

Protester arrested at mining blockade

DEASE LAKE: Great-grandmother opposes open-pit mine NEWS A3



Today there are some 170,000 Natives in BC, or 5 % of the total province population. According to a 1991 government census, only one-quarter (or 40,000) lived on reserves.

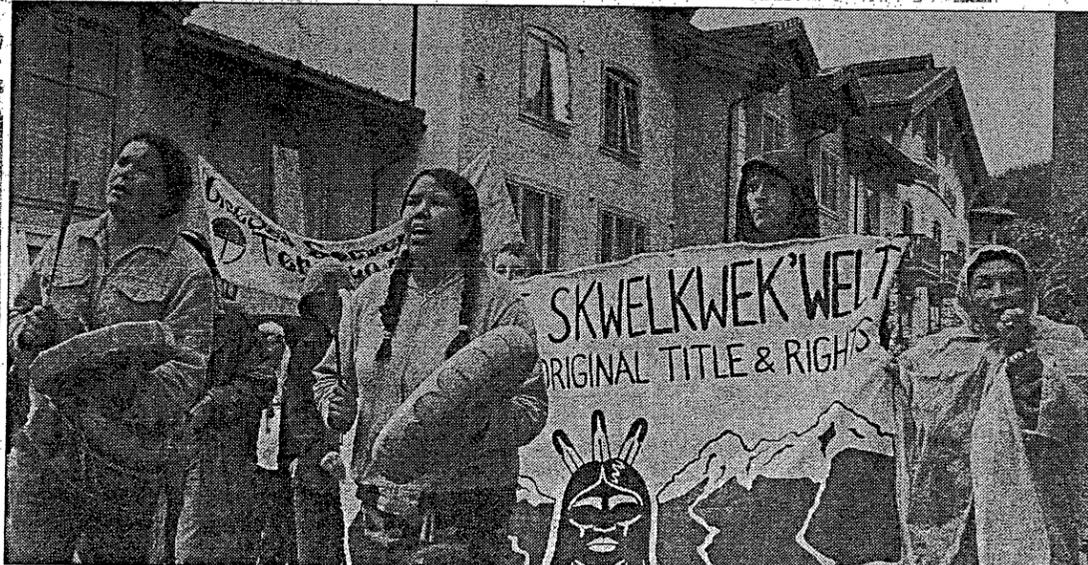
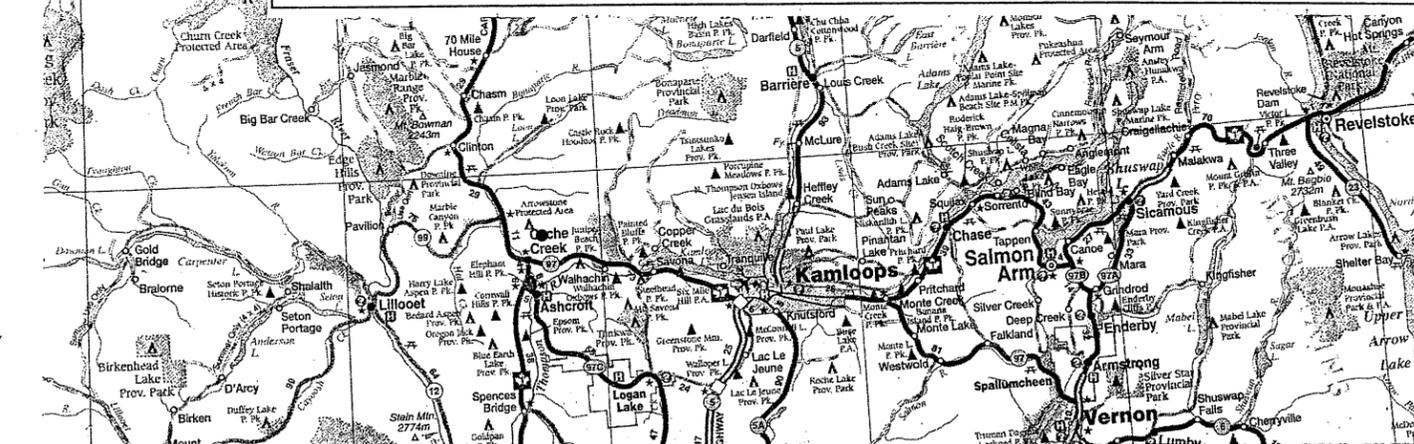
There are some 197 bands in BC, or 33% of Canada's total 609 bands.

There are 1,650 reserves in BC, or 72% of Canada's total 2,300 reserves. Many BC reserves are small and only one-quarter (approx. 400) were occupied in 1991.

Reserve land in BC comprises some 3,440 sq. kilometers of land (or 0.36% of BC's total land). Altogether, BC's reserves comprise just 13% of the total area of reserves in Canada.

B.C. Native Blockades & Direct Action

From the 1980s to 2006



Rally against the continued expansion of Sun Peaks ski resort on Secwepemc territory, 29 August 2004.



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BC Native Blockades & Direct Action from the 1980s to 2006

by Zig Zag

INTRODUCTION

“The government is not going to give us what is rightfully ours just because we ask for it. We will have to fight for it at the negotiating table—when we get there—and also again and again at barricades and with other kinds of direct action.”

Saul Terry, President of Union of BC Indian Chiefs, *The Province*, October 26, 1990

Background

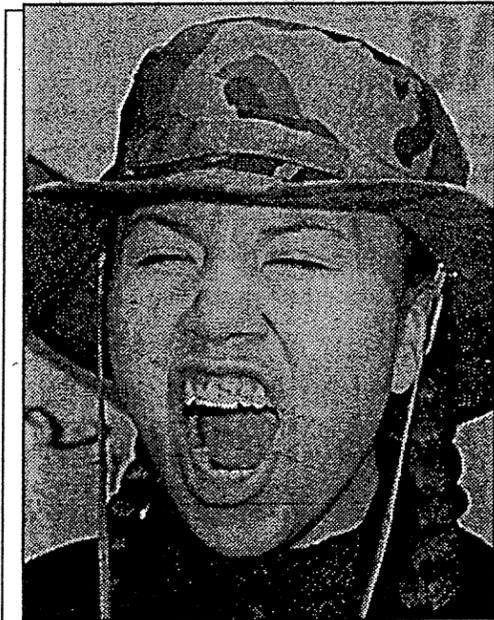
BC has always been known for the militancy of Indigenous peoples in resisting European colonialism. During the 1800s, many ships were attacked and looted on the coast, while in the interior forts & militias were needed in order to protect settlers. In 1872, one of the first blockades in BC occurred after the Gitksan village of Gitsegukla was destroyed by a fire set by settlers. The Gitksan blockaded the Skeena River, preventing settlers from traveling along it. In response, two Royal Navy gunboats were dispatched, and the government later provided a cash settlement.

Even after the imposition of colonial rule, BC Natives continued to fight the theft of their lands & resources through protests, petitions and legal action. By the 1920s, there were several BC Native organizations devoted to land claims. In 1927, Canada amended the *Indian Act* to criminalize this activity.

