sproat, 12 March 1869.

103. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 30 July 1869, 3; Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 87.

104. The advertisement appeared in; Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 14-15 October 1869, 2. An article citing the liquidation of the company and the value of its assets was in *ibid.*, 14 October 1869, 3.

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would have a month's grace to communicate with its English owners.[105] The auction, deferred to February 1870, never took place, as in late January the dispute between the company and Stamp was "completely and satisfactorily settled." The only problem noted was the "depressed state of the timber market all over the world," and the mill was expected to start cutting again in later February.[106] In spite of the announced settlement, the assets of the venture, including land, sawmill and machinery, and the *Isabel*, were auctioned twice in 1870, on February 23 and on July 15. Both times the successful bidder was J.C. Nicholson, on behalf of Dickson De Wolf & Company, with bids of $20,000 and $14,000 respectively. The first auction took place in an atmosphere of "merriment," with only Nicholson bidding seriously, while the second had some competing bids.[107] A factor that could explain the second auction was the announcement that, on the application of the liquidators of the sawmill company, Vice-Chancellor James "made a call of £4 per share on the contributories of the British Columbia and Vancouver Island Spar, Lumber, and Saw-mill Company (limited)" on February 25.[108] It is unclear how this call for funds affected the settlement with Stamp, but it may be more than coincidence that the final sale

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105. The Vancouver Island suit and countersuit are described in; Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 87-89. The suit and countersuit on the Mainland was reported in "Stamp vs. B.C. & V.I. Mills," *Mainland Guardian*, 3 November 1869, 3; "In Chancery," *ibid.*, 6 November 1869, 3. Stamp won his case on November 9; *ibid.*, 10 November 1869, 3.

106. *Ibid.*, 29 January 1870, 3. The mill had stopped cutting in mid-December, and was anticipated to start up again about February 18. *Ibid.*, 15 December 1869, 3; *ibid.*, 2 February 1870, 3.

107. The auctions were held in Victoria by Lumley Franklin. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 24 February 1870, 3; *ibid.*, 1 July 1870, p.3; *ibid.*, 16 July 1870, 3. Howay noted only the first auction, so interpreted the sale price as $20,000, while Morton interpreted the auctions as being for two separate lots, for a total sale price of $34,000. However, it was clear from the July 1 auction advertisement that all of the company's assets were included in the July 15 auction, so the final sale price was $14,000. Howay, "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet," 16; Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 90-91.

108. *Mainland Guardian*, 13 April 1870, 3.

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price in the July auction was precisely the amount of Stamp's judgement. The auctions may have been a device intended to change the ownership of the mill, orchestrated by major British shareholders in cooperation with Dickson DeWolf & Company. Nicholson, as one of the men presented as a possible successor to Stamp as manager, appears to have been involved in the venture prior to the sale. Both Howay and Morton commented on their putative sale prices of $20,000 and $34,000 as a small fraction of the real value of the sawmill.[109] However, the even lower final sale price of $14,000 may be explained to some extent if it was more of a "paper" price, to facilitate the revision of ownership structures, rather than a realistic market value. While ownership changed in 1869-1870, the mill operated intermittently. It was loading cargoes, but not cutting, in October, was cutting again in early December, and loading cargoes through late January 1870.[110] Cutting had not resumed as expected by late February, but the mill was loading in mid-April 1870.[111] The mill, now operated by the Hastings Saw Mill Company, was said to be in operation again, still under Raymur's management, in August 1870.[112]

Scale and Value of Exports from the Burrard Inlet Forest Industry, 1865-1883

Without profitability, or the perception of profitability, it is unlikely that the commission merchants, British capitalists, and banks would have entered this industry. As

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109. Howay, "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet," 16; Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 91.

110. The mill was loading in October 1869. *Mainland Guardian*, 16 October 1869, 3; *ibid.*, 20 October 1869, 3. It was cutting for the first half of December, and loading through 19 January 1870. *Ibid.*, 4 December 1869, 3; *ibid.*, 15 December 1869, 3; *ibid.*, 19 January 1870, 3.

111. The mill was expected to begin cutting about February 18, but due to lack of demand this had not started by February 23. Loading proceeded on April 13, suggesting that some cutting had been done by then. *Mainland Guardian*, 2 February 1870, 3; *ibid.*, 23 February 1870, 3; *ibid.*, 13 April 1870, 3.

112. Howay, "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet," 16; Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 91-92, 95.

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noted above, the capital costs of purchasing or building a sawmill, relative to the prices paid for the commodities, would suggest significant potential for profit, contingent on placing products on export markets. In 1865, the first year of production for both S.P. Moody & Company and the BC & VI Spar Lumber and Sawmill Company, the mainland colony remained a net importer, rather than exporter, of cargo.[113] However, of the total exports other than gold [£28,286 or $141,430], forest products were the most valuable at £16,058 [$80,290], slightly ahead of furs [£15,000 or $75,000], a sector still dominated by the Hudson's Bay Company. The £10,000 [$50,000] value of spars significantly exceeded the value of sawn lumber and other "value-added" forest products, with a total value of £6,058 [$30,290]. With the exception of spars, the production of forest products on Burrard Inlet in 1865 was a fraction of what Alberni Mills shipped in 1864 [see Chapter 5, Table 5.1]. While the latter produced about 9.7 million feet of rough and planed lumber, Burrard Inlet and New Westminster shipped about a quarter of that quantity, 2.4 million feet.[114] Even the spars exported represented a small portion of those shipped from Alberni in 1862 and 1863. The spars shipped in 1865 were cut by the logging contractor Jeremiah Rogers and shipped by Edward Stamp's new Burrard Inlet operation.[115] The scale of Moody & Company's lumber exports, even with the addition of the production of other mills that may have been shipping, in no way approached the export level of the Alberni sawmill.

As a rough estimate, the value of the annual exports of the two Burrard Inlet mills probably increased about 50 percent by 1867-68, to about $120,000 [see above]. The level of exports continued to rise through the next year, in spite of the organizational flux

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113. BCA, GR-2957, British Columbia (Colony), Custom House Returns, 1859-1869 [*sic*; actually 1858-1869], 108-109, "Summary of the Shipping Outward from the 1st January to the 25th December 1865." The departures from New Westminster and Burrard Inlet in that year added up to 100 ships in cargo, totalling 8,344 tons and 507 crew, and 177 ships in ballast, totalling 47,522 tons and 2,249 crew. *Ibid.*

114. *Ibid.*, 105, "Exports for the Year 1865" from the Colony of British Columbia.

115. Morton, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, 49.

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of the BC & VI Sawmill. F.W. Howay assembled and tabulated lists of shipping from Burrard Inlet for the 1860s, and noted that based on newspaper reports, in 1869 twenty-four ships were loaded at Moody's sawmill, and twenty-one at Stamp's. Of these forty-five cargoes, thirty-four specified destinations. Twelve [35%] were bound for San Francisco, eight [24%] for Australia and New Zealand, eight [24%] for South America and Mexico, four [12%] for China, and one each [3%] for London and Hawaii.[116] The single shipment to London was made up of spars. Twenty-one [62%] of these cargoes were shipped directly to Pacific markets other than the United States, while it is probable that some of the cargoes to San Francisco were shipped on to Pacific destinations. In 1870 the Burrard Inlet sawmills exported to the same markets, led by nearly four million feet of lumber to South America and Mexico, just under two million feet of lumber to Australia, just over one and a half million feet of lumber and other forest products to China, and well over one million feet of lumber to Hawaii. The other markets included Tahiti and Britain, with the latter emphasizing spars.[117] The markets for the Burrard Inlet sawmills remained remarkably consistent with those of the Alberni Mill nearly a decade earlier.

Although the demand for spars declined in the 1870s with the shift to steamships, production continued to increase on the inlet, and by 1873 the total value of forest products exported rose to $211,026. This was about $20,000 greater than the value of

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116. Howay, "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet," 16-19.

117. Britain took 190,803 feet of rough lumber and 780 spars; New South Wales 356,517 feet of rough lumber, 24,307 pickets, and 88,000 laths; Victoria (Australia) 1,605,040 feet of rough lumber and 15 spars; China 1,507,537 feet of rough lumber, 15,000 pickets, 73,700 laths,156,000 shingles, and 37 spars; Chile 266,458 feet of rough lumber; Mexico 377,489 feet of rough lumber and 65,941 feet of dressed lumber; the Sandwich Islands 973,000 feet of rough lumber, 127,000 feet of dressed lumber, 635,000 shingles, and 420 bundles of shooks; Peru 2,150,222 feet of rough lumber and 1,116,327 feet of dressed lumber; Tahiti 117,007 feet of rough lumber, 33,634 feet of dressed lumber, and 50,000 shingles. H.L. Langevin, "British Columbia, Report of the Hon. H.L. Langevin, C.B., Minister of Public Works," Canada, Sessional Papers 1872, *Appendices*, Appendix Y, 150.

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the coal exports from Vancouver Island, and about $9,000 less than the value of fur exports. All of these were dwarfed by gold, still the dominant export with a value of $1,035,254.[118] However, the Burrard Inlet-based forest industry assumed a place as a major component of the British Columbia economy.

In the fall of 1881, when the *Colonist* reported on the Burrard Inlet sawmills and the surrounding communities, the prospects of the lumber trade seemed bright. The lumber markets remained consistent with those previously noted, focussing on Pacific Rim countries other than the United States. Cargoes of lumber were sent to China, Australia, and Peru, together with South Africa, while spars and squared timber went to China and England. The exports of the Moodyville Saw Mill over the preceding decade, including two "bad years," totalled 69,000,000 board feet of lumber, which by the most conservative reckoning represented over $1,000,000 in value. Hastings Saw Mill supplied the same markets, primarily China, Australia, and South America. The writer considered it noteworthy that a cargo from Hastings Mill went to San Francisco a few weeks earlier.[119] Cargoes to the American market remained rare compared to those to the long-established "foreign" Pacific markets which continued to sustain the Burrard Inlet mills.

A report on forest industry exports in 1883 repeated the pattern, with the Moodyville Saw Mill loading twenty-six vessels, with twelve cargoes shipped to Australia, seven to South America, two to China, one to Japan, two to "Figi" [Fiji] and two to England.[120] Hastings Saw Mill loaded twenty-three vessels, with ten going to Australia,

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118. British Columbia, *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia, Session 1873-74*, "Export of goods ... for the year ending June 30, 1873," 14-15.

119. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 September 1881, 3.

120. The quantity shipped totalled 12,438,818 feet of rough and 2,089,039 feet of dressed lumber, 341,707 pickets, 3,641 laths, and 563 spars [1 shipment to Australia, 1 to Japan, 2 large ones to England]. *The Resources of British Columbia*, Vol.1, no.12 (February 1884), 5.

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five to South America, three to China, three to South Africa, and two to San Francisco.[121] Of these forty-nine export cargoes, twenty-two [45%] were bound for Australia, twelve [25%] to South America, five [10%] to China, three [6%] to South Africa, two to San Francisco, two to Fiji, two to Britain [4% each], and one [2%] to Japan. If the more atypical cargoes of spars [all three cargoes to South Africa, two of the British ones, and the single Japanese cargo] are removed, the dependence of the mill on Pacific markets, in particular on Australia, South America, and China, becomes even more evident. The annual value of the Burrard Inlet-centred forest product export trade grew, although erratically, through the later 1870s and early 1880s. It rose from $211,026 in 1873, as noted above, to reach a peak of $327,360 in 1878, before declining to a low of $172,647 in 1881. By 1883 it had reached $407,624, almost double the 1873 value, then dropped sharply in 1885-1887, before climbing again.[122] These radical fluctuations were due to the reliance on volatile "foreign" markets around the Pacific, strongly influenced by trends in the larger global economy.

Based on the records of Welch, Rithet & Company relating to the Moodyville sawmill, as well as the Muir Brothers' operation, it may be assumed that the typical "net proceeds" realized on an export cargo of lumber to Pacific markets in the late 1870s was in the $2,000 to $3,000 range.[123] Applying the lower figure, and the recorded shipments

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121. The quantity exported totalled 12,228,998 feet of rough and 1,706,420 feet of dressed lumber, 193,090 pickets, 449,000 laths, and 150 spars [50 on each of South African shipments]. *Ibid.*, 5-6.

122. The export values are cited in Hughes, Jr., "The Economic Development of British Columbia, 1858 to 1885," 96, Appendix I. The roughly 2.85 million feet of lumber exported from the two mills, at an approximate value of $10 per foot, would equal about $285,000. The 713 spars, assuming a value of $100 each, would equal $71,300, for a total of $356,300. Allowing for the cost of shingles, lath, pickets, etc., and the conservative $10 per foot figure used, this correlates well with the recorded $407,624 in forest product exports.

123. As discussed earlier in the chapter, Rithet, Welch & Company had constant dealings as agents with Moody, Nelson & Company, and its successor company, the Moodyville Saw Mill Company, through 1878 and 1879. At that time, the "net proceeds" of each "adventure" of shipping a lumber cargo to Pacific markets such as Australia and Hawaii

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from the Burrard Inlet mills in 1883, would result in annual incomes of about $52,000 and $46,000 for the Moodyville and Hastings mills, respectively. Relative to the capital costs discussed earlier in this chapter, this suggests a high rate of return on investment. The highest estimate of the value of the assets of the newly-constructed Hastings Saw Mill, including all buildings, machinery, land, and the steam tug *Isabel*, was $160,000.[124] In 1883 the monthly payroll of the 250 men said to be working for the Hastings Saw Mill Company was estimated at $12,500.[125] Assuming twelve months' operation, this would represent an annual labour cost of $150,000. Even using the [probably inflated] $160,000 asset value, depreciated over ten years, a labour cost of $150,000 [although twelve months' continuous operation would be unlikely], and $10,000-15,000 in supplies and materials, the return on investment would have been in the range of twenty-five percent. Given that markets for cargoes could be found, it would appear that the system of production, shipping, and marketing had the potential to make for extremely high profit margins for the participants in this trade in the 1860s and 1870s.

The System of Production in the Burrard Inlet Sawmills

The commission merchants and lumbermen who initiated the Burrard Inlet industry brought with them business conventions and operating practices developed in the earlier ventures at Alberni Mills, and on Puget Sound. As suggested in Chapter 5, the Alberni Mills venture may have been compromised most by an inability to muster and retain a labour force, due to a lack of congruence with the ideology and aspirations of potential workers, both Aboriginal and immigrant. The same issues arose in mustering and

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seem to have clustered in a range between $2,000 and $3,000. BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Vol.7A, Cash Book 1878-1879, 1-249, 265-282. Two examples of net proceeds deposited to the Moodyville "Advance Account" from cargoes in late 1879 were $1,930.88 and $3,196.16, respectively. *Ibid.*, 539, 545.

124. The $160,000 figure appeared in an article reporting the liquidation of the company in Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 14 October 1869, 3. Of course, the purported purchase price of these same assets in July 1870 was $14,000. *Ibid.*, 16 July 1870, 3.

125. *The Resources of British Columbia*, Vol.1, no.12 (February 1884), 5-6.

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maintaining an industrial labour force in the Vancouver Island coal mines [Chapter 6], eventually solved with a split labour market divided principally by skill and secondarily by race. Granting high autonomy and the possibility of occupational and social mobility to the largely British upper echelon filled its expectations, while relying on Chinese labourers for the core of the unskilled labour force provided cheap and reliable workers that supported the aspirations of the upper echelon, without challenging it. In the conditions of labour shortage of the time, the essential skilled workers would willingly participate only in those ventures that presented them with opportunities for occupational and social mobility. The aspirations of skilled workers to rise to the status of independent proprietors were entirely congruent with the version of the producer ethos which underlay the ideology of the immigrant population and the strategies of the colonial state.

The state would support, with land grants and other concessions, ventures that created opportunities for mobility. Those opportunities attracted skilled workers seeking better life chances, and wishing to achieve respectability. Such opportunity depended on the participation of an unskilled workforce, resulting in the development of a labour market split along lines of skill and race in a way similar to that in the coal mining industry. In the forest industry, the Anglo-North American logging contractors and loggers most closely approached the "independent producer" status of hewers in coal mining. The generally Anglo-North American skilled sawmill workers were essential to processing, while larger numbers of less skilled millmen and longshoremen provided the labour to move and load lumber. Although this broadly resembles the coal mining situation, the production schedule of sawmilling, and the demographic profile of Burrard Inlet, led to a different strategy for mustering unskilled labour. Rather than a permanent workforce of fully proletarianized Chinese workers, the Burrard Inlet mills relied on capturing unskilled labour on a casual, as-needed basis, from resident, almost exclusively First Nations populations.

Logging

There are few specific references to the systems of production employed at the

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Burrard Inlet mills in the 1860s. George Dawson visited one of the camps associated with the Moody Dietz & Nelson sawmill in 1875:

> "Camp" rather a permanent affair. A large stable erected for the oxen & Mules, & houses for the men. These on the bank above the shore. Lumbering roads radiating back into the woods in all directions for Several miles. Roads well made, & wide, bankes often cut through & ravines bridged to get greater uniformity of grade. Cross pieces imbedded in the road at intervals, & notched in the centre, oxen tackled to log, which rests on the Cross pieces, man going before with brush & smearing them with dog-fish oil to make the logs run easily. Trees when felled first deprived of bark by chopping. Then sawn up into lengths by hand saw.[126]

Dawson's description accords closely with those concerning logging at Alberni Mills in the previous decade, and with more generic descriptions, such as Robert Brown's 1876 "Lumbering on the North Pacific Coast." Brown's account was based on what he was "personally familiar with" as well as notes provided by his friend G.M. Sproat. Brown emphasized the split between the "two main divisions" of the work, logging and sawmilling, and went on to describe the logging process, as well as the physical configuration of the logging camps:

> The saw-mill owner occasionally undertakes the work in the woods on his own account, but more usually makes a contract with a "logger," who engages for a certain price to deliver logs into the mill-pond close to the mill.
>
> Having secured his "claim" to a portion of forest land bordering on the water, the "logger" proceeds to make a "main" road from the most densely-wooded part of the land to the water-side, usually to some small bay. At the water-side end of the road he makes a slide of smooth logs, down which the logs brought from the forest roll into the water. Each logger, it may be added, has, as in the Eastern States, private marks chipped on every log, so that it may be at once recognized and claimed if it should go adrift. "Booms" are placed across to confine the logs until a sufficient quantity is obtained to form what is called a "boom of logs" for the mill. The logger next selects a suitable spot for his hut, and for a hovel for the oxen employed in dragging the logs, oxen being here universally employed in preference to horses. About a dozen men are engaged for the

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126. Douglas Cole and Bradley Lockner, editors, *The Journals of George M. Dawson: British Columbia, 1875-78*, Vol.1 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989), 119.

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> different operations of clearing away the brushwood, cutting the tree down, barking it, and sawing it across when felled into the required lengths, and for driving the team of oxen. A cook is also employed to take charge of the house and stores, and to cook for the party. This small establishment in the forest is called a "logging camp," and at these camps, as in logging camps generally, the traveller generally receives a hearty welcome, and abundance of good, wholesome fare -- coffee, fresh bread, venison, salmon, beef and pork, potatoes, dried apples, fresh butter, pickles, &c. The work is very hard, and can only be done by men long accustomed to it. Most of the loggers come from Canada or the State of Maine, where they have been used to the axe from boyhood. Europeans are hardly worth their food until they have been some time at it. Removing the brushwood, called "swamping," is the only portion of the work that a "green hand" can undertake, and he must be a handy man to make a figure at that. The choppers and the teamster are the highest paid men. They receive from fifty to sixty dollars (£10 to £12) per month, with food. The others are only paid from £6 to £8 per month, with food, which it may be added, is invariably the rule when workmen are employed at such establishments on the Pacific coast. Where the place is distant from a mill, and boards cannot be obtained, the house is built of logs, with moss stuffed between them, and the roof is made of long splints of cedar (*Thuja gigantea*). It is warm and water-tight. The inside is a large room, with open sleeping "bunks" placed round. In the centre is a wood fire, and above it a wooden open chimney coming down through the roof, like a vast extinguisher. In one corner of the room the cook has an American iron cooking-stove, while a long table and benches, at which the men take their meals, complete the furniture of these artizans of the forest. The axe used in chopping is a small one, of American make, with a long handle. The English manufacturers, though furnished with samples of this axe, do not seem to have succeeded in making it so as to satisfy the woodmen.[127]

The word "logger," as applied by Brown, seems to be generally synonymous with "logging contractor," the independent producers who supplied the raw logs to the sawmills. Among the employees of the contractor there was a clear hierarchy of

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127. Brown, *The Countries of the World*, Vol.1, 259-260. Joseph Lawrence, in his description of "pioneer" mills, repeated Brown's account of logging and logging camps nearly verbatim, with only a few words or phrases omitted, and some changes of tense. Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 34-35. As well as Brown, Lawrence cited G.M. Sproat, *British Columbia, Information for Emigrants* (London: Clowes, 1873), 82; Morley Roberts, *The Western Avernus* (London, S.C. Brown, Langham and Company Ltd., 1904), 161-180.

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occupational prestige, based on skill, with the "choppers" and teamsters at the top. This was reflected in their monthly wages, which at $50-$60 were nearly double those of the less-skilled workers, who earned $30-$40 per month. The only work defined as unskilled was swamping, or clearing brush. Brown described a logging workforce comprised mostly of experienced woodsmen from Canada or Maine, with a few Europeans, but no Aboriginal workers. This demographic profile corresponds to that described by Sproat at Alberni Mills in the early 1860s, in which about 75% of the workers were Canadian and American.[128] Brown may have been echoing Sproat's sentiments when he described the North American loggers:

> The loggers of the North-West are a fine, manly, intelligent set of men. They have generally been fairly educated, and have seen a good deal of the world. Having few opportunities of spending money in the woods, and being well paid, those of them who resist the temptation to spend their earnings when they visit the towns are able to save money, and can get on to be logging contractors themselves.[129]

These workers were portrayed in positive terms, and so may be considered respectable within the producer ethos-based ideology of colonial society. Perceived as comparatively autonomous due to skills essential to the operation of the forest industry, the high income and prestige of these men let them aspire to assuming places as independent producers, fully meeting the definition of success in the society of nineteenth century British Columbia. Although not a fully racialized workforce, there was a tendency to equate skilled loggers with Canadian or Maine origins. This resembled the situation in the Vancouver Island Coal mines, where British immigrants made up most of the skilled workforce. Such immigrant groups, who racially and culturally were congruent with the hegemonic group in British Columbia society, seem to have dominated the high prestige and highly-paid skilled labour sector of the industrial workforce, which provided the possibility of occupational and social mobility into the ranks of independent producers or

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128. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, 27.

129. Brown, *The Countries of the World*, Vol.1, 260.

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entrepreneurs. When John Robson, the editor of *The British Columbian*, visited Burrard Inlet in October 1866, he noted that Moody's mill had a stock of logs in booms that would provide two and a half million feet of lumber: "Mr. Andrews, the energetic foreman of the logging party, is rapidly augmenting the quantity. He has a gang of as likely looking men as we ever saw taken into the forest."[130] Robson was explicitly echoing the attitudes expressed above, and was much taken with this logging workforce, as well as those working for Jeremiah Rogers [below] on behalf of Stamp's venture.

In 1881 the *Colonist* described the Burrard Inlet export sawmills, and their associated logging operations. The Moodyville Sawmill employed two different systems of log supply, starting with two logging camps "belonging to the firm." One of these, "Cotterell's," was about two and a half miles "back" of the mill, and produced 25-30,000 feet per day of clear timber. The other camp was about the same distance "down the Inlet" and was operated by "Uncle Lev" Harmon.[131] The 1881 census noted that the New Brunswick-born John A Cottrell had an establishment that included his family, one Chinese cook, and 16 "woodmen."[132] The USA-born J.L. Harmon had a slightly larger, and more heterogenous camp, which included a Chinese cook, two teamsters and 16 woodmen, along with four people who did not work at logging.[133] Although the configuration and work process of these camps would follow that described by Brown, the specific reference to ownership suggests company-owned operations, rather than independent contractors. The census classified both Cottrell and Harman as a "timber merchant," a term consistently applied to all logging contractors, reinforcing their identity as "independent" producers, even in such company-owned operations. The operators of a

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130. "Our Forest Wealth," *The British Columbian*, 13 October 1866, 1.

131. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 September 1881, 3.

132. Cottrell was 55 years of age, and had his wife and two children living with him. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district b North, 104, house 456.

133. Harmon was 50 years old, and his facility included men listed as a millhand, a shipbuilder, and a miner, respectively, as well as one child. *Ibid.*, 105, house 457.

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third camp associated with the Moodyville mill, Charles Daggat [?] and __ Furry [? - their names are illegible] received the same designation in the census. Their camp included seventeen woodmen and one Chinese cook.[134]

In addition to company or contractor logging camps, a "small army" of hand loggers, "about 50 in all, 80 of whom [*sic* - this may be a mistransposition of "30"] are Indians working up Jarvis Inlet, some as far north as 120 miles," supplied the Moodyville sawmill. These independent producers felled their logs into the water, to be made up into booms, then towed to Burrard Inlet by the company vessel *Etta White*.[135] The 1881 census confirmed the existence of these Aboriginal hand loggers, with twenty-four members of the "See-Shahl" [Sechelt] nation identified as "Logger." In the First Nations around Burrard Inlet, only this only group included individuals identified this way.[136] In 1876, the Sechelt handloggers "supplied 1,300,000 cubic feet of saw logs, for which they received, delivered in the water adjacent to the places where cut, at the rate of $3. per M – being the price paid also to White men persecuting the same business." At the request of the chiefs of the nation, and to "encourage this industry," a temporary reservation of land intended for logging was made to the Sechelt.[137] The reserve commissioners and provincial government were acting to support this group of successful commodity producers.

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134. Of the 51 workers directly involved in logging as teamsters or woodmen in the camps serving the Moodyville mill, 17 were born in Ontario, 11 in New Brunswick, 1 in Quebec, 10 in the United States, 5 in England, 3 in Scotland, 3 in Ireland, and 1 in Germany. *Ibid.*, 104-105, 113-114.

135. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 September 1881, 3.

136. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district D7, Tribe Cowichan, Sub-tribe See-Shahl, 117-122. The other nations around the lower Mainland included many men identified as labourers, some identified as hunters and/or fishermen, and some identified as carpenters, but no other loggers. *Ibid.*, 1-122.

137. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, 1878*, liv, Special Appendix D, Report of the Indian Reserve Commission, 21 March 1877. The members of the commission were the former commission merchant G.M. Sproat, and two former officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, A.C. Anderson and Archibald McKinlay.

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These handloggers were simply individuals who would be paid on a piecework basis for each log delivered into the company booms. They were not formed into industry-specific ventures like the logging contractors, but often sold logs to generate cash income as a part of a larger economic strategy. For settlers, selling logs produced in clearing their pre-emptions or leases provided income to bolster their attempts to become self sufficient on their land holdings. For Aboriginal producers, supplying logs followed on directly from the earlier economic relationship between First Nations and the Hudson's Bay Company. Such voluntary participation in commodity production would provide "discretionary income," that could be channelled through social mechanisms such as the potlatch to increase the social standing of individuals and families. This voluntary participation of Aboriginal producers was consistent with the racial ideology of the hegemonic social group. In 1884 the former HBC Chief Trader William Fraser Tolmie offered an explanation for his suggestion that the Aboriginal population between Burrard Inlet and Bute Inlet was flourishing: "Being capital sailors they have no lack of employment as deck hands, and as loggers for the saw-mills they are also effective."[138] This links the survival of the indigenous population to industrial employment, but in a clearly racialized manner, entirely consistent with the views expressed twenty years earlier by G.M. Sproat. Outdoor work, in the context of "wilderness," without the strictures of factory discipline and schedules, and ideally in the context of independent production, was seen to be most compatible with ideology concerning "Indian character." The congruence between the expectations and ideology of First Nations producers and the expectations and ideology of forest industry entrepreneurs supported the participation of such Aboriginal producers in the forest industry.

At its inception Stamp's spar and mill operation was supplied by the logging contractor Jeremiah Rogers, at first cutting on lands alienated by the BC & VI Spar Lumber and Sawmill Company or on government reserves. John Robson, visiting Rogers' logging camp in October 1866, noted that the latter came from St. Andrew's New

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138. William Fraser Tolmie, "Utilization of the Indians," *The Resources of British Columbia*, Vol.1, no.12 (February 1884), p.7.

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Brunswick to Puget Sound in 1858, then worked at Alberni and Port Neville before arriving on Burrard Inlet. At the time of the visit, Rogers, under contract to Stamp, was preparing three cargoes of spars, respectively for the governments of France, Russia, and the Netherlands. Robson's description echoes the opinion of Brown and Sproat about Rogers' loggers: "He has a fine set of men, chiefly from his own native place, and now possesses facilities for working which will enable him to take out these magnificent spars at the rate of 100 tons per diem."[139] This report confirms Rogers' arrival in the region in 1858, although it is unclear if it was the gold rush or Stamp's earlier lumber ventures that brought him to Puget Sound. The New Brunswick-dominated logging workforce corresponded with that described at Alberni Mills, and by Brown in his later account. Rogers' later acquisition of timber lands in his own name, to ensure a higher degree of autonomy from sawmills and agents, was discussed in the section on Stamp's mill above.[140] Other logging contractors identified with Stamp's venture included Jonathan Miller [also involved in the land dispute with Stamp], who logged in Point Grey between 1865 and 1871, and Angus Fraser, who apparently took over as the primary contractor to Hastings Mill after Rogers' death. Fraser was said to have cut 9,740,000 board feet of wood on an 80 acre tract of land on English Bay in 1875 for Hastings Mill.[141] Angus Fraser and his employees were listed in the 1881 census, in which he was described as a 32 year old Quebec-born timber merchant, living with his wife and two children.[142] His logging crew comprised 2 teamsters, 1 foreman, 2 cooks, 1 carpenter, and 12 "choppers"

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139. "Our Forest Wealth," *The British Columbian*, 13 October 1866, 1.

140. BCA, MS-120, file 1, Stamp's Mill: Corres. re Sawmill on Burrard Inlet, 69, H.N. Ball to Attorney General, 30 November 1868; *ibid.*, file 2, Stamp's Mill: Indentures - BC & Vancouver Island Spar Lumber Co. - 1865 - BC & Jeremiah Rogers, 1867, 10-15. In the indenture, Rogers was described as a "Lumberer."

141. Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 33-34.

142. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district b North, 97, house 423.

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[with two occupations illegible].[143]

The *Colonist*'s1881 description of the Burrard Inlet sawmills made it clear that unlike its competitor, the Hastings Mill Company had "no system of hand-logging." This suggests that either company-owned camps or larger-scale independent logging contractors supplied the logs to the sawmill. The primary logging camp supplying the mill was referred to as "Gillies' camp," located about three miles up the Fraser Creek trail.[144] The 1881 census listed James Gilles, identified as the primary log supplier to Hastings Mill, as a 30 year old, Quebec-born "Lumber Merchant." He shared quarters with 1 teamster, 1 foreman, and 7 lumbermen, while 12 more lumbermen, the family of one of them, an engineer and a foreman, were in the next two houses.[145] Of the 23 forestry workers associated with Gilles' camp, 9 were born in Ontario, 4 in Quebec, 3 in New Brunswick, 1 in Nova Scotia, 1 in British Columbia, 1 in the United States, 2 in Scotland, 1 in Ireland, and 1 in Russia. The 18 North Americans [78.3% of the total] were exclusively identified as being of British descent.[146] Gilles' camp still employed two old steam traction engines from the Cariboo Highway for yarding logs, although any economic advantage was countered by their need of a semipermanent road bed. An additional three or four camps also supplied Hastings Mill.[147] Fraser's operation, described above, was probably one of these, as well as that of Donald McGregor, described in the 1881 census as a timber merchant with 11 lumbermen in his camp.[148]

The table below provides an overview of the demographic makeup of the six

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143. *Ibid.*, 97-98, house 424.

144. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 September 1881, 3.

145. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district b North, 95, house 417.

146. *Ibid.*, 104-105.

147. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 September 1881, 3.

148. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district b North, 99, house 428.

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logging camps in the vicinity of Burrard Inlet associated with the export sawmills. It only includes those who are identified by an occupation that relates directly to logging, and not the small number of family members and other residents of the camps.

Table 7.1: Logging camp workers in the six camps identified in the 1881 census rolls[149]

Place of Birth	timber merchant	teamster	engineer	foreman	carpenter	woodman, lumberman,	cook	illegible	
BC						2	1		3
Canada	5	2	1	1	1	52	1	2	65
USA	2	2				11			15
Britain		1		1		22			24
Europe						4			4
China							5		5
other									
total	7	5	1	2	1	91	7	2	116

The total logging population of 116 individuals included 65 Canadian, 24 British, and 15 American workers. Adding the 3 British Columbia-born workers, 72% of the workforce was North American, and adding the British-born workers 92% of the workforce could be described as Anglo-North American. Five of the seven timber

149. These houses included some non-logging residents, but to provide a demographic profile of the logging workforce, only those in a logging-related occupation are listed. "Canada" includes Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, while "Britain" includes England, Ireland, and Scotland, and "Europe" refers to the continent. The BC-born workers listed were all of British or European descent, while most of the Quebec-born workers were of British rather than French descent. The names assigned to occupations, and degree of detail, varied from camp to camp. The six camps, and sawmill affiliation, were: John Cottrell's Camp [Moodyville Saw Mill], *ibid.*, 104, house 456; J.L. Harman's Camp [Moodyville Saw Mill], *ibid.*, 105, house 457 and "shanty"; Charles Daggat [? - illegible] and __ Furry's [? - illegible] Camp [Hastings Saw Mill?], *ibid.*, 113-114, house 492; James Gilles' Camp [Hastings Saw Mill], *ibid.*, 95-96, houses 417-419; Angus Fraser's Camp [Hastings Saw Mill], *ibid.*, 97-98, houses 423-424; Donald McGregor's Camp [mill affiliation unknown], *ibid.*, 99, house 428.

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merchants were Canadian, and the other two were American-born. Of the nine men identified in skilled or administrative positions, five were Canadian, with two British and two American-born. Five of the seven cooks were Chinese-born. While Sechelt handloggers played an important role supplying the Moodyville sawmill, First Nations workers were not enumerated in any of the "industrial" logging camps attached to the Burrard Inlet mills, suggesting their exclusion from such jobs. There is nothing to suggest significant changes in either the logging system of production, or the social relations of production and demographic composition of the workforce in the twenty years since the establishment of Alberni Mills. The dominance of Anglo-North American workers continued. With the exception of Chinese workers in the racialized role of cooks, the logging workforce almost exclusively came from Anglo-North American origins.

The correlation between a logging workforce that was 92% Anglo-North American and the construct of loggers as highly skilled, highly paid, and highly autonomous workers should be noted. The potential for joining the ranks of logging contractors, and so achieving social mobility as independent producers, also figured into this construct. The parallels between the logging workforce and the skilled workforce in the Vancouver Island coal mines [see Chapter 6] are evident. Both were primarily Anglo-North American, perceived to have special skills essential to the system of production, seen as autonomous, with a high degree of control over the work process, and considered to be occupationally and socially mobile. The handloggers supplying the Moodyville mill did not embody all the attributes as the "industrial" loggers, although they shared elements of autonomy and independent production. Such "independence," combined with the non-structured, non-scheduled nature of the activity, and its location in the "wilderness," meant that it fit closely with the naturalized ideology surrounding Aboriginal people. Because of this congruence, handlogging was seen as suitable work for Aboriginal men, and the income and resulting social mobility it provided made it attractive to Aboriginal producers.

Sawmilling

Whether produced by handloggers, company logging camps, or independent

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logging contractors, the logs were assembled in booms for transportation and as a convenient way of maintaining a stock of timber for cutting. From the booms the timber was taken into the sawmills to be processed into lumber. In his 1876 description of "Lumbering on the North Pacific Coast," Robert Brown went on to describe the operation of a typical export sawmill in the 1870s:

> From fifty to sixty men are employed at a large mill, in the capacity of engineers, firemen, log-haulers, gang-sawyers, cross-cutters, filers, blacksmiths, and men employed in carrying and stacking the planks. Several of these occupations require special skill, but many are open to the ordinary labourer. Consequently, the men at a mill are, on an average, scarcely equal to those in the logging camps. There are more rough characters among the people at the mill. The married men at a saw-mill live in small wooden cottages; the unmarried men have one or two barracks or dormitories. There is a cook-house, with a large mess-house attached, where the men have their three daily meals. They work from six to six, with only half an hour for dinner. The wages of the labourers are about £5 or £6 per month, with board and lodging; and the skilled men receive, according to their occupations, from £8 to £12 and £13 per month, board and lodging. The proprietors usually have a large general shop at the mill to supply the wants of the men and their families. The mills are generally driven by steam power, the refuse of the logs supplying abundance of fuel. The saws consist of upright "gang" saws and "circular" saws. The wood on being sawn is run out of the mill on to the wharf, and the ships' crews take it into the vessels, which load "bow on" to the wharf.[150]

In spite of Brown's editorial comment, and obvious preference for loggers, only four of the nine mill jobs listed, fireman, log-hauler, lumber stacking, and possibly cross-cutting, did not require specialized knowledge and experience. Brown described sawmill salaries as ranging from £5-6 [$25-$30] per month for unskilled labourers, and from £8-13 [$40-$65] per month for "skilled men." As in the logging camps, these were all-found salaries, with room and board included.[151] The range of salaries started lower, but rose higher than those in the logging sector, arguing against the perception of a "rougher" sawmill workforce, although it could suggest a less homogenous workforce. The

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150. Brown, *The Countries of the World*, Vol.1, 261-262.

151. *Ibid.*

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appearance that different criteria were used to evaluate sawmill and logging workforces is supported by the explicit description of the twelve-hour work day in the mill, "with only half an hour for dinner." This reinforces a "factory" environment, and the lack of autonomy experienced by the workers, contrary to Brown's description of logging camps which did not mention schedules.[152] An 1884 description of Hastings Mill confirmed that the Burrard Inlet mills observed the same factory schedule: "In this, as in all other mills, eleven and one-half hours constitute a days work."[153]

Morley Roberts described four months' work in a New Westminster sawmill in 1884-1885 in terms following Brown's account. Roberts, an English adventurer, was hired as a common labourer, which entailed "hard and laborious lifting of timbers, arranging of boards and planks, carting and carrying of saw-dust, flooring boards, beadings and scrollings, sashes, doors, what not." The work day was 6 AM to 6 PM, with a half hour for a "hurried dinner," for which a common labourer received $30 per month, plus room and board. Roberts described a heterogenous workforce in the sawmill, including M'Culloch, an American, Johnny the young sawyer, the "deceitful" chief sawyer, and "Indians, half-breeds and Chinamen mingled and ever changing."[154] Other members of the mill community were identified as Pete, Roberts' German room-mate, John Anderssen, a Swede, and another unnamed Swede. Also mentioned were Charley, Roberts' partner from up country, an "English sailor" with a drinking problem, Fraser, the bookkeeper, Mr. Gray, the Superintendent, and "Mr. H-----," the manager. Two Chinese cooks and a Chinese waiter fed about thirty workers in the mess hall. The transient White workers, like Roberts, lived in a "sleeping-room" over the mess hall, but the rest "lived in cabins, or

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152. *Ibid.*, 261, 260, quote from p.261.

