

F.N. Summit Report

October 16-18, 2019

Musqueam

Wednesday October 16, 2019

Update from F.N. Summit Executive

Before the meeting had started I had the opportunity to speak to F.N Leadership Council who were present, F.N Summit, U.B.C.I.C., and Assembly of First Nations. My intent and message is that the F.N Leadership council cannot claim to speak for the Wet'suwet'en. We work on many common issues, but, the Wet'suwet'en must keep our own voices. I believe the massaging has been consistent over the years on this, and they should respect this. It was well received, some believe that any misrepresentation would be corrected.

The Executive Committee reported on the Loan Forgiveness for Treaty Loans. The Government has put this into their budget, but, the formal portion of the Loan Forgiveness has not been implemented, this was stated because of the Federal Election, and all has ceased. There will be the process started again after the election, regardless of what Political Party is elected.

Update on the Treaty Process itself was that the Overlap Issue is the main concern. I had mentioned in my previous Reports that it was the Government itself who stated that the Overlap Issue is best to be done by the F.N.'s in Treaty themselves. It seems strange that the very Governments who had created the Overlap Issue now claim the F.N.s settle it themselves.

The Treaty Commission had reported, once again, on the Loan Forgiveness. They stated it is their "Number One Priority" so that all those in Treaty Negotiations are all on a level playing field.

Hon. Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

I had an opportunity to speak to Minister Fraser before he spoke at the Summit. I reiterated to him that his Ministry must remember that the Wet'suwet'en represent themselves and that if there are any entities that claim to represent us, they have to provide documents that the Wet'suwet'en have clearly given that consent. He was also reminded that we need to keep our voices in any discussions or in Decision Making.

His update was that the N.D.P and the Province of B.C. would be the first Elected Government to uphold and implement the United Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People. He also stated that there would be updates on what they are proposing in a separate room the

following day. We would have to surrender their cell phones and sign a confidentiality disclosure form before we could get the Briefing/update. My thoughts are that: It's a start, not too in-depth; the Recognition of UNDRIP is something we can work with. It must be remembered, only we can truly uphold UNDRIP. At least we have something to refer to. As expected, it is not too complicated. When the Panel Session started on the discussion, there were many questions on whether this support for UNDRIP was simply a publicity stunt or were the N.D.P. really going to move this forward? Minister Fraser's response was that they were "committed" to making this a reality and will work in a positive manner to ensure their Government would truly implement and uphold it.

After our Lunch Break the day was given to celebrate the years of commitment that Grand Chief Ed John (Akile Ch'oh) had given to the Summit and all Indigenous Peoples of Canada.

He was escorted into the hall by Musqueam Drummers and Singers with an Honour Song, a Blanket was given to him. Remarks were given by F.N. Summit Executive, U.B.C.I.C. Executive and also Regional Chief of the A.F.N. Terry Teegee. The floor was then given to all who wished to speak. Numerous Nations stood to gift him as well as to sing songs in order to honour him. For me, personally, my highlight was when Chief Woos joined the Lake Babine Nation to speak and sing Akile Ch'oh Laksilyu Clan Song followed by his Father Clan Song. His Father Clan is Tsayu, so I danced up to contribute money to him, then others within the Hall followed suit. A powerful and extremely afternoon together to honour all his hard work.

Thursday October 17, 2019

Recognition and Reconciliation of Rights Policy for Treaty Negotiations in B.C.

The discussions at this table have halted until the Federal Election is over then all discussions will continue. They had updated that this may not happen until February of 2020.

The outstanding issues are: Taxation, Re-dress, Fish and water rights.

Note*

I had stepped out to get the UNDRIP update. There had to be two sessions held as the first session was full.

Ed John, Update on the Fraser River Salmon Stocks

The slide at Big Bar has truly affected the Salmon stocks. Ed had reported that of 56 streams they had monitored they had only reported seeing 57 Sockeye in the entirety of streams. He did note that there were "some" Sockeye taken below the Big Bar Slide to use as Breeding Stocks. Hopefully they can save some of the Stock.

There was a comment from the Delegation that there was a request for all Sport Fishery cease in the Fraser River, this was unsuccessful because the Sport Fishing Lobby had 300,000 members and so they did not close that fishery.