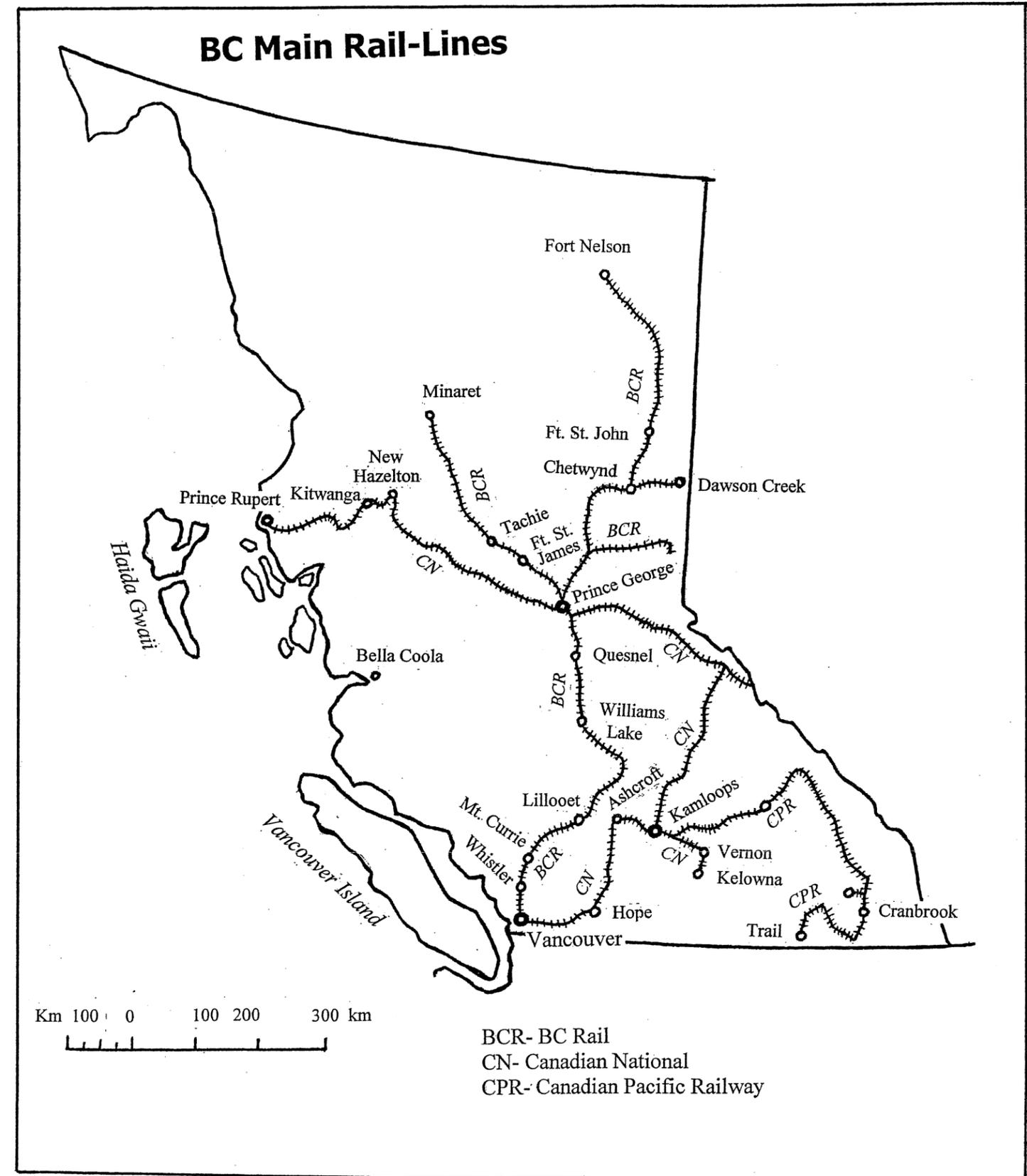
When Indigenous people rose up during the 1960s and '70s, Natives in BC were among the most active in Canada. In 1973, the Native People's Caravan departed from Vancouver and ended in a small riot at Ottawa's Parliament buildings. The next year, the first armed blockade occurred near Cache Creek's Bonaparte reserve. On April 28, 1975, the Tl'azt'en blockaded a railway near the Tache reserve. It lasted for three and a half months and had a major impact on the areas forestry industry (320 workers laid off and 3 mills closed down during the blockade). In May & June 1975, at least 13 blockades occurred throughout the province (including highways, logging roads, and a rail line).

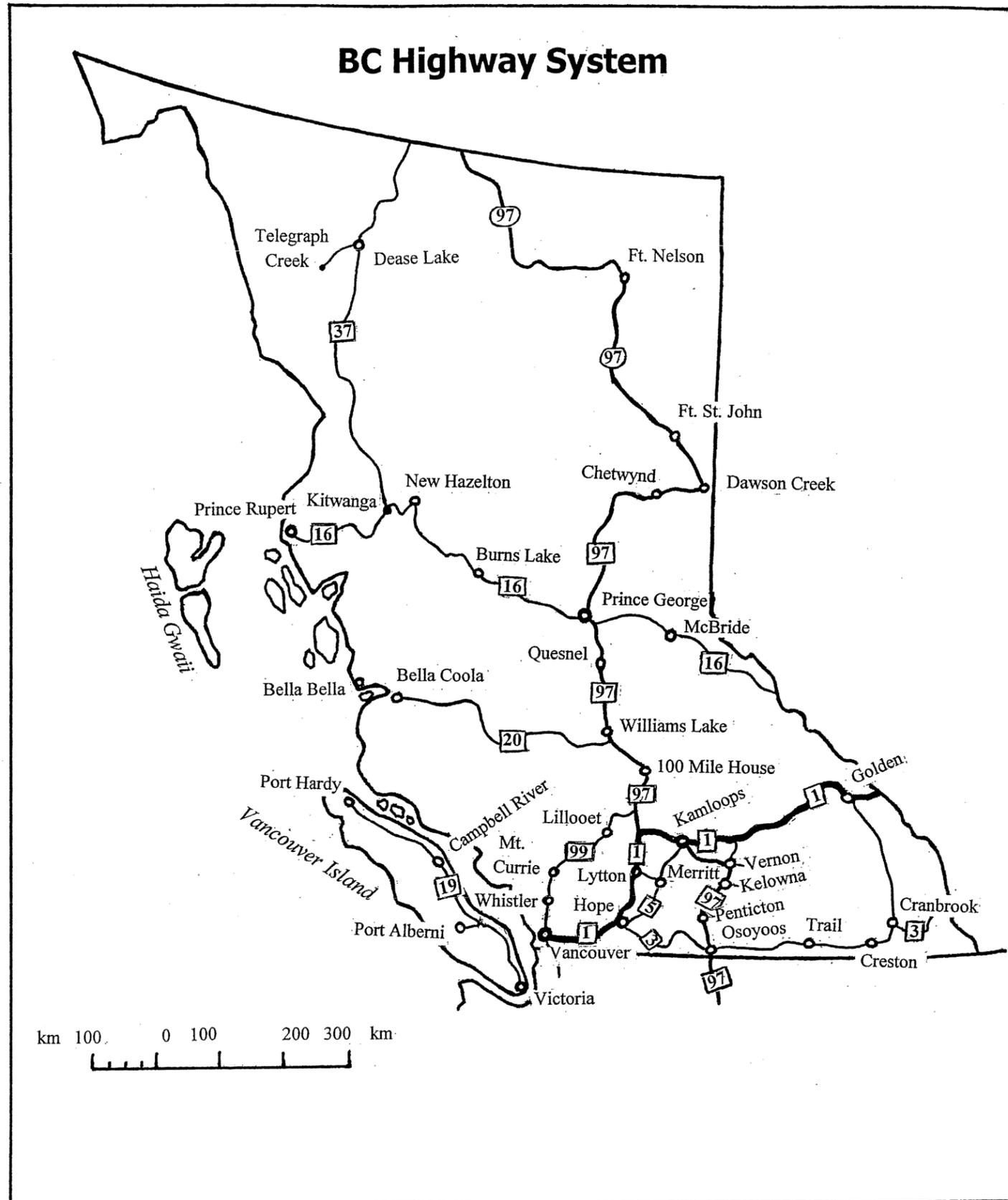
At the time, these actions were frequently seen as the work of young, misguided, warriors (how right they were). By the 1980s, however, many Indigenous communities had adapted similar tactics, including band councils, who saw them as a way to pressure government officials for political & economic purposes. At this time, protests, roadblocks, 'illegal' fisheries, and occupations of government offices, were fairly common, including the July 1981 occupation of the Department of Indian Affairs building in Vancouver by mostly Native women. The occupation ended July 24 when police broke down the office doors and arrested 53 people (42 of whom were women, with groups from Neskonlith, Mt. Currie and Bella Coola).

The primary motivations for these early direct actions concerned land & social conditions for Native people. Many were part of land claims (return of reserve land taken by government, compensation for lost land & resources, to establish or influence negotiations, etc.). Some were also about ongoing destruction on lands that formed part of a land claim (i.e., anti-logging blockades). Others were demands for better housing, healthcare, education, and employment (inc. logging & fisheries).



NYM member lets out her War Cry during Nov. 21, 2003 occupation of Stockwell Day's office.





Direct Action and Road/Railway Blockades

Direct action is the taking of physical action that immediately stops an activity or gains an objective. A blockade of a logging road can stop logging, an occupation of an office can stop business, while 'illegal' fishing can gain food & income. Occupations, sabotage, and blockades are all examples of direct action, as opposed to protests & court cases, which may influence events indirectly. When direct action is taken against transportation infrastructure, information & communications outlets, etc., the effects can be immediate in terms of lost productivity and negative economic impact. This is their great value, but they can also come with a price: potential arrests, legal fees, imprisonment, etc.

Although this chronology includes different forms of direct action, the most common is that of the road block and its scary cousin: the railway blockade. These are forms of direct action used frequently by Native peoples, in not only Canada but throughout the Americas. In Ecuador, for example, from June 4-8, 1990, the entire country was paralyzed when Indigenous peoples blockaded major roads & highways. Similar actions have occurred in Bolivia and Argentina (the Piqueteros).

Part of the reason road & railway blockades are so commonly used by Natives in BC is proximity: many reserves are located near to or beside roads, highways and/or railways. In fact, a common point of conflict are reserve lands expropriated by the government to build roads, highways and/or train tracks.