153. This referred to actual working time, without the half hour dinner break. *The Resources of British Columbia*, Vol.1, no.12 (February 1884), pp.5-6.

154. Morley Roberts, *The Western Avernus* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1924), 141-142.

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in little huts," with some, primarily married workers, "boarding themselves."[155] Roberts portrayed a relatively stable skilled labour component, and identified many of its members, together with a larger common labour component, which included transient Euro-North Americans and a significant number of Aboriginal, mixed-blood, and Chinese workers. Roberts exhibited animosity toward his Chinese co-workers. The mill's manager fired him for assaulting the Chinese waiter, for what Roberts perceived as insolence. The same mill later hired Roberts back and then fired him again for "knocking down" another Chinese worker. Roberts described Chinese workers as one of the challenges in an arduous industrial environment, with wages earned "by sweat and fatigue of muscle, and contact with Chinamen - that strange, indomitable, perservering, vile, and wonderful race."[156] The juxtaposition of transient Euro-North American workers with Aboriginal and Chinese workers in the unskilled workforce presented social challenges, given the very different expectations, social statuses, and racial ideology that adhered to each group.

Roberts described the work process, noting the "whirr" of belts, the "scream" of saws, the pounding of wedges, "hurrying figures," and a description that overall suggested a demanding and unpleasant environment. The intermittent operation of the sawmill, combined with frequent machinery breakdowns, provided some respite from this intensity. Roberts emphasized the precarious financial situation of the mill, noting constant lawsuits demanding payment, Chinese workers going on strike to get paid, and on his departure, the manager borrowing twenty dollars to pay him off.[157] Although the mill was not identified by name, it had a Victoria agency, and the manager and superintendent were partially identified. It is possible that it was John Hendry's Royal City Planing Mills.

Joseph Lawrence relied heavily on the descriptions of Brown and Roberts for his synthesized portrayal of the operations of a "pioneer" sawmill, emphasizing the transient nature of the workforce. Lawrence suggested that many unmarried workers would work

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155. *Ibid.*, 143-154.

156. *Ibid.*, 154, 176, 141.

157. *Ibid.*, 142, 153-155.

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for a period of two to four weeks before moving on.[158] This transience relates strongly to the idea of "adventuring," moving on and looking for new opportunities, with waged work seen as a way to facilitate the search. Becoming members of a permanent proletariat was not what motivated transient labourers such as Roberts and his co-workers.

In 1866, at the beginning of the export forest industry on Burrard Inlet, *The British Columbian* reported a population of about eighty or a hundred non-Native inhabitants around Burrard Inlet, "mostly employed at the saw mills."[159] Presumably this included the mill workers and loggers associated with Moody's sawmill, the crew erecting Stamp's mill, and Rogers' logging crew. Two months later, the newspaper described the Moody & Company sawmill operation as "much improved" by its new owners, with a lower cost of production than anywhere else on the coast. The mill could cut and edge 50,000 feet of lumber per day, and to that date had exported over five million feet of sawn lumber. The mill had been idle for four weeks, but was expected to start cutting the following week in anticipation of a ship contracted to take an order of 400,000 feet of lumber. Additionally, "several good houses" now stood in the vicinity of the sawmill, implying the growth of a respectable component in the local population.[160] In 1876 the *Colonist* reported the Moody & Company sawmill could cut 60,000 feet of lumber per day, running some thirty saws. Over 100 men worked in the mill, and the total population "in connection" with the operation numbered about 300.[161] An 1881 description offered more detail concerning the demographics of the local population, with a reference to a

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158. Lawrence, "Markets and Capital," 35-37.

159. "Burrard Inlet," *The British Columbian*, 25 August 1866, 3.

160. "Our Forest Wealth," *The British Columbian*, 13 October 1866, 1.

161. The main mill building of the Moody & Company operation in 1876 was over 300 feet in length, and roofed with corrugated iron for 270 feet of that; "A Ramble on the Mainland," Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 18 April 1876, 2.

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"Kanaka Town," adjacent to the "defunct" water-powered mill that burnt in 1873.[162] Its steam-powered replacement, adapted to cut larger timber, normally produced 60,000 feet, but had a capacity of 110,000 feet per day.[163]

The 1881 census enumerated the population around Burrard Inlet. Although it is difficult to assign houses and families to specific locations, Table 7.2 below presents a demographic overview of those people most likely employed by the Moodyville sawmill. Although its largest component was British-born, the sawmilling workforce was more heterogenous than that in the logging camps. Anglo-North American workers formed the majority, but not in the dominant proportion recorded in the camps.

Table7.2: Sawmill workers identified in association with the Moodyville Saw Mill in the 1881 census rolls[164]

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162. "Kanaka" was the contemporary term used for natives of the Hawaiian Islands [see Chapter 2], suggesting a significant population of Hawaiian workers was present at Moodyville. This was confirmed in the census data from the same year [below].

163. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 September 1881, p.3. George Dawson's 1875 description of the mill was very similar, although at that time the mill was limited to smaller logs. Dawson noted that the water power machinery served to run the planers when the rest of the mill was not operating. He described the sawing process, but with no information about the workers involved. Cole and Lockner, *The Journals of George M. Dawson*, Vol.1, 115-116.

164. Although these houses included some non-sawmilling residents, to provide a demographic profile of the workforce, this table lists only those in a sawmill-related occupation. "Canada" includes Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, while "Britain" includes England, Ireland, and Scotland, and "Europe" refers to the continent. Those BC-born workers listed were all of British or European descent, while most of the Quebec-born workers were of British rather than French descent. The names assigned to occupations, as well as the degree of detail, varied in the census rolls. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district b North, 106-113, houses 434-491.

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Place of birth	manager	blacksmith	machinist	sawman or sawyer	operator	millwright	engineer	watchman	sawfiler	foreman	tallyman [?]	millman or mill hand	store [or stove]	cook	stevedore or longshoreman	
BC												3				3
Canada				1								4	1		1	7
USA				1			1			1		6			1	10
Britain	1	1				2	2	1	2		2	16			8	35
Europe			1		1							8				10
Hawaii												3				3
Chile												6				6
China														1		1
other												5				5
total	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	51	1	1	10	80

Of the total of eighty workers, thirty-five [44%] were British-born, while fifty-five [69%] could be considered Anglo-North American. There was a significant group of European-born workers [13%], and of Hawaiian and Chilean-born employees [11%], corresponding with the reference to Kanaka Town. Both these groups were concentrated among the unskilled "millmen," representing respectively eighteen and seventeen percent of this group. With another five millmen born in other countries, this meant that twenty-nine [57%] of the unskilled workers were Anglo-North American. On the other hand, of the seventeen workers designated as holding skilled or administrative positions, two were European-born, while the other fifteen [88%] were Anglo-North American. The latter group also monopolized the ranks of stevedores or longshoremen. The heterogeneity in the sawmill seemed to apply most to the unskilled or common labour positions, while the skilled and responsible positions, or those like longshoreman that were perceived to be more autonomous, were dominated by Anglo-North American workers. It is interesting that a substantial part of the unskilled labour force originated in Hawaii and South America, both primary markets for cargoes of lumber from Burrard Inlet. This echoed the situation at Fort Vancouver forty years earlier, when Hawaiian workers dominated the sawmilling workforce [see Chapter 2].

An 1881 article in the *Colonist* described the Hastings Mill operation following a

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tour conducted by the company's foreman, Mr. C. Caldwell.[165] After mentioning surrounding development, particularly the new Episcopal Church, the author noted the sawmill itself, with five ships loading at the time. Although the cutting capacity of the steam-powered mill was 70,000 board feet per day, the average cut at the time of the visit was about 50,000 feet per day, as the mill was "laboring under the disadvantage of a scarcity of hands," a general complaint in the district at the time.[166] The 1881 census of Canada provides some information about the workforce at Hastings Mill. Although it is difficult to assign houses and families to specific locations, Table 7.3 below presents a demographic overview of those people probably employed by the Hastings sawmill. The workforce that seems to be associated with this mill was much smaller, at forty-six, than the eighty enumerated around the Moodyville sawmill, perhaps relating to the "scarcity of hands" noted in the same year. The single greatest difference in the composition of the Hastings sawmill workforce was the lower proportion of British-born workers. They still comprised the largest single group by origin, but not in the same numbers as seen in the Moodyville workforce.

Table 7.3: Sawmill workers identified in association with the Hastings Saw Mill in the 1881 census rolls[167]

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165. The 1881 census listed Charles Coldwell, a New Brunswick-born "Foreman (Mill)," occupying a house with his wife and children. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district b North, 94, house 409.

166. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 30 August 1881, 3. George Dawson visited the Hastings Mill in 1875, but offered little information, other than noting that it was "not quite so well appointed," with a "poorer engine" than the Moody Dietz & Nelson mill. Cole and Lockner, *The Journals of George M. Dawson*, Vol.1, 117-118.

167. This table includes only those individuals identified specifically in an occupation related to sawmilling; there were other residents of the houses, including families, but the table is intended to provide a demographic profile of the sawmill workforce. "Canada" includes Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, while "Britain" includes England, Ireland, and Scotland, and "Europe" includes all continental countries. Those BC-born workers listed were all of British or European descent, while the majority of the Quebec-born workers were of British rather than French descent. The names assigned to occupations, as well as the degree of detail, varied in the census rolls. BCA, GR-469,

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Place of birth	manager	book keeper	clerk	foreman	blacksmith	water tender	millman or mill hand	carpenter	cook	stevedore or longshoreman	
BC							3				3
Canada	1	1		1			3			1	7
USA							6				6
Britain					2	1	8			2	13
Europe							5	1	1	1	8
Hawaii							5				5
Chile											
China									2		2
other			1				1				2
total	1	1	1	1	2	1	31	1	3	4	46

Of the total of forty-six workers, eleven [24%] were British-born, while twenty-six [56%] could be considered Anglo-North American. Both these proportions were lower than at the Moodyville mill, and there was a slightly higher proportion of European-born workers [17%]. The bloc of Hawaiian-born employees [11%] occupied the same share as the combined Hawaiian and Chilean population in the Moodyville workforce. Both Europeans and Hawaiians were concentrated among the unskilled workers, each representing sixteen percent of the "millmen." With one other millman born in Australia, this meant that twenty-one [68%] of the thirty-one unskilled workers were Anglo-North American. Of the seven workers designated as holding skilled or administrative positions, one was European-born and one born elsewhere, while the other five [71%] were Anglo-North American. Three of four stevedores or longshoremen were Anglo-North American [75%], and one was European-born. Although the demographic profile differed from that of the larger Moodyville workforce, it followed a similar overall pattern. A high degree of heterogeneity, including a visible minority bloc, existed among the unskilled labour force, while Anglo-North American workers occupied most of the skilled, responsible, or more

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1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district b North, 91-94, houses 398-426.

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autonomous positions. Richard Alexander, who served as storekeeper, accountant, and manager at Hastings Saw Mill from 1870 to 1914, later recalled that in the "early days" of the mill he managed a workforce "very largely composed of run-away sailors and Indians," with Chinook trade jargon the language generally used.[168]

Anomalies are evident between the size of the workforces described in contemporary reports and those enumerated in the 1881 census, and a discrepancy between Alexander's memory of the Aboriginal character of the Hastings mill workforce and the lack of evidence for such workers in the census rolls. Both of these may be explained by a significant "casual" labour component in this industry, primarily composed of Aboriginal men from around the Inlet and surrounding region. The 1876 report noted over 100 men working in the Moodyville mill, with a total population of about 300 "in connection" with the operation.[169] The 1881 census identified a smaller workforce of 130 men that seem to have been associated with this mill, including 70 managers, skilled and unskilled millworkers, 10 longshoremen, and two logging camps containing 38 men, with a possible third, giving a total of 50 loggers, in addition to at least 24 Sechelt Nation handloggers.[170] An 1884 description of the Moodyville operation gave a total workforce of about 300 men, with six to eight logging camps, and a monthly payroll of some

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168. Richard H. Alexander, "Reminiscences of the early days of British Columbia," *The Canadian Club of Vancouver: Addresses and Proceedings, 1910-1911* (Vancouver: Saturday Sunset Presses, 1911), 13. A Scottish-born Canadian, Alexander came to BC in the 1862 rush, joined the mill as storekeeper in 1870, soon advanced to accountant, and then took over from Raymur as manager in 1882. Alexander, his wife and family were prominent in the social life of the settlement that rose around the mill and as part of the emerging elite of the new city of Vancouver in the 1880s. He retired as manager in 1914. Jamie Morton, "Alexander, Richard Henry," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Volume XIV* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 12-13; McDonald, *Making Vancouver*, 22-29, 144.

169. "A Ramble on the Mainland," *Daily Colonist*, 18 April 1876, 2.

170. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district b North, 106-113, houses 434-491.

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$15,000, or an average wage of $50 per month.[171] The same sort of discrepancy shows up for the Hastings mill, which in the 1881 census had a workforce of 108 men associated with it, including 42 managers, skilled and unskilled workers, four longshoremen, and two logging camps containing 46 men, with a possible third, giving a total of 66 loggers.[172] The 1884 description of the operation gave a total workforce of about 250 men, slightly smaller than that of the Moodyville Mill at the same time, with a monthly payroll of $12,500, suggesting wage parity.[173]

Although production rose in the 1880s, in both cases the increase in the number of men employed seems disproportionate. An account from 1887 described a smaller Moodyville workforce of 194 men, divided into 64 millworkers, with a monthly payroll of $4,000 plus board, 50 longshoremen, at a total monthly cost of $1,500 and board, and 80 men in the logging camps, earning $3,600 per month plus board. The overall monthly wage averaged $47, close to the $50 noted in 1884, with millworkers averaging $62.50, longshoremen $30, and the loggers $45.[174] Given that wages reflected prestige, and that millworkers now earned more than loggers, it appears that "factory" jobs had become more respectable, reversing the situation reported in the 1860s. Assuming a 26-day working month, the longshoremen earned just over $1.00 per day, much lower than any other work in the industry, and similar to the wages paid Chinese labourers in the coal industry. This implies a perception of these jobs as low-skill and low-prestige work. Allowing for increased production in the 1880s, these figures correspond more closely to those in the 1881 census, with the principal variation in the number of longshoremen.

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171. *The Resources of British Columbia*, Vol.1, no.12 (February 1884), 5.

172. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district b North, 91-94, houses 398-426.

173. The reports of 250 workers, a $12,500 monthly payroll, and five logging camps are all from *The Resources of British Columbia*, Vol.1, no.12 (February 1884), 5-6.

174. BCA, vertical files, film 95, pp.443-446, "Graphic Sketch of the Village of Moodyville, on Burrard Inlet," transcribed from *Vancouver News and Daily Advertiser*, 2 April 1887.

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Sources from the 1870s and 1880s support Alexander's portrayal of significant Aboriginal involvement in the labour force. The Rev. George Grant, who visited the Moody Dietz & Nelson sawmill in 1872 as a member of Sanford Fleming's railway survey party, noted that the workmen "represented the various nationalities scattered everywhere along the Pacific coast, Whites, Chinese, Siwashes [a derisive term for Aboriginals], Kanakas or Sandwich Islanders, etc." In 1875 George Dawson anticipated the 1881 census data when he noted that in the sawmills "Europeans or at least Whites fill the responsible posts," but that "Indians (Squa'mich) Chinamen, Negroes & Mulattoes & half breeds & Mongrels of every pedigree abound. Many of the lumber men originally from the lower Provinces."[175] George Walkem reported that the sawmills of the province employed about 130 Aboriginal workers in 1875, at wages between $20 and $30 per month and board, for an annual total of $40,000.[176] In 1878 the Indian Reserve Commission reported that Aboriginal people chose to live on Burrard Inlet "chiefly for the convenience of ready access to the saw mills, where they find a ready market for their labour, for their fish and other products." The sawmills provided "a wide field for the labour of those who are industriously inclined." The Commission estimated that $80,000 to $100,000 "finds its way annually into the hands of the natives. The mill owners, too, and the shipping frequenting the mills, are benefitted in a corresponding degree, by having a local source of labour constantly available."[177] In 1878 James Lenihan noted that work "[i]n the saw mills and lumber shanties, loading ships and as deck hands on steamers" provided $38,000, of the total of $154,162 earned by Aboriginal people in the district, close to Walkem's earlier estimate of forest industry earnings. This $38,000 represented

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175. George M. Grant, *Ocean to Ocean: Sir Sanford Fleming's Expedition through Canada in 1872* (Toronto: James Campbell & Son, 1873), 319; Cole and Lockner, *The Journals of George M. Dawson*, 115.

176. George Walkem, "Report of the Government of British Columbia," Canada, Sessional Papers 1875, 3.

177. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs 1878*, lii, Special Appendix D, Report of the Indian Reserve Commission, 21 March 1877.

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the second largest income source, behind only the salmon canning industry, which provided $65,862.[178] The two Burrard Inlet sawmills were thought to have paid Aboriginal workers about $18,000 in 1880, while Israel Powell suggested the following year that the sawmills preferred Aboriginal workers to White workers, with all paid the same wages of up to $2.50 per day.[179]

With the exception of the twenty-four handloggers belonging to the Sechelt Nation, Aboriginal participation in the Burrard Inlet lumber industry was not reflected in the 1881 census.[180] This apparent oversight may be attributed to two primary factors. First, the system of production was very much based on the "adventures" mediated through commission merchants, by which lumber was taken to export markets. More or less constant logging maintained a supply of logs in reserve at the mills, as described at Moody's operation in 1866. However, contemporary newspaper descriptions suggest that the sawmills did not cut continuously, but produced lumber in response to specific contracts for a cargo, as with the first shipment from Stamp's mill in 1867. The ship *Siam* arrived in June, the mill began cutting and loading its cargo on June 18, and the ship cleared Burrard Inlet for Australia on July 25.[181] In late 1869 the ship *Maud Ellen*, chartered by the BC & VI Sawmill, first loaded some cargo at Moody's mill, then crossed to Hastings mill, which cut for the first half of December 1869, before shutting down after

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178. Other sources of Aboriginal income in 1878 included: furs sold - $25,000; farm labour - $15,000; cattle and produce - $3,000; fish oil - $1,500; cranberries - $800. It should be noted that with the exception of farm labour, these all took the form of independent commodity production. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs 1879*, 72, Report of James Lenihan, 10 September 1878.

179. William Fraser Tolmie, "Utilization of the Indians," 7; Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs 1884*, 107.

180. The Aboriginal population around Burrard Inlet is enumerated in BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district D7, 35-67. None of the listings include mill or logging-specific occupations. This point was also made by McDonald in *Making Vancouver*, 8-9.

181. Howay, "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet," 11.

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the *Maud Ellen* was loaded.[182] In May 1871, Hastings Mill "commenced" cutting lumber with the arrival of the ship *Dashing Wave*.[183] The recollections of J. Rodger Burnes confirmed the lack of speculative cutting at Moodyville in the nineteenth century: "There never seemed to be much lumber piled on the storage grounds as there always was a vessel loading."[184] The pattern appears to have been one analogous to the older contract system of production described in Chapter 3, with commodities processed into exportable form only when there was a specific contract for them. In some ways, this resembled modern "just-in-time" manufacturing processes, with the commission merchants acting to coordinate the various inputs.

Assuming that the schedule of production was linked directly to the presence of a ship to take a cargo on one of the "adventures" negotiated by the commission merchants representing the mill, a large workforce would be required only for the few weeks when the ship was taking on a cargo. J. Rodger Burnes confirmed the newspaper reports that it took "some weeks" to load [and cut] a cargo of lumber. During this time many ships' crews would desert, leaving the captains to try to muster new crews before their departures.[185] This provides an explanation for the ethnic diversity among the workforce of the Burrard Inlet mills. In such an "on-demand" system, the sawmills had to maintain a core skilled labour force, to ensure that the physical plant and machinery of the mill could be ready to cut on short notice. This core group included engineers, sawyers, blacksmiths, millwrights, and administrative personnel such as managers, clerks, and foremen. There would also be benefits in maintaining a "skeleton" crew of unskilled workers, or millmen, to enable quick activation of the sawmill. However, it is clear from the contemporary

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182. *Mainland Guardian*, 16 October 1869, 3; *ibid.*, 4 December 1869, 3; *ibid.*, 15 December 1869, 3.

183. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1871, 3.

184. BCA, vertical files, film 95, 418, J. Rodger Burnes, "Pioneer Recalls Days of Moodyville Mill," clipping from *Citizen*, 22 June 1961, 22.

185. *Ibid.*

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descriptions that most of the unskilled labour force in the sawmills was a transient one, often working for no more than a couple of weeks at a time. The demand for such transient labour, primarily utilized for the unskilled tasks of stacking, transporting, and loading lumber on ships, corresponds well with the presence of a "constantly available" Aboriginal workforce. The parallels to the workforce in the pre-1870s coal mining industry, in which Aboriginal workers assumed the lead role in transporting and loading coal on ships, should also be noted. There was a consistent pattern of racialization of casual or temporary jobs related to transportation and shipping, seen as being congruent with the naturalized construct of "Indian."

The pattern of desertion described by Burnes provides an explanation for Alexander's recollection of a workforce comprising "run-away sailors." Such men, with resident Aboriginal workers, provided a willing casual workforce around Burrard Inlet. Without a commitment by the workers, or by the employers, to long-term employment, this workforce supplied the uncertain demand for common labour around the sawmills. This hypothesis may be applied to the 1887 description of the numbers of workers and wages in the various sectors of the Moodyville operation. The number of longshoremen loading lumber nearly matched the number of millworkers producing lumber, but the former earned on average less than half the wages of the latter. The 1881 census listed longshoremen or stevedores, although in very low numbers compared to millworkers. This suggests the existence of a core group of workers of mostly Anglo-North American origin, augmented as required with a large number of low-paid common labourers who were not defined in the census as sawmill-specific workers. Aboriginal workers or former sailors comprised the majority of these casual labourers at the mills. Some of the former sailors settled around the mills, and eventually moved into the permanent sawmill labour force, judging by the significant minority of Hawaiian and South American sawmill workers listed in the census.

This pattern of a labour market split into an upper echelon defined by specific occupations, and a lower echelon defined simply as labourers, with an additional dimension of racialization, repeats the distinction made between skilled workers, including

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"miners," and labourers in the Vancouver Island coal mines. The 1881 census portrays the Anglo-North American character of the skilled workers, managers and administrators, and loggers around Burrard Inlet. British immigrants dominated the equivalent group in the coal mines. By the later 1870s Chinese workers made up over three quarters of the lower echelon of the coal mining labour force, while that in the sawmills remained more heterogenous. This may be explained by the different labour requirements of the two industries, with the constant operation of the coal mines calling for a permanent unskilled labour force. The "on-demand" production schedule system of the sawmills, and the availability of labourers as required, counterindicated such a premanent unskilled labour force at the Burrard Inlet sawmills. Although it is difficult to establish the size of the population of former sailors, the 1881 census provided some information on the indigenous component of the potential workforce. Around Burrard Inlet, the census enumerated a total of 819 Aboriginal people, members of the "Sku hu a mish" [Squamish] and "Musquiam" [Musqueam] nations. Of this population, it listed 220 men as "laborer," and 16 men as "carpenter," suggesting a higher level of skill or technical ability, with five as "hunter and fisherman," and two each as "hunter" or "fisherman."[186] The size of this potential workforce of labourers relates well to George Walkem's report that the Burrard Inlet sawmills employed 130 Aboriginal workers in the 1870s. The designation of Aboriginal workers as "labourers" seems to repeat the convention in the Vancouver Island coal mines, where the census listed unskilled Chinese workers not as "miners," but as "labourers." Such a population of labourers, engaged as needed to load ships and transport lumber, explains the apparent discrepancy between the census and narrative data

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186. This population was enumerated as seven groups or "Sub-Tribe[s]", all part of "tribe Cowichan, as follows: Sku hu a mish, Burrard Inlet, 252 people, 69 labourers and 5 carpenters; Misquiam, Burrard Inlet, 140 people, 33 labourers, 11 carpenters, 1 hunter and fisherman; Sku hu a mish, Reserve No 3 Burrard Inlet, 58 people, 19 labourers; Sku hu a mish, Moodyville, 132 people, 32 labourers, 2 hunters & fishermen, and 1 hunter; Sku hu a mish, Burrard Inlet, 70 people, 20 labourers, 1 hunter and 1 fisherman; Sku hu a mish, Seymour Creek B.I., 26 people, 5 labourers, 2 hunters & fishermen; Musquiam, Burrard Inlet, 141 people, 42 labourers and 1 fisherman. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district D7, 35-67.

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relating to the size and demographic profile of the sawmilling workforce. Such a casual and unskilled workforce, mostly made up of Aboriginal workers, or deserting sailors who often were not of Anglo-North American origin, would not be listed in the census as mill workers or longshoremen, but simply as labourers.

For Aboriginal workers, the attraction of this work in and around the sawmills remained the ability to earn discretionary income, to permit mobility in their originating society. In 1872 George Grant commented on the voluntary nature of this work: "The aborigines work well till they have enough money to live on for some time, and then they go up to the boss and frankly say that they are lazy and don't want to work longer." Grant seemed offended particularly by the distribution of goods in potlatches. He gave the example of "big George," a labourer who earned $20 per month "to carry slabs." George eventually saved $2,000, then spent it all on a week-long, thousand-guest potlatch, leaving him with high status in his nation, but "penniless," and again carrying slabs.[187] The work George performed was consistent with the unskilled labouring work associated with Aboriginal workers, and he worked to the express end of achieving social mobility in his originating society. The voluntary and loosely scheduled approach to industrial work favoured by Aboriginal workers related well to the unskilled labour demands of the Burrard Inlet forest industry, with a schedule of activity predicated on the arrival of ships to be loaded. In some cases, due to the chronic labour shortage in nineteenth century British Columbia, and continuing patterns of hiring unskilled workers from indigenous populations around Burrard Inlet, Aboriginal workers were able to achieve permanent, skilled labour status in the 1880s and later.[188]

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187. Grant noted that although big George had achieved his goal of raising his social position, two of his rivals for "tyee" status, "Supple Jack" and "Old Jim," already were saving and preparing for their own potlatches; Grant, *Ocean to Ocean*, 319-320.

188. The participation of Native workers in the industrial forest industry in the later nineteenth century, and their movement into more permanent and more skilled positions is described in Lutz, "After the Fur Trade," 79-80; Knight, *Indians at Work*, 231-249, particularly 233-235.

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Conclusions

Significant parallels existed between the social systems of production that developed in the Burrard Inlet-based forest industry and that in the Vancouver Island coalfield. In both cases the system of production evolved in the 1860s, to take on a conventionalized form by the early 1870s. Although the coal industry relied nearly exclusively on the San Francisco market, the forest industry depended on the "foreign" markets of the Pacific, although mediated through the metropolis of San Francisco. Each industry was dominated by two producing and exporting companies, and a labour market split along racial and skill-based divisions produced the commodities. The historiography of both industries has tended to focus on factors of production, and the personalities of the entrepreneurs that initiated the ventures. However, it is clear that without the intervention of commission merchants or agents in Victoria, San Francisco, and London, neither of these export industries would have been possible. The many overlaps between the commission merchants involved in these two industries are significant.

Unlike the coal industry, the export forest industry did not evolve directly out of the established system of production of an earlier Hudson's Bay Company venture. Rather, commission merchants and producers attracted to the region by the gold rush initiated the export sawmills. They brought with them systems of production based on those developed in the earlier forest industries of California and Puget Sound, mediated through the experience of the prototype venture of Alberni Mills. Almost all of the commission merchants or agents, and many of the producers responsible for initiating the Burrard Inlet industry had worked on the prototypical Alberni Mills venture [Chapter 5]. As in the coal industry, the ability to place the commodity on markets seems to have outweighed the factors of producing the commodity in determining the viability of the industry. As early as 1866, the S.P. Moody & Company mill was claimed to have the lowest cost of production on the coast.[189] However, American tariffs restricted the Burrard Inlet mills to non-American markets, and duties on incoming supplies and

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189. "Our Forest Wealth," *The British Columbian*, 13 October 1866, 1.

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machinery made it difficult for them to compete with the Puget Sound sawmills even on these markets.[190] R.P. Rithet raised this issue in 1878 to explain why he had not built a mill on, or logged, property he leased over two years earlier. Competition for "Foreign orders" from the sawmills on Puget Sound meant that "the only two Mills in the Province have not been able to obtain sufficient business to keep them running to their full capacity." A recent reciprocity treaty between the United States and Hawaii created a ten percent disadvantage for BC lumber on the latter market, while in spite of a large domestic market, the Puget Sound mills made every effort to divert foreign order from "the Mills in this Province to the detriment of not only the owners, but the Country."[191] As the initiator of this abortive venture, Rithet, usually identified as an agent or merchant, demonstrated again the blurring of the lines between producers and agents.

There seem to be many discrepancies concerning the amount of capital these ventures required, and where it was obtained. Although some funds may have come directly from the producers or the agents, banks seem to have supplied most of the capital, through loans or promissory notes guaranteed by the agents or their partners. This is consistent with the high profit margins possible in this trade, as well as with a schedule of production based on "adventures," or cargoes of lumber or spars that were to be cut,

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190. It was this perceived disadvantage in terms of tariffs and duties that had resulted in the unsuccessful call for a 50¢ per thousand feet drawback on lumber exported. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, E. Stamp to W.A.G. Young, 22 January 1868.

191. The timber lease in question had been dated September 23, 1875. Rithet was interested in buying some of the leased land on the usual terms. BCA, GR-868, British Columbia, Lands, Correspondence Inward, Box 3, file 23, R.P. Rithet to Forbes G. Vernon [Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works], 22 January 1878. This leased land and intended venture may have been the one referred to by Mose Ireland. According to Ireland, after Moody [for whom Rithet acted as agent] achieved prosperity, he gave Ireland the task of finding a site and establishing a sawmill, with a $100,000 budget. This venture ended with Moody's death. BCA, vertical files, film 68, p.2326, "Mose Ireland – Pioneer," from Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 21 May 1905. As the lease dated from only two months earlier than Moody's November 1875 death, the brief for the project sounds identical, and Rithet and Moody had strong business links, it is possible that described the same venture.

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loaded, and taken to markets on an as-required basis. Unless the agent putting together the adventure had a realistic expectation of selling the cargo at a profit, the venture would not proceed. For the banks, this made for an acceptable level of risk, based on the record of the agent, and ensured that the funds to pay the note or loan would be realized in a timely fashion.

Until these sawmill ventures reorganized as limited liability companies in the 1880s and 1890s, the details of ownership remain obscure. The usual portrayal in the historiography, and even in much of the contemporary literature, is of a split between the producers, who owned the companies, and the agents, who took advantage of the producers. The producers are seen as the visionary entrepreneurs, assuming all the risks and establishing their "pioneer" ventures on a shoestring, with the agents profiting from the producers' efforts. It is significant that such accounts portray Moody in a much more favourable light than Stamp, although essentially they filled the same role in their respective ventures. However, the former Maine lumberman Moody was consistently described as a producer, while the former English sea captain and commission merchant Stamp was consistently represented as an agent. While the former is seen as an avatar of the producer ethos and pioneer virtue, the latter is seen as a grasping and troublesome obstacle to progress and representative of "big capital" or monopoly.[192] This repeats the same distinction drawn in Chapter 6 in the Vancouver Island coal mines between Robert Dunsmuir, accorded greater respect as an owner-operator than the "clerical and financial" manager Mark Bate. Although the involvement of agents and commission merchants seemed the key factor in determining the viability of an export industry, the producer ethos was, and remains, so deeply embedded in British Columbia ideology that factors of commodity production are privileged over those involving marketing of commodities. However, in the Burrard Inlet lumber industry, such facile distinctions between producers and agents are misleading, as many of the operators and managers, such as Stamp,

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192. Perhaps the most extreme example of this dichotomy is drawn by James Morton, extending as far as the title of his book, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp: The Lives and Colourful Times of Vancouver's Lumber Pioneers.*

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Raymur, Moody, and so forth, filled both roles. At the same time, commission merchants or agents, such as G.M. Sproat, Andrew Welch, and R.P. Rithet often made the decisions concerning the operation of the mills, apparently moving them into the status of producers along with their on-site managers.

In spite of the obstacles to marketing British Columbia lumber, such as tariffs, duties, and the competition from Puget Sound, the Burrard Inlet mills seem to have been economically viable. Their agents were able to place cargoes on markets, and the low cost of production compared to other regions served to offset tariffs and duties. The low cost of production was due first to the availability of high-quality and low-cost resources, through the granting of timber lands to the companies by the colonial and later provincial governments. The enormous scope and low cost of the grants made to Stamp's venture repeated those made to the earlier Alberni sawmill, and this provided an example for the timber land grants to the Moodyville mill. By the 1870s these timber rights were protected by legislation against the incursions of potential pre-emptors, to ensure that the export mills retained a cheap and secure timber supply.[193] With the high quality of timber on these lands, the raw materials to be transformed into exportable commodities were readily available.

The same conditions, in terms of agents with linkages to export markets, and generous allocations of inexpensive resources, existed at the prototypical Alberni Mills venture in the early 1860s. However, the difficulty in mustering and retaining an industrial labour force proved to be an insurmountable obstacle to its economic viability. Demographic conditions on Burrard Inlet in the wake of the Fraser River gold rush permitted the new export mills to more easily address the labour issue. Much of the core group of loggers, and administrative and skilled personnel followed Stamp from the

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193. An Order in Council signed by R. Beaven on 18 July 1874 reserved all the lands held by the two export mills from any competing pre-emptions. This was invoked in 1877, when a pre-emption was staked on a waterfront timber lease of Moody, Nelson & Company in Port Moody. BCA, GR-868, British Columbia, Lands, Correspondence Inward, Box 3, file 18, Moody, Nelson & Company to Forbes G. Vernon [Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works], 19 February 1877.

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Alberni venture to Burrard Inlet. Fifteen years later, the 1881 census identified a core, Anglo-North American-dominated, population of loggers and skilled mill workers associated with the sawmills. This group provided the human capital and expertise to make production possible. Occupationally and socially mobile, they could move from storeman or clerk to managerial or even ownership positions. They were augmented by a more heterogenous population of less-skilled, but apparently permanent employees living in association with the sawmills. These men provided the core of the unskilled labour required for processing, and could be augmented as required by the available population of labourers around the Inlet, comprised of members of the Squamish and Musqueam nations, and former sailors. Some of the latter group apparently joined the "permanent" mill workforce, demonstrated by the proportion of Hawaiian, South American, and Filipino workers at the sawmills.

The incorporation of Aboriginal workers into the labour force demonstrated the negotiation between historical blocs, with clearly stated advantages for both groups. By acquiring surplus economic resources through participation in the capitalist economy, Aboriginal workers could enhance their status and position in their originating society. This motivation provided the mill owners with a "casual" workforce, that could be called on as required to perform generally unskilled work. In particular, Aboriginal workers specialized in transporting lumber and loading ships, and could be mustered to perform such specific tasks. This also accorded with racialized perceptions of "Indian" jobs, by taking place outdoors, involving ships, and structured more on a piecework basis than around factory discipline. The same ideological congruence applied to the level of official support offered to the handloggers of the Sechelt nation, which again met the racialized expectations of appropriate work for Aboriginal people.

In spite of the labour shortage noted at the Hastings Mill in 1881, it seems that the Burrard Inlet mills remained viable over a longer term than the Alberni mill due to their ability to muster labour. The workforce was split, in much the same way as that in the Vancouver Island coal mines, along lines of skill, status, and often race. The upper echelon of skilled labour was generally Anglo-North American, and had the opportunity

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for further mobility into the ranks of managers and owners. As in the coal mines, it appeared that many of the Euro-North American workers in this group, like Morley Roberts, simply used such waged work as a temporary expedient to fund their pursuit of other opportunities. A major variation from the coal mining workforce was the general absence of Chinese labourers from the Burrard Inlet mills. This probably relates to the difference between the "continuous" system of production in the coal mines and the more sporadic system occasioned in the sawmills by the convention of cutting and loading cargoes simultaneously. The demand for casual unskilled labour on the Inlet could be met by the population of Aboriginal labourers, rather than maintaining a permanent workforce specifically as unskilled labour. The racialization of industrial jobs in BC contributed to the difference, as Chinese workers were considered suitable for the discipline of full-time, proletarianized, factory-type work, while Aboriginal workers were not. This ideology of race, combined with the demands of the respective systems of production, created the perception that Chinese labour was the most suited to the coal mines, while Aboriginal labour was most appropriate for transporting and loading lumber in the sawmills.

At the same time, there was an element of racialization in the skilled and administrative upper echelon of the labour force. Those who were held in the highest regard, or were assessed as having achieved respectability, were generally of Anglo-North American origin, conforming to the self-ascription of the hegemonic group in post-gold rush British Columbia. They were constructing themselves as the champions of progress, and by adhering to this ideology, they were creating an economic and social environment in which others like themselves could also achieve social mobility. Finally, the importance of autonomy in determining respectability should be acknowledged. The forest industry workers that were universally held in the highest regard were the North American loggers. This may be equated directly with the perceived level of freedom encountered in their work process. They worked outdoors, in a situation with a high degree of risk, but essential to production, so with a high rate of pay. Not subjected to the same strictures of a factory environment as mill workers, they were seen as more autonomous or independent. Finally, they were described explicitly as having the opportunity to rise to

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become logging contractors, or independent producers. This group, almost exclusively Anglo-North American, was seen as conforming most closely to the core values of the developing industrial society of British Columbia, in particular mobility and autonomy, and as such, provided a model of how respectability could be achieved.

