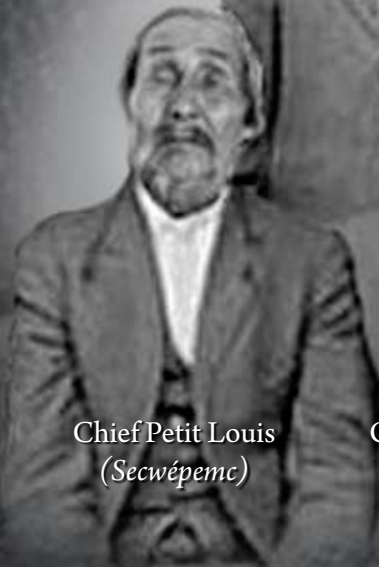


# *The Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier*

Chief John Tetlenitsa  
(Nlaka'pamux)



Chief Petit Louis  
(Secwépemc)



Chief John Chilahitsa  
(Sylx)



Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier  
(Canada)



*Commemorating the 100th Anniversary, 1910-2010*



## *Yiri7 re Stsq'ey's-kucw* *Our Laws & Customs*



Our laws and customs, what we call *yiri7 re stsq'ey's-kucw*, were given to us by Sk'elép (Coyote) as laid out in our ancient oral histories, the *Stspetékwe*:

A long time ago, maybe 5,000 years ago, the Wutémkemoc, a group of Coast Salish people sometimes called “transformers” ventured up the Fraser River. They met Sk'elép, who was sitting on a rock watching them as they approached. They tried to *t'ult* (transform) him with their powers, but were able only to change his tracks into stone. Therefore, the marks of Sk'elép's feet may be seen on this rock at the present day.

Sk'elép sat with his chin resting on his hand and stared at them while they were trying to transform him. When they failed, he cried out to them, “You are making the world right — so am I. Why try to punish me when I have done you no harm? This is my country. Why do you come here and interfere with my work? If I wished, I could turn you into stone, but as you have likely been sent into the world, like myself, to do good, I will allow you to pass, but you must leave this country as quickly as you can. We should be friends, but must not interfere with each others' work.”

At a later date and at a different location, Sk'elép again met the Wutémkemoc. He was not so diplomatic and threatened to cause them serious harm if they did not leave his country.

Also at this time it is said that Old Sk'elép was the ancestor of all Indians. He had many wives. From some descended the Nlaka'pamux (Thompson), from others the Syilx (Okanagan), from still others the Secwépemc (Shuswap) ... It is said that at one time they spoke the same language.

After Sk'elép finished his work, it is said that the Old One — the Creator or Chief of the Ancient World who had sent Coyote — then came back to finish off some of his work. He led the different tribes into their homelands and gave them the languages they now speak.

*(From a stspetékwe as recorded by ethnologist James A Teit, 1895 and 1915.)*

One fundamental principle of our traditional law thus laid out by Sk'elép thousands of years ago is that each nation collectively holds its respective homeland and its resources at the exclusion of outsiders. Outsiders ought not trespass our lands without our express permission. However, when Sk'elép invited the foreign Wutémkemoc into our home as *guests*, noting “we should be friends but we should not interfere with each others' work” he was the first to establish a relationship between us as the owners and hosts of this land, and the outsiders as guests who were invited and should be treated with kindness but were expected to show respect and reciprocity.

As settlers came into our home in the past two hundred years, they were again reminded that we were the ones who owned the collective “ranches” or homelands of our nations, and that they were guests in our land. In the 1910 Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, our Chiefs reiterated their memories of the first *seme7* (guests) who respected our lands and boundaries; however, as settlers took over our land and established laws aimed at keeping us off our “ranches,” they denied not only our ownership of lands and resources, but also our ancient laws of trespass and jurisdiction. They thus defied the honour of being guests that we had bestowed upon them.