According to Blomley (1996) and others, there were between 225-500 disputed rights of ways on reserves across BC, with 900 public roads cutting through reserves. Some right of ways belong to train companies, such as BC Rail or Canadian National Railways.

"BC Rail lines, for example, run through or beside twenty reserves in BC. The existence of such routes, and the process by which they were established, often remains a point of disagreement for generations, thus resulting in rail lines often being seen as logical sites of protest."

(Blomley, "Shut the Province Down; First Nations Blockades in BC 1984-1995," *BC Studies* No. 111, Autumn 1996, pp. 19-20)

Another reason trains are targeted for direct action is their economic impact. In the case of railway blockades, CN & BC Rail have both reported losses of \$750,000 to as much as \$3-million a day in lost revenue (as in Cheam 1993 & 2003, & Seton Portage 1990). They are also major transporters of natural resources. In the mid-90s, an estimated 2/3rds of all BC Rail business came from forestry (transporting lumber), with another 20-30% derived from coal in northeastern BC. Along with this is grain from the prairies. The primary destinations for this cargo are ports in Prince Rupert and Vancouver. Both these ports, as well as one in Richmond, are currently undergoing large-scale expansion in preparation for greater trade with Asia-Pacific (i.e., the expanding Chinese market). This is part of the Liberal government's 'Gateway' project, which will see over \$500-million provided to port, road & railway expansion in order to facilitate greater resource extraction & export.

Overall, the cutting of transportation routes is an effective tactic that disrupts social life and economic activities. For these same reasons they can also create high levels of tension & conflict with settlers, government & police, as well as within Native communities. Without some level of community support & participation, a roadblock or occupation cannot sustain itself over a long period, nor can it withstand police repression.

State Response & Repression

The most common response by the government to a roadblock is to allow the courts to deal with it. This usually requires those being blockaded to seek a court injunction ordering its removal. Unless the Crown can prove a danger to public safety if it is not immediately acted upon, most of the time those conducting the blockade can file a counter-injunction and argue their case before a judge.

At Oka, months of court injunctions & counter-injunctions passed before the July 11 raid by police, for example. In the case of Meares Island (1984), the Nuu-Chah-Nulth filed a counter-injunction against MacMillan Bloedel to stop the logging of an area that was part of a land claim. A judge upheld their injunction and ordered all logging stopped. The case dragged on for several years (Meares was later designated a provincial park).

When police do enforce an injunction, it is usually announced that all those not wishing to be arrested should leave the area. After this, whoever remains is subject to arrest & may be charged with contempt of court. Although this is a standard scenario, it may be the case that police act without any injunction, i.e., to arrest persons they see committing 'criminal acts', to ensure 'public safety' by clearing a main road, highway, or railroad (as occurred in Skwelkwel'welt 2001 and Cheam 2003).

At times, roadblocks form part of a larger political & public relations campaign. This is most often the case when band & tribal councils sanction roadblocks and other forms of direct action (civil disobedience). Because of their approach, and due to their relationship to the colonial government & business, campaigns carried out under band councils tend to receive far less state repression, i.e., compare the 1985 Haida blockades to those in 1990 by the Lil'wat. In a case of

good protester vs. bad protester, the Haida won in their campaign and got a sizeable area declared a national park. The Lil'wat, on the other hand, were attacked by police and violently arrested, with over 60 spending a month in jail. Although as many as 70 Haida were arrested, charges were dropped against most and only suspended sentences handed out to a few.

In general, there is a progression in state repression from the 1970s to today. In the '70s, government & police appear unprepared and unable to respond to Native blockades. They were often forced into negotiations or even concessions. In the 1980s, the tactics of the earlier militants were adapted by the band/tribal councils. Describing the Nuuchah-Nulth (Meares Island), Haida (Lyell Island), and Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en campaigns of the mid to late-80s, one observer compared them to a 1995 roadblock near Merritt:

"But these blockades and the arrests were carefully orchestrated. The RCMP worked very closely with the natives. The natives wanted to get arrested to press their point. In those cases, there was never a threat of violence like there was on the Douglas Lake road. The use of masks [is] significant. That's Oka... I deplore this development. The use of masks is a symbol we don't want in BC"

Paul Tennant, UBC political science professor, quoted in "Masked faces reflect new level of tension..." *Vancouver Sun*, June 7, 1995

In 1990, during the Oka Crisis, BC had more solidarity blockades with the Mohawks than any other region of Canada. Roads, highways and rail-lines were blocked across the province. A railway bridge was set on fire and badly damaged. By this time, police were more experienced & prepared to forcibly remove Native blockades. After 1990, the state increasingly had to contend with blockades that were not negotiated or orchestrated events with police, but rather acts of resistance inspired by the 77-day armed standoff at Oka.

Oka revitalized Indigenous grassroots organizing in many areas. As mentioned, in BC, the most active element carrying out blockades had been the band & tribal councils throughout the 1980s. They had won major concessions from the government, including more Native access to the fishing & logging industries, some protected areas turned into parks, and recognition of rights to land and resources.

of four major rivers: the Spatsizi, Nass, Klappan and Skeena). Fontaine Minerals had previously negotiated a settlement with the Tahltan Central Council.

September 3, a court injunction sought by Fontaine Minerals, and endorsed by Tahltan Central Council president and chair, is granted. The company states it will not negotiate with anyone but the band councils, even though many councilors join the grassroots movement and participate in protests, etc.

September 5, 15 Tahltan, including many elders, are arrested by RCMP.

October, 200 Tahltan and other Natives rally as court begins for 15 arrested previous month. Crown drops contempt of court charges (many of those arrested were elders).

December 1, Iskut elders & youth block Tahltan Central Council from carrying out a ratification vote for its industrial development/environmental destruction plan.

2006

Spring, at D'arcy/N'Quatqua (near Mt. Currie), St'at'imc blockade road in opposition to logging by band council company (N'Quatqua Logging Company). Chief seeks injunction, but a judge finds that blockade had never actually blocked trucks, who were advised not to proceed by the company/band council. The injunction is not granted and logging is delayed through summer. Blockaders claim chief ignored widespread community opposition to plan.

April 26, Vancouver, several hundred Natives stop traffic on Lion's Gate Bridge leading to North Vancouver for 2 hours in solidarity with Six Nations land reclamation. Solidarity pickets are also set up at Neskonlith (Secwepemc) and Westbank (Okanagan).

Tahltan...

June 16, Tahltan blockade road to stop mineral exploration by BC Metals, who propose to build a copper & gold mine, in the Klappan area.

August, Shell Oil announces it is abandoning plans for exploratory drilling for natural gas in the Klappan region after it failed to reach a deal with the Tahltan. Originally, work had begun in 2004, after Shell had signed a deal with the Tahltan Central Council (which prompted protests & blockades).

September 9, Tahltan elder Lillian Moyer is arrested at blockade of BC Metals when RCMP enforce court injunction.

Note: This list is far from complete: if you know details of these or other actions not listed, please send information (inc. dates, locations, nations involved, arrests if any, police action, etc.) to: warrior-publications@hotmail.com

