

Dam Bennett:
The Impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and Williston Lake Reservoir on the Tsek'ehne of
Northern British Columbia

by
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Abstract

In 1968 the province of British Columbia completed the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and created the Williston Lake reservoir. Far from being an empty wilderness eagerly waiting for development, the site of this new body of water was the centre of the Tsek'ehne homeland. Unsurprisingly, the W.A.C. Bennett Dam negatively affected them. Much of their traditional territory was flooded, and because of poor planning, the three Tsek'ehne communities in the Rocky Mountain Trench were increasingly isolated from one another. BC's Aboriginal policy, with its denial of Aboriginal title, small reserves and perception of Indigenous people as lazy and in the way of progress, only made matters worse as certain pre-existing aspects suddenly became relevant and the officially recognized bands often had to deal with it on their own. Because of the impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, the connections between the three bands were weakened. Previous academics have missed this point because of their over reliance on outsider perspectives of the Tsek'ehne.

Preface

This dissertation is an original work by Daniel Sims. The research project, of which this dissertation is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “The Effects of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and Hart Highway on the Tse Keh Nay of British Columbia, 1952-2012,” Pro00022295, 10 May 2011.

Dedication

“I was young, but I know the results of the lake affect me now. I would probably be different.”¹

Oliver Tomah, 1984

¹ Ingenika Band Members, interviewed by Lorraine Izony, Ingenika, BC, 25 April 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

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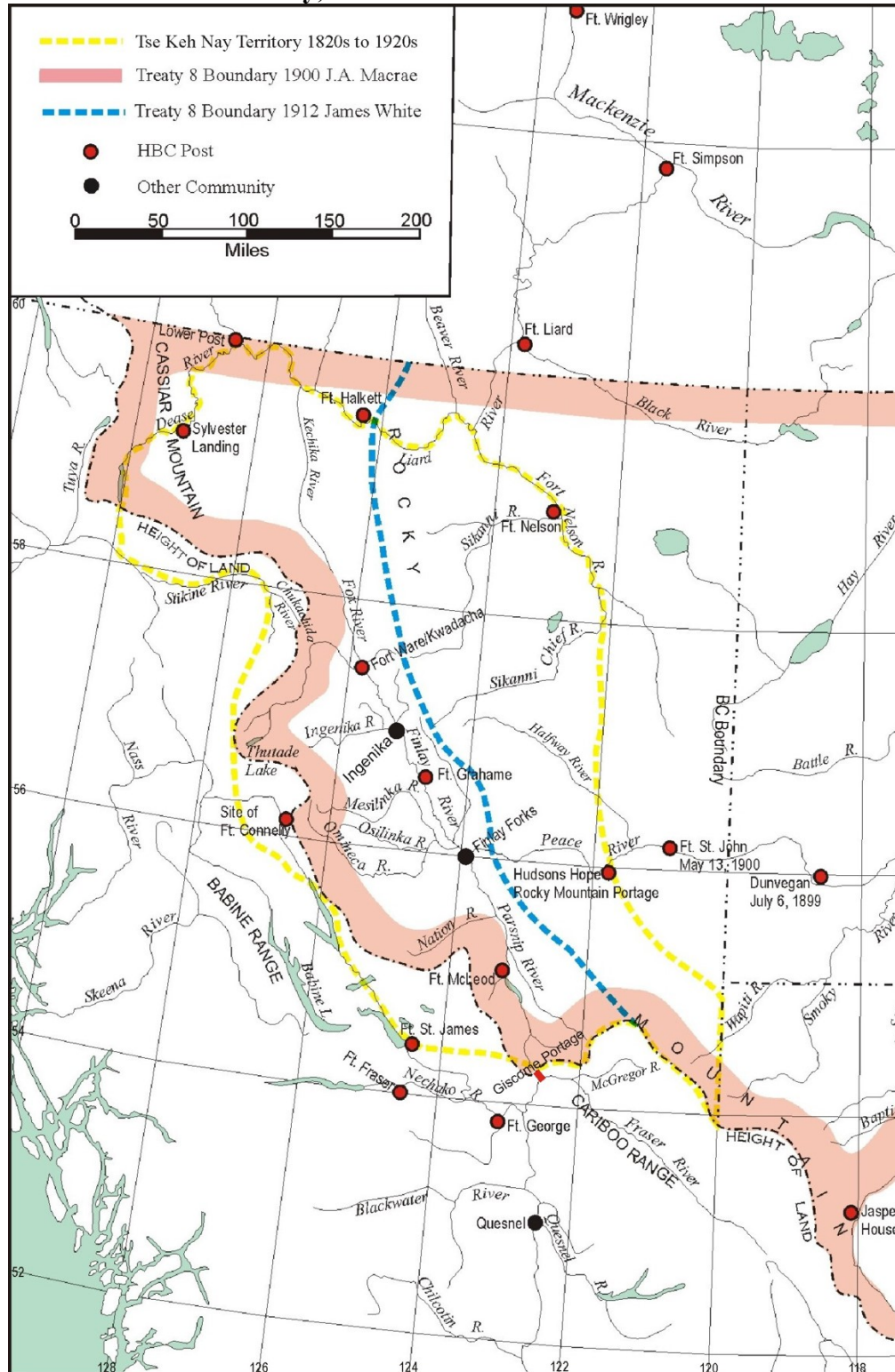
Introduction

The Tsek'ehne of Northern British Columbia live upstream of the W.A.C Bennett Dam. I am Tsek'ehne and have never known a world without the dam or its reservoir, Williston Lake. My grandparents and my parents remember the flooding that started after the dam's completion in 1968 and continued until 1972. I have grown up with stories about the flooding and the reservoir. When I tried to find academic works on the subject I found none adequately discussed the repercussions for the Tsek'ehne of either dam or reservoir. To understand those repercussions, this dissertation addresses the Tsek'ehne of northern BC, their lives before, during and after the construction of the dam and the creation of the reservoir, and the making of the dam and reservoir themselves from a Tsek'ehne perspective.

The Tsek'ehne today consist of the Kwadacha, McLeod Lake, and Tsay Keh Dene First Nations. Traditional Tsek'ehne territory is bound by the Liard River to the north; the Fort Nelson and Sikanni Chief rivers to the northeast; the central range of the Rockies to the east; the height of land to the southeast and south; Stuart Lake to the southwest; Bear Lake and the height of land to the west; and the Dease River to the northwest.¹ (See Map 1) At its heart is the northern Rocky Mountain Trench (the Trench), a significant portion of which the W.A.C. Bennett Dam flooded. A fourth First Nation, Takla Lake, is a mixed Dakelh-Tsek'ehne community created in 1959 through the union of the North Takla and Fort Connelly (Bear Lake) bands. Because of their location outside of the Trench I have not included them in this study, except in passing and then usually with regard to the Bear Lake Band.

¹ Daniel Sims, "Tse Keh Nay-European Relations and Ethnicity, 1790s-2009," (MA Thesis: University of Alberta, 2010), 66-67, *passim*.

Map 1
Approximate Tsek'ehne Territory, 1820s-1920s



Source: Map made by Gerhard Ens. Original found in Daniel Sims, "Tse Keh Nay-European Relations and Ethnicity, 1790s-2009 (MA Thesis: University of Alberta, 2010), 179-180.

Argument

The completion of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam was a triumph of colonialism and a nightmare for the Tsek'ehne. This hydroelectric project had a devastating effect on them. Much of their traditional territory was flooded, and because of poor planning, the three Tsek'ehne communities in the Trench were increasingly isolated from one another. BC's Aboriginal policy, with its denial of Aboriginal title, small reserves, and perception of Indigenous people as lazy and in the way of progress, only made matters worse for the three officially recognized Tsek'ehne bands, who had to deal with the changes brought about by the W.A.C. Bennett Dam on their own.² As anthropologist James Waldram and others have argued, in many ways hydroelectric development mirrored BC's Aboriginal policy.³ In this instance Aboriginal and hydroelectric policy in BC were both developed and enforced without much concern for or engagement with Indigenous peoples until after the policies were fully established.

The W.A.C. Bennett Dam weakened the connections between the three bands. Previous investigations missed this point because of their reliance on outsider perspectives of the Tsek'ehne.⁴ Indeed, despite conducting interviews in McLeod Lake and Fort Ware in 1978, anthropologist Guy Lanoue misunderstood what happened and falsely attributed the weak bonds between the three communities to a weak national identity or else the recent emergence of one.⁵

² Please note that since terms like Indian and Aboriginal have specific legal meanings I will use these terms when referring to relevant legal concepts and state policies. In all other matters I will use the term Indigenous to refer to the original inhabitants of what became Canada. John Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 8, 33-36, 42-43, 47, passim.

³ James Waldram, *As Long as the Rivers Run: Hydroelectric Development and Native Communities in Western Canada* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1993), 4-5, passim; Mary Christina Koyl, "Cultural Chasm: A 1960s Hydro Development and the Tsay Keh Dene Native Community of Northern British Columbia" (MA Thesis: University of Victoria, 1992), 117-119.

⁴ Koyl, 21-22; Guy Lanoue, *Brothers: The Politics of Violence Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia* (Oxford: Berg Publishers Ltd., 1992), 1-2, 141; Guy Lanoue, "Continuity and Change: The Development of Political Self-Definition Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia" (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1983), 34-35, 214-215.

⁵ Lanoue, "Continuity," 34-35, 214-215.

When you talk to Elders in all three communities, however, it readily becomes apparent that the issue is not one of identity, but the fact that often each community faced the negative repercussions of the dam alone. As a result, attempts by the three communities to come together do not represent nation building, but rather the renewing of historic ties.

This dissertation is Tsek'ehne history. It focuses on Tsek'ehne over non-Tsek'ehne perspectives and in doing so challenges the native-newcomer binary found in many other works.⁶ More specifically this work is a case study of the effects of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam on the Tsek'ehne. As a history of the Bennett Dam, it moves beyond Indigenous history and enters into the fields of energy and environmental history. In both areas what it reveals not only challenges the assertion that hydroelectric power is clean electricity, but also reveals how in a colonial situation settlers change the physical environment itself to benefit non-Indigenous people. Both conclusions transcend the Canadian state and yet this monograph is undeniably still part of British Columbian and Canadian history. It reveals the inherent conflict that exists in a federation that assigns Indigenous people to the federal government and the resources that surround them to the provincial government. Indeed, much like Adele Perry's examination of the Winnipeg aqueduct, my dissertation highlights how settler colonialism worked on the ground in Canada to ensure the needs of non-Indigenous settlers were prioritized over the needs of Indigenous people when it came to a resource – water.⁷ Reflecting the fact that this form of colonialism was

⁶ Paige Raibmon discusses this binary in depth in *Authentic Indians*. Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

⁷ Veracini and Wolfe define settler colonialism as a form of colonization characterized by a focus on land acquisition combined the replacement of Indigenous societies and labour by non-Indigenous ones. Adele Perry, *Aqueduct: Colonialism, Resources and the Histories We Remember* (Winnipeg: Arp Books, 2016): 14-15, 95, passim; Lorenzo Veracini, "Introduction," in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, ed. Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 1-6; Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999), 1-3.

systemic in nature, the laws that could have in theory protected the Tsek'ehne did not.⁸ In this instance, however, the system functioned despite the presence of a large settler population in the Trench and the on the ground implementation of past Aboriginal policies. Nevertheless, as a history of colonialism it is a global history and to paraphrase Perry, around the world settlers constructed dams, both hydroelectric and storage, to the detriment of Indigenous peoples.⁹

Reliance on Tsek'ehne perspectives differentiates this study from others that have examined their relationship to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. Energy histories tend to either ignore Indigenous voices or limit their use.¹⁰ I on the other hand conducted a large number of interviews with individuals from all three communities over two years. This study covers the period between 1793 and 1990. The length of time covered assists in understanding what life was like prior to the dam as well as what life was like after it. I selected 1990 as the cutoff date because it marks the beginning of the modern comprehensive treaty process, an event that has changed the relationship between First Nations, the province and Canada.

Prior to the dam the three communities had regularly interacted with each other and maintained a traditional lifestyle that resulted in residence up and down the Finlay, Parsnip, Pack, and Crooked rivers. This way of life was possible because European settler colonialism and numerous economic developments had not succeeded in Tsek'ehne traditional territory. As a

⁸ British North America Act, 1867, s.91(10); British North America Act, 1867, s.91(12); Navigable Waters Protection Act, RSC 1952, c.193, as amended by SC 1956, c.41.

⁹ Perry, 15.

¹⁰ A few examples include Christopher Armstrong, Matthew Evenden and H.V. Nelles, *The River Returns: An Environmental History of the Bow* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009); David Billington and David Jackson, *Big Dams of the New Deal Era: A Confluence of Engineering and Politics* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 3, 5, 13, 251, passim; Matthew Evenden, *Allied Power: Mobilizing Hydro-electricity during Canada's Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015); Matthew Evenden, *Fish versus Power: An Environmental History of the Fraser River* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Thomas Hughes, *Networks of Power: Electrification in Western Society, 1880-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); H.V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines & Hydro-electric Power in Ontario, 1849-1941*, 2nd ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005); Paul Pitzer, *Grand Coulee: Harnessing a Dream* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1994); Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).

result of this situation, BC's refusal to recognize Aboriginal title and instead create small reserves was not readily apparent to the Tsek'ehne, who continued to live on the land outside of day-to-day state control. Furthermore, when representatives of Swedish industrialist Axel Wenner-Gren first seriously proposed the Peace River project in 1957, due to their previous experiences with previous proposed economic developments, the Tsek'ehne were reasonable in believing that it would come to nothing or have a minimal impact on them. Indeed, it was not until the nationalization of BC Electric and the Peace River Power Development Company in 1961 that the project was "guaranteed" to take place.

Prior to 1961 neither level of government made much effort to ensure the Tsek'ehne truly understood anything about the project. Apart from some brief interactions by inquisitive newspaper reporters, nobody even spoke to the Tsek'ehne about the project. Further, rather than actively involving the Tsek'ehne in negotiations, after 1961 Indian Affairs more or less handled the entire matter for them. This approach proved highly detrimental for the Tsek'ehne as during this period the federal government proved unwilling to seriously challenge the province regarding the proposed dam, while at the same time Indian Affairs failed to properly inform the Tsek'ehne what was happening. As a result, once the dam was constructed the Tsek'ehne not only witnessed the drowning of their homeland, but also were suddenly made aware of the fact that the state did not recognize their title to their homeland. As well they were increasingly isolated from one another as the McLeod Lake Band and the Fort Ware section of the Finlay River Band were restricted to their respective reserves.

The Fort Grahame section of the Finlay River Band, later known as the Ingenika Band, had to wait in logging camps for three years while Ottawa and Victoria rehashed the Aboriginal lands dispute that emerged following the province's initial union with Canada. When Indian

Affairs finally formed reserves for the Ingenika Band, the people instead began to relocate to Ingenika Point near the historic village of Ingenika. As squatters, this group experienced different repercussions than isolated Fort Ware or development-surrounded McLeod Lake. These different outcomes contributed to the separation of the three bands as McLeod Lake sought a means to deal with development, while at the same time trying to benefit from what already existed; Fort Ware sought to improve supply routes and defend against development; and the Ingenika Band sought compensation and a new reserve. Working against these different consequences were all the common impacts of the dam as well as conscious efforts the three bands have made to foster unity.

Historiography

Tsek'ehne Curated History

The Tsek'ehne have their own history, historians and historical debates. Unlike Euro-Canadian history, until relatively recently the dominant format has not been written texts and even today oral forms dominate. These oral accounts are neither merely evidence nor hearsay. They stand on their own as histories.¹¹ Indeed, some Tsek'ehne purists will no doubt dislike my use of written sources throughout this work or my inclusion of optional citations for Tsek'ehne common knowledge and commonly held views. This assertion is not to say that the Tsek'ehne think oral histories are beyond critique. Like other works of history, it is important to critically analyze them, identifying not only who produced them, but also what their perspective and point is.

¹¹ There are numerous works examining the nature of oral history. The following two articles are a good start. Julie Cruikshank, "Invention of Anthropology in British Columbia's Supreme Court: Oral Tradition as Evidence in *Delgamuukw v. BC*," *BC Studies*, no. 95 (1992): 25-42; Robin Ridington, "Dane-zaa Oral History: Why It's Not Hearsay," *BC Studies*, no. 183 (2014): 37-62.

A major source of anger among the Tsek'ehne is the way western academia interact with and write about them. Many Elders feel that unless academics, scientists and government officials think they stand to gain something from the Tsek'ehne, they ignore the Tsek'ehne and their knowledge. The result according to McLeod Lake Elder Geraldine Solonas is that both levels of government left the communities to suffer in third world conditions.¹²

Many Elders fondly remember a happy time before the dam, with few to no problems.¹³ (Of course some Elders are quick to point out not everything was perfect prior to the reservoir).¹⁴ To them the Trench was beautiful and peaceful prior to flooding, and they are upset it was destroyed by a reservoir they neither like nor want. The transformation changed people, destroyed their way of life, and in some instances led to deaths. Some say this change is irreversible. Certainly the communities are still dealing with the suffering, pain and hurt the dam brought on.¹⁵ Kwadacha Elder Louie Tomah describes their traditional territory as currently being like an “old torn up shirt” – a situation that continued logging is not making better. Like a tear in a shirt, the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and its reservoir cannot be undone.¹⁶ Sure, you can mend it, but you cannot make it exactly like it was.

According to former McLeod Lake Chief Harry Chingee the biggest issue was the sudden change in ways of life.¹⁷ Expanding on this idea, former Tsay Keh Dene Chief Ray Izony argues that this shift placed the people in survival mode and in doing so led to a loss of culture due to

¹² Geraldine Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.

¹³ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this view is common. See Mary Ann and Murphy Porter, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2012. Murphy recalls BC Hydro found work for everyone, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

¹⁴ William (Billie) Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012.

¹⁵ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this view is common. See Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 September 2012.

¹⁶ Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012.

¹⁷ Harry Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012.

different priorities.¹⁸ The drug and alcohol abuse that emerged as people self-medicated did not help the situation and as a result there is a general concern that future generations might gradually lose their culture, language, and identity. The communities, however, are taking steps to prevent this loss from happening.¹⁹ Some Elders even note that they do not think the reservoir is directly to blame for this situation.²⁰

While there is a general consensus regarding the impacts of the Williston Lake reservoir there is great debate over not only intent, but also who is ultimately responsible for what happened.²¹ Tsay Keh Dene Elder Elsie Pierre blames W.A.C. Bennett himself and believes he now resides with the Devil, while former Kwadacha Chief Emil McCook blames Indian Affairs for failing to fulfill its fiduciary responsibility.²² Expanding on the latter perspective, Tsay Keh Dene Elder Billie Poole thinks Indian Affairs sold out the people, and would have done so for a dollar.²³ Others blame BC Hydro.²⁴ According to Kwadacha Elder Mike Abou everything that happened was intentional.²⁵ If Indian Affairs or the province had really wanted the Tsek'ehne to benefit they should have clearly laid out the plans and negotiated proper compensation.²⁶ Reflecting this sentiment, Tsay Keh Dene Elder Phillip Charlie told historian Meg Stanley that

¹⁸ Ray Izony, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 3 October 2012.

¹⁹ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this concern is common. Some Elders attribute this problem to intermarriage with non-Tsek'ehne. See Zepheria Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Salmon Valley, BC, 1 October 2012.

²⁰ Albert Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 11 September 2012.

²¹ Mary Ann Charlie and Laura Seymour, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2012; Gordon Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September, 2008; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

²² Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

²³ William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012.

²⁴ Robert Inyallie, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012; John Poole, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 30 September 2012.

²⁵ Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012.

²⁶ Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012.

he believes those “that flooded us out. They sit on high chairs with big cigars they light every evening. They warm their toes by the fire.”²⁷

Elders debate why the province constructed the dam in the first place. Among the Tsek’ehne it is common knowledge that the province built the W.A.C. Bennett Dam to produce electricity to supply the province of BC, but given the impacts of its reservoir on the Tsek’ehne many Elders wonder whether it was worth it.²⁸ And as Tsay Keh Dene Elder Wilson Abou said in 1984, “They hurt all of us with the lake. Not only one of us, all of us.”²⁹ Kwadacha and Tsay Keh Dene still do not receive power from the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and some Elders are upset over this basic reality.³⁰ Some think power from the dam should be free for them.³¹ Others like Kwadacha Elder Mary Jean Poole call into question the need for electricity in general.³²

Although Elders rarely use the noun colonialism most see their treatment as directly connected to the system. To paraphrase Tsay Keh Dene Grand Chief Gordon Pierre, whereas the fur trade was the beginning of the colonial experience, the reservoir destroyed the land and the people.³³ In this sense the W.A.C. Bennett Dam is an example of Indigenous lands and resources taken for the benefit of Europeans and Euro-Canadians.³⁴ It is important to bear in mind,

²⁷ Meg Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers: Harnessing the Power of the Peace and Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2010), 121.

²⁸ This knowledge of course does not mean Elders know exactly what took place. Koyl, 70; Johnny Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012.

²⁹ Ingenika Band Members, interviewed by Lorraine Izony, Ingenika, BC, 25 April 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

³⁰ Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Jimmie and Nora Massettoe, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012; Helen Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September 2012; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012; Laura Seymour, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012.

³¹ Jimmie and Nora Massettoe; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012.

³² Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012.

³³ Gordon Pierre.

³⁴ Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Patrick Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Helen Poole; William (Billie) Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 8 September 2008; Agnes Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Alfred Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012.

however, that Elders do not see what happened to them as an isolated instance.³⁵ For example, Tsay Keh Dene Elder Albert Poole sees the dam as the first of three major “developments” in the Trench; the other two being forestry and mining.³⁶ Elders also recognize that similar occurrences have taken place around the world.³⁷

Many Elders see a divide between traditional Tsek’ehne and western academic knowledge. And while this difference is not necessarily a problem, they are unhappy with the fact that due to the unequal power relationship between the two they often are forced to defend what they know when it contradicts the written accounts of early explorers, fur traders, missionaries, and academics.³⁸ Adding injury to insult individuals like former Tsay Keh Dene Chief Johnny Pierre view existing studies as largely superficial. Making matters worse, he recalls a representative of BC Hydro denied him access to archival records due to a concern it was for a specific claim.³⁹

On a very basic level, there is anger that settlers have given many geological features in Tsek’ehne traditional territory official non-Tsek’ehne names that have no relation to their historic names.⁴⁰ Beyond nomenclature, however, Tsay Keh Dene Elder Billie Poole directly connects this epistemological division to the degradation of the entire Finlay River ecosystem.⁴¹ In the case of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam many Elders are contemptuous of accounts that claim the dam benefitted the communities or the state helped the people out, and according to Grand Chief Gordon Pierre, since the state (both provincial and federal) did nothing for the people then, the

³⁵ Earl Pollon and Shirlee Smith Matheson, *This Was Our Valley* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2003), 276.

³⁶ Albert Poole, 6 November 2008.

³⁷ Pollon and Matheson, 276; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

³⁸ Mary Jean Poole, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2013; William (Billie) Poole, 8 September 2008; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter.

³⁹ Johnny Pierre.

⁴⁰ Mary Jean Poole.

⁴¹ William (Billie) Poole, 8 September 2008.

state should leave the people alone now.⁴² Still, some hold out hope that one day Euro-Canadians will understand and acknowledge what happened to the Tsek'ehne.⁴³ This dissertation is an attempt to foster this understanding through its contribution to the fields of Indigenous, environmental and energy history.

Indigenous History

This dissertation draws on and contributes to a robust collection of Indigenous histories dealing with Indigenous groups in Canada and BC. As historian Susan Neylan has pointed out “the fascination with colonialism has positioned Native-Settler relations at the heart of BC history.”⁴⁴ My dissertation joins John Lutz’s *Makuk* and Keith Thor Carlson’s *The Power of Place; The Problem of Time* in re-examining native-newcomer relations, perceptions of Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous history itself.⁴⁵ Indeed, Carlson challenges the native-newcomer framework, which still privileges non-Indigenous perspectives and in doing so helps perpetuate colonialism.⁴⁶

Both books rely upon extensive fieldwork.⁴⁷ In *Makuk* Lutz challenges the idea that Indigenous peoples in Canada were outside of the capitalist wage labour economy, arguing instead that they were historically integral to the economy of BC with recent levels of unemployment being against the historic norm. According to him the reason why this recent development is accepted as the norm is because of definitions regarding what was “real” work as

⁴² Mary Ann Charlie and Laura Seymour; Doug Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; Gordon Pierre; Pollon and Matheson, 278; Albert Poole, 6 November 2008; Helen Poole; Richard Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 27 September 2012.

⁴³ Mary Jean and Willie Poole; Agnes Solonas; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012.

⁴⁴ Susan Neylan, “Colonialism and Resettling British Columbia: Canadian Aboriginal Historiography, 1992-2012,” *History Compass* 11, no. 10 (2013): 839.

⁴⁵ Keith Thor Carlson, *The Power of Place, The Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010); Lutz, *Makuk*.

⁴⁶ Carlson, 273-275.

⁴⁷ Lutz notes he used fifty-nines distinct interviews. Quantifying the number of interviews Carlson conducted is more difficult since he does not provide a list in the book. Carlson, 286n6-8, 347-348, passim; Lutz, *Makuk*, 17, 312-315.

well as who was and was not an “Indian.” These perceptions are problematic because Indigenous involvement in the wage labour economy played an important role in the peaceable subordination that characterizes colonization in Canada. And although Lutz bases his conclusions on case studies of the Tsilhqot’in and Lekwungen nations, it is highly applicable to the Tsek’ehne, especially with regard to seasonal employment, which Lutz argues ultimately hurt Indigenous workers due to technological changes that rendered many of these jobs obsolete.⁴⁸ Indeed, since it supports many of Lutz’s conclusions with regard to Indigenous employment and how views of it changed over time, this study is almost a third case study on this topic.

Lutz’s discussion in *Makúk* regarding who was and was not an “Indian” draws in part on Paige Raibmon’s *Authentic Indians* as well as Alexandra Harmon’s *Indians in the Making*. Both scholars problematize how we categorize who is Indigenous and who is not.⁴⁹ Raibmon points out how concepts of authenticity, rather than reinforcing Indigenous identities and communities, are actually often tools of colonialism holding Indigenous peoples to an unrealistic standard that is defined by the colonizer.⁵⁰ Both authors argue the concept of who is an “Indian” is an historical construct that often emerged during the worst points of Indigenous history. These definitions often have more to do with socio-economic relations, colonialism, and the colonial binary that presents Indigenous peoples as the opposite of Europeans than with cultural ties or biology.⁵¹ Similar issues over who was authentically Tsek’ehne emerged during and following the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. My study shows that well into the twentieth century these concepts of authenticity continued to exist and depending on the situation helped or

⁴⁸ Lutz, *Makúk*, chap 4, 5, pg. 4-9, 24-26, 31, 276-288, 297 passim.

⁴⁹ Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities Around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Raibmon.

⁵⁰ Raibmon.

⁵¹ Harmon, 2-12, 246-249, passim; Raibmon, 5, 7, 205, passim.

hindered the Tsek'ehne. Furthermore, as overtly shown in chapter eight, the Ingenika Band was well aware of these perceptions and even attempted to use them to their benefit.

Lutz's examination of Indigenous employment patterns expands on Rolf Knight in *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930* first published in 1978. Knight argued against ideas that Indigenous people in BC never joined the wage labour economy after the fur trade, instead arguing that depending on the industry Indigenous involvement continued well into the twentieth century. Indeed, according to him one of the main reasons why this myth continues to exist is that many well-meaning academics focused too heavily on culture and cultural ideals, ironically often out of a desire to save both for Indigenous people. Although labour history is not the focus of my dissertation, it nonetheless adds to the findings in Knight's work regarding Indigenous involvement in the forest industry, especially in the Prince George region.⁵² As shown in chapter one, the forest industry emerged in the early twentieth century and took off after World War II. From the beginning, the work force included Tsek'ehne.

Before *Makuk*, in two articles, Lutz examined not only the involvement of Indigenous peoples in the early British Columbian economy, but also what their participation meant to them.⁵³ In "After the Fur Trade" he pointed out that not only did Indigenous people in BC continue to be part of the economy after the establishment of colonies and decline of the fur trade, but until 1890 they were numerically the dominant group in the province.⁵⁴ This

⁵² Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia, 1848-1930* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), ix-xi, 3-9, 14-15, 18-22, 239-240, 321-328, passim.

⁵³ John Lutz, "After the Fur Trade: The Aboriginal Labouring Class of British Columbia, 1849-1890," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1992): 69-93; John Lutz, "Work, Sex, and Death on the Great Thoroughfare: Annual Migrations of 'Canadian Indians' to the American Pacific Northwest," in *Parallel Destinies: Canadian-American Relations West of the Rockies*, ed. John Findlay and Ken Coates (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

⁵⁴ Lutz, "After the Fur Trade."

conclusion might sound self-evident today, but it is important to remember that these finds or arguments helped move the academic discourse away from asking whether Indigenous people were involved to what this involvement meant.⁵⁵ Reflecting this transition in “Work, Sex, and Death on the Great Thoroughfare” Lutz examined the annual migration that emerged on the Pacific Coast, arguing it was neither a case of Indigenous peoples abandoning old ways nor a direct continuation of them. It was both, a situation that the status based prestige economy made possible.⁵⁶ Despite not focusing on labour history per se, my dissertation contributes to a better understanding of the rationales for the involvement of Indigenous peoples in wage labour economy. For example, well into the twentieth century the Tsek’ehne were involved in a seasonal migration that not only enabled them to sell their labour, but also helped them fund culturally important ways of life, such as hunting and trapping.

In *The Power of Place; The Problem of Time* (2010) Keith Thor Carlson examines Sto:lo and challenges the primacy of “native-newcomer relations,” terms, and frameworks often found in Indigenous history. According to Carlson, Indigenous history, identity, and culture is situational and ever evolving, something often downplayed by scholars who either want to make their subject matter easier to work with or else choose to focus on the victimization resulting from the unequal power relationship associated with native-newcomer relations. Because history is situational, Carlson calls into question why, rather than being nation specific, many scholars have taken a regional pan-Indian approach to Indigenous history that often is of little relevance to the communities included. At the same time, he is careful to recognize that specificity of events is not a denial of overarching structures and in fact both influence each other. My

⁵⁵ Andrew Parnaby, “‘The Best Men Who Ever Worked the Lumber:’ Aboriginal Longshoremen on Burrard Inlet, 1863-1939,” *Canadian Historical Review* 87, no. 1 (2006): 54.

⁵⁶ Lutz, “Work, Sex, and Death on the Great Thoroughfare.”

dissertation is nation specific and grounded in an Indigenous perspective. It provides a detailed history of an important event in Tsek'ehne history from a Tsek'ehne perspective. At the same time it recognizes that this history has many commonalities with other Indigenous groups. By dealing with the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam at the level of the Tsek'ehne rather than the individual federal recognized bands, I challenge the notion that Kwadacha, McLeod Lake, and Tsay Keh Dene are distinct entities. Just because Indian Affairs maintained separate band lists, does not mean they are in fact completely separate.⁵⁷ I also challenge the notion that all Indigenous peoples are the same and therefore my examination of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam does not include all First Nations affected by it. Rather I focus on the Tsek'ehne.

Both Lutz and Carlson draw on the work of historical geographer Cole Harris, who examines how the colonial process transformed the conceptual geography of BC.⁵⁸ In *Making Native Space* (2002) he argues that British Columbian Aboriginal land policy transformed the province, dividing it into Indigenous space and non-Indigenous space. To fix this colonial situation he suggests the province must come to terms with its history and work to reconceptualize the land regime of the province. Part of this process is understanding that the province's Aboriginal land policy went against general Aboriginal land policy in Canada, resulting in provincial-federal conflicts, almost no treaties, two reserve commissions, and much smaller reserves than the rest of Canada.⁵⁹ Provincial policy negatively impacted the Tsek'ehne when it came to providing compensation for the W.A.C. Bennett Dam as much of the land the Tsek'ehne actively used was not reserve land. Furthermore, Harris' work primarily looks at the

⁵⁷ Carlson, 8-10, 24-31, 34, 271, 273, passim.

⁵⁸ Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2002); Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographic Change* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2000).

⁵⁹ Cole Harris, *Making Native Space*.

nineteenth and early twentieth century, while I primarily examine the second half of the twentieth century. In many ways this difference reflects the fact that colonial processes that Harris examines did not end when his study did.⁶⁰ Indeed, as my study reveals many of the processes he describes in *Making Native Space* did not come into full effect in northern BC until after 1938, a fact which no doubt explains the book's focus on the coast and southern half of the province.⁶¹

Taking a completely different approach from all of these histories is Robin and Jillian Ridington's groundbreaking 2013 book *Where Happiness Dwells*. Co-authored with Elders of the Dane-zaa First Nation, the Ridingtons rely heavily on oral histories to produce a Dane-zaa history from creation to the present that privileges Dane-zaa interests. As a result, although the book is similar to Carlson's *The Power of Place; The Problem of Time* in focusing on a single nation, it is radically different in its use of large block quotes to preserve the original oral text of the Dane-zaa oral histories. Indeed, to make the book accessible to community members the Ridingtons not only avoided excess non-Dane-zaa citations, but also largely limited references to outside literature to the last chapter.⁶² Although this approach to citations is usual for most academic works, it serves to privilege Dane-zaa knowledge. In a similar vein, I have heavily relied on Tsek'ehne oral histories for my dissertation and while I discuss parallels to other Indigenous histories I try to make sure I do not downplay the unique aspects of Tsek'ehne history.

⁶⁰ Cole Harris, *Making Native Space*; Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia*.

⁶¹ Cole Harris, *Making Native Space*.

⁶² Robin Ridington, Jillian Ridington, and Dane-zaa First Nations Elders, *Where Happiness Dwells: A History of the Dane-zaa First Nations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013), 359, passim.

W.A.C. Bennett Dam Histories

Academic studies of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam appeared almost immediately after it was constructed. For example, planner David LeMarquand completed his dissertation “Environmental Planning and Decision Making for Large-Scale Power Projects” in 1972. Based on the immediate negative effects he argued that the state needed a system in which interest groups could influence projects like the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, as prior to this point the provincial state was institutionally required to only consider the economic and practical aspects of a project. One aspect of this proposed system was the creation of an environmental review agency as he concludes the then Environmental and Land Use Committee was powerless. Unfortunately, the closest LeMarquand comes to discussing the Tsek’ehne is when he noted the impacts downstream on fifteen-hundred Indigenous peoples, and thirty-eight Indigenous peoples in the reservoir area.⁶³ Presumably these thirty-eight were Tsek’ehne, but one cannot be entirely sure because he never refers to them by any specific name. If it does refer to them, the number is too small and reveals the amount of ignorance surrounding the Tsek’ehne during this period and even today. While my dissertation parallels LeMarquand in critically analyzing the planning that went into the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, it deviates from it by focusing on the Tsek’ehne.

This difference in focus is the main distinguishing feature between Tsek’ehne histories and W.A.C. Bennett Dam histories, for while any study of the modern Tsek’ehne must include the dam, the same is not true for every study of the dam. Lawyer James Howell for example examined the project’s legal and political context as well as its impacts on the Peace-Athabasca Delta in “The Portage Mountain Hydro-electric Project” (1978) without ever really mentioning the Tsek’ehne. And even though he was critical of government promises, the Columbia River

⁶³ David LeMarquand, “Environmental Planning and Decision-making For Large-Scale Power Projects,” (MA Thesis: UBC, 1972), ii, iv, 1-10, 67, 71-72, 79-81, 87-88, 103, 105-116, *passim*.

Treaty, and the legal framework that surrounded the project, when it came to the impacts on Indigenous peoples he looked downstream.⁶⁴ To put it bluntly the repercussions on Fort Chipewyan and the Peace-Athabasca Delta have come to dominate the public discourse surrounding the W.A.C. Bennett Dam.

Critical approaches to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, like Howell's, are challenged by historian Stephen Tomblin in his 1990 article "W.A.C. Bennett and Province-Building in British Columbia" in which he examines the meaning of all the developments during W.A.C. Bennett's tenure as premier. According to Tomblin, everything Bennett did was part of a well-planned policy of promoting, developing and protecting BC. This argument is a direct challenge to those who have argued that Bennett had no plan.⁶⁵ Tomblin's focus, however, is not on the effects of any of these developments and he fails to mention the Tsek'ehne at all. Nevertheless, his argument suggests that Bennett planned for what happened to the Tsek'ehne, did not care about what happened to the Tsek'ehne, or else his planning was not as good as Tomblin suggests. Based on the fact the effects of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam caught the province by surprise (as I show in chapter five) it appears the latter was the case.

Sociologist Karl Froschauer re-examines this planning as part of a wider investigation into hydroelectric development and development in general across Canada. In *White Gold* (1999) he argues BC's "industrialization by invitation" in the form of hydroelectric projects was believed at the time to not only lead to development and economic activity, but also trumped political and economic considerations, including the rights of Indigenous peoples. Despite this

⁶⁴ James Howell, "The Portage Mountain Hydro-electric Project," in *Northern Transitions*, vol. 1, *Northern Resource and Land Use Policy Study*, ed. Everett Peterson and Janet Wright (Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Resource Committee, 1978), 31 55-56-59.

⁶⁵ Stephen Tomblin, "W.A.C. Bennett and Province-Building in British Columbia," *BC Studies*, no. 85 (1990): 45-46, *passim*.

recognition, like Howell and Tomblin he does not discuss the Tsek'ehne, although he does mention the Eeyou (Cree) with regard to the James Bay Project, arguing the Québec government saw them as part of nature, and therefore just one more thing that hydroelectric development would change.⁶⁶ My work reveals one instance in which political and economic considerations trumped the rights of an Indigenous group, the Tsek'ehne.

Tina Loo is the first historian to focus on the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and discuss the Tsek'ehne in any significant manner. In her 2007 article "Disturbing the Peace," she examines the environmental and social impacts of the dam through the lens of James Scott's concept of high modernism.⁶⁷ Introduced in his book *Seeing Like a State* (1998), Scott argued that large scale state planning had a tendency to run into unforeseen problems due to expert knowledge not being tempered by practical knowledge, which he calls *mētis*. This outcome revealed that rather than attempting to completely understand any situation, the state simplified the data it collected based on their desired outcome. It was this simplification, combined with unchecked state power and a self-confident belief in the ability of science and technology to improve the world that set the stage for disaster.⁶⁸ One can find all of these factors in connection to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. Not only did investigations simplify the environment of the Trench without regard to local Tsek'ehne knowledge, but the provincial Social Credit government firmly believed in their ability to improve the area combined with consistent majority governments that allowed them to act on this conviction.

⁶⁶ Karl Froschauer, *White Gold: Hydroelectric Power in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), ix, xiii, 4, 14-16, 174-175, 233, *passim*.

⁶⁷ Tina Loo, "Disturbing the Peace: Environmental Change and the Scales of Justice on a Northern River," *Environmental History* 12 (2007): 895-919; James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

⁶⁸ Scott, 1-8, *passim*.

Loo uses the term “environmental justice” in “Disturbing the Peace” to refer to a way of thinking about developments that helps state officials avoid and/or rectify the problems associated with Scott’s concept of high modernism. In particular, she argues that in order for those negatively affected to receive amends not only does the state need to deal with the damage to the environment, but also there needs to be an understanding of the different ways individuals perceive environmental change.⁶⁹ In short, the practical knowledge Scott juxtaposes with expert knowledge needs to be reconciled with the latter. Indeed, as she argues in her 2016 article “High Modernism, Conflict, and the Nature of Change in Canada,” not only is practical knowledge not categorically opposed to expert knowledge, but depending on the situation the latter can be quite useful.⁷⁰

Loo’s articles are highly relevant as my dissertation seeks to convey an understanding of how the Tsek’ehne perceived the changes the W.A.C. Bennett Dam brought on. So too is Joy Parr’s 2010 book *Sensing Changes* in which she argues not only that our bodies are instruments of detection and analysis, the so-called archive of the body, but also that when examining environmental changes and developments historians should employ these perceptions as opposed to attempting to merely examine the “facts.” To do otherwise according to her is to miss an important part of the story: how major environmental changes affected local residents.⁷¹ Nowhere is this fact more apparent than in the interviews I conducted. Beyond merely flooding a significant portion of their homeland, the perception many Elders have of the environment

⁶⁹ Loo, “Disturbing,” 895, *passim*.

⁷⁰ Tina Loo, “High Modernism, Conflict, and the Nature of Change in Canada: A Look at *Seeing Like a State*,” *Canadian Historical Review* 97, no. 1 (2016): 66, *passim*.

⁷¹ Joy Parr, *Sensing Changes: Technologies, Environments, and the Everyday, 1953-2003* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 1-4, 8-23, 189-198.

around them has been challenged as they interacted with a radically changed, yet familiar, environment.

As an environmental historian, Loo's focus is the project itself and not the Tsek'ehne. Her 2011 article, co-authored with historian Meg Stanley, titled "An Environmental History of Progress," focuses on hydroelectric development in BC, arguing that these so-called improvements led to the emergence of "high modernist local knowledge" that not only resulted in the changes seen after construction was complete, but also changed how local environments and levels of knowledge were perceived by residents. And although its synoptic view is excellent when it comes to understanding hydroelectric development in BC as a whole, its lack of focus on the Tsek'ehne misses unique aspects of the effects on them of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam.⁷² My dissertation aims to rectify this situation, while at the same time joining a large roster of works dealing with this topic, such as Jeremy Mouat's *The Business of Power* and other works on the Columbia River Project.⁷³ That state officials created new local high modernist knowledge alongside the Williston Lake reservoir is beyond a doubt and the coming to terms with this new epistemology was central to how the Tsek'ehne responded to the negative impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam.

In 2010 Stanley published an official history of the Peace and Columbia River projects titled *Voices from Two Rivers*. Written for the BC Hydro Power Pioneers, it seeks to merely document the social processes connected to both rather than criticize or critically analyze the

⁷² Tina Loo and Meg Stanley, "An Environmental History of Progress: Damming the Peace and Columbia Rivers," *Canadian Historical Review* 92, no. 3 (2011): 399-427, passim.

⁷³ Jeremy Mouat, *The Business of Power: Hydro-electricity in Southeastern British Columbia, 1897-1997* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1997); Jeremy Mouat, "The Columbia Exchange: A Canadian Perspective on the Negotiation of the Columbia River Treaty, 1944-1964," in *The Columbia River Treaty Revisited: Transboundary River Governance in the Face of Uncertainty*, ed. Barbara Cosens (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2012); Jeremy Mouat, "Columbia River Treaty and Canada," *The Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, http://historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=10474 (accessed 15 April 2016).

events. Stanley does acknowledge, however, that not everyone benefited from the project or even agreed with it. Still, she did conduct interviews with Tsek'ehne Elders in an attempt to understand their point of view.⁷⁴ She even sent copies of the book to these Elders when it was completed. For these reasons it is better than the previous official history *Gaslights to Gigawatts*, which as historian Holly Nathan points out, only mentions the Tsay Keh Dene in a mere two pages and then misspells their name.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, Stanley's work is still somewhat celebratory of the history of BC Hydro.

Nathan examined media portrayals of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and Indigenous peoples until 1969 in her 2009 thesis "Building Dams, Constructing Stories" arguing that no one really questioned if the project should happen, merely how they thought it could best happen. She found that although Indigenous topics repeatedly appeared in the news media during this period, almost no one talked about the potential impacts of the dam on the Tsek'ehne. In a break with the previous works on the W.A.C. Bennett Dam Nathan is equally critical of scholars, such as Lanoue and Koyl, who do not question whether the province should have constructed the dam.⁷⁶ (A similar sentiment exists in Tsay Keh Dene's former Director of Land and Resources Derek Ingram's 2012 thesis "Community-Based Knowledge Capture" in which he argues one cannot quantify the impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett.)⁷⁷ Nathan's thesis ends with the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, with only a cursory mention of the period afterwards in her conclusion.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Stanley, 4-9, 20-26, 38-39, 66-67, 103, 105-106, 110-113, 120-121, 251-256, 278n22-278n29m 279n34-279n37, 299-300, passim.

⁷⁵ BC Hydro Power Pioneers, *Gaslights to Gigawatts: A Human History of BC Hydro and Its Predecessors* (Vancouver: Hurricane Press, 1998), 226, 228; Holly Nathan, "Building Dams, Constructing Stories: The Press, the Sekani and the Peace River Dam, 1957-1969" (MA Thesis: University of Northern British Columbia, 2009), 105-106.

⁷⁶ Nathan, ii, 4, 9, 103, passim.

⁷⁷ Derek Ingram, "Community-Based Knowledge Capture: Tsay Keh Dene Development and Online Archival System" (MA Thesis: University of Northern British Columbia, 2012), 17, passim.

⁷⁸ Nathan.

Hydroelectric Histories

The history of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam exists within a broader historiography on dams and electrical networks. Two particular approaches within this field are especially relevant to this study. The first considers the role these developments play in the society they are built in, while the second examines their effects on Indigenous peoples. Since my dissertation does not focus on the W.A.C. Bennett Dam alone, the former is relevant in helping me gain a better understanding of the history and logic behind hydroelectric development. It is in the second area that my dissertation advances the most. My contribution reflects the fact that although the historical narrative described within is unique, one can find the overarching themes around the world, especially with regard to other Indigenous peoples.

Falling within the former group is Thomas Hughes' 1988 book *Network of Power* in which he argues that electrical infrastructure is a cultural artifact, which by World War I symbolized modernity and progress, remade nature itself, and was increasingly conceptualized as a resource.⁷⁹ David Billington and Donald Jackson's 2006 *Big Dams of the New Deal Era* as well as Paul Pitzer's 1994 *Grand Coulee* repeat the first part of Hughes' argument, that dams and electrical infrastructure are cultural artifacts, with Pitzer adding that the Grand Coulee dam is also a monument to society's dependence on electricity.⁸⁰ The second part of Hughes' argument, that nature itself is remade and conceptualized as a resource, is expanded on in Richard White's 1995 *The Organic Machine* in which he argues that the hydroelectric development of the Columbia River created an organic machine, a blending of nature and technology made possible by the socially constructed aspects of the former.⁸¹ In helping me conceptualize hydroelectric

⁷⁹ Hughes, 2, 176, 265, 405, 465.

⁸⁰ Billington and Jackson, 3, 5, 13, 251, passim; Pitzer, xiii-xv, passim.

⁸¹ White, ix-x, 4, 57-58, 61-62, 109-113, passim.

dams as cultural artifacts that remake nature itself, these books helped me better understand the motives behind the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and what it meant to those who supported it. It was thanks to these perspectives that I quickly recognized the logic of hydroelectric development – the belief that hydroelectric development, and the renewable energy it provided, would naturally lead to industrialization, further development, and economic growth. As noted in chapter two, many proponents of the project readily embraced this logic.

All three works discuss local Indigenous peoples, but do not focus on them.⁸² The same is true for the work of Matthew Evenden. For example, although he makes repeated references to Indigenous groups in British Columbia in 2004's *Fish versus Power*, his focus is on the lack of hydroelectric development on the Fraser River. In part, Evenden takes this approach because in his view not only did Indigenous peoples not renew their activism until the 1970s, but the state did not even consult with them prior to the 1960s. Nevertheless, my work in many ways reflects the common trends Evenden recognizes in hydroelectric histories, namely the identification of the factors that led to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and subsequent documentation of its impacts. Indeed, while he argues that the province did not dam the Fraser because of a combination of opposition from those concerned about salmon conservation, the lack of political will, and the alternatives of the Peace and Columbia, it was the lack of salmon, existence of a strong political will, and perceived benefits that resulted in the damming of the Peace.⁸³ Evenden's work helps me understand the political atmosphere that existed in British Columbia during the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam.

⁸² Billington and Jackson, 239-241, *passim*; Pitzer, 216, 219-223, *passim*; White.

⁸³ Evenden, *Fish versus Power*, 2-3, 16, 183, 271-276

Evenden firmly connects his work to the field of political economy.⁸⁴ In *The River Returns*, Evenden and his co-authors historians Christopher Armstrong and H.V. Nelles argue that environmental history represents the mixture of political economy and the environmental movement just as the Bow River represents the mixture of human culture and agency and the forces of nature.⁸⁵ H.V. Nelles had earlier documented the intimate relationship between development, business, and the state in *The Politics of Development*. In it, he had argued that despite the industrialization of Ontario, state control in many ways remained feudal in nature, with the provincially owned Ontario Hydro being a necessary evil, detached as much as possible from responsible government.⁸⁶ In part, this lingering legacy stems from the instrumentalist view of nature discussed in *The River Returns* that poses the question of how to best use nature. As they point out, in Canada the first step was often to displace Indigenous people. This change might have come later on the Parsnip and Finlay rivers, but just as with the Indigenous groups living along the Bow River, the Tsek'ehne have been affected by a river management system that for most part does not consider their needs and has not defined their water rights.⁸⁷ It is my belief that in examining the repercussions of these oversights my dissertation will help end them.

Perhaps nowhere better is Evenden's political economy approach better illustrated than in his most recent book, *Allied Power*, in which he examines hydroelectric development in Canada during World War II. He argues that hydroelectric power not only drove Canadian industries during the war, but also resulted in more hydroelectric development taking place, even in instances where other considerations had prevented it in the past. The entire processes' connection to the war effort in turn reinforced the view that dams were beneficial, especially

⁸⁴ Armstrong, Evenden and Nelles, Evenden, *Allied Power*, 11, passim; Evenden, *Fish versus Power*, 10.

⁸⁵ Armstrong, Evenden and Nelles, 7, 16, 20-22, 386.

⁸⁶ Nelles, 1-2, 489-495, passim.

⁸⁷ Armstrong, Evenden and Nelles, ix, 386, 392.

when it came to the spread of industry, while the call for energy conservation became a forerunner to the later environmental movements. In turn, the war shaped future growth throughout Canada as the role of the federal government in regulating a resource that constitutionally fell under provincial jurisdiction posed new political questions, while the uneven level of development reinforced regional differences. In the case of British Columbia the shortages caused by corporate strategies, noncommittal federal policies, and the international nature of many rivers set the stage for not only the Peace River project, but also the Columbia River project by calling into question the intentions of the federal government and companies like BC Electric.⁸⁸ As a result, when the province announced the former, it did so in an atmosphere that called for more electrical generation, and a distrust of the federal government and the province's power companies. My dissertation examines the outcome.

Also taking a political economy approach is historian Jack Glenn who argues that the development of the Oldman River Dam in Alberta in 1991:

Revealed the disparity between what our governments say about the environment and Indian people and how they act towards them, and... [illustrated] the impotence of special interest groups in effecting changes that are contrary to the received wisdom.⁸⁹

Of relevance to the case of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, Glenn notes how Alberta quickly claimed constitutional jurisdiction over the Oldman River to the point of infringing on federal jurisdiction, which Ottawa only half-heartedly defended and ultimately abandoned, thereby allowing the province to be in control and resulting in legal action from affected parties like the Piikani. As revealed in chapter four a similar situation existed in British Columbia prior to the completion of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, especially with regard to the Navigable Waters

⁸⁸ Evenden, *Allied Power*, 3-8, 11-14, 164, 184, 189-193, 199-200.

⁸⁹ Jack Glenn, *Once Upon an Oldman: Special Interested Politics and the Oldman River Dam* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), xi, *passim*.

Protection Act. According to Glenn, this outcome is less than ideal as the courts are limited in their ability to change policy or the laws that support them.⁹⁰ Like Billington and Jackson, Pitzer, White and Evenden, however, Glenn's focus is not on groups like the Piikani, but on the Oldman River Dam itself.⁹¹

Many other works, however, do focus primarily on the impacts of hydroelectric developments on Indigenous peoples. In *Dammed Indians* (1982) Michael Lawson argues that only differences between historic land seizures and the flooding of Aboriginal lands for public works in the United States is the "claimed" justification behind both as well as what the state does with the land once it is acquired. According to him, some historians have overlooked this similarity because of a focus on the nineteenth century when examining Indigenous peoples, something he hopes to change.⁹² My dissertation is part of this change. Indeed, some of the Elders I interviewed were "Baby Boomers" and if you accept the notion that one generation passes oral traditions to another, while oral history is a retelling of direct experiences, I have predominantly dealt with the latter.

Many other academics in Canada and the US have also taken up his call to examine Indigenous people in the twentieth century. Richard Salisbury for example discusses the effects of the James Bay project on the Eeyou (Cree) in his 1986 book, *A Homeland for the Cree*. As the first modern "treaty" in Canada, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement stands as a stark contrast to what happened to the Tsek'ehne. Indeed, Salisbury argues that the Eeyou have not only become more integrated into wider Canadian society, but also have strengthened wider Eeyou identity to the point where they have a strong sense of national identity and a sense of

⁹⁰ Ibid., 8, 10-11, 270-273, passim.

⁹¹ Billington and Jackson, 239-241, passim; Glenn, 8, 270, passim; Pitzer, 216, 219-223, passim; White.

⁹² Michael Lawson, *Dammed Indians: The Pick-Sloan Plan and the Missouri River Sioux, 1944-1980* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), xii-xxiii, 179-194, 199-200, passim.

their own homeland. According to him, this transformation is not because of the James Bay project or agreement per se, but through the project and agreement. In other words, the project provided an impetus for further unity by providing a common threat, while the agreement itself is in fact a product of this unity.⁹³ It is an argument that is highly relevant to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and the Tsek'ehne as it suggests a similar outcome as the James Bay project would have required not only unity, but also the sense of a common threat. My dissertation examines why this sense of unity in many ways has still not emerged despite attempts to bring the three nations together.

James Waldram's *As Long as the Rivers Run* (1993) expanded and localized on Lawson's overall argument. As mentioned above he argued hydroelectric policy in Western Canada was a continuation of treaty and scrip policy. Mirroring James Scott, Waldram points out that local knowledge about the importance of waterways to northern communities and their economies differed from state views of the same waterways, resulting in hydroelectric projects that benefitted southern cities, whose non-Indigenous residents often see this form of electricity as green energy, and have no clue it hurts northern communities. Finally, with regard to federal-provincial relations he argues that nationwide the federal government, despite its fiduciary responsibility, avoided intervening in hydroelectric developments due to provincial control of resources.⁹⁴ As my dissertation reveals all of these conclusions appear to be true with regard to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, with the possible exception that continuation of past policy merely perpetuated the problems that emerged due to a lack of treaty with the Tsek'ehne.

⁹³ Richard Salisbury, *A Homeland for the Cree: Regional Development in James Bay, 1971-1981* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1968), 1-12, 135, 138-141, 147-148, 150, passim.

⁹⁴ Waldram, 5-17, 178.

Historian Jean Manore challenges the argument that hydroelectric development and Indigenous peoples are diametrically opposed in her book *Cross-Currents* (1999), arguing it is a false dichotomy that ignores the complexity of the situation. According to her one can see this complexity by taking an approach to environmental history that reveals agency, cooperation, and commonality rather than a “winner takes all” situation. In common with Hughes, Billington and Jackson, Pitzer, and White she sees hydroelectric dams as a physical manifestation of the bonds that unite society. Speaking specifically about Indigenous peoples, she concludes that they have suffered due to interpretations of the common good, equality, and treaties that ignore Aboriginal and treaty rights.⁹⁵ As my dissertation reveals the Tsek’ehne faced similar issues with regard to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and it often appears the different state agencies involved, including one Crown Corporation – BC Hydro, thought they were acting in the interest of the common good even when their actions seemed to be obviously detrimental to the Tsek’ehne.

Also in 1999 James Hornig published an edited collection of essays on the James Bay Project in northern Quebec titled *Social and Environmental Impacts of the James Bay Hydroelectric Project*.⁹⁶ Hornig saw the project as “an unusually rich case history of the physical and social environmental impacts accompanying a modern-day megaproject of economic development”⁹⁷ that revealed tensions between economic planning, the lack of environmental oversight, and how pre-existing conflicts emerging from competing visions and values can be made worse through a lack of information.⁹⁸ As my dissertation reveals one could say the same thing about the W.A.C. Bennett Dam.

⁹⁵ Jean Manore, *Cross-Currents: Hydroelectricity and the Engineering of Northern Ontario* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999), vii-viii, 1, 30-33, passim.

⁹⁶ James Hornig, ed, *Social and Environmental Impacts of the James Bay Hydroelectric Project* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999).

⁹⁷ Hornig, ed, “Preface,” xi.

⁹⁸ Ibid., “Preface,” xi-xii.

Not surprisingly, authors in this collection challenge concepts of progress and examine the difference between perceived and real impacts.⁹⁹ Among these authors, anthropologist Adrian Tanner's article "Culture, Social Change, and Cree Opposition to the James Bay Hydroelectric Development" is particularly relevant to my study as he argues that social breakdown emerges with the disintegration of traditional life caused by development.¹⁰⁰ As my dissertation shows many of the social issues associated with colonialism only emerged following the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir.

The James Bay Project has remained an important focus of studies examining the impacts of hydroelectric projects on Indigenous peoples. For example, in 2008 Thibault Martin and Steven Hoffman produced an edited collection titled *Power Struggles: Hydro Development and First Nations in Manitoba and Quebec* that compares James Bay and the Northern Quebec Agreement with hydroelectric developments in northern Manitoba and the Northern Flood Agreement.¹⁰¹ The editors argue that while Quebec has apparently moved towards nation-to-nation relations, Manitoba has maintained a mere business relationship with First Nations.¹⁰² With many of the First Nations in BC still lacking treaty it is unclear what path the province will take.

⁹⁹ Raymond Coppinger and Will Ryan, "James Bay; Environmental Considerations for Building Large Hydroelectric Dams and Reserves in Quebec," in *Social and Environmental Impacts*; B.D. Roebuck, "Elevated Mercury in Fish as a Result of the James Bay Hydroelectric Development: Perception and Reality," in *Social and Environmental Impacts*; Adrian Tanner, "Culture, Social Change, and Cree Opposition to the James Bay Hydroelectric Development," in *Social and Environmental Impacts*; Stanley Warner, "The Cree People of James Bay: Assessing the Social Impact of Hydroelectric Dams and Reservoirs," in *Social and Environmental Impacts*; Kesler Woodward, "The Impact of the James Bay Hydroelectric Development on the Art and Craft of the James Bay Cree," in *Social and Environmental Impacts*; Oran Young, "Introduction to Issues," in *Social and Environmental Impacts*.

¹⁰⁰ Tanner, 124.

¹⁰¹ Thibault Martin and Steven Hoffman, ed., *Power Struggles: Hydro Development and First Nations in Manitoba and Quebec* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2008).

¹⁰² Thibault Martin and Steven Hoffman, "Introduction," in *Power Struggles*, 3-4.

Several articles in this collection are particularly relevant to my dissertation. The first is Steve Hoffman's "Engineering Poverty" in which he concludes that the destruction of Indigenous ways of life caused by hydroelectric projects was an intended outcome of hydroelectric projects.¹⁰³ This argument reflects a wider theme in the book that the modern treaties are a continuation of historic treaties and policies.¹⁰⁴ Somewhat related to this argument is Brian Craik's "Governance and Hydro Development in Quebec and Manitoba" in which he argues Ottawa constitutionally has a role to play in Indigenous development in the provinces, and therefore the provinces should stop looking internally when considering this matter.¹⁰⁵ As my dissertation highlights, however, reaching an agreement that benefits all parties, Indigenous, provincial and federal, is hard to do and as in the case of the Ingenika Band can come undone at any time.

Aboriginal water rights are fundamental to understanding the impacts of hydroelectric development. In *Native Peoples and Water Rights* (2009) Kenichi Matsui examines how Aboriginal water rights changed in western Canada between 1870 and the 1930.¹⁰⁶ He argues that "the codification of land and water rights became an integral part of the colonial process."¹⁰⁷ This process included not only Indigenous demands for recognition of their water rights, but also the wider federal-provincial conflict over resources that has existed in Canada since Confederation. In the case of BC, the federal government initially resisted the province's denial of Aboriginal water rights until 1921 when the province partially recognized them. This situation

¹⁰³ Steven Hoffman, "Engineering Poverty: Colonialism and Hydroelectric Development in Northern Manitoba," in *Power Struggles*, 127-128, passim.

¹⁰⁴ Martin and Hoffman, ed.

¹⁰⁵ Brian Craik, "Governance and Hydro Development in Quebec and Manitoba," in *Power Struggles*, 292-294, passim.

¹⁰⁶ Kenichi Matsui, *Native Peoples and Water Rights: Irrigation, Dams, and the Law in Western Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 6.

stood in stark contrast to the Nakoda on the Bow River, who were able to exercise their water rights to not only benefit from hydroelectric projects on the river, but also set a precedent for future developments.¹⁰⁸ In highlighting this difference, Matsui's work is highly relevant to my study as it reveals the different ways provinces treat Indigenous peoples when it came to their water rights. As seen in the negotiations preceding the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam the rights that were considered were land rights and then only reserve land.

One can also see a complete disregard of Indigenous water rights in Adele Perry's *Aqueduct: Colonialism, Resources and the Histories We Remember* in which she examines the history of the Winnipeg aqueduct within the context of settler colonialism. She argues the development is an excellent example of settler colonialism and colonial erasure, in which the land, water, and resources of Indigenous people deemed of value are taken for the benefit of settlers, while the impacts on and very existence of the Indigenous people affected are ignored. As she notes, one can find a connection between civic development and settler colonialism worldwide and it is quite clear that projects like the W.A.C. Bennett Dam are another example of this relationship. Similarly, her concise description of how the colonial state disregarded and ignored the Shoal Lake First Nation during and after the construction of the Winnipeg aqueduct is eerily reminiscent of the treatment of the Tsek'ehne and W.A.C. Bennett Dam, right down to the celebration of the finished project and repeated promises by state agencies to help the nation out.¹⁰⁹

Reflecting the international reality of settler colonialism, Perry's book is reminiscent of Martin Chanock's *Law, Custom, and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and*

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., chap. 3-4, p. 41, 137-139, 143, passim.

¹⁰⁹ Perry, *Aqueduct*, 7-8, 10 14-18, 45, 47, 53, 68-69, 73, 85-93, 95-96, 98-100, passim.

Zambia, in which Chanock argues that the law is an instrument of colonialism.¹¹⁰ As Perry highlights, Canadian law contains mechanisms to facilitate developments that not only negatively affect Indigenous peoples, but which they also oppose. Indeed, as she points out, the federal government easily abused its guardianship relationship with status Indians, especially in the name of the common good.¹¹¹ Douglas Harris makes an analogous argument in *Landing Native Fisheries*, which examines the fishing station reserves in BC. Although created to facilitate fishing, these reserves were prevented from achieving this goal by the federal Department of Fisheries, which denied the Aboriginal right to fish.¹¹² With regard to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam all of these works help explain why the state agencies involved in construction felt that they had legally done all they were required to do to prepare the Tsek'ehne for the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir. In short, they were operating within a legal system designed to fail all involved.

Northern Histories

This dissertation is also a contribution to northern history. As historian Liza Piper points out “within Canadian historiography, there are two forms of northern history.”¹¹³ The first, and older tradition defines Canada as a northern nation and therefore includes works from all across Canada, while the second defines the “North” as the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions of Canada. Piper defines this latter iteration as focusing on power relations between the politically “weak” north and the politically “strong” south as well as native-newcomer relations in a part of the

¹¹⁰ Martin Chanock, *Law, Custom, and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹¹¹ Perry, *Aqueduct*, 16, 59-70.

¹¹² Douglas Harris, *Landing Native Fisheries: Indian Reserves and Fishing Rights in British Columbia, 1849-1925* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 2-17, 1870-198, passim.

¹¹³ Liza Piper, “Coming in from the Cold: The Landscape of Canadian Environmental History: Canada and the Circumpolar North,” *Canadian Historical Review* 95, no. 4 (2014): 567.

world where Indigenous groups often still dominate numerically.¹¹⁴ It is within this second tradition that my dissertation falls. The province constructed the W.A.C. Bennett Dam for the benefit of the Lower Mainland¹¹⁵ and therefore tensions not only existed between Indigenous groups and settlers, but also amongst settlers based on their geographic location.

Jim Mochoruk's 2004 book *Formidable Heritage* explores how the physical environment defined as the Canadian North is often viewed by Canadians living outside of the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions as only useful for what it can become, and how it can make non-Indigenous people rich. According to him, this has led to environmental disasters, deteriorated relations, and conflicts between Indigenous peoples and the state.¹¹⁶ Although his focus is northern Manitoba, Mochoruk's conclusions apply to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and its impacts on the Tsek'ehne. As most notably seen in my first two chapters despite being one of the first areas of the province to see permanent European settlement, northern British Columbia tended to be disregarded except when individuals deemed it of value and as a result every generation rediscovered it. The Peace River project was no different. Unlike previous proposals, however, it was actually constructed.

Expanding on what this relationship meant for Indigenous people is Ken Coates's 1993 book *Best Left as Indians*. Examining Yukon, Coates discusses a geography and community of Indigenous peoples related to the Tsek'ehne, especially the Tsek'ene of Kwadacha. He argues against simplistic narratives such as partnership, dependency or underdevelopment, instead concluding that the relationship between native and newcomer was complex and shaped contemporary Yukon society. Furthermore, the relative lack of European settlement until the

¹¹⁴ Piper, 567-569.

¹¹⁵ For the purposes of this dissertation the Lower Mainland includes everything south of Whistler and west of Hope.

¹¹⁶ Jim Mochoruk, *Formidable Heritage: Manitoba's North and the Cost of Development, 1870 to 1930* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2004), xii-xiii, 379-380, *passim*.

postwar period allowed for the continuance of many traditional economic activities alongside part time and/or seasonal employment.¹¹⁷ The same is true for the Tsek'ehne and it was not until the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam that the colonial state disrupted these activities.

Frank Tough's *As Their Natural Resources Fail* examines northern Manitoba, another region where Indigenous people dominate. Unlike Coates, however, Tough does not see the relationship that formed between Indigenous people and newcomers as anything ever approaching a balance. Nor does Tough accept that in the North life remained unchanged until the postwar period. And although his study is different from mine due to the time period examined as well as issues surrounding the acquisition of the Rupert's Land and the North West Territories, treaties, and scrip, which for the most part simply do not exist in BC, his study is important to this dissertation. Like Coates, Tough challenges many of the simplistic "feel good" narratives found in northern history, such as the myth of economic partnership. He does so in an attempt to ascertain the historic causes of contemporary economic issues among Indigenous peoples.¹¹⁸ In a similar vein my dissertation seeks to explain how once self-sufficient Tsek'ehne suddenly found themselves on welfare. Indeed it could be argued that much like first contact, the processes Tough describes merely happened to the Tsek'ehne at a much later date.

Moving away from a primary focus on native-newcomer relations is Liza Piper's 2009 *The Industrial Transformation of Subarctic Canada*, which examines development in the North as well as our perceptions of what the North represents. Arguing that many individuals conceptualized the North as pristine untouched wilderness, Piper challenges the simplistic notion that development is a binary of saving the environment or making a profit. She points out that

¹¹⁷ Ken Coates, *Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840-1973* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 4-5, 14-15, 37, 166, 193, 244-245, passim.

¹¹⁸ Frank Tough, "*As Their Natural Resources Fail: Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930*" (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), 8-9, 299, 301-302, 307, passim.

not only were Indigenous peoples often involved in development, but also their knowledge was often essential to it, especially when it came to transportation on the rivers that were often the only way in. Of particular relevance to the Tsek'ehne is that these developments include hydroelectric projects which differ from other projects due to the level of commitment they represent. After all, one cannot simply shut down and abandon a dam like the W.A.C. Bennett Dam if it proves unprofitable or undesirable. Furthermore, following Piper's line of reasoning as a representation of industrialization and commodification in northern BC, the dam divorced the Peace River and Trench from the local environment, connecting it with Vancouver, and transforming the waters from a resource to a commodity suitable for the metropole.¹¹⁹

Tsek'ehne History

Ethnographers and anthropologists wrote the earliest studies focusing on the Tsek'ehne. The first was missionary ethnographer Adrien Gabriel Morice, who published both popular histories, including newspaper articles, and academic articles in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹²⁰ He presented the Tsek'ehne as the archetypal noble savage, completely nomadic without any historic villages or permanent houses.¹²¹ Anthropologist Diamond Jenness followed Morice in 1924.¹²² He argued the Tsek'ehne were comprised of "a number of bands

¹¹⁹ Liza Piper, *The Industrial Transformation of the Subarctic Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 2, 6, 40, 56, 253-254, 283, passim.

¹²⁰ D.L.S. [A.G. Morice], *Fifty Years in Western Canada: Being the Abridge Memoirs of Rev. A.G. Morice, O.M.I.* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1930); A.G. Morice, "Caledonia and Its Oborigines: Said to Have Descended from the Jews," *Fort George Herald*, 14 January 1911; A.G. Morice, "The Fur Trader in Anthropology: And a Few Related Questions," *American Anthropologist* 30, no. 1 (1928); A.G. Morice, *The Great Dene Race* (Vienna: The Press of the Mechitharistes, 1906); A.G. Morice, *The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia (Formerly New Caledonia), 1660 to 1880* (Smithers: Interior Stationery Ltd., 1978); A.G. Morice, "Notes Archaeological, Industrial, and Sociological on the Western Denes with an Ethnographical Sketch of the Same," *Transactions of the Canadian Institute* (1893); A.G. Morice, "The Western Dene: Their Manners and Customs," *Proceedings of the Canadian Institute*, Toronto 26, No. 152 (1889).

¹²¹ D.L.S., 39-40, 50-51; Morice, "Caledonia and Its Oborigines;" Morice, "The Fur Trader in Anthropology," 79-80, 84; Morice, *The Great Dene Race*, 37; Morice, *The History of the Northern Interior of British*, 5, 7; Morice, "The Western Dene," 116, 165.

¹²² Diamond Jenness, *The Sekani Indians of British Columbia*, no. 84, *Anthropological Series*, no. 20 (Ottawa: J.O. Patenaude, 1937), v.

with no central organization and very little unity.”¹²³ Justice, according to him, was by blood-feud since no one had the authority to administer any other form.¹²⁴ After Jenness the Tsek’ehne were not “studied” until anthropologist Guy Lanoue in 1978.¹²⁵ This meant that when the W.A.C. Bennett Dam was constructed the most recently published material on them was from Morice or Jenness.

Lanoue’s book, *Brothers: The Politics of Violence Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia*, is for the most part a condensed version of his dissertation, “Continuity and Change: The Development of Political Self-Determination Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia.” In both he compares Tsek’ehne society in McLeod Lake and Fort Ware from contact to the present. He does not, however, examine Ingenika.¹²⁶

Writing after the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, Lanoue argues that McLeod Lake suffered more than Fort Ware from the Williston Lake reservoir, but does note that the impacts of the Williston Lake reservoir were different for both bands, and have influenced how each views development and the reservoir itself.¹²⁷ Still he concludes that the Tsek’ehne have continued “to act within the confines of their cultural tradition, especially those aspects of their tradition which deal with their manner of establishing bonds between people.”¹²⁸

Since Lanoue’s dissertation, a number of academics have written theses and dissertations examining the Tsek’ehne. In 1982-1983 community and regional planner Yvonne Harris conducted field research in Fort Ware and McLeod Lake in an attempt to determine how Fort

¹²³ Ibid., 5.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 44-46, passim.

¹²⁵ Lanoue, “Continuity,” 2.

¹²⁶ Lanoue, *Brothers*, ix-x, passim; Lanoue, “Continuity and Change,” i, passim.

¹²⁷ Lanoue, “Continuity,” 36-38, 54, passim.

¹²⁸ Lanoue, “Continuity,” 2.

Ware should deal with development.¹²⁹ It was not until 1992 that Mary Christina Koyl examined the Ingenika Band in her thesis “Cultural Chasm,” which focused on that band to the detriment of Fort Ware and McLeod Lake. A possible reason for this decision is Koyl’s belief that the concept “Sekani” is a European construct, lacking both an endonym and concept of a wider identity.¹³⁰

Koyl, who had worked for the provincial government, takes a romantic binary approach to her examination of the impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam on the Tsay Keh Dene alone. In other words, she presents the Tsay Keh Dene in almost “noble savage” like terms that are in direct opposition to the traits often associated with them by the colonial state of BC. And although culturally sensitive, her work comes across as apologetic when she concludes that because of a lack of understanding regarding cultural differences there was nothing the state could have done to make the Tsay Keh Dene comprehend what was going to happen. She even cites ignorance as a defense for the state not knowing the Tsek’ehne existed, suggesting name changes only made the matter worse. Perhaps most troubling is that she does not argue hydroelectric development should stop, merely that state officials need to tell Indigenous people in a culturally sensitive manner that their homeland is going to be flooded. Still she does argue the state refused to act once officials identified a problem and that the bands needed proper compensation.¹³¹

One problem many of these works have had in common is that often they have missed Indigenous agency, something individuals like Henry Reynolds have sought to rectify with

¹²⁹ Yvonne Harris, “Choices for Change: A Study of the Fort Ware Indian Band and Implications of Land Settlements for Northern Indian Bands” (MA Thesis: University of British Columbia, 1984), ii-v, 21, 43, 116-123, *passim*.

¹³⁰ Koyl, 11, 21-22, 103, 124.

¹³¹ Although Koyl never explains why she focuses on Tsay Keh Dene alone, she does acknowledge the Williston Lake reservoir also impacted McLeod Lake and Kwadacha. *Ibid.*, ii-iii, vii, 3, 5, 15, 25-35, 45-47, 69-70, 79, 81-83, 90, 96-97, 99, 119-125, 127-130, *passim*.

subaltern works like *The Other Side of the Frontier: Aboriginal Resistance to the European Invasion of Australia* (1981).¹³² Indeed, Reynolds argues in *The Law of the Land* that the greatest fabrication of the European settlers in Australia was the denial of Aboriginal title.¹³³ This statement is equally applicable to BC and as my dissertation reveals even in situations where it is highly curtailed Indigenous agency persists. As Frantz Fanon asserts in *Black Skin, White Mask*, despite the fact that it is their relationship to the colonizer that defines the colonial other, at times this reality is not apparent until the relationship between the two is overt in nature.¹³⁴ For many Tsek'ehne the true depth of this realization did not occur until after the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam.

Sources, Methods, and Research Considerations

I based my dissertation on a wide array of archival records from not only state archives, such as the BC Archives and Library and Archives of Canada, but also numerous private archives ranging from the *ad hoc* Kwadacha Archives to the archives of the University of Northern British Columbia. I have relied heavily on provincial and Indian Affairs records pertaining to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and relocation of the Ingenika Band as well as the personal papers of W.A.C. Bennett and Ray Williston found at the Simon Fraser University and University of Northern British Columbia archives respectively.¹³⁵ In the case of W.A.C. Bennett

¹³² Although the book originally came out in 1981, the 2006 edition makes a direct reference to being subaltern studies on page 4 of the new introduction. Henry Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier: Aboriginal Resistance to the European Invasion of Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press Ltd., 2006).

¹³³ Henry Reynolds, *The Law of the Land* (Melbourne: Penguin, 1987).

¹³⁴ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 89-90, 126-128.

¹³⁵ For specifics and a complete list see the bibliography. British Columbia Archives (BCA), Portage Mountain Development..., GR-0880; BCA, Peace River Power Development Company fonds, MS 2353; Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), Relocation of Indians – Ingenika Band, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1; LAC, Relocation of Indians – Ingenika Band, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27; LAC, Economic Development Division series, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355; LAC, Electric Power Industry in Canada – Correspondence on the Peace River Project: General Registry, RG 25, Volume 5611 File Part 1, File 12989-40; LAC, British Columbia – Wenner-Gren Development: Canadian National Railway Company fonds, RG 30, Volume 14440; Northern British Columbia Archives (NBCA), Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13; Simon Fraser University Archives (SFUA), W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55.

this source was invaluable as the restricted premier records were somewhat lacking in relevant information.¹³⁶ Beyond these specific collections, I also examined records dealing with the Tsek'ehne and their traditional territory in general.¹³⁷ Thanks to numerous successful Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) requests, some of these came from the federal Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.¹³⁸ Finally, I had access to reports and in house publications created by researchers and community members alike.

In addition to archival records and secondary sources, I have relied on a large number of oral interviews. Between March 2012 and March 2013 I conducted sixty interviews with Elders from Kwadacha, McLeod Lake, and Tsay Keh Dene. I also received permission from ten Elders I interviewed during the research for my MA thesis to use their interviews in my dissertation. Factoring in repeats and those who chose to be anonymous, I interviewed around sixty different individuals of a population of around 1,614 or roughly 4% of the population.¹³⁹ One must remember, however, that like most First Nations in Canada the majority of the population is young. So this number is actually a good representation of Tsek'ehne Elders.

¹³⁶ BCA, British Columbia Premier's Records 1953-1972, GR-1414.

¹³⁷ For specifics and a complete list see the bibliography. Most notably there are the numerous Chief Inspector of Indian Agencies/Indian Commissioner records found in RG 10. BCA, Records of Mining Claims and Other Material, 1909-1939, GR-0257; BCA, Northern British Columbia Fish and Wildlife Records, GR-1085; BCA, Wilson Duff Research Notes, GR-2809.

¹³⁸ For specifics and a complete list see the bibliography. Given the nature of records that require an ATIP request not everything proved useful for this dissertation and therefore does not appear in it. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Band Alliances – Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, V-2003-02158-2, Box 3, Volume 1, File E4200-9-2395; INAC, Environmental Protection – Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, V-2003-02158-2, Box 3, Volume 1, File E5000-2395.

¹³⁹ INAC, "Registered Population: Kwadacha," http://fnppn.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca/fnp/Main/Search/FNRegPopulation.aspx?BAND_NUMBER=610&lang=eng (accessed 25 August 2017); INAC, "Registered Population: McLeod Lake," http://fnppn.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca/fnp/Main/Search/FNRegPopulation.aspx?BAND_NUMBER=618&lang=eng (accessed 25 August 2017); INAC, "Registered Population: Tsay Keh Dene," http://fnppn.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca/fnp/Main/Search/FNRegPopulation.aspx?BAND_NUMBER=609&lang=eng (accessed 25 August 2017).

I did not conduct interviews the first time I visited any of the communities for this project. Instead, I attended meetings, presentations, and events where I got to introduce myself and my research to the community and to the Elders. I also got to know the Elder coordinators in Kwadacha and McLeod Lake: Susan McCook and Kathy Parkinson. Once this step was completed I arranged interviews with Elders at a location that was convenient and desirable to them, be it their home, place of work, the band office, or the Prince George Native Friendship Centre. I recorded interviews in audio alone, often taking notes and occasionally receiving secondary sources from the Elders.

I conducted my interviews in a free flowing manner, starting with the basic question of what life was like prior to the dam, or in the case of McLeod Lake, the highway. Although the first language of most of the people I interviewed is a dialect of Tsek'ehne (i.e. Tsek'ene, Tse'khene or Tsay Keh Nay), English is the *lingua franca*.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, there are issues regarding language loss at residential school and for those adopted out. As a result, I conducted interviews primarily in English, with some Elders using Tsek'ehne during certain parts. Questions would then build off what the interviewee told me, with four additional questions almost always being asked in one form or another: when did you first hear about the dam, what were the impacts of the dam, what are the connections between the communities, and what does it mean to be Tsek'ehne? This free flowing manner was not only respectful to the interviewee, the majority of whom are Elders, but also allowed them to tell me what was most important to them. Reflecting the holistic nature of Tsek'ehne knowledge and understanding, sometimes the interviews appear to veer away from the topic at hand, only to reconnect in the end. This approach allowed Elders to share not only what they knew, but also how they perceived the

¹⁴⁰ Depending on how you interpret the meaning of first language, English could be considered the first language of many, but this categorization is problematic.

impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and Hart Highway. In doing so, it connected to Joy Parr's concept of the archive of the body found in *Sensing Change* in which perceptions of change are as important as the changes themselves.¹⁴¹

I let the interviews drive my research. Almost all of my archival research took place after I had conducted sixty of my seventy interviews (including the ones from my MA thesis). This meant that the interviews I conducted shaped what I looked and I often found myself looking for sources that Elders informed me about that were not readily apparent as relevant when looking at finding aids or using search engines.

Terminology

The term Tsek'ehne refers to the ethnic group of Indigenous peoples that includes the Kwadacha, McLeod Lake, Takla Lake, and Tsay Keh Dene First Nations commonly known as the Sekani.¹⁴² Although phonetically identical, each First Nation has its own spellings of the term: Kwadacha – Tsek'ene, McLeod Lake – Tse'khene, Takla Lake – Sekani, and Tsay Keh Dene – Tsay Keh Nay. Other spelling variations exist as well and the entire matter is reflective of the issues surrounding standardization of spelling an oral language. To use one of these spellings over all others when referring to the ethnic group as a whole would privilege it, and suggest one spelling is correct, while the others are wrong. Reflecting this fact when the Kwadacha, Takla Lake and Tsay Keh Dene came together to protect Amazay Lake from a proposed gold mine they used a compromise spelling of Tse Keh Nay.¹⁴³ Furthermore, the Tsek'ehne language has different dialects and regional variations. To reflect this variation when referring to a member or

¹⁴¹ Parr.

¹⁴² They are numerous different spellings of Sekani in the historical literature. Takla is often excluded.

¹⁴³ Loraine Littlefield, Linda Dorricott and Deidre Cullon, "Tse Keh Nay Traditional and Contemporary Use and Occupation at Amazay (Duncan Lake): A Draft Report," unpublished report, 2007, 4, passim; Tse Keh Nay, "Tse Keh Nay – Save Amazay Lake from Northgate Minerals!" www.tsekehnay.net (accessed 7 September 2009; site now discontinued).

members of a particular band, including the band itself, I use their preferred spelling of Tsek'ehne.

I use the word “band” to refer to groups recognized officially or *de facto* by Indigenous Affairs or Indigenous organizations. The more modern term of First Nation, which has more or less replaced band, is also used. In addition, I use historic terms throughout my dissertation that might seem outdated. For example, I almost always refer to Indigenous Affairs as Indian Affairs or “the Department” despite the fact that during this period (See Appendix A) it went from being a branch to a department to a branch and back to a department, with numerous names changes, the most recent being from Aboriginal Affairs to Indigenous Affairs.¹⁴⁴ (See Appendix A)

Similarly, the statutes cited to claim constitutional jurisdiction over Indigenous peoples in Canada, as well as protect their rights, do not use the term Indigenous. The British North America Act 1867 uses the term Indian in section 91, while the Constitution Act 1982 not only uses the term Aboriginal, but also defines it to include Indians, Inuit, and the Métis.¹⁴⁵ For this reason, terms like Indian and Aboriginal remain in common use, especially with regard to terms like Indian/Aboriginal policy, Aboriginal title, and Aboriginal rights.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, the numerous court cases that have examined this jurisdiction as well as these rights use both terms and in some instances given them legal meaning. For example, *re. Eskimos* (1939) and *Daniels v. Canada* (2016) confirmed that the Inuit and Métis were included in the term “Indian” found in the British North America Act 1867.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ This decision is based on the fact that it was and still is commonly referred to as Indian Affairs. It also reflects the fact that in Canada Indigenous Affairs continues to handle the affairs of status Indians, not status “Aboriginals” or status “Indigenous” and status cards still state the holder “is an Indian under the law.” Of course Indigenous Affairs also manages the affairs of the Inuit and increasingly the Métis.

¹⁴⁵ British North America Act, 1867, s.91(24); Constitution Act, 1982, s.25, s.35, s.35.1.

¹⁴⁶ Indeed, Aboriginal rights is the term used in sections 25 and 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Constitution Act, 1982.

¹⁴⁷ *Daniels v. Canada* [2016] SCC 12; *re. Eskimos* [1939] SCR 104.

The three First Nations included in this study have also had various names over the years. Kwadacha began with aatse Davie of the Sasuchan of the Fort Grahame band, the T'lotona and the Tseloni and appears in the historical record as the Oetzane; the Fort Grahame nomads; the Whitewater band; the Fort Ware band; the Finlay River band; and the Fort Ware band once again prior to formally adopting their current name of the Kwadacha First Nation. In 1929 the BC Provincial Police even referred to them as Liard Band, although this usage appears to be limited to one source.¹⁴⁸ Complicating the situation some band members also have Kaska or Tahltan ancestry.

McLeod Lake is often said to have emerged from the Tsekani proper and Yutuwichan and appears in the historical record as the Fort McLeod Band prior to the standardization of their current official name – the McLeod Lake Indian Band. Often colloquially referred to as the McLeod Lake First Nation, some band members maintain that the community is an amalgamation of not only the two groups mentioned above (the Tsekani and Yutuwichan), but also the Dakelh and Nehiyawak. This claim might reflect the fact that some band members have Dakelh, Nehiyawak, or Tahltan ancestry, although it is unclear. Further complicating the situation McLeod Lake Elder Doris Prince has heard that Kwadacha and Tsay Keh Dene are descendants of those Tsek'ehne who wanted to move further north to find isolation.¹⁴⁹

Tsay Keh Dene is often said to have emerged from the Sasuchan, the T'lotona, and the Tseloni and appears in the historical record as the Fort Connelly Band; the Bear Lake Band; the Fort Grahame Band; the Finlay River Band; the Tall Grass Indians; the Ingenika Band; and the

¹⁴⁸ BCA, Northern British Columbia Fish and Wildlife Records, GR-1085, Box 1, File 2, Letter to the NCO from Constable C.D. Muirhead, 6 March 1929.

¹⁴⁹ Doris Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 26 September 2012.

Tsay Keh Dene First Nation.¹⁵⁰ A 1975 Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources report on the Ingenika Band even refers to them as the Finlay Forks Band, although since the report suggests this name was official it appears to be a corruption of the Finlay River Band rather than another name.¹⁵¹ Some band members have Tahltan ancestry, a situation that in part exists due to connections with Caribou Hide/Metsantan.

The entire situation and connection to the five commonly accepted historic Tsek'ehne groups: Tseloni, T'lotona, Sasuchan, Yutuwichan, and Tsekani is far more complicated and Tsek'ehne individuals debate it to this day. Furthermore, many Tsek'ehne and some academics consider the Dane-zaa, if not the Kaska or Tsuu T'ina, to be part of the same ethnic group.¹⁵² Sometimes outsiders even mistakenly referred to the Tsek'ehne as Dane-zaa in the past.¹⁵³ Complicating the situation is that men traditionally practiced exogamy.

Within accounts of the three First Nations there is not always consistency in the way sources have spelled the names of certain individuals, especially when one factors in the time frame of this study. Confusing the matter is that authors often identify people with a particular great family depending on their relatives, even if the last name of the individual in question is not the same.¹⁵⁴ Often called bands in the fur trade record, Tsek'ehne great families are somewhat similar to clans in other First Nations in that they are descended from a common ancestor. Unlike

¹⁵⁰ The first two names can be misleading because other members of the Fort Connelly/Bear Lake Lane Band joined the Takla Lake Band in 1959.

¹⁵¹ NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources,] "The Origin Of The Ingenika Band Of Indians And The Flooding Of Williston Lake," [1975].

¹⁵² Often this claim is based on language. Billington notes Tsek'ehne is spoken in Iskut, while Kaska is mutually intelligible with Tsek'ehne. Jenness notes some see no distinction, but he does. Keith Billington, *Tse-loh-ne (The People at the End of the Rocks): Journey Down the Davie Trail* (Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, Inc., 2012), 39; BCA, Wilson Duff Research Notes, GR-2809, Reel B6045, File 76, [Robin] Ridington, "Appendix I: Subdivisions of the Beaver," 145; Jenness, 8, 10, 14; Koyle, 50-51; Morice, "Notes on the Western Denes," 11-12, 28-31; Ridington and Ridington, 77, 95, *passim*.

¹⁵³ BCA, R.M. Patterson papers, MS-2762, Box 4, File 5, R.M. Patterson, "Diary: Finlay's River," 8 August 1949.

¹⁵⁴ For example, Seymour Isaac refers to former McLeod Lake Chief Derek Orr as a Solonas, while his predecessor and successor Chief Harley Chingee is referred to as the young Chingee. Seymour Isaac, 7 November 2008.

clans, however, they are not as exclusionary due to the bilineal nature of descent reckoning among the Tsek'ehne.

Similarly, among the Tsek'ehne Indian status is not the main determinant of whether an individual is Tsek'ehne or even a community member. Some individuals like Bill Boyko, Charles Arthur Van Somer, Jim Van Somer, Ludwig Smaaslet, and MacDonald Egnell were of European ancestry (at least in part) and non-status.¹⁵⁵ Yet they were all to varying degrees members of the Tsek'ehne community. To exclude them for being non-Tsek'ehne is problematic, especially considering that in all cases they had Tsek'ehne children, spouses, or grandchildren. It creates a false dichotomy between the families of these individuals and other Tse Key Nay. It also gives the false impression that the Tsek'ehne lived “entirely separate from but parallel to the few white people in the area” as Koyl claims.¹⁵⁶ Rather contact was limited, and in some ways still is.¹⁵⁷

Outline

The W.A.C. Bennett Dam had a negative impact on the Tsek'ehne as their traditional territory was not only flooded, but also aspects of BC's Aboriginal policy became relevant for the first time. As a continuation of prior developments in northern BC and a reflection of BC's Aboriginal policy the dam marked a turning point for the Tsek'ehne by dividing the nation.

Chapter one will examine how prior to the dam the Tsek'ehne lived in their homeland as one large community that included the predecessors of the Kwadacha, McLeod Lake and Tsay Keh Dene First Nations: Fort Ware, McLeod Lake, and Fort Grahame. In it, I argue that due to

¹⁵⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11295, Census (sic) – Whitewater Group of Indians Residing at Ware, BC as at June 3rd, 1944; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11295, Investigation: Mac Egnell; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11295, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC D.M. MacKay from Indian Agent R. Howe, 17 July 1944; Stanley, 23.

¹⁵⁶ Koyl, 36.

¹⁵⁷ Jessica Place, “Expanding the Mine, Killing a Lake: A Case Study of First Nations' Environmental Values, Perceptions of Risk and Health” (MA Thesis: University of Northern British Columbia, 2007), 15.

the failure of the province's European population to successfully settle or develop their homeland the Tsek'ehne were able to live a traditional lifestyle that gradually included employment in the non-Tsek'ehne economy. During the post-World War II period, however, things began to change, starting with the Hart Highway and ultimately culminating in the Peace River project.

The next three chapters deal with the background and construction of this development. A consistent theme in all three is the fact no one properly informed the Tsek'ehne about what might happen. Chapter two will explore why the announcement of the two proposals of Swedish industrialist Axel Wenner-Gren to develop the Trench did not excite much reaction from the Tsek'ehne. In particular, it reveals how neither level of government informed the Tsek'ehne about the potential negative impacts of these proposals and therefore were in no position to effectively try to stop the Peace River project when it went forward in 1961. Building on this theme of a lack of information, the third chapter will delve into how once BC nationalized Wenner-Gren's Peace River Power Development Company and BC Electric, Ottawa failed to fulfill their fiduciary obligation to the Tsek'ehne when it came to negotiations regarding the reservoir that they knew was coming. (It did not help that Indian Affairs had merged the Fort Grahame and Fort Ware bands in 1959 without seeking any sort of approval.) As a result, not only did genuine consultation not occur, but Indian Affairs failed to make sure the province or BC Hydro actually considered the potential repercussions the flooding of the Trench would have on the Tsek'ehne. As chapter four reveals, this trend continued even while some Tsek'ehne found employment clearing the reservoir basin and Indian Affairs exchanged reserve land with the province on the behalf of the Finlay River Band. As a result not only did Ottawa fail to properly inform or prepare the Tsek'ehne for what was going to happen and but in the case of the

Fort Grahame section of the Finlay River band this failure led to the creation of a squatter community in northern BC.

The remaining chapters examine the impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam on the Tsek'ehne. Chapter five will consider how rather than being a non-event the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir not only represented a major environmental disaster, but also caught the Tsek'ehne off guard. Stuck not only on reserves, but also in temporary forestry camps, the three communities were increasingly isolated from each other. This process led to the division of the Finlay River Band into the Fort Ware and Fort Grahame bands. It continued throughout the next twenty-two years as the unique circumstances facing each resulted in each band reacting differently. Ultimately, it contributed to different strategies towards the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and future developments. For example, in chapter six I examine how rather than waning after the completion of the dam, development continued around McLeod Lake. As a result, the band sought increased control of their traditional territory, eventually seeking out adhesion to Treaty 8. Inversely, chapter seven examines how the new reservoir disrupted the main supply route to Fort Ware and the community therefore found itself one of the most isolated in Canada. Rather than seek adhesion, however, Fort Ware sought outside assistance from not only the colonial state, but also through various Indigenous organizations. Chapter eight explores the interesting history of the renamed Fort Grahame Band, the Ingenika Band. Faced with environmental devastation and government ineptitude, the band sought isolation and a traditional way of life off reserve.

The unique effects of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam should not be overstated, however, and chapter nine considers some of the common negative repercussions that exist for all three communities, including loss of land, climate change, issues regarding compensation, an influx of

outsiders, and deaths. Although devastating, these common impacts provided a chance to rebuild historic ties between the three bands and in doing so, they not only challenged some of the isolating aspects of the dam, but also helped all three bands deal with the legacy of BC's historic Aboriginal policy. Unfortunately, earlier studies that do not examine the effects of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam over an extended period of time have often overlooked this opportunity and due to a general lack of oral research failed to sufficiently consider Tsek'ehne perspectives of the dam and its impacts.

Chapter 1 – The Singing Times,¹ 1793-1956

The Tsek'ehne know it as the “singing times.” An idealized period of living off the land and traveling up and down the numerous rivers of the northern Rocky Mountain Trench (the Trench). The period from 1793 to 1956 was one of slow change for the Tsek'ehne. Their traditional territory was the site of limited European development and settlement and therefore remained predominantly Tsek'ehne. The Tsek'ehne were able to maintain a traditional way of life. This situation also meant that although British Columbia and Ottawa fought over Aboriginal policy and reserve lands in the province until 1927, the detrimental victories of the province did not have an immediate impact on the Tsek'ehne. To them reserves existed as a vague concept alone, and without a constant state presence to enforce Aboriginal policy, the Tsek'ehne were free to continue living a traditional lifestyle that gradually included employment in the non-Tsek'ehne economy. Things began to change, however, in the postwar World War II period, with increased attendance at the Lejac Residential School and the construction of the Hart Highway in 1952.

The “Undeveloped” Trench

The northern Rocky Mountain Trench is the heart of the traditional territory of the Tsek'ehne. During this period, it was also the site of limited European development that, due to its sporadic nature, has given rise to the myth that the Trench was untouched wilderness.² And while such rhetoric dehumanizes the Tsek'ehne and presents their infrastructure as unimportant, the limited scale of non-Tsek'ehne improvements allowed the Tsek'ehne the opportunity to slowly adapt to the colonial situation they found themselves in.

¹ Bev Christensen, “The Sekani Indians of Ingenika: ‘We’re Refugees in Our Own Land,’” *Prince George Citizen*, 11 April 1987.

² *Tsay Keh Dene: CBC Hourglass Documentary*. CBC Television, 1970.

Europeans made first contact with the Tsek'ehne on 9 June 1793 when North West Company fur trader Sir Alexander MacKenzie encountered a group on the Parsnip River.³ Twelve years later his colleague Simon Fraser established a fur trade post at McLeod Lake called Fort McLeod, the oldest permanent European settlement west of the Rockies in what became Canada. Following this event Fraser and other fur traders established Fort St. James on Stuart Lake in 1806; Fort George, where the Nechako River enters the Fraser in 1807; Fort Connolly on Bear Lake in 1826/1827; and Fort Grahame, 65 miles north of where the Finlay, Parsnip and Peace rivers join, in 1870. Lastly, there was Fort Ware, where the Kwadacha River enters the Finlay, which the HBC purchased in 1926, following its questionable seizure from an independent trader.⁴

A common view is that the fur trade changed the Tsek'ehne.⁵ As former Chief Ray Izony points out, the material culture offered by the fur traders intrigued many Tsek'ehne.⁶ Yet one must remember that trade networks predated European contact, and in many ways the fur trade encouraged the continuance of traditional economic activities and lifestyles.⁷ Rather than

³ Alexander MacKenzie, *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans:....* (London: R. Noble, 1801), 198-208.

⁴ The transition was contested in court as seen in the *Prince George Citizen* between 1929 and 1932. The exact date its establishment as an independent trading post is unknown. *Overn v. Strand* [1931] SCR 720; "Sheriff Peters Is Co-Defendant In Damage Suit:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 21 March 1929.