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Chapter 8: The Establishment of the Salmon Canning System of Production

The preceding three chapters examined the introduction of large-scale forest products and coal exporting industries. The gold rush-based focus on the economic opportunities that could be created by producing and exporting commodities from British Columbia provided the impetus for the development of these industries. Organized within the larger social and political project of progress, development, and maximizing opportunities for occupational and social mobility, they enjoyed considerable support from the colonial and provincial governments. Significant parallels existed in their development and organization, beginning with the key role of commission merchants or agents in placing commodities on export markets. Without such access, and in the absence of significant local markets for commodities, the emergence of a version of the liberal order based on the conversion of resources into commodities would not have proceeded. As illustrated in the preceding sections, this serves as something of a corrective for the demonstrated bias in favour of producers evident both in contemporary sources and in the historiography surrounding these industries. Without the ability of the agents to sell the commodities, there was no opportunity for production. The fluid relationship between producers and agents further confuses the "producerphilic" interpretation. In many cases, the agents assumed the lead in initiating or expanding industrial ventures, taking on a producer role. Additionally, the commission merchants often acted as "financial agents" for the producing companies, handling the economic business of the companies, such as mustering capital, paying bills, and accepting payables, in exchange for a commission on earnings. Rather than simple parasites profiting from the hard work of the "pioneering" producers, the commission merchants formed an integral part of the larger system of production, rendering the simple producer/agent dichotomy meaningless.

The expansion of the commercial fishery beyond the HBC and Alberni Mills followed a similar pattern, becoming viable with the introduction of salmon canning, to produce an exportable commodity, and the participation of commission merchants, who mustered inputs and provided access to markets. This chapter will delineate the evolution of the salmon canning system and how it became conventionalized through the 1870s and

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1880s, creating the conditions for a boom in the 1890s, in response to the Second Industrial Revolution and the resulting demand for canned salmon. As a "new" industry, with a fairly clearly defined date of introduction in British Columbia, salmon canning provides a convenient environment for analysing the integration of ideology and cultural values into an emergent system of production. This chapter will examine the organization of the ventures that canned salmon, and in particular the relationships between the individuals who produced the commodity and those that facilitated the capitalization of the ventures and the marketing of the finished products. At the time, and in the historiography, these people were often portrayed as very disparate groups, referred to as "canners" and "agents," parallelling the artificial dichotomy and "producer-centric" bias seen in the other industries. As in those industries, closer examination of the historical record suggests a less neatly delineated situation, with a spectrum of capitalists, merchants, entrepreneurs, and skilled workers that occupied the upper echelon of the industry. In addition, notable linkages existed to other sectors of the industrial and commercial economy. This chapter will examine the structure of labour in the salmon canning industry, that shared some features with the other industries, such as the creation of labour markets split along lines of skill and race, but also exhibited some distinctive characteristics, due to the specific technological and resource-based requirements of this industry, in combination with existing cultural values.

Following the initiation of a viable salmon canning industry on the Fraser River in 1871 there was a rapid period of expansion, both on the Fraser and on the rivers of the north coast, over the next decade, with the total provincial pack of canned salmon rising from about 1,300-1,400 cases in 1871 to 62,000 cases in 1880 to 255,000 cases in 1882.[1]

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1. The 1871 production is from Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 November 1871, 3; *ibid.*, 3 October 1871, 3; *Mainland Guardian*, 30 September 1871, 3; *ibid.*, 4 October 1871, 3. The 1880 and 1882 figures are from Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 705. Conventionally, the standard salmon "box" or "case" in the late nineteenth century weighed 48 pounds net, usually as 48 one-pound cans. This was the case as early as 1874, when in his summary of the production of the Fraser River salmon canning industry, James Cooper specified that "Each case contains 48 tins of 1 lb. each." Canada, Sessional Papers 1875, *Annual Report of the Department of Marine & Fisheries*, Supplement no.5, 169-179. The "case"

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In the 1880s the demand for British Columbia salmon dropped due to the 1882-1886 recession in Europe. Repeating the situation in the forest industry, American canners could turn to domestic markets, while BC canners relied entirely on export sales, primarily to Great Britain. Unlike the American producers, who had developed domestic markets, BC canners were entirely export-oriented, with Great Britain the primary consumer. Because of the recession, demand and prices on the British market dropped, a situation aggravated by competition from newly-developed large-scale American fisheries in Alaska. Total British Columbia production declined to 108,000 cases, export income dropped to 20 percent of former levels, and the number of operating canneries was reduced by half.[2] By the "big year" of 1889, and the first stages of the second industrial revolution, the situation reversed, with the total pack rising to over 414,000 cases, signalling the start of a period of rapid expansion through the 1890s.[3]

The fishery resources of British Columbia were well-documented in gold rush-era literature, following on from the viable salt salmon trade of the HBC [Chapter 2] and the more limited fishery of the Alberni Mill venture [Chapter 5]. Alexander Annandale, a Scot who found success in the Australian gold rush of the 1850s, initiated an early attempt to convert the resource into an export trade, prior to the introduction of canning technology. As he followed the gold rush to BC in 1859, although without success, he observed the potential of the salmon resource in the Fraser River. Annandale retained enough capital to return "home" to Britain in 1863 and acquire the inputs to return to BC and establish a salmon fishery. He wrote to James Douglas in early 1864, requesting duty-free importation of nets and gear "(for my own use)" into the colony for the purpose of "testing the value of the fisheries." As well as equipment and supplies, Annandale brought

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remained the standard measure of production in the industry, usually referring to 48 one pound cans or 96 half pound cans.

2. David J. Reid, *The Development of the Fraser River Salmon Canning Industry, 1885 to 1913* (Vancouver: Department of the Environment, Fisheries and Marine Service, Pacific Region, 1973), iv.; Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 174, 179,705-706.

3. *Ibid.*, 706.

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technical expertise from Scotland, in the person of Alexander Ewen, later identified as a founder of the salmon canning industry:

> I have brought with me a man of great experience (and who has been for a number of years a manager of Sea Coast fishing near Aberdeen) - a full supply of every description of nets used in Scotland - all necessary gear - and am about to invest and risk the whole of the Capital I am present possessed of.[4]

In his application to the colonial government, Annandale emphasized the ideology of the producer ethos and the potential contribution to development: "(for if my enterprise proves successful it will be a great benefit to both Colonies)." As would be expected, this appeal resonated with the colonial administration, which approved his relief from duties.[5] Annandale established his salmon fishery on the south side of the Fraser across from New Westminster. The venture failed quickly, with its assets offered for sale in May 1865, presented as a desirable opportunity "for parties with some capital – who understand the business." The facilities included a large "Cooperage and Curing House," housing for sixteen men, a four-room private residence, and a wharf, while equipment and material included nets, cordage, and twine, curing vats, barrels and kits for packing, barrel staves, and sixteen tons of salt.[6] The presence of nets and worker housing suggest that this venture depended on immigrant labour for all phases of production, including fishing, curing and packing. In this respect it followed the unsuccessful labour strategy of the Alberni Mills sawmill operation, as opposed to the HBC or Anderson & Company fisheries, that relied on Aboriginal producers to supply the fish. As with Alberni Mills, it is likely that the cost and challenge of retaining waged employees in a context of gold rush

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4. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 24, Alexander Annandale to James Douglas, 22 February 1864.

5. *Ibid.*, annotated "Granted 24 Feb."

6. The failure of the venture is noted in Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 584. The physical details of the saltery come from the advertisement for its sale in *The British Columbian*, 6 May 1865, 2. The advertisement ran for at least a month, through 8 June 1865.

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opportunities, as opposed to simply buying the commodity from Aboriginal independent producers, explained why the venture was for sale so soon, including "nearly new" nets. As the HBC found, purchasing fish from Aboriginal producers was cheaper than the supplies required to fish, let alone the cost of employees in such an uncertain activity [see Chapter 2]. Later commentators attributed the failure of Annandale's venture to inappropriate technology, in particular the use of "Scotch trap nets rather than drift nets" in the Fraser River. Later, his former manager, Ewen, introduced drift nets and started an ongoing and profitable salt salmon business, exporting to the Sandwich Islands and Australia.[7]

The focus on factors of commodity production to explain the venture's failure echoes the reasons offered for the failures of the early 1860s sawmills on the lower Mainland. However, probably more important was the lack of participation by commission merchants in either the sawmills or Annandale's fishery. The more viable ventures discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, and the successful post-1865 export sawmills, all enjoyed strong linkages to export markets through the commission merchant firms that either initiated, or were integrally involved in them. Although Annandale's venture failed, it paved the way for later ventures, both with the facility, and the legacy of former employees such as Ewen, who parlayed his human capital into the status of a prominent independent producer.

The Introduction of Salmon Canning

Although some exports of salt salmon from the Fraser River continued through the 1860s, the conversion of the resource into the basis of a major export industry required the introduction of reliable techniques for canning fish. This technology developed in Britain and on the Atlantic coast of North America, then moved to the west coast with entrepreneurial migrants attracted by the California gold rush. By the late 1860s large scale salmon canning was established on the Sacramento and Columbia Rivers, with the

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7. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 584.

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Hume family assuming a leading role.[8] Concurrently, urban working populations in Britain demonstrated a demand for canned salmon. When the product first arrived on the British market in the late 1860s, Britain was the world's leading industrial state, yet due to a rapidly growing urban population and limited land area, was hard-pressed to feed itself. Canned salmon, considered competitive price-wise with canned meat, at about half the cost of fresh meat, provided a cheap and palatable source of protein for urban workers.[9]

In the late 1860s, following the introduction of canning to the West Coast, local commentators emphasized the economic potential of the salmon resource in the Fraser. Sockeye [*Orcorhyncus nerka*] already was recognized as the variety that had the greatest "commercial value." Annual exports averaged about 500 barrels of salted sockeye salmon, with other varieties packed and exported in smaller quantities, but it was speculated that about 2,000 barrels would be shipped with the "big run" of sockeye anticipated in 1869. However, the newspaper saw canning, with sockeye "packed in tins fresh," as the best mechanism for developing an industry.[10] Sockeye run up the Fraser to spawn each summer in July and early August. The runs follow a four year cycle, with one dominant, or "big run" year, followed by a subdominant year and then two off years. The years of the dominant sockeye run on the Fraser River in the relevant period were 1869, as noted above, 1873, 1877, 1881, and 1885. Cicely Lyons claimed that the earliest packs put up on the Fraser River were red spring, the variety canned on the Columbia River, with the advantages of sockeye making it the preferred variety for processing by the big run season of 1877.[11] However, sockeye was identified as the best species to utilize in 1869, and A.C. Anderson, the federal Inspector of Fisheries, was recommending the

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8. This general pattern of expansion of canning to California and then up the Pacific coast is described in many sources, including Ralston, "Patterns of Trade and Investment,"38-41; Chris Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor: The Pacific Coast Canned-Salmon Industry, 1870-1942* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 17-18.

9. Ralston, "Patterns of Trade and Investment," 40-41.

10. *Mainland Guardian*, 25 September 1869, 2.

11. Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 156.

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canning of sockeye in 1874, suggesting a preference for this variety from the beginning of the industry.[12] Although some entrepreneurs attempted experimental salmon canning ventures before 1869, their inability to export was attributed to a lack of "sufficient capital to make the business profitable,"again privileging factors of production, rather than access to export markets.[13]

In 1867 James Syme made the first documented attempt to can Fraser River salmon in the former Annandale saltery.[14] By the fall of 1869, this facility, identified as the former "James Syme Fishery," was advertised for rent again, complete with "Salting Vats, Boiler, [and] Smoke House," and a dwelling house.[15] The salting vats suggests that the facility continued to operate as a saltery, while the presence of a boiler, essential in canning, argues for the latter form of processing. As early as 1869, the *Mainland Guardian* identified salmon canning as a potentially valuable industry on the Fraser:

> It is surprising that so few possessing the requisite capital have entered into this very profitable business; if carried on as it might be on a sufficiently extensive scale, a most lucrative export trade might be created that would realize large fortunes for the traders, and give employment to a numerous population, who would become consumers of luxuries, hence increasing the revenue and prosperity of the colony.[16]

The ideological expression of the doctrine of colonial progress is significant. Such an industry would not provide economic benefits just to the entrepreneurs, but would act to support a settler population, thereby contributing to the development of the colony. By 1871 this hope was realized when two canneries exported cargoes to England, both

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12. *Mainland Guardian*, 25 September 1869, 2; Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1874*, 168-169.

13. Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 142-143; Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 584-585; *Mainland Guardian*, 25 September 1869, 2.

14. Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 142-143; Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 584-585.

15. *Mainland Guardian*, 6 October 1869, 2.

16. "Salmon," *Mainland Guardian*, 25 September 1869, 2.

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initiated by entrepreneurs active on the Lower Mainland in the 1860s. In May 1871, prior to the salmon run, Captain Edward Stamp, the omnipresent entrepreneur central to the introduction of the exporting forest industry [see Chapters 5-7], acquired a lease on a large storehouse in the former Royal Engineers' camp in New Westminster, and the use of the adjacent wharf.[17] In this facility, Stamp's "Fish Preserving Co." packed about 50,000 pounds of salmon in one and two pound tins. The company shipped one thousand "boxes" of this to England, probably comprising most of the production, although intending some for the Australian market.[18] In 1874, more than two years after Stamp's untimely death, an article described him as the person that paved the way for the export of canned salmon to England.[19]

Alexander Loggie, a canner from New Brunswick, initiated the other venture, heading a partnership which included Alexander Ewen, Annandale's former manager, James Wise, a fisherman who came to BC in 1862, and David Hennessey, another canner from New Brunswick.[20] It began in early June 1871, simultaneously with Stamp's

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17. Stamp requested a one-year lease on the building, and offered rent of $200 per year. Although expressing concern about the smell, B.W. Pearse approved the application on behalf of the colonial government. BCA, GR-1372, Colonial Correspondence, file 1643, Edward Stamp to F.G. Claudet, 29 May 1871.

18. The article that noted the quantity packed raved about the quality of the product, and also noted that some canned salmon would be retained for the local market. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 November 1871, 3. The reference to the 1,000 "boxes" of salmon shipped to England, with more to be sent to Australia was made a month earlier in *ibid.*, 3 October 1871, 3. A few days before, an article noted that 700 "cases" of canned salmon from the "Fish Preserving Co., at Sapperton" was to be shipped to England on the *Princess Royal*. "Canned Salmon for England," *Mainland Guardian*, 30 September 1871, 3. Conventionally, canned salmon was shipped in a "box" or "case" of 48 pounds net weight, usually 48 one-pound cans [see note 1, above]. The contemporary reports suggest that nearly the entire production of Stamp's cannery went to England, with under five percent of the total for Australia and local consumption.

19. "Our Salmon," *Mainland Guardian*, 1 August 1874, 2.

20. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 585; Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 141-143.

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cannery: "A new company has commenced operations in the above business [canned salmon] in the premises formerly occupied by Mr. J. Syme with every prospect of success. They are all practical men, thoroughly up to the business, and, having the finest site for the purpose on the river, possess every facility for their work." It was expected that the venture would prove profitable, and would encourage other canneries in turn.[21] By October 1871 "Messrs Loggie & Co." shipped 300 cases of canned salmon "to various parts of the world."[22] This represented under a third of the quantity shipped by Stamp's venture in the same year. Reports portrayed the Loggie venture as a partnership involving skilled workers in the form of canners and fishermen, or normative "pioneer producers." Stamp, as a commission merchant, clearly provided a link to capital and markets in his venture, but it is unclear how he acquired the required technology and skilled labour, although the Victoria tinsmith John Deas, who supplied cans to the venture, also may have provided processing expertise.[23]

As in the two export sawmills on Burrard Inlet, these "pioneer" ventures reflect the producer-agent dichotomy, with Stamp filling the latter role in both industries. The historiography of the salmon canning industry consistently depicts its organization in terms of this dichotomy, in many cases following a three-phase model postulated by Keith Ralston. He suggested that in the 1870s, Victoria commission merchants, who raised their

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21. "Canned Salmon," *Mainland Guardian*, 7 June 1871, 3.

22. Assuming 48 pound cases, this suggests that 14,400 pounds of salmon was exported. *Mainland Guardian*, 4 October 1871, 3. Cicely Lyons cited the figure of 300 cases exported, but suggested that the whole amount was sent to England, rather than various markets. Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 145.

23. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 585. Deas had come to Victoria from San Francisco by 1862, working as a tinsmith. He ran his own business in Yale from about 1866 to 1868, then returned to Victoria. Nothing reveals how he may have acquired the technology for canning. H. Keith Ralston, "John Sullivan Deas: A Black Entrepreneur in British Columbia Salmon Canning," *BC Studies*, Vol.32 (Winter 1976-77), 64-78. In the fall of 1877 Deas was described as having managed his cannery "during the last seven years," which suggests that he had assumed these responsibilities in 1871, when Stamp initiated the venture. *Mainland Guardian*, 14 November 1877, 3.

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venture capital in British Columbia, financed early cannery ventures.[24] Ralston's second phase, in the late 1870s, involves investment from the earlier canning centres of the American west coast, culminating in 1881 with about 45 percent of the plant and operating capital on the Fraser River coming from the United States.[25] Ralston's third stage, in the late 1880s, is typified by direct British investment in the industry, with the revival of the British market for canned salmon. Combined with the beginnings of large-scale limited liability companies in British Columbia, this led to an industry consolidated into a smaller number of larger, British-capitalized firms.[26] Ralston's model provides the basis for most subsequent discussions of the early development of the BC salmon canning industry.[27]

The dichotomy between agents and producers seems to be an integral part of these interpretations, with the agents consistently portrayed as dominating the canners, or producers.[28] Although in some instances this may have been the case, the historical record suggests a wide range of power relations of the industry, contrary to Ralston's contention of financial domination. He argued that "the commission merchants of Victoria (later also of San Francisco) provided the finances; the growth of the industry, in fact, depended on

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24. Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen," 19-20.

25. *Ibid.*, 21.

26. Ralston, "Patterns of Trade and Investment," 37-45.

27. This model has been adapted by most later writers on the topic. For example Duncan A. Stacey, *Sockeye and Tinplate: Technological Change in the Fraser River Canning Industry 1871-1912* (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1982), p.6; Muszynski, "Major Processors to 1940 and Early Labour Force," 47-49; Muszynski, *Cheap Wage Labour*, 106-124; Dianne Newell, editor, *The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry: A Grown Man's Game* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 12; L. Anders Sandberg, "A Study in Canadian Political Economy: A Critical Review and the Case of the British Columbia Salmon Canning Industry, 1870-1914" (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1979), 116-118.

28. For instance, Ralston found it "not surprising" that two of the first three canneries should have passed into the hands of "merchants." Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen," 20.

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their ability to carry the producer until the pack was sold." However, in a footnote, he admitted that "[n]o direct evidence could be found on this point."[29] The nature of the historical documents relied on in this interpretation provides a possible explanation for the portrayal of the canners' subordination to the commission merchants. The more accessible of these, like the reminiscences of Leon Ladner, a canner's son, or the manuscript of Henry Doyle, the architect of the assembly of BC Packers, were produced by writers sympathetic to the canners' perspective.[30] I suggest that this historical and historiographical preference for canners reflects the depth to which the producer ethos was embedded in nineteenth century BC ideology, with its entrenched antipathy towards monopolists and speculators. As in the other industries, this dichotomy may not be sustained in the face of historical evidence. In the first fifteen years of the industry, some clearly delineated conventions were established with respect to the initiation and operation of ventures to produce and export canned salmon. However, the roles of the individuals who initiated and managed such ventures seem to have been fluid, with the demarcation between producer and agent at best an arbitrary one.

1871-1877: The Beginning of the Industry

In the 1870s there was no single form of proprietorship required, or even perceived as desirable, for a canning venture, as T. Ellis Ladner recalled later:

> In the heyday of early salmon canneries, ventures were embarked upon under various types of ownership. There was no provincial statute affording limited liability, or even provision for registered partnerships. Canneries were operated as sole proprietorships, as associations of two or more, as partnerships, or as companies.[31]

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29. *Ibid.*, 19, note 47. Ralston suggested that with the exception of the Hudson's Bay Company, none of the merchant firms in Victoria had large enough assets to support such practices. *Ibid.*

30. Ladner, *Above the Sand Heads*; BCA, I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries," c.1957. Doyle's manuscript was later published in Newell, *The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry.*

31. Ladner, *Above the Sand Heads*, 86.

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The capitalization of these early ventures has been debated, with the received version following Ralston's contention that the commission merchants of Victoria acted as financiers in the first phase of cannery development. Henry Doyle saw the first canners as impecunious visionaries:

> As is usual with practically all industrial efforts those who first engage in new enterprises are generally men of comparatively little financial worth. Those who already possess money hesitate to take chances in pioneering. It was this way in the creation of the salmon canning industry. Those who started it were fishermen like Alexander Ewen, ... and others of kindred occupations, little means, and from the one stratum of society. I do not know of a single one of these pioneers who could be classed as a man of substance in the financial sense at the time he first engaged in the salmon canning business.[32]

Doyle's commitment to the producer ethos is clear in this passage. On the other hand, Cicely Lyons saw the early canners as self-capitalized, with their ventures representing a diversification of earlier investments in the region. However, she excepted both the prototypical ventures of Stamp and Loggie from this pattern.[33] The ambiguity concerning the appropriate structure and capitalization of such ventures is evident, but an examination of the historical record will serve to clarify this. Commission merchants acted on behalf of both the Stamp and Loggie ventures in the 1871 season. Stamp's cannery exported at least 1,000 boxes of salmon with the participation of the Victoria firm of Findlay, Durham & Brodie. It is unclear if Findlay, Durham & Brodie acted simply as a shipping agent, or if the firm purchased the salmon outright from Stamp and then resold it in England.[34] As Stamp was a commission merchant and shipping agent himself, the agency of Findlay, Durham & Brodie seems redundant, echoing the situation seen with the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company, where coal was marketed to the San Francisco market by the coal merchant John Rosenfeld rather than the San Francisco

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32. BCA, I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries," c.1957, 22-23.

33. Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 159.

34. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 3 October 1871, 3; Ralston, "John Sullivan Deas," 142.

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commission firm of Dickson, De Wolf & Company, with its business affiliation with the producing company [see Chapter 6]. This reinforces the perception that the commission merchant firms would defer to more specialized firms for the marketing of certain commodities. In 1871, the Victoria commission merchant firm of Lowe, Stahlschmidt & Company acted as the agent for Alexander Ewen, one of the partners in Alexander Loggie & Company.[35] In 1871 Alexander Loggie & Company, with Ewen a partner, shipped 300 cases of salmon to England through the same merchant firm. Cicely Lyons suggested that the arrangement was required, in spite of existing contacts for the sale of salt salmon in Australia and Hawaii, to provide access to the British market:

> He could not hope to usher Alexander Loggie & Company's product on to the English market by this route, consequently the partners made an arrangement with Stahlschmidt & Ward (commission merchants, shipping and insurance agents) of Victoria, to act as their sales agent on consideration of a commission of five per cent.[36]

The development of the Victoria shipping and commission firms engaged in the salmon canning industry proceeded with the evolution of commercial canning. The 1882 British Columbia directory classified four Victoria companies as "wholesale commission and shipping merchants." They were Findlay, Durham & Brodie, Stahlschmidt & Ward, Turner, Beeton & Company, and Welch, Rithet & Company.[37] All four of these firms were established in the early 1870s, in each case evolving out of earlier merchant firms. By the late 1870s they all were involved extensively in the salmon canning industry. For instance, in 1891 it was said of Stahlschmidt & Ward that "they had seen the full career [of

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35. Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen," 19, citing the Victoria *Standard*, 16 January 1871, 2.

36. Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 145, 159. Stahlschmidt & Ward was the name of the successor company of Lowe, Stahlschmidt & Company, as discussed below.

37. *The British Columbia Directory for the Years 1882-83* (Victoria: R.T. Williams, 1882), 110.

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the salmon fisheries]."[38] Stahlschmidt & Ward could trace its origins to Lowe, Stahlschmidt & Company, described in 1871 as commission merchants acting as agents for British and California companies. Lowe, Stahlschmidt & Company had formed in turn in 1870, when Victoria resident James Lowe, formerly of the firm of Lowe Brothers [see Chapter 3], entered a partnership with Thomas Lett Stahlschmidt, another well-established Victoria merchant.[39] Lowe brought strong British Columbia and northwest affiliations from his earlier employment with the Hudson's Bay Company, and mercantile connections with San Francisco, Hawaii and Britain.[40] Robert Ward, the brother of William Ward, the manager of the Bank of British Columbia in Victoria, and also Thomas Stahlschmidt's son-in-law, joined the latter's firm in 1876, and assumed its ownership in 1883.[41]

The 1871 Victoria directory listed Findlay, Durham & Brodie as importers and wholesale dealers in dry goods and clothing, with offices in Victoria and London. The three principals were George James Findlay, John Henry Durham, and J.H. Brodie, with Findlay and Brodie listed as residents of Victoria, but not Durham, suggesting he acted as the firm's London representative.[42] The company had developed recently into a three way partnership, as two years earlier, it was Findlay & Durham, engaged in the same sort of business. Demonstrating the strong linkages in the Victoria business community, in 1882 the manager of Findlay, Durham & Brodie was Matthew T. Johnston, formerly of Alberni

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38. Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen," 19, note 49, citing *Victoria Illustrated* (Victoria: Ellis & Co., 1891), 88.

39. Mallandaine, *First Victoria Directory and British Columbia Guide, 1871*, 24, 37; Careless, "The Lowe Brothers," 289.

40. *Ibid.*, throughout.

41. *Ibid.*; *Mainland Guardian*, 17 March 1883, 2. Robert Ward's brother William was the Victoria manager of the Bank of British Columbia, a prominent source of venture capital in the region.

42. Mallandaine, *First Victoria Directory and British Columbia Guide, 1871*, advertisements, 5,11,13.

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Mills, and until 1876 the Victoria partner in Sproat & Company [see Chapter 7].[43]

Turner, Beeton & Company began the 1870s as J.H. Turner & Company, wholesale and retail merchants in dry goods.[44] John Herbert Turner arrived in Victoria from England in July 1862, attracted by the gold rush, then entered into partnership with another merchant attracted by the gold rush, Jacob Hunter Todd. By early 1864 Turner had opened the "London House" retail drapery & millinery business, with a silent partner, Henry Coppinger Beeton, and a purchasing agent, John Partridge Tunstall, both of the London warehouse firm of Copestake, Moore & Co.[45] J.H. Turner & Company became Turner, Beeton & Tunstall, importers and wholesale and retail dealers in dry goods, with the 1872 arrival of John Henry Tunstall in Victoria.[46] The newer firm was closely affiliated with J.P. Tunstall & Company, of London, which represented its interests there. In 1876-77 the company reorganized, when J.H. Tunstall left Victoria after falling out with Turner, and Beeton left Copestake, Crampton & Moore. Beeton and Turner sold off the Victoria retail business to concentrate on salmon canning and wholesale business, without consulting their partner Tunstall, which led to the dissolution of the company, and the formation of Turner, Beeton & Co., with H.C. Beeton & Company as its London affiliate.[47] When Turner, Beeton & Company was incorporated [in England] in 1899, the

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43.Edward Mallandaine, *First Victoria Directory and British Columbia Guide, 1869*, (Victoria: E. Mallandaine, 1869), 26; *The British Columbia Directory for the Years 1882-83*, 110.

44. Edward Mallandaine, *First Victoria Directory and British Columbia Guide, 1871*, 40.

45. Christopher J.P. Hanna, *William Wilson: Pioneer Entrepreneur* (Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2002), 40.

46. John Henry was the son of John Partridge Tunstall. *Ibid.*, 70; Edward Mallandaine, *First Victoria Directory and British Columbia Guide, 1874* (Victoria: E. Mallandaine, 1874), 40.

47. Hanna, *William Wilson*, 125-127. The dissolution of the Turner, Beeton & Tunstall, with Turner in Victoria and the two other partners in London is recorded in *British Columbia Gazette 1877* (Victoria: Queen's Printer, July 20, 1877), 222. The shift in London representation to H.C. Beeton & Co. is noted in Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 16 July

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firm was described as "general merchants, shipping and insurance agents, and salmon canners, the canneries being situated on the Skeena and Fraser Rivers."[48]

Welch, Rithet & Company formed in 1871, as the successors to the earlier merchant firm of J. Robertson Stewart. William C. Ward, the manager of the Bank of British Columbia, and the brother of Robert Ward of Stahlschmidt & Ward, was given as a Victoria reference for the new firm.[49] Robert Patterson Rithet, the Victoria principal of the new firm, commented on the support from the bank: "Ward is willing to do anything in his power to further the new business and appears quite confident in its success."[50] Rithet thought the prospects for a commission merchant firm were bright in the early 1870s in Victoria, particularly given the "tip-top" connections to the metropolitan centres of San Francisco and London:

> By the papers I presume you noticed the mention of a new firm of Wharf St Welch, Rithet & C°, Such is the name of the Successors of J Robertson Stewart & of which your humble Servant forms a half: now in reality have I Entered upon turmoil of business, the result of which I dread to anticipate but am hopeful of Success. We Commence under most favourable auspices and at a time when the Colony appears about to Enter upon an Era of improvement & progress - with the House in San Francisco and in Liverpool we ought to make a business; our outside Connections are also tip-top[.][51]

Welch and Rithet's activities prior to the formation of this partnership were outlined in Chapter 7, with both men playing a leading role in the development of the Burrard Inlet forest industry, particularly the Moodyville sawmill. As alumni of Anderson & Company and Sproat & Company, the partners exemplified the triangular trade linkages

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1878, 2.

48. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 5 August 1899, 3.

49. *Ibid.*, 2 November 1871, 4.

50. BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Vol.2, letterbook, 289, R.P. Rithet to A. Welch, 28 August 1871.

51. *Ibid.*, Vol.2, letterbook, 288, R.P. Rithet to Clapperton, 28 August 1871.

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between Victoria, San Francisco and Britain.[52] The Victoria partner, R.P. Rithet, from a respectable farming background in Dumfriesshire, Scotland, worked for a commission merchant in Liverpool for three years before the gold rush drew him to Victoria in 1862 at the age of eighteen. He spent two years in the Cariboo before returning to Victoria in 1865, where he joined Sproat & Company [see Chapter 7].[53] In the course of his time in the Cariboo and in Victoria, Rithet formed close affiliations with other commission merchants and entrepreneurs who had been attracted to the region, including James Raymur, the manager of the Hastings Mill, William Ward, the banker and brother of the commission merchant Robert Ward, and Jacob Hunter Todd, merchant and former partner of J.H. Turner [above].[54] The points of convergence between these commission merchant firms were many, and ongoing.

These merchant firms were arranged along similar lines, with a Victoria office, usually one partner in England, and often an office in San Francisco. Generally affiliations existed with merchants in the "foreign" Pacific markets identified in Chapters 5 and 7, including Australia, Hawaii, China, and South America. At least two of these firms had extremely strong personal and business linkages to the Bank of British Columbia, through its manager William Ward. The business of the commission merchants revolved around the importation of consumer goods, including foods and liquor, "dry goods," and clothing, from England or San Francisco, and the export of commodities produced in British Columbia. In the 1870s canned salmon assumed a prominent role in this commodity

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52. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 26 July 1889, 4, Obituary, Andrew Welch.

53. Clayton, "Rithet, Robert Patterson," 873-874; Scholedfield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.4, 1134-1136. This source gives a date of 1870 for the formation of Welch, Rithet & Company, while the 1871 date is from Rithet's own correspondence. BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Vol.2, letterbook, 288, R.P. Rithet to Clapperton, 28 August 1871.

54. *Ibid.*, letterbook 1868-1871, 251-253, R.P. Rithet and [for] J. Raymur to A. Welch, 3 August 1871; *ibid.*, 256-257, R.P. Rithet and [for] J. Raymur to A.J. Ralston, 3 August 1871; *ibid.*, 261-263, R.P. Rithet to A.J. Ralston, 5 August 1871; *ibid.*, 264-265, R.P. Rithet to J. Raymur, 7 August 1871. By the early 1880s Todd switched his primary business to the salmon canning industry, operating a network of canneries.

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export trade, due to the strong demand on British markets, and its suitability for shipping.

Little evidence exists to clarify the relationship between the agents and canners in the 1870s. Each of the four merchant firms described above acted in the canning business, although the level of their contribution to the system of production remains unclear. Meanwhile, the industry expanded from the two "pioneer" ventures in 1871. By 1873 the plants operating on the river included those of John Deas, Loggie & Company, the Vancouver Island Company, and Cunningham & Holbrook.[55] Two of these firms, Deas and Cunningham & Holbrook, evolved out of Stamp's venture, following the latter's death in 1872, while promoting his salmon canning business in England.[56] It seems that the venture was taken over by his former agents, Findlay, Durham & Brodie, with John Deas assuming management of the cannery on the Fraser River. For the 1873 season Deas, presumably in connection with Findlay, Durham & Brodie, erected and acted as superintendent of a "large fishing establishment" on Deas Island.[57] Deas remained the largest producer on the river until 1876, then fell to third place in the expanded industry resulting from the big run season of 1877. In August 1878 Deas sold all his right, title and interest in this cannery to Findlay, Durham & Brodie, ending his connection with the industry.[58] Some ambiguity exists concerning the ownership of this business. In his fine

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55. Deas produced 7,400 cases of canned salmon, 100 barrels of salt salmon and 2 tons of smoked oolichans, Loggie & Company produced 4,500 cases of canned salmon and 700 barrels of salt salmon, and the Vancouver Island Company packed 3,500 cases of canned salmon and 100 barrels of salt salmon. No figures were available for Cunningham & Holbrook. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 23 October 1873, 2.

56. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, January 27, 1872, p.3.

57. *Mainland Guardian*, September 10, 1873, p.3; H. Keith Ralston, "John Sullivan Deas: A Black Entrepreneur in British Columbia Salmon Canning," *op. cit.*, pp.142-144. It is possible that Deas had been managing the cannery from the start in 1871; see [Note 19], above.

58. *Ibid.*, pp.145-146; *Mainland Guardian*, November 14, 1877, p.3; *ibid.*, August 28, 1878, p.2. In the fall of 1877 Deas was described as having managed his cannery "during the last seven years," which suggests that he had acted in this capacity since the 1871 season, when Stamp initiated the venture. *Ibid.*, November 14, 1877, p.3.

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discussion of Deas' activities as a canner, Keith Ralston concluded that the cannery definitely was in Deas' name, as he held tenure of the land and facility, and controlled the company, subject only to the constraints of needing capital from Findlay Durham & Brodie, as his financial agents.[59] This is consistent with contemporary descriptions, such as A.C. Anderson referring to Deas as "the proprietor of a cannery," and Findlay, Durham & Brodie advertising themselves as "Agents for Deas' Salmon Fishery, Fraser River." Contemporary newspaper reports also referred to "Deas's Fishery" or identified the cannery as being that of J. Deas.[60] Ranged against this are consistent references to Finlay, Durham & Brodie as the owners in the official fisheries reports from 1873 to 1878. For example, in 1873 "One large firm, Messrs. Findlay, Durham & Brodie, are engaged extensively in this business [salmon canning]. There are some others in a smaller way."[61] After Deas sold his interest in the cannery, it was known as the Fraser River Company Cannery, and by 1881 was managed by Charles Brodie, with Findlay, Durham & Brodie remaining its Victoria agents.[62] When Deas built the new plant in 1873, Cunningham & Holbrook, a pair of New Westminster merchants, took over Stamp's 1871 cannery in the old Royal Engineers' camp.[63] Holbrook & Cunningham dissolved their partnership in early 1877, with Holbrook taking over the cannery operation on his own for the dominant

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59. H. Keith Ralston, "John Sullivan Deas: A Black Entrepreneur in British Columbia Salmon Canning," *op. cit.*, p.144.

60. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Commissioner of Fisheries, 1878*, 290; *Guide to the Province of British Columbia for 1877-8*, Victoria, T.N. Hibben & Co., 1877, p.379; Victoria *Colonist*, September 30, 1873, p.2; *Mainland Guardian*, November 14, 1877, p.3.

61. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1873*, 205.

62. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 28 July 1881, 3. Although there is no evidence linking the manager to the partner in the owning company, the name would seem more than coincidental.

63. Ralston, "John Sullivan Deas," 145; Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 23 October 1873, 2.

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run of that season.[64] It should be noted that cannery movement, construction, and company initiation tended to be focussed on the big run years for sockeye salmon, such as 1873 and 1877.

Like Deas, Alexander Loggie & Company moved its operation for the 1873 season. Two of the partners in this venture also participated in Ewen, Wise and Kay, a salmon saltery which packed a "great Number" of barrels of fish.[65] In 1875 Loggie & Company "reorganized as Ewen and Wise" when Loggie withdrew from the firm.[66] During the winter of 1876-77, in advance of the big run season, Ewen & Wise erected a purpose-built cannery in New Westminster.[67] Meanwhile, Stahlschmidt & Ward, the successor company of Lowe, Stahlschmidt & Company, continued to serve as Ewen & Wise's agents, for which they charged a five percent commission.[68] In 1878 Ewen bought out his remaining partner, forming Ewen & Company.[69] The reorganized firm continued to be represented by Stahlschmidt & Ward and then by its successor, Robert Ward & Company, beginning in 1883.[70]

Both contemporary sources and historical interpretations consistently portray Ewen as a pioneer producer, who remained independent of the agents. For example, Ellis Ladner described Ewen as "extremely canny," and outlined his approach:

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64. *British Columbia Gazette, 1877*, 56; *Mainland Guardian*, 22 September 1877, 3.

65. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 30 September 1873, 2.

66. Ralston, "John Sullivan Deas," 145. Loggie died in Wisconsin in early 1876. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 27 February 1876, 3.

67. The cost of the new plant was over $5,000.00. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Commissioner of Fisheries, 1877*, 341.

68. In 1877 Stahlschmidt & Ward were advertising as agents for "Ewen & Wise's Salmon Fishery, Fraser River." *Guide to the Province of British Columbia for 1877-8*, 380; Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 159.

69. Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen," 20.

70. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 30 July 1881, 3; *British Columbia Gazette, 1883*, 100; *Mainland Guardian*, 17 March 1883, 2.

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> Alex Ewan [*sic*] owned at New Westminster one of the first salmon canneries on the Fraser River. It was quite small. Ewen probably did not have sufficient funds to venture on a larger scale and preferred to develop his business from its profits rather than borrow money, for to borrow money he would have had to reveal particulars of his affairs. He was, however, progressive, and was soon able to branch out.[71]

Keith Ralston suggested that the income provided by his saltery operations augmented Ewen's cannery earnings, and permitted him to expand while remaining financially "independent" of the agents.[72] These portrayals of Ewen as independent producer echo Daniel Gallacher's portrayal of Robert Dunsmuir's "independence" as he developed his coal mining company [chapter 6], reinforcing the symbolic value of such avatars of the producer ethos. Ranged against this is an 1875 letter to the Commissioner of Fisheries from "Stahl, Schmidt & Co. [*sic*]," in which the company identified itself as intimately involved in the fishery while advocating hatcheries and other resource enhancement efforts.[73] This suggests that Ewen's agents participated in the industry at a level far beyond that expected of a firm simply placing a product on export markets.

