

BC Treaty Commission Presentation
by
Chief Commissioner Steven Point
to the
Union Of BC Municipalities Convention

*9:50 – 10:20 A.M.
Malaspina Room, Fairmont Waterfront Hotel
Monday, September 26, 2005*

Check Against Delivery

THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME TODAY TO TALK ABOUT TREATY MAKING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

I WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE TREMENDOUS JOB THE UBCM IS DOING IN PROMOTING DIALOGUE AMONG LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND FIRST NATIONS THROUGH YOUR FORUMS AND PROGRAMS AND THROUGH THE ONGOING WORK OF YOUR ABORIGINAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE.

I KNOW YOU WORK CLOSELY WITH THE FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT AND FIRST NATIONS AND YOUR EFFORTS CONTRIBUTE GREATLY TO THE NEW RELATIONSHIP WE ARE ALL SEEKING.

SO, ON BEHALF OF THE TREATY COMMISSION, THANK YOU.

MY MAIN MESSAGE TODAY IS THAT THERE ARE MANY ACTIONS LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND FIRST NATIONS CAN TAKE TO BUILD BETTER RELATIONSHIPS, OR TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS IF THEY AREN'T ALREADY WORKING TOGETHER.

THERE ARE THINGS WE CAN DO.

WE HAVE BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF THESE ACTIVITIES; AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE SUPPORTIVE.

WE WILL BE RELEASING OUR 2005 ANNUAL REPORT TOMORROW IN VICTORIA.

YOU WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THEN FOR THE DETAILS, BUT I CAN TELL YOU THAT LAND USE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING ARE FEATURED IN THE REPORT.

AND HERE'S WHY. TREATY MAKING CASTS A SPOTLIGHT ON BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF LAND USE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING FOR CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR RECONCILIATION.

HOW THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER ON LAND USE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING, AND COORDINATE THEIR ACTIONS, WILL DETERMINE IF THE NEW RELATIONSHIPS WE ARE SEEKING THROUGH TREATIES WILL BE REALIZED.

FIRST NATIONS MUST CONTEND WITH THE LARGER LAND USE PLANNING ISSUES IN THEIR TERRITORIES, BUT ALSO THE PLANNING ISSUES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

OUR COMMITMENT TO BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND FIRST NATIONS REALLY SPRANG FROM THE COMMUNITY-TO-COMMUNITY FORUMS, WHICH YOUR ASSOCIATION ADMINISTERS WITH THE FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT.

COMMUNITY-TO-COMMUNITY FORUMS, AS YOU KNOW, STARTED A MUCH-NEEDED DIALOGUE BETWEEN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS AND FIRST NATIONS.

FOR SOME COMMUNITIES IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THEY HAD TALKED TO THEIR NEIGHBOURS, EITHER FORMALLY OR INFORMALLY.

THERE WAS A NEED FOR SIMILAR FORUMS TO SERVE ENTIRE REGIONS. WE HEARD THAT FROM FIRST NATIONS AND FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

WE COULD SEE THAT REGIONAL FORUMS COULD BE BENEFICIAL TO TREATY MAKING. WE THOUGHT IT MIGHT HELP SECTORAL NEGOTIATIONS.

WE WERE ABLE TO GET FUNDING FOR THREE REGIONAL FORUMS, WHICH BROUGHT TOGETHER VARIOUS REGIONAL INTERESTS IN THE CARIBOO, NORTH VANCOUVER ISLAND AND MAPLE RIDGE AREAS.

THEY HAD SOME SUCCESS, BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE THE FUNDING TO CONTINUE.

LAST FALL WE PARTNERED WITH SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY TO HOST A LEADERS' FORUM ON FIRST NATIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION AND TREATIES.

WHAT WE LEARNED IS ATTITUDES AND PLANNING PRACTICES CAN BRING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER OR TEAR THEM APART. WE HAVE SOME GOOD EXAMPLES WE CAN POINT TO. YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS HONOURED THESE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS AND FIRST NATIONS AT PAST CONFERENCES.

WE WERE UP IN PRINCE GEORGE EARLIER THIS YEAR TO HOST A DINNER WITH FIRST NATION CHIEFS, MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS.

WE ORGANIZED THE EVENT TO:

- IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE COMMISSION;
- BUILD RELATIONSHIPS IN THE REGION; AND
- HEAR ABOUT TREATY NEGOTIATIONS FIRSTHAND FROM NORTHERNERS.

WHAT WE DISCOVERED IS NORTHERNERS GET IT. THEY UNDERSTAND THE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER AND ARE DOING IT.

THAT IS NOT THE CASE EVERYWHERE IN THE PROVINCE.

BUT I AM ENCOURAGED BY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS.

MY FELLOW COMMISSIONER, MIKE HARCOURT, WAS IN NANAIMO A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO TO SPEAK AT A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BREAKFAST THAT WAS ATTENDED BY THE MAYOR, GARY KORPAN, AND SNUNEYMUWX CHIEF JOHN WESLEY.

MIKE NOTED IN HIS SPEECH THAT THE TWO LEADERS HAD SIGNED A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON WORKING TOGETHER, SHARING SERVICES AND CONSULTING EACH OTHER ON DEVELOPMENT.

THAT'S A VERY DIFFERENT SITUATION THAN WAS THE CASE JUST A FEW YEARS AGO. AND IT'S WELCOMED CHANGE.