⁵ Ray Izony, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 23 September 2008; Mary Christina Koyl, "Cultural Chasm: A 1960s Hydro Development and the Tsay Keh Dene Native Community of Northern British Columbia" (MA Thesis: University of Victoria, 1992), 26; Guy Lanoue, *Brothers: The Politics of Violence Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia* (Oxford: Berg Publishers Ltd., 1992), 138-181, passim; Gordon Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September, 2008; William Quackenbush, "Tastes of Canadians and Dogs: The History and Archaeology of McLeods Lake Post, British Columbia" (MA Thesis: Simon Fraser University, 1990), 32, 34-35, 165, passim.

⁶ Ray Izony, 23 September 2008.

⁷ Alison Davis, *Sekani Ethnobotany: Traditional Role of Plants Amongst the Sekani People* (Bloomington: Trafford Publishing, 2008), 3.

rendering them inauthentic, the developments seen during the fur trade are proof that, as with other Indigenous peoples across Canada, Tsek'ehne society and culture was not static.⁸

One can clearly see this fact with regard to concepts of land ownership. According to anthropologist Diamond Jenness, any semblance of land ownership by families was a result of the influence of the fur trade.⁹ In reality, however, the Tsek'ehne concept of land ownership predated contact with Europeans and is not only similar to a marriage and/or union, but also fundamental to Tsek'ehne society and identity.¹⁰ It is said that possession goes both ways with the land claiming the Tsek'ehne and capable of rejecting them if they misuse it.¹¹ Despite this conception of land ownership, each band, and below them great family, had its own territory within wider Tsek'ehne territory. European style traplines merely added another dimension of land use. This of course did not mean there were set boundaries or borders internally within the Tsek'ehne, but externally at least the Tsek'ehne are quite territorial when it comes to other First Nations, and more than willing to inform them of their exclusive levels of interest and title to Tsek'ehne territory.¹² Indeed, traditionally non-Tsek'ehne cannot gain rights to Tsek'ehne territory, except through a Tsek'ehne spouse or child, and then only for the length of the relationship.¹³ As anthropologist Guy Lanoue noted this challenges typical views of concepts of land ownership among other band societies living in Canada. (During his fieldwork he quickly discovered the Tsek'ehne are distinct from other Dene speaking groups, and therefore attempts to apply general knowledge about the Dene is often doomed to failure in much the same way

⁸ Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

⁹ Diamond Jenness, *The Sekani Indians of British Columbia*, no. 84, *Anthropological Series*, no. 20 (Ottawa: Patenaule, 1937), 44.

¹⁰ Ray Izony, *Tsay Keh Dene Elder Engagement Information*, 24-25.

¹¹ Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 9 September 2008.

¹² The traditional territory of each great family should not be confused with traplines, which did not always coincide. Nor does it imply the divisions were set like modern European influenced borders.

¹³ John Poole, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 30 September 2012.

applying knowledge about the English does not work when one is studying the Germans.)¹⁴

Lanoue believed these unique traits were due to them being recent arrivals in the Trench, having only arrived in the last three hundred years, something contrary to Tsek'ehne tradition.¹⁵ Rather according to Tsay Keh Dene Elder Jean Isaac the people have tried to keep the land since the beginning of time, especially following contact in 1793, only to see it flooded in one year, 1968.¹⁶

Similarly, like with other Indigenous groups outside observers often claimed that the Tsek'ehne started living at the fur trade posts after their establishment and that prior to this point in time Tsek'ehne villages did not exist.¹⁷ In reality, however, the Tsek'ehne had often used these locations as village sites long before their “official establishment,” albeit not necessarily lived in year round.¹⁸ Reflecting this reality, some Elders would recall the trading posts as their local store.¹⁹

¹⁴ Guy Lanoue, “Continuity and Change: The Development of Political Self-Definition Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia” (PhD Diss., University of Toronto, 1983), 7, 320-322.

¹⁵ Julia Izony, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 5 December 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Lanoue, “Continuity,” 321.

¹⁶ Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 September 2012.

¹⁷ Quackenbush suggests the real catalyst was the construction of churches by missionaries, but notes a lack of conclusive evidence either way. Adrien Gabriel Morice repeatedly argued there were no historic Tsek'ehne villages in his works. The best example can be seen in the “The Fur Trader in Anthropology.” Cocola notes a village near Fort Connelly, but refers to the settlement at Fort Grahame as a camp. Keith Billington, *Tse-loh-ne (The People at the End of the Rocks): Journey Down the Davie Trail* (Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, Inc., 2012), 39; Nicolas Cocola, *They Call Me Father: Memoirs of Father Nicolas Cocola*, ed. Margaret Whitehead (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1991), 157, 171; Jean Isaac, 19 September 2012; Jenness, 8-9, 11, 16; A.G. Morice, “The Fur Trader in Anthropology: And a Few Related Questions,” *American Anthropologist* 30, no. 1 (1928): 79-80, 84; Quackenbush, 61, 92.

¹⁸ McLeod Lake for example was historically a summer settlement. Jean Isaac, 9 September 2008; Jean Isaac, 19 September 2012; Yasmine Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 26 September 2012; Andrew Solonas Sr., interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 29 July 2004; Josephine Tylee, interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 3 August 2004; Josephine Tylee, interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 18 August 2004; Josephine Tylee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Lena Vallee, interviewed by Richard Almond, Chief Lake Road, BC, 5 August 2004.

¹⁹ Zepheria Isadore, interviewed by Richard Almond, Salmon Valley, BC, 23 September 2004; Josephine Tylee, 19 March 2012.

Besides Fort Connelly, Fort Grahame, Fort McLeod, and Fort Ware there were other historic settlements including Akie, Collins Creek, Factor Ross, Finlay Forks, Germansen, Old Ingenika, Kerry Lake, Mesilinka on Black Pine Lake, Metsantan/Caribou Hide, Ospika, Pelly Lake, and Tobin Lake.²⁰ In the case of Fort Grahame, community members often say that the settlement across the Finlay River, Factor Ross, is the more important settlement site.²¹ Indeed, according to some individuals you can still hear the ancestors talking at these locations, especially on the anniversaries of important events.²²

By the early twentieth century, villages, like the ones at Fort Grahame and Fort McLeod, were centred around a Roman Catholic Church, trading post, graveyard full of spirit houses, and various houses that either were only occupied when individuals were not out on the land, or when they were inclined to do so. The “houses” ranged from log cabins to tents.²³ When the McKenna-McBride Commission (1913-1916) visited in 1915, the commissioners reported McLeod Lake had ten houses in the village, while Fort Grahame had three.²⁴

The decision not to live in the villages year round was for survival since game was scarce within a day’s travel of many of these sites.²⁵ Yet the houses were evident enough that when

²⁰ According to Seymour Isaac Finlay Forks was a stopping place, and not a village per se. Zepheria Isadore told me Ingenika did not exist prior to the flood, but many other Elders told me it did. It is unclear if she is conflating Tsay Keh Dene with Ingenika or referring to Ingenika versus Old Ingenika. Factor Ross was more or less across the Finlay River from Fort Grahame, and often treated as synonymous with Fort Grahame. Metsantan and Caribou Hide were Tahltan-Tsek’ehne communities that are often associated with each other like Factor Ross and Fort Grahame. Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012; Zepheria Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Salmon Valley, BC, 1 October 2012.

²¹ Phillip Charlie, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 6 November 2008.

²² John Poole.

²³ Alex Poole, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 6 October 1984, Ingenika Band (Gem Book).

²⁴ British Columbia Archives (BCA), MS 1056, Royal Commission of Indian Affairs in British Columbia (1913-1916) Transcripts 1914-1915, Box 3, File 4, Stuart Lake Agency, Examination of W.J. McAllan, Indian Agent for the Stuart Lake Agency at the Board Room, Victoria, November 15th, 1915.

²⁵ Martha Egnell, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012; Ernest Lamarque, “Making Trail for M. Bedaux, 1934,” *Peace River Chronicles: 81 Eye-Witness Accounts of the Peace River Region of British Columbia*, ed. Gordon Bowes (Vancouver: Prescott Publishing Company, 1963), 447; Bernard McKay, *Crooked River Rats: The Adventures of Pioneer Rivermen* (Surrey: Hancock House, 2009), 39.

surveying reserves for the Tsek'ehne following the McKenna-McBride Commission the surveyor made reference to them.²⁶ In the past individuals like missionary ethnographer Adrien Gabriel Morice used the lack of a large sedentary population to disqualify these sites as village sites.²⁷ It is problematic, however, as no one challenges the existence of any of the numerous cottage country villages across Canada that are only seasonally occupied. Complicating the situation is that some Elders recall the few non-Tsek'ehne in Trench were not always welcome in Tsek'ehne villages.²⁸ Indeed, in 1924 the *Prince George Citizen* reported that "their chiefs are said to be strongly adverse to any intercourse with the whites,"²⁹ adding that some non-Tsek'ehne trappers have disappeared under mysterious circumstances in Tsek'ehne territory.³⁰

Until 1861 fur traders were the predominant non-Tsek'ehne population in Tsek'ehne traditional territory. In that year prospectors discovered gold twenty miles up the Parsnip River, and the following year the Peace River Gold Rush began. In 1870 Father James McGucklin, a Roman Catholic Oblate missionary, began to minister to the Tsek'ehne. More missionaries would follow and Oblate priests still minister to the Tsek'ehne to this day. It was also around this time that the Euro-Canadian community of McLeod Lake began to emerge separate from the HBC post as a waystation for those traveling through the area.³¹ A year later the Omineca Gold Rush began after prospectors found gold along tributaries of the Omineca River in 1868 and 1869. This gold rush led to the establishment of settlements like Germansen Landing and Manson Creek in Tsek'ehne traditional territory as well as numerous now ghost towns like New

²⁶ Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), RG 10, Volume 11060, File 33/13 Part 3, Reference Plan of Lot 1, Blk. 'A', Lot 3581, Cassiar District, BC, 23 October 1926.

²⁷ A.G. Morice, "Caledonia and Its Oborigines: Said to Have Descended from the Jews," *Fort George Herald*, 14 January 1911; A.G. Morice, "The Fur Trader in Anthropology: And a Few Related Questions," *American Anthropologist* 30, no. 1 (1928): 84.

²⁸ Phillip Charlie.

²⁹ "Sorcerer Meets Death at Hands of Siccanees:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 2 October 1924.

³⁰ Sorcerer Meets Death at Hands of Siccanees."

³¹ Quackenbush, 61.

Hogem, Old Hogem, and Omineca/Germansen. The Cassiar Gold Rush followed in 1873 drawing many prospectors to the northwest marches of Tsek'ehne traditional territory.

And while the Klondike drew many prospectors well outside the traditional territory, during the gold rush some miners travelled to the gold field via the Trench. Enough in fact to prompt the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) to attempt to construct a trail through it to the Klondike in 1897-1898 and 1905-1907. Some Tsek'ehne helped the police in this endeavor. Others resisted the movement of non-Tsek'ehne through their territory, and the attempt by some Tsek'ehne and Dane-zaa to stop prospectors from crossing their territory was one of the reasons why the federal government sought to negotiate Treaty 8 in 1899. Many were angry over the treatment they received from the prospectors, not to mention the competition for resources they represented, and general lack of respect for Tsek'ehne ownership of the land.³² Their anger even made headlines in *The Globe* in 1906.³³ It was in 1905 that the state first became involved with the Tsek'ehne directly when NWMP offered them aid.³⁴ Aside from this aid, however, the only other long-term impact of the NWMP was the naming of a meadow north of Fort Grahame Police Meadows.³⁵

Except for a brief gold rush on the Nation River in the 1890s and McConnell Creek in 1908 the gold rush era was over. Many of the gold rush towns disappeared or greatly decreased in size, with the infrastructure they depended on slowly giving way to the elements. Often

³² The two groups are often confused during this period and as noted in the introduction not necessarily separate groups at all. Margaret Whitehead notes theft, liquor and rape as three sources of anger. Some Elders recall hearing that their Elders helped the prospectors survive. "The Beaver Indians: Strong Feeling Against the White Man:..." *The Globe*, 19 September 1906; LAC, RG 10, Volume 4027, File 299,110; C. Mair, "In the Far Northwest:..." *The Globe*, 15 July 1899; J.D. Moodie, "Blazing a Trail to the Klondike, 1897," *Peace River Chronicles*, 200-201; John Poole.

³³ "The Beaver Indians: Strong Feeling Against the White Man."

³⁴ BCA, Conference of Northwest Coast Studies fonds, MS 1308, Box 1/1, File 20, Frans Lamers, "Sekani Adaptation: An Analysis of Technological Strategies and Processes," Northwest Coast Studies Conference, 12-16 May 1976, 16; Lanoue, *Brothers*, 173-174.

³⁵ John Poole.

individuals outside of northern BC forgot they even existed. This transition did not mean all mining and prospecting stopped in Tsek'ehne territory, however. Some prospectors, miners, and eventually mining companies would still continue to try to mine the mineral rich Trench, especially during economic downturns like the Great Depression. Among these was the Ferguson Mine on the Ingenika River in the 1920s, and Northern Reef Gold Mines on the McDougall River in the 1930s.³⁶ The Ferguson Mine was located near Grassy Bluff on the Ingenika River, and is the reason why community members often call Grassy Bluff "the Mine."³⁷

Even if they abandoned mining, not all the miners left. Some found employment as trappers and/or independent traders.³⁸ Tsek'ehne Elders recall some of these storeowners were crooked, traded alcohol for furs, and/or sexually assaulted Tsek'ehne women.³⁹ (Adrien Gabriel Morice even claims the HBC itself brought in kegs of rum for the Tsek'ehne.)⁴⁰ Others used underhanded trading methods, such as free alcohol to facilitate trade.⁴¹ This alcohol was not always unadulterated.⁴² Even though it is sometimes downplayed, historical records acknowledge the illicit trade in alcohol.⁴³

³⁶ Numerous articles appear in Prince George newspapers during this period. I have included a few examples as well as the relevant BC Archives fonds. BCA, Records of Mining Claims and Other Material, 1909-1939, GR-0257; "Porcupine Company Will Develop Big Ferguson Mine:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 21 October 1926; "Work to Begin on McDougall River Placers:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 17 May 1934.

³⁷ Ingenika Band Members, interviewed by Lorraine Izony, Ingenika, BC, 25 April 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Elizabeth Isadore, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 20 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

³⁸ J.C. Bryant, "Pete Toy, 1871-72," *Peace River Chronicles*, 77; H.J. Moberly, "The Monopoly is Broken, 1865-68," *Peace River Chronicles*, 67-71; "William A. Rae Tells Anecdote of Twelve-Foot Davis:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 24 December 1925.

³⁹ Ray Izony, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 3 October 2012; Ray Izony, "Changes in Tsay Kehnnay Dene Governance/Society;" "Northern Justice," *Prince George Citizen*, 24 July 1941.

⁴⁰ A.G. Morice, *History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia (Formerly New Caledonia), 1660 to 1880* (Smithers: Interior Stationery Ltd., 1978), 118.

⁴¹ Willie Pierre, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 11 December 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; William (Billie) Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012;

⁴² Willie Pierre, 11 December 1984; Sorcerer Meets Death at Hands of Siccanees."

⁴³ "William A. Rae Tells Anecdote of Twelve-Foot Davis."

Failed Settlement – Dreams of Finparpea

Following the prospectors came the settlers, but to this day the majority of Tsek'ehne traditional territory has little to no permanent non-Tsek'ehne settlement. Since BC controlled its own lands and resources it had its own homestead policy, referred to as pre-emption. There were numerous attempts to pre-empt in the Trench, especially prior to World War I when rumours of prospective railways into the region ran rampant.⁴⁴ Along with pre-emptors came the speculators with money to simply purchase land. Beginning in 1913 and continuing to the outbreak of World War I the *Fort George Herald* alone contained at least four hundred fifty-two notices of individuals (sometimes the same individual numerous times) intending to purchase land along the Finlay River up to the Pesika River.⁴⁵ Some pre-emptors were successful.⁴⁶ (This success did not necessarily correspond with good relations with the Tsek'ehne.)⁴⁷ As a whole, however, most homesteaders and speculators failed, and those unfamiliar with the history of the region often believe that European settlement was not seriously attempted.⁴⁸ The antiquated and somewhat racist logic that if European settlers are serious in their attempts than European settlement is guaranteed to successfully occur supports these notions.

⁴⁴ In 1922 it was reported W.R. Comstock had a herd of Hereford cattle on the Ingenika. Lucill Adams, "The Homestead at Finlay Forks, 1913-14," *Peace River Chronicles*, 319-329; "Around the City," *The Leader*, 17 February 1922; "City News of Interest," *Prince George Star*, 10 November 1916; *Fort George Herald*, 7 October 1911; C.F.J. Galloway, "An Optimist Visits the Area, 1912," *Peace River Chronicles*, 291; Paul Haworth, *On the Headwaters of Peace River: A Narrative of a Thousand-Mile Canoe Trip to a Little-Known Place of the Canadian Rockies* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1917), 21, 89-90, 93; "Settler in From Pine Pass Country:...", *Prince George Post*, 21 August 1915; Frank Swannell, "Finlay and Omineca Valleys, 1913," *Peace River Chronicles*, 313.

⁴⁵ Numerous notices appear during this period, most notably in the early Prince George newspaper, the *Fort George Herald*. A good place to start is the *Fort George Herald*, 8 February 1913.

⁴⁶ Gordon Bowes, *Peace River Chronicles*, 316.

⁴⁷ Adams for example claims they were filthy, diseased (with consumption among other things), and mentally children. The only Tsek'ehne she mentions by name, Maggie Fox, nee Pierre, does not fall into this category, although her children seemingly do. Adams, "The Homestead at Finlay Forks," 317-319.

⁴⁸ For example, Ray Williston would later claim only two families seriously tried to farm in the Trench. BCA, Ray Williston interview, T1375:0015, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 8 October 1975, Victoria, BC; Lanoue, "Continuity," 23; Northern British Columbia Archives (NBCA), Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Bruce Ramsay, "The Last Frontier Awakes:...", *The Province* 12 February 1957; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Peace River Project.

The Euro-Canadian settlement of Finlay Forks was located near where the Finlay River meets the Parsnip and forms the Peace River. Part of the problem with describing the location is that both the Finlay and Parsnip rivers meander on their way towards one another. Upstream of the Forks on the Finlay River was Pete Toy's Bar, although at times it was included when referring to Finlay Forks. In 1913 surveyor Frank Swannell reported that there were forty settlers at Finlay Forks and two general stores.⁴⁹ Former HBC manager of Fort Grahame, William Fox, who was married to my great grand aunt, a Tsek'ehne woman named Margaret Pierre, even started one.⁵⁰ Three years later the community had its own post office.⁵¹ The postmaster was Louis Peterson, the reputed first settler at the Forks, who pre-empted land in 1912.⁵²

Like many other towns Finlay Forks boosters had high hopes it would become the next major metropole. The local booster organization, the so-called Progressive Association of Finparpea, even planned on renaming the community Finparpea after the Finlay, Parsnip and Peace rivers.⁵³ When travel writer Paul Haworth visited the community in 1916 there were three centres to the community: government house on an island in the Parsnip River, Staggy's store on the eastern shore, and Louis Peterson's store opposite it. Everyone was betting on being in the right location for the train that never came. By that point in the time, however, Fox had returned to Fort Grahame as the post manager.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Swannell, "Finlay and Omineca Valleys," 313.

⁵⁰ *Fort George Herald*, 10 August 1912.

⁵¹ "Finlay Forks Post office," *Prince George Citizen*, 31 May 1916.

⁵² It appears Canty misread the Certificate of Improvement as the original Certificate of Pre-emption Record states 1912. BCA, Crown Land Pre-emption Records, GR-0112, Volume 21, File 1532, Certificate of Pre-emption Record: Louis Peterson, 16 July 1912; BCA, GR-0112, Volume 21, File 1532, Certificate of Improvement, 20 April 1917; Laurence Canty, "Mining Men Will Develop Farms in Finlay Valley:....," *Prince George Citizen*, 17 May 1928.

⁵³ Canty, "Mining Men Will Develop Farms in Finlay Valley."

⁵⁴ Haworth, 88-89, 117.

Despite this apparent success, in 1917 when Premier Harlan Brewster visited Finlay Forks there were only four to five out of forty original pre-emptors left.⁵⁵ Furthermore, despite the good soil in the Trench, very little land was being cultivated in the Parsnip watershed.⁵⁶ Finparpea, and the community the new name represented, was a casualty of World War I, the failure of the railway to arrive, and the environment.⁵⁷ As early as 1915 the population had already begun to drop and there were only thirty-five residents.⁵⁸ Many of the male settlers left to fight in Europe. Many of them never returned. Of those who did return, many soon left.⁵⁹

Yet into the late 1920s there was still hope that Finlay Forks would become the metropole of northern BC.⁶⁰ For example, while the *Prince George Citizen* reported in 1921 that there were only around twelve people living at Finlay Forks, it also noted that local trader H.M. Gibson was still hopeful the province would construct a road from Manson Creek so that farmers at the Forks could supply the miners around Manson Creek.⁶¹ The following year Finlay Forks was called “the nucleus of a coming town,”⁶² and in 1925 it was announced that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) were thinking about establishing a detachment in the area to combat the claimed lawlessness and illicit liquor trade of the area.⁶³ The next year the *Citizen*

⁵⁵ Bowes, *Peace River Chronicles*, 349.

⁵⁶ Richard Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 27 September 2012.

⁵⁷ This claim of course does not mean people did not settle here after the war. As Laurence Canty points out Finparpea was never an official name. Canty, “Mining Men Will Develop Farms in Finlay Valley,” Haworth, 73, 90, 93.

⁵⁸ “Peace River Country Coming Farming Centre:....,” *Prince George Herald*, 9 October 1915.

⁵⁹ BCA, Provincial Game Warden Records, GR-0446, Box 107, File 10, Letter to Provincial Game Warden, A.B. Williams, from District Manager, 6 February 1917; Canty, “Mining Men Will Develop Farms in Finlay Valley.”

⁶⁰ Lukin Johnston, “A Journalist’s Impressions, 1927,” *Peace River Chronicles*, 404.

⁶¹ “Findlay Forks Trader Wants Calendar for 1922:....,” *Prince George Citizen*, 24 June 1921.

⁶² “Prince George the Gateway to the Peace River District:....,” *Prince George Citizen*, 7 July 1922.

⁶³ This was the conclusion of a series of letters ending with LAC, RG 18-F-2, Volume 3312, File HQ-1034-E-1, Letter to the Officer Commanding, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, from Superintendent J.H. McMullin, 26 January 1925.

claimed that mineral deposits near Fort Grahame would lead to a smelter at Finlay Forks, if not the Peace River Canyon.⁶⁴

The late 1920s saw another boom in speculators. In March 1928 some twenty speculators applied for permission to purchase land around Finlay Forks and Fort Grahame in relation to the proposed mining activity at the Ferguson and Fercambur mines on the Ingenika River and a promised smelter at Finlay Forks. The applicants ranged in both gender and occupation and based on their last names it appears many are relatives.⁶⁵ Officially, the applications were a result of the agricultural potential of the area in conjunction with these mines and speculators even formed the Finlay River Land and Development Company, which planned on clearing between 15,000 to 20,000 acres of land in the northern Trench for agriculture.⁶⁶ Once again the *Prince George Citizen* hoped Finlay Forks would become a northern metropolis.⁶⁷ In November 1928 more speculators joined in along the Parsnip River and the company even proposed the construction of a hydroelectric dam at the Black Canyon on the Omineca River.⁶⁸ In the long run, however, transportation issues combined low commodity prices brought about by the Great Depression destroyed the development, and there is no evidence any of the speculators actually settled in the area.⁶⁹ Finlay Forks would continue to exist as a service community in the Trench, but never again would anyone present it as the next metropole in northern BC. More importantly

⁶⁴ The *Prince George Citizen* ran a series of articles on this proposal starting with "Trail Smelter Is Most Important Industrial Unit: Sullivan Mine at Kimberley Is Chief Source of Ore Supply For Big Plant: Ferguson Mine on the Ingenika May Bring Another Big Smelter to the North," *Prince George Citizen*, 28 July 1927.

⁶⁵ Canty, "Mining Men Will Develop Farms in Finlay Valley;" "Local Happenings," *Prince George Citizen*, 3 May 1928; *Prince George Citizen*, 3 May 1928.

⁶⁶ The *Prince George Citizen* ran a series of articles on this proposal starting with Canty, "Mining Men Will Develop Farms in Finlay Valley." The company also appears as the Finlay Valley Land and Development Company. "Finlay Valley to Have Hydro-Electric Plant:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 22 November 1928; "Ingenika Mines Continues Work During Winter:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 1 November 1928.

⁶⁷ Canty, "Mining Men Will Develop Farms in Finlay Valley."

⁶⁸ "Finlay Valley to Have Hydro-Electric Plant."

⁶⁹ "Local Happenings," *Prince George Citizen*, 20 July 1933.

for the Tsek'ehne its failure meant they were not forced to deal with a large settler population in their midst.

Continued Ways of Life

As with other areas in northern Canada, the failure of the non-Tsek'ehne to develop or settle the Trench allowed the Tsek'ehne to continue living a traditional lifestyle.⁷⁰ Life could be difficult at times in the Trench, and sometimes the people suffered from starvation or disease, especially during the eight to nine month long winter.⁷¹ A particularly hard time was during the early 1900s when the unrestricted competition with outsiders resulted in federal officials receiving numerous reports of starvation.⁷² Not helping the situation was that during the winter of 1905-1906 the HBC made the situation harder by refusing credit, known colloquially as “jawbone,” when individuals returned to the villages at Christmas.⁷³ In 1906 the suffering of Fort Grahame Chief Natchie and his band, due to a lack of game and credit, made headlines in *The Globe*.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Ken Coates, *Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840-1973* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

⁷¹ According to Haworth some were tempted to resort to cannibalism, but did not. He cites peeled jackpines as evidence of starvation. Haworth, 43-44, 53, 119, 124-126.

⁷² BCA, Attorney General Correspondence, GR-0429, Box 10, File 1, Folio 886/03, Letter to the Honourable, Indian Superintendent from A.G. Morice, 5 February 1903; LAC, RG 10, Volume 4027, File 299,110, Letter to the Officer Commanding, R.N.W.M. Police, 'N' Division, from Corporal R.W. McLeod, 8 January 1906; LAC, RG 10, Volume 4027, File 299,110, Letter to the Honourable the Minister of the Indian Department from C.A. Ries et al., 23 January 1909; LAC, RG 10, Volume 4027, File 299,110, Letter to Frank Gedley from N. Coccola, 12 October 1909; LAC, RG 18-A-1, Volume 323, File 702-06, Letter to the Commissioner, R.N.W.M. Police from Indian Commissioner D. Liard, 3 October 1906.

⁷³ Jawbone would be slowly phased out by the 1930s. LAC, RG 10, Volume 4027, File 299,110, Letter to the Officer Commanding, R.N.W.M. Police, 'N' Division, from Corporal R.W. McLeod, 8 January 1906; McKay, 10-11; Quackenbush, 63, 83.

⁷⁴ The article notes how his band lived on the Ospika River. “Ottawa and Georgian Bay: Great Sources of Power on New Canal: Government May Do It: Grand Trunk May Have New Railway Schemes: Kingston, Smith's Fall & Ottawa Applying for Extensions – French Tourist Robbed by Pickpockets – Indians Suffering for Want of Game,” *The Globe*, 12 September 1906.

These reports should not be overstated, however. Despite this hardship, many Elders recall that people were happy in general and content with their way of life.⁷⁵ Furthermore, in some instances it appears that these reports had more in common with the “starvation” discussed by Mary Black-Rogers in “Varieties of ‘Starving’” or Elizabeth Vibert in *Trader’s Tales* in that it was neither literal nor used merely as hyperbole.⁷⁶ Nowhere can one better see this possibility than in the comments made by Father Nicolas Coccola regarding the closed beaver season in his report from 1909. They suggest the information was designed less to prevent starvation per se, and more to put pressure on the state to recognize Aboriginal trapping rights and/or intervene when it came to credit and aid, something the state eventually did.⁷⁷ This proposal was not without precedent as since 1905 the federal government had been helping pay debt accrued by status Indians with the HBC.⁷⁸

In the case of actual starvation, true dependence on outside food is not a sufficient explanation, although it is true many Tsek’ehne came to expect foodstuffs would be available at local trading posts and stores. Difficulties bringing in supplies via Summit Lake often led to shortages.⁷⁹ Not helping the situation was that freeze up generally took place in October/November following October snows, and spring arrived in late April/May. A delayed

⁷⁵ Ingenika Band Members; Jean Isaac, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 24 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

⁷⁶ Mary Black-Rogers, “Varieties of ‘Starving:’ Semantics and Survival in the Subarctic Fur Trade,” *Ethnohistory* 33, no. 4 (1986): 353-383; Elizabeth Vibert, *Trader’s Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807–1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 2000).

⁷⁷ The series of letters starts with LAC, RG 10, Volume 4027, File 299,110, Letter to Frank Gedley from N. Coccola, 12 October 1909.

⁷⁸ Quackenbush states 1900. He cites Lanoue, who states 1905. Lanoue, *Brothers*, 173-174; Lanoue, “Continuity,” 305-306, 326; Quackenbush, 83-84.

⁷⁹ Some Elders do use the word dependency. In 1924 it was reported that the Tsek’ehne at locations like Fort Grahame rarely bought food from the HBC and even then in limited quantities. Lamers mentions flour was originally used to tan hides. Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2013; BCA, MS 1308, Box 1/1, File 20, Lamers, 16; Martha Egnell, 8 March 2012; Gordon Pierre; Michael Solonas, interviewed by Richard Almond, Prince George, BC, 10 September 2004; Sharon Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2013; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012; Tsek’ehne Kemess Meeting, Prince George, BC, 2 October 2012.

spring could mean hunger for community members who planned on the ability of goods, as happened in 1947.⁸⁰

According to riverman Bob Van Somer the best trip from Summit Lake was in early spring when the water was high. He and his father Art Van Somer would see other Tsek'ehne on the Finlay and Parsnip rivers on their trip up to Fort Ware.⁸¹ In general water was highest around June, and lowest in the fall, although Tsek'ehne from all three bands regularly travelled up and down the Finlay and Parsnip rivers, as well as their tributaries, as soon as ice could be easily broken. The river system formed a riverine highway that stretched from Summit to Thutade Lake with Tsek'ene from Fort Ware heading as far south as Summit Lake, and McLeod Lake Tse'khene heading as far "north" as Thutade Lake. Rough spots existed, but except in a few instances like at Deserter's Canyon, an experienced boater could travel up and down these rivers without portaging. Once at Summit Lake Tsek'ehne could travel to Prince George via the Giscome Portage. Finlay Forks was where McLeod Lake's traditional territory met the traditional territory of the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay, and was one place where all three communities met and lived together.⁸² Another nexus was Old Ingenika, which was near where Fort Ware and Fort Grahame's traditional territory overlapped.⁸³ Because of the importance of the rivers to travel and trade, most other settlements were located on a waterway, albeit not necessarily the Crooked, Pack, Parsnip or Finlay rivers.⁸⁴ Aside from these major settlement

⁸⁰ "Ease Food Shortage," *Prince George Citizen*, 5 June 1947; "Food Crisis Faces North," *Prince George Citizen*, 15 May 1947.

⁸¹ Bob and Shirley Van Somer, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 22 March 2012.

⁸² In a 1987 *Prince George Citizen* article Ella Pierre notes people travelled as far north as Atlin. Bev Christensen, "The Sekani Indians of Ingenika."

⁸³ Koyl, 38.

⁸⁴ Ron McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2012; Vera Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012; Agnes Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

sites, campsites were located up and down both rivers about five to ten miles apart.⁸⁵ People built caches throughout the traditional territory.⁸⁶

Historically a number of watercraft, including spruce and birch bark canoes, dugout canoes, and moose hide rafts, made this transportation corridor possible.⁸⁷ Although by the 1920s some individuals owned imported canoes, it was the handmade shallow draft riverboat that came to dominate travel on the rivers of the Trench. They ranged in length from twenty-five to sixty feet. They were built light, with a narrow raked transom at both ends, and flat bottoms that gently curved up and in at the ends so that they could be pulled in shallow water and bounced across gravel bars if needs be.⁸⁸ Some would even claim the flat bottoms allowed for safe travel on rough lakes.⁸⁹ Bernard McKay notes that in general for every foot of length the width increased by 7½ inches. The end result was a design similar to a cross between a York boat and a canoe.⁹⁰

Along the rivers, and spreading out from them, there existed an extensive trail system throughout the Trench that connected settlements and resource sites.⁹¹ Indeed, as archaeologist

⁸⁵ Mike Abou; Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 September 2012; John Poole; Yasmine Prince; Richard Solonas.

⁸⁶ Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012; Jenness, 35.

⁸⁷ Dugouts tended to dominate in the south, while moose hide rafts dominated in the north. Lanoue claims there is no memory of spruce bark canoes in McLeod Lake or Fort Ware in “Continuity and Change,” but that they were used. In *Brothers* he cites a lack of need and material, but that they were used. According to him prior to contact the Tsek’ehne rarely used watercraft. This claim is contradicted by oral tradition, which among the Elders I interviewed is considered common knowledge. See Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012. Lanoue, *Brothers*, 1, 105, 140; Lanoue, “Continuity,” 213, 279n1, 304.

⁸⁸ Mike Abou; Georgina Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; R.F. Corless, Jr., “River Freighting Down North,” *Pacific Motor Boat* January 1943, 13, 17; Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2013; Ron McCook; McKay, 29, 35, 47-49; George Massetoe, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2012; Nancy Middleton, “Boats...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 24 September 1965; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.48, Box 1, Jack Corless interviewed by Helen Mustard; Josephine Tylee, 19 March 2012.

⁸⁹ Middleton, “Boats...”

⁹⁰ McKay, 47-49.

⁹¹ Among the Elders I interviewed this information is common knowledge. See Jack Isadore, interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 4 August 2004. He is not aware of any trails north of Finlay Forks. Other Elders are. I have also included a few good outside sources highlighting their existence. Billington; Samuel Black, *A Journey of a Voyage from Rocky Mountain Portage in Peace River to the Sources of Finlay's Branch and North West Ward in Summer 1824*, ed. E.E. Rich (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1955), passim; Loraine Littlefield, Linda

Joni Manson points out, because of their complex manmade nature, the term trail is misleading because of the connotations it has with *ad hoc* almost natural travel routes.⁹² Some trails even belonged to individuals.⁹³ Reflecting their secondary status when it came to travel some Elders state they used the trails primarily during the winter, while others divide them into higher winter trails and lower summer trails.⁹⁴ Either way their direct connection to the waterways of the Trench meant that even during the winter, the rivers formed the backbone of the transportation network in the Trench. As soon as the ice was thick enough on the river individuals began to travel on them once more as seasonal ice roads utilizing snowshoes, dogsleds, sleighs, toboggans, and skimmers. Winter travel was easiest in March when the snow formed a crust and one could simply walk anywhere on it.⁹⁵ Yet as late as 1933, provincial officials considered Finlay Forks “inaccessible” during the winter.⁹⁶

To the amazement of Euro-Canadian outsiders who believed in stages of development that categorized Indigenous peoples as less civilized, despite being in continuous contact with Europeans since 1805, and adopting certain tools such as the gun, the Tsek’ehne continued to primarily hunt, gather, fish, and trap as opposed to sowing and harvesting their food. As many Elders put it, they lived off the land. And while it is true that they grew and tended to food plants, hunting and trapping were their principal occupations and would continue to be so for most people well into the twentieth century. How they accomplished this vocation might have changed, but these alterations merely reflected that fact that this traditional lifestyle was not

Dorricott and Deidre Cullon, “Tse Keh Nay Traditional and Contemporary Use and Occupation at Amazay (Duncan Lake): A Draft Report” (unpublished report, 2007), 18, 32, 36, 135-136, *passim*.

⁹² Joni Manson, “Transmississippi Trade and Travel: The Buffalo Plains and Beyond,” *Plains Anthropologist* 43, no. 166 (1998): 385.

⁹³ Mike Abou.

⁹⁴ Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012; Jack Isadore, 4 August 2004.

⁹⁵ Sophie Poole, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 17 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

⁹⁶ “Finlay Forks Ballots Most Expensive of All Cost in the Province,” *Prince George Citizen*, 23 November 1933; “Finlay Forks Ballots Will Be Expensive Pieces of Paper,” *Prince George Citizen*, 2 November 1933.

static.⁹⁷ People were always busy.⁹⁸ The resources of the Trench were quite capable of supplying them with most things that they needed.⁹⁹ Reflecting the connections between the bands, traplines existed throughout the traditional territory and partnerships sometimes existed between individuals from two or more bands.¹⁰⁰ (Anthropologist Guy Lanoue argues these partnerships, along with membership in a family and marriage, were fundamental to social cohesion.)¹⁰¹ Game, ranging from grouse to moose was acquired by gun, bow and arrow, or snare.¹⁰² In 1916 journalist Paul Haworth reported the two staples were moose and rabbit. That year William Fox told him that about a decade before hunters had killed the last elk in Fort Grahame Tsek'ehne territory up the Akie River.¹⁰³

People hunted and fished as they travelled on the rivers. As many Elders recall moose, other wildlife, and food plants were plentiful.¹⁰⁴ True, the *Prince George Citizen* had reported in the 1920s that the desire for moose hides had made moose scarce in the northern Trench, but by the 1930s and 1940s the same newspaper repeatedly cited the bountiful populations of wildlife in

⁹⁷ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See John Poole. Evidence of the level trapping can also be found in BCA, Northern British Columbia Fish and Wildlife Records, GR-1085, while evidence of Tsek'ehne agriculture can be found both in the oral record as well as historical documents ranging from academic articles to evidence from the McKenna-McBride Commission. The latter challenges portrayals by Haworth and Morice that the Tsek'ehne did not grow plants. The stereotype that authentic Indigenous ways are static is explored by Paige Raibmon in *Authentic Indians*. BCA, MS 1056 Box 3, File 4, Stuart Lake Agency, Examination of W.J. McAllan, Indian Agent for the Stuart Lake Agency at the Board Room, Victoria, November 15th, 1915; Haworth, 70-71, 121; A.G. Morice, "The Western Dene: Their Manners and Customs," *Proceedings of the Canadian Institute, Toronto* 26, no. 152 (1889): 135; Raibmon.

⁹⁸ Anita Vallee.

⁹⁹ Lanoue notes a claimed scarcity in game. Lanoue, "Continuity," 289; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

¹⁰⁰ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Mike Abou. Additional evidence can be found in BCA, GR-1085.

¹⁰¹ These partnerships would remain after the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. Lanoue, "Continuity," 102, 134-149, 163-164, passim.

¹⁰² BCA, MS 1308, Box 1/1, File 20, Lamers, 16, 18; Frank Hunter, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 19 December 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Jenness, 39-41; Morice, "The Western Dene," 130, 132; Virginia Pierre, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 5 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

¹⁰³ Haworth, 122, 127-128.

¹⁰⁴ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Ray Izony, 3 October 2012. Despite this information, Stanley claims game was not plentiful. Meg Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers: Harnessing the Power of the Peace and Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2010), 26.

the area.¹⁰⁵ And although at times they would look for the best price for their furs and supplies, the people shared what they had, and helped each other out. The lifestyle brought people together and they would meet up and visit, sometimes for days. Many northern Tsek'ehne camped around McLeod Lake, and many McLeod Lake Elders remember eagerly awaiting the arrival of their relatives in the spring and summer of the year.¹⁰⁶

A common complaint among the Elders was the imposition of BC game laws onto the people. Many Tsek'ehne saw game wardens as foreign agents interfering with traditional ways, and ignorant of what was right or just.¹⁰⁷ In a province where treaties were the exception rather than the rule, the concept of harvesting being a treaty right was almost entirely absent, while the pretense of it being an Aboriginal right was not even entertained. In 1904 the province banned the trapping of beaver, only to repeal it the following year.¹⁰⁸ They would put in place further province wide bans between 1906 and 1911 and 1919 and 1921.¹⁰⁹ Even when the province permitted trapping, it forced Tsek'ehne individuals to obey provincial laws or suffer the consequences. In 1931 the local magistrate convicted six McLeod Lake Tse'khene charged with the illegal possession of furs, while in 1957 local officials fined two McLeod Lake Tse'khene for hunting out of season.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ "Big Game Abounds North Summit Lake:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 6 July 1939; "Big Tourist Attraction In Northern Trip:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 14 April 1938; "A Great Highway Nears Completion:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 3 June 1948; Ivor Guest, "Fishing Found to Anything in BC," *Prince George Citizen*, 26 May 1938.

¹⁰⁶ Beyond social interaction, some Fort Ware band members shopped at McLeod Lake, while others got multiple appraisals of their fur.

¹⁰⁷ Alex Poole, 6 October 1984.

¹⁰⁸ Lanoue notes this repeal did not apply to McLeod Lake. Quackenbush, 81-83; Lanoue, "Continuity," 312, 315.

¹⁰⁹ Ministry of Environment: Wildlife Branch, *Beaver: Management Guidelines in British Columbia* (Victoria: Ministry of Environment, 1988) 1.

¹¹⁰ "McLeod Lake Indians Lose Skins Taken Out of Season: Six Adjudged Guilty of Being in Illegal Possession of Beaver Pelts: Klootchman Had So Many Children Imprisonment Considered Out of Question," *Prince George Citizen*, 18 June 1931; "Three Find Hunting an Expensive Sport," *Prince George Citizen*, 27 June 1957.

Beyond the impacts of these restrictions, the regulation of trapping affected Tsek'ehne society by the structures it created. In 1912 the provincial government began to register traplines, and as a result non-Tsek'ehne trappers made inroads into Tsek'ehne territory.¹¹¹ Like the prospectors before some became independent traders.¹¹² Officially, the province implemented registration in part to reduce conflict over traplines.¹¹³ Some individuals came to identify with their traplines, especially if they coincided with traditional family territories.¹¹⁴ Complicating the matter is that some fathers passed their traplines onto their sons, while federally Indian Affairs had adopted a policy of purchasing and/or registering traplines for anyone who needed one.¹¹⁵ To combat this situation and avoid issues over landownership, the province not only amended the Game Act in March 1929 to make the continued registration of a trapline contingent on holding a trapping license, but clearly state registration did not equal title.¹¹⁶ Despite this restriction, by 1936 officially all of the traplines around Fort Grahame were registered and by the 1950s all required Tsek'ehne traplines were considered to have been acquired by Indian Affairs and registered with the province.¹¹⁷ Of courses this claim is problematic, as an unregistered trapline

¹¹¹ Some Elders consider this process to be the beginning of traplines. Robert Inyallie, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012; Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012; Ray Izony, 23 September 2008; Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Ray Izony, "Changes;" Elizabeth Pierre, "Stories Related to Us by Our Elders," *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, ed. Kaya Minogue, 69; Virginia Pierre, 5 October 1984.

¹¹² McKay, 10.

¹¹³ Evidence of both the conflicts and the fact registration was aimed at ending it can be found in BCA, GR-1085.

¹¹⁴ Rose Dennis, "Family Trap Lines," *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 84.

¹¹⁵ Lanoue, "Continuity," 135.

¹¹⁶ The *Prince George Citizen* mistakenly reported the new regulations denied these licences to Indians. This claim is contradicted by the annual report of the Provincial Game Commissioner, but does seem to show the intent of the amendment. "Cougar Bounty Has Been Increased to \$50," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 March 1929; Department of Attorney-General, *Report of the Provincial Game Commissioner for the Year Ended December 31st, 1929* (Victoria, Charles F. Banfield, 1930), H17, H21; Game Act Amendment Act, 1929.

¹¹⁷ BCA, GR-1085, Box 5, File 2, Letter to Indian Agent R.H. Moore from Game Warden A.J. Janks, 30 July 1936; Lanoue, "Continuity," 327-328.

did not officially exist and therefore often disregarded by outside trappers, who could register the trapline and make the original owner a poacher in the eyes of the law.¹¹⁸

Historically, Tsek'ehne trappers followed similar annual patterns. In the fall and/or winter individuals hunted and headed to their traplines to remain there for most of the winter. Most returned to the villages in the spring, summer, and fall to dry meat, sell their furs, and purchase supplies and foodstuff that they could not get from the land and wanted. People celebrated during these periods. Afterwards they would return to their traplines and other settlements. The cost of goods at the trade posts ensured that those purchasing supplies from the post never bought too much, and often bought on debt, especially during the summer.¹¹⁹ According to Elder Alex Poole, people stayed at Fort Grahame until the end of June, then they would return to their traplines.¹²⁰ Christmas was another time when band members gathered in the villages. Some Elders remember the community holding potlatches during these gatherings.¹²¹

Increasingly involvement in the wage labour economy supplemented this traditional economic system. With the end of the Hudson's Bay Company's trade monopoly the ever-changing price paid for furs meant that trapping could be a gamble when it came to paying for supplies. As more and more independent traders emerged the matter only became worse. Prices could vary greatly from store to store and as competition increased more and more traders

¹¹⁸ Lanoue claims in his dissertation that no one in Fort Ware remembers where people trapped prior to the registration of traplines, although he does note people trapped on unregistered lines. BCA, GR-1085, Box 1, File 9, Report by Constable C.D. Muirhead: Re. Complaint of Peter Johnson, 8 December 1926; BCA, GR-1085, Box 5, File 4, Letter to Game Warden W.L. Forrester from Game Warden S.G. Copeland, 13 May 1938; Lanoue, "Continuity," 136, 138; McKay, 70-72.

¹¹⁹ Charlie Cunningham, "The Fur Trade on the Finlay," *Peace River Chronicles*, 533; Haworth, 122.

¹²⁰ Martha Egnell, 8 March 2012; Alex Poole, 6 October 1984; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

¹²¹ Willie Pierre notes Chief Thomas of Bear Lake held potlatches at Christmas. Guy Lanoue discusses the phratry system extensively in his work, but not potlatches per se. Morice mentions potlatches, but not his sources. Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Jenness, 47-50; Lanoue, "Continuity," Morice, "Fur Trade in Anthropology," 76; Willie Pierre, 12 October 1984; Suzanne Tomah, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 20 October 1984.

restricted access to credit. Nowhere is this situation better seen than at Fort Ware, where around 1941 the price of furs was lower than elsewhere in the Stuart Lake Agency, especially when compared with the cost of living, which was higher than elsewhere in the agency. This combined with a lack of fish and game, and the decision of the HBC to again cancel jawbone, made life difficult for the Fort Ware Tsek'ene.¹²² Naturally many saw wage labour employment as a way to deal with this situation. In doing so they hoped it would allow for the continuance of traditional ways of life.

Initially work was scarce in the Trench, however.¹²³ The forest industry, which by the mid-twentieth century would become the largest employer in area was slow to reach the area. Indeed, despite the first sawmill being established in Prince George (South Fort George precisely) in 1909 as of 1917 forestry had not yet reached the Parsnip or Finlay watershed with the exception of minor sawmills connected to mining on the Omineca and Manson rivers.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, reporter Paul Haworth reported that a forest company had already acquired forest land along the Crooked River to ensure they had rights to it when a railway was constructed.¹²⁵ By 1921 the *Prince George Citizen* reported much of the timber was suitable for pulp and paper.¹²⁶

¹²² This situation differs from the one described by Arthur Ray in *Indians in the Fur Trade*. It is unclear if it is due to time and/or location. LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,163-1, Fort Grahame Reserve: Letter to the Secretary, Indian Affairs Branch, from Indian Agent Robert Howe, 2 July 1941; LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,163-1, [Whitewater Reserve:] Letter to the Secretary, Indian Affairs Branch, from Indian Agent Robert Howe, 2 July 1941; Arthur Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Trappers, Hunters and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870: With a New Introduction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 61-65, passim.

¹²³ Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012; William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012.

¹²⁴ F.E. Runnalls, *A History of Prince George* (Prince George: Fraser-Fort George Museum Society, 1946), 88; Monica Storrs, "Westward to Omineca, 1937," *Peace River Chronicles*, 469; H.N. Whitford and R.D. Craig, "A Forest Inventory in 1917," *Eye-Witness Accounts from the First Exploration in 1793 Down to 1959 of the Peace River District of British Columbia including the Finlay and Parsnip River Basins*, ed. Gordon Bowes (Vancouver: Western Development and Power Limited, 1959), 158, 160, 162.

¹²⁵ It is possible he is referring to the Cariboo Timber Company. "District Forester Back From Peace River Trip:....," *Prince George Citizen*, 30 September 1921; Haworth, 65.

¹²⁶ "Pulp Resources in P.G.E. Territory: Construction of Line North of Prince George Promises Big Tonnage for Mill," *Prince George Citizen*, 11 February 1921.

Despite this lack of work some individuals found employment fighting forest fires, or supplying them with logistical support, while others worked as guides, sometimes for game and sometimes for minerals.¹²⁷ And while in some instances employers took advantage of Tsek'ehne workers, these jobs also provided an opportunity for some band members to develop friendships with non-Tsek'ehne bosses and coworkers.¹²⁸

This situation would continue throughout the Interwar Period and it was not until World War II that the forest industry took off in the southern parts of the Trench. Workers, however, were in high demand due to the war and as a result word got out that around Summit Lake and further south there were numerous job opportunities, a situation that would continue during the postwar boom.¹²⁹

Many Tsek'ehne heeded the call. So many, in fact, that the draw south started to affect officially recognized band government. As a result, during the 1940s officially recognized chieftainships remained vacant or filled by acting chiefs because of the inability of Indian Affairs to hold elections.¹³⁰

Not helping the situation was that as late as 1951 even when flying in the Indian Agent for the Stuart Lake Agency was only able to visit these communities once a year, (sometimes

¹²⁷ Rumours emerged that some fires were less than natural. In 1927 the *Citizen* said the Ferguson Mine was found by an Aboriginal individual. Mulhall claims Tsek'ehne involvement was minimal. Robert Inyallie; Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012; "McLeod's Lake," *Prince George Citizen*, 29 July 1958; George Massetoe; David Mulhall, *Will to Power: The Missionary Career of Father Morice* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986), 124; "Prospectors Are Active In McLeod River District:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 22 June 1933; "Start Is Being Made In Developing New District," *Prince George Citizen*, 23 June 1927; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012.

¹²⁸ Mulhall, 163-164; Laura Seymour.

¹²⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 7127, File 985/3-5, Part 1, Letter to the Secretary, Indian Affairs Branch from Indian Agent Robert Howe, 3 September 1941.

¹³⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 7127, File 985/3-5, Part 1, Letter to the Secretary, Indians Affairs Branch from Acting Indian Agent Jas. Lacey, 12 March 1940; LAC, RG 10, Volume 7127, File 985/3-5, Part 1, Letter to the Secretary, Indian Affairs Branch from Indian Agent Robert Howe, 10 September 1941; LAC, RG 10, Volume 7127, File 985/3-5, Part 1, Letter to the Secretary, Indian Affairs Branch from Indian Agent Robert Howe, 2 October 1941.

less), due to their remoteness and the simple fact people were not restricted to their reserves.¹³¹ (By the early 1960s visits to locations like McLeod Lake were more than once a year, but not by much.)¹³² Their remoteness meant that the Indian Agent was not entirely aware of what was happening in this part of the Stuart Lake Agency.¹³³ Reflecting this lack of state control when the bands voted in 1952 over whether to allow hold elections under custom, or the Indian Act, all three voted for custom against official wishes.¹³⁴

As time went on more and more individuals traveled to the Finlay Forks-McLeod Lake-Summit Lake area to work at sawmills and related jobs during the spring/summer, and returned north to trap in the fall/winter. Soon it became the norm for most people, including women who either found work in camps or accompanied their families for domestic labour.¹³⁵ Perhaps this situation is why in 1950 the *Prince George Citizen* reported the Tsek'ehne were better off financially than before.¹³⁶ It was such common knowledge that when local sawmills shut down

¹³¹ In December 1943 in the process of investigating band memberships for the Fort Ware Band, Indian Agent Robert Howe noted how he had only visited Fort Ware twice since he began. He had been agent since at least 1940, if not 1939. He continually references this fact in the same file. Numerous reference to the remoteness of the area can be found in the *Prince George Citizen*. I have included a notable example. "Fails to Hide in Vast Open Spaces of Northern BC:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 18 July 1940; LAC, RG 10, Volume 7127, File 985/3-5, Part 1, Letter to the Secretary, Indian Affairs Branch from Indian Agent Robert Howe, 2 October 1941; LAC, RG 10, Volume 7127, File 985/3-5, Part 1, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC, W.S. Arneil from Indian Superintendent R. Howe, 23 February 1952; LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,163-1-2, Letter to the Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs from J.A.F. Campbell, 17 May 1925; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11295, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC, D.M. MacKay from Indian Agent, R. Howe, 22 December 1943.

¹³² "McLeod Lake News," *Prince George Citizen*, 6 October 1960; "McLeod's Lake," *Prince George Citizen*, 17 July 1959; "McLeod's Lake," *Prince George Citizen*, 5 October 1961; "McLeod's Lake News," *Prince George Citizen*, 4 March 1960.

¹³³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File 139-13, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC, D.M. McKay from Indian Agent R. Howe, 9 September 1943; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11288, File 139 – General, Letter to Divisional Registrar 'K,' C.G. Pennock from Indian Commissioner, D.M. MacKay, 9 December 1941.

¹³⁴ Elections are still held according to custom in all three communities. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), "First Nations Electoral System Breakdown, by Province and Territory, in Canada," *Aboriginal Peoples and Communities* <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1337794249355/1337794353857> (accessed 14 August 2017); LAC, RG 10, Volume 7127, File 985/3-5, Part 1, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC, W.S. Arneil from Indian Superintendent R. Howe, 14 July 1952; LAC, RG 10, Volume 7127, File 985/3-5, Part 1, Letter to Indian Affairs Branch from Indian Commissioner for BC, W.S. Arneil, 18 July 1952.

¹³⁵ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

¹³⁶ "Remote Area Indians Visited."

in April 1961, the *Prince George Citizen* assured its readership that the McLeod Lake Tse'khene would simply return to trapping.¹³⁷

Rather than replacing traditional ways of life, this annual migration became part of it and at times supplanted it. The wages earned during the spring/summer paid for trapping in the fall/winter. Some Tsek'ehne even used this annual migration to sell their furs further south where they could get better prices.¹³⁸ Others, however, made a more permanent move to the south. For example, Willie Pierre recalls moving from Fort Grahame to McLeod Lake in 1959, where he found temporary employment, including with the Department of Highways. Eventually he moved to Finlay Forks, where he found work as a sawmill worker, logger, and freighter.¹³⁹ He was not alone. Some Tsek'ehne even rose above the rank of mere labourers. For example, former Chief Harry Chingee rose to the rank of superintendent in the forestry company he worked for.¹⁴⁰

Despite moving for work, Elders are adamant this move did not mean they were abandoning their old homes and villages.¹⁴¹ Temporary communities and camps emerged as a result of this annual migration.¹⁴² Indians Affairs even visited band members from Fort Ware and Ingenika at these locations in the 1960s.¹⁴³ McLeod Lake Elder Anita Vallee would even refer to the Tsek'ehne as being from Finlay Forks due to the fact they moved there for work, while at the time claiming that after 1971 the three bands returned home to their traditional territories.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁷ "McLeod's Lake News," *Prince George Citizen*, 21 April 1961.

¹³⁸ Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012.

¹³⁹ LAC, RG 10, V-2011-00666-X (2011-3-8-27), Box 2, File 985/3-8-27, Letter to F.C. Bradley from N.Y. Middleton, 9 March 1963; LAC, RG 10, V-2011-00666-X (2011-3-8-27), Box 2, File 985/3-8-27, Letter to from F.C. Bradley, 12 March 1963; Willie Pierre, 12 October 1984; Verne Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.

¹⁴⁰ Harry makes the distinction between logging (bush work) and sawmill employment, noting many Tsek'ehne preferred unskilled sawmill work. Harry Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012.

¹⁴¹ Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012; Laura Seymour.

¹⁴² John Poole; Melvin Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2013; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

¹⁴³ "Town and Country: McLeod's Lake," *Prince George Citizen*, 20 July 1964.

¹⁴⁴ Anita Vallee.

Melvin Smaaslet on the other hand would say Summit Lake got its name from the fact it was where the three communities met.¹⁴⁵

Post War Changes (1945-1956)

Things continued to change for the Tsek'ehne in the postwar period after World War II. Settlers quickly identified transportation as one of the main obstacles to development and this resulted in a common way of thinking about developing the Trench, which I call the logic of transportation.¹⁴⁶ For example, in 1921 the *Prince George Citizen* argued despite being the oldest districts in the province, the location of the Canadian Pacific Railway had precluded sustained widespread European settlement in the north.¹⁴⁷

The fur traders and those that followed them were content to transport goods like the Tsek'ehne via trails and waterways.¹⁴⁸ The most popular routes into the Trench were via the old trail from Fort St. James, the Pine Pass, Takla Landing at present day Takla Lake, Hazelton, the Giscome Portage near present day Summit Lake, and the Rocky Mountain Portage, at present day Hudson's Hope that bypassed the unnavigable Peace River Canyon. Despite the fact that during the Omineca Gold Rush travelers had heavily used the first four, by 1937 the latter two had come to dominate transportation in the northern Trench, with a faux Giscome Portage the main access point into the Trench.

¹⁴⁵ Melvin Smaaslet.

¹⁴⁶ This can be seen in numerous articles found in local Prince George newspapers. I have included a few examples. It is also seen in the primary sources collected by Gordon Bowes in his books *Eye-Witness Accounts* and the *Peace River Chronicles*, although these seem to have been written to promote development. Gordon Bowes, ed., *Eye-Witness*; Gordon Bowes, ed., *Peace River Chronicles*; "Crooked River Waterway to the Front Again," *Prince George Citizen*, 13 September 1934; Haworth, 95; "Prince George Is Natural Gateway To Peace River," *Fort George Herald*, 18 November 1913.

¹⁴⁷ "Central BC Is Not A New Country:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 25 January 1921.

¹⁴⁸ L.M. Bower, "A Prospector Reports, 1912," *Peace River Chronicles*, 271; Cecil Denny, "Building the Police Trail in 1905," *Eye-Witness*, 65; Daniel Gordon, "From Fort McLeod to Fort St. John, 1879," *Peace River Chronicles*, 135, 137; H.J. Moberly, "The Monopoly is Broken, 1865-68," *Peace River Chronicles*, 68; R.M. Patterson, "History of the Finlay River Area," *Eye-Witness*, 14; F.S. Smythe, "An Expedition to the Lloyd George Mountains," *Peace River Chronicles*, 482.

Heavily promoted by newspapers in Prince George, the Giscome Portage had first come into common usage during the Peace River Gold Rush.¹⁴⁹ It received a huge boost in 1920 when the province constructed a road from Prince George to Summit Lake, thereby removing the need to actually portage.¹⁵⁰ As a result, it should come as no surprise that six years later mining engineer Douglas Lay claimed it was the best route into the northern Trench, even when one factored in the winter freeze and weight restrictions that apart from six weeks around June existed throughout the remainder of the year.¹⁵¹

Any roads that existed prior to the Hart Highway were short and terminated at a waterway. As a result, waterways remained key to travel in the Trench. L.M. Bower would even argue in 1912 that the waterways would remain key even if a railway or road was constructed.¹⁵² Prior to the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir the primary supply route to McLeod Lake, Finlay Forks, Fort Grahame and Finlay Forks was via Summit Lake, and until the previously mentioned road to Summit Lake, the Giscome Portage. Many individual band members shopped at McLeod Lake. In 1910 the *Fort George Herald* called McLeod Lake “the entrepot of that vast and lonely country.”¹⁵³ As time went on more and more Tsek’ehne traded further south. In 1920 and 1948 the *Prince George Citizen* reported two-thirds of the McLeod Lake Tse’khene traded at Summit Lake.¹⁵⁴ Other Tsek’ehne even went as far south as Prince George to trade.¹⁵⁵ This was a

¹⁴⁹ I have included a few examples here. “Giscomb Portage Is The Natural Outfitting Point for the Peace River Country,” *Fort George Herald*, 17 August 1912; “South Fort George Is the Gateway to the Peace River Valley:...,” *Fort George Herald*, 15 April 1911.

¹⁵⁰ BC Parks gives the construction period of the road as 1919-1920. Bernard McKay claims a later date of 1924. BC Parks, “Giscome Portage Trail Protected Area,” *BC Parks* <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/giscome/> (accessed on 28 August 2015); Jack Isadore, 4 August 2004; McKay, 24, 171; “Peace River Gateway Is The Natural Trade Channel,” *Prince George Citizen*, 25 October 1921; “The Water Route North,” *Prince George Citizen*, 14 July 1922.

¹⁵¹ Douglas Lay, “Minerals in the Fort Grahame Area, 1926,” *Peace River Chronicles*, 395.

¹⁵² Bower, “A Prospector Reports,” 271, 279.

¹⁵³ “Exploring the Peace River:...,” *Fort George Herald*, 1 October 1910.

¹⁵⁴ “Christmas in Fort George in 1909,” *Prince George Citizen*, 3 December 1920; *Prince George Citizen*, 23 December 1948.

¹⁵⁵ Haworth, 43; “Leprosy Story Is Exploded by Two Old-Timers:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 3 July 1924.

fairly recent move as until the Grand Trunk Pacific and other railways reached Prince George, the former HBC “capital” Fort St. James, and Quesnel, or as it was known Quesnelmouth, were the main supply centres for northern BC.¹⁵⁶ Now local boosters hoped that Prince George would rival Edmonton, Alberta as the metropole of the North.¹⁵⁷

Throughout the years developers proposed numerous railways lines and roadways running either up the northern Trench or across it. Some were more than just rumours or empty promises, and surveys were even carried out in the area.¹⁵⁸ There was talk of the Canadian Pacific Railway running through the Pine Pass or Peace River Canyon, and the Grand Trunk Pacific through the Peace River Canyon.¹⁵⁹ In some instances rumours of railways led to the decision to forgo other improvements, and some journalists suggest the rumours turned away potential railways due to concern over competition.¹⁶⁰

Since these railways never went beyond surveys, the province and private individuals worked to improve the waterways into the Trench, most notably the Crooked River from Summit Lake to McLeod Lake.¹⁶¹ Increasingly there were also calls to either extend the road north from

¹⁵⁶ Until 1953 and 1975 respectively, Central Fort George and South Fort George were separate communities, but collectively they were known as Prince George.

¹⁵⁷ *Fort George Herald*, 7 October 1911; “The Natural Outfitting Point for the Peace River,” *Fort George Herald*, 27 May 1911; “South Fort George Is the Gateway to the Peace River Valley.”

¹⁵⁸ Numerous articles appear in Prince George newspapers during this period, including proposals for the Alaskan Highway. I have included a few examples. “P.G.E. and E., D. & BC Will Be Feeders for Grand Trunk Rly.,” *Fort George Herald*, 4 April 1914; “P.G. May Be Starting Point for Second Alaska Highway,” *Prince George Citizen*, 19 January 1953; Runnalls, 115-118, *passim*.

¹⁵⁹ “From Victoria to Winnipeg:...,” *The Globe*, 7 November 1879; “The Pacific Railway:...,” *The Globe*, 29 April 1879.

¹⁶⁰ “Asseltine and Highways and Railways,” *Prince George Citizen*, 3 February 1938; “Hon. H.G. Perry Is Making Fight Against North Eastern Ry.:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 22 March 1934; “Summit Lake Will Have Telephone Service,” *Prince George Citizen*, 14 March 1929.

¹⁶¹ In 1871 some were constructed by the province. Kwadacha Elders Robert Inyallie and John Poole remember beaver dams being on the river in his youth. It is possible they mean these dams. Jack Corless recalls dams being paid for in the interwar period. It is possible these were the dams constructed by Dick Corless mentioned by Bernard McKay. In 1927 the *Prince George Citizen* noted work done under the supervision of Mort Teare and W.E. Keyt. BC Parks, “Giscome Portage Trail Protected Area;” “Improvement of Crooked River Waterway,” *Prince George Citizen*, 27 October 1927; “Improvement of Summit Lake Waterway,” *Prince George Citizen*, 28 October 1926; Robert Inyallie; McKay, 23; NBCA, 2004.24.48, Box 1, Jack Corless interviewed by Helen Mustard; John Poole;

Summit Lake or construct new routes into the Trench.¹⁶² Most notable was the so-called Turgeon Highway, which was in many ways an upgrade of the old McLeod Lake-Fort St. James trail.¹⁶³ Unfortunately, although work often began, it was never completed.¹⁶⁴ In the case of the Turgeon Highway by 1939 the province had completed the road to Manson Creek leaving an estimated forty miles needed to reach Finlay Forks.¹⁶⁵ World War II, however, prevented construction from happening.¹⁶⁶ Work resumed after the war, but by 1947 it had only reached Germansen Landing.¹⁶⁷ As a result, by December 1957 the province still needed to construct thirty-eight miles to push the Turgeon Highway to Finlay Forks.¹⁶⁸

Like many other regions in Canada, northern British Columbia prospered in the post-World War II period and as a result Elders remember how things began to change.¹⁶⁹ They were not alone in this assessment and in 1952 the *Prince George Citizen* proudly proclaimed Prince George was no longer a frontier town, and urged its readership to look north to the “last frontier.”¹⁷⁰ Of course as the *Citizen* noted, this frontier was not new, and the Euro-Canadian population had actually declined since the 1860s, with former ranches, traplines, and claims

“Prince George Should Procure Northern Trade:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 9 August 1923; “Untitled,” *Prince George Citizen*, 28 July 1927.

¹⁶² Numerous articles appear in Prince George newspapers during this period. I have included a few examples. “Extensive Road Program Laid Out for Season:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 9 May 1929; *Fort George Herald*, 7 October 1911.

¹⁶³ Numerous articles appear in Prince George newspapers during this period. I have included a few examples. “First Contracts Let On The Peace River Highway,” *Prince George Citizen*, 13 August 1936; “Omineca Road Now Graded to Manson Creek:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 26 October 1939; “Work to Start on Ft. St. James-Manson Highway:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 30 June 1938.

¹⁶⁴ “Davie Lake Road Becomes of Increasing Value,” *Prince George Citizen*, 20 December 1934; “Peace River Gateway Is The Natural Trade Channel,” *Prince George Citizen*, 25 October 1921; Jay Sherwood, *Surveying Northern British Columbia: A Photo Journal of Frank Swannell* (Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press Inc., 2004), 111.

¹⁶⁵ “Large Agricultural Area,” *Prince George Citizen*, 23 December 1957; “Omineca Road Now Graded to Manson Creek.”

¹⁶⁶ “Ottawa Frowns on Civil Expenditures:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 29 August 1940.

¹⁶⁷ F.S. Smythe, “An Expedition to the Lloyd George Mountains, 1947,” *Peace River Chronicles*, 485.

¹⁶⁸ “Large Agricultural Area.”

¹⁶⁹ Elders debate the exact year, but generally in the 1950s/1960s. Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012; Jack Isadore, 4 August 2004; Zepheria Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, 1 October 2012; Michael Solonas, 10 September 2004; Sharon Solonas.

¹⁷⁰ “Northland Note,” *Prince George Citizen*, 4 June 1953.

reverting to nature.¹⁷¹ Three years later R.M. Patterson noted many non-Tsek'ehne trappers were either slowly abandoning their traplines along the Finlay River or else selling them to the Tsek'ehne.¹⁷²

As part of the city's postwar planning the city had pledged to extend the Cariboo Highway to the Alaska Highway and complete the Turgeon Highway.¹⁷³ At the same time the HBC began to close fur trade posts in the Trench, ending an era. Officially the HBC closed Fort Grahame in 1949, the same year status Indians gained the provincial franchise. Four years later Fort Ware closed, prompting the *Prince George Citizen* to proclaim the end of Fort Ware as a community, claiming that with the exception of two people everyone moved to Fort Grahame.¹⁷⁴ Finally, Fort McLeod closed in 1968. Prior to that, however, it had been renamed McLeod Lake in 1952 to avoid confusion with Fort McLeod, Alberta and relocated the following year across the lake to benefit from the recently completed Hart Highway that connected the southern Trench to Prince George to the south and the Peace River Country via the Pine Pass.¹⁷⁵

The closure of these posts was not beneficial to the Tsek'ehne. Many Elders recall that when the stores closed the HBC did not tell them in advance. As a result, these closures caught many band members by surprise. In the case of Fort Ware this situation, combined with a poor hunting year, meant that some starved, especially children.¹⁷⁶ Luckily, although the HBC closed, independent traders like Frank (Shorty) Webber, Ben Corke, Ed Stanberg, and Dick Corless Jr. had trading posts at Old Ingenika, Fort Grahame, Finlay Forks, and McLeod Lake respectively.

¹⁷¹ "'Magnificent Wilderness:' Railway Could Tap Northland Wealth," *Prince George Citizen*, 23 October 1952.

¹⁷² Patterson, "History of the Finlay River Area," 15, 17.

¹⁷³ "Cites Post-war Plans for North," *Prince George Citizen*, 8 June 1944.

¹⁷⁴ "Air Evacuation Ends Life of Fort Ware: Woman and Child Refuse to Leave," *Prince George Citizen*, 18 June 1953.

¹⁷⁵ "Pioneer Settlement Gets Change of Name," *Prince George Citizen*, 2 June 1952.

¹⁷⁶ Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Albert Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 6 November 2008; John Poole; Laura Seymour.

When Webber died in 1952 Ben Corke replaced him and then expanded operations to Old Ingenika in 1957, for a brief period to Deserter's Canyon/Ruby Red Creek, then Akie River, and finally Fort Ware.¹⁷⁷ As a result, the store at Old Ingenika became a temporary store serviced by Art Van Somer when he passed by with supplies.¹⁷⁸ Some Elders remember Ben Corke provided free food to band members in 1954 following the closure of Fort Ware.¹⁷⁹ Others, however, recall he undervalued furs brought to him.¹⁸⁰ Indeed, some Elders say he refused to give band members credit.¹⁸¹ When Corke went for treatment for cancer in 1963 rivermen Art Van Somer and his brother Jim, who had both worked hauling freight for years, replaced him.¹⁸² Reflecting the fact many Tsek'ehne lived on the land during this period Van Somer would at times buy furs at their local camps, as the old North West Company had done.¹⁸³

Perhaps the development to have the greatest impact on the Tsek'ehne in the postwar period was the Hart Highway. Before the Hart Highway, however, there was the Lejac Residential School, although they are connected. In 1922 Lejac opened on Fraser Lake. Some Tsek'ehne children attended from the beginning, but it was not until 1949 that the majority did in any regular manner.¹⁸⁴ This situation was partially a result of the day and summer schools that

¹⁷⁷ Shorty Webber died of a blockage of the heart. BCA, Death registrations, 1872-1988, GR-2951, 1952-09-009470.

¹⁷⁸ Julie Cooper, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Martha Egnell, 8 March 2012; Helen Poole; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

¹⁷⁹ Felix Charlie, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2012; Albert Poole, 6 November 2008.

¹⁸⁰ William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012.

¹⁸¹ Martha Egnell, 8 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

¹⁸² Ben Corke died on 14 January 1964 of complications arising from bladder cancer that resulted in a lower urinary tract obstruction, and uremia. BCA, GR-2951, 1964-09-001480.

¹⁸³ Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

¹⁸⁴ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Mabel Troendle, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 16 September 2008. Prior to this date Elders talk about attending for a few years and leaving, or not attending at all. For example, Mabel recalls she attended from 1945 to 1948. Quarterly returns for Lejac can be found in LAC, RG 10, Volume 6443, while admission and discharge records can be found in LAC, RG 10, Volumes 6445 and 6446.

existed at McLeod Lake, Fort Grahame and Caribou Hide in 1930s and 1940s.¹⁸⁵ (A school did not initially exist at Fort Ware, although there was a request in 1939 for a summer school that suggested moving the summer school from Fort Grahame to Fort Ware.)¹⁸⁶ This increase in attendance was also presumably partially as result of the completion of the Hart Highway to McLeod Lake in 1949, combined with requests by Indian Affairs officials to make schools like the one at McLeod Lake permanent.¹⁸⁷ Some Elders recall that the location of the school was problematic as it was in Dakelh territory and Dakelh dominated.¹⁸⁸ Some parents refused to send their children to residential school. Chief John McCook of Fort Ware for example refused to send his children back after the first year.¹⁸⁹ It also appears some parents were able to visit their children while they were attending school.¹⁹⁰

Elders recalled many Oblate missionaries for their autocratic, fear mongering ways even prior to the opening of Lejac.¹⁹¹ This approach to dealing with the Tsek'ehne only continued in

¹⁸⁵ McLeod Lake's summer school appears to have operated from at least 1935 to 1948. It is possible it continued to operate as late as 1958 or 1965 based on *Prince George Citizen* articles from that year. Fort Grahame's summer school appears to have operated from at least 1935 to 1939. Caribou Hide's day school appears to have operated from at least 1936 to 1942. Some Elders did not hear about these schools. Attendance records at Fort Grahame and Caribou Hide claim many Elders attended school in these communities, however, albeit not necessarily all. LAC, RG 10, Volume 6406, File 835-5 Part 2; LAC, RG 10, Volume 6418, File 852-1, Part 1; LAC, RG 10, Volume 6418, File 852-2, Part 1; LAC, RG 10, Volume 6421, File 866-1, Part 1; LAC, RG 10, Volume 6421, File 866-2, Part 1; LAC, RG 10, Volume 6445, File 881-10, Part 8, Extract from Superintendent Howe's Report Dated October 4th on the Schools of the Stuart Lake A., Vanderhoof, British Columbia; Elizabeth Pierre, "Stories Related to Us by Our Elders," 68; Albert Poole, "Metsintan Yeah!" *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 153; Josephine Tylee, 3 August 2004; Lena Vallee, interviewed by Richard Almond, Chief Lake Road, BC, 17 August 2004.

¹⁸⁶ An exchange of letters in LAC, RG 10, Volume 8764, File 985/25-1-2 between 1939 and 1940 discusses the matter. LAC, RG 10, Volume 8764, File 985/25-1-2, Letter to Superintendent of Welfare and Training, R.A. Hoey from Bishop E.M. Bunoz, 6 March 1939; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter.

¹⁸⁷ "First Car Over P.G. – McLeod Lake Road," *Prince George Citizen*, 15 September 1949; Albert Isadore; LAC, RG 10, Volume 8764, File 985/25-1-1, Memorandum from Superintendent of Welfare & Training, Bernard Neary, 19 November 1946.

¹⁸⁸ Koyl, 41.

¹⁸⁹ Chief John McCook lost his family allowance as a result. Billington, 169-170, 180-181; Littlefield, Dorricott and Cullon, 16.

¹⁹⁰ "McLeod's Lake," *Prince George Citizen*, 25 February 1960; "McLeod's Lake News," *Prince George Citizen*, 1 December 1960.

¹⁹¹ Jean Isaac, 9 September 2008.

Lejac.¹⁹² Jean Isaac noticed that after residential school not only were the children who returned scarred, but fewer parents taught their own children.¹⁹³ Indeed, Josephine Tylee makes a direct connection between an introduction to Euro-Canadian education and difficulty in teaching children.¹⁹⁴ What is clear is that the cultural genocide that was residential school changed the relationship children had with their parents, community, and language.¹⁹⁵ For some pupils and parents this institution turned them against wanting to have anything to do with Euro-Canadians, a situation that would be problematic when it came to consultation.¹⁹⁶

Some Elders see the residential school as having the biggest impact on the Tsek'ehne prior to the Peace River project, if not the biggest impact over all.¹⁹⁷ As one Elder in McLeod Lake told me, the survivors have post-traumatic stress disorder.¹⁹⁸ Many self-medicate to forget.¹⁹⁹ Fortunately in some instances Elders re-aculturated residential school survivors when they returned home.²⁰⁰ Other Elders see residential schools as a contributing factor to the negative impacts of the Peace River project. Tsay Keh Dene Elder Billie Poole for example wonders if the people would have been able to stop the development had they received a proper education.²⁰¹

Three years after reaching McLeod Lake, the Hart Highway was completed. The highway had emerged in 1943 as the road that would connect the province with the Alaska Highway.²⁰²

¹⁹² Jean Isaac, 9 September 2008; Albert Poole, "Lejac School Days," *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 5.

¹⁹³ Jean Isaac, 9 September 2008.

¹⁹⁴ Josephine Tylee, 19 March 2012.

¹⁹⁵ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. Some Elders still see this change occurring. See Jean Isaac, 9 September 2008.

¹⁹⁶ Koyl, 42.

¹⁹⁷ Alfred Solonas; Josephine Tylee, 19 March 2012.

¹⁹⁸ Richard Solonas.

¹⁹⁹ Sharon Solonas.

²⁰⁰ Koyl, 40.

²⁰¹ William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012.

²⁰² "Six Million Is Now Available For BC Link With Alaska Highway:....," *Prince George Citizen*, 1 July 1943; "Work on Pine Pass Highway Will Begin Soon as Weather Permits," *Prince George Citizen*, 17 February 1944.

By 1944 the United States had selected the route and Premier John Hart even proposed a railroad run alongside it.²⁰³ The following year J. Lewis Robinson recommended a highway through the Trench due to its low precipitation levels and scenery.²⁰⁴

The new highway would follow historic Tsek'ehne trails.²⁰⁵ Along those sections of the old river route from Summit Lake, the highway replaced river travel.²⁰⁶ It deviates from it where it crosses the Parsnip River near Windy Point north of where the Misinchinka River enters the Parsnip River, then follows the river northeast to the Pine Pass. Initially no road existed north of it. Not even one to Finlay Forks.²⁰⁷ Seemingly as a result of this situation in places like Fort Ware as late as 1967 there were only six reported non-Tsek'ehne residents.²⁰⁸

Developers hoped the highway would solve the logic of transportation in the northern Trench.²⁰⁹ For the first time one could get to McLeod Lake via a major provincial roadway instead of trail or waterway.²¹⁰ In response to this new connectivity, the band even proposed the relocation of the village on McLeod Lake No. 1 across the lake in order to take full advantage of the highway. Instead, Indian Affairs moved the village from the lakeshore near the heritage site to its present location in 1979 to prevent flooding and sewage issues.²¹¹

²⁰³ "Railroad and Highway North to Peace River," *Prince George Citizen*, 13 July 1944; "Rail Surveys Paralleling Peace River Road Work," *Prince George Citizen*, 22 August 1946; "Road to Peace River Over Pine Pass Route:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 10 February 1944; SFU Archives, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55, Ephemera (MLA), F-55-26, Premier – Press Releases – 1944, F-55-26-0-14, Press Release: Premier's Office, 8 July 1944.

²⁰⁴ J. Lewis Robinson, "The Rocky Mountain Trench," *Eye-Witness*, 143.

²⁰⁵ Al Inyallie.

²⁰⁶ Alec Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; Jane Inyallie, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 3 October 2012; NBCA, 2004.24.48, Box 1, Jack Corless interviewed by Helen Mustard; Richard Solonas.

²⁰⁷ Doug Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; Verne Solonas.

²⁰⁸ Robert Inyallie; Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012; Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; John Poole; Doris Prince; Agnes Solonas; "Town and Country: McLeod's Lake," *Prince George Citizen*, 17 January 1967; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

²⁰⁹ "Work on Pine Pass Highway Will Begin Soon as Weather Permits."

²¹⁰ A point repeatedly mentioned in the *Prince George Citizen*. An example can be found in "Northward – Up the Hart Highway," *Prince George Citizen*, 31 March 1966.

²¹¹ This flooding was not directly from the reservoir. Construction of the new village began in October 1963. Anonymous #3, interviewed by author, October 2012; "Centennial Club Elects Officers," *Prince George Citizen*, 19 February 1959; Al Inyallie; Jack Isadore, 4 August 2004; Marion Jackson, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake,

As it turned out the Hart Highway was a mixed blessing.²¹² The increased traffic and demands on resources were detrimental to wild life along the highway. The caribou herds near Bear Lake (not to be confused with the Bear Lake Fort Connelly was on) disappeared following the construction of the highway.²¹³ Motorists hit many moose.²¹⁴

As Alison Davis put it, the highway facilitated “what could literally be called a flood of development in the region.”²¹⁵ It brought more non-Tsek’ehne into Tsek’ehne territory, especially loggers, settlers, hunters, and poachers.²¹⁶ As a result of the highway, the non-Tsek’ehne community of McLeod Lake grew.²¹⁷ This influx was a reversal of the previously mentioned trend in which non-Tsek’ehne had been leaving the Trench. Perhaps as a result many Elders would not recall Euro-Canadians entering into Tsek’ehne territory until the postwar period, with those that did leaving.²¹⁸ McLeod Lake Elder Jack Isadore even called it an invasion.²¹⁹

Some Tsek’ehne, especially those from McLeod Lake, found employment clearing for the highway, transporting goods and supplies, or in construction.²²⁰ After its construction a bus service was established the connected McLeod Lake to Prince George and Dawson Creek. Some

BC, 20 March 2012; “McLeod’s Lake News,” *Prince George Citizen*, 30 January 1959; Nancy Middleton, “McLeod’s Lake News,” *Prince George Citizen*, 30 October 1963; Royal BC Museum, “New Arrivals,” *Living Landscapes* www.livinglandscapes.ca/prnr/mcleod_lake/newarrivals.html (accessed 29 January 2014; site discontinued); Agnes Solonas; Geraldine Solonas; Josephine Tylee, 19 March 2012; Anita Vallee.

²¹² Harry Chingee, 21 March 2012; Jane Inyallie; Jack Isadore, interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 July 2004; Marion Jackson; Richard Solonas.

²¹³ Alec Chingee.

²¹⁴ Richard Solonas.

²¹⁵ Davis, 3.

²¹⁶ Adele Chingee; Jack Isadore, 21 July 2004; Marion Jackson; Littlefield, Dorricott, and Cullon, 43; Richard Solonas.

²¹⁷ Patricia Johnson, “McLeod Lake Post,” *The Beaver* Autumn 1965: 22-23.

²¹⁸ Gordon Pierre.

²¹⁹ Jack Isadore, 4 August 2004.

²²⁰ Doug Chingee; Harry Chingee, 21 March 2012; Al Inyallie; Jack Isadore, 4 August 2004; Johnny Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012; Doris Prince; Richard Solonas; Lena Vallee, 17 August 2004.

Elders used it to find employment in these communities.²²¹ Others left the area entirely.²²² Elders would also recall that after the completion of the highway fewer people lived on the land during the summer, but is unclear if it causal.²²³ The forest industry, already expanding in the area since the 1940s, took off after the completion of the Hart Highway, most notably in the form of portable sawmills.²²⁴ This expansion only increased employment opportunities for the Tsek'ehne.²²⁵ Some Elders see it as form of colonialism.²²⁶

The highway led to many deaths for the McLeod Lake Tse'khene.²²⁷ This new connection with the outside world meant band members could easily bring alcohol into the community if they wanted to.²²⁸ It also led to the introduction of the automobile as source of transportation that rivalled the old riverboats.²²⁹ Taken together these two changes proved quite deadly. Deaths as the result of automobile accidents and hitting pedestrians were common. Some died of exposure, drowned in the lake, or disappeared. Not helping the situation was that not only did the McLeod Lake Hotel open a bar, but a local store also ran a beer parlor.²³⁰ Some band members would get intoxicated at one or the other, especially once Indian Affairs took their

²²¹ Alec Chingee; Richard Solonas; Verne Solonas; Josephine Tylee, 19 March 2012.

²²² Lanoue, "Continuity," 175.

²²³ Lena Vallee seems to suggest it was due to a lack of riverboats. Adele Chingee; Lena Vallee, 17 August 2004.

²²⁴ "Forest Act (Section 33) Notice of Application for Forest Management License: The Pas Lumber Company Ltd., 26 March 1953," *Prince George Citizen*, 26 March 1953; "Ft. McLeod Pioneer In Hospital; New Sawmill at Summit Lake," *Prince George Citizen*, 20 May 1954; Al Inyallie; Jack Isadore, 4 August 2004; "McLeod's Lake – Trading Post, 1966;" Vera Poole, "Williston Lake," 32; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-38-0-3, BC Hydro and Power Authority, "The Smoke of Prosperity," *Progress* Winter 1963; Richard Solonas; Verne Solonas.

²²⁵ Harry Chingee, 21 March 2012; Al Inyallie; Jean Isaac, "Sekani History," 5-6.

²²⁶ Jean Isaac, "Sekani History," *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 67.

²²⁷ Georgina Chingee; Jack Isadore, 21 July 2004; Jack Isadore, 4 August 2004; Lena Vallee, 5 August 2004.

²²⁸ Adele Chingee; Jane Inyallie.

²²⁹ Georgina Chingee.

²³⁰ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Richard Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 27 September 2012. Gordon Clark, "McLeod Lake Indians: Fight is One of Hope," *Prince George Citizen*, 11 July 1987; Malcolm Gray, "Violent Death Common on BC Reserve," *The Globe and Mail*, 6 August 1974.

children away to Lejac.²³¹ Some Elders recall waiting for their parents while they were inside the bar. For the McLeod Lake Tse'khene the bar contributed to social disruption that challenged traditional ways of life and traditional economic activities.²³² The highway also meant that even if the bar closed, band members could travel to other bars in nearby communities.²³³

Status Indians drinking in bars was perfectly legal. In December 1951 the province of BC amended the Liquor Act to allow status Indians to drink in hotel beer parlours. Other locations, such as liquor stores and clubs were still off limits, however.²³⁴ In 1954 the federal government further amended the act to allow status Indians to drink in licensed public places.²³⁵ These laws went against the spirit of the general prohibition contained in the Indian Act of the time, but were not in conflict as Section 95 of the Indian Act allowed for the provinces to control Aboriginal liquor laws off-reserve.²³⁶ Together these laws created a situation where status Indians could legally buy alcohol, and drink it in some locations of BC, but not others, that differentiated them from other British Columbians. Many found the situation unfair and protested, including Frank Calder, who pointed out the Lieutenant-Governor had broken the law by serving him alcohol at a state ball.²³⁷ In 1956 Ottawa further amended the Indian Act to allow for the end of on-reserve

²³¹ Jack Isadore, 21 July 2004; Jack Isadore, 4 August 2004; Lanoue, *Brothers*, 24; "Northern Roundup: Cannibalism in Northern BC," *Prince George Citizen*, 12 April 1961; Doris Prince; Yasmine Prince; Geraldine Solonas; Verne Solonas; Lena Vallee, 5 August 2004.

²³² Al Inyallie.

²³³ Gray, "Violent Death Common on BC Reserve."

²³⁴ According to E.S. Peters until 1895 status Indians could purchase alcohol. Robert Campbell, "A 'Fantastic Rigmorole: Deregulating Aboriginal Drinking in British Columbia, 1945-1962,'" *BC Studies*, no. 141 (2004): 89-90, 92; E.S. Peters, "Cougars I Have Met: Sheriff Ernest Peters' Memory Stirred by Cougar Story from Ft. St. James: These Animals Are Rare in the Interior But Not By Any Means Unknown – Some Dissertations by the Way," *Prince George Citizen*, 30 December 1921.

²³⁵ Campbell, 91.

²³⁶ BCA, Scrapbooks of Liquor-Related Newspaper Clippings, GR-0062, Box 5, Volume 18, "Indians Ask for Liquor Rights on Their Reservation," [Cowichan Leader], 22 December 1955; Wendy Moss and Elaine Gardner O'Toole, *Aboriginal People: History of Discriminatory Laws* (Ottawa: Law and Government Division, 1991) publications.gc.ca/Collections-R/LoPBdP/BP/bp175-e.htm (accessed 25 September 2015).

²³⁷ BCA, GR-0062, Box 5, Volume 18, "Bonner... Indians to Receive No Further Liquor Privileges, 2 March 1956;" BCA, GR-0062, Box 5, Volume 18, "Unfair Liquor Act," 29 July 1955; BCA, GR-0062, Box 5, Volume 18, "Would Change Indian Act: Representatives of Queen Charged with Violation," 12 February 1955; Robert Campbell, *passim*.

prohibition at the request of a band.²³⁸ Six years later the province announced that it “would no longer enforce the liquor provisions of the Indian Act.”²³⁹ The Drybones case of 1970 overturned these provisions nationwide, and in 1985 the federal government amended the Indian Act to not only reflect this state of affairs, but also allow bands to pass their own prohibition laws.²⁴⁰ The end result was that status Indians could legally drink throughout Canada.

The Hidden Problem – British Columbia Aboriginal Policy

The maintenance of the traditional lifestyle and slow transition to involvement in the non-Tsek’ehne wage labour economy was possible thanks to the land base of the Tsek’ehne. Unfortunately, this land base was not secure as was revealed by a seemingly unrelated story. In the 1920s provincial newspapers reported that the Tsek’ehne living around the Liard River had leprosy. Although official investigations revealed the story to be false, they did find that the biggest concern facing the Tsek’ehne was maintaining control of their traditional territory in the face of BC Aboriginal policy and incursions by non-Tsek’ehne trappers.²⁴¹

In July 1862 my great great grandfathers and great great grandmothers woke up in the Stickeen Territories. They had gone to sleep the night before in Tsek’ehne traditional territory, which at an international level was nominally under the control of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s as representatives of the British Empire. The dual governor of the Colony of British Columbia and the Colony of Vancouver Island, James Douglas governed the new Stickeen Territories. The imperial government created the Stickeen Territories in response to the Stikine Gold Rush of

²³⁸ Robert Campbell, 93-94, 99.

²³⁹ Ibid., 99.

²⁴⁰ Moss and O’Toole.

²⁴¹ BCA, Denys Nelson Papers re. British Columbia Indians, MS-1175, Box 3, File 5, “No Leprosy Among Indians,” *Province*, 25 June 1924; “Leprosy Story Is Exploded by Two Old-Timers;” “Leprosy Story Gets Attention for Siccanees: Northern Indians Demand Home Rule in Matter of Their Game Laws: Will Seek to Have White Trappers Excluded from Their Tribal Areas,” *Prince George Citizen*, 28 August 1924; Sorcerer Meets Death at Hands of Siccanees.”

1861 on the Stikine River on the western marches of Tsek'ehne territory. The following year they incorporated it into the Colony of British Columbia. In 1866 the imperial government united the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, and five years later the colony joined the new Dominion of Canada as the sixth province.

Unlike the other western provinces, BC joined Canada with the same rights as the original four when it came to lands and resources.²⁴² Unlike all other provinces, Section 13 of the BC's Terms of Union protected its colonial Aboriginal policy, with Ottawa pledging to adhere to it with regard to reserves and Aboriginal lands.²⁴³ This entrenched a formula of ten acres per family of five, and the province used this right to fight Ottawa tooth and nail when they tried to change it and/or suggest the signing of treaties.²⁴⁴ In December 1873 Attorney General George Walkem even argued that although those with reserves were happy with them, the federal government should reduce the size of reserves to better fit population levels. According to him, the small size of reserves in the province helped alleviate the concern of some Indigenous people that the state would confine residents to them.²⁴⁵ Ottawa challenged this claim and through repeated disallowances of the provincial Land Act, as well as negotiations, succeeded in 1874 in having the reserve formula amended to twenty acres per family of five. (They had hoped for

²⁴² British Columbia Terms of Union, 1871 s.10, *passim*.

²⁴³ British Columbia Terms of Union, 1871 s.13; Department of the Interior, *Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year Ending 30 June 1874* (Ottawa: Maclean, Roger and Co., 1875), 10; LAC, RG 10, Volume 3611, File 3756-1, Memorandum, 2 November 1874; LAC, RG 10, Volume 3611, File 3756-1, Letter to Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Carnarvon from the Governor-General of Canada, the Earl of Dufferin, 4 December 1874.

²⁴⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 3611, File 3756-1, Memorandum, 2 November 1874; LAC, RG 10, Volume 3611, File 3756-1, Letter to Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Carnarvon from the Governor-General of Canada, the Earl of Dufferin, 4 December 1874.

²⁴⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 3611, File 3756-1, Letter to Indian Commissioner I.W. Powell from Attorney General George Walkem, 29 December 1873.

forty, or even eighty in ranching areas, acres per family of five.) There was disagreement over whether the new formula was retroactive.²⁴⁶

This “victory” did not settle the issue and in 1907 the province argued its policy was to periodically change the size of reserves to reflect population changes, with any land no longer “needed” immediately surrendered to the province since title to reserves was merely usufructuary, with ultimate ownership residing in the province. Therefore, it argued Ottawa could not lease or transfer reserve land, and in instances where it did the land immediately reverted to the province thereby rendering the transaction void. This argument was not merely a reference point, but based on the fact the province believed that in total reserve land in BC was too large for the Aboriginal population in general.²⁴⁷ This did not bode well for any of BC’s roughly one hundred ninety-eight First Nations. Taken together with the policy of twenty acres per family of five, it left them with very little secure or adequate land to deal with outsider intrusion and colonialism.

This lack of secure land was especially true for the Tsek’ehne. In 1876 both levels of government formed the Joint (federal and provincial) Indian Reserve Commission to create reserves throughout BC without a set formula. As a result, the federal government created a reserve at McLeod Lake, later known as McLeod Lake No. 1 (286 acres), in 1892.²⁴⁸ For twenty

²⁴⁶ Twenty acres west of the Cascades and forty acres east was proposed as a formula by Indian Commissioner Powell. As early as 28 July 1873 Victoria conceded the size, although the entire issue is discussed in length in LAC, RG 10, Volume 3611, File 3756-1 between 1873 and 1874. Department of the Interior, *Annual Report... 30 June 1874*, 9-11; Indian Affairs, *Annual Report on Indian Affairs for the Year Ending 30 June 1872* (Ottawa: I.B. Taylor, 1873), 12; Indian Affairs, *Annual Report on Indian Affairs for the Year Ending 30 June 1873* (Ottawa: I.B. Taylor, 1874), 5; LAC, RG 10, Volume 3611, File 3756-1; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11047, File 33/General Part 6, Minute of the Honourable the Executive Council, Approved by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor on the 28th Day of February, A.D. 1907.

²⁴⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11047, File 33/General Part 6, Minute of the Honourable the Executive Council, Approved by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor on the 28th Day of February, A.D. 1907.

²⁴⁸ Officially the reserve was allotted in 1892, surveyed in 1894 and transferred to the federal government on 29 July 1938. BCA, Minutes of Decision of Joint Indian Reserve Commission, GR-2982, Box 5, File 21 [4A], Folio 902/93, Minute of Decision: McLeod Lake Indians, 12 September 1892; BCA, GR-2982, Box 5, File 21 [4A], Folio 902/93, Letter to the Chief Commissioner of Lands & Works from Commissioner P. O’Reilly, 28 March 1893; BCA, GR-

years it was the only Tsek'ehne reserve. And while no record exists of the commission looking into creating a reserve for the Fort Grahame Tsek'ehne, oral tradition maintains that around 1910-1911 the commission visited Fort Grahame to lay out a reserve, only to have Chief Charlie Hunter ask, "How can you give me land that we already own."²⁴⁹

The Joint Indian Reserve Commission did not settle the matter of reserve land in BC and in 1912 in an attempt to find a final solution both levels of government formed the McKenna-McBride Commission.²⁵⁰ One of the many issues the commission looked at was Treaty 8, first signed in 1899. The western boundary of Treaty 8 is highly contentious. It is currently before the BC Supreme Court and the heart of the dispute is that while the orders-in-council authorizing the treaty state either the commissioners should decide the western boundary or else it is the height of land that is the Arctic-Pacific divide,²⁵¹ the treaty itself says "the central range of the Rocky Mountains."²⁵²

2982, Box 5, File 83 [16], Folio 4960/95, Letter to the Chief Commissioner of Lands & Works from Commissioner P. O'Reilly, 23 December 1895; Indian Affairs Branch, *Schedule of Indian Reserves in the Dominion of Canada: Part 2 Reserves in the Province of British Columbia, Corrected Up to March 31, 1943* (Ottawa: Indian Affairs Branch, 1943), 155.

²⁴⁹ Ray Izony, "Changes."

²⁵⁰ Wilson Duff, *The Indian History of British Columbia: The Impact of the White Man*, new ed. (Victoria: Royal BC Museum, 1997), 94; Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2002), 228-230, passim.

²⁵¹ Arthur Ray notes the province did not officially respond to P.C. No. 2749, perhaps so as to not legitimize the recognition of title or otherwise engage the federal government. Christine Smillie sees the notification as a way of informing the province about Treaty 8 without seeking consent so as to not get into the issue of Aboriginal title in the province. Bob Irwin, "Treaty 8: An Anomaly Revisited," *BC Studies* no. 127 (2000): 89-91, 90n20; LAC, RG 10, Volume 3848, File 75, 236-1, Extract from a Report of the Committee of the Honourable the Privy Council approved by His Excellency on the 27 June 1898, P.C. No. 1703; LAC, RG 10, Volume 3848, File 75, 236-1, Extract from a Report of the Committee of the Honourable the Privy Council approved by His Excellency on the 6 December 1898, P.C. No. 2749; LAC, RG 10, Volume 3848, File 75, 236-1, Letter to the Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs from Indian Commissioner, North West Territories, 12 January 1898; Arthur Ray, "Treaty 8: A British Columbian Anomaly," *BC Studies* no. 123 (1999): 34-35, 37-38, 47, 49; Arthur Ray, "Treaty 8 and Expert Witnesses: A Reply to Robert Irwin," *BC Studies* no. 127 (2000): 103; Christine Smillie, "The People Left Out of Treaty 8" (MA Thesis: University of Saskatchewan, 2005), 17-18.