Native Direct Action in BC 1984-2006

Blockades

Roadblocks

Highway: 13
Main Road: 5
Logging or Access Road: 61
Total: 84

Train

Total: 14

Boat

Total: 3

Total Blockades: 101

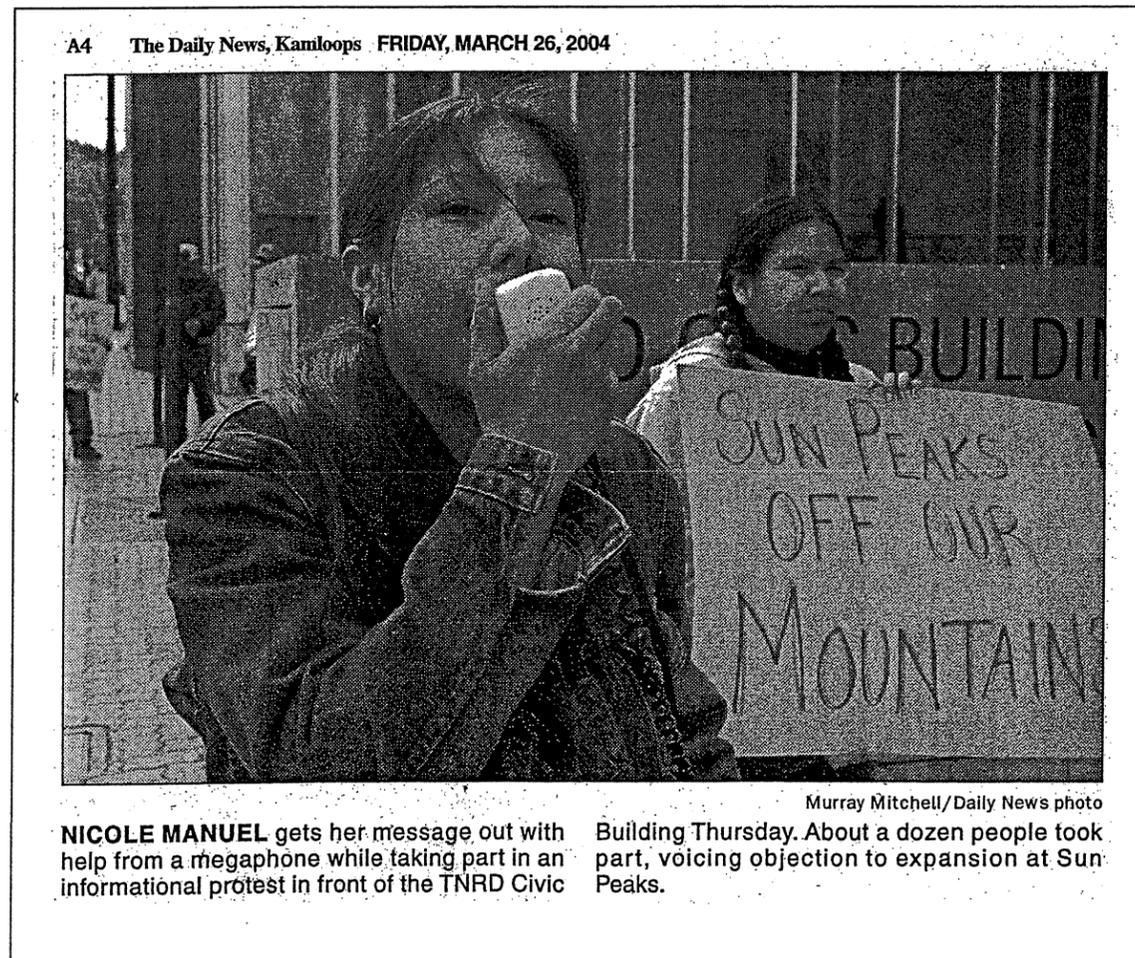
Occupations

Office: 14
Camps: 9

Total Occupations: 23

Sabotage

Total Sabotage: 3



NICOLE MANUEL gets her message out with help from a megaphone while taking part in an informational protest in front of the TNRD Civic

Building Thursday. About a dozen people took part, voicing objection to expansion at Sun Peaks.

Skwelkwek'welt...

August 29, over 200 protesters gather at Sun Peaks. Following the rally, a camp is established next to golf & condominium construction site. Sun Peaks seeks injunction.

September 21, RCMP enforce injunction against Secwepemc camp, arresting 3 Natives. Charges later dismissed.

October, at Zeballos on Vancouver Island, Ehattesaht First Nation stops Western Forest Products trucks from using road cutting through reserve. On October 5, the band council advises company that its trucks can no longer use road and company does not attempt to pass. All other vehicle traffic is permitted. Band seeks meeting with company officials regarding its logging activities & scale of environmental destruction in territory.

Fall-Winter, near Neskonlith, Secwepemc block construction of railway expansion west of Chase after burial grounds are found. CN Rail builds around site and avoids expansion through Neskonlith (where land for railway was taken by government, and where many of Sun Peaks protesters live).

2005

Tahltan Campaign Against Mining, 2005-06...

Northern regions of BC have come under increasing pressure from mineral & energy corporations seeking access to coal, natural gas, gold, silver, copper, as well as oil & gas projects (including pipelines). All these include infrastructure such as roads, hydro dams, railway expansions, electrical power lines, all of which mean increased logging.

Three Tahltan communities of Iskut, Dease Lake and Telegraph Creek came under pressure from several proposed mining and natural gas projects. This threat was compounded by the capitalist Tahltan Central Council and its backroom deals with the corporations. These projects, including an open pit coal-mine, natural gas drilling, copper and gold mines, were all located in the Mount Klappan area. They threaten to degrade the environment, pollute the source waters for four major rivers, and bring harm to the Tahltan people & culture.

Beginning in 2005, grassroots Tahltan, elders, youth, and councilors began to oppose the tribal council and corporations with a very long office occupation, protests and a number of blockades, as well as counter-injunctions. Their legal positions have been based on Aboriginal rights & title, including the *Haida vs. Weyerhaeuser 2004* court case & *Delgamuukw* regarding consultation & accommodation. They have also made alliances with neighboring Gitksan, Wet'suwet'en, Haida, Tsimshian and others.

For more info, check the Tahltan website: www.sacredheadwaters.com

January 17, in Telegraph Creek, Tahltan nation members (including elders & youth) begin months-long occupation of band office in opposition to deals made between tribal council & mineral corporation Nova Gold. They demand resignation of president, Jerry Asp, who seeks court injunction to remove protesters (not enforced). Later, workers for the Tahltan Nation Development Corp. also walked out. Although Asp later resigns, he is replaced by other capitalist Tahltans, who continue negotiations with mining & energy corporations.

Spring, in March, Haida begin blockades of Weyerhaeuser logging company's sorting facilities near Juskatla and one near Queen Charlotte City. Part of effort to have 2004 court case implemented in which company must consult & accommodate Haida regarding its activity. In May, the Haida agree to stop blockades in return for protection of old growth forest as well as rights to cut up to 120,000 cubic meters of timber/year, plus \$5 million in resource revenue sharing. The blockade lasted 2 weeks and included the seizure of lumber and barges. Haida claimed company had violated a 2002 agreement by failing to consult and by selling timber rights to another company. Although not officially sanctioned by the Council of the Haida Nation (tribal council), many chiefs & councilors participated, including the president of the CHN, Guujaaw.

Near Osoyoos, roads into Weyerhaeuser's OK Falls sawmill are blockaded. According to reports, chief Clarence Louie (one of the wealthiest Natives in BC) sought timber rights to 30,000 cubic meters of wood.

July 5, the Huu-ay-aht of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth blockade Coleman Bridge near Port Alberni, on Vancouver Island. Part of 'Reclaim Our Territory' campaign against BC Ministry of Forestry & logging in area.

Tahltan...

July 16, Tahltan blockade access road to Fontaine Minerals construction machinery attempting work on a proposed open pit coal-mine in Mount Klappan, near Dease Lake (one of several mine projects proposed in area, which is also the beginning

All this, however, did not drastically affect social conditions for Natives. By 1990, many were ready to take action in solidarity with the Mohawks. Oka served as a model & example for Indigenous resistance throughout the '90s (and up to today). Consequently, state repression has also increased in order to counter this.

When grassroots Indigenous movements carry out direct actions, the state tends to use greater repression & violence in general (i.e., Wounded Knee 1973, Oka 1990, Ipperwash & Gustafsen Lake 1995, Six Nations 2006, etc.). Such groups are seen as more vulnerable to attack, but it is also the case that grassroots resistance tends to select targets of higher value and in a manner that compels the state to repress it, rather than negotiate or give any concession to (and thereby legitimize the resistance, or reward the bad protester).

Other contributing factors to levels of repression are political climate (are there other actions occurring in region or across Canada? What is the context in which these are occurring? etc.) and location (is it a major transportation route? Is the blockade having a serious impact on economic activity? etc.).

Overall, there has been an increase in state repression against Native resistance & direct action. Compared to the mid-70s when roadblocks first began in the province, today's police (primarily the Royal Canadian Mounted Police) are more experienced & organized to deal with blockades. Since 1990, more Natives who have participated in roadblocks have faced prison terms, and more blockades have seen their removal through police violence. At the same time, blockades continue that are based on symbolic arrests for publicity and /or as part of a legal campaign (i.e., Tahltan 2006).

Today, roadblocks remain an effective form of direct action. Along with railway blockades, these tactics immediately stop the flow of traffic & goods, bring certain industries to a sudden halt with the potential to paralyze an entire region (or even country, as in Ecuador 1990). This would require organization, including coordination, analysis of transportation infrastructure, and security of communications, that is beyond the scope of this publication. In addition, there are over 80,000 kilometres of electrical power lines throughout the province, as well as dams, pipelines, bridges, port and ferry facilities that, although not a common target of direct action, also have the potential to significantly disrupt the BC economy.



In 1998, young people took over the Westbank First Nations office in Westbank to protest the treaty process.

CANADIAN PRESS FILES

Excerpt from "Shut the Province Down..."

"[T]he frequency and intensity of Native blockades in BC suggests that it is seen as a particularly effective form of direct action. Indeed, the blockade need not be established to be effective; its threatened use may be enough.

"The reason for choosing the blockade is complex, but it must surely rest on the fact that blockades "work": that is, they often advance Native goals.