It is unclear how much of the BC salmon pack at this time was shipped directly to England, its ultimate retail destination. Keith Ralston wrote that: "Salmon canning in BC began independently. It was financed primarily by local commission merchants with direct trade connections with Great Britain. The bulk of the pack was exported directly, not via San Francisco."[74] Ralston noted the important precedent of the wheat trade to Britain from the west coast, based in San Francisco, and how the salmon trade followed its commercial pattern.[75] Although Findlay, Durham & Brodie had clear linkages only to Britain, the other agents had equal or stronger relations with San Francisco. An 1873

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71. Ladner, *Above the Sand Heads*, 87.

72. Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen," 20.

73. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Commissioner of Fisheries, 1876*, 209-220.

74. Ralston, "Patterns of Trade and Investment on the Pacific Coast," 41.

75. *Ibid.*

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Victoria *Colonist* discussing the state of the Fraser River fishery cited the price of the salmon in San Francisco as a basis for calculating the returns of the industry.[76] This implies that the primary market for Fraser River salmon was in that city. In the 1877 season, BC contributed 67,387 of the total 68,641 cases of canned salmon produced in Canada, with the majority shipped to the USA [37,485 cases] and England [24,337 cases].[77] However, a list of producers prepared the same year suggested that most B.C. salmon sold in England and Australia.[78] This could reflect a convention of shipping to England through San Francisco, following that of the Columbia River packers in the 1870s: "During the past season [1880] there has been a general disposition on the part of the Oregon canners to ship directly to England on their own account, instead of doing so through second parties in San Francisco, as heretofore."[79] In the 1870s some Fraser River canneries, such as King & Company and the Delta Cannery, definitely shipped to San Francisco. In December 1878 Welch Rithet & Company paid an advance to the former on 2,991 cases of salmon shipped from San Francisco to Liverpool, while the Delta Cannery, partly owned by Welch, Rithet & Company, paid Findlay, Durham & Brodie for insurance on a shipment to San Francisco.[80] These transactions illustrate the cooperation between the various producers and agents as well as the practice of shipping to England through San Francisco. It would appear that in the first decade of British Columbia salmon canning, San Francisco remained the commercial centre of the trade, with at least a substantial portion of the pack shipped through that city, although this pattern was changing by the 1880s.

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76. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 30 September 1873, 2.

77. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Commissioner of Fisheries, 1877*, xiii,xxxvi.

78. *Ibid.*, 307.

79. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, 1880*, 264.

80. BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Vol.7., Cash Book 1878-1879, 323, 27 December 1878; *ibid.*, 327, 30 December 1878.

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1877-1881: American Capital and Expansion

In 1877 the expectation of a dominant Fraser River sockeye run, combined with a growing export market, resulted in the formation of two large operations, and a significant expansion of the industry. Ralston identified this as the year when American domination of the BC industry began. American involvement dated to 1876, when the Northwestern Commercial Company built the Inverness cannery, the first on the Skeena River. This was a partnership between Turner, Beeton & Company, entering the industry for the first time, and Colonel Charles C. Lane, described by Cicely Lyons as a Columbia River canner.[81] The Northwestern Commercial Company had an intended capital of $200,000 [20,000 $10 shares], 80 percent to be subscribed in San Francisco, but with 4,000 shares reserved for sale in Victoria at $5.00 each. The company had been "promoted at San Francisco by Col. Lane."[82] Rather than a Columbia River canner, Lane was a Swedish-born mining engineer, attracted to California during the 1849 gold rush, and then to the Fraser River for the 1858 gold rush. A resident of Victoria, he was a partner in the Cariboo gold mining company of Lane & Kurtz for many years. For the last six years of his life, from 1886-1892, Lane worked for Alexander Ewen, presumably in the latter's canning business.[83] The reported $200,000 capitalization of the Northwestern Commercial Company venture would have paid for the construction and operation of several such plants. An 1881 assessment gave the value of the cannery as $16,000, and estimated that $45,000 would permit its operation for that season.[84] It is likely that the purported $160,000 subscribed in San Francisco was a marketing ploy to attract purchasers to the "half-price" $5 Victoria shares. This leaves the "American" capitalization of this venture

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81. Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 149-150.

82. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 29 February 1876, 3.

83. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 16 March 1892, 2; Mallandaine, *First Victoria Directory and British Columbia Guide, 1871*, 22; Mallandaine, *First Victoria Directory and British Columbia Guide, 1874*, 21; *Guide to the Province of British Columbia for 1877-8*, 306.

84. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1881*, 223.

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suspect, together with Lane's national identity. The Northwestern Commercial Company was identified as a producer until 1879, but for the 1880 season the Inverness cannery was identified as belonging to the commission merchant firm of Turner, Beeton & Company alone.[85]

Before the big run season of 1877 Lane formed a partnership with James Finlayson to establish a cannery in New Westminster.[86] The firm of Finlayson & Lane ranked "next in importance" to English & Company in the 1877 season, packing some12,000 cases of salmon.[87] Lane's partner was probably the "J. Finlayson, Family Grocer" advertising in the 1874 Victoria directory.[88] Finlayson & Lane dissolved in March 1878, replaced by the new firm of Lane, Pike & Nelson, formed in San Francisco, but with two of the partners in BC.[89] Lane's ongoing canning ventures seem to have exhibited some American influences, but it is misleading in light of the participants and sources of capital to claim them as American owned or capitalized.

Based on its ownership, and by employing a San Francisco agent to place its products on markets, the second venture established for the big run season of 1877 may be more accurately identified as American. Marshall English, in partnership with S.B. Martin, established the English & Company Cannery in a facility built and owned by Ebenezeer

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85. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Commissioner of Fisheries, 1879*, 301-302; Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, 1880*, 270-271.

86. *Mainland Guardian*, 18 April 1877, 3; *ibid.*, 18 August 1877, 3.

87. *Mainland Guardian*, 18 August 1877, 3; Canada, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Department of Fisheries, 1890*, 178, summary of seasonal packs of canneries since establishment.

88. Mallandaine, *First Victoria Directory and British Columbia Guide, 1874*, advertisements.

89. *Mainland Guardian*, 20 March 1878, 2.

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Brown at Brownsville, the site of the Vancouver Island Company cannery.[90] English was a Virginian who made and lost a fortune in gold rush California. On the advice of his friend, William T. Coleman, the leading cannery agent in San Francisco, English invested his remaining capital in the Brownsville cannery, with "Wm. T. Coleman & Co." acting as his selling agents.[91] In 1877, his first season of operation, English produced 24,000 cases of salmon, by far the largest pack on the Fraser.[92] The English & Company and Finlayson & Lane ventures had a profound impact on the industry. Their dominant position provoked a certain negative reaction, and much of the contemporary concern with waste and pollution in the canning industry focussed on these firms. In December 1877 Finlayson & Lane responded in its own defence, pointing out the benefits of its presence within the context of the creation of opportunities and fostering progress:

> The aggregate expenditure for labour and supplies has cost over a quarter of a million dollars, and probably exceeds the disbursements of the old established canneries any previous year nearly tenfold; consequently the advent of Messrs. English & Co's. establishment and ourselves, this year, has been of much benefit to the people in this locality...[93]

In 1881 the federal Department of Marine and Fisheries estimated the global cost of "securing the pack" at BC canneries at $4.00 per case, the same figure utilized by Rithet in 1878 as a basis for advances.[94] Using this per-case cost, these two firms would have required operating capital of about $144,000 to produce 36,000 cases in the 1877

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90. Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 148; *Mainland Guardian*, 11 August 1877, 3. This facility may have been the same one used by the Vancouver Island Company.

91. BCA, I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries," c.1957, 154. Doyle was English's son-in-law.

92. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Department of Fisheries, 1890*, 178, summary of seasonal packs of canneries since establishment.

93. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Commissioner of Fisheries, 1878*, 294.

94. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1881*, 223; BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Vol.7., Cash Book 1878-1879, 323, 27 December 1878.

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season.[95] The facilities of the two canneries were appraised at a combined value of $52,000 in 1881, but as both seem to have been established in existing buildings, much of this value predated their founding.[96] This suggests that Finlayson & Lane inflated its estimates of cannery expenditures to some extent. It generally has been accepted that the capital utilized by these companies originated with San Francisco agents.[97] This perception seems to be based on Henry Doyle's portrayal of the relative importance of agents involved in the salmon canning industry:

> Of the firms engaged in this agency business William T. Coleman & Co of San francisco [sic] were by far the largest operators. Balfour Guthrie & Co. ranked second and Meyer Wilson & Co. of Portland, oregon [sic] occupied third, place. In British Columbia Coleman & Co were the most important factors with Robert Ward & Co and Welch Rithet & Co, both of Victoria, following in the order named...[98]

Ralston emphasized the fiscal impact of the American agents in developing his evolutionary model. Based on the *Report of the Department of Marine & Fisheries, 1881*, which listed BC cannery operators by nationality, and estimated their plants' values and operating expenses for the 1881 season, he concluded that 45% of the Fraser River canning industry was run on American capital.[99] However, this is somewhat misleading. As has already been seen, the "American" companies were not always American. The Northwestern Commercial Company had Turner, Beeton & Company as a partner, the

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95. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Department of Fisheries, 1890*, 178, summary of seasonal packs of canneries since establishment.

96. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1881*, 223.

97. For instance, Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen," 21.

98. BCA, I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries," c.1957, 25.

99. Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of the Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen," 21, citing Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Department of Marine & Fisheries 1881*, 223.

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Swedish mining engineer Charles Lane as a major player, and inflated statements of American investment. The same circumstances prevailed with Finlayson & Lane and its successor company, Lane, Pike & Nelson, which although formed in San Francisco, had a strong BC component. In 1878, Welch, Rithet & Company was shipping salmon on behalf of Lane, Pike & Nelson. Such use of a Victoria agent suggests a broader integration into the BC industry.[100]

A form of analysis which may provide a more accurate interpretation is one based on the percentage of the total provincial pack controlled by the various agents. The total number of cases packed in the 1881 season was 169,576.[101] Two of the canneries had American agents, with Gilbert Clemens of San Francisco representing the British Columbia Packing Company [successor of Lane, Pike & Nelson], and W.T. Coleman & Company representing English & Company.[102] In the 1881 season these canneries produced respectively 19,987 [11.8% of the total] and 18,500 [10.9% of the total] cases, so their American agents handled just under 23 percent of provincial production.[103] By comparison, Welch, Rithet & Company, agents for two canneries, handled 36,339 cases, or over 21 percent of the provincial pack, and Stahlschmidt & Ward, also representing two canneries, handled 39,900 cases, or more than 23 percent of the total. Findlay, Durham & Brodie represented one cannery, and possibly a second, while Turner, Beeton & Company represented one cannery.[104] This demonstrates the degree to which the Victoria commission merchants dominated the capitalization and organization of the

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100. BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Vol.7., Cash Book 1878-1879, 189, 2 September 1878.

101. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Department of Fisheries, 1890*, 179, summary of seasonal packs of canneries since establishment.

102. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 28 July 1881, 3; BCA, I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries," c.1957, 154.

103. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Department of Fisheries, 1890*, 179, summary of seasonal packs of canneries since establishment.

104. *Ibid.*; Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 28 July 1881, 3; *ibid.*, 30 July 1881, 3.

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provincial canning industry at this time. A significant minority of the canners were linked to American capital and San Francisco agents, but Victoria merchants controlled more than three quarters of the industry. Although in the 1881 season Stahlschmidt & Ward was narrowly the leading agent, through the decade Welch, Rithet & Company assumed that role. The beginnings of its rise to dominate the industry will be examined from the perspective of the company's entry into salmon canning.

The Delta Cannery

The establishment of the Delta Cannery provides some insight into company formation and control in the salmon canning business. Welch, Rithet & Company entered the industry directly in the 1878 season, in conjunction with a Fraser delta-based partnership intending to build a new cannery on land owned by Thomas E. Ladner. Jim Laidlaw, who Ladner's son remembered as "a careful and reasonably shrewd business man," apparently acted as the "canner" in this partnership.[105] Laidlaw emigrated from Rossshire, Scotland to Ontario, was drawn to BC by the 1858 gold rush, finally arriving in the Cariboo in 1862. Unsuccessful there, he came to the coast in the big run year of 1873 and saw the potential in salmon canning on the Fraser River. Beginning in 1874 he spent three seasons in Booth & Company's cannery on the Columbia River to learn the business. He returned to BC in 1877 as an employee of the newly-formed English & Company. In 1878, he was ready to start his own venture, and with some partners, "organized a company" to build the Delta Cannery.[106] As recalled by Ellis Ladner:

> The business was commenced by James A. Laidlaw, Thomas E. Ladner, Joseph Lyon and Frank Page, in association. Frank Page was bookkeeper and Joe Lyon was general mechanic and superintendent in the cannery

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105. Ladner, *Above the Sand Heads*, 80,86.

106. Kerr, *Biographical Dictionary*, 216-217. The biography in Kerr noted the fall of 1878 as the date of establishing the company, but Laidlaw was attending a "Fishery Meeting" in New Westminster in March 1878 as the representative of the Delta Cannery, supporting an earlier date of formation, consistent with the other contemporary information. *Mainland Guardian*, 28 March 1878, 3.

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> operations. J.A. Laidlaw spent his time at his own cannery at Sapperton. Father's part seems to have been dealing with the Indian and the few white fishermen and with the Chinese cannery crews.
>
> R.P. Rithet and Co. of Victoria provided the financial backing for the venture and were agents for the cannery. All materials for fishing and for packing were purchased through that firm and the canned salmon was sold through them and shipped in vessels for which they were agent, both for cargo and for marine insurance.[107]

This description follows the defined role of the commission merchants or agents involved in the export forest industry outlined in Chapter 7, with the agents handling all the finances and business arrangements of the producing company. Other than Rithet, the partners in the venture were not capitalists, but skilled workers, or "owner-operators." Other sources identify the partners in the Delta Cannery as Laidlaw, Ladner, and Donald Chisholm.[108] It appears that the origins of the business partnership dated back to their participation in the gold rush. As noted, R.P. Rithet, the principal of their agents, had been in the Cariboo in the 1860s, as had Laidlaw, Ladner, and Chisholm. The Cornishman Ladner worked as a teamster there during the gold rush, while the Scot Laidlaw and Nova Scotian Chisholm both mined gold.[109] When Laidlaw died in 1893, Rithet and two Laidlaw family members acted as executors for the estate, suggesting a close relationship between the men.[110] Again, the strength of the personal and business linkages between the producers and agents is evident.

Welch, Rithet & Company's cash book from 1878-1879 reveals the financial involvement which the agents had with the cannery. The excerpts below are taken from the period in 1878-1879 which relates to the first operating season of the cannery. Small payments or receipts of less than $25.00, mostly for telegrams and small shipments, have

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107. Ladner, *Above the Sand Heads*, 80.

108. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 24 March 1878, 3; *ibid.*, 10 February 1893, 2; Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 154-155.

109. *Ibid.*, 154-155.

110. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 10 February 1893, 2.

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been left out, but they total less than $100.00. All other payments received from, made to, or disbursed on behalf of the Delta Canning Company by Welch, Rithet & Company appear in the table below:[111]

Table 8.1: Accounts of the Delta Canning Company kept by Welch, Rithet & Company, 1878-1879 [1878 canning season]

Date	**Credited or Debited to the account of the Delta Canning Company**	**Credit**	**Debit**
Mar. 25, 1878	duty	$102.90	
Apr. 8, 1878			$100.00
Apr. 8, 1878	freight	$55.40	
Apr. 20, 1878	freight, duty, wharfage	$214.54	
May 1, 1878	paid R. Maynard per a/c	$85.85	
May 13, 1878	on a/c		$400.00
June 18, 1878	freight, duty, telegram	$26.28	
July 1, 1878	cash paid J.A. Laidlaw	$200.00	
July 1, 1878	cheque		$500.00
July 1, 1878	per J.A. Laidlaw		$98.38
July 13, 1878	repairs to steamer *Georgia*	$62.75	
July 15, 1878	duty and freight	$116.31	
July 25, 1878	duty	$204.73	
July 25, 1878	freight	$204.73	
July 25, 1878	work on steamer	$312.18	
July 29, 1878	Cash sent them	$2,000.00	
Aug. 1, 1878	Cash paid to their Cr at Bank of British Columbia	$3,000.00	
Aug. 5, 1878	Duty on turpentine	$27.56	
Aug. 7, 1878	Cash paid this day to their Cr at Bank of British Columbia	$3,000.00	
Aug. 8, 1878	Cash sent them	$2,500.00	
Aug. 10, 1878	paid J. Spratt per acct. steamer *Georgia*	$100.00	
Aug. 15, 1878	duty, freight on tin, etc.	$202.03	

111. BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Vol.7., Cash Book 1878-1879, 47-359, 25 March 1878 - 27 January 1879.

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Date	Credited or Debited to the account of the Delta Canning Company	Credit	Debit
Aug. 26, 1878	duty, freight on labels, supplies etc.	$291.91	
Aug. 29, 1878	Cash sent them [4,000.00] paid this day to their Cr at Bank of BC [1,000.00]	$5,000.00	
Aug. 30, 1878	duty on safe	$43.75	
Sept. 2, 1878	freight on 1700 cases salmon - safe costs	$144.76	
Sept. 3, 1878	customs refund		$24.50
Sept. 5, 1878	Advance Account. Paid Findlay Durham & Brodie Premium Marine Insce on 8000 Cases Salmon per "Chocorua" to London	$1,075.00	
Sept. 9, 1878	sight draft on New York favor Mosler Bahmann & Co. Cincinnati, Ohio: U.S.A.	$111.88	
Sept. 9, 1878	paid Jas. P Goodhue per a/c for purchasing and charges on 200 Barrels for Salmon	$353.05	
Sept. 9, 1878			$177.00
Sept. 10, 1878	Cash sent them today	$2,000.00	
Sept. 13, 1878	Cash paid to their Cr @ Bank of British Columbia this day	$5,000.00	
Sept. 30, 1878	Retired from Bk of BC P.N. favor Joseph Spratt [855.62] Do Do Do [900-]	$1,755.62	
Oct. 7, 1878	Delta Canning Co. - Cash sent them [2,500.00] Paid this day to their Cr. with Bank of BC [2,500.00]	$5,000.00	
Oct. 24, 1878	Cash sent them to-day c/o J.A. Laidlaw 7,000.00 Telegram sent Welch & Co. San Francisco 4.21	$7,004.21	
Oct. 24, 1878	General A/Ct Paid to their Cr this day @ Bank of BC	$3,000.00	
Nov. 7, 1878	General A/Ct - charter party on steamer	$237.25	
Nov. 25, 1878	p Wm Sterling on a/c		$10,000.00
Nov. 26, 1878	General A/Ct Retired from Bank of British Columbia their P. Note @ 33 d/s in our favour due this day	$5,000.00	
Dec.5, 1878	General A/Ct Paid to their Cr with Bank of British Columbia	$8,000.00	
Dec. 5, 1878	General A/Ct Premium policy ... paid Imperial Insurance Company on Salmon Canneries	$48.00	

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Date	Credited or Debited to the account of the Delta Canning Company	Credit	Debit
Dec. 26, 1878	General A/Ct retired @ Bank of BC their P.N. due this day	$5,000.00	
Dec. 30, 1878	Advance Account Paid Findlay D & Brodie Marine insurance on Salmon shipped per S.S. "Dakota" to San Francisco	$40.50	
Jan.7, 1879	Delta Canning Co. General account - Cash paid to Wm Sterling	$2,000.00	
Jan. 27, 1879	General account Retired their P. Note due this day @ Bank of British Columbia	$6,000.00	
Totals		**$69,521.19**	**$11,299.88**

This data provides a number of interesting insights. First, the payments made on the cannery's behalf suggest a total operating cost of $69,521.19 for the 1878 season. The Delta Cannery packed 16,500 cases in the 1878 season, which based on the contemporary cost of production of $4.00 per case, would equate to approximately $66,000.00.[112] It is unknown if the payments listed in the table include the cost of constructing the cannery, as work was underway in late March 1878.[113] In 1881 the cannery facility had an estimated value of $25,000.[114]

Of the total payments made on behalf of the cannery, $43,255.62 [62.2%] was directed to the Bank of British Columbia, sometimes in the form of promissory notes ["P.N."] due on specific dates. This reinforces the central role of the bank in the development of "ambitious entrepreneurs" such as Rithet, and its importance to the

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112. The $4.00 per case cost of production seems stable in the late 1870s and early 1880s; see note 94 above. The production is from Canada, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Department of Fisheries, 1890*, 178, summary of seasonal packs of canneries since establishment.

113. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 24 March 1878, 3.

114. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1881*, 223.

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canning industry.[115] The impression given is that the bank provided most of the capital for the venture, and that Welch, Rithet & Company acted as agents, facilitating the movement of capital, rather than capitalizing the venture. In some cases, the bank apparently directed and managed investment by individuals like Joseph Spratt, whose promissory notes were paid off on September 30, 1878.

Cash payments to the cannery totalled $20,000.00, or 28.8 precent of the total credits to the venture. Most of this probably covered the operational costs of the cannery, including labour, supplies, and so forth. Much of the remaining 9 percent included freight, duty and insurance. One of the interesting aspects of this is the use of Findlay, Durham & Brodie as insurance agents for the cannery [September 5, 1878], in spite of Welch, Rithet & Company acting as "Agents for The Imperial Fire Insurance Company of London." As a counterpoint, Welch, Rithet & Company provided wharfage for large quantities of canned salmon and "Sundries" on behalf of Findlay, Durham & Brodie.[116] The impression of ongoing reciprocal business arrangements is reinforced throughout the Welch, Rithet & Company cash book.[117] It should be noted that in this first season of operation, the Delta Cannery was shipping salmon both to London and San Francisco [September 5, 1878; December 30, 1878].

The Delta Canning Company represented Rithet's first direct participation in the salmon canning industry. In cooperation with Laidlaw and Ladner, this involvement expanded rapidly. Already in 1878, Welch, Rithet & Company acted on behalf of Lane, Pike & Nelson, shipping 1,350 "pkgs salmon" for them.[118] They were more intimately involved with the King & Company venture, which operated in the pioneer

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115. Ralston, "Patterns of Trade and Investment on the Pacific Coast," 42-43.

116. Welch, Rithet & Company sent an invoice to the other firm for wharfage on: "6971 css Salmon 301 9/40 ton @ 25¢" and "117 pkgs Sundries 9 33/40 [tons]" at the same rate. BCA, MS-264, Findlay, Durham and Brodie, Box 1, file 2.

117. BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Vol.7., Cash Book 1878-1879, throughout.

118. *Ibid.*, 189, 2 September 1878.

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Stamp/Holbrook cannery in Sapperton for the 1878 season.[119] They paid to the credit of this company at the Bank of British Columbia $11,964.00 as the advance on 2,991 cases of salmon being shipped from San Francisco to Liverpool.[120] This reiterates the central role of the bank in managing the finances of the canneries.

The involvement of Welch, Rithet & Company and Jim Laidlaw in salmon canning increased, with Laidlaw purchasing the Stamp/Holbrook cannery sometime after establishing the Delta Cannery.[121] If he was involved prior to the purchase, it could explain why Welch, Rithet & Company acted as agent for King & Company. The Sapperton cannery burnt in the fall of 1879, but Laidlaw replaced it for the big run season of 1881, and built another plant nearby in 1882.[122] In the 1881 season Welch, Rithet & Company represented the Delta Cannery and the Laidlaw & Company Cannery. Descriptions of the plants noted that Frank Page, W.H. Ladner and T.E. Ladner were present at the former, and James Laidlaw at the latter.[123]

By 1890 the Rithet/Laidlaw partnership expanded into financial involvement in six canneries and one fishery in BC.[124] In February 1891, shortly after the incorporation of R.P. Rithet & Company, the Victoria Canning Company of British Columbia, Ltd. was

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119. Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 153.

120. BCA, MS-504, Rithet Family Papers, Vol.7., Cash Book 1878-1879, 323, 27 December 1878.

121. Kerr, *Biographical Dictionary*, 216-217; Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, 165.

122. Reid, *The Development of the Fraser River Salmon Canning Industry*, Appendix I, 39. Federal fisheries records confirm that Laidlaw had one plant in 1881 and two in 1882. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Department of Marine & Fisheries, 1881*, 223; Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Department of Marine & Fisheries, 1882*, 194-195.

123. The Delta Cannery had a capacity of 20,000 cases per year, and the Laidlaw Cannery had an expected pack of 15,000 cases in 1881. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 28 July 1881, 3; *ibid.*, 30 July 1881, 3.

124. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Department of Fisheries, 1890*, 180-181, schedule of salmon canneries.

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formed, with authorized capital of $500,000 [5,000 $100 shares]. Its first object was to take over six canning companies; four of which had plants on the Fraser River; Laidlaw & Company, the Delta Canning Company, the Harlock Packing Company, and the Wellington Packing Company. The Standard Packing Company's cannery was on the Skeena, and the Cascade Packing Company's cannery was on the Naas River. The trustees of the company at formation were R.P. Rithet and a partner of each of the canning companies, respectively; James A. Laidlaw, Thomas E. Ladner, Henry E. Harlock, Francis Page, John Irving, and Moritz Strouss.[125] By 1898 Rithet dominated the ownership of the company. He personally held 1,376 shares, and his company, R.P. Rithet & Company, Ltd., held 911 shares, so he controlled almost 85% of the 2,698 called-up shares of Victoria Canning Company.[126] This situation prevailed until these interests were sold out to BC Packers on its formation in 1902.

Labour Conventions in the Salmon Canning Industry

The nature of the salmon resource, and the process which transformed it into a viable export commodity, made for a distinctive system of production, including the labour force. In the absence of refrigeration, canning provided a way to preserve fish, in a form convenient for shipping and marketing the product. The introduction of canning technology was essential to develop a successful export trade in BC salmon. It also implied the development of an industrial or factory system, in which a relatively skilled workforce would produce cans, fill them with salmon, and seal them under sterile conditions in a way that would reliably ensure preservation of the fish. Additionally, the canneries needed to be established adjacent to the fishing grounds, to eliminate the

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125. BCA, GR-1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4412, file 35(1890), 1-7.

126. The directors by this time included Rithet and four others, only one of whom, John Irving, holding 170 shares, was also an 1891 trustee. The largest shareholder after Rithet was Annie Harlock, with 216, presumably inherited from Henry Harlock. *Ibid.*, 19,17. Two of the other three directors had been trustees of R.P. Rithet & Company at its formation in 1891, and were directors in 1898. BCA, GR-1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4412, file 30(1890), 1-4,14,16.

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possibility of spoilage before processing.

A second factor was the anadromous life cycle of the sockeye salmon, the preferred species for packing in the developmental stage of the industry. Following a period of life in the ocean, this species runs up coastal rivers to spawn in July and early August. This run, with huge quantities of salmon available for a very limited time, determined the packing "season" for the canneries.[127] Usually this lasted three to four months, beginning with can production and finishing with the end of the sockeye run.[128] The workforce had to be willing to work only as required, relatively skilled, inexpensive, tractable, and mobile, particularly after the canneries spread out from the Fraser River in the later 1870s. With the chronic shortage of labour that existed in British Columbia at the time, such requirements were difficult to meet. Possibly it was the difficulty in mustering a suitable labour force that delayed the introduction of salmon canning to British Columbia. As in the coal mining industry, and the forest products industry, the canners and agents developed specific strategies to meet the labour requirements of this industry, based on the nature of the resource, the processing, and racial ideology. Some of the attributes of the other industries, such as a split labour market, were evident, but there were some distinctive elements in the new industry.

Fishing Labour

As previously noted, later writers attributed the failure of Annandale's saltery to unsuitable fishing technology. His former manager, Ewen, introduced drift nets [or gillnets] soon after and started an ongoing and profitable salt salmon business, exporting to the Sandwich Islands and Australia.[129] The evidence suggests that Annandale attempted

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127. This phenomenon is well-described in many sources, both in the fields of natural and human history. For instance, Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen," 1-4.

128. This is noted in many sources, including Knight, *Indians at Work*, 183-184.

129. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol.2, 584. Ewen is generally credited with introducing gillnets, or drift nets, to the Fraser River in 1864, although Duncan

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to fish with a labour force imported for the purpose, a strategy that proved unworkable as early as the 1820s [see Chapter 2]. Additionally, the alternative economic opportunities presented to Anglo-North American immigrants in the 1860s made it impossible to retain them. While Annandale failed, the Anderson & Company fishery on Barclay Sound continued to produce, following the Hudson's Bay Company's model of purchasing fresh fish from independent Aboriginal fish suppliers. This eliminated the need to retain a dedicated permanent workforce, and integrated well with the voluntary participation of Aboriginal producers in the export economy. By the 1860s, the hegemonic group naturalized a construct of "Indian" that included the capture and sale of fresh fish.[130] In 1865 the American consul reported that fresh salmon cost $1 per hundredweight, while a barrel of salt salmon sold for $4, with the cost of the fish less than that of the cask and the salt.[131] From viable exporting fisheries, such as those of the HBC and Anderson & Company, it was evident that the least expensive, and most convenient strategy for acquiring fresh salmon was to purchase it from Aboriginal fishers. The limited Fraser River salmon salting industry, which packed about 500 barrels per year on average in the 1860s, adopted this practice. Aboriginal producers were expected to supply the fresh fish for the anticipated pack of 2,000 barrels in the big run season of 1869: "The packers paid the Indians $2 per hundred for the proper kinds, delivered at the warehouses."[132] With 100 sockeye probably weighing about 500-600 pounds, this represented a significantly lower price than the $1 per hundredweight cited in 1865. By the time Stamp and Loggie initiated the export salmon canning industry in 1871, Aboriginal fishers were naturalized as the suppliers of fresh fish for processing.

Stacey argued that Aboriginal people were probably using gillnets on the Fraser prior to Ewen's application. Stacey, *Sockeye and Tinplate*, 11.

130. For instance, Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 166.

131. BCA, GR-2078, Diplomatic Despatches, United States Consuls in Victoria 1862-1906, film B9747, Allen Francis to F.W. Seward, 10 January 1866.

132. These figures were for the preferred sockeye salmon, with other species packed in unspecified smaller numbers; "Salmon," *Mainland Guardian*, 25 September 1869, 2.

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With the rapid growth of the salmon canning industry, it soon formed an important aspect of Aboriginal participation in the capitalist economy. James Lenihan, the "Indian Superintendent" for the New Westminster district, noted that Aboriginal workers earned $65,862 in the salmon canning industry in 1878, by far the largest part of a total of $154,162 earned by First Nations in his district. This contribution became more remarkable considering the three month period in which people employed as "fishermen and at other work" earned it. Lenihan reported that the canneries employed nearly 800 Aboriginal workers "of all ages and sexes," with men paid $1.50 to $2.00, women $1.00, and boys 50¢ to 75¢ per day.[133] The 1,300 Aboriginal men [76.5%] and 400 Aboriginal women [23.5%] employed in the "fisheries" of the Fraser district in the 1882 season reflected the growth of the industry over the preceding four years.[134]

Descriptions of the salmon canning labour force illustrate a strongly racialized allocation of labour in the industry. A report on the Fraser River canneries in the 1883 season estimated a total workforce of between 2,000 and 2,200 people, divided into about "300 white men [14-15%], from 1,000 to 1,200 Indians [50-55%] and some 700 Chinese [32%-35%]." Divided among ten operations, the average processing workforce per cannery numbered about ten Euro-North American and seventy Chinese workers. Each operation employed a fishing workforce averaging some twenty White workers, and all of its 100-120 Aboriginal workers.[135] Chinese workers numerically dominated [88%] the processing workforce, while Aboriginal workers comprised the majority [83-86%] of the fishing workforce, demonstrating a clear correlation between race and type of work. In 1884 a report to a Royal Commission listed a total salmon canning workforce in BC,

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133. Other sources of Aboriginal income in 1878 included: lumber industry and shipping - $38,000; furs sold - $25,000; farm labour - $15,000; cattle and produce - $3,000; fish oil - $1,500; cranberries - $800. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs 1879*, 72, Report of James Lenihan, 10 September 1878.

134. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, 1882*, 61.

135. *The Resources of British Columbia*, Vol.1, no.4 (June 1883), 4.

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including the north coast, of 2,710 people, divided into 1,280 [47%] Aboriginal men and women, 1,157 [43%] Chinese men, and 273 [10%] Euro-North American men. This report reinforced the racialization of jobs: "The white men are generally employed as foremen, mechanics, and fishermen, the Indians fish for and clean salmon, and Chinamen make the cans (with the aid of machinery), fill them and solder them up, etc."[136] Conforming to racial ideology and the conventions already noted in other industries, Euro-North American workers occupied the positions inside the canneries with high skill and responsibility, and with potential for mobility, while proletarianized Chinese workers provided "factory" labour, and some Aboriginal women cleaned salmon. The relatively autonomous fishing workforce included a minority of Euro-North Americans, but a majority of Aboriginal men, perceived as most suitable for work congruent with the naturalized construct of "Indian."

In fishing, as in processing, the minority of Euro-North American workers had exclusive access to responsible jobs with the potential for mobility, although Aboriginal workers captured most of the fish. In its sixth season in 1883, the Delta Cannery bought some salmon from contract boats, but relied primarily on a company fleet of forty boats, manned by Aboriginal fishermen: "It requires four Indians to man each boat, two for the day shift and two for the night, making a total of 160 Indians." These men were distributed between four fishing camps along the river, "each camp containing forty Indians in charge of a white man." No mention was made of Aboriginal workers inside the Delta Cannery, although it employed a "number" of Aboriginal women to knit nets.[137] Other canneries, such as the Rivers Inlet Cannery, used a mix of Aboriginal and Euro-North American fishers.[138]

Based on the reports cited above, much of the early Aboriginal fishing workforce

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136. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration 1885*, Appendix L, 395, T. Revely, agent, to Nicholas F. Davin, Secretary of the Commission, 22 August 1884.

137. *The Resources of British Columbia*, Vol.1, no.10 (December 1883), 42-43.

138. This cannery also operated forty boats on two shifts with 160 fishermen. *Ibid.*, 43.

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came from lower Mainland First Nations, although by the 1880s some Aboriginal workers travelled long distances down the coast to work for the Fraser River canneries.[139] As with the handloggers of the Sechelt nation, some groups apparently specialized in working in this industry.[140] In 1884 former HBC Chief Trader W.F. Tolmie referred to Vancouver Island nations as "active fishermen"[141] When Ned DeBeck worked in the Scottish-Canadian cannery in 1899, conventions existed for the seasonal migration of groups from the north to the Fraser River canneries. DeBeck noted the employment of members of the [local] Squamish nation, but that many workers came from central coast nations, arriving about a week before the fishing season began:

> Well here they come on a flood tide in the late afternoon bowling along ahead of a westerly wind. Great canoes 50 ft and over, spread to an 8 ft beam, each with 4 sails, wing & wing. Some came all the way from the Skeena and the Queen Charlottes but most were Kwakiutl ie Cape Mudge to Queen Charlotte Sound. They came in a flotilla about 12 of the big ones and an equal number of lesser ones about 40 ft or a little less. I'm sure one of the big canoes could hold up to 100 if you counted children but did not count dogs, mongrels all, short on pedigree but long on multiplicity of breeds. Most of them showed various stages of distemper or mange; they were quarrelsome and forever fighting.
>
> There were plenty of children as we found out in the next few hours. About 1/2 the flotilla kept on up the river to other canneries.
>
> There was considerable ceremony to the landing. A few hundred yards out sails were lowered and they started singing Indian songs until they got to 5 or 6 yards from the wharf. With a final shout a sudden silence. Dead silence for about a minute. Then the biggest chief stood and with a speaking staff in his hand made a short speech. A sudden stop. A barked order. And then all hell broke loose: every paddle clawing water to

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139. Knight, *Indians at Work*, 182-183.

140. There were also groups that seemed to be under-represented. In the 1881 census, there were very few Aboriginal people in the lower Mainland that had the occupation of "fisherman" listed, certainly not approaching the number known to be employed at the canneries in the early 1880s. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, District 187 New Westminster, Sub-district D7, 1-122.

141. Tolmie, "Utilization of the Indians," 7.

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sidle the canoe up to the wharf; mooring lines made fast.[142]

The majority of Kwak'waka'wak migrants from northeastern Vancouver Island corresponds with Tolmie's earlier reference. DeBeck's count of canoes and passengers suggests something in the range of 1,500 to 1,800 people in the "flotilla," although it is difficult to establish how many of these were workers. It seems evident that by the 1890s well-established conventions determined which groups or individuals worked at a given cannery, and how workers were organized at the canneries under a particular leader or chief. Once landed, the company assigned Aboriginal men assigned to boats, and women, by this time starting to replace Chinese workers, to the canning line.[143]

Since migrants comprised many, and perhaps a majority, of the Aboriginal fishermen, the canners did not employ them due to their specialized local knowledge of the resource.[144] Their employment related more to the racial stereotype that equated Aboriginals with fishing, and with the provincial shortage of labour, in particular the lack of willing Euro-North American workers. Members of the latter group, with many opportunities available, would not be attracted to short-term seasonal work that was in conflict with other pursuits. For instance, for those seeking yeoman farmer status, fishing season conflicted with cultivation and harvesting. Aboriginal workers could integrate the salmon fishing season with existing seasonal rounds. As First Nations participation was voluntary, to augment the traditional economy, it predisposed Aboriginal workers to

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142. BCA, MS-346, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, Box 1, file 19, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, BC)," 15c-18c. DeBeck noted how he had met the Squamish Nation Chief Capilano at the cannery, when the latter had come to check on the well-being of the members of his community working there. *Ibid.*, Box 1, file 10, "Miscellaneous correspondence 1950s," E.K. DeBeck to Fred Anesley, 22 May 1963.

143. *Ibid.*, Box 1, file 19, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, BC)," 18c-25c.

144. Knight referred to the need for the migrant fishermen to acquire the local knowledge to fish effectively in their new work environment. Knight, *Indians at Work*, 9-10, 182.