## *Yiri7 re stsq'ey's ne Memorial ~ Historical and Political Context*

In the summer of 1910, Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier set out across the country on a “non-political” pre-election campaign tour. On August 25th he stopped in Kamloops where he was met by a delegation of Chiefs from the Secwépemc, Nlaka'pamux, and Syilx Nations, who greeted their guest with an unequivocal message. They enlisted the help of their “secretary,” a Scottish-born ethnologist and long-time ally, James Teit, who had put their words onto paper, and French priest Father LeJeune, who translated the verbal presentation and presented the written English document (“the Memorial”). The Interior Chiefs asserted the persistence of their Aboriginal Nations’ title and sovereignty over their respective territories, vowing that they would continue to struggle for a just and reciprocal relationship with the government until it was achieved.

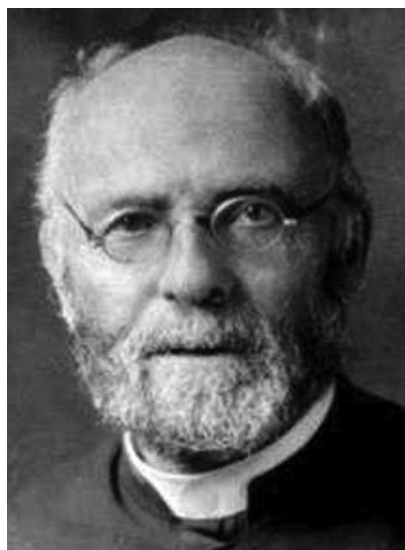
Laurier’s brief visit came on the heels of Interior Peoples’ escalating dispossession at the hands of settlers and the provincial and federal policies that sanctioned them. Laurier was braced by a report on Indian Title he had previously commissioned from lawyer Tom McGinness, which — produced without input from Aboriginal Peoples — acknowledged that B.C.’s Aboriginal Peoples had been unfairly and illegally dispossessed from the homelands they had occupied since time immemorial. Laurier’s government and subsequent governments did not release the report, nor would they accept its conclusions.



James Alexander Teit



Sir Wilfrid Laurier



Father LeJeune



Indian Reserve at Spences Bridge

The Memorial must have resonated with Laurier, who departed with it in hand, intending to follow up on a legal and political resolution of the land title and rights question. However, he lost the election to Conservative opponent Robert Borden the following year, before it could move forward. Now, exactly one hundred years since the presentation of the Memorial to Laurier, the vision those Chiefs put forward continues to reverberate in the ongoing struggles for Aboriginal title, rights, and jurisdiction.

It is often assumed that First Nations of British Columbia quietly accepted the allotment of reserves during the 1870s and 1880s. This is not true. The 1910 Memorial emerged alongside a series of legal and political actions at this time, including joint petitions to government; delegations to Ottawa and London, England; and the organization of the Allied Tribes. In response to these actions, the Canadian government enacted Section 141 of the Indian Act in 1927, which prohibited Indians from raising money and/or retaining lawyers in pursuit of title and rights.

The Memorial is a historical document that demonstrates the involvement of the Interior Nations in pressing for title, rights, and sovereignty in the early twentieth century. It is also a historical narrative in itself, which tells the story of the previous hundred years of relations with European newcomers from the Aboriginal point of view. The Memorial charts the first contact with fur traders (*seme7úw'i* or “real whites”) and the ensuing fur trade period, throughout which Aboriginal people maintained control of their land and resources. It then documents the arrival of miners, the laying out of large reserves, and the continual curtailment of Aboriginal rights as more and more settlers poured into the land.



It also reflects Interior Aboriginal Peoples' continued and consistent traditional concepts around being the hosts in their lands, and the reciprocity that the host-guest relationship entails. It underscores the Aboriginal concepts of land ownership and tenure, Aboriginal political authority, and sovereign relations with the Crown and government.