"Most of BC's scanty population live in a few urban centers, most notably in the extreme southwest of the province [Vancouver & lower mainland, Victoria]. This population is dependent on an attenuated transport system made up of a few major roads and rail routes... At the same time, the provincial economy is still largely dependent on access to increasingly isolated pockets of resources, such as timber [and minerals, gas & oil, fuel]. Vast amounts of usually unprocessed raw materials are then hauled out for delivery to distant export markets. The result is that the closure of one or two transport routes can have profound consequences...

"The vulnerability of the transport system is further aggravated by the fact that road and rail lines frequently pass through reserves, which are, as noted, the usual location for blockades...

"Transport lines are vulnerable due to the export orientation and resource base of the provincial economy, the dispersed nature of the transport system, and the location of transport corridors relative to reserves...

"The fact that the reserve is the usual focus for the blockade is important when one remembers its scattered distribution. Unlike many of the Native peoples in the US, Native peoples in BC were dispersed into a large number of small, isolated reserves. The province has over 1,600 reserves... Ironically, while such dispersion could be seen as an obstacle to united action, it makes the blockade particularly telling. Blockades, being scattered, are very disruptive and hard to regulate. When several are in place at the same time (as in the summer of 1990), the effect can be striking. As one is resolved, another emerges; much as do the forest fires that flare up across the Interior as the summer storms sweep across the mountains. Similarly, with a few exceptions, blockades have been non-coordinated. Although there have been some calls for collective action, most blockades appear to be established either by individual bands or tribes... Individual bands, councils or members, take the decision to blockade. The lack of a clear political "center" make the blockade potentially unpredictable and, thus, powerful, as a tactical tool.

"Finally, blockades are not necessarily tied to an individual location but can, on occasion, be reallocated along a given transport corridor... A striking example of this occurred between 24 July and 26 August 1990 when the Seton Lake, Fountain, Pavilion and Mt. Currie bands blockaded the BC Rail main line to show solidarity with the Mohawk at Oka and to air their grievances over unresolved land claims. The first rail blockade at Seton Portage was dismantled when it was reported that an RCMP riot squad was en route to the site, but then re-established at Mt. Currie. The track was again blocked at Seton Portage, and an RCMP raid led to several arrests. This prompted the re-establishment of the blockade at Mt. Currie, which, in turn, was dismantled when it was learned the police were en route. The Seton blockade was set up a third time; this time the only road access to Seton Portage was also blockaded in order to prevent the RCMP from serving an injunction."



Douglas Lake road block, 1995

Nicholas Blomley,
"Shut the Province
Down; First Nations
Blockades in BC 1984-
1995"
BC Studies, Autumn
1996, pp. 17-24

What a terrible idea...



NO JUSTICE ON
STOLEN LAND

arrest, several were later sentenced to jail terms of up 4 months. This blockade was not supported by many St'at'imc and caused tension in nearby towns, making it vulnerable to police repression.

Skwelkwek'welt...

July 18, Sun Peaks injunction served against McGillivray Lake camp, enforced by RCMP. Several Natives are arrested.

July 19, a new protection center is set up at first location.

July 23, 15-20 RCMP forcibly remove four Secwepemc (two elders) from camp and charge with criminal contempt of court (disobeying the court injunction).

August 24, Secwepemc NYM blockade main road leading into Sun Peaks for 4 hours. Six youth later arrested for blocking heavy machinery (4 eventually sentenced to 90 days in prison in June 2005). Immediately cleared by RCMP as it is considered a provincial right of way.

August 27, Highways workers destroy Secwepemc structure built at entrance to Sun Peaks. Ministry of Transportation office in Kamloops occupied in response.

August 30, in Victoria, the head office of BCAL is occupied by NYM & Secwepemc youth as part of Skwelkwek'welt campaign. BCAL later changes their name to Land and Water BC.

August, the Halfway River band, northwest of Fort St. John, blockades drilling & pipeline projects by Anadarko & Westcoast Energy. They also blockade construction of a \$7 million Petro-Canada natural gas pipeline and are joined by members of Dog River & Saulteau bands. The proposed pipeline would cut 23 km through hunting grounds.

Skwelkwek'welt...

September 19, Secwepemc youth & NYM hold three coordinated actions in Kamloops, Victoria (BCAL) and Vancouver (Tourism BC) consisting of brief occupations of offices.

October 4, Secwepemc begin building cordwood house at McGillivray Lake, near Sun Peaks.

October 19, the Delta Hotel at Sun Peaks, under construction and nearly completed, burns down. Heating equipment failure is suspected.

December 10, cordwood house at McGillivray Lake is demolished by Sun Peaks workers.

2002

December 11- Nuxalk & NYM at Bella Coola blockade transport truck filled with fish farm salmon for 9 hours, demanding that it not be transported through their territory. The company complies and as a result fish farm salmon are re-routed through Prince Rupert. This is part of their campaign against fish farms including protests at hatcheries and stores selling farm fish (which in turn is part of coastal-wide Native campaign against fish farms).

December 18, at Ocean Falls, Heiltsuk & Nuxalk, along with environmentalists (Forest Action Network) and commercial fishermen, arrive at Omega fish farm under construction and dismantle its concrete foundation.

2003

May 1, Nuxalk again blockade 2 semi-trailer trucks filled with fish farmed salmon (each with 32,000 lbs. of farm fish).

October 2, in Cheam, CN railway tracks cutting through reserve are blocked in opposition to logging in nearby Elk Creek (Mount Cheam). Within 4 hours, over 30 RCMP arrived and arrested 7 Pilalt (mostly young women), breaking one woman's arm. Despite this, the blockade persisted until the next day, when a large number of police (over 100), including riot cops & dogs, in a convoy of over 30 vehicles, invaded the reserve in a show of force. Throughout the fall and spring, some protests were carried out mostly by environmentalists in the Elk Creek area.

2004

March 24, Heiltsuk blockade commercial herring fishery. About 50 Heiltsuk boats are used to block some 40 commercial fish boats. Natives also use 'seal bombs' to sabotage fishery (a device that makes a loud bang in water). In opposition to depleting herring stocks through commercial fishing.

July 10, Musgamagw-Tsawataineuk Tribal Council organize protest against fish farms in Broughton Archipelago (north Vancouver Island). A flotilla of Native fish boats, led by war canoes, serves eviction notice on fish farms.

2000

April 2000, Cheam band members (Pilalt) and newly formed Westcoast Warrior Society begin blockade of access road to Ferry Island, a small provincial park on land expropriated from Cheam reserve. The blockade lasts approx. 2 months.

Sutikalh Mountain Camp, 2000-06...

May 2, Sutikalh camp is established by St'at'imc women on Highway 99, mid-way between Mt. Currie & Lillooet (also known as Melvin Creek). Camp is established to stop construction of a \$530-million all-season ski resort in an untouched Alpine mountain area (Cayoosh). The camp has existed for over 6 years (as of December 2006) and served to force abandonment of ski resort (although the threat remains with 2010 Winter Olympics & greater investment in outdoor recreation/tourism). The St'at'imc campaign at Sutikalh included petitions, protests, community referendums, and blockades, which helped pressure all 11 St'at'imc band councils and tribal council to publicly oppose the ski resort as well.

July 27-Aug 4, St'at'imc youth conduct information blockade on Hwy. 99 at Sutikalh, handing out 1,500 leaflets and collecting hundreds of names on petition.

August 14, Information blockade at Sutikalh for 17 hours.

Secwepemc Skwelkwek'welt/Anti-Sun Peaks Campaign 2000-06...

October, Secwepemc establish first Skwelkwek'welt protection center against Sun Peaks ski resort expansion, the first of approx. 6 over the course of 2000-01. Most involved injunctions & counter-injunctions but are eventually enforced by RCMP, resulting in over 38 arrests (including 4 elders & 32 youth) over the same time period. Some arrests also result from blockades, protests, and office occupations. By 2005, over 70 arrests had been made. Police repression of movement has included raids on homes & businesses (April 2003), surveillance, harassment and jail sentences of up to 90 days (2005). As of December 2006 the Secwepemc continue to oppose Sun Peaks ongoing expansion, mostly through protests & information pickets.

For more info: www.skwelkwekwelt.net

Summer- Takla band blockades CN Rail line, 300 km northwest of Prince George, then blockades a forest service road to oppose pesticide spraying.

October, in Vancouver, offices of federal DFO minister is occupied for 2 days by NYM in solidarity with Burnt Church Mik'maq fisheries dispute.

November 21, in Penticton, NYM occupies offices of Stockwell Day, leader of Reform Party, during federal elections.

2001

January 16-20, NYM establishes 4-day camp at Peace Arch US-Canada border crossing (south of Vancouver) in solidarity with Leonard Peltier clemency campaign.