²⁵² Arthur Ray claims this was due to confusion over where the height of land was. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), "Treaty No. 8: Made, June 21, 1899 and Adhesions, Reports, etc.," *British Columbia Indian Treaties in Historical Perspective* (Ottawa: Research Brand, Corporate Policy, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1981), 86; Irwin, 89, 92-93; Ray, "Treaty 8: A British Columbian Anomaly," 52; Ray, "Treaty 8 and Expert Witnesses," 104-106.

It is unclear if Tsek'ehne traditional territory is in the treaty area, or even if it should be. McLeod Lake, Finlay Forks, Fort Grahame, Ingenika and Fort Ware are all located in the land between the height of land and the central range of the Rockies. And while a Tsek'ehne group at Fort Nelson signed an adhesion in 1910, and some Tsek'ehne living near Fort St. John received annuities, there was no adhesion signed with the Tsek'ehne at Fort Ware, Fort Grahame, or McLeod Lake until the McLeod Lake Tse'khene adhesion in 1999/2000.²⁵³ Oral tradition maintains brothers Chief Charlie Hunter of Fort Grahame and Chief *aatse* Davie of Fort Ware advised their people to reject treaty based not only on their knowledge of Canadian prairie treaties not being honoured, but also what they did not know about the treaty and treaty process itself.²⁵⁴

Whether or not the Tsek'ehne were in Treaty 8 was highly relevant to the creation of reserves for them. If they were included, then their reserves had to follow the reserve formula of Treaty 8: 640 acres per family of five or 160 acres in severalty. It is perhaps because of this formula that despite at first apparently accepting a western boundary of Treaty 8 that followed the Arctic-Pacific divide, the McKenna-McBride Commission ultimately decided on 1 February 1916 that the boundary was the Central Range of the Rockies. As a result, the commission officially dropped the issue of there being no Tsek'ehne adhesions to treaty west of the

²⁵³ Gordon Pierre questioned whether Tsek'ehne signed an adhesion at Fort Nelson. Some Elders heard rumours McLeod Lake or Fort Ware had signed an adhesion prior to this date, but were unsure. Phillip Charlie; Jean Isaac, 9 September 2008; Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 7 November 2008; Jack Isadore, 4 August 2004; LAC, RG 10, Volume 8595, File 1/1-11-5-1, untitled Fort Nelson Adhesion, 15 August, 1910; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; Gordon Pierre; Albert Poole, 6 November 2008; Verne Solonas.

²⁵⁴ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Lena McCook, 6 March 2013 and John Poole. Lena claims *aatse* Pierre was *aatse* Davie's brother, while John is not entirely sure they were biological siblings.

Rockies.²⁵⁵ Yet, some Elders recall hearing that commissioners offered a treaty adhesion to Chief Charlie Hunter, who once again refused it.²⁵⁶

Indian Affairs would once again raise the issue of whether or not the Tsek'ehne were in Treaty 8 during the Ditchburn-Clark Inquiry (1920-1923) that approved the findings of the McKenna-McBride Commission. Ultimately, however, Superintendent General Duncan Scott informed Chief Inspector of Indian Agencies, W.E. Ditchburn that Ottawa was willing to leave the issue alone as long as BC eventually created reserves following the reserve formula, while at the same time mistakenly claiming the height of land was the Rockies.²⁵⁷ Despite this recommendation, Indian Affairs did not create reserves for the McLeod Lake and Fort Grahame Tsek'ehne that followed the reserve formula contained in Treaty 8, a decision that reporter John Cruikshank would later call "miserly."²⁵⁸ Instead, the Ditchburn-Clark Inquiry reduced the original applications for reserve land made by the commission. With regard to McLeod Lake, this included Pack River No. 2 (276 acres), Carp Lake No. 3 (12.10 acres), War Lake No. 4 (8.15

²⁵⁵ Indeed, despite being notified on 5 January 1914, the commission did not reply until August 1915, and then to merely note they had visited and laid out reserves. A 1975 Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources report on the Ingenika Band suggests despite being in the treaty area, they were not part of Treaty 8, and therefore received reserves during the McKenna-McBride Commission. This reasoning is faulty as the commission considered the Treaty 8 area. LAC, RG 10, Volume 11022, File 565A, Letter to J.C.H. Bergeron from Deputy-Superintendent Duncan Scott, 5 January 1914; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11022, File 565A, Letter to Deputy-Superintendent Duncan Scott from Secretary, Royal Commission of Indian Affairs C.N. Gibbons, 6 August 1915; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11295, Interim Report No. 91 of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, 1 February 1916; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources,] "The Origin Of The Ingenika Band Of Indians And The Flooding Of Williston Lake," [1975].

²⁵⁶ William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012.

²⁵⁷ An exchange of letters discussing the matter is found in LAC, RG 10, Volume 11302 ending with a letter on 24 March 1922. LAC, RG 10, Volume 11046, File 33/General Part 3, Letter to Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Duncan Scott, from Chief Inspector of Indian Agencies, W.E. Ditchburn, 19 November 1920; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11302, Letter to Deputy Superintendent General Duncan Scott from Chief Inspector of Indian Agencies, W.E. Ditchburn, 24 March 1922.

²⁵⁸ Billie Poole claims lines were put around Fort Grahame, Police Meadows and Finlay Forks in 1932-1933. Officially the reserves were allotted in 1916, surveyed in 1926 and transferred to the federal government on 29 July 1938. John Cruikshank, "Two Decades Later, BC Offers Aid:...", *The Globe and Mail*, 22 September 1987; Indian Affairs Branch, *Schedule of Indian Reserves... Up to March 31, 1943*, 155-156; William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012.

acres) and McLeod Lake No. 5 (17.30 acres).²⁵⁹ For Fort Grahame it included Finlay Forks No. 1 (168 acres), which was located at Fort Grahame, and Police Meadows No. 2 (320 acres).²⁶⁰

The name Finlay Forks No. 1 was a result of an attempt by Indian Agent William McAllan to create reserves seemingly in anticipation of the McKenna-McBride Commission, most notably a 640 acre reserve 4½ miles north of Finlay Forks.²⁶¹ Despite the fact McAllan told him that the Tsek'ehne had inhabited the areas since time immemorial, Commissioner J.A.J. McKenna disregarded this information and succeeded in having the application rescinded due to the formation of the commission.²⁶² This action did not stop McAllan's request, however, although it would transform during the commission.²⁶³ Ultimately, the commission would reject the idea of a reserve at Finlay Forks, but in an odd turn of events keep the name for the reserve at

²⁵⁹ The McKenna-McBride Commission originally applied for 320, 12, 20, and 15 acres for each reserve respectively. In a letter dated 12 May 1925 it was requested that these reserves be surveyed based on the original size. Indian Affairs Branch, *Schedule of Indian Reserves... Up to March 31, 1943*, 155-156; LAC, RG 10, Drafts of the Report of the Commission on Indian Lands in British Columbia and Confirmation of Evidence, Volume 1045, Indian Affairs, "Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, 1913-1916," 900-901; LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,163-1-2, Letter to J.A.F. Campbell from Assistant Deputy and Secretary, J.D. McLean, 12 May 1925.

²⁶⁰ The McKenna-McBride Commission originally applied for 149.2 and 640 acres for each reserve respectively. A letter from Ditchburn-Clark Inquiry would claim the 640 acres for Police Meadows was a mistake. Indian Affairs Branch, *Schedule of Indian Reserves... Up to March 31, 1943* (Ottawa: Indian Affairs Branch, 1943), 155; LAC, RG 10, Volume 1045, Indian Affairs, "Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia," 1913-1916, 901.

²⁶¹ Initially the application had been for a mere 320 acres. LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,163-1, Letter to Assistant Deputy and Secretary, J.D. McLean from Indian Agent W.J. McAllan, 12 January 1912; LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,163-1, Letter to Assistant Deputy and Secretary J.D. McLean, 16 December 1912.

²⁶² LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,163-1, Letter to Deputy Commissioner, Department of Lands, R.W. Renwick from Assistant Deputy and Secretary, J.D. McLean, 27 February 1912; LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,163-1, Telegraph to Minister of the Interior, Robert Rogers from J.A.G. (sic) McKenna, 18 September 1912.

²⁶³ In December 1912 the request was for 320 acres where the Pack meets the Parsnip River, 280 acres on the Pack, and 10 acres on Long Lake for McLeod Lake as well as 320 acres at Finlay Forks and 640 acres at Fort Grahame for Fort Grahame. By April 1914 the request was for 320 acres where the Pack meets the Parsnip River, 12-20 acres on Long Lake, and 20 acres on Carp Lake for McLeod Lake as well as 320 acres at Finlay Forks and 640 acres twenty miles west of Fort Grahame for Fort Grahame. LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,163-1, Letter to Assistant Deputy and Secretary J.D. McLean, 16 December 1912; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11022, File 565A, Letter to Commissioner J.A.J. McKenna from Deputy Minister of Lands, R.W. Renwick, 14 April 1914; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11026, File SNL-2, Schedule of Lands in British Columbia Applied for on Behalf of the Indians: Stuart Lake Agency.

Fort Grahame many miles to the north.²⁶⁴ This oversight would become official when the province approved the findings of both the commission and inquiry on 26 July 1923, followed by Ottawa's approval on 19 July 1924 outside of the CPR railway belt, and 3 February 1930 inside the CPR railway belt. (The province approved the latter on 23 September 1930, but withheld transferring reserve title to the federal government until 1938.)

This approval meant that only one Tsek'ehne nation did not have a reserve – Fort Ware. Fort Ware did not receive reserves during the McKenna-McBride Commission because Indian Affairs did not officially consider it its own separate band until 1943.²⁶⁵ During the McKenna-McBride Commission it had had reserves created for it as the Fort Grahame Nomads living with the Kaska.²⁶⁶ The Fort Ware Tsek'ehne did not stay with the Kaska, however, and by 1927 the provincial police were aware that they lived between the Fox and Kwadacha rivers.²⁶⁷ Indian Affairs, however, did not “discover” they lived there until 1929 and it was not until 1935 that reserves were requested pending an investigation into the chief, Aatse Davie, who was believed to be from Fort St. John.²⁶⁸ Although an official investigation concluded that he had at best visited

²⁶⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11022, File 565A, Letter to Deputy Minister of Lands, R.W. Renwick from Indian Agent, W.J. McAllan, 29 October 1914; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11022, File 565C, Letter to N.W. White, Chairman of the Commission from Commissioners Saurmarez Carmichael and J.P. Shaw, 22 October 1914.

²⁶⁵ Harry Chingee, 21 March 1912; LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,163-1, Letter to the Secretary, Indian Affairs Branch, from Indian Agent Robert Howe, 2 July 1941; LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,163-1, Letter to the Secretary from Indian Agent R.H. Moore, 15 February 1937; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11295, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC, D.M. MacKay from Indian Agent R. Howe, 14 July 1943; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11295, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC, D.M. MacKay from Director, Harold McGill, 5 (11) August 1943; John Poole.

²⁶⁶ Indian Affairs Branch, *Schedule of Indian Reserves... Up to March 31, 1943*, 141-142; LAC, RG 10, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, Volume 11021, File 541B, Indian Agent Scott Simpson, ‘Stikine Agency,’ LAC, RG 10, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, Volume 11021, File AH11, Examination of Agent: Meeting with W. Scott Simpson, 18 January 1916; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11026, File SNK-1, Stikine Agency: Add New Reserves; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11026, File SNK-2, Minutes of Decision: Stikine Agency – Casca Tribe or Band (Including the Fort Graham Nomads of the Stikine Agency).

²⁶⁷ BCA, Northern British Columbia Fish and Wildlife Records, GR-1085, Box 1, File 2, Letter to the NCO from Constable C.D. Muirhead, 6 March 1929.

²⁶⁸ Aatse Davie had formed the band in part because he required any man who married one of his daughters to live with him. The entire process is found in LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,161-1 as well as LAC, RG 10, Volume 11295.

Fort St. John; was not a treaty Indian and had never received annuities; and that his band had lived with the Kaska until they returned to Fort Ware in 1919 Indian Affairs did not survey reserves until 1938.²⁶⁹

Despite surveying in 1938, it was not until 1943 that Indian Affairs legally created the three reserves: Fort Ware No. 1 (958 acres), Sucker Lake No. 2 (5.02 acres), and Weissener Lake No. 3 (5.28 acres). Unlike the previous reserves created for the Tsek'ehne, the province did not grant the land included in these three reserves, forcing the federal government to purchase it following surveys.²⁷⁰ Ottawa paid the province \$1,206.61.²⁷¹ It was not until Indian Affairs purchased the reserve lands that they officially separated the two bands.²⁷²

Despite having reserves, the Tsek'ehne were not restricted to them. Indeed, as was made painfully obvious during the McKenna-McBride Commission, the local Indian Agent had little to do with them, meeting with McLeod Lake every one to two years and even less with Fort Grahame. According to W.J. McAllan, it took one week to reach McLeod Lake and two weeks to

²⁶⁹ Indian Affairs concluded the rumour might have started because of someone with a similar name. Oral tradition states his mother was a Tsek'ehne woman, who married three men in succession: a Tsek'ehne man, who she had no children with; a Scottish fur trader, who she had Chief Charlie Hunter Sr. and Thomas Hunter with; and a French fur trader, who she had Davie and his sister with. (Aatse Davie's sister died at a young age.) Through her aatse Davie's first cousin was Old Pierre. Some Elders say Charlie Hunter Sr. was from Halfway River. Lena McCook claims they were in fact brothers. Keith Billington claims his mother was Tseloni and Sasuchan with perhaps some Gitksan. Frans Lamers claims his father was French and his mother was Cree. The issue of whether he received annuities would come up again and again as would his exact parentage and last name. Indian Affairs concluded his last name was either Braconnier, Brascoyer, Braskwayie, while Billington, Emil McCook and Mary Jean Poole heard it was Hamilton. As with above the entire process is found in LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,161-1 as well as LAC, RG 10, Volume 11295. Billington, 37-38; BCA, MS 1308, Box 1/1, File 20, Lamers, 18; Martha Egnell, 8 March 2012; Frank Hunter; Indian Affairs Branch, *Schedule of Indian Reserves... Up to March 31, 1943*, 159; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; Lena McCook; Mary Jean Poole, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2013.

²⁷⁰ As with above the entire process is found in LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,161-1 as well as LAC, RG 10, Volume 11295. Indian Affairs Branch, *Schedule of Indian Reserves... Up to March 31, 1943*, 159.

²⁷¹ A \$10 Crown grant fee was also applied. LAC, RG 10, Volume 11047, File 33/General Part 7, Letter to Deputy Minister of Lands from Indian Commissioner for BC, D.M. McKay, 20 April 1942.

²⁷² LAC, RG 10, Volume 11295, Letter to Commissioner for BC, D.M. MacKay from Director Harold McGill, 26 June 1943; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11295, Letter to Indian Agent, R. Howe from Indian Commissioner for BC, D.M. MacKay, 12 July 1943; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11295, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC, D.M. MacKay from Indian Agent R. Howe, 14 July 1943; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11295, Memorandum from Indian Commissioner for BC, 20 July 1943.

reach Fort Grahame.²⁷³ As late as 1924 Lower Mainland journalists described the Finlay-Parsnip watershed as “‘beyond the law.’”²⁷⁴ Reflecting the inability of the colonial state to enforce its policies, some McLeod Lake Elders recall that their families lived across the lake in the “Euro-Canadian” McLeod Lake.²⁷⁵ Revealing the “importance” of reserves to the Tsek’ehne, former Chief Emil McCook told me reserves did not exist for Fort Ware until 1958.²⁷⁶ Indeed, Fort Ware initially had funding issues due to the fact the village did not correspond with the reserve.²⁷⁷ Despite this situation, Emil noted Indian Affairs informed him that they had provided services to both Fort Ware and Fort Graham beginning in 1949, something he vehemently disagrees with.²⁷⁸

Nor were the Tsek’ehne interested in staying on reserves of their own accord.²⁷⁹ Rather residence on reserve was often due to the simple fact a reserve either corresponded with a historic village or settlement, or else provided some other need.²⁸⁰ The Tsek’ehne lived throughout the traditional territory up to the completion of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam moving from one settlement to another depending on the time of year and resources needed. According to some Elders they periodically stayed close to fur trade posts, especially in times of need, while others state they avoided living by posts in general.²⁸¹ State officials like BC Police Special

²⁷³ BCA, MS 1056, Box 3, File 4, Stuart Lake Agency, Examination of W.J. McAllan, Indian Agent for the Stuart Lake Agency at the Board Room, Victoria, November 15th, 1915.

²⁷⁴ BCA, MS-1175, Box 3, File 5, “Indians Being Preyed Upon by Trappers,” *Vancouver Sun*, 15 September 1924.

²⁷⁵ Al Inyallie, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; Doris Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 26 September 2012.

²⁷⁶ Emil McCook, 5 March 2013.

²⁷⁷ Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012.

²⁷⁸ Emil McCook, 5 March 2013.

²⁷⁹ Billington, 35-36; Adele Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; Jean Isaac, 9 September 2008; Verne Solonas.

²⁸⁰ Adele Chingee; Albert Isadore, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 18 March 2013; Zepheria Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, 1 October 2012; Richard Solonas; Josephine Tylee, 19 March 2012.

²⁸¹ The former argument is problematic as Fort Grahame closed between 1885 and 1890. Billington, 39; Hudson’s Bay Company Archives (HBCA), Post: Fort Grahame (BC) Finding Aid, 1998; HBCA, Post Reports – McLeod Lake, 1891, B.119/e/2, J. McDougall, ‘Inspection Report: McLeod Lake Post: New Caledonia District,’ 8; Lanoue, “Continuity,” 264-265, 271, 290, 304-306, 307-309.

Constable C.D. Muirhead did not seem to care either way.²⁸² Some would suggest the Tsek'ehne dislike villages like Fort Ware today due to the fact that historically Indian Affairs did not confine band members to them.²⁸³ One Elder from McLeod Lake even equated reserves to jail.²⁸⁴ Another said they felt closed in on reserves.²⁸⁵ On an abstract level Tsay Keh Dene Elder Jean Isaac sees reserves as instruments of colonialism, designed to efface traditional culture, and in doing so challenges the notion that reserves protect land for Aboriginal peoples in the face of colonialism.²⁸⁶ Until the completion of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, however, these reserves were largely abstract in nature.

Conclusion

Since 1793 the British Empire and Canadian state increasingly incorporated Tsek'ehne traditional territory. Changes were slow, however. Starting with the fur traders, and continuing with the prospectors, non-Tsek'ehne had attempted to “develop” the Trench only to find limited, often temporary, success. The same was true with regard to non-Tsek'ehne settlement, like Finlay Forks. In part this outcome was the result of economics. The fur traders did not want to ruin their source of furs. The prospectors found it easier to follow gold rushes rather than invest in mining projects. This outcome was also a result of timing. When settlement seemed assured, World War I drew many of the settlers to battlefields in Europe, never to return. When modern mechanized mining seemed poised to takeoff in the 1920s, the Great Depression shut it down, along with renewed promises of settlement. The end result of these failed developments and settlement was that the Tsek'ehne were able to continue leading a traditional way of life,

²⁸² BCA, Muirhead, Cecil Davidson, 1899-: Prince George District, Bulkley Valley; Game Warden, MS-2354, Part 1, C.D. Muirhead, “Diary, January 27, 1922 - December 31, 1937,” 37, 40, 53, 65, 67, 72, 73.

²⁸³ Robert Inyallie.

²⁸⁴ Alfred Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012.

²⁸⁵ Doris Prince.

²⁸⁶ Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012.

utilizing the vast majority of their traditional territory, and travelling up and down the Finlay and Parsnip river systems from Thutade Lake in the north to Summit Lake in the south. Gradually wage labour employment, most notably in sawmills around Summit Lake and Prince George, was incorporated into traditional economic activities like hunting and trapping. This situation meant that BC's Aboriginal policy, which had evolved through numerous conflicts with Ottawa, did not have an immediate impact on the Tsek'ehne. Things began to change, however, in the postwar period after World War II starting with increased attendance at the Lejac Residential School and continuing with the Hart Highway. In the case of the McLeod Lake the two developments interplayed off each other as the highway brought a bar to the Euro-Canadian community of McLeod Lake around the same time as people lost their children to Lejac. Then in 1956 a new development was proposed.

Chapter 2 – In the Shadow of Wenner-Gren, 1956-1961

On 12 February 1957 the newspapers of BC announced a secret 1956 memorandum between the province and Swedish industrialist Axel Wenner-Gren to build a monorail and associated developments through the northern Rocky Mountain Trench (the Trench). By August 1957 the focus of the project had switched to hydroelectric development.¹ This switch was the beginning of the Peace River project. At the time, however, it was not entirely clear that the project would amount to anything. Given the history of failed developments in their traditional territory the Tsek'ehne had no reason to believe Axel Wenner-Gren would complete the monorail or the Peace River project. Still, the period from 1956 was a period of change for the Tsek'ehne. Neither the province nor the federal government did anything to try to warn the Tsek'ehne about the dangers of the situation. Even the often critical provincial newspapers merely debated whether or not this project was the best one for the region with little concern about the hypothetical impacts on the Tsek'ehne. Instead, it seemed to quickly accept the state's logic that hydroelectric development always led to industrialization, further development, and prosperity. The end result was that when the project went forward in 1961, the Tsek'ehne were not properly informed about it, and therefore not in a position to effectively fight it. This is problematic as even the "best" outcome of a hydroelectric development that impacted Indigenous peoples, the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement, did not occur because Indian Affairs took the initiative, but because the Eeyou (Cree) and other Indigenous groups in Northern

¹ British Columbia Archives (BCA), Portage Mountain Development..., GR-0880, Box 57, The British Thomson-Houston Export Co. Ltd., "Volume I: Report On The Feasibility Of Building Dams On The Peace River," 4; BCA, GR-0880, Box 59, BC And BB Power Consultants Limited, "Peace River Hydro-Electric Project Report," (Vancouver: BC And BB Power Consultants Limited, 1959), 14; Kwadacha Archives (KA), British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 2148721, Volume 1, Letter to E.W. Bassett from A.F. Paget, 7 October 1957.

Québec were able to come together in opposition after receiving information about the James Bay project.²

The Monorail: The 1956 Memorandum

Representatives of the province and Axel Wenner-Gren signed the 1956 memorandum on 16 November 1956, which served as a letter of intent that outlined the construction of a monorail connecting Prince George to the border of Yukon Territory, along with related forestry, hydroelectric, and general infrastructure developments.³ In a move that critics would claim was purely political, Premier W.A.C. Bennett decided to keep it a secret until February 1957.⁴ The memorandum included the watershed of the Peace River above Hudson's Hope, with the exception of the watersheds of the Parsnip River south of and including the Lignite and Mischinsinlika creeks, and the Kitcheka River.⁵ It did not bode well that Kitcheka River does not exist, although it does reflect an official ignorance of northern BC that had existed since the colonial period.⁶

² Brian Craik, "Governance and Hydro Development in Québec and Manitoba," in *Power Struggles: Hydro Development and First Nations in Manitoba and Québec*, ed. Thibault Martin and Steven Hoffman (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2008), 288; Renée Dupuis, "Should the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* Serve as a Model Agreement for Other First Nations," in *Power Struggles*, 216, 218, 219; Thibault Martin, "Hydro-Development in Québec and Manitoba: Old Relationships or New Social Contract," in *Power Struggles*, 24; Thibault Martin, "The End of an Era in Québec: The Great Whale Project and the Inuit of Kuujuaupik and the Umiujaq," in *Power Struggles*, 232; Richard Salisbury, *A Homeland for the Cree: Regional Development in James Bay 1971-1981* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 3, 53-56, 152; Romuald Wera and Thibault Martin, "The Way to Modern Treaties: A Review of Hydro Projects and Agreements in Manitoba and Québec," in *Power Struggles*, 65.

³ BCA, Peace River Power Development Company fonds, MS 2353, Memorandum of Intention Made This 16 Day of November 1956; BCA, MS 2353, Memorandum of Agreement Made This 7th Day of October 1957.

⁴ When correspondence surrounding the memorandum were released on 25 March 1957 it was revealed that it had been altered on 19 December 1956 by excluding the Hudson's Hope area of the Peace River basin and removed any explicit mineral rights. BCA, Percy Grey collection, T3792:0001-0002, Percy Grey, "Origins of the Central British Columbia Development Project," May 1980; Northern British Columbia Archives (NBCA), Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Gordon McCallum, "Wenner-Gren File Reveals Little New:...", *The Province* 26 March 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Wengren Reserve Reduced By Gov't:...", *The Vancouver Sun* 26 March 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "BC Cut Size Of North Project:...", *Victoria Daily Times* 27 March 1957.

⁵ BCA, MS 2353, Memorandum of Intention Made This 16 Day of November 1956.

⁶ It appears it is in fact referring to the Kechika River. BCA, J.F. Pine Collection 1958-1980, MS 1172, Box 1, A.E.I. (Canada) Ltd., "Volume 1: Assessment of Water Power Potential," BCA, MS 1172, Box 1, A.E.I. (Canada)

Since its announcement, accounts of the origin of the 1956 memorandum have differed. The somewhat romantic “official” version was that Bernard Gore, a representative of Axel Wenner-Gren, first heard about the potential of northern BC during a conversation with Agent-General W.A. MacAdam of BC House (London, England) at a cocktail party in 1955 and went from there.⁷ Numerous other versions existed, however. Most glorified the individual telling the story.⁸ Perhaps the most likely one, and the one supported by Minister of Lands and Resources, Ray Williston, is that investor Jack Roe informed his friend, English engineer-architect Percy Grey, of the potential of BC. Grey in turn informed Bernard Gore, eventually working with him as well as other representatives of Wenner-Gren and the province until after the signing of the memorandum when they sidelined him.⁹

Wenner-Gren’s first step following the 1956 memorandum was to incorporate the Wenner-Gren BC Development Company Limited on 21 November 1956. Under the terms of the

Ltd., “Volume 2: Assessment of Water Power Potential;” Derek Hayes, *British Columbia: A New Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2012), 84.

⁷ This version can be found in numerous newspaper articles at the time. A prime example is NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Peter Burton, “Talking Politics: Vast Plan Born Over Cocktails,” *Daily Colonist*, 13 February 1957.

⁸ For example, Axel Wenner-Gren claimed he wanted to develop British Columbia since the 1920s, while Premier W.A.C. Bennett claimed he had a vision of developing the Peace River long before he heard of Axel Wenner-Gren. Of note Bennett did not mention his vision in 1957 while addressing the Men’s Canadian Club and told Jack Webster he only visited the Peace River after the 1956 memorandum. Seemingly confirming what Bennett told Webster, former President of the Hudson Hope Board of Trade, Earl Pollon, recalls Bennett viewing the river and monologuing about its future in 1959. Finally, Ray Williston would later state the provincial government ignored the Peace River because it was too remote. BCA, T1375:0009, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975, Victoria, B.C.; BCA, W.A.C. Bennett interview, T1675:0006, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by Jack Webster, Vancouver, BC, 22 October 1976; BCA, W.A.C. Bennett interview, T1675:0021, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by David Mitchell, 16 June 1977; BCA, W.A.C. Bennett interview, T1675:0036, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by David Mitchell, 11 February 1978; BCA, W.A.C. Bennett interview, T1675:0052, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by Roger Keene, 1977; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Ben Metcalfe, “Who Was the Guide? ...,” *The Province* 14 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, “Wenner-Gren Profit To ‘Aid Mankind:’ ...,” *The Vancouver Sun* 21 February 1957; Earl Pollon and Shirlee Smith Matheson, *This Was Our Valley* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 2003), 127; Simon Fraser University Archives (SFUA), W.A.C. Bennett fonds, File 55-32-0-10, “British Columbia Today and Tomorrow:” An Address By: The Honourable W.A.C. Bennett, Premier of British Columbia’ to Men’s Canadian Club, Ottawa 26 November 1957.

⁹ In 1980 Ray Williston encouraged Grey to record an oral history for the Mackenzie and District Museum, in Mackenzie, BC Grey not only obliged, but referred to his bitterness in being pushed out of the official Wenner-Gren history, even providing and citing physical evidence to prove his point. BCA, T3792:0001-0002, Percy Grey.

memorandum, surveys were to begin by “the second quarter of 1957 and be completed by the end of 1958; and the Principals shall cause construction of the railway to commence not later than April 1st 1960.”¹⁰ As Ray Williston explained, however, having a railway was a waste of money and resources unless there was freight to move on it. Furthermore, since the proposed train would be a monorail, it needed a source of electricity.¹¹ Therefore the Wenner-Gren BC Development Company retained five companies to aid in surveys: British Thomson-Houston Limited of London (hydro), Lundberg Exploration Limited of Toronto (minerals), Alweg Company of Sweden (monorail), Rankin Company of Toronto (pulp), and Hedlunds Travaru A.B. of Sweden (forestry). Of these companies Axel Wenner-Gren himself owned Alweg and under the terms of the 1956 memorandum he subsequently created a British Columbian subsidiary to operate in the province.

Wenner-Gren’s representatives planned the appointment of the British Thomson-Houston Company well in advance and the company quickly formed a working relationship with the water comptroller, A.F. Paget.¹² Given that they expected an interim report in September 1957 and a final report in July 1958, it appears they took this approach to speed up the company’s work.¹³ To help accomplish this task, British Thomson-Houston outsourced the studies on hydroelectricity to the BC Engineering Company Limited, a subsidiary of BC Electric (BCE) and British Thomson-Houston.¹⁴ By August 1957 surveys had revealed the hydroelectric potential of

¹⁰ BCA, MS 2353, Memorandum of Intention Made This 16 Day of November 1956.

¹¹ BCA, T1375:0009, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975, Victoria, BC

¹² James Howell, “The Portage Mountain Hydro-electric Project,” in *Northern Transitions*, vol. 1, *Northern Resource and Land Use Policy Study*, ed. Everett Peterson and Janet Wright (Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Resource Committee, 1978), 28; KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, Letter to Thomas Foy from A.F. Paget, 7 November 1958.

¹³ BCA, GR-0880, Box 59, BC And BB Power Consultants Limited, “Peace River Hydro-Electric Project Report,” 13-14; BCA, MS 1172, Box 2, BC Engineering Company Limited, “Report On Rocky Mountain Trench Area Hydro-Electric Investigations Stage I Volume I” (Vancouver: The British Thomson-Houston Company (Canada) Ltd., 1958), 2.

¹⁴ BCA, GR-0880, Box 59, BC And BB Power Consultants Limited, “Peace River Hydro-Electric Project Report,” 13; BCA, MS 1172, Box 2, BC Engineering Company Limited, “Report On Rocky Mountain Trench Area Hydro-

the Peace River, and the September interim report identified eight potential dam sites with the firm belief that further investigations would reveal more. This news led to the scrapping of the July final report and the 1957 memorandum.¹⁵

The Dam: The 1957 Memorandum

On 7 October 1957 representatives of Axel Wenner-Gren and the province of BC signed a second memorandum for hydroelectric development. The following day Premier W.A.C. Bennett proudly proclaimed a new development that would “change the map of BC, solve some of our most acute development problems and have a lasting and beneficial effect on the economy of Canada.”¹⁶ He then went on to describe how this improvement, a proposed hydroelectric dam on the Peace River, would provide needed electricity, improve the flow and navigation of the Peace and Mackenzie rivers, and save the Fraser River from future development that might harm the salmon fishery. The expected completion date for this project was 1964, at which time the province would begin work on another hydroelectric project on the Liard River to the north. Bennett made no mention in his speech of the original inhabitants of the Trench, the Tsek’ehne. The only possible negative outcome Bennett identified was the potential to have to divert the recently constructed Hart Highway and future Pacific Great Eastern Railway (PGE).¹⁷ Bennett assured his audience that “this... causes no engineering problems and the cost entailed in the

Electric Investigations Stage I Volume I,” 2; “UK Engineers Complete Tour of Wenner-Grenland,” *Prince George Citizen*, 27 September 1957.

¹⁵ Mulyk considers the 1957 memorandum the real turning point. BCA, GR-0880, Box 59, BC And BB Power Consultants Limited, “Peace River Hydro-Electric Project Report,” 14; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk,] “The Mackenzie Story” (Mackenzie: Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada, Local No. 18, 1974), 3.

¹⁶ Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), Department of Finance fonds, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Statement By The Honourable W.A.C. Bennett, Premier of British Columbia, 8 October 1957.

¹⁷ LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Statement By The Honourable W.A.C. Bennett, Premier of British Columbia, 8 October 1957.

relocation of these important land links will be borne by the company building the new hydro-electric project.”¹⁸

Despite some reports to the contrary, the Peace River, (especially the Peace River Canyon,) had long been prophesized and studied as a potential site for hydroelectric development.¹⁹ (Inversely some hoped some development would make the canyon navigable.)²⁰ Explorer Alexander MacKenzie had wondered at the power of water at the Peace River Canyon in 1793. (He also noted the existence of coal seams, which turned out to be high quality semi-anthracite coal.)²¹ With electrification more and more individuals looked to the canyon for its ability to produce power. As early as 1913 the *Fort George Herald* reported that the federal Commission of Conservation was examining the site for hydroelectric development.²² The biggest obstacle, however, was the lack of a market large enough to justify the capital required to

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Gordon Bowes, *Eye-Witness*, 156; NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk;] Martin Robin, *Pillars of Profit: The Company Province 1934-1972* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1973), 192; Gordon Shrum with Peter Stursberg, *Gordon Shrum: An Autobiography*, ed. Clive Cocking (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 78-79; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-24-0-2, Letter to H.G.T. Perry from E. Davis, 8 September 1942; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-49-0-0-91, R.E. Sommers, E.W. Bassett and A.E. Paget, “Water Powers: British Columbia, Canada” (Victoria: Water Rights Branch, 1954), 147-150; George Smith, “Proposed Diversion of Peace River,” *Eye-Witness*, 156; Vancouver Sun, “Electric Power In British Columbia: A Special Series” (Vancouver: The Vancouver Sun, 1959), 15.

²⁰ R.F. Corless Jr., “River Freighting Down North,” *Pacific Motor Boat* January 1943: 13; Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, 7 November 2008; H.J. Moberly, “The Monopoly is Broken, 1865-68,” *Peace River Chronicles: 81 Eye-Witness Accounts of the Peace River Region of British Columbia*, ed. Gordon Bowes (Vancouver: Prescott Publishing Company, 1963), 68; Donny Van Somer, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2013.

²¹ Alexander MacKenzie, *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans:...* (London: R. Noble, 1801), 175, 180.

²² This can be seen in numerous articles found in local Prince George newspapers. It is also seen in the primary sources collected by Gordon Bowes in his books *Eye-Witness Accounts* and the *Peace River Chronicles*. I have included a few examples. J.W. Bremner and C.R. Crysdale, “Water Power Potential of the Canyon, 1930,” *Peace River Chronicles*; Paul Haworth, *On the Headwaters of Peace River: A Narrative of a Thousand-Mile Canoe Trip to a Little-Known Place of the Canadian Rockies* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1917), 266; “Hon. Dr. King Is Impressed with the Peace River:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 28 September 1927; “Million Horsepower Confined in the Peace River Waterways,” *Fort George Herald*, 18 January 1913; Arthur White, “Water Powers of Upper Peace River System,” *Eye-Witness*, 145.

build a dam.²³ Indeed, Ray Williston would later claim the province offered both the private BC Electric and public BC Power Commission, the two largest electrical companies in the province, the opportunity to develop the Peace River and both turned them down.²⁴ Indeed, according to him Wenner-Gren was the first individual to try to seriously develop the Trench.²⁵

As with the 1956 memorandum, one of the first actions Axel Wenner-Gren took was to create a new company, in this instance the Peace River Power Development Company (PRPDC) on 29 October 1958. On 12 November 1958 the Wenner-Gren BC Development Company Limited officially gave them all of the rights, titles and interests it held in relation to hydroelectric development in the province.²⁶ (The latter had only officially taken over all the rights, titles, interests held by Axel Wenner-Gren on 9 September 1958.)²⁷

Despite creating a new company, Wenner-Gren representatives still retained British Thomson-Houston to continue investigations into how to develop the Peace and Liard rivers. Rather than complete the work alone, however, British Thomson-Houston hired two companies to conduct further investigations into the hydroelectric potential of the Trench: BC Engineering Company Limited and Sir William Halcrow & Partners of London.²⁸ These two companies

²³ Bremner and Crysedale, "Water Power Potential of the Canyon;" BCA, MS 1172, Box 2, BC Engineering Company Limited, "Report On Rocky Mountain Trench Area Hydro-Electric Investigations Stage I Volume I," 2-02-1; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.9, Box 1, The Peace River Project.

²⁴ NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Wenner-Gren's Fortitude Praised By Williston," *Colonist* 19 March 1958.

²⁵ When asked the BCPC rejected this claim. LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Letter 101 to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs from Canadian Consul-General, Seattle, 24 March 1958; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Letter 110 to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs from Canadian Consul-General, Seattle, 4 April 1958; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Wenner-Gren's Fortitude Praised By Williston," *Colonist*, 19 March 1958.

²⁶ SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-34-0-8, Letter to The Honourable The Minister Of Finance Of The Province Of British Columbia from W.C. Mainwaring 28 December 1959.

²⁷ BCA, MS 2353, Letter to The Honourable The Minister Of Finance Of The Province Of British Columbia from W.C. Mainwaring, 28 December 1959; BCA, MS 2353, Letter to The Honourable The Minister Of Lands And Forests Of The Province Of British Columbia from W.C. Mainwaring, 28 December 1959.

²⁸ BCA, GR-0880, Box 57, The British Thomson-Houston Export Co. Ltd., "Volume I: Report On The Feasibility Of Building Dams On The Peace River," 3; BCA, GR-0880, Box 59, BC And BB Power Consultants Limited, "Peace River Hydro-Electric Project Report," 13-15.

worked independent of each other and submitted reports to British Thomson-Houston in August 1958 that formed the basis of British Thomson-Houston's October 1958 report to the PRPDC.²⁹ By April 1958 the *Prince George Citizen* reported Halcrow investigations had identified seven potential dam sites on the Peace River: four west of the Peace River Canyon and three east of it.³⁰

The October 1958 report produced by British Thomson-Houston utilized both reports and marked the end of initial surveys. It revealed that by this point in time BC Engineering had decided on two sites: Site 3a, (where the W.A.C. Bennett Dam is currently located), and Site 1, (where the Peace River Canyon Dam is currently located). British Thomson-Houston, however, did not accept this conclusion, and the October 1958 report instead noted four potential dam sites and one temporary dam site worthy of future investigation: Site 1, Site 3, Site 3a, the Ne Parle Pas Rapids and Site 7.³¹

Rather than have British Thomson-Houston conduct further investigations, the PRPDC directly hired the BC Engineering Company, which had joined with Balfour, Beatty and Company to form the BC and BB Power Consultants Limited, in November 1958 to conduct these investigations and start engineering the project itself.³² The company released the results from these investigations in their final report in December 1959 and given to the water comptroller on the 31 December 1959 deadline for the project proposal. This report accepted BC

²⁹ BCA, GR-0880, Box 59, BC And BB Power Consultants Limited, "Peace River Hydro-Electric Project Report," 13-15; BCA, MS 1172, Box 2, BC Engineering Company Limited, "Report On Rocky Mountain Trench Area Hydro-Electric Investigations Stage I Volume I;" BCA, MS 1172, Box 2, BC Engineering Company Limited, "Report On Rocky Mountain Trench Area Hydro-Electric Investigations Stage I Volume II" (Vancouver: The British Thomson-Houston Company (Canada) Ltd., 1958).

³⁰ "Wenner-Gren Engineers Sift Best Of 7 Peace Dam Sites," *Prince George Citizen*, 24 April 1958.

³¹ BCA, GR-0880, Box 57, The British Thomson-Houston Export Co. Ltd., "Volume I: Report On The Feasibility Of Building Dams On The Peace River," 4, 11, 25-26.

³² BCA, GR-0880, Box 59, BC And BB Power Consultants Limited, "Peace River Hydro-Electric Project Report," 13-15.

Engineering's two originally proposed dam sites, rather than Halcrow's seven, a decision not made public until February 1959.³³ Although this represented the "end" of involvement by BC and BB Power Consultants in the Peace River project, BC Hydro would later retain one of their parent companies, Balfour, Beatty and Company, as consultants.³⁴

Many of these the reports looked primarily at the Peace River. Associated Electrical Industries (A.E.I.), the parent company of British Thomson-Houston Company for the Wenner-Gren BC Development Company, produced another undated report into the hydroelectric potential of the reserve area under the 1956 memorandum. In particular, it listed potential dam sites not only on the Peace and its tributaries, but also the Liard River and its tributaries.³⁵

BC and BB Power Consultants Limited's final report was the first step in getting official approval for the Peace River project. According to a *Vancouver Sun* article of the time, the president of the PRPDC, W.C. Mainwaring, was even hopeful that approval would be imminent

³³ BCA, GR-0880, Box 57, The British Thomson-Houston Export Co. Ltd., "Volume I: Report On The Feasibility Of Building Dams On The Peace River," 11; NBCA, 2000.13.2.4, Box 5, "Industrial Empire Begun As Peace Dam Site Chosen:..., [*The Vancouver Sun*], 21 February 1959.

³⁴ KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 0242651, Volume 1, Consultants Retained For Investigating, Design and Construction of Portage Mountain Dam, 12 June 1962.

³⁵ It is hard to try to date this report, however. Volume I of the report refers to BC and BB Power Consultants Limited's December 1959 report suggesting it was produced afterwards, but does not give a date of publication. Confusing the matter the Library and Archives of Canada suggests 1959 as a possible year for the reports release, while the BC Archives does not guess a year at all. Further compounding the confusion is that Ray Williston would later claim Associated Electrical Industries was the successor to British Thomson-Houston Company. As noted, A.E.I. was in fact the parent company, although it did subsume its subsidiary in 1960. Whether this is what Williston was mistakenly referring to is unclear. BCA, MS 1172, Box 1, A.E.I. (Canada) Ltd., "Volume 1: Assessment of Water Power Potential," 31, 38; BCA, MS 1172, Box 1, A.E.I. (Canada) Ltd., "Volume 2: Assessment of Water Power Potential;" BCA, MS 1172, Box 1, Ray Williston, Explanatory Notes...; BCA, "MS 1172 Finding Aid," <http://search.bcarechives.gov.bc.ca/sn-40DC9E5/view/TextualRecords/find%2BA.E.I.%2B%2B%2B%2B/1> (accessed 20 February 2014); Department of Special Collections and Western Manuscripts - Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, "Catalogue of the Marconi Archives: Archives of the British Thomson-Houston Company Ltd., 1895-1999: Company History," <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/modern/marconi/marconi.html#marconi.Q> (accessed 20 February 2014); LAC, "Full Record: AMICUS No. 22928635," http://amicus.collectionscanada.gc.ca/aaweb-bin/aamain/itemdisp?sessionKey=999999999_142&l=0&d=2&v=0&lvl=1&itm=22928635 (accessed 20 February 2014).

and construction would commence by 1 July 1960 and be completed in 1968.³⁶ In many ways this timeline was more of a reflection of Mainwaring's optimism rather than reality, especially when one considers that both he and Director William Murphy had stated in December 1959 that this was not the application for a provincial water license, but for the certificate of public convenience and necessity required to even apply for a water license under the BC Water Act.³⁷ Even then, this was only the first step of the process of getting a certificate and provincial law required public hearings following the release of the water comptroller's study into the feasibility of the project.³⁸ Still Mainwaring and others seem to have believed the process was a mere formality, and he planned on applying for a water license immediately upon receiving a certificate of public convenience and necessity.³⁹ A confusing process perhaps, but as

³⁶ NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "Peace Power Project Okay Expected July 1," *The Vancouver Sun* 16 February 1960.

³⁷ According to the *Daily Colonist*, Premier Bennett had even suggested construction would begin in 1959. This timeline might sound unbelievable, but the 1957 memorandum contained provisions for the review to take only three months. As Howell points out three-month timeline is unusual as most reviews took around three to five years, and according to LeMarquand initial studies usually took around three to five years. The CCF challenged the requirement, and called for the project to be approved in the legislature instead. The timeline is often confused with the actual application for a water license. Adding to the peculiarity of the process is that the Chairman of the Public Utilities Commission, H.F. Angus, (the organization that granted the certificate of convenience and public necessity) told Paget he was willing to allow both applications to be considered at the same time instead of sequentially. Despite this official support for expediency the PRPDC was not readily working to response to requests from Paget as he completed his investigation. BCA, MS 2353, Memorandum of Agreement Made This 7th Day of October 1957; Howell, 33; KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 0214872, Letter to W.C. Mainwaring from A.F. Paget, [13 January 1960]; KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, Pete Loudon, "Peace Power Technicians Already On Job," *The Victoria Daily Times* 31 October 1959; KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, Letter to A.F. Paget from H.F. Angus, 23 November 1959; KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, D.J. Bleifuss and H.M. Hunt, "Peace River Development:...", 25 November 1959; David LeMarquand, "Environmental Planning and Decision-making For Large-Scale Power Projects" (MA Thesis: UBC, 1972), 76-77; NBCA, 2000.13.2.4, Box 5, Peter Burton, "Operation Wenner-Gren Definite By 1960 – Bennett:...", *Daily Colonist* 3 October 1958; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "In Time For Debate In Legislature?...", *Victoria Daily Times* 25 November 1959; SFUA, F-55-34-0-8, W.C. Mainwaring interviewed by Jack Webster, 15 February 1960; Vancouver Sun, "Electric Power In British Columbia," 13.

³⁸ NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Terry Hammond, "Williston To Report: Peace Plan Go-Ahead?...", *Daily Colonist* 25 March 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "Changes Suggested:...", *Daily Colonist* 26 March 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "The Peace: The Big Bargaining Lever..." *The Province* 26 March 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, William Ryan, "Before License Application:...", *The Province* 31 March 1960.

³⁹ Mainwaring at times objected to such claims. BCA, British Columbia Energy Commission, GR-1390, Box 9, "Peace River Hydro-Electric Project: Comprehensive Plan...", December 1959, 14; BCA, MS 2353, Letter to The Honourable The Minister Of Lands And Forests Of The Province Of British Columbia from W.C. Mainwaring, 28 December 1959; BCA, MS 2353, "Comprehensive Plan Of Peace River Power Development Company Ltd.", December 1959, 36; SFUA, F-55-34-0-8, W.C. Mainwaring interviewed by Jack Webster, 15 February 1960.

Mainwaring had told journalist Jack Webster on 15 February 1960 it was all the more confusing if one was not actually involved in it and trying to understand or report on it to the public.⁴⁰

Making matters worse the process was not contained in the BC Water Act, but the 1957 memorandum, and therefore was somewhat unique to the Peace River project itself.⁴¹ As a result, there was not precedence for how things would work, a reality that not only explains the confusion over the entire process, but also calls into question its transparency.

The task of the water comptroller was first to determine the safety and feasibility of the proposed dam and second to examine if the project was in the interest of maximum utility.⁴² To expedite the process A.F. Paget hired consultants to help him, readily followed the company's interim reports and was not above contacting third parties if the company's information contradicted these interim reports and company announcements.⁴³ By November 1959 the consultants had produced a report outlining how the water comptroller should approach the feasibility study.⁴⁴

Points of concern included navigation on the Slave and Mackenzie rivers, the expected amount of icing and flooding downstream, the amount of water required by Alberta downstream, and the impact of the flooding of 589,000 acres of land.⁴⁵ Further compounding these concerns was that due to the fact the dam was one of the largest in the world investigators based certain

⁴⁰ SFUA, F-55-34-0-8, W.C. Mainwaring interviewed by Jack Webster, 15 February 1960.

⁴¹ BCA, MS 2353, Memorandum of Agreement Made This 7th Day of October 1957.

⁴² KA, File 0214872, Letter to Ray Williston from A.F. Paget, 6 March 1959; KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, D.J. Bleifuss and H.M. Hunt, "Peace River Development."

⁴³ KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, Memorandum to E.W. Bassett from A.F. Paget, 17 July 1959; KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, Letter to E.W. Bassett from A.F. Paget, 18 September 1959; KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, Letter to A.F. Paget from D.J. Bleifuss, 6 October 1959; KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, Letter to D.J. Bleifuss from A.F. Paget, 19 October 1959; KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, Letter to the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources – Water Resources Branch from A.F. Paget, 10 November 1959; KA, File 2148721, Volume 2, Letter to E.W. Bassett from A.F. Paget, 1 February 1960.

⁴⁴ KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, D.J. Bleifuss and H.M. Hunt, "Peace River Development."

⁴⁵ KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, D.J. Bleifuss and H.M. Hunt, "Peace River Development;" KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, The Proposed Portage Mountain Hydro-Electric Development of the Peace River, British Columbia.

findings found in the feasibility study on mathematics, educated guess work and conservative measures.⁴⁶ Later critics would complain that the feasibility study was not all-inclusive and that it looked at the project from a purely technical and financial perspective. One must remember, however, that it was common at the time for such studies to more or less ignore the larger environmental, economic, and social repercussions of such projects.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, James Howell would later argue that based on all of these omissions the water comptroller expected the PRPDC would work with other governments (federal, provincial and territorial), departments in the BC government, and organizations.⁴⁸ For the Tsek'ehne this naturally meant working with Indian Affairs.

The provincial government gave Paget until the end of March 1960 to report to them whether the dam was feasible.⁴⁹ Paget for his part seemed to suggest in the final report that he was displeased with this time frame.⁵⁰ As mentioned some critics believed the findings were a foregone conclusion and the short turnaround time seemed to support this accusation. Foregone conclusion or not, Paget went through the process of investigating the project all the same. One of the first things Paget requested in his study were statements from Alberta and Ottawa approving the expected changes to the water flow of the Peace River.⁵¹ The PRPDC not only

⁴⁶ KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 2148721, Volume 3, Letter to A.F. Paget from D.J. Bleifuss, 16 June 1960.

⁴⁷ As Nathan points out a key problem was that the modern day Aboriginal rights and environmental movement had not emerged at this point in time. Mary Christina Koyl, "Cultural Chasm: A 1960s Hydro Development and the Tsay Keh Dene Native Community of Northern British Columbia" (MA Thesis: University of Victoria, 1992), 82, 83; LeMarquand, 67, 78, 83-84, 88; Holly Nathan, "Building Dams, Constructing Stories: The Press, the Sekani and the Peace River Dam, 1957-1969" (MA Thesis: University of Northern British Columbia, 2009) 22; [W.M. Schultz et al.,] "Death of a Delta: A Brief to the Government," [Edmonton, 1970], 1; John Wedley, "Infrastructure and Resources: Governments and Their Promotion of Northern Development in British Columbia," (PhD Dissertation: University of Western Ontario, 1986), 308, 456.

⁴⁸ Howell, 33-34.

⁴⁹ NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "Peace Hydro Report 'Soon,'" *The Province* 24 March 1960.

⁵⁰ NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "Paget Unhappy?" *Daily Colonist* 26 March 1960.

⁵¹ BCA, Power and Special Projects fonds, GR-0880, Box 60, Peace River Project: Record of Correspondence with Comptroller of Water Rights, BC, 1960, International Power and Engineering Consultants Limited, Letter to W.C. Mainwaring from A.F. Paget, 7 January 1960.

responded to Paget's request, but also noted meetings had been held in Edmonton on 9 July 1959 that had led to Alberta requesting a constant minimum flow of 6,000 c.f.s. with more (20,000-30,000 c.f.s.) required in September to ensure navigation between the Peace and Slave rivers in the Lake Athabasca Delta. The company also stated that it had met with federal and territorial officials five times to discuss the Peace River project.⁵²

In his final report released on 25 March 1960, Paget concluded that although the Peace River project was technically feasible, there needed to be further studies into whether the electricity it would produce was marketable, and if it would fit into the wider development of BC as a whole.⁵³ The release of the report was a major event for the provincial government and Minister of Lands and Forests Ray Williston even went to Prince George to announce the government's response.⁵⁴ Rather than take Paget's conclusion as the mixed message that it was, Williston instead announced "over-all approval" of the project.⁵⁵ For the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and Conservatives the report was further evidence that the project was not feasible.⁵⁶ Neither the province nor the opposition, however, seemed to care that

⁵² The five locations of the meetings were Edmonton on 6 August 1959, Vancouver in late August 1959, Calgary on 22 September 1959, Edmonton on 22 September 1959 and Fort Smith on 24 September 1959. The last meeting in Fort Smith had even included Curtis Merrill, the Administer of the District of Mackenzie in the Northwest Territories. BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Letter to A.F. Paget from F.J. Pine, 14 January 1960.

⁵³ KA, File 2148721, Volume 2, Letter to R.G. Williston from A.F. Paget, 25 March 1960; KA, File 2148721, Volume 2, "Vast Peace River Plan Passes Major Hurdle," 26 March [1960]; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Ron Rose, "Report Urges Over-All Plan Before Peace Gets Go-Ahead:...", *The Vancouver Sun* 25 March 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "Changes Suggested;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Paddy Sherman, "Peace Hydro Plan Wins Paget's Okay," *The Province* 26 March 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, William Ryan, "Before License Application."

⁵⁴ NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Terry Hammond, "Williston To Report: Peace Plan Go-Ahead?"

⁵⁵ NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "Peace Power Project," *Daily Colonist* 26 March 1960.

⁵⁶ NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Stuart Philpott, "Peace, Columbia Plans 'Conflict:' Bennett Claims Contradicted By Paget Report, Says Strachan," *The Province* 26 March 1960.

a draft of the report from February 1960 claimed no settlements existed in the reservoir area or that it contained a disclaimer that approval did not extend outside of BC.⁵⁷

The next step in getting a certificate of public convenience and necessity was to conduct public hearings.⁵⁸ The *Province* noted this might be problematic as it needed signed contracts from either BCE or the BC Power Commission (BCPC) to even hope to successfully apply for the certificate, which itself was required to get a provincial water license.⁵⁹ The PRPDC disagreed with this assessment of the situation and announced in April 1960 that it planned on submitting their application within weeks of Paget's report.⁶⁰ This appears to have been company propaganda as a month later it pushed back the expected application date to September 1960, but still unbelievably planned on commencing construction in late 1960.⁶¹ The official reason cited for the delay was the complexity of producing the report as well as the need to have committed financial backers.⁶² Of course, to get financial backers the PRPDC had to prove itself a reasonable financial risk with a likely chance of profit return. To do this the PRPDC had to find customers for the Peace River project. Historian Meg Stanley argues this was the real reason for the delay and notes that because of it work on the project effectively shut down.⁶³ Despite this

⁵⁷ KA, File 2148721, Volume 2, Draft – D.J.B., February 1960, Decision of the Comptroller of Water Rights, Department of Lands and Forests, Government of British Columbia in Regard to the Peace River Hydroelectric Project.

⁵⁸ NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Hammond, "Williston To Report;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "Changes Suggested;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "The Peace: The Big Bargaining Lever;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Ryan, "Before License Application."

⁵⁹ NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "Changes Suggested;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "Peace Power Project;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "The Peace: The Big Bargaining Lever...;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Ryan, "Before License Application."

⁶⁰ KA, File 2148721, Volume 2, Alec Merriman, "Peace Project To Go Ahead:...", *The Daily Colonist* 1 April 1960.

⁶¹ The letter from Richard Lund seems to suggest this was a deadline of sorts. KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Letter to A.F. Paget from Richard Lund, 6 June 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.6, Box 6, "Peace River Power Defers PUC Application Until Fall," *The Province* 6 May 1960.

⁶² NBCA, 2000.13.2.6, Box 6, "Peace River Power Defers PUC Application Until Fall."

⁶³ Meg Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers: Harnessing the Power of the Peace and Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2010), 37.

delay, critics still believed the entire process was a mere formality, resulting in a resolution in May 1960 by the BC Chamber of Commerce that the project undergo a full public review.⁶⁴

Even September seemed to be too early for an application and in June 1960 the PRPDC pushed the expected application date back to October 1960.⁶⁵ Hope, however, was not lost and the PRPDC expressed a belief that both companies: BCE and the BCPC would sign contracts within the next three months.⁶⁶ Even this was offset by the (perhaps fictitious) concern the project was increasingly polarizing residents of the Lower Mainland and the Northern Interior, with the former concerned the electricity generated would be too expensive and the latter seeing the development as the first step in the industrialization of the north.⁶⁷ It seemed the question was whether the PRPDC could get contracts signed before the public of BC turned on the project and the provincial government.

Just Another Project: The Tsek'ehne 1956-1961

Given the history of failed developments in their traditional territory the Tsek'ehne had no reason to believe Axel Wenner-Gren would complete the monorail or the Peace River project. Indeed, the *Prince George Citizen* equated the monorail to the notorious PGE the day after the announcement of the 1956 memorandum.⁶⁸ Historian Meg Stanley indirectly points this fact out when she discusses W.A.C. Bennett's infamous anecdote of how early in his term as premier he had a pioneering vision of industrialization and idealized housewives while visiting Hudson's Hope and looking at the Peace River, only to encounter a disbelieving trapper who merely saw a river.⁶⁹ Regardless of whether the story is true, the story not only reflects Paige Raibmon's

⁶⁴ NBCA, 2000.13.2.6, Box 6, Ron Thornber, "By BC Chamber:...", *The Vancouver Sun* 16 May 1960.

⁶⁵ NBCA, 2000.13.2.6, Box 6, Frank Rutter, "Double Delay For Wenner-Gren," *Victoria Daily Times* 16 June 1960.

⁶⁶ NBCA, 2000.13.2.6, Box 6, Harry Young, "Contract Certain Says Mainwaring:...", *Daily Colonist* 17 June 1960.

⁶⁷ NBCA, 2000.13.2.6, Box 6, Terry Hammond, "North Vs. South Over Power:...", *Daily Colonist* 25 August 1960.

⁶⁸ "Billion Dollar Deal Recalls Day When Local Man Sold P.G.E.," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 February 1957.

⁶⁹ BCA, T1675:0006, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by Jack Webster, Vancouver, BC, 22 October 1976; BCA, T1675:0021, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by David Mitchell, 16 June 1977; BCA, T1675:0036, W.A.C. Bennett

colonial binary discussed in *Authentic Indians* by presenting the trapper as an individual stuck in the past, juxtaposed with the modern pro-development Bennett, but also is an example of the rhetoric John Lutz mentions in *Makuk* that presents the “other” as in the way of development.⁷⁰

Not helping the situation was the way surveyors conducted their surveys following the announcement of the 1956 memorandum. Beginning in 1875 with A.R.C. Selwyn, more than twenty parties had surveyed the promising Trench, and in doing so recreated it as European space.⁷¹ Surveyor Frank Swannell alone came in 1909, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1934, 1939, and 1940. Until 1936 surveyors primarily conducted their work on the ground or in watercraft, and many hired Tsek’ehne individuals as labours and guides, sometimes forming friendships with them. This situation began to change in 1936 when one of the first aerial surveys was conducted.⁷² Nevertheless, when the monorail surveys began in March 1957 they were conducted from the air, a move that was somewhat unexpected by Prince George merchants who hoped to outfit them.⁷³ As the *Prince George Citizen* said, these aerial surveys

interviewed by David Mitchell, 11 February 1978; BCA, T1675:0052, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by Roger Keene, 1977; Stanley, 27, 104.

⁷⁰ It is also possible that if false Bennett came to believe it to be true in trying to make sense of the entire situation. John Lutz, *Makuk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 8, 33-36, 42-43, 47, passim; Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 5, 7, 205, passim; Luise White, *Speaking With Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 68.

⁷¹ Elders like former Chief Ray Izony are upset over how these surveyors changed the names of geographic features. Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2002); Ray Izony, “Changes in Tsay Kehnnay Dene Governance/Society.”

⁷² E.F. Ted Williams History Centre, 2003.15.74, Chief Toma[h] and Arthur Tuttle, Surveyed Throughout Ingenika, 1941; E.F. Ted Williams History Centre, 2003.15.75, Chief Toma[h]’s Sons; E.F. Ted Williams History Centre, 2003.15.235, Chief Toma[h] Giving Directions to the Tuttle Survey, 1941; E.F. Ted Williams History Centre, 2003.15.236, Chief Toma[h] with the Transit Above the Finlay River, 1941; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.6, Box 1, Interview with Gerry Andrews: Ray & Helen Knorr; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.16, Box 1, G.S. Andrews, “Alaska Highway Survey in British Columbia,” *The Geographical Journal* 100, no. 1 (1942): 10; Jay Sherwood, *Return to Northern British Columbia: A Photo Journal of Frank Swannell, 1929-1939* (Victoria: Royal BC Museum, 2010), 43, 45; Jay Sherwood, *Surveying Northern British Columbia: A Photo Journal of Frank Swannell* (Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press Inc., 2004), 136, passim; Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, M81/V343, Ernest C.W. Lamarque fonds, Folder 1, Ernest Lamarque, “Memoirs of Ernest C.W. Lamarque,” 1958.

⁷³ These were general surveys. Surveys for the monorail did not begin until July 1957. The surveys are repeatedly discussed in provincial newspapers. I have included a few examples. “100 Packhorses Needed for Wenner-Gren

were “so unobtrusive... that even the scattered inhabitants of the trench have not been aware of what has been going on.”⁷⁴ The decision to work from the sky removed a potential vector of information for the Tsek’ehne. In hindsight some Elders believe it might have been intentional and aimed at keeping them ignorant of the proposed developments.⁷⁵

From the signing of the 1956 memorandum, however, the Tsek’ehne were living under the shadow of Axel Wenner-Gren. Unfortunately, for them this simple fact was not clear. Based on my own research (and discussed in detail in chapter four) it appears the earliest official meeting between the Tsek’ehne and any level of government or representative of the PRPDC took place in 1960. Nobody took it seriously.⁷⁶ Indeed, because of a history of numerous other failed projects the sporadic appearance of surveyors was nothing new. Increased incursions from Euro-Canadians and their projects, often thanks to the Hart Highway, did not help the situation. It was therefore difficult to determine which project would be the most disruptive. In the spring of 1956, for example, the Ferguson Mine as well as the developments it promised to bring were “revived” by Cominco.⁷⁷ Two years later the province extended the PGE to Fort St. John via the Pine Pass, thereby bypassing Finlay Forks and precluding its hoped future as a trade hub. Some McLeod Lake Tse’khene found employment putting the track through, and a general result of these developments was that the trend of seasonal employment only increased as more and more

Survey,” *Prince George Citizen*, 24 June 1957; BCA, T1675:0006, W.A.C. Bennett; BCA, T1675:0036, W.A.C. Bennett; British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, “Peace River Power: The Portage Mountain Project,” (Vancouver: British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, [1967]), 3; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Bill Ryan, “BC Project ‘My Big One’ – Wenner-Gren,” *The Province* 11 March 1957.

⁷⁴ “Trench Surveys Quietly Underway,” *Prince George Citizen*, 21 March 1957.

⁷⁵ Ray Izony, “Changes.”

⁷⁶ Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012; Ray Izony, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 3 October 2012.

⁷⁷ “190 Miles North of Prince George:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 9 April 1956.

Tsek'ehne found employment to provide for themselves and their family, while at the same time maintaining the ability to pursue traditional economic activities for part of the year.⁷⁸

Aside from these developments other changes were occurring within the Tsek'ehne community itself. In 1959 without consultation Indian Affairs officially united the Fort Ware and Fort Grahame bands into the Finlay River Band.⁷⁹ According to former Chief Emil McCook they intended to ease negotiations regarding the Peace River project.⁸⁰ That year Father G. Clenaghan went to Old Ingenika and Fort Ware to help band members construct churches in both communities.⁸¹ Two years later Wilson Duff reported that most of the band lived at Fort Ware, with about twenty-five people living at Old Ingenika, and one family at Fort Grahame.⁸² (From a petition from December 1967 it appears some band members from Fort Grahame had moved to Fort Ware.)⁸³ In 1958 Indian Affairs constructed a one room day school in Fort Ware, and there were plans by Indian Affairs to build a dump, wells, and a sports facility.⁸⁴ Still the community did not have electricity and by 1966 lacked a medical clinic or airport.⁸⁵

⁷⁸ Doug Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; Jack Isadore, interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 4 August 2004.

⁷⁹ Some Elders recall the merger taking place earlier than the official date. They also note, however, that the entire situation was suspect. Ray Izony, "Changes," John Poole, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 30 September 2012.

⁸⁰ In a similar vein Koyl states it was for administrative ease. Koyl, 46-47; Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2013.

⁸¹ "He's Helped Build 4 Churches, Sawmill:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 9 May 1962; "McLeod's Lake," *Prince George Citizen*, 8 May 1959; "McLeod's Lake," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 July 1959.

⁸² Duff's notes are unclear. It appears he is suggesting one hundred and sixty-five people live at Ware with forty-five living elsewhere. He also seems to suggest twenty-five people live at Ingenika. Whether this means the family at Fort Grahame is twenty people in size is unclear, however. BCA, Wilson Duff Research Notes, GR-2809, Reel B6045, File 77, Grahame-Ware Sekani: Sasuchan.

⁸³ LAC, RG 10, V-2011-00666-X (2011-3-8-27), Box 2, File 985/3-8-27, Letter to Laing from Counsellor Don McCook, 18/20 December 1967.

⁸⁴ The *Citizen* references a school built in 1963. "At Fort Ware: Housing Programs for Indians," *Prince George Citizen*, 5 August 1964; Alison Davis, *Sekani Ethnobotany: Traditional Role of Plants Amongst the Sekani People* (Bloomington: Trafford Publishing, 2008), 3; LAC, V-2011-00666-X, RG 10, Box 2, File 985/3-8-27, Letter to Superintendent A.C. Roach from B. Houle, 22 December 1966; LAC, V-2011-00666-X, RG 10, Box 2, File 985/3-8-27, Letter to B. Houle from A.C. Roach, 3 January 1967; Doug Martin, "Teacher Leads Pioneer Life," *Prince George Citizen*, 27 August 1965; Earl Pollon and Shirlee Smith Matheson, *This Was Our Valley* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2003), 267.

⁸⁵ Robert Inyallie, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012; Martin, "Teacher Leads Pioneer Life."

Meanwhile in the southern Trench logging continued to spread. McLeod Lake soon found its reserves were of interest to the BC Forest Service, most notably with regard to constructing a forest access road from Fort St. James that connected to the existing road to Germansen Landing near Cripple Lake. In 1964 the band authorized the service to enter McLeod Lake No. 1, Pack River No. 2 and War Lake No. 4 to conduct surveys. Construction soon followed.⁸⁶ By 1967 the province had constructed a bridge across the Parsnip River and loggers were logging near Tudyah Lake.⁸⁷

Overlooked by the News Media

Four years after he was voted out of office in 1972, W.A.C. Bennett told journalist Jack Webster that “most of my opponents, including the media, didn’t oppose me on the Columbia; they opposed me on the Peace.”⁸⁸ The following year he told David Mitchell that:

Nobody supported us on our two-river policy, the Peace and the Columbia. They all said you could never use the power and you could never transmit the power from the Peace River down to Vancouver – too long a distance; couldn’t be done; couldn’t be done.⁸⁹

These comments reflect the criticism Bennett and his Social Credit Party received from opposition parties, the news media, and private citizens when province announced the 1956 and 1957 memorandums.⁹⁰ Despite this criticism, no major newspaper seemed to have considered the

⁸⁶ LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 13 May 1964; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 3 August 1964; “McLeod’s Lake – Trading Post, 1966,” *Prince George Citizen*, 31 March 1966; “Near McLeod’s Lake: 60-Mile Forest Road Started,” *Prince George Citizen*, 18 November 1964; “Trapping Still Carried on Near Historic Trading Post,” *Prince George Citizen*, 30 March 1965.

⁸⁷ Verne Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.

⁸⁸ BCA, T1675:0006, W.A.C. Bennett.

⁸⁹ BCA, T1675:0036, W.A.C. Bennett.

⁹⁰ Froschauer, 179-180; Howell, 27-31; Tina Loo, “Disturbing the Peace: Environmental Change and the Scales of Justice on a Northern River,” *Environmental History* 12 (2007): 899-900; Pollon and Matheson, 153-159; Stanley, 29-34; Stephen Tomblin, “W.A.C. Bennett and Province-Building in British Columbia,” *BC Studies* No. 85 (1990): 51-52, *passim*.

impacts the development would have on the Tsek'ehne.⁹¹ While not particularly unusual at the time it did rob the Tsek'ehne of a vector to learn about the project.⁹² Indeed, McLeod Lake Elder Zepheria Isadore informed me that in hindsight she wished the Tsek'ehne had united in opposition to the project and believed they would have if they had known about it.⁹³

Journalists did not aim their criticism at the projects per se, but rather how they were being proposed and undertaken. Critics were upset over the fact the 1956 memorandum was secret for three months.⁹⁴ Others felt the monorail was simply too good to be true, especially considering the province's past history with proposed projects, and demanded more information.⁹⁵ The provincial opposition party, the CCF, questioned the motives of those involved, and demanded the right to examine the proposal closer.⁹⁶ Their leader, Robert Strachan even suggested the agreement was illegal due to contradicting provincial forestry legislation.⁹⁷ Not helping the situation was that the premier appointed Einar Gunderson, the former finance

⁹¹ Nathan notes the *Native Voice* raised the issue at the time, while the *Prince George Citizen* admitted its own omission of topic at the time in 2006. Nathan, 3, 8, 18-19, 53, 60, 62, 68-73, 78-79, 90, 94-97; NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Ray Williston Interview; NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk,] 5; Wedley, 270, 277; Eileen Williston and Betty Keller, *Forests, Power and Policy: The Legacy of Ray Williston* (Prince George: Caitlin Press Inc., 1997), 179-180.

⁹² This lack of interest in Indigenous issues was one of the reasons why *The Native Voice* started publication in 1946. Eric Jamieson, *The Native Voice: The Story of How Maisie Hurley and Canada's First Aboriginal Newspaper Changed a Nation* (Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press Inc., 2016), 58, passim.

⁹³ Zepheria Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Salmon Valley, BC, 1 October 2012.

⁹⁴ Provincial newspapers contain numerous articles from this period discussing and criticizing the proposed project. A good example is NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "An Editorial: Our Heritage In Pawn?" *Victoria Daily Times* 14 February 1957.

⁹⁵ Provincial newspapers contain numerous articles from this period discussing and criticizing the proposed project. A few examples are LAC, Canadian National Railway Company fonds, RG 30, Volume 14440, "Long Look Urged in Wenner-Gren Deal:...", [The *Vancouver Sun*, 13 February 1957]; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "BC Called 'Over-Zealous' On Huge Northern Project:...", *Victoria Daily Times* 13 February 1957.

⁹⁶ Provincial newspapers contain numerous articles from this period discussing and criticizing the proposed project. A few examples are NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Strachan Asks Adjournment Of Throne Speech Debate," *The Vancouver Sun* 15 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Dillon O'Leary, "CCFer Hits Swedish 'Giveaway' Project," *News Herald* 19 February 1957.

⁹⁷ LAC, RG 30, Volume 14440, ["Survey By Sun:...", *The Vancouver Sun* 28 February 1957]; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Hal Dornan, "Bennett Had No Right To Sign Memo – CCF," *The Province* 26 February 1957.

minister, to the board of the Wenner-Gren BC Development Company, while Gunderson was still vice-president of the provincial owned PGE.⁹⁸

On a practical level various railway experts suggested the environment was not suitable for a monorail, and even if it was, that the cost of connecting it to traditional single track railways would be prohibitive.⁹⁹ Ingenika Mines, which had tried to develop the Ferguson Mine on the Ingenika River, was concerned about the impact the 1956 memorandum would have on their plans announced months prior as well as the plans of their sister company, the Finlay Valley Land and Development Company.¹⁰⁰

The area originally placed under a general land and timber under the 1956 memorandum was roughly 40,000 square miles, only about 18,000 square miles smaller than England and Wales combined. Axel Wenner-Gren had right of first refusal to timber harvesting within and almost immediately the province placed corresponding mineral and water reserves in the area.¹⁰¹ The reserve was expanded by an estimated 4,000 square miles in March 1957 to include the Trench from McLeod Lake to the Yukon border, and once again in conjunction with the 1957 memorandum to any additional natural resources that might affected by hydroelectric

⁹⁸ Both Bennett and Williston would later state it was a baseless complaint, with Bennett noting other parties practiced patronage as well. BCA, T1375:0010, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975, Victoria, BC; BCA, T1675:0036, W.A.C. Bennett; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, O'Leary, "MLA's Protest Gunderson's Position With Wenner-Gren:...", *News Herald* 14 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Alex Young, "Got Directorship In Wenner-Gren," *The Vancouver Sun* 14 February 1957.

⁹⁹ "Deep Snowfalls Make Monorail 'Impractical,'" *Prince George Citizen*, 18 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Wenner-Gren Rail Plan 'Impractical:...'," *The Vancouver Sun* 15 February 1957; "Wenner-Gren Project Jeopardizes Claims," *Prince George Citizen*, 7 March 1957.

¹⁰⁰ "Wenner-Gren Project Jeopardizes Claims."

¹⁰¹ Technically the province was only committed to a reserve on lands and timber. The reserve included forestry management and public areas. The reserve was highly contentious, despite officially existing to prevent speculation and being in the name of the province. BCA, MS 2353, Memorandum of Intention Made This 16 Day of November 1956; "Mineral Stakings Halted in North," *Prince George Citizen*, 18 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "BC Plan Foreseen To Develop North:...", *The Vancouver Sun* 13 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Prospectors Barred from 'Small Area,'" *Vancouver Sun*, 15 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Strachan Asks Adjournment Of Throne Speech Debate;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Gordon McCallum, "Williston Hits Back At Omineca Criticism," *The Province* 21 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Part For Monorail:...", *The Vancouver Sun*, 4 March 1957.

development.¹⁰² Critics charged it created a fiefdom for Axel Wenner-Gren, labelling the area Wenner-Grenland.¹⁰³ Wenner-Gren was a point of concern because of his personal history, which included a friendship with Hermann Göring, the convenient rescuing of survivors from the *S.S. Athenia* (the “first” British ship sunk during World War II), his subsequent blacklisting during the war, and the lackluster success rate of past projects he had been involved in.¹⁰⁴

None of this criticism of the 1956 memorandum forced the hand of the provincial government and Bennett later suggested it strengthened his hand when dealing with third parties on the matter.¹⁰⁵ This calls into question the claim by his political opponents and later academics that the criticism was so intense that the failure of the monorail would mean electoral defeat or that it led to the 1957 memorandum to save face.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, the criticism was not universal

¹⁰² “New Reserve For ‘Wee-Gee’ Land,” *Prince George Citizen*, 16 October 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, “Part For Monorail...,” *The Vancouver Sun*, 4 March 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, “Wenner-Gren Land:...,” *Daily Colonist* 5 March 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Peter Burton, “New Concessions In Peace River:...,” *Colonist* 16 October 1957.

¹⁰³ LAC, RG 30, Volume 14440, Stuart Keat, “Axel in Wonderland:...,” *Saturday Night*, 13 April 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Eric Nicol, “Giving BC To The Americans? Nonsense – The Man’s A Swede!” *The Province*, 19 February 1957.

¹⁰⁴ According to a 1947 memorandum the exact dates of Wenner-Gren being placed on the list were 3 February 1942 for Canada, 21 February 1942 for the United Kingdom. It unclear when the exact date for the United States occurred, but occurred sometime in February preceding the British inclusion for the United States. It was also claimed he was a war profiteer. According to Wenner-Gren the issue was that the U.S. State Department was full of Communists, and as Sherman and Mitchell point out he was an honorary fellow of the Chaim Weizmann Institute in Israel. Sherman and Mainwaring note he received a commendation from the British and Canadian governments for rescuing survivors from the ship *Athenia* during World War II. Mitchell also claims the friendship with Göring was alleged. Williston and Keller merely note a relationship with Israel. Provincial newspapers contain numerous articles from this period discussing and criticizing the proposed project. I have included a few examples. LAC, RG 30, Volume 14440, Bill Fletcher, “Swedish Capitalist World Mystery Man:...,” *The Vancouver Sun* 13 February 1957; LAC, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property fonds, RG 117, Volume 2060, File 6251, Memorandum for Mr. Beckett: Re: Wenner-Gren, Axel, Mexico, 10 November 1947; LAC, RG 117, Volume 2060, File 6251, Memorandum to Administration Board Chairman from Deputy Custodian, C. Stein, 2 April 1957; LAC, RG 117, Volume 2060, File 6251, Memorandum for the Deputy Custodian from K.W. Wright, 3 April 1957; LAC, RG 117, Volume 2060, File 6251, Eric Hutton, “Is BC’s Fanfare For Wenner-Gren Another False Alarm?,” *Maclean’s* 13 April 1957: 15-17, 85-89; David Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1983), 287-288; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Norman Hacking, “The Wenner-Gren Dispute:...,” *The Province* 20 February 1957; Paddy Sherman, *Bennett* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1966), 217-219; SFUA, F-55-34-0-8, W.C. Mainwaring interviewed by Jack Webster, 15 February 1960; Williston and Keller, 175.

¹⁰⁵ Mitchell, 288.

¹⁰⁶ As late as May 1958, however, papers like *The Globe and Mail* were expecting both projects to go forward. Howell, 30; Pat McGeer, *Politics in Paradise* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Ltd., 1972), 43; “The Quest for Oil and Ore,” *The Globe and Mail*, 10 May 1958; Robin, 208, 226; Wedley, 252.

and by the beginning of March 1957 provincial newspapers reported groups and individuals ranging from the Vancouver Board of Trade and University of British Columbia Economics Professor Joseph Kania were in favour of the 1956 proposal.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, according to historian Holly Nathan, it was at this point in time that the major newspapers of the Lower Mainland began to support the 1956 proposal, a change that, according to her, precluded organized opposition, and aided in reducing the few who did oppose the project to a fringe element.¹⁰⁸ Accompanying this change was a general sense in these papers that not only would the proposed projects improve the province as a whole, but also since Axel Wenner-Gren was a philanthropist, various institutions in the province would benefit as well.¹⁰⁹

A few exceptions to this change in sentiment existed, however. For example, almost immediately after the announcement of the 1956 memorandum the *Vancouver Sun* reported that out of eighteen industrialists surveyed, only one was willing to voice opposition to it.¹¹⁰ By 6 March 1957 the *Sun* was willing to claim that anger towards the memorandum was waning.¹¹¹ Indeed, in echoing this view, the *Daily Colonist* reminded its readership that it was job of the

¹⁰⁷ The Board of Trade is even reported as having investigated the 1956 proposal. Provincial newspapers contain numerous articles from this period discussing and criticizing the proposed project. I have included a few examples. NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Trade Board Probes Wenner-Gren Deal," *News Herald*, 22 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Bill Ryan, "Trade Board Backs Wenner-Gren Deal," *The Province*, 5 March 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "UBC Economist Backs Wenner-Gren Scheme," *The Vancouver Sun*, 5 March 1957.

¹⁰⁸ This argument is made based on her analysis of news media portrayals of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. She notes how the news media was used to successfully fight the proposed Echo Park Canyon Dam in Colorado, while those opposed to the Strathcona Dam on the Campbell River of Vancouver Island were portrayed as a questionable vocal minority. She also notes editorial support from *The Province* and the *Vancouver Sun*, but notes it emerged over time. BC Hydro, "Strathcona Dam," *BC Hydro: For Generations* https://www.bchydro.com/community/recreation_areas/strathcona_dam.html (accessed 13 July 2015); Nathan, 1-6, 40, 45-51, 55-61, 70-71.

¹⁰⁹ Axel Wenner-Gren had founded the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Nordic Co-operation and Research in 1937 and helped form the New York Viking Foundation for Anthropological Research in 1941 (now known as the Wenner-Gren Foundation). Provincial newspapers contain numerous articles reflecting this change. I have included a few examples. NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Bill Ryan, "Wenner-Gren Deal Will Aid Research," *Province*, 16 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Wenner-Gren Profit To 'Aid Mankind,'" NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Wenner-Gren Puzzled By Deal Furore," *The Vancouver Sun* 7 March 1957.

¹¹⁰ NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Sun Survey:...", *The Vancouver Sun* 14 February 1957.

¹¹¹ NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, James Nesbitt, "Capital Column: Wenner-Gren Furore Subsiding," *The Vancouver Sun* 6 March 1957.

opposition to criticize the provincial government and of the fourth estate to report this criticism.¹¹² Other newspapers remained opposed, including the *Victoria Daily Times*. In March 1957 the paper published an open letter responding to an invitation to a party celebrating the official commencement of surveys that cited public opposition (20:1 according to their own straw poll) and questioned Axel Wenner-Gren's wartime relations and history.¹¹³

Perhaps no other newspaper had a relationship with the 1956 memorandum like the *Prince George Citizen*, however. Prince George was and is the largest urban centre in the Northern Interior of BC. Via the famed Giscome Portage at Summit Lake it was the urban centre the Tsek'ehne were most likely to visit in the 1950s. It was therefore the newspaper most likely to have any sort of readership among them, their friends, and their acquaintances.

The *Citizen* was a booster newspaper. As a result, the overall tone of the announcement of the 1956 memorandum in the *Prince George Citizen* was positive.¹¹⁴ It was hoped the new developments would replace "the ring of a prospector's pick on hard rock, the soft swirls of an Indian's paddle and the 'chug, chug, of the freight boat's 'kickers,'" and make Prince George BC's second city.¹¹⁵ (The *Citizen* was not the only newspaper to believe the latter and provincial newspapers even suggested the development would lead to the annexation of Yukon Territory.)¹¹⁶ According to reporters, industrialists were figuratively camping outside the

¹¹² NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Opening Up The North," *Daily Colonist* 21 February 1957.

¹¹³ The *Victoria Daily Times* had earlier held a vote regarding public support after suggesting the Bennett government refused to hear criticism. It reported it received two thousand ballots with the majority opposed. NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Here's Your Ballot: How Do You Vote On Deal?" *Victoria Daily Times* 19 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "This Is No Answer," *Times* 19 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Wenner-Gren Plan Opposed, Poll Shows," *The Vancouver Sun* 23 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "An Open Letter To Mr. Wenner-Gren," *Victoria Daily Times* 11 March 1957.

¹¹⁴ Nathan, 1-2, 25-28, 40, 42, 47; Wedley, 255.

¹¹⁵ "Prince George Seen As Province's Second City," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 February 1957.

¹¹⁶ LAC, RG 30, Volume 14440, "Extra: Project 'X' Bared:...", *The Prince George Citizen* 14 February 1957; "Mayor Sees City Home Of 80,000:...", *Prince George Citizen* 14 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Prince George To Grow As Big As Edmonton," *Province* 13 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Jim Hazelwood, "Flood Of Business Forecast:...", *The Vancouver Sun* 15 February 1957; "Williston Sketches Vast Exploitation Plan In Legislature Today," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 February 1957.

legislature in an apparent sense of anxious excitedness to find out the latest news of the Wenner-Gren development.¹¹⁷ To them Wenner-Gren's wartime record was not an issue.¹¹⁸ Yet the *Citizen* was quick to point out the memorandum threatened pre-existing mineral claims and property rights, including the thirty-two claims of Ingenika Mines Limited and the Finlay Valley Land & Development Company.¹¹⁹ It also reminded its readership that boosters had made similar promises with regard to the PGE in 1931.¹²⁰ Nevertheless it was not until the project was under construction that the *Citizen* began to seriously criticize the project and then in response to locals not being hired to build the dam.¹²¹

The 1957 memorandum equally attracted criticism along the same lines as the 1956 memorandum.¹²² Often this critique expanded on existing criticism, such as the claim the Bennett government was giving away the resources of the province to foreign interests or not sharing enough useful information and that development should take another form.¹²³ There were questions regarding the ability of transmitting electricity from the Peace River to the Lower Mainland.¹²⁴ Yet in many ways the criticism was not as intense. As community and regional planner David LeMarquand characterizes it:

Throughout the planning of the project there was considerable discussion and debate on its merits and failings by the opposition, interested groups and the public.

¹¹⁷ "Industry Committee Elated Over Billion-Dollar Deal," *Prince George Citizen*, 18 February 1957.

¹¹⁸ Nathan, 1, 40-41.

¹¹⁹ "Mayor Sees City Home Of 80,000;" "Wenner-Gren Project Jeopardizes Claims."

¹²⁰ "Billion Dollar Deal Recalls Day When Local Man Sold PGE."

¹²¹ Holly Nathan sees this change as uncharacteristic of the *Citizen*. A number of articles appear in the paper following the following the two cited. "Are You With Us Or What?" *Prince George Citizen*, 27 January 1964; "Contractors' Plea Refused:..." *Prince George Citizen*, 2 November 1961; Nathan, 64, 64n141, 74-77.

¹²² For example, other rivers were proposed. Froschauer, 180; Nathan, 63-64, passim; Wedley, 270, 275.

¹²³ Among the alternatives was nuclear energy. LeMarquand and Nathan would suggest one problem was that the information that was provided was often too technical. This matter is repeatedly discussed in provincial newspapers. I have included a few examples. LeMarquand, 102, 104-105; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, "Tory Issues Wen-Gren Challenge," *The Vancouver Province*, 17 January 1959; Nathan, 19, 64; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Peter Burton, "New Concessions In Peace River;" Vancouver Sun, "Electric Power in British Columbia," 5-7, 9, 13, 17-22.

¹²⁴ As many authors pointed out the Soviets had recently revolutionized transmission technology. I have included an example. Williston and Keller, 179-180.

But, with some exception, much of the debate was like MacBeth's view of life 'full of sound and fury signifying nothing.' There was little information generation that could inform public opinion.¹²⁵

Perhaps this was due to a general perception that the 1957 memorandum was merely a continuation of the 1956 memorandum. It might also be because groups, like the United Fishermen and Allied Worker's Union, argued that by damming the Peace River it would help save the Fraser River from hydroelectric development, thereby protecting the Fraser River salmon fishery.¹²⁶ Indeed, reports of the investigation into the hydroelectric potential of the Peace and Liard rivers pointed out that both watersheds were unique in BC for draining ultimately into the Arctic Ocean and therefore lacking a salmon run altogether.¹²⁷ As historian Matthew Evenden has pointed out, concern over the Fraser salmon fishery had reached a crescendo following the Nechako (Alcan) development in 1952.¹²⁸

Like with the 1956 memorandum, critics demanded more information. Increasingly, however, they also argued for the need of comprehensive studies to truly understand the impacts of the proposed hydroelectric developments on the Peace and Liard rivers. Anthropologist Wilson Duff for example argued that since the 1957 memorandum did not contain provisions for archaeological studies in the expected reservoir basin it was flawed.¹²⁹ (Studies were eventually conducted in 1963 by Robert McGhee of the National Museum of Man, but his notes were ruined and the artifacts he collected lost when his boat capsized at the Ne Parle Pas Rapids.)¹³⁰

¹²⁵ LeMarquand, 99.

¹²⁶ BCA, GR-0880, Box 59, BC And BB Power Consultants Limited, "Peace River Hydro-Electric Project Report," 8-9; BCA, British Columbia Premier's Records 1953-1972, GR-1414, Box 43, File 5, United Fishermen and Allies Worker's Union, "Well I'll Be Dammed: A Fish Story!"

¹²⁷ BCA, GR-1414, Box 43, File 5, Fish and Power Note; BCA, MS 1172, Box 1, A.E.I. (Canada) Ltd., "Volume 1: Assessment of Water Potential," 2.

¹²⁸ Matthew Evenden, *Fish versus Power: An Environmental History of the Fraser River* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹²⁹ LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, "Tory Issues Wen-Gren Challenge;" "New Reserve For 'Wee-Gee' Land;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Burton, "New Concessions In Peace River."

¹³⁰ Stanley, 38.

Critics urged Comprehensive environmental and ecological studies, and perhaps surprisingly, Ray Williston supported them.¹³¹ Nevertheless, as was the norm during this period, neither level of government nor the PRPDC conducted wider impact studies, something Elders like Geraldine Solonas still find unbelievable.¹³²

The two river policy Bennett mentioned to Mitchell consisted of the Peace and Columbia River projects. There was also concern among critics that the proposed project would not only be in competition with the Columbia River, but also produce electricity that cost five to eight mills more.¹³³ A mill is one-tenth of a cent per kilowatt hour, so the difference is less than a single cent, although even this small amount adds up when one considers the total capacity of such a large hydroelectric project. (For example given the current capacity of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, 2,730 megawatts, the difference would be between \$1,365 and \$2,184.) The claim was a direct challenge to the PRPDC, who claimed the cost would be the same, if not lower.¹³⁴

As with the 1956 memorandum, the *Prince George Citizen* proudly announced the 1957 memorandum.¹³⁵ As it predicted, “Prince George today stands to achieve a place of prominence in the world that at any time in the past would have been beyond its wildest dreams.”¹³⁶ The city,

¹³¹ KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Letter to Ray Williston from T.M.C. Taylor, 4 January 1963; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Letter to T.M.C. Taylor from Ray Williston, 24 January 1963; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Letter to D.B. Turner from A.F. Paget, 26 April 1963.

¹³² LeMarquand, 83-85; Jeremy Mouat, “Columbia River Treaty and Canada,” *Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=10474 (accessed 26 April 2016); Jessica Place, “Expanding the Mine, Killing a Lake: A Case Study of First Nations’ Environmental Values, Perceptions of Risk and Health” (MA Thesis: University of Northern British Columbia, 2007), 15; Geraldine Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.

¹³³ This matter is repeatedly discussed in provincial newspapers. I have included a few examples. NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Alex Merriman, “Report From The Buildings:....,” *Daily Colonist* 27 February 1960; NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, “Harding: Peace R. Power Twice As Costly,” *Victoria Daily Times* 22 February 1963.

¹³⁴ KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, “North Is Promised Lower Cost Power,” *The Province*, 27 April 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.4, Box 5, Ryan William, “Vast Plans Bared:....,” *The Province* 13 November 1958; SFUA, F-55-34-0-8, W.C. Mainwaring interviewed by Jack Webster, 15 February 1960.

¹³⁵ Wedley, 269.

¹³⁶ “Vast Hydro Plan:....,” *Prince George Citizen*, 9 October 1957.

already “the world’s white spruce capital,” would become the world capital of hydroelectric power. So excited was the *Citizen* that they actually contacted Minister of Lands and Forests Ray Williston (who was the local MLA) at his home at 7:15 am on the day the 1957 memorandum was announced to get details and promises Prince George would become a transmission hub. John Morrison, the mayor, was not afraid to expand upon these promises, and expected Wenner-Grenland to lead to Prince George becoming the second largest city in the province.¹³⁷ In 1959 Williston told the legislature that residents of the section of the Peace River Country in Alberta had approached him to see if BC would annex the area.¹³⁸ Despite all of this hopeful speculation in Prince George, the public BCPC did not intend on changing its plans to construct diesel generators to power Prince George, an objective it continued as late as 1963 on the understanding they could at least be used as standby.¹³⁹

Prince George was not the only community in the Northern Interior that the *Citizen* hoped would benefit from the 1957 memorandum. According to one article it was hoped that Vanderhoof, (ironically near the geographic centre of the province), would benefit from the mere fact it had a road running north from it to Fort St. James and the mining communities of Manson Creek and Germansen Landing. Representing all that remained of the promised Turgeon Highway, the *Prince George Citizen* called for the provincial to extend the route from Manson Creek to Finlay Forks, especially since they only had to construct thirty-eight miles of road. It did represent a round-about route into the Trench, but one must remember that there was no road to Finlay Forks at the time, and to construct one from the new Hart Highway would mean

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ “Williston Says Power Is Most Important Topic In Northern BC,” *Prince George Citizen*, 19 February 1959.

¹³⁹ “Peace River Power Project Hot Topic,” *Prince George Citizen*, 9 October 1957; “Steam Used To Produce First Power Here:....,” *Prince George Citizen*, 23 May 1963.

building a longer road. With this difference in distance and the cost associated with it, the *Citizen* hoped for the completion of the road to Finlay Forks.¹⁴⁰

All of this support for both projects was problematic for the Tsek'ehne. While they certainly did not need Euro-Canadian journalists to tell them to fight for their rights, because no one had officially informed the Tsek'ehne of the proposed project the newspapers of the province were one of the main sources of information about it. Yet the major newspapers of the province were not concerned about the impact on the Tsek'ehne and other residents of the Trench for that matter. That is not to say that they were ignorant of the Tsek'ehne, however. Unfortunately, journalists saw them as “vanishing” in wake of “civilization.”¹⁴¹ Indeed, on the day *The Province* announced the 1956 memorandum, it also noted that “the Sekanais Indians living in the area call their country Omoenekhah, meaning lake-like or sluggish river. As Omineca to the white man it will mean jobs, new industry, new wealth.”¹⁴² In 1960 Einar Gunderson would tell reporter Jack Brooks that the project would not only open up the north, but also make sure “this country [does not] remain with the Indians.”¹⁴³ (According to *The Province* at the time there were two hundred Indigenous people and ten Euro-Canadians in the three communities.)¹⁴⁴

The Tsek'ehne did not lack access to the news media, such as *The Province*. Mary Christina Koyle's claim that they did ignores the newspaper reporters who came into Tsek'ehne traditional territory following the announcement of the 1956 memorandum and spoke to individual members of the Tsek'ehne and non-Tsek'ehne community. Almost universally they

¹⁴⁰ “Reservoir To Open Up Much Untouched Land,” *Prince George Citizen*, 23 May 1963.

¹⁴¹ Nathan, 53-54.

¹⁴² NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Ramsey, “The Last Frontier Awakes:...,” *The Province* 12 February 1957.

¹⁴³ NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, “Notes Show Competition Was Expected,” *Vancouver Sun*, 4 March 1960.

¹⁴⁴ Nathan, 53-54.

found local residents were not happy with the news of the proposed monorail that would be the harbinger of greater developments.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, when initial accounts cited a reservoir that crested above the elevation of Summit Lake on the Arctic-Pacific divide, the *Prince George Citizen* reported the residents of McLeod Lake were curious about whether or not the new reservoir would flood them out.¹⁴⁶ Local store owner/trader Dick Corless Jr. summed up the entire mood of the residents:

You can't expect these simple people to get enthusiastic about anything the white man plans for B.C.... We have robbed them blind and starved them off so long now that they couldn't care less. They just want to be left alone, if the truth were known.¹⁴⁷

Nor was this sentiment completely ignored by the readership of the province's newspapers, who at times responded in a colonial manner. In March 1957 the *Prince George Citizen* printed an editorial letter from an anonymous reader simply known as a "local housewife" that argued opposition to the 1956 memorandum was childish and the residents of McLeod Lake were selfish for wanting to hold back the province as a whole.¹⁴⁸

Coinciding with the announcement for the 1956 memorandum, and rather than working to help them, the Tsek'ehne were quickly portrayed as pitiful in a manner reminiscent of common colonial portrayals of Indigenous peoples being unable to properly take care of themselves and therefore perpetually in need of European help. Yet days after the announcement

¹⁴⁵ Specific individuals cited were David Slocum, William (Bill) Boyko, and Dick Corless Jr. Ben Metcalfe claimed to have shown Tse'khene David Slocum an article on the project. According to Metcalfe he merely shook his head. Bill Boyko had married into the community at McLeod Lake. He was reported as being unhappy about the news. "'Couldn't Care Less,' Veteran Riverman:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 21 February 1957; Koyl, 70; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Gordon McCallum, "BC Staking Rush Forecast:...", *Province* 15 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Ben Metcalfe, "Civilization Doesn't Excite The Ominecans," *Province* 15 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Nicol, "Giving BC To The Americans? Nonsense – The Man's A Swede!"

¹⁴⁶ "McLeod's Lake News," *Prince George Citizen*, 18 November 1958.

¹⁴⁷ "'Couldn't Care Less,' Veteran Riverman;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Metcalfe, "Civilization Doesn't Excite The Ominecans."