BC First Nation Gaming Revenue Sharing

I had spoken to Vanessa Sutton, she had presented on the Revenue Sharing.

She had stated during our conversation that we as the Office of The Wet'suwet'en would have to apply to be "Partner" in the Gaming in order to access any funds from The Lottery Commission. The agreement with BC Gaming Commission is for 25 years and each entity has to re-apply as members every five years in order to access a portion of the \$100 million per year I will note that there are 203 separate entities recognized as Bands within BC.

I had questioned her on why were only Indian Act Bands, Treaty First Nations and those who were recognized as Self Governing automatically recognized for Gaming Funds and yet the Hereditary Governance of our Nation had to apply in order to access the funds available?

We have six Wet'suwet'en Bands and one other on our Territory (Lake Babine) that can access and yet we have to do a separate process?

She stated that we apply, and then Revenue Sharing would be "considered" by the FN Gaming Commission. There seems to be two separate decision makers in the process, both need to have percentages in favour of who will be allotted funding.

I know we had presented this to Peter Grant previously, I hadn't received the response. I have the two page outline she had handed to me, it is rather vague.

First Nations Education Steering Committee

The one big stand out for me was the work they are doing with B.C. Teacher Regulation Branch and British Columbia to streamline certification of Teachers working within participating schools. For this purpose they want to refine a limited number of amendments to the Teachers Act and possibly the First Nations Education Act. This would be to promote and Certify access to more Teachers within the First Nations Schools.

There were two examples given on why

1. Only 19% of Indigenous Children in Care meet Grade 7 Numeracy compared to 72% of all students.
2. A 6 year completion rate of 50% compared to 84% of all students.

A.F.N. Regional Chief Terry Teegee

He stated that the “Big Bar Slide” had seriously impeded the Salmon migration of the Fraser River stocks. It is estimated that for the entire river system, only 625,000 had made it through. This is far below any escapement levels of the Fraser River system. When it was decided to request that all Sport Fisheries cease, the Government had a responsibility to immediately shut it down, they refused. The Cycle to this years escapement is going to have serious effects on the future of these stocks, thus, serious effects on the First Nations who depend on these stocks.

He also updated that there may be, in the future, opportunities for First Nations to access funding to do their own Environmental Assessments. We will have to track the progress on this, doing this ourselves with appropriate resources would be extremely helpful in the future.

Bonnie Leonard- A.F.N. Charter Renewal

They had announced that there were to be a number of additions to their Councils to be represented a Provincial/Territorial Advisory Council and a Traditional Advisory Council.

They are adding Hereditary Council as well. This is all new, the first time to my knowledge that the Hereditary System may actually be acknowledged and present at their table- Representatives would be endorsed by the Regional A.F.N body by way of Resolutions. The last time we had attended an A.F.N event, we were there as Guests with no voting powers, this seems to be changing.

Resolutions

Friday October 18, 2019

Approval of Recognition and Reconciliation of Rights Policy For Treaty Negotiations in British Columbia- Passed

Acknowledgement of Election of Robert Morales as Chair of Chief Negotiators Forum Until September 2022- Passed

Support for Protocol on Cooperation and Communication Among the First Nations Leadership Council, First Nations Tax Commission, First Nations Financial Management Board, First Nations Finance Authority, Lands Advisory Board, Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of BC, New Relationship Trust, and First Nations Public Service Secretariat.

There was a lengthy discussion on the New Relationship Trust Representative- He had missed the meeting where they had agreed to be in support, this was clarified and he gave his support.-Passed

**Confirmation of First Nations Summit Appointment to the First Nations Technology Board.-
Passed**

Addressing the Criminalization and Over-incarceration of Indigenous Women and Girls.

Another lengthy discussion on why Men and Boys were not included in this motion? It was because there were previous Motions to address those issues- Passed

Call to Action to Cease an Ongoing Practice of Immediate Removal of Newborns From their Parents Postnatal-Passed.

Support for Co-Developing Provincial Indigenous Languages Legislation-Passed.

Establishment of A First Nations Summit Committee to Address Climate Change and Rising sea Levels- Passed.