Even despite such oppressive measures as Section 141 of the Indian Act and the implementation of the residential schools system, the Secwépemc and neighbouring First Nations — indeed Aboriginal Nations throughout British Columbia and Canada — did not forget the concepts and issues as outlined in the Memorial. Many of the Chiefs whose experiences and voices are reflected in the Memorial provide a link between the fur trade era and 1910. Thus, Chief Louis of Kamloops and several other Chiefs present at the 1910 Memorial reading were born in the 1830s or 1840s and had witnessed the time of the *seme7úw'i* and the arrival of the post-1850s newcomers through the colonial period. The political principles and values learned from the Chiefs long ago remain alive through their descendents and persist in the foundation of the present struggle.

We, the Secwépemc and our neighbouring Aboriginal Nations continue to organize and pursue the recognition of title and rights from both a political and legal standpoint, creating new opportunities to put the vision stated by Chiefs in the Laurier Memorial into practice: "For the accomplishment of this end we and other Indian tribes of this country are now uniting ... in this fight for our rights."



L to R - Chief Petit Louis, Chief Basil David (Dick), and Chief John Chilahitsa



Chiefs Delegation to Ottawa, May 1916

L to R top - Chief Elie Larue, Chief John Tetlenitsa, James A. Teit, Chief Adolph Thomas, Chief William Pascal  
L to R bottom - Chief James Raitasket, Chief John Chilahitsa, Chief Paul David, Chief Basil David (Dick)



Delegation travels to Ottawa, 1924



## MEMORIAL TO SIR WILFRID LAURIER, PREMIER OF THE DOMINION OF CANADA

From the Chiefs of the Shuswap, Okanagan and Couteau Tribes of British Columbia.  
Presented at Kamloops, 25th August, 1910

†  
Dear Sir and Father,

We take this opportunity of your visiting Kamloops to speak a few words to you. We welcome you here, and we are glad we have met you in our country. We want you to be interested in us, and to understand more fully the conditions under which we live. We expect much of you as the head of this great Canadian Nation, and feel confident that you will see that we receive fair and honorable treatment. Our confidence in you has increased since we have noted of late the attitude of your government towards the Indian rights movement of this country and we hope that with your help our wrongs may at last be righted. We speak to you the more freely because you are a member of the white race with whom we first became acquainted, and which we call in our tongue "real whites."

One hundred years next year they came amongst us here at Kamloops and erected a trading post. After the other whites came to this country in 1858 we differentiated them from the first whites as their manners were so much different, and we applied the term "real whites" to the latter (viz., the fur-traders of the Northwest and Hudson Bay companies. As the great majority of the companies employees were French speaking, the term latterly became applied by us as a designation for the whole French race.) The "real whites" we found were good people. We could depend on their word, and we trusted and respected them. They did not interfere with us nor attempt to break up our tribal organizations, laws, customs. They did not try to force their conceptions of things on us to our harm. Nor did they stop us from catching fish, hunting, etc. They never tried to steal or appropriate our country, nor take our food and life from us. They acknowledged our ownership of the country, and treated our chiefs as men. They were the first to find us in this country. We never asked them to come here, but nevertheless we treated them kindly and hospitably and helped them all we could. They had made themselves (as it were) our guests.

We treated them as such, and then waited to see what they would do.

As we found they did us no harm our friendship with them became lasting. Because of this we have a warm heart to the French at the present day. We expect good from Canada.

When they first came among us there were only Indians here. They found the people of each tribe supreme in their own territory, and having tribal boundaries known and recognized by all. The country of each tribe was just the same as a very large farm or ranch (belonging to all the people of the tribe) from which they gathered their food and clothing, etc., fish which they got in plenty for food, grass and vegetation on which their horses grazed and the game lived, and much of which furnished materials for manufactures, etc., stone which furnished pipes, utensils, and tools, etc., trees which furnished firewood, materials for houses and utensils, plants, roots, seeds, nuts and berries which grew abundantly and were gathered in their season just the same as the crops on a ranch, and used for food; minerals, shells, etc., which were used for ornament and for plants, etc., water which was free to all. Thus, fire, water, food, clothing and all the

necessaries of life were obtained in abundance from the lands of each tribe, and all the people had equal rights of access to everything they required. You will see the ranch of each tribe was the same as its life, and without it the people could not have lived.

Just 52 years ago the other whites came to this country. They found us just the same as the first or "real whites" had found us, only we had larger bands of horses, had some cattle, and in many places we cultivated the land. They found us happy, healthy, strong and numerous. Each tribe was still living in its own "house" or in other words on its own "ranch." No one interfered with our rights or disputed our possession of our own "houses" and "ranches," viz., our homes and lives. We were friendly and helped these whites also, for had we not learned the first whites had done us no harm? Only when some of them killed us we revenged on them. Then we thought there are some bad ones among them, but surely on the whole they must be good. Besides they are the queens people. And we had already heard great things about the queen from the "real whites." We expected her subjects would do us no harm, but rather improve us by giving us knowledge, and enabling us to do some of the wonderful things they could do. At first they looked only for gold. We know the latter was our property, but as we did not use it much nor need it to live by we did not object to their searching for it. They told us, "Your country is rich and you will be made wealthy by our coming. We wish just to pass over your lands in quest of gold." Soon they saw the country was good, and some of them made up their minds, to settle it. They commenced to take up pieces of land here and there. They told us they wanted only the use of these pieces of land for a few years, and then would hand them back to us in an improved condition; meanwhile they would give us some of the products they raised for the loan of our land. Thus they commenced to enter our "houses," or live on our "ranches." With us when a person enters our house he becomes our guest, and we must treat him hospitably as long as he shows no hostile intentions. At the same time we expect him to return to us equal treatment for what he receives. Some of our Chiefs said, "These people wish to be partners with us in our country. We must, therefore, be the same as brothers to them, and live as one family. We will share equally in everything half and half in land, water and timber, etc. What is ours will be theirs, and what is theirs will be ours. We will help each other to be great and good."

The whites made a government in Victoria perhaps the queen made it. We have heard it stated both ways. Their chiefs dwelt there. At this time they did not deny the Indian tribes owned the whole country and everything in it. They told us we did. We Indians were hopeful. We trusted the whites and waited patiently for their chiefs to declare their intentions toward us and our lands. We knew what had been done in the neighboring states, and we remembered what we had heard about the queen being so good to the Indians and that her laws carried out by her chiefs were always just and better than the American laws. Presently chiefs (government officials, etc.) commenced to visit us, and had talks with some of our chiefs. They told us to have no fear, the queens laws would prevail in this country, and everything would be well for the Indians here. They said a very large reservation would be staked off for us (southern interior tribes) and the tribal lands outside of this reservation the government would buy from us for white settlement. They let us think this would be done soon, and meanwhile until this reserve was set apart, and our lands settled for, they assured us we would have perfect freedom of traveling and camping and the same liberties as from time immemorial to hunt, fish, graze and gather our food supplies where we desired; also that all trails, land, water, timber, etc., would be as free of access to us as formerly. Our chiefs were agreeable to these propositions, so we waited for these treaties to be made, and everything settled. We had never known white chiefs to break their word so we trusted. In the meanwhile white settlement progressed. Our chiefs held us



in check. They said, "Do nothing against the whites. Something we did not understand retards them from keeping their promise. They will do the square thing by us in the end."

What have we received for our good faith, friendliness and patience? Gradually as the whites of this country became more and more powerful, and we less and less powerful, they little by little changed their policy towards us, and commenced to put restrictions on us. Their government or chiefs have taken every advantage of our friendliness, weakness and ignorance to impose on us in every way. They treat us as subjects without any agreement to that effect, and force their laws on us without our consent and irrespective of whether they are good for us or not. They say they have authority over us. They have broken down our old laws and customs (no matter how good) by which we regulated ourselves. They laugh at our chiefs and brush them aside. Minor affairs amongst ourselves, which do not affect them in the least, and which we can easily settle better than they can, they drag into their courts. They enforce their own laws one way for the rich white man, one way for the poor white, and yet another for the Indian. They have knocked down (the same as) the posts of all the Indian tribes. They say there are no lines, except what they make. They have taken possession of all the Indian country and claim it as their own. Just the same as taking the "house" or "ranch" and, therefore, the life of every Indian tribe into their possession. They have never consulted us in any of these matters, nor made any agreement, "nor" signed "any" papers with us. They have stolen our lands and everything on them and continue to use same for their own purposes. They treat us as less than children and allow us no say in anything. They say the Indians know nothing, and own nothing, yet their power and wealth has come from our belongings. The queens law which we believe guaranteed us our rights, the B.C. government has trampled underfoot. This is how our guests have treated us - the brothers we received hospitably in our house.

After a time when they saw that our patience might get exhausted and that we might cause trouble if we thought all the land was to be occupied by whites they set aside many small reservations for us here and there over the country. This was their proposal not ours, and we never accepted these reservations as settlement for anything, nor did we sign any papers or make any treaties about same. They thought we would be satisfied with this, but we never have been satisfied and never will be until we get our rights. We thought the setting apart of these reservations was the commencement of some scheme they had evolved for our benefit, and that they would now continue until they had more than fulfilled their promises but although we have waited long we have been disappointed. We have always felt the injustice done us, but we did not know how to obtain redress. We knew it was useless to go to war. What could we do? Even your government at Ottawa, into whose charge we have been handed by the B.C. government, gave us no enlightenment. We had no powerful friends. The Indian agents and Indian office at Victoria appeared to neglect us. Some offers of help in the way of agricultural implements, schools, medical attendance, aid to the aged, etc., from the Indian department were at first refused by many of our chiefs or were never petitioned for, because for a time we thought the Ottawa and Victoria governments were the same as one, and these things would be charged against us and rated as payment for our land, etc. Thus we got along the best way we could and asked for nothing. For a time we did not feel the stealing of our lands, etc., very heavily. As the country was sparsely settled we still had considerable liberty in the way of hunting, fishing, grazing, etc., over by far the most of it. However, owing to increased settlement, etc., in late years this has become changed, and we are being more and more restricted to our reservations which in most places are unfit or inadequate to maintain us. Except we can get fair play we can see we will go to the wall, and most of us be reduced to beggary or to continuous wage slavery. We have also learned lately that the British Columbia government claims absolute ownership of our reservations, which means that we are practically

landless. We only have loan of those reserves in life rent, or at the option of the B.C. government. Thus we find ourselves without any real home in this our own country.

In a petition signed by fourteen of our chiefs and sent to your Indian department, July, 1908, we pointed out the disabilities under which we labor owing to the inadequacy of most of our reservations, some having hardly any good land, others no irrigation water, etc., our limitations re pasture lands for stock owing to fencing of so-called government lands by whites; the severe restrictions put on us lately by the government re hunting and fishing; the depletion of salmon by over-fishing of the whites, and other matters affecting us. In many places we are debarred from camping, traveling, gathering roots and obtaining wood and water as heretofore. Our people are fined and imprisoned for breaking the game and fish laws and using the same game and fish which we were told would always be ours for food. Gradually we are becoming regarded as trespassers over a large portion of this our country. Our old people say, "How are we to live? If the government takes our food from us they must give us other food in its place." Conditions of living have been thrust on us which we did not expect, and which we consider in great measure unnecessary and injurious. We have no grudge against the white race as a whole nor against the settlers, but we want to have an equal chance with them of making a living. We welcome them to this country. It is not in most cases their fault. They have taken up and improved and paid for their lands in good faith. It is their government which is to blame by heaping up injustice on us. But it is also their duty to see their government does right by us, and gives us a square deal. We condemn the whole policy of the B.C. government towards the Indian tribes of this country as utterly unjust, shameful and blundering in every way. We denounce same as being the main cause of the unsatisfactory condition of Indian affairs in this country and of animosity and friction with the whites. So long as what we consider justice is withheld from us, so long will dissatisfaction and unrest exist among us, and we will continue to struggle to better ourselves. For the accomplishment of this end we and other Indian tribes of this country are now uniting and we ask the help of yourself and government in this fight for our rights. We believe it is not the desire nor policy of your government that these conditions should exist. We demand that our land question be settled, and ask that treaties be made between the government and each of our tribes, in the same manner as accomplished with the Indian tribes of the other provinces of Canada, and in the neighboring parts of the United States. We desire that every matter of importance to each tribe be a subject of treaty, so we may have a definite understanding with the government on all questions of moment between us and them. In a declaration made last month, and signed by twenty-four of our chiefs (a copy of which has been sent to your Indian department) we have stated our position on these matters. Now we sincerely hope you will carefully consider everything we have herewith brought before you and that you will recognize the disadvantages we labor under, and the darkness of the outlook for us if these questions are not speedily settled. Hoping you have had a pleasant sojourn in this country, and wishing you a good journey home, we remain

Yours very sincerely,

The Chiefs of the Shuswap, Okanagan and Couteau or Thompson tribes

Per their secretary, J.A. Teit

†



## *Re sw7ecs re semsême7 ell wellenwí7s-kucw ne tmicwv ~ Historical Timeline*

- 1763 The Royal Proclamation embodies a policy statement by the Crown recognizing Indian land title and rights and prohibiting any alienation of Indian lands without surrender to the Crown.
- 1793 Alexander Mackenzie, North West Company (NWC) meets Aboriginal people along the Fraser River, including northern Secwépemc people.
- 1812 The Pacific Fur Company and the NWC establish the first trading posts at Kamloops. The main period of the fur trade under the Hudson's Bay Company spans 1821–1858.
- 1846 The Treaty of Oregon establishes the boundary between the United States and British Crown-held territories.
- 1840s The Jesuits make contact with Aboriginal Peoples of the Interior. Two decades later the Oblates begin establishing missions.
- 1857 Gold is discovered at Nicomen on the Thompson River by Native people, touching off the Fraser River Gold Rush. Gold prospectors compete for food resources, access to water and gold, and encroach on Aboriginal lands.
- 1858 The Nlaka'pamux (Thompson), St'at'imc (Lillooet), Syilx (Okanagan) and Secwépemc (Shuswap) engage in a war in the Fraser Canyon with American gold miners' militias — elected leaders and established militias experienced in Indian wars in the U.S.A — to a standstill, compelling the Americans to sign a peace treaty with the Aboriginal Nations. B.C. Governor James Douglas abdicates responsibility, leaving it up to the Aboriginal warriors to defend the mainland from American invasion.
- 1858 The colony of B.C. is formed on November 19th.
- 1861 Governor Douglas, who had risen from the ranks of the Hudson's Bay Company, instructs the Chief Commissioner of Lands, Colonel R.C. Moody to establish Reserves throughout the colony, "... to be defined as they may be severally pointed out by the Indians themselves."
- 1865 Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, Joseph Trutch, reduces the previously allotted or proposed reserves under pretext that settlers are arguing the Indians are not "using" the lands.
- 1867 The B.N.A. Act creates Dominion of Canada Section 91(24), giving the Federal Government responsibility for Indians and lands reserved for Indians.
- 1871 B.C. enters Confederation. The Terms of Union are drawn up and mention of Indians is limited to Clause 13 which states that the Federal Government will continue to be responsible for Indians and will enact a policy "as liberal as hitherto" towards Indians.
- 1876 The first federal Indian Act is passed. It consolidates all previous Indian legislation, defines Indian status and reserves, and gives the Superintendent General administrative powers over Indian affairs.
- 1877 The Joint Reserve Commission visits Interior Nations who are seriously considering uniting forces with Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce to go to war over the land issue.
- 1878 The Joint Reserve Commission is dissolved because B.C. no longer wishes to participate. A federal commissioner carries on alone, subject to the approval of the B.C. Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works and B.C. Supreme Court to adjudicate disputes.
- 1885 The Potlatch is made illegal by an amendment to the Indian Act; subsequently expanded to include all Indian ceremonies.
- 1906 After a gathering in Kamloops, Chiefs leave for Ottawa and England to meet with King Edward regarding land claims. Chiefs include Joe Capilano (Squamish), Basil David/Dick (Secwépemc) and Charley Isipaymilt (Cowichan).
- 1909 Interior Tribes of B.C. is formed.
- 1909-1911 Numerous Nations put forth petitions and declarations, including the Cowichan, Nisga'a, Tahltan, and Lillooet.
- 1910 Interior Chiefs sign a declaration on July 16th at Spence's Bridge setting out their position on Aboriginal title and rights. On August 25th, a Memorial is presented to Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier by the Interior Chiefs at the I.O.O.F. (Oddfellows) Hall in Kamloops.
- 1911 Laurier loses the Federal election; Conservative opponent Robert Borden wins and the Memorial is shelved.
- 1911 The Memorial to Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, is presented. An expanded group of Interior Chiefs implore the Minister, then in charge of Indian Affairs, in powerful words to address the question of title, rights, and jurisdiction, which they view as fundamental to improving the living conditions of Aboriginal Peoples.
- 1913-1916 Partly in response to the Indian lobbying efforts, the McKenna-McBride Commission is established. However, instead of dealing with the fundamental issue of Indian title and rights, it only deals with adjusting the size of the reserves. Their report, completed in 1916, results in 47,000 acres of good, arable reserve land to be taken away and replaced with 80,000 acres of inferior land.
- 1916 The Allied Tribes of B.C. is founded. In 1919, they file a petition to the federal and provincial governments with a comprehensive presentation of all Indian land claims in the province.
- 1920-1926 The Allied Tribes oppose the McKenna-McBride report. The Province refuses to participate in any discussions. The Allied Tribes dissolve in 1926.
- 1927 An amendment to the Indian Act (s.141) is passed, prohibiting Indians from raising money for advancing land claims, filing court cases on land claims or retaining a lawyer.
- 1949 B.C. Indians are granted the right to vote in provincial elections. Frank Calder is elected to the provincial legislature.

1951 The Indian Act is revised; S.141 and the anti-potlatch law are dropped.

1960 Indians get the federal vote under Diefenbaker (Conservative).

1966-67 The Hawthorn Report, the first comprehensive study on Indian socio-economic conditions, identifies Indians as “citizens plus,” thus forcing the federal government to act.

1968 The National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) is formed in response to federal government efforts to formulate and implement a comprehensive Indian policy aimed at assimilation and extinguishment of title and rights.

1969 The Trudeau administration makes the White Paper public. The policy aims at assimilating Indians into mainstream society by eliminating “special status” and transferring responsibility to the provinces. Indians across Canada vehemently reject it, issuing a Red Paper.

1969 The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is founded in Kamloops, with a mandate to advance Aboriginal title and rights.

1973 The Calder case (Nisga’a), in a split decision, affirms the existence of Aboriginal title and forces the federal government to reconsider its position, leading to the creation of a Comprehensive Claims process.

1974 Office of Native Claims is established at the Department of Indian Affairs to settle outstanding land claims.

1980 In UBCIC’s Constitution Express Aboriginal Peoples unite and travel to Ottawa to call for Constitutional recognition.

1981 The NIB is restructured to form the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and every band in Canada is given a vote within its forum.

1982 The Canadian Constitution is patriated without Aboriginal Peoples’ input. Section 35 of the Constitution affirms the “existing rights” of Aboriginal Peoples (Indians, Inuit, and Métis). Three subsequent First Ministers’ Conferences to further define Aboriginal rights fail.

1982 The Shuswap Declaration: All seventeen communities in the Shuswap Nation agree to work together to work on the preservation and promotion of the Secwépeḿc language, culture and history.

1984 The Guerin case (Musqueam) establishes that the federal government does have a “fiduciary responsibility” towards Aboriginal Peoples.

1987-92 The federal government and provinces draft the Meech Lake Accord to bring Quebec into the Constitution. It fails when Manitoba First Nation MLA Elijah Harper opposes the Accord in the Manitoba legislature, based on a complete lack of consultation with Aboriginal Peoples. The subsequently drafted Charlottetown Accord proposed a “third order of government” by Aboriginal Peoples but was defeated in a public referendum.

1987-1989 Shuswap Chiefs reaffirm the Laurier Memorial in various resolutions, declarations, and publications.

1990 *R. vs. Sparrow* clarifies constitutionally protected Aboriginal fishing rights.

1991 Report of the B.C. Claims Task Force recommends a new treaty process for B.C. By 1995 they develop the B.C. Treaty Commission Act. Subsequently, the Northern Secwépeḿc communities represented by the Northern Shuswap Tribal Council, as well as the Alkali Lake Band (Esk’etemc) join the B.C. Treaty process; however the bands represented by SNTC do not join the B.C. Treaty process because the bands feel the process is fundamentally flawed.

1997 *Delgamuuk’w vs. British Columbia* upholds Aboriginal title, asserting that Aboriginal people must be consulted and compensated for any infringement or extinguishment of title.

2000 The Nisga’a Final Agreement Act becomes Canadian law. The Nisga’a surrender 92% of their territory and become subject to provincial and federal laws in exchange for expanded reserved lands over which they hold common title, and \$190 million cash.

2000 Members of the Neskonlith band establish the Swelkwékw’elt Protection Centre at the Sun Peaks Ski Resort in Secwépeḿc territory to stop resort expansion. They endure 54 arrests over four years; resort expansion continues.

2005 The First Nations Leadership Council agrees to the “New Relationship” with the B.C. Government.

2007 The U.N. adopts the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Canada is one of four nations to vote against its adoption and remains one of the only countries which refuses to ratify.

2008 Prime Minister Harper apologizes to former students of residential schools, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is formally established.

2009 The B.C. government and the First Nations Leadership Council propose the Aboriginal Title Recognition and Reconciliation Act, contingent on recognition of B.C. Crown title. However, recognized as fundamentally flawed, it is subsequently formally rejected by the B.C. All Chiefs Assembly.

*For a more detailed summary of events across B.C., check out the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs historical timeline at [www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/timeline.htm](http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/timeline.htm)*





Chief Wayne Christian,  
Splats'in First Nation

## *Tribal Chairman Message*

One hundred years ago today, our ancestors delivered a clear message to the government. That message outlined our struggles and also made recommendations to government as to how to close this matter with a sense of justice and fairness to all.

The words of our ancestors were wise and have served to create a foundation of principles for the generations that have followed.

For the last 100 years, First Nations people in British Columbia have continued to struggle and fight for our rights and title. We have never ceded, surrendered or sold our lands. We have remained steadfast in our beliefs and knowledge that one day we will “Stand each other up to be great and good” and justice will be served.

We call upon the people of British Columbia and Canada and the governments that represent you, to do the right thing, to work with us to conclude this long struggle in our history by taking action that will bring the words in the Memorial to life.

## *Acknowledgements*

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*“We wish it be known that there will always be soreness in our hearts  
until we get our rights” (Memorial to Frank Oliver, 1911).*