¹⁴⁸ "A Vote For 'Weegee' By A Housewife," *Prince George Citizen*, 4 March 1957.

of the 1956 memorandum, Ray Williston informed the legislature that Indigenous people were “literally starving to death at the northern end of the trench due to the area’s inaccessibility.”¹⁴⁹ Coinciding with this comment, at the beginning of March an article on the living conditions of the Finlay River Band in *The Province* led to creation of the “Save the Sekani” campaign in the Lower Mainland, which attracted national attention.¹⁵⁰ Although denounced by the *Prince George Citizen*, the campaign brought to light diverse views regarding who and what the Tsek’ehne were with comments ranging from starving Stone Age paupers to honest ingenious noble savages.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, the *Citizen* proclaimed that the monorail proposed in the 1956 memorandum would help benefit them.¹⁵² The campaign was a success when it came to donations for residents of the Lower Mainland. When it came to delivering them to the Tsek’ehne, however, campaign organizers did not send not everything up and the Tsek’ehne would not accept what they did receive due to their suspicions of “gifts” from Europeans. Yet no one seemed concerned with why they did not accept the supplies, the validity of claims they were starving, or whether the proposed monorail would lead to a repeat of the claimed situation.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, “CCF Chief Asks 10 Questions:...,” *Daily Colonist*, 15 February 1957.

¹⁵⁰ “Citizen Exclusive: Sekanis Traditionally Beggars Says Expert:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 18 March 1957; “Donations Assist Band,” *Globe and Mail*, 19 March 1957; ““Save Sekanis’ Gifts Not Delivered, Gathering Dust,”” *Prince George Citizen*, 11 October 1957; ““Save Sekanis’ Move May Be Heap Big Joke On White Man,”” *Prince George Citizen*, 21 March 1957.

¹⁵¹ An unnamed Dakelh author also supports Campbell’s rebuttal. It could be Lizette Hall. “Another Planeload For Sikanis Today,” *Prince George Citizen*, 21 March 1957; “Another Planeload Of Supplies To Ft Ware & Ft Grahame,” *Prince George Citizen*, 21 March 1957; A Carrier Indian, “An Indian Replies,” *Prince George Citizen*, 25 March 1957; “Citizen Exclusive: Sekanis Traditionally Beggars Says Expert;” “Give Help, But Wisely,” *Prince George Citizen*, 18 March 1957; Lizette Hall, “The Judge Rebuked,” *Prince George Citizen*, 1 April 1957; ““Save Sekanis’ Move May Be Heap Big Joke On White Man.””

¹⁵² “Citizen Exclusive: Sekanis Traditionally Beggars Says Expert.”

¹⁵³ “Brassieres, Perfume, Among Sekani Gifts,” *Prince George Citizen*, 18 March 1957; “Donations Assist Band;” ““Save Sekanis’ Gifts Not Delivered, Gathering Dust.””

The Logic of Hydroelectric Development

The lack of lasting criticism of the 1956 memorandum, and lack of concern for the Tsek'ehne, reflects the acceptance of the logic of transportation discussed in chapter one. After all, if a lack of transportation was one of the main obstacles to development in northern BC, then logically transportation infrastructure, like a monorail, would remove that impediment and lead to development and prosperity for all. One can see a similar logic with regard to the belief that hydroelectric development, and the renewable energy it provided, would naturally lead to industrialization, further development, and economic growth – the logic of hydroelectric development. The switch to hydroelectric development led to the ready embrace of this logic to the detriment of the Tsek'ehne.¹⁵⁴ Proponents of the logic pointed to Grand Coulee dam in Washington State, which had garnered criticism, only to bring industrialization, development and prosperity.¹⁵⁵ Within the promotional literature surrounding the Peace River project one can often find comparisons to the Grand Coulee and other hydroelectric projects within the United States combined with the assumption that since they preceded economic growth they created it and the unquestioned assumption that similar growth would logically follow regardless of differences in circumstances.¹⁵⁶

Related to the logic of hydroelectric development was Canada's "northern vision" that presented "the north" (defined as areas north of Canada's major centres of Euro-Canadian population) as a place awaiting proper use and development, regardless of the Indigenous

¹⁵⁴ This logic is found in numerous primary and secondary sources. I have included a few examples from the primary sources. BCA, MS 1172, Box 1, A.E.I. (Canada) Ltd., "Volume 1: Assessment of Water Power Potential," 6-7; BCA, MS 1172, Box 1, Ray Williston, Explanatory Notes..., BCA, T1675:0052, W.A.C. Bennett; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, "The Power Picture in British Columbia:...", *Water Power* (February 1960): 66.

¹⁵⁵ SFUA, F-55-34-0-8, David Catton, "Hydro Electric Power: C.H.Q.M. News Commentary (Radio News)," 9 February 1960.

¹⁵⁶ A few examples include British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, "Peace River Power Project" (Vancouver: British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, 1963); British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, "The Power of the Peace" (Vancouver: British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, 1963).

population and their infrastructure.¹⁵⁷ (As Holly Nathan notes, in BC proponents of this vision intimately tied it to foreign capital and “industrialization by invitation.”)¹⁵⁸ In other words, Canada’s “northern vision” was a continuation of the colonial attitudes that had led to general European colonization in what became Canada. Two prime ministers, John Diefenbaker and Lester Pearson, during this period readily embraced this view, and presented “the North” as the final frontier in Canada. Not being residents of the North, they easily fit into Sherrill Grace’s argument that “the North” is an ideological construct created by outsiders that serves to shape Canada at all levels.¹⁵⁹ As lawyer James Howell points out, the Bennett government had embraced the northern vision by at least 1954 and presented BC as a pioneering province, rich in resources and just awaiting development.¹⁶⁰ Two important factors influencing BC’s “northern vision” were the Cold War as well as competition with Alberta when it came to accessing the economies and markets of the territories.¹⁶¹ Historian Martin Robin even suggests the Peace River project revitalized the provincial northern vision.¹⁶²

Reports of the time contain the logic of hydroelectric development.¹⁶³ As Martin Robin points out:

The Peace symbolized the brave, new company frontier which had dutifully returned government candidates since 1952; the outer rim of development whose

¹⁵⁷ Koyl, 62-63, 81-82.

¹⁵⁸ Nathan, 5.

¹⁵⁹ Sherrill Grace, *Canada and the Idea of North* (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 8-9, 15-17.

¹⁶⁰ Howell claims by at least 1954. Mitchell claims it predated Diefenbaker’s northern vision. McGeer and Wedley claim Bennett was influenced by Diefenbaker and former premiers Richard McBride and Duff Pattullo. Wedley contends Bennett was more forceful, but had relations with Ottawa been better than they could have worked together. Mulyk and Wedley point out Bennett wanted to annex Yukon, with Wedley adding that Pattullo wanted to too. Loo merely notes Bennett and Diefenbaker shared the vision. BCA, W.A.C. Bennett interview, T1675:0023, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by David Mitchell, 18 June 1977; Howell, 26; Tina Loo, “Disturbing the Peace: Environmental Change and the Scales of Justice on a Northern River,” *Environmental History* 12 (2007): 899; McGeer, 42; Mitchell, 260; NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk,] 2; Pollon and Matheson, 160; Sherman, 227, 231; Wedley, 4, 13-14, 133, 137, 289, 141-142, 145, 445-449, 468, passim.

¹⁶¹ Wedley, 147-150, 445, 446.

¹⁶² Robin, 210.

¹⁶³ BCA, MS 1172, Box 1, A.E.I. (Canada) Ltd., “Volume 1: Assessment of Water Power Potential,” 6-7; BCA, MS 1172, Box 1, Ray Williston, Explanatory Notes....

endless expansion would be guaranteed not merely by the immediate demand created by the dam construction, but by the provision of cheap energy attractive to firms which budgeted high on electrical consumption.¹⁶⁴

Expanding on this concept, historian John Wedley argues during this period the province followed a two-step policy to promote development: building infrastructure, and resource regulation and management.¹⁶⁵ The Peace River project fell into both categories as it both regulated and managed one resource, water.¹⁶⁶ Its promise of opening up northern BC also connected it to the logic of transportation. Eileen Williston and Betty Keller even present hydroelectric development as a third dimension to provincial development.¹⁶⁷ This emphasis on development is important. Geographer David LeMarquand even argues that the debate that followed the 1956 memorandum missed the point that while Bennett wanted the Peace, he wanted development more, and therefore might have been open to options.¹⁶⁸ Inversely, however, when asked what would happen if the Peace River project did not go ahead in 1960, Ray Williston assured the inquirer that even the storage of water would be the best economic use of the Trench.¹⁶⁹

Just a mere nine years after the completion of the project James Howell argued the project was a prime example of inverted planning, where objectives were unclear and the project was determined by what was technologically feasible and acceptable by the electorate.¹⁷⁰ At first this argument might seem to challenge the logic of hydroelectric development, but Howell also

¹⁶⁴ Robin, 226.

¹⁶⁵ Bennett and Tomblin makes a similar argument, with Bennett telling the Associated Boards of Trade of Central British that he saw development proceeding from transportation and power. SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-53-0-0-2, W.A.C. Bennett, "The Power Development Story in British Columbia:...", 16 September 1961; Tomblin, 46-47, 49, 51, passim; Wedley, iii, 4-5, 152, 156, 158, 226, 450-451, passim.

¹⁶⁶ Wedley only notes it as infrastructure. Wedley, 452.

¹⁶⁷ Williston and Keller, 169.

¹⁶⁸ LeMarquand, 67, 70.

¹⁶⁹ KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Letter to Ray Williston from Bishop Wilson, 13 April 1960; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Letter to Bishop Wilson from Ray Williston, 25 April 1960.

¹⁷⁰ Howell, 31.

states that it happened due to one part lack of environmental concern, and one part “a slavish acceptance of growth as an unquestioned good,” with the only good thing being that it might have raised the environmental awareness in general through its impact.¹⁷¹ Howell’s argument concluded “when the hydro potential of the Peace River was discovered, development-oriented policies required no justification, either in BC or in Canada as a whole.”¹⁷² In other words, he is referring to the logic of hydroelectric development, but highlighting the flaw in this logic; proponents merely believed dams brought development and growth, but beyond that assumption there was no clear explanation this outcome would occur. Karl Froschauer echoes this belief, stating that:

Since the 1940s, and particularly since the 1960s, members of British Columbia’s political elite and their appointed utility managers have claimed that hydro development would be the leading force in transforming the B.C. economy from primary resource-based industry to secondary manufacturing industry.¹⁷³

To this end according to Froschauer the provincial government offered up BC’s natural resources and water resources to private interests. To add injury to insult, he notes that based on his own research rarely do energy intensive industries, even if they do materialize, lead to the development of secondary industries.¹⁷⁴

Meg Stanley concluded it was not until the late 1960s that individuals directly challenged this logic as the environmental and civil/Aboriginal rights movements gained more and more support.¹⁷⁵ She is not entirely right, however, as a memorandum looking into the hydroelectric development of the province from 1942 noted that with a few exceptions cheap power was not

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 34.

¹⁷² Ibid., 56.

¹⁷³ Froschauer, 174.

¹⁷⁴ Nathan suggests Froschauer saw this policy as emerging with the two river policy. Froschauer, 14, 174, 192, 197-198, 209-210, 224; Nathan, 64-65, 65n99.

¹⁷⁵ Stanley, 105, 117, 256.

what drove new developments.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, the justification for the Peace River project was not merely limited to future development. In a somewhat circular argument, proponents of the dam repeatedly made the claim that the province needed the Peace River project because of increased demand, although when an electrical shortage would take place was debatable, ranging from immediately to 1976.¹⁷⁷ Mirroring these claims was the range of dates for the completion of the Peace River project: 1964 to 1978, with varying dates within for first electricity.¹⁷⁸ In other words, the province needed the dam to prevent the shortage. As we shall see in the next chapter, however, the province's power companies did not agree.

Conclusion

From the announcement of the 1956 memorandum to build a monorail up the Trench to Yukon the Tsek'ehne were living in the shadow of Axel Wenner-Gren. The 1957 memorandum transformed the proposal into one of hydroelectric development – the beginning of the Peace River project. No one bothered to actually inform the Tsek'ehne and even if they had, given the history of proposed development in their homeland, the Tsek'ehne would have been quite reasonable in not expecting it to come to fruition. All the while, they were experiencing slow, steady change as more and more individuals became involved in the forest industry and Indian Affairs merged the Fort Grahame and Fort Ware bands into the Finlay River Band. The

¹⁷⁶ NBCA, H.G.T. (Harry) Perry fonds, 2002.7.2.120, Box 15, Industrial Development Committee, Memorandum to the Industrial Development Committee, 13 November 1942, 15-16.

¹⁷⁷ These claims are found in numerous primary and secondary sources. I have included a few examples. In 1977 Bennett even claimed it predated the project. Quite damning, however, was Keenleyside, who claimed in his memoirs that the province was too small to need the electricity that was produced. BCA, MS 2353, "Comprehensive Plan Of Peace River Power Development Company Ltd.... December 1959, 20; BCA, T1675:0017, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by David Mitchell, 13 December 1976; BCA, T1675:0052, W.A.C. Bennett; Hugh Keenleyside, *On the Bridge of Time*, vol. 2, *Memoirs of Hugh L. Keenleyside* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 502; NBCA, 2000.13.2.4, Box 5, Alex Young, "Peace Power Vital To Meet Shortage:...", *The Vancouver Sun* 28 January 1959; NBCA, 2000.13.9.4, The Peace River Project; Pollon and Matheson, 159; Sherman, 211, 225-226.

¹⁷⁸ These claims are found in numerous primary and secondary sources. I have included a few examples. NBCA, 2000.13.2.4, Box 5, Bill Fletcher, "Wengren Developers Predict: Peace Power For Vancouver," *The Vancouver Sun*, [21 February 1959]; NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, A Guided Tour "Talk" Of The Peace Power Project by Les Sladen.

provincial news media was of no help to the Tsek'ehne. It is not true that they had no access to it, but what is true is that their access was limited. Furthermore, although criticism of the 1956 and 1957 memorandum did emerge, it was not categorical and showed no concern about the potential impacts on any Indigenous group. Critics accepted the logic of transportation as well as the logic of hydroelectric development, only debating how to best implement them in the real world. As a result, the Tsek'ehne were not properly informed about the proposals, and therefore not in a position to effectively fight them when it went forward in 1961.

Chapter 3 – What a Great Settlement? Ottawa, Edmonton, The Creation of BC Hydro, and the Construction of the Peace River Project, 1956-1972

There was nothing close to a guarantee of the Peace River project until 1961. As noted in the previous chapter the news media of the province had come to support the development and criticism from the official opposition had not led to provincial policy change. Moving outside of the province an examination of the rest of Canada reveals that while Alberta did not seem to care, the federal government was more concerned about the Columbia River project and refused to do anything about the matter. As a result, the real hindrance to the commencement of construction on the dam was the failure of Peace River Power Development Company (PRPDC) to get a contract from the province's two largest electrical companies: the private BC Electric (BCE) and the provincially owned BC Power Commission (BCPC). It appeared that the Peace River project would end up like the numerous proposed developments in northern British Columbia, leaving remnants that were little disturbed except perhaps by the Tsek'ehne alone. By 1960 Premier W.A.C. Bennett decided to intervene, and in a move that shocked many, nationalized not only BCE, but also the PRPDC the following year. With this act, the Peace River project was now almost certain. However, given the lack of firm opposition from the federal government, who were constitutionally responsible for the Tsek'ehne and navigable rivers, proper steps were not taken by Indian Affairs to ensure the provincial government or BC Hydro adequately consulted with and/or considered the impacts on both. Instead limited consultation occurred, with Indian Affairs serving as the mediator between the Tsek'ehne and others. This outcome was disastrous given the diverging views that existed in BC regarding Aboriginal policy.

What Great Settlement? The Peace River Project and Federal Relations

Both the proposed monorail and Peace River project were contained within the province of BC. Their effects, however, were not. The former was expected to one day connect the province to Yukon Territory, while the latter, by controlling the Peace River, directly affected the flow of water downstream on the Peace, Slave, and Mackenzie rivers in Alberta and the Northwest Territories. Given the federal nature of the Canadian state, this meant BC had to work out some sort of agreement with at least two other sovereign governments: Alberta and Ottawa. For the Tsek'ehne it was the latter government that was constitutionally supposed to represent their interests. The British North America Act 1867 that created Canada placed "Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians under federal jurisdiction."¹ To fulfill this obligation the federal government created "Indian Affairs" in 1868.² Sometimes a federal department, sometimes a branch in another federal department (See Appendix A), it was Indian Affairs that the PRPDC, province, and eventually BC Hydro relied on to deal with Indigenous issues surrounding the Peace River project.³ When it came to the Peace River project itself, two additional areas of constitutional jurisdiction gave the federal government some level of control and impact regarding its development, namely the federal government's jurisdiction over "navigation and shipping"⁴ as well as "sea coast and inland fisheries."⁵ Given the historic reliance on the Peace, Parsnip and Finlay rivers for transportation and food, both areas were in theory an additional level of constitutional protection.

¹ British North America Act, 1867, s.91(24).

² An Act Providing for the Organisation of the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada and for the Management of Indian and Ordnance Lands, 1868; Secretary of State, *Annual Report of the Secretary of State for the Year 1868* (Ottawa: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1869).

³ According to Koyl, BC Hydro did not even consider Indigenous issues until 1978. Mary Christina Koyl, "Cultural Chasm: A 1960s Hydro Development and the Tsay Keh Dene Native Community of Northern British Columbia" (MA Thesis: University of Victoria, 1992), 84-85, 97, 104-105, 118.

⁴ British North America Act, 1867, s.91(10).

⁵ British North America Act, 1867, s.91(12).

These powers were formidable in theory, but in reality Ottawa often found itself thwarted by the provinces. By the 1950s Indian Affairs had many times found itself challenged when dealing with BC when it came to status Indians. Chapter one dealt with the conflict that emerged after Confederation between the provincial and federal governments over the size of reserves in BC. At the heart of this dispute was BC's denial of Aboriginal title from 1864 to 1991, and problematic "recognition" prior to 1864.⁶ As a result, the only historic treaties in BC are the fourteen Douglas Treaties on Vancouver Island and Treaty 8.⁷

The reserve commissions represented defeats for the federal government on the matter as both excluded title as a subject of inquiry and in the case of the Joint Indian Reserve Commission included the provision that generous reserves would settle the matter.⁸ Ottawa finally capitulated in 1927 following a Special Joint Committee in Parliament, which declared the issue closed and led to the 1927 amendment to the Indian Act to outlaw raising funds for legal claims by status Indians.⁹ In 1964 anthropologist Wilson Duff labelled this surrender the Great Settlement, despite the fact that it settled nothing.¹⁰ The Great Settlement represented the failure of the federal government to fulfill its fiduciary responsibility in managing the affairs of

⁶ The year before the provincial had reversed its decision to not negotiate land claims. British Claims Task Force, "The Report of the British Columbia Claims Task Force," 28 July 1991; BC Treaty Commission (BCTC), *What's the Deal with Treaties? A Lay Person's Guide to Treaty Making in British Columbia* 5th ed. (Vancouver: BCTC, 2007), 30; BC Treaty Commission, *Why Treaties? A Legal Perspective* (Vancouver: BC Treaty Commission, n.d.), 2-4; Wilson Duff, *The Indian History of British Columbia: The Impact of the White Man*, new ed. (Victoria: Royal BC Museum, 1997), 85-86, 91-93; Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2002), xxviii, xxix, 21, 32, 68, 90-92, 97, 122, 226, passim; Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), 20, 23, 26-27, 30, 36, 38-39, 41, 67, 237, passim.

⁷ Indian Affairs, *Annual Report on Indian Affairs for the Year Ending 30 June 1872* (Ottawa: I.B. Taylor, 1873), 12; Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), RG 10, Volume 3611, File 3756-1, Letter to Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Carnarvon from the Governor-General of Canada, the Earl of Dufferin, 4 December 1874; LAC, RG 10, Volume 3611, File 3756-1, Memorandum in Connection with the Indian Land Grievances in British Columbia.

⁸ Duff, 93-95; Cole Harris, *Making Native Space*, 71, 92, 96-97, 122-124, 167, 199.

⁹ Cole Harris maintains the turning point was 1880 when the sole remaining reserve commissioner of the Joint Indian Reserve Commission, Gilbert Sproat, resigned over the matter. Duff, 91-98; Cole Harris, *Making Native Space*, xxx, 164, 168, 260-261; Tennant, 82, 104-113.

¹⁰ Duff, 87, 97-98.

the province's Indigenous population. Thirty years later the tensions had not decreased, and Ottawa was again facing the province when it came to representing Indigenous people with regard to the numerous economic developments of the Bennett era in BC.¹¹ Making matters worse was that while a single premier headed the province, federally three prime ministers governed between 1956 and 1968: Louis St. Laurent (1948-1957), John Diefenbaker (1957-1963), and Lester Pearson (1963-1968) with minority governments between 1957 and 1958 and 1962 and 1963 that the federal Social Credit Party could bring down if they did not get what they wanted.

The British Columbian government was well aware of this weakness. Historian Martin Robin would even claim Bennett actively worked to help ensure there was a minority government in Ottawa that could not successfully oppose him.¹² Ray Williston would recall that the changes in federal government in 1957 and 1963 as well as the minority government situations following the elections of 1957, 1962, 1963, and 1965 aided the province in resisting federal opposition to developments in the province. According to him, Ottawa was fearful the Peace River project would prevent development on the Columbia River and jeopardize the Columbia River Treaty with the United States.¹³ In his assessment the primary concern of the federal government was not the impact on the Peace River or even the Tsek'ehne, but international relations and co-operation with the United States.

¹¹ Cole Harris, *Making Native Space*, 322; David LeMarquand, "Environmental Planning and Decision-making For Large-Scale Power Projects" (MA Thesis: University of British Columbia, 1972), 95; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia Region, L.E. Wight from Acting Director, Indian-Eskimo Economic Development Branch, J.W. Evans, 13 November 1973.

¹² Martin Robin, *Pillars of Profit: The Company Province 1934-1972* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1973), 239.

¹³ British Columbia Archives (BCA), Ray Williston interview, T1375:0011, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975, Victoria, BC

The 1956 proposal for a monorail aroused little opposition from the federal government.¹⁴ Helping the situation was that the province announced the memorandum in the dying days of the twenty-second federal parliament, which led to the 1957 federal election that saw the defeat of Louis St. Laurent's Liberals by John Diefenbaker's Progressive Conservatives. From a constitutional perspective this lack of a response makes sense as the project almost entirely fell within the jurisdiction of the province, with the exception of the hoped for connection to Yukon Territory and the inclusion of interprovincial and/or navigable rivers in this first memorandum and its associated reservation.¹⁵ British Columbian newspapers even debated whether the inclusion of these rivers rendered the agreement extraconstitutional, with the *Daily Colonist* definitively stating any hydroelectric development on the Peace would be under federal jurisdiction.¹⁶

Since the 1957 memorandum switched the focus of the proposed project to an interprovincial navigable river it would seem logical that it might arouse opposition from the federal government or Alberta. Yet neither government opposed the Peace River project in any significant way. (The Northwest Territories as a non-sovereign territory had only started

¹⁴ The most vocal criticism came primarily from opposition parties and was similar to the criticism mentioned in the previous chapter. Alberta liberal leader James Prowse was concerned British Columbia would rob Alberta of its dominance in the Peace River county of both Alberta and British Columbia. This might sound outlandish, but as historian Stephen Tomblin points out part of Bennett's overall plan was to assert British Columbian sovereignty. It should also be noted, however, that Tomblin claimed there was an unofficial alliance between Ottawa and Edmonton at the time, something I could find no evidence of during my own research, while Bowes claims in May 1958 residents of the Albertan Peace Country told Bennett they wanted to join British Columbia. When asked on 19 February 1957 to comment on the criticism in Alberta, W.A.C. Bennett simply reported that he had discussed the matter with Premier Ernest Manning although it is unclear what exactly they talked about. The newspapers at the time carried numerous articles on the matter. I have included a few examples. Gordon Bowes, *Eye-Witness Accounts from the First Exploration in 1793 Down to 1959 of the Peace River District of British Columbia including the Finlay and Parsnip River Basins*, ed. Gordon Bowes (Vancouver: Western Development and Power Limited, 1959), 17; Northern British Columbia Archives (NBCA), Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Doug Leiterman, "Big Storm Blowing Up In Ottawa," *Province* 13 February 1957; Stephen Tomblin, "W.A.C. Bennett and Province-Building in British Columbia," *BC Studies*, no. 85 (1990): 46, 50-51.

¹⁵ British North America Act, 1867, s.91(10), s.92(10)(a).

¹⁶ The *Daily Colonist* also claimed the federal government supported the proposal and would not interfere. NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Hydro Battle Looms In BC Development:...", *The Vancouver Sun* 15 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, "Peace River Dam Needs Ottawa Nod," *Daily Colonist* 16 February 1957.

regaining responsible government in 1954 after having lost it in 1905 and was represented by the federal government during this period.)

Alberta seems to have limited its concern to ensuring that, despite the fact BC maintained the dam would improve the flow and navigation of the Peace and Mackenzie, there was no dramatic change to the flow rate of the Peace River.¹⁷ Rather than make a formal arrangement with BC, the Albertan government reached an agreement with the PRPDC in 1959, a decision that would prove problematic when BC disregarded it entirely. Aside from a few verbal protests, however, Alberta seems to have left the entire matter to Ottawa out of a belief the federal government would protect their interests.¹⁸ Indeed, it was only after “Death of Delta” publicized the damage to the Peace-Athabasca Delta in 1970 that the province did anything about the project.¹⁹

¹⁷ Leonard Halmrast told *The Province* that if everything went as planned Alberta would benefit. The issue of downstream benefits was raised, but abandoned when it was realized it might result in the federal government getting involved. This decision suited Alberta, who did not want to pay for these benefits. The matter would be raised again when the British Columbia was sued in 1970 over the impacts to Peace-Athabasca Delta in an apparent attempt to implicate Alberta in liability. A series of letters between the provinces can be found in Kwadacha Archives (KA), File 2148721, Volume 1 starting on 6 November 1957. BCA, British Columbia Premier’s Records 1953-1972, GR-1414, Box 43, File 5, Fish and Power Note; BCA, T1375:0013, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975, Victoria, BC; Howell, 32, 42, 45; KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, “Bennett Dam Had No License:...,” KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, Letter to Ray Williston from LC Halmrast, 6 November 1957; LeMarquand, 96; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Statement By The Honourable W.A.C. Bennett, Premier of British Columbia, 8 October 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, “Assured of Benefit: Alberta Now Happy At Power Proposal,” *The Province*, 11 October 1957; “Peace River Power Project Hot Topic,” *Prince George Citizen*, 9 October 1957.

¹⁸ The source refers to it as the Peace River Development Corporation. KA, File 0242651-A, Volume 1 and KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2 contain a series of documents discussing the matter starting on 19 June 1964 and 22 August 1961 respectively. Howell, 42, 45; Indian Claims Commission (ICC), “Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Inquiry: WAC Bennett Dam and Damage to Indian Reserve 201,” (March 1998), 29-32; KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds..., File 0242651-A, Volume 1, W.F. Miles, “Progress Diary of W.F. Miles,” 19 June 1964, 4; KA, Water Comptroller fonds..., File 0242651-A, Volume 3, Letter to H.D. DeBeck from J.P. Ottesen, 3 August 1965; KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Letter to R.E. Bailey from R.J. Perrault, 22 August 1961; KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, Letter to A.F. Paget from W.C. Mainwaring, 13 May 1959; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, “No Harm Here,...,” *The Province*, 17 August 1961; LeMarquand, 97, 138-140.

¹⁹ The brief it triggered a letter between Premier Harry Strom and Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau on 2 July 1970 that led to the formation of the Peace-Athabasca Group. British Columbia refused to participate, in part due to lawsuits brought against it over the matter. As early as 12 August 1969 Ottawa organized a meeting with Ray Williston to discuss the negative impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, only to have the province become defensive and argue navigation had been improved downstream. The follow March members of the Alberta legislature had demanded a full list of correspondence between the Executive Council of Alberta and the government of British

For a variety of reasons Ottawa refused to directly challenge the province regarding the potential impacts of the Peace River project.²⁰ The same was not true when it came to the Columbia River Treaty 1961, which formalized the international Columbia River project.²¹ The announcement of the 1957 memorandum shocked the federal government, who had been negotiating the treaty with the United States since 1944.²² The announcement even warranted a series of letters between the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Canadian Consul General in Seattle.²³ Proponents of the Peace River project argued it would remove BC's expected dependence on electricity produced on the Columbia in the United States; a claim confirmed in the feasibility studies into the Peace River project itself.²⁴ From the perspective of federal officials, however, the hydroelectric potential of the Peace River was not significant enough to justify the cost of constructing the dam and the problem of transmission to the Lower Mainland was still an unresolved issue. They were quick to note they were not the only group to have doubts about the project.²⁵ On the bright side they hoped it would strengthen BC and

Columbia. Based on this request the Acting Minister of Agriculture not only produced a list, but also sent a copy to Ray Williston for review. The list included sixteen letters, with the first two in 1961, the next ten from 1963 to 1964, and the last four from 1968 to 1969. Howell, 45-46; ICC, 35, 38-46, passim; KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Letter to Ray Williston, R. Reiersen, 11 March 1970; [W.M. Schultz et al.,] "Death of a Delta: A Brief to the Government," [Edmonton, 1970], 5-19, passim.

²⁰ As we shall see in this chapter, however, it is not true that nothing was done as the Indian Claims Commission would later suggest. ICC, 29.

²¹ Jeremy Mouat, "Columbia River Treaty and Canada," *Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=10474 (accessed 26 April 2016).

²² Among the sources I looked at this information is common knowledge. Pollon and Matheson claim "Ottawa was in favour of the Columbia, although they were not pushing a project because of the complex arrangements that would have to be ratified with the United States." Earl Pollon and Shirlee Smith Matheson, *This Was Our Valley* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2003), 159.

²³ The consul would continue sending the federal government information as the project developed. LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Letter 283 to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs from the Canadian Consul General, Seattle, 22 October 1957; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Letter 284 to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs from the Canadian Consul General, Seattle, 22 October 1957; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Letter 129 to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs from Canadian Consul-General, Seattle, 28 April 1958.

²⁴ BCA, Portage Mountain Development..., GR-0880, Box 57, The British Thomson-Houston Export Co. Ltd., "Volume I: Report On The Feasibility Of Building Dams On The Peace River," 18.

²⁵ LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Letter to S.S. Reisman from M.F. Belanger, 25 October 1957.

Canada's position in the Columbia River negotiations – a common presentation of the role of the Peace with regard to the Columbia, but there were also concerns the competition between the two projects that allowed for this leverage might prevent the Columbia from being constructed.²⁶ In the long run, however, the Diefenbaker government was content to leave the project alone as long the province followed Canadian law.²⁷

It appears Ottawa was more interested in the Columbia River project during this period. (Indeed, later academics would suggest that internal criticism within the province was due to the Columbia.)²⁸ Of course there was the obvious complication of the United States being involved and it was here that the province and Ottawa engaged in a rather open dispute that necessitated the second signing of a revised Columbia River Treaty in 1964. Like the 1871 to 1927 dispute over Aboriginal title and reserves in BC, the province won this conflict.²⁹ Furthermore, as community and regional planner David LeMarquand points out it turned Bennett into a provincial hero, bravely defending British Columbian interests against “Eastern Canada.”³⁰ Why would Ottawa want to fight over the Peace River project too?

The Columbia River project from the start was a part of the Peace River project.³¹ Just how is debated, however. Historian John Wedley argues the Peace River project “completely altered the entire picture with respect to the proposed Canadian-U.S. agreement.”³² Reporter

²⁶ This presentation is common knowledge among the sources I looked at. Another aspect of the proposal that gave it leverage was the fact it was entirely within Canada. According to the *Vancouver Sun* the *Economist of London* even suggested the original 1956 memorandum would provide leverage. NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, “Wenner-Gren A Smokescreen?” *The Vancouver Sun*, 8 April 1957.

²⁷ Nathan, 46.

²⁸ LeMarquand, 67, 79; Holly Nathan, “Building Dams, Constructing Stories: The Press, the Sekani and the Peace River Dam, 1957-1969,” (MA Thesis: University of Northern British Columbia, 2009), 64.

²⁹ Mouat, “Columbia River Treaty and Canada.”

³⁰ LeMarquand, 73.

³¹ Gordon Shrum with Peter Stursberg, *Gordon Shrum: An Autobiography*, ed. Clive Cocking (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 79.

³² John Wedley, “Infrastructure and Resources: Governments and Their Promotion of Northern Development in British Columbia” (PhD Diss.: University of Western Ontario, 1986), 273.

Paddy Sherman merely states that it complicated the Columbia.³³ According to historian Jeremy Mouat, Bennett thought that if the federal government did not properly negotiate the Columbia River Treaty, the Columbia River project would threaten the Peace River project, while Stephen Tomblin presents the conflict between the two levels of government as the main issue in the province when it came to development.³⁴

Comments made by federal Minister of Public Works Howard Green in November 1958 seem to suggest the federal government also wanted to maintain the appearance that it was not concerned about the Peace River project.³⁵ Ottawa was nonetheless interested in the proposed development.³⁶ Yet as the Consul General pointed out in October 1958 the project was still under considerable doubt.³⁷ One factor casting doubt on the project was the federal government's policy against allowing the long term exportation of power (known as firm electricity) that it had adopted during World War I.³⁸ Critics believed that if both the Columbia and Peace River projects were completed the province would have an unusable surplus of electricity that needed to be exported. It appears that it was because of this federal policy against the exportation of firm electricity that although both the PRPDC and province advocated finding customers outside Canada, they did not push the matter and were adamant it was not necessary when directly asked.³⁹ Nevertheless, starting with the feasibility studies the PRPDC suggested the creation of a

³³ Paddy Sherman, *Bennett* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1966), 209.

³⁴ Mouat, "Columbia River Treaty and Canada;" Tomblin, 51.

³⁵ NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.4, Box 5, "Columbia Plan Still OK: Ottawa," *The Province*, 13 November 1958.

³⁶ LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Letter 292 to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs from Canadian Consul-General, Seattle, 7 October 1958; LAC, Canadian National Railway Company fonds, RG 30, Volume 14440, British Columbia – Wenner-Gren Development, "Project Gets Cautious Enthusiasm."

³⁷ LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Letter 292 to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs from Canadian Consul-General, Seattle, 7 October 1958.

³⁸ KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 2148721, Volume 1, Maurice Western, "An 'Unfriendly Act:' ..., " *Victoria Times*, 27 October 1959.

³⁹ In 1960 W.C. Mainwaring told Jack Webster talk of exportation was based on when the previously mentioned shortage would occur. This echoes the *Vancouver Sun* in 1959 that claimed W.A.C. Bennett was opposed to exportation since the electricity was needed in the province. BCA, Peace River Power Development Company

hydroelectric empire that eventually evolved to encompass not only the Peace and Columbia, but also the Homathko, Clearwater and McGregor rivers and would allow for the sale of additional electricity produced in the United States as a result of the Columbia River project.⁴⁰ To get around exportation policies, proponents of the dam discussed legal loopholes ranging from short-term exportation contracts that pushed the boundary between short-term and long-term to having the province declare the electricity short-term “dump” energy.⁴¹ None worked and Ottawa still refused exportation.⁴² Furthermore, the PRPDC did not include exportation in their feasibility

fonds, MS 2353, “Comprehensive Plan Of Peace River Power Development Company Ltd....,” December 1959, 20; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Bruce Hutchinson, “Canadians Lay Plans to Export Power,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 29 October 1958; NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, “The Peace People Mean Business....,” *The Province* 16 January 1960; Simon Fraser University Archives (SFUA), W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-34-0-8, W.C. Mainwaring interviewed by Jack Webster, 15 February 1960; University of Victoria Archives (UVA), Ray Williston fonds, AR002, Box 4, File 23, W.C. Mainwaring, “Some Power Facts About British Columbia: The Fraser, The Columbia, The Peace,” (Vancouver: Peace River Power Development Company Ltd., 1959); Vancouver Sun, “Electric Power In British Columbia: A Special Series” (Vancouver: The Vancouver Sun, 1959), 6-7.

⁴⁰ The proposed regional grid was supported by General Andrew McNaughton, who on 18 March 1960 argued for a Pacific International Power Pool backed up by the Peace River project and allowing for great Canadian control on the Columbia. BCA, GR-0880, Box 57, The British Thomson-Houston Export Co. Ltd., “Volume I: Report On The Feasibility Of Building Dams On The Peace River,” 19-21; BCA, British Columbia Energy Commission, GR-1390, Box 9, R.L. Chantrill and Jack Stevens, “A Report On Power Capabilities And Operating Aspects Of The Peace River Project And A Pacific International Power Pool” (Vancouver: Peace River Power Development Company Limited, May 1960); BCA, MS 2353, “Comprehensive Plan Of Peace River Power Development Company Ltd....,” December 1959, 20; KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 2148721, Volume 3, W.C. Mainwaring, “Nuggets In Our Own Backyard:....,” 9 September 1960; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Peace River Power Development Company, “Hydro Power in British Columbia – 1960” (Vancouver: Peace River Power Development Company, 1960), 4-5; UVA, Ray Williston fonds, AR002, Box 4, File 16, Memorandum to Ray Williston from A.F. Paget, 30 June 1960; UVA, AR002, Box 4, File 16, Comments On The Report “Power Capabilities And Operating Aspects Of The Peace River Project And A Pacific International Power Pool” by R.L. Chantrill And Jack D. Steven; UVA, AR002, Box 4, File 23, Standing Committee On External Affairs: General McNaughton’s Arguments Given In Proceedings And Evidence, No. 6, On March 18, 1960 As Applied To Peace River.

⁴¹ As *Electrical Digest* noted in October 1960 Ottawa was more than willing to allow the exportation of natural gas. KA, Water Comptroller fonds, File 2148721, Volume 3, “Editorial Comment,” *Electrical Digest* October 1960; SFUA, F-55-34-0-8, W.C. Mainwaring, “Hydro Development And Potential In British Columbia And The Pacific Northwest:....,” 23 September 1960.

⁴² Williston and Keller note that the National Energy Board was opposed to the Peace River project and wanted to stop it. The only conceivable way of accomplishing this goal for the board was to prevent exportation, which it had control over. Government of Canada, “Our History,” *National Energy Board* <https://www.neb-one.gc.ca/bts/whwr/rhstry-eng.html> (accessed 27 July 2015); Wedley, 282; Eileen Williston and Betty Keller, *Forests, Power and Policy: The Legacy of Ray Williston* (Prince George: Caitlin Press Inc., 1997), 180, 189.

report given to water comptroller A.F. Paget in December 1959, a fact noted by Paget when he read a May 1960 PRPDC report advocating it.⁴³

If Ottawa's main concern was the Columbia River project, Bennett during this period gave the impression only the Peace mattered.⁴⁴ Years later biographer David Mitchell claimed that in addition to seeing it as leverage, he had a soft spot for the Peace.⁴⁵ Furthermore, despite Bennett and others claiming that not only did they want, but also that the province needed, both projects, they argued that in order to get the Peace it had to come first.⁴⁶ (John Wedley would even claim that in order ensure the construction of the Peace Bennett stalled during negotiations on the Columbia.)⁴⁷ This desire for both developments came to be known as the "two river policy." Reflecting the logic of hydroelectric development, W.A.C. Bennett and others argued that the policy would lead to further economic growth, industrialization, and infrastructure.⁴⁸ Indeed, they presented it as assurance should the Americans' delay on the Columbia or inflation dramatically increase.⁴⁹

Bennett readily embraced the logic of hydroelectric development, and had earlier attempted to interfere with the negotiations on the Columbia by approving the construction of a

⁴³ KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Letter to Ray Williston from A.F. Paget, 27 June 1960.

⁴⁴ Sherman, 228-229; Wedley, 278.

⁴⁵ David Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1983), 289, 297.

⁴⁶ Among the sources I looked at this view is common. Despite these claims, the previously mentioned undated A.E.I. report criticized the Columbia River project for not preventing floods and wasting potential energy. BCA, J.F. Pine Collection 1958-1980, MS 1172, Box 1, A.E.I. (Canada) Ltd., "Volume 1: Assessment of Water Power Potential," 6-7.

⁴⁷ Wedley, 279-280, 293.

⁴⁸ Bennett would later tell Mitchell and Keene that his decision to act led to the project avoiding inflation, telling the later that it would have cost the province an additional \$2 billion. BCA, W.A.C. Bennett interview, T1675:0017, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by David Mitchell, 13 December 1976; BCA, W.A.C. Bennett interview, T1675:0036, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by David Mitchell, 11 February 1978; BCA, W.A.C. Bennett interview, T1675:0052, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by Roger Keene, 1977; KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, "Peace, Columbia: Two-River Policy Explained."

⁴⁹ BCA, T1675:0017, W.A.C. Bennett; BCA, T1675:0052, W.A.C. Bennett; Vancouver Sun, "Electric Power In British Columbia," 21.

dam by Kaiser Aluminum on the Arrow Lakes on the Columbia River in 1954. The federal government had disallowed this development on the basis the river was international as well as its perceived conflict with the Columbia River negotiations. Now some federal officials believed that Bennett had orchestrated the Peace River project in revenge for the federal government killing the Kaiser Aluminum project.⁵⁰ He would not let them kill the Peace.

No Thank You! The Failure to Find Customers for the Peace River Project

Following the initial announcement of the 1957 memorandum, proponents of the dam proudly proclaimed that the Peace River project would produce the cheapest electricity in the world by 1965 or 1966.⁵¹ This was important because in order to get a contract Peace power had to be competitive.⁵² Despite these claims, as well as comments on 28 September 1959 by President Dal Grauer of BCE that seemed to support the project as well as exportation, (especially of downstream benefits,) the PRPDC had problems raising money to begin actual construction.⁵³ Attempts to raise capital, by selling private shares to select individuals and organizations, potentially created an economic bubble when they resold these shares to speculators.⁵⁴ Proposals that investors construct facilities to process uranium, petrochemicals, or pulp to take advantage of the power produced by the Peace River project were met with critics who not only charged transportation was, and would remain, an issue regardless of any reservoir

⁵⁰ LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Letter 64 to The Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs from the Canadian Consul General, 4 March 1959.

⁵¹ NBCA, 2000.13.2.4, Box 5, William Ryan, "Vast Plans Bared:...", *The Province* 13 November 1958.

⁵² NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk,] "The Mackenzie Story" (Mackenzie: Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada, Local No. 18, 1974), 4; Wedley, 271.

⁵³ KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, "The Power Picture in British Columbia:...", *Water Power* (February 1960): 65-66; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, William Ryan, "Columbia Row Poses No Relay," *The Province*, 14 December 1960; Mouat, "Columbia River Treaty and Canada."

⁵⁴ This story first appeared in provincial newspapers in August 1959. I have included a few examples. NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Denis Blunden, "\$2 'Foolish' Price For Peace Shares: Northern BC Power Scheme Still 'Risk Project' Says Mainwaring," *The Vancouver Sun*, 5 August 1959; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Denis Blunden, "Confusion Shrouds Power Stock Deals: Gore Says Share Sales To 'Outsiders' Illegal," *The Vancouver Sun*, 6 August 1959; SFUA, F-55-34-0-8, W.C. Mainwaring interviewed by Jack Webster, 15 February 1960.

completed, but that some of these facilities raised the question, especially with regard to atomic energy, of why invest in hydro in the first place.⁵⁵

By early 1960 PRPDC and its President, W.C. Mainwaring, had concluded that in order to move forward with the development the company needed contracts from both BCE and the BCPC as well as completion before the Columbia River project or exportation due to the predicted surplus of electricity in the province.⁵⁶ On its own the provincially owned BCPC was too small to provide the capital to construct the Peace River project without receiving substantial provincial subsidies and despite signing some minor contracts, the provincial government refused to push the issue until BCE signed.⁵⁷ This was problematic as prior to becoming president of the PRPDC, Mainwaring worked for BCE, and was on record as stating the proposed project did not meet their need regardless of the cost.⁵⁸ Still in 1958 BCE President Grauer had assured shareholders that his company would consider the Peace River project as part

⁵⁵ Reports that the trees were suitable for pulp had been made as early as 1912. Numerous articles appear discussing this matter. I have included a few as an example. L.M. Bower, "A Prospector Reports, 1912," *Peace River Chronicles: 81 Eye-Witness Accounts of the Peace River Region of British Columbia*, ed. Gordon Bowes (Vancouver: Prescott Publishing Company, 1963), 278; KA, File 2148721, Volume 1 "Plant Under Consideration: Nuclear Fuel Plant For Peace River?" *Daily Colonist* 7 April 1959; NBCA, 2000.13.2.4, Box 5, Harry Young, "Wenner-Gren Board Shopping For Capital," *Daily Colonist*, 21 April 1959; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "Peace River Pulp 'Logical,'" [unknown newspaper], [n.d.]; NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk,] 5.

⁵⁶ Numerous articles appear discussing this matter. I have included a few as an example. LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Peace River Power Development Company, "Hydro Power in British Columbia – 1960," 3; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Alec Merriman, "Without Export: Peace Power, Columbia Can't Compete," *Daily Colonist*, 19 January 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "Peace 'Enough For BC:' Export Key To Hydro Jobs," *The Province*, 19 January 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "Peace Plan Drops If Columbia First: Ottawa Power Export Ruling To Influence Vital Decision," *The Vancouver Sun*, 19 January 1960; SFUA, F-55-34-0-8, W.C. Mainwaring interviewed by Jack Webster, 15 February 1960.

⁵⁷ The 1957 memorandum had stated Northern British Columbia would have first priority to power. Numerous articles appear discussing this matter. I have included a few as an example. BCA, MS 2353, Memorandum of Agreement Made This 7th Day of October 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Alex Merriman, "Report From The Buildings:...", *Daily Colonist*, 27 February 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Ian MacDonald, "Bennett Hands-Off Peace Power Sale:...", *The Vancouver Sun*, 29 February 1960; NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.6, Box 6, "North Won't Pay To Get Power Here," *The Vancouver Sun*, 27 April 1960; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Ray Williston Interview.

⁵⁸ Mitchell, 289; Pollon and Matheson, 159; Sherman, 221-222; Williston and Keller, 178.

of its commitment to continue to provide adequate electricity to BC at a profit. Naturally, this goal meant purchasing it at the lowest possible cost.⁵⁹

The first attempt the PRPDC made to get a contract was to promise in the fall of 1959 that the cost of electricity from the Peace River project would be equal to, if not lower than, the 1959 price BCE was already paying for electricity.⁶⁰ This benefit ignored the fact that BCE owned the generators it used to produce electricity and had plans to construct more generators that would provide them with enough electricity until 1973, when they forecast the first shortages emerging.⁶¹ And even though a subsidiary of BCE purchased shares in the PRPDC at the special rate of \$1 per share, by the spring of 1960 it was reported that shareholders were not interested in any association whatsoever with the PRPDC.⁶²

The failure to get a contract was a major problem as BCE controlled the electricity market in BC, with between 90%-95% control.⁶³ It was a problem the provincial government soon took note of. Indeed, while Ray Williston would later agree that in order for the Peace River project to go ahead the PRPDC needed a contract with both BCE and the BCPC, Premier Bennett would claim Andrew McTaggart of the PRPDC informed him the company only needed

⁵⁹ KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, Letter to the Shareholders of the British Columbia Power Corporation Limited from A.E. Grauer, 24 November 1958.

⁶⁰ NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, William Ryan, "Peace River Site Chosen," *The Province* 2 October 1959; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "In Time For Debate In Legislature?...", *Victoria Daily Times* 25 November 1959; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "BC Approval Awaited, Says Chief:...", *Daily Colonist* 7 December 1959.

⁶¹ This included a planned thermal plant at Hat Creek near Lillooet, which the PRPDC tried to portray as mere insurance against shortages. Oddly, the PRPDC also expected the shortage would come much sooner. NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "BCE Isn't Taking Chances...", *The Province*, 10 February 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Bill Ryan, "Mainwaring Confident Of Peace River Choice," *The Province*, 10 February 1960; Sherman, 221, 229; SFUA, F-55-34-0-8, David Catton, "Hydro Electric Power: C.H.Q.M. News Commentary (Radio News)," 9 February 1960; SFUA, F-55-34-0-8, W.C. Mainwaring interviewed by Jack Webster, 15 February 1960.

⁶² Sherman notes technically the shares were held by Western Development and Power Company, a subsidiary of BCE. The BCPC was offered similar terms. BCA, W.A.C. Bennett interview, T1675:0006, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by Jack Webster, Vancouver, BC, 22 October 1976; BCA, T1675:0036, W.A.C. Bennett; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Ryan, "Peace Finance Backed:...", *The Province*, 4 March 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "In Peace Power: BC Hydro Offered \$1 Shares," *Daily Colonist* 5 March 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "BC Hydro Offered Peace Shares," *Victoria Daily Times*, 5 March 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "By Shareholder: BCE-Wenner-Gren Association Scored," *The Province* 1 April 1960; Sherman, 222.

⁶³ BCA, T1675:0006, W.A.C. Bennett; BCA, T1675:0036, W.A.C. Bennett; BCA, T1675:0052, W.A.C. Bennett.

a contract with BCE as the BCPC was too small to provide enough capital. Both would agree, however, that Ottawa was pressuring the company not to sign a contract, although Williston would note BCE was unwilling to even purchase Columbia River power unless they received a discount of less than the actual cost of production, which if true meant neither project was viable.⁶⁴

If pressure did exist from Ottawa, it was *ad hoc* and unofficial. Explanations that are more mundane exist for BCE's opposition to involvement in the Peace River project. Statesman and head of the BCPC Hugh Keenleyside would suggest it was simply Dal Grauer and the directors of BCE who opposed the purchasing of Peace River power.⁶⁵ As a number of scholars suggest, it appears they were concerned with the perceived conflict that seemed to be emerging between the province and federal government over both the Peace and Columbia river projects.⁶⁶ Either way, by May 1960 a stalemate had emerged as neither BCE nor the BCPC would sign a contract that would justify the construction of the Peace River project.⁶⁷ Bernard Gore, who claimed to have originated the entire project was confused as the project would "cost the people of B.C. nothing, yet... [could] bring untold benefit by opening up the North."⁶⁸

Bennett Gives the "Socialist Hordes" What They Want: The Nationalization of BC Electric and the Peace River Power Development Company

One potential answer was to nationalize BCE. Nationalization was something that the Social Credit government initially denounced as unrealistic socialism advocated and proposed by

⁶⁴ Mulyk suggests BCPC was initially the only desired customer. BCA, T1675:0006, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed; NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Ray Williston Interview; NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk,] 3.

⁶⁵ Hugh Keenleyside, *On the Bridge of Time*, vol. 2, *Memoirs of Hugh L. Keenleyside* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 495.

⁶⁶ Pollon and Matheson, 159, 161; Sherman, 229; Wedley, 282.

⁶⁷ Wedley notes the stalemate in 1959. BCA, T1675:0006, W.A.C. Bennett; BCA, T1675:0036, W.A.C. Bennett; BCA, T1675:0052, W.A.C. Bennett; Wedley, 271, 281, 282-283.

⁶⁸ NBCA, 2000.13.2.6, Box 6, William Ryan, "Gore Says Wengren Project Good For BC," *The Province*, 24 May 1960.

the official opposition, the CCF, who wanted to nationalize BCE and the PRPDC.⁶⁹ Indeed, *The Province* reported that representatives of the PRPDC were not too concerned about the matter since they did not believe the CCF could win an election in BC.⁷⁰ What would come first: the CCF forming a provincial government, or the PRPDC finding a customer for the electricity the Peace River project would produce?⁷¹

When the province announced the 1956 memorandum the CCF had denounced it. Unable to force the provincial government to alter it, they implored the electorate to hold the Socreds accountable during the next provincial election.⁷² The next provincial election was not until 1960, however. Both the 1956 and 1957 memorandums and their proposed developments were election topics, with a particular focus on the Peace River project.⁷³ Nationalization was also an election issue, with the CCF pledging to nationalize BCE within six months of winning the election.⁷⁴ Social Credit candidates defended their party's policies and assured the provincial electorate, which since 1949 included status Indians, that they would not nationalize BCE or the PRPDC, with Ray Williston even claiming the CCF policy was meaningless.⁷⁵ Social Credit leaders would often cite this view as the Social Credit perspective on nationalization, but later in

⁶⁹ The CCF was categorically opposed to BCE because it was a private owned utility. NBCA, 2000.13.2.4, Box 5, Alex Young, "Can't Afford To Buy BCE – Bennett:...", *The Vancouver Sun*, 27 February 1959; NBCA, 2000.13.2.6, Box 6, Paddy Sherman, "Peace Chief Rejects Nationalization Fears," *The Province*, 18 May 1960; Vancouver Sun, "Electric Power In British Columbia," 16-17.

⁷⁰ NBCA, 2000.13.2.6, Box 6, Sherman, "Peace Chief Rejects Nationalization Fears."

⁷¹ KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, "What Next? Peace Power Heads Meet In Vancouver;" Nathan, 64.

⁷² NBCA, Box 4, Gordon McCallum, "Socred's Future Tied To Omineca:...", *The Province*, 19 February 1957.

⁷³ NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, James Nesbitt, "Capital Column: Wengren Fight Rocks Socreds," *The Vancouver Sun*, 22 March 1960.

⁷⁴ NBCA, 2000.13.2.6, Box 6, Art McKenzie, "Social Credit: 'Peace, Columbia Only Hope,'" *The Province*, 3 September 1960.

⁷⁵ Numerous articles during the election reported these election promises. I have included a few as an example. BCA, W.A.C. Bennett interview, T1675:0021, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by David Mitchell, 16 June 1977; BCA, T1675:0036, W.A.C. Bennett; NBCA, 2000.13.2.6, Box 6, Terry Hammond, "Williston Scores Critics:...", *Daily Colonist*, 12 August 1960; NBCA, 2000.13.2.6, Box 6, McKenzie, "Social Credit: 'Peace, Columbia Only Hope,'" *The Province* 3 September 1960.

life W.A.C. Bennett would claim he was always for nationalization.⁷⁶ At first this statement might seem like historical revisionism, but one should note that Bennett remained silent on the topic during the election, and as historian Martin Robin points out he had supported nationalization during his time as a Coalition member of the legislature (MLA).⁷⁷ Nevertheless, this view was not something he proclaimed during the campaign. The Socreds won the 1960 election with 32 MLAs to the CCF's 16 and the Liberal's 4, although given that the popular vote was 38.83% Social Credit, 32.73% CCF, and 20.90% Liberal it seemed most of the electorate wanted a change in government or government policies.⁷⁸

The year before the election the province had formed the BC Energy Board to coordinate activities between BCE and the BCPC.⁷⁹ Critics charged the move was a façade that only served to help legitimize provincial policy, something Premier Bennett challenged as both uninformed and unconstitutional.⁸⁰ Not helping the situation was that from the beginning the board supported the two river policy, suggesting that the province use the Columbia River project to power urban centres and the Peace River project to power industrial development in northern BC.⁸¹ The irony of this situation was that initially it was unclear if the private Peace River project even fell under the board's jurisdiction, with the province ultimately deciding that it would have authority over it if problems emerged.⁸² Of course, given the fact that the PRPDC's failure to get a customer for

⁷⁶ Williston and Keller note Bennett was at least willing to discuss it. BCA, T1675:0036, W.A.C. Bennett; Williston and Keller, 195.

⁷⁷ BCA, T1675:0021, W.A.C. Bennett; Mitchell, 293; Robin, 231.

⁷⁸ Elections British Columbia, *Electoral History of British Columbia, 1871-1986* (Victoria: Queen's Printer for British Columbia, 1988), 275.

⁷⁹ Karl Froschauer, *White Gold: Hydroelectric Power in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 180; Shrum, 77.

⁸⁰ NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "Angry Bennett Says: Wenner-Gren Not Exempt," *Daily Colonist*, 18 December 1959; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "An Editorial: For A Power Authority," *The Province*, 13 January 1960.

⁸¹ NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Bill Fletcher, "Use Peace Power At Site, Energy Board Chief Urges," *The Vancouver Sun*, 2 February 1960.

⁸² KA, File 2148721, Volume 1, Pete Loudon, "Important Decision: Who Will Rule On Peace Dam?" *Victoria Times* 4 November 1959; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, Gordon McCallum, "Wengren Certain Of Power Rights:...", *The Province*, 16 December 1959; NBCA, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, "New Board Powerless Over Wenner-Gren: Peace Project Exempt," *The Province*, 16 December 1959.

its power had effectively halted development, this meant the board had *de facto* jurisdiction from the beginning. It would not be long before the province tasked them with writing a report to justify the nationalization of BCE and the PRPDC. First, however, Bennett had to justify even the suggestion.

According to Williston, by February 1961 Bennett had made up his mind to nationalize the company to ensure the construction of the Peace River project.⁸³ Having committed to this policy he decided to nationalize the PRPDC as well.⁸⁴ (Williston would also claim that in early 1961 he was approached by W.C. Mainwaring, who told him in order to ensure the project went forward the province needed to nationalize BCE, the PRPDC, and East and West Kootenay Power.)⁸⁵ Just a mere five months after the 1960 election (February 1961) he claimed in the legislature that the province might have to nationalize BCE due to unfair treatment from the federal government with regard to power company corporation taxes.⁸⁶ Just why the premier of a province would be worried about a private company paying too much in taxes is unclear, but he even claimed to have confronted Prime Minister John Diefenbaker at the October 1959 federal-provincial conference over the matter.⁸⁷

Nobody at the time, or even now, seems to have believed that the issue was corporate taxes, however. The general consensus was that the real reason was that Bennett saw nationalization as a way to ensure the construction of the Peace River project, although some believe he hoped there was a chance his comments might make BCE change its policy without nationalization. Indeed, Bennett himself stated in later life that the primary reason for

⁸³ BCA, Ray Williston interview, T1375:0013, Ray Williston.

⁸⁴ NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Ray Williston Interview.

⁸⁵ LeMarquand, 83; Williston and Keller, 195.

⁸⁶ NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Terry Hammond, "Estimates Hold True," *Daily Colonist*, [1962]; NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.7, Box 7, "BCE Seizure Bennett Hint," *Daily Colonist*, 28 February 1961.

⁸⁷ BCA, T1675:0006, W.A.C. Bennett.

nationalization was BCE's failure to back the Peace River project despite his personal attempts to get them to change their mind. According to him, their position was due to federal interference, and the company did not have the best interests of the province in mind.⁸⁸ Ray Williston would even claim the BCE management team was upset with Bennett for leaving the provincial Progressive Conservative (PC) party, and therefore accepted federal PC rhetoric that the Peace River project would stop the Columbia. Even with this line of reasoning, however, he still saw Bennett's decision to nationalize as a necessary evil.⁸⁹ Apparently Bennett was able to convince more Social Credit MLAs and on 27 March 1961 CCF leader Robert Strachan carried a motion for nationalization.⁹⁰ This vote marked a transition point and nationalization was an open secret from at least May 1961 on, although as Ray Williston pointed out, not everyone knew.⁹¹

The Social Credit government wanted the Peace River project to proceed. It also did not want to appear to simply nationalize BCE and the PRPDC to accomplish this outcome and corporate taxes were not a good enough justification. After all, it liked to portray itself as the free market option to the socialism of the CCF.⁹² On 28 December 1960 the province commissioned the British Columbia Energy Board to study the Columbia and Peace river projects together,

⁸⁸ Among other things Bennet mentioned the company was British, not British Columbian, and repeatedly referred to a meeting with Dal Grauer in June 1960 in Paris where he warned Grauer that he would nationalize the company if they did not back the Peace River project. Meg Stanley see this event at the beginning of nationalism. She blames the company's charter for it not backing the Peace River project, although the interview (T1675:0036) she cites for this claim states it was the federal government not the charter. BCA, T1675:0006, W.A.C. Bennett; BCA, T1675:0017, W.A.C. Bennett; BCA, T1675:0036, W.A.C. Bennett; BCA, T1675:0052, W.A.C. Bennett; Meg Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers: Harnessing the Power of the Peace and Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010), 9, 9n21, 265.

⁸⁹ NBCA, 2000.13.9.4, The Peace River Project; Williston and Keller, 179.

⁹⁰ Seemingly confirming this statement Mouat points out that even some cabinet members did not know. Mouat, "Columbia River Treaty and Canada."

⁹¹ Mitchell suggests no one knew, while Sherman claims no Social Credit minister knew. BCA, T1375:0013, Ray Williston; BCA, T1675:0006, W.A.C. Bennett; Mitchell, 303-306; Sherman, 243-248, 251.

⁹² Williston and Keller claim it was due to the threat of the National Energy Board. As mentioned the board merely controlled exportation. Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*, 3rd ed (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 295, 313-314; Williston and Keller, 189, 195.

some would say at the suggestion of W.C. Mainwaring.⁹³ In order to avoid political appointees the chair of the board, UBC physics Professor Gordon Shrum, hired consultants Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners as well as Merz & McLellan from the United Kingdom to conduct the investigation.⁹⁴ The board released its interim report on 1 March 1961, and its final report on 31 July 1961.⁹⁵

The interim report gave no definite conclusions.⁹⁶ The final report compared the estimated cost of the Columbia and Peace river projects not only if the Columbia and Peace were constructed using public and private financing as was expected at the time, but also if the Peace was constructed only with public finance. The decision to include the latter scenario was Shrum's when he found out the Peace would be much more expensive if it was constructed using private finance. According to the report, it also meant that both developments would cost almost the same.⁹⁷ It laid out the two river policy in technical terms.⁹⁸ It was no secret that the board

⁹³ The interim report gives 27 December as the commission date. Williston and Keller claim it was a royal commission. LeMarquand, 80; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, British Columbia Energy Board, *Columbia and Peace River Projects: Interim Report No. 1*, 1 March 1961, 1; LAC, Columbia River Documents fonds, RG 89, Box 36, File 2987-MISC-15, British Columbia Energy Board, *Report on the Columbia and Peace Power Projects*, 31 July 1961, i, 5-6; Williston and Keller, 189.

⁹⁴ LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, British Columbia Energy Board, *Columbia and Peace River Projects: Interim Report No. 1*, 1; LAC, RG 89, Box 36, File 2987-MISC-15, British Columbia Energy Board, *Report on the Columbia and Peace Power Projects*, 8; Shrum, 80.

⁹⁵ LeMarquand claims it was submitted on 1 August 1961. LeMarquand, 81; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, British Columbia Energy Board, *Columbia and Peace River Projects: Interim Report No. 1*, LAC, RG 89, Box 36, File 2987-MISC-15, British Columbia Energy Board, *Report on the Columbia and Peace Power Projects*, 1-2.

⁹⁶ Williston and Keller refer to a "preliminary report," which appears to be a draft of the final report. LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, British Columbia Energy Board, *Columbia and Peace River Projects: Interim Report No. 1*, 1, passim; Williston and Keller, 195-196.

⁹⁷ Williston and Keller mistakenly claim public financing of the Peace River project was always part of the analysis of the two projects. Reflecting the expected outcome, BCE's Hat Creek project was deemed to not be more economical than either, although Hat Creek would remain in the public mind when BCE was nationalized on 1 August 1961. LeMarquand would characterize the treatment as a dismissal. LeMarquand, 81-82; LAC, RG 89, Box 36, File 2987-MISC-15, British Columbia Energy Board, *Report on the Columbia and Peace Power Projects*, 1-2, 12; Williston and Keller, 189, 195.

⁹⁸ Three days after the report was released a federal memorandum concluded that Bennett was planning on developing both the Columbia and Peace together in parallel. Shrum claims the policy was a compromise. Froschauer, 179, 181; LeMarquand, 81; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Memorandum from to the Minister from J.F. Parkinson, 4 August 1961; Shrum, 81; Tomblin, 54-55.

designed the report to justify nationalization, rather than convince Bennett of its merits.⁹⁹ The report also confirmed that if both projects were completed together a surplus of electricity would emerge requiring the need to export power. Chairman of the Public Utilities Commission, H.F. Angus, challenged these assumptions in his minority report.¹⁰⁰ Sadly, scholars would later call it the most critical report on the dam.¹⁰¹ Angus was the only board member to produce a minority report, although a group of University of British Columbia professors released their own report in 1962 that determined the Peace River project was more expensive than any of the alternatives at the time.¹⁰²

On 1 August 1961 Bennett's Social Credit government introduced the *Power Development Act, 1961* to directly nationalize BCE, and indirectly nationalize the PRPDC by transferring all of its rights, titles, interests, resources, permits, certificates, and contracts regarding the Peace River project to BCE.¹⁰³ In keeping with the claim that the cause was corporate taxes, the special session held to introduce and pass this bill followed news that the

⁹⁹ Among the secondary sources I looked at this view is common knowledge. Gordon Shrum later stated that before the report was out he told Bennett to nationalize BCE and the PRPDC. This challenges LeMarquand claims Bennett did not know the conclusions of the report with any certainty, but seems to be confirmed by Bennett, who said that the decision to nationalize was made prior to the BC Energy Board's report being released. LeMarquand, 81-82; Shrum, 79, 81-82; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-53-0-0-2, W.A.C. Bennett, "The Power Development Story in British Columbia:...", 16 September 1961.

¹⁰⁰ LAC, RG 89, Box 36, File 2987-MISC-15, British Columbia Energy Board, *Report on the Columbia and Peace Power Projects*, 40-42, 44.

¹⁰¹ Later reports on the project, like a 1962 one from the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources would seem to completely accept the conclusions of the majority report. BCA, GR-0880, Box 61, Water Resources Branch: Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, *The Effect of Regulation of the Peace River: Interim Report No. 1* June 1962, 1-2; LeMarquand, 81; Wedley, 310.

¹⁰² The report does note that it does not consider all implications. James Howell, "The Portage Mountain Hydro-electric Project," in *Northern Transitions*, vol. 1, *Northern Resource and Land Use Policy Study*, ed. Everett Peterson and Janet Wright (Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Resource Committee, 1978), 40; LeMarquand, 75, 83; LAC, RG 89, Box 36, File 2987-MISC-15, British Columbia Energy Board, *Report on the Columbia and Peace Power Projects*, 44.

¹⁰³ It should be noted that although the Peace River Power Development Company was effectively nationalized, the Wenner-Gren BC Development Company was not and continued to operate in BC. British Columbia, Bill No. 5: An Act To Provide For The Reorganization Of The British Columbia Electric Company Limited And The Development Of Power Resources, 1961; SFUA, W.A.C Bennett fonds, F-55-36-0-1, Letter to British Columbia Electric Company Limited and British Columbia Power Corporation Limited from Wood, Gundy & Company Limited, 29 August 1961.

federal government had not changed its taxation position.¹⁰⁴ Immediately afterwards Premier Bennett tabled the BC Energy Board's report.¹⁰⁵ On 3 August the act passed unanimously and the province named Gordon Shrum the new chair of BCE. President of the BCPC, famed Canadian diplomat Hugh Keenleyside, personally wrote "Prime Minister" Bennett to congratulate him on the move.¹⁰⁶ Although he would state in his memoir that it was never clear to him why the province nationalized BCE, both he and Gordon Shrum would claim BCE was so unpopular in BC at the time that the public supported this move.¹⁰⁷ While this assertion might be true, the move certainly shocked many British Columbians as well as members of the business community. As a result, Bennett undertook a public relations campaign aimed at justifying the takeover by citing corporate taxes and the economic benefit.¹⁰⁸

Both BCE and the PRPDC resisted nationalization. Wenner-Gren's representatives were content to merely receive another \$8 million, but the parent company of BCE, the BC Power Corporation, sued the province in a court case that went all the way to the BC Supreme Court, and resulted in an out of court settlement during the 1963 election. It was under the shadow of the court case that the province formed the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC

¹⁰⁴ BCA, T1375:0013, Ray Williston; BCA, T1675:0006, W.A.C. Bennett.

¹⁰⁵ Mitchell, 306; Robin, 228; Tomblin, 52; Wedley, 297.

¹⁰⁶ SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-36-0-7, Letter to The Honourable W.A.C. Bennett from H.L. Keenleyside, 2 August 1961.

¹⁰⁷ Gordon Shrum would claimed Keenleyside was upset with the decision to nationalize BCE and the PRPDC as he feared it would kill the Columbia, which his organization the BCPC was already working on. Keenleyside, 493, 495; Shrum 81, 84-85.

¹⁰⁸ Mulyk even claims it split the Social Credit party, although there is little indication this situation was true and it appears Williston thought Mulyk was so biased that he did not deal with it. BCA, T1675:0036, W.A.C. Bennett; Mouat, "Columbia River Treaty and Canada;" NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Letter to Helen Knorr from Ray Williston, 20 February 1980; NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk,] 2-6; Sherman, 249-251, 255; SFUA, F-55-36-0-1, Press Release from the Office of the Premier, 6 September 1961; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-36-0-17, W.A.C. Bennett, "Statement By Premier W.A.C. Bennett On Second Reading Of The Power Development Act, 1961," 2 August 1961; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-50-0-10, W.A.C. Bennett, "Why I Took Over BC Electric: Special Statement for the Monetary Times," *The Monetary Times: 1961 Report On Gas and Oil*, November 1961: 1-3; SFUA, F-55-53-0-0-2, Bennett, "The Power Development Story in British Columbia."

Hydro) on 30 March 1962 by merging BCE and the BCPC in an apparent ploy to prevent the nationalization of BCE from being undone as the BC Power Corporation seemed to want done.¹⁰⁹

Nationalization was the real beginning of Bennett's two river policy, which embraced the logic of hydroelectric development by claiming the Peace River project would develop northern BC, and the Columbia River project the southern Interior. The policy had emerged prior to 1961, but as long as the Peace River was private and without a contract, there was no way to guarantee its implementation.¹¹⁰ According to their 1959 proposal to the water comptroller, the PRPDC originally planned to construct two dams on the Peace River in quick succession: Site 3a – the Portage Mountain Dam (now known as the W.A.C. Bennett Dam) at the head of the Peace River Canyon and Site 1 (now known as the Peace Canyon Dam) at the foot of the Peace River Canyon.¹¹¹ This would be potentially followed by four additional dams on the Peace River below

¹⁰⁹ The nationalization of BCE and its merger with the BCPC to form BC Hydro in 1962 was ruled unconstitutional by Chief Justice Sherwood Lott on 29 July 1963, and insufficient compensation wise by about \$21 million. A subsequent court case regarding the settlement and taxation was brought all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Proceedings In The Province Of British Columbia..., August 2nd 1962, 7-8; BCA, T1675, T1675:0052, W.A.C. Bennett; *British Columbia Power Corporation v. British Columbia Electric Company*, [1962] SCR 642; *British Columbia Power Corporation v. Minister of National Revenue*, [1968] SCR 17; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-37-0-5, Letter to H.L. Keenleyside and Gordon Shrum from W.A.C. Bennett, 18 January 1962; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-37-0-17, Extract From Throne Speech, 25 January 1962.

¹¹⁰ During the February 1960 throne speech Ray Williston even presented it as a form of social assistance. Reflecting the uncertainty of the proposed project in November 1960 Ray Williston advised Milton Vince of the Hudson's Hope area that without a license the dam was not guaranteed. Bennett argued the policy had formed prior to him becoming premier in 1952, but most scholars and Ray Williston argue it emerged only after the 1956 memorandum at the earliest. Of note even David Mitchell, who interviewed Bennett when he made this arguments, did not believe him. Bennett also directly connected himself to former premier's Richard McBride (1903-1915) and Duff Pattullo (1933-1941), both of whom fought Ottawa to benefit British Columbia, with McBride even pre-empting the federal government in August 1914 by purchasing two submarines from the United States to defend the West Coast. Barman, 189-191, 212-213, 273, 275, 278; BCA, T1375:0011, Ray Williston; BCA, T1675:0021, W.A.C. Bennett; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Letter to Milton Vince from Ray Williston, 10 November 1960; Mitchell, 289; Stanley, 4-5, 254n10.

¹¹¹ BC Hydro promotional pamphlets would ignore the Peace Canyon Dam during construction. BCA, GR-0880, Box 59, BC And BB Power Consultants Limited, "Peace River Hydro-Electric Project: Volume I Report" (Vancouver: Peace River Power Development Company, December 1959), 9; British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, "Peace River Power: The Portage Mountain Project," (Vancouver: British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, [1967], 3.

Hudson's Hope (Site A, B, C, and D) as well as dams on the Liard River to develop the North and connect BC to the Alaskan power grid.¹¹² The Peace River Canyon Dam (Site 1) might have to wait, but construction on the Portage Mountain Dam was to begin immediately. Furthermore, with the province in a new found position of authority, when BC Hydro outlined the two river policy in 1962, it formally included the sale of downstream benefits from the Columbia, with an expected system capacity of June 1966, and delivery of Peace River power to the Lower Mainland by 1968.¹¹³ Officials even speculated that if renegotiated correctly the Columbia River Treaty could finance not only the Columbia dams themselves, but also the Peace River project.¹¹⁴ This situation was important as the report concluded building the Peace first would be more expensive.¹¹⁵

Construction Begins

Within days of nationalization Ray Williston ended water reserves placed on the unrecorded waters of the Peace, Finlay, Parsnip, and Salmon rivers as well as their tributaries prior to the 1956 memorandum, and in the case of the earliest reserve about five years before W.A.C. Bennett moved to the province.¹¹⁶ Since the province had not nationalized the Wenner-

¹¹² BCA, MS 1172, Box 1, Ray Williston, Explanatory Notes...; BCA, Ray Williston interview, T1375:0016, Ray Williston.

¹¹³ The news media still questioned whether exporting power was possible. BCA, GR-0880, Box 61, A.W. Lash and J.B. Hedley, "Preliminary Report On the Comparison Of Costs And Sequencing Of Development Of Peace And Columbia Rivers" (Victoria: Economic & Commercial Services Division: BC Hydro And Power Authority, 13 July 1962), 1, 5; LAC, General Registry, RG 25, Volume 5611 File Part 1, File 12989-40, Letter 351: Letter to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs from the Canadian Consulate General, 13 December 1962; SFUA, F-55-36-0-2, Letter to The Honourable W.A.C. Bennett from G.M. Shrum, 13 October 1961.

¹¹⁴ SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-49-0-0-56, A Proposal For The Immediate Hydroelectric Development Of The Columbia River Basin And The Peace River.

¹¹⁵ The year before engineer M.H.R. Durst recommended leaving the Peace for the federal government to development. BCA, GR-0880, Box 61, Lash and Hedley, "Preliminary Report On the Comparison Of Costs And Sequencing Of Development Of Peace And Columbia Rivers," 5-6; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Letter to A.F. Paget from M.H.R. Durst, 13 November 1961.

¹¹⁶ These were ended on 15 September 1961. KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Report to W.A.C. Bennett from Ray Williston, 4 August 1961; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Water Act: Notice of Cancellation of Reserve by E.W. Bassett, 8 August 1961.

Gren BC Development Company, provincial officials began a legal investigation to determine what rights, if any, the company still held in the province.¹¹⁷ It was concluded the 1956 memorandum, and the reserves created in conjunction to it, remained in effect except when superseded by the 1957 memorandum. (Reflecting this situation the Wenner-Gren BC Development Company continued to investigate the mineral and forestry potential of the northern Rocky Mountain Trench (the Trench), most notably through their partial ownership of Alexandra Forest Products Limited.)¹¹⁸

Having established a legal framework, work quickly began at Site 3a. By October 1961 contracts were signed with Western Bridge and Steel Fabricators (Vancouver) to build a bridge across the Peace River as well as McNamara Construction Western Limited (Edmonton) to drill test shafts for diversion tunnels on the west bank of the Peace.¹¹⁹ Connected to the bridge was a basic highway constructed the month before connecting the dam site to the Hart Highway.¹²⁰ Work began in November on both the bridge and test shafts. They were finished by February 1962.¹²¹ Two months later Portage Mountain Contractors won the \$17 million contract for the actual diversion tunnels and in August 1962, following the approval of the provincial water rights application, the province announced the cancellation of the reserve placed on land in the

¹¹⁷ KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Memorandum from R.W. Gross to D.A.M. Patterson, 8 September 1961.

¹¹⁸ BCA, MS 2353, "Peace River Power Nears End Of Road," *Vancouver Sun*, 30 January 1965; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Memorandum from D.A.M. Patterson to R.W. Gross – Subject Peace River Development, 18 September 1961; NBCA, 2000.13.2.7, Box 7, Carney, "North Pulp Mill At Plan Stage;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.7, Box 7, "Wenner-Gren Plans New Pulp Mill;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.7, Box 7, "Wenner-Gren Mill Expected For BC;" NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Carney, "North Pulp Mill At Plan Stage."

¹¹⁹ BCA, T1375:0013, Ray Williston; NBCA, 2000.13.2.7, Box 7, "Peace Contracts Awarded," *Vancouver Sun*, 20 October 1961; NBCA, 2000.13.9.4, The Peace River Project.

¹²⁰ Jim Peacock, "No Jobs Yet: First 2 Peace Jobs To Last Until '62," *Prince George Citizen*, 20 September 1961; SFUA, F-55-53-0-0-2, W.A.C. Bennett, "The Power Development Story in British Columbia:...", 16 September 1961.

¹²¹ NBCA, 2000.13.2.7, Box 7, "Peace Contracts Awarded;" SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-37-0-18, Draft Summary On Peace River Hydro.

province for Wenner-Gren following the 1956 memorandum.¹²² They still hoped that dam would be operational by 1968.¹²³ The only negative impact of nationalization and the resistance to it was the “cancellation” of contracts that had been called into question by the decision against the province and led to a delay in the construction of the diversion tunnels initially hoped to be completed by September 1963.¹²⁴ Rather than have work stop too long, however, the province took out a loan from the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce to guarantee the contract.¹²⁵ As a result, the contractors were able to complete the diversion tunnels on time, and that winter the cofferdams were constructed.¹²⁶

What Navigable Waters Protection Act?

Shortly after nationalization of the PRPDC and BCE in 1961, *The Province* reported that an unnamed trapper in the Trench believed the dam and its reservoir would destroy the Tsek’ehne.¹²⁷ With regard to the Peace River project, however, the federal government’s biggest concern appeared to still be that the Peace might kill the Columbia. On an international level this issue made sense as Canada had signed the Columbia River Treaty with the United States in January 1961, outlining the construction of the Columbia River project. Constitutionally since the Tsek’ehne were defined as Indians, and the Peace and Columbia rivers are navigable and have fisheries, the federal government had a say in both projects due to their impacts on all three. When it came to Aboriginal policy, however, the federal government had capitulated to the

¹²² NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, Paddy Sherman, “BC To Free Vast Area In Wenner-Gren Tract,” *The Province*, 16 August 1962; NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, “Gov’t Yields 80 Mile Along Peace,” *Vancouver Sun*, 16 August 1962.

¹²³ NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Gordon Shrum, “The Peace River Project,” 17 August 1962; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-49-0-0-71, Gordon Shrum, “The Peace River Project,” 17 August 1962.

¹²⁴ NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Dick Dolman, “Dam Contractors Must Race Clock,” *The Province*, 24 August 1963; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-36-0-2, Letter to The Honourable W.A.C. Bennett from G.M. Shrum, 13 October 1961.

¹²⁵ Pat McGeer, *Politics in Paradise* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Ltd., 1972), 51; Sherman, 270.

¹²⁶ BCA, GR-0880, Box 56, British Columbia Hydro And Power Authority, “Peace River Project 1964,” (Vancouver: Consulting Engineers: International Power And Engineering Consultants Limited, 1964), 2-3.

¹²⁷ Stanley, 105.

provincial government in the Great Settlement of 1927.¹²⁸ Would it do so with regard to the Peace as a navigable river?

The Navigable Waters Protection Act, 1952, allowed for the halting of construction, and removal of infrastructure from navigable rivers if not approved by the federal Minister of Public Works.¹²⁹ Meg Stanley presents the act as one of the means of opposing the Peace River project available to the opposition.¹³⁰ Since the Peace was navigable, logically the act applied to the Peace River project. Nevertheless, during this period some in Ottawa were not sure about federal jurisdiction. Part of the problem was that there was no set definition of what a navigable river was.¹³¹ For example, when asked for information about the Peace River project due to concerns about its impacts downstream, the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources informed the Director of the Peace River District Planning Commission of Alberta in February 1960 that the federal government's authority only covered navigation and fisheries, not hydroelectric projects.¹³²

This uncertainty did not mean federal officials ignored the Peace River project, although the focus seemed to be on the downstream impacts. As early as 23 July 1959 the Department of Public Works contacted the District Engineer of the Water Resources Branch in Calgary to examine the potential impact on navigation downstream.¹³³ Their preliminary report on 16 December 1959 suggested the dam "would indeed affect the water elevation in Lake Athabasca

¹²⁸ Dory Thacker, "Fulton Gives 3 Answers:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 29 November 1961; "Udall Slapped: Peace Job Faces Problems – Fulton," *Prince George Citizen*, 29 November 1961.

¹²⁹ Navigable Waters Protection Act, RSC 1952, c.193, as amended by SC 1956, c.41.

¹³⁰ The others being land title and engineering feasibility. The *Daily Colonist* agreed with this assessment in 1962. NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, "Peace Permit Sought," *Daily Colonist*, 2 February 1962; Stanley, 9.

¹³¹ Some court cases cite the ability to canoe or drive logs as indicating navigability. LeMarquand, 93.

¹³² BCA, British Columbia Premier's Records 1953-1972, GR-1414, Box 66, File 5, Letter to William Andrew C. Bennett from Director, Peace River District Planning Commission, E.T. Clegg, 22 January 1960; KA, File 2148721, Volume 2, Letter to E.T. Clegg from Alvin Hamilton, 12 February 1960.

¹³³ LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Reports And Investigations By Water Resources Branch Into the Downstream Effects of Regulation of Peace River: Chronological Summary to 13 June 1962, 19 June 1962.

and in the navigation channels connecting the Lake to Slave River.”¹³⁴ As the Indian Claims Commission would later point out this was the first point in time in which Ottawa officially knew there might be negative impacts from the project.¹³⁵ Further studies confirmed the findings of the Water Resource Branch, but seemed to indicate the impact would be minimal, and in June 1962 the Water Resources Branch produced a report titled *The Effect of Regulation of the Peace River* that concluded once the dam was completed navigation should not be affected and in fact might be improved during years of natural low runoff. The worst period would be immediately after the completion of the dam when flow was restricted to fill the reservoir. The report stated that this would no doubt affect the Peace-Athabasca River Delta by increasing its area, but noted further studies were planned to determine whether this was true and what the magnitude of the change would be.¹³⁶

Prior to nationalization the PRPDC did not seem to believe it had to get approval from the federal government via a water license to construct the Peace River project.¹³⁷ Nationalization rendered the issue moot. After nationalization provincial newspapers debated whether the Navigable Waters Protection Act would lead to federal-provincial conflict, noting

¹³⁴ *Preliminary Investigation into the Effect of Regulation of the Peace River on Lake Athabasca and the Slave River* from 16 December 1959 is noted in “Reports and Investigations By Water Resources Branch Into the Downstream Effects of Regulation of Peace River. This report was restricted to government officials only. It appears even the Indian Claims Commission could not get a copy of it for their report. ICC, 33, 33n89; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Reports And Investigations By Water Resources Branch Into the Downstream Effects of Regulation of Peace River: Chronological Summary to 13 June 1962, 19 June 1962.

¹³⁵ ICC, 33.

¹³⁶ BCA, GR-0880, Box 61, Water Resources Branch: Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, *The Effect of Regulation of the Peace River: Interim Report No. 1* June 1962, 1, 20, 22; KA, File 2148721, Volume 2, Letter to A.F. Paget from T.M. Patterson, 14 March 1960; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Memorandum from T.H. Patterson, 13 September 1961; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Memorandum from J.J.G. McLellan, 10 May 1962; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Letter to R.G. Robertson from H.A. Young, 15 May 1962; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Reports And Investigations By Water Resources Branch Into the Downstream Effects of Regulation of Peace River: Chronological Summary to 13 June 1962, 19 June 1962.

¹³⁷ NBCA, 2000.13.2.4, Box 5, Bill Fletcher, “Wengren Developers Predict: Peace Power For Vancouver,” *The Vancouver Sun*, [21 February 1959].

that some lawyers argued the act applied if the Peace was navigable, while others stated it only applied if the dam affected navigation.¹³⁸ Federal Minister of Justice, Davie Fulton did not have any doubts. He considered the act applicable if there were any impacts on navigation downstream. Unfortunately, at the time some saw this conviction as merely an example of Fulton's personal opposition to the Peace River project.¹³⁹

While provincial newspapers were predicting provincial-federal conflict, the new BCE consulted the law firm of Farris, Stultz, Bull and Farris over whether or not the Portage Mountain Dam fell under the Navigable Waters Protection Act. The province did not think the act applied.¹⁴⁰ (During this period as a Crown Corporation, the nationalized BCE, and its successor BC Hydro were intimately connected.) This belief appears to be related to a letter Water Comptroller A.F. Paget sent to Ray Williston on 6 March 1959 informing the minister that as water comptroller for BC his authority was naturally limited to the province and therefore the province should seek a legal opinion (from the Attorney General according to Paget) on the matter, as well as contact Alberta and the federal government.¹⁴¹ Indeed, when the province did not immediately follow his advice, Paget advised engineer F.J. Pine to consult the Attorney General on 1 September 1959.¹⁴² Even then, however, the province did not take steps to get a legal opinion until 1961.

The opinion the province received supported their view of the application of the Navigable Waters Protection Act. According to their lawyer, Senator John Wallace de Beque

¹³⁸ NBCA, 2000.13.2.7, Box 7, "Navigation Could Be The Key To BC-Ottawa Hydro Battle," *Vancouver Sun*, 16 September 1961; NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, "BCE To Move For Peace Showdown," *The Province*, 5 February 1962.

¹³⁹ LeMarquand, 93; Mitchell, 310; NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, "Peace Dam Built Illegally, Says Paper," *The Province*, 7 January 1971.

¹⁴⁰ SFUA, F-55-36-0-1, Letter to R.R. Dodd from John Wallace de Beque Farris, 25 September 1961.

¹⁴¹ KA, File 0214872, Letter to Ray Williston from A.F. Paget, 6 March 1959.

¹⁴² KA, Water Comptroller fonds, File 2148721 Volume 1 Letter to A.F. Paget from F.J. Pine, 2 September 1959.

Farris, the wording of the Navigable Waters Protection Act meant that since the dam was not in a navigable stretch of the Peace the act did not apply. Farris, however, did not give this opinion unqualified support, and noted not only that the issue was a legal grey area, easily challenged in court, but also that if the act was found to apply, an application for the dam was definitely needed.¹⁴³ Gordon Shrum (the newly appointed chair of BCE) subsequently wrote the premier telling him that in his opinion the province should ignore requests from the federal Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources for information, make no application, and quote Farris' legal opinion if questioned about it.¹⁴⁴ Individuals like Ray Williston supported him and later in life Williston claimed the act did not apply since the federal government "could not certify the Peace River navigable up through the Canyon,"¹⁴⁵ even though the province had requested such a certification in order to receive funding for navigation aids.¹⁴⁶

The province followed Shrum's advice and made no application. Shrum, however, would present it as Farris' advice. During a conference held at Simon Fraser University in 1974, in response to comments made by law professor Charles Bourne of the University of British Columbia that he was surprised Ottawa had not stopped the project under the Navigable Waters Protection Act, Shrum even characterized the retaining of Farris as money well spent. Shrum went on to claim Farris advised the province to simply ignore the fact the Peace was navigable, and not publicize its lack of a federal license. It did not matter if navigation remained the same or

¹⁴³ SFUA, F-55-36-0-1, Letter to R.R. Dodd from John Wallace de Beque Farris, 25 September 1961.

¹⁴⁴ LeMarquand would later claim Shrum said he was told to not apply by Farris. I cannot find any evidence for this claim. LeMarquand, 94; SFUA, F-55-36-0-1, Letter to The Honourable W.A.C. Bennett from Gordon Shrum, 27 September 1961.

¹⁴⁵ BCA, T1375:0013, Ray Williston; NBCA, 2004.24.25, Box 1, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975, Victoria, BC

¹⁴⁶ NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, "Bennett Dam Didn't Breach Any Act – Williston," *The Province*, 8 January 1971.

improved.¹⁴⁷ (As noted, this was not what Farris advised.)¹⁴⁸ In addition, Shrum also claimed that no one had even considered the impact on the Peace-Athabasca Delta until 1967, at which time the project was too far along for the province to take any serious actions in response. This suggests Shrum was completely ignorant of the two previously mentioned reports from the Water Resources Branch in 1959 and 1962. He even claimed that had someone raised the issue in the early 1960s it would have influenced plans for the Peace River project.¹⁴⁹

Given his seeming recreation of Farris' legal opinion, however, one wonders whether this was a willful forgetting of these reports, especially when one considers a memorandum to the Premier's Office dated 2 October 1961, in which Shrum not only expanded his reasoning on how to react to Farris' legal opinion, but also stated the dam might impact the Peace-Athabasca Delta by first creating more silt and then decreasing the overall amount of silting.¹⁵⁰ (The month before a memorandum from G.J. Berg had noted that although at certain times of the year (most likely early fall) the dam would decrease water levels in the delta by two feet, it was not economically feasible to alter the dam to prevent this impact.)¹⁵¹ In the memorandum Shrum claimed that by applying for a license under the Navigable Waters Protection Act or announcing Farris' opinion, the provincial government would give the federal government another weapon in their fight with the province and they might refuse to issue a permit on principle. In his opinion failure to apply for a permit allowed the federal government three chances to raise the issue: when the province built an access bridge over the Peace, when diversion of the Peace River took place in September 1963, and when flooding started in the fall of 1966. To help avoid confrontation, he

¹⁴⁷ KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, "Bennett Dam Had No License."

¹⁴⁸ SFUA, F-55-36-0-1, Letter to R.R. Dodd from John Wallace de Beque Farris, 25 September 1961.

¹⁴⁹ KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, "Bennett Dam Had No License."

¹⁵⁰ SFUA, F-55-36-0-2, Memorandum from G.M. Shrum to the Premier's Office, 2 October 1961.

¹⁵¹ SFUA, F-55-36-0-2, Memorandum from G.J. Berg to Messrs. R.M. Bibbs and F.J.N. Spoke, 27 September 1961.

recommended doing everything the federal government asked, except apply for a permit and to avoid the issue at all costs. As for Alberta, he felt they would support BC despite the downstream impacts due to the potential for hydroelectric development on the Peace River in their province.¹⁵²

The province was playing a game of bluff. Why did Ottawa not call it? Minister of Justice Davie Fulton believed an application was required. A federal cabinet memorandum from 22 January 1962 even noted that while Ottawa did not expect to find an impact on navigation, it did expect the province to make an application under the Navigable Waters Protection Act.¹⁵³ One month later the *Daily Colonist* and *The Province* reported that Ray Williston told reporters he expected his government would file an application shortly despite the fact construction was already underway.¹⁵⁴

The province never made an application, however. Reflecting his policy of acting like it was a non-issue, Gordon Shrum (by now co-chair of the recently formed BC Hydro) wrote the federal Department of External Affairs on 6 August 1962 to ask for aid in soliciting technical assistance from the American Bureau of Reclamation of the Department of the Interior.¹⁵⁵ While looking into the matter, the federal government internally raised the issue of there being no water

¹⁵² SFUA, F-55-36-0-2, Memorandum from G.M. Shrum to the Premier's Office, 2 October 1961.

¹⁵³ LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Memorandum from J.F. Parkinson, 22 January 1962.

¹⁵⁴ NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, "Peace Permit Sought;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, "BCE To Move For Peace Showdown."

¹⁵⁵ LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Letter to Howard Green from GM Shrum, 6 August 1962; LAC, RG 25, Volume 5611 File Part 1, File 12989-40, Letter to Howard Green from GM Shrum, 6 August 1962.

license.¹⁵⁶ It took no actions to force the matter, however, and despite the objection of the Minister of Public Works, Davie Fulton, the federal government approved the request.¹⁵⁷

As Minister of Justice (the position he held immediately prior to becoming Minister of Public Works) Fulton had made it known that a license was required to proceed on the Peace River project.¹⁵⁸ In both positions he had the power to object to the development under the Navigable Waters Protection Act and demand its removal, yet he did nothing but complain and talk.¹⁵⁹ In this instance his objections resulted in the federal government merely reminding Gordon Shrum on 24 October 1962 that a license was required.¹⁶⁰ Still the province did not make an application, and on 7 November 1962 Shrum argued the act did not apply due to the site of the dam not being navigable to begin with.¹⁶¹ Public Works then contacted the federal Department of Justice. Despite confirming the Peace River project needed an application, neither department pushed the matter further.¹⁶² It appears the province was benefitting from the weakness and disunity of the federal government following the 1962 election in June, combined with the repercussions of the Cuban Missile Crisis.¹⁶³ Not helping the situation was that Davie Fulton

¹⁵⁶ LAC, RG 25, Volume 5611 File Part 1, File 12989-40, Letter to U.S.A. Division from H.H. Carter, 4 September 1962; LAC, RG 25, Volume 5611 File Part 1, File 12989-40, Memorandum from CJ Woodsworth (U.S.A. Division), 10 September 1962.

¹⁵⁷ This approval process is documented in LAC, RG 25, Volume 5611 File Part 1 in a series of letters starting on 23 August 1962. LAC, RG 25, Volume 5611 File Part 1, File 12989-40, Letter to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, H.H. Carter from R.G. Robertson, 23 August 1962.

¹⁵⁸ NBCA, 2000.13.2.7, Box 7, "Navigation Could Be The Key To BC-Ottawa Hydro Battle."

¹⁵⁹ LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Letter to Alvin Hamilton from Walter Dinsdale, 25 September 1961; Thacker, "Fulton Gives 3 Answers;" "Udall Slapped: Peace Job Faces Problems – Fulton."

¹⁶⁰ KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to G.M. Shrum from H.A. Young, 24 October 1962.

¹⁶¹ LeMarquand suggests Shrum never replied. LeMarquand, 94; ICC, 40, 44, 87.

¹⁶² ICC, 40, 44, 87.

¹⁶³ Denis Smith, "Diefenbaker, John George," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 20 http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/diefenbaker_john_george_20E.html (accessed 11 May 2016).

decided to enter provincial politics as head of the provincial Progressive Conservative Party to fight Bennett and his policies.¹⁶⁴

On 8 April 1963 Prime Minister Diefenbaker lost to Liberal leader Lester B. (Mike) Pearson. The Liberals formed a minority government. When the contracts were announced for the dam in May 1963 reports emerged that the minority Liberal government was embarrassed about this fact, but unwilling to push the issue, while the province felt that with no federal complaints, and no expected detrimental impact to navigation on the Peace they did not need to apply for a license.¹⁶⁵ Later reports would reveal that the issue was repeatedly raised in 1963 and 1964. The minority Liberals did nothing.¹⁶⁶ A federal cabinet memorandum dated 13 November 1963 even stated that the Minister of Justice was unsure if, despite precedent, the act applied to the province or their firms, like BC Hydro, and was fearful that if taken to court the province would win. Until the federal government could amend the act to clarify the matter the federal cabinet agreed not to push the issue beyond merely requesting the province protect navigation downstream on the Mackenzie River.¹⁶⁷ Federal Minister of Public Works Jean-Paul Deschatelets even suggested someone made a statement to this effect in parliament.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Ray Williston suggests this move was because Fulton had become unpopular federally. Naturally this fact is covered in numerous articles found in provincial newspapers of the period. I have included a few examples. BCA, Ray Williston interview, T1375:0014, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975, Victoria, BC; NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.9, Box 8, Terry Hammond, "Dam Halt Urged By Fulton," *Daily Colonist*, 13 September 1963; NBCA, 2000.13.2.9, Box 8, "Fulton Would Call Halt To Peace Dam At Once:...", *The Province*, 13 September 1963.

¹⁶⁵ The *Province* would later call the province's logic into question. NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, "Williston: Ottawa Not Defied On Peace Project," *Daily Colonist*, 19 June 1963; NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, "Navigation And The Peace River Dam...", *The Province*, 24 June 1963.

¹⁶⁶ KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, "Bennett Dam Had No License;" LAC, Lester B. Pearson fonds, MG 26-N3, Volume 206, File 552, Letter to Peace from Jack Davis, 8 July 1963; LAC, MG 26-N3, Volume 206, File 552, Letter to D.R. DeLaporte from Jules Pelletier, 10 October 1963; LAC, RG 25, Volume 5611 File Part 1, File 12989-40, Peace River – Application for Construction of Dam, 27 June 1963.

¹⁶⁷ LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Memorandum from R.B. Bryce, 13 November 1963; LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Memorandum from Jean-Paul Deschatelets, 23 April 1964.

¹⁶⁸ LAC, RG 19, Volume 4472, File 9105/P355, Memorandum from Jean-Paul Deschatelets, 23 April 1964.

