
RETURN

Under sub-section (2) of section 10 of the "Public Inquiries Act."

C. A. SEMLIN,
Provincial Secretary.

*Provincial Secretary's Office,
12th January, 1900.*

VICTORIA, B.C.,
30th December, 1899.

To His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

YOUR HONOUR,—I have the honour to return herewith the Special Commission issued to me on the 7th June, 1899, under the provisions of the "Bennett-Atlin Commission Act, 1899," and the "Public Inquiries Act," and to report as follows:—

I arrived in Atlin on the 16th June, and then found that the work before me consisted of—

- (1.) Disposing of some 647 applications for records filed in the year 1898, but which had not been dealt with by the Recorder.
- (2.) Of dealing with the claims to consideration of some 40 men who had taken up claims in July, 1898, under the North-West Territory laws. To these men, certain assurances of recognition by the British Columbia Government had been given in 1898 by Capt. Rant, Gold Commissioner, and these assurances had been, in part, acted upon by Mr. Graham in the spring of 1899, and as all, or nearly all, these claims had been re-located under the British Columbia mining laws, I had—
- (3.) To deal with the conflicting equities of these British Columbia claimants.

Then there were—

- (4.) Many instances of overlapping and conflicting boundaries,

As well as—

- (5.) Cases of plain "claim-jumping"

The first few days were occupied in drawing up rules of procedure and forms for use. As these forms proved very useful, I enclose copies for reference, should it ever become necessary to issue a second Commission under similar circumstances.

On the 19th June, the Commission was formally opened, and by the end of the close season all the work contemplated by the "Bennett-Atlin Commission Act, 1899," had been disposed of—at any rate to this extent: every man knew where he stood, unless some new claimant should appear within the first seventy-two hours of the open season and raise a new contest before me.

After the 1st August, I was engaged in adjudicating on the title to one or two of these new contestants, and in granting confirmatory orders in those cases in which no new contestants appeared; settling the form of orders and judgments pronounced before the 1st August, but which had not, on account of pressure of business, been reduced into writing, and generally arranging and closing up of the work of the Commission. I dealt with several cases of the character which crop up in any mining district, and some criminal and ordinary County Court cases.

On the 13th August I left Atlin for Bennett; from there I proceeded to Skagway, and waited a few days in case any further trouble should arise, but the reports I received shewed that everything was proceeding quietly at Atlin up to the evening of 15th August. I sailed from Skagway on the 17th.

I desire to draw your attention to the valuable assistance rendered me by Mr. Bass (Secretary of the Commission) and Mr. Walsh (Clerk). To Mr. Graham, the Gold Commissioner, and to the clerks in his office, whose services were lent to me, I owe a great deal. Without the assistance of these gentlemen whom I have named, I could have made but little headway against the volume of business brought before me.

I have, etc.,

(Signed) P. Æ. IRVING, J.,

Special Commissioner

VICTORIA, B. C. :

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1900.