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accept temporary work.[145] With the 1890s boom in salmon canning up and down the coast, the demand for Aboriginal fishing labour often outweighed the supply, creating problems for the canners:

> The labour question on Fraser River and elsewhere is becoming a very difficult one to settle owing to keen competition for boats crews, among Fraser River packers. This season many Northern Indians were given big inducements to come down to Fraser River, leaving Rivers Inlet short as you are aware. It is probable next year that this competition in the Northern Labour market may necessitate a rise in the price of fish on Skeena and Rivers Inlet.[146]

This makes it clear that essentially there was a single market for Aboriginal fishing and canning labour on the coast of British Columbia. "Inducements" such as advances and increased prices paid for fish were used to try to muster a workforce for each season. Although organized recruiting was sometimes employed in the early years of the industry, Aboriginal participation in the industry was generally voluntary, based on how it integrated with their own cultural values.[147] As noted by Lanihan in 1878, Aboriginal participants could earn significant income to improve their material life and social status in a comparatively short canning season, leaving them free to pursue a traditional yearly round. For members of more remote coastal nations, it formed an integral part of the yearly round, providing access to consumer goods not otherwise available. A contemporary observer saw such people in New Westminster after the end of the season,

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145. This willingness, for reasons related to their own seasonal round and traditional economy, of Aboriginal workers to accept short-term seasonal jobs in the salmon fishery that would not be acceptable to Euro-North American workers, is discussed in Dianne Newell, *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 76-79.

146. City of Vancouver Archives [hereafter cited as CVA], Add. Mss 1, Bell-Irving Family, Vol.83, correspondence 1897-99, 663, Henry Bell-Irving to J. Whittall & Co. [London], 9 August 1899.

147. At times in the early 1880s, fisheries officials asked Indian agents to encourage Aboriginal people to work in the canneries, and in later years, high-ranking Aboriginal recruiters were engaged by the companies. Newell, *Tangled Webs of History*, 53, 78-79.

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"wandering curiously from store to store, heaping together goods wherewith to fill their canoes for the return voyage northward."[148] Like "big George" and his rivals at Moodyville [chapter 7], Aboriginal workers could convert consumer goods into enhanced prestige and rank through the mechanism of the potlatch. Herbert Gowen gave an example of an Aboriginal fisherman at New Westminster who spent his entire seasonal earnings of $1,400 on muskets, crackers and blankets, all distributed in one potlatch.[149]

The introduction of industrial salmon canning increased the demand for sockeye salmon. By the 1878 season, the canneries, by now on the Nass and Skeena as well as the Fraser, packed over 100,000 cases of salmon, representing more than a million sockeye salmon.[150] As well as increasing the demand for migrant Aboriginal fishers noted above, this required the application of new and more intensive fishing techniques.[151] This restructuring of Aboriginal fishing to conform to the requirements of industrial canning represented a partial shift from independent production and commodity sales to a system that more closely resembled the tut-work system in the Vancouver Island coal mines. Access to the resource, and the material requirements of production, were supplied by the company, but the workers retained a high degree of autonomy and control over the work process, and were paid on the basis of production. This new relationship, in its mature form in the late 1890s, was described by Ned DeBeck:

> Next day they [the Aboriginal migrant workers] were back at

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148. Herbert H. Gowen, "Salmon Fishing and Canning on the Fraser," *The Canadian Magazine*, Vol.2, no.2 (December 1893), 164.

149. *Ibid.*, 165.

150. The 1878 production is referred to in Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Inspector of Fisheries for British Columbia for 1879*, 280. In 1890 the number of fish required per case on the Skeena was given as eight, while the cost per fish compared to the cost of fish per case on the Fraser suggests something between eight and ten fish per case. CVA, Add. Mss 1, Bell-Irving Family, Vol.3, Diary July 1890 to January 1891, 13 November 1890; *ibid.*, Vol.2, Diary May to August 1890, 21 June and 5 August 1890.

151. This adoption of new techniques is mentioned in Knight, *Indians at Work*, 9-10; Newell, *Tangled Webs of History*, 53.

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> sunrise to move their iktas [Chinook jargon for "possessions"] to their houses. The men who were to fish in cannery boats had to be assigned and given their little book for the tallyman to enter each delivery of fish and initial it with corresponding entries in his own book.[152]

Many of the Aboriginal fishermen in the 1870s and 1880s were employed in such "cannery boats," with the company supplying the boat, nets, any other required equipment, and the licence. Each boat had two men assigned per shift, one as the fisher, handling the net, and the other as the boat puller, responsible for rowing in this pre-power boat era. While the work schedule was set by the employer, the boat crew had a high degree of control over the work process, and their production would be determined to some extent by the intensity of their work and their expertise. The tallyman [the position DeBeck was assigned to, as a Chinook-speaking White youth] noted the production of each boat, determining the payment to the workers on the basis of what they produced. Henry Bell-Irving, who in the 1890s initiated the consolidated salmon canning company, Anglo British Columbia Packing, reported in 1893 that cannery shareboats produced the cheapest fish, at 5¢ each plus the cost of nets. The most expensive fish came from contractors, who would cover the costs of their own boats, licences, nets, and other requirements, at 8¢ per fish.[153] With restrictions on the number of licences held by the companies in the late 1880s and early 1890s, which were lifted again in 1892, there was a shift to more contractors, in spite of the higher cost. This also seems to have resulted in some demographic changes in the fishing fleet, as on the Fraser River a higher proportion of non-Native, and in particular Japanese, fishermen appeared.[154]

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152. BCA, MS-346, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, Box 1, file 19, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, BC)," 18c-25c.

153. CVA, Add. Mss 1, Bell-Irving Family, Vol. 11, Diary April to September 1894, 17 April 1894.

154. The imposition and removal of licence restrictions, and the shift from "tut-work" to contract fishermen is from Stacey, *Sockeye and Tinplate*, 12-13. The demographic shift, which reduced Aboriginal fishers from a majority in the 1880s to a minority by World War I, is noted in Newell, *Tangled Webs of History*, 84-85. It is supported by Henry Bell-Irving's listing of the fleets associated with some Fraser canneries in 1894, after the

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In the 1870s and 1880s, the mostly Aboriginal salmon canning fleet fished using gillnets set from small boats manned by two men, or on occasion one man and one woman. The employment of Aboriginal women, often the relatives of fishers, as boatpullers was documented in this period.[155] Gillnets worked best in opaque waters where they were not easily visible, and for a run of equally-sized fish. This related well to the conditions encountered in mid-summer near the mouths of the rivers that contained the enormous sockeye runs. Generally used as drift nets in this period, the nets were set from small flat bottom skiffs, paid out over the stern, set in a roughly "L"-shaped configuration, and permitted to drift in the tide. A cork line supported the top of the net, while a lead line held down the bottom. After the tide turned or the drift ended, the fisher hauled the net into the stern of the boat by hand, extracted the fish, and depending on the time, set another drift. The skill of the fisher and boat puller determined the choice of location, the positioning of the drift, and the hauling of the net. As well as skill, this work required physical strength, endurance, and patience.[156]

In the 1870s and 1880s Aboriginal workers made up the majority, perhaps as much as 85 percent, of the fishers supplying the salmon canneries. This racial specialization was a result of the willingness of Aboriginal people, for reasons grounded in traditional economies and societies, to accept seasonal work that was not attractive to Euro-North American workers, combined with the naturalized perception that Aboriginal people supplied fish. Fishing, associated with independence, an absence of factory discipline, and pursued in the context of the outdoors or wilderness, was congruent with racialized notions of appropriate work for indigenous people. Aboriginal participation in this

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licence restrictions. His notes include references to "Siwash boats," that show the latter to be already in the minority in that district. CVA, Add. Mss 1, Bell-Irving Family, Vol. 11, Diary April to September 1894, 17 April 1894, 25 July 1894.

155. Newell, *Tangled Webs of History*, 76. There are photographic images of gillnet boats with female Aboriginal boatpullers in the collections of the British Columbia Archives and other repositories of historic photographs.

156. The net and boat technology, and the fishing process, involved in the early gillnet fishery is described in greater detail in Stacey, *Sockeye and Tinplate*, 11-16.

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industry became systemized, with certain groups returning to specific canneries season after season, often travelling long distances to do so. Although in this period such work remained voluntary, with economic and so social mobility the primary motivation, it began to erode the economic independence of indigenous societies. The nature of the work served as an intermediate stage between independent commodity production, as in the salmon salting industry, and proletarianization. Although workers were paid on the basis of the quantity of products delivered, and controlled the immediate work process, the canning companies set the overall conditions of employment. As a result of these factors commercial salmon fishing was, to a large extent, racialized as an "Indian" job until the later 1880s. This began to break down in the 1890s, but for reasons of availability and racial ideology, the industry considered Aboriginal men the most suitable fishers.

Cannery Labour

The same factors, a chronic shortage of workers and naturalized racial ideology, resulted in a distinct pattern in the processing workforce in the canneries. The received version in the historiography of salmon canning suggests that in the early years, the processing plants operated using Chinese, Native and Euro-North American labour. The latter group assumed the technical and managerial functions, while a larger number of Chinese and Aboriginal workers, "captured" from regional populations, provided the cheaper, unskilled processing labour.[157] The second phase of this model posits the appearance of a large floating labour force of Chinese contract workers left unemployed with the completion of CPR construction in 1885, which gradually replaced Native

157. For instance, Alicja Muszynski noted that "between 1870 and 1900, Chinese men became the core cannery labour force," around which "flexible cheap labour" was assembled, in the form of Natives, mustered by Native recruiters. She equated the White work force with the capitalist class, rather than as another form of labour. Muszynski, "Major Processors to 1940 and Early Labour Force," 59-61; Alicja Muszynski, "The Creation and Organization of Cheap Wage Labour in the BC Fishing Industry" (PhD diss.: University of British Columbia, 1986), ch.4.

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workers in the unskilled processing.[158]

The documentary record suggests a different pattern, with Chinese contract workers imported in the formative years of the industry specifically as cannery labour. The linkages established, between sources of labour power in Hong Kong, Hawaii, and San Francisco and the Victoria commission merchants central in the BC salmon canning industry, provided the model for the CPR's later hiring of Chinese construction labourers. Rather than the CPR workforce providing a replacement labour force for the canneries, the labour recruiting for the canneries provided the prototype for that of the railway. Reversing the received version, at times canners recruited Aboriginal processing crews to replace Chinese crews, as the demand for Chinese labour for the CPR construction and in American canneries made it more expensive and more difficult to procure.

The Nature of the Processing Workforce

By the late 1880s a split labour market existed in the shore plants, divided along contours of skill, race, and opportunity, parallelling the situation in the coal mining and forest industries. The upper echelon was made up of the technical and managerial "cannery crew," usually Euro-North American employed directly by the operating company. The much larger lower echelon supplied most of the actual processing labour. It was called the "contract crew," a term used interchangeably with "Chinese crew," because of the usual ethnic composition of the group. However, other workers, including Natives and Japanese, sometimes participated in this segment of the processing

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158. Peter Li is a recent proponent of this model: "The completion of the CPR meant that many Chinese were laid off, and a large number of them moved to the urban areas of British Columbia where they formed an unemployed labour pool. Much of this idle labour was probably taken up by the expanding manufacturing and canning industries in British Columbia." Li, *The Chinese in Canada*, 48. He followed earlier writers, such as Morton, *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains*, Vancouver, 136-139; Ladner, *Above the Sand Heads*, 118; and Patricia E. Roy, "The preservation of the peace in Vancouver: the aftermath of the anti-Chinese riot of 1887," *BC Studies* 31, (Autumn 1995) 44-59.

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workforce.[159] The development of the split labour market, and reliance on Chinese processing labour, may be traced in the demographic data relating to the industry. An 1873 newspaper article commented on the use of Chinese workers at John Deas' cannery, by far the most productive of the four operations on the Fraser River at that time: "Besides the [ordinary? - illegible] hands Mr. Deas has employed about the establishment, he has near twenty Chinamen at work, and they seem to have acquired the handycraft of canning salmon to remarkable perfection."[160] Coming two years after the start of the industry in BC, this notice was a harbinger of the Chinese rise to numerical dominance in the cannery workforce.[161] A series of articles in the *Mainland Guardian* in 1877 describing "Our Canneries" noted that most of the workforce in the four canneries on the Fraser River was Chinese. English & Co., with a capacity of 450 cases per day, employed 200 Chinese and 50 White workers.[162] Finlayson & Lane, with a 300 case per day capacity, had 100 Chinese and 50 White workers.[163] H. Holbrook employed 60 Chinese, 35 White, and 50 Native workers to pack 10,000 cases per year and salt some salmon.[164] The oldest of the canneries, that of J. Deas, produced 11,600 cases per year and salt

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159. Chris Friday, in his study of the labour patterns of Asian workers in the Columbia River canning industry, described what he called a "two-tiered internal labor market in the canned-salmon industry." This sees to correspond with the split labour market described in the historical record for British Columbia. Friday's upper tier was composed of "earlier entrants," who were affiliated with the owners, received good wages, and were upwardly mobile within the industry. The lower tier was composed of people "increasingly distinct in their ethnicity" from the owners, with lower wages and less occupational mobility. Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor*, 16.

160. *Mainland Guardian*, 19 July 1873, 3.

161. Apparently the first Chinese cannery workers on the Columbia River were hired in 1870 by George Hume to work in his venture there. Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor*, 8.

162. *Mainland Guardian*, 11 August 1877, 3.

163. *Ibid.*, 18 August 1877, 3.

164. *Ibid.*, 22 September 1877, 3.

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salmon with an exclusively Chinese workforce of 110 men.[165] The 1877 workforce in the Fraser River canneries was 71.8 percent Chinese, 20.6 percent White, and 7.6 percent Native. A federal report in 1879 described the seasonal nature of the salmon canning labour force, with the 200-300 permanent Chinese residents of New Westminster increased by 1,000 or 1,200 workers imported for the salmon season. Brought from Oregon, Washington, California, as well as Victoria, they generally remained in New Westminster for the two or three months of the canning season. These Chinese cannery workers earned from $25 to $35 per month, while White workers made from $30 to $40 per month.[166]

At the same time Edgar Dewdney, the MP for Yale, discussed the impact of the salmon canning industry on the Chinese population of BC:

> A great many of them [Chinese] came into the Province owing to the opening up of that industry, but a great many also went out again. I think that pretty nearly the whole of them that came into the Province, in connection with the prosecution of this industry, went out again, as far as I can learn, I know that they were very useful in this relation. That industry could not have been carried on without them.[167]

The *Daily Colonist* reported on the Fraser river canneries in 1881, also the year of the national census. While the newspaper articles appeared in late July, during the canning season, the census was enumerated in May, while preparations for the season took place. It would be expected that this would be reflected in differences in reported populations of Chinese contract crews, only present for the canning season, or of Aboriginal fishers, who arrived at the canneries immediately before the start of the season [see the section on fishing labour above]. The Adair & Company cannery, with an anticipated pack of 18,000

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165. *Ibid.*, 14 November 1877, 3.

166. Canada, *Journals of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, Session 1879*, Appendix (No.4), "Report of the Select Committee on Chinese labour and immigration," 16.

167. *Ibid.*, 14.

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cases, had a labour force of 70 Chinese, 30 Natives, 25 Whites, and 10 or 12 boys.[168] The census described two households at the cannery; one Euro-North American, including a bookkeeper and his family, a foreman, a cook, an engineer, a farmer, and a carpenter. The other household was Chinese, with a Chinese foreman, 14 labourers, and 2 cooks.[169]

The Delta Cannery had a slightly larger 20,000 case per year capacity, and employed 150 Chinese and 35 White workers.[170] The census noted one of the owners and his family in one household, and another household which included another partner and his wife, a farmer, 2 labourers, and a salmon canner. All the preceding people were Euro-North American, but the second household also included a foreman, 51 labourers, and 5 cooks, all Chinese.[171]

The Fraser River Company, in the former Deas cannery, had an anticipated pack of 12,000 cases, put up by 70 Chinese and 15 White labourers.[172] The census noted the manager and an Euro-North American foreman in the one household which could be directly associated with the cannery.[173]

The British Columbia Packing Company, with an expected pack of 20,000 cases, employed 140 hands.[174] The census listed a Euro-North American household with two

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168. "A Visit to the Fraser Canneries," Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 28 July 1881, 3.

169. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, New Westminster District a South, 50-51, houses 279-280.

170. "A Visit to the Fraser Canneries," Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 28 July 1881, 3.

171. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, New Westminster District a South, 52-55, houses 285-286.

172. "A Visit to the Fraser Canneries," Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 28 July 1881, 3.

173. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, New Westminster District a South, 60, house 306.

174. "A Visit to the Fraser Canneries," Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 28 July 1881, 3.

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"Salmon Canners," a fisherman, a blacksmith, a tinner, and a foreman.[175] The two preceeding households listed contained respectively 36 Chinese labourers and a Chinese cook, and a Chinese foreman, 34 Chinese labourers and a Chinese cook, who probably comprised the workforce of the cannery.[176]

The Ewen and Company cannery, with a capacity of 20,000 cases per year, had 100 "men, women and boys" working in it.[177] The census noted the manager and his family in one household, but no other which could be identified with the cannery.[178] This situation was repeated at the English & Company cannery which was expected to produce 30,000 cases during the season.[179] The only clearly associated household in the census contained the owner/manager and his family.[180] The Laidlaw & Company cannery employed 115 Chinese and Native workers, and 22 White workers, and was expected to produce 15,000 cases.[181] The 1881 census noted the owner and three Euro-North American "Canneryman" in one household.[182]

The Haigh & Sons' cannery had a capacity of 20,000 cases per year, packed by 70 Chinese and 30 White workers, and 17 boys.[183] The 1881 census noted one household

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175. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, New Westminster District a South, 60, house 305.

176. *Ibid.*, 57-60, houses 303 and 304.

177. "A Visit to the Fraser Canneries," Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 30 July 1881, 3.

178. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, New Westminster District S.D. North, 3, house 12.

179. "A Visit to the Fraser Canneries," Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 30 July 1881, 3.

180. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, New Westminster District S.D. North, 65, house 277.

181. "A Visit to the Fraser Canneries," Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 30 July 1881, 3.

182. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, New Westminster District S.D. North, 86, house 368.

183. "A Visit to the Fraser Canneries," Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 30 July 1881, 3.

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which contained 4 Haigh brothers, one with a family, a clerk, a blacksmith, 8 labourers, a steam engineer, a carpenter, two tinsmiths, and a fisherman.[184]

In the four Fraser River canneries for which the ethnic breakdown was specified, the total workforce was 522 individuals, of whom 360, or 69.0 percent were Chinese, 132, or 25.3 percent were Euro-North American [assuming all "boys" were in this group], and 30, or 5.7 percent were Native.[185] The proportion of Chinese workers in the individual canneries varied from 51.9 to 82.4 percent. As Ewen's cannery and some of the others also employed Chinese crews, it is likely that these figures are representative of the overall industry. This is supported by how close the proportion of Chinese workers remained to the 71.8 percent noted four years earlier. While all the canneries employed Chinese and Euro-North American workers, only two used Native employees, arguing against the idea that the canneries took advantage of cheap Native labour "captured" in the vicinity.

The problem of mustering labour for the Fraser River canneries continued through the big run season of 1881, when an expedition to Puget Sound could recruit only 53 Chinese workers in Tacoma: "It is next to impossible to get them to leave the Columbia; and attractions are too strong to induce white men to come for a few weeks work. Only about 30 white men have reached Seattle since the close of the salmon season on the Columbia."[186] This suggests that the majority of the Chinese contract crews at this time were not coming from the United States, in spite of the sequence of the salmon runs, which would allow them to work both rivers.

The 1881 census provided a snapshot of the five year-old fishing industry on the north coast of British Columbia. The figures available for the Nass and Skeena Rivers show similar percentages of Chinese in the labour force. For example, a group

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184. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, New Westminster District a South, 56, house 296.

185. By comparison, in 1881 the 819 men comprising the coal mining workforce in the Nanaimo mines were divided into 55% White, 43% Chinese, and 2% Native workers. See Table 6.1, chapter 6.

186. "Hands for the Fisheries," Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 7 August 1881, 3.

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"Establishing a Fishery at Nass Harbour, Nass River," comprised 14 Euro-North American tradesmen and labourers and 27 Chinese labourers.[187] A number of the Skeena plants appeared on the 1881 census, such as the R. Cunningham operation.[188] The Aberdeen cannery had one household occupied by the manager and his wife, 11 Euro-North American White fishermen, 8 Euro-North American tradesmen and labourers, and 32 Chinese labourers.[189] The Inverness cannery had its manager in one household, another house with 8 Euro-North American tradesmen and labourers, and a third containing 42 Chinese labourers.[190] In these northern canneries, the total workforce was 144 individuals, of whom 101, or 70.1 percent were Chinese, a proportion like that in the Fraser River canneries. The 43 Euro-North American workers represented 29.9 percent of the total, while no Native workers were enumerated in these newly-introduced plants. In every instance for which there is census data, the split between the cannery crew and the contract crew is evident, on the basis of defined jobs, ethnicity, and cohabitation. The only case of a multi-ethnic residence was at the Delta Cannery, and even in that case it is unlikely that the actual living quarters were shared.

The historical data portrays a cannery workforce in the 1870s and 1880s divided roughly into one quarter Euro-North American cannery crews and three quarters non-White contract crews, with Chinese workers making up most of the latter group. This racialization of the workforce meant that the Chinese population, about 8.8 percent of the provincial population, contributed about 70 percent of the canning workforce.[191] In the

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187. BCA, GR-469, 1881 census, Film B.389, New Westminster District D3, S.D. Coast of Mainland, 1-2.

188. *Ibid.*, 2.

189. *Ibid.*, 2-5, house 16.

190. *Ibid.*, 5, house 19; *ibid.*, 5, house 20; *ibid.*, 5-7, house 21.

191. The total population of the province in 1881 was 49,459 people, of whom 4,350 were Chinese. Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 269, Tables 1A and 1B. The census figures relating to the canneries were affected by the time of year they were taken; if prior to the sockeye season, the number of workers was much smaller.

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late 1870s and through the 1880s newspaper editorials and the actions of newly-organized workingmen's organizations precipitated some official studies of Chinese labour in BC. Perhaps the most ambitious was the 1885 Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration. As part of this study Huang Sic Chen, the Chinese consul, submitted a list of the "Numbers and Occupations of Chinese in British Columbia..." in 1884, at the height of the CPR construction. He noted a total Chinese population in the province of 10,492, of whom 3,510, or just over 33 percent, were engaged in "Railway Construction."[192] This was roughly equivalent to the combined Chinese populations of Victoria and New Westminster, 1,767 in the former and 1,680 in the latter, for a total of 3,447. Among the New Westminster population was found 390 "Fish-hands in canneries."[193] On the Skeena 310 of the 311 Chinese were "Fishery hands," with the sole exception a doctor.[194]

Reporting to the same Commission, the Department of Marine and Fisheries listed a workforce of 2,710 people in the BC salmon canning industry: "The white men are generally employed as foremen, mechanics, and fishermen, the Indians fish for and clean salmon, and Chinamen make the cans (with the aid of machinery), fill them and solder them up, etc."[195] The following table presents an approximation of how this labour force was divided by work, race, and gender in 1884:

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192. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration 1885*, Appendix C, 363-366, 364.

193. *Ibid.*, Appendix C, 363. The two other largest occupational groups were farm labourers, 400 individuals, and sawmill hands, 190 individuals.

194. *Ibid.*, Appendix C, 365. Other large Chinese populations were found at Wellington on Vancouver Island [685 people], where they provided coal mining labour, and at "Mouth Quesnelle," a gold-mining centre in the Cariboo [506 people]. *Ibid.*, Appendix C, 363-364. No other single population exceeded 168 people.

195. *Ibid.*, Appendix L, 395, T. Revely, agent, to Nicholas F. Davin, Secretary of the Commission, 22 August 1884.

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Table 8.2: Distribution of workers in the BC salmon canning industry, 1884:[196]

	Chinese men	Euro-North American men	Aboriginal men	Aboriginal women	Total
Processing Workforce	1,157 [74% of cannery workforce]	100 [6% of cannery workforce]		300 [19% of cannery workforce]	1557
Fishing Workforce		173 [15% of fishers]	980 [85% of fishers]		1153
Total Workforce	1,157 [43% of total]	273 [10% of total]	980 [36% of total]	300 [11% of total]	2,710 [100%]

In spite of competition from the CPR construction, the canneries still employed 11.0 percent of the Chinese population of the province in 1884. The proportions arrived at in this table accord well with those noted in 1877 and 1881, with Chinese workers comprising about three quarters of the provincial processing workforce. Some local variations existed due to the expansion of the industry to the northern rivers and inlets of the province. In many cases, canners built near existing Native settlements, which could provide an alternative source of labour. Because of the cost of importing Chinese contract crews, in some cases canners "captured" and trained a local processing labour force.[197] The language of Dr. John Helmcken, who reported that "the Indians now supply, in some cases, the places of the Chinese in the north" was telling. His use of "the places of the Chinese," rather than "cannery labour," supports the fact that the system of production

196. The total number of workers by race is from *ibid.* The division of Aboriginal workers by gender, and so by sector, is based on the proportions noted in 1882 on the Fraser River, when 1,700 Native workers were divided 76.5% men and 23.5% women. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, 1882*, 61. The proportion of Euro-North American and Aboriginal fishers is based on that noted on the Fraser in 1883 in *The Resources of British Columbia*, Vol.1, no.4 (June 1883), 4.

197. When engaging Native groups, often the canners attempted to replicate the pattern of the Chinese contract workforce by placing a person or family in a position to assume overall responsibility for mustering and supervising the workers. Muszynski, "Major Processors to 1940 and Early Labour Force," 59-61; Muszynski, *Cheap Wage Labour*, 42, 130.

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was predicated on labour supplied by an identifiable group in a particular way.[198]

Henry Bell-Irving, a Vancouver-based commission and insurance agent, summarized the economic implications of the two echelons of cannery labour, relative to the costs of other inputs. In 1890 Bell-Irving entered the salmon canning business with his acquisition of the Garry Point Cannery. Before finalizing the deal, he determined precisely how much capital such a venture required, and the cost of the various inputs. For an estimated production of 18,000 cases per season, he arrived at a total cost of production of $2.55 per case, broken down into three main categories; fish, materials, and labour. The cost of salmon per case was approximately 75¢, which he rounded up to 85¢ per case, or 33 percent of the total. The cost of materials, including tin, solder, wooden cases, labels, lacquer and other chemicals, he calculated at 91¢ per case, rounded up to $1.00, or 39 percent of the total. Together, fish and packing materials represented 72 percent of the cost of production, with labour accounting for the remaining 28 percent of the total, or 70¢ per case.[199] Bell-Irving broke down labour costs into "White labour" [cannery crew] and "Chinese Contract" components, finding that the labour of the former represented about 20¢ per case, and that of the latter about 50¢ per case [approximately 8% and 20% respectively of the total cost of production]. Although the historiography universally assumes that canners used Chinese labour due to its cheapness, Bell-Irving's figures do not support the usual contention that Chinese wages were half those of Euro-North American workers. The cannery crew represented about 25 percent of the labour force and about 28.6 percent of the labour cost, while the contract crew represented 75 percent of the labour force and 71.4 percent of the labour cost. Although Chinese wages were less, the level of difference suggests that factors other than pure cost determined the canners' decision to engage Chinese workers.

Bell-Irving detailed the cost of the cannery crew, giving a clear idea of the sort of

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198. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration 1885*, 56.

199. The salmon input also contained a labour component, in that the fish was supplied by men in various relationships to the company, several of which could be defined as labour.

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technical and managerial positions the company hired directly. The relative prestige or responsibility of jobs is suggested by the monthly salaries:

Watchman	12 mos	@	50.00	600
Foreman	6 "	"	75.00	450
Engineer	2 "	"	70.00	140
Bathroom man	2 "	"	50.00	100
Retortman	2 "	"	70	140
Cook	6 "	"	30	180
Bookeeper [sic]	8 "	"	50	400
Assistant	6 "	"	30	180
D. McDonald	6 "	"	70	420
Assistant	6 "	"	50	300
56 mos board @ $12				672
				3582
or say per case if 18000 c/s [cases] put up =				0.20[200]

This list illustrates the seasonal employment of the cannery crew, with only a watchman retained year-round, and a bookkeeper working two-thirds of the year. Those members of the crew needed to prepare for and shut down after, the season, worked for six months, while the others engaged only for the two month-long packing season. As in the forest and mining industries, the upper echelon of skilled and responsible workers was closely linked to the community of producers and agents, with an everpresent possibility of joining the ranks of cannery owners or operators. The "agent" Bell-Irving described his relations with the hired manager of the Garry Point Cannery before the 1894 season:

> Lord called. Enquired as to next year - I said wd give same salary & 5¢ p. c/s extra on all over 20,000 c/s - 1/2 lb counting as one & one half cases. He said that wd be agreeable & he wd stay by us. He asked what wd be done with him when poor year came round. I said wd look after him.[201]

The significant points are the face to face negotiations between the employee and the owner, the financial incentive for high production, and the explicit commitment to

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200. City of Vancouver Archives, MS-1, Bell-Irving Family, Diaries, Vol.2; May to August 1890, 5 August 1890, "Approx Estimate of Cost."

201. *Ibid.*, Diaries, Vol.10; September 1893 to April 1894, 4 January 1894.

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"look after" a valued manager. As this industry expanded, the companies needed to maintain a core workforce of skilled workers and managers, so as in the coal mining and forest industries, such men with high human capital to a large extent could determine their conditions of employment.

Bell-Irving confirmed that Chinese contract workers performed most of the actual processing: "Chinamen contract to do all the labour viz taking salmon from boat, making tins, packing labling [sic], making cases nailing up - for 50¢ p. case." Bell-Irving described the schedule of payments made to the contractor, beginning with $1,500 when the tins were finished, followed by about 50% of the total when the fishing ended, with the balance paid when the cases were ready for shipment.[202] In October 1890 Bell-Irving detailed the cost of Chinese contract labour:

> Chinese Contract
> 48¢ + 2¢ for labelling
> Payments of premiums
> wages @ $45.00 p. mo.
> Payments
> 20% of 48¢ when tins made
> 10% on each 500 c/s
> ready for shipment up to 3000
> Balance 1 month after shipment
> If more than 1/2 of 1 per cent
> is rejected of cases ready for
> shipment, such excess shall
> be paid by contractor &
> company shall not pay for any work rejected.
> Empty cans $2 1/2 per 1000[203]

Ned DeBeck, who worked in a Fraser River cannery in 1899 and 1900, described the role of Chinese labour in the processing:

> The fish are now on the floor and from then on, till they are finally

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202. *Ibid.*, Diaries, Vol.1; November 1889 to April 1890, 16 January 1890, "Memo - Queries."

203. *Ibid.*, Diaries, Vol.3; July 1890 to January 1891, 3 October 1890, "G Pt C. Co."

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> nailed up in boxes for shipment they are in the hands of the Chinese contractor. He pays all the help. The fillers are the ones on piece work; all others by the hour except the slitters who were paid by the week or month. These latter were specialists. The smoothness and speed of their work was worth watching.[204]

Henry Doyle, in the early twentieth century the initiator of the consolidated canning company, BC Packers, described a larger cannery workforce of a few years later. As in all other descriptions, it was divided into a six-man cannery crew, and a contract crew comprising about fifty Chinese contract workers, including:

> 4 fish cutters
> 2 fish picklers
> 1 trucking fish
> 1 fish slitting machine
> 2 carrying fish to fillers
> 2 ticket punchers
> 1 filling light cans
> 1 carrying fish to wiper
> 1 feeding wiper
> 1 carrying cans to salting machine
> 2 feeding tops
> 1 crimper
> 1 solder machine
> 5 cooler fillers
> [4] stopping off
> 4 cold test
> 2 mending leaks
> 8 bath room
> 3 lye kettle;

and about fifty-five Aboriginal women:

> 30/35 filling
> 20 in gut shed.[205]

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204. BCA, MS-346, Box 1, file 19, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, BC)," 26c-27c.

205. This crew pre-dates the introduction of the Iron Chink, which eliminated butchering jobs, but post-dates the more extensive use of Native people in the contract crew. Newell, *The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry*, 111-112.

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The jobs on the canning line were clearly defined, with different levels of prestige and rates of pay. Native women were integrated into the contract crew in specific places, such as can filling, where they were paid by the hour, rather than on a piecework basis, like the Chinese fillers.[206] The butchers, also known as "slitters" or "cutters," were at the top of the contract labour hierarchy, and significantly were paid on a different basis than the other workers.[207]

All sources agree with Bell-Irving that the canners hired these contract crews through Chinese contractors, who provided men for a set price per case packed. The canners specified the anticipated number of cases, based on which a guaranteed minimum payment was agreed with the contractor. Although this per-case rate varied, in the later nineteenth century the 50¢ noted by Bell-Irving was typical.[208] The 1902 Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration suggested that it was "this method of doing business," the fixed and pre-arranged cost of processing, that made Chinese labourers preferable in the canning industry.[209]

Once details were settled with the canning company, the Chinese labour contractor recruited a crew, "from the labouring class - men who work in the gardens - anybody I can

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206. BCA, MS-346, Box 1, file 19, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, BC)," 44c-45c.

207. Excellent contemporary descriptions of the operation of the canneries, and the specific jobs of the members of the cannery crews and contract crews are found in a number of sources, including, Ladner, *Above the Sand Heads*, 83-112 [on the industry and technology], 113-134 [on the "cannery crews"]; BCA, MS-346, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, Box 1, file 19, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, BC)"; and BCA, MS-2305, Alfred Carmichael Papers, Box 6, file 1, "Account of a Season's work at a salmon cannery. Windsor Cannery, Aberdeen, Skeena. 1891." The latter manuscript source has been cited in a number of published works.

208. Newell, *The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry*, 113-114. The "standard" 50¢ per case rate still prevailed as late as 1904-1905, both for the Fraser River and the northern canneries. *Ibid.*

209. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, 1902*, 142.

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get." Given the short season, and uncertain nature of the industry, the contractors used cash advances to attract workers. Some had higher levels of human capital due to prior experience in the industry, so could perform more skilled work, such as producing cans in preparation for the season. Such men commanded advances of $40 to $50, often with a guarantee of four months' work. Unskilled labourers, recruited for the canning season only, merited lower advances of from $30 to $40, and usually a commitment for no more than two months' work.[210] However, compared to other jobs available to Chinese workers, the potential earnings in a good season were substantial. For example, a Chinese worker, engaged in Victoria in 1878 to work in the sugar fields of Hawaii for one year, would earn $12 for each month of 26 ten-hour days, with an increase to 12½¢ per hour for overtime.[211] The $144 guaranteed by this year-long contract was not much greater than the earnings of a cannery labourer over a three month period.

Mar Chan, a Chinese cannery contractor, confirmed to the 1902 Royal Commission that he contracted with the canneries "by the case," from which he paid his men a monthly salary of from $37.50 to $50-$60 a month, the latter for "can-makers." Similar to the $45 cited by Bell-Irving in 1890, this refuted Mar Chan's observation that Chinese wages were much lower a decade earlier. Mar Chan employed 180 Chinese men in three Fraser River canneries in the 1900 season, with 80-90 of them employed prior to the season making cans. In addition, he employed Aboriginal workers [probably women] during the salmon run to clean fish and perform other miscellaneous work.[212]

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210. *Ibid.*, 142.

211. BCA, P/H/F49, Findlay, Durham & Brodie, Labour Contract, 1878. The calculated rate for straight time was approximately 4.6¢ per hour. This pay was similar to that accorded Portuguese contract employees recruited in Europe in 1877, who were offered $10 per month for the same terms of employment. Japanese workers recruited in Japan in the 1880s were paid $9 per month, under similar terms. Ronald Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii 1835-1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 35, 43.

212. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, 1902*, 141-142.

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The Chinese labour contractor assumed the risk for the advances he paid, as seen in Bell-Irving's payment schedule, with the canner making the first payment, still only 20 percent of the total, after the cans were produced. As Mar Chan explained: "If the fish do not come they cannot make any money unless I pay that money. I do not get it back. It is not marked a debt; it only holds for that season." In assuming the risks of the advances and guarantees to workers, the contractor counted on the guaranteed minimum payment from the canner, and the possibility of more if the pack exceeded the anticipated size, as well as a margin of profit on the provisions the contractor supplied to the crew:[213]

> The contractor furnishes the provisions, where chiefly his profits are made. At the end of each month what he has supplied is made up and charged *pro rata* to the men in his employ. At the end of the season, if the run is short, the contractor may lose money on his contract which, however, is partly covered by his profits on the provisions. If the provisions furnished to the Chinamen and the advances made to them exceed the amount of their wages at the end of the season the loss falls on the contractor and not on his employer.
>
> The advantages to the canners are: First, the contractor takes the responsibility of employing sufficient hands to do the work, thereby saving all the inconvenience and trouble which would otherwise fall upon the employer; second, the work is done by experts who have been trained in the business; third, the canner knows exactly what 'the processin' will cost per case; fourth, any loss falls upon the contractor; fifth, he avoids the trouble of furnishing supplies, and the expenses of providing accommodation suitable for white men; sixth, the Chinese boss is able to get more work out of the men and to have it done more satisfactorily than when they work by the day for the cannery employer.[214]

Foremost among the broad economic and logistical advantages for the canner was the predictability of this form of labour recruiting. A Chinese contract fixed the labour costs and capital requirements of processing for the season, bringing an element of predictability to an inherently unpredictable industry. The recruiting and supervision of a suitable processing work force was handled at arm's length, and the requirement for

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213. *Ibid.*, 142.

214. *Ibid.*, 135.

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housing and board "suitable for white men" was eliminated. However, room and board was the only price factor which was considered as an advantage in this list; there was no other reference to lowering labour costs by engaging a contractor.

The life of the contract crew revolved around the brief canning season. When the season ended, the contractors took the crews back to Victoria, New Westminster, or other place of recruitment. During the off season, the contractors attempted to place their crews in other positions. If unsuccessful, the contractor would extend "sustenance credit" to the men until the next canning season, extending the indenture of the workers, as their debt to the contractor rose.[215]

Recruiting the Processing Workforce

Often the "canners," as well as the "agents," entered the industry due to an ability to provide one of the required inputs for the salmon canning process. Sometimes this was in the form of linkages to markets or to a source of capital, sometimes it was possession of a suitable facility or location, and sometimes it was the ability to muster and control labour. T. Ellis Ladner described a clear example of a partnership in which the various participants assumed responsibility for different inputs in the case of the Delta Cannery [see earlier this chapter]. The canner Jim Laidlaw provided the linkage to the agent R.P. Rithet, and so to marketing and capitalization of the business. Two of the partners could be defined as part of the cannery crew, with Frank Page the bookkeeper and Joseph Lyon the general mechanic and superintendent. Thomas E. Ladner, a long-time local resident, took responsibility for the labour force: "Father's part seems to have been dealing with the Indian and the few white fishermen and with the Chinese cannery crews."[216] Presumably his social and business connections in the area prepared him to deal with the primarily Aboriginal fishermen and the Chinese merchants or labour contractors who supplied the

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215. The sustenance allowance was minimal, consisting of two rice meals per day. Ladner, *Above the Sand Heads*, 114.

