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Sent: July 22, 2020 6:17 PM

To: prrd dc <prrd.dc@prrd.bc.ca>

Subject: Colonial name of our province

Dear Regional District Chair and Board Members:

I would like to request council to urge the provincial government, through a council resolution, to proclaim a new INCLUSIVE name for our province and adopt a new flag and coat-of-arms on the 150th anniversary of the province's entry into the Canadian confederation on July 20, 2021.

The intent is not to revise our history but to greatly expand its limited focus under the province's current name and symbols. It will create new economic activity, post COVID-19, and will generate world-wide attention [new world maps, atlases] and recognition that our province is inclusive of all its peoples. It will be a boon to tourism, particularly in an interest in our indigenous cultures.

The government should consult with our indigenous communities on a new name that will reflect the province's more than 10,000 years of indigenous history, its awesome grandeur, diverse bio-geoclimatic zones and mosaic of multi cultures. The new name should be short and easily pronounceable and spelled. Today, it has become a practice, before a public event, to have an indigenous land acknowledgement. Is this mere tokenism, under the guise of Truth and Reconciliation, even when our province continues to have a COLONIAL name, flag and coat-of-arms?

Queen Victoria, a monarch who never set foot in these parts, chose the name "British Columbia" on July 24, 1858, by. Her decision, though said to be hesitant, was unilateral. She did not consult with the mostly indigenous people who lived here.

Vancouver Island was a British colony for just 22 years. The mainland was a colony for 13 years. British rule ended in 1871. Yet we cling to the "British" moniker while ignoring [a] the more than 10,000 years that indigenous communities inhabited these lands, and [b] our 149 years in the Canadian confederation.

Some will argue that a name change will dishonour British roots and heritage, and, oh yes, tradition. They conveniently forget the roots, heritage and traditions of our

indigenous communities, who have lived here for more than 10,000 years, and those of us who are not of British [today a minority] ancestry.

We are not British. And Columbus never came here. It is meaningless name, particularly when abbreviated to BC, and confusing [there is a Colombia country and BC is mostly commonly interpreted as 'Before Christ' or, tongue in cheek, "British Colonists"]. We have laboured under this colonial pretension for too long. There were many Canadians who had their knickers in a knot when Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson proposed a new flag on June 15, 1964, that was inaugurated on February 15, 1965, a mere eight months later. Was this a mistake? Should we have kept the old Canadian Red Ensign with the Union Jack and coat of arms on a red background so that we could continue to show our gratitude to the British? Today the Maple Leaf is the pride of all Canadians.

When can we take pride in our province's name, flag and coat-of-arms?
A new name, flag and coat of arms would be in accordance with Premier John Horgan's recent challenge of "thinking outside the box" in the "new normal" after the COVID-19 pandemic.

It will demonstrate solid confidence in our selves as a province that is inclusive of all its residents, rather than clinging to coattails of British colonists.

The name, of course, cannot be fully changed overnight because it is a complex matter. However, many countries had the fortitude to make a start and go through a liberating process of choosing a new name [i.e. Ghana, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Zambia, Mali, etc.] and implementing it fast.

If we keep the status quo, we are only confirming that many in our midst still have the "colonizers' supremacy culture" and all their talk about reconciliation with our indigenous peoples and being a multicultural province is only tokenism and not full and respectful inclusion.

Sincerely

Ben Pires
Victoria

My take on our province's flag:

It is a **COLONIAL** flag.

The top depicts the Royal Union Flag
with a crown in the centre.

This only reflects **22** years of Vancouver
Island and **13** years of the Mainland
as British colonies.

It **IGNORES 149** years of the province
in the Canadian Confederation
and the more than **10,000** years of
indigenous communities on these lands.



Ben Pires, Victoria