WE ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED BY THE PROPOSAL FROM THE LOWER MAINLAND TREATY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR A ROUNDTABLE WITH FIRST NATIONS ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS. MIKE WAS ASKED TO FACILITATE THE MEETINGS AND HE HAS AGREED TO IF WE CAN GET EVERYBODY TOGETHER ON THE SAME PAGE.

TREATIES WILL BRING SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO CURRENT LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, GOVERNANCE AUTHORITIES AND THE ECONOMIC MAKE-UP OF FIRST NATIONS' COMMUNITIES AND REGIONS.

TO HELP PREPARE FIRST NATIONS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURING LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS FOR THIS NEW REALITY, WE HAVE INITIATED A PILOT PROJECT ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMUNITY PLANNING AMONG SLIAMMON FIRST NATION, THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF POWELL RIVER AND THE POWELL RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT.

THE FOUR-PHASE PROJECT COMPRISES DEVELOPMENT OF A SLIAMMON COMMUNITY PLAN, COMPARISON OF SLIAMMON AND LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANS, AMENDMENT OF PLANS AND IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING.

THE PROJECT PARTNERS WILL COMPILE A LIST OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL INTERESTS AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES.

THEY WILL PRESENT THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS IN A BEST PRACTICES GUIDEBOOK FOR USE BY OTHER FIRST NATIONS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURING GOVERNMENTS.

SLIAMMON FIRST NATION HAS PROTOCOL AGREEMENTS WITH BOTH THE CITY AND THE REGIONAL DISTRICT THAT COMMIT ALL THREE GOVERNMENTS TO WORK COOPERATIVELY IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE AND HERITAGE PROTECTION.

WE HOPE OUR EFFORTS IN SPREADING AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AND IN SUPPORTING THE SLIAMMON PILOT PROJECT WILL

BE A CATALYST FOR MANY MORE PROJECTS.

FOLLOWING OUR FORUM A YEAR AGO WE CAME UP WITH 10 TIPS FOR ESTABLISHING EFFECTIVE INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS. SEE IF YOU CAN DO ANYTHING WITH THESE SUGGESTIONS, OR MAYBE YOU ALREADY HAVE:

1. SET A GOOD EXAMPLE. LEADERS MUST LEAD.
2. DO SOMETHING. STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH ACTION.
3. THINK WE. ACT IN THE INTERESTS OF THE LARGER COMMUNITY.
4. CELEBRATE DIVERSITY. RECOGNIZE, UNDERSTAND AND RESPECT CULTURE, TRADITION AND VALUES.
5. START TALKING. DEVELOP PROTOCOLS ON COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION.
6. JOIN FORCES. PARTICIPATE AS EQUAL PARTNERS.
7. LEARN TO FIGHT. DEVELOP A DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISM AND LEARN TO DISAGREE CONSTRUCTIVELY.
8. BE CREATIVE. INVITE BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY TO BECOME COMMUNITY PARTNERS.
9. BECOME A TREATY BOOSTER. SEEK PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR A TREATY.
10. TELL YOUR STORY. IDENTIFY THE BENEFITS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP THAT INCLUDES A TREATY.

THERE IS A NEW REALITY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

TODAY, WE HAVE MANY EXAMPLES OF FIRST NATIONS WORKING WITH OTHERS TO PLAN THEIR FUTURE TOGETHER, LOOKING AT LAND USE AND AT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

TREATY NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN, AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE, A CATALYST FOR CHANGE.

THERE ARE MANY MORE EXAMPLES OF COOPERATION AND ENTERPRISE THAN WAS THE CASE WHEN WE STARTED THIS PROCESS IN 1992.

WE KNOW THAT FULL PARTICIPATION IN THE MAINSTREAM ECONOMY IS THE WAY TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR FIRST NATIONS.

THROUGH A NUMBER OF VENTURES, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, THERE ARE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR FIRST NATIONS.

IN FACT, FIRST NATIONS WITH FAVOURABLE LOCATIONS WILL SEE BIG BENEFITS, IF THEY ARE NOT ALREADY MAJOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE MAINSTREAM ECONOMY.

GOOD RELATIONSHIPS AMONG FIRST NATIONS, ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS ARE ESSENTIAL TO THAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TO COMPLETING TREATIES.

RELATIONSHIPS ARE BETTER TODAY IN MANY PARTS OF THE PROVINCE. THERE IS A NEW SPIRIT OF COOPERATION.

WE ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT TREATIES WILL COME. RECENT STATEMENTS BY THE PREMIER AND THE PRIME MINISTER SUGGEST WE HAVE REACHED A CHANGING POINT.

THERE IS A NEW REALITY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

THE PREMIER HAS PUT AN END TO 134 YEARS OF THE DENIAL OF ABORIGINAL RIGHTS AND TITLE. THERE IS NO TURNING BACK.

IN CLOSING I WOULD LIKE TO ECHO THE WORDS OF FINANCE MINISTER CAROLE TAYLOR FROM HER BUDGET SPEECH LAST WEEK.

“THIS NEW RELATIONSHIP HAS THE POTENTIAL TO RE-SHAPE OUR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE – AND CREATE A MORE INCLUSIVE AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE FOR ALL BRITISH COLUMBIANS.”