
PETITION.

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia:

GENTLEMEN,—The petition of the undersigned showeth:—

That whereas the Toronto and British Columbia Lumber Company hold, and have held since 1891, two timber limits in the Alberni District, comprising 40,000 acres, of which the annual rental is now \$5,774:

That whereas in 1898 the Company was in arrears on these two limits alone \$17,740, and the Government of that date accepted a sum of \$8,723 in full payment:

That whereas the reasons given at that time for not exacting the full sum due were: first, the unsatisfactory nature of the timber industry and small demand for limits; and second, that the Company, as a Company, were insolvent and little or nothing might have been obtained by suing them, the sum compromised for being paid by individual shareholders not legally liable:

That whereas since 1898 the arrears of rent have been allowed, under successive Governments, to accumulate until in April, 1902, they amounted to \$17,747:

That whereas the failure of the Company either to operate a mill or develop in any way these limits, situated as they are in the heart of the district, is a very serious check to the development of the district and to the prosperity of the residents therein:

That whereas the reasons previously given for compromising with the Company are not now applicable, as it is obviously an unsound policy to allow an alleged insolvent Company to accumulate further indebtedness, and it is a notorious fact that the lumber industry is not now in a depressed condition, but the contrary, and that large limits in the same district have recently changed hands at satisfactory prices:

That whereas the Government have recently advertised and offered for sale all land, or even a pre-emptor's interest in land, on which taxes were due the Crown, and even in cases where the owners or pre-emptors were only due a few dollars for one year's taxes, it would be entirely in keeping with such a policy for the Government to sell the interests of the Company in the limits for the arrears of rent, and the Government would thereby secure not only the arrears of rent, but also the probability of receiving rent therefor in future, and would greatly benefit all classes of the community by the active opening up and working of these limits:

Therefore, your petitioners humbly beg your Honourable Body to recommend the Government to immediately take steps either to compel the Company to fulfil the terms of their leases, or to dispose of the limits in one or more lots to parties ready and able to build and operate a mill or mills on the lands:

And we, your humble petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray, etc., etc.

JOHN BEST,
GEORGE H. BIRD,
JOHN SHIRLEY RICHARDSON,
and 89 others.

VICTORIA, B. C.:

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