This rather lackluster reason for not forcing the issue stands in stark contrast to the claim years later by the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation that Ottawa simply did not want to challenge the project because it was too important to BC.¹⁶⁹ The rationale is also a direct challenge to Meg Stanley's claim that "the federal government demanded that the Province apply for a license to dam the Peace,"¹⁷⁰ but the premier ignored the request. When one looks at Stanley's sources for this assertion, Tina Loo's "Disturbing the Peace" and James Howell's "Portage Mountain Hydro-Electric Project," only Loo discusses the topic, and then only states Ottawa "chose not to act."¹⁷¹ It is therefore unclear where Stanley got this information from, especially as it contradicts the previously mentioned decision on the matter by the federal cabinet.

The end result was that BC never attempted to obtain the approval of the minister.¹⁷² The topic fell silent until 14 August 1970, two years after the completion of the project. It was the federal departments of Public Works as well as Energy, Mines and Resources that raised it again under Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau and determined that due to not receiving federal permission the dam was illegal¹⁷³ (The Liberals had won a majority during the 1968 federal election.) The following year the issue appeared in the news media, with the Minister of the Environment, Jack Davis, stating federal government should have pushed the issue.¹⁷⁴ This assertion was too little too late and the Indian Claims Commission found in its 1998 report that

¹⁶⁹ ICC, 100-101.

¹⁷⁰ Stanley, 9.

¹⁷¹ Oddly the page Stanley cites for Loo's article actually states nothing about the legality of the Peace River project, although an endnote on the page does. Howell; Tina Loo, "Disturbing the Peace: Environmental Change and the Scales of Justice on a Northern River," *Environmental History* 12 (2007): 895, 912n1; Stanley, 9, 265n20.

¹⁷² LeMarquand, 93.

¹⁷³ The Indian Claims Commission does mention internal memorandums stating the dam was illegal dated 18 April 1967 and 17 July 1970. ICC, 40, 44, 87, 97, 100-101.

¹⁷⁴ KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, "Bennett Dam Had No License;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, "Peace River Built Illegally, Says Paper;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, "Bennett Dam Didn't Breach Any Act – Williston."

the federal government had failed in its legal responsibility to not only ensure the dam was constructed within the legal framework of Canada, but also protect the environment and Indigenous peoples living downstream.¹⁷⁵

Limited Consultations with Indian Affairs

One can easily see evidence for the findings of the ICC with regard to consultation. Following the nationalization of BCE in 1961, and its amalgamation with the BCPC in 1962 to form BC Hydro, the province did not hold hearings regarding the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity as section 12 of the BC Hydro and Power Authority Act 1962 exempted BC Hydro from the Public Utilities Act.¹⁷⁶ Rather the Crown Corporation moved directly to apply for a provincial water license on 14 February 1962.¹⁷⁷ The province did not receive the application until 19 February and on 22 February, the province instructed BCE to place ads regarding the application in local newspapers for two weeks, with a statutory declaration to that effect received in response by 15 April 1962.¹⁷⁸ Once advertising of the application was completed, private individuals, corporations, and other interested parties had thirty days to contact the water comptroller's office with their concerns.¹⁷⁹ The newspapers BCE placed the notice in were the *Peace River Block News*, the *Dawson Creek Star*, the *Fort Nelson News*, the *Alaska Highway News*, the *Vancouver Sun*, and *The Province*.¹⁸⁰ They excluded the newspapers of Vancouver Island as was as the *Prince George Citizen*. The *Citizen* might not

¹⁷⁵ ICC, 40, 44, 87-101.

¹⁷⁶ Howell, 44.

¹⁷⁷ BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Proceedings In The Province Of British Columbia..., August 2nd 1962, 2; KA, Water Comptroller fonds, File 2148721, Volume 3, Untitled memo.

¹⁷⁸ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to R.W. Gross from V. Raudsepp, 22 February 1962; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Untitled memo.

¹⁷⁹ KA, File 0214872, Letter to D.B. Turner from E.W. Bassett, 26 March 1962; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Untitled memo; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Letter to D.B. Turner from E.W. Bassett, 26 March 1962.

¹⁸⁰ KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Untitled memo; KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to R.W. Gross from V. Raudsepp, 22 February 1962.

seem like a large omission when one considers the Peace River flows east to Alberta, but when you consider that the Tsek'ehne regularly travelled to Summit Lake and Prince George for work and supplies, and had their children taken from them to Prince George, and then west to Lejac Residential School, this omission seems rather glaring. The timing of the ads was also problematic for the Tsek'ehne, many of whom were out on their traplines.

By 28 March 1962 BCE was willing to report that it had ordered ad space for the announcements in the newspapers required, although they freely admitted that they had not confirmed if the *Fort Nelson News* or *Alaska Highway News* actually published the ad.¹⁸¹ The province confirmed this claim within the next few days, and by 4 April 1962 Robert Wallace Gross was willing to swear an affidavit about the matter.¹⁸² A similar affidavit by Harold Taylor, dated 15 February 1962, attested to his placing notice of BCE's application at the dam site itself.¹⁸³

Given the fact that BCE was investigating only how the Peace River project would affect common law properties, this left the Tsek'ehne at a marked disadvantage in their traditional territory, which BC did not accept as belonging to them because of the province's denial of Aboriginal title at the time.¹⁸⁴ Further complicating the situation was that legally they were wards of the federal government, and therefore their main point of contact was a third party, Indian Affairs.

Indian Affairs began to investigate the potential impact on the Tsek'ehne in December 1959. On 21 March 1962 the Indian Commissioner of British Columbia advised the province that

¹⁸¹ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to A.G. Sargent from R.W. Gross, 28 March 1962.

¹⁸² KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Affidavit by Robert Wallace Gross, April 1962.

¹⁸³ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Affidavit by Harold Taylor, 15 February 1962.

¹⁸⁴ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to A.F. Paget from R.W. Gross, 22 February 1962; KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to Ray Williston from R.W. Gross, 12 March 1962.

individual Tsek'ehne objected to the water license due to the effect the reservoir would have on their traplines.¹⁸⁵ Two days later Indian Affairs notified the water comptroller that there were a number of reserves in the expected reservoir area, and asked that the water comptroller withhold the water license until the Indian Commissioner of British Columbia had a chance to investigate the potential impacts, especially with regard to the economic activity of the Tsek'ehne, which was believed to be based on primary industries at the time.¹⁸⁶

It appears the water comptroller received no significant response and on 26 March 1962 the minister in charge of Indian Affairs, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Ellen Fairclough, wrote BCE noting that the information Indian Affairs had received on the project was lacking. She also stressed that with regard to compensation the province should pay attention to the impacts to Indigenous fishing and trapping. Furthermore, if the Peace River project did flood reserves, she expected the province to negotiate flooding rights with the affected bands.¹⁸⁷ BCE responded on 10 April 1962 assuring her that not only did they did not expect flooding to happen for several years, but that the expected elevation was no longer 2,500 feet, but 2,250 feet at the spillway with a maximum of 2,260 feet upstream. To aid Fairclough in working with this information, BCE provided her with a list of reserves, and Indigenous owned traplines the company had identified as potentially affected as well as a map showing the 2,500 foot and 2,260 foot contour based on aerial mapping with ground control points for accuracy.¹⁸⁸

The inherent inequality of depending on Indian Affairs to represent the interests of the Tsek'ehne is evident when one considers the water comptroller even approached the local Prince

¹⁸⁵ Guy Lanoue, "Continuity and Change: The Development of Political Self-Definition Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia" (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1983) 380.

¹⁸⁶ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to A.F. Paget from H.M. Jones, 23 March, 1962.

¹⁸⁷ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to R.W. Gross from Ellen Fairclough, 26 March 1962.

¹⁸⁸ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to Ellen Fairclough from R.W. Gross, 10 April 1962.

George School District to see if they objected to the Peace River project.¹⁸⁹ The province sent individual notices to residents and/or property right holders that they identified the Peace River project as directly impacting.¹⁹⁰ These individuals were then free to respond in a number of ways, such as signing a petition against the project, hiring a lawyer, and/or resigning themselves to the development for proper compensation.¹⁹¹ Among those who seemed to resign themselves to the project in return for proper compensation was William (Bill) Boyko, a Euro-Canadian who was married to Marianne (Maryiam) Toodick, a Tse'khene woman from McLeod Lake.¹⁹²

Those living in the area who did not receive a notice were not above inquiring with BCE or the water comptroller as to why and in some instances provide their unsolicited objection to the project.¹⁹³ Furthermore, federal departments were not above inquiring for individuals they represented.¹⁹⁴ Even "experts," like Professor M.Y. Williams of the Department of Geology, wrote in with their objections. Williams in particular was concerned about the flooding of 576,000 acres of land, including McLeod Lake, Finlay Forks, Fort Grahame and the MacKinnon Ranch, as well as the loss of resources and infrastructure this represented. According to him, the

¹⁸⁹ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to R.W. Gross from R. Gracey, 15 March 1962.

¹⁹⁰ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to BC E[lectric] from W. Kruger, 18 March 1962; KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to R.W. Gross from J.L. Ruxton, 20 March 1962; KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to British Columbia Electric Company Limited from Green & Howard, 15 March 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to Green & Howard Barristers and Solicitors from R.W. Gross, 19 March 1962.

¹⁹¹ On 3 April 1962 a number of individuals signed a petition in Fort St. John. It is hard to tell how many actually objected as some of the signatures appear to repeat themselves. There are a total of twenty-seven signatures, but only twenty-one seem unique. These letters can be found in KA, File 0242651, Volume 1 and KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2 starting in March 1962. I have included a few examples. KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to T.P. Eirich from R.W. Gross, 21 March 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to British Columbia Electric Company Limited from Green & Howard, 15 March 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Notice of Objection: Water Act (Section 9), 3 April 1962.

¹⁹² KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to Comptroller of Water Rights from William Boyko, 14 March 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to W.M. Boyko from A.F. Paget, 26 March 1962.

¹⁹³ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to BC Electric from Robert Middleton, 27 March 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to Comptroller of Water Rights from Kennedy Melville, 23 March 1962; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-38-0-1, North Peace River Petition Received ? February 1963.

¹⁹⁴ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to Parliament Building, Victoria, BC re. Peace River Project – SUTHERLAND, J. – Lieut. – Lot #7458, Pr. George, Cariboo, BC from H. Morris, 11 December 1962.

expected reservoir would hinder transportation and therefore he recommended the construction of multiple smaller hydroelectric installations that would not flood as much land.¹⁹⁵ The province dealt with all of these objections, and provincial officials like Ray Williston were even willing to respond to questions, such as whether or not the weight of the water in the reservoir would lower the elevation of Prince George.¹⁹⁶ For the record, the response was yes, and by about an inch.¹⁹⁷

Based on their own research BCE identified a number of Tsek'ehne trappers in April 1962 that the reservoir might affect: fourteen from McLeod Lake, six from Fort Grahame, two from Finlay Forks, and one from Fort Ware.¹⁹⁸ These trappers were identified based on their registered traplines, an expected maximum reservoir level of 2,260 feet, and letters of objection received from the Tsek'ehne themselves via Indian Affairs dated 5 April 1962.¹⁹⁹ Tsek'ehne individuals sent twenty-nine letters in total to BCE. These letters of objections were form letters with McLeod Lake written in for the address of the sender (someone crossed out McLeod Lake when the individual's address was elsewhere) provided by Indian Affairs, and witnessed by W.A.S. Barnes.²⁰⁰ (Barnes also made them available to local non-Indigenous residents like Ben

¹⁹⁵ William's objections would later be published in *Canadian Saturday Night*. KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, M.Y. Williams, "Peace River Power: The Indirect Cost," 10 January 1962; KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to A.F. Paget from M.Y. Williams, 5 March 1962; KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Re: M.Y. William's Letter of Mar. 5/62; LAC, RG 25, Volume 5611 File Part 1, File 12989-40, M.Y. Williams, "Peace River Power: The Indirect Cost," *Canadian Saturday Night* [77, no. 16] (September 1962).

¹⁹⁶ KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds..., File 0242651-A, Volume 5, Letter to Williston from B. Wardlaw, 2 January 1969; KA, File 0242651-A, Volume 5, Letter to B. Wardlaw from H.M. Hunt, 7 January 1969.

¹⁹⁷ KA, File 0242651-A, Volume 5, Letter to B. Wardlaw from H.M. Hunt, 7 January 1969.

¹⁹⁸ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to Ellen Fairclough from R.W. Gross, 10 April 1962.

¹⁹⁹ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to Ellen Fairclough from R.W. Gross, 10 April 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to Comptroller of Water Rights from W.A.S. Barnes, 5 April 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to W.A.S. Barnes from A.F. Paget, 16 April 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to R.W. Gross from A.F. Paget, 16 April 1962.

²⁰⁰ Sadly the objection letter from Modeste Alexis does not appear to be in the KA. It is unclear if it was ever received by the water comptroller, although the 5 April 1962 letter accompanying them lists it. Guy Lanoue and an untitled report from 1979 cites the objections coming from twenty-six trappers. The letters can be found in KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2. I have included a few examples. KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to BC Electric from Alex Chingy, 7 March 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to BC Electric from Patricia Chingy for Harry Chingy, 7 March 1962; Lanoue, "Continuity," 380; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, 2.8 Native People, 25 June 1979.

Corke.)²⁰¹ Of note, the department actually signed three letters from Fort Grahame on behalf of the individuals, because as Indian Affairs noted, airmail could not reach the fort this early in the spring.²⁰² In addition, the wives of three men signed for their husband as well as two individuals representing themselves and their business partners and the new owner of a trapline.²⁰³ One Tsek'ehne man from McLeod Lake, Isaac Frank, even had an official objection sent by his lawyer in addition to the form letter.²⁰⁴

An examination of who sent (or had sent for them) objection letters compared with two lists of registered mail sent by the water comptroller in regard to the project reveals that six objectors from McLeod Lake did not receive letters.²⁰⁵ Presumably this apparent oversight was due to the water comptroller not deeming their objection to be valid. Ironically, one of them was Chief Harry Chingee, who later attended the water rights hearings at Chetwynd on 2 August 1962.²⁰⁶

Sadly these letters were officially deemed irrelevant following a letter from Director H.M. Jones on 12 April 1962 to the water comptroller and BCE stating that Indian Affairs was

²⁰¹ KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to BC Electric from B. Corke, 7 March 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to Benjamin Corke from A.F. Paget, 19 April 1962.

²⁰² KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to Comptroller of Water Rights from W.A.S. Barnes, 5 April 1962.

²⁰³ KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to BC Electric from Patricia Chingy for Harry Chingy, 7 March 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to BC Electric from Amelia Chingee for Sam Chingee, 7 March 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to BC Electric from Agnes Frank for Isaac Frank, 7 March 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to BC Electric from Leon Inyallie for Allan Inyallie & Company Trapline, 7 March 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to BC Electric from Robert Inyallie for Harriett & Robert Inyallie, 7 March 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to BC Electric from Freddy Inyallie for Allen Inyallie, 7 March 1962.

²⁰⁴ KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to BC Electric from Agnes Frank for Isaac Frank, 7 March 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to the Water Recorder from Coates, Henslowe & Shkuratoff, 5 April 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to Coates, Henslowe & Shkuratoff Barristers and Solicitors from A.F. Paget, 17 April 1962.

²⁰⁵ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Office Registration Receipt: Mailed By Water Rights Branch, 27 July 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to the Comptroller of Water Rights from W.A.S. Barnes, 5 April 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Registered Articles Mailed At: Water Rights, 21 December 1962.

²⁰⁶ As with most Tsek'ehne names Harry Chingee has had his last name spelled different ways throughout his lifetime. In the actual proceedings he is never asked to spell it himself, does not spell it out as others do, and it appears as "Chingy." BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Proceedings In The Province Of British Columbia..., August 2nd 1962, 5.

investigating the impact of the Peace River Project on five reserves: McLeod Lake No. 2, Pack River No. 2, McLeod Lake No. 5, Finlay Forks No. 1 and Police Meadows No. 2.²⁰⁷ Jones justified this overriding of individual Tsek'ehne objections based on the approaching deadline as well as the remoteness of the reserves, and the difficulty in understanding the potential impact (both immediate and long term) on the social and economic welfare of the Tsek'ehne.²⁰⁸ Jones also informed Paget that expropriation of reserve land would have to take place under the Indian Act, and would require BCE to negotiate with the affected Tsek'ehne regarding "loss of livelihood from natural resources, displacement of families to other locations if necessary, compensation for loss of land and easements to flood if they are necessary."²⁰⁹ The following month (2 May 1962) Indian Affairs and BC Hydro reached an agreement regarding how they would determine compensation. The province expected flooding to begin in 1967, and among other things, there was talk of constructing a new school on McLeod Lake No. 1. The only major sticking point was with regard to the transference of mineral rights.²¹⁰ This decision did not mean Indian Affairs was completely unresponsive to individual Tsek'ehne needs, as revealed by a letter sent to the water comptroller from W.A.J. Barnes on 2 May 1962. In the letter Barnes noted he had found out Antoine Solonas had just returned from trapping over the winter only to find a letter notifying him of the water license application.²¹¹

²⁰⁷ KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Portage Mountain Development: List of Property and Rights Affected: Unregistered Land Rights, 30 January 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to Comptroller of Water Rights from W.A.S. Barnes, 5 April 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to A.F. Paget from H.M. Jones, 12 April 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to H.M. Jones from A.F. Paget, 19 April 1962; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, 2.8 Native People, 25 June 1979; William (Billie) Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012.

²⁰⁸ KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to A.F. Paget from H.M. Jones, 12 April 1962.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Lanoue, "Continuity," 381.

²¹¹ KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to Comptroller of Water Rights from W.A.J. Barnes, 2 May 1962.

This focus on reserves was problematic because as noted in Chapter 1 the Tsek'ehne were not restricted to them and lived throughout their traditional territory. This view also excluded all of the historic villages mentioned in previously chapters, most notably Finlay Forks, which was the residence of two Tsek'ehne trappers identified by BCE in April 1962. In doing so it seemed to confirm the concern of Tsay Keh Dene Elder Alec Poole that the Crown would attempt to claim there were no Tsek'ehne villages in the Trench and the Tsek'ehne did not live there.²¹² Stranger still it ignored the fact Indian Affairs included Finlay Forks in its 1961 investigations of Tsek'ehne communities potentially affected by the Peace River project as well as later reports prior to the completion of the Peace River project indicating not only a resident population, but also that more Tsek'ehne were moving to the community for work in clearing the basin.²¹³

The focus on reserves also contributed to the confusion that many people in the province had with regard to the Tsek'ehne.²¹⁴ Writing on the history of Mackenzie, BC, after the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir, historian J.L. Mulyk would claim the Tallgrass Indians of Finlay Forks and Fort Ware were completely ignorant of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam.²¹⁵ (The label Tallgrass Indian was a name used at the time to refer to various members of the Finlay River Band, many of whom subsequently formed the Ingenika Band, the former name of the Tsay Keh

²¹² Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012.

²¹³ "At Fort Ware: Housing Programs for Indians," *Prince George Citizen*, 5 August 1964; Charlie Cunningham, "The Fur Trade on the Finlay," *Peace River Chronicles*, 532, 534-537; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1, Part 1, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC from Superintendent W. Presloski, 16 September 1964; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Regional Land Use Officer, F.J. Walchli, 7 November 1966; LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,163-1, Letter to R.A. Renwick from J.D. McLean, 27 February 1912; LAC, V-2011-00666-X, Box 2, File 985/3-8-27, Letter to Indian Affairs from Sophie Pierre, [19 June 1968]; LAC, V-2011-00666-X, Box 2, File 985/3-8-27, Letter to Sophie Pierre from A.C. Roach, 19 June 1968; NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Mel Rothenburger, "Don't Worry About The Trench," [1968]; "Police Beat: Child Dies of Possible Choking," *Prince George Citizen*, 12 November 1964; "Town and Country: McLeod's Lake," *Prince George Citizen*, 22 February 1965.

²¹⁴ Koyl takes this claim to the extreme. Koyl, 34, 46-47, 65-66, 81.

²¹⁵ NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk,] 1, 22.

Dene First Nation.)²¹⁶ In his response to this claim Ray Williston stated Finlay Forks was never a Tallgrass village or reserve, and those living there were squatters who had moved in following the relocation of the Euro-Canadian population in preparation for the flooding of the reservoir.²¹⁷ According to him, the only settlements in the Trench were Fort Ware, McLeod Lake, and Fort Grahame, although at times he only mentioned one or two and stated the population was sparse.²¹⁸ (In 1972 it was claimed there were only thirty-eight Indigenous persons living in the Trench.)²¹⁹ Of course not helping the situation was the fact the reserve at Fort Grahame was named Finlay Forks No. 1 and both Indian Affairs and the local newspaper confused its location given the similarities in name or used unofficial names.²²⁰ Furthermore, to be fair to Williston, both he and Mulyk completely fail to mention Old Ingenika, despite the fact it made national headlines in 1961 when a wildfire threatened it.²²¹

By May 1962 the period to make objections was closed.²²² The water comptroller duly informed the newly created BC Power and Hydro Authority of this fact. At the same time the comptroller also noted that unlike the PRPDC, BC Hydro had not been keeping him informed on

²¹⁶ *Tsay Keh Dene: CBC Hourglass Documentary. CBC Television, 1970.*

²¹⁷ In his 1997 biography it is claimed there were only three Indigenous communities in the entire area of the 1956 memorandum, however. NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, The Mackenzie Story: Comments On The Presentation; Williston and Keller, 175.

²¹⁸ BCA, Ray Williston interview, T1375:0015, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975, Victoria, BC; NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, The Mackenzie Story: Comments On The Presentation.

²¹⁹ LeMarquand, 87.

²²⁰ LAC, V-2011-00666-X, Box 2, File 985/3-8-27, "Couldn't Get Ride, Ailing Baby Dies;" LAC, V-2011-00666-X, Box 2, File 985/3-8-27, Letter to Mrs. Middleton from F.C. Bradley, 5 March 1963; "Shooting Victim Critical," *Prince George Citizen*, 30 April 1965.

²²¹ In 1987 this fire would be referenced in describing the rebuilt village of Ingenika. "1 of 300 BC Fires Reported Surrounding Remote Indian Village," *The Globe and Mail*, 14 August 1961; "Forest Fires At A Glance," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 August 1961; "Grove Fire Races South at 12 Mph," *Prince George Citizen*, 18 August 1961; "Smoke Hinders Fighters: Forest Fire Threatens Empty Indian Village," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 August 1961.

²²² A letter from the Department of Recreation and Conservation notes they were advised that the period would end as of 10 April 1962. KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to A.F. Paget from D.B. Turner, 2 April 1962; KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to R.W. Gross from A.F. Paget, 8 May 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to A.F. Paget from D.B. Turner, 2 April 1962.

the project, and that to deal with the objections and begin hearings by mid-September, he needed more information.²²³

The next step was to hold hearings: the first at Chetwynd on 2 August 1962 and the second at Victoria on 15 October 1962.²²⁴ The province held the Chetwynd hearings in the Activity Room of the Windrem Superior School.²²⁵ Critics have often portrayed this hearing, and the ones that followed, as mere formalities; not really open to the public; not really giving out information on the project; and not really offering a means for the “objectors” to actually object.²²⁶ (David LeMarquand would see this entire situation as a structural problem of how corporations and the government made decisions at the time.)²²⁷ Indeed, Gordon Shrum would later recount how Premier Bennett had already given him instructions to begin work on the project, and as noted, the province had signed contracts for preliminary work on the project as early as October 1961.²²⁸

In preparation for the hearings at Chetwynd the water comptroller sent letters on 27 July 1962 to two Tsek’ehne individuals residing at Finlay Forks as well as Bill Boyko, seven Tsek’ehne individuals residing at Fort Grahame as well as Ben Corke, and eleven Tsek’ehne individuals at McLeod Lake.²²⁹ This number is not only interesting because the numbers are different than the list of affected Tsek’ehne compiled earlier in the year, but also because the

²²³ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to R.W. Gross from A.F. Paget, 8 May 1962.

²²⁴ BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Proceedings In The Province Of British Columbia..., August 2nd 1962; BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Continuation Of Hearing..., October 15th, At 10:00 am; KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Conditional Licenses Under Water Act, 21 December 1962; SFUA, F-55-37-0-3, Letter to The Honourable W.A.C. Bennett from G.M. Shrum, 27 December 1962.

²²⁵ BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Proceedings In The Province Of British Columbia..., BC, August 2nd 1962; KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to Hugh Bemister from A.F. Paget, 21 June 1962; KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Notice of Hearing: Water Act Section 9 and 29, 26 June 1962.

²²⁶ Holly Nathan would later categorize the entire involvement of the Tsek’ehne in Peace River project as the failure of multiple structures. ICC, 30; LeMarquand, 91-92, 99-102, 104-105; Nathan, 22.

²²⁷ LeMarquand, 91-92, 99-102, 104-105.

²²⁸ Howell, 43.

²²⁹ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Office Registration Receipt: Mailed By Water Rights Branch, 27 July 1962.

correction list, when compared to this list, and list of addresses actually mailed to, contains two different addresses. These letters concerned game rights and registered traplines in the expected reservoir basin.²³⁰ Earlier lists also noted land use permits²³¹ and timber rights.²³² No one I interviewed was included in this list (it appears to be mostly their parents), but neither does anyone remember hearing about these letters or follow up letters sent out on 21 December 1962 after the hearings. These included fifteen letters to McLeod Lake, seven to Fort Grahame and three to Finlay Forks. The increase is due to some individuals in partnerships listed on the July 1962 list receiving individual letters.²³³

At this hearing the primary objectors were from Richfield Oil; French Petroleum; Westcoast Transmission; Western Pacific Pipelines & Crude Oil Products; Pacific Petroleum; the Corporation of the Village of Taylor; Indian Affairs; Texaco Exploration; and the Fish and Game Branch. Also present was the chief of the McLeod Lake Tse'khene Harry Chingee. The chief of the Finlay River Band did not attend. This is especially odd as the Finlay River villages at Fort Grahame and Finlay Forks were expected to be flooded (along with Gold Bar) by a reservoir 2,250 feet high. One must remember that these hearings were not sudden events. Indeed, it was in preparation for the hearing that J.H. Steede prepared his previously cited "Notes On The Peace River Project."²³⁴

²³⁰ These numbers were sixteen at McLeod Lake, eight at Fort Grahame, and two at Finlay Forks as of 31 January 1962, with two changes of address on 21 February 1962. KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Portage Mountain Development: List of Property and Rights Affected: Game Rights, 31 January 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Portage Mountain Development: Corrections to List of Property and Rights Affected: Game Rights, 21 February 1962.

²³¹ KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Portage Mountain Development: List of Property and Rights Affected: Unregistered Land Rights, 30 January 1962.

²³² KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Portage Mountain Development: List of Property and Rights Affected: Timber Rights, 31 January 1962.

²³³ KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Registered Articles Mailed At: Water Rights, 21 December 1962.

²³⁴ Though classified as objectors per se, not everyone listed as such was actually objecting to the application. Lanoue notes that the water comptroller merely asked for a representation in his notice of the hearing, and Indian Affairs selected Harry Chingee. Unfortunately, the sources he cites for this claim are not available to me. BCA, GR-

At this point in time, the province expected that the reservoir would be 2,250 feet high. The hearing records note that Indian Affairs was examining five Indian reserves it believed might be inundated: for the McLeod Lake band – McLeod Lake No. 1, Pack River No. 2, McLeod Lake No. 5 and for the Finlay River band – Finlay Forks No. 1 and Police Meadows No. 2. (Ultimately, only Finlay Forks No. 1 was flooded.) They also mentioned four more reserves that the reservoir might potentially affect: for the McLeod Lake band – Carp Lake No. 3 and War Lake No. 4 and for the Finlay River band – Fort Ware No. 1 and Sucker Lake No. 2. Of concern with these reserves was BC's policy at the time of forbidding the purchase of land for status Indians by the federal government or anyone else, which meant at best both levels of government would merely exchange land.²³⁵

Indian Affairs' prime representative was Director H.M. Jones, followed by W.A.S. Barnes, Indian Superintendent for the Stuart Lake Indian Agency.²³⁶ Indian Affairs representatives, while noting the Indigenous population of the Trench had lived there since time immemorial, and enjoyed the beauty of the region, argued that they were nonetheless content with their rights and the progress the dam would bring. They did note, however, that with the information thus far provided the only thing they could talk about was the impact on reserve land; all other considerations were an unknown. Even the exact size of the reservoir was unknown. Nevertheless, observers expected the reservoir would seriously affect trapping and hunting both directly and indirectly for both men and women. Indian Affairs claimed to be concerned the status Indians received fair and just treatment and compensation, and even asked

0880, Box 60, Proceedings In The Province Of British Columbia..., August 2nd 1962, i, 5, 11-12. 30; Lanoue, "Continuity," 381.

²³⁵ BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Proceedings In The Province Of British Columbia..., August 2nd 1962, 7, 50, 97-98."

²³⁶ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Solicitors Representing Objectors to Peace River Application/Government Officials Concerned with Peace River Application; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Registered Letters: Government Official Concerned with the Peace River Applications.

that the water license have conditions guaranteeing this during the hearings. They also reminded the province that surrender of reserve land required federal approval via an order-in-council.²³⁷ It is clear from this presentation at the hearing that Indian Affairs was not going to try to stop the project. There is no evidence they even considered it. According to Mary Christina Koyl, after the meeting Indian Affairs felt compensation for traplines would be fair and just.²³⁸

As mentioned, Chief Harry Chingee of McLeod Lake was present. Towards the end of the presentation by Indian Affairs, the province invited him to talk. According to the hearing records, Chief Chingee did not, and indeed Indian Affairs suggests the province's "cordiality" left him with little to say.²³⁹ According to Chief Chingee during the meeting he and the Indian Affairs representatives attempted to inform the water comptroller what the impact would be, but there was little they could do.²⁴⁰

Stranger still is the comment by Indian Affairs that he "represent[s] the people in that area."²⁴¹ This comment completely ignores the chief of the Finlay River band that represented villages at Finlay Forks, Fort Grahame, Ingenika and Fort Ware. It also ignored the wildlife of the Trench. In the Tsek'ehne worldview they are only one group of people in the Trench, with the others being the animals. The Chetwynd hearing also dealt with the expected impact on the animals. The consensus was that the reservoir would negatively affect all the animals who lived in the bottom of Trench, especially if it blocked their migration path.²⁴² Despite this realization, the province did little to rectify the situation. Indeed, the federal Department of Fisheries did not even attend the hearings and merely expressed concern over protecting the Fraser River salmon

²³⁷ BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Proceedings In The Province Of British Columbia..., August 2nd 1962, 95-101.

²³⁸ Koyl, 67, 85-87, 99.

²³⁹ BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Proceedings In The Province Of British Columbia..., August 2nd 1962, 101.

²⁴⁰ Harry Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012.

²⁴¹ BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Proceedings In The Province Of British Columbia..., August 2nd 1962, 101.

²⁴² Ibid., 108.

fishery. (There was a concern that any connection between the Arctic and Pacific would ruin the salmon fishery through the introduction of the tapeworms found in whitefish or pike that would eat smolt.) To this end, they directed the water comptroller to a report sent to him on 6 April 1962.²⁴³

The *Prince George Citizen* reported on the Chetwynd hearings on 3 August 1962 in an article titled “Compensation Main Concern: No Objections Voiced to Peace Application.” The headlines for this article suggest no one objected to the Peace River project. And while this is technically true, the actual body of the article notes many individuals were unhappy with the inundation of their property, and demanded proper compensation.²⁴⁴ In this article and another, Indian Affairs field officer Robin Kendall was characterized as concerned for local First Nations whose future was uncertain, and who would at minimum lose their traplines, if not five reserves in the Trench. Despite this claimed concern according to the article, he merely argued for compensation for the reserves, and not for the traplines.²⁴⁵ Of note, however, was the fact the writers of the *Prince George Citizen* seemed to believe the Tsek’ehne reserves were 1,047 acres in total and contained the traplines within them.²⁴⁶ Apparently, referring to the five reserves the province believed at the time would be flooded, the combined size is about twenty acres too small and wrong about the location of traplines, which were off-reserve.

²⁴³ Numerous references to this concern can be found in the British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds. I have included the first document in each file. As LeMarquand points out, however, since there were no migratory fish in the Peace River the Fisheries Act did not apply. BCA, GR-0880, Box 57, Fisheries Management Division, “Fisheries Problems Associated With Development Of The Peace River And Its Upper Tributaries For Hydro-Electric Purpose,” (Vancouver: Department of Recreation & Conservation, [1959]), 8-13, 17; BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Proceedings In The Province Of British Columbia..., August 2nd 1962, 95-101, 107-120; KA, File 0214872, Letter to D.B. Turner from E.W. Bassett, 26 March 1962; KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Memorandum to E.W. Bassett from D.B. Turner, 2 April 1962; KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to A.F. Paget from W.R. Hourston, 31 May 1962; KA, File 0242651-B, Volume 2, Letter to A.F. Paget from J. Kemp, 6 April 1962; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Untitled memo; KA, File 2148721, Volume 3, Letter to D.B. Turner from E.W. Bassett, 26 March 1962; LeMarquand, 95.

²⁴⁴ Pat Denton, “Compensation Main Concern:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 3 August 1962.

²⁴⁵ “Concern Felt For Indians,” *Prince George Citizen*, 3 August 1962; Denton, “Compensation Main Concern.”

²⁴⁶ “Concern Felt For Indians.”

Following the hearings at Chetwynd the province held more hearings at the conference room in the Court House in Victoria on 15 October 1962.²⁴⁷ The Indigenous population of the Trench did not come up during these hearings.²⁴⁸ Following these hearings by 16 November 1962 the legal representatives of Westcoast Transmission Company Limited, Western Pacific Pipelines and Crude Oil Products Ltd., Pacific Petroleum Ltd., and the village of Taylor had contacted the water comptroller regarding their clients' objections. With the exception of Taylor, they noted all of their clients had directly agreed to the terms of the proposed water license for the Peace River project. Furthermore, they noted that they believed from the Chetwynd hearings the water comptroller would protect Taylor.²⁴⁹

The Deputy Comptroller of Water Rights formally acknowledged the letter from these representatives on 22 November 1962.²⁵⁰ The water comptroller issued the province a conditional water license on 21 December 1962, officially allowing construction to begin pending approval of the plans "on or before the 31st day of December, 1963 and shall be completed and the water beneficially use on or before the 31st day of December, 1978."²⁵¹ Almost immediately, the province made plans to make a call for contracts on the dam itself.²⁵² Tenders were due 4 April 1963 and newspaper reported that Minister of Lands and Forests Ray Williston said nothing but completely unrealistic contracts could stop or delay the Peace River

²⁴⁷ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to C.F. Murphy from A.F. Paget, 9 October 1962.

²⁴⁸ BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Continuation Of Hearing..., October 15th, At 10:00 am.

²⁴⁹ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to the Comptroller of Water Rights from Farris, Stultz, Bull & Farris, 16 November 1962.

²⁵⁰ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to Farris, Stultz, Bull & Farris from V. Raudsepp, 22 November 1962.

²⁵¹ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Conditional Licenses Under Water Act, 21 December 1962; KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Conditional License Under Water Act, 21 December 1962; SFUA, F-55-37-0-3, Conditional Licenses Under Water Act, 21 December 1962.

²⁵² NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, "Peace Dam Tenders Called Next Week," *Vancouver Sun*, 6 December 1962; NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, "Panel Approves Plans For Peace," *The Province*, 7 December 1962.

project.²⁵³ Nevertheless, BC Hydro posted the tender for bids in the month it had earlier informed the water comptroller it wanted to award a contract.²⁵⁴ When they came in, the four bids ranged from \$73,558,648 and \$97,233,279; Williston used the amounts given to chide opposition and their estimates of the cost of the project and the electricity it would produce.²⁵⁵ The low bid was accepted 3 May 1963, although the consortium led by Peter Kiewit and Sons Canada Limited had begun primary work prior to the official announcement.²⁵⁶ Indeed as early as 1962 eight hundred individuals were working on the project.²⁵⁷ By September of 1963, BC Hydro had diverted the Peace River and by the following year the project was under full swing.²⁵⁸ Three years later in August 1966, Williston was willing to predict the dam would be completely finished by 1972.²⁵⁹

Conclusion

There was nothing close to a guarantee of the Peace River project until 1961. Given the constitutional and legal structure of the Canadian federation, as well as the impacts the proposed monorail and Peace River project might have on them, Ottawa and Alberta had a say when it

²⁵³ British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, "Peace River Project" (Vancouver: British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, [1963]); KA, File 0242651-A, Volume 1, Letter to A.F. Paget from F.A. Lazenby, 7 March 1963; NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, Jack Cahill, "'BC Nears River Of No Return:'...", *Vancouver Sun*, 20 March 1963; NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, "Opposition Chided: Peace Started Says Williston," *Daily Colonist*, 20 March 1963; NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, "Peace Can't Back Up Now – Williston," *The Province*, 20 March 1963; NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, Jack Cahill, "Power Fight Rocks House:...", *Vancouver Sun*, 21 March 1963.

²⁵⁴ KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Letter to A.F. Paget from F.A. Lazenby, 18 October 1962.

²⁵⁵ KA, File 0242651-A, Volume 1, "Bennett Jubilant:...", [The Province, 5 April 1963]; NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, "Big Savings Seen: Peace Dam Tender Low," *Victoria Daily Times*, 5 April 1963.

²⁵⁶ BCA, GR-0880, Box 56, British Columbia Hydro And Power Authority, "Peace River Project 1965," (Vancouver: Consulting Engineers: International Power And Engineering Consultants Limited, 1965), 6; LAC, RG 25, Volume 5611 File Part 1, File 12989-40, "Giant Project: BC Hydro Gets Dam Contract," *Montreal Gazette*, 4 May 1963; NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, Bob McMurray, "Low Bidder On Portage Dam Starts Organizing For Job," *The Province*, 6 April 1963; NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, "\$73,500,000 Peace Dam Contract: Point Of No Return," *Daily Colonist*, 4 May 1963; NBCA, 2000.13.2.8, Box 7, "Peace Past Recall; 1,000 Jobs Opened:...", *Vancouver Sun*, 4 May 1963.

²⁵⁷ NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Peace River Project – Basic Statistics May 1974, 2.

²⁵⁸ NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Peace Power Project; NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk,] 12.

²⁵⁹ NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.11, Box 9, Ian Street, "Peace Dam Project Power Due In '72," *The Province*, 26 August 1966.

came to how both projects were developed. Surprisingly when it came to exercising their rights, neither government seriously opposed either.²⁶⁰ The federal government had already capitulated in 1927 when it came to Aboriginal policy in the province. When the province announced the 1956 and 1957 memorandums, aside from the latter's implications for the Columbia River project, neither Ottawa nor Edmonton seemed too concerned about either. Although the Peace River project soon eclipsed the proposed monorail, its biggest obstacle was the failure of PRPDC to get a contract from the province's two largest electrical companies: the private BCE and the provincially owned BCPC. Rather than watch the proposal fail, W.A.C. Bennett decided to intervene, and in a move that shocked many, nationalized not only BCE, but also the PRPDC on 1 August 1961. With this act the Peace River project was now an almost certain, but given the lack of firm opposition from the federal government, who were constitutionally responsible for the Indians and navigable rivers, or Alberta as an affected sovereign party, proper steps were not taken to ensure the provincial government or BC Hydro adequately considered the impacts on the Tsek'ehne. Limited consultation occurred, but with Indian Affairs serving as the mediator between the Tsek'ehne and others, they were effectively consultations with Indian Affairs. As a result, the Tsek'ehne were never given the genuine option to object to the project, and aside from reserves and traplines little concern was shown for the effects the Peace River project might have on them, their traditional territory or their lifestyles. The province was now constructing the project, and further consultations were to take place in an attempt to compensate the Tsek'ehne for these impacts and prepare them for the flooding that would follow completion.

²⁶⁰ LeMarquand, 102.

Chapter 4 – What Dam? Consulting About a Dam and Replacement Reserves, 1962-1970

With the Peace River project under construction, the province's constitutionally protected reserve policy, tempered by the Aboriginal lands question and Great Settlement, suddenly became relevant to the Tsek'ehne, who were stuck in-between two levels of government over a reserve exchange. Since the Canadian constitution made the Tsek'ehne wards of the federal government, BC, and their Crown Corporation, BC Hydro, continued to primarily consult with Indian Affairs rather than directly with the Tsek'ehne. It was therefore up to Indian Affairs to be the main point of contact regarding the project, its impacts, and the options the Tsek'ehne had regarding both. The Tsek'ehne, however, were informed, not consulted, and the information they received was often contradictory or incomplete. Part of the problem was that while representatives of Axel Wenner-Gren had first proposed the project in 1957, official information did not exist until 1962. Furthermore, because of Tsek'ehne involvement in the wage labour economy as well as the continuance of traditional economic activities, not everyone was informed once this information was available. When it came to replacing flooded reserves not only did Indian Affairs drive the process, but the Aboriginal lands question re-emerged as both levels of the government fought over how these reserve lands would be replaced. The end result of this lack of information and the federal-provincial conflict over creating new reserves was a Tsek'ehne population that as a whole did not truly understand the effects of the Peace River project, and in the case of the Fort Grahame section of the Finlay River band (Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay), were left without a habitable reserve when the water began to rise.

Working to Clear a Reservoir: Tsek'ehne Employment in the Peace River Project

The Tsek'ehne are not categorically opposed to development or industry.¹ However, one aspect scholars have often overlooked with regard to the Peace River project is the involvement of Tsek'ehne labourers.² This oversight exists despite the fact Indian Affairs recommended the Tsek'ehne themselves clear Finlay Forks No. 1 as well as the sheer number of jobs Elders recall were available at the time in connection to the project.³ It seems to have persisted due to self-proclaimed “allies” who cherish the simple binary created by the ecological Indian.⁴ Ironically, rather than helping the Tsek'ehne, this omission has only confused the question of what people heard about the Peace River project.

During the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam journalists were well aware of Indigenous employment in this part of BC and as Holly Nathan points out the news media considered the situation to be a good thing, regardless of the eventual impacts of the project on them.⁵ Nor was Indigenous employment unexpected and a BC Engineering report from July 1958 notes that while “the region at present is largely uninhabited, those residents not employed in the limited mining, lumbering and ranching ventures relying mainly on trapping for income.”⁶

¹ Guy Lanoue, “Continuity and Change: The Development of Political Self-Definition Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia,” (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1983), 37.

² Historian Mary Christina Koyl even suggests the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Dene were ignorant of what was happening because they were so far away from the dam site, with only four families working at a sawmill. Koyl herself later challenges the assertion and notes most band members worked at sawmills around Finlay Forks. Mary Christina Koyl, “Cultural Chasm: A 1960s Hydro Development and the Tsay Keh Dene Native Community of Northern British Columbia” (MA Thesis: University of Victoria, 1992), 44, 46, 73-74, 88.

³ Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to BC Hydro and Power Authority from Indian Commissioner for BC, J.V. Boys, 3 August 1965; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter, interviewed by author and Susan McCook, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2012.

⁴ There are many sources that examine the concept of the ecological Indian. A good place to start is Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2000).

⁵ “100 Area Indians Work Peace Dam,” *Prince George Citizen*, 16 June 1965; Nathan, 78.

⁶ British Columbia Archives (BCA), MS 1172, Box 2, BC Engineering Company Limited, “Report On Rocky Mountain Trench Area Hydro-Electric Investigations Stage I Volume I” (Vancouver: The British Thomson-Houston Company (Canada) Ltd., 1958), 1-01-3.

This omission is not to say that no one documented Tsek'ehne employment. Among the non-Aboriginal labourers involved in the construction of the Peace River project, some have produced memoirs and one recommended by Tsek'ehne Elder Ivor Smaaslet is Norman Unrau's *Under These Waters: Williston Lake Before It Was*.⁷ Norman Unrau remembers the BC Forest Service employed many men from Fort Grahame and Ingenika as boatman and fallers in connection to the clearing of the proposed reservoir basin. The families he worked the most with were the Solonas family of McLeod Lake and Pierre family of Fort Grahame. He recalls former McLeod Lake chiefs Paul Solonas and Andrew Solonas Sr. were employed felling trees in addition to being river men transporting supplies.⁸ Andrew Solonas Sr.'s sons Verne and Richard recall BC Hydro employed their father felling trees not only in the expected reservoir area, but also in the Dina Lake area, near present day Mackenzie. As Verne recalls, his uncle Andrew Prince was also working with his father during this period. The camp they lived at was located on Cut Thumb Creek.⁹ His brother Richard still recalls the shock his family experienced when they returned to their cabin, only to find the area around it clear-cut and the cabin lived in.¹⁰

Aside from working as tree fellers and boatmen, local sawmills that sprung up in the wake of the Peace River project employed many Tsek'ehne men and as a result during this period employment levels were universally high.¹¹ At times this involvement followed historical

⁷ Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Salmon Valley, BC, 1 October 2012; Norman Unrau, *Under These Waters: Williston Lake: Before It Was* (n.p., n.p., 2001).

⁸ Unrau, 42, 68-69, 96-97.

⁹ Richard also recalls an unnamed uncle working with his father, but it is unclear if it is Andrew Prince. Richard Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 27 September 2012; Verne Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.

¹⁰ Richard Solonas.

¹¹ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Alfred Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012. It is not entirely clear how this fits into the claim by Karl Pollon and Shirley Smith Matheson that the project employed only non-local union labour long term, while only providing temporary employment to locals, although it should be noted they include felling in the latter category. Earl Pollon and Shirlee Smith Matheson, *This Was Our Valley* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2003), 114, 117-118, 138-140.

seasonal migration patterns that predated the Peace River project and it is not entirely clear the changes initiated by the clearing of the reservoir basin were obvious. McLeod Lake Elder Georgina Chingee recalls her father Max McNabb Tylee worked at some of these sawmills as well as felling in part to clear the reservoir basin. During the summer he would return to the reserve at McLeod Lake.¹² Increasingly, however, more and more Tsek'ehne stopped returning home during the fall to trap during the winter. By 1961 enough members of the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Dene had moved to Finlay Forks on a permanent basis that Indian Affairs constructed homes for them despite the location not being a reserve.¹³ The major turning point, however, was in 1963-1964. It was at this point in time that most Tsek'ehne men got involved in the forest industry year round, and in the case of the Finlay River Band rarely returned home in the fall or gathered in the summer.¹⁴ Elders on the other hand recalled it was the beginning of the forest industry in Tsek'ehne traditional territory, with Tsay Keh Dene Elder Jean Isaac connecting it to the construction of the new sawmill by Cattermole Timber and the preparation for the Peace River reservoir.¹⁵ (Tsay Keh Dene Grand Chief Gordon Pierre and former Chief Ray Izony see it

¹² Georgina Chingee, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 19 March 2012.

¹³ Ray Izony, interviewed by authors, Prince George, BC, 3 October 2012; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Regional Land Use Officer, F.J. Walchli, 7 November 1966; Alex Poole, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 6 October 1984 in *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Helen Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September 2012; Vera Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012.

¹⁴ Erroneously the *Prince George Citizen* claimed it was the first time the Tsek'ehne were engaged in the wage labour economy. Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge and government reports indicate Willie Pierre was on unemployment insurance prior to 1963 due to previous work. See Vera Poole, 15 March 2012. She remembers only her uncle Thomas Tomah did not head south. "At Fort Ware: Housing Programs for Indians," *Prince George Citizen*, 5 August 1964; E.F. Ted Williams History Centre, Oral History, A998.9.1, Harry Chingee interviewed 29 August, 1998; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1, Part 1, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC from Superintendent W. Presloski, 16 September 1964; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Superintendent of Lands, D. Borthwick from Indian Commissioner of BC, J.V. Boys, 9 November 1966; LAC, RG 10, V-2011-00666-X (2011-3-8-27), Box 2, File 985/3-8-27, Letter to F.C. Bradley from N.Y. Middleton, 9 March 1963; LAC, RG 10, V-2011-00666-X (2011-3-8-27), Box 2, File 985/3-8-27, Letter to from F.C. Bradley, 12 March 1963; "Town and Country: McLeod's Lake," *Prince George Citizen*, 22 February 1965.

¹⁵ Carrier Lumber followed in quick succession with some Elders recalling they were first. Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 September 2012; Ray Izony, "Changes in Tsay Kehnnay Dene Governance/Society," Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; William (Billie) Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012; Patrick Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012.

as one of the first sustained incursions of Europeans into Tsay Keh Nay territory.)¹⁶ It was made possible by the completion of a forest access road to Finlay Forks in 1963 and Elders recall that prior to the flooding every turn off on the access road from Mackenzie to Finlay Forks had a sawmill.¹⁷

Beyond clearing the basin, the Tsek'ehne were involved in other areas of the Peace River project. In 1966 the *Prince George Citizen* reported on Keom Pierre, who had worked the previous summer clearing for the transmission lines only to return to trapping near Fort Grahame in the winter.¹⁸ Keom's middle name was Guillaume. It was under this name that student Neil Westmacott remembered him as the boatman he had an adventure with when they had to return two moose calves to their angry mother.¹⁹

What Did You Hear...? What the Tsek'ehne Heard About the Peace River Project

Since the Tsek'ehne worked to complete the Peace River project the question emerges of what did they know about the development and its potential impacts? Non-Tsek'ehne views have tended to fall in-between two extremes. On the one hand Earl Pollon and Shirlee Smith Matheson note local European residents like Pen Powell and A.C. Geddes claimed that when the flooding began the Tsek'ehne (never named and referred to as the Indians) were either confused and disbelieving or thought it was a mere beaver dam causing the flooding.²⁰ Ray Williston on the other hand would later claim their employment in connection the dam and reservoir must

¹⁶ Ray Izony, "Changes;" Gordon Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September, 2008.

¹⁷ William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012; Alfred Solonas.

¹⁸ He was not the only Tsek'ehne who worked on the transmission lines. "100 Area Indians Work Peace Dam," *Prince George Citizen*, 16 June 1965; Jack Isadore, interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 4 August 2004; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter; "Town And Country: McLeod's Lake," *Prince George Citizen*, 4 February 1966.

¹⁹ His wife Virginia recalls that Keom was also employed as a freighter. Virginia Pierre, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 9 August 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Meg Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers: Harnessing the Power of the Peace and Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2010), 66-67.

²⁰ Kwadacha Elder Louie Tomah recalls Ken Powell told the people to stay. Pollon and Matheson, 268-269; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012.

have meant they knew what was happening.²¹ It is important to remember, however, that the Tsek'ehne were not employed constructing the dam itself. Therefore, even if they were employed clearing the reservoir, it did not mean they knew about the dam in any meaningful way and some Elders recall people wondered why all the clearing was taking place.²² Yet whether they knew it or not, the clearing of the basin was the beginning of the end of a way of life for the Tsek'ehne. Norman Unrau summed up the change in one single recollection. As he stated:

One day as I came ashore, near Davis Creek, I spotted a tree with something hanging among the branches. This 'something' turned out to be a half dozen large traps most likely used for beaver sets. On a subsequent check the trees had been felled and who knows if someone recovered them or not! Most of the natives trapped at one time or another!²³

Although perhaps unintentional, the symbolism in this passage sums up what was happening to the Tsek'ehne. The clearing of the basin was quite literally taking the old way of life, if not the old trapper Bennett claimed to have met, away with it down the river. One can equally compare the unnamed trapper to the Tsek'ehne as inhabitants of the northern Rocky Mountain Trench (the Trench), whose developments Bennett saw as not correctly utilizing the environment. With accounts of trappers committing suicide after the completion of the Bennett Dam, one wonders if that was the trapper's ultimate fate, especially since there is no record of the encounter from Bennett's trapper's perspective.²⁴

As with many other Indigenous groups at the time, proponents of the dam readily employed the rhetoric that a backward people like the Tsek'ehne should not hold up the Peace

²¹ Northern British Columbia Archives (NBCA), Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.21, Box 1, The Mackenzie Story: Comments On The Presentation.

²² Inversely, however, Kwadacha Elder Mike Abou remembers questioning Albert and Gilbert Poole as to why they would help the Europeans clear the reservoir. Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Lena McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2013; Alfred Solonas; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012.

²³ Unrau, 69.

²⁴ Among these was said to be Dick Corless, although provincial death records state he died of a stroke in 1959. BCA, GR-2951, 1959-09-014790; Pollon and Matheson, 183.

River project.²⁵ Indeed, as reporter Mel Rothenburger informed his readership immediately prior to the flooding of the Trench, saving the past, including Finlay Forks, Fort Grahame, Ingenika and Fort Ware, for the few should not hold up the promise of development for the many.²⁶ Still, someone had to tell the few.

Complicating the matter were a number of issues. On a purely political level there was the issue of representation on the Finlay River Band council itself. In a 1987 specific claim, the Fort Grahame section's successor band, the Ingenika Band, stated they had no representation on the band council.²⁷ Former Chief Emil McCook, who told me there were a total of four councillors on council: two for Fort Ware and two for Fort Grahame, challenges this assertion. According to him, at the time the two councillors for Fort Grahame were Isadore Izony and former Tsay Keh Dene Chief Seymour Isaac.²⁸ Aside from Emil, however, I can find no evidence for either individual acting as a band councillor.²⁹ Indeed, when I asked Seymour who was chief at the time, he told me it was Tomah Izony, a claim supported by other Elders in Tsay

²⁵ Carney claims that despite having a modern school, the Fort Ware Tsek'ene still wore moose skin clothing. NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.9, Box 8, Pat Carney, "Peace Reservoir Key For North Pulp Mill," *The Province*, 12 February 1964; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Mel Rothenburger, "Don't Worry About The Trench," [1968].

²⁶ NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Rothenburger, "Don't Worry About The Trench."

²⁷ Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), "Status Report on Specific Claims: Tsay Keh Dene (BAND-609)," *Reporting Centre on Specific Claims* http://services.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/SCBRI_E/Main/ReportingCentre/External/externalreporting.aspx (accessed 14 August 2017).

²⁸ He also claims the band became known as the Long Grass Band. Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2013.

²⁹ For example. Isadore's daughter Lena McCook does not remember ever hearing her father was a band councillor and when one looks at the three of the four Band Council Resolutions dealing with the authorization of the flooding of Finlay Forks No. 1 at Fort Grahame neither individual is treated as anything other than a band member. The fourth BCR is only referred to in Indian Affairs records, and I could not find a copy of it. It appears to have been passed on 14 September 1966, with twenty-one signatures in addition to the chief and council, to authorize the creation of the Tutu Creek and Parsnip River reserves. Lena McCook; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Finlay River Band Council Resolution, 19 February 1965; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Finlay River Band Council Resolution, 28 July 1967; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Finlay River Band Council Resolution, 26 March 1968; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 30 December 1970.

Keh Dene.³⁰ It appears therefore that despite the federal government officially merging them in 1959 the two bands remained *de facto* distinct with John McCook the chief of Fort Ware and the official Finlay River Band and Tomah Izony the chief of Fort Grahame.

Even if you ignore the political issues, differences in culture were certainly important too. For example, there seemed to be an emphasis on the part of state officials, including BC Hydro representatives, on making sure men over women were informed, despite the fact from a traditional perspective women are the basis of Tsek'ehne society.³¹ But given the fact the Tsek'ehne had been in contact with Europeans and Euro-Canadians since 1805 in the south and 1826 in the north, claims by Mary Christina Koyl that a "cultural chasm" existed that precluded the possibility of providing information are overstated.³² Perhaps more importantly there existed issues with language. At the time not all Tsek'ehne were fluent in English and none of the officials sent to inform them were fluent in Tsek'ehne.³³ Tsay Keh Dene Elder Billie Poole for example notes that Chief Tomah Izony did not speak English and would disregard mail he received from BC Hydro.³⁴ As former Chief Seymour Isaac recalls Chief Izony had a translator whenever he met with state officials.³⁵ Even with a translator present issues emerged due to the heavy use of technical jargon.³⁶

³⁰ Albert mentioned the spatial division of the bands as proof of their distinctness. Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 7 November 2008; Albert Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 11 September 2012; William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012.

³¹ Verne Solonas.

³² In making this claim Koyl seems to ignore evidence to the contrary and claims to know what Elders are thinking. Koyl, 5, 47, 50, 53-55, 68-73, 79-81, 90, 96-100, 104, 121-122, *passim*; Pollon and Matheson, 267-268;

³³ "History of Ingenika," *Native Voice* 17, No. 2 (1989): 19; Seymour Isaac, 7 November 2008; William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012; Doris Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 26 September 2012; Agnes Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012.

³⁴ William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012.

³⁵ Seymour Isaac, 7 November 2008.

³⁶ "History of Ingenika," 19.

When it comes to what state representatives told the Tsek'ehne it is hard to find a definite starting point for when they first received information. For example, Percy Gray notes how he visited the Trench as a private citizen in February-March 1957 to see the area he had proposed be developed, and fondly remembers the Tsek'ene cook who fed him during this stay at Fort Ware.³⁷ Whether the cook knew who Grey was, why he was there, or anything about the 1956 memorandum is unclear, although it should be noted Fort Ware was in regular, albeit sporadic, communication with the Tse'khene of McLeod Lake. Around the same time reporter Ben Metcalfe visited McLeod Lake to talk to local residents about the memorandum. According to him, he talked to a Tse'khene individual by the name of David Slocum, William (Bill) Boyko who was married to Marianne (Maryiam) Toodick, a Tse'khene woman from McLeod Lake, and local storeowner and riverman Dick Corless Jr.³⁸ Furthermore, even if they had, the information available at this point in time was about the proposed monorail, not the Peace River project.

McLeod Lake's chief, Harry Chingee, was present at the hearings at Chetwynd in 1962. Neither the chief of the Finlay River Band, John McCook, nor any other representative of the band or its two sections, (such as Tomah Izony), attended the hearings, however. Chingee recalled both Indian Affairs and the province attempted to describe the impact of the Peace River project and Williston Lake reservoir on the Tsek'ehne. Unfortunately, they did not succeed. They provided flawed information, although in his opinion this reflected more on government ignorance than malicious intent.³⁹ For example, they told him it would take months, if not years,

³⁷ BCA, Percy Grey collection, T3792:0001-0002, Percy Grey, "Origins of the Central British Columbia Development Project," May 1980.

³⁸ All of these individuals have passed away before my research, and nobody I talked to mentioned this event. "“Couldn't Care Less,” Veteran Riverman:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 21 February 1957; NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Gordon McCallum, “BC Staking Rush Forecast:...,” *The Province*, 15 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Ben Metcalfe, “Civilization Doesn't Excite The Ominecans,” *Province* 15 February 1957; NBCA, 2000.13.2.2, Box 4, Eric Nicol, “Giving BC To The Americans? Nonsense – The Man's A Swede!” *The Province*, 19 February 1957.

³⁹ Harry Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012.

for much of the reservoir to flood; in fact, it took two to three months.⁴⁰ Furthermore, rather than being an actual hearing that could potentially stop the project as he believed, Harry remembers the decision had already been made to go forward with the development. Therefore, he resigned himself to the fact that it would create jobs for residents at McLeod Lake, even if it would negatively impact them in other ways.⁴¹ His successor Andrew Solonas similarly recalls he could not do nothing to stop to the project.⁴²

John McCook was not told about the expected reservoir until 1964, and then during a meeting in Finlay Forks.⁴³ His successor Emil McCook recalls that no one officially informed the members of the Fort Ware section of the Finlay River Band (Fort Ware Tsek'ene) until 1967 and even then they did not properly explain the information provided. As a result, they were not able to properly prepare for the potential impacts. It appears since none of their reserves were to be flooded state officials did not see the need to meet with them to the same extent as they did with the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay. Indeed, Emil recalls his uncle John was worried about them and despite the connections between the two groups felt they should have their own leadership.⁴⁴

Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay Elders remember visits from Indian Agents during this period were rare and usually consisted of “two hour stop overs.”⁴⁵ As a result knowledge of, and interactions with, the colonial state were limited during this period.⁴⁶ As former Chief Seymour

⁴⁰ Official estimates stated it would take five years for the reservoir fill to its maximum level of 2,250 feet. Harry Chingee; Univeristy of Victoria Archives (UVA), Ray Williston fonds, AR002, Box 4, File 16, Letter to Ray Williston from John Gouge, 10 April 1962.

⁴¹ Harry Chingee.

⁴² Andrew Solonas Sr., interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 29 July 2004.

⁴³ Jimmie and Nora Massettos, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012.

⁴⁴ Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013.

⁴⁵ Direct quote from page Koyl page 70. Koyl, 46, 70, 98; “History of Ingenika,” 19; Stanley, 110.

⁴⁶ “History of Ingenika,” 19; Jean Isaac, “Sekani History,” *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, ed. Kaya Minogue, 66-67; Gordon Pierre; Albert Poole, “The Long Journey Home (Excerpt from Work in Progress),” *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 159.

Isaac would later tell reporter Mike Halleran, Indian Affairs seemed content to leave them alone.⁴⁷

The first meeting regarding the project Seymour Isaac remembers occurred around 1960 and took place at the store in Ingenika. Besides himself, Tomah Izony, William Isaac, Frank Hunter, Alec Pierre, Isadore Izony and Art Van Somer were present at this meeting with former game warden Alf Jenks and a representative of BC Hydro. Art had brought the latter two men up. During the meeting Isadore asked why the province would construct the dam. He was told it was for electricity. At first these Elders laughed at the news, and Seymour remembers nobody really took it seriously. Nevertheless, Frank Hunter and Chief Tomah Izony were indignant that Europeans would even come into Tsek'ehne territory, or that they would flood it, especially as the Tsek'ehne lived off it, and just wanted outsiders to leave them alone. BC Hydro's representative quickly stopped talking, but not before pointing out he was only the messenger and arguing that no one could stop development. (According to him, even if someone stopped the dam logging would still come to the area.) He also promised he would return to talk to more people. It is unclear if he ever did.⁴⁸

As it turns out the BC Hydro representative was Charlie Cunningham, who kept a journal of this 1962 trip. He claims to have shown these people maps of the expected reservoir and remembers the Elders expressed a feeling of sorrow, but hope that they would find new land to replace their lost land. He even claimed some hoped their traplines along the edge of the new reservoir would be more productive and therefore wanted the flood to begin as soon as possible. Among the people he claimed to talk to during the trip were Art Van Somer, Frank Hunter at

⁴⁷ *Tsay Keh Dene: CBC Hourglass Documentary*, CBC Television, 1970.

⁴⁸ Former chief Ray Izony also recalls nobody took the information seriously. Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012; Ray Izony, 3 October 2012.

Fort Grahame, Isadore Izony at Ingenika, and four unnamed trappers at Fort Ware. He found additional Tsek'ehne residents at all three locations as well as Finlay Forks. It is important to note, however, that although Cunningham reports there being around twenty-five to thirty people at Ingenika and two hundred at Fort Ware, he makes no claim that he talked to all of them, or even saw them.⁴⁹

Art Van Somer's son Bob Van Somer remembers not only this trip, but another with Cunningham. According to him, the entire message of both trips to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents of the Trench was "total bullshit." The province would only provide compensation for traplines and real property. Cunningham promised that the reservoir would open up the Trench, provide a constant source of jobs, and lead to the development of a commercial fishery as well as resorts. Of note, however, he neither directly connected the reservoir to the Peace River project, nor gave an estimate of its expected size. Indeed, aside from these "negotiations" Cunningham did not say much.⁵⁰

The 1962 meeting was not the only one to take place that Elders from Tsay Keh Dene remember. Billie Poole remembers another meeting on 20 March 1963 with Indian Affairs Superintendent W. Presloski held in Ingenika. It was memorable as Billie recalls Presloski had the people track down a runway in the snow with their snowshoes so he could land. Held at Shorty Webber's store, in addition to Billie Poole, Thomas Tomah, Isadore Izony, William Isaac, Alex Poole, Francis Isaac, Seymour Isaac and Keom Pierre were in attendance. As far as Billie knows this was the first time anyone heard about the expected reservoir. At the meeting Presloski

⁴⁹ I could not find the original journal and cite excerpts and from the *Peace River Chronicles* as well as the account found in Pollon and Matheson's *This Was Our Valley*. This is obviously problematic. For example, depending on how you read Pollon and Matheson they could seem to suggest Cunningham claims he talked to the populations he cites for each community. Charlie Cunningham, "The Fur Trade on the Finlay, 1962," *Peace River Chronicles: 81 Eye-Witness Accounts of the Peace River Region of British Columbia*, ed. Gordon Bowes (Vancouver: Prescott Publishing Company, 1963), 532-537; Pollon and Matheson, 267-268.

⁵⁰ Bob and Shirley Van Somer, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 22 March 2012.

presented the project as inevitable and promised compensation. Rather than discuss the news in English, however, those in attendance talked in Tsek'ehne. Overall Billie Poole would recall Indian Affairs not only handled the situation for the Tsek'ehne, but also had a step-by-step plan to do so, only informing the people when necessary, and then, after the fact. Seeing it as yet another aspect of colonialism, he would not be surprised if the state first conceived of the project as early as the 1930s.⁵¹ In a meeting in 1977 he would state bluntly that meetings should have taken place when the dam was first considered, and not after the fact.⁵²

Despite taking this approach, Indian Affairs continued to hold meetings with the Tsek'ehne as constructed progressed. On 10-11 December 1963 they met with the residents of Fort Grahame and Old Ingenika and the following year held meetings in Old Ingenika and Finlay Forks.⁵³ Indeed, it was the latter meeting in 1964 that resulted in most of the people heading to Finlay Forks for work.⁵⁴

Elders in all three communities recall hearing varying amounts of information about what was going to happen. This difference should not be surprising as even among the Euro-Canadian population connected to the Peace River project, while some were pestering the province to find out when they would pay compensation, others claimed the province conceived the entire project in secrecy.⁵⁵ As local resident and historian Earl Pollon notes in his book with Shirlee Smith Matheson, nothing he heard about the dam prior to nationalization seemed to matter until the province completed it.⁵⁶

⁵¹ William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012.

⁵² LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Suzanne Veit, 'Meeting with Ingenika Band,' Ingenika Point, 21 March 1977.

⁵³ Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to District Supervisor from A.C. Roach, 30 December 1970; Jimmie and Nora Massettie.

⁵⁴ Ray Izony, 3 October 2012.

⁵⁵ Kwadacha Archives (KA), British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 2148721, Volume 3, Letter to the BC Government from Roy McDougall, 2 January 1962; Unrau, 9-10.

⁵⁶ Pollon and Matheson, 108.

Overall Elders remember no real consultation occurred and no one provided useful information about the consequences of the Peace River project. Instead, state officials merely presented it as happening regardless of what the Tsek'ehne wanted. Admittedly, some had heard about the project as early as 1957, but information they received was limited and problematic. It was easily forgotten or dismissed. Furthermore, not everyone attended the meetings or even heard of them. There tended to be an emphasis on talking primarily with those receiving compensation.⁵⁷ Some Elders remember hearing nothing until the water actually started to rise. The amount of information people received sometimes varied within a family.⁵⁸ At times people even encountered state employees sent north to prepare for the clearing of the reservoir. These encounters only added to the confusion as it was not the job of these individuals to inform the Tsek'ehne, and therefore they often gave incomplete or evasive answers to questions about what

⁵⁷ Among the Elders I interviewed this is considered common knowledge. See Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012; Albert Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 6 November 2008; Albert Poole, 11 September 2012; Helen Poole. The closest any came to claiming complete comprehension is stating they were told and knew about the dam. As Jean Isaac would say the Tsek'ehne had a tendency to ignore what was not understood, downplaying what they understood, but did not like, and accepting what they understood and did like. Koyle uses this statement to argue the Tsek'ehne did not understand because of cultural differences. In reality this statement is a classic example of confirmation bias, and as seen in Stanley, she remembers that prior to the flooding she and her husband Francis Isaac were too busy working and being parents to dwell on what bureaucrats told them anyway. Jean's brother-in-law Albert Poole remembers the first meaningful information was received during the 1964 meetings, but was overshadowed by the promise of jobs. Overall he and other Elders believe the state was ignorant of the presence of the Tsek'ehne. His sister Helen Poole, however, thinks the general mobility of the community at the time made it hard to inform people. Koyle, 69-71, 75; Pollon and Matheson, 271-273; Stanley, 110.

⁵⁸ Felix Charlie, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2012; John Cruickshank, "Two Decades Later, BC Offers Aid:...", *The Globe and Mail*, 22 September 1987; Lena McCook; Rita McIsaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September 2012; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012; Melvin Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2013; Alfred Solonas; Suzanne Tomah, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 20 October 1984 in *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

they were doing.⁵⁹ Not helping the situation is that some Elders were upset their homeland was going to be flooded.⁶⁰

Based on the information they received about the size of the reservoir many believed it would only extend to Finlay Forks, to the height of the riverbank, or be an extreme spring flooding instead of the massive reservoir that flooded 90 miles of the Finlay River and 110 miles of the Parsnip and Crooked rivers.⁶¹ Highlighting the lack of understanding was the fact that even this size was much smaller than the original grandiose reservoir, 2,525 feet in height, that would have reversed the flow of the Peace, Parsnip and Crooked rivers into Summit Lake, and over the Arctic-Pacific Divide into the Fraser River.⁶² At this height the reservoir would have flooded McLeod Lake in addition to Finlay Forks and Fort Grahame.⁶³

According to Seymour it was due to this sort of misinformation that the Tsek'ehne were even willing to sign anything.⁶⁴ (Other Elders would suggest Tsek'ehne leadership was

⁵⁹ Mabel Troendle recalls ribbons being placed on the hills above the river between 1965-1966. Pollon and Matheson argue the fact the Tsek'ehne did not relocate above these ribbons as evidence the Tsek'ehne did not know what they meant despite being told. Maggie Pierre, however, remembers her father was upset as he knew it was related to the destruction of their homes. It should be noted that Maggie's cousin, Grand Chief Gordon Pierre, does not remember seeing any ribbons. Water comptroller records reveal the BC Forest Service was order to mark the 2,275-foot contour in December 1961 either through blazing or paint gun. The contour, however, would not be surveyed, but identified using photographs. Martha Egnell, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012; Ingenika Band Members, interviewed by Lorraine Izony, Ingenika, BC, 25 April 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 0214872, Re: Peace River Reservoir, 1 December 1961; Gordon Pierre; Pollon and Matheson, 268, 271; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012.

⁶⁰ Stanley, 110.

⁶¹ BCA, Peace River Power Development Company fonds, MS 2353, Letter to The Honourable The Minister Of Lands And Forests Of The Province Of British Columbia from W.C. Mainwaring, December 1959; Seymour Isaac, 7 November 2008; Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012; Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Albert Poole, 11 September 2012.

⁶² BCA, Percy Grey collection, T3792:0001-0002, Percy Grey.

⁶³ NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk,] "The Mackenzie Story" (Mackenzie: Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada, Local No. 18, 1974), 3n1.

⁶⁴ Seymour Isaac, 7 November 2008; Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012.

lacking.)⁶⁵ In 1972 he told reporter Marj Gray that had they taken the information seriously they would have fought the project.⁶⁶ He believes BC Hydro fooled the people.⁶⁷ Reflecting this sentiment Kwadacha Elder Louie Tomah remembers thinking that the development might be beneficial, only to end up feeling powerless.⁶⁸ The end result was that despite the Tsek'ehne not having a complete understanding of the consequences, state officials claimed they agreed to the Peace River project.

Nowhere can one better see the implications of this belief than when it came to the burning of cabins within the expected reservoir basin. Some Elders like Jean Isaac recall provincial representatives not only told community members that they would burn their cabins, but also promised that before doing so they would remove and protect the possessions they found until their own could pick them up. As she notes, however, when her husband Francis Isaac returned to Fort Grahame during the summer of 1967 he found the province had not only burned all the cabins without warning, but also saved nothing.⁶⁹ The cabins burned were not just those of the Tsek'ehne, and local historian Bernard McKay claims the individuals hired to burn them down, Alf Jenks and Gord McMullen, sometimes tried to burn down cabins up to three years prior to the flooding of the reservoir. As a result, sometimes residents drove them off by gunpoint.⁷⁰

The Isaacs were not the only family to have this happen to them. Others, however, do not remember the province telling them they were going to burn their cabins. It is a source of anger

⁶⁵ According Zepheria Isadore, Chief Harry Chingee told band members that the reservoir would only flood part of their traditional territory and no traplines. As she points out Andrew Prince, Max McNabb Tylee, and David Solonas lost their traplines. Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet; Melvin Smaaslet.

⁶⁶ Marj Gray, "Finlay Forks Indians Gone By Fall," *Prince George Citizen*, 17 May 1972.

⁶⁷ Seymour Isaac, 7 November 2008.

⁶⁸ Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012.

⁶⁹ Pollon and Matheson, 273.

⁷⁰ Bernard McKay, *Crooked River Rats: The Adventures of Pioneer Rivermen* (Surrey: Hancock House Publishers Ltd., 2000), 172; Pollon and Matheson, 176, 273.

to this day.⁷¹ Elsie Pierre believes the province made no attempt to save property inside the cabins, while her sister Rita McIsaac is not sure they took stuff.⁷² Complicating the situation was that many individuals stored their valuables under the floor boards of their cabin and therefore those unfamiliar with this practice could easily miss items.⁷³ As it turns out, forestry workers took some of these possessions, although Norman Unrau claims they were under the understanding the owners had abandoned anything left behind.⁷⁴ And although some like Isadore Izony were lucky in that other band members spotted and were able to retrieve their property from some of these workers, many Tsek'ehne found themselves with next to nothing.⁷⁵

News Reserves, Same Old Problem: Exchanging Reserves Post-Great Settlement

After 1964, meetings increasingly move away from informing the Tsek'ehne about the project to dealing with the expected impacts of the reservoir. This change was a result of the investigations in December 1959 by Indian Affairs in preparation for the development. During the Chetwynd hearings state officials expected the Peace River project to flood five reserves. In December 1962, however, BC Hydro informed Indian Affairs that because of the lowering of the dam only Finlay Forks No. 1 and Police Meadows No. 2 would be flooded. (These two reserves were the reserves of the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay.) By October 1963 the province revised this conclusion once again, and BC Hydro informed Indian Affairs that only Finlay Forks No. 1

⁷¹ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012. He considers it a complete lack of respect for the owners of the cabins and notes in Tsek'ehne culture one does not touch other people's stuff.

⁷² Rita McIsaac; Elsie Pierre and Mabel Troendle, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 10 November 2008.

⁷³ Ingenika Band Members; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

⁷⁴ Some see this action as out right theft. Most notable among the things taken are Willie Pierre's photo collection currently in the ethnography collection of the Royal BC Museum after being "found" at Fort Grahame on 18 August 1966. Laura Seymour also heard Keom and Virginia Pierre's photos were at the museum, although she was not sure. Mary Ann Charlie and Laura Seymour, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, 5 March 2012; Royal BC Museum, Ethnographic Photography Collection, Section Fort Grahame, Photos 13750-13853; Unrau, 53, 63-64, 68.

⁷⁵ Georgina Chingee; Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Rita McIsaac; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

would be flooded.⁷⁶ Finlay Forks No. 1 was a residential reserve, while Police Meadows No. 2 was quite literally a meadow in a mountain valley. Within four months Indian Affairs had identified possible choices for the location of replacement reserves and presented them to the Finlay River Band. (The McLeod Lake Tse'khene determined which band members the reservoir would dislocate and dealt with them on an individual level.)⁷⁷ By that September Indian Affairs not only knew Finlay Forks No. 1 would be flooded in 1968, but also had been "told" the Finlay River Band wanted two news reserves near what would become Mackenzie, BC.⁷⁸

Everything was in order for a quick exchange of reserve lands. For a whole host of reasons creating a new reserve within any province is not simple, most notably because of provincial control (with the exception of the Prairie Provinces until 1930) of lands and resources.⁷⁹ To put it bluntly the provinces might not be willing to surrender lands and resources to the federal government for a new reserve. In the case of BC as a result of the conflict between the province and the federal government, reserves were historically smaller on average than those in the rest of Canada, with almost all First Nations having more than one. The province argued this combination, in conjunction with the lack of resources and social services on them, meant that Indigenous people would have to leave their reserves and intermingle with other British Columbians, most notably through the wage labour economy. The province hoped that this situation would lead to assimilation.⁸⁰ Although the pass system complicated the matter, this rationale shaped BC reserve policy throughout much of the twentieth century. It was not the only

⁷⁶ Lanoue, "Continuity," 382.

⁷⁷ According to Koyl Indian Affairs claimed it had difficulty meeting with band members. Koyl, 68; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 30 December 1970.

⁷⁸ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Superintendent, Stuart Lake Agency from W. Presloski, 16 September 1964.

⁷⁹ Bob Irwin, "Treaty 8: An Anomaly Revisited," *BC Studies* no. 127 (2000): 86-89.

⁸⁰ Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographic Change* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2000), 87-88, *passim*.

rationale, however, as the province simultaneously held that Indigenous people were in way of “proper” development and therefore they should remove them.⁸¹ The relocation of the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay is a result of both policies.

The most obvious evidence of this fact was that despite asking for two new reserves to replace Finlay Forks No. 1 the total acreage of the two would not exceed the size of Finlay Forks No. 1, 168 acres.⁸² It was neither a failure to take into consideration the overall impacts of the Peace River project, nor the province myopically “seeing like a state,” but a simple continuation of BC reserve policy.⁸³ So too was Indian Commissioner of British Columbia J.V. Boys’ response that what was needed was not only easy access to employment, but also easy access to state services and land certainty during the creation of the reservoir. According to him, these requirements, in conjunction with as much information as possible, would help ensure a smooth transition.⁸⁴

Presumably in an attempt to accomplish this goal, on 19 February 1965 Indian Affairs held a meeting at Cattermole Camp No. 2.⁸⁵ Thirty-three members of the Fort Grahame section of the Finlay River Band lived at the camp by that point in time, but apparently only eight were present at the meeting, with Tsay Keh Dene Elder Francis Isaac claiming the rest were busy trapping.⁸⁶ Based on who signed the band council resolution (BCR), the eight were Isadore

⁸¹ Cole Harris, 57, passim; John Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 8, 42-43.

⁸² LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Superintendent, Stuart Lake Agency from W. Presloski, 16 September 1964.

⁸³ Tina Loo, “Disturbing the Peace: Environmental Change and the Scales of Justice on a Northern River,” *Environmental History* 12 (2007); Stanley, 113.

⁸⁴ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Chief Economic Development from Indian Commissioner J.V. Boys, 24 September 1964.

⁸⁵ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Finlay River Band Resolution – 19 February 1965; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to A.J. Creighton, BC Hydro Land Division from J.V. Boys, Indian Commissioner for BC, 4 March 1965.

⁸⁶ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC from W. Presloski, 16 September 1964; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Finlay River Band Resolution – 19 February 1965.

Izony, Alec Poole, Willie Pierre, Gilbert Poole, Fred Hunter, Billy Poole, Larry Pierre and Keom Pierre.⁸⁷ Reports of the meeting indicate they inquired about the finality of the loss of the Finlay Forks reserve; the exact size of the Finlay Forks reserve; the option to sell the timber on it before it was lost; mineral rights on the new reserves; housing on the new reserves; and the option to stop sending their children to the Lejac Residential School.⁸⁸ The end result was a BCR asking for new reserve land. As was common at the time of the eight who signed all were men, but it does raise the question of whether Indian Affairs simply deemed the women and children not important enough to be included in the number of those who attended, or if they even attended at all.⁸⁹ Later band members of Ingenika band would state not only was this not the majority, but that those who signed did so under “duress and due to undue influence.”⁹⁰

Indian Affairs forwarded the BCR to BC Hydro on 4 March 1965. In exchange for Finlay Forks Reserve No. 1, the BCR requested three new reserves in the form of two options. Option one was a 60-acre reserve north of the McLeod Lake school, between the Hart Highway and the Pack River; a 60-acre reserve north of the Hart Highway between the Finlay Forks access road and the Parsnip River; and a 48-acre reserve at Finlay Forks east of the Parsnip arm of the new reservoir. Option two differed with the second reserve comprising 60 acres on the eastern side of Tudyah Lake and the third 48 acres on the northwestern shore of Morfee Lake. (The latter would have led to the creation of a reserve just outside present day Mackenzie, BC) Commissioner Boys concluded the request by stressing to BC Hydro that the Tsek’ehne making the request had a desire to integrate into wider Canadian society, while at the same time maintain aspects of their traditional life and culture. Reflecting his own desire for services, he noted the reserve north of

⁸⁷ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Finlay River Band Resolution – 19 February 1965.

⁸⁸ Koyl, 88-89.

⁸⁹ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Finlay River Band Resolution – 19 February 1965.

⁹⁰ INAC, “Status Report on Specific Claims: Tsay Keh Dene (BAND-609).”

the McLeod Lake School had easy access to a multitude of services, ranging from the provincial school to utilities like telephone service.⁹¹ In eager anticipation of the response of BC Hydro and the creation of these new reserves, the land department of Indian Affairs noted it would simply have BC Hydro expropriate the old reserve and then Indian Affairs would create new ones.⁹²

From Indian Affairs records it appears BC Hydro refused to make the choice.⁹³ As a result, on 17 February 1966 the request for land was changed. Instead of offering two options to BC Hydro and the province, Indian Affairs instead modified the first option and completely dropped the second. In particular, they replaced the request for a reserve at Finlay Forks proper with a request for a reserve of the same size near the instant town of Mackenzie.⁹⁴ BC Hydro still did not respond, and within a month Indian Affairs changed this request once again to just two reserves: one near where the Hart Highway crossed the Parsnip River, north of McLeod Lake – Parsnip River, and one north of Mackenzie, Tutu Creek.⁹⁵ It was this request that BC Hydro forwarded to the provincial Land Branch.⁹⁶ Despite these requests, Indian Affairs did not obtain a BCR legitimizing any of them until 14 September 1966.⁹⁷ According to anthropologist Guy

⁹¹ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1, Letter to BC Hydro and Power Authority, Land Manager, A.J. Creighton from Indian Commissioner, J.V. Boys, 4 March 1965.

⁹² LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC from Administrator of Lands, David Vogt, 9 March 1965.

⁹³ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC from Administrator of Lands W.P. McIntyre, 20 September 1965; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC from Administrator of Lands W.P. McIntyre, 17 January 1966; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC from Administrator of Lands W.P. McIntyre, 17 February 1966.

⁹⁴ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1, Letter to BC Hydro and Power Authority from Indian Commissioner of BC, J.V. Boys, 17 February 1966.

⁹⁵ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1, Letter to Officer in Charge, Stuart Lake Agency from Indian Commissioner of BC, J.V. Boys, 15 March 1966.

⁹⁶ NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources,] "The Origin Of The Ingenika Band Of Indians And The Flooding Of Williston Lake," [1975].

⁹⁷ Despite references to the BCR, I cannot find a copy of it. Its date is also problematic as other records suggest the meeting where it was presumably passed and signed was not until 17 September. It is most likely a minor inconsistency, but it is also possible that two BCRs exist. Indeed, Tsay Keh Dene Elder Billie Poole recalls the chief was forced to sign a document agreeing to everything, but does not specify the document. Colin Crampton, "Problems of Environmental Conservation for the Sekani Ingenika Band in Northern British Columbia, Canada," *Environmental Conservation* 19, no. 1 (1992): 76; Lanoue, "Continuity," 382; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-

Lanoue twenty-one band members signed it.⁹⁸ Presumably based on these twenty-one signatures Commissioner Boys concluded that there was complete agreement from the Finlay River Band on the choice.⁹⁹

On 7 November 1966 Regional Land Use Officer F.J. Walchli reported in a memorandum that BC Hydro and the province had accepted this proposal. It was expected Tutu Creek would be 80 acres, while Parsnip River would be 88 acres. As Walchli explained, the choice was a result of attempting to balance a desire for access to jobs, schools and services, while at the same time keeping the resident Tsek'ehne apart from wider Canadian society and giving them access to the Williston Lake Reservoir and Parsnip River for transportation. On a rather odd note, as support for this assertion, he claimed the Chief of McLeod Lake, Harry Chingee, supported the selection of the new reserves for the Finlay River Band.¹⁰⁰ Why this mattered and how much involvement Chief Chingee actually had in the matter is unclear. Less than a year remained before the completion of the Peace River project.

Despite this agreement, Indian Affairs and the province via the Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources had not yet officially approved the transfer.¹⁰¹ BC Hydro, however, wanted the matter dealt with no later than 1967. Therefore it attempted to expedite the process, even going so far as seeking a letter of approval from Indian Affairs for the transfer prior to

27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Regional Land Use Officer, F.J. Walchli, 7 November 1966; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 30 December 1970.

⁹⁸ Lanoue, "Continuity," 382.

⁹⁹ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Indian Commissioner of BC, J.V. Boys, 9 November 1966.

¹⁰⁰ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Regional Land Use Officer, F.J. Walchli, 7 November 1966.

¹⁰¹ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Indian Commissioner of BC, J.V. Boys from Regional Land Use Officer, F.J. Walchli, 7 November 1966; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Superintendent of Lands, D. Borthwick from Indian Commissioner of BC, J.V. Boys, 9 November 1966.

official provincial approval.¹⁰² Indian Affairs also wanted to expedite the process, and Commissioner Boys wrote the provincial Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources requesting that a reserve be placed on the proposed reserve sites, and that five of the houses constructed on skids at Finlay Forks for Finlay River band members be moved to the proposed Parsnip River reserve as soon as possible.¹⁰³ A point of concern was that that winter the province did not plan on maintaining the Finlay Forks access road all the way to the settlement and according to Indian Affairs the only other option was to relocate the entire populace to the McLeod Lake reserve on a temporary basis.¹⁰⁴

Ultimately neither relocation took place and as 1967 began both levels of government were still in the midst of transferring reserve lands. In January 1967 an Indian Affairs memorandum reported that it was awaiting inspection in April or May by the Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources.¹⁰⁵ Two months later BC Hydro informed Indian Affairs that the desired location of the proposed Parsnip reserve overlapped with provincial reserves established by the Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources for town site purposes, the Parsnip access road and the Pacific Great Eastern Railway.¹⁰⁶ Rather than accept this reversal Indian Affairs decided to fight for the Tsek'ehne and as result in May 1967 the province

¹⁰² LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Indian Commissioner of BC, J.V. Boys from Regional Land Use Officer, F.J. Walchli, 7 November 1966.

¹⁰³ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Superintendent of Lands, D. Borthwick from Indian Commissioner of BC, J.V. Boys, 9 November 1966; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Indian Commissioner of BC, J.V. Boys, 9 November 1966.

¹⁰⁴ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Indian Commissioner of BC, J.V. Boys from Regional Land Use Officer, F.J. Walchli, 7 November 1966.

¹⁰⁵ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Indian Commissioner of J.V. Boys, 19 January 1967.

¹⁰⁶ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC, J.V. Boys from Land Supervisor A.J. Creighton, 20 March 1967; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Regional Superintendent W.J. McGregor, 11 May 1967.

removed their reserves.¹⁰⁷ Another BCR giving consent to flood the Finlay Forks No. 1 in exchange for a token fee of five dollars, and the creation of the two new reserves previously mentioned, was acquired in July 1967.¹⁰⁸ All three signatories were from the Fort Ware section of the band.¹⁰⁹ By this point in time Indian Affairs had changed the size of the Tutu Creek and Parsnip River reserves from about 80 and 88 acres respectively, to about 90 and 77 acres respectively.¹¹⁰ Indian Affairs still expected the exchange would take place before 1968.¹¹¹

Despite this apparent willingness to proceed with the transfer, and the relaxing of provincial reserves, there was still debate over whether or not to allow the creation of the Parsnip River reserve, and this resulted in the province delaying their approval of the selection of the reserves. This issue did not end until February 1968; the year the water began to rise in earnest. Indian Affairs, despite having BCRs authorizing it to act, and obtaining another one on 26 March, had not yet given permission to flood Finlay Forks No. 1. It is possible that if they had given their consent, negotiations would have gone longer.¹¹² Unwisely, however, the signatories

¹⁰⁷ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Indian Commissioner of BC, J.V. Boys, 22 March 1967; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Regional Superintendent W.J. McGregor, 11 May 1967.

¹⁰⁸ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Indian Commissioner for British Columbia from Administrator of Lands, W.P. McIntyre, 5 December 1966; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority: Permission to Enter on Private Property, 1967; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Regional Superintendent W.J. McGregor, 17 July 1967; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Superintendent, Stuart Lake Agency, A.C. Roach, 24 July 1967; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Finlay River Band Council Resolution, 28 July 1967.

¹⁰⁹ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Finlay River Band Council Resolution, 28 July 1967.

¹¹⁰ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Superintendent, Stuart Lake Agency, A.C. Roach, 24 July 1967; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC, J.V. Boys from Solicitor P.A.C. Tynan, 8 February 1968; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Administration from Regional Land Use Officer, F.J. Walchli, 19 March 1968; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Finlay River Band Council Resolution, 26 March 1968.

¹¹¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 30 December 1970.

¹¹² LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Assistant Deputy Minister from Director of Indian Affairs, J.W. Churchman, 13 September 1967; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Message to Indian Commissioner for BC, J.V. Boys from W.P. McIntyre, 20 September, 1967; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC, J.V. Boys from Solicitor P.A.C. Tynan, 8 February 1968; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Finlay River Band Council Resolution, 26 March 1968.

of the BCR only included the chief of the Finlay River Band, John McCook, two band councillors Don McCook and Tommy Poole, and twenty band members.¹¹³ These twenty included people who currently live in Tsay Keh Dene and Kwadacha, but it was not the majority of band members. As a result, it would be one aspect of a specific claim in 1987.¹¹⁴

All of this meant that as the spring runoff approached, the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay were not yet relocated from their temporary settlement at Finlay Forks to their new reserves and had no land base to speak of. *The Globe and Mail* would later claim that some band members remained at Fort Grahame until the water rose, but my own research contradicts this claim. For example, Tsay Keh Dene Elder Francis Isaac recalls travelling back to the empty village only to find it had been burned and then telling people about it, while Kwadacha Elder Martha Egnell remembers landing at Fort Grahame prior to it being flooded and not recognizing it.¹¹⁵ It appears it was a misunderstanding, no doubt complicated by the odd name of the reserve at Fort Grahame, Finlay Forks No. 1.

In fact, many Tsek'ehne were living in logging camps along Finlay Forks access road. Some lived in houses Indian Affairs provided in 1961 for the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay, which the department had built on skids for easy movement to the new reserves once flooding began.¹¹⁶ Six houses, however, were not enough for all Tsek'ehne living in the area, especially

¹¹³ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Finlay River Band Council Resolution – 26 March 1968.

¹¹⁴ INAC, "Status Report on Specific Claims: Tsay Keh Dene (BAND-609)."

¹¹⁵ Cruickshank, "Two Decades Later, BC Offers Aid;" Martha Egnell, 8 March 2012; Koyle, 73; "History of Ingenika," 9; Pollon and Matheson, 273.

¹¹⁶ Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Regional Land Use Officer, F.J. Walchli, 7 November 1966; Alex Poole, 6 October 1984; Helen Poole; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

after 1963/1964 and some had to live in tents.¹¹⁷ Others lived in houses provided by, or purchased from, their employer.¹¹⁸ Some just built their own.¹¹⁹

The end result is that even if one believed no Tsek'ehne settlement existed at Finlay Forks prior to construction of the Peace River project, one at least existed prior to the completion of the dam. Indeed, in 1972 reporter Marj Gray even claimed no settlement at all existed prior to the influx of workers around 1964.¹²⁰ The province not only shared this view, but early investigations into the development supported it.¹²¹

Technically Gray was talking about a logging camp at Mile 79 on the Finlay Forks access road.¹²² Other camps existed along the road including 76 Mile, 73 Mile, 69½ Mile (commonly known as 69 Mile), and 64 Mile. Given their proximity to Finlay Forks as well as the fact they were often little more than cut blocks, those writing about them often refer to them as Finlay Forks. It was at them that many Tsek'ehne were staying when the water began to rise in 1968.¹²³ Indeed, on 25 May 1968 the province began relocating people to 69 Mile. This action, combined with the provision of additional housing, made 69 Mile the dominant camp.¹²⁴ Marj Gray would

¹¹⁷ Al Inyallie, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; Ron McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2012; John Poole, interviewed by author and Susan McCook, Prince George, BC, 30 September 2012; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; Laura Seymour, interviewed by author and Susan McCook, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012.

¹¹⁸ Felix Charlie; Ingenika Band Members.

¹¹⁹ Yvonne Harris, "Choices for Change: A Study of the Fort Ware Indian Band and Implications of Land Settlements for Northern Indian Bands" (MA Thesis: University of British Columbia, 1984), 24.

¹²⁰ Gray, "Finlay Forks Indians Gone by Fall."

¹²¹ In his 1997 biography it is claimed there were only three Indigenous communities in the entire area of the 1956 memorandum, however. KA, File 2148721, Volume 2, Draft – D.J.B., February 1960, Decision of the Comptroller of Water Rights, Department of Lands and Forests, Government of British Columbia in Regard to the Peace River Hydroelectric Project; NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, The Mackenzie Story: Comments On The Presentation; Eileen Williston and Betty Keller, *Forests, Power and Policy: The Legacy of Ray Williston* (Prince George: Caitlin Press Inc., 1997), 175.

¹²² Gray states Finlay Forks is 79 miles north of Mackenzie on the Finlay Forks access road, which as noted in the previous chapter was only 80 miles long from the Hart Highway. Gray, "Finlay Forks Indians Gone by Fall."

¹²³ Emil McCook even refers to them as Mackenzie due to its proximity. Georgina Chingee; Martha Egnell, 8 March 2012; Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; Alex Poole, 6 October 1984; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; Laura Seymour; Anita Vallee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.

¹²⁴ Cruickshank, "Two Decades Later, BC Offers Aid;" Felix Charlie; Georgina Chingee; Ingenika Band Members; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach,

even later claim Indian Affairs leased the camp for the community, thereby making it official.¹²⁵

There is no evidence Indian Affairs did and for the time being it was the “fulfillment” of Indian Affairs’ promise to relocate the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay.¹²⁶

The Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay were in this camp and others because the province was in no rush to relocate them to their new reserves. (The Fort Ware Tse’kene and McLeod Lake Tse’khene were in these camps because they had not returned to their home reserves.) In the case of the former this inaction was a result of the fact that despite the Finlay River Band, Indian Affairs, and the province inspecting and approving them in March 1968, paying the nominal fees paid, and then having them surveyed in August 1968, BC did not transfer the land to BC Hydro until the late winter/early spring of 1969. The authority in turn did not officially transfer the new lands from the provincial to the federal Crown until 16 June 1969, more than a full year after the reservoir began to flood.¹²⁷ This resulted in protest from the Finlay River Band in March 1969, who felt held back from participating in the labour economy of the instant town of Mackenzie due to the fact they had no firm land base, and mistreated once they heard about other land

30 December 1970; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; Virginia Pierre, 9 August 1984; Albert Poole, 11 September 2012; Helen Poole; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter; Anita Vallee; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

¹²⁵ Marj Gray, “Displaced by Lake:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 25 January 1972.

¹²⁶ Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 19 September 2012.

¹²⁷ “The Origins of the Ingenika Band of Indians and the Flooding of Williston Lake” claims BC Hydro had to buy the land off of the province, only acquiring Tutu Creek No. 4 on 10 February 1969 and Parsnip River No. 5 on 30 April 1969. LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Finlay River Band Council Resolution, 26 March 1968; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Regional Superintendent Administration, W.J. McGregor, 11 April 1968; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Certificate of Indefeasible Title: D1687/D6529; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Certificate of Indefeasible Title: D5264/D6530; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Assistant Deputy Minister from Director of Indian Affairs, J.W. Churchman, 12 August 1968; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development from Solicitor P.A.C. Tynan, 12 August; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development from Solicitor P.A.C. Tynan, 31 March 1969; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development from Solicitor P.A.C. Tynan, 19 June 1969; NBCA, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources,] “The Origin Of The Ingenika Band Of Indians And The Flooding Of Williston Lake.”

claims in the news.¹²⁸ Although sent to BC Hydro by Indian Affairs, it did not expedite the process.¹²⁹

Nor does the infamous White Paper, which proposed to do away with status and reserves, appear to have affected the process, and the correspondence regarding the transfer never mentions it. One must remember, however, that although this proposed new Canadian Aboriginal policy would have ended the legal category of Indian band and Indian reserve, it was expected the title of the latter would be given to the former. The alleged justification for this change was that it would provide greater economic opportunities and overall control. Indian Affairs did not want to take land away from bands, but give it to them.¹³⁰ Furthermore, as land owners the band members of the Finlay River Band would still be entitled to compensation for their flooded 168 acres of land. Given its Aboriginal land policy, it is unlikely the province would have provided them with land. (Even compensation in the form of cash might have proved problematic given the province's policy of claiming automatic ownership of surrendered reserve land.) Therefore, it would have been up to Ottawa to provide compensation in the form of fee simple title to land, but it did not have ownership of the lands in question until 16 June 1969.

