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NESIKA

(Chinook meaning "US")

THE VOICE OF B.C. INDIANS

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DEMONSTRATORS ASSEMBLED outside the Land Claims offices on May 1 before forming a police-escorted motorcade to the provincial legislature. "Anybody who is not with us, is against us," Philip Paul, recently elected chairman of the UBCIC's executive committee told them. "We're no longer the executive of an organization — we're the executive of an Indian movement." This movement, he said, "would shake the very bones of this country." He stressed that he and fellow committee members George Watts and Bill Wilson were "of one mind." While the demonstrators chanted, drummed and listened to speeches outside the parliament buildings,

George Watts was telling the NDP caucus, "You've hidden the whole issue long enough by giving us handouts and making us feel like we're a part of our country . . . we won't have a true place in this country until we control where we're going as a people . . ." After the caucus meeting Bill Wilson told the gathering: "Don't think this is going to be an easy fight because they have millions and millions and millions of dollars in the federal and provincial coffers to try to seduce us down the garden path to the welfare existence that we've lived in for 150 years."

—(Text and photo by G. Peters)

First positive response

By GERARD PETERS

In what has been described as the first positive response from the provincial government, a June meeting has been proposed by the Human Resources Minister.

In a letter to the Union of Chiefs' executive committee, Norm Levi says, "It is my hope that the meeting in June will initiate a series of meetings which will enable us to develop adequate techniques and procedures for the discussions."

The communication has been termed a very watered-down response, but "clearly the province has felt the political pressure of our actions over the past four months."

The purpose of the June meeting, says Levi, will be to set up the terms of reference for continuing discussions; to provide an opportunity for an exchange and initiation of information and to agree on the mechanism required to acquaint the general public with the facts related to cutoff lands.

Levi said that all people in B.C. have an interest in the lands . . . and must understand the issues which will be discussed.

In an editorial (reprinted elsewhere in full) the Vancouver Province, however notes that, ". . . Levi raises a red herring when he asserts some difficulty in acquainting the public with the cutoff lands issue. The facts are simple. The history of discrimination against the Indians is clear. The solutions virtually present themselves."

In a communication to the 23 cutoff bands, the Cutoff Action Committee has called for a meeting to discuss with them, the direction they should take in talks with the government.

The bands' representatives will meet May 31 and June 1 in Peniticon. It will be an outdoor get-together, so camping gear is essential.

The committee stresses that no funds are available for travel and other expenses. More information may be obtained from Adam Eneas at 492-8853.

From Chilliwack — Decisions for Change

By GERARD PETERS

CHILLIWACK — The 7th annual Union of B.C. Chiefs general assembly has brought more change than any other.

The first motion carried, dealt with the adoption of non-voting delegates as chairpersons for the conference. Though it might sound chauvinistic to mention, Shirley Leon was the first woman to chair a major conference.

After the annual report of the

Union's activities, Bill Wilson said that Indians were being led around by the nose by governments' program funding. He said that the Lakes District and others were saying, "take your money back." This, he said, was what the Union should be doing.

Wilson, later elected to the executive committee of the Union, days later told a meeting of former Union staffers that a decision to reject government dollars made in Chilliwack was not a political ploy.

It was, he said, a move toward independent Indian nations. He stressed that the initiative must be taken by the individual, and the executive would not dictate. Independence could not be achieved while there was dependence on government money.

An extraordinary resolution submitted by the Fraser East district made provision for the election of the executive committee at a general assembly. Formerly, the executive members were chosen by district representatives from among themselves.

In another change, the chiefs' council was expanded from 15 to 18. Executive members cannot now serve as district representatives but have equal powers on chiefs' council.

A motion, earlier presented in Terrace during the special land claims assembly, was re-introduced and carried. It was resolved that the B.C. Special fund, resulting in 1927 from efforts of the Allied Tribes be channelled into the

pursuit of a land claims settlement.

