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Vancouver Daily World
11 September 1890

THE PITT RIVER MURDER

Yesterday morning several Indians arrived at New Westminster from Pitt Lake, bringing with them the body of the murdered half-breed Louis Bee, which was found in the river about the same place as the murder was committed yesterday afternoon, almost immediately after departure of the coroner and jury.

Upon being notified that the body had arrived, Mr. Moresby had it removed to a shed close by to await the action of the coroner and jury, who had already ordered an autopsy to be made.

The autopsy proved beyond doubt that death had resulted from the bullet found in the body.

An inquest was held, and after deliberation the jury returned a verdict to the effect that Louis Bee came to his death by a gun shot wound, caused by an Indian named Slumagh, whom they charge with wilful murder.

Mr. Moresby, accompanied by a couple of specials, proceeded from New Westminster this morning to the Pitt River country on board the Constance, and will make a vigorous search for the murderer, whom the Indians are anxious should be captured at once, for they are in mortal dread of him.

The Pitt River Murder

Vancouver Daily World
27 October 1890

THE MURDERER SLUMACH CAPTURED

The Indian, Slumach, whose brutal murder of the half-breed, Louis Bee, and his determined resistance to arrest, made him noted as a desperate character, has at last surrendered to the authorities. About a month ago he fled to the mountains on the shore of Pitt Lake, and being well supplied with ammunition, and a splendid marksman, made any attempts at his capture a great risk.

Mr. P. Tiernan, Indian Agent at New Westminster, persuaded the Indians that it was their duty to deliver Slumach up to justice.

They accordingly would furnish him with no food and the desperado was starved out.

On Friday he sent his nephew to the Indian Agent saying he was ready to surrender.

When taken in charge he had not eaten anything for days and was terribly emaciated. He was taken to the New Westminster jail and placed under the care of a physician, but it is doubtful whether he will survive.

The Murderer Slumach captured

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Vancouver Daily News
14 January 1891

The condemned Indian murderer, Slumich [sic], will be hanged in New Westminster next Friday morning at 8 o'clock. All the arrangements for the termination of the unfortunate man's life have been completed. He is well stricken in years, being over 70, but yet a hearty, hale person. There is universal sympathy for the poor man, whose sands of life at best would soon run out. The case was one which called for executive clemency.

No title

Vancouver Daily World
16 January 1891

SLUMAGH EXPIATES HIS BLOODY CRIME UPON THE SCAFFOLD. HE DIES WITHOUT A STRUGGLE IN LESS THAN FOUR MINUTES—THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIS EXECUTION—THE AWFUL PARTING SCENE.

Hanged at the Royal City

From our own Correspondent.

New Westminster, Jan. 16—It was with mingled feelings that at least some of those assembled in New Westminster goal yard this morning regarded the blessings of our civilization. It has been said, "the very worst use we can put a man to, is to hang him," and those of us familiar with the story of Slumagh must not merely have doubted the utility of the old Cowichan's execution, but perhaps even its justice, after weighing considerations.

True it is that he was the murderer of certainly one, and perhaps several other fellow creatures; but he was an old man; and until a generation ago, blissfully ignorant of the existence of the white man; and it is scarcely to be marvelled at if he regarded us all with some considerable suspicion, and because what we, who have had reference for life and law bread in us through centuries, in our easy and superior way airily designate savages and lawless.

The first half of his life, and more, was spent in the woods, by the running streams and among the "craigs and peaks" of his native land, where he roamed, hunted, fished, or what not, without restraint, and with no idea even of the meaning of the words right and wrong. If he had an enemy his instinct told him to kill him, and he did, probably never heeding the matter afterwards.

What wonder when the white man came here that the old savage refused, nay found it impossible, to look upon him as a blessing sent by the Great Father for his better enlightenment. His untutored and simple nature saw in the pale face an enemy trying to restrain him and driving himself and his tillicums of the land which had been the Indians hunting grounds since time begun. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots," and can a middle aged savage be expected to change his ways at the word of the white man, who benefits the more as the Indians become fewer?

Such were the thoughts which forced themselves upon your correspondent as he stood in the goal office this morning awaiting the arrival of the condemned man on his short last journey to the scaffold.

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There was much sympathy for Slumagh among those who witnessed his execution. It was thought that the Government might with just clemency have extended a reprieve to him, for he certainly would not have lived very long in confinement, and the fact that he never ran across law and order in any shape until the latter years of his long life made many hope that he would be allowed to finish his career in the confinement of the penitentiary.

But it was not to be, and this morning Slumagh was hanged. The incidents attendant upon the murder of Louis Bee, the flight to the woods of Slumagh, where he remained until starved into surrender, his subsequent trial and sentence are all too fresh in public memory to necessitate recapitulation here. Ever since his arrest, Slumagh has been assiduously attended by Father Morgan, who was unremitting in his exertions for the convict's spiritual welfare.

The old man received the good priest's visits with evident and marked pleasure, more special towards the close of his life, and yesterday Father Morgan was with him for the last time. During the day the doomed man was visited by his daughter and grandson.

The interview seemed to affect him very powerfully and after they had left him, he seemed more restless than he had hitherto been. During the last six hours of his life he was attended by an Indian catechist named Pierre, to assist in preparing him for the final moment, to whose ministrations he paid close attention.

At 7:15 this morning Father Morgan and the Catechist Pierre went to the condemned's cell and remained with Slumagh to the end. He rose early, after a good night's rest, and ate a hearty breakfast. The priest found him calm and quiet, but quite resigned, and at once proceeded to baptize him.

At 7:40 the executioner, enveloped in black from head to foot, passed through the office of the goal, where, by this time, were assembled about one hundred persons, including representatives of the press.

Shortly afterwards those desirous of seeing the hanging descended into the yard, at one end of which stood the scaffold. Before long, the deputy sheriff, Gov. Moresby, several officials, and the hangman, arrived on the scene, when the rope was affixed to the cross beam and the lever tested. Everything proved to be in good order. By this time the hour of doom was very near at hand.

Through the barred windows the visitors could see the procession forming in the corridor, and precisely at 8 o'clock Slumach, supported on each side by a warden, appeared in the yard. Behind him came Father Morgan and the catechist, reciting prayers. The convict appeared very feeble and on mounting the scaffold one of the wardens supported him by placing his arm around his waist. He was dressed in a pair of tweed trousers and a flannel shirt, shoes and stockings, but no hat.

To pinion the legs and adjust the black cap over Slumagh's

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face was but the work of a moment, and then the rope was placed in position. All this time the priest was reciting prayers and in an instant everyone uncovered their heads and the tall black figure pulled the lever.

The trap fell with a thud and all was over for Slumagh died without a struggle.

Owing to his having a more than ordinary small neck it was necessary to give a lengthy drop and he fell eight feet five inches. The certified time of death, which was kept by Mr. Eggers of Vancouver, from the moment when the lever was worked, was 3 minutes and 58 sec. For some time after the hanging the priest, who was visibly affected, remained on the scaffold singing the prayers for the dead. It is satisfactory to note that this execution was carried out in a most perfect manner by those concerned and Sheriff Armstrong is to be commended for the excellent and expeditious manner in which he brought it through. Coroner Pittendrigh empanelled a jury who after viewing the body and hearing the evidence of Governor Moresby and the Sheriff, found the customary verdict.