Skwelkwek'welt...

April 30, Secwepemc women briefly blockade Delta hotel construction site entrance (part of expansion).

May 23-25, in Kamloops, Secwepemc NYM occupy offices of BC Assets & Lands for 2 days. BCAL is a provincial agency that sells & develops 'Crown' land. Part of their Skwelkwek'welt campaign against Sun Peaks, in which BCAL sells or leases land to Sun Peaks. 16 are arrested and most are later convicted of criminal contempt in September, including a 76-year old elder woman. Although the Crown requested jail time, the judge gave 3 'leaders' the most severe sentences of one year's probation and 1 month community service.

June 1, at Skwelkwek'welt (Sun Peaks), establish new protection center at McGillivray Lake. A tourist business is evicted.

June 24, at a protest in Sun Peaks a drunk white settler assaults a Secwepemc woman resulting in defensive action against him. RCMP seize video from APTN reporter.

June 26, some 30 RCMP raid protection center and arrest 6 youth involved in previous protest.

Sutikalh...

June-July 2001, at Sutikalh a 10-day roadblock (spike-board) is established in late June. The roadblock permitted passenger vehicles through but prevented all logging trucks and other commercial vehicles, who then had to detour and take a longer route. The roadblock was raided by a large RCMP force, including Emergency Response Teams with an armoured car, helicopters, dogs, and over 60 officers, on July 5. They arrested 7 unarmed individuals. Although they did not resist

CHRONOLOGY of BC Native Blockades & other Direct Actions 1984-2006

Note: Much of the period 1984-1995 is based on Nicholas Blomley, "Shut the Province Down...". Other sources for this and later time periods include newspapers (the *Vancouver Sun*, *The Province*, *Times-Colonist*, *Windspeaker*, *Kahtou*, etc.), *Redwire* magazine, newsletters & flyers from Native grassroots movements (i.e., House of Smayusta, Lil'wat Peoples Movement, Native Youth Movement, Skwelkwek'welt Protection Center, etc.), and personal interviews with participants.

In some cases, only dates & locations have been established. If you have information regarding these or any additional actions not listed, including dates, locations, arrests and police action (if any), and background info, please send to: warrior-publications@hotmail.com

1984

Meares Island, Nuu-Chah-Nulth

Campaign to stop logging, began in November 1984, carried out by Tla-o-qui-aht & Ahousat. Meares Island is located 6 km northeast of Tofino on west Vancouver Island. Involved blockade of logging road construction crew on November 21 by over 100 band members, chiefs & councilors, and local environmentalists. On November 23, MacMillan Bloedel filed court injunction, Natives file counter-injunction. In January 1985 court, Native's lawyer challenges validity of logging license as being expired. Court case continued for many years. Meares Island was eventually declared a park in 1991.

1985

Haida Campaign to Protect Lyell Island

Lyell Island is located off of southern Moresby Island, which itself forms the bottom half of Haida Gwaii. Moresby Island contains few settlements or industry. The area was proposed as a park by the Haida beginning in the mid-to late 1970s. By 1984, the island was threatened with logging. The Haida began organizing to have the logging halted and, by October 1985, had blockaded a logging access road. Beginning in November 1985, the RCMP began enforcing a court injunction ordering their removal. A total of 71 persons were arrested, including band councilors, elders, and even Svend Robinson, an NDP MP. In the end, only 11 were charged with contempt of court. In December 1986, 9 Haidas were given 5-month suspended sentences. Svend Robinson was ordered to pay a \$750 fine.

In January 1986, the Haida set up another blockade but removed it just prior to the arrival of police, and logging continued. The Haida campaign received widespread support from churches, environmentalists, and celebrities. By March, some Haida were traveling on a cross-country caravan with a message of Save South Moresby. Eventually, southern Moresby Island was made into a national park (the Gwaii Hanaas National Park).

This campaign was successful because it attracted widespread support from other social sectors and because its goals did not threaten colonial society but in fact contributed to it (through tourism). At the time, environmentalism was a growing middle-class movement that widely endorsed the Haida's efforts. In 1985, a similar campaign had begun in the Stein Valley in the southern interior which resulted in the establishment of a provincial park (the Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage Provincial Park). Both these parks portrayed the government as being progressive while contributing to a growing tourism industry based on outdoor recreation & Aboriginal culture.

CN Road & Railway Blockade, Gitwangak, Kitwanga

From November 29 to December 8, 1985, members of the Gitwangak band (Gitxsan) blockaded a road leading into CN railyard. Canadian National received a court injunction ordering its removal. Later that month, a single Gitwangak chief briefly stopped train traffic by standing on the line. Dispute over land expropriated in 1910 (presumably for train yard & tracks). Also at this time, the CN line cutting through the reserve was blocked in opposition to spraying of pesticide chemicals alongside tracks. The Gitwangak reserve is located near the town of Kitwanga (near New Hazelton).

September 27, near Lillooet, road construction for silver & gold mine exploration on Cairn Peak is stopped, machine operator forced to dig trenches across road.

November, blockade of road construction near Lillooet.

1986

December, 40 Kwakiutl at Fort Rupert (near Port Hardy) blockade a logging road on Deer Island (north Vancouver Island). Claim it as reserve land under 1851 Douglas Treaty and as burial grounds. The forest company seeks an injunction and the Kwakiutl filed a counter-injunction.

August 16 & 23, in Cheam (near Hope), fights with DFO officers, one officer hospitalized, ends with 18 Natives facing charges of assault, obstruction, and illegal fishing. DFO use search warrants to seize video from CBC, CKVU & CTV news. This conflict occurs during a summer-long protest fishery along the Fraser River.

1988

The Tsawout at Saanich (near Victoria in Vancouver Island) blockade access to a beach proposed as a new marina business, and assert the area is part of 1852 Douglas Treaty. Injunction & counter-injunction. Court later rules in favour of Natives and against proposed marina facility.

Fall (?), Nuuchah-Nulth and environmentalists blockade logging road construction at entrance to Megin Valley. 35 are arrested, including hereditary chief Earl Maquinna George. Charges dropped against most, although ten receive short prison sentences.

Fall, Sekani 'illegally' log 200 truckloads of trees near McLeod Lake reserve. Later granted possession of logs due to provisions of the 1899 Treaty No. 8.

Gitxsan-Wet'suweten Blockades, 1988-89

In 1984, the Gitxsan-Wet'suweten filed their *Delgamuukw* land title case declaring their sovereignty over 58,000 square km of land in northern BC. The case was organized by the band councils and hereditary chiefs (many of whom were also band councilors). *Delgamuukw* took many years to go through the courts.

In the late 1980s, the Gitxsan & Wet'suweten began carrying out protest fisheries & blockades of logging roads & rail lines in an effort to put political pressure on the government and raise the profile of their court case. It was also a way to stop the ongoing destruction of traditional territory while asserting sovereignty. In 1986, the Gitxsan-Wet'suweten band councils/hereditary chiefs advised members to ignore Department of Fisheries & Oceans (DFO) licenses. In July 1987, at a protest against DFO officers attempting to seize 'illegal' salmon nets on the Skeena River, a crowd threw marshmallows at the officers. Six Natives were later charged, although these were dismissed.

In September & October, 1988, five roadblocks were set up in the Kispiox Valley and the Oliver Creek watershed (east of Terrace) to protest logging. Another blockade was set up at the Baline River Bridge logging road. Blockades continued into 1989 in the Kispiox & Suskaw Valleys. An Eagle clan chief—Peter Turley—was arrested & charged with stealing a front-end loader used during one of the blockades, although in general the Gitxsan-Wet'suweten avoided arrests & obeyed court injunctions. Another blockade into the Kispiox Valley in early March was set up for one day and then removed just prior to the arrival of police. These blockades attracted extensive media coverage and did in fact raise the profile of the *Delgamuukw* case (along with rallies & press conferences in Vancouver, where an office was also established).

The Gitxsan-Wet'suweten achieved some of their goals in terms of raising their public profile and that of their court case, which may in fact have contributed to the eventual Supreme Court of Canada *Delgamuukw* decision in 1997 recognizing Aboriginal title. The protest fisheries & logging blockades did not experience a high level of repression. The relative isolation of the logging areas also appears to be a contributing factor to the low level of policing in that not much of the industrial sector was affected.

1989

In the Slocan Valley in south-east BC, members of Sinixt nation blockade construction of new road at Vallican after a burial site and artifacts are found.

1997

April 17-19, in Vancouver, some 30 members of the Native Youth Movement occupy the offices of the BC Treaty Commission in opposition to the treaty process. Ends with NYM voluntarily leaving offices after 2 days.