As it turned out the two sticking points were: who was responsible to construct the access roads to the reserves, and the timber and mineral rights. In the case of the former, Indian Affairs agreed to fund the construction of the roads.¹³¹ The latter was more complicated and once again

¹²⁸ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Superintendent, Stuart Lake Agency, A.C. Roach, 19 March 1969.

¹²⁹ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority from Regional Director British Columbia-Yukon Region, 26 March 1969.

¹³⁰ Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, 1969* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1969).

¹³¹ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Regional Director of Indian Affairs from Administrator of Lands, J.H. MacAdam, 22 August 1968; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Superintendent, Indian Commissioner of BC from Regional Superintendent, Administration, W.J. McGregor, 23 August 1968.

harkened back to BC's Aboriginal policy and the dispute that led to the Great Settlement in 1927. BC maintained, on the advice of the provincial attorney general, that mineral rights on all reserves in the province remained with the provincial Crown. This stance contradicted general Canadian Aboriginal policy. When Indian Affairs protested, the province pointed to correspondence from 6 February 1940 between the director of Indian Affairs and deputy minister of mines as well as the subsequent agreement on 26 January 1943, and the Indian Reserves Mineral Resources Act 1943.¹³² As result when the agency superintendent inquired about the transference of mineral and timber rights, Regional Director J.V. Boys, noted that while timber rights were a requirement, based on experience with reserves in the Fort Nelson area, it was unlikely mineral rights would be transferred. In his view it was a matter that only litigations could solve.¹³³ Nevertheless, Indian Affairs did inquire about the matter. In response, the province told them they had already settled the issue of mineral rights on Indian reserves. Therefore, they would not transfer mineral rights. On the bright side, however, the new reserves would include timber rights.¹³⁴ Rather than fight the matter, Indian Affairs decided to accept the transference under protest and without prejudice with regard to future litigation.¹³⁵

Transference in June 1969 did not mean the two lots transferred to the federal Crown were now Indian reserves. This did not occur until October 1969 and resulted in the creation of Tutu Creek Indian Reserve No. 4 and Parsnip River Indian Reserve No. 5.¹³⁶ Reflecting the

¹³² LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Indian Commissioner for BC, J.V. Boys from Superintendent of Lands, D. Borthwick, 3 January 1967.

¹³³ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Regional Director – Social Affairs, J.V. Boys, 3 December 1968.

¹³⁴ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to BC Hydro & Power Authority from Director of Lands, W.R. Redel, 13 December 1968; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development from Solicitor P.A.C. Tynan, 18 December 1968.

¹³⁵ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Regional Director, J.V. Boys, 14 January 1969.

¹³⁶ This was four months after Jean Chrétien announced the proposed policies of the White Paper. Jean Chrétien, "Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy," (Speech, House of Commons, Ottawa, 25 June 1969);

strained relationship and lack of trust between Indian Affairs and the province, the federal government did not officially transfer Finlay Forks Indian Reserve No. 1 to BC Hydro until December 1969. Prior to this Indian Affairs contemplated placing a clause retaining mineral rights in the transference, but ultimately decided not to.¹³⁷ One small victory for the Finlay River Band was that when surveyors laid out the reserves their overall size increased: Tutu Creek increased by 2.3 acres to 92.3 acres and Parsnip River increased by 7.3 acres to 84.3 acres.¹³⁸ By either date, however, two spring runoffs had been caught in the new Williston Lake reservoir, and band members of the Finlay River Band living near Finlay Forks and along the Finlay Forks access road had not been relocated to their new reserves despite having their misnamed Finlay Forks reserve at Fort Grahame flooded.

It would be two more spring runoffs before Indian Affairs officially relocated any Tsek'ehne to either the Parsnip or Tutu Creek reserves. Despite being reserves, during the next year Indian Affairs would delay in even relocating individual band members because of the desire to have the reserves developed beforehand, the lack of will to move the houses at the various logging camps, and the apparent unwillingness of the department to physically force anyone to move to either reserve, especially the increasingly unpopular Tutu Creek.¹³⁹ The first

LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Memorandum from Regional Director British Columbia-Yukon Region, J.V. Boys, 25 June 1969; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Parsnip I.R. No. 5; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Tutu Creek I.R. No. 4; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to His Excellency the Governor General in Council from Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 2 October 1969.

¹³⁷ Lanoue, "Continuity," 384; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to His Excellency the Governor General in Council from Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 14 July 1969; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to Legal Advisor V. Romard from Administrator of Lands, J.H. MacAdam, 15 September 1969.

¹³⁸ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to His Excellency the Governor General in Council from Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 2 October 1969; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Parsnip I.R. No. 5: Description for Submission to Council; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Tutu Creek I.R. No. 4: Description for Submission to Council.

¹³⁹ LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to District Supervisor, Lakes District from Regional Director, British Columbia-Yukon Region, F.A. Clark, 16 December 1970; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to District Supervisor, Lakes District, A.C. Roach from Regional Director, British Columbia-

reason is questionable as Indian Affairs itself expected that the limited development that would take place would not be permanent.¹⁴⁰ The second on the other hand represented a reversal of the plan Indian Affairs first formulated when they had had the houses initially constructed at Finlay Forks. And finally, the third revealed the fact that, despite a questionable petition received from Union of British Columbian Indian Chiefs activist Bob Hall to have the Tsek'ehne living in the camps relocated to Tutu Creek, by November 1970 Indian Affairs was aware that more and more of those Tsek'ehne living in the forestry camps desired a new relocation site at Ingenika Point.¹⁴¹ Hall had come too late.

Conclusion

How both levels of government treated the Tsek'ehne during and after the construction of the Peace River project and the creation of Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5 revealed that the Great Settlement of 1927 had not resolved the issue of Aboriginal policy in BC. Although some officials from the province and their Crown Corporation BC Hydro contacted the Tsek'ehne about the development, Indian Affairs primarily handled the issue and was their main source of “information” about what was happening and what the effects might be. Even the information it had, however, repeatedly changed between 1956 and 1962. All the while the Tsek'ehne found employment preparing for the very dam that most did not know would significantly impact them. As meetings began in earnest to discuss what was happening and what each party should do, Indian Affairs informed rather than consulted and provided incomplete, if

Yukon Region, F.A. Clark, 23 November 1970; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Superintendent, Lakes District from BC Regional Engineer, W.G. Robinson, 30 November 1970; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to BC Regional Engineer from District Supervisor A.C. Roach, 7 December 1970; Lena McCook; Albert Poole, 6 November 2008.

¹⁴⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Superintendent, Lakes District from BC Regional Engineer, W.G. Robinson, 30 November 1970; Albert Poole, 6 November 2008.

¹⁴¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia – Lakes District from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 27 November 1970.

not contradictory information. They did not even meet with everyone. It handled the exchange of reserve land for the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay, obtaining BCRs seemingly to confirm *a priori* decisions. For its part the province and BC Hydro proved as cooperative as during the Aboriginal lands question period of the early twentieth century. Neither would provide more reserve land than was lost – 168 acres. Neither level of government would allow the land included in the exchange to stand in the way of development or settlement. Nevertheless, they did fight over things like mineral and timber rights. The end result of this lack of information and the federal-provincial conflict over creating new reserves was a Tsek'ehne population that as a whole did not truly understand the impacts of the Peace River project, and in the case of the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay, did not have a habitable reserve when the water began to rise. They still did not live on their new reserves at the end of 1970 and because of the immediate impacts of the Peace River project, were looking to return home.

Chapter 5 – One Hell of a Mess: The Creation of the Williston Lake Reservoir and the Immediate Impacts on the Tsek’ehne, 1968-1971

The province officially completed the Peace River project on 12 September 1967.¹ Additional work would follow, but the dam and its generating station were ready to begin backing up the Peace River and generating electricity. Three months later BC Hydro closed the diversion tunnels. Flooding began in earnest in the spring of 1968.² Proponents of the dam considered it a triumph for W.A.C. Bennett and the Social Credit government, which had pushed for the project since 1957 and nationalized the British Columbia Electric Company (BCE) and the Peace River Power Development Company (PRPDC) to ensure its completion. Reflecting this sentiment, in a move that harkened back to the recreation of British Columbia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century from an Indigenous to European space, the province named the dam the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, its generating station the Gordon M. Shrum Generating Station, and its reservoir Williston Lake. Together they were to serve as monuments to the key politicians and officials who had made them reality.³ Ideally, from the province’s perspective this period following the completion of the dam would be a non-event following the initial celebrations of the completion of the dam and first electricity. Both levels of the

¹ British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, “Peace River Power” (Vancouver: British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, [1968]), 3-4.

² Some Elders recall flooding began prior to 1968, but this refers to spring floods made worse by the construction of the dam. For example, in a letter date 3 August 1965 permission was granted to partially block the diversion tunnel intakes to raise the level of the river upstream, while in 1967 one diversion tunnel was closed with a repeat of the usually high 1964 spring flood expected as the worst case scenario. It turned out to be worse as can be seen in a series of letters starting on 12 July 1966 in Kwadacha Archives (KA), File 0242651-A, Volume 4. Rose Dennis, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 27 March 1985 in *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; KA, Water Comptroller fonds..., File 0242651-A, Volume 3, Letter to H.D. DeBeck from J.P. Ottesen, 3 August 1965; KA, Water Comptroller fonds..., File 0242651-A, Volume 4, Letter to H.D. DeBeck from J.P. Ottesen, 12 July 1966; KA, File 0242651-A, Volume 4, Public Notice: Flooding Upstream of the Portage Mountain Development During 1967; William (Billie) Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012.

³ Cole Harris, “The Fraser Canyon Encountered,” *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographic Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 135-136, passim; Cole Harris, “The Making of the Lower Mainland,” *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographic Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 68-69, 80-81, 102, passim; Cole Harris, *Making Native Space*, xvii-xxi, passim; Mary Jean Poole, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2013.

government expected that given the sparse population the entire process would be relatively easy, with few of the problems associated with relocating people like along the Columbia River.⁴ The province, however, had failed to properly clear the reservoir basin or inform the people still living and working in it how flooding would proceed. The result was one hell of a mess, as the rising water created a debris filled cesspool that killed many of the animal inhabitants of the northern Rocky Mountain Trench (the Trench). In instances where the new reservoir did not flood reserves, McLeod Lake and the Fort Ware section of the Finlay River Band (the Fort Ware Tsek'ehne), the Tsek'ehne were supposed to content themselves to live on reserves and abandon the use of the rest of their traditional territory. With Finlay Forks No. 1 gone, and Police Meadows No. 2 undeveloped and disregarded, the Fort Grahame portion of the Finlay River Band (the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay) were to be relocated to two new reserves of their choice. Not only did the reserve era begin for the Tsek'ehne, but it was in this moment that the issues that had been festering came to fruition in a destructive way. The small reserves created as a result of BC Aboriginal policy suddenly became relevant in an important way. Lacking clear and precise information the Tsek'ehne were not only often caught off guard, but also unaware of what exactly was happening and what to do. The new debris-filled reservoir hampered transportation in the Trench, and the three communities found themselves increasingly isolated from one another. The first indication of this newfound divide was when the Finlay River Band split into the Fort Ware and Ingenika bands in 1971. The second was the rejection by the majority of the Ingenika Band of their new reserves. A smooth transition had not occurred.

Channels and Harbours: The Failure to Properly Clear the Williston Lake Reservoir Basin

⁴ British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, "Peace River Power," [1968], 8; Simon Fraser University Archives (SFUA), W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-39-0-3, untitled FAQ.

Even while the provincial government was celebrating, an environmental disaster was growing in the new Williston Lake reservoir. Because the province had not properly cleared the reservoir basin, as the water rose anything that remained that was buoyant became floating debris. This situation existed despite the fact that even before nationalization there were demands that the province ensure the proper clearing of the expected reservoir basin.⁵ It appears the primary reasons for this failure to heed these requests were money and time. It is particularly troubling as these demands were the result of previous hydroelectric developments in the province that had created debris filled reservoirs, thereby negatively affecting local residents. Among them were the Cheslatta T'en, a Dakelh group neighbouring the Tsek'ehne, who had had their homeland flooded in 1952 as a result of the Nechako (Alcan) development. Only told days before what was happening, the Cheslatta maintain that Indian Affairs forged "their" signatures on the documents giving permission to flood their land.⁶

Section 4d of the 1957 memorandum required that Axel Wenner-Gren clear the reservoir basin to the standards of the Minister of Lands and Forests.⁷ A big question, however, was what the provincial standard was. BC Engineering, one of the firms retained by British Thomson-Houston to help them investigate the potential of the Peace River for the Wenner-Gren BC Development Company, believed it was the removal of all of the timber within the fluctuation range of the reservoir as well as any loose material.⁸ Although logical, this assumption stood in

⁵ KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 2148721, Volume 1, Letter to Ray Williston from Jim Railton, 25 November 1957.

⁶ Grand Chief Edward John, "First Nations Summit News Release: First Nations Summit Supports Cheslatta Carrier Nation's Plan to Stop Destructive Flooding of Nechako Lake," 30 September 2013; J.E. Windsor and J.A. McVey, "Annihilation of Both Place and Sense of Place: The Experience of the Cheslatta T'En Canadian First Nation Within the Context of Large-Scale Environmental Projects," *The Geographic Journal* 171, no. 2 (2005): 154, *passim*.

⁷ British Columbia Archives (BCA), Peace River Power Development Company fonds, MS 2353, Memorandum of Agreement Made This 7th Day of October 1957.

⁸ BCA, J.F. Pine Collection 1958-1980, MS 1172, Box 2, BC Engineering Company Limited, "Report On Rocky Mountain Trench Area Hydro-Electric Investigations Stage I Volume I" (Vancouver: The British Thomson-Houston Company (Canada) Ltd., 1958), 1-04-2, 1-04-3.

stark contrast to the view of Minister of Lands and Forests Ray Williston that there was no standard.⁹

As a result, the PRPDC's final report in December 1959 only budgeted \$5 million for clearing, an amount that later academics would categorize as almost certainly guaranteeing that the reservoir would be an unnavigable mess.¹⁰ Why was the amount so low? According to W.C. Mainwaring, President of the PRPDC, Williston himself had informed him that the PRPDC should keep the estimated amount budgeted for clearing to a minimum so as to not increase the expected cost of the project, and through this the estimated cost of electricity. Based on this maxim, the PRPDC planned on only clearing along the shoreline where absolutely necessary, and where they expected timber would protrude when the reservoir was at its expected lowest level. Even with these standards though, Mainwaring informed the water comptroller on January 1960 that \$5 million was a low estimate of the cost, and would need to be increased.¹¹

The fact that the estimated cost of clearing the reservoir was too low was an open secret. Indeed, while examining the cost of the proposed Peace River project in comparison with the Columbia River project during the summer of 1959, the *Vancouver Sun* pointed out that while estimates for the Columbia included the cost of clearing the expected reservoir basins, estimates for the Peace River project did not. Based on the Nechako (Alcan) project the *Vancouver Sun* estimated that it would cost a total of \$100 million to properly clear the reservoir basin, while at

⁹ BCA, Ray Williston interview, T1375:0015, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 8 October 1975, Victoria, BC

¹⁰ James Howell, "The Portage Mountain Hydro-electric Project," in *Northern Transitions*, vol 1, *Northern Resource and Land Use Policy Study*, ed. Everett Peterson and Janet Wright (Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Resource Committee, 1978), 32; KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 0214872, Memorandum to R.G. McKee from R.D. Greggor, 17 February 1960; Meg Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers: Harnessing the Power of the Peace and Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2010), 66.

¹¹ KA, File 0214872, Letter to A.F. Paget from W.C. Mainwaring, 15 January 1960.

the same time noting forestry experts deemed much of the timber worthless.¹² Even this amount was low and later estimates would go as high as \$300 million.¹³

In early 1960 the BC Forest Service began to investigate clearing the expected basin of the reservoir at the request of the water comptroller. Based on their study, they estimated \$20 million was required to clear the basin of timber within the annual fluctuation range of 2,100 to 2,250 feet, with the cost increasing if they removed timber as debris. (\$5 million was for selective clearing alone.)¹⁴ Working under the assumption they had until 1975 to complete the task, it was suggested the job should be divided into general salvage and specific removal for navigation and recreation between 2,100 and 2,250 feet and wholesale clearing to 2,200 feet for navigation channels.¹⁵ To facilitate the removal of timber the service recommended constructing logging roads along the Parsnip River and using the river itself when it came to the Peace. At this point in time officials plans excluded the Finlay River altogether and some Elders would recall that even when it was included the focus was still around the Finlay Forks areas and on the Parsnip arm of the future reservoir.¹⁶ One factor expected to aid in all of this was the belief that pulp mills would follow development.¹⁷ In 1975 Ray Williston claimed that it was the province's

¹² Northern British Columbia Archives (NBCA), Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.4, Box 5, "\$100 Million Job To Clear Dam Site:...", *The Vancouver Sun* 8 June 1959; Vancouver Sun, "Electric Power In British Columbia: A Special Series" (Vancouver: The Vancouver Sun, 1959), 5-7, 9, 17-18.

¹³ Ranulph Fiennes, *The Headless Valley* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973), 166.

¹⁴ KA, File 0214872, Letter to R.G. McKee from Ray Williston, 4 January 1960; KA, File 0214872, Letter to R.G. McKee from A.F. Paget, 8 January 1960; KA, File 0214872, Memorandum to R.G. McKee from R.D. Greggor, 17 February 1960.

¹⁵ According Ray Williston this allowed for a minimum fifty feet of clearance for boating and fishing. As the memorandum states, however, this is only true when the reservoir is high. BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston; KA, File 0214872, Memorandum to R.G. McKee from R.D. Greggor, 17 February 1960.

¹⁶ Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012; KA, File 0214872, Memorandum to R.G. McKee from R.D. Greggor, 17 February 1960; William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012; Mabel Troendle, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 16 September 2008; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012.

¹⁷ BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston; KA, File 0214872, Memorandum to R.G. McKee from R.D. Greggor, 17 February 1960.

recognition that these trees were good pulp wood that changed the initial plan of only clearing the southern half of the reservoir basin.¹⁸

Because of the nationalization of the project in 1961 it was not the PRPDC, or even BC Hydro per se, that handled the actual clearing of the reservoir basin, but the Ministry of Lands, Forests and Water Resources.¹⁹ Within two months of nationalization the province put the timber in the expected basin up for auction through an order-in-council.²⁰ Expecting the height of the reservoir to be 2,250 feet, it recommended the province collect any money the province made from the sale of this timber and credit it “to the Peace River Power Timber Salvage Vote.”²¹ Contracts were to be under the BC Forest Service, who controlled the overall planning to clear the basin.²² The budget was \$5 million.²³ This amount was not merely a low estimate, however, and all told BC Hydro paid the Forest Service received a total of \$5,398,598.90 from BC Hydro and was actually funding a percentage of the clearing in 1967 and 1968.²⁴

In their 1961 annual report, the BC Forest Service noted the plan was to recover and utilize the timber that would be lost to the Peace River project. They expected it would take at least ten to twelve years, if not fourteen or fifteen.²⁵ In order to save money the province only expected contractors to clear merchantable timber if it would be above water. They would only

¹⁸ BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston.

¹⁹ Department of Lands and Forests, *Report of the Forest Service Year Ended December 31 1961* (Victoria: A. Sutton, 1962), 39.

²⁰ KA, File 0214872, Copy of Minute Approved October 23rd, 1961 – Lieutenant-Governor, 19 October 1961.

²¹ Ibid.

²² BCA, Portage Mountain Development..., GR-0880, Box 60, Proceedings In The Province Of British Columbia..., August 2nd 1962, 51; BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston.

²³ KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds..., File 0242651-A, Volume 2, Peace River Project: Notes on Discussion Concerning Reservoir, 9 February 1965.

²⁴ In 1979 it was claimed BC Hydro and the BC Forest Service split the cost 50/50. The annual reports of the service contradict this claim. I have cited the 1968 annual report alone. Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, *Report of the Forest Service Year Ended December 31 1968* (Victoria: A. Sutton, 1969), 102; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Mackenzie Heritage Day: 29 October 1979.

²⁵ Department of Lands and Forests, *Report... December 31 1961*, 39.

remove debris as needed.²⁶ The province hoped that by clearing the reservoir in stages the profits earned from timber sales would cover the province's expenses, including the disposal of unmerchantable timber.²⁷

Clearing and cleanup began in earnest in 1962. Money, however, was still a concern.²⁸ The key problem was that to clear the entire reservoir basin meant to lose money.²⁹ Indeed, even the limited clearing that did occur was problematic and sometimes unprofitable due to expenses like the cost of transportation. Many contractors went bankrupt.³⁰ In an attempt to keep costs low in 1964 the province not only brought in Le Tourneau tree crushers, but also decided to only clear to create navigation channels between standing timber and harbors on the reservoir shoreline.³¹ Any other timber could remain in the reservoir regardless of whether or not it would

²⁶ BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston.

²⁷ McLeod Lake Elder Richard Solonas recalled the merchantable timber consisted of evergreens, while the unmerchantable timber consisted of deciduous trees. KA, File 0214872, Letter to G.S. Bryson from R.G. McKee, 26 October 1961; Richard Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 27 September 2012.

²⁸ Later in life Gordon Shrum would pride himself for constructing the dam as cost effectively as possible. Gordon Shrum with Peter Stursberg, *Gordon Shrum: An Autobiography*, ed. Clive Cocking (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 89-90.

²⁹ NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, "Bill Fletcher," *Vancouver Sun*, 17 May 1963.

³⁰ BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston; BCA, Ray Williston interview, T1375:0017, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 8 October 1975, Victoria, BC; Greg McIntyre, "Lake Log Salvage in Trouble?" *Prince George Citizen*, 8 February 1971; NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Ray Williston Interview; Earl Pollon and Shirlee Smith Matheson, *This Was Our Valley* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2003), 190; Norman Unrau, *Under These Waters: Williston Lake: Before It Was* (n.p., publisher unknown, 2001), 54, 66-67.

³¹ Mulyk claims they were brought in due to the BC Forest Service miscalculating the reservoir area, something Ray Williston flatly denied. The tree crushers sounded impressive, but in action needed aid from caterpillar tractors (cats) to move, and even with light to medium forest density only did a mediocre job. Williston and Keller claim one even got stuck and had to be dismantled to be moved. It is even said that one of the tree crushers is beneath the reservoir, although this claim might be an urban legend. According to Unrau the operators were paid at a rate of \$200 to 300 per hour depending on the size of the crusher, regardless of any actual work actually taking place. The actual contracted signed 17 September 1964 stated this rate, with a few exceptions, was for actual work. Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, *Report of the Forest Service Year Ended December 31 1962* (Victoria: A. Sutton, 1963), 29, 42; Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, *Report of the Forest Service Year Ended December 31 1964* (Victoria: A. Sutton, 1965), 39-41; Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, *Report of the Forest Service Year Ended December 31 1965* (Victoria: A. Sutton, 1966), 47; Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Salmon Valley, BC, 1 October 2012; Marion Jackson, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.14.1, Le Tourneau Tree Crusher, Agreement between Tractau Llectric Equipment Limited and British Columbia, 17 September 1964; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.21, Box 1, The Mackenzie Story: Comments On The Presentation; NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk,] "The Mackenzie Story" (Mackenzie: Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada, Local No. 18, 1974), 16; Johnny Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15

protrude above the surface of the water, a decision that stands in stark contrast to the claim by labourer Norman Unrau that the province cleared the timber that would be above the waterline when the reservoir was lowest.³²

It was in this year that clearing became a year round endeavor and that summer the province decided to burn slash so that it would not become debris.³³ An apparent time saving measure, this decision would not be the last and the following year the province decided to increase the elevation for selective clearing by twenty feet.³⁴ By this point in time the province had resigned itself to the expectation that the reservoir would be debris filled. Rather than worry about how this mess would affect local residents and their ability to travel in the Trench, the primary concern was how it would impact the dam itself as well as overall aesthetics.³⁵

By 1965 the BC Forest Service reported that it had sold all merchantable timber that was accessible; in total it covered only 85,265 acres.³⁶ Two years later, they conducted two salvage sales for the timber along the Finlay River.³⁷ Ideally, the province would deal with any timber that contractors did not remove prior the flooding by burning it, recovering it as the water rose or somehow anchoring it to the reservoir basin itself.³⁸ As former Chief Seymour Isaac remembers,

March 2012; Alfred Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Richard Solonas; Unrau, 45-52; Williston and Keller, 211-212.

³² Unrau, 45, 54, 66-67.

³³ KA, File 0214872, Memorandum to the Honourable the Minister, 9 March 1964; KA, File 0214872, Memorandum from R.D. Thomas, 29 June 1964.

³⁴ KA, File 0242651-A, Volume 2, Peace River Project: Notes on Discussion Concerning Reservoir, 9 February 1965.

³⁵ KA, File 0242651-A, Volume 2, Peace River Project: Notes on Discussion Concerning Reservoir.

³⁶ Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, *Report... December 31 1965*, 12.

³⁷ Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, *Report of the Forest Service Year Ended December 31 1967* (Victoria: A. Sutton, 1968), 35; "Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources: Notice of Intention to Grant a Salvage Timber Sale License within the Findlay River Flood Basin," *Prince George Citizen*, 7 August 1967; "Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources: Notice of Intention to Grant a Salvage Timber Sale License within the Findlay River Flood Basin," *Prince George Citizen*, 21 December 1967.

³⁸ Alec Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, *Report of the Forest Service Year Ended December 31 1964* (Victoria: A. Sutton, 1965), 41; Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, *Report... December 31 1968*, 32, 40; Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012.

however, the forestry crews started too late on the Finlay River because of a lack of funding, and as a result they had to rush to clear as much as they could before the completion of the dam.³⁹

McLeod Lake Elder Albert Isadore recalls this situation was true throughout the entire basin and Norman Unrau argues critics who say the province should have cleared the entire reservoir basin simply did not understand that it was impossible given the time allotted for the task.⁴⁰

In February 1967 Ray Williston reported on the progress of the clearing of the reservoir basin. Of the 435,200 acres expected to be flooded a mere eight percent (35,630 acres) had been cleared or prepared for the flooding. As expected, with the exception of clearing to create navigation channels, crews focused on removing merchantable timber.⁴¹ And even though clearing continued throughout 1967 as the water rose journalists estimated contractors had only cleared a quarter of the reservoir basin; the rest was to “become an underwater forest.”⁴² In some instances even the use of the word cleared was deceiving. To save money on transportation contractors left 200 million board feet of timber in the basin area to collect as the water rose.⁴³ Still in 1980 Ray Williston would vehemently deny contractors simply left the best timber behind.⁴⁴ By December 1967 the province released notices regarding the flooding of the

³⁹ Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012.

⁴⁰ Echoing this Pollon and Matheson cite local resident Jim Beattie as stating it should have been cleared on principal, but noting this would have meant clearing started earlier. They also cite A.C. Geddes as stating the infrastructure should have been put in place around 1958. This of course would have meant paying for infrastructure at a time when the project was not certain and handled by the private Peace River Power Development Company. Albert Isadore, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 18 March 2013; Pollon and Matheson, 181, 189, 200; Unrau, 13-14, 41-47.

⁴¹ “Portage Mountain Dam: Williston Details Clearing Process,” *Prince George Citizen*, 27 February 1967.

⁴² In 1985 it was estimated one third had been cleared. Malcolm Curtis, “Ocean of Debris:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 5 February 1985; Con Jackson, “Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 14 June 1968.

⁴³ So much timber was left that some Elders believe nothing was hauled out at all. NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.12, Box 9, “Bill Fletcher,” *Vancouver Sun*, 3 September 1968; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012.

⁴⁴ NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, The Mackenzie Story: Comments On The Presentation.

reservoir to the public.⁴⁵ According to them early in 1968 the elevation of the reservoir would reach 1,800 feet. By June it was expected to be at 2,000 feet and by the end of 1968 2,080 feet. The maximum reservoir elevation was supposed to be 2,200 feet.⁴⁶

Public Warning – Danger: The Williston Lake Reservoir

The first sign something was different occurred in the fall of 1967.⁴⁷ As Elders recall, at first the rising water did not seem to create too much of a problem, but this quickly changed.⁴⁸ Initially the reservoir filled relatively quickly.⁴⁹ Some would say ten times faster than expected.⁵⁰ Much to the surprise of crews tasked with clearing along the edge of the reservoir, that spring the water was soon coming up a foot a day.⁵¹ The rate would ultimately increase to five feet a day during the summer. Within a year the reservoir was over halfway to its maximum elevation and even though it had not reached the normal operational range, the province held a ceremony on 28 September 1968 officially marking first electricity.⁵² So concerned was the province with ensuring this event would occur in 1968 that even though the spring runoff had been low the

⁴⁵ KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds..., File 0242651-A, Volume 5, Letter to H.D. DeBeck from J.P. Ottesen, 1 December 1967.

⁴⁶ KA, File 0242651-A, Volume 5, Public Notice: Flooding of Upstream of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam.

⁴⁷ Robert Inyallie, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012; Elsie Pierre and Mabel Troendle, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 10 November 2008.

⁴⁸ This belief was especially true if the individual in question did not know about the dam. Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012; Ron McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2012; Albert Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 11 September 2012; Vera Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012.

⁴⁹ Inversely the following year (1969) Ray Williston would tell the news media it was filling slower than expected. Georgina Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Marion Jackson; Rita McIsaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September 2012; Jimmie and Nora Massettoe, interviewed by author and Susan McCook, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012; NBCA, 2000.13.2.13, Box 10, Pat Dufour, "Williston Clean-Up Costs \$10 Million," *Victoria Daily Times*, 26 July 1969; Patrick Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

⁵⁰ Pollon Matheson, 191.

⁵¹ Rita McIsaac; NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Mackenzie Heritage Day: 29 October 1979; Pollon and Matheson, 191.

⁵² Due to the lay of the land the reservoir was only a quarter full and by October 1970 it was still thirty-three feet from its maximum elevation. BCA, GR-0880, Box 56, British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, "Peace River Project Progress Report," April, May, June 1968, 5, 26; BCA, GR-0880, Box 56, British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, "Peace River Project Progress Report," July, August, September 1968, 7, 28; "Fears Confirmed," *Prince George Citizen*, 21 June 1968; NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Nat Cole, "Spectacular Lake Williston:...", *Vancouver Sun*, 10 October 1970; Pollon and Matheson, 193-194.

water comptroller allowed a reduction in the flow rate at the dam site.⁵³ Depending on the terrain and spring runoff the water would continue to rise until 1972 at a rate ranging from six inches to fifteen feet per day, after which the province expected it to fluctuate by about twenty to sixty feet in any given year.⁵⁴ This change might not sound like much, but they expected it to expose up to 260,000 acres of reservoir basin and anything left behind to the winds and weather for extended periods throughout the year.⁵⁵ It could be very bad for wildlife depending on their habitat, seasonal migrations, and what the lower elevation revealed in the reservoir basin.⁵⁶

The initial fill rate caught people off guard all along the emerging reservoir, and forced the early abandonment of Finlay Forks proper. People lost personal property, which if it floated contributed to the debris.⁵⁷ Many people required rescuing, especially if the property lost was

⁵³ In July the water comptroller lowered the minimum flow rate permitted at the dam site from a fluctuating rate of 10,000 to 1,000 c.f.s. between 1 April and 30 November 1968 (with a minimum of 10,000 c.f.s. between 16 July and 15 September) to a constant 1,000 c.f.s. to ensure this first power. Four months later, a minimum flow of 10,000 c.f.s., (or the natural flow,) was extended from 1 December 1968 to 31 March 1969. KA, Water Comptroller fonds, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Letter to Director, Water Resources, Department of Agriculture, Province of Alberta, R.E. Bailey from Comptroller of Water Rights, H.D. DeBeck, 15 November 1968; David LeMarquand, "Environmental Planning and Decision-making For Large-Scale Power Projects," (MA Thesis: UBC, 1972), 91, 132-135.

⁵⁴ In 1992 Watson reported the lowest elevation recorded was about 2,150 feet or a fifty-five foot drawdown. Ted Beaudoin, "Lake's Industries as Spectacular as Its Moods," *Prince George Citizen*, 7 July 1969; Jackson, "Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area;" Lena McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2013; NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, "Spectacular Lake Williston;" Laura Seymour, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012; Tom Watson, *Evaluation of Mercury Concentration in Selected Environmental Receptors in the Williston Lake and Peace River Areas of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Environmental Resources: British Columbia Hydro, 1992), 2.

⁵⁵ BCA, GR-0880, Box 6, BC Research: Division of Applied Biology, *Limnological Studies of Williston Lake During the Summer and Fall, 1975: Project 1711*, 46-47, 51; NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Ian Hunter, "But Williston Can't Say When: Snag-Free Reservoir Pledged," [*Vancouver Sun*], 7 November 1970.

⁵⁶ Doug Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; Harry Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; Marion Jackson; Helen Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September 2012.

⁵⁷ Among the Elders I interviewed this information is common knowledge. Some Elders recall waking up to find their cabin flooded, while others recall having up to one day to move. See Ingenika Band Members, interviewed by Lorraine Izony, Ingenika, BC, 25 April 1984 in *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*. Koyl notes some people went hunting only to return to rising water. Jackson, "Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area;" Mary Christina Koyl, "Cultural Chasm: A 1960s Hydro Development and the Tsay Keh Dene Native Community of Northern British Columbia" (MA Thesis: University of Victoria, 1992), 74; Pollon and Matheson, 191, 271-272, 276; Stanley, 110-111.

their boat.⁵⁸ Making matters worse, Elders recall some sawmills were still operating up to the time they were flooded and planned on simply relocating to higher elevations as needed.⁵⁹ For example, Ongman's sawmill had employees live on rafts so that they could continue working, only to have a landslide destroy these accommodations.⁶⁰

As the water rose, improperly secured trees that contractors had simply knocked down had a tendency to stand up once covered by water or uprooted and became debris.⁶¹ The result was a mess. Promotional material and reports on the dam had promised the public the reservoir would open up the Trench for industry and recreation.⁶² Some would argue it did, or rather would, although this claim is often restricted to the forest industry.⁶³ Ray Williston would even later state he was quite proud that the reservoir opened up the Trench.⁶⁴ Others were less hopeful.⁶⁵ During the summer of 1968 not only were signs put up along the reservoir warning the public of debris, sloughing banks, winds, and sudden storms, but public warnings were issued by the

⁵⁸ Ingenika Band Members; John Poole, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 30 September 2012; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2012; Melvin Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2013.

⁵⁹ Ron McCook; John Poole; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012.

⁶⁰ Unrau, 21-22.

⁶¹ Pollon and Matheson, 186.

⁶² Pristine sandy beaches were among the things promised. British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, "Peace River Power," [1968], 8; Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), Columbia River Documents fonds, RG 89, Box 36, File 2987-MISC-15, British Columbia Energy Board, *Report on the Columbia and Peace Power Projects* 31 July 1961, 39; NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, J. Lewis Robinson, "The Rocky Mountain Trench in Eastern British Columbia," *Canadian Geographic Journal* 77, no. 4 (1968): 138-140; Helen Poole; "Reservoir to Open Up Much Untouched Land," *Prince George Citizen*, 23 May 1963; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-49-0-0-71, Gordon Shrum, "The Peace River Project," 17 August 1962; Bob and Shirley Van Somer, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 22 March 2012.

⁶³ Karl Froschauer, *White Gold: Hydroelectric Power in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 189-191; Jackson, "Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area; NBCA, 2000.13.2.12, Box 9, "Bill Fletcher," 3 September 1968; NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Nat Cole, "Displaced Person's View of Williston Lake: 'You Hate to See the Beauty of Peace River Disturbed,'" *Vancouver Sun*, 10 October 1970; NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, "Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk,] 13; Richard Solonas.

⁶⁴ He did admit in 1969 that any boat travelling on the reservoir needed to be sea worthy. Williston and Keller would use this fact to claim the reservoir was safe in one year as opposed to the seven to eight years Williston himself predicted. BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston; NBCA, 2000.13.2.13, Box 10, Dufour, "Williston Clean-Up Costs \$10 Million;" Williston and Keller, 218.

⁶⁵ NBCA, 2000.13.2.12, Box 9, "Bill Fletcher," 3 September 1968;" Pollon and Matheson, 192, 298.

province regarding not only the dangers of the new “lake,” but also the Finlay Forks access road.⁶⁶ The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) even released their own warning in October following the drowning of a tugboat captain who worked for Cattermole Timber when his tug went down.⁶⁷ In a twist of fate this “first victim” of the Williston Lake reservoir was Allan Bernard Tommy, who was Sto:lo from the Matsqui First Nation. His body was never recovered. He would not be the last to die in the reservoir.⁶⁸ By 1985 *Prince George Citizen* reported that eight more people were lost to the reservoir. Based on available death records the number as of 1992 is nine.⁶⁹

As early as June 1968 even the usually supportive *Prince George Citizen* began running article after article on the mess created by the rising water.⁷⁰ By then there was an estimated 750 million cubic feet of timber floating in the reservoir. The plan was to either salvage it for lumber or burn it.⁷¹ To help accomplish this five forestry companies formed the Peace Salvage Association in early 1968 to coordinated activities with BC Hydro and the BC Forest Service, who had jurisdiction over the Peace Reach and the remainder of the reservoir respectively.

⁶⁶ CBC, *CBC Hourglass Documentary*, CBC: Television, 1970; “Flotsam Hazardous at Finlay Forks,” *Prince George Citizen*, 7 August 1968; Beaudoin, “Lake’s Industries as Spectacular as Its Moods,” *Prince George Citizen*, 7 July 1969; NBCA, 2000.13.2.12, Box 9, “Bennett Dam Lake Hazardous,” *The Province*, 17 August 1968; NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, “Spectacular Lake Williston.”

⁶⁷ NBCA, 2000.13.2.12, Box 9, “Williston Lake Branded Menace,” *Vancouver Sun*, 24 October 1968.

⁶⁸ BCA, Vital Statistics Agency Death Registrations, 1872-1988, GR-2951, 1968-09-017957.

⁶⁹ Stanley cites at least seven people have died. Based on the fact the BC Archives wait twenty years to release death records it appears this number is based on the death records of the province available at the time her book was written. BCA, GR-2951, 1968-09-017957; BCA, GR-2951, 1975-09-020052; BCA, GR-2951, 1980-09-020519; BCA, GR-2951, 1980-09-020576; BCA, GR-2951, 1988-09-005147; BCA, GR-2951, 1988-09-008193; BCA, GR-2951, 1988-09-014338; BCA, GR-2951, 1988-09-014339; BCA, GR-2951, 1992-09-023115; Stanley, 112; Carla Wilson, “Floating Logs, High Waves,” *Prince George Citizen*, 28 August 1985.

⁷⁰ “Flooding Causing Headaches,” *Prince George Citizen*, 13 June 1968; Jackson, “Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area; ‘Fears Confirmed.’”

⁷¹ *Native Voice* estimates this comprised 1,800 acres. “History of Ingenika,” *Native Voice*, 17, no. 2 (1989): 9; Jackson, “Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area;” Con Jackson, “Bodies Meet to Discuss Debris,” *Prince George Citizen*, 14 June 1968.

Officially the mood was positive and according to logger and public relations manager Tom Roberts a meeting held in 1969 did not deem the debris to be particularly problematic.⁷²

While BC Hydro controlled the Peace Reach to ensure the protection of the dam, it was the task of the BC Forest Service to facilitate the sale and salvage of merchantable timber to private companies, and begin clearing the reservoir itself to allow for navigation by ocean worthy vessels.⁷³ According to the province and its supporters those clearing the reservoir simply needed time and money. Some even hoped that eventually the floating debris would become water logged and sink to the bottom of the reservoir.⁷⁴ Instead much of it became mummified and logs that the province did not remove continue to float in the reservoir to this day. The same was true for trees left standing as well as those that stood up. Although the province hoped that winter reservoir drawdowns would cause ice on the top of the reservoir to crush these trees, to this day semi-submerged forests exist seemingly stuck in a perpetual autumn.⁷⁵

In September 1968 Ray Williston informed the news media that the province would clean everything up under a ten year \$2 million per year program that had its origins with the clearing policies prior to the completion of the dam. Merchantable timber was still a priority under this plan, but the province would leave no standing timber above the minimum elevation of the reservoir. According to Williston, the debris would supply two pulp mills in the area. Until then

⁷² According Pollon and Matheson BC Hydro fiercely controlled the twenty miles of the Peace Reach upstream from the dam site, working with Carrier Lumber, rather than the entire association. Some have cited the BC Forest Service's majority control as simply control. Beaudoin, "Lake's Industries as Spectacular as Its Moods;" McIntyre, "Lake Log Salvage in Trouble?;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, "Spectacular Lake Williston;" Pollon and Matheson, 186, 191, 193-196.

⁷³ Reflecting this sentiment some Elders recall that during this initial period tugboats were needed to get through debris. Robert Inyallie; Jackson, "Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.12, Box 9, "Bill Fletcher," 3 September 1968;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.13, Box 10, Dufour, "Williston Clean-Up Costs \$10 Million;" Wilson, "Floating Logs, High Waves."

⁷⁴ Fiennes, 166.

⁷⁵ *CBC Hourglass*; NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, "Spectacular Lake Williston;" Helen Poole.

he advised the public that it was best for “do-gooders” to leave the entire issue alone.⁷⁶ (He would later claim part of the problem was that the younger generation had “negative attitudes.”)⁷⁷

By the late 1970s critics would suggest that much of the work conducted to clear the reservoir was more about public relations rather than benefiting local residents.⁷⁸ In part they based this conclusion on the fact that by 1970 the province had mostly cleared the Peace and Parsnip reaches with a particular focus on the eastern shore of the Parsnip and Finlay reaches.⁷⁹ The province hoped that it would be entirely free of debris by 1973.⁸⁰ Just as with the initial clearing of the reservoir basin, part of the problem was the scale of the task. As local resident Al Hamilton told Pollon and Matheson, the cleanup process was like “‘eating soup with a darning needle.’”⁸¹ Not helping the situation was that the following year Williston reduced the budget for clearing the debris by \$10 million, while at the same time extending the time line by a possible five more years. He was optimistic, however, that boating would be possible in seven to eight years under this program.⁸² Until then the reservoir was effectively impassable.⁸³

Debris was not the only problem, however. The soil of the Trench was sandy, deposited in prehistoric times when a naturally-occurring “dam” had existed near the dam site, and contributed to throughout the centuries by the meandering Finlay and Parsnip rivers. With trees and other plant life removed in preparation for the reservoir, when the water came up it had a tendency to liquefy this soil, and up to two hundred yards of shoreline could simply slough into the reservoir, taking with it anything unfortunate enough to be on it, thereby adding to the debris,

⁷⁶ NBCA, 2000.13.2.12, Box 9, “Clearing Project to Span 10 Years:...,” *Daily Colonist*, 6 September 1968.

⁷⁷ NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, “Williston Defends Bennett Dam,” *Daily Colonist*, 17 September 1970; NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, “Dam Defended by Williston,” *The Province*, 17 September 1970.

⁷⁸ NBCA, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Mackenzie Heritage Day: 29 October 1979; Pollon and Matheson, 186.

⁷⁹ NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, “Spectacular Lake Williston;” Pollon and Matheson, 191.

⁸⁰ NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Bob McConnell, “Picture ‘As Ugly as Sin,’” *The Province*, 28 October 1970.

⁸¹ Pollon and Matheson, 189.

⁸² NBCA, 2000.13.2.13, Box 10, Dufour, “Williston Clean-Up Costs \$10 Million.”

⁸³ BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston.

and producing a huge wave up to fifty feet high in the new reservoir.⁸⁴ The fluctuating nature of the reservoir did not help, and up to twelve feet a year of shoreline could be lost.⁸⁵ As with the rate at which the reservoir filled, this result was completely unexpected by provincial officials, despite the fact as early as 1917 individuals like Paul Haworth had reported that at spots both the Parsnip and Finlay rivers were flanked by sandy cut banks that when disturbed by wind or changes in the river would slough into them.⁸⁶ It was estimated sloughing-in would add an additional 30 million cubic feet of timber to the reservoir by 1971.⁸⁷ It would be quite common for the first ten years and it continues to this day.⁸⁸ Part of the problem is that since the reservoir flooded a mountain valley often where the shore sloughs in it leaves a relatively steep bank that is prone to sloughing in itself. This process repeats itself until a stable angle is reached or bed rock is exposed.⁸⁹

Due to the uneven terrain diurnal mountain winds have always existed in the Trench to some degree. The Trench also has a tendency to collect Arctic air in it, which eventually tends to drain to the west, and in doing so can create strong winds.⁹⁰ Individuals like Paul Haworth had

⁸⁴ Ironically Fiennes suggests proper clearing (the removal of plant life) would have prevented sloughing in. The documentary *CBC Hourglass* suggests it is due to the dry climate of the Trench. Beaudoin, "Lake's Industries as Spectacular as Its Moods;" BCA, GR-0880, Box 6, BC Research, 54; *CBC Hourglass*; Adele Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; Georgina Chingee; Rose Dennis interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 20 October 1984 in *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Fiennes, 21, 166; Ingenika Band Members; Ray Izony, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 3 October 2012; Jackson, "Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area;" Rita McIsaac; NBCA, 2000.13.2.12, Box 9, "Bennett Dam Lake Hazardous;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.12, Box 9, "Bill Fletcher," 3 September 1968;" Helen Poole; Vera Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012.

⁸⁵ Derek Ingram, "Community-Based Knowledge Capture: Tsay Keh Dene Development and Online Archival System" (MA Thesis: University of Northern British Columbia, 2012), 19.

⁸⁶ Elders would note the difference between these banks and the ones created after the reservoir formed. BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston; Paul Haworth, *On the Headwaters of Peace River: A Narrative of a Thousand-Mile Canoe Trip to a Little-Known Place of the Canadian Rockies* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1917), 80, 104, 106-108, 111, 143; Laura Seymour; Verne Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; Josephine Tylee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012.

⁸⁷ Jackson, "Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area."

⁸⁸ Ray Williston claims it had ended by 1975. BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston; Ingenika Band Members.

⁸⁹ *CBC Hourglass*.

⁹⁰ In very simplistic terms diurnal mountain winds are the product of the terrain itself, which produces uneven air temperatures, and corresponding air pressures, at different elevations and locations. In their attempt to equalize air

warned the public that like sloughing winds could produce waves on the lakes of the Crooked River within five minutes that might swamp a careless or inexperienced boater.⁹¹ Thanks to its relative translucence, depth, and ability to easily mix, water does not heat up as fast as land. This difference in temperature produces the idealized sea and land breezes that occur along the seashore. In the case of lakes they are known as lake and land breezes and can even exist along rivers and other large bodies of water.⁹² When combined with the water cycle these winds can create storms.⁹³ The Williston Lake reservoir at its peak is 438,118 acres (1,773 km²) in area. At the time of its creation it was the largest man made reservoir in the world and currently is the largest lake in BC and the seventh largest man made reservoir in the world after Lake Nasser in Egypt.⁹⁴ Yet when representatives of Axel Wenner-Gren first planned it, they did not expect it to contribute to rapidly changing weather in the Trench, or increased winds. It did on both accounts. Not helping the situation was that the new reservoir produced a flat “terrain” perfect for wind to blow unimpeded, especially compared to the boreal forests that had existed in the Trench prior to it.⁹⁵

pressure, winds blow from areas of high pressure (low temperature) to areas of low pressure (high temperature). Four main types of wind exist: upslope/downslope, up-valley/down-valley, cross-valley and mountain-plain wind. The binary nature of many of these types of wind is a result of the wind generally changing direction twice a day. C. David Whiteman, *Mountain Meteorology: Fundamentals and Applications* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 20, 171-172.

⁹¹ Galloway, C.F.J. “An Optimist Visits the Area, 1912,” *Peace River Chronicles: 81 Eye-Witness Accounts of the Peace River Region of British Columbia*, ed. Gordon Bowes (Vancouver: Prescott Publishing Company, 1963), 291-293; Haworth, 48, 64-65, 87-88.

⁹² R.A. Pielke, “Land and Sea Breezes,” *Encyclopedia of Atmospheric Sciences*, ed. Gerald North, John Pyle and Fuqing Zhang, 2nd ed., vol. 4 (Toronto: Academic Press, 2014), 80-81.

⁹³ Ingram alludes to this situation. Ingram, 18.

⁹⁴ BC Hydro, “Williston Reservoir,” *BC Hydro: For Generations* https://www.bchydro.com/community/recreation_areas/williston.html (accessed 1 June 2015).

⁹⁵ Robert Inyallie; Jimmie and Nora Massetoe; Pollon and Matheson, 273; Helen Poole; Mary Jean and Willie Poole.

In general the winds in the Trench blow predominantly from south to north and have a tendency to produce waves on the debris filled reservoir.⁹⁶ Unlike in the ocean, waves on the new reservoir tended to not swell and were full of energy. This energy delayed cleanup efforts as the waves tended to disperse collected floating debris and break apart log booms.⁹⁷ The calmest areas are the ends of Parsnip and Finlay reaches, which can be deceiving for people that enter the reservoir from their respective rivers.⁹⁸ These waves were not always small. White capped waves up to forty feet high can form, and even moderate wave actions have a tendency to render debris hard to see, especially if it is partially submerged.⁹⁹ Even in the best of weather some debris, such as neutral buoyancy cottonwood logs, was hard to see.¹⁰⁰ These were but one type of partially and completely submerged logs that locals colloquially know as deadheads, and they represent a major problem to transportation to this day in some areas of the reservoir.¹⁰¹ Submerged trees were particularly deadly as when they uprooted they shot to the surface like wooden torpedoes.¹⁰² As with many others things, this was unexpected as it was believed

⁹⁶ BCA, GR-0880, Box 6, BC Research, 42; Alec Chingee; Curtis, "Ocean of Debris;" Ingenika Band Members; Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012; Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 0242651-E, Volume 1, H.M. Hunt, "Problems Encountered in Doing Field Work at Lake Williston," [1987]; LAC, RG 10, Box 1 File 985/19-4-609, "Log Clean-up Major Victory," *British Columbia Lumberman*, December 1978: 8-9; Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Ron McCook; Willie Pierre, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 12 October 1984 in *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Richard Solonas.

⁹⁷ Beaudoin, "Lake's Industries as Spectacular as Its Moods."

⁹⁸ BCA, GR-0880, Box 6, BC Research, 42.

⁹⁹ BCA, GR-0880, Box 6, BC Research, 42; Beaudoin, "Lake's Industries as Spectacular as Its Moods;" Curtis, "Ocean of Debris;" Ingenika Band Members; Al Inyallie; Robert Inyallie; Jackson, "Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area;" KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 1, H.M. Hunt, "Problems Encountered in Doing Field Work at Lake Williston;" Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter; Wilson, "Floating Logs, High Waves."

¹⁰⁰ Jackson, "Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area."

¹⁰¹ BCA, GR-0880, Box 6, BC Research, 49; Doug Chingee; Curtis, "Ocean of Debris;" NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, "Spectacular Lake Williston;" Doris Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 26 September 2012; Wilson, "Floating Logs, High Waves."

¹⁰² Georgina Chingee; Marion Jackson; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter; Patrick Prince; Agnes Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Geraldine Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.; Richard Solonas; Mabel Troendle.

submerged trees would remain in place.¹⁰³ A direct hit from any of this debris could puncture the hull of a riverboat, while at the same time anchoring it in place.¹⁰⁴

Storms have a tendency to seemingly emerge out of nowhere.¹⁰⁵ Particularly dangerous was the centre of the new reservoir, where the Finlay, Parsnip, and Peace reaches met. Here winds could arise from all directions, and reach speeds up to 70 miles per hour creating waves that, combined with the debris itself, made travel on the new reservoir very dangerous.¹⁰⁶ As former Chief Seymour Isaac informed me one could find oneself surrounded by swells twenty-five to thirty feet high in as little as ten minutes time.¹⁰⁷ He was not alone in this assessment.¹⁰⁸

Given the wind and debris in the reservoir the logical solution would be to try to reach shore whenever the winds and waves rose up. Unfortunately, banks created by sloughing, debris, deadheads, and in some places partially or fully submerged forests made this hard to do, if not impossible, even in the best of weather.¹⁰⁹ A 1975 study found it was worst “along the upper two thirds of the Finlay Reach and in portions of Finlay Bay and the northern end of Parsnip Reach.”¹¹⁰ Some Elders remember debris forcing them to spend hours, if not days out on the reservoir.¹¹¹ Others feared it.¹¹² Debris could wreck boats that remained on the reservoir during a

¹⁰³ BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston.

¹⁰⁴ Albert Poole, “The Long Journey Home (Excerpt from Work in Progress),” *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, ed. Kaya Minogue, 161.

¹⁰⁵ *CBC Hourglass*; Ingenika Band Members; Donny Van Somer.

¹⁰⁶ According to H.M. Hunt winds of 30-35 mph produced waves five to six feet high. Beaudoin, “Lake’s Industries as Spectacular as Its Moods;” KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 1, H.M. Hunt, “Problems Encountered in Doing Field Work at Lake Williston;” Mary Jean and Willie Poole; Wilson, “Floating Logs, High Waves.”

¹⁰⁷ Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Beaudoin, “Lake’s Industries as Spectacular as Its Moods;” Bob Hughes, “Think Twice About Using Lake Williston,” *Prince George Citizen*, 8 September 1972.

¹⁰⁹ BCA, GR-0880, Box 6, BC Research, 41, 49, 52-53; *CBC Hourglass*; Rose Dennis, 20 October 1987; Ingenika Band Members; KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 1, H.M. Hunt, “Problems Encountered in Doing Field Work at Lake Williston;” Mary Ann and Murphy Porter; Laura Seymour; Bob and Shirley Van Somer; Wilson, “Floating Logs, High Waves.”

¹¹⁰ BCA, GR-0880, Box 6, BC Research, 42.

¹¹¹ *CBC Hourglass*; Marj Gray, “Finlay Forks Indians Gone by Fall,” *Prince George Citizen*, 17 May 1972; Ingenika Band Members; Jimmie and Nora Massett; Helen Poole; William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012; Mabel Troendle; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

¹¹² Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012.

period of heavy waves, while a landslide could sink them. The latter is ironic as many people tried to stay close to shore to avoid debris and be safe.¹¹³

Even on shore, one was not safe, however. The reservoir does not confine the waves and wind and depending on their strength, and in the case of waves, their height, they could draw in more debris from the shoreline.¹¹⁴ A.C. Geddes recalls one evening when a series of waves he had earlier rode out on the reservoir filled his truck with water.¹¹⁵

Moose Can't Read: An Impassable Reservoir

Throughout 1968 a key issue resulting from this debris was the impact it had on the wildlife that the Tsek'ehne relied on for food and other resources. Of key concern for the Tsek'ehne were the khuda, or moose, but of course all of the animals in the Trench were affected to varying degrees.¹¹⁶ Just as with salmon on the Northwest Coast, one can easily exaggerate the importance of moose when it comes to the Tsek'ehne and some Elders, like Richard Solonas, would suggest a reliance on moose was more common in the north than in the south.¹¹⁷ Yet it was a staple of Tsek'ehne diet. Nevertheless, from the proposal of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, it was clear that the dam would have a negative impact on the local moose population.

Rather than attempt to save the existing population, or construct the W.A.C. Bennett to have as a little impact as possible, the province decided to cull the population to match their

¹¹³ Beaudoin, "Lake's Industries as Spectacular as Its Moods;" Ingenika Band Members; Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012.

¹¹⁴ Ingenika Band Members; Pollon and Matheson, 191.

¹¹⁵ Pollon and Matheson, 187-188.

¹¹⁶ For example, the indigenous mountain caribou had their migration routed disrupted. This fact disproves Lamers' claim the last caribou herd in Tsek'ehne territory was recorded in 1824. It has even been suggested that mountain goats and mountain (stone) sheep may have benefited. BCA, Conference On Northwest Coast Studies fonds, MS 1308, Box 1/1, File 20, Frans Lamers, "Sekani Adaptation: An Analysis Of Technological Strategies And Processes," Paper presented to Northwest Coast Studies Conference, 12-16 May 1976, 17-18; Yvonne Harris, "Choices for Change: A Study of the Fort Ware Indian Band and Implications of Land Settlements for Northern Indian Bands" (MA Thesis: University of British Columbia, 1984), 47-48.

¹¹⁷ Richard Solonas.

expected reduced habitat. They would accomplish this goal through increased harvesting and as early as 1963 the province extended the hunting season for moose and deer north of Finlay Forks by an extra week.¹¹⁸ They extended the season even further during the 1967-1968 hunting season. The only conditions were that hunters had to ask permission to utilize forestry access roads, give jawbones as proof to the Fish and Wildlife Branch, and properly prepare for conditions in the reservoir basin.¹¹⁹ With all of the clearing taking place, the reservoir basin itself was not easy for anything to travel through even before the initial flooding.¹²⁰

Despite these conditions the extended hunting seasons took on a mythic status among the residents of the Trench. Many local residents, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, combined the multiple seasons into one big open season on game for Euro-Canadian hunters.¹²¹ And although individuals like Norman Unrau recall the limit was three moose per hunter, it is not entirely clear that all hunters adhered to this number and many Tsek'ehne Elders recall seeing moose killed for their antlers or shot as target practice.¹²²

Although \$10,000 had been set aside in 1963 for the provincial Department of Recreation and Conservation to study the impact on fish and wildlife, its primary concern was the potential impact on salmon and there is no evidence that BC Hydro ever received a copy.¹²³ As a result, it was only when the water began to rise during the first year that any actual impact studies

¹¹⁸ Seasons for mountain sheep and antlerless deer were also extended. "Moose, Deer Season Changed," *Prince George Citizen*, 26 July 1963.

¹¹⁹ "Flood Hunting Area," *Prince George Citizen*, 3 January 1968; "Primitive Conditions Faced 'Special' Moose Hunters," *Prince George Citizen*, 23 January 1968; Pollon and Matheson, 286-287.

¹²⁰ Pollon and Matheson, 186.

¹²¹ Tsay Keh Dene Elder Francis Isaac recalls the open season lasted for five seasons. *CBC Hourglass*; Ingenika Band Members; Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012; Jack Isadore, interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 4 August 2004; NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk,] 16; Pollon and Matheson, 269; Royal BC Museum, "Troubled Waters," *Living Landscapes* www.livinglandscapes.bc.ca/prnr/mcleod_lake/index.html (accessed 29 January 2014) site discontinued.

¹²² Ingenika Band Members; Jack Isadore, 4 August 2004; Royal BC Museum, "Troubled Waters;" Unrau, 97.

¹²³ KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 0242651, Volume 1, Memorandum to A.F. Paget from D.B. Turner, 5 November 1962; KA, File 0242651, Volume 1, Order Water Act Section 15 File No. 0242651, 27 February 1963; LeMarquand, 85.

regarding moose began. Of prime concern for those conducting this research was what effect the reservoir would have on the winter habitat of moose (and other ungulates) along the rivers.¹²⁴ It is important to note, however, that this question was for future projects and the province did not conduct the study to alter the already completed W.A.C. Bennett Dam.¹²⁵ Given the meandering nature of the rivers there were numerous swamps, sloughs, and islands that attracted wildlife in general. Throughout the northern Trench these areas were not only winter feeding grounds for moose, but also the sites of spring calving grounds, and year round moose habitat.¹²⁶

Unsurprisingly it was revealed that their usual winter feeding grounds were now gone, and moose would be forced into the surrounding forest in the winter. As a result, even before concluding the study it was clear that due to the flooding there would not be enough food for moose in the Trench during the winter of 1968.¹²⁷ The following spring birthing and child rearing would be difficult not only for the moose, but all animals in the Trench as they tried to evade the rising water.¹²⁸ All the debris and sloughing had a tendency to drown any animals that decided to try to cross the new reservoir.¹²⁹ The debris effectively created a “fence” that

¹²⁴ Many Elders are unaware of any impact studies at all. “Primitive Conditions Face ‘Special’ Moose Hunters;” Jackson, “Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area;” NBCA, 2000.13.2.12, Box 9, “Bill Fletcher,” 3 September 1968; Pollon and Matheson, 271-272, 276; Albert Poole, 11 September 2012.

¹²⁵ Jackson, “Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area;” NBCA, 2000.13.2.12, Box 9, “Bill Fletcher,” 3 September 1968.

¹²⁶ The swamps and sloughs were throughout Tsek’ehne territory. Rose Dennis, 20 October 1987; Ingenika Band Members; Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Salmon Valley, BC, 1 October 2012; Ray Izony, *Tsay Keh Dene Elder Engagement Information*, 1-2; NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, “Displaced Person’s View of Williston Lake;” Alex Poole, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 6 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; William (Billie) Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 8 September 2008; William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012; Richard Solonas.

¹²⁷ Jackson, “Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area;” “Fears Confirmed;” NBCA, 2000.13.2.12, Box 9, “Bill Fletcher,” 3 September 1968.

¹²⁸ Ingenika Band Members.

¹²⁹ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Felix Charlie, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2012. Jackson, “Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area;” NBCA, 2000.13.2.12, Box 9, “Bill Fletcher,” 3 September 1968; NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, “Displaced Person’s View of Williston Lake.”

prevented any animal from reaching the shore.¹³⁰ It also prevented animals from escaping “islands” created by the rising water that were eventually inundated.¹³¹

Soon individuals were finding the bloated carcasses of wildlife intermixed in the debris. Still wildlife biologist Ken Sumanik estimated a minimum of 4,000 moose were facing starvation that winter. To prevent this tragedy, he and others encouraged hunters help cull the herd during the 1968-1969 hunting season, which began on 3 August 1968 and ended 31 March 1969 in the reservoir basin and allowed for the taking of two moose per hunter.¹³² Ever the optimist, Ray Williston assured the public that as of September 1968 individuals had only found nineteen moose dead in the reservoir and that “predictions that a total of 6,000 moose would die were unrealistic.”¹³³ This low number was the official provincial view and Williston would maintain it later in life despite evidence to the contrary.¹³⁴

As it turned out the number of moose killed was (and still is) highly speculative.¹³⁵ By 1984 provincial environmental studies estimated the dam resulted “in the loss of an annual harvestable surplus of 1,000 to 1,500 moose.”¹³⁶ Since a baseline harvestable surplus is not given, however, it hard to tell the total number of moose lost. Two years later, studies estimated

¹³⁰ NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, “Displaced Person’s View of Williston Lake;” William (Billie) Poole, 8 September 2008; William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012.

¹³¹ Jack Isadore, 4 August 2004; Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet; Marion Jackson; Bernard McKay, *Crooked River Rats: The Adventures of Pioneer Rivermen* (Surrey: Hancock House, 2000), 173; Pollon and Matheson, 186; Patrick Prince; Unrau, 97; Bob and Shirley Van Somer; Donny Van Somer.

¹³² Former chief Johnny Pierre recalls hearing that the province tried to chase them away from the reservoir with helicopters. Robert Inyallie; Albert Isadore; Jackson, “Bennett Dam Back Up Blights Area;” Con Jackson, “Hunting Promoted Along Finlay Before Moose Starvation in Flood,” *Prince George Citizen*, 4 July 1968; Con Jackson, “Moose Kill Light in Extra Season,” *Prince George Citizen*, 7; NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, “Displaced Person’s View of Williston Lake,” January 1969; Johnny Pierre.

¹³³ “Williston Slams Outworn Notions,” *Prince George Citizen*, 30 September 1968.

¹³⁴ BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston; NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, “Displaced Person’s View of Williston Lake.”

¹³⁵ Fiennes, 21; Johnny Pierre; Unrau, 97-98.

¹³⁶ KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Executive Summary: Re: Finlay-Omineca Strategic Environmental Plan, [3 December 1984].

that 10,000 moose were lost as a result of the flooding.¹³⁷ This estimate would further increase to 12,500 moose in total.¹³⁸ Here the difference in numbers seems to represent the ecological model used rather than an actual death count. Putting this into perspective by 1973 Ken Kylo estimated that moose along the Finlay Reach were extinct, while others would claim a fifty to seventy-five percent drop.¹³⁹

The death of all of the animals caught in the reservoir was traumatic for the Tsek'ehne. Locals say that all along the reservoir the smell of rotting animals caught in the debris was ever present that summer.¹⁴⁰ Not only did they find their bodies after they drowned, but often they witnessed and/or heard the animals drowning.¹⁴¹ Driven by a desire to try to deal with the horror facing them many band members tried to save any animals they could. Some were successful. Elders recall how community members saved mothers and their young, including predators.¹⁴²

Forestry Camps and Reserves

While all of this was happening, the Tsek'ehne were suffering, especially those who because of work lived in the forestry camps in the Finlay Forks area. They had never been properly informed about the project, or its potential impacts, and as a result when the water began to come up it caught them off guard. Even though some Tsek'ehne were working the nightshift when the water came up, many Elders were still only vaguely aware that the province had built a dam. One can clearly see the confusion that this lack of information caused in an

¹³⁷ KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Memorandum from Legislative Intern, Dale Jackson, 10 June 1986.

¹³⁸ Yvonne Harris, "Choices for Change" (MA Thesis: University of British Columbia, 1984), 46.

¹³⁹ Kwadacha Elder Ivor Smaaslet told me 50% of the moose in the area died, while Pollon and Matheson state Jim Beattie told them three quarters of the moose died. Robert Inyallie; Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet; Pollon and Matheson, 286-287.

¹⁴⁰ Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 19 September 2012; Koysl, 75; McKay, 174.

¹⁴¹ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See William (Billie) Poole, 8 September 2008.

¹⁴² Rose Dennis, 20 October 1987; Ingenika Band Members; Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012; Elsie Pierre and Mabel Troendle, 10 November 2008; Alex Poole, 6 October 1984; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

account by Finlay Forks storeowner Bill Bloor. According to him, when the water first came up, the Tsek'ehne at Finlay Forks, with the atmosphere of a funeral, wept over the loss of their homeland all along the riverbank.¹⁴³ Grand Chief Gordon Pierre remembers this event and the anger that still remains over the loss of land.¹⁴⁴ This appraisal is in contrast to that of local resident Pen Powell, who described the Tsek'ehne as reacting like “animals” as the water rose, running back and forth in panic trying to escape the water.¹⁴⁵

The loss of the river valleys of the Trench was traumatic to the Tsek'ehne. Given the Tsek'ehne relationship to their land and its importance to Tsek'ehne society and identity, the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir was similar to losing one's beloved spouse. The rising water physically divided the Tsek'ehne as it forced them to relocate. The fact that their old reserve of Finlay Forks No. 1 was gone, and their new reserves of Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5 did not exist, forced the majority of the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay to stay in the Finlay Forks area.¹⁴⁶ Among them were McLeod Lake Tse'khene as well as Fort Ware Tsek'ene, who increasingly returned to their respective reserves as time went by. Because prior to 1968 many Tsek'ehne had lived throughout the traditional territory, for most this moment was the first time they lived on a reserve for an extended period.¹⁴⁷ It was the beginning of the reserve era – the period when the majority of band members lived on reserve – for these two bands. The reserve soon became the centre of life, with the band office replacing the store as the nucleus of

¹⁴³ *CBC Hourglass*; Ingenika Band Members; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter.

¹⁴⁴ Gordon Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September 2008.

¹⁴⁵ Pollon and Matheson, 268.

¹⁴⁶ Martha Egnell, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012; “History of Ingenika,” 10; Ray Izony, “Changes in Tsay Kehnnay Dene Governance/Society.”

¹⁴⁷ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. The beginning of this era does not mean all Tsek'ehne were forced onto their respective reserves. See Martha Egnell, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2013.

the community and main node of information.¹⁴⁸ (Even this situation was a change from the early twentieth century when individuals like aatse Davie did not stay around the store for longer than they had to.)¹⁴⁹

Understanding which Tsek'ehne went where is not simple. Some Tsek'ehne moved to Mackenzie, Summit Lake, Prince George, or left the area entirely, often for work. Confusing the situation further is that prior to the flood the distinctions between the three bands were not categorical. People were officially members of one or another band, but band membership, and even status, often did not mean much on the ground. This was especially true for the Finlay River Band, whose two sections had never formally constituted nor unified.¹⁵⁰ For example, Meg Stanley notes "a few of the Ingenika people moved to Fort Ware temporarily."¹⁵¹ Among these was my grandmother, Suzanne Tomah.¹⁵² The same was true when it came to McLeod Lake, and Kwadacha Elder Martha Egnell remembers moving to McLeod Lake when the water first rose in order to continue working.¹⁵³

After the water began to rise, and relocation to the new reserves did not occur, increasingly the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay were unhappy with the entire situation. Many questioned the very location of the reserves. Both Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5 were outside of their traditional territory, and in fact were infringing on the territory of the

¹⁴⁸ In many ways the store still serves this purpose, albeit not to the same degree as the band office. Keith Billington, *Tse-loh-ne (The People at the End of the Rocks): Journey Down the Davie Trail* (Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, Inc., 2012), 22, 52-53; Ray Izony, "Changes;" John Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills: Self-Sufficiency Lost to Sekanis of Fort Ware," *Prince George Citizen*, 11 January 1977; Verne Solonas; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

¹⁴⁹ Billington, 39.

¹⁵⁰ Robert Inyallie; Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet; Ron McCook.

¹⁵¹ Stanley, 113.

¹⁵² Ingenika Band Members.

¹⁵³ Martha Egnell, 8 March 2012; Albert Poole, "The Long Journey Home (Excerpt from Work in Progress)," *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 168.

McLeod Lake Tse'khene.¹⁵⁴ (Tutu Creek was actually the location of a McLeod Lake camp.)¹⁵⁵

As former Kwadacha Chief Emil McCook informed me, even when invited into the traditional territory of another Tsek'ehne group, it is still not home. Not only did this lack of belonging apply to the reserves, but also to the camps themselves, especially the further south they were. Resident Tsek'ehne, when not from McLeod Lake, were often not familiar with the area, and had to ask McLeod Lake Elders for information about the land.¹⁵⁶ Quite correctly *The Globe and Mail* would suggest in the late 1980s that the location of these new reserves reflected official ignorance of Aboriginal land tenure systems.¹⁵⁷

Rather than push the province to expedite the creation of Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5, Indian Affairs instead constructed a number of houses at 69 Mile.¹⁵⁸ Made of studs and plywood, they were generally 12'x20' with one to three rooms and despite the designer intending them for six individuals they often contained families of seven to ten individuals.¹⁵⁹ The houses had a tendency to leak and could be quite cold in the winter, especially since they were uninsulated and had two exterior doors.¹⁶⁰ Nor did they have utilities like electricity or running water.¹⁶¹ As at Finlay Forks in 1961, there were not enough houses at 69 Mile and Elders remember families either shared these dwellings or lived in tents.¹⁶² Although

¹⁵⁴ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Georgina Chingee.

¹⁵⁵ Doris Prince.

¹⁵⁶ Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; John Poole; Tsek'ehne Kemess Meeting, Prince George, BC, 2 October 2012.

¹⁵⁷ John Cruickshank, "Two Decades Later, BC Offers Aid:...", *The Globe and Mail*, 22 September 1987.

¹⁵⁸ The number is in dispute as Indian Affairs claims nine were constructed, while Elders recall there only being six. It is possible the difference is due to some of the houses deteriorating and becoming uninhabitable, but this is unclear. *CBC Hourglass*; Ray Izony, "Changes;" LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, Relocation of Indians – Ingenika Band, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 30 December 1970.

¹⁵⁹ Felix Charlie; Ray Izony, "Changes;" Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; Lena McCook; Elsie Pierre and Mabel Troendle, 10 November 2008; Helen Poole; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; Mabel Troendle, 16 September 2008; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

¹⁶⁰ Johnny Pierre; Mabel Troendle; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

¹⁶¹ *CBC Hourglass*; Helen Poole.

¹⁶² Elsie Pierre and Mabel Troendle, 10 November 2008; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter; Mabel Troendle.

traditionally the Tsek'ehne drew water from creeks, the one that was the source of water at 69 Mile was a rather small, shallow creek that Elders recall was less than ideal.¹⁶³ In theory they could have drew water from the new reservoir, but Elders found it was non-potable due to debris, including the carcasses of drowned animals and chemical waste from flooded camps, floating camps, and boats.¹⁶⁴ Not helping the situation was that when something disturbed the sediment along the shore of the reservoir it would make clean water muddy and therefore undesirable for drinking.¹⁶⁵

Elders living in these camps recalled the period as one of constant movement to stay one jump ahead of the reservoir as it rose. Their houses were periodically dragged (once a month according to one resident of nearby Mackenzie, BC) to higher ground as the water rose.¹⁶⁶ Given that they were logging camps some Elders remember feeling trapped between the rising reservoir and the clearing crews still working along the reservoir.¹⁶⁷ It was chaotic. Naturally many found this terrifying and some felt homeless. Others were indignant and found it demeaning. Overall conditions were horrible. Some lost hope. Stunned inaction often confused for ignorance soon gave way to sadness regarding the entire situation, a desire to want to return home, and anger over the influx of non-Tsek'ehne into the rump Tsek'ehne traditional territory.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ The documentary *CBC Hourglass* refers to it as a pond. A similar source of water had existed at Finlay Forks proper. It appears the key issue was the quality of water from this creek as Elders recall traveling to get water from other creeks. *CBC Hourglass*; Ingenika Band Members; Jean Isaac, 19 September 2012; Albert Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 6 November 2008; Albert Poole, 11 September 2012; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

¹⁶⁴ Ingenika Band Members; Jean Isaac, 19 September 2012; Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, G.A. Rhoades, "Report on Ingenika Band of Indians in Occupation of Crown Lands at Ingenika River," 18 April 1974; John Poole; Mary Jean and Willie Poole; Doris Prince; Agnes Solonas.

¹⁶⁵ Rose Dennis, 20 October 1984; Ingenika Band Members.

¹⁶⁶ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Josephine Tylee, 19 March 2012. She recalls being promised that her house would be moved while being informed about compensation. Ted Beaudoin, "Lake's Industries as Spectacular as Its Moods;" *CBC Hourglass*; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.32, Box 1, Transcript: CBC, "Mackenzie Story," Written & Produced by Martin Robins.

¹⁶⁷ Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

¹⁶⁸ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Jimmie and Nora Massetoe. Stanley, 111.

Making matters worse the debris-filled, restless reservoir effectively ended water transportation in the Trench for the Tsek'ehne, while at the same time impeding land transportation.¹⁶⁹ As McLeod Lake Elder Doug Chingee pointed out, even if one wanted to struggle on the reservoir, the increase in fuel used was an issue.¹⁷⁰ The environment people had once known had changed to such a degree that individuals no longer recognized it.¹⁷¹ Ted Beaudoin of the *Prince George Citizen* summed it up in terms similar to Cole Harris in *Making Native Space*; the reservoir resulted in “new landmarks with new names.”¹⁷²

The shallow draft flat-bottomed wooden riverboats designed to haul tons of supplies in such shallow rivers were no match for the new inland ocean that was the Williston Lake reservoir.¹⁷³ Since they were only three to four feet high, high waves could easily swamp, if not capsize them.¹⁷⁴ The debris threatened to destroy outboard motors, known as kickers, as well as inboard motors that community members had begun to use during the interwar period. If this happened during a storm, it left the boat operator defenseless.¹⁷⁵ Lack of consultation and loss of employment meant that individual Tsek'ehne could not plan ahead to purchase vessels capable

¹⁶⁹ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

Numerous references to the situation can also be found in RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609 as well as RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27. BCA, Wilderness Advisory Committee, Box 10/37, Submission 785, Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, “Presentation for the Inquiry on Wilderness Areas,” Prince George, BC, 20 January 1986, 6.

¹⁷⁰ Doug Chingee.

¹⁷¹ Ingenika Band Members; Jean Isaac, 9 September 2008; Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012; Geraldine Solonas; Josephine Tylee, 19 March 2012.

¹⁷² Beaudoin, “Lake’s Industries As Spectacular As Its Moods;” Cole Harris, *Making Native Space*.

¹⁷³ Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2013; “BC Riverman Dies, Aged 61,” *Prince George Citizen*, 2 June 1971; Ingenika Band Members; Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia – Lakes District from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 27 November 1970; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; “Passing of a Race,” *Prince George Citizen*, 3 June 1971; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter; Bob and Shirley Van Somer; Donny Van Somer.

¹⁷⁴ Ingenika Band Members; Robert Inyallie; William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012; Richard Solonas; Donny Van Somer.

¹⁷⁵ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Mary Jean and Willie Poole. BCA, GR-0880, Box 6, BC Research, 42; Haworth, 66-67; “M.H. O’Dell,” *Prince George Citizen*, 23 July 1920.

of travelling safely on the new reservoir.¹⁷⁶ Once it became apparent that anyone who wanted to travel on reservoir needed such a vessel, no one had the money to purchase one and unlike riverboats they could not easily make them.¹⁷⁷ For those who dared to travel by boat on the reservoir, drowning was always a terrifying possibility, and some like Frans Lamers would equate it to suicide.¹⁷⁸ Although the official number of people who lost their lives on the reservoir seems small, most Elders believe it is much higher. And while some non-Tsek'ehne might argue the reservoir is safer than the rivers, the Tsek'ehne do not make this claim.¹⁷⁹

Still some Tsek'ehne did attempt to travel on the reservoir, and many riverboats, and their cargoes, were lost. This often required pushing your way through flotsams of debris, or navigating through partially submerged forests.¹⁸⁰ Ironically the wind was often instrumental in allowing passage, but only if it did not create waves to swamp your riverboat, puncture the hull with debris, or crush it.¹⁸¹ Some Tsek'ehne had to use chainsaws to cut their way through the debris.¹⁸² Others used the poles they had historically used to help move the riverboats in shallow sections of a river.¹⁸³ For those without a pole, they had to push the logs with their hands or

¹⁷⁶ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Rhoades, "Report on Ingenika Band...."

¹⁷⁷ Mike Abou; *CBC Hourglass*; Georgina Chingee; Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Josephine Tylee, 19 March 2012.

¹⁷⁸ BCA, MS 1308, Box 1/1, File 20, Lamers, 20; *CBC Hourglass*; Hughes, "Think Twice About Using Lake Williston;" Ingenika Band Members; NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, "Spectacular Lake Williston;" Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012.

¹⁷⁹ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this view is common. It appears some of the Elders include non-Tsek'ehne individuals as well as those who drowned in tributaries of the reservoir. See Mary Ann Charlie and Laura Seymour, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2012. BCA, GR-2951, 1968-09-017957; BCA, GR-2951, 1975-09-020052; BCA, GR-2951, 1980-09-020519; BCA, GR-2951, 1980-09-020576; BCA, GR-2951, 1981-09-008016; BCA, GR-2951, 1987-09-004909; BCA, GR-2951, 1988-09-005147; BCA, GR-2951, 1988-09-008193; BCA, GR-2951, 1988-09-014338; BCA, GR-2951, 1988-09-014339; BCA, GR-2951, 1989-09-015602; BCA, GR-2951, 1992-09-014497; BCA, GR-2951, 1992-09-023115; Wilson, "Floating Logs, High Waves."

¹⁸⁰ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Emil McCook, 6 March 2012.

¹⁸¹ *CBC Hourglass*; Ingenika Band Members; Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Rita McIsaac; Willie Pierre, 12 October 1984; Albert Poole, 6 November 2008; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012; Mabel Troendle.

¹⁸² Ingenika Band Members; Elsie Pierre and Mabel Troendle, 10 November 2008; Helen Poole; William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

¹⁸³ *CBC Hourglass*; Robert Inyallie; Jean Isaac, 9 September 2008; Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 7 November 2008; George Massetoe, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2012; Gordon Pierre.

whatever else they might have.¹⁸⁴ Even leaving a riverboat on shore could result in the rising water and waves damaging, destroying or trapping it, and the wind could blow items into the reservoir itself.¹⁸⁵ The fluctuating level of the reservoir could damage docks and moors or make them useless.¹⁸⁶

Water travel was not the only thing cut off by the new reservoir. It also disrupted the extensive trail system, with its riverine nexus. Often at least part of these trails were below 2,200 feet and therefore now underwater.¹⁸⁷ As a result any section of the trail in the Trench below this height would be flooded and anything at this elevation would be along the edge of the reservoir and potentially prone to sloughing into it. This situation resulted in an incomplete trail system at the heart of Tsek'ehne territory and today it is only away from the reservoir that historic trails are still widely used.

In theory the new roadways starting with the Hart Highway and followed by the Finlay Forks access road, could have replaced riverine and trail transportation for the Tsek'ehne in the Trench. Reflecting this belief, the province planned on connecting the two new reserves for the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay to the Finlay Forks access road. This road, however, was a forest access road from the beginning, and would remain so until this day north of Mackenzie. Travel along it was dangerous and required a two-way radio to avoid collisions on narrow and/or blind sections.¹⁸⁸ (Even today the road to Tsay Keh Dene and Kwadacha still requires radios.) Fort Ware on the other hand did not receive even a forest access road until 1990, while until the

¹⁸⁴ Mabel Troendle.

¹⁸⁵ BCA, GR-0880, Box 6, BC Research, 42, 50; Ingenika Band Members; Rita McIsaac; Helen Poole.

¹⁸⁶ Koyl, 78; Pollon and Matheson, 194-195.

¹⁸⁷ Guy Lanoue, *Brothers: The Politics of Violence Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia* (Oxford: Berg Publishers Ltd., 1992), 1, 140.

¹⁸⁸ *CBC Hourglass*.

construction of a bridge in 1974 the Pack River separated the reserve at McLeod Lake from road access to the Hart Highway.¹⁸⁹

It is false that the Tsek'ehne as a whole did not have automobiles to utilize this road system as is often claimed.¹⁹⁰ Some did have motor vehicles prior to the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir. Many lost them to the reservoir.¹⁹¹ The riverboat dominated transportation, however, with most families owning at least one.¹⁹² Still overall there was a general lack of vehicles, and while individuals could hire taxis from Mackenzie, the cost kept reserves even located close to town isolated, and often made work nearly impossible.¹⁹³

One potential benefit to travel was that during the winter the surface of the reservoir freezes and it is possible to travel on it. Initially community members did so via foot travel or dogsled. As former Chief Seymour Isaac pointed out, however, the size of the reservoir meant trying to cross it during the winter realistically required a skidoo.¹⁹⁴ With the spread of skidoo ownership, the size of the reservoir, combined with the lack of shelter, could prove to be a death trap if one's skidoo broke down on it.¹⁹⁵ The fluctuating nature of the reservoir also posed new dangers as when BC Hydro draws it down in the winter it tends to create air holes in the ice.

¹⁸⁹ Robert Inyallie; Patricia Johnson, "McLeod Lake Post," *The Beaver* Autumn 1965: 22; Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Ron McCook; Verne Solonas; Tom Nixon, "Regional District: PG Urban Study Planned," *Prince George Citizen*, 15 December 1972; Gerry Soroka, "Isolation Lessened with Bridge Pledge," *Prince George Citizen*, 22 September 1972.

¹⁹⁰ *CBC Hourglass*; NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, Trade Union Research Bureau [J.L. Mulyk,] 22; Josephine Tylee, 19 March 2012; Lena Vallee, interviewed by Richard Almond, Chief Lake Road, BC, 17 August 2004.

¹⁹¹ Felix Charlie; Julie Cooper, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Ingenika Band Members; Ron McCook, 5 March 2012; Verne Solonas; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

¹⁹² Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Verne Solonas.

¹⁹³ Bill Graham, "Missionary Lives with Indian Band:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 28 February 1975; Jane Inyallie, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 3 October 2012; Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; Alfred Solonas; Mabel Troendle; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012; Tsek'ehne Kemess Meeting.

¹⁹⁴ Marj Gray claims the narrowest point is 11 miles. Gray, "Finlay Forks Indians Gone by Fall."

¹⁹⁵ Lanoue estimates that by 1978-1979 every household in Fort Ware owned one. Robert Inyallie; Guy Lanoue, "Continuity and Change: The Development of Political Self-Definition Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia" (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1983), 194; Mary Jean and Willie Poole; Suzanne Tomah, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 20 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

These air holes can be quite large and result in ice that is dangerous to travel on in some parts.¹⁹⁶ Changes in the level of water can make it difficult to get off the reservoir, especially if the ice itself cracked and then refroze.¹⁹⁷ In the spring even safe sections can become unsafe as the ice begins to melt.¹⁹⁸ All of this posed a threat to anything crossing the reservoir. Grand Chief Gordon Pierre, for example, remembers watching five moose drown for five to six hours in the reservoir after falling through the ice one March.¹⁹⁹ This was not an isolated incident.²⁰⁰ Finally the fluctuating nature of the reservoir meant that when BC Hydro draws the water down in the winter beaver lodges can not only end up well above water, but also possibly crushed by falling ice.²⁰¹

The changes to transportation effectively ended the annual migration south to find employment or rather the return north in the fall, although some tried at first to continue on.²⁰² It also ended employment transporting goods up and down the rivers for all but a few individuals. It was the end of a way of life.²⁰³ The cost of flying meant that it could not become a complete substitute and those Tsek'ehne who had relied on their riverboats to commute to work, no longer could.²⁰⁴ Even for those who could still use their riverboats, restrictions on their uses made purchasing and maintaining riverboats less cost effective.²⁰⁵ As time went on, increasingly more and more Tsek'ehne rarely stayed in their villages/reserves for extended periods of time.²⁰⁶

¹⁹⁶ Alec Chingee; Ingenika Band Members; Mabel Troendle; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

¹⁹⁷ Ingenika Band Members.

¹⁹⁸ Alec Chingee; Ingenika Band Members; Mabel Troendle; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

¹⁹⁹ Gordon Pierre.

²⁰⁰ Mary Ann Charlie and Laura Seymour; Alec Chingee; Laura Seymour.

²⁰¹ Ingenika Band Members; Pollon and Matheson, 272, 276, 314; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012.

²⁰² The end of this migration was not instantaneous. Ron McCook; Jimmie and Nora Massettoe; Helen Poole; Mary Jean and Willie Poole; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter; Laura Seymour; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

²⁰³ Ron McCook.

²⁰⁴ BCA, MS 1308, Box 1/1, File 20, Lamers, 20; Ray Izony, "Changes;" Vera Poole, "Williston Lake," 32; Laura Seymour.

²⁰⁵ Lanoue, "Continuity," 51-52.

²⁰⁶ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Gordon Pierre.

Just with McLeod Lake No. 1 and Fort Ware No. 1, Indian Affairs approved of both the Tutu Creek and Parsnip River reserves as they saw them as providing the best of both worlds, allowing residents to remain isolated from wider Euro-Canadian society, while benefitting from social services and job opportunities. And as with McLeod Lake No. 1 and Fort Ware No. 1, residents found that finding new employment was difficult, and many Tsek'ehne found themselves without jobs as work related to the dam wound down, or their jobsite was flooded out.²⁰⁷ Despite originally being a logging camp, 69 Mile soon found itself located away from new jobsites centred on the now flooded Finlay Forks, and instant town of Mackenzie. Some Tsek'ehne even lost their jobs after they relocated there.²⁰⁸ Making matters worse the nearest store was thirteen to fourteen miles away and the nearest doctor was in Mackenzie or Prince George.²⁰⁹ Some services, such as schools and clinics had existed at the camps during the clearing of the reservoir basin, but they were temporary and began to close in 1968.²¹⁰ Racism was a key component in the failure to find employment as was the failure of Indian Affairs to prepare the Tsek'ehne for the transition and culture shock, but given the history of employment prior to 1968 it is apparent neither was not the only reason.²¹¹ The Tsek'ehne were not the only people in the wake of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam's completion without a job and as a result competition for employment existed. McLeod Lake Elder Marion Jackson recalls individual Tsek'ehne had to almost beg for jobs.²¹² This contradicts a local history of Mackenzie produced

²⁰⁷ Kwadacha Elder Felix Charlie recalls work in the Finlay Forks area entirely dried up by 1975-1975. *CBC Hourglass*; Felix Charlie; Robert Inyallie; Ron McCook; Jimmie and Nora Massetoe; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; Laura Seymour; Tsek'ehne Kemess Meeting.

²⁰⁸ Ingenika Band Members; John Poole; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

²⁰⁹ Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; Laura Seymour.

²¹⁰ *CBC Hourglass*; "Town and Country: McLeod's Lake," *Prince George Citizen*, 27 October 1967.

²¹¹ Lanoue seems at first to claim the issue was a lack of new jobs, but later notes the issue of interpreting first encounters with the Tsek'ehne following the creation of the reservoir. BCA, MS 1308, Box 1/1, File 20, Lamers, 20-21; Gordon Clark, "McLeod Lake Indians: Fight Is One of Hope," *Prince George Citizen*, 11 July 1987; Lanoue, "Continuity," 4, 46-47; George Massetoe; NBCA, 2004.24.32, Box 1, Transcript: CBC, "Mackenzie Story."

²¹² Marion Jackson.

by the CBC, which attributes this failure to find employment, and the problems that emerged, to both Tsek'ehne culture and alcohol abuse, which as we shall see was a symptom that perpetuated the problem, but not its cause.²¹³ Still some Tsek'ehne did find employment, especially in the continued logging and cleanup on and around the reservoir or as forest fire fighters.²¹⁴ Most notable were the residents of 76 Mile (six to eight families), who were employed helping clean up the reservoir. Indian Affairs would eventually relocate five of these families to the Parsnip River reserve. (The rest would relocate to Ingenika or Fort Ware.)²¹⁵

For those who did not find a job, food could often be hard to come by due to reduced money reserves and wildlife. Due to the debris filled reservoir, loss of land, loss of traplines, loss of goods, the death of animals, increased forestry activity and government control, and competition with other Tsek'ehne and non-Tsek'ehne individuals the continuance of traditional economic activities proved difficult near the reservoir. This was generally true throughout the traditional territory of the Tsek'ehne, with the exception being that the further one went from the reservoir the better some things seemed to get.²¹⁶ Trapping was hard to do. The debris filled reservoir often prevented those who had not lost their trapline (in whole or in part) from

²¹³ NBCA, 2004.24.32, Box 1, Transcript: CBC, "Mackenzie Story."

²¹⁴ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See E.F. Ted Williams History Centre (Prince George, BC), Oral History, A998.9.1, Harry Chingee interviewed 29 August, 1998. Harry Chingee claimed the Tsek'ehne were naturals at fighting forest fires. LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Report from Community Development Worker, Nicholas Prince, 31 May 1971; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Engineer from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 27 July 1971; "Milne Photos," *Prince George Citizen*, 19 June 1969.

²¹⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Zone Director, Northern BC, R.A. Sprenger, 27 September 1971.

²¹⁶ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Ron McCook. Numerous references to the situation can be found in RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609 as well as RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27. I have included a few external records as well, most notably some of the studies dealing with this fact. Yvonne Harris, 48, 60; Loraine Littlefield, Linda Dorricott and Deidre Cullon, "Tse Keh Nay Traditional and Contemporary Use and Occupation at Amazay (Duncan Lake): A Draft Report" (Unpublished report, 2007), 45; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources,] "The Origin Of The Ingenika Band Of Indians And The Flooding Of Williston Lake," [1975].

successfully trapping.²¹⁷ The death of fur bearing animals in the reservoir made it hard even for those who could get access to their entire trapline to make a profit.²¹⁸ As for those who wanted to acquire a new trapline, they often found that other trappers already held most of the ideal locations untouched by the reservoir or else were similarly looking for a new trapline.²¹⁹

Hunting was equally problematic for many of the same reasons. The reservoir killed many animals, and the open seasons designed to cull the moose, combined with forest access roads to aid clearing, resulted in more and more hunters in the area. Another issue was regulations. Although status Tsek'ehne did not require hunting or fishing licenses, under British Columbian law at the time they needed a permit to do so out of season if they were harvesting off reserve. Given the size of the reserves, this regulation effectively meant they needed a permit for harvesting out of season. Although not a new law, the ability of the state to enforce it was new to many Tsek'ehne.²²⁰

For the first time welfare became a significant factor in the income of individual Tsek'ehne, who prior to this had been largely economically self-sufficient with little to no aid from the federal or provincial governments.²²¹ As Tsay Keh Dene Elder Vera Poole recalls, this was a major event in the history of the people, which those in need initially resisted. As a result

²¹⁷ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Albert Isadore.

²¹⁸ Yvonne Harris, 48; Ingenika Band Members.

²¹⁹ "History of Ingenika," 9; Ron McCook; Tsek'ehne Kemess Meeting.

²²⁰ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Rhoades, "Report on Ingenika Band...."

²²¹ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Albert Poole, 6 November 2008. Julia Izony notes receiving family allowance around 1943. Lanoue notes the increased availability of state aid starting in the 1950s. Emil McCook notes that band members received the usual social programs all Canadians were entitled to, such as family allowance. Alex Poole recalls his mother getting \$15 prior to her death. He assumes it was from the state. Albert Poole heard rations were given out by the state following the closure of Fort Grahame. Suzanne Tomah remembers her family receiving family allowance after her dad died. "Ingenika, Fort Ware: 'Horror Stories' Heard," *Prince George Citizen*, 15 April 1983; Lanoue, "Continuity," 170; NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, "Displaced Person's View of Williston Lake;" Walter Taylor, "The Way to Disaster: Secret Rapid Northern Development," *Nesika (Chinook Meaning "Us"): The Voice of BC Indians* 3, no. 3 (1974): 2.

of a general lack of jobs available to many Tsek'ehne it increasingly became a norm.²²² It affected the self-esteem of many individuals.²²³ According to Tsay Keh Dene Elder Jean Isaac the end result was co-dependence.²²⁴ This view is striking as a co-dependent relationship not only implies that one party is dependent on the other, but that the one they are dependent on has problems that this dependency helps enable.

This transformation supports the findings of Arthur Ray and Hugh Shewell that economic dependency was an outcome of colonial policies in Canada.²²⁵ Rather than stemming from the fur trade or federal policies, however, it was the W.A.C. Bennett Dam itself that negatively impacted the Tsek'ehne. Furthermore, unlike Shewell, I was unable to find any evidence that the end result was intentional or due to the some inherent divide between traditional Tsek'ehne culture and capitalism.²²⁶ Rather it appears that Frank Tough's argument that rather than explicitly excluding Indigenous people from the economy the economic development of Canada created a situation in which their involvement was precarious is correct.²²⁷ As with their relatives in Yukon, the post-World War II period revealed this fact to be true, with the W.A.C. Bennett Dam driving it home.²²⁸ Now the Tsek'ehne had to deal with the situation they found themselves in.

²²² Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; Anita Vallee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.

²²³ Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

²²⁴ Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012.

²²⁵ Arthur Ray, "Periodic Shortages, Native Welfare, and the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1930," in *The Subarctic Fur Trade: Native Social and Economic Adaptations*, ed. Shepard Krech III (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984); Hugh Shewell, *'Enough to Keep Them Alive: ' Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 323-325, passim.

²²⁶ Shewell,

²²⁷ Frank Tough, *'As Their Natural Resources Fail: ' Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), 299-309.

²²⁸ Ken Coates, *Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840-1973* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

The debris in the reservoir not only cut off transportation in the Trench, it also effectively ended communication between the Tsek'ehne at McLeod Lake, Fort Ware, and living near Finlay Forks, thereby isolating the communities from one another and their homeland.²²⁹ This might not sound like a significant problem if one assumes the residents were unrelated, but as the McLeod Lake Indian Band made clear to the province during hearings for the proposed McGregor Diversion in 1978, they were (and continued to be).²³⁰ Blood and marriage connects the communities, and historically the Tsek'ehne lived up and down the Finlay and Parsnip rivers with village sites nodes of major settlement and interaction.²³¹ One was not limited to “belonging” to one single group and even today some Elders consider the legal division between the bands prior to the reservoir to be a result of colonialism aimed at easier management by the colonial state.²³² It certainly did not reflect the reality on the ground and as one band member told me, prior to the construction of the dam, the three nations of Kwadacha, McLeod Lake and Tsay Keh Dene had been *de facto* one.²³³ The exact relation changed over time and varied from individual to individual.²³⁴ Complicating the entire situation is that fictive relatives are common

²²⁹ Among the sources I looked at this information is common knowledge. A few examples include Bentley LeBaron, *Parsnip Review* (Ottawa: McLeod Lake Indian Band and Department of Indian Affairs, 1978), 9, 52; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Suzanne Veit, “Report Draft,” 22 March 1977, 2.3.1.1.a; Littlefield, Dorricott and Cullon, 45.

²³⁰ LeBaron, 9.

²³¹ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge with only one Elder claiming the communities had no connection. See Anonymous #3, interviewed by author, October 2012; Elsie Pierre and Mabel Troendle, 10 November 2008. Even then it is not clear if the individual meant familial connections or what time period they were referring to. Using Prince George Roman Catholic Diocese genealogy records, I was able to create a family tree that linked all of the major families in present day Kwadacha, Tsay Keh Dene and McLeod Lake, albeit not necessarily closely. E.F. Ted Williams History Centre, 2011.23, Genealogy Records: Carrier and Sekani People.