A motion presented by Delbert Guerin was carried. It provided that the UBCIC inform the various governments "of our Indian lands" that Indians would acquire food, fish and wild game "without the use of the non-Indian government permit system."

A motion reading, ". . . the various religious churches, being prominent contributors to our present situation, should be questioned by the UBCIC for a concrete commitment and statement of position regarding the land claims question," was unanimously carried.

The motion was expanded on to the effect that, the churches' support be shown by providing financial assistance to be used in the resolution of the land claims issue.

A motion presented by Simon Lucas putting a figure of 10 billion dollars on a claim to be made to the province for natural resources that have been exploited, generated much discussion.

It was variously hit as being premature, too low, arbitrary, and others. George Watts pointed out that, "What this motion is doing is

bringing about discussion that should have happened five years ago."

The Indian Act was rejected as a criteria for the selection of the executive members of the Union. This opened the way for non-status Indians (by the Indian Act definition) to run for the executive positions, so long as they were descendants of the original inhabitants of what is now B.C.



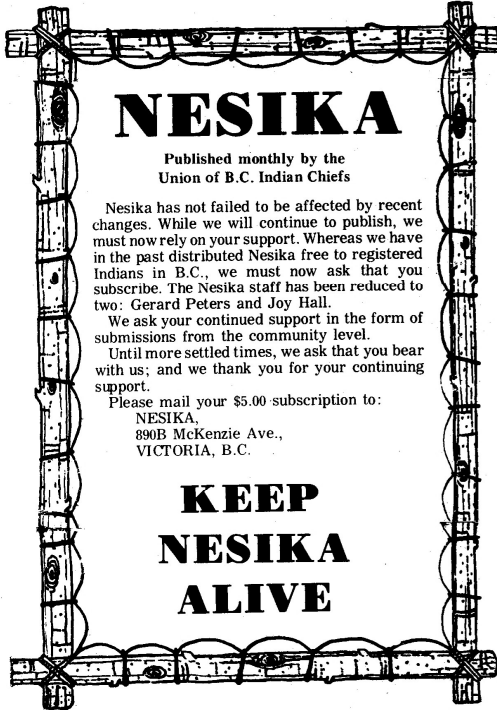
\$1,000 DONATION was made by Bob and Marge Cantryn to the land claims fund. Mrs. Cantryn is at the left, Mr. Cantryn is obscured behind Chief Cecil Mack of the Toguait Band who holds the West Coast talking stick. \$1,000 donation was also made by Mr. and Mrs. Bill Lightbown and their family. Other donations include one for \$10,000 approved by the United Church. Former employees of the Union offices donated a further \$2,240. A resolution was adopted channelling the B.C. Special (\$100,000 provincial grant that is divided on a per capita basis to bands) to the land claims fund. Some bands that gave their share of the B.C. Special in Chilliwack are: the West Coast District \$6,734; Chemainus \$1,050; Kuper Island \$832 and Nanoose Bay \$184. We regret that this list is incomplete.

—(G. McKevitt photo)

June 25th
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NESIKA

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Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs

Nesika has not failed to be affected by recent changes. While we will continue to publish, we must now rely on your support. Whereas we have in the past distributed Nesika free to registered Indians in B.C., we must now ask that you subscribe. The Nesika staff has been reduced to two: Gerard Peters and Joy Hall.

We ask your continued support in the form of submissions from the community level. Until more settled times, we ask that you bear with us; and we thank you for your continuing support.

Please mail your \$5.00 subscription to:
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**KEEP
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To the singing A/G: (A Lesson From History)

By GERARD PETERS

Dear Mr. MacDonald:

Perhaps you wonder at how we've arrived at what the media calls "militant May?" A history lesson is in order.

In very recent history you've flippantly referred to "services" your government has provided for Indian people. These services, you proclaimed, were more important to Indians than their claims to aboriginal rights.

You laughed publicly at Indian demands; and when Indians, protesting your government's inaction, demonstrated at the legislature in April — all you gave them was a song.

On Day One in "militant May" Indians demonstrated again outside your legislature. Meanwhile your government was giving their leaders the runaround inside.

Your people changed the time and place of a scheduled meeting with Indian leaders — but failed to notify them. What happened? Meaningful talks were aborted. After a hurried presentation — the Indians were thanked — and the NDP caucus members filed out. . . .

Read the "Debate on the Subject of Confederation With Canada." You'll learn that, wonder of wonders, our great grandparents had a champion in your legislature.

Henry Holbrook, in 1870, tried to introduce a resolution giving Indians consideration in the event of confederation.

He predicted that Indians might be a "source of great trouble if they are not considered as well as white men." Now — substitute "militant May" for "source of great trouble."

Holbrook was stopped. And to stop them, legislation in 1876 (Qualifications & Regulations of Voters Act) withheld the vote from Indians.

Now, your government has just passed the Emergency Program Act. Bill 61, you admit gives "unlimited powers . . . in an emergency as envisaged by cabinet." Strange, isn't it that unlimited powers to quell riots and civil disobedience — should emerge in "militant May?"

Don't we learn from history? More history . . . The debates quote a Holbrook associate, "Governments are made for the people and not the people for the governments."

Now, this profound proclamation is made while, according to the debates, there were 6,500 adult white men and 65,000 Indians in the colony. Indian input was nil. Perhaps, in 1870, Indians weren't people?

Now, then, Mr. MacDonald, let's play with history. Had the vote not been withheld — couldn't Indians a century ago have been the government?

Don't shudder . . . but picture the "Indian Way" overriding the "Protestant Ethic."

Indians are now a minority in their land . . . but are ready, like never before — to amend their place in the history books.

Henry Holbrook, for his vision, was outvoted 20 to 1. How would you have voted, Mr. MacDonald?



OLD MacDonald . . . had a song



AIM speaker Larry Joseph, Nitinaht Band, addresses the assembly. In a turnaround from former general assemblies, non-delegates were permitted to express their views.

—(G. McKevitt photo)

An honorable pow-wow

An editorial reprint from the Vancouver Province.

The provincial government's decision to discuss the cutoff lands issue is no small victory for B.C. Indians. It implies that Victoria has accepted the Indian claim in principle and that it is prepared to deal with it on a broad basis rather than piecemeal.

That's as it should be. To deal with individual band claims, or to help the Indians by offering them commercial opportunities like the Babine Forest Products consortium at Burns Lake, or simply to encourage their independence in other ways would tend to sidestep the central issue. That is to deal with the land claims question in a fair and honorable way.

Nothing should be done to obscure that issue. The provincial and federal government in a clearly dishonorable arrangement took over 36,000 acres of Indian land by companion pieces of legislation in 1919 and 1920. This, to the Indian, disenfranchised him as much as taking his vote away would have done. And the lands were taken without the permission of the Indians.

The act of taking them away implied that they were in fact Indian lands. There should never have been any debate whatsoever about the right of ownership of those acres.

Human Resources Minister Norman Levi raises a red herring when he asserts some difficulty in acquainting the public with the cutoff lands issue. The facts are simple. The history of discrimination against the Indians is clear. The solutions virtually present themselves.

Since more than half of the cutoff lands have never been put to any commercial use and are under the direct control of the Crown provincial they can simply be handed back. The Indians have never claimed the return of land on which development has taken place. They want compensation.

A compensation formula may not be easy to work out. But it would be fair to expect a reasonable attitude on the part of the provincial government to be met by an equally reasonable response from the Indians. The most vital point seems already to have been met — that the Indian claim is right in principle and that it should be dealt with on a broad basis.

From 1969 to 1975 The Movement is born

By GERARD PETERS

Old barriers have crumbled in recent weeks giving rise to the people movement.

The special land claims assembly in Terrace recognized the eligibility of non-status Indians for a land claims settlement so long as they were least one-quarter blood descendants of the original inhabitants of what is now British Columbia.

In a dramatic move that was acclaimed by many as "reducing all our people to the same level," delegates to the chiefs' annual assembly Chilliwack also voted to reject all forms of government funding.

From 1969, when the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs was formed to press for a land claims settlement, to 1975 when government funding was rejected, the Union had accumulated a staff of nearly 90 and had working budget of more than one and one-half million dollars. Follow the Chilliwack decision, all but a core staff of communications work were laid off.

Upwards of 50 million dollars annually have been rejected as a result of the decision, and the Indian energies are focusing on the land claim issue.

This is evident from news reports of Indian actions during "militant May." Indians had occupied the Vernon offices of DIA and have been successful in having it close permanently. The Kamloops DIA office continue to be picketed. There, too, closure of the offices is being demanded because with the rejection of government money — they serving no purpose and are costing tax dollars.

Phone contacts cannot be made with the Bella Coola DIA offices, they reportedly continue to be occupied. And in Vancouver, members of the American Indian Movement, in mid-May occupied the Indian Affairs regional offices on the 14th floor of the "Black Tower."

In other actions, the Stewart-Trembleur band continues the blockade of the B.C. Railway and are pushing for talks with Premier Barrett who is president of the BCR. In Port McNeil, Indians are charging a toll for bridge crossing. Westbank Indians have barricaded a lookout on a pull highway. The Uchucklesahat people have blockaded logging roads on west coast of Vancouver Island.

And, following a Chilliwack declaration that Indians have traditional rights to hunt and fish, the attorney-general's department has reported been flooded with cases involving Indians who have contravened white man's laws.

The decision to reject government money has not failed to bring criticism from Indians. Most vocal are George Brown, president of Burns Lake Native Development Corporation that is provincially financed and Doris Ronneburg who has resigned as head of BCANI health and welfare program.

Brown has criticized the non-status association as being riddled with failure and disaster. He said that association executives draw fat salaries that make them too comfortable. He predicted that new leadership would emerge at the association's general assembly in early June.

Fred House, BCANSI president, however predicted that the association would vote itself out of existence at the convention. He said that chiefs' decision to include non-status Indians in a land claims settlement cleared the way for "one powerful organization representing all Indian native people."

At presstime: Indications are that Indians will gather in late June talks. A get-together from June 21 to 25, will be hosted by the McCurrie band, some 100 miles north of Vancouver.

Estimates reach as high as 30, of bands that will continue to accept government grants. Interestingly enough, it's the smaller, economically secure bands who are behind the decision and the financially independent bands who are hesitant.

Since Chilliwack, the executive members have been travelling throughout the province explaining their interpretation of the decision to reject government dollars.

The Vancouver office of the UBCIC, which since late April have served as a communications centre will relocate to the Land Claims office Victoria at the end of May.

As we go to press, a small army of volunteer workers have been typing, addressing, bundling and mailing information bulletins. Some are young, long-haired, sporting beads and AIM-embroidered jackets. Others are older and more conservative. But all are part of "the Movement."



THEY'RE PRETTIER, and when they sang "This Land is Your Land" . . . This Land is My Land" they got more of a positive reaction from B.C. Indians than Attorney-General Alex MacDonald. They did sing at the recent Chilliwack conference in their native west coast language. From left to right are Jessie Lucas, Sandi Howard, Lil Howard and Lil Howard, all from the west coast.

Volunteer workers needed for communications centre

By MAXINE PAPE

The Union of B.C. Chiefs' staff have been laid off. The office at 2140 West 12th now serves as the communications centre for the movement.

We must keep the local people informed and we need your help. Information bulletins, cassette tapes and videotapes are being circulated.

Help is most urgently needed in putting out the weekly bulletins. They must be typed, duplicated, put together, stapled, addressed, folded and mailed.

Many tasks are involved in working toward a settlement of land claims, and being independent of government monies. We must take the initiative to help each other out.

We need people with cars to transport volunteer workers. We need help answering the phone.

The busy day will be Tuesday, when the bulletin must be out. If you can, please help. Phone us at 736-6751 or drop in.



ADAM ENEAS escorts some of the hotheads and radicals that occupied the Vernon Indian Affairs offices in April. The young ladies were in their 60s and 70s. Eneas' grandmother Mrs. Angeline Eneas spoke to the assembly. Her words, as translated by Mrs. Louise Gabriel were: "My dear friends ... there are many of you here ... the only way anything can be done, is if we all work together." In early May, Adam Eneas announced that the offices would be closed permanently. This followed a wire to Indian Affairs Minister Judd Buchanan asking for the closure.

—(G. McKeivitt photo)

Independence Day

Bring your camping gear to Mount Currie for Independence Day celebrations from June 21st to 25th.

Mount Currie is 100 miles northeast of Vancouver and may be reached by Highway 99, Squamish or by B.C. Rail. From the north, there's a gravel road from Lillooet.

June 25th is the anniversary of the government's white paper policy and of Custer's last stand.

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FILM, VIDEOTAPES AVAILABLE

There are four copies of the film "The Land is The Culture," in the Greater Vancouver area. Vancouver has the largest Indian concentration in B.C. — "the reserve in Vancouver."

The film should be seen by our own people first. Copies are available at these phone numbers: 736-6751; 985-7711; 736-8721 and 384-6313.

Videotapes of the debates and decisions made at the Chilliwack conference can be obtained, along with the equipment to show them. Phone 736-6751.

They may also be viewed at the Video Inn — 261 Powell St. in Vancouver (phone 688-4336).

We hope you can offer your time — and we welcome your suggestions. Please call us at 736-6751.

The following is a list of contact people who have the land claims film and videotapes of the Chilliwack conference:

Janice Mathias,
c/o Squamish Band Office,
P.O. Box 86131,
North Vancouver, B.C.
Telephone: 985-7711

Ron Hamilton,
C/o West Coast District Council,
R.R. #3, Mission Road,
Port Alberni B.C.
Telephone: 723-8165

Mary Lou Andrews,
P.O. Box 128, Agassiz, B.C.
Telephone: 792-0513

Wes Williams,
P.O. Box 18, Lytton, B.C.
Telephone: 256-4513

Bob Pasco,
P.O. Box 283, Ashcroft, B.C.
Telephone: 453-9098

Ron Seymour,
P.O. Box 1726, Prince George, B.C.
Telephone: 963-7553

Charles Chapman,
P.O. Box 561, Oliver, B.C.
Telephone: 498-3408

Wilson Bob,
R.R. #1, Lantzville, B.C.
Telephone: 390-4512

Walter Taylor,
782 Western Ave., Williams Lake, B.C.
Telephone: 392-2292

Brandon Kennedy,
1732 Gorse St., Prince George, B.C.
Telephone: 562-2072

Mary Louise Williams,
c/o Mount Currie Band Administration Office,
Mt. Currie, B.C.

Jeanette Gauthier,
P.O. Box 995, Chetwynd, B.C.

East Fraser District,
C/o Coqualeetza, P.O. Box 370,
Sardis, B.C.
Telephone: 858-9431

Alic Nast,
705-5th Ave. E., Prince Rupert, B.C.
Telephone: 624-3509

Nick Gessler,
C/o Haida Museum, Masset, B.C.
Telephone:

John Macko,
C/o Kwakwaka'wakw District Council,
1670A Spit Road, P.O. Box 1,
Campbell River, B.C.
Telephone: 287-4551

Ray Jones,
General Delivery, Kitsegukla Band,
Kitsegukla, B.C.
Telephone: 849-5637

Ben Bolton,
P.O. Box 634, Terrace, B.C. V8G 4B8
Telephone: 635-4367

Charlie Shaw,
P.O. Box 47, Kitimat, B.C.
Telephone: 623-7774

Cultural Centre,
C/o Land Claims Centre,
890B MacKenzie Ave.,
Victoria, B.C.
Telephone: 479-7166

Bob Manuel,
General Delivery, Chase, B.C.
Telephone: 679-3511

Angus Dickie,
Box 1140, Fort Nelson, B.C.
Telephone:



FORMER UNION EMPLOYEE, Wes Williams gets youthful assistance. Of the 34 Victoria staff and the 53 from the Vancouver office, only a core of communications workers remain. Most former field workers have, however, agreed to continue without pay. Many former employees continue to help on a volunteer basis. Others have returned home to work as organizers. The rejection of program funding has rechannelled their thinking, so that now land claims is the central issue, they say. The remaining employees will relocate to the land claims centre in Victoria by end-May.

Right to determine our own destinies

VANCOUVER (Staff) — Union of Chiefs' executive member, George Watts told the recent provincial NDP convention that Indians don't want the kind of government charity the province has been handing out in projects like the Burns Lake sawmill and the Port Simpson cannery.

In a speech delivered to more than 600 delegates at the convention Watts said that these projects were the same sort of handouts the federal government has been giving Indians for years.

"We don't want anything from the government," said Watts, "What we want is the right to determine our own destinies."

In a panel session, earlier, fellow executive member, Bill Wilson, branded the NDP members as "white-assed liberals," who talk about helping the Indians but don't do anything to allow them self-determination.

The convention passed overwhelmingly a resolution urging the government to begin immediately to negotiate a land claims settlement.

After his speech, George Watts got a rousing standing ovation as he left the platform. In his speech, he also noted he had been allowed to speak only after the convention had passed the resolution and Indian people had not been consulted in drawing it up.

That sort of attitude didn't show any real sympathy with the Indians' desires for self-determination, he said. He said, too, that Indians were tired of hearing cabinet ministers tell them how much the NDP government had done for them — all they have done was give handouts.

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B.C. IS INDIAN LAND



HARRY DICK, 79-year-old Shuswap veteran of the First World War sings to the assembly in Chilliwack. He spent two years on the battlefield. He told of raising his hand, kissing the bible and being made to swear that he would fight for God, King and Country. He noted, "This is still not my country." With his storytelling, he stole the entire conference. He wished he was young enough he said, he'd become chief and kick the Indian agent in the ass. To his left is Joe Williams who fought in the Second war. Wounded three times, he told of a hospital in Italy where a sergeant asked what he was fighting for. "My country," he said. "Your country? The white man took it." On the right is chief Joe Manual.

—(G. McKevitt photo)



AVERAGE AGE of the Union's executive committee has dropped from mid-forties to the early thirties and is probably indicative of the changing times. Elected at the recent Chilliwack general assembly were chairmen Philip Paul (at the mike), vice-chairman George Watts (centre) and secretary Bill Wilson. Previous executive members were elected by the 15 district representatives who form the chiefs' council, from among themselves. This election, however, saw the executive elected from the floor at the general assembly. Executive members are full members on chiefs' council but cannot serve as district representatives.

—(G. McKevitt photo)



AIM SINGERS occupy the centre area in the Evergreen Hall in Chilliwack during the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs' 7th annual general assembly, in late April. Earlier in the month, chiefs gathered in Terrace for a special land claims assembly. A resolution was passed that

proclaimed "B.C. is Indian land." Descendants of the original inhabitants of the land that is now known as British Columbia are gathering in late June for more talks.



JAMIE STERRITT is at the mike. In the left foreground is Adar Eneas' hat with Sterritt's shoe underneath. Said Sterritt, "That a white man with the bulls kicked out of him." Sterritt has introduced a motion which was overwhelmingly received that would allow a non-status Indian to run for the executive of the Union of Chiefs. Himself a non-status, Sterritt was nominated for an executive position. In defence of Sterritt's motion George Watts said, "If it happens that a non-status Indian has it all together, he belongs on the executive, as long as he's an Indian from B.C." He pointed out one non-status Indian from Alberta who, if he were around today, belonged on the executive — Louis Riel.

—(G. McKevitt photo)