June 6-24, at Ista/King Island, Nuxalk blockade Interfor logging road along with environmentalists (inc. Greenpeace). Tripod set up on road with two protesters suspended. Over 40 RCMP with boats, helicopters, divers and tree climbers are used to enforce injunction. Ends June 24 with 22 Nuxalk & environmentalists arrested. Six Nuxalk later receive suspended jail sentences & two-years probation.

July 25, near Prince Rupert, an Alaskan ferry is blockaded in protest of fisheries & fishing rights (Tsimshian?).

October, near Bella Coola, Nuxalk youth reoccupy *Scw7cwlk* (Skowquiltz), an area threatened with logging. They build a traditional pit-house which is occupied for over a year. The Nuxalk would also later construct a long house at a hot-spring as part of their efforts to reoccupy, monitor and begin using more of their territory.

1998

April 17-21, Vancouver, over 60 NYM members occupy BCTC offices for 5 days, receive widespread media coverage and support from many bands (including Penticton, Nuxalkm, Cheslatta-Carrier, Lil'wat, and others). Ends with 14 arrests; charges dropped two months later when BCTC fails to attend court. Head treaty commissioner Alec Robertson is subsequently fired.

May, NYM Vancouver along with Okanagan youth occupy offices of Westbank band council, near Kelowna. Westbank is the only Okanagan band involved in the BC treaty process, and is one of the most capitalist having over 8,000 non-Natives leasing land for homes & businesses. Two day occupation ends with 21 arrests. Charges later dropped.

June 24, Tsilhqot'in blockade access road to Raven Lake, using a front-end loader parked across the road with logs. The Anahim band council reportedly demands more jobs in local forest industry as reason for blockade.

1999

Spring, Penticton band blockade airport runway to pressure city & airport during negotiations over leases.

July-September, at Cheam reserve, Pilalt along with NYM security defy DFO officers on Fraser River. This is a continuation of the Cheam band's fights with DFO since the late 1970s, which has resulted in raids, confiscations of fish, nets, boats and vehicles. Throughout the summer fishing season, scores of DFO officers attempted enforcement using speedboats & helicopters, but were unable and/or unwilling to risk a potential conflict. Cheam band council, including chief June Quipp, participate.

August-September, in south-central interior, Okanagan and Secwepemc bands carry out 'illegal' logging as part of Aboriginal title campaign (*Delgamuukw*), assertion of sovereignty, as well as to place political pressure on government for greater access to forest industry. Shuswap Nation Tribal Council issues logging permits to members. Vernon, Neskonlith and Westbank (Okanagan) bands among those involved. Westbank was one of the first bands to carry out logging (previously occupied by NYM/Okanagan youth in 1998):

"The Westbank First Nation—a veteran of blockades & illegal logging—has received a timber allocation & money to persuade it to return to the treaty process and quit being a pest," according to a column by Jim Stirling in the October 2000 issue of the *Sawmilling Journal*. The band reportedly received 40,000 cubic meters from area licenses and an additional 15,000 cubic meters from the Ministry of Forests in 2000.

In response to 'illegal' logging, BC files for injunction to stop logging and court case begins. One of the goals of this campaign, in fact, was to initiate court case in order to change government policies. In 2005, the government attempted to drop case but BC Supreme Court rules it must continue...

1994

January 13, Gitksan & Wet'suwet'en begin occupation of vacant high school in Hazelton, citing a need for facility after school closure in 1992.

November-December. Penticton, blockade of Green Mountain Road against Apex ski resort continues, eventually leading to the demise of business and forcing it into receivership (July 1996).

March 27- A two day blockade of Ure Creek logging road by environmentalists in solidarity with Lil'wat, removed by RCMP based on 1991 injunction.

1995

The summer of 1995 saw a month-long armed standoff in the central interior region by Secwepemc rebels against over 450 heavily-armed RCMP at Gustafsen Lake/Ts'Peten (near 100 Mile House). At the same time, the conflict at Ipperwash/Aazhoodena was occurring (during which Dudley George was shot & killed by the Ontario Provincial Police on September 6). In addition, throughout the spring, several other Native blockades in BC had already occurred. Although they did not affect major transportation routes or industry, these actions led to frustration among the settler population (fueled by NDP government & media).

March-June, Adams Lake, Little Shuswap, Neskonlith band members, near Chase, Secwepemc blockade road (spike-board) to proposed RV park that threatens burial grounds. One member arrested after altercation with drunken off-duty police.

May-June, Douglas Lake ranch blockade by Upper Nicola band members (Nlaka'pamux) over access to fishing at Douglas Lake as well as ecological damage from cattle ranching. Ends shortly after heavily-armed RCMP Emergency Response Team is discovered during patrol.

Spring, near Parksville members of Nanoose band block access road to construction site where 147 burial remains were found (eventually over 1,000). Area cordoned off, condominiums built around burial site.

Ts'Peten Standoff

June-July, at Gustafsen Lake/Ts'Peten, Secwepemc sundance camp blocks access to cattle with wire fencing, rancher demands their eviction. NDP government uses incident to appeal to settler frustration with blockades throughout Spring.

July-August. RCMP deploy over 450 heavily-armed police and military APC's to lay siege to Secwepemc sundance camp. Fabricate shooting incidents to justify military involvement.

August 1995, Gitksan blockade logging road 15 km east of Hazelton.

Ts'Peten...

August 15, Sugar Cane band offices occupied by Secwepemc in solidarity with Ts'Peten defenders.

September 11, RCMP ERT ambush truck used by defenders with explosive device, setting off shootout during which over 70,000 rounds are fired by police.

September 12, RCMP snipers open fire on unarmed defenders at Ts'Peten walking in agreed upon no-shoot zone.

September 17, standoff ends with 24 arrested in total. William Ignace (Wolverine) receives the longest jail term of 8.5 years for his part in the standoff, and is paroled on January 13, 1999. Served total of 5 years.

Nuxalk Campaign to Protect Ista, September 1995

While the armed standoff at Ts'Peten was occurring, a non-violent blockade by Nuxalk near Bella Coola was also underway, led by hereditary chiefs (House of Smayusta). The Nuxalk would blockade a logging road being constructed on King Island (Ista) for 26 days, beginning in early September and ending with over 20 arrests on September 26. Three hereditary chiefs (Lawrence Pootlass, Ed Moody and Charlie Nelson) refuse to sign promissory notes not to return to Ista and are held in jail for 23 days (Lawrence Pootlass' wife dies at this time). During October 16 court appearance in Vancouver, over 200 supporters rally & march to Interfor headquarters, occupying offices for most of the day. A large police presence including ERT are sent to the building. At a December court appearance the judge refuses to recognize Nuxalk sovereignty and defendants leave court. They are eventually arrested and some sentenced to 3 weeks in jail.

1990

March, Tsilquot'in blockade logging road near Chilko Lake, area part of land claim.

March, Tsilquot'in, Toosey band, blockade logging through reservation, chief & council involved, opposition to logging & dangerous driving by trucks. BC agrees to re-route road.

May 18-28, at Gitwangak reserve (near Kitwanga), CN main line blockaded to protest inaction on land claims.

1990: Oka Solidarity Blockades

During the summer of 1990, BC saw more solidarity blockades, pickets & protests than any other region of the country. Less than ten days after the botched July 11 raid that ignited the crisis in Quebec, there were already 11 blockades & pickets along major highways & roads throughout BC. Overall, at least 30 road & railway blockades occurred throughout the province during the summer, including:

July 1990

- Lion's Gate Bridge, Vancouver- Squamish band members set up an information picket on bridge, a main commuter link to North Vancouver. They slow traffic for two hours handing out pamphlets.
- Chilcotin (Tsilqot'in)- Blockade set up to block Canadian military training exercise comprised of several hundred soldiers and their vehicles.
- Chilcotin- Highway 20 near Alexis Creek (west of Williams Lake) is blockaded for two hours. Demand for negotiations on land title.
- Lekwiltok, blockade Island Highway near Campbell River, removed July 28 after truck rams through.
- The Nadleh Whut'en blockade a road cutting through their reserve.
- Penticton, Okanagans set up information blockade on public road cutting through their reserve. Fifty people participate. Some commercial & tourist traffic blocked.
- Osoyoos, Okanagans temporarily block Highway 97 near Oliver.
- Vernon, road blocked by Okanagans.
- Seton Portage, St'at'imc begin blockade of BC Rail line near reserve.
- Mt. Currie, Lil'wat begin blockade of Duffey Lake Road cutting through reserve (see below).
- Port Alberni, Opetchesat briefly blockade Highway 4 and distribute information about Oka and local land claims.
- Fountain, near Lillooet, two separate blockades of road.
- New Aiyansh, Nisga'a block logging road, set up by elders & youth, on and off for a few days.
- Moricetown, on July 24 Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en establish information picket on Highway 16 for 2 days.
- Kitwancool, Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en blockade road to protest a mill closure that leaves many unemployed. Blockade lifted a week later after BC premier Vander Zalm visits.
- Gitwangak, July 31 to Aug 8, CNR main line blockaded in solidarity with Oka. On same dates they also blockade Route 37, which cuts through reserve.

