

Tasha Buchanan

Subject: Attn: Mayor and Council

From: benpires@shaw.ca <benpires@shaw.ca>

Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 7:03 PM

To: Inquiry <inquiry@barriere.ca>

Subject: Attn: Mayor and Council

Dear Mayor and Council:

I would appreciate Council's collective response -- if Council is proactive in reconciliACTION, decolonization, inclusion and anti-bigotry/racism/marginalization – to the questions below. I would also like to know where is your community is in terms of attitude to diversity in the continuum of: HATE to DISCRIMINATION to DENIAL to RESISTANCE to TOLERANCE to TOKENISM to ACCEPTANCE to RESPECTFUL FULL INCLUSION? Hopefully it is in full inclusion.

Now, will Council file this letter away without a PROACTIVE, LEADERSHIP response, or will Council approve a resolution to our Premier to ADVOCATE for changes by the provincial government?

Here are the questions:

Why can't residents of Canada's westernmost province be 100 per cent Canadian, like those of the other provinces, with an all-inclusive name?

Why are we partly "British" as in "British" Columbians, where "British" is defined as being a citizen of Britain?

Do we still consider our province to be a colony of Britain, even though the province joined the Canadian federation in 1871? With less than 30 per cent of province's residents having British ancestry, why must the rest -- 70 per cent – be called "British"? Is it because Queen Victoria named it in 1858, even though she never consulted with the First Nations nor the settlers and never did step on this land?

While we were a colony of Britain for only **THIRTEEN** years [1858-1871], why does the name ignore the thousands of years of pre-colonial rule and the near 152 years as part of the Canadian federation?

Do those, who insist on keeping the province's colonial name, feel that being "British" maintains their superiority over others? Are not the words that indicate superiority the foundation of bigotry/racism/marginalization in our province?

Why do these people, when we talk about such issues, throw out accusations of "cancel culture"? Is it a threat to their superiority? What are the other words of superiority commonly used ['royal', "crown land", "crown corporations," etc.]?

There is much talk about reconciliation [more intense after the discovery of the graves of children of residential schools], decolonization, anti-bigotry, anti-racism. Is this just rhetoric?

If people truly want reconciliation, decolonization and equality [under the equality provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms], why do they ignore the call for a new name for our province? Is “tradition” a valid excuse for the colonial name?

Who can be challenged to come up with a new name for our province, preferably an indigenous name, with the initials “BC” so that there is no need to change the name/logo, at some expense, of some of our institutions/companies like ICBC, BC Ferries, BC Hydro, UBC, BC Lions, etc.?

Why must the province’s flag and coat of arms have the British union jack with the cross, the symbol of British colonization?

Is it insincere or hypocritical when land acknowledgement statements are made while standing in front of a colonial provincial flag with the Union Jack on the top half and the crown on the centre. Is it to remind indigenous people and those who have immigrated from former British colonies, where ancestors were violently treated by the British, on who is in charge/superior?

Why can’t we have a new flag, such as one with a blue bar on the left to indicate our location on the Pacific Ocean coast, a green bar on the right, and in the centre white or indigenous orange bar in the centre with a indigenous-stylized maple leaf or, perhaps, a drum, symbolizing a heart beat and an instrument of all indigenous cultures and nearly every other cultures in the world?

Thank you for your kind attention.

Warm regards,

Ben J. Pires
804 Mann Avenue, Victoria, BC, Canada V8Z 3C4
250-479-8781

[\(15\) Ben Pires | Facebook](#)

FYI: This matter was covered by Times Colonist columnist Jack Knox on January 26, 2008 [page A3] when I first raised it, then on February 17, 2008 [with readers’ reaction], and again on January 21, 2018, and January 28, 2018 [again with readers’ reactions].

Former legislative reporter of the Canadian Press and *The Vancouver Province* in the early 1970s