²³² Littlefield, Dorricott and Cullon, 7; Lena McCook.

²³³ Anonymous #1, interviewed by author, March 2012.

²³⁴ Littlefield, Dorricott and Cullon, 7-8.

in Tsek'ehne society and as a result at times some Elders only knew that there was a connection, but not always precisely how.²³⁵

As a result of these ties the impact of the reservoir on travel and communication had negative consequences for the connections between the three bands. There is a general consensus among community members that the reservoir and its impacts reinforced the differences between the three Tsek'ehne groups historically known as the Fort Ware, Fort Grahame and Fort McLeod (McLeod Lake) bands.²³⁶ The effective end of water transportation in the Trench meant many Tsek'ehne no longer visited relatives in other communities as they once had. As a result younger generations tended to not build relationships with their relatives in the other two communities like they once theoretically would have, and at times believe they are completely different nations, rather than three First Nations of a single larger nation.²³⁷ There is hope, however, among some of the Elders and others that this will change and they have taken steps to bring the three communities together.²³⁸

Isolated, unemployed, and having suffered the destruction of their homeland by a debris filled quagmire that those in forestry camps still lived along, the Tsek'ehne increasingly turned to alcohol and other drugs that were readily available due to the influx of non-Tsek'ehne during

²³⁵ Doug Chingee; Rita McIsaac; John Poole; Sharon Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2013; Josephine Tylee, 19 March 2012.

²³⁶ Anthropologist Guy Lanoue argues that wider Tsek'ehne identity was not clear prior to the reservoir, and perhaps emerged because of it. Nevertheless, he does recognize it existed as some level and notes that after the reservoir Fort Ware Tsek'ehne parents no longer approved of marriage with McLeod Lake Tse'khene. He proposes it is due to past relations, present relations, and a lack of bush skills among many McLeod Lake Tse'khene. Many McLeod Lake Tse'khene would challenge the last reason. Inversely he claims McLeod Lake Tse'khene saw Fort Ware Tsek'ehne as "hicks." Lanoue, "Continuity," 50-52, 56-58, 86, 210, 214, 255.

²³⁷ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. This statement of course does not mean nobody visited at all. See Doris Prince. She notes people stopped visiting, but she is not sure about the date. Some of the younger Elders are not too sure on the exact details.

²³⁸ Zepheria Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet; Ray Izony, 23 September 2008; Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Lena McCook; Ron McCook, 5 March 2012; Anita Vallee.

the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and the founding of Mackenzie, BC.²³⁹ During the clearing of the reservoir basin high levels of employment had meant many Tsek'ehne had money to purchase both, and some started drinking out of boredom, to be social, and/or due to outside influences.²⁴⁰ For example, while drinking at McLeod Lake “began” in 1952 with the opening of a beer parlor, it was not until the construction of the dam that it really took off.²⁴¹ Still, Elders remember limited to no alcohol consumption prior to the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir. As a result, the consumption that followed made it seem to some that the Tsek'ehne had not used alcohol before.²⁴²

It would be a problem spread to future generations and in all three communities substance abuse remains an issue to this day.²⁴³ Some Elders have even stated that they believe it was part of a plan to have the Tsek'ehne wipe themselves out.²⁴⁴ According to one local barkeeper in 1970s drinking only further fueled the bad treatment (he equates it to the treatment of African Americans in his native United States) they received from the new residents of Mackenzie, who saw them as stereotypical “drunk Indians.” Compounding the matter, according to him, was that some Tsek'ehne tended to stay in Mackenzie once they were intoxicated rather than risk their lives trying to return home.²⁴⁵

²³⁹ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Mabel Troendle and Elise Pierre, 15 March 2012. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Rhoades, “Report on Ingenika Band....”

²⁴⁰ Harry Chingee, 21 March 2012; Jean Isaac, “Sekani History,” *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*; Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet; Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Mary Jean Poole; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

²⁴¹ Clark, “McLeod Lake Indians: Fight is One of Hope;” Geraldine Solonas.

²⁴² Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet; Sharon Solonas. She notes the alcohol prohibition placed on status Indians, but mistakenly states it ended in 1965. Based on the liquor laws discussed in the first chapter it appears she is either mistaken, giving me the *de facto* date, or referring to McLeod Lake’s prohibition.

²⁴³ Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; Mary Jean Poole; Richard Solonas.

²⁴⁴ Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

²⁴⁵ NBCA, 2004.24.32, Box 1, Transcript: CBC, “Mackenzie Story,” Written & Produced by Martin Robins.

Alcohol abuse was, however, only a symptom of the wider disruption in the lives of the Tsek'ehne. It further fueled this disruption as individuals attempting to self-medicate at times turned their anger, despair, and other emotions on their fellow Tsek'ehne.²⁴⁶ Other times they turned them inward on themselves, and suffered injury or death from causes that were preventable.²⁴⁷ According to many Elders, prior to the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir fighting was almost unheard of.²⁴⁸ A common approach to conflict was to avoid it at all costs.²⁴⁹ Yet some did occur.²⁵⁰ (In 1983 Guy Lanoue reported that whereas Fort Ware still followed this approach to conflict, McLeod Lake did not.)²⁵¹ Rather distance negated the emotions that led to violence.²⁵² People simply left when upset and all were free to do as they pleased as long as they did not interfere in the ability of others to do what they wanted. Now, however, they found themselves stuck on reserve, continually interacting with those they had strong feelings about.²⁵³

The Emergence of the Ingenika Band and the Rejection of the New Reserves

All of these impacts contributed to the legal division of the Finlay River Band in 1971 into the Fort Ware and Ingenika bands as well as the rejection of Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5. The catalyst, however, was the failure of Indian Affairs to relocate those band members living in forestry camps to the new reserves of Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip No. 5 created in 1969. Given that the majority of them were Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay the

²⁴⁶ Lanoue notes he was told violence resulted from loss of traplines. Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012; Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012; Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; "Man Found Guilty," *Prince George Citizen*, 27 May 1971; Virginia Pierre, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 9 August 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Peter Salmon, "Rifle Meant for 'Scare' Woman Tells Assize Jury," *Prince George Citizen*, 15 November 1968; Richard Solonas; Anita Vallee; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

²⁴⁷ *CBC Hourglass*; Lanoue, "Continuity," 5, 74-75; Richard Solonas.

²⁴⁸ Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012; Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet; Virginia Pierre, 9 August 1984; Verne Solonas.

²⁴⁹ Koyl, 37, 107.

²⁵⁰ Felix Charlie; Martha Egnell, 8 March 2012.

²⁵¹ Lanoue, "Continuity," 71-72.

²⁵² Jean Isaac, 19 September 2012; Verne Solonas.

²⁵³ Verne Solonas.

perception among band members increasingly grew that the existing band government was not serving their best interests, especially since some band members had not known about the creation of the reservoir until after the completion of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. Reflecting this division at a meeting on 26 November 1970 in the forestry camps colloquially known as “Finlay Forks” to discuss where people wanted to live, twenty-one families voted to relocate to Ingenika, five to the Black Canyon on the Omineca River, two to Fort Ware and two to Tutu Creek. The majority also wanted to divide the Finlay River Band into two.²⁵⁴

Based on this vote District Supervisor A.C. Roach reported that it was obvious that those in attendance did not want to stay in forestry camps or move to Tutu Creek, but wanted a reserve at Ingenika. (These individuals had even proposed surrendering seventy acres at Tutu Creek for its creation.) This location they argued would not only take them away from the alcohol and beer parlours that came with Mackenzie, but also provide easy access to hunting and fishing areas as well as their traplines. Since there were about one hundred and ten individuals, however, those in attendance did not represent everyone. Roach touted this fact as the main reason why at this point in time Indian Affairs should not contact the province regarding the matter. Indeed, he argued the people did not really know where they wanted to go.²⁵⁵ It is equally likely he did not want to abandon a \$200,000 housing project Indian Affairs was preparing.²⁵⁶

These feelings were not new. Indeed, as early 23 December 1969 Indian Affairs was concerned the situation would become a media nightmare.²⁵⁷ Within a year this fear came true.

²⁵⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia – Lakes District from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 27 November 1970.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Superintendent, Lakes District from BC Regional Engineer, W.G. Robinson, 30 November 1970.

²⁵⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 30 December 1970.

In October 1970 the *Vancouver Sun* ran a story on the impacts on the Tsek'ehne.²⁵⁸ The following month the CBC brought the situation to national attention through the broadcasting of an untitled documentary in two television shows: *Weekend* on 15 November 1970 and *CBC Hourglass* on 20 November 1970. This documentary, while edited to present the Tsek'ehne (it calls them the Tall Grass Indians, a short lived anachronistic name) as the Indian “other,” was not full of factual errors and was quite hard hitting. For example, narrator Mike Halleran noted the people felt pressured to move to the undesirable Tutu Creek Indian Reserve, and instead wanted to return to Fort Ware or Ingenika in order to follow a traditional way of life. He poked fun at the lake being a recreational lake and presented it as catching the Tall Grass Indians unaware and without the knowledge on how to fight for their rights. He explored the myth that Aboriginal peoples wanted and liked welfare and government aid with Councillor Francis Isaac, even getting a clip where Councillor Isaac stated any taking of welfare was due to the impacts of the reservoir and not desirable except as temporary aid. He and Bob Hall even interviewed a representative of Indian Affairs, presumably Roach, on topics ranging from relocation, compensation, and aid, challenging him about the willingness of the department to be proactive, provide aid, and the department's claims that people wanted to move to Tutu Creek.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ The article is problematic for a number of reasons. For example its claim that the band had to sue to get Finlay Forks No. 1 when in reality the reserve had been laid out during the McKenna-McBride Commission with no consultation. It also states there are one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five families. This number was more than likely the population of band members as opposed to the number of families, which was around twenty as only about eighty lived at 69 Mile at the time. LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs, Duncan Clark, 26 May 1971; NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, “Displaced Person's View of Williston Lake.”

²⁵⁹ The *Province* mentions an hour long documentary on the debris on 28 October 1970. It is unclear if it is the same as the untitled documentary discussed here. *CBC Hourglass*; Linda Johnston, “The Feasibility of Broadcasting Material Produced by Citizens' Groups on the CBC TV Network with Its Current Structure and Policy,” (MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1974), 61; NBCA, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, McConnell, “Picture ‘As Ugly as Sin;’” Daniel Sims, “Ware's Waldo: Hydroelectric Development and the Creation of the Other in British Columbia,” in *Sustaining the West: Cultural Responses to Canadian Environments*, ed. Liza Piper and Lisa Szabo-Jones (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015), 304-305.

This documentary provoked anger, and action on the part of other Canadian citizens, Indian Affairs, and the province.²⁶⁰ Ray Williston called the entire production “inexcusable”²⁶¹ and “reprehensible.”²⁶² In 1975 he would describe those who took part in it as “dissent dissolutes” from McLeod Lake, who had squatted in the homes of others after the province removed the population of Finlay Forks. According to him, not only were they willing to take part in a documentary that falsely claimed they had lost their homes at Fort Grahame, Ingenika and Finlay Forks, but in doing so they ignored the help the residents of Mackenzie had given them. Nevertheless, in the ensuing public outcry they received a provincial reserve near Fort Ware following a public outcry. (Williston does not explain what a provincial reserve is or when they received it.) Since then he claimed to have not heard anything about them. He did not explain, however, how they fit into the sparse population he repeatedly cited as existing in the Trench or why they were not among the Indigenous population from Fort Ware, McLeod Lake and Hudson’s Hope who came to Finlay Forks to work, although it should be noted that he clarified in 1980 that they had moved to Ingenika on their own accord, only to receive government aid.²⁶³

The documentary prompted outsider solutions to the issue. Private citizen Marilyn Hinton, for example, suggested the government should relocate the Tsek’ehne located in the camps to Fort Ware.²⁶⁴ Unbeknownst to her, however, Indian Affairs had received reports from the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) that noted that due to the local conditions

²⁶⁰ BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston; Marj Gray, “Lake Williston Charges Denied,” *Prince George Citizen*, 16 December 1970; Marilyn Hinton, “To W.A.C.,” *Prince George Citizen*, 20 November 1970; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1 Part 1, Letter to District Supervisor, Lakes District from Regional Director, British Columbia-Yukon Region, F.A. Clark, 16 December 1970; “To W.A.C.,” *Prince George Citizen*, 20 November 1970.

²⁶¹ Gray, “Lake Williston Charges Denied.”

²⁶² BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston.

²⁶³ BCA, T1375:0015, Ray Williston; NBCA, 2004.24.21, Box 1, The Mackenzie Story: Comments On The Presentation; Pollon and Matheson, 270.

²⁶⁴ Hinton, “To W.A.C.”

at Ware, Indian Affairs might have to relocate the community.²⁶⁵ As Ron McCook pointed out the band members at Fort Ware were against any sort of relocation, especially once they saw what happened to the Fort Grahame section of the band.²⁶⁶

Just as the *Prince George Citizen* had promoted the Bennett Dam itself, it defended the treatment of the Tsek'ehne. In an article dated 16 December 1970 reporter Marj Gray stated the dam had not negatively affected the Tsek'ehne. Yet oddly, she did agree that the reservoir had disrupted transportation for the Tsek'ehne. Gray maintained the biggest problem was that those Tsek'ehne who lived at Finlay Forks were not on reserves. As she noted, the Tsek'ehne were legally squatting on Crown land and had done so since time immemorial. They had relocated to Finlay Forks to find employment during the construction of the dam, and as Gray reported District Supervisor A.C. Roach had told her that they should have known something about the dam, albeit not necessarily its true magnitude. Now rather than wanting to move on to a reserve, they wanted to relocate to Ingenika.²⁶⁷

It was not until October 1971 that Indian Affairs relocated the first five families to the Parsnip River reserve, four years after the completion of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam.²⁶⁸ Ideally they were to be the first of many. In reality their relocation was the culmination of a process that finally fell apart in 1971. Following visits to the Tsek'ehne at or near Finlay Forks in January, Indian Affairs decided that to address the issue of where people wanted to relocate a task force would be formed in March 1971, including Indigenous activists and leaders, Nicholas (Nick)

²⁶⁵ According to Fiennes this was a rumour that resulted in a similar outcome as the Save the Sekani charity drive. Fiennes, 158; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; "Sekanis to Move," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 April 1971; "Band's Plight 'Football,'" *Prince George Citizen*, 15 April 1971.

²⁶⁶ Ron McCook.

²⁶⁷ Gray, "Lake Williston Charges Denied."

²⁶⁸ Marj Gray, "Displaced by Lake:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 25 January 1972; Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Lena McCook; Johnny Pierre.

Prince, former chief of the Nak'azdli First Nation, and Bob Hall for the UBCIC.²⁶⁹ As a result meetings were held at 69 Mile on 19 March. Thirteen families were interviewed by Prince, with eight wanting to relocate to Ingenika, (one recommending swapping land for land at Police Meadows Indian Reserve No. 2 for land there); two to Tutu Creek Indian Reserve No. 4 or Mackenzie; one to Fort Ware; one to the Black Canyon on the Omineca River, where their trapline was; and one undecided. An additional family was not present. When it came to education only five families responded. According to Indian Affairs, four inquired about sending their children to the Lejac Residential School, while one asked about the construction of a day school.²⁷⁰ This might sound surprising given what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission revealed about residential schools, especially when one considers that at this point in time many of the children were attending the portable school provided by the logging companies.²⁷¹ But as Tsay Keh Dene Elder Vera Poole would recall, the situation at the forestry camps was so bad that some individuals entertained the idea that residential school was better for their children.²⁷²

Rather than immediately doing anything about this situation Indian Affairs continued with plans to relocate the Tsek'ehne living along the Finlay Forks access road to one of their two new reserves. At the same time the task force working with the community began to face other issues. In a shocking turn of events Nick Prince accused the UBCIC of playing “political

²⁶⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia-Yukon Region from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 6 January 1971; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia-Yukon Region from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 2 February 1971; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Executive Direction, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Ross Modeste from Assistant Regional Director, British Columbia-Yukon Region, V.M. Gran, 2 March 1971; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Petition by Ronald Seymour, 5 March 1971; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 22 March 1971; John Poole.

²⁷⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 22 March 1971.

²⁷¹ Former chief Johnny Pierre remembers the portable schools were technically for employees only. Marie Cadorette, “Education: Enrollment Races Ahead of Construction,” *Prince George Citizen*, 29 December 1967; *CBC Hourglass*; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs, Duncan Clark, 26 May 1971; Johnny Pierre; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

²⁷² Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

football” with the group and denounced the union’s announcement that the Tsek’ehne were starving.²⁷³ Rather than leave the task force, Prince instead was made a community development worker tasked with finding a solution to the problems facing the Tsek’ehne living in the camps.²⁷⁴

While this was happening the Finlay River Band ceased to exist. In many ways it was the reservoir itself that led to dissolution of the union between Fort Ware and Fort Grahame, especially as the Fort Grahame section found it increasingly difficult to maintain contact with the band council due to the reservoir or came to see it as unrepresentative of their interests.²⁷⁵ From the beginning the chief of the Finlay River Band, John McCook considered the union problematic, and it continues to confound individuals familiar with the two First Nations today.²⁷⁶

On 12 February 1970 Indian Affairs received a BCR from the Finlay River Band requesting a referendum to determine whether it should continue to exist.²⁷⁷ Following meetings with band members in the Finlay Forks area, Roach recommended that it proceed as requested.²⁷⁸ Officially the Finlay River Band had one hundred and ten eligible voters. When Indian Affairs had the referendum in Fort Ware and Finlay Forks in December 1970 only seventy people voted. Of these, sixty-nine favored dissolution of the union between Fort Ware and Fort Grahame.²⁷⁹ The ballot also asked electors where they wanted to live. Half wanted to live in Fort Ware and

²⁷³ “Band’s Plight ‘Football,’” *Prince George Citizen*, 15 April 1971.

²⁷⁴ “Reserve 1st for Prince,” *Prince George Citizen*, 22 April 1971.

²⁷⁵ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Suzanne Veit, “Report Draft,” 22 March 1977, 2.3.1.1.a.

²⁷⁶ Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; Tsek’ehne Kemess Meeting.

²⁷⁷ Some Elders from Kwadacha recall the division of the Finlay River Band was at the behest of the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay. Others are not entirely sure why it happened. Felix Charlie; Mary Ann Charlie and Laura Seymour; Lanoue, “Continuity,” 384.

²⁷⁸ Lanoue, “Continuity,” 384.

²⁷⁹ Lanoue states all seventy were in favor based on a report from 22 December 1970. It is unclear if this is the same as the report I found from 24 December, which states sixty-nine. Lanoue, “Continuity,” 384-385; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director from A.C. Roach, 24 December 1970.

form the Fort Ware Band. Of the other half, the election results revealed that twenty-seven wanted to live at Ingenika, while eight wanted to either stay where they were or live at traditional sites throughout the traditional territory.²⁸⁰ Despite the referendum, Indian Affairs, who had united the bands in 1959, had the final say. It decided to support the dissolution to make relocation and handling their affairs easier. Indian Affairs hoped that once divided the two bands would stay completely separate. This decision became official in early 1971.²⁸¹ The reborn Fort Ware Band retained all of Fort Ware's historic reserves, while the reborn Fort Grahame Band, retained Fort Grahame's old Police Meadows No. 2 reserve as well as the two new reserves of Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5.²⁸²

That April the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay made their voice clear. During a meeting held at 69 Mile on 16 April 1971, the Fort Grahame Tsek'ehne informed Nick Prince that they were not satisfied with the 168 acres that comprised the Parsnip River and Tutu Creek reserves and wanted a new reserve of at least 500 acres. They did not want to relocate to either reserve, and instead wanted a two-year trial resettlement at Old Ingenika. Reflecting their recent separation from the Finlay River Band, it was at this meeting that they formally elected a new chief, Seymour Isaac, as well as two councillors: Francis Isaac and Freddy Hunter. They also informed Prince that they had changed their name to the Ingenika Band.²⁸³

²⁸⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director from A.C. Roach, 24 December 1970.

²⁸¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Director, Community Affairs Branch, J.G. McGilp from Assistant Regional Director, British Columbia-Yukon Region, V.M. Gran, 9 March 1971.

²⁸² Kwadacha Elder and former band councillor Johnny Poole recalls former Kwadacha chief Emil McCook signed off on the Parsnip River reserve for the Finlay River Band, although as noted he was not chief until 1972. Poole also heard Kwadacha still has some rights on the reserve, although he is not sure what rights. This seems to contradict Indian Affairs records. LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Director of Lands, W.R. Redell from Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs, Duncan Clark, 22 July 1971; John Poole.

²⁸³ The previously mentioned *CBC Hourglass* documentary claims the elections had already been held in 1970. *CBC Hourglass*; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Report from Nicholas Prince, [16] April 1971; Lena McCook.

Rather than fight this turn of events directly and forcefully, Indian Affairs decided to not only approach the provincial government about the use of the Ingenika area by the new Ingenika band, but also utilize Prince to get a consensus regarding relocation, and get community input on the plans to develop the Tutu Creek and Parsnip River reserves.²⁸⁴ According to Mary Christina Koyl they were willing to allow the band to relocate anywhere it wanted to, and did not want to force them.²⁸⁵ For his part Prince was now not merely content to complete his job, but decided to make it his mission to acquire a 35,000 acre reserve under Treaty 8 for the one hundred thirty members of the Ingenika Band from either the federal or provincial government.²⁸⁶ Meanwhile he would continue to work with the community located along the Finlay Forks access road to secure their agreement to relocate to the two new reserves, and by May was able to report that four families had expressed an interest in relocating to the Parsnip River reserve, with more expected.²⁸⁷

This was all good news for Indian Affairs, who still preferred Tutu Creek and Parsnip River over Ingenika. As District Supervisor Roach put it, Parsnip River was ideal due to its access to clean water, the electrical grid, the Hart Highway, and services like provincial schools.²⁸⁸ All of this made it better than Ingenika, which lacked a school altogether. Yet since Indian Affairs had not yet relocated anyone to the Parsnip River reserve all of these benefits were mere promises from a department that had not properly explained the project, or its impacts in

²⁸⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Community Planner, Technical Services Branch, A.M. Cunningham, 16 April 1971.

²⁸⁵ Koyl, 95.

²⁸⁶ "Reserve 1st for Prince."

²⁸⁷ So influential was Prince in enticing people to relocate to the Parsnip River reserve that former band councillor for Fort Ware, Johnny Poole, would later claim it was Prince himself who got the Parsnip River reserve for the band. Prince's works is detailed in a series of letters found in LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27 from 10 May to 22 July 1971. LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs, Duncan Clark, 26 May 1971; John Poole.

²⁸⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs, British Columbia Region from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 21 May 1971.

the first place. One problem was the cost of relocating all twenty families.²⁸⁹ Indian Affairs had only budgeted \$150,000 for relocation for the 1971 fiscal year. They expected, however, that to relocate all of the families would cost between \$250,000 and \$300,000.²⁹⁰

By 9 June 1971 another family had agreed to relocate to the Parsnip River reserve, bringing the total to five. Indian Affairs hoped to relocate the five families by the beginning of September.²⁹¹ Seven days later they pushed this estimate back to October 1971.²⁹² This delay might seem like a short period, considering the time it had taken to transfer the reserve, but on 22 June Nick Prince reported that the band was dividing between those who wanted to live on the Parsnip River reserve and those who wanted to relocate to Ingenika. And even though he believed the latter was due to an unnamed outside influence and would dissipate when people realized how much the environment had changed, he warned that a deciding factor would be how quickly the Parsnip River reserve would be ready.²⁹³ It was a competition between the two sites, and while the Tsek'ehne might have idealized Old Ingenika, living conditions around Finlay Forks meant people wanted to move.

Shortly after, planning by Indian Affairs for the Parsnip River reserve began in earnest, including plans for a boat launch on the Parsnip River.²⁹⁴ Reflecting the desire of only five families to relocate Indian Affairs only purchased five prefabricated houses to move onto the

²⁸⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs, Duncan Clark, 26 May 1971.

²⁹⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs, Duncan Clark, 26 May 1971.

²⁹¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Community Planner, A. Cunningham from Assistant Regional Engineer, BC Region, W.I. Coplick, 9 June 1971.

²⁹² LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Zone Director, Northern BC Zone, R.A. Sprenger from District Supervisor, Lakes District, A.C. Roach, 16 June 1971.

²⁹³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Report by Community Development Worker, Lakes District, Nicholas Prince, 22 June 1971.

²⁹⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Community Planner from Assistance Community Planner, Technical Services Branch, P. Dooley, 29 June 1971.

reserve once basic infrastructure was in place.²⁹⁵ Approving all of this were two BCRs and one petition.²⁹⁶ Still many members of the Ingenika Band wanted to relocate to Ingenika itself.²⁹⁷ Work continued on the Parsnip River reserve throughout the summer and early fall, and by October the prefabricated houses were in place, and inspected by the band council.²⁹⁸ By the week of 25 October 1971 the five families were ready to move in.²⁹⁹

On 8 November 1971 District Supervisor Roach was happy to report that the department had relocated the five families and their children were attending school at McLeod Lake.³⁰⁰ Over three years had passed since the Williston Lake reservoir had begun to fill and even though five families had moved in, the reserve still did not have electrical service from the very grid that the W.A.C. Bennett Dam powered. There were hopes this would occur in late November.³⁰¹ Meanwhile six families, representing thirty-nine members of Ingenika Band, had taken matters into their own hands and relocated on their own accord to Ingenika Point. (An additional twelve to thirteen members were at the Lejac Residential School at Fraser Lake.)³⁰²

This move was the death knell of the Tutu Creek and Parsnip River reserves. The people would no longer wait for Indian Affairs to relocate them. Some saw it as a chance to escape the alcohol and drug use that had emerged in the community. Indian Affairs would later see it as a

²⁹⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs from District Supervisor, Lakes District, A.C. Roach, 5 July 1971.

²⁹⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Ingenika Band Council Resolution, 6 July 1971; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Petition from the Ingenika Band, 6 July 1971; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Ingenika Band Council Resolution, 19 July 1971.

²⁹⁷ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Director of Lands, W.R. Redell from Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs, Duncan Clark, 22 July 1971.

²⁹⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Ingenika Band Council Resolution, 19 October 1971.

²⁹⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to W.M. Munroe from Regional Engineer, BC Region, W.G. Robinson, 25 October 1971.

³⁰⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 8 November 1971.

³⁰¹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Engineer, BC Region, W.G. Robinson from District Manager, W.M. Munro, 29 October 1971.

³⁰² LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 8 November 1971.

failure to assimilate. On a more pragmatic level the move removed those who relocated from the full control of the colonial state, as most notably seen in the states' inability to enforce any harvesting regulations. Together community members saw it as escaping eastern (Euro-Canadian) civilization, and the dissatisfaction they had with it and the new reserves. They would return to the old ways.³⁰³ Yvonne Harris would argue this move saved them from the worst effects of the dam – assimilation.³⁰⁴ They had lived in various camps along the Finlay Forks access road since before the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir. As time passed these temporary structures had started to deteriorate and eventually about only half were suitable for winter inhabitation.³⁰⁵ Indian Affairs planned for new housing, but this was only a temporary measure.³⁰⁶ Unemployment and a lack of game had resulted in malnutrition emerging.³⁰⁷ Tuberculosis, a scourge of the Aboriginal community even today, spread as a result.³⁰⁸ For some Elders this outbreak was the first time they heard about the disease, while others recall historic outbreaks that had devastated the nation.³⁰⁹ It was a period of hardship.³¹⁰

It represented the failure of Indian Affairs to properly relocate the people of the Fort Grahame section of the Finlay River Band in a timely matter because it could not force BC to create new reserves. Some existing literature on the impacts of the Williston Lake reservoir on the Ingenika Band/Tsay Keh Dene claims (or seems to suggest to claim) that relocation to the

³⁰³ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Martha Egnell, 8 March 2012. Relevant state sources include LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Rhoades, "Report on Ingenika Band...;" LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Suzanne Veit, "Meeting with Ingenika Band," Ingenika Point, 21 March 1977; NBCA, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources,] "The Origin Of The Ingenika Band Of Indians And The Flooding Of Williston Lake," [1975].

³⁰⁴ Yvonne Harris, 23.

³⁰⁵ Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

³⁰⁶ "Food Asked for Sekanis," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 April 1971.

³⁰⁷ Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

³⁰⁸ The documentary *CBC Hourglass* claims 20% since the fall of 1967/spring of 1968. *CBC Hourglass*; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

³⁰⁹ Mabel Troendle for example was in the hospital because of tuberculosis in 1968. Phillip Charlie, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 6 November 2008; Mabel Troendle, 16 September 2008.

³¹⁰ Albert Poole, 6 November 2008.

new reserves took place in 1968, and then the reserves failed.³¹¹ Given that the delayed creation and relocation of only a few families to Parsnip River No. 5 is common knowledge among the Elders I interviewed, this claim seems to stem from the assumption and/or stereotype that since Indian bands in Canada live on reserves, if they live somewhere it must be a reserve. Oddly, one can find this logic in a series of articles from the *Prince George Citizen* in 1965 in which journalists call the camps at Finlay Forks reserves as well as on 19 September 1987 article where in discussing the lack of a reserve, and directly noting the community at Ingenika was a squatter community, the reporter nonetheless calls it a reserve.³¹² Only adding to the confusion was that just as the camps near Finlay Forks were often referred to as Finlay Forks, any camp near the Parsnip River reserve is often referred to as Parsnip, Parsnip River, or some other variation, by the Elders I interviewed, while at the same time making it clear that they not are exclusively talking about the Parsnip River reserve.³¹³ In addition, some Elders note the confusion that existed at the time, and still exists, over what was and what was not a reserve, and which band owned it, and as in the case of the reserve at Fort Grahame, what their name was.³¹⁴ Some for example thought there were reserves at Finlay Forks, or Summit Lake, the former perhaps a misunderstanding of the name of the reserve at Fort Grahame, or an instance of referring to any

³¹¹ Ingram and Lanoue note some people moved to Kwadacha as well. Veit claims BC Hydro purchased the two new reserves and that they were only approximately the size of the old Finlay Forks No. 1 reserve. She also suggests the issue of getting a reserve at Ingenika was handled by BC Hydro alone. Pollon and Matheson cite Pen Powell as stating people were relocated to Ingenika Point. BCA, MS 1308, Box 1/1, File 20, Lamers, 21; Billington, 67-68; Alison Davis, *Sekani Ethnobotany: Traditional Role of Plants Amongst the Sekani People* (Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2008), 4; "History of the Ingenika," 9; Ingram, 17; Koyl, 17, 76-77, 89-95; Lanoue, *Brothers*, 4; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Suzanne Veit, "Report Draft," 22 March 1977, 2.3.1.1.a; Tina Loo, "Disturbing the Peace: Environmental Change and the Scales of Justice on a Northern River," *Environmental History* 12 (2007): 901; NBCA, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources,] "The Origin Of The Ingenika Band Of Indians And The Flooding Of Williston Lake," [1975]; Pollon and Matheson, 269, 270, 280; Stanley, 113.

³¹² Bev Christensen, "Progress Comes Slowly at Ingenika Point," *Prince George Citizen*, 19 September 1987; "Shooting Said Accidental," *Prince George Citizen*, 3 May 1965; "Shooting Victim Critical," *Prince George Citizen*, 30 April 1965.

³¹³ Martha Egnell, 8 March 2012; George Massetoe; John Poole; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012; Josephine Tylee, 19 March 2012.

³¹⁴ Georgina Chingee; Jimmie and Nora Massetoe; Melvin Smaaslet.

settlement as a reserve.³¹⁵ Others appear to confuse Tutu Creek with 76 Mile or the Parsnip River reserve.³¹⁶ As with before the creation of the reservoir, the situation was not helped by the newspapers and organizations that referred to settlements as reserves. In 1971 for example the Doh Day-de-class Indian Youth Club announced it would hire eighteen youths from the reserves of the Lakes District. When the *Citizen* announced this opportunity, Finlay Forks was included in a list of reserves alongside Fort Ware and McLeod Lake.³¹⁷

This error might seem like a minor point, but it is not. The false narrative of the Fort Grahame Tsek'ehne being relocated to new reserves when the reservoir was created not only contradicts the records of Indian Affairs and Tsek'ehne oral histories, but also makes the failure of the Parsnip River and Tutu Creek reserves the fault of the Ingenika Band itself. The false narrative paints the decision of the Ingenika Band to relocate to Ingenika starting in 1971 as the failure of the band to cope with the new reserves, rather than the reality that they were tired of waiting for Indian Affairs to relocate them. Shirlee Smith Matheson and Earl Pollon even quote Ray Williston as stating it was the fault of the Ingenika Band.³¹⁸ Fault lay, however, with the failure of Indian Affairs to have the new reserves ready when the water rose in 1968 because it would not force BC to create them.

Conclusion

Contrary to provincial expectations the “completion” of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam in the fall of 1967 and subsequent flooding that began in 1968 was not a good thing despite initial

³¹⁵ Julie Cooper, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Jimmie and Nora Massettoc; Melvin Smaaslet; Agnes Solonas; Mabel Troendle; Josephine Tylee, 19 March 2012.

³¹⁶ Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012; Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Ray Izony, “Changes,” LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs from A.C. Roach, 20 October 1971; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Zone Director, Northern BC, R.A. Sprenger, 27 September 1971; Lena McCook.

³¹⁷ “Indian Program Outlined,” *Prince George Citizen*, 21 May 1971.

³¹⁸ Pollon and Matheson, 270.

celebrations. It was at this moment that all of the issues that had emerged since 1956 came to fruition. The province had failed to properly clear the reservoir basin and as the water rose a debris filled cesspool emerged that was dangerous to travel on or even be around. The Tsek'ehne as well as those working in the reservoir basin (two groups not mutually exclusive) were not properly informed and when the reservoir filled faster than expected it caught many off guard. Many moose and other wildlife at worst drowned or at best lost habitat. For the Tsek'ehne it was the beginning of the reserve era and as time passed many Fort Ware Tsek'ene and McLeod Lake Tse'khene left the forestry camps they had lived in when the water came up and moved to their reserves to make it their primary place of residence. The Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay, who were supposed to have two new replacement reserves (Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5) could not move due to delays in creating these reserves and therefore had to remain in forestry camps. Either way lacking clear and precise information the Tsek'ehne were not only often caught off guard, but also unaware of what exactly was happening and what to do. The new Williston Lake reservoir not only disrupted transportation in the Trench for the Tsek'ehne, but both directly and indirectly contributed to Tsek'ehne unemployment. With the exception of a few band members also living in these camps, the debris-filled reservoir isolated the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay from the Fort Ware Tsek'ene and McLeod Lake Tse'khene. United since 1959 with the former in the Finlay River Band, this divide contributed to the division of the Finlay River Band in 1971 as well as the creation of the Ingenika Band from the remains of the Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay. Indian Affairs assigned the two new reserves to the latter, but delays not only in creating them, but also relocating people onto them, combined with a sense that band members had selected them under pressure, and by a non-representative band council, led to their rejection by the majority of Ingenika band members in 1971.

Chapter 6 – McLeod Lake – Surrounded On All Sides, 1968-1990

McLeod Lake is the oldest permanent European settlement west of the Rockies, but until 1949 it was isolated from the rest of Canada by the very waterways that sustained it. After the Bennett Dam it bore the brunt of settler colonialism. The construction and preparation of the dam resulted in a large influx of non-Tsek'ehne into traditional Tsek'ehne territory. The creation of the instant town of Mackenzie in 1966, and the completion of a bridge across the Pack River in 1974 strengthened this connection for the McLeod Lake Tse'khene. Making matters worse the multiple reserves of the McLeod Lake Band were nowhere near the size of the comparably larger reserves of the Canadian prairies based on formulas of 160 to 640 acres per family of five. Rather they were the small, disconnected reserves arising from BC Aboriginal policy designed to promote employment and assimilation, albeit not necessarily in that order, or with any genuine sincerity. As a result, during this period the people of McLeod Lake looked to secure control over their traditional territory in order to hold back and control the colonization and development that engulfed them. In an attempt to rectify this situation, they ultimately pursued an adhesion to Treaty 8.

Surrounded by Loggers

As geographer Cole Harris points out in “The Struggle with Distance” colonialism went hand in hand with transportation infrastructure. To put it bluntly, the state cannot control what it cannot easily reach.¹ The fact that none of the major Tsek'ehne settlements were located on a railway or roadway until the mid-twentieth century meant that even though there was a European presence, the Tsek'ehne did not feel the full force of colonization. This situation began to change for McLeod Lake in 1949 during the construction of the Hart Highway. The highway was in a

¹ Cole Harris, “The Struggle with Distance,” *The Resettlement of British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 161-162, 193, passim.

certain sense the forerunner of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and Williston Lake reservoir. Quite fittingly, it was the closure of the Hudson's Bay Company post at McLeod Lake on 31 January 1968 that heralded in the new reservoir.² And although one could say that its location spared McLeod Lake much of the damage caused by the reservoir, one must remember that the band lost land and resources to the Parsnip and Peace reaches, including traplines.³

Both projects also meant that for the first time the provincial and federal governments became day-to-day actors in Tse'khene life at McLeod Lake.⁴ In this way McLeod Lake is an exception to the statement made by anthropologist Frans Lamers that the W.A.C. Bennett Dam only isolated the Tsek'ehne.⁵ For this reason, scholars have often compared McLeod Lake to the two northern communities. Researchers like Guy Lanoue, Yvonne Harris, and Meg Stanley see McLeod Lake as the eye of a storm that culminated in the 1960s with the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, the Williston Lake reservoir, the influx of the forest industry, and with all of these events, non-Tsek'ehne settlement. Indeed, according to Lanoue and Harris, McLeod Lake was the community most affected by the dam. As anthropologists they hypothesized what they found in studying the nation would reveal the future for their Tsek'ehne brothers to the north, if not other isolated First Nations.⁶

² "Hudson's Bay Co.: Trading Post Closes," *Prince George Citizen*, 1 February 1968; "McLeod's Lake (1805-1968)," *Prince George Citizen*, 8 March 1968.

³ Jack Isadore, interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 July 2004.

⁴ Guy Lanoue, "Continuity and Change: The Development of Political Self-Definition Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia" (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1983), 101, 170.

⁵ Although Lamers mentions McLeod Lake, he focuses primarily on Fort Ware and Ingenika and treats these two bands as the Sekani. British Columbia Archives (BCA), Conference of Northwest Coast Studies fonds, MS 1308, Box 1/1, File 20, Frans Lamers, "Sekani Adaptation: An Analysis of Technological Strategies and Processes," Northwest Coast Studies Conference, 12-16 May 1976, 6, 12, 20, *passim*.

⁶ Lanoue notes a tension in McLeod Lake that did not exist in Fort Ware. Yvonne Harris, "Choices for Change: A Study of the Fort Ware Indian Band and Implications of Land Settlements for Northern Indian Bands" (MA Thesis: University of British Columbia, 1984) ii, 23, 60; Lanoue, "Continuity," i, 3-5, 36-38, 96; Meg Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers: Harnessing the Power of the Peace and Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2010), 112.

Although the province was certainly correct that the dam helped spread the forest industry north, logging activity in the reservoir basin was not the only forestry activity in the southern Trench.⁷ McLeod Lake is located in the Prince George Timber Supply area, although its traditional territory extends into other supply areas, most notably the Mackenzie Timber Supply Area.⁸ Here continued logging after the creation of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam only further contributed to the effects of the reservoir.⁹ And although it would not be until the 1980s that logging reached the northern Trench, here too it only added to the devastation of the reservoir.¹⁰ Logging in general can lead to a loss of habitat for many animals, especially if undertaken without care. Clear cutting, which was common, negatively impacted the plants and wildlife already affected by the Williston Lake reservoir. Garbage and other pollutants produced by the industry were equally bad and logging along the new shoreline can contribute to debris.¹¹ Indeed, McLeod Lake Elder Al Inyallie thinks it was logging itself, and not the reservoir per se, that was the primary cause of the decline of moose populations within Tsek'ehne traditional territory.¹²

Like the reservoir, logging has damaged or destroyed infrastructure, such as trails and traplines.¹³ And although Elders believe that the province should force forestry companies to

⁷ British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, "The Power of the Peace," (Vancouver: BC, 1963).

⁸ Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resources Operations, "Forest Analysis: Mackenzie Timber Supply Area (TSA)," <https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/tsa/tsa16/> (accessed 8 July 2015); Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resources Operations, "Forest Analysis: Prince George Timber Supply Area (TSA)," <https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/tsa/tsa24/index.htm> (accessed 14 July 2015).

⁹ Yvonne Harris, ii, 23, 60; Alfred Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012.

¹⁰ Jean Isaac, "Sekani 'Tsey Kehneh,'" *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, ed. Kaya Minogue, 80.

¹¹ Colin Crampton, "Problems of Environmental Conservation for the Sekani Ingenika Band in Northern British Columbia, Canada," *Environmental Conservation* 19, No. 1 (1992): 76; Alison Davis, *Sekani Ethnobotany: Traditional Role of Plants Amongst the Sekani People* (Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2008), 5; Yvonne Harris, 46-47; Jean Isaac, "Sekani 'Tsey Kehneh,'" *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 79-80; Zepheria Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet; Ray Izony, "Changes in Tsay Kehnnay Dene Governance/Society;" Loraine Littlefield, Linda Dorricott and Deidre Cullon, "Tse Keh Nay Traditional and Contemporary Use and Occupation at Amazay (Duncan Lake): A Draft Report" (Unpublished report, 2007), iii, 43; William (Billie) Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 8 September 2008; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012; Josephine Tylee, interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 18 August 2004.

¹² Al Inyallie, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012.

¹³ Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2013; Al Inyallie; Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2013.

replace what they destroy, even today this outcome rarely happens.¹⁴ The infrastructure that facilitates forestry, logging roads, brings in non-Tsek'ehne. As the roads have spread north with the industry, so too did hunters and poachers.¹⁵ All three communities seek to discourage this influx of outsiders.¹⁶ Of course, during this period from the perspective of the colonial state the only land they could keep people out of was reserve land. As a result of the various reserve commissions and inquiries that had taken place in BC during the early twentieth century, by 1968 McLeod Lake had five reserves of varying size totaling 599.6 acres.¹⁷ Anything outside of these reserves was open to development without compensation, or input from the McLeod Lake Tse'khene. The only exception was the personal trapline.

By the late 1970s/early 1980s, however, although the McLeod Lake band was actively trying to change the situation, many traplines were owned by non-Tse'khene or not in use.¹⁸ As McLeod Lake Elder Josephine Tylee notes, this loss of traplines meant that community could not teach younger generations how to trap, thereby perpetuating the situation.¹⁹ Of course this did not mean an end to traditional economic activities after the creation of the dam. Rather it reduced their importance as a main source of sustaining employment. Some people, especially those who did not have their traplines flooded by the reservoir, continued to trap, although most noticed a

¹⁴ Bob and Shirley Van Somer, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 22 March 2012.

¹⁵ As Ray Izony points out this started with the Finlay Forks access road. Al Inyallie; Zepheria Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, 1 October 2012; Ray Izony, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 3 October 2012; Ray Izony, "Changes;" Kwadacha Archives (KA), British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, J. O'Riordan, "Williston Lake Potentials Study," 25 March 1975; William (Billie) Poole, 8 September 2008; Yasmine Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 26 September 2012.

¹⁶ Zepheria Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, 1 October 2012.

¹⁷ Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, *Schedule of Indian Reserves and Settlements: Part II, Province of British Columbia* (Ottawa: Indian Affairs Branch, 1966), 19, 79, 93, 138; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), *Schedule of Indian Reserves and Settlements* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1972), 18-19, 25, 104, 123, 180.

¹⁸ Yvonne Harris, 23, 61-62; Lanoue, "Continuity," 135, 138.

¹⁹ Josephine Tylee, interviewed by author, 19 March 2012.

greatly diminished return below the provincial average.²⁰ Nevertheless because of this situation, and further developments in the southern Trench (including the reservoir), by the early 1980s Yvonne Harris reported the band had been forced to abandon use of their traditional territory north of the Nation River/Cut Thumb Creek, including areas within the traditional territory of the Fort Grahame Tsek'ehne.²¹ This area would apparently continue to shrink, as according to McLeod Lake Elder Doris Prince by 2012 the southern tip of the reservoir itself was the limit.²²

Ultimately traplines are not the best way to control land or influence development. Having a registered trapline does not equate to land ownership and even if it did the relatively small size was not enough to supplement the total area of McLeod Lake's reserves. As Yvonne Harris argues in order for an Indigenous group in northern BC to develop, they needed a minimum of 640 to 960 acres of land per individual, along with priority access, a genuine level of control, and a cash settlement. (As she points out the Numbered Treaties did not even meet this criteria, especially with regard to resource control, money for development, and provisions for self-government.)²³ Based on this formulation the total area covered by McLeod Lake's five reserves was not even enough for a single individual. Fort Ware and Ingenika were no better. Following the division of the Finlay River band Fort Ware had a total of three reserves covering 968.3 acres of land, while Ingenika had 496.6 acres contained in their three reserves.²⁴ To put this into perspective the size of the reserve created as a result of the 1956 memorandum was

²⁰ According to Harris by about \$4,500 per year. Anonymous #3, interviewed by author, October 2012; Yvonne Harris, 61-62; Marion Jackson, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; Lanoue, "Continuity," 83; Doris Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 26 September 2012; Yasmine Prince; Geraldine Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; Richard Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 27 September 2012; Sharon Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 18 March 2013.

²¹ Yvonne Harris, 66-68, 113.

²² Doris Prince.

²³ Yvonne Harris, iv-v, 12, 114.

²⁴ INAC, *Schedule of Indian Reserves and Settlements* (1972), 8, 10, 48, 124, 128, 159, 174, 181.

25,600,000 acres, while the total area flooded by the Williston Lake reservoir was around 440,000 acres.

These small reserves had only “worked” prior to the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir because the Tsek’ehne were not restricted to them. McLeod Lake alone had used much of the Parsnip River Valley to survive. Now the remnant of this territory was under threat from development, with only 599.6 acres reserved for their use alone.²⁵ (In comparison in 1982-1983 Yvonne Harris estimated Fort Ware was still using some 7.9 million acres of their traditional territory, with about 3 million shared with the Kaska.)²⁶ Together all three Tsek’ehne bands had lost 440,000 acres of traditional territory, but in the case of McLeod Lake there was no guaranteed access or priority harvesting rights in the remainder.²⁷

Expanding Connections

Despite the fact the Hart Highway had connected McLeod Lake to the rest of Canada, attachments to the outside world were still an issue for the McLeod Lake Tse’khene. As a result, the band did not initially receive any “benefits” from the fact their traditional territory was linked to the rest of BC. The highway that allowed for the influx of non-Tse’khene into the traditional territory ran through the Euro-Canadian settlement of McLeod Lake and not McLeod Lake No. 1, which the Pack and McLeod rivers divided it from. In 1968 no bridge existed over either river in the vicinity of the reserve. (A bridge across the McLeod River had washed out in 1946.)²⁸ The only way to drive from McLeod Lake No. 1 to McLeod Lake was via a logging road from Fort

²⁵ Bentley LeBaron, *Parship Review* (Ottawa: McLeod Lake Indian Band and Department of Indian Affairs, 1978), 6, 9.

²⁶ Yvonne Harris, 70, 117.

²⁷ LeBaron, 9.

²⁸ Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), RG 10, Volume 6406, File 835-5 Part 2, Letter to Indian Affairs Branch from R. Howe, 8 July 1946; William Quackenbush, “Tastes of Canadians and Dogs: The History and Archaeology of McLeods Lake Post, British Columbia” (MA Thesis: Simon Fraser University, 1990), 88.

St. James.²⁹ Reflecting this fact, there had even been talk in 1959 of moving the reserve to the other side of the lake to be closer to the highway.³⁰ This relocation did not happen, however. Instead, in August 1968 the band gave permission to Harry Copperthewaite and Bob Sindia to operate a ferry across McLeod Lake that landed at the reserve. For this right they were to provide the nation a payment of two dollars per trip.³¹

Copperthewaite and Sindia were not the only individuals interested in moving things through reserve land, however. Even with their limited land base the forest industry still desired access to the McLeod Lake's reserves. In return McLeod Lake would find itself further connected to the rest of Canada and with more logging roads running through their traditional territory. In September 1968 the band council gave permission to Carp Lake Sawmills Limited to haul logs through McLeod Lake No. 1 and Pack River No. 2 on the Ft. St. James road. No new roads were to be constructed, and the band would continue to have free access to any of the roads included in the contract. In exchange the sawmill could construct a bridge on reserve over the McLeod River, and would pay the band \$120 per year.³² And while the former was optional, it made little sense to gain the right to use the existing roadways on reserve, if one had to stop at the river and ferry things across. It should, however, not be seen as a giveaway by the band. The

²⁹ Nancy Middleton claims a logging bridge was constructed across the Pack River around 1963 connecting McLeod Lake No. 1 to the Hart Highway. It appears this bridge was either temporary or was not located at the reserve itself. Evidence for this is seen in the ferry used to bring supplies across the lake to construct the forest access road to Fort St. James in 1965 and 1966. Stanley seems to confuse the two McLeod Lakes. "McLeod's Lake – Trading Post, 1966," *Prince George Citizen*, 31 March 1966; Nancy Middleton, "McLeod's Lake News," *Prince George Citizen*, 30 October 1963; Stanley, 112; "Temporary Bridge Installed," *Prince George Citizen*, 29 September 1988; "Trapping Still Carried on Near Historic Trading Post," *Prince George Citizen*, 30 March 1965.

³⁰ "McLeods Lake News," *Prince George Citizen*, 30 January 1959; "Centennial Club Elects Officers," *Prince George Citizen*, 19 February 1959.

³¹ LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 12 August 1968.

³² LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 18 September 1968.

band did not give permission for eternity or even 99 years, but only for a single year, subject to renewal, which they did in 1969 and in 1971.³³

Even with prospect of a logging bridge across the McLeod River there was still no bridge across the Pack River. Instead band members forded the river, crossed McLeod Lake, or in the winter, travelled on the ice covering both.³⁴ In an attempt to change this situation, during the summer of 1971 the band passed an open resolution to release reserve land for a road if anyone built a bridge across the Pack River.³⁵ By that autumn the provincial Highways Department was investigating the matter and despite delays and disagreement over the type of bridge it was to be, they completed it by 1974.³⁶ The completion of the bridge not only connected McLeod Lake No. 1 to the Hart Highway, but also in doing so sped up the replacement of riverboats by motor vehicles in McLeod Lake begun by the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir.³⁷

Hand in hand with the connections that the bridge brought came electrification. After the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, BC Hydro quickly connected McLeod Lake to the provincial power grid. As early as 1966 the community had petitioned BC Hydro and the Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources regarding the matter.³⁸ In 1969 both the

³³ LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 18 September 1968; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 4 September 1969; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 12 March 1971.

³⁴ Patricia Johnson, "McLeod Lake Post," *The Beaver* Autumn 1965: 22; Tom Nixon, "Regional District: PG Urban Study Planned," *Prince George Citizen*, 15 December 1972; Gerry Soroka, "Isolation Lessened with Bridge Pledge," *Prince George Citizen*, 22 September 1972.

³⁵ A BCR dated 28 April 1972 made it clear the band still expected to be compensated for lost reserve land. Lanoue notes some band level opposition to the bridge. Lanoue, "Continuity," 45-46; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 29 June 1971; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 9 August 1971; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 28 April 1972.

³⁶ In 1973 it was reported the bridge over the McLeod River was temporary. "Bridge Studied," *Prince George Citizen*, 19 November 1971; Bill Graham, "New Provincial Park:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 17 April 1973; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 17 January 1972; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 28 April 1972; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 15 September 1972; Verne Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.

³⁷ Verne Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.

³⁸ "Power Supply Request Made," *Prince George Citizen*, 12 April 1966.

Euro-Canadian settlement and the reserve petitioned BC Hydro once again.³⁹ Contrary to what some Elders had been told prior to the completion of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam service was not free for the Tsek'ehne. Lacking the capital to pay its share of the cost of connecting to the grid, McLeod Lake passed a band council resolution (BCR) on 10 June 1969 requesting Indian Affairs provide the funds, and committing the band to underwriting delinquent accounts.⁴⁰ This guarantee was initially only for a year, but was extended to five years the following month.⁴¹ The petition worked, and by January 1971 construction was completed. McLeod Lake No. 1 received electricity the following year.⁴² Now depending on their ability to pay, band members could use some of the electricity produced at the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. Despite this change, running water would not be the norm on reserve for much of the 1970s.⁴³

Education and Employment I

At the same time BC Hydro was connecting McLeod Lake to the provincial grid and highway system, the band was taking steps to deal with the impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and developments that followed. One of the first steps was to push for their children to no longer attend the Lejac Residential School at Fraser Lake, BC. Even before the bridge over the Pack

³⁹ "Hydro Busier in Area," *Prince George Citizen*, 22 April 1969; "Oldest Settlement Gets Hydro Soon," *Prince George Citizen*, 26 May 1969.

⁴⁰ Some Elders in both McLeod Lake and Kwadacha remember being promised free electricity, while Alec Chingee recalls a price of \$7 per year. Alec Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; Zepheria Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Salmon Valley, BC, 1 October 2012; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 10 June 1969; Yasmine Prince; Laura Seymour, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012; Agnes Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012.

⁴¹ LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 10 June 1969; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 15 July 1969.

⁴² Adele Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; Doug Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; Mike Gosling, "Lights Go On At Lake," *Prince George Citizen*, 13 January 1971; Jack Isadore, interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 4 August 2004; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 12 November 1969; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 5 March 1970; Richard Solonas.

⁴³ Guy Lanoue, *Brothers: The Politics of Violence Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia* (Oxford: Berg Publishers Ltd., 1992), 49.

River was completed the band passed a resolution to have them attend the McLeod Lake Elementary School starting in the 1973-1974 school year.⁴⁴ Indian Affairs and the province approved this request and just over a year later the band requested funding for a home-school coordinator to not only help parents and students when it came to attending school at McLeod Lake and Mackenzie, but also to help meet the educational needs of drop-outs.⁴⁵ Nine months later they requested additional busing for the students from the school-bus pick-up site on the Hart Highway to the reserve.⁴⁶ The summer before they had requested funding for a band library.⁴⁷

Education is necessary for most forms of employment. Logging, which took off in the region with the clearing of the reservoir basin, often precluded the continuance of traditional economic activities due to loss of land, and access roads that allowed for greater, and easier, competition from outsiders.⁴⁸ As work connected to the dam and reservoir wound down, many Tsek'ehne found themselves without employment. In theory McLeod Lake should have been the best positioned Tsek'ehne group to find employment with its access to Mackenzie, the forest industry, the natural gas industry, and the service industry.⁴⁹ In reality jobs were often scarce for the community in part because of the lack of preparation for the transition from traditional

⁴⁴ LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 16 October 1972.

⁴⁵ LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 19 January 1975.

⁴⁶ LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 17 October 1975.

⁴⁷ LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 14 July 1975.

⁴⁸ Lanoue claims only one individual worked in Mackenzie while he conducting fieldwork in 1978. He also seems to suggest some people did not want to work for wages, but it appears it was only when it came to working for the chief. KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Executive Summary: Re: Finlay-Omineca Strategic Environmental Plan, [3 December 1984]; KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Letter to Chief Executive Officer, BC Hydro and Power Authority, L. Bell from Deputy Minister of Environment and Parks, T.R. Johnson, 20 November 1987; Lanoue, "Continuity," 4, 83, 95, 101-102; Verne Solonas; Saul Terry, "No Land, No Jobs, No Future for McLeod Lake," *Union of BC Indian Chiefs Up-Date*, August 1984, 2.

⁴⁹ A nascent oil and gas industry also existed in the region and in theory provided employment opportunities. Despite noting a lack of jobs, Lanoue notes logging is an option for McLeod Lake. Yvonne Harris, 22; Marion Jackson; Lanoue, *Brothers*, xi, 107.

economic activities, and the racism of some employers in the area.⁵⁰ Furthermore, Mackenzie represented the consolidation and greater mechanization of sawmills in the area, a situation that meant fewer workers were required and those that were needed certain skills.⁵¹ It also meant that these mills produced more emissions, and as it would turn out some of the mills did not follow provincial standards.⁵² Not helping the situation was that in the early 1970s BC, along with much of the rest of Canada, entered into an economic recession that persisted on and off into the 1990s.⁵³ As a result as late as 1989 unemployment rates were as high as 90% in McLeod Lake.⁵⁴ Unemployment contributed to drug and alcohol abuse in the community as people found themselves with little to do with their time.⁵⁵

Still some band members found employment.⁵⁶ In Chief Harry Chingee's opinion, however, often employers gave those who did find employment the worst jobs and they were the first fired and the last hired. Based on these observations he concluded that the people themselves had to improve their employment opportunities if they wanted them to get better.⁵⁷ At first this observation might be simply be seen as a result of racism. It is interesting to note, however, that in another interview in the late 1990s he stated that he did not notice discrimination during his career, pointing to the regular employment of members of coastal First

⁵⁰ Al Inyallie; Marion Jackson.

⁵¹ Verne Solonas.

⁵² KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Executive Summary: Re: Finlay-Omineca Strategic Environmental Plan, [3 December 1984].

⁵³ Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2010), 313, 346-347.

⁵⁴ "Timber Agreement Reached," *Prince George Citizen*, 27 November 1989.

⁵⁵ Jack Isadore, 21 July 2004.

⁵⁶ Verne Solonas.

⁵⁷ By the time of the dam Harry had worked for many years in the forest and petroleum industry, rising to the rank of management. Ken Bernsohn, "Indians Escalate Battle Here:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 19 November 1986; Gordon Clark, "McLeod Lake Indians: Fight Is One of Hope," *Prince George Citizen*, 11 July 1987; E.F. Ted Williams History Centre (Prince George, BC), Oral History, A998.9.1, Harry Chingee interviewed 29 August, 1998; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957 File Part 1, File 985/19-7-12-618.

Nations.⁵⁸ Taken in the context of his previously mentioned views it would appear that he does not see the issue as one of discrimination per se, but rather a lack of training and will among the Tse'khene, a point he raised with Indian Affairs in the late 1970s.⁵⁹

Either way the failure of many people to smoothly transition from traditional economic activities to a strictly wage labour economy was important for a number of reasons. According to Guy Lanoue by 1978-1979 it was the norm to seek employment in the wage labour economy to purchase food and most band funding was through transfer payments. At first this might appear to be due to the low cost of food available at McLeod Lake.⁶⁰ According to Elders, however, the impacts of the Williston Lake reservoir caused this change.⁶¹ As in Fort Ware and Ingenika people still ate traditional foods and utilized the land that remained available to them to harvest it. Yet the foods were harder to acquire. Yvonne Harris found that by 1982-1983 a majority of residents felt game, trout, and fur bearing animals had declined since the creation of the reservoir, with only lake whitefish increasing in number. The latter was important as by this point in time fish was supplementing the amount of meat harvested to feed the community.⁶² This trend has continued to this day and McLeod Lake Elder Anita Vallee told me that game had declined overall since the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir.⁶³ Some Elders, however, see the decline as really beginning with the Hart Highway and Jack Isadore reported in 2004 that the

⁵⁸ E.F. Ted Williams History Centre, A998.9.1, Harry Chingee interviewed 29 August, 1998.

⁵⁹ Indian Affairs on the other hand also blamed unreliability, often connected to the consumption of alcohol and public perceptions of Indigenous people. LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957 File Part 1, File 985/19-7-12-618; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957 File Part 1, File 985/19-7-12-618, The McLeod Lake Indian Band: Its Problems and Opportunities: CESO Project #6519 CI.

⁶⁰ Lanoue, "Continuity," 52, 54, 170.

⁶¹ Doris Prince; Anita Vallee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.

⁶² Yvonne Harris, iii, 12, 52, 60-61, 63-64.

⁶³ Anita Vallee.

moose people kill around McLeod Lake started showing signs of illness after the construction of the highway.⁶⁴

In an attempt to provide employment opportunities, and take matters into their own hands, the band applied for funding under a number of programs. In 1974 the band received funding for work improving the reserve under the Local Initiatives Program.⁶⁵ The following year the band constructed a new community hall.⁶⁶ One year later the band applied for funding for handicraft classes as well as summer work under the High School Student Summer Employment Program clearing campsites on Carp Lake No. 3 and War Lake No. 4 and general clearing for leases on McLeod Lake No. 1. The band strongly desired the latter because it not only promised to provide work experience to Tse'khene youths, but also kept them around the reserve during the summer.⁶⁷ By 1980 an employment program for students existed in McLeod Lake, as well as Ingenika and Fort Ware.⁶⁸

The band also took steps to create employment opportunities for adult band members as well. It saw welfare as a destructive force since it was individualistic in nature, and many felt that further contributed to the end of traditional economic activities.⁶⁹ According to former Chief Harry Chingee, as a result of receiving welfare some individuals lost their traditional Tsek'ehne will to work.⁷⁰ Seemingly in connection to the previously mentioned application to clear on McLeod Lake No. 1, in June 1976 Harry applied for a timber permit to sell salvage timber on the

⁶⁴ Jack Isadore, 4 August 2004.

⁶⁵ "LIP: Culture, Art, Artifacts" *"Nesika" (Chinook Means "Us"): The Voice of BC Indians* 3, no. 1 (1974): 15-16; "L.I.P. Money Scarce in City," *Prince George Citizen*, 6 December 1973.

⁶⁶ "McLeod Lake Band Opens New Hall," *Prince George Citizen*, 16 October 1975.

⁶⁷ LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 2 January 1976; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 28 April 1976; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Provincial Seasonal Employment: Native Youth Program: Project Application Form, [28 April 1976].

⁶⁸ Bev Christensen, "Student Program Cut Back:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 3 June 1981.

⁶⁹ Lanoue, "Continuity," 55, 99n9.

⁷⁰ Harry Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012.

reserve.⁷¹ At the same time the band developed an employment program with a local pulp mill that would provide transportation for band members via bus from the reserve to the millsite. For those who did not want to be involved in the forest industry Chief Chingee also sought a \$19,700 grant to help him expand his guiding outfit from a part-time to full-time business.⁷² It does not appear that this application was successful, however, and it was not until 1986 that Chingee got a federal grant to expand his outfit.⁷³ By 1989, however, he was concerned continued forestry activity would diminish his guiding area, especially in areas with access roads.⁷⁴

The McGregor Diversion

While the McLeod Lake Tse'khene were trying to recover from the impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam as well as deal with development in their traditional territory, in 1976 BC Hydro proposed another hydroelectric development in their territory on the McGregor River. The McGregor River is a tributary of the Fraser River and therefore not part of the Peace, and ultimately Arctic watershed. It is instead part of the Pacific watershed. However, in order to increase the amount of water flowing into the Williston Lake reservoir, as well as provide flood control on the Fraser River, BC Hydro proposed constructing a dam on the river that would reverse its flow over the Arctic-Pacific divide and into the Parsnip River. Where Williston Lake had failed, the band feared that the McGregor Diversion would succeed and flood some of McLeod Lake's reserve lands. They expected the effects to be similar to the impacts of the original Williston Lake reservoir.⁷⁵

⁷¹ LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 13 June 1976.

⁷² "Harry Chingee: Guide Tracks Grizzly Bear," *Prince George Citizen*, 10 September 1976.

⁷³ Ken Bernsohn and Bob Rowlands, "Yukon Mine to Export Ore Soon:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 5 July 1986.

⁷⁴ Bev Christensen, "Foreign Hunters Target Big Game," *Prince George Citizen*, 21 October 1989; Bev Christensen, "When Hunting Is More Than A Hobby," *Prince George Citizen*, 21 October 1989.

⁷⁵ A preliminary form had been proposed during the initial planning of the Peace River project. British Columbia Hydro, "2008 Long Term Acquisition Plan: Appendix F8: Potential Large Hydro Project Report," (Vancouver: BC Hydro, 2008), 3; James Howell, "The Portage Mountain Hydro-electric Project," *Northern Transitions*, vol. 1, *Northern Resource and Land Use Policy Study*, ed. Everett Peterson and Janet Wright (Ottawa: Canadian Arctic

Not willing to see a repeat of the Williston Lake reservoir the band took action. In response to the proposal McLeod Lake contacted Indian Affairs on 28 June 1977 in an attempt to ensure their interests were taken care of, and because they did not trust the province, BC Hydro, or Indian Affairs to do so without intervention. The band wanted both levels of government to recognize their relationship to their traditional territory, along with the fact that they had never extinguished their Aboriginal title, and failed to properly compensate them for the flooding caused by the Williston Lake reservoir. They demanded a voice in development. Internally they formed their own committee to handle the matter: the McGregor Committee.⁷⁶

Indian Affairs' response was the *Parsnip Review*. Commissioned on 1 November 1977, the initial draft of the report were not completed until January 1978, by which time public opposition to the project had led to the McGregor Diversion's cancellation.⁷⁷ In writing the report author Bentley LeBaron soon came to the conclusion that topics like forestry, railway construction, pipeline construction, power line construction, and land claims could not be separated from the potential impacts of the McGregor Diversion or real impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. Nor could he exclude Fort Ware or Ingenika since not only had the dam affected them, but the McGregor Diversion too would impact them. As a result the report became the first major study on the Tsek'ehne since Diamond Jenness.⁷⁸

The report found that traditional economic activities continued at McLeod Lake alongside wage labour employment, most notably in the forest industry. Other band members had left the reserve to find work. (In Fort Ware and Ingenika traditional economic activities still

Resource Committee, 1978), 28; LeBaron, ix, 7-8; Eli Sopow, "Salmon Loss Feared:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 26 August 1976.

⁷⁶ LeBaron, vi, x, 6, 9, 46.

⁷⁷ LeBaron, vi; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Director – Research Division, Policy, Research & Evaluation Branch, Katie Cook from Director of Operations, BC Region, W. Van Iterson, 22 February 1978.

⁷⁸ Diamond Jenness, *The Sekani Indians of British Columbia*, no. 84, *Anthropological Series*, no. 20 (Ottawa: J.O. Patenaude, 1937); LeBaron, vi-vii, xiii-xiv, xvi, 16-22, 40-52.

dominated, but logging was beginning to encroach.) Although the province did not believe that McLeod Lake would lose reserve land, the loss of land and resources to an extended Williston Lake reservoir created by the diversion would result in additional loss of culture; wildlife and fish; accessibility, due to debris; archaeological sites; health; morale; social cohesion; and opportunities, most notably in the forest industry concerned the band. They also feared that the project would lead to increased competition for resources with Euro-Canadians and further alcohol abuse due to all the impacts. The band based all of these conclusions on their experience with the Williston Lake reservoir and the forest industry that had emerged with it. As LeBaron found this was a history that left all the Tsek'ehne feeling frustrated and with a sense of profound loss and injustice regarding the entire situation. Not helping the situation was that while critics were paying attention to the project itself and Indigenous groups along the Fraser, they gave almost no attention to the potential impacts on the Tsek'ehne. As LeBaron found, however, the same was true when it came to other developments impacting the Tsek'ehne, with the exception of the construction of new transmission lines.⁷⁹

Still, since it was a preliminary report LeBaron earmarked many of these concerns for future research, especially given the lack of information that was available on the communities. Of note LeBaron recommended the three Tsek'ehne nations submit a joint comprehensive claim and use this future research for the final report in the claim. He argued all three bands had a strong case to make a claim for proper compensation regarding the Williston Lake reservoir. The only things he saw in the way were the difficulty of travelling and communication between the three bands, and the potential unwillingness of Ingenika to participate with the other two.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ LeBaron, x-xii, xiv-xxiv, 8-22, 40-53 57-58, *passim*.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, x-xii, xiv-xxiv, 8-22, 40-56, 60-63, 67-69 *passim*.

Even with this investigation Chief Harry Chingee still did not trust BC Hydro, the province, or even Indian Affairs to look out for the interests of the Tsek'ehne. The finished report began with a letter from him to the Minister of Indian Affairs, Hugh Faulkner, explaining this distrust. Chief Chingee informed the minister that the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir had caused great hardship and anxiety for the Tsek'ehne. The loss of land and associated resources he argued had disrupted traditional economic and cultural activities. Now he was concerned that the McGregor Diversion, unchecked forestry and BC Rail expansion would destroy the remainder of Tsek'ehne traditional territory. Therefore he recommended Indian Affairs allow the research to continue.⁸¹

In light of these suggestions, and following meetings with the chiefs and councils of McLeod Lake, Fort Ware and Ingenika, Indian Affairs decided to proceed with further work on the report pending the approval of the Ingenika band members and available funding.⁸² When they applied for funding, however, issues emerged over how to justify it in light of the decline in traditional economic activities, the cancellation of the diversion, and the number of McLeod Lake band members who had left the reserve. Director of Operations for the BC Region, W. Van Iterson, instead proposed that McLeod Lake embrace the new developments in their traditional territory. Furthermore, head office noted proposed research by the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) on timber rights and right of way land lost to the reservoir.⁸³ Nevertheless, it is important to note that based on the preliminary report the BC Region accepted

⁸¹ Ibid., i-ii.

⁸² LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Director – Research Division, Policy, Research & Evaluation Branch, Katie Cook from Director of Operations, BC Region, W. Van Iterson, 22 February 1978.

⁸³ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Director of Operations, BC Region, W. Van Iterson from Director, Research Branch, Policy, Research and Evaluation Group, Indian and Inuit (sic) Affairs Program, 10 April 1978.

that the destruction of the traditional Tsek'ehne resource base began with the Williston Lake reservoir.⁸⁴

Education and Employment II

McLeod Lake was already taking steps to benefit from new developments, most notably by working to increase involvement in the wage labour economy. This approach continued. In 1977 McLeod Lake created the McLeod Lake Band Economic Development Committee tasked with investigating all of the resources available to the band and producing an economic development plan.⁸⁵ To help run the committee the province provided \$36,100 in four equal installments to the band.⁸⁶

McLeod Lake also continued its involvement in larger state run programs. In 1977 the federal Canada Works Program provided \$42,000 to the community to provide jobs for “six people for 40 weeks for reserve improvements.”⁸⁷ The following year the band began construction on a hostel.⁸⁸ It also won a contract for tree planting in an open competition.⁸⁹ This was part of a larger overall plan to get the community involved in the local forest industry. On 17 August 1978 the band even held a meeting to discuss the matter with the Deputy Minister of Forests and UBCIC.⁹⁰ The following year “a fully serviced subdivision was built on” McLeod Lake No. 1.⁹¹ Historian Kelly Rogers reported that most band members found seasonal employment in the forest industry, either logging or fighting fires, and trapped on familial traplines. There were hopes the new subdivision would be the first stage of getting more

⁸⁴ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to District Manager, Prince George, Myler Savill from Director of Operations, BC Region, W. Van Iterson, 20 April 1978.

⁸⁵ LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 7 September 1977.

⁸⁶ Eli Sopow, “Tour of BC Rail: Mackenzie Cool to Bennett,” *Prince George Citizen*, 6 October 1978.

⁸⁷ Al Irwin, “Employment Opportunities:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 18 November 1977.

⁸⁸ Lanoue, “Continuity,” 55.

⁸⁹ LAC, RG 10, Box 1 File 985/19-4-609, Williston Lake Debris Disposal Information Meeting, 25 June 1979.

⁹⁰ LeBaron, 57-58; “Timber.r.r.,” *UBCIC News*, August 1978: 12.

⁹¹ Kelly Rogers, “History of McLeod Lake, BC”

infrastructure on reserve and the band hoped community members would take advantage of the highway and sell crafts to tourists.⁹²

Like many other communities in British Columbia, the recession of the 1980s had a negative effect on the band. The federal government cut back on student employment programs, providing less employment opportunities for not only the McLeod Lake Tse'khene, but also the Fort Ware Tsek'ene, and Ingenika Tsay Keh Nay.⁹³ In May 1982 the band complained to the BC Human Rights Commission that the province was denying them logging rights due to an unfair bias. They presented the denial as part of a chain of developments – including the W.A.C. Bennett Dam – that had negatively impacted them and resulted in dislocation, loss of wildlife and death. They feared that the proposed Anzac spur line would be another such event.⁹⁴ Still hope remained. In 1983 the *Prince George Citizen* reported that housing employed a portion of the band.⁹⁵ The following year, however, the *Vancouver Sun* reported only three band members were employed and then at the band office. Loss of land and lack of jobs were destroying the community said Chief Harry Chingee. He was hopeful a tree farm license and the employment it would bring would help change the situation.⁹⁶ In 1985 the band applied for, and got funding under the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for housing.⁹⁷ The same year the band established Duz Cho Logging.⁹⁸

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Christensen, "Student Program Cut Back."

⁹⁴ "'Rights' Brief: Logging Decisions Blasted by Indians," *Prince George Citizen*, 28 May 1982.

⁹⁵ "McLeod Lake: City Girl Goes Country," *Prince George Citizen*, 24 March 1983.

⁹⁶ Terry, "No Land, No Jobs, No Future for McLeod Lake," 2.

⁹⁷ "Indians Given Housing Help," *Prince George Citizen*, 16 October 1985.

⁹⁸ Royal BC Museum, "Moving On: The 21st Century," *Living Landscapes* www.livinglandscapes.bc.ca/prnr/mcleod_lake/moving.html (accessed 29 January 2014) site discontinued.

Treaty

Economic activity led the McLeod Lake Tse'khene further into the fight for their Aboriginal rights. By 1987 Chief Harry Chingee had come to the conclusion that the solution to the band's economic woes was recognition of ownership to their traditional territory and its resources.⁹⁹ Since at least 1973 the band had been pursuing an adhesion to Treaty 8 based on the belief that once they signed it they would have a secure land base for economic development.¹⁰⁰

One of the first steps the band took was to try to acquire more reserve land. To this end on 16 February 1972 chief and council passed a resolution to annex 640 acres of provincial Crown land west of McLeod Lake No. 1.¹⁰¹ Given the province's Aboriginal land policy this was not accepted, and in fact between 1972 and 1985 the band lost about fourteen acres of reserve land.¹⁰² This loss appears to be the result of the band surrendering the roads on McLeod Lake No. 1 to the Department of Highways in 1973, without acquiring additional reserve land of the same size. This occurred despite the fact a BCR dated 12 January 1973 stated the province had offered them fourteen acres at a price of \$30 per acres, plus the cost of surveying.¹⁰³

Rather than purchase this land the band passed another resolution on 23 April 1973 requesting Indian Affairs investigate whether or not the band was under Treaty 8, and if so, demanding retroactive gifts and annuities from the initial signing of the treaty.¹⁰⁴ As we shall see with Ingenika, the question of treaty halted the process of acquiring/creating new reserve land. In

⁹⁹ Clark, "McLeod Lake Indians: Fight is One of Hope."

¹⁰⁰ Numerous references to this goal can be found in the *Prince George Citizen*. I have included an example. Gordon Clark, "Sale of Dispute Area:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 14 July 1987; LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 23 April 1973.

¹⁰¹ LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 16 February 1972.

¹⁰² Indian and Inuit Affairs Program, *Schedule of Indian Bands, Reserves and Settlements Including Membership and Population Location and Acreage in Hectares* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1985), 118; INAC, *Schedule of Indian Reserves and Settlements* (1972), 104.

¹⁰³ LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 12 February 1973.

¹⁰⁴ LAC, RG 10, V2011-00666-X, Box 9, File 985/3-6-14R, Band Council Resolution, 23 April 1973.

1982 the band officially began negotiations with the federal government.¹⁰⁵ McLeod Lake's stance was that they had been forgotten when it came to treaty.¹⁰⁶

The issue of whether or not the Tsek'ehne should be in Treaty 8 has potential implications when it comes to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. Yvonne Harris suggests that if the province had known that none of the Tsek'ehne nations in the northern Rocky Mountain Trench (the Trench) had signed an adhesion they might have asked for agreement to build the dam beforehand. Although in theory possible, it is unlikely considering provincial Aboriginal policy that denied Aboriginal title existed where treaties had not been signed, (which she herself discusses) as well as the fact the province and BC Hydro had more or less left matters regarding Indigenous peoples and the dam to Indian Affairs.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, when it was proposed to raise the reservoir five feet in 1986, a memorandum noting the potential impacts merely noted the area was claimed, and there might be a response.¹⁰⁸

With regard to the ongoing issue of the western boundary of Treaty 8, Indian Affairs has not always seen the boundary as being the key determinant when it comes to whether a band is part of a treaty. On 23 October 1973 Indian Affairs concluded that since the Fort Grahame Band had not signed an adhesion, the treaty did not apply to their successor band Ingenika, regardless of whether or not they were located within the boundaries of the treaty. As justification they cited current policy to not open up historic treaties as well as the findings of the McKenna-McBride commission on the matter.¹⁰⁹ Even the McLeod Lake adhesion explicitly sidestepped

¹⁰⁵ Sheryl Thompson, "Indian Blockade:..., *Prince George Citizen*, 21 November 1986.

¹⁰⁶ Royal BC Museum, "Treaty 8 Adhesion: Hope for the a (sic) New Future," *Living Landscapes* www.livinglandscapes.bc.ca/prnr/mcleod_lake/treaty.html (accessed 29 January 2014) site discontinued.

¹⁰⁷ Yvonne Harris, 86-87, 90-91.

¹⁰⁸ KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Memorandum from Legislative Intern, Dale Jackson, 10 June 1986.

¹⁰⁹ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Chief, Lands Division, H.T. Vergette from Policy, Planning and Research Branch, G.S. Brown, 23 October 1973.

the issue of the western boundary by stating it was in no way evidence of where it was.¹¹⁰ This evasion was possible because as Arthur Ray points out the eastern boundary of the traditional territory of the McLeod Lake Tse'khene would be included in Treaty 8 even if one accepts the treaty's western boundary is the central range of the Rockies.¹¹¹

Having not signed a treaty, the title the McLeod Lake Tse'khene had to their traditional territory had never been dealt with. Historically the province denied Aboriginal title existed, but in 1973 the landmark Calder case began the process that would lead to the province changing its view in 1991 by ruling that Aboriginal title had at least existed in BC, and not because of the Royal Proclamation of 1763.¹¹² As with other First Nations in BC, McLeod Lake took this ruling and informed the province and federal government that it wanted a treaty. Until then the band would seek redress for any infringements on their traditional territory.

In June 1977 the band made a claim against BC Rail (the renamed Pacific Great Eastern) for constructing a line through their unsundered traditional territory due to its effects on wildlife, resources, trapping, and Aboriginal title. At the time BC Rail was conducting preliminary investigations into constructing a spur line from Anzac to present day Tumbler Ridge without looking into the impacts it would have on the community.¹¹³ At the same time the province formed a royal commission to investigate the railway itself.¹¹⁴ During hearings at Mackenzie on 22 June 1977, the band notified the commission of the extent of Tse'ehne territory as recorded by Diamond Jenness in 1937, and then politely informed the commission that BC Rail had illegally constructed its track from Summit Lake to the Pine Pass on

¹¹⁰ Arthur Ray, "Treaty 8: A British Columbian Anomaly," *BC Studies* no. 123 (1999): 57.

¹¹¹ Arthur Ray, "Treaty 8 and Expert Witnesses: A Reply to Robert Irwin," *BC Studies* no. 127 (2000): 107.

¹¹² *Calder et al. v. Attorney-General of British Columbia* [1973] SCR 313.

¹¹³ LeBaron, xii, xv, 16-18; John Wedley, "Infrastructure and Resources: Governments and Their Promotion of Northern Development in British Columbia" (PhD Dissertation: University of Western Ontario, 1986), 5.

¹¹⁴ Wedley, 17, *passim*.

unsurrendered Tsek'ehne territory. To legitimize the railway they proposed compensation for lost resources, land, wildlife, and traditional employment opportunities as well as royalties for tonnage hauled over Tsek'ehne territory.¹¹⁵ Included in the submission was also a list of those Tsek'ehne from McLeod Lake as well as Ingenika and Fort Ware, who had received compensation for having their traplines flooded by the Williston Lake reservoir.¹¹⁶ It would appear the band saw the two developments as related.

Next the band made its case to the forest industry. On 1 August 1977 the McLeod Lake Band presented at a meeting of the Provincial Forest Policy Advisory Committee requesting the right to be involved in planning and policy, and raising the issue of Aboriginal title and past damages caused by the forest industry. According to the *Parsnip Review* the band hoped to acquire its own timber licenses, contract work, and help band members become owner-operators. As the review pointed out, however, issues existed when it came to policy and band capital to not only operate, but also compete and/or work with large forest companies.¹¹⁷ One month later the band protested against forestry development in their traditional territory before the Forest Policy Advisory Committee. In 1978 in discussing this increased resistance to development, Indian Affairs noted that not only were traditional economic activities on the decline, but also that band Chief Harry Chingee wanted to form a band-owned logging company called Sekani Logging to not only employ, but also train band members.¹¹⁸ Indian Affairs even proposed that they could

¹¹⁵ BCA, Commission on British Columbia Railway (1977), GR-0500, Box 7, File 13, Exhibit 152, Submission to the Royal Commission on the British Columbia Railway, His Lordship, Mr. Justice Lloyd McKenzie, Chairman; "Land from Summit Lake to Pine Pass:..." *Prince George Citizen*, 23 June 1977.

¹¹⁶ BCA, GR-0500, Box 7, File 13, Exhibit 153, Summary of Compensation Payments Made for Traplines and Improvements Thereon to Flooding of the Finlay and Parsnip River Valleys by BC Hydro.

¹¹⁷ LeBaron, xiii, 18-19, 53, 57-60.

¹¹⁸ It was eventually decided that Harry would officially own the company to avoid some of the issues associated with band run businesses. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Director – Research Division, Policy, Research & Evaluation Branch, Katie Cook from Director of Operations, BC Region, W. Van Iterson, 22 February 1978; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to District Manager, Prince George, Myler Savill from Director of Operations, BC Region, W. Van Iterson, 20 April 1978; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957 File Part 1, File

make the province support McLeod Lake in their logging endeavors by using past and future developments as levers.¹¹⁹ When funding fell through for the *Parsnip Review*, they decided to simply help the band become involved in the local economy, and in 1978-1979 Indian Affairs helped Sekani Logging raise funds to get and keep a contract clearing debris for BC Hydro.¹²⁰

At the same time, the band also protested the nascent oil and gas industry in their traditional territory. Like many other Indigenous groups around the world they were concerned unbridled oil and gas development would devastate their traditional territory. As a result, when Westcoast Transmission applied to expand its pipeline, McLeod Lake presented at the hearings, demanding compensation for pre-existing lines trespassing on Tsek'ehne territory, and their impacts, as well as pointing out the lack of impact studies.¹²¹

Despite these protests the band found little success. This outcome, however, did not deter them from further demonstrations. Indeed, despite not receiving compensation for the initial BCR line, when plans seemed to come to fruition in 1981 for the development of coalfields in northeastern BC that led to the creation of Tumbler Ridge, BC, the McLeod Lake Tse'khene protested the construction of the proposed spur line from Anzac.¹²² They vowed to block it unless the province properly compensated them, provided them with job opportunities, and

985/19-7-12-618; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957 File Part 1, File 985/19-7-12-618, Sekani Logging Co. Ltd.: A Proposal for Establishment of a Logging Company, April 1979.

¹¹⁹ The future projects included a proposed spur line to what became Tumbler Ridge, and the upgrading of West Coast Transmission's pipeline and BC Hydro transmission lines. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Director – Research Division, Policy, Research & Evaluation Branch, Katie Cook from Director of Operations, BC Region, W. Van Iterson, 22 February 1978; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to District Manager, Prince George, Myler Savill from Director of Operations, BC Region, W. Van Iterson, 20 April 1978.

¹²⁰ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Director of Operations, British Columbia Region, W. Van Iterson from District Manager, L.M. Savill, 24 May 1978; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to District Manager, Prince George, Myler Savill from Director of Operations, BC Region, W. Van Iterson, 20 April 1978; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957 File Part 1, File 985/19-7-12-618.

¹²¹ LeBaron, 20-21; “Westcoast Wants More,” *UBCIC News*, May 1978, 4.

¹²² Numerous references to this development can be found in provincial newspapers. I have included a few examples. “N.E. Coal Development,” *Indian World: “The Choice Is Ours”* 3, no. 2 (May 1980): 6; Arnold Olson, “Sale to Japan Opens Up Northeast BC:..., *Prince George Citizen*, 23 January 1981; Bob Rowlands, “Coal Suit Eyed by Sekani Band,” *Prince George Citizen*, 29 June 1981.

worked with the federal government to deal with Aboriginal title. They claimed title to the entire watershed of the Williston Lake reservoir as Tsek'ehne land.¹²³ Of course this statement meant that they were including the Tsek'ehne at Ingenika and Fort Ware in this traditional territory as well.

Nor did the failure to secure an adhesion make them give up on treaty. In September 1986 despite two failed rounds of negotiations since 1982, the band officially voted to proceed to sign an adhesion to Treaty 8.¹²⁴ Sticking points were McLeod Lake's insistence that they still had title to their traditional territory, and wanted recognized ownership to an area equal in value to that lost to them through the Williston Lake reservoir. Instead the federal government offered them land under the terms of Treaty 8, with the condition the band abandon all future land claims.¹²⁵ Still they had succeeded in getting outsiders to recognize, at least publicly, that they should be part of Treaty 8.¹²⁶

The following year they sued both levels of government for adhesion. In part they did so because the land offered was greater than that under existing provincial policy and as Verne Solonas would later tell me it was even greater than anything available under the modern comprehensive treaty process.¹²⁷ By this point in time the progress of the claims process in BC had disillusioned the band.¹²⁸ Historian Bob Irwin sees this decision to pursue an adhesion as testament to the value of the Numbered Treaties.¹²⁹ Indeed, the address given by McLeod Lake

¹²³ Rowlands, "Coal Suit Eyed by Sekani Band."

¹²⁴ Bernsohn, "Indians Escalate Battle Here."

¹²⁵ The area of the land offered is off, but the reference Chief Harry Chingee makes to a new suit is indicative that it is in reference to Treaty 8. Terry, "No Land, No Jobs, No Future for McLeod Lake," 2.

¹²⁶ "Indians Obligations Could Cost Millions," *Prince George Citizen*, 19 July 1985.

¹²⁷ Ray, "Treaty 8," 55; Royal BC Museum, "Treaty 8 Adhesion;" Verne Solonas.

¹²⁸ Ray, "Treaty 8 and Expert Witnesses," 103; Royal BC Museum, "Treaty 8 Adhesion."

¹²⁹ Bob Irwin, "Treaty 8: An Anomaly Revisited," *BC Studies* no. 127 (2000): 101.

Chief Alec Chingee at the signing of the adhesion noted the various provisions of the treaty as benefiting the band, especially the guarantees regarding trapping.¹³⁰

In their claim the band argued that not only was their territory in Treaty 8, but the McKenna-McBride commission had failed to live up to its recommendation that reserves in that part of the province included in Treaty 8 follow the treaty's reserve formula. Ottawa responded with approval for an adhesion. The province, however, cited the treaty text to say McLeod Lake was not included, and even if it were they had not agreed to Treaty 8 in the first place.¹³¹ As a result McLeod Lake saw the province as reneging on its commitment during the McKenna-McBride commission.¹³² The province refused to budge.

McLeod Lake therefore took matters into their own hands. On 8 October they succeeded in disrupting a timber sale near McLeod Lake after informing local sawmills that under Treaty 8 they were negotiating title over the land in question.¹³³ Later that month the band invited bids for the survey and selection of the roughly 32,000 acres they were entitled to with a population of two hundred forty-five and the treaty reserve formula of six hundred and forty acres per family of five.¹³⁴

Despite organizing a meeting with the Intergovernmental Relations Minister, Bruce Strachan, the McLeod Lake Tse'khene, citing the lack of fulfillment of the terms of Treaty 8, began to blockade a logging road near Kerry Lake. The blockade lasted for six days. The band followed it with another blockade near Bear Lake on the Hart Highway that lasted five days and

¹³⁰ Royal BC Museum, "Treaty 8 Adhesion."

¹³¹ Irwin points out the McKenna-McBride commission said the boundary was the Rockies and treated McLeod Lake and Fort Grahame as outside the treaty. Irwin, "Treaty 8," 100-101; Ray, "Treaty 8," 55-57; Royal BC Museum, "Treaty 8 Adhesion."

¹³² Royal BC Museum, "Treaty 8 Adhesion."

¹³³ "Land Claim Halts Sale of Timber," *Prince George Citizen*, 8 October 1986.

¹³⁴ Advertisements can be found in the *Prince George Citizen* starting on 24 October 1986. "Ad," *Prince George Citizen*, 24 October 1986.

they only removed it after the Pas Lumber Company got an injunction against them.¹³⁵ It was but one of many blockades that began to emerge in BC in the later 1980s and 1990s in response to province's denial of Aboriginal title and refusal to deal with treaty or the Aboriginal lands question.

The new blockade also saw McLeod Lake seek an injunction to prevent logging throughout Tsek'ehne traditional territory (around 3.6 million acres) until negotiations of their adhesion were completed. As evidence they cited the fact that since no one had dealt with Aboriginal title to their traditional territory, the province did not have the right to allow resource extraction in it.¹³⁶ They were dismayed that when it came to seeking the injunction the province told them to talk to Ottawa because the matter had to do with a treaty, while Ottawa told them to talk to the province because the province had control over lands and resources.¹³⁷ When a local member of parliament challenged the validity of not only this claim, but also all land claims in Canada, McLeod Lake band member Harley Chingee challenged this statement in the *Prince George Citizen* and provided its readership with a brief history of Indigenous-European relations in Canada.¹³⁸

McLeod Lake was not alone in fighting for recognition of their Aboriginal title. During this period the roughly 198 First Nations in BC were fighting for their rights as the issue of Aboriginal title and treaty reemerged in the wake of the Calder case. This only strengthened Ottawa's position when it came to the old issue of Aboriginal policy in the province. In this case the push for an adhesion to Treaty 8, and the desire for an injunction to stop logging in the

¹³⁵ There are multiple "Bear Lakes" in British Columbia. This lake should not be confused with the lake Fort Connolly was located on. Ken Bernsohn, "Blockade Set Up on Area Log Road," *Prince George*, 12 November 1986; "Indian Protest: Blockade Moved," *Prince George Citizen*, 17 November 1986; Thompson, "Indian Blockade."

¹³⁶ Bernsohn, "Indians Escalate Battle Here."

¹³⁷ Thompson, "Indian Blockade."

¹³⁸ Harley Chingee, "Your Opinion: McCuish Rapped," *Prince George Citizen*, 2 March 1987.

traditional territory of the McLeod Lake Tse'khene, provided Ottawa with another chance to push back, and Ottawa readily took it. They supported McLeod Lake and plainly stated that BC was required to provide enough land to meet treaty obligations.¹³⁹ Helping the situation was that the blockades resulted in some local lumber producers pushing the federal government to act, and in doing so succeeded.¹⁴⁰

Not all forestry companies supported the band, however. On 23 June 1987 McLeod Lake once again set up a blockade near Kerry Lake, with the caveat that logging companies could remove any timber already cut. It lasted five days. Not only did the band aim to strengthen their negotiations by creating a *de facto* injunction, but they hoped that by allowing companies to remove any timber already cut they would prevent a counter injunction as had occurred in November 1986.¹⁴¹ It was these companies' refusal to heed the band's warning not to log in the area since it was in dispute that fueled the blockade. The caveat to allow the removal of already harvested timber did not work, and the company affected by the blockade sought its own injunction to remove the blockade. Making matters worse this time around the band was unable to prevent bidding on timbers blocks in the area, although the bidders were willing to concede that they might never be able to log any blocks they won.¹⁴²

McLeod Lake was actively trying to make sure logging companies heard about its claims. They no longer claimed all Tsek'ehne traditional territory. Indeed, whereas their claim in 1986 was reported to be around 3.6 million acres (14,500 km²), by 25 June 1987 it was reported to be around 220,000 acres (89,200 hectares). The entire matter is confused by the *Citizen's* decision to convert 128 acres to a mere 51 hectares (it should be 51.7998 hectares), and the apparent

¹³⁹ "Land Claim Dispute Moves Out of Court," *Prince George Citizen*, 6 May 1987.

¹⁴⁰ Diane Bailey, "Indian Land Claims: Forest Industry 'A Pawn,'" *Prince George Citizen*, 9 March 1987.

¹⁴¹ Bev Christensen, "Indians Block Logging Road," *Prince George Citizen*, 23 June 1987.

¹⁴² Gordon Clark, "Timber Bidding Isn't Affected by Block Threat," *Prince George Citizen*, 25 June 1987.

decision to recalculate the land sought by the band based on 51 hectares per person of the two hundred fifty band and omit any of the numbers below the thousands place.¹⁴³

Ultimately Balcaen Enterprises won an injunction and McLeod Lake removed the blockade at Kerry Lake.¹⁴⁴ In response, however, they erected new blockades on 1 July on the roads to campgrounds at Carp Lake and War Lake.¹⁴⁵ Unlike previous blockades, the band did not direct them at the forest industry per se, but rather at the general population of the province. They were also located on reserve land at War Lake No. 4.¹⁴⁶ Presumably this was to avoid another injunction, since the public did not have a vested interest in camping that equaled the McLeod Lake Tse'khene interest in the land; the legal reasoning behind the Balcaen injunction.¹⁴⁷ Still, to help maintain public relations, the band permitted campers to cross the blockade if they were leaving.¹⁴⁸ This goodwill provision did not have the intended effect, and on 6 July a group of six individuals attempted to force their way through the blockade with chainsaws and guns. Although a police investigation followed, the event escalated the entire situation.¹⁴⁹

The band announced that unless the province stopped logging in the disputed area it was well within its rights to decommission the road since it was on reserve land. In addition, the band would begin logging on reserve to fund negotiations.¹⁵⁰ In an odd twist the province not only acknowledged the band was within its rights to block the road since it was on reserve land, but

¹⁴³ Clark, "Timber Bidding Isn't Affected by Block Threat;" "Word Awaited on Injunction," *Prince George Citizen*, 26 June 1987.

¹⁴⁴ "McLeod Lake Indians: Court Orders Roadblock Lifted," *Prince George Citizen*, 27 June 1987.

¹⁴⁵ "Blockade Greets Campers, Fisherman:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 1 July 1987.

¹⁴⁶ "Dispute at Blockade," *Prince George Citizen*, 8 July 1987.

¹⁴⁷ "McLeod Lake Indians: Court Orders Roadblock Lifted."

¹⁴⁸ "Access to Park: Indians Continue Blockade of Road," *Prince George Citizen*, 3 July 1987.

¹⁴⁹ "Carp Blockade: Indians Reject Offer for Road," *Prince George Citizen*, 13 July 1987; Gordon Clark, "Band Will Dig Up Road at Blockade," *Prince George Citizen*, 9 July 1987; Clark, "McLeod Lake Indians: Fight is One of Hope;" "Dispute at Blockade," *Prince George Citizen*, 8 July 1987.

¹⁵⁰ Clark, "Band Will Dig Up Road at Blockade."

also noted the road had not been properly announced in the *British Columbia Gazette*, and therefore had technically not been given right of way. Rather than deal with the issue, however, Environment and Parks Minister Bruce Strachan announced he would see if it were possible to construct a new road around McLeod Lake's reserves.¹⁵¹ On 10 July the band dug three ditches in the road. Despite this damage, on 12 July the province attempted to buy the roadway from the band, only to be refused. The band wanted negotiations for an adhesion to Treaty 8.¹⁵²

To the shock of the band it was informed on 14 July that two months earlier (5 May 1987) the province, in another earlier attempt to bypass the issue of Aboriginal title, offered to sell the federal government around 49,000 acres (20,000 hectares) of land, so that Ottawa could negotiate on its own.¹⁵³ According to BC it was not its place to negotiate land claims with Indigenous groups, and it would not stop logging in the dispute area.¹⁵⁴ Ottawa refused the offer on the grounds that, under the province's terms of union, BC was to provide the federal government land for reserves for free.¹⁵⁵ This was a reversal of the decision in 1961 to purchase land from the province for the creation of reserves at Fort Nelson under the terms of the same treaty.¹⁵⁶

Work on a new road around War Lake No. 4 began on 15 July 1987. Citing the two previous injunctions to remove blockades located off reserve, Harry Chingee announced the band would not only not resist this move, but also were compiling a case to bring the issue of an adhesion to Treaty 8 to court.¹⁵⁷ Reflecting the fact that they partially designed their demands to secure employment opportunities, on 22 July 1987 the *Prince George Citizen* reported that the

¹⁵¹ Clark, "McLeod Lake Indians: Fight is One of Hope."

¹⁵² "Carp Blockade: Indians Reject Offer for Road."

¹⁵³ Clark, "Sale of Dispute Area."