August 1990

- Fort St. James, Carrier establish information blockade on Highway 27 concerning Oka and local land struggles.
- Gitwangak, Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en blockade CN rail line.
- Secwepemc near Dead Man's Creek (Skeetchestn, west of Kamloops) blockade CN Rail line.
- Kispiox, Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en blockade logging roads. One blockade is set up by 14-year olds who called themselves "little warriors." "We're not allowed to argue with the loggers," said Ben Joseph, 14, "We must be very polite" (*The Province*, August 9, 1990).
- Seton Portage & Mt. Currie, St'at'imc conduct 3 separate blockades of BC Rail line, in mid- and late August, 35 arrested in one blockade, another 15 violently arrested in another at Seton Portage. Police use batons and dogs to clear blockade (see below).
- Seton Portage, on August 24, hours after violent RCMP raid, BC Rail bridge is badly damaged by fire.
- Adams Lake, near Chase, Secwepemc establish information blockade on reserve road lasting 4 days.
- Lac La Hache & Red Bluff, Cariboo Tribal Council establishes a two day information blockade on a road.
- Alert Bay, Kwakwaka'wakw blockade main town street as part of protest over burial grounds.

Summer, Haida blockade boat-plane access to a commercial sports fishing lodge, stopping float planes from landing in the marina. Some 7 Haidas are arrested for contempt after defying a court injunction and later receive 60-day prison sentences, suspended for 18 months.

September 1990, Tofino, the Tla-o-qui-aht blockade the main town road in solidarity with Oka standoff.

October 29, Penticton band members blockade access to dike on Okanagan River owned by BC. Demand provincial government build access road.

St'at'imc Railway Blockades, Summer 1990

As part of the Oka solidarity actions, St'at'imc at Seton Portage (near Mt. Currie) blockaded a BC Rail line beginning on July 24. BC Rail sought a court injunction ordering their removal, which was eventually enforced by the RCMP in a raid in mid-August that resulted in 35 arrests. About 200 Natives surrounded the RCMP station in Lillooet, where the prisoners were taken. The line was then blockaded at another site—Mt. Currie-- and then in Seton Portage again. As a result, BC Rail sought & received a 'blanket injunction' barring any band from blocking the line. On August 24, over sixty RCMP raided a roadblock at Seton Portage leading to the railway, charging into a crowd of some 150 elders, men, women & children:

"Armed with clubs, the other officers appeared in lines behind him. Two officers had police dogs on long leashes. Two helicopters hovered overhead.

"The police stormed forward, swinging at the unarmed natives who got in their way. The police rammed through the lines and drove their trucks through, bashing another truck and pushing it into the ditch.

"Mothers were screaming and running to rescue their children, while many others in the crowd picked up rocks, hurling them at the officers. The incident, which lasted about ten minutes, ended with officers racing to jump in the vans..."

("Seton bridge burned after blockade confrontation," by Tom Arnold, *Vancouver Sun*, August 25, 1990).

Several St'at'imc were injured by baton strikes and dog attacks, including women & children. Fifteen people were arrested at the railway site. Because of the hostile crowd blocking the road, helicopters were used to transport the prisoners to the Lillooet RCMP station. Five hours later, a 50-meter trestle bridge over the Portage River on BC Rail's mainline was set on fire, causing several days of repairs to be done before the tracks could be reopened.

St'at'imc Blockade of Duffey Lake Road, 1990

Beginning in July 1990, the Lil'wat at Mt. Currie began blocking the Duffey Lake road cutting through their reserve. Initially a solidarity blockade, the road itself was a focus of resistance as it had been expropriated by the government in order to extend Highway 99. The blockade is organized by the Lil'wat Peoples Movement.

In early November, the blockade was raided by a large police force, who arrest 64 people. The police also had Emergency Response Teams (ERT) deployed. Although many blockaders went peacefully, some resisted. Once arrested, the group refused to cooperate and as a result were held in custody for a month & then released.

October-November 1990, Tlowotshis-Mumtagila (Kwakwaka'wakw)- A logging road is blockaded.

November, At Boothroyd reserve, located south of Lytton along Highway 1 & Fraser River, a road is blocked that cuts through reserve. The provincial government expropriates land to circumvent blockade.

1991

Ure Creek Blockade, St'at'imc, February 1991

Lil'wat People's Movement at Mt. Currie blockade logging road into Ure Creek in February, a sacred area threatened by road-building & logging. During blockade, settlers set up a counter-blockade with a list of names of St'at'imc & environmentalists they stopped from passing. BC seeks a court injunction against Natives which is enforced by RCMP. 11 Lil'wat are arrested, charges against four were eventually dropped. The remaining seven were given one-month conditional sentences.

April 17, explosives badly damage a logging bridge over the Green River, 4 km east of Pemberton (provided access to Ure Creek).

July 16, a shot is fired near Cheam reserve during night-time confrontation with DFO on Fraser River. One Native is charged with dangerous use of firearm.

July 4- 15, Toosey band members (Tsilhqot'in) are arrested after blocking an access road into a Canadian Forces training area.

1992

January, Tsilhqot'in blockade access road to several hundred CF soldiers and vehicles from entering Department of National Defense training area.

Tsilhqot'in blockade Carrier Lumber logging operations in Nemaiah Valley for 2 months before company withdraws.

Fall-Winter, near Gitwangak, Gitksan members of Eagle Clan (with hereditary chief Art Loring) blockade logging road. Road block consists of timber stockade built across road (12 feet high). This serves to protect the blockaders (often 4-5) from an attack by drunken settlers & loggers, who throw bottles, ram the stockade & vehicles of Natives, and throw Molotov cocktails. They are forced back, and the RCMP fail to lay charges. The blockade ends just prior to RCMP enforcement of a court injunction, and after negotiations with the logging company (a local white settler). The agreement includes consultation with Gitksan over logging areas and a 1 year moratorium on logging in this particular area. This roadblock is documented in the film *Blockade* by Nettie Wild (National Film Board of Canada 1993, 90 min.).

During the same period, a white settler family is evicted from territory of the Frog clan when their house is built near fishing grounds (Boulder Creek). The documentary shows a large crowd of Gitksan at the settler's house notifying them that they must leave. Eventually, the family moves and are compensated by the Gitksan.

December 3, at Gitwangak, the Gitksan blockade the CN rail line to protest logging in territory, specifically the transfer of timber from Westar, which had closed its local mill a year earlier and had now sold its uncut logs to another company. Since many Gitksan are employed in the logging industry, many had also been laid off when the Westar mill closed. The shipping out of uncut logs also meant shipping out their jobs.

In the documentary *Blockade*, the Gitksan are seen preparing for the rail blockade. CN is telephoned early in the day to advise that after midnight, no trains will be able to pass through Gitwangak. To block the tracks, an abandoned car is placed on top of large wood beams, which are lain inside and on top of the tracks. These trains ship mostly lumber, coal and grain.

In preparation for RCMP enforcement of a court injunction, roads into the reserve are also blocked. At one, a community fire truck is positioned to use high-pressure hoses on police if they attempt to pass. Two police cars approach and are told they must use the CN right of way (section of reserve land taken by government for railways or public roads). Five police officers walk a few hundreds yard along the tracks to the blockade, where dozens of Gitksan are gathered.

Despite their numbers & preparation, the crowd moves from the tracks when the injunction is served, leaving 3 Gitksan to be symbolically arrested. The band council is directly involved in this blockade. All blockades & eviction of settler family are also associated with the *Delgamuukw* case, to assert sovereignty and put political pressure on the government.

1993

Gitsegulka (Gitksan) blockade Yellowhead Highway over right of way through reserve.

The North Thompson band also blockades Yellowhead Highway.

Penticton, Okanagan members blockade Green Mountain Road through reserve in opposition to the expansion of the Apex Alpine ski resort.

August 29-September 3, Members of Cheam (Pilalt) band blockade CN rail line cutting through reserve as part of fight with Department of Fisheries & Oceans (DFO). CN reports losses of \$3-million a day (totaling some \$15-million). A heavy tractor is parked across the tracks to block it and, if necessary, rip up tracks. Cheam reserve, near Chilliwack & Hope, is located approx. 2 hours drive east of Vancouver. The blockade is lifted after negotiations with DFO are set.

October 19, Gitwangak, Gitksan blockade BC Rail line near Bear Lake, 100 km north west of Hazelton to protest logging in territory that is part of land claim. BC Rail considers injunction but states it is not urgent until daily runs begin in mid-November. Blockade continues into early '94.