

---

---

## REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE

APPOINTED TO ENQUIRE INTO THE CLAIMS OF THE REV. GEORGE  
DITCHAM TO CERTAIN LAND IN THE VICINITY OF COAL HARBOUR.

MR. SPEAKER :—

Your Select Committee appointed on 28th February, 1888, "to enquire into the claims of the Rev. George Ditcham to certain land in the vicinity of Coal Harbour," beg to report as follows :—

After hearing Mr. Ditcham and the evidence produced by him, and the letters which passed between Mr. Ditcham and the Honourable Mr. J. W. Trutch, Dominion Government Agent, and the Government of British Columbia, and the official notices, from time to time, published in the British Columbia Gazette, and which are referred to in the evidence taken, we are of opinion that the Rev. George Ditcham having taken up and bona fide occupied that piece of land referred to in Mr. Ditcham's application to Honourable Mr. Trutch, dated 20th March, 1884, and containing about 160 acres, adjoining Lot 352, Group 1, New Westminster District, should be allowed to complete his purchase thereof. And we most respectfully recommend that the Government should take into their consideration the advisability of issuing a Crown grant of said land to said George Ditcham, upon payment of one hundred and sixty dollars for said land, and a further fee of five dollars upon the Crown grant.

All of which is most respectfully submitted.

WM. H. LADNER, *Chairman*,  
GEO. W. ANDERSON,  
JOSEPH MASON,  
HENRY CROFT,  
W. N. BOLE

## EVIDENCE.

MARCH 28TH, 1888

MR. AGASSIZ—I know the land in dispute. Mr. Ditcham occupied it in March, 1884. He put a house upon it. He slashed about six or seven acres, and cropped about three or four acres. About that time he applied to Dominion Government for the land grant, and his application was put on file by Mr. Trutch, as appears by Mr. Roebuck's letter of April 17th, 1884, referring to application of March 20th, 1884. Mr. Ditcham went to the office personally, and was told by the Private Secretary, Mr. Bovill, that the only way he could get the land was by settling upon it. Besides the crop mentioned, Mr. Ditcham put in between 30 and 40 fruit trees. When the land was handed over to the Local Government in May, 1884, Mr. Ditcham, on 5th of that month, applied to Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, by letter, requesting to have his claims recognized, as appears by Mr. Gore's letter of 15th May, 1884. I spoke to Honourable J. Robson, and he asked me how far was the place from Granville. I said two or three miles; referring to my own claim and Mr. Ditcham's, my own claim being the closer of the two. Mr. Robson said he thought they would be dealt with as agricultural lands; and after the Local got the lands I reminded Mr. Robson of the conversation referred to, and he said he had no idea it was so near Granville. Mr. Ditcham put about eight hundred dollars (\$800) upon his lands. The land is valuable for agricultural purposes, and Miller's adjoining land being successfully used as a market garden. On several occasions Honourable Mr. Robson told me to go ahead, and I should, in any event, be paid for my improvements. Miller's land lies between Mr. Ditcham's land and mine.

L. A. AGASSIZ.

APRIL 5TH, 1888.

REV. G. DITCHAM—I have been in the country 13 years, and this is the only land that I have applied for, or am in any wise interested. I was in Victoria, January, 1884, and went to Mr. Trutch's office and made application for a piece of land, 160 acres, lying south of and adjoining Lot 352, Group 1, New Westminster District, and near the False Creek road, and four miles from Granville and ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ ) one and one half miles east of the land known as the C. P. R. grant, and was told by Mr. Bovill, if I found the land not occupied I could take it up. I began by making a road through Lot 352, from False Creek road, to reach the land in question. After completing the road I erected my house, and began clearing at once. I then made written application, March 20th, 1884, to Honourable J. W. Trutch, and received reply, April 17th, 1884, stating that my application had been placed on file, and would be considered in due course. On 27th November, 1883, Honourable J. W. Trutch published a form of reply to settlers and applicants for land in British Columbia, on the faith of which, and believing I could purchase the land from the Dominion Government, I accordingly applied as already stated, and in the British Government Gazette of April 24th, 1884, Mr. Trutch published an official notice referring to and recognizing said circular or letter. I next saw that the Provincial Government had reserved this land, in common with all land situated west of the North Road, and I applied on the 5th May, 1884, to Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works for liberty to purchase. He replied on 15th May, objecting, on ground that the land not having agricultural value only, could not be disposed of as ordinary agricultural land, but that they would shortly be put upon the market, which has never since been done—although I have again and again applied to the Department on this subject, but without success. I received an unofficial letter from the Honourable John Robson of November 28th, 1884, and also an official letter, June 16th, 1885, to which I refer; also letter of June 20th, 1887, from Mr. Gore, to which I refer. I have expended about six hundred (\$600) dollars in cash, besides my own labour in improving the land. I made a good road for

over half a mile—about 9 feet wide, and completely cleared about 10 acres of alder bottom, and set out 60 fruit trees, and have about two (2) acres down in timothy. I built a house 14 by 22, with lean-to attached. This expenditure has been a very had strain upon my means, which are very limited. Owing to the delay and expenses caused by the question remaining unsettled, I am out \$400—in all one thousand (1,000) dollars—besides my own labour. I have occupied the land almost continuously since February, 1884, to the present, either by myself or agent, and I claim to be entitled to complete my purchase at the rate of one dollar (\$1) per acre. I hand a copy of letters referred to. At the time I applied for the land Port Moody was the statutory terminus of the C. P. Railway.

GEO. DITCHAM.

*H. S. Roebuck to Rev. George Ditcham.*

OFFICE OF DOMINION GOVERNMENT AGENT,  
VICTORIA, B. C., April 17th, 1884.

SIR,—I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 20th ult., and to inform you that Mr. Trutch is not in a position at the present time to take any action in the matter, but that your application has been placed on file, and will be considered in due course.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) H. S. ROEBUCK,  
*Secretary.*

*The Surveyor-General to Rev. G. Ditcham.*

VICTORIA, B. C., May 15th, 1884

SIR,—In reply to your letter of the 5th instant, I am directed by the Hon. Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works to state that the land in question, not having an agricultural value only, is not likely to be disposed of as ordinary agricultural lands would be, as, per notice, all land west of Port Moody is reserved, and not open to settlement.

It is probable that they will be put upon the market shortly, due notice of which will of course be given.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) W. S. GORE,  
*Surveyor-General.*

*Honourable John Robson to Rev. G. Ditcham.*

VICTORIA, November, 28th, 1884.

DEAR SIR,—Replying to your letter of the 21st instant, having reference to land near Coal Harbour, on which you appear to have squatted, I beg to say that I cannot do more than the Chief Commissioner has already done.

The Provincial Government cannot hold themselves responsible for anything the Dominion Government may have done, through Mr. Trutch, respecting lands to which they had no claim.

The Provincial Government have taken every precaution to keep out of the market lands which, from their proximity to Coal Harbour, are of exceptional value, with the intention of putting them up to public competition, and they feel that they would not be doing their duty to the public interests at large if they permitted lands presumably worth hundreds of dollars an acre to be taken up as ordinary agricultural land for one dollar an acre.

Under the circumstances, I do not see how you could expect the Government to admit that you have even a moral claim to the land in question.

It is possible that when such cases as yours come to be dealt with, the Government may see their way to having occupants allowed for valuable improvements; but that appears to me to be the most that could reasonably be expected.

Very respectfully yours,

(Signed) JNO. ROBSON.

---

*Honourable John Robson to Rev. G. Ditcham.*

VICTORIA, June 16th, 1885.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to yours of the 10th instant, I have to say that the Government have no power to deal with your case until such time as the land shall be offered for sale, when they will be prepared to have your improvements valued and added to the upset price of the land.

I have talked over the matter with the Chief Commissioner, and we both regret very much that we have no power to comply with your wishes.

Very sincerely yours,  
(Signed) JNO. ROBSON.

---

*The Surveyor-General to Rev. G. Ditcham.*

VICTORIA, B. C., June 20th, 1887.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, with enclosure, of the 9th instant, and in reply, to state that the land you desire is just in the same position now as at the date of Mr. Robson's letter.

You should, however, renew your application when the land is offered for sale, of which due notice will be published.

I have, &c.,  
(Signed) W. S. GORE,  
*Surveyor-General.*