216. *Ibid.*, 80.

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processing crew. Ladner's input was the ability to muster and manage the necessary labour.

If the partners in a venture did not bring such linkages to required inputs, it was essential to provide them by hiring suitable managers, as in 1878, when the "San Francisco-based" Northwestern Commercial Company [see earlier this chapter] hired Joe McKay, a former Hudson's Bay Company chief trader based on the Skeena, to be "manager of their business in this province."[217] In McKay, the company acquired strong linkages to the Victoria business community, as well as to the Aboriginal community surrounding its cannery. McKay's contract stipulated that he would work at the cannery on the Skeena for a four month season each year, and the rest of the year in Victoria.[218] This directive suggests that maintaining a relationship with the merchant community in Victoria, to provide access to markets, capital, and sources of Chinese contract labour, was central to the successful operation of the venture. Individuals such as McKay and Ladner, either as partners or employees, provided the essential linkage to sources of labour for the canneries.

Recruiting the Cannery Crews

As noted above in the Delta Cannery, partners in a venture sometimes filled the skilled labour, responsible, and managerial positions in their operations. The division between the cannery crew and the owners was not a rigid one in this period, and employees in this group had a realistic expectation of upward mobility to the status of owner. Ned DeBeck described the cannery crew at the Scottish-Canadian Cannery in 1899-1900, which included Alex Sutherland: "He was spoken of as the foreman but really was the manager and he was thoroughly competent in that capacity. Windsor [the owner]

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217. BCA, MS-2735, J.W. McKay Papers [film A-1673], insert, 215.

218. *Ibid.* Evidence of McKay's involvement with other commodity export ventures and with the Victoria merchant capitalists is found in various documents, for example, *ibid.*, Letterbook, J. McKay to T. Stahlschmidt, 23 October 1876.

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seldom came out."[219]

In addition to being the plant manager, Sutherland was an equal partner in the original Scottish-Canadian Salmon Packing Company Ltd., and remained a shareholder in the new corporate entity, United Canneries of BC, which took over the plant in 1900.[220] Repeating the case of the Delta Cannery, a partner was included in the cannery crew. Employees in the cannery crews often were selected on the basis of pre-existing relationships with the canners or agents. For example, the Scottish-Canadian Cannery hired Ned DeBeck as a junior member of its cannery crew due to his identity as an Anglo-North American boy with some mechanical aptitude, and whose father was a friend of the owner.[221] It appears that the cannery crews were assembled from the "cannery clan," an amorphous group of canners, agents, and their economic and social associates who seemed to gravitate towards the fishing industry. Their recruitment seemed informal, usually extending from prior business or social contact.

Recruiting the Chinese Crews

Recruiting Chinese contract crews seems to have been a more involved, and more formalized process. Ralston suggested that the use of such labour in British Columbia followed the earlier patterns observed on the Sacramento and Columbia Rivers.[222] However, as noted above, Chinese workers were noted in the BC industry in 1873, with

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219. BCA, MS-346, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, Box 1, file 19, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, BC).," 18c.

220. BCA, GR-1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4416, file 170(1897), 4; *ibid.*, Film B.4417, file 384(1897), 22-23.

221. "The owner of the cannery SC [sic] was one Charlie Windsor. My father had known him in New Westminster. Off I go to Steveston armed with a letter to Windsor." BCA, MS-346, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, Box 1, file 19, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, BC).," 18c.

222. For instance, "Chinese entry may also have been made easier by their previous experience on the Sacramento and Columbia River industries." Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen," 12.

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their first documented presence in the American industry just three years earlier, when a Columbia River cannery employed fifteen men recruited by the plant's Chinese cook.[223] The Chinese cannery workforce on the Columbia grew rapidly, with 12 of 13 canneries employing Chinese workers by 1874, increasing to over 4,000 workers distributed among 35 canneries by 1881.[224] Chris Friday described a four-stage progression in the way that Chinese workers were recruited and managed in the American salmon canning industry:

> First, a brief period of indirect recruitment through cannery employees occurred. The entrance of full-fledged Chinese contractors who paid workers by the day or month marked the second phase. In the third, a mixed piece- and day-rate system of contracting prevailed. That mixed system gave way to the fourth and final stage in which piece-rate contracting prevailed industrywide with only a few exceptions.[225]

Friday suggested that recruiting changed as "outside investors," rather than owner-operators, adopted the "less direct and more reliable" alternative of hiring through an existing network of Chinese labour contractors, active in the region since the railway construction of the 1860s.[226] Friday's second through fourth stages were not clearly delineated in the BC industry. As noted above, the canners paid the labour contractors on a piecework rate of about 50¢ per case in this period. The contractors paid their crews either a daily or a monthly wage, with the latter more common for the skilled workers engaged for longer periods. Ellis Ladner noted that common labourers were paid $1.10 per day, while "a few Chinese were paid by the month." Ned DeBeck described the Chinese contractor paying workers by the hour, day, or month, depending on their job. Both Ladner and De Beck referred to some workers, in particular the fillers who placed

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223. This event, in George Hume's cannery, took place six years after his family had initiated commercial canning on the west coast of North America, on the Sacramento River. Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor*, 8.

224. *Ibid.*, 26.

225. *Ibid.*, 37.

226. *Ibid.*, 18, 37-38.

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the salmon in the cans, who were paid on a piecework basis.[227] The position of filler often was occupied by Aboriginal women. The structures of the labour market, and the conventionalized relationship between the canners, labour contractors, and workers, had little to do with the basis of payment to the contract crews. Friday's evolutionary model breaks down further given the demonstrably artificial nature of the dichotomy between the eras of "owner-operator" and "outside investor" in the case of British Columbia.

From the start of the BC industry in the early 1870s, salmon canning ventures demonstrated a preference for Chinese processing workers, because of a perceived set of attributes considered desirable in this type of business. In 1879 the generally anti-Chinese Dr. McInnis acknowledged that this preference existed: "...the Chinese are very apt and handy, and the canning proprietors out there [in BC] prefer them to any other class for making tins and for any light work."[228] The evidence presented in the 1885 Commission on Chinese Immigration confirmed the support of members of the hegemonic group in BC, like Judge Begbie, for Chinese labour: "I do not see how people would get on here at all without Chinamen. They do, and do well, what white women cannot do, and do what white men will not do." Begbie believed that inherently cheaper Chinese labour was the only factor that allowed ventures such as canneries to be "paying" propositions.[229] Thomas Ladner of the Wellington Packing Company stated that the canning industry would be "entirely killed" without Chinese labour.[230] W.B. Adair and D.R. Lord of the British American Packing Company both agreed that the industry needed Chinese

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227. Ladner, *Above the Sand Heads*, 115; BCA, MS-346, Box 1, file 19, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, BC)," 26c-27c.

228. McInnis went on to qualify this by stating that Chinese workers were not widely employed in "heavy work." Canada, *Journals of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, Session 1879*, Appendix (No.4), "Report of the Select Committee on Chinese labour and immigration," 16.

229. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration 1885*, 75, 77.

230. *Ibid.*, 98.

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labour.[231] Dr. J.S. Helmcken noted: "The canneries, I think, tried to get along with white labor, but had to give it up. I think they could not have grown and flourished if it had not been for Chinese labor."[232] Contemporary commentators considered this reliance on Chinese labour an obstacle to Euro-North American opportunity and provincial development. An 1874 article identified a lack of labour as the "chief difficulty" in developing a viable salmon packing industry on the Fraser River, but hoped that the expansion of the industry would attract Euro-North American settlers who would work in the canneries.[233] In 1879 the Select Committee on Chinese Immigration hoped that the growth of a White settler population supported by agriculture, the fishery, and lumbering would eliminate the dependence on Chinese cannery labour.[234] There was an element of wishful thinking in these statements, as Euro-North American immigrants seeking social mobility demonstrated no interest in accepting relatively low-paid and low-prestige "factory" jobs for a two month season. Helmcken's statement was reinforced by Patricia Roy, who noted in her study of political responses in BC to Asian immigration that White workers would not accept "the low pay, unpleasant working conditions and uncertainties of the short season" in the canneries.[235] An 1881 editorial repeated the concern about the labour shortage in the fishing industry, blaming the situation on the Chinese:

> The run will last about three weeks, and if labor were obtainable every tin on the river would be filled. But, most unfortunately, the canneries are at the mercy of the Chinese. This race are now masters of the situation. They can and do dictate terms, they object to the introduction of labor saving apparatus, on the plea that machinery makes work scarce; they strike upon the slightest provocation and are generally as disagreeable and independent

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231. *Ibid.*, 113-115.

232. *Ibid.*, 56.

233. "Our Salmon," *Mainland Guardian*, 1 August 1874, 2.

234. Canada, *Journals of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, Session 1879*, Appendix (No.4), "Report of the Select Committee on Chinese labour and immigration," 16.

235. Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 41.

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> as it is possible for laboring men to be. They say in effect, "We've got the canners in the door - let's squeeze 'em." Indians are preferred to Chinese by the canners; but, while more tractable than the latter class, they are still more unreliable, because nature seems to render continuous exertion on their part impossible. Efforts to obtain the services of a sufficient number of whites have failed, the railways in British Columbia and Oregon having absorbed all available men.[236]

Ironically, the strength attributed to the Chinese workers in this excerpt came from being the only group that met the labour requirements of the canners. This editorial provides a clear statement of hegemonic racial ideology, professing a preference for Aboriginal workers, but excluding them from such factory work because of a racialized belief in their unreliability and inability to continuously exert themselves. In response to complaints in 1882 about Chinese domination of cannery labour, the canners argued that Aboriginal workers did not provide a suitable substitute, and that eliminating Chinese workers would "put more than fifteen hundred whites and Indians out of work."[237]

This dependence on Chinese labour is in opposition to the portrayal, naturalized in the historiography of BC, that Chinese labour simply provided a cheap substitute for Euro-North American labour when the latter was at a premium. This presupposes that the two forms of labour were considered directly interchangeable, that Chinese labour was plentiful, and that Euro-North American labour was scarce. Keith Ralston explained the Chinese domination of the cannery labour force in the 1870s and 1880s by applying this model.[238] More than two decades later, Peter Li reiterated essentially the same position: "From the outset the real Chinese question in Canada, as in the U.S., was in essence a question of how to exploit a cheap source of labour when the supply of white workers fell

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236. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 August 1881, 2, "The Canneries."

237. Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 41.

238. Ralston wrote: "The initial entry of the Chinese into the canneries could have been expected from the size of that ethnic group in a small population -- other provincial industries, like gold and coal mining, also depended on Chinese labour." Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of the Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen," 12.

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short of the increasing demands from the expanding industries of the west."[239] In fact, it may be more successfully argued from the historical evidence that the salmon canning industry could not develop as it did without a processing workforce of Chinese workers. Fully proletarianized, they were mustered and supervised by Chinese merchants or labour contractors to meet the specific requirements of the canners or agents managing the canneries. As Euro-North American workers were unwilling, and Aboriginal workers were considered unsuitable to meet these requirements, only the availability of Chinese contract crews made salmon canning viable.

The hegemonic group in 1870s BC, which included the canners, agents, and members of the cannery crews, understood the need for this specialized workforce, as expressed in their testimony to the 1885 Commission on Chinese Immigration. Chinese contract crews made it possible for the industry to expand, thereby creating more opportunities for occupational and social mobility for the upper echelon of the workforce. Because this workforce was essential to the successful operation of the canneries, the Chinese workers were paid wages approaching those of Euro-North American workers. The disparity in earnings was much less than in other industries, such as coal mining [chapter 6]. Additionally, those Chinese workers with higher human capital, such as slitters and can-makers, were able to command higher wages and more favourable terms of engagement. White workingmen and editorialists of the time saw the preference for Chinese labour, and the ability of Chinese workers to acquire human capital and realize limited occupational mobility, as a threat to Euro-North American access to opportunity.[240] Chinese workers were considered acceptable if they were restricted to common labour, in the lower echelon of a split labour market, supporting the opportunities of Euro-North American workers while not competing directly with them

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239. Li, *The Chinese in Canada*, 24.

240. The newspapers served as agents of the anti-Chinese movement, with five of the six papers published in the province opposing Chinese labour in the 1874-1875 controversy over the hiring of Chinese workers for public works projects. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 6 September 1874, 2.

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[see chapter 6]. However, the possibility that fully-proletarianized Chinese workers would be more attractive to employers, and therefore provide competition for opportunities which were believed to adhere only to the Euro-North American population, was antithetical to immigrant ideology.

The rhetoric of the anti-Chinese activists suggested that Chinese labour was attractive to employers because it was not free labour: "It can be no secret that Chinese labor on this coast is not, for the most part, free labor; it is for all intents and purposes *slave labor!*"[241] In 1876 the *Mainland Guardian* published a diatribe against Chinese labour, adhering to the rhetoric of non-contribution to the development of the province.[242] Dr. McInnis, testifying before the Select Committee on Chinese Labour and Immigration in 1879, suggested that Chinese labour had been necessary to initiate industrial development, but was unwanted now that there were more White workers "than can find profitable employment." McInnis invoked the spectre of unfree Chinese labour, referring to Chinese workers as "all bondmen:"

> I have been informed by Chinamen themselves that they give bonds, before leaving China, to Chinese Companies, to work for a term of from five to ten years, and all that the company have to do in order to carry out their part of the contract, is to furnish them with the bare necessaries of life and their clothing, and the company have all their earnings.[243]

Ellis Ladner described a similar form of engagement in the Fraser River canneries: "The Chinese employed by canneries in British Columbia were brought from China by labour contractors, or 'big merchants.' They were indentured to the contractors, who

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241. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 2 September 1871, 2. The discussion continued through the month. *Ibid.*, 5 September 1871, 2; *ibid.*, 28 September 1871, 2.

242. The sojourning nature of Chinese workers, and the flow of earnings out of the province were the two points emphasized. *Mainland Guardian*, 6 May 1876, 2.

243. After the agreed term was finished, the men were described as working in their own interest until they had enough money to retire back to China; Canada, *Journals of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, Session 1879*, Appendix (No.4.), "Report of the Select Committee on Chinese labour and immigration," 16.

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advanced trans-Pacific fare and the admission tax."[244] These references support the impression that the merchants arranged and managed the immigration of Chinese cannery labourers to meet the labour demand in BC. At the time, producers and agents considered this an advantage in the creation of industries and so opportunity, while organized workingmen and editorialists believed that such a reliance on Chinese labour compromised the opportunity for Euro-North American workers.

By the time of the 1881 census, the Chinese population of British Columbia had increased to 4,350 people, divided between the Chinatowns of Victoria and New Westminster, and various centres of resource extraction around the province.[245] In the nineteenth century three of the Hong Kong and San Francisco-based merchant firms dominated the enclave economy of the Chinese community in British Columbia. The Kwong Lee, Tai Soong and Yang Wo Sang companies operated as import and export businesses, as well as labour brokers, in the latter capacity arranging for the transport of workers from China. As well as dominating the "internal" economy of the Chinese immigrant community, these companies served as a point of contact between hegemonic society and Chinese immigrant society.[246]

In the case of the salmon canneries, and other industrial employers, the linkage to the Chinese merchant firms that supplied the contract crews were often through the Anglo-North American commission merchants or agents. In addition to their central role in linking producers to markets and capital, the agents often provided such labour inputs to the producing companies. For instance, Findlay, Durham & Brodie, one of the four major agents active in the 1870s fishing industry, utilized a stock labour contract form, printed with its company name. A remaining example of this form is made out in the name

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244. Ladner, *Above the Sand Heads*, 115.

245. David Chuenyan Lai, "The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in Victoria: Its Origins and Functions," *BC Studies*, No.15 (Autumn 1972), 54, Table 1.

246. David Chuenyan Lai, *Chinatowns, Towns Within Cities in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988), 187-189; David Chuenyan Lai, *The Forbidden City within Victoria*, (Victoria: Orca Publishers, 1991), 20-21.

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of a Chinese worker, contracted in Victoria to work in the sugar fields of Hawaii.[247] This evidence for trans-Pacific labour recruiting supports the presumption that the same sort of recruiting and transportation of workers applied to workers mustered for BC industries. The agent's use of a standard labour contract form suggests that such contracting was carried out on an extensive scale, and recruiting in Victoria for the Hawaiian sugar fields demonstrates the trans-Pacific nature of Chinese labour contracting. Workers were recruited where a surplus existed, and placed where they were required, under the direction of Anglo-North American and Chinese merchants.[248] Together with some 4,000 Chinese workers in BC in 1881, the Hawaiian sugar industry employed more than 10,000 Chinese workers by 1882, while over 28,000 Chinese contract labourers worked in the California agricultural industry in 1880.[249] Findlay, Durham & Brodie, clearly involved in this trans-Pacific movement of Chinese workers in the 1870s, acted as John Deas' agent, and often was identified as the proprietor of the cannery in which the first Chinese workers were noted in 1873.[250]

Two of the other three Victoria agents active in the fishing industry had equally strong linkages to sources of Chinese labour. The San Francisco partner in Welch, Rithet

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247. BCA, P/H/F49, Findlay, Durham & Brodie, Labour Contract, 1878.

248. The pattern of labour in the sugar fields resembled that later seen in the salmon canneries. The industry was initiated in 1835, using casual Hawaiian labour, but within three years Chinese workers had assumed most of the duties within the processing mills, although Hawaiian workers still worked in the fields. Later entries of immigrant labour from Asia and Europe were integrated into the industry using the contract labour pattern established with Chinese workers in the early years. Takaki, *Pau Hana*, chs.1-3.

249. Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor*, 2, citing Edna Bonacich, "Asian Labor in the Development of California and Hawaii," p.151; and June Mei, "Socioeconomic Origins of Emigration: Guangdong to California, 1850-1882," p.196, both in in *Labor Immigration Under Capitalism: Asian Workers in the United States before World War II*, eds. Lucie Cheng and Edna Bonacich, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: 1986).

250. The ambiguity about the ownership of this cannery is described earlier in this chapter, although Keith Ralston concluded that Deas was the owner, and Findlay, Durham & Brodie was simply his commercial agent. Ralston, "John Sullivan Deas," 64-78. The Chinese cannery workers were noted in Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 19 July 1873, 2.

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& Company, Andrew Welch, was a leading figure in the Hawaiian sugar trade.[251] The business linkage to Hawaii and California would have provided access to the contract labour structure already in place in those regions. The third merchant firm with clear linkages to Hawaii and California was Robert Ward & Company, which evolved in turn out of the earlier merchant firms of Stahlschmidt & Ward and Lowe, Stahlschmidt & Company, and the Lowe Brothers.[252] In 1858 Allan Lowe & Company, an earlier iteration of Lowe Brothers, acted as the agents for Hop Kee & Company of San Francisco in organizing the first contingent of Chinese gold rush immigrants to BC [see Chapter 4].[253] Both Welch, Rithet & Company and Stahlschmidt & Ward recruited Chinese labour for the CPR construction in the early 1880s, with the latter firm playing a leading role.[254] In 1885 Ward was described as the "agent for contractors, British Columbia sections, Canada Pacific Railroad." Three years earlier the firm of Stahlschmidt & Ward had between 5,000 and 6,000 Chinese workers consigned to it from Hong Kong, intended for CPR construction.[255] The fact that the CPR contractors selected these two Victoria merchant firms to muster a Chinese labour force suggests that the latter had strongly developed links with sources of such labour, which presumably evolved out of earlier business connections with other Pacific centres. No evidence of direct linkages with sources of Chinese labour has been located for the fourth of the Victoria agents involved in the canning industry, Turner, Beeton & Company. However, as discussed above, this firm hired Joe McKay as their local manager, in order to acquire his personal linkages to potential sources of labour within BC, and to the other Victoria commission merchants.

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251. *Ibid.*, 2 November 1871, 4; *Ibid.*, 26 July 1889, 4, Obituary, Andrew Welch.

252. Mallandaine, *First Victoria Directory and British Columbia Guide, 1871*, 24,37; Careless, "The Lowe Brothers," 289.

253. BCA, MS-1053, Knowlton, Wilson E., agreement, Allan Lowe & Company and Hop Kee & Company, 24 June 1858.

254. Wickberg, *From China to Canada*, 21.

255. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration 1885*, 84.

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Although excluded by race from full membership in the hegemonic group of society, some of the Chinese labour contractors acquired significant power in the industry. Although not becoming prominent until the late 1880s, Lee Coy provides a documented example of one who achieved occupational and social mobility by providing contract crews to the canneries. In 1887 Lee "Coey" was identified as a labour contractor when he supplied contract crews to the canner Benjamin Young, who complained about the poor quality of the workers.[256] Lee Coy participated in other aspects of the industry, as in 1894 when he supplied charcoal to Fraser River canneries.[257] Chinese workers generally burned charcoal to sell to the industry, and it is likely that Lee Coy directed some of his contract crews to this activity when they were not required by the canneries. Ned DeBeck observed the relationship between Lee Coy and his contract crews, and how he managed them, at the Scottish-Canadian Cannery at the turn of the century:

> The Chinese were contract labour, all under one boss. He was a real boss - Big Shot: big fat Lee Coy. When he came out from Vancouver all the Chinese worked hard in fear and trembling. If he saw any slowing up he would take a wallop with his stick or give them a kick. We were told it was slave labour.[258]

In the early twentieth century Lee Coy acted as the primary Chinese labour contractor to the BC Packers' Association, the consolidated company that dominated the industry at that time. As Lee Coy apparently supplied other firms as well, his influence in the industry must have been enormous. Henry Doyle, the general manager of BC Packers,

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256. Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor*, 42, citing University of Oregon Manuscripts, Benjamin Young Papers, Box 4, Letterpress Book, 1884-1889. Friday later identified Lee Coy, BC Packers' union buster, as the same person, "also known as Lee Coey." *Ibid.*, 86. Benjamin Young threatened to hire Native women to replace his Chinese crew if Lee Coy did not come through with better workers. *Ibid.*, 89.

257. City of Vancouver Archives, MS-1, Bell-Irving Family, Diaries, Vol.10; September 1893 to April 1894, 10 January 1894. The charcoal was used as fuel in the soldering stoves in the canneries.

258. BCA, MS-346, Box 1, file 19, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, BC)," 2c-3c.

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did not think much of Lee Coy as a labour manager, but admitted his usefulness as a union buster, for which the latter received a $2,400 bonus in 1904.[259] Lee Coy shifted from providing labour to canners to acting as a canner in his own right for the 1906 season, when he operated the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, in Steveston, packing 2,617 cases of salmon.[260] This built on the existing business relationship between Lee Coy, who supplied crews to the firm that owned three canneries, including the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. In the 1906 season Malcolm, Cannon & Company decided to operate two of its plants, using Lee Coy-supplied crews, but chose not to run the Gulf of Georgia Cannery.[261] Lee Coy apparently mustered enough workers to operate the idle plant on his own account, and by doing so, moved from the status of a labour contractor to that of a canner or producer. It would be interesting to discover to what extent this venture was motivated by Lee Coy's desire to keep his crew working to some purpose in a flat canning season.

Conclusions

The historiography of the salmon canning industry has generally followed an evolutionary model based on visionary pioneer canners establishing the industry, before their domination in turn by Victoria commission merchants, and by American capital. In this received version, "captured" Aboriginal and Euro-North American workers comprised the early labour force, later replaced in the processing workforce by Chinese workers left unemployed with the completion of the CPR. Although many questions remain

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259. Newell, *The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry*, 70.

260. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1907-8*, 220. The production figures for Lee Coy were repeated in the provincial records, but without specifying the plant in which the salmon was packed, BC, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1907*, C11.

261. Lee Coy supplied crews to the United Canneries of BC, the limited stock company which owned the Scottish-Canadian Cannery and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, at the turn of the century. By 1906 United Canneries evolved into the privately-held firm of Malcolm, Cannon & Company, which operated only the Scottish-Canadian Cannery and its new Dominion Cannery, on the Skeena. Newell, *The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry*, 142-143.

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unanswered about the early formation of the British Columbia salmon canning industry, the historical evidence seems to refute some of the assumptions made in this version, and perhaps suggests some new interpretations.

The three-stage evolutionary model is too simple to incorporate all the variables manifested in the development of the salmon canning industry. The potential of the resource was identified in the 1860s, but the inputs required in the system of production could not be mustered until 1871. The dichotomy portrayed in the literature between canners and agents does not seem sustainable, as many of the "canners" acted more as managers or businessmen than as "practical canners." They initiated ventures, usually by providing one of the key inputs, and then managed their efficient operation. For example, in one of the two 1871 cases, Loggie provided canning technology, and in the other, Stamp provided a suitable facility, and more importantly, links to British markets. Once established, existing business and personal linkages provided the canning companies with the other inputs required. Edward Stamp hired the tinsmith John Deas to provide canning expertise, and several agents or commission merchant firms in Victoria specialized in shipping, insuring, and marketing BC salmon in England. The startup of the Delta Cannery in 1878 demonstrated this pattern, with each of the partners providing one or more of the required inputs. The source of capital was clear in this case, provided by the Bank of British Columbia, primarily through a system of promissory notes. With a relatively short turnaround between the preparation for a canning season and the marketing of the finished product, and a high degree of predictability, which encouraged the banks to underwrite these ventures, the capital demands on the canners and agents were minimal. The essential factor in initiating a successful venture seems to have been respectable status based on a perception of success within, and support for, the producer ethos and the doctrine of progress. This implied membership in the hegemonic group in BC society, and so strong linkages to the banking, commission merchant, political, and labour spheres. The symbiosis between producers and agents, as well as the blurred line between them, repeats the situation in the Burrard Inlet forest industry. The dichotomy drawn between the two groups suggests another manifestation of the producer ethos, in

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which the "practical canner" or producer is favoured over the non-producing commission merchant or agent, and creates an artificial level of tension between the two groups.

In the first decade of the industry, high profits relative to investment provided a strong incentive to enter the business. In 1876-77 Ewen & Wise spent about $5,000 on a new purpose-built facility.[262] The figures given for market price and the cost of production in 1873 suggest a profit to the producer of about $2.00 per case, on a cost of production of about $4.00 per case.[263] Assuming this figure remained relatively constant, the canners on the Fraser would have cleared between $6,700 and $14,200 in the 1873 season. If anything, the profitability of this industry increased in the following decades. Henry Doyle explained the economics of the second generation of plants:

> An average sized cannery and its equipment represented an investment value of $30,000 to $40,000, and, conceded all the facilities and credits recited above, $5,000 in actual cash, and sometimes even less, would be ample for the initial investment. In the first stage of this expansion one thing that gave confidence to agents, supply houses, and bankers alike was that most of the new companies were organized by men who had previously been employed by old established operators and risked their own accumulated capital in the venture. It was felt, and rightly so, that since they understood the business, and risked their own savings to back their judgement, their prospects of succeeding warranted other commercial interests to extend them a helping hand.[264]

Doyle described a situation in which canners with human capital, some economic capital, and linkages to other inputs, could parlay that into achieving the status of independent producer. In this industry, a good opportunity to achieve social mobility existed for members of the upper echelon of the split labour market. According to the pioneer salter and canner Alexander Ewen, the "operators" of the canneries had returns of

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262. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Report of the Commissioner of Fisheries, 1877*, 341.

263. Calculated from figures given in the Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 30 September 1873, 2.

264. BCA, I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries," c.1957, 202-203.

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from $15,000 to $75,000 over the seasons from 1887 to 1890.[265] The financial incentive to enter this industry was considerable, but the canners, as later reported by Ellis Ladner, felt that the agents were too much in control of the trade:

> It was undoubtedly a highly profitable and comfortable business for the agents. Some were also principal shareholders in the canneries, but generally they were not concerned with competition between canneries. They looked for financial control of the product and a commission suitable to their investment.
>
> After once coming under the control of a fiscal agent, there was little opportunity for a company to exercise its own discretion. British Columbia was very far indeed from eastern Canada, where the banks had their head offices. Mail service from the east to the widespread canneries on the Pacific was slow. There was, therefore, little choice but to operate through fiscal agents.[266]

Ladner portrayed a situation in which the agents profited by dominating the canners, although the canners appear also to have found the industry "highly profitable and comfortable." Many of the agents, such as R.P. Rithet, concerned themselves with more than financial control of the product, and played a prominent part in determining the overall form the industry assumed. Furthermore, the relationships between the canners and agents often was far beyond simple commodity trading. The common background of many of the canners and agents, as expatriate Scots or Scots-Maritimers, and veterans of the Cariboo gold rush, suggests that reasons beyond business determined why a canner would become involved with an agent, and maintain that relationship through good times and bad. Because of the parallel development of the canners and agents, and the stability of the relationships that linked them, changes in the capitalization of the industry proceeded in an evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, fashion. Although making a dramatic entry in 1877 as the largest producers on the Fraser, the "American" ventures of Marsh English and Finlayson & Lane did not represent a dramatic shift in the control of the industry. The Victoria agents and their canneries still dominated the industry, with

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265. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Department of Fisheries, 1890*, 175.

266. Ladner, *Above the Sand Heads*, 91-92.

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strong involvement by the Bank of British Columbia.

These early ventures, and the evolving symbiotic roles of the canners and agents, determined the form of the system of production in the salmon canning industry. Business conventions developed and were adopted by later canners who acquired their human capital and understanding of the industry through participation in the first generation of canneries. In this system of production, the canners and the agents divided the responsibilities for the capitalization and management of each venture, including the capture, processing, shipping and sale of their chosen commodity. The division of these responsibilities seemed to depend more on the individuals, and their personal relationships, than on any proscribed form. However, by the 1890s, and the Second Industrial Revolution-induced boom in the salmon canning industry, the system of production was highly formalized, and had a high degree of predictability. An accurate perspective on the capital and labour inputs required, relative to the known market, shipping and other related costs, eliminated many of the uncertainties usual in embarking on a new venture. There were still variables, such as the size of the sockeye run, although that could be approximated, and market fluctuations in response to British economic conditions and competition from other regional canning industries. However, the high degree of predictability, and the opportunity presented for high profits and social mobility, made the salmon canning business attractive to those with some human or economic capital seeking to become independent producers.[267]

Probably the 1860s labour shortage in British Columbia, and the resulting lack of a suitable processing workforce, delayed the development of the Fraser River salmon canning industry compared to that on the Columbia. As discussed throughout this study, Euro-North American immigrants came to BC to escape proletarian status, so were not attracted to waged industrial work except to facilitate achieving the goal of becoming an

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267. The conventionalized nature of the industry and the mechanisms for entering it, based on personal experience, is emphasized in Ladner, *Above the Sand Heads*, 91-92; BCA, I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries," c.1957, 22-25.

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independent producer. The seasonal nature of the salmon run, in direct conflict with other possible pursuits such as gold mining, the forest industry, or agriculture, made such work even less attractive to aspirant immigrants. This presented less of a problem for the fishing sector than for the processing sector of the industry. Ongoing practice, convention, and ideology combined in a construct of "Indian" that included the role of fisher and fish seller. This supported existing racial stereotypes, resulting in the racialization of commercial fishing as an "Indian" job.

Mustering workers for the canneries presented a greater problem, reflected in the form of the two tiered labour market, with the cannery crews and contract crews split along lines of skill and race. The parallels to the labour force in the coal mining industry and the forest industry are evident. The cannery crew provided labour power, but their level of human capital, particularly technical, financial, and managerial expertise, made them essential to the ventures. The owners or operators of the canneries recruited this group informally, often within the social or business circles of the hegemonic group. As in the upper echelon of the forest industry labour force, this group was generally of Anglo-North American origin, and had good opportunities for occupational and social mobility. As noted, partners in the ventures often worked as part of the cannery crew, and there was an established pattern of moving from employee to ownership status in this industry.

The contract crew provided labour for most of the processing, from production of cans to butchering the fish, packing and sealing the cans, and often labelling and crating the finished cans. Contemporary comment in the 1860s and early 1870s suggested it was the lack of a suitable processing workforce that had retarded the development of the industry. The canners could not recruit Euro-North American workers for such unattractive work, and racialized concepts of appropriate jobs precluded the employment of Aboriginal workers. Their solution, documented as early as 1873, was the use of Chinese contract labour crews, an already proletarianized group, that had little choice in accepting the terms of employment. This removed the problems of recruitment, retention, and discipline from the canners.

As mentioned previously, the received explanation for the Chinese majority among

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processing workers assumes a single labour market, in which cheaper and more available Chinese workers were substituted for more expensive Euro-North American workers. Portes and Bach called this an "orthodox economic perspective" in which new immigrants lack human capital, such as training, education, and language skills, but become upwardly mobile with the acquisition of these skills. In this model, by filling the lower echelon of jobs, a cheap supplementary labour force like the Chinese would create conditions for those with higher human capital to achieve occupational mobility.[268] Chris Friday considered an explanation based on the presence of an "indispensable and cheap [Chinese] labor force" to be oversimplified, and offered an evolutionary variant, in which canners extending their labour recruiting beyond their immediate social group as the industry expanded. In the "widening gap between owners and workers, Chinese found employment and worked well enough to satisfy their employers. In time they created a semiautonomous sphere of action."[269] Friday suggested that the canners at first employed Chinese workers in a single labour market, which later divided along racial lines as the Chinese specialized in, and so became indispensable for, certain forms of work.

Ranged against these single labour market models are interpretations that depend on structural factors, particularly power asymmetries and conflict between social groups. For instance, the "colonized minorities" approach focusses on groups in some form of servitude or peonage, who lack economic or social power, and so have no possibility of upward mobility. Such excluded groups provide cheap labour for business, and act as an underclass, with symbolic value as inferiors for other workers.[270] This model seems to apply to the Chinese contract workforce, based on their often indentured and proletarian status, lack of citizenship rights, and restriction to the lower echelon of the industrial workforce. Patricia Roy noted that during the hearings of the Select Committee on

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268. Portes and Bach, *Latin Journey*, 11-12; Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor*, 16.

269. *Ibid.*, 9.

270. Portes and Bach, *Latin Journey*, 12-14.

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Chinese Immigration in 1878, "there was a sense that as long as the Chinese 'kept their place' and did not compete with white men, they were useful as servants, temporary labourers, and workers in aspects of mining or agriculture where white men could not make a living."[271] This seems to correspond with the "colonized minority" model. However, its application to the canning industry is compromised by the cost of Chinese compared to Anglo-North American workers. In 1879 and in 1890 wages paid to the Euro-North American cannery crew averaged 15-20 percent higher than Chinese wages, which allowing for the perception of higher skill and responsibility assigned to jobs in the cannery crew, as opposed to those in the contract crew, did not represent an enormous difference. It may be contrasted with the salary variation in the coal mining industry, where unskilled Anglo-North American labourers earned double the wage of Chinese labourers [see Chapter 6]. In 1890 the wages of the cannery crew accounted for only eight percent, while the wages of the contract crew represented 20 percent of the total cost of production. The canners may have realized a saving by hiring Chinese workers, but even if they were paid the same wages as the cannery crew, it would not have affected the cost of production significantly. As well as limited economic benefits, it is clear from contemporary reports that White workers, politicians, and newspapers saw the Chinese workers as a threat to, rather than symbolic support for the superiority of, Euro-North American labour.

Marxist or materialist theory suggests that such subordinated groups may be used by employers to maintain control over existing workforces. In this case, race or ethnicity serves as a device to divert or retard the development of class consciousness in the workforce.[272] In trying to add analytical power by refining what she considered a rather simplistic, top-down form of Marxist analysis, Edna Bonacich developed the "split labour market" model to explain the origins of ethnic antagonism in the workplace. She

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271. Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 50.

272. Portes and Bach, *Latin Journey*, 14-16. Strong support for a model that emphasizes class analysis in the social development in BC is found in Warburton, "Race and Class in British Columbia," 79-84.

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suggested that a split labour market required three social groups, "business, higher paid labor, and cheaper labor." The labour cost of the latter two groups is determined by their "resources," or power, and "motives," or why they participated in the labour market: "Since these [resources and motives] often vary by ethnicity, it is common to find ethnically split labor markets." Meanwhile, business wants the cheapest, most docile work force.[273] Higher paid labour is threatened by the introduction of cheaper labour, which will either displace it, or force it to lower its price. Given enough power, more expensive labour will resist its displacement, employing strategies involving either the exclusion of competing labour, or the definition of what she termed a caste system, in which the group supplying lower cost labour is denied access to higher paid positions. The linkage between this caste strategy and the colonized minorities model should be noted. Bonacich argued that ethnic hostility develops not through the purposeful actions of the employers, as in a Marxist model, but evolves as part of the competition between groups of workers. The common characteristic for situations with high ethnic antagonism is the existence of a "powerful white, or more generally higher paid working class."[274]

Peter Li considered this model a good fit with the subordination of Chinese workers in British Columbia, suggesting that the labour market "was split by race in such a way that Chinese workers received, in many instances, about half the wage of white workers." He offered as evidence the exclusion of Chinese from higher skill and higher pay jobs in industries such as coal mining, and the wage data cited in the 1902 Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration. Li suggested that such lower pay, supported by "institutional racism and legislative controls," made for higher profits for

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273. "Resources" included: the standard of living in the originating society; the availability of information, protecting against fraud and misunderstanding; and the "political resources," or protection and advocacy provided by the country of origin. "Motives" included whether the worker was temporary or permanent; whether the income earned was primary or supplementary to the individual or family income; and whether there was a pattern of sojourner "fortune-seeking." Bonacich, "A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market," 140-143.

274. *Ibid.*, 143-148.

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capitalists and higher wages for White workers. Li invoked both Bonacich's caste system and the "colonized minorities" model:

> Despite frequent allegations by white workers, there is little evidence that Chinese labour was competing directly with white labour prior to the 1880s. On the contrary, the employment of Chinese as unskilled labourers probably made it easier for white workers to take higher-status jobs in the skilled-labour sector.[275]

The application of the split labour market model to the specific conditions in the cannery labour market is less comfortable, as it is based on the assumption of a large differential in labour costs, which is not supported by the historical record. Additionally, the records produced by participants in the cannery system of production do not suggest high levels of ethnic conflict in this period. Other industries or forms of labour seemed to serve more as the focus for such antagonism.

In his analysis of labour in the American industry, Chris Friday adopted Ewa Morawska's premise that turn-of-the-century firms contained elements of both primary and secondary labour markets, the former providing stable jobs, good wages, and internal job mobility, while the latter was characterized by seasonal jobs with poor wages, high turnover, and little opportunity for occupational mobility. This resulted in split internal labour markets, in which race or ethnicity outweighed human capital.[276] Friday argued that the split internal labour market was not a device to divide workers among themselves, but rather a way to ease tensions between crews and managers, without "radically remaking labor relations."[277] It is difficult to see how fostering a two-tier labour market in an industry would serve to alleviate tension, other than the stress of mustering and

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275. Li, *The Chinese in Canada*, 43-45.

276. Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor*, 16-17, citing Ewa Morawska, "The Sociology and Historiography of Immigration," in *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics*, ed. Virginia Yans-McLaughlin (New York: 1990), 200; Portes and Bach, *Latin Journey*, 16-20.

277. For articulation of the model that owners divided workers against each other through a split internal labour market, Friday cited Edna Bonacich and Alejandro Portes and Robert L. Bach. Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor*, 17.

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managing a seasonal labour force. However, it is possible that Friday was attempting to account for the lower level of ethnic animosity observed in the canning industry. Neither Friday's adopted model, nor the split labour market model, which is admirably suited to explain the overall ethnic tensions in nineteenth century BC, explain adequately why Chinese contract labour was preferred for the "lower tier" of the labour market.

Existing models tend to focus on economic factors as their primary explanatory device. By combining elements of their analysis, and adding cultural and ideological factors, a more useful interpretation of the social relations of production in the canning industry may be developed. A two-tier model does seem to apply, with the upper echelon made up of Euro-North American workers, and for reasons based principally on racial ideology, a lower echelon in the fishing sector largely composed of Aboriginal men, and in the processing sector of Chinese contract workers. In both cases, some economic benefits existed in engaging workers from these non-hegemonic groups, but the way that groups were integrated into the system of production depended much more on racialized perceptions of appropriate work for Euro-North American, Aboriginal, and Chinese workers. In fact, without the participation of Aboriginal fishers and Chinese processing crews, it is unlikely that the salmon canning industry could have developed as it did.

Other than the raw resources, the first canners in the 1870s had to import all of the required inputs to initiate a commodity export trade. In many other regions, capitalism was introduced as part of the process of European colonization, but was able to integrate some features of existing pre-capitalist modes of production. In gold-rush era British Columbia, the only pre-capitalist systems of production were the traditional economies of the First Nations. As discussed throughout this study, cultural and ideological features of both indigenous and immigrant cultures made it difficult to integrate the Native system of production into the capitalist system of production. In the salmon canning industry, the Aboriginal men could easily assume a role as fishers, as it embodied elements of autonomy and independent commodity production consistent with norms in both indigenous and immigrant cultures. With this exception, early entrepreneurs needed to supply all the inputs required for capitalist production, other than raw materials. Salmon canning

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required access to markets, capital, specialized technology, and a labour force compatible with the specific requirements of the industry. The "canners," those who constructed the early plants, often provided the technology, some of the capital and the access to resources. Through partnerships, and by hiring skilled Euro-North American workers, the canners acquired other necessary inputs. Working partners and skilled workers in the upper echelon of the labour market made up the "cannery crews," a group that parallelled equivalent groups in the coal mining and forest industries. Those who were not already working partners had every expectation of rising to the position of independent producer, following the conventional practices for establishing a venture in this industry.

Closely linked to the "cannery clan" were the Victoria-based commission merchants or agents who specialized in supplying the market and financial inputs. Through pre-existing linkages, they supplied mechanisms for transporting and marketing the salmon, and had access to sources of capital. These agents used their relationships with Chinese merchants and labour brokers in Hong Kong, Hawaii, California, and British Columbia to muster a processing labour force that met the requirements of the industry. This system of contract labour had already proven its worth in China, Malaysia, Hawaii, and California, and in gold mining, public works, and coal mining in British Columbia. Patterns of mustering and managing Chinese contract workers developed in the larger Pacific economy proved eminently suitable for the BC salmon canning industry, and provided the prototype for the larger contract workforce required for construction of the CPR in the 1880s. Both the Victoria agents and the Chinese merchants or labour brokers realized benefits through labour contracting. The Chinese merchants profited by acting as the mediators between the workers and the hegemonic society, by holding the indentures of the workers under contract to them, and by supplying provisions and other Chinese products to the workers.

For the Victoria agents and the canners, this strategy of labour recruiting made the industry possible by addressing the demographic and ideological obstacles to mustering a processing workforce. For the producers and agents, a key consideration was the predictability of such a labour force, removing the uncertainty from at least one aspect of

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an uncertain business. The data suggest that this predictability probably was more important than the cost benefits of this form of labour; Chinese wages in this industry closely approached Euro-North American ones. This factor explains the willingness of the Chinese workers to participate in this system. They were highly paid compared to the wages paid to other Chinese contract workers around the Pacific, such as those in the sugar fields of Hawaii or in the agricultural industry of California. As noted, three or four months in a cannery provided the same income as a full year on a sugar plantation. The jobs were also relatively secure, due to the degree of technical ability required, and specialized nature of the work. Chris Friday argued that the entry of other groups, such as Natives and local Euro-Americans, into the cannery labour force on a casual basis allowed the Chinese to establish an "aristocracy of labor," with the skilled Chinese workers ranking above the unskilled newcomers.[278] This does fit with the internal prestige structure of the contract crews, but ignores the fact that even the highest-prestige Chinese butcher was still limited to the contract crew; the only Chinese who could aspire to joining the "cannery clan" were merchants or labour contractors such as Lee Coy. The key issue here is the balance between human capital and cultural capital. High-skill Chinese processing workers could convert their human capital into economic capital. As suggested, they were viewed as essential to the system of production, and to ensure their participation received higher wages, and were paid on a monthly rather than daily basis. However, because of their cultural dissonance with the hegemonic group, including the "cannery clan," they were unable to convert this into occupational or social mobility that would take them out of the lower echelon of the split labour market. Although a Chinese butcher may have contributed as much to the system of production as an Anglo-North American steam engineer, cultural capital would trump human capital, and the former would be excluded from opportunities for upward mobility.

The Chinese contracting system, which in the 1870s and 1880s related strongly to the labour requirements of salmon canning, coal mining, gold mining, as well as the CPR

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278. *Ibid.*, 88-89.

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construction, strongly influenced the patterns of settlement and migration of the Chinese immigrant population. The overall size of this population seemed to wax and wane depending on economic conditions, as workers were imported or exported based on labour demand [see chapter 4]. A seasonal pattern of migration existed, with workers based in urban centres, and then dispersing to industrial work sites in the appropriate seasons.[279] It may be argued that the size and health of urban Chinatowns in BC rested on the linkages between the Victoria agents and the Chinese merchants or labour contractors, and the patterns of mustering labour. Through the turn of the twentieth century, Victoria, the base for the commission merchants active in the commodity export trades, also had the largest Chinatown in the province. Data from the 1881 census, and in the 1885 Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration suggest that in the urban centres of Victoria and New Westminster, most Chinese residents lived in some sort of tenement or dormitory environment. Presumably these facilities were owned and/or operated by the Chinese merchants who mediated between hegemonic and Chinese sojourner societies, and so directed the working lives of these people. The Chinatowns provided a sort of "warehouse" of labour power, which the canners and agents and operators could access through the agency of the Chinese labour contractors. In 1884 the two largest Chinatowns were in Victoria, the commercial centre of British Columbia, and New Westminster, handy to the canneries and sawmills of the Fraser River, and a point of entry for the railroad construction and mining activity in the interior of the province. The naturalized interpretation of Chinatowns presents them as a manifestation of ethnic solidarity, clan associations, and an attempt to replicate Chinese society, while the revisionist model suggests that they were primarily constructs of the West rather than colonies of the East, designed to demonstrate social distance between groups.[280] Perhaps

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279. This pattern was described in many sources, including BCA, C/C/30.14/C44, British Columbia, Government Agencies, Chinese Statistics, 1879, 1880.

280. The naturalized view is exemplified by Lai, *Chinatowns, Towns Within Cities in Canada*; Lai, *The Forbidden City within Victoria*. The clearest statement of the revisionist approach is given in Kay Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial*

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a more balanced approach would focus on the way that nineteenth century Chinatowns in BC were formed to meet the purposes of the Chinese labour contractors and merchants, and at one remove, the labour requirements of the Victoria merchant capitalists. This raises a chicken-egg argument with respect to the development of the salmon canneries. May it have been, in the post-1870 period, the slowing down of gold mining, resulting in a movement of Chinese miners from the Cariboo to Victoria's Chinatown, which provided the missing input for the establishment of the salmon canning industry?

Regardless of such speculation, it is clear that the dependence of the salmon canning industry on Chinese contract workers as processing labour did not occur by accident. Several factors came together, apparently under the guidance of the Victoria merchants so involved in the initiation of the commodity export trades from British Columbia. For a variety of reasons, as has been noted above, the available pool of Native and White labour was either considered unsuitable, or considered the industry unsuitable, for their participation. This meant that to allow the development of this industry, the merchants needed to muster a labour input. To do so, they relied on their existing linkages with sources of Chinese contract labour, and found that it was an eminently suitable response to the specialized labour demands of the canneries. With its adoption, they shaped the broad economic and social relations of the system of production in this industry which endured for decades. The parallels to the workforce in the coal mining industry and that in the forest industry are notable, with a workforce divided along primary lines of skill and race.

Discourses in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

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Chapter 9: Conclusion

The distinct form which a liberal order took in British Columbia may be attributed to a number of central structural factors, mediated through a constellation of cultural features related to the expansion of the world capitalist economy. The conjunction of economic and social factors was in many ways particular to the region. An argument may be made for a form of British Columbia exceptionalism prior to the functional enacting of the Canadian National Policy with the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The broad contour of nineteenth century social development, beginning with an economic relationship between indigenous populations and outriders of the capitalist economy, and culminating in Euro-North American hegemony, follows the larger North American pattern. As in the rest of the continent, this change occurred within a demographic context of declining indigenous populations and increasing immigrant populations. Although often expressed in terms of push and pull factors, the constant underlying motivation for emigrants was a desire to improve life chances. To facilitate this, immigrant populations attempted to construct societies that maximized opportunities for social mobility, through the adoption of producer ideology, both as practice and formalized through legislation. The two parallel threads in the process of resettlement, the demographic domination of immigrant-derived populations, and the naturalization of the liberal order, tended to advance in tandem. Each provided a logic for the other, within the liberal order and the strongly related ideology of race and progress.

What made the naturalization of a liberal order in British Columbia exceptional were economic and social structures organized around the requirements of a commodity exporting economy, extracting and transforming natural resources for sale on foreign markets. In most regions of North America, resettlement within the liberal order took place within structures based on agricultural land ownership, and the goal of becoming an independent yeoman farmer. For the immigrant population in British Columbia, the shortest path to the goal of success and respectability was not through farming, but through assuming the role of independent commodity producer. Beginning with the gold resource that precipitated the rushes of 1858 and 1862, this impetus soon transferred to

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other potential export commodities and markets.

Over the following two decades, while the gold mining-based economy waxed and waned, and industrial systems of commodity production were introduced, expressions of social development based on the non-agricultural resources of British Columbia remained remarkably consistent. A hegemonic group generally made up of Anglo-North American men developed in the context of the gold mining and commodity exporting economy, and with them emerged a version of the liberal order consistent with their cultural values and lived experience. The society they constructed depended heavily on the values of the producer ethos, and how that contributed to the progress of both the individual and the community. The aspirations of the emerging elite in the colonies and province were not entirely grounded in maximizing individual profits. The ongoing resistance to speculation and monopolists makes it clear that a more egalitarian version of capitalism was being advocated. The expressed goal was to develop a society, distinct from that of the United States or Britain, that would maximize opportunities for social mobility for the maximum number of immigrants. The economic base of these opportunities was not the ownership of agricultural land, but the potential for exploiting the terrestrial and marine resources of the region through commodity exporting industries. The desirability of strategies of industrial development was measured in terms of how they supported the progress or development of a state or society in which was naturalized the ideology of individual social mobility through migration.

The economic and social attractions of the region were portrayed in a manner consistent with this particular variant of the liberal order from the beginning of the gold rush until the advent of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1880s. Bishop George Hills, in the course of his 1860-61 travels, emphasized the economic resources, particularly gold, and opportunities presented in the two colonies. Although his professional interest was in the introduction of religion, he went on to suggest that British Columbia was not just a field for mission activity, but rather that "its chief value lies in its capabilities for successful colonization." He thought that this would be encouraged by the high wages paid, particularly "the startling value of muscle," in both skilled trades and in those jobs simply

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requiring physical labour.[1]

The same themes were dealt with in an editorial series in the *Mainland Guardian* in the fall of 1869. Written in the early years of the Burrard Inlet lumber industry, shortly before Robert Dunsmuir launched his challenge to the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company, and Edward Stamp initiated the salmon canning industry, these articles were intended to encourage the progress and development of the colony of British Columbia. The last in this series summarized the enormous economic potential presented by the resources of the colony. Most telling is the way that this opportunity was interpreted as one most suited to support small producers, who would become the value carriers for colonial society, rather than non-producers or monopolists:

> The colony is not poor; the producers are making a good living (which is all most people do in this world) and are content. Who says that the colony cannot do anything, then? Why, those who live upon the producers, and who chiefly reside in cities; and they simply because they cannot sell sufficient to become personally rich. The colony does not want more doctors, lawyers, politicians, mischief-makers, breeders of dissatisfaction, bummers, and others, who live upon and by the producer; there being no demand for them, they are a drag on the market; but the colony does want more producers, more creators of wealth, more of those who live by the exertion of their physical powers and not by their wits. The colony is rich enough to do anything for itself; it is rich enough to get producers and educers – wealth creators, to undertake anything in moderation, but not to make 'roads to the stars.'[2]

This provides a clear and explicit statement of the producer ethos, with the emphasis on small production ["in moderation"] rather than large-scale or monopoly production ["roads to the stars"]. Such production, providing an opportunity for the maximum number of people to become independent or autonomous producers, was seen as the most appropriate use of the resources of the colony.

To attract this larger population of producers, the first editorial in this series listed the attractions of British Columbia, or the pull factors, for immigrants. Foremost among

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1. [Hills], "Episcopacy in the Rough," 473.

2. "Future Success," *Mainland Guardian*, 13 October 1869, 2.

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these were the high wages paid in the region: "Every occupation is better paid for than elsewhere. The unskilled workman can earn more money than in any other colony, and his chances of getting a homestead are better." Employment was available in "mining, fishing, lumbering, or trading," and the high wages made it possible to save money, towards achieving independent producer status and so respectability. This editorial suggested that given the opportunities presented to immigrants, all that was lacking was adequate promotion of the colony. The promotional stories of Donald Fraser in the *London Times* were noted, but were seen as only attracting gold rush adventurers, rather than settlers.[3] This demarcation between "gold rush" and "settlement" motivations seems rather artificial in retrospect, as it has been seen that most of the industrial development of the region was led by those attracted by the gold rush. However, it probably reflects a ongoing expression of the belief in the broader North American "agricultural yeoman" strategy for achieving independence, rather than a commodity exporting industry strategy, although the latter seemed more applicable to British Columbia.

This editorial series recommended that once an immigrant population was attracted, it was important to ensure its retention and growth. The blueprint suggested was grounded entirely in the tenets of the liberal order. The colonial government was advised to: "make those whom you induce to immigrate to this country comfortable, take away as much unnecessary inconvenience and trouble from them as possible." It was suggested that civil servants focus their attention on satisfying the needs of immigrants, and that the state support the development of small ventures, rather than the ventures of monopolies and large capitalists.[4] Again, it will be observed that this strategy relates directly to the encouragement of the producer ethos, with the state serving to facilitate the conditions that would provide the maximum opportunity for the maximum number of people to achieve independent producer status.

The ideological themes expressed in the late 1860s remained deeply embedded in

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3. "Immigration," *ibid.*, 2 October 1869, 2.

4. "Population," *ibid.*, 9 October 1869, 2.

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the early 1880s, after BC had been a province of Canada for more than a decade, and shortly before the structural situation was changed with the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The initial volume of *The Resources of British Columbia* in 1883 included an editorial titled, "Many Reasons Why Emigrants Should Come to British Columbia," which focussed on the economic benefits and healthy climate that provided the pull for those intending to emigrate from Britain.[5] These pull factors, including very high wages and the relatively low cost of land, housing, and food, were emphasized in later editions of the publication.[6] A purported letter from "An Itinerant" was published, which took the ideas of full employment and high wages, and added the less tangible elements of autonomy and egalitarianism:

> To the workingman no country in the world affords better opportunities, or holds out more favorable inducements than the Province of British Columbia.
>
> Good wages are paid to skilled laborers and other workmen. There are no white slaves here. People labor, they do not toil. Employers are, or have been, workmen themselves, and their experience as such, enables them to form a correct conception of the rights of individuals, and their proper relation to one another. Hence, a fair day's work is all that is required, while wages are invariably paid in coin, no truck, no store pay, no discount on payments, and the employee stands upon an equal platform with the employer.[7]

Even waged work in the workingman's paradise of British Columbia was portrayed here in terms that minimize the dichotomy between capital and labour. Through emigration, a worker would escape the oppression of proletarianization; he may have remained a waged worker, but in a more egalitarian relationship with his employer.

As in the 1869 articles, the call in the 1880s was for emigrants that would contribute in a meaningful way to the progress and development of the province, by

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5. "Many Reasons Why Emigrants Should Come to British Columbia," *The Resources of British Columbia*, Vol.1, no.1 (March 1883), 4-5.

6. *The Resources of British Columbia*, Vol.1, no.3 (May 1883), 2.

7. *Ibid.*, Vol.1, no.7 (September 1883), 7.

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bringing financial and human capital with them.[8] Capital and labour were viewed as symbiotic. Certain initial conditions were required to attract capital, including "good government" and "remunerative markets," and the possibility of profit was necessary to retain investment. The introduction of capital would create opportunities for both unskilled and skilled workingmen, and so facilitate the progress of the economy and society.[9] This "symbiotic" approach tends to blur the division between capitalists and workers, as it views both of them as essential to production. Under this model, anyone that provided inputs that supported the development of the capitalist economy would be considered a producer. Supporting progress, in a manner consistent with such a broadened construct of the producer ethos, was the key component in defining success, and so respectability, in the evolving society of British Columbia.

The keystones of the liberal order, whether based on an agricultural or a commodity exporting economy, were liberty, equality, and property.[10] The first two attributes enabled the pursuit of the third one. Together, they worked against the acceptance of a proletarian role by "free" immigrant populations. To accept waged work was antithetical to the purpose of emigrating to a region like British Columbia, as it was only through joining the ranks of independent producers that one would be seen as successful, within the values of the emerging culture. The liberty and equality that comprised a part of the conditions required for the acquisition of property, and so social mobility, worked against the establishment of a permanent proletariat. This ideological preference for independent producer status, and disinterest in accepting waged work, meant that there was a chronic shortage of waged workers in British Columbia until the

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8. "The urgent requirements of the province at the present time are men and money - the laborer, the mechanic, the real farmer, dairyman, fruit-grower or stock-raiser, and the large and small capitalist. ... There is scarcely an industry in the province that is not, at present, hampered by the scarcity of labor." "Who Should Come to British Columbia," *ibid.* Vol.1, no.3 (May 1883), 2.

9. *Ibid.*, Vol.3, no.2 (April 1885), 17-20.

10. McKay, "The Liberal Order Framework," 617-645.

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1880s and the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

In conjunction with this, those individuals who best fit the definition of successful independent producers or proprietors achieved symbolic power as the "Horatio Alger" figures of the nascent society. They provided the embodiment of the logic of emigration for the immigrant population, as examples of how economic and social mobility was supported. At the same time, these individuals, as the best representatives of the values held by the immigrant society, acquired political and social power, and were transformed into a "nouveau-elite." Individuals such as Joseph Trutch, discussed in Chapter 4, G.M. Sproat, from Chapter 5, Robert Dunsmuir, from Chapters 3 and 6, and R.P. Rithet, from Chapters 7 and 8, had a profound impact on the development of the province. In each case, they embodied and actively advocated the producer ethos, in spite of a variety of social and occupational antecedents. They emigrated respectively as an engineer, a commission merchant, a skilled coal miner, and a clerk. None of them came from aristocratic or elite situations in Britain, but they all achieved elite status in the context of the commodity exporting economy of British Columbia. Much of the historiography of nineteenth century British Columbia assumes a clear division between [Euro-North American] elite and working classes, but this may be overstated.[11] The primary expressed motivation for emigrating to BC rested on a belief that it provided an environment in which social mobility could be achieved. Clearly those who arrived with more economic or human capital, or with better linkages to potential markets, were the best positioned to take advantage of such opportunities, and so assume neo-elite status. However, classes did not divide along a simple imported bourgeois-proletariat dichotomy, but reflected the substantial presence of independent commodity producers and the racialization of the waged labour force. The development of class consciousness was muted by the wide

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11. For example, recently John Belshaw noted the links between coal mining managers and owners and political power, which provided a means for oppressing the workers: "This was not a frontier in which equals were hewn from the confused rubble of privilege and station; on Vancouver Island the economic, political, and social elites conscientiously preserved and enhanced their authority over immigrant miners from Britain, China, and elsewhere." Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 135-137.

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acceptance of a producer ethos. As an example, Robert Dunsmuir, generally portrayed as a symbol of the oppressive elite owner/ employer/ robber baron, may also be seen as a leading symbol of success within the commodity exporting version of the liberal order. Judging by the support for him in the 1882 and 1886 provincial elections, in which he won and retained a seat in the legislature, the majority of the voters in the district felt that he best represented their interests.[12] Many of these voters were coal miners or other employees of the coal mines, who generally are portrayed as members of the working class, and as such, oppressed by Dunsmuir.[13] Their apparent support for him suggests that this purported class division was not as clearly drawn as is portrayed in the literature. It is significant that the other member elected from Nanaimo in 1882 and returned in 1886 was William Raybould, who had emigrated from England in 1864 to work in the Nanaimo coal mines. Within a year or two he established himself as the independent proprietor of a dry goods store, which was operated by his wife until it was prosperous enough to permit him to leave the coal mines.[14] In the 1886 election, the voters comprehensively rejected two

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12. Gallacher, "Dunsmuir, Robert," 293.

13. The results for the 1882 provincial election listed 770 voters in the two-seat riding of Nanaimo, with 229 or 30% voting for Dunsmuir and 185 or 24% voting for William Raybould, Noah Shakespeare's former business partner [see note 14 below]. Elections BC, Electoral History of British Columbia 1871-1986, 4th General Election 1882, http://www.elections.bc.ca/elections/electoral_history/4ge1882-1.htm . In the provincial voters list of 1875 the Nanaimo riding had 285 eligible voters, of whom 102 were specifically listed as "miner." This does not include the large number of labourers, machine operators, carpenters, blacksmiths, etc., many of whom would have been employed by the mines, or those specifically listed as colliery managers, clerks, etc. BC, Sessional Papers, *Provincial Voters List, 1875*; *The Consolidated Statues of British Columbia, 1877*, "Qualification and Registration of Voters Act, 1876," 181-188.

14. William Raybould, an English immigrant miner, arrived in Nanaimo in 1864. Raybould and fellow [unskilled] employee of the coal mines Noah Shakespeare established a dry goods and millinery business in partnership by the fall of 1865. The partnership was dissolved in the summer of 1867, with Raybould continuing the business alone. Raybould's wife ran the shop, with some assistance from him, until he left his mining job to work full time in their business. With its later success, Raybould entered politics. *Nanaimo Gazette*, 11 September 1865, 3; *ibid.*, 20 July 1867, 2; *The Pacific Coast Business Directory for 1867* (San Francisco: Henry G. Langley, 1867), 567; BCA, vertical

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men running as "Workingmen's candidates" in favour of Dunsmuir and Raybould.[15] This voting behaviour seems to indicate a ringing endorsement on the part of the voters for the liberal order, and for men that had succeeded within it as the most suitable representatives. Although Raybould had not risen in the way that Dunsmuir had, he still carried symbolic power as an example of occupational and social mobility achieved through emigration, escaping the proletariat in England to become an independent proprietor in Nanaimo.

As demonstrated throughout this study, the social divisions that emerged in pre-1885 BC were shaped by who could realize the the migrant dream of social mobility, and who could not. Membership in the historical bloc that had the ability to rise economically and socially was available if certain structural and cultural criteria were met. The individual needed to have some combination of economic, human, or cultural capital. That is, progress within the context of a commodity exporting economy was possible if one could provide an input of capital. As demonstrated in the coal mining, forest, and salmon canning industries, the capital requirements were modest, and could often be acquired through linkages with banks or investors. Human capital was key in the initial development of industrial systems of production, and it was their skill and expertise that men like Robert Dunsmuir were able to leverage into significant advantages in becoming independent producers. Finally, cultural capital or "plausibility" provided the linkages that permitted entrepreneurs, even those lacking both economic and human capital, to muster the inputs required to develop commodity exporting industries. This was perhaps best illustrated by the various agents or commission merchants, with their effective linkages to markets, sources of capital, and ability to muster both skilled and unskilled workers. This model follows that of Pierre Bourdieu, who introduced the idea that the various forms of

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files, film 117, 3089-3090, Raybould, William.

15. Results of the 1886 election show Dunsmuir gaining 366 votes [32%], while Raybould received 267 votes [23%], respectively slightly higher and slightly lower than their shares in the 1882 election. The Labour, or Workingmen's candidates, Samuel Henry Myers and James Lewis, respectively received 2.6% and 6.7% of the votes in the 1886 election. Elections BC, Electoral History of British Columbia 1871-1986, 5th General Election 1886, http://www.elections.bc.ca/elections/electoral_history/5ge1886-1.html .

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capital were mutable and interchangeable, with the potential to transform one into the other.[16] This model supports the breaking down of the arbitrary and ideological barriers between agents and producers. The key issue was to have one form or another of capital, that would permit the possessor to transform themselves into an independent proprietor.

For those who held one or the other of these structural prerequisites, mobility was possible, with the extent of that mobility theoretically only constrained by the ambition, ability, and work ethic of the individual. Those who conformed most closely to the values of the liberal order would rise the furthest. In spite of the inherent tautological nature of the premise, "self-made" men like Dunsmuir and Rithet were the most representative of the cultural values of the self-defined hegemonic group in the region. The economic and social rise of these men also provided symbolic support for the presence of a true meritocracy, in which status could be achieved by the individual, contingent on their ability to muster the inputs required for the progress and development of British Columbia through commodity export. The producer ethos was deeply embedded in the habitus of this socially mobile, hegemonic group. The preference for producers over agents or commission merchants has been noted throughout this study. Both in the nineteenth century and in the historiography of British Columbia there is a division drawn between the two groups. The data surrounding the various export industries makes it clear that it is an arbitrary and artificial division. However, it was perceived as meaningful, and resulted in some of those who contributed economic or cultural capital to the establishment of ventures to define themselves as producers, expanding the definition to include all who supported or made possible the progress of the region. Usefulness could include providing inputs other than skilled labour and specialized knowledge.

A broadened definition of producer was not inconsistent with changes that were occurring in the United States at the same time. However, in British Columbia, as in the

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16. Bourdieu deals with the concept of "habitus," the ideological/epistemological/cultural forms that mediate the lived experience of the individual. In his model, the construction of habitus depends largely on cultural capital, but also depends on access to economic and human [which he terms "educational"] capital; Bourdieu, *Distinction*, particularly 80-83, 301-304 [for transformations between forms of capital], 101-103 [for habitus].

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rest of British North America, this central economic and social mission was mediated through the cultural lens of British colonial values. Doug Owram noted that as Canada expanded into Rupert's Land there was a conscious effort made to reproduce British values and society, as opposed to encouraging the development of indigenous forms, as had occurred in the United States. It was believed that this would result in an improved, ideal form of British society appearing in Canada.[17] This extended the consciously British-based identity that had been supported in Upper Canada and the Atlantic colonies. However, in these regions, this had been based on a more literal, agrarian land-owning, transposition of the British social system.

The "Britishness" of British Columbia, on the other hand, developed within the structural conditions of a commodity exporting economy. It was seen as a remedy for the social conditions existing in the resource exporting regions of the American West, and British cultural values remained an important, and self-consciously maintained attribute of the identity of the colonies and early province. The attractions of a society based on British values made the region more appealing to many who considered the United States to be too republican and too democratic, in spite of its undeniable opportunities. The strategy of migration in search of social mobility was mediated by this desire to live in a more familiar cultural context. This difference was perhaps even more strongly drawn during the years of the American Civil War. There was a conscious and explicit acknowledgement of the difference between the British colonies and the United States, and in many cases a conscious decision was made to emigrate and remain in the British colonies rather than the republic. However, the enthusiasm for retaining British cultural forms did not extend to maintaining the social order of the mother country.

From the beginning of the gold rush the promotional literature portrayed Vancouver Island and British Columbia as not only the "England of the Pacific," but as a place in which immigrants could succeed more easily, in the absence of the fierce

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17. Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Image of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), particularly ch.6, "The character of empire: the Britain of the West."

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competition for upward mobility that existed among the educated population in England.[18] This emphasis on opportunity was echoed in the literature of the early 1860s surrounding the Cariboo gold rush. The expatriate English merchant Alfred Langley suggested that the colonies provided an opportunity for thousands of poor immigrants to become wealthy.[19] Alexander Rattray emphasized the English flavour of colonial society, but stressed the opportunities and lack of social barriers in the colonies as compared to the situation in Britain. By emigrating, a settler could become "a man of standing and position," or in other words achieve success and respectability, more easily than in the mother country.[20]

Kinahan Cornwallis offered a clear statement of the reasons that emigrants should choose to come to gold rush British Columbia, rather than to the United States. Britain was seen as dominated by the "moneyed monopolist," without much chance of social mobility, while in the new colony immigrants could participate in the project of founding a new liberal order-based society, "the basis of whose social structure may rest on more independent ground than does the tinsel fabric of his mother country." At the same time, Cornwallis emphasized the superiority of British society over American republicanism.[21] His was perhaps the clearest expression of the combination of economic and cultural factors contributing to the decision to emigrate to British Columbia. It was a region that presented significant opportunities for economic and social mobility, but within a social context that depended heavily on British values. Although there was a strong commitment to maintaining an environment in which social mobility was possible, there was a rejection of the egalitarian or republican values of the United States. Rather, the successful individual would demonstrate his or her newly won status in a way consistent with the

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18. *British Columbia and Vancouver's Island: a Complete Handbook* (London: William Penny, 1858), 65.

19. A.J. Langley, *A Glance at British Columbia and Vancouver's Island in 1861*, (London: Robert Hardwicke, 1862), 41.

20. Alexander Rattray, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1862), 174-175.

21.Cornwallis, *The New El Dorado*, xvi, 109-111.

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manifestations of status in Britain. The individual could assume a place among the elite that would have been unavailable if they had remained in Britain, rather than attempting to change the social order in a significant way. This position may have been a reaction to the nativism of the California gold rush, that excluded many from the opportunity, in part it may have related to the Civil War and the central issue of slave labour, but many other factors probably contributed. Ironically, the desire to rise in economic and social status does not seem to have been reflected by a desire to eliminate the class system. Rather, there seems to have been a desire to simply assume a status or class position that would have been impossible to achieve in the originating society, but in a social context more resembling that of Britain than that of the republican United States.

In the extremely fluid economy and society of the colonies and early province, achieving success owed little to the social antecedents of the individual in Britain or other region of origin. It also presented the opportunity for unsuccessful as well as successful immigrants to reinvent their identity as part of the process of social mobility. The cues that identified class affiliation and respectable status in Britain were mutable, and less reliable, in the colonial setting. Commentators of the period, such as Bishop Hills [see Chapter 4] and Matthew Macfie, commented on the downward mobility of some migrants from respectable backgrounds, and the attempts of others to assume cultural capital, in Bourdieu's terms, of groups of higher status. Macfie considered this misrepresentation unnecessary: "If the character of people is respectable, humble origin is felt to be much less a barrier to advancement in the colonies than in England. But in no part of the empire are *shams* so readily detected."[22] This lack of class coherence in cultural production, and in particular the manifestations of the aspirant *nouveau riche*, was also noted by Macfie as the inversion of the "social pyramid." "Many persons of birth and education, but of reduced means, are compelled, for a time after their arrival, to struggle with hardship,

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22. This statement was made in regard to a woman who betrayed her class affiliation through her accent, by dropping "h's" and using singular verbs with plural nouns, but claimed to have been raised in an ancestral mansion. Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 396.

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while the vulgar, who have but recently acquired wealth, are arrayed in soft clothing and fare sumptuously."[23]

This expansion of appropriate class behaviour and consumption also applied to recreation and sport. John Belshaw noted a wide range of sporting and recreational diversions that the population on the Vancouver Island coalfield participated in, including cricket, baseball, football, rugby, quoits, pigeon-racing, gardening, bicycling, gambling, races [canoe, mule, and horse], and orchestras and bands. He suggested that the key issue underlying this cultural production was its "remarkable class context," in particular the "degree to which these entertainments existed outside the control of the middle-classes or the state." Belshaw presented this as another example of worker resistance to state and capitalist oppression, with the miners taking control of their sports and recreation, by expanding outside British working class cultural production.[24] However, this movement of socially mobile migrants into sports identified with the British middle or upper class is entirely consistent with the habitus of the aspirant emigrant. Sports such as cricket, and recreations such as orchestral music, were seen as exclusive to certain social groups, and participation in them was a demonstration of success on the part of those who were excluded in Britain. Anglo-North American migrants chose to express their position in cultural production consistent with their habitus, so wished to demonstrate their "success," in ways that were mediated through their "Britishness." In 1866 a gold rush immigrant managing a business in the interior expressed envy of a friend living in Victoria. Figuring into this envy was access to Beacon Hill Park, and the news that his friend had established a Victoria Rowing Club: "Such a truly English pastime is worthy of every encouragement..."[25] Perhaps one of the clearest examples again concerns Robert Dunsmuir, who demonstrated his success and social rise by building Craigdarroch Castle

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23. *Ibid.*, 412-413.

24. Belshaw, *Colonization and Community*, 187-189.

25. BCA, GR-0485, British Columbia, Attorney General, Papers from Intestate Estates 1861-1886, Box 14, Thomas Theobald, file 2, C.J.D. Agar to Thomas Theobald, 1 December 1866.

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in Victoria, emulating the ancestral homes of British aristocrats.

This largely Anglo-North American historical bloc, motivated by an ideology of opportunity, progress and mobility, and empowered by enough economic, human, and cultural capital to act on it, constructed itself as the hegemonic group. They created the economic and social conditions that supported individual opportunity and mobility, which attracted more like-minded immigrants. The most successful formed the nouveau elite of the colonies and province, dominating the economy and the government, while their example supported the hopes of the aspirant population. In the industries examined in the course of this study, it will be noted that in each case there existed a labour market split along the lines of skill and race. Almost exclusively in the coal mining and forest industries, and to a large extent in the salmon canning industry, the upper echelons of these split labour markets were comprised of members, or potential members, of the hegemonic historical bloc. Although many were waged workers, there were many exceptions, with working partners. The split between capital and labour, in respect of this upper echelon, remained ambivalent. For this socially mobile workforce, the goal of independent proprietorship was a realistic one, and many achieved it in the massive expansion of the commodity exporting industries in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

As this group constructed its identity, and established itself as hegemonic, it also served to define respectability. Those who best embodied the habitus, or values, of the hegemonic group, and by extension those that achieved success in the structural conditions of British Columbia, were those that would be considered respectable. The attributes that comprised respectability in Britain, or in the context of the agricultural liberal order in other regions of North America, were not identical to those valued in British Columbia. This is illustrated by the frequent references to the respectability of loggers, particularly compared to sawmill workers. In agricultural regions, such as Upper Canada or the Maritime colonies, it would only be unsuccessful agriculturalists that needed to participate in the forest industry, while in British Columbia, there was a strong demand for such workers, whose skills were essential to the establishment of the forest

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industry. The Anglo-North American antecedents of the loggers, and their stated ability to become independent proprietors, meant that they formed part of the emerging hegemonic group. Their human capital made them indispensable to the system of production, their cultural congruence with the hegemonic class gave them cultural capital, while their high pay gave them the economic capital to potentially achieve independence. They embodied all the attributes of the commodity exporting liberal order, and so were considered respectable. On the other hand, although there was a core of permanent upper echelon workers in the sawmills with many of the same attributes, there was also a lower echelon, typified by low skill or human capital, transient or temporary employment, and often made up of racialized groups. The key difference was the inability of this group to become socially mobile. Without any special skills [or restated, with low human capital], they could be replaced with other unskilled workers, so were not essential to the system of production. This also meant low pay, rendering them unable to acquire economic capital. Finally, in many cases they were not culturally congruent with the dominant Anglo-North American historical bloc, so lacked cultural capital. Those who did escape from this group were generally from an Anglo-North American background, and this cultural capital could be converted into the opportunities that were denied to those of other cultural backgrounds. In general, members of the lower echelon of the split industrial labour market were considered less respectable than members of the upper echelon; the less economic, human, and cultural capital, the less they met the definition of success in the society.

The majority of "independent" immigrants from Europe or North America (as opposed to Chinese immigrants brought by merchants) required a certain level of economic, human, or cultural capital to cover the not inconsiderable cost of travelling to British Columbia. As discussed earlier in this study, the primary reason for migrating in the context of the gold rush and resource industry opportunities of the region was to escape proletarianization. Combined with the producer ethos and the dream of social mobility through independent proprietorship, this made it extremely difficult to muster a permanent proletarian workforce in BC. Waged work was generally seen as a temporary

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expedient to support an individual's progress to independent producer status. As suggested in Chapter 5, it was probably this inability to muster and retain an industrial workforce that resulted in the failure of the Alberni Mills venture in the 1860s. In spite of his reference to the "making of the British Columbia working class," John Belshaw supported the idea that British coal miners used emigration as a strategy to avoid or at least delay the increasing proletarianization they were experiencing in Britain.[26] The search for autonomy, and the resulting disinclination of Euro-North American immigrants to form a neo-proletariat, meant that the [unskilled] industrial labour input required to ensure the progress of the region and the creation of more opportunities was difficult to find. The resulting shortage of labour, and the high wages this situation created, was noted consistently in descriptions of the economy and society of British Columbia from the 1860s through the 1880s, as discussed above.

The search for a suitable industrial proletariat, in order to "make a working class," employed three primary strategies. The first was to import an Anglo-North American workforce specifically for the purpose. This was the approach used at the Alberni Mills, and by ventures such as Annandale's salmon saltery [see Chapters 5 and 8]. As had been discovered previously by the Hudson's Bay Company, the attraction of comparatively high industrial wages by British standards could not compete with the economic and social opportunities presented in the context of the gold rush for Anglo-North American workers. It was difficult to muster, and impossible to retain, such a workforce. However, the high wages and constant demand for workers meant that a strategy developed under which immigrants would work for wages on a temporary basis to support their efforts to achieve independent proprietor status. A transient and highly mobile population of Anglo or Euro-North Americans made up a significant portion of the common labour workforce

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26. John Douglas Belshaw, "The British Collier in British Columbia: Another Stereotype Reconsidered," *Labour/Le Travail*, 34 (Fall 1994), 11-36. Belshaw used the "Making of the British Columbian Working Class" phrase as part of the title of his book, *Colonization and Community*.

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throughout this period.[27] Although this group was lacking in human capital, it was possible for its members, because of their primarily Anglo-North American identity, or cultural capital, to acquire it through experience, and so join the ranks of the upper echelon of labour, and acquire the potential for social mobility. In all the industries examined, Anglo-North Americans numerically dominated the upper, socially mobile echelon of the split labour market, but were generally in the minority among common labour; that status was not a permanent one for this group. Given the difficulties in recruiting and retaining a Euro-North American industrial proletariat, alternatives had to be found if the resources of the region were to be used to support the progress of the colonies and province. The received version suggests that industrial ventures first depended on Aboriginal workers, and then with the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, an available workforce of laid-off Chinese workers. The presumption made is that these populations provided the workforce simply because they were there to be "captured," as either a majority, or a significant minority of the population.[28] However, as seen in the development of the various industries, this model cannot be sustained.

As with Euro-North American immigrants, members of First Nations and Chinese immigrants who chose to participate in the commodity exporting industries did so for reasons relating to social mobility, although based on different sets of cultural values. For the hegemonic Anglo-North American group, the social and political project, the progress

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27. An example of this phenomenon in the 1880s was the respectable Englishman, Morley Roberts, who later wrote of his experiences as transient common labour in British Columbia. Roberts, *The Western Avernus.* [see also Chapter 7 for some of Roberts' descriptions of working as common labour in a sawmill]

28. The literature dealing with Aboriginal participation in the industrial economy tends to support the interpretation that because First Nations comprised the majority of the population, they also comprised the majority of the industrial workforce. For example, Lutz, "After the Fur Trade," 69-93; Knight, *Indians at Work.* The model of unemployed Chinese ex-CPR workers forming the primary industrial labour pool in the last half of the 1880s is applied in most of the historiography, including Li, *The Chinese in Canada*; Morton, *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains*; Roy, "The preservation of the peace in Vancouver."

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of the colonies and province, was inseparable from the personal project of achieving success and so respectability. The ideology of the liberal order and producer ethos, in combination with the resources of the region, created the opportunities that allowed the social mobility of this group. The expressed ideology of this group, and the legislation that they enacted [such as the pre-emption laws], were intended to provide opportunity to the maximum number of people, following the liberal order precepts of liberty, equality, and property. By entrenching the idea that British Columbia was a place where social mobility was possible, this would result in increased immigration, which would in turn support the progress of the colonies and province in a way consistent with the values of the newly-formed hegemonic group, and their neo-elite leaders.

For both Aboriginal and Chinese participants, there does not seem to have been the same commitment to the project of constructing a liberal order society and state. Rather, these groups engaged in the industrial economy in search of economic gain that would support their personal social mobility, not in a nascent colonial society, but within the context of their originating societies. In the industries studied, it seems clear that Aboriginal participation in the capitalist economy was "voluntary," and so not essential to survival. The existence of "traditional" economies, involving socially-integrated exploitation and distribution of resources, provided the basic requisites of life. Such economies were not heavily compromised until First Nations were restricted to reserves, and so removed from traditional forms of land use and occupation. In the period in which industrial systems of production developed, earnings from participation in the capitalist economy provided a way to acquire goods, to supplement the resources available to the individual within traditional social structures. This additional wealth could be used in turn to acquire status within these same traditional structures, through devices such as potlatches [see Chapters 1, 7 and 8 for more detail]. Selective and voluntary participation in the capitalist economy would give Aboriginal workers the resources they required to improve their status or position within their originating society. It is clear from descriptions such as those offered in Chapters 7 and 8 that this provided the primary logic of waged work for First Nations.

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The logic of choosing to migrate to work in the capitalist economy of BC was not dissimilar for Chinese workers. In the period under discussion, Chinese participation in the industrial economy occurred principally in the form of male sojourners, who sent as much as possible of their earnings back to China to support the *jia*, or family unit [see Chapter 4]. The wages paid to Chinese workers in labour shortage British Columbia seem to have been on average much higher than were possible in other regions using sojourning Chinese labour, such as Malaysia, Hawaii, or the United States. Higher earnings would permit larger remittances to families in China, and so an improvement in the security, material life, and status for the *jias* of sojourning workers in British Columbia. There has been extensive debate concerning the status of these sojourners as autonomous or indentured workers. Nineteenth century writers generally saw these people as indentured, or coolie labour, and their rhetoric often described the workers as slaves to the Chinese merchants or labour contractors that arranged their passage. Late twentieth-century Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American scholars generally have attempted to normalize these people by presenting them as autonomous immigrants, demonstrating agency in their decision to immigrate, and in their actions after arriving in North America. Although there were many exceptions, overall the data seems to support the earlier interpretation. From the initial wave of Chinese immigration in the 1858-1860 period, and through the use of Chinese contract labour in the coal mining and salmon canning industries in the 1870s, the majority of Chinese immigrant workers seem to have been mustered by merchants or labour contractors to meet specific needs for a colonial proletariat.

An attempt to enumerate the Chinese population of British Columbia in 1879 produced an estimate of 4,163 people, of whom 4,039 were men. The majority of them were employed in the commodity exporting industries, including 1,394 [33% of the total population] working at gold mining, 863 [21% of the total population] employed in salmon canning, and 347 [8% of the total population] in coal mining.[29] This situation was

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29. The overall population is taken from BCA, C/C/30.14/C44, British Columbia, Government Agencies, Chinese Statistics, 1879, 1880. This source lists 957 gold miners in interior districts, 200 cannery workers in New Westminster, and 1,100 transient

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similar five years later, with the addition of many more contract workers imported to meet the labour needs of the CPR. The total Chinese population in 1884 had risen to 10,492, of whom 3,510 [33% of the total population] were engaged in "Railway Construction."[30] At the same time there were 1,157 [11% of the total population] Chinese men working in the salmon canning industry.[31] In 1883, there were 405 [4% of the total 1884 population] Chinese workers in the Vancouver Island coal mines.[32] Gold mining employed 1,465 [14% of the total 1884 population] men in 1883.[33] The majority of these industrial workers would have been members of contract crews. The CPR construction workers were almost exclusively crews brought in and managed by labour contractors on behalf of the company, and as seen in Chapter 8, the same situation existed in the canneries. If the pattern of the late 1860s and early 1870s was still being followed by the coal mining companies, it is likely that most of these workers were provided as contract crews. Less is

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fishermen and miners in the Victoria population. *Ibid.* In 1879 1,394 Chinese workers were engaged in gold mining. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines 1879*, table following 229. By correlating these figures, the numbers of men engaged in the various industries has been calculated.

30. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration 1885*, Appendix C, 363-366, 364. Most of this increase in population may be attributed to the CPR construction. The recorded Chinese population of the province at the time of the 1881 census showed a minimal rise from 1879, with 4,350 people enumerated. Barman, *The West beyond the West*, 363, Table 5.

31. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration 1885*, Appendix L, 395, T. Revely, agent, to Nicholas F. Davin, Secretary of the Commission, 22 August 1884.

32. BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines, 1883*, 422-423. The actual numbers of Chinese workers employed in coal mining may have been significantly higher, if those employed by the miners themselves on personal contracts, as well as those employed by the mining companies, were added in. The number of Chinese inhabitants of Wellington in 1884 was given as 685, and it may be assumed that most of them, perhaps over 600 men, were engaged in coal mining. Canada, Sessional Papers, *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration 1885*, Appendix C, 363-364.

33. Information taken from BC, Sessional Papers, *Annual Report of the Minister of Mines 1883*, table following 389.

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known about the status of the gold mining workforce, but it is likely that a significant portion of it was engaged as contract crews. Assuming half of the gold mining workers were employed in this manner, together with all of the Chinese workers in coal mining, salmon canning, and railway construction, this would provide a total industrial workforce of some 1,907 men in 1879 [46% of the total Chinese population, and 5,804 men in 1884 [55% of the total Chinese population] that were engaged as contract crews. Other less-regularized work also relied on Chinese contract crews at this time, so it is likely that even at this late date something between half and two thirds of the total Chinese population was employed in this way, under the direction and control of a Chinese labour contractor or merchant. A significant aspect in the use of contract crews was the mediating role played by Chinese merchants in meeting the demand for industrial labour in British Columbia, and in creating the circumstances in which men who chose to become sojourners could be placed to best advantage.[34]

Critical in this process were pre-existing power relations in China, and in overseas Chinese society throughout the Pacific region. Clearly the merchant firms, with Kwong

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34. Examples of work employing Chinese contract labour from this period include an 1884 agreement between Yick Tai [contractor] and William Siffken [contractee] of Sooke to clear and fence 25 acres of land at $19 per acre. The prominent merchant firm of Kwong Lee & Company acted as the guarantor for Yick Tai, in consideration of the commitment by Yick Tai to "hereby undertake and agree to order and obtain all provisions to be supplied to me during the continuance of the work referred to in the annexed agreement." Kwong Lee & Company would also accept the money paid by the contractee, on behalf of the contractor. BCA, MS-1053, Knowlton, Wilson E., agreement, Yick Tai and William Charles Siffken, 27 August 1884. The role of Kwong Lee in mediating between the Chinese contract crew and the employer is important, as is the indirect way the commission for services was obtained by the merchant firm. The same sort of arrangement was entered into by the Dominion Sawmill Company in New Westminster when it wished to have a ditch dug in the same year; "The Chinamen have been over to see the ditch again they agree to dig it for two dollars per rod. ... I did not tell them so they will put seventy five men to work be sure to have them give bonds to complete the work by the 20th April or the first of May not later." BCA, MS-75, Dominion Sawmill Company, Vol.1, third folio, Dominion Sawmill Co., William Shannon to J.B. Henderson, 28 February 1884. The size of the contract crew in this instance is notable; clearly the Chinese labour contractors could muster a substantial crew, admittedly at a time of year before the salmon canning season.

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Lee one of the most prominent in this period in BC, had significant economic capital, as well as human capital, in its links to sources of potential workers in southern China. Perhaps the greatest asset of such firms was their ability to broker between populations interested in sojourning work and those looking for an easy way to muster and manage an industrial workforce thousands of miles away. The merchants and labour contractors were often described in the nineteenth century in terms very different from the contract workers they imported. With their property, business establishments, and often with families, these men were seen to better exemplify the definition of respectability that developed among the hegemonic group. It was their respectable status that allowed them to act as intermediaries between non-respectable alien workers and proprietors cleaving to the producer ethos. The role of these labour brokers has not been adequately acknowledged in the historiography to date. By attempting to fit the development of working class consciousness in British Columbia into models based on simple dichotomous factors of class or race, the nuances of power relationships within these arbitrary social groupings are lost.

The ways in which Aboriginal and Chinese workers were integrated into the industrial workforce depended on the cultural values of the hegemonic group, including racial ideology. Imported ideology influenced how identifiable groups first were incorporated into the industrial workforce. In many cases racial stereotypes were reinforced within the social systems of production in the commodity exporting industries. In some instances, most notably in the coal mining industry, racialized conventions that developed were later institutionalized through legislation, specifying who could perform what function on a strictly racial basis. The evolution and fixing of social divisions including race took place largely in the context of the commodity exporting industries.

The larger project of the hegemonic group remained the creation of a meritocratic society based on the utilization and export of resources. This was intended to create the structural conditions that would provide the greatest opportunity for the greatest number of people to achieve success, and so respectability. Imported racial ideology was filtered through the lens of individual and community progress under these terms. For Aboriginal

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populations, racial ideology centred on a number of concepts, starting with the romantic construct of the "noble savage," seen as wild, autonomous and free, and considered inseparable from the construct of "wilderness." With contact came the commonly-held observation of a disappearing race, in some cases equated with savage but futile resistance to the inroads of "civilization," and in some cases with a debased or ignoble population unable to deal with the changing order. It has been demonstrated in earlier chapters that these racial stereotypes determined the way in which Aboriginal producers were integrated into the commodity exporting economy. At first, the emphasis was on independent commodity production, which could be performed in the wilderness, and with no scheduling or organizational structures that would conflict with the perceived independence of Aboriginals. This was the mechanism generally employed by the Hudson's Bay Company prior to the gold rush. This racializing of Aboriginal jobs as outside [and therefore close to the wilderness], without factory schedules and restrictions, and often on a piecework basis, continued through the study period. Perhaps the clearest example is the handloggers of the Sechelt Nation in the 1880s, meeting all the criteria, and so fully endorsed and supported by the state. Other examples of "Indian" work based on racial stereotypes abound. The maritime pursuits and transportation often noted as Aboriginal specialities are consistent with this construct, as is the frequently-mentioned supply and sale of provision items. In the salmon canning industry, Aboriginal men specialized in the outdoor work of fishing, and were paid on a piecework basis, as opposed to the factory discipline and monthly salaries accorded to workers in the canneries. Around the coal mines and in the sawmills, Aboriginal men [and women in the former case] specialized in transporting commodities and loading ships, essentially on an as-required schedule. All of these accorded well with the embedded construct of what type of work was appropriate for Aboriginal people. This process of racialization restricted the number and type of industrial jobs that were seen as appropriate for Aboriginal workers, and therefore limited the level of participation that was encouraged by employers.

As well as being limited to racialized occupational niches, the place of Aboriginal

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populations in relation to the larger society and the larger project of entrenching the liberal order was shaped by the ideology of the rising hegemonic group. During the gold rush and after, First Nations were seen as not contributing to this project. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the concept of a disappearing race was in opposition to the concepts of growth and progress. Similarly, Aboriginal resistance to the introduction of a capitalist liberal order and the consequent changes in resource use and land tenure were interpreted through the racial stereotypes. Any active resistance tended to be considered the actions of unpredictable and intractable savages, while passive resistance through non-participation in the capitalist economy was interpreted within the "debased race" model. In either case, First Nations, as perceived through these cultural filters, would be considered at worst a capricious and potentially violent obstacle to the introduction of the liberal order, or at best non-supportive and so irrelevant to its development. It is within the context of such ideology that Indian land policies developed. The perception of a disappearing race, combined with the idea that First Nations were not maximizing the potential of the land and resources, and so were impeding the progress of the region, contributed to the figurative and literal disenfranchising of the Aboriginal population. Seen as non-participants in, or even as adversaries to, the project of developing a commodity exporting liberal order society, First Nations were relegated to a peripheral role. It was expected that they would disappear with the wilderness, as it was brought into a productive state through the progress of the liberal order. This naturalized ideology underlying practice or convention was institutionalized when Aboriginal populations were restricted to reserves and lost their citizenship rights through federal legislation.

The disinterest of Euro-North American workers in assuming proletarian roles, and the limitations placed on Aboriginal participation in the industrial economy by both indigenous and immigrant ideology meant that other strategies needed to be adopted to meet the labour requirements of the region. The one that was employed relied on extending the existing pattern of Chinese sojourning labour that had already been extended to California. As discussed above, and in earlier chapters, this group came to British Columbia under the direction of Chinese merchant firms and labour contractors,

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apparently in direct response to the requirement for labour. The sojourning workers that made up the majority of the immigrants arrived essentially as a proletarian group. They migrated, were placed in jobs, were fed and housed, and had their surplus savings sent to China, under the direction and control of the merchants. These men were selling their labour power, through the mediating influence of the merchants. There was not a direct relationship between labour and capital, as it was mediated through the agency of the Chinese merchants. Based on established patterns of labour contracting already seen in California and around the Pacific, the workers were viewed from their first arrival as a proletariat, docile, hard working and inexpensive. The employment of this Chinese proletariat began in the gold mining industry, moved into roadbuilding in the early 1860s, into coal mining in the late 1860s, and into salmon canning in the early 1870s. Due to their cultural distance or alienation from the dominant society, and the level of control that the merchants and labour contractors had over them, this group had limited ability to resist. Lacking economic capital, human capital, and most notably cultural capital, and being in a clearly subordinated position and so lacking autonomy, these workers were the least congruent with the cultural definition of respectability in British Columbia. As such, these imported contract workers were almost entirely lacking in opportunities for social mobility, an so were the group that most closely approximated a true industrial proletariat. The positions they assumed were those unskilled common labour jobs that comprised the lower echelon of the industrial labour market, that did not provide opportunities for occupational mobility. Because this group was economically and socially subordinated to the Chinese labour contractors, and because of their cultural distance from local society, their participation in such work was not voluntary. Whereas Aboriginal workers could choose to not participate in the industrial workforce, this option was not available to Chinese contract workers. This provided a benefit to proprietors, in terms of predictability. Euro-North American workers treated common labour as a transient state, with more desirable alternatives available to them, while Aboriginal workers participated voluntarily to enhance their status in their originating societies. Neither of these groups could be considered reliable sources of unskilled industrial labour, particularly if the

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seasonal nature of some industries, such as salmon canning, was factored in. However, by engaging a fully-proletarianized workforce through the agency of a Chinese labour contractor, the proprietor knew in advance the size and cost of the workforce, and the contractor would assume all responsibility for mustering, retaining, and disciplining the workers.

As "Indian" work was racialized, so was "Chinese" work, based on the construct of "living machines" that was applied to this fully proletarianized and largely subordinated group. As with attitudes concerning Aboriginal populations, the racialized position of Chinese industrial workers tended to reinforce the cultural construct of "Chinese." Additionally, lower echelon jobs tended to become equated with Chinese workers, so even less attractive to those seeking opportunities for social mobility. As certain types of labour became equated with a proletarian group without the opportunity for social mobility, it tended to widen the division between respectable and non-respectable groups, with race being added to skill as dividing factors. At the same time that Chinese contract labour was becoming indispensable to meeting the labour requirements of the industrial economy, an active and ongoing debate continued concerning its use. This debate focussed on the central issue in the construction of the British Columbia liberal order; whether or not Chinese labour contributed to the progress of the region. If such labour was considered essential to the development of industry, the opening up of the resources of the region, and so created opportunities for members of the hegemonic group, then it was beneficial. However, if it was assumed that the development would proceed regardless, and that Chinese workers "stole" jobs from Euro-North American workers, as well as lowering wages, such labour was perceived as harmful. The anti-Chinese rhetoric of the 1860s, noted in Chapter 4, was remarkably consistent with that of the 1870s and 1880s, focussing on "unfair" economic competition, and the cultural or moral damage of encouraging a population that was not congruent with the central values of the emerging society.

This rhetoric took the form of constructing Chinese populations as the opposite of those traits that made a member of the hegemonic group respectable. First and foremost,

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they were not free or autonomous. Chinese workers were continually described as slaves, and the Chinese merchants as their owners. They were described as tools of monopolists, their cheap labour permitting larger enterprises, and so threatening a more egalitarian economy based on petty independent production. By living frugally, and sending their earnings to China, they were seen as a threat to the development of an integrated economy with a thriving service component. With the exception of providing cheap labour that made some ventures possible that may not have occurred otherwise, Chinese workers generally were described in terms that were antithetical to the liberal order as embraced by the socially mobile hegemonic group.

In the 1870s the anti-Chinese movement began to coalesce in British Columbia, and in its formation reflected many elements of the naturalized ideology of the liberal order. A key participant in that movement was Noah Shakespeare, who was used in Chapter 6 as an example of an Anglo-North American immigrant attracted by the gold rush, who accepted short-term work as common labour in the coal mines to facilitate his move to independent proprietor status. He also provides a model for the naturalization of liberal order ideology in British Columbia, as a prominent figure in the anti Chinese movement, and as an advocate, and example of, the construction of an environment conducive to social mobility for immigrants. Like Robert Dunsmuir, or like his own former partner William Raybould, Shakespeare achieved respectability through his social mobility. In the course of a political career that culminated with his election to Parliament, Shakespeare reflected, and helped to define, the ideology of social mobility through emigration that formed the basic tenet of British Columbia society. Shakespeare is primarily identified with his anti-Chinese activities as a social activist and a politician, but it is important to consider this aspect in the context of the larger project of formation of the desired liberal order state.

When Shakespeare left the coal mines in 1864, he began a new career as an independent proprietor in the photography business in Victoria. Although Shakespeare later claimed that he worked at it for a few years, and then closed his gallery and "went in for real estate," it appears that photography remained his primary business until the late

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1870s, and the transfer of his energies to his political career. By 1877 his wife Eliza Jane had opened a "fancy store," uncommonly for a married woman, suggesting that his income as an independent proprietor may not have been adequate for the growing family's needs.[35] The most significant point is that Shakespeare acquired the human capital he required to establish himself as a proprietor, rather than as a waged worker.

Shakespeare came from a working class social context in England. Early in his civic political career, the *Daily British Colonist* described his tirade against " 'Dave' 'iggins," and how Shakespeare then "retired amid a shower of 'haitches' and great uproar."[36] Shakespeare provoked a strong reaction, and was seen as a figure of fun, due to his regional working class accent, in the context of the "Britishness" of Victoria culture. Throughout his political career, Shakespeare consistently described himself as a workingman, or as the advocate of workingmen. In England, he had been active in the Methodist Church, and in social reform causes such as the temperance movement and the

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35. Mattison, "Victoria Theatre Photographic Gallery," 7, 10; "Noah Shakespeare: who by industry alone makes success of life," *Victoria Daily Times*, 10 March 1917; "Mr. Noah Shakespeare: Veteran Postmaster of Victoria," 128. In 1874 Shakespeare was listed as "photographer, Gov't St." Mallandaine, *First Victoria Directory, and British Columbia Guide, 1874*, 35. In 1877 the listing for Noah is "photographer, Government street, res. Fort street,"and for Eliza Jane is "Shakespeare Mrs., fancy and Berlin wool store, Fort street." *Guide to the Province of British Columbia for 1877-8*, 319. Although Shakespeare sold his gallery in April 1874, he was noted as hiring a new employee for it in October 1874, and to have leased the "Theatre Photographic Gallery," adjacent to his original premises, in May 1875, so remained in the business throughout that period. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 30 April 1874, 3; *ibid.*, 16 October 1874, 3; *ibid.*, 13 May 1875, 3. The suggestion that Eliza Jane had to open her shop to augment Shakespeare's inadequate earnings as a photographer was made in, Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 48. The Shakespeares were involved in a dry goods and millinery business in Nanaimo from 1865 to 1867, in partnership with William Raybould and his wife [see note 14 above]. Given the Shakespeares' move to Victoria in 1864, it is possible that Shakespeare was a silent partner in the Nanaimo venture, although the consistency with Eliza Jane's later business suggests the involvement may have been more active.

36. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 9 January 1877, 3.

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Ragged School, and brought his enthusiasm for these causes to Vancouver Island.[37] In particular, he and Eliza became leaders in the temperance movement from the 1860s, and as the Grand Chief Templar of the IOGT for BC and the Pacific Northwest states in 1877 and 1878. [38] To this role he added the leadership of the recently formed Workingmen's Protective Association in October 1878, and linked its goals to those of the Independent Order of Good Templars, with WPA meetings held in the Good Templars' Hall. His leadership of the WPA was protested by some, on the basis that he was no longer a workingman, but was using the movement to further his own goals of living "sumptuously at the public crib."[39] The WPA, sometimes described as the first labour union in BC, was formed in September 1878 by a small group of workingmen in Victoria, with the stated intent of fighting Chinese labour, as well as providing mutual support for workers.[40] Unusually for the period, the WPA resolved to admit ladies, following the lead of the IOGT.[41] The key point here is the convergence between the temperance movement, the labour movement, and the anti-Chinese movement, organized around the goal of assisting workingmen to achieve respectability. Alcohol, as well as the perceived impact of Chinese contract labour on the opportunities in the labour market in British Columbia for Anglo-

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37. BCA, MS-0254, Mrs. Thomas H. Johns, "History of Metropolitan Church, Victoria, BC," 127, 146, 147; "Leading Laymen. 4. Mr. N. Shakespeare, Victoria," 10; obituary, *Western Methodist Recorder*, Vol.20, no.11 (May 1921), 5.

38. Noah held many local offices in the IOGT, such as Worthy Chief Counsellor and Grand Worthy Patriarch, in the years before 1877. Women were active participants in the IOGT; Eliza Jane as well as Noah was a member at formation of the new Victoria Good Templar Lodge No.1 in September 1866. Harold Tuttle Allen, *Forty Years' Journey: The Temperance Movement in British Columbia to 1900* (Victoria: Harold Tuttle Allen, 1981), 22, 35; Rose, *A Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography*, 297; "Leading Laymen. 4. Mr. N. Shakespeare, Victoria," 10. Eliza Jane remained active through 1877-78, when Noah was Grand Templar. *Guide to the Province of British Columbia for 1877-8*, 277.

39. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 10 September 1878, 3; *ibid.*, 5. November 1878, 3; *ibid.*, 10 October 1878, 3; *ibid.*, 11 October 1878, 3.

40. *Ibid.*, 3 September 1878, 3.

41. *Ibid.*, 5 November 1878, 3.

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North American immigrants, were seen as threats to attaining respectability. Although racism and the othering of the Chinese population certainly figured into this, I offer that the primary issue was to maintain the immigrant population's opportunities for social mobility. Anything that compromised that goal was to be opposed.

The merging of the producer ethos with British cultural values in a way distinct to British Columbia was illustrated in the campaigns of the successful candidates in the Victoria riding in the 1882 federal election. By this time Shakespeare, the former Black Country iron roller, was the mayor of Victoria, while Edgar Crow Baker was a retired Royal Navy officer. Although both English, they came from significantly different class and social backgrounds. However, as candidates both men utilized precisely the same rhetoric, focussing on the anti-Chinese movement, and linking it directly to their self-ascribed identities of "workingman." As Shakespeare's critics had pointed out several years earlier, he had not earned a living by manual labour since about 1864, but continued to actively promote such an identity.

Shakespeare saw his advocacy of the working man and his anti-Chinese activism as the keys to his election: "I practice what I preach. The heathen Chine [*sic*] must go. The workingman has put me where I am today, and his interests are and will be mine." He enlarged further: "I'm certain of my election; thanks to my straightforward course on the Chinese question."[42] He referred to his history with the Anti-Chinese Association, his opponent's opposition to it, and how things would have been different if the ACA had been supported more strongly. He described the Chinese as an "unmitigated evil," that made no contribution to the development of the province. He called for changes in taxation to make the Chinese contribute more, and took the government to task for permitting Chinese labour on public works contracts, such as the CPR. He promised to bring the Chinese question to the notice of the federal government, and to promote schemes to encourage White immigration. Shakespeare closed his speech with the

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42. *Ibid.*, 30 June 1882, 3.

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statement that he "was an Englishman and he hoped to die one [great cheering]."[43]

E.C. Baker presented a very similar platform at the same meeting, and it was reported that he "claimed to be a workingman."[44] This claim seems unusual in light of the fact that Baker was a retired English naval officer who emigrated to Halifax on half pay in 1872, then moved to Victoria in 1874, where he was provided an entree into the business and administrative elite of the city by his wife's family.[45] As described by biographer G.W.S. Brooks:

> ...Baker was on intimate terms with the majority of the leading businessmen and virtually every member of the executive council from 1874 to 1915. His first position, managing the Hastings Saw Mill Company's Victoria office, brought him into contact with a wide selection of the business community. His wife's uncle, Captain James Arnold Raymur, was manager of the mill and as such was one of the most influential businessmen in the province. The social events at the latter's home in Victoria were a great source of useful introductions for Baker. Freemasonry also provided Baker with a means of meeting many prominent Victorians. It was a powerful organization in the province in this era. Many leading businessmen and politicians were Masons as was Baker, who held the position of Grand Master for British Columbia for two years. Baker was a naval officer (on half pay) and this gave him an entrée into one of the most

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43. *Ibid.*, 1 July 1882, 3. Shakespeare followed through on his commitment to present an anti-Chinese initiative in Parliament. In 1884 Shakespeare made a motion in the House for a law prohibiting Chinese immigration, claiming this was required due to "unfair" economic competition and the perceived immorality of Chinese immigrants, following the standard anti-Chinese rhetoric of the period. This motion was fully supported by E.C. Baker. *Debates of the House of Commons, Second Session, Fifth Parliament, 1884*, Vol.XVI (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1884), 974-976, 19 March 1884; *ibid.*, 1282-1289, 2 April 1884. *Debates of the House of Commons, Second Session, Fifth Parliament, 1885*, Vol.II (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1885), 3006-3008, 2 July 1885. Shakespeare's motion was amended into Bill 156, to "restrict and regulate Chinese immigration into the Dominion of Canada." Becoming law in 1885, it introduced the infamous $50 head tax on each Chinese arrival and limited the number of Chinese immigrants per vessel The first bill developed was the similar Bill 124, later withdrawn and replaced by Bill 156. *Ibid.*, 1037-1038, 10 April 1885; *ibid.*, 3002-3023, 2 July 1885; *ibid.*, 3050-3051, 3075.

44. Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 1 July 1882, 3.

45. Brooks, "Edgar Crow Baker," 24-25. The introductions began as soon as Baker arrived in Victoria. BCA, MS 707, Vol.13, 14,16, 26 March and 10 April 1874.

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> influential groups in Victoria society, as well as a useful business connection.[46]

By almost any standards, Crow would be described as at least a minor member of the commercial elite of Victoria and British Columbia from the time of his arrival in Victoria, and attempting to present himself as a working man would seem to be disingenuous at best.

However, if the broadened definition of producer is accepted, and the shared ideology of these two individuals is taken into account, it may be seen how they would perceive themselves to share interests with workingmen. As applied at this time, "workingman" did not equate to "working class." One could argue that with the exception of the fully-proletarianized Chinese contract workers, there was no group in British Columbia that saw itself as a permanent proletariat. Rather the self-ascribed workingmen saw themselves as having access to opportunities for occupational and social mobility. They believed that they contributed to the progress of the province through their usefulness and productivity. As discussed in Chapters 7 and 8, and enlarged earlier in this section, this belief in social mobility through adherence to producer values blurred the boundaries that existed in less fluid societies. Divisions between social groups or classes were negotiated within the structural conditions of the commodity exporting industries, based on the residual and emergent cultural forms of immigrant and indigenous societies. Both the activist/politician Shakespeare, and agent/entrepreneur Baker were seen [although this was at times contested] as members of an emerging elite, as they had achieved personal success within this environment, and in turn contributed to creating the conditions that enabled social mobility. It is significant that at the same time they cloaked themselves in the identity of workingman, symbolizing their status as value carriers within the producer ethos.

With his election to Parliament, Shakespeare achieved high social status, and was acknowledged as a model of respectability, conforming fully to the values of the emerging

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46. Brooks, "Edgar Crow Baker," 25.

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liberal order. As proof of this he was appointed a Justice of the Peace, and various business opportunities were presented to him, such as acting as an organizer, and the president, of the British Columbia Mutual Fire Insurance Company in 1886.[47] He continued his involvement in causes that would assist in the progress of workingmen, such as serving as the president of the Victoria Mechanics' Institute in 1882, the president and one of the organizers of the British Columbia Agricultural Association in 1885, the president of the YMCA in Victoria in 1886-1887, and a member of the management committee of the Protestant Orphans' Home of Victoria.[48] Perhaps more significant than this general recognition of his congruence with the values of the society was the way Shakespeare saw himself as a symbol of social mobility through migration. After his election, but before taking his seat in the House, he spent the summer in Europe, where he lectured English audiences on the benefits of emigration to Canada, using himself as an example.[49] From one who was ridiculed for his working class accent, to one who was considered not a real workingman, to a member of the elite and a symbol to encourage emigration, Shakespeare provided a variant of the self-made man that operated primarily in the realm of ideology, rather than within a specific system of production. His ongoing fight to eliminate the citizenship rights and opportunities of Chinese workers was the other side of his interest in encouraging British immigration. He felt that his actions would create the greatest opportunity for the greatest number of those that met his definition of respectability. It was his commitment to a doctrine of the liberal order consistent with

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47. His appointment as a provincial JP came shortly after his election to the House of Commons. *British Columbia Gazette 1883*, 225. His position with the insurance company is mentioned in many sources, including, Rose, *A Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography*, 297; Kerr, *Biographical Dictionary*, 285.

48. Rose, *A Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography*, 297; Kerr, *Biographical Dictionary*, 285; *The British Columbia Directory for the years 1882-83*, 91; E. Mallandaine, *The British Columbia Directory, 1887* (Victoria: E. Mallandaine & R.T. Williams, 1887), 103.

49. Eliza Jane accompanied him on this trip, spent holidaying in France and England, as well as performing various "official" duties in England. "Noah Shakespeare: who by industry alone makes success of life," *Victoria Daily Times*, 10 March 1917; Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 29 July 1883, 2; *ibid.*, 5 September 1883, 3; *ibid.*, 15 September 1883, 3.

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British cultural traditions, and the construction of a state that would support the social mobility of Anglo-North Americans, that placed him solidly in the hegemonic historical bloc in BC.

Society in British Columbia in the early 1880s was shaped, as in other colonized regions, by the introduction of the capitalist world system, and the values of the liberal order that accompanied it. However, the structural and cultural factors that prevailed in BC were distinct, resulting in a distinct iteration of the liberal order. Ideology and cultural values originating in Britain, California, China, or indigenous to BC, were mediated through the requirements of a commodity exporting economy. Compared to other settler societies in North America, the absence of a viable agricultural economy was perhaps the single most important structural deviation. The emergence of the liberal order took place under circumstances that depended on the existence of, and access to, foreign markets, the availability of resources, and the ability to create viable systems of production. This required a reassessment and broadening of the producer ethos. The agents or commission merchants that could place a product on the market, arrange shipping, and muster capital were as central to the system of production as those who had the specialized knowledge and skills to produce the commodity. In many cases the boundary between agent and producer became meaningless. Relatively low capital requirements, high profit margins, and the high wages paid to skilled labour meant that opportunities for workers to become independent proprietors were more than illusory. The opportunity for success within the context of the commodity exporting economy was a reality. Although many did not achieve it, there were enough examples self-made men to keep the myth alive.

The shared ideology of mobility through migration, and the strength of the myth of success led to the naturalization of a certain set of cultural values, practices and conventions. In general, these were designed to provide the maximum opportunity for the maximum number of immigrants that met the criteria of the hegemonic historical bloc. The larger project was the construction of a society that supported these aspirations. Some of these values and practices were based on pre-existing racial ideology, which evolved and were reinforced until they were eventually fixed by legislation. Within the

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context of export industries, this resulted in the splitting of the labour market, along divisions of skill and race. To ensure the maximum opportunity for the self-ascribed hegemonic group, the lower echelon of this split market was equated with "othered" groups, primarily First Nations and Chinese immigrants. Aboriginal workers were limited to certain occupational niches seen as congruent with racial ideology, while Chinese workers were treated as living machines, with little opportunity for successful resistance in this period. As well as limiting and fixing occupational roles for these groups, the way in which they contributed to the larger project of social development affected the way they were integrated into, or more properly excluded from, provincial society. First Nations were seen as making a limited contribution outside a few specified economic niches, and were often viewed as an impediment to free use of the province's resources. As such, they were moved to the periphery of the economy and the society. Attitudes concerning the Chinese were ambivalent. They were seen as contributing to development in some sectors, although they were thought to contribute little to the overall progress of the region, given the practice of sending their earnings to China. Additionally, as the only fully proletarianized group in the province, they were seen as a social and economic threat. Following American ideology, it was thought that in this role they acted to support monopoly and big business, squeezing out petty producers, and would make it impossible for any Euro-North American worker to compete for common labouring jobs. Both these issues would constrain the opportunities for occupational and social mobility for the hegemonic group. The anti-Chinese movement of the 1870s was led by workingmen, largely made up of small producers or skilled workers, who believed that their potential for success would be constrained by the presence of a large population of Chinese workers. Acting through previously successful leaders such as Shakespeare and Baker, the workingmen and other members of the hegemonic group were able to influence restrictive legislation that the Chinese, as a racialized, and largely proletarian group, were unable to resist.

Such conscious efforts at social and state formation, as well as the practices and conventions around which life in British Columbia took place, were organized around the

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principle of creating opportunities for economic and social mobility, for a certain portion of the population. Underlying this was a broadened version of the producer ethos, mediated by the constraints of a commodity exporting economy. The hegemonic group was widely defined, with the excluded groups those with a high degree of cultural dissonance with the dominant group. Essentially, those who were not seen as contributing to the project of developing a new society based on the liberal order were either neglected, as with First Nations, or excluded, as with Chinese immigrant workers. This criteria, of contributing or not contributing to the progress of the new society, seems to have comprised the primary social division. The Chinese contract workers that were imported to meet certain labour requirements were the only fully proletarianized group. For those that arrived with, or could acquire, some economic capital, human capital, or cultural capital, there was the understanding that social mobility was possible. Class formation in British Columbia took place along several vectors. One of the defining features was the region not as a location for the making of a working class, but as a location for escaping or resisting the working class. It was the dream of economic and social mobility that attracted a migrant population to gold rush-era British Columbia. It was a dream that sustained into the post-gold rush evolution of commodity exporting industries. Anything that threatened this dream, that is, that would support proletarianization of the aspirant immigrants, would be fiercely resisted. This explains the reaction to the introduction of an already proletarianized group like the Chinese workers. At the same time that proletarianization was resisted, a new elite emerged, with those who achieved success assuming symbolic power as models for others, and taking positions in politics. In a society constructed to support social mobility, those who achieved success provided its strongest validation. They also acquired the economic and political power to naturalize their habitus, and in doing so support the identity of British Columbia as an environment where, following Bourdieu, economic, human, and cultural capital could be converted into social mobility, but only for those who conformed to the cultural values of the emerging hegemonic group.

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