¹⁵⁴ Gordon Clark, "Ready Next Week:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 15 July 1987; Clark, "Sale of Dispute Area."

¹⁵⁵ Gordon Clark, "McLeod Lake Claim:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 16 July 1987.

¹⁵⁶ Clark, "Sale of Dispute Area."

¹⁵⁷ Clark, "Ready Next Week."

province hired band members to help build the new road around their reserve.¹⁵⁸ The following month band members protested another timber auction in their traditional territory.¹⁵⁹

When this did not work the band decided to force the matter. On 13 September 1988 the band began to log around Kerry Lake in advance of a timber sale after issuing its own permits to its own company, the McLeod Lake Band Development Corporation. This was in direct defiance to constitutional authority of the Minister of Forests, and the band hoped it would lead to a court case along the lines of the Calder case or the rumored Lubicon agreement, and which would force an adhesion to Treaty 8.¹⁶⁰ The band was worried that without taking action that prior to any settlement private companies would remove all of the timber in question.¹⁶¹ Reflecting the fact their fight was with the province the band placed ads in the *Prince George Citizen* warning potential bidders for the timber of their actions.¹⁶² Still comments like the band charging tolls at Summit Lake and the Pine Pass to enter their territory, removing all sawmills, and tearing down the W.A.C. Bennett Dam concerned the public and it was quickly clarified that they were not serious.¹⁶³ Within a day the band had applied for an injunction, while the ministry ordered the band to cease and desist.¹⁶⁴ On 15 September the band disrupted the timber sale for the area and issued a band council resolution “to use as much force as necessary and reasonably to remove trespassers” to the area in question.¹⁶⁵ On 23 September 1988 the bridge over the McLeod River in McLeod Lake No. 1 was set on fire under mysterious circumstances.¹⁶⁶ The band would

¹⁵⁸ “Get Out the Old Fishing Pole,” *Prince George Citizen*, 22 July 1987.

¹⁵⁹ “Bulletin,” *Prince George Citizen*, 5 August 1987.

¹⁶⁰ Bev Christensen, “Land Claim Strategy:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 13 September 1988; Bev Christensen, “Meanwhile, Logging Area Blockade Remains:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 26 October 1988.

¹⁶¹ Bev Christensen, “Indians Step Up Timber Campaign,” *Prince George Citizen*, 15 September 1988;

¹⁶² Christensen, “Land Claim Strategy;” “Notice,” *Prince George Citizen*, 13 September 1988.

¹⁶³ Christensen, “Land Claim Strategy;” “No Hits, No Runs...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 16 September 1988.

¹⁶⁴ Bev Christensen, “Timber Battler Heats Up,” *Prince George Citizen*, 14 September 1988.

¹⁶⁵ Bev Christensen, “Indians Step Up Timber Campaign,” *Prince George Citizen*, 15 September 1988.

¹⁶⁶ “Bridge Fire: Arson Seen as Cause,” *Prince George Citizen*, 26 September 1988; “Indian Band Denies Starting Bridge Fire,” *Prince George Citizen*, 27 September 1988.

continue to follow this course of action throughout September and October of 1988 even after an interim injunction issued by the BC Supreme Court ordered them to end the blockade on 3 October.¹⁶⁷

On 8 November 1988 the BC Supreme Court ruled an injunction would not be granted because the band could not prove irreparable damage would be done to claimed land that ranged in size from 40,000 acres to 166,660 acres. Of note the case stated the federal government argued it could do nothing with regard to Treaty 8 and new reserve land because of Section 13 of the BC Terms of Union, and the lack of federal Crown land in the province.¹⁶⁸ The province on the other hand argued union with Canada had extinguished all Aboriginal rights, including Aboriginal title and that it expected the federal government to compensate them for any land included in a settlement.¹⁶⁹ Despite the ruling the band refused to remove their blockade until after they had defined the area they wanted, and even presented it as victory since the court had simply dismissed their argument.¹⁷⁰

After redefining their claim to 55,000 acres the BC Supreme Court ruled on 16 December 1988 that since the balance of convenience was equal they would not grant an injunction for the 1,000 acres the band had been blockading; they would, however, grant an injunction to the remaining 54,000 acres.¹⁷¹ Perhaps more importantly the court found in both cases that their

¹⁶⁷ Numerous articles covering their actions can be found in the *Prince George Citizen* starting with on 20 September 1988. I have cited a few key ones. "All Is Quiet At Blockade," *Prince George Citizen*, 11 October 1988; "Blockade Stays Up," *Prince George Citizen*, 4 October 1988; Bev Christensen, "Dispute Heating Up," *Prince George Citizen*, 6 October 1988; "Indians Plan Sale Protest," *Prince George Citizen*, 20 September 1988; "Interim Injunction Forbids Blockade," *Prince George Citizen*, 4 October 1988.

¹⁶⁸ *McLeod Lake Indian Band v. BC* [1988] BCSC 3316.

¹⁶⁹ Bev Christensen, "Injunction Halts Logging:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 19 December 1988; "Province Won't Change Stance on Land Claims," *Prince George Citizen*, 19 December 1988.

¹⁷⁰ "Area of Claim Defined: Indians Remove Blockade," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 November 1988; Bernice Trick, "Indians, Logging Firms Applaud Court Decision," *Prince George Citizen*, 10 November 1988; Bernice Trick, "Indians Vow Fight," *Prince George Citizen*, 9 November 1988.

¹⁷¹ *McLeod Lake Indian Band Chief v. BC* [1988] BCSC 3107.

claim to reserve land was valid.¹⁷² The band continued to protest provincial policies and even began to provide a phone number for individuals to call for more information on their position.¹⁷³ In March and April 1989 they won a court case and subsequent appeal regarding the control of a timber sale for the trees they had felled.¹⁷⁴ In the appeal the court once again noted how Section 13 of the BC Terms of Union combined with provincial control of lands prevented Ottawa from fulfilling the terms of Treaty 8, while in the original case it had mistakenly stated that McLeod Lake had no reserve land.¹⁷⁵

In July 1989, as the band's legal battle with the province progressed, it alleged that the federal government had tricked the band into telling them their legal strategy, only to use it against them by stating the band's traditional territory was not within Treaty 8.¹⁷⁶ As seen with the Lubicon Lake Nation this type of "betrayal" was not unique and Indian Affairs was more than willing to side with the province depending on the situation.¹⁷⁷ In response the McLeod Lake initiated a federal case claiming a breach of trust, and requested the BC Supreme Court remove the federal government's newest statement regarding Treaty 8.¹⁷⁸ Band members also planned to protest outside the Prince George courthouse in support of their cause, and Chief

¹⁷² McLeod Lake Indian Band v. BC [1988] BCSC 3316; McLeod Lake Indian Band Chief v. BC [1988] BCSC 3107.

¹⁷³ "Indian Band Plans Protest," *Prince George Citizen*, 9 February 1989.

¹⁷⁴ In-between these two rulings the province flip-flopped regarding whether timber could be removed as highlighted in a series of articles in the *Prince George Citizen* beginning on 23 March 1989. "Across Canada: BC Indian Band Wins Round in Timber Battle," *The Globe and Mail*, 26 April 1989; "Logs Moving Again," *Prince George Citizen*, 23 March 1989; McLeod Lake Indian Band v. BC [1989] BCSC 2878; McLeod Lake Indian Band v. BC [1989] BCCA 2919.

¹⁷⁵ McLeod Lake Indian Band v. BC [1989] BCSC 2878; McLeod Lake Indian Band v. BC [1989] BCCA 2919.

¹⁷⁶ Bev Christensen, "McLeod Lake Indians 'Stabbed in the Back,'" *Prince George Citizen*, 25 July 1989; "McLeod Lake Dispute: 'Indians Not Abandoned,'" "Ottawa Double-Crossed Us, Indians Say," *The Globe and Mail*, 26 July 1989.

¹⁷⁷ Unlike McLeod Lake there is no debate whether or not the tradition territory of the Lubicon is in Treaty 8 and as a result the band has sought fulfillment of their treaty rights as opposed to an adhesion. Dawn Martin-Hill, *The Lubicon Lake Nation: Indigenous Knowledge and Power* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 17, *passim*.

¹⁷⁸ Bev Christensen, "Indians Return to Court," *Prince George Citizen*, 1 August 1989; Christensen, "McLeod Lake Indians 'Stabbed in the Back.'"

Harry Chingee wrote Prime Minister Brian Mulroney asking him to get involved as he had with regard to the Lubicon.¹⁷⁹ The *Prince George Citizen* reported he was concerned the band's case regarding adhesion would fail due to government stalling actions and the cost of hiring lawyers.¹⁸⁰

Meanwhile, the band continued to fight the forest industry and the provincial forest service. In November 1989 they blockaded a logging road in their claim area near Weedon Lake after Rustad Brothers had moved a single caterpillar into the area in anticipation of logging to remove a spruce beetle infestation.¹⁸¹ Complicating the situation was that the BC Supreme Court had ordered the band to work with the BC Forest Service to fight the infestation, but the band was concerned the province would use the obligation to remove as much timber as possible prior to a settlement.¹⁸² Ultimately they reached an agreement in November 1989 that promised full employment for the band.¹⁸³ And despite the fact their claim had not yet been resolved, when the Oka Crisis emerged in the summer of 1990 the band, although sympathetic, rejected the use of violence and weapons. In fact, it co-opted public interest by holding information sessions for their own claims.¹⁸⁴ That fall the band began proceedings in the BC Supreme Court asking it to rule whether or not their territory is in Treaty 8. Originally scheduled for early December, all parties involved agreed to postpone it until 1991.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁹ Bev Christensen, "McLeod Lake Dispute: Indians Seek PM's Help," *Prince George Citizen*, 5 August 1989; "Courthouse Rally Set," *Prince George Citizen*, 3 August 1989.

¹⁸⁰ Bev Christensen, "Legal Bills Pile Up for McLeod Lake Indians," *Prince George Citizen*, 21 September 1989.

¹⁸¹ Bev Christensen, "Blockade Puts Stop to Logging Road Talks," *Prince George Citizen*, 20 November 1989.

¹⁸² Ken Bernsohn, "Forest Service, Indians Ordered to Co-operate," *Prince George Citizen*, 6 November 1989; Bev Christensen, "Blockade Puts Stop to Logging Road Talks," *Prince George Citizen*, 20 November 1989.

¹⁸³ Bev Christensen, "McLeod Lk. Band: Blockade Stopped," *Prince George Citizen*, 21 November 1989; "Timber Agreement Reached," *Prince George Citizen*, 27 November 1989.

¹⁸⁴ "Indians Explain Position," *Prince George Citizen*, 1 August 1990; Marilyn Storie, "McLeod Lake Band Takes Moderate Approach," *Prince George Citizen*, 10 August 1990; "Violent Tactics Rejected," *Prince George Citizen*, 9 August 1990.

¹⁸⁵ Bev Christensen, "McLeod Lake Indian Band Returns to Court," *Prince George Citizen*, 19 September 1990; "McLeod Band Must Wait for Court Date," *Prince George Citizen*, 5 December 1990; "McLeod Lk. Band Gets Day in Court," *Prince George Citizen*, 3 December 1990.

Off-Reserve

Prior to this case the band sought to increase their official population and therefore claim a larger area by seeking out anyone who could be a band member, but for whatever reason was not.¹⁸⁶ (It would repeat this process in 1998 in preparation for the final negotiations of McLeod Lake's adhesion to Treaty 8.)¹⁸⁷ Their absence reflected the decision of many band members to leave reserve, especially, as Elders note, following the W.A.C. Bennett Dam.¹⁸⁸ Of the three bands, McLeod Lake has the highest amount of band members living off reserve, or in the case of Ingenika, "off settlement." In 1983 Indian Affairs reported that in 1980/1981 about 27% of McLeod Lake's two hundred twenty-eight band members lived on reserve, whereas 72% and 74% of band members in Fort Ware (226) and Ingenika (169) respectively lived on reserve/in a recognized settlement.¹⁸⁹ Although the ratio would change for all three nations in the years between 1980/81 and 1989 they would not change dramatically.¹⁹⁰ (See Appendix B) A significant factor in the difference according to anthropologist Frans Lamers is that many band members from Fort Ware or Ingenika returned after leaving.¹⁹¹

As noted, Elders in McLeod Lake attribute this decision to leave as yet another change following the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir. They are not alone. Doug Brown for example sees the decision to move off reserve as a direct result of the Williston Lake

¹⁸⁶ Bev Christensen, "Fort McLeod Land Claim:..., *Prince George Citizen*, 4 May 1990.

¹⁸⁷ "Notice: All McLeod Lake Indian Band Members," *The Globe and Mail*, 26 September 1998.

¹⁸⁸ Harry Chingee, 21 March 2012; Lanoue, "Continuity and Change," 37, 56; Doris Prince.

¹⁸⁹ In 1979 ~80% of band members in Fort Ware lived on reserve, while only ~27% of band members in McLeod Lake lived on reserve, albeit ~15.5% lived near the community. INAC, *Schedule of Indian Bands, Reserves and Settlements including Membership and Populations, April 1, 1983* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1983), 104-106; Lanoue, "Continuity," 176.

¹⁹⁰ INAC, *Schedule of Indian Bands, Reserves and Settlements including Membership and Population, Location and Acreage in Hectares, June 1 1985* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1985), 117-118; INAC, *Schedule of Indian Bands, Reserves and Settlements including Membership and Population, Location and Acreage in Hectares, June 1 1987* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1987), 147-148; INAC, *Schedule of Indian Bands, Reserves and Settlements including Membership and Population, Location and Acreage in Hectares, December 1990* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1990), 122-124.

¹⁹¹ BCA, MS 1308, Box 1/1, File 20, Lamers, 20.

reservoir.¹⁹² I would also argue this factor is one of the root causes. As some McLeod Lake Elders noted after the Hart Highway and reservoir, McLeod Lake gradually ceased to be a community, and instead became a group of relatives. As a result, people simply left the reserve when it suited their needs.¹⁹³ At the same time the Sixties Scoop, in which “child protective services” took Indigenous children out of their community at higher rates than other groups in Canada, saw the removal of children from the community, and until 1988 the community had no input regarding adoptions.¹⁹⁴

Employment was a prime factor in the question of whether or not the reserve suited the needs of band members. Following her study of Fort Ware and McLeod Lake in the early 1980s Yvonne Harris concluded the question was one of family ties versus employment opportunities. As noted, traditional economic activities were often family based. In the case of McLeod Lake, the loss of access to traditional territory due to the Williston Lake reservoir and subsequent resource developments intensified the conflict. As noted, this loss meant traditional economic activities were harder to continue. As a result, band members often found employment opportunities in the wage labour economy, which tended to be more individualistic.¹⁹⁵ This line of reasoning might sound simplistic, but it should be noted Elders and other academics support it.¹⁹⁶

Delving deeper into the issue anthropologist Guy Lanoue challenges the direct connection to economic factors alone, especially as he reports that despite the high number of

¹⁹² Doug Brown, “Carrier-Sekani Self-Government in Context: Land and Resources,” *Western Geography* 12 (2002): 39.

¹⁹³ Richard Solonas; Sharon Solonas.

¹⁹⁴ “Indian Adoptions: Bands Must Be Involved,” *Prince George Citizen*, 30 January 1988.

¹⁹⁵ Yvonne Harris, 17, 23.

¹⁹⁶ Jane Inyallie, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 3 October 2012; Jessica Place, “Expanding the Mine, Killing a Lake: A Case Study of First Nations’ Environmental Values, Perceptions of Risk and Health” (MA Thesis: University of Northern British Columbia, 2007), 16.

people leaving the reserve at McLeod Lake, many off-reserve band members lived within twenty miles of the reserve.¹⁹⁷ In discussing the breakdown of the sense of community at McLeod Lake he suggests three responses to the threat this loss represented to a band level identity: withdrawing into Tse'khene culture, the acceptance of Pan-Indianism, and multi-person make-work projects. According to him the sense of isolation that emerged due to poor relations with Euro-Canadian neighbors resulted in individuals withdrawing into Tse'khene culture. Many of these individuals tended to be older. At the same time younger members of the community, who he claimed had less "genuine" contact with non-Tsek'ehne, tended to embrace Pan-Indianism, the concept that Indigenous peoples should unify, as a result of their desire to see change. They were caught between the Tse'khene and Euro-Canadian ways of life, Pan-Indians and Tse'khene culture, and desirous of change. At times their Pan-Indian views led to conflict with traditionalists within the band. In an attempt to bring both groups together as well as provide employment, the band created make-work projects. In other instances "selective emigration" occurred due to internal connections within the band losing out to external ties.¹⁹⁸ As Tsay Keh Dene Elder Jean Isaac told me, people try to avoid conflict by leaving.¹⁹⁹

Conclusion

McLeod Lake found itself at the eye of the storm in the developments that followed the Hart Highway and culminating in the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. Unlike Fort Ware and Ingenika it bore the full force of colonialism as a result. In the fight to maintain traditional economic activities and have some level of control over their traditional territory it soon became apparent that the 599.6 acres of reserve land officially given to them during BC's two reserve

¹⁹⁷ Lanoue, "Continuity," 171, 183, 187.

¹⁹⁸ Lanoue notes Pan-Indianism is lacking in Fort Ware. Lanoue, "Continuity," 36-37, 40, 43, 50, 54-55, 58-60, 74-75, 78, 82-87, 96-98, 101, 121-143, 174, 187, *passim*.

¹⁹⁹ Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 19 September 2012.

commissions was not enough land for them to support themselves on. As traditional economic activities declined, wage labour employment increasingly became the alternative. Its individualistic nature, however, threatened the community of McLeod Lake. As a result of repeated attempts to rectify the situation the band decided to pursue an adhesion to Treaty 8, which under any definition includes part of their traditional territory. The province fought this decision, but the band found itself strengthened in its position by the multiple court cases, starting with Calder in 1973. In part the decision to pursue an historic treaty was economic, but the economic impacts of the highway and dam, were only symptoms of the threat the decline in traditional economic activities represented to the McLeod Lake Indian Band. Still the solution McLeod Lake sought to the long-term impacts of the Hart Highway and W.A.C. Bennett Dam was an adhesion to Treaty 8.

Chapter 7 – Fort Ware – Splendid Isolation?

McLeod Lake stands in stark contrast to Fort Ware, which prior to the construction of a logging road in 1990 had no road connection to the rest of Canada. Like McLeod Lake, Fort Ware had numerous small reserves. Yet due to their isolation from the rest of Canada, and despite the fact more and more people resided on the main reserve, until the influx of loggers in the 1980s, the distinction between reserve land and Crown land was not as recognized like it had to be at McLeod Lake. At first this isolation might sound like a good thing, but one must remember that like McLeod Lake, the river system of the northern Trench had sustained Fort Ware. The new reservoir had not only disrupted this life line, but also devastated the local wildlife population. Here the question was not how to deal with the colonial state, but how to reduce isolation and its negative impacts, without losing the benefits isolation brought. As the band came to realize the enormous task of trying to deal with the impacts of the reservoir, its solution was to seek outside assistance not only from the colonial state, but through various Indigenous organizations. In the case of the latter when the band felt that the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council no longer represented their needs, this desire for outside help, combined with various connections, resulted in a switch in allegiance to the Kaska Dena Council.

Isolation

Whereas McLeod Lake found itself more closely connected to the colonial state after the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, Fort Ware found itself more isolated than it had been prior to 1968.¹ In 1984 Yvonne Harris said it stood “beyond the frontier.”² As a result of the

¹ Jane Inyallie, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 3 October 2012; Ron McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2012; Richard Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 27 September 2012; Bob and Shirley Van Somer, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 22 March 2012; Donny Van Somer, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2013.

² Yvonne Harris, “Choices for Change: A Study of the Fort Ware Indian Band and Implications of Land Settlements for Northern Indian Bands,” (MA Thesis: University of British Columbia, 1984), 21.

entire situation some authors have even called Fort Ware the most isolated community in the province.³ The Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) even suggested relocating the entire community in 1971.⁴ One might be tempted to think the reservoir had no impact on Fort Ware since not much of their traditional territory was flooded and their main village at the confluence of the Finlay and Kwadacha rivers remained intact.⁵ In this community band members continued to use riverboats, especially when travelling upstream.⁶ (Ingenika band members would also continue using riverboats on what remains of the Ingenika River.)⁷ Many still live on the land.⁸ But one must remember that historically the main supply route for the community was the river system of the northern Trench. No one had constructed a road to Fort Ware prior to, or during the construction of the dam. Therefore, the creation of the debris filled reservoir effectively ended transportation on Fort Ware's main supply line to the wider world, the waterways of the northern Rocky Mountain Trench (the Trench). With not even a logging road until 1990, any attempts to supply the community either had to be by force through the debris filled reservoir, or be flown in.⁹ In either case the reservoir resulted in higher prices for

³ Keith Billington, *Tse-loh-ne (The People at the End of the Rocks): Journey Down the Davie Trail* (Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, Inc., 2012), 11; Deborah Wilson, "Third World in BC's Back Yard," *The Globe and Mail*, 27 February 1993.

⁴ "Sekanis to Move," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 April 1971.

⁵ Mary Ann Charlie and Laura Seymour, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2012; George Massetoe, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, 7 March 2012.

⁶ Doug Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 29 March 2012; Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2013; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012.

⁷ Albert Poole, "The Long Journey Home (Excerpt from Work in Progress)," *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, ed. Kaya Minogue, 176-177, passim.

⁸ Martha Egnell, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2012.

⁹ Mary Ann Charlie and Laura Seymour; Robert Inyallie, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012; Bentley LeBaron, *Parsnip Review* (Ottawa: McLeod Lake Indian Band and Department of Indian Affairs, 1978), 52; Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Memorandum from Lands & Wildlife Program Officer, R.M. McIntyre, 21 October 1977; Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012; Laura Seymour, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012.

most goods.¹⁰ Indeed, even when the BC Forest service built a logging road to the community, they did not construct a bridge across the Finlay River to the actual village until afterwards.¹¹

In theory air travel could have provided an alternative to river travel for individuals at Fort Ware, or as we shall see Ingenika. In some instances it did. Even then, however, the expense of flying made it prohibitive for many band members.¹² This situation should come as no surprise as even though local airlines served Fort Ware and Fort Grahame, their cost meant they had not supplanted the use of riverboats.¹³ Even if price was not an issue initially the plane only came in once a month. Eventually airlines would increase this schedule to twice a month, but even this change did not create a substitute for the travel options lost to the reservoir.¹⁴

Some band members caught rides with the Van Somers who still struggled through the reservoir to ship supplies to Fort Ware and Ingenika during this period. If successful they could bring in more supplies than the average plane capable of flying into Fort Ware. The cost of shipping was also lower. They would continue to risk their lives bringing supplies in despite the fact there was a noted decline in the number of furs both communities traded with the family. During the summer they could still make around ten to twelve trips if conditions were right.¹⁵

¹⁰ Jimmie and Nora Massett, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012.

¹¹ Emil McCook, 6 March 2012.

¹² Mary Ann Charlie and Laura Seymour; Al Inyallie, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 7 November 2008; Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012; Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Laura Seymour; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

¹³ Numerous articles highlighting this fact can be found in the *Prince George Citizen*. I have included a few key ones. Service could be sporadic and declined in the postwar period as seen in 1967 when fifty band members petitioned Indian Affairs to try to get a plane in for supplies and to save Christmas. "Air Service Out of Prince George To Be Restored:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 28 May 1931; "Extend Air Mail Route," *The Globe and Mail*, 21 January 1938; LAC, RG 10, V-2011-00666-X (2011-3-8-27), Box 2, File 985/3-8-27, Letter to Laing from Counsellor Don McCook, 18/20 December 1967; "Prince George to Secure Air-Mail Service with Northern Points in May:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 18 March 1937; "Western Canada Airways Looking for Business:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 7 February 1929.

¹⁴ Robert Inyallie; Doug Martin, "Teacher Leads Pioneer Life," *Prince George Citizen*, 27 August 1965.

¹⁵ Robert Inyallie; Rita McIsaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September 2012; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

Each trip took between ten to fourteen days.¹⁶ However, since they were limited to the summer to bringing in supplies, it was during the winter that supply shortages were the worst.¹⁷

One might think that faced with supply shortages the residents of Fort Ware would simply return to living off the land and/or traditional economic activities. After all, even though some band members had lost part or all of their trapline to the new reservoir, unlike in McLeod Lake, by the late 1970s, early 1980s all traplines were still Tsek'ene owned and used. But as many band members found out, the number of animals that died as a result of the reservoir made this difficult to do.¹⁸ Indeed, rather than reflecting a lucrative fur trade everyone wanted to be involved in, the high level of Tse'kene ownership was in part due to an Indian Affairs policy of purchasing non-Tsek'ehne traplines in the Fort Ware area. Reflecting the connections between the Fort Ware Tsek'ene and Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay, former residents of Fort Grahame owned two of them.¹⁹

The Plug and the Need for Transportation Aid

Anything that floated when the water came up became debris in the reservoir. Furthermore, of the three main reaches, the Finlay River Reach was by far the least cleared prior to the flooding.²⁰ All of this, combined with a wind that primarily blew from south to north, meant that debris had a tendency to gather at the north end of the reservoir, “conveniently” away from non-Tsek'ehne population centres. Known colloquially as “the plug” it effectively

¹⁶ Meg Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers: Harnessing the Power of the Peace and Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2010), 25.

¹⁷ Robert Inyallie.

¹⁸ Yvonne Harris, 48, 61; Guy Lanoue, “Continuity and Change: The Development of Political Self-Definition Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia” (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1983), 135.

¹⁹ Indian Affairs had been purchasing traplines well before the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir. “Hospitality, Hardship, Heroism: Life Along the Finlay,” *Prince George Citizen*, 10 November 1952; Lanoue, “Continuity,” 135-136.

²⁰ BCA, Portage Mountain Development..., GR-0880, Box 6, Division of Applied Biology, BC Research, *Limnological Studies of Williston Lake During the Summer and Fall, 1975: Project 1711*, 5, 42, 48.

prevented travel from the reservoir itself to the Finlay River.²¹ (Other plugs existed at the mouth of the Ospika, Peace, and Parsnip rivers depending on the wind.)²² In 1968 Indian Affairs estimated the plug covered around 1,800 acres.²³ Ten years later the province estimated it covered 2,000 acres, largely as a result of the fact that despite cleaning efforts it had a tendency to attract new debris.²⁴ When the water began to lower in the fall, the debris remained in place until the spring runoff in May/June. For the rest of the year a good southerly wind could clear out the entire plug in a matter of hours, thereby making cleanup difficult. BC Hydro proposed boom barriers be constructed, but given their experience with booms on the Peace Reach they ultimately deemed the cost unrealistic. Furthermore, even a boom that held would merely hold the Plug further south and not necessarily fix the issue of transportation. Despite hopes that attempts to clean the reservoir would one day get rid of it, to this day the plug still exists, albeit in a smaller form.²⁵

According to Ray Williston, the province hoped that the W.A.C. Bennett Dam would render the waterways upstream of it navigable under the Navigable Waters Protection Act, and

²¹ Ingenika Band Members, interviewed by Lorraine Izony, Ingenika BC, 25 April 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Kwadacha Archives (KA), British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 0242651-E, Volume 1, H.M. Hunt, "Problems Encountered in Doing Field Work at Lake Williston," [1987]; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority from Construction Engineer, Engineering Division, BC Forest Service, D.S. Cameron, 9 October 1975; Lena McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2013; Ron McCook; Johnny Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012; Donny Van Somer.

²² Alec Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Williston Lake Debris Disposal Information Meeting, 25 June 1979.

²³ Lanoue, "Continuity," 384.

²⁴ LAC, RG 10, Box 1 File 985/19-4-609, "Log Clean-up Major Victory," *British Columbia Lumberman*, December 1978: 8-9; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Williston Lake Debris Disposal Information Meeting, 25 June 1979.

²⁵ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority from Construction Engineer, Engineering Division, BC Forest Service, D.S. Cameron, 9 October 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, "Log Clean-up Major Victory," 8-9; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, 2.8 Native People, 25 June 1979, 2.8.3; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, "Williston Lake Debris Disposal Information Meeting, 25 June 1979; Earl Pollon and Shirlee Smith Matheson, *This Was Our Valley* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2003), 201; Eileen Williston and Betty Keller, *Forests, Power and Policy: The Legacy of Ray Williston* (Prince George: Caitlin Press Inc., 1997), 218.

therefore eligible for federal funding. This change never happened and for its part the province seemed uneasy with funding navigation services in the reservoir itself.²⁶ When a radio repeater station was constructed in June 1969 to allow communication to the north end of the reservoir, the private Peace Salvage Association and not the province paid the \$10,000 cost.²⁷ The province did eventually render aid when transportation proved to be an issue with regard to supplying Fort Ware. It was not proactive though and during the first year Art Van Somer continued to try to haul supplies in his old riverboat to Ingenika and Fort Ware.²⁸ He and others soon found out that the debris that had effectively ended transportation for the regular every day Tsek'ehne was dangerous even for the larger riverboats used to supply the communities.

A vivid memory that remains in the community is the time waves swamped Art Van Somer between Finlay Forks and the Ospika River after debris rendered the rudder on his riverboat inoperative.²⁹ His brother Jim Van Somer saved him and Art lost around four to five tons of supplies estimated to be worth between \$2,000 and \$10,000 when his boats went down.³⁰ Art and his entire crew, including his young son Ralph, almost drowned.³¹ They survived by dumping the fuel barrels in the fuel barge into the reservoir and climbing into it.³² A forest ranger named Art Joyce travelling with him went into shock and rescuers had to pry him from the bow of the boat, which his crewmates had tied him to because he could not swim.³³ Elders would

²⁶ Northern British Columbia Archives (NBCA), Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, "Bennett Dam Didn't Breach Any Act – Williston," *The Province*, 8 January 1971.

²⁷ Ted Beaudoin, "Lake's Industries as Spectacular as Its Moods," *Prince George Citizen*, 7 July 1969.

²⁸ Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

²⁹ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. Harvey Sims and other storeowners faced similar problems. See Donny Van Somer.

³⁰ Mary Ann Charlie and Laura Seymour; Ingenika Band Members; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012; Laura Seymour; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012; Bob and Shirley Van Somer; Donny Van Somer.

³¹ Mary Ann Charlie and Laura Seymour; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

³² Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

³³ Mary Ann Charlie and Laura Seymour; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

recall he suffered nightmares from the event.³⁴ And although Art was able to salvage his boat, he had to fly replacement supplies into Fort Ware at an increased cost.³⁵

This event effectively put an end to Art's travels on the reservoir until he purchased his own tugboat and barge.³⁶ When it became apparent that the Plug threatened the supply route in general, however, Indian Affairs approached the province to ask for aid in keeping the route open.³⁷ As a result, this event marked the beginning of Art's reliance on the BC Forest Service for aid through the Plug.³⁸ The failure of the supply barge to make it to Fort Ware could easily result in shortages at the store.³⁹ In April 1971 the UBCIC even petitioned Indian Affairs to have one ton of fresh food flown to Fort Ware.⁴⁰

Eventually the province would develop a policy of giving aid via tugboat, portage, or air travel between 1 June and 30 September annually.⁴¹ Forestry tugboats were instructed to help Fort Ware storeowner Art Van Somer, and after his death in 1971 his sons Bill and Bob Van Somer, run their barge through the debris if possible, but not to escort them along the entire length of the reservoir.⁴² (Already forestry tugs were providing some level of aid in times of need

³⁴ Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

³⁵ George Massetoe; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012.

³⁶ Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 19 September 2012; George Massetoe; Alex Poole, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 6 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012.

³⁷ Lanoue, "Continuity," 384.

³⁸ It would later be suggested this aid was from the beginning of the creation of the reservoir. BCA, Ray Williston interview, T1375:0015, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975, Victoria, BC; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

³⁹ Ron McCook.

⁴⁰ In their response Indian Affairs confused Fort Ware with the new Ingenika Band. "Food Asked for Sekanis," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 April 1971.

⁴¹ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Memorandum from Lands & Wildlife Program Officer, R.M. McIntyre, 21 October 1977.

⁴² Massetoe seems to suggest Art ran the store until 1974. Stanley describes the boats the Forest Service used as debris breakers. BCA, Death registrations, 1872-1988, GR-2951, 1971-09-008661; "BC Riverman Dies, Aged 61," *Prince George Citizen*, 2 June 1971; Jean Isaac, 19 September 2012; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority from Construction Engineer, Engineering Division, BC Forest Service, D.S. Cameron, 9 October 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Memorandum from Lands & Wildlife Program Officer, R.M. McIntyre, 21 October 1977; Rita McIsaac; George Massetoe; "Passing of a Race," *Prince George Citizen*, 3 June 1971; Stanley, 112; Bob and Shirley Van Somer; Donny Van Somer.

to Tsek'ehne travelling on the reservoir.)⁴³ In 1975 they expanded this policy to allow the Van Somers to request aid with one week of advance notice.⁴⁴ Aside from temporary aid in helping the Van Somers travel on the reservoir, the Forest Service was also willing to loan the family vessels and in 1970 even provided \$12,000 for a boat suitable for travel on the reservoir that could haul around 30 tons of supplies.⁴⁵ Even with the aid, the reservoir is still dangerous.⁴⁶

Because of these problems prices remained high when it came to shipping goods to Fort Ware. In 1974 the *Prince George Citizen* reported that the cost of shipping a pound of supplies to Fort Ware was 10¢.⁴⁷ While this amount might not seem like much, Elders compared it to the historic shipping rates such as 7.65¢ per pound in 1941 and 8¢ per pound in 1964, which themselves were low compared to the rate in 1916 (10¢ per pound.)⁴⁸ By 1977 the cost had risen to 15¢ per pound and two years later, despite the Van Somers buying a sixty-foot barge in 1978 followed by an eighty-foot long river in 1979, the cost of shipping was 16¢ per pound.⁴⁹

⁴³ Ingenika Band Members; Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 September 2012; Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Rita McIsaac; Alex Poole, 6 October 1984; Mabel Troendle, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 16 September 2008.

⁴⁴ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Minutes: Peace Waterways Improvement Project: Planning Committee Meeting, 27/30 August 1976.

⁴⁵ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority from Construction Engineer, Engineering Division, BC Forest Service, D.S. Cameron, 9 October 1975.

⁴⁶ Robert Inyallie; Alex Poole, 6 October 1984; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

⁴⁷ "Fort Ware Trader: Indians 'Good Friends,'" *Prince George Citizen*, 6 March 1974.

⁴⁸ "At Fort Ware: Housing Programs for Indians," *Prince George Citizen*, 5 August 1964; Felix Charlie, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2012; Charlie Cunningham, "The Fur Trade on the Finlay, 1962," *Peace River Chronicles: 81 Eye-Witness Accounts of the Peace River Region of British Columbia*, ed. Gordon Bowes (Vancouver: Prescott Publishing Company, 1963), 536; Paul Haworth, *On the Headwaters of Peace River: A Narrative of a Thousand-Mile Canoe Trip to a Little-Known Place of the Canadian Rockies* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1917), 95, 122; Jimmie and Nora Massettoe; Alex Poole, 6 October 1984; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012.

⁴⁹ Lanoue claims in "Continuity and Change" the cost from the portage at Ingenika was 16¢ per pound, while in *Brothers* it is the same price from Mackenzie to the portage and then to Fort Ware. "80-Foot River Boat," *Prince George Citizen*, 15 June 1979; John Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills: Self-Sufficiency Lost to Sekanis of Fort Ware," *Prince George Citizen*, 11 January 1977; Lanoue, *Brothers*, 53-54, 56, 131n12; Lanoue, "Continuity," 99n8; 208n7.

This steady increase had the potential to create conflict in the community. For example, anthropologist Guy Lanoue not only found the prices high, but also noted band members did too. And while he seems to suggest some blamed the storeowner for the prices, he himself also notes the high cost of shipping.⁵⁰ Not helping the situation was that since there was only one store in the community it was easy to make charges of there being a monopoly and/or price gouging occurring.⁵¹ Either way most of the Elders I talked to agree that prices were high, but do not blame the Van Somers per se. They blame the reservoir.⁵² Making matters worse was that with the end of the seasonal migration south to find employment wage labour employment was scarce in Fort Ware.⁵³ Still as we shall see these prices were cheaper than supplying the community by air.

The north end of the reservoir is where the rapids of Deserter's Canyon once existed on the Finlay River. Even when it was possible to get through the canyon it was here that one had to haul supplies overland only to reload them onto riverboats further upstream. Now instead of transporting goods overland to avoid the rapids, the Van Somers transported them to avoid the Plug.⁵⁴ Because of this situation, in an attempt to make the entire process easier, the province constructed a "new portage" in the form of a \$30,000 eight-mile long road that started at Ingenika Point and ended at the Finlay River.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, the new portage did not help Fort Ware during the winter, as even supplying Ingenika Point was problematic at that time of year.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Lanoue, *Brothers*, 53-54, 56, 131n12; Lanoue, "Continuity," 99n8; 208n7.

⁵¹ Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills."

⁵² Mary Ann Charlie and Laura Seymour; Martha Egnell, 8 March 2012; Robert Inyallie.

⁵³ Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter; Laura Seymour; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

⁵⁴ Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

⁵⁵ In 1977 it was reported the road was eleven miles long. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority from Construction Engineer, Engineering Division, BC Forest Service, D.S. Cameron, 9 October 1975; Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Jimmie and Nora Massettoe; Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills;" Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012.

⁵⁶ Bev Christensen, "The Sekani Indians of Ingenika:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 11 April 1987.

Instead during the winter airplanes primarily supplied both communities. Winter, however, comes early in the northern Trench. For example, in 1986 it was estimated the end of October was the last date to barge supplies in.⁵⁷ The cost of flying in supplies was also high and between 1969 and 1975 the BC Forest Service paid around \$56,000 to merely fly supplies from the water bomber base at Ingenika Point to sections of the Finlay River where they could be then taken to Fort Ware.⁵⁸ Unlike the supply barges in the summer, though, these shipments were limited in the amount of food they could carry.⁵⁹ The transition from one to the other was also not seamless. As a result freeze up (September to November) and break up (April to June) could be periods in which supplies were not received at all, especially prior to the construction of a suitable airstrip in Fort Ware, as the river could be too rough for boat or plane, but not frozen enough for skis.⁶⁰

The amount paid by the BC Forest Service might seem like a lot of money. It did not, however, adequately supply the community with things people take for granted, like fresh fruit or vegetables. Part of the problem was that the high cost of shipping supplies by air meant that this only covered about 13.3 to 23.5 tons of supplies for the entire winter.⁶¹ (Compare this amount to the estimated 100 tons of supplies brought in during the summer or the 200 to 1,000 tons of supplies brought annually prior to the reservoir.)⁶² “Supplies” is the key word, since this amount

⁵⁷ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Preliminary Briefing Material: Fort Ware Situation, August 26, 1986, Prepared by District Supt. of R.E.E.D.

⁵⁸ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority from Construction Engineer, Engineering Division, BC Forest Service, D.S. Cameron, 9 October 1975.

⁵⁹ “Fort Ware Trader: ‘Spuds Made Indian Suds,’” *Prince George Citizen*, 20 February 1974.

⁶⁰ “Fort Ware Indians ‘Starving to Death,’” *Prince George Citizen*, 2 April 1975; “Now Hear This,” *Prince George Citizen*, 30 April 1968.

⁶¹ The price ranged from 30¢ to 17¢ per pound throughout the 1970s. Hazel Allan, “Indians Own Store in Fort Ware:....,” *Prince George Citizen*, 1 August 1980; Bill Graham, “Indians: Fresh Food Scarce,” *Prince George Citizen*, 19 February 1974; Lanoue, “Continuity,” 51; Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Pope, “Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills.”

⁶² “Improvement of Crooked River Waterway,” *Prince George Citizen*, 27 October 1927; “Peace River Gateway Is The Natural Trade Channel,” *Prince George Citizen*, 25 October 1921; “Pen Pictures of Highway Leading to Summit Lake:....,” *Prince George Citizen*, 20 June 1929; Pope, “Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills.”

included things other than food. Even if one assumes it were all food, however, given the population of one hundred fifty, this meant at most about 177.8 to 313.7 pounds of food per person for the winter.⁶³ Given the length of winter (six to eight months) this meant at most about 29.6 to 52.3 or 22.2 to 39.2 pounds per person per month. To put this into perspective landscape architect James Richardson estimated in 2011 that the average Canadian was supplied around 188 pounds of food per month.⁶⁴ Despite these inadequacies, this service would continue throughout the 1970s.⁶⁵

Up until 1975 supply planes were landing on the Finlay River itself.⁶⁶ In an attempt to reduce the cost through a limited economy of scale, in August 1976 Indian Affairs began to discuss an expansion to the airstrip at Fort Ware so that it could accommodate Douglas DC-3 aircraft.⁶⁷ Indian Affairs did nothing and three months later at a regional planning committee the BC Forest Service asked of why the Van Somers did not simply use mail or Indian Affairs flights to help reduce costs.⁶⁸ The following month Indians Affairs prepared its response, namely that the aircraft chartered by the department was often shared by employees of Health and Welfare, and therefore did not have any spare room. Furthermore, it was against subsidizing the operation

⁶³ On 19 February 1974 it was reported there were two hundred residents. This appears to be either rounded up from the roughly one hundred fifty on reserve residents at the time, or refer to total band members. "Fort Ware Trader: 'Spuds Make Indian Suds,'" Graham, "Indians: Fresh Food Scarce;" Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), *Schedule of Indian Bands, Reserves and Settlements Including Membership and Population, June 30, 1982* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1982), 103.

⁶⁴ James Richardson, "The Ecological Footprint of Food," *Living Within a Fair Share Ecological Footprint*, ed. Robert and Brenda Vale (New York: Routledge, 2013), 37.

⁶⁵ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Minutes: Peace Waterways Improvement Project: Planning Committee Meeting, 27/30 August 1976; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Williston Lake Debris Disposal Information Meeting, 25 June 1979.

⁶⁶ "Fort Ware Indians 'Starving to Death.'"

⁶⁷ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Minutes: Peace Waterways Improvement Project: Planning Committee Meeting, 27/30 August 1976.

⁶⁸ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Minutes: Peace Waterways Improvement Project: Planning Committee, 4 November 1976.

of the Van Somers on principle.⁶⁹ Still they did nothing and in April 1978 the province inquired about the progress of the extension.⁷⁰ Met with the same response, eventually store manager Jim Van Somer, who had replaced his brother Art following his death, pushed for its construction and by 1979 flights were landing in Ware itself.⁷¹

Despite the high cost, following the construction of the runway airplanes primarily supplied the village.⁷² In part this might be a response to the reduced aid in travelling on the reservoir. When the province announced that the BC Forest Service would end its work on the reservoir at the end of the 1977-1978 fiscal year, Indian Affairs asked BC Hydro if their complete takeover also meant that they would meet commitments made by the Forest Service. And although BC Hydro said it would, as it turns out it simply required that any contractor clearing the reservoir at the north end of the Finlay Reach aid the Van Somers.⁷³

Transportation began to change once again in the late 1980s. In 1986 Indian Affairs and chief and council began to discuss the merits “of a winter road from Ingenika to Fort Ware,” especially in light of the continued issues of freighting to the community via the reservoir and Finlay River in the summer, and flying supplies in during the winter.⁷⁴ That summer the province made plans to construct a forest access road to the community with proposed starting points

⁶⁹ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Assistant Regional Director, Local Government, British Columbia Region, E.P. Derrick from District Manager R.M. McIntyre, 16 December 1976.

⁷⁰ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Memorandum from Lands and Wildlife Programs Officer, Prince George District, R.M. McIntyre, 20 April 1978.

⁷¹ George Massetoe refers to him as Johnny Van Somer. Robert Inyallie; LAC, RG 10, Box 1 File 985/19-4-609, Williston Lake Debris Disposal Information Meeting, 25 June 1979; Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; George Massetoe.

⁷² Emil McCook, 6 March 2012.

⁷³ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Minutes: Peace Waterways Improvement Project: Planning Committee Meeting, 20 October 1977; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Memorandum from Lands & Wildlife Program Officer, R.M. McIntyre, 21 October 1977; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Minutes: Peace Waterways Improvement Project: Planning Committee Meeting by Construction Engineer, D.S. Cameron, 18 April 1978.

⁷⁴ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Chief and Council, Fort Ware Band from Business Services Officer, Resource, Economic & Employment Development Branch, Prince George District, Blair Carlson, 18 February 1986.

either being Ft. St. James to the southwest or Horn Creek Landing on the reservoir.⁷⁵ Band members, however, did not readily embrace this prospect, and the *Prince George Citizen* reported in 1989 that they were concerned that the road would bring more and more loggers into their traditional territory.⁷⁶

It was not until 1990 that a logging road reached the community. Ironically even when this connected the community to the rest of Canada and supply became less of an issue, the cost of food was still the highest in the province.⁷⁷ To the surprise of some of some band members the road further isolated the community from Ingenika and McLeod Lake as it was not necessary to stop in either while commuting to Mackenzie or Prince George.⁷⁸ (The same is true for Ingenika, while the location of McLeod Lake means that one is never required travel to Ingenika or Fort Ware).⁷⁹ Indeed, McLeod Lake Elder Zepheria Isadore thinks driving limits the options of the driver in ways boating does not.⁸⁰ (Inversely, however, McLeod Lake Elder Josephine Tylee notes she now sees more people from up north as a result of the road being in place.)⁸¹ The recent opening of a gas station by McLeod Lake has the potential to change this situation as it is the only on-reserve service station between Prince George and Tsay Keh Dene and therefore the only place to get tax free gas.

Colonial Conflict: A Lack of Services

The failure of Indian Affairs to properly inform the Fort Ware Tsek'ene about the construction and impact of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and Williston Lake Reservoir did not

⁷⁵ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Director, Band Support and Capital Management, British Columbia Region from Head, Band Operations, Prince George District, Jeff Goldie, [17 July 1986].

⁷⁶ Ken Bernsohn, "Tree Farm License Hearing Here:....," *Prince George Citizen*, 21 February 1989.

⁷⁷ "Welfare Termed Too Low:....," *Prince George Citizen*, 17 October 1990.

⁷⁸ Ron McCook; Richard Solonas; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012.

⁷⁹ Phillip Charlie, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 6 November 2008.

⁸⁰ Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Salmon Valley, BC, 1 October 2012.

⁸¹ Josephine Tylee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012.

engender good relations with either the province or the federal government. The majority of the population in, and around, Fort Ware are Tsek'ehne. The nearest community is the equally isolated village of Tsay Keh Dene. Together they share a detachment of about four Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers.⁸² Even their presence is recent, however. Until the early 1990s policing was done out of Mackenzie, BC, with officers in charge of policing the entirety of the Trench from McLeod Lake to Fort Ware.⁸³ Aside from these officers, all other agents of the colonial state in both communities are strictly transitory, periodically coming to either meet with band members and/or provide services, and then leaving.⁸⁴ Even now relationships with these officials are not always the best despite goodwill activities.⁸⁵

Not helping these relations is the fact that alcohol and drug abuse, which emerged following the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir, has a tendency to polarize outsiders (either for or against the band) residing in the community for a short period. At times they even seem to be an excuse to denounce the community itself, especially if community members rejected the “good work” of outsiders, or if personalities clashed.⁸⁶ Long-term residents were no help in trying to explain these views, as most non-Tsek'ehne living in the community for any

⁸² Loraine Littlefield, Linda Dorricott and Deidre Cullon, “Tse Keh Nay Traditional and Contemporary Use and Occupation at Amazay (Duncan Lake): A Draft Report” (Unpublished report, 2007), 5-6.

⁸³ Mary Ann and Murphy Porter.

⁸⁴ As late as 1985 the detachment of RCMP that worked in Fort Ware and Ingenika was not permanent and rotated in from Mackenzie, BC Hazel Allan, “Northern Nurse:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 3 July 1980; Bev Christensen, “It May Be Needed:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 28 February 1984; Sean Fine, “Off the Bench and Into the Community:...,” *The Globe and Mail*, 25 June 1994; Harold Morin, “Death Rate Tops Birth Rate Among Macleod Lake People,” “*Nesika*” (*Chinook Meaning “Us”*): *The Voice of BC Indian* 3, no. 2 (1974): 12; Bernice Trick, “Remote Posting: Christmas Alone ‘A Special Time,’” *Prince George Citizen*, 21 December 1985.

⁸⁵ Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 9 September 2008; “Santa Airlifted by RCMP,” *Prince George Citizen*, 21 December 1979.

⁸⁶ John Asling, “Former Teachers Terrorized:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 8 November 1978; Billington, 214-215, 217; “Community of Fort Ware:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 14 September 1978; Bill Graham, “Three Sisters Teach:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 9 August 1974; Yvonne Harris, 17; “Threat to Teacher:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 13 September 1978; Trick, “Remote Posting.”

length of time tend to gradually assimilate into Tsek'ehne ways, especially if they formed romantic relations.⁸⁷

Isolation and conflict with the colonial state did not help the amount of services available in Fort Ware, which only slowly reached the community and even then were often initially restricted to the store or official band buildings.⁸⁸ For example, in 1971 BC Tel installed a radiotelephone system in the community, thereby improving communication with the outside world. Technically, however, it was only for official business.⁸⁹ It was not until 1986, and Northwest Tel, that the average band member could easily get telephone service.⁹⁰ Similarly, in 1973 Indian Affairs called for bids for a new two room day school, teacherage, and powerplant.⁹¹ By 1977 the community had a nursing station. Only the chief's house had electricity, however, and running water was still not available.⁹² Instead, community members took the water directly from the Finlay River.⁹³ This situation continued throughout the 1970s and by 1983 only official buildings and the storeowner's house had both electricity and running water.⁹⁴ Reflecting the ineptitude of Indian Affairs, they send washers and dryers to the community during this period.⁹⁵

Around 1980 the band adopted an approach that included confronting Indian Affairs, and working with the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council to improve housing and infrastructure on reserve.⁹⁶ As a result, in 1983 the band got a new community hall, school, and teacherage for

⁸⁷ Billington even became band manager in 1988. Billington, 11; Trick, "Remote Posting."

⁸⁸ Billington, 22.

⁸⁹ "[Photos Page 12]," *Prince George Citizen*, 19 November 1971.

⁹⁰ Billington, 25.

⁹¹ W.G. Robinson, BC Regional Engineer, "Legals: Department of Indians Affairs and Northern Development," *Prince George Citizen*, 27 March 1973.

⁹² Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills;" Mary Ann and Murphy Porter.

⁹³ Yvonne Harris, 19-20.

⁹⁴ "Child Apprehensions: Judge Sends Children Back Home," *Indian World: "The Choice Is Ours"* 3, no. 5 (1980): 4; Yvonne Harris, 19-21; Lanoue, *Brothers*, 49, 109.

⁹⁵ Mary Christina Koyl, "Cultural Chasm: A 1960s Hydro Development and the Tsay Keh Dene Native Community of Northern British Columbia" (MA Thesis: University of Victoria, 1992), 120.

⁹⁶ Robert Inyallie.

their community of thirty-two houses that were on average 622 square feet and housed 5.5 individuals.⁹⁷ The following year Indian Affairs constructed a community wide water system, although due to limitations in housing options many residents did not receive running water, and instead were to use outdoor hand pumps and three communal washhouses.⁹⁸

The living situation in Fort Ware might not have prompted a quick response from Indian Affairs, but it did have a tendency to tug at the heartstrings of northern British Columbians. In 1970 the *Prince George Citizen* ran a charity to provide Christmas gifts to those in need, including the residents of Fort Ware.⁹⁹ In 1982 a private landscaper organized a clothing drive for Fort Ware and Ingenika.¹⁰⁰ The band did not believe all of this aid was altruistic, however. For example, in 1971 the *Prince George Citizen* reported that band members met the previously mentioned UBCIC request for fresh food with questions of how much the aid would cost them, and why outsiders were giving something away for free without expecting anything in return.¹⁰¹ Even today some individuals in the community distrust outsiders, a concern that seems to have emerged as a result of the misplaced trust the band had in the province, BC Hydro, and Indian Affairs with regard to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam.

Government actions only fueled this distrust. For example, in 1973 thirteen youths eagerly took part in the federal Opportunities For Youth Project designed to provide employment opportunities and were hired to construct a rink and recreational area in Fort Ware.¹⁰² Federal officials, however, did not tell them that they would deduct any money the youths made from any welfare payments their parents received. As a result, in one instance one youth made a net

⁹⁷ Yvonne Harris, 19-21.

⁹⁸ "Contract Awarded," *Prince George Citizen*, 26 April 1984.

⁹⁹ "Christmas Gifts Asked for 'Forgotten' People," *Prince George Citizen*, 24 November 1971.

¹⁰⁰ "Business Up 25 PCT.: Savings Offered at S.A. Thrift Shop," *Prince George Citizen*, 9 July 1982.

¹⁰¹ Rick Hull, "Indians Cool to Charity:....," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 May 1971.

¹⁰² Bill Graham, "Indians Charge Rip-Off in OFY, Welfare Payment," *Prince George Citizen*, 3 August 1973.

profit of \$6.¹⁰³ Naturally the situation caused an uproar within the community, something the *Prince George Citizen* brought to the attention of the wider world. As a result of public pressure, Indian Affairs changed this policy and even promised to reimburse any family affected.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the damage had been done.

The Cost of Living and Employment

Isolation, issues of supply, colonial conflict, and a lack of services came to a head in Fort Ware in the mid-1970s when the high cost of living resulted in health issues in the community. In 1971 the *Prince George Citizen* reported that the prices set by Art Van Somer were reasonable.¹⁰⁵ As time passed, however, issues emerged related to supply and buying power. In 1974 band members proposed creating a food co-operative because of a general lack of fruits and vegetables at the store. As a result of food availability, both in kind and cost, some of the children in the community were suffering from a lack of iron, while other residents complained of stomach ailments.¹⁰⁶

When asked about the matter, store operator Jim Van Somer cited the cost of shipping, especially during the winter, and the relative poverty of many community members. According to him, he brought in some canned and fresh vegetables during the summer, but their high price meant that people living on welfare (a reported 90% of the community in 1975), and receiving a mere \$50 per person per month, could not afford them.¹⁰⁷ Instead canned foods dominated due to

¹⁰³ Graham, "Indians Charge Rip-Off in OFY, Welfare Payment."

¹⁰⁴ Graham, "Indians Charge Rip-Off in OFY, Welfare Payment;" "Indians Affairs Halt Fort Ware Deductions," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 August 1973.

¹⁰⁵ Hull, "Indians Cool to Charity."

¹⁰⁶ Dried fruits and vegetables were apparently available. Graham, "Indians: Fresh Food Scarce."

¹⁰⁷ Lanoue would report that in 1979 around 11.9% of the population a month received actual welfare cheques averaging about \$343 per month. According to him the average cost of buying food was \$200 per month per adult. Based on an estimate how much the store made, he concludes about 82% of band's income from all sources was spent at the store. Graham, "Indians: Fresh Food Scarce;" "Fort Ware Indians 'Starving to Death;'" "Fort Ware Trader: Indians 'Good Friends;'" "Fort Ware Trade: 'Spuds Make Indian Suds;'" Lanoue, "Continuity," 176, 184, 187.

the length of the trip and risk of supplies getting wet.¹⁰⁸ Not helping the situation was that many band members had dog teams that only further added to their monthly living expenses.¹⁰⁹ Jim Van Somer noted issues with what food community members purchased and alcohol abuse as aspects that complicated the entire matter. Nevertheless, he welcomed a co-op in the community.¹¹⁰ He also suggested that the community should look into developing a community garden with the aid of Indian Affairs, and return to a more traditional lifestyle, namely by dispersing throughout the traditional territory as all Tsek'ehne had once done.¹¹¹

At first one might be tempted to dismiss his comments as those of a Euro-Canadian outsider, who only wanted to make money off of the people, but the Van Somers are in fact part of the community at Fort Ware. (His son is currently the chief.)¹¹² Indeed, as former Chief Emil McCook told me, the band actually invited Jim to run the store because of these connections.¹¹³ It helped that his brother Art had previously run the store.¹¹⁴ Still he ran the store for profit, with a reported profit margin in 1977 of around 25%.¹¹⁵ Despite this profit margin, in 1974 Jim Van Somer told the *Prince George Citizen* his store had a debt of \$16,000 due to him extending credit to community members.¹¹⁶ The total debt of the store would remain in the tens of thousands throughout the 1970s.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁸ Bernard McKay, *Crooked River Rats: The Adventures of Pioneer Rivermen* (Surrey: Hancock House, 2000), 35; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.48, Box 1, Jack Corless interviewed by Helen Mustard.

¹⁰⁹ According to Guy Lanoue they played a part in maintaining connections to past. "Fort Ware Trader: Indians 'Good Friends,'" Lanoue, "Continuity," 195.

¹¹⁰ "Fort Ware Trader: 'Spuds Make Indian Suds.'"

¹¹¹ "Fort Ware Trader: Indians 'Good Friends.'"

¹¹² Billington, 22; "Fort Ware Trader: Indians 'Good Friends,'" Donny Van Somer.

¹¹³ Emil McCook, 5 March 2013.

¹¹⁴ Billington, 52.

¹¹⁵ "Fort Ware Trader: Indians 'Good Friends,'" Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills."

¹¹⁶ "Fort Ware Trade: 'Spuds Make Indian Suds.'"

¹¹⁷ Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills."

As result of the publication of the issues facing the community, the news media began to report on the issues facing Fort Ware. Some of the information they provided, however, was less than ideal. For example, when the Plug stopped a supply barge carrying 2½ tons of supplies (including fresh vegetables), the *Prince George Citizen* informed its readers that the province airlifted supplies to the community on 20 May 1974. According to the *Citizen*, this amount only worked out to 125 pounds per resident. Unfortunately, when one does the math, this means there was only enough food for a total population of forty.¹¹⁸ As the *Citizen* itself reported when it first began looking into the issue Fort Ware had a population of between one hundred and fifty and two hundred.¹¹⁹ This discrepancy is unexplained, but it gave the public a false sense of the situation at Fort Ware.

The issue of supplying the community did not go away. The winter of 1974-1975 was a poor year for trapping, and as a result, in 1975 the Van Somers could no longer purchase supplies or secure a loan, and community members could not afford the food they needed. When nothing happened after he met with Indian Affairs in March 1975 Jim Van Somer sent a press release to the *Prince George Citizen* in an attempt to pressure them into increasing welfare payments and/or sending supplies. According to Indian Affairs, they had no control over the amount of welfare someone received, but they did claim to have paid for Northern Thunderbird Air to fly 3,400 pounds of supplies up to the community after their meeting in March. Having not heard anything further on the matter, they felt the issue was resolved.¹²⁰ Unlike some previous stories on Fort Ware, this press release reached the nation via *The Globe and Mail*.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ "Fort Ware Supplies Airlifted," *Prince George Citizen*, 21 May 1974.

¹¹⁹ Graham, "Indians: Fresh Food Scarce;" "Fort Ware Trade: 'Spuds Make Indian Suds.'"

¹²⁰ Billington would note that when he made a similar request as band manager that he was told band members should supplement a lack of income with more moose meat. Billington, 213; "Fort Ware Indians 'Starving to Death.'"

¹²¹ "Across Canada: Planeload of Food Going to Indians," *The Globe and Mail*, 4 April 1975; "Indians Face Possible Starvation in BC Outpost, Storeowner Says," *The Globe and Mail*, 3 April 1975.

Complicating the situation was the fact that at this point in time, mail still only moved in and out of Fort Ware at a rate of once a month, and could be easily delayed.¹²² Therefore there was no guarantee that one could convey information to and from Fort Ware in a timely manner. The press release worked, however, and Indians Affairs flew another 2,500 pounds of supplies up and proudly told the *Citizen* everything was fine.¹²³ At the same time storeowner, Bill Van Somer, also committed to sending two more shipments prior to spring breakup.¹²⁴ His wife assured the public that it was all a misunderstanding.¹²⁵

The “logical solution” to issues of supply and the high cost of living was for band members to find higher paying jobs and in doing help contribute to the development of the community. Employment, however, was hard to find and often conflicted with other activities. In 1973 and 1974 Fort Ware received three Local Initiative Project grants for construction of a new community hall, youth park, power plant, and laundry.¹²⁶ Unlike make-work projects in McLeod Lake, however, it was difficult to find band members to work on these projects as many still left the village throughout the year, especially during the summer.¹²⁷ Ironically this situation existed because band members still followed traditional economic activities and lived off the land. True, the reservoir had made the continuance of traditional economic activities difficult. Yet in Fort

¹²² “Fort Ware Indians ‘Starving to Death.’”

¹²³ “Fort Gets Food,” *Prince George Citizen*, 7 April 1975; “Fort Ware: ‘No Starvation’ Officials Report,” *Prince George Citizen*, 8 April 1975; “Fort Ware ‘Starvation:’ Food Airlifted to Indians,” *Prince George Citizen*, 3 April 1975.

¹²⁴ “Fort Ware: ‘No Starvation’ Officials Report.”

¹²⁵ “BC Indians in No Danger of Starving,” *The Globe and Mail*, 8 April 1975.

¹²⁶ “LIP: Culture, Art, Artifacts,” 15-16; “L.I.P. Money Scarce in City,” *Prince George Citizen*, 6 December 1973; “Local LIP Projects to Cost \$258,000,” *Prince George Citizen*, 25 April 1973; C.E. McMaster, “Letters to the Editor: Fort Ware,” *Prince George Citizen*, 26 March 1974; “Winter Jobs Increase,” *Prince George Citizen*, 23 January 1973.

¹²⁷ Lanoue, “Continuity,” 54-55; Millie Poplar and John Warren, “Timber: Fort Ware Want A Fair Share,” *UBCIC News*, November 1978, 19.

Ware these activities continued after 1968.¹²⁸ In many instances they continue to the present day. The perception of how they continued, however, is a different matter.

In 1975 the *Prince George Citizen* reported that life in Fort Ware was still “traditional,” albeit with aspects of “non-Tsek’ehne” society. Local teachers even taught handicraft classes at night in the school.¹²⁹ By 1982/1983 the community was even using the school to help revive Tsek’ene culture. The school only went to Grade 8, however, with students having to leave the community for higher education. Few did. According to Yvonne Harris, land use practices and consumption of traditional foods were at that time the same as before contact.¹³⁰

Critics soon used the aid needed in supplying the community and these aspects of society against the community, however. In doing so it echoes the work of historian Paige Raibmon on concepts of Indigenous authenticity and how things perceived as non-Indigenous challenged perceptions of who is and who is not really Indigenous.¹³¹ In 1977 the *Citizen* ran an article on Fort Ware that they printed twice.¹³² According to reporter John Pope life in Fort Ware was “sustained by welfare payments and revolves around a small nucleus of white people,” and “people... [were] dependent on food from Prince George,” because “they no longer trap as extensively as their ancestors.”¹³³ Whereas in 1974 the *Citizen* reported that community members used the entire animal, a mere three years later Pope claimed that they only used the meat and skin. Pope even viewed the decision of the Fort Ware Tsek’ene to play hockey in a

¹²⁸ Kathy Poole, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 1 March 2013; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012.

¹²⁹ McMaster, “Letters to the Editor: Fort Ware.”

¹³⁰ Harris claims the same is true for Ingenika despite her study not including the community. Yvonne Harris, iii, 12, 19-20, 52, 65, 68, 113; Lanoue, “Continuity,” 180.

¹³¹ Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

¹³² Pope, “Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills.”

¹³³ Ibid.

different light, citing this activity as a sign of loss of culture.¹³⁴ Pope's article is problematic not only for the way he interprets lifestyle in Fort Ware, but also because of some factual errors it contains. For example, he claims that the Sekani are Carrier, which is similar to stating the English are German.¹³⁵ Still, Pope's article is sympathetic, or at least claims to be. This dependency according to him was due to low fur prices, and a lack of employment opportunities in Fort Ware. He also notes that the between fifty to three hundred fifty moose killed per year for food were shared in the community. Finally, according to him Jim Van Somer believed the residents were returning to their traditional culture.¹³⁶

While Pope saw cultural loss and revival as big issues, this conclusion was not one necessarily held by Chief Emil McCook. In 1977 the *Prince George Citizen* reported him as stating that the three big problems facing the community were a lack of housing, alcoholism and alcohol related problems, and employment. The first issue was a matter of the band either funding construction themselves, or relying on Indian Affairs in the form of \$10,000 grants. They were dealing with the second through prohibition on reserve, combined with an agreement with the liquor storeowner in Mackenzie to not sell and deliver alcohol to band members. Like many other prohibitions, however, it was still possible to break the law and acquire alcohol, or make it yourself.¹³⁷

Despite these issues other outsiders would later report that Tsek'ene culture in Fort Ware remained strong. In 1982/1983 Yvonne Harris reported that traditional practices and ways of life were being handed down to the next generation, and that while most young people could not

¹³⁴ Pope also cited softball as another example. McMaster, "Letters to the Editor: Fort Ware;" Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills."

¹³⁵ Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills."

¹³⁶ It is still quite common for band members to share game in all three communities. Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills;" Doris Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 26 September 2012.

¹³⁷ Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills."

speak Tsek'ene, they could understand it. At this point in time hunters in the community were more than supplying the community's meat needs through hunting.¹³⁸ Perhaps because of this fact Guy Lanoue found a few years earlier that band members viewed involvement in the wage labour economy for food as supplemental.¹³⁹ Still hunters in Fort Ware informed Yvonne Harris that the moose population near the village had declined as a result of the reservoir. As noted, however, historically the Tsek'ehne had lived off the land because hunting within a day of the villages could not sustain the people. Overall she found that just over half of the people she talked to thought fur bearing animals were better since the reservoir, while a strong majority felt game was worse. When it came to fishing a plurality thought the reservoir had made it worse.¹⁴⁰

Like Harry Chingee in McLeod Lake, Chief Emil McCook took steps to try to find employment for band members. For example, in 1977 he hoped that his guiding outfit, McCook and Furniss Ketchikan Ranger Outfitters, would help improve employment levels.¹⁴¹ About a year later Guy Lanoue would report that it was the biggest employer in the community.¹⁴² McCook and Furniss even advertised in *The Globe and Mail*.¹⁴³ Customers, however, could not call to book a trip, and mail was still only coming into the community one a month.¹⁴⁴ Still, as Emil told me, they continued to operate for at least eleven years.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁸ Yvonne Harris, 19, 52-55.

¹³⁹ Lanoue, "Continuity," 54, 184.

¹⁴⁰ Lanoue cites a 1979 report noting some band members did think fur-bearing animals were on the decline. Martha Egnell, 8 March 2012; Yvonne Harris, 46, 52-60; Lanoue, "Continuity," 191-192.

¹⁴¹ Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills."

¹⁴² Lanoue, "Continuity," 93, 170, 184-188.

¹⁴³ "If You Go," *The Globe and Mail*, 21 May 1983.

¹⁴⁴ Emil McCook, 6 March 2012.

¹⁴⁵ Yvonne Harris notes in 1982 a guiding outfit in the northern part of Fort Ware traditional territory was sold to a non-Tsek'ehne. It would appear that this outfit is not the same one, especially since Chief McCook had a non-Tsek'ehne partner, and Emil recalls it operating for at least eleven years. Yvonne Harris, 70; Lanoue, "Continuity," 94; Emil McCook, 6 March 2012.

Both Fort Ware and Ingenika are within the Mackenzie Timber Supply Area.¹⁴⁶ Whereas McLeod Lake pushed for inclusion in the forestry industry and because of this desire wanted an adhesion to Treaty 8 to give them a land base, Fort Ware at first attempted to avoid the forest industry. This was not because they were against it per se, but they wanted to make sure they were either in control of it in their traditional territory, or at least had a say.¹⁴⁷

Even after its completion logging around Fort Ware was directly connected to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. During construction of the dam Finlay Forest Products and BC Forest Products had signed agreements securing timber rights in the northern Trench.¹⁴⁸ (BC Forest Products had acquired Wenner-Gren's Alexandra Forest Industries in 1967, but continued to use the brand until 1970.)¹⁴⁹ They maintained these rights despite not harvesting and made no secret that they had plans for the area.¹⁵⁰

By the late 1970s community members were dreading the day the industry moved into their traditional territory, especially given the fact companies were acquiring timber leases in the area, or investigating mineral deposits, like at Cirque Mine. They saw it as another threat to their traditional economy, which the Bennett Dam had already damaged.¹⁵¹ At the time the primary sources of income in the community were traditional economic activities, such as trapping; transfer payments, including welfare; and wage labour employment in seasonal logging, firefighting, and the band civil service. This mixture created a problem as not only did the

¹⁴⁶ This does not mean their traditional territories are limited to the supply area. Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resources Operations, "Forest Analysis: Mackenzie Timber Supply Area (TSA)," <https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/tsa/tsa16/> (accessed 8 July 2015).

¹⁴⁷ Billington, 244; Poplar and Warren, "Timber: Fort Ware Want A Fair Share," 19.

¹⁴⁸ Karl Froschauer, *White Gold: Hydroelectric Power in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 189; Yvonne Harris, 40.

¹⁴⁹ Froschauer, 189; Mai Veemes, *Mackenzie BC Turns Twenty* (Mackenzie: British Columbia Heritage Trust, 1985), 26-27.

¹⁵⁰ Yvonne Harris, 40-42; "History of Ingenika," *Native Voice*, 17, no. 2 (1989): 10; Lanoue, "Continuity," 37.

¹⁵¹ Lanoue, "Continuity," 37; Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills;" Poplar and Warren, "Timber: Fort Ware Want A Fair Share;" Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012.

reservoir limit traditional economic activities, but the promise of involvement in the forest industry could potentially damage it further. (In all three communities employment in the band office could involve real or perceived patronage and/or politics that made it less/attainable than ideal for some people.)¹⁵² Already provincial records reported that yields for trapping were below the British Columbian average, although some like Guy Lanoue thought this situation was a result of inefficiency.¹⁵³ This claim might seem minor, but when the province was looking into raising the reservoir in 1986 they cited the subpar utilization as one reason why the impact on trapping might be minimal.¹⁵⁴

Eventually, however, Fort Ware, like McLeod Lake, sought to get involved in the forest industry. In 1980 the band got funding to purchase a sawmill. The following year the sawmill went into operation. Soon it contributed to other projects in the community, such as the store and housing, and between 1980 and 1984 Indian Affairs provided a total of \$133,900 to help fund the project.¹⁵⁵ A key issue, though, was the band's lack of clear secure timber cutting rights in their traditional territory.¹⁵⁶

In the same year that the band got funding to purchase a sawmill, the Van Somer's store closed and Fort Ware began operation of its own store. The band accomplished this move by not renewing the retail permit for the store, an option made possible as a result of the band receiving \$60,000 from Indian Affairs to open their own store. Rather than being upset, however, store

¹⁵² Yvonne Harris, 19, 58, 118; Lanoue, "Continuity," 89-96, 170, 184-188; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Suzanne Veit, "Report Draft," 22 March 1977, 2.3.1.1.a; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, ICHRS Application for Fort Ware Sawmill – 12 June 1986.

¹⁵³ Harris estimates by about \$5,200 in 1982/1983. Yvonne Harris, 58-59; Lanoue, "Continuity," 191-192, 194, 195.

¹⁵⁴ KA, British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Memorandum from Legislative Intern, Dale Jackson, 10 June 1986.

¹⁵⁵ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Director, Resource, Economic & Development Branch, BC Region, Lionel Munaweera from Superintendent of Resource, Economic & Employment Development Branch, Prince George District, Gary Jung, 15 April 1986.

¹⁵⁶ Yvonne Harris, 117, 118.

manager Jim Van Somer was reported as being relieved as it was becoming harder and harder for him to keep the store running. A big difference in the stores would be that the new band run store would not give anyone credit whereas the Van Somer's store generally had a total of around \$25,000 of credit available to the community at any given time.¹⁵⁷

Despite the hope that the community owned store would fix problems of supply, issues remained regarding the cost of shipping and salary, combined with the difficulty of simply getting to Fort Ware. As a result, the store went bankrupt in 1984.¹⁵⁸ The loss of the fully stocked store to fire shortly after opening did not help.¹⁵⁹

The cost of shipping had also dramatically increased since the mid-1970s. By 1982/1983 supplies were being barged to Ingenika then flown to Ware. As a result, the cost of shipping had risen to 76¢ per pound. This rate was a high price to pay even when one factors in that BC Hydro agreed to help with the cost. The cost meant that by the summer of 1983 the store was once again not carrying fresh vegetables, and was also out of meat.¹⁶⁰

In May 1983 Indian Affairs visited the community following complaints from Member of Parliament Frank Oberle, the Kaska Dena Council and their land-use consultant Douglas Elias that people could not afford to purchase food, and children were suffering from malnutrition and vitamin deficiencies.¹⁶¹ When asked about the issue community members noted that some community members had not been paid.¹⁶² Issues of store manager existed as well. Following bankruptcy the band hired a new store manager, Colin Webster.¹⁶³ He cited the high cost of

¹⁵⁷ Hazel Allan, "Indians Own Store in Fort Ware."

¹⁵⁸ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Store Manager, Fort Ware Store, Pam Westergaard from Business Service Officer, Prince George District, Blair Carlson, 17 July 1985.

¹⁵⁹ Yvonne Harris, 56-57.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 56-57.

¹⁶¹ "Fort Ware Indians: Starvation Claim Checked," *Prince George Citizen*, 8 May 1984.

¹⁶² "Starvation Denied: 'Hard Times' in Fort Ware," *Prince George Citizen*, 11 May 1984.

¹⁶³ Yvonne Harris, 57.

shipping in goods as the main problem. Furthermore, the previous manager appeared to have not tried to deal with this issue and let band members buy with credit, something the store was not initially supposed to allow. Following their investigation Indian Affairs discovered that there was an accounts receivable of \$75,000 for the store. Nevertheless, in response to the needs of the community, the department arranged for Northern Thunderbird Air to fly up \$25,000 worth of groceries.¹⁶⁴ It helped that by this point mail was coming in twice a month.¹⁶⁵

In conjunction with this meeting, Fort Ware's isolation made national headlines in *The Globe and Mail*. The reporting, however, was a mixture of sensationalism, and cultural aspects the reporter was not aware of. It reported that land use consultant Elias thought it was the worst situation in Canada, while it said MP Oberle was spending sleepless nights over the issue.

According to Oberle, Indian Affairs made the situation worse through their insistence on the need to construct a water and sewage system over housing and electrification. The *Globe and Mail* even made references to eating porcupine, the Tsek'ehne food of starvation, but did not understand the significance. Still the blame for the entire situation was ultimately placed firmly on the debris filled Williston Lake reservoir, and its impacts on transportation and wildlife.¹⁶⁶

The Globe and Mail reported that each band member was entitled to \$1,500 in debt at the store. However, because some band members could not pay off their debt in 1983 Indian Affairs provided \$53,000 to cancel it out.¹⁶⁷ Despite this payment, in August 1985 they reported that

¹⁶⁴ Starvation Denied."

¹⁶⁵ Ian Mulgrew, "Hydro Dam Leaves Village Isolated:...", *The Globe and Mail*, 5 May 1984.

¹⁶⁶ Mulgrew, "Hydro Dam Leaves Village Isolated;" Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012.

¹⁶⁷ Mulgrew, "Hydro Dam Leaves Village Isolated."

community members owed about \$47,000 to the store.¹⁶⁸ As a result of all these issues, Indian Affairs got involved in the operation of the store.¹⁶⁹

The store was not the only issue facing Fort Ware in 1984. By that year it seemed their traditional territory was about to be invaded by mining, forestry, and once again hydroelectric development.¹⁷⁰ In 1985 the band's application for funding for the sawmill under the Indian Community Human Resource Development Strategy program (ICHRDS) was rejected.¹⁷¹ As it turns out the application was rejected by the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC) Economic Development Review Committee during the recommendation stage due to the project's short time span, the committee's own criteria for recommending applications, and the fact the project had previously been funded.¹⁷²

The following year Indian Affairs met with chief and council to discuss, among other things, potential economic opportunities for the community. The influx of mining into their traditional territory and the corresponding infrastructure it brought concerned community members.¹⁷³ The band once again applied for funding for the sawmill under the Indian Community Human Resources Strategy (ICHRS). Among other things they noted that the community had 95% unemployment and that this level forced the store to operate on credit.

¹⁶⁸ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Excerpts from the Minutes of a Meeting, Ft. Ware, 20 August 1985.

¹⁶⁹ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Store Manager, Fort Ware Store, Pam Westergaard from Business Service Officer, Prince George District, Blair Carlson, 17 July 1985; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Excerpts from the Minutes of a Meeting, Ft. Ware, 20 August 1985; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Superintendent of Economic Development, Prince George District, Gary Jung from Business Services Officer, Prince George District, Blair Carlson, 15 October 1985; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Resource, Economic & Employment Development Branch, Prince George District: Fort Ware & Ingenika Stores, February 1986.

¹⁷⁰ Yvonne Harris, 113; Donny Van Somer.

¹⁷¹ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4545-H1-610, Part 6, Letter to Fort Ware Band from Business Service Officer, R.E.E.D. Program, Prince George District, Blair Carlson, 12 December 1985.

¹⁷² LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Chief and Council, Fort Ware Band from Business Services Officer, Resource, Economic & Employment Development Branch, Prince George District, Blair Carlson, 18 February 1986.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

More importantly they connected the social disruption that existed in the community to high unemployment levels, arguing that those with jobs have higher self-esteem than those without.¹⁷⁴

Despite Indian Affairs involvement in the band store, by November 1985 the debt has risen to \$52,000, with the store manager experimenting with various means of supplying the store from places as far away as Grand Prairie, Alberta.¹⁷⁵ Issues also emerged when it came to Fort Ware sending financial statements to the district office in Prince George.¹⁷⁶ By March 1986 Indian Affairs had concluded that the store as an economic activity was more of a social service than a profit-making endeavor, and the chief and council did not want to change this situation. Indian Affairs therefore proposed moving the store from the Resource, Economic and Employment Development (REED) to Band Operations.¹⁷⁷ Band Operations did not readily accept this recommendation and saw the issues with the store being in part societal, and in part a matter of developing the operation itself.¹⁷⁸

By now the band was receiving weekly flights into the community, in part to supply the store. In an effort to cut the costs of shipping it was decided to stop weekly flights into the community as of 9 July 1986 and instead have one monthly flight in to bring in fresh produce

¹⁷⁴ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, ICHRS Application for Fort Ware Sawmill – 12 June 1986.

¹⁷⁵ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Memorandum from Business Service Officer, Prince George District, 19 November 1985.

¹⁷⁶ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Superintendent of Economic Development, Prince George District, Gary Jung from Business Services Officer, Prince George District, Blair Carlson, 15 October 1985; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Chief and Council, Fort Ware Band from Superintendent of Economic Development, REED Program, Prince George District, Gary Jung, 25 November 1985.

¹⁷⁷ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Director, Resource, Economic & Employment Development Program, British Columbia Region, Lionel Munaweera from Head, Business Development, Resource, Economic & Employment Development Program, British Columbia Region, A Armitage, 12 March 1986; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to District Manager, Prince George District, George Cornwell from Superintendent, R.E.E.D. Branch, Prince George District, Gary Jung, 25 July 1986.

¹⁷⁸ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to District Manager, Prince George District, G. Cornwell from Head of Band Operations, Prince George District, Blair Carlson, 4 November 1986.

and ship the rest via the reservoir and Finlay River.¹⁷⁹ At this point in time the store still had an accounts receivable totaling \$54,000 and was running a deficit. A key problem according to Indian Affairs was the ability of band members to spend their money elsewhere, thereby never really paying off their debt. Of course they blamed chief and council for not forcing a change.¹⁸⁰

A month later Indian Affairs reported that the accounts receivable were between \$65,000 and \$70,000. The only good news was that it was down from an all-time high of \$100,000. As Indian Affairs saw it three options existed with regard to the band-owned store, with only the second being viable. They could do nothing, and the store and the community would suffer, if not disappear altogether; they could hire a new store manager to try to fix the situation; or they could continue to bail out the store.¹⁸¹

Making matters worse between 21 and 22 August 1986 the band manager, store manager, and store clerks resigned. They had become polarized against the community, and reported alcohol abuse and violence as one of the reasons why they resigned.¹⁸² As noted by Indian Affairs itself, however, there was no evidence to verify these claims from other sources, and it appears that with regards to the non-band member maintenance employee and RCMP the decision to leave was unrelated to the resignations.¹⁸³ The resignations seemed somewhat halfhearted in some instances, and the band manager in question would once again be working

¹⁷⁹ It appears these weekly flights are why Stanley claims supplies were eventually brought in entirely by air. LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Education Department, Indian and Northern Affairs from Pamela [Westergaard], 20 June 1986; Stanley, 112.

¹⁸⁰ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Director, Indian Services, British Columbia Region, Myler Savill from District Manager, Prince George District, George Cornwell, 17 July 1986.

¹⁸¹ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Director, Resource, Economic and Employment Development, British Columbia Region, Lionel Munaweera from Assistant Head, Advisory Services, Resource, Economic and Employment Development, British Columbia Region, R.D. James, 20 August 1986.

¹⁸² LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Preliminary Briefing Material: Fort Ware Situation, August 26, 1986, Prepared by District Supt. of R.E.E.D.

¹⁸³ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Preliminary Briefing Material: Fort Ware Situation, August 26, 1986, Prepared by District Supt. of R.E.E.D.; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Superintendent of Resources, Economic & Employment Development, Prince George District, Gary Jung from District Social Worker, Prince George District, Bev Fowlie, 27 August 1986.

for the band in 1989.¹⁸⁴ After a field inspection, the department claimed the cause was a lack of respect for authority. In their report Indian Affairs lumps chief and council together with the band manager and RCMP in forming this conclusion, thereby ignoring a conflict that existed between Chief Emil McCook and the band manager regarding what was more important, the store or housing, as well as the separate issue of the RCMP not being seen as a legitimate authority in Fort Ware.¹⁸⁵

With regard to the store manager and clerk an Indian Affairs investigation revealed that the manager had attempted to withhold the mail of band members if it contained a cheque, so that they could apply it to their store debt. Other times they discarded or delayed mail with money in it.¹⁸⁶ Naturally, this provoked anger among community members.¹⁸⁷ Still the department was concerned that the community was not taking responsibility for its own needs, and merely blaming non-Tsek'ehne for their problems. They did acknowledge, however, that part of the problem was societal. Traditional economic activities out on the land were in conflict with regular attendance at school, especially since the teachers were paternalistic in their tone when it came to absences. Infrastructure such as running water and electrification had not affected changes in day-to-day life, and overall the department concluded it had focused too much on the material development of the community, and not enough on the social development. No mention was made of the impact of the Williston Lake reservoir.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4545-H1-610, Part 6, Letter to Gary Jung from General Administrator, Fort Ware Indian Band, Michael Metcalf, 8 October 1989.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Preliminary Briefing Material: Fort Ware Situation, August 26, 1986, Prepared by District Supt. of R.E.E.D.

¹⁸⁷ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Superintendent of Resources, Economic & Employment Development, Prince George District, Gary Jung from District Social Worker, Prince George District, Bev Fowlie, 27 August 1986.

¹⁸⁸ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Preliminary Briefing Material: Fort Ware Situation, August 26, 1986, Prepared by District Supt. of R.E.E.D.

Recommendations included increased social development aimed at bringing the community into “the modern world”, combined with less material development. The department also included a call for more communication and the avoidance of large groups of Indian Affairs officials visiting the community at once, thereby overwhelming band officials. To decrease funding the department called for a return to using the river to freight in supplies, and of the three options of closing the store and doing nothing; closing the store and pooling resources to buy groceries; and the department restoring the situation. Indian Affairs proposed the last with the caveat that the next store manager be an Indian Affairs employment.¹⁸⁹

Indian Affairs discussed these recommendations at a meeting at Prince George on 28 August 1986. Out of this meeting they proposed a plan to redirect negative energies, including the hiring of those leading the opposition to the store, better management of funds, and performance bonuses for employees. To implement this plan Indian Affairs decided to get directly further involved in the day-to-day operations of the store, and to a limited extent the band itself. It was also decided that housing funds would be re-directed into the band’s sawmill to not only provide employment, but also building materials.¹⁹⁰

Once again a new store manager was hired. In this instance, however, new did not mean brand-new and Colin Webster once again hired.¹⁹¹ Under his tenure he altered the credit system to reflect the capacity of borrowers to pay back the store and the Indian Affairs was hopeful the 1988-1989 fiscal year would be good for the store.¹⁹² When Webster left the community the store

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Letter to Director, R.E.E.D. Branch, BC Region, Lionel Munaweera from Superintendent, Resources, Economic, Employment & Development Branch, Prince George District, Gary Jung, 23 September 1986.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Memorandum: Fort Ware Visit – 21 March, 1989.

once again hit hard times and in 1990 the band rehired him.¹⁹³ This time it was requested that ICHRS funds be permitted to be used to restock the store and to serve as equity under the Aboriginal Economics Program.¹⁹⁴

By 1987 mining and forestry had finally reached Fort Ware in earnest. Already the band had received Economic Development funding to help purchase shares in Tsay Tay Forestry Limited in partnership with the Ingenika Band, Fletcher Challenger Limited and Finlay Forest Industries Limited.¹⁹⁵ (Fletcher Challenge had purchased BC Forest Products in 1987.)¹⁹⁶ To make communication easier with the non-Tsek'ene world the band also opened a branch office in Prince George in 1989.¹⁹⁷ Now it asked for further funding to hire an Economic Development Officer. This position was to enable the band to get involved in mining operations at Finbow, after Curragh Resources Limited decided to revive the lead-zinc Cirque Mine.¹⁹⁸ (The Ingenika Band demanded a full environmental impact study into the mine.)¹⁹⁹ District recommended this additional funding to regional, although there was some delay in releasing all the funding the band was entitled to, due to a failure to provide them with required information.²⁰⁰ As with

¹⁹³ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Indian & Northern Affairs from Band Manager, Fort Ware Indian Band, Keith Billington, 5 July 1990.

¹⁹⁴ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4545-H1-610, Part 6, Letter to District Superintendent, Geoff Goldie from Band Manager, Fort Ware Indian Band, Keith Billington, 23 October 1990.

¹⁹⁵ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4545-H1-610, Part 6, Letter to Gary Jung from General Administrator, Fort Ware Indian Band, Michael Metcalf, 8 October 1989.

¹⁹⁶ Catalyst, "Our History," *Catalyst: Today's Paper* <http://www.catalystpaper.com/about/history> (accessed 8 July 2015).

¹⁹⁷ Billington, 25.

¹⁹⁸ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4545-H1-610, Part 6, Letter to Gary Jung from General Administrator, Fort Ware Indian Band, Michael Metcalf, 8 October 1989.

¹⁹⁹ "Indians Want Impact Study of Mine Plan," *Prince George Citizen*, 23 May 1990.

²⁰⁰ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4545-H1-610, Part 6, Letter to Chief & Council, Fort Ware Band from Superintendent, Economic Development Program, Prince George District, 16 October 1989; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4545-H1-610, Part 6, Letter to Chief and Council, Fort Ware Band from District Superintendent, Economic Development, Prince George District, Gary Jung, 8 November 1989; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4545-H1-610, Part 6, Letter to Chief and Council, Fort Ware Band from District Superintendent, Economic Development, Prince George District, Gary Jung, 16 January 1990; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4545-H1-610, Part 6, Letter to Chief and Council, Fort Ware Band from District Superintendent, Economic Development, Prince George District, Gary Jung, 8 February 1990.

McLeod Lake, however, no treaty meant Fort Ware did not have any control over their traditional territory.

The Kaska Dena Council

While all of these problems in the community were occurring the band was making the transition from membership in the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council to the Kaska Dena Council. In 1981 Fort Ware helped form the Kaska Dena Council, in part to help fight the proposed Alaska natural gas pipeline and the Liard River project; negotiate land claims for the band; and help them deal with the Cirque Mine.²⁰¹ Representatives of Axel Wenner-Gren had earlier investigated the Liard River project as part of the Peace River project. As proposed in the 1980s it would have flooded the northern edges of Tsek'ene territory, just as the Williston reservoir flooded the southern edges. The province expected that the transmission line to the south would crisscross it.²⁰²

Why would the Fort Ware Tsek'ene join a Kaska organization, especially considering their membership in the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council? The Tsek'ehne had traditionally practiced exogamy. Aatse Davie, the founder of Fort Ware band had many daughters and his requirement to marry one was that the husband had to live with him. The dispute that resulted in Aatse Davie's group traveling throughout northern BC as the so-called Fort Grahame nomads or Oetzane resulted in some Fort Ware Tsek'ene having Kaska ancestry. Furthermore, some band

²⁰¹ By 1984 the Liard River project and Cirque Mine had been delayed. Felix Charlie; Yvonne Harris, 18-19, 21-22, 44; "Indians Claim Pipeline Route Lands," *Prince George Citizen*, 11 December 1981; Kaska Dena Council, "About the Council," *Kaska Dena Council* <http://www.kaskadenacouncil.com/kaska-dena-council/about-the-council> (accessed 15 June 2015); Kwadacha, "Treaty," *Kwadacha Nation* <http://www.kwadacha.com/#!/treaty-update/cd3v> (accessed 15 June 2015); Kaska Dena Council, *Kaska Treaty Negotiations: Building Treaty Awareness, October 2014* (Lower Post: Kaska Dena Council, 2014), 3; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; Ian Mulgrew, "Land Claim by 830 Indians Jeopardizes Major BC Projects," *The Globe and Mail*, 19 February 1982; Ian Mulgrew, "Young Indians Looking to Past to Deal with Uncertain Future;" John Poole, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 30 September 2012.

²⁰² Yvonne Harris, 50-51.

members are Kaska and the traditional territory of the two groups overlaps.²⁰³ My own research suggests the notion that one must have a single primary ethnic identity is false. In a certain sense, Fort Ware is both Tsek'ehne and Kaska.²⁰⁴

Whereas an influx of development and non-Tsek'ehne settlers, combined with a desire for control over traditional territory and employment opportunities contributed to the demand for an adhesion to Treaty 8 in McLeod Lake, the Kaska Dena merely wanted control of their traditional territory. In 1982 the council made its claim to the federal government, which it accepted the following year. Four years later it provided a statement of intent to negotiate to the province and in 1993 began negotiations under the BC Treaty Commission.²⁰⁵ As I argued in “Tse Keh Nay-European Relations and Ethnicity,” it appears to be a pragmatic solution to the issue of overlap and the connections Kwadacha has with the other Kaska nations.²⁰⁶

Fort Ware, however, was still part of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC).²⁰⁷ The band's decision to join the Kaska Dena Council was a result of the fact that as time went by they felt increasingly unrepresented by CSTC and desired to leave.²⁰⁸ When it joined the Kaska Dena Council politically Fort Ware remained tied to the Prince George district from the perspective of Indian Affairs and therefore the CSTC. A point of concern was the funding available to the band from the district as well as the devolved programs offered by the CSTC.²⁰⁹ Issues also emerged

²⁰³ Yvonne Harris, 68-70; Lanoue, “Continuity,” 119-120; George Massetoe.

²⁰⁴ Emil McCook, 5 March 2013.

²⁰⁵ Kaska Dena Council, *Kaska Treaty Negotiations*, 1-3.

²⁰⁶ Daniel Sims, “Tse Keh Nay-European Relations and Ethnicity, 1790s-2009 (MA Thesis: University of Alberta, 2010), 117.

²⁰⁷ Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC), “What is the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council,” *Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council: Newsletter* 1, no. 1 (March 1982): 4-5; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Trip Report by Business Services Officer, Blair Carlson, 23 January 1986; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; John Poole; Donny Van Somer.

²⁰⁸ Emil McCook, 5 March 2013.

²⁰⁹ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Trip Report by Business Services Officer, Blair Carlson, 23 January 1986; John Poole; Donny Van Somer.

over which council actually represented the Tsek'ene of Fort Ware. By that point in time the Kaska Dena Council had won with regard to stopping/postponing the Liard River project and mining near Fort Ware.²¹⁰ When Fort Ware confirmed it wanted to withdraw from the CSTC in early 1986, the CSTC Economic Development Review Committee passed a motion that no more district funds or programs be available for Fort Ware.²¹¹ It appears that the CSTC, who wanted to take complete control of policies and programs in the district, did not want to include non-member nations.²¹²

Conclusion

The Bennett Dam left Fort Ware more isolated than it had already been. The reservoir made traditional economic activities and living off the land difficult. This increase resulted in the cost of goods going up. Air travel was too expensive to replace water transportation on the debris filled reservoir. Therefore, supply barges still struggled through it. The hardest part was the Plug located at the mouth of the Finlay River. Even with state aid it was difficult to supply the community. At the same time Fort Ware was still predominantly Tsek'ehne. Conflicts remained with the colonial state and colonial officials. Services many Canadians take for granted were slow to come to the community. All of these factors came to a head in the mid-1970s when the high cost of living, combined with a lack of money and items to purchase, resulted in health issues. Both levels of government as well as the band made attempts to fix this situation, including trying to improve employment opportunities, but the problem did not go away, and would plague the community throughout the 1980s. As time went on, however, outside observers

²¹⁰ Yvonne Harris, 18-19, 44, 50.

²¹¹ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Chief and Council, Fort Ware Band from Business Services Officer, Resource, Economic & Employment Development Branch, Prince George District, Blair Carlson, 18 February 1986; Johnny Pierre; John Poole; Donny Van Somer.

²¹² INAC, V-2003-02158-2, Box 3, Volume 1, Band Alliances - Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, File E4200-9-2395, Letter to Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council from Chief Harry Chingee, 30 October 1990.

increasingly removed the issues from the impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, until for some it seemed they had always existed for Fort Ware. Ultimately, however, it was the dam's reservoir that further isolated the community, disrupted its main supply route, and led to these problems. As the band came to realize the enormous task of trying to deal with the impacts of the reservoir, its solution was to seek outside assistance not only from the colonial state, but through various Indigenous organizations. As we shall see, unlike Ingenika, the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council did not help Fort Ware when it came to overcoming these issues. This was yet another factor that led to the band leaving the council and joining the Kaska Dena Council.

Chapter 8 – Ingenika – Ignore the State, 1968-1990

In between Fort Ware and McLeod Lake was a reborn Ingenika. Rather than move to their reserves at Tutu Creek, Parsnip River, or even Police Meadows, beginning in 1971 members of the Ingenika Band began to relocate on their own accord to the site of Old Ingenika. They wanted the isolation that plagued Fort Ware in order to not only escape the development that engulfed McLeod Lake, but also to pursue a traditional lifestyle. They did so against the wishes of Indian Affairs, who were planning on finally relocating band members from the forestry camps near Finlay Forks. It was a direct challenge to British Columbian Aboriginal policy as the band chose to simply ignore the province's denial of their ownership to their traditional territory. It was also a challenge to Canadian Aboriginal policy as the band not only rejected the reserves negotiated for them by Ottawa, but also vehemently rejected the view that their traditional territory was included in Treaty 8. From the perspective of both Crowns they were squatters. They would remain squatters until 1990, when following a public relations campaign, the new village of Tsay Keh Dene was created. The Ingenika band had won in its decision to ignore the state and return to a more traditional way of life.

Squatters (1969-1973)

In theory Indian Affairs was open to the idea of people relocating to Ingenika Point and had even approached the province in July 1971 to acquire land there for the band.¹ Band members, however, were no longer content to wait, and on 23 August 1971 Indian Affairs was forced to inform the province that between fifty to sixty individuals had relocated without any

¹ Northern British Columbia Archives (NBCA), Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources,] "The Origin Of The Ingenika Band Of Indians And The Flooding Of Williston Lake," [1975].

form of official approval.² The province's response was to form a committee to deal with "the Ingenika situation."³ In theory Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5 had been viable alternatives to this return to Ingenika. However, as the people waited in forestry camps year after year both reserves increasingly came to be seen as forced upon the community by either Indian Affairs or a band council that many did not think ever really represented them.⁴ Many were also beginning to feel that they would be physically forced onto them and did not want to give Indian Affairs the chance to do so.⁵ On the other hand, the proposed 500 acre reserve at Ingenika Point came to be seen as compensation for everything the community had been forced to live through as a result of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam.⁶ More importantly, unlike the southern Trench, it was home, and even though all that remained of Old Ingenika was a BC Forest Service runway on the bluff above, it was around this water bomber base that the new Ingenika emerged.⁷

The first family to return was that of Alex and Sophie Poole in 1969. They felt they were being pressured to move to Tutu Creek No. 4, a place they did not see as home. They were also concerned that a city like Mackenzie would be built in their traditional territory, and that not only were they being relocated to allow for its construction, but also that the state would eventually claim it was not their traditional territory at all.⁸ And while this concern might seem unfounded,

² Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Director of Lands, W.R. Redell from Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs Duncan Clark, 23 August 1971.

³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs, Duncan Clark, 28 September 1971.

⁴ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Suzanