

TREATY COMMISSION

# update

*The independent voice of treaty making in British Columbia*

## Chief Commissioner appointed BC Lieutenant-Governor

Steven Point was looking forward to his next six months as chief commissioner following two successful treaty ratifications by First Nations and given the opportunities for further breakthroughs in the BC treaty process.

Point, in a speech to the First Nations Summit leaders in 2006, had advised the assembly that he would serve only one, three-year term as chief commissioner. His plan was to return to the bench early in 2008 to resume his career as a provincial court judge. But in recent weeks he was having second thoughts about ending his term. There were things he still wanted to do.

Then came the call from Prime Minister Stephen Harper offering Point the opportunity to become British Columbia's 28th Lieutenant-Governor. During the flood of media calls following the announcement Point admitted to feeling a little overwhelmed by the honour and grateful for the many good wishes and tributes. It was an opportunity Point and his wife Gwen thought too historic to ignore.

Interestingly enough, if the Tsawwassen First Nation settlement legislation is approved this fall in the BC Legislature,

*Continued on page 6*

## Strahl new Indian Affairs Minister



Chilliwack-Fraser Canyon MP Chuck Strahl becomes the ninth Indian and Northern Affairs minister since the BC treaty process was conceived in 1991.

Strahl succeeds Jim Prentice who had held the portfolio for 18 months. The Fraser Valley father of four was first elected to parliament in 1993, the year the Treaty Commission opened its doors. He was re-elected in 1997, 2000, 2004 and 2006. In the recent federal cabinet shuffle Strahl was moved to Indian Affairs from

*Continued on page 2*



update **inside**



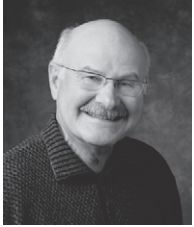
BC TREATY COMMISSION

- 3 Tsawwassen ratifies
- 5 Huu-ay-aht ratifies

- 7 Court rulings
- 8 Status Report

# Harcourt promoted benefits of treaties

Former premier Mike Harcourt has left the Treaty Commission after four years as a tireless advocate for treaty making as a tool to unlock economic opportunities in First Nation communities.



Harcourt

Appointed a commissioner in May 2003 by then federal Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault, Harcourt quickly became the Treaty

Commission's spokesperson on the economic benefits of treaties. It was his view that treaties would create billions of dollars of economic activity in the province.

At speaking engagements throughout the province, Harcourt emphasized that treaties unleash investment, support local

resource development and other types of development, and create jobs and transfer wealth and decision-making to local communities.

He was a leader in bringing comprehensive community planning for First Nation communities into the treaty lexicon. He promoted the development of a comprehensive community planning pilot project adopted by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the Communities in Transition Partnership Initiative which brought together the Treaty Commission and the Real Estate Foundation of BC.

Chief Commissioner Steven Point believes Mike Harcourt is one of the most beloved citizens in BC. "It will be almost impossible to replace him. He had that rare combination of vision and integrity.

"Mike's contribution to the Treaty Commission is much appreciated and

his valued counsel on so many issues will be greatly missed. He was a friend, colleague and trusted advisor to me."

Harcourt's departure in May leaves the independent Treaty Commission without a federal appointee and consequently hamstrung in making key decisions. Major decisions require a quorum comprising the federal appointee, provincial appointee and one of two elected First Nations Summit appointees.

Former Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice had been considering the appointment of a commissioner prior to the federal cabinet shuffle that saw him move to Industry. ☉

## Strahl new Indian Affairs Minister

*Continued from cover*

Agriculture. He is a former member of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

Chief Commissioner Steven Point, who has known Minister Strahl for many years, welcomed the appointment of a minister from BC. "I see this appointment as progressive and positive. He is no stranger to aboriginal issues and the commissioners look forward to working with him to discuss ways in which to promote wider progress in the BC treaty process."

Grand Chief Edward John, of the First Nations Summit executive, said, "We look forward to working with Minister Strahl to address the unanswered land question in BC and working together to close the serious social and economic gaps faced by First Nations people in BC and across Canada." ☉

## First Nations seek common table

The Treaty Commission has reaffirmed its support for a common table to discuss treaty issues which many First Nations say are preventing progress in treaty negotiations.

Chief Commissioner Steven Point said the idea of a common issues table has the Treaty Commission's support. "We are on record in the past as supporting such a common table approach on some issues.

"Ultimately, it a decision to be made by the Principals — the governments of Canada and BC and the First Nations Summit," said Point. "We have been in discussions with representatives of the

Unity Protocol and have agreed to further discussions."

Former Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice, as one of his last acts, advised Unity Protocol First Nations that the First Nations Summit was the appropriate body for discussion of treaty issues.

The Unity Protocol brings together a large number of First Nations that have joined forces to lobby for a better deal at the treaty table. Among the issues the Unity Protocol seeks to address are: certainty as to rights and title; constitutional status of treaty lands; governance including co-management; fiscal relations and taxation; and fisheries. ☉

# Tsawwassen members ratify treaty



Chief Baird after the vote

**T**sawwassen First Nation made history on July 25 by being the first First Nation to vote in favour of a comprehensive treaty with the federal and provincial governments under the BC treaty process.

Members voted 130 to 50 — 70 percent of registered Tsawwassen voters in favour — to accept the terms of their final agreement.

The 'yes' vote puts the Tsawwassen First Nation on the path to self-government and ends over a century of governance under the *Indian Act*. Treaty highlights include a land package of 724 hectares plus \$13.9 million over 10 years in addition to \$2 million for mineral rights, \$2.8 million for ongoing self-government costs, \$15.8 million in one-time start-up costs related to programs such as culture and parks, and a quota of the salmon fishery.

The BC government is expected to bring the treaty before the legislature in October for approval. Premier Gordon Campbell said "that as soon as the ratification legislation is in place we'll be introducing it to the legislature. I hope it will be done by this fall."

Then, the federal government will be expected to bring the treaty before parliament.

**Chief Kim Baird:** "I'm ecstatic that we received such strong support from the community. I'm very, very relieved. Our community has sent a clear message to us that this is the way forward for our community."

**Premier Gordon Campbell:** "Chief Kim Baird and the entire Tsawwassen First Nation have shown tremendous leadership by taking this historic step forward and ratifying the final agreement. Tsawwassen First Nation members have worked hard to ensure that the terms of the final agreement will help build a brighter future for their community. I commend them and the federal government for the leadership and commitment they are demonstrating by moving this agreement forward."

**Minister Jim Prentice:** "I want to extend my congratulations to Tsawwassen members, Chief Kim Baird and other community leaders on this new beginning. In voting to ratify the final agreement, members of the Tsawwassen First Nation have taken a giant step toward a more secure and prosperous future. This is a fair treaty that benefits all Canadians and creates the foundation for shared respect and prosperity."

**Chief Judith Sayers, First Nations Summit:** "There are 203 First Nation communities in BC, and we are on the verge of

the first treaty under the current treaty process. That is something to celebrate, especially given that such a large majority of members support it."

**Commissioner Jody Wilson:** "We congratulate Chief Kim Baird and the entire Tsawwassen First Nation on their treaty ratification and commend all the parties for their commitment and hard work in achieving this agreement. I look forward to watching and supporting Tsawwassen First Nation as they take up the tools in the treaty to build their community on their own terms."

**Chief Bill Cranmer, 'Namgis First Nation:** "The Tsawwassen people have built a gateway to a future where they are now the masters of their own fate. And they've done so on terms that preserve their culture, strengthen their community and provide the means to participate in the prosperity that already exists in their traditional territory."

**Ralph Drew, Chair, Lower Mainland Treaty Advisory Committee:** "I congratulate Chief Kim Baird and her community. This agreement represents a historic moment for the BC treaty process as the first final agreement to be ratified not only in the Lower Mainland, but in British Columbia." ☺

## update

is published by the BC Treaty Commission and distributed to anyone with an interest in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. Please feel free to reprint the material in this newsletter.

If you are not on our mailing list but would like to be, contact us. BC Treaty Commission  
203-1155 West Pender Street  
Vancouver, BC V6E 2P4

Toll-free 1-800-665-8330  
Telephone 604-482-9200  
Facsimile 604-482-9222  
Email [info@bctreaty.net](mailto:info@bctreaty.net)

[www.bctreaty.net](http://www.bctreaty.net)

# Agreements lay groundwork for treaties

A variety of agreements between First Nations and the provincial and federal governments are paving the way for future treaties in British Columbia.

Land use and resource management plans, resource sharing agreements, and small hydroelectric projects are helping to resolve outstanding issues around resource development and revenue sharing. At the same time, the parties are developing working relationships and laying the groundwork for treaty negotiations.

These agreements are not always tied to treaties, but help to provide land-use certainty critical for First Nations, other governments and business.

The provincial government and the Squamish First Nation announced in July a land-use agreement for the upper Elaho and Sims valleys that outlines how the land can be developed. Portions of the band's traditional lands are 'wildland' zones where commercial recreation and mining are permitted, but commercial forest harvesting is not. Other lands are set aside as cultural sites, where development must not affect the bands' sacred places or wildlife habitat. And about 11,000 hectares are in conservancies to be left untouched.

Also in July, the BC government agreed to a land-use plan that includes input from the Wet'suwet'en Nation, Lake Babine Nation, Nedo'ats Hereditary Chiefs and Yekooche Nation.

The Morice Land and Resource Management Plan area, located north of Tweedsmuir Park, is about 1.5 million hectares in size. The plan sets aside 8.2 percent of the land as protected areas, while leaving 75 percent of the area

open to forestry and 92 percent open to mining. It also sets objectives for the protection of First Nations' traditional land uses and cultural sites, and continued partnerships with First Nations to ensure ongoing plan implementation and monitoring.

"The Morice LRMP document is a starting point," says Debbie Pierre, executive director of the Office of the Wet'suwet'en. "It is definitely by no means something the Wet'suwet'en feel is completed, but through collaborative management we believe that we can effectively protect critical ecosystems that maintain the quality of life of the Wet'suwet'en."

In May, the Haida Nation announced separate, tentative agreements with the provincial and federal governments on protected land and sea areas on and around the Queen Charlotte Islands. The Haida and the BC government initialed a draft Strategic Land Use Agreement that includes the permanent

protection of 225,000 hectares of land for natural, cultural, spiritual and recreational values, the implementation of ecosystem-based management, a timber harvest of 800,000 cubic metres per year and the establishment of committees to ensure locally-driven implementation and monitoring of the agreement following its ratification.

Federally, the parties have a preliminary agreement to develop a national marine protected area at Bowie Seamount, a rare region of shallower, more biologically rich water off the coast.

Both agreements are considered breakthroughs in an area better known for lawsuits and disputes over aboriginal title.

"Through this process we have maintained the values that have given us our culture, while at the same time setting the stage for a sustainable island economy," said Council of the Haida Nation President Guujaaw. ☉

## Federal negotiators get *Cabinet okay*

The federal cabinet has given the green light to conclude three more treaties and three agreements in principle.

The decisions regarding the six First Nations came quickly on the heels of successful ratification votes by Tsawwassen First Nation and Huu-ay-aht First Nation in July.

Yale First Nation in the Fraser Canyon, Yekooche Nation northwest of Prince George and In-SHUCK-ch Nation in the Lillooet River Valley are the three First

Nations that are expected to conclude treaty negotiations soon.

While Yale and Yekooche have agreements in principle (AiP), In-SHUCK and the BC government had been waiting for a federal signature to conclude their AiP. This finally happened August 25.

'Namgis Nation, Oweekeno (Wuikinu) Nation and Te'Mexw First Nations (Beecher Bay, Malahat, Nanoose, Songhees and Sooke) are expected to conclude agreements in principle soon. ☉

# Huu-ay-aht members ratify treaty

Treaty negotiations in BC took another step forward when the Huu-ay-aht First Nation ratified the Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement.

Huu-ay-aht members voted 90 percent in favour of the Maa-Nulth treaty in a vote July 28.

Of the 303 eligible Huu-ay-aht voters who cast a ballot, 272 voted to approve the treaty providing Huu-ay-aht self government, land and cash, as well as access to fisheries, forestry and other economic opportunities valued at \$145 million. Huu-ay-aht voters also approved the transfer of Band assets to the new Huu-ay-aht government.

The Huu-ay-aht are the first of five Maa-nulth First Nations to accept the terms of the treaty. The remaining four First Nations — Ucluelet First Nation, the Toquaht Nation, the Ka:'yu:'k't'h' / Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations and the Uchucklesaht Tribe — are expected to vote on the agreement in October.

If approved, together the five First Nations will receive 24,459 hectares of land, \$120 million in lump-sum payments over the next 10 years from the federal and provincial governments, \$9.5 million annually for ongoing program funding and an estimated \$1.2 million annually in resource-revenue sharing.

## Hereditary Chief Spencer Peters:

*"The ingredients are now there for us to restore our rightful place within Canada as a strong, healthy, and prosperous people. I only wish that my father, grandfather, and great-great-grandfather could have been here to witness and celebrate this day."*

## Chief Councillor Robert Dennis:

*"I want to extend a special thanks to all of those who worked so hard for our people. Once again our people have exercised their democratic right to vote and have given the treaty a resounding vote of confidence. We can now focus our energy and resources on using the tools in the treaty to make the dreams and aspirations of our people a reality."*

## Minister Jim Prentice:

*"I would like to congratulate Huu-ay-aht members, including Chief Robert Dennis and other community leaders, on this successful ratification vote. The Huu-ay-aht First Nation has taken a significant step toward a new and more prosperous future that will also bring many benefits to the surrounding Bamfield and Port Alberni areas."*

## Premier Gordon Campbell:

*"Years of hard work at the treaty table have brought the Huu-ay-aht First Nation to this historic day. I want to congratulate Chief Councillor Robert Dennis and the Huu-ay-aht community for their commitment, leadership and determination in taking this important step towards a final treaty."*

## Commissioner Jack Weisgerber:

*"This agreement is the culmination of a long and sustained effort by the Huu-ay-aht people, with good leadership, to improve opportunities on their traditional territory." ☉*

## First Nations approve Constitutions

An important step towards self-determination and the opportunities afforded by a modern-day treaty is taken when a First Nation ratifies its constitution.

A First Nation constitution is a governance document similar to those that define and regulate other governments. Once ratified, the constitution dictates how government will operate, determines what laws will govern the First Nation, and defines the rights, privileges and responsibilities of the citizens. For example, the constitution sets out such things as who can vote and who can stand for office, the role of hereditary chiefs, and when elections must be held.

A First Nation constitution takes effect the same day as a treaty, and so it must be in place before the treaty can be implemented. And like a treaty, a First Nation constitution defines that First Nation's aboriginal rights and title, and how it will be applied after treaty.

Each of the five Maa-nulth First Nations has spent the past five years drafting their own constitutions with the Huu-ay-aht First Nation being the first to ratify.

*"This will be the first time in well over a century that our ultimate law will be created by the very people it governs,"* said John Jack, a Huu-ay-aht First Nation youth.

Constitutions are available on-line at:

[www.maanulth.ca/downloads/Constitution\\_Huu-ay-aht.pdf](http://www.maanulth.ca/downloads/Constitution_Huu-ay-aht.pdf)

[www.maanulth.ca/downloads/Constitution\\_Kyuquot\\_Checlesaht.pdf](http://www.maanulth.ca/downloads/Constitution_Kyuquot_Checlesaht.pdf)

[www.maanulth.ca/downloads/Constitution\\_Toquaht\\_Nation.pdf](http://www.maanulth.ca/downloads/Constitution_Toquaht_Nation.pdf)

[www.maanulth.ca/downloads/Constitution\\_Uchucklesaht.pdf](http://www.maanulth.ca/downloads/Constitution_Uchucklesaht.pdf)

[www.maanulth.ca/downloads/Constitution\\_Ucluelet.pdf](http://www.maanulth.ca/downloads/Constitution_Ucluelet.pdf)

[www.lheidli.ca](http://www.lheidli.ca) ☉

# Chief Commissioner appointed BC Lieutenant-Governor *Continued from cover*

the document will bear Point's signature as Lieutenant-Governor.

As chief commissioner, Point visited many First Nation communities and spoke to thousands of British Columbians.

Whether speaking at the annual general meeting of the Maa-nulth First Nations in Port Alberni, visiting the Tsawwassen First Nation reserve or addressing Lheildi T'enneh First Nation members in Prince George, or the concerns of other First Nations, Point was an advocate for reconciliation through treaty making and self government for First Nations.

From his own experience, he understood well that the treaty process represented a long-awaited opportunity for First Nations to find their rightful place in the Canadian legal and social system. In his own inimitable way, he sought to demystify that process, to

focus on the key priorities for First Nations, and to shed light on the solutions that were already emerging from negotiation tables.


He encouraged people to see the Nisga'a Lisims Government in action. He talked about their treaty journey in speeches around the province, and promoted the Nisga'a story in the Treaty Commission-sponsored film *Nisga'a Dancing in Both Worlds*.

He wrote, "Last year I was invited to witness the Nisga'a Lisims Government in action. I was very impressed with the Government House, internal government structure and their assembly. To fully appreciate the import and meaning of First Nation government, you really have to see it in action. I was blown away to borrow a phrase from my children's vernacular.

"There is no doubt that aboriginal forms of self government have always existed and continue to exist in various traditional forms," said Point. "However, with the possibility of full recognized self government rights in a constitutionally protected treaty, First Nations will finally take their place among the other founding nations of Canada."

Third-term Commissioner Jack Weisgerber will lead the commission until Point's replacement is appointed or a federal commissioner is named to replace Mike Harcourt whose term ended in May.

Weisgerber said, "Steven's appointment is significant for all British Columbians, but especially for First Nations people as it shows that they are taking their rightful place in society."

Point assumes his new duties October 1. 

## Commonly asked questions about life after treaty

**F**or many First Nations people in BC, ratifying a treaty takes a leap of faith — while a treaty represents an end to life under the *Indian Act*, the work of implementing the treaty agreement and improving lives in the First Nation community lies ahead.

First Nation members have many questions about life after treaty. For example:

### Q. What treaty rights will a First Nation have?

A. Once a treaty comes into effect, a First Nation will be entitled to the constitutionally protected rights and benefits set out in the treaty. Some of those rights

include: the right to be governed by their own laws through a First Nations government and constitution; the protection of language and culture; and the right to hunt, gather and fish according to the rules set out by the First Nation and according to the terms of the treaty.

### Q. Who has a say in a First Nation government?

A. A First Nation government is accountable to its citizens, and all laws, policies and procedures must be consistent with that First Nation's constitution. Each First Nation determines who can be a citizen through their own membership or citizenship rules and each First Nation

must ratify their constitution before the effective date of their treaty.

### Q. After treaty, what happens to my Indian Status?

A. Treaties provide for the continuation of Indian status, and members of a First Nation that ratifies a treaty will still be eligible to have a status card after the effective date of the treaty. This ensures members of a treaty First Nation will continue to have access to programs and services available to "Indian" people (as defined by the *Indian Act*) in Canada. These programs and services include: health and dental benefits, eyeglasses and prescription

# Court rulings a warning to First Nations

Two recent BC Supreme Court decisions strongly suggest First Nations resolve overlapping and shared territory issues.

The court rulings note that where there are competing claims to territory, a prima facie case for aboriginal title may not be established or may be weakened. On the other hand, the court rulings suggest resolutions among First Nations strengthen claims to aboriginal title and rights and, ultimately, the ability to conclude treaties.

The Tseshaht First Nation sought an injunction in the BC Supreme Court in July to stop the Huu-ayaht First Nation treaty ratification vote on the grounds the Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement impinged on their land claim.

The Court noted the balance of convenience rests with the First Nation

ratifying a final agreement and the non-derogation language included in treaties is recognition that a final treaty does not limit the claim of another First Nation to land or resources agreed to in the treaty.

The BC Supreme Court in *Hupacasath First Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)* and *Heiltsuk Tribal Council v. British Columbia (Minister of Sustainable Resource Management)* ruled that a prima facie case for aboriginal title may not be established or may be weakened where there are competing claims to territory.

The 1991 BC Claims Task Force Report makes it clear it is the responsibility of First Nations to resolve issues related to overlapping territories amongst themselves. To that end, the First Nations Summit did develop a protocol for the resolution of overlapping territories, but the protocol has never been used.

The BC Treaty Commission continues to be involved in discussions between the federal and provincial governments and First Nations and among First Nations on overlaps.

The Treaty Commission recognizes the need for dispute resolution services addressing unresolved overlaps involving Stage 5 and advanced Stage 4 First Nations, for whom treaty land and resource issues and the nature of resultant overlaps will have come into clearer focus.

The Treaty Commission has been facilitating overlap discussions among First Nations and is currently developing a shared territory resolution project as a first step in looking at alternatives to court action when talks between First Nations break down. ☉

drugs, home care, and other programs and services that are or will become available to 'status Indians' in Canada in the future. Members of a treaty First Nation who qualify for a status card will access these programs and services in the same way and from the same locations as they are accessed now, unless the First Nation assumes responsibility for these services. In any event, the level of existing services stays the same and may be improved to meet the needs of members.

## Q. What happens to members/citizens who do not qualify for status?

A. Individuals enrolled under the treaty are entitled to all benefits in the treaty. Citizens, not enrolled under the treaty,

are entitled to the rights as defined in their First Nations' constitution. It is up to each First Nation to determine what benefits flow to members or citizens. After treaty, First Nations determine their citizens through their own First Nation Constitution and *Citizenship Act*. It is possible after treaty that a person could be a citizen of a First Nation, but not be entitled to treaty benefits.

## Q. What about taxes?

A. The tax exemption under the *Indian Act* will continue to apply for a specified period of time after the effective date of the treaty, for example 8 years for the sales tax exemption and 12 years for the income tax exemption. Then all treaty First Nation members will pay taxes. How those taxes apply and

where income tax flows will depend on where a person resides and works.

For example, the income tax of any person (First Nation or non-First Nation) who resides on Treaty Settlement Lands will flow to the First Nation government no matter where they earn their income. The First Nation government will also receive 100% of the GST generated and 50% of the PST generated on Treaty Settlement Lands. And all First Nation government-run businesses will be exempt from income tax on profits earned on treaty lands. In contrast, a First Nation member who does not work on Treaty Settlement Lands will pay income tax to the Canadian government to pay for federal services that all Canadians (including First Nations) receive. ☉

# Status

## REPORT

*There are 58 First Nations participating in the BC treaty process. Because some First Nations negotiate at a common table, there are 48 sets of negotiations. There are 39 First Nations in Stage 4 agreement-in-principle negotiations and 8 First Nations in Stage 5 negotiations to finalize a treaty.*

### 8 First Nations in Stage 5

In-SHUCK-ch Nation  
Lheidli T'enneh Band  
Maa-nulth First Nations  
Sechelt Indian Band  
Sliammon Indian Band  
Tsawwassen First Nation  
Yekooche Nation  
Yale First Nation

Da'naxda'xw Awaetlatla Nation  
Ditidaht First Nation  
Esketemc First Nation  
Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs  
Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs  
Gwa'Sala'Nakwaxda'xw Nation  
Haisla Nation  
Heiltsuk Nation  
Homalco Indian Band  
Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group  
Kaska Dena Council  
Katzie Indian Band  
Klahoose Indian Band  
Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Treaty Council  
Kwakiutl Nation  
(in suspension)

Laich-Kwil-Tach K'omoks Council of Chiefs  
Lake Babine Nation  
Musqueam Nation  
'Nqmgis Nation  
Nazko Indian Band  
Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council  
Oweekeno Nation  
Pacheedaht Band  
Quatsino First Nation  
Snuneymuxw First Nation  
Sto:Lo Nation  
Taku River Tlingit First Nation  
Te'Mexw Treaty Association  
Teslin Tlingit Council  
Tlatlasikwala Nation  
Tsay Keh Dene Band  
Tsimshian First Nations

Tsleil-Waututh Nation  
Westbank First Nation  
Wet'suwet'en Nation

### 5 First Nations in Stage 3

Cheslatta Carrier Nation  
Hupacasath First Nation  
K'omoks First Nation  
Squamish Nation  
Tlowitsis First Nation

### 39 First Nations in Stage 4

Carcross/Tagish First Nation  
Northern Shuswap Tribal Council Society (formerly Cariboo Tribal Council)  
Carrier Sekani Tribal Council  
Champagne and Aishihik First Nations

### 6 First Nations in Stage 2

Acho Dene Koe First Nation  
Allied Tribes of Lax Kw'alaams Council of the Haida Nation  
Liard First Nation  
McLeod Lake Indian Band  
Ross River Dena Council

## Second treaty vote an option

**L**heidli T'enneh First Nation members are to decide this fall if a second treaty vote will go ahead.

A member survey conducted following the treaty rejection in March and a report from the Treaty Commission may assist members in assessing whether a second vote is warranted. The federal and provincial governments have agreed to hold lands included in the treaty until at least March 2008.

Members voted to reject the treaty settlement by a vote of 123 to 111.

Chief Dominic Frederick told the Prince George Citizen the member survey "showed not only was there misunderstanding about the treaty, but a mixture of other issues, including items that had been brewing from the past."

The Treaty Commission funded the survey undertaken by Vancouver research firm Mustel Group and conducted its own interviews with Lheidli T'enneh elders and other community leaders. Both the survey results and Treaty Commission report are in the hands of the members for their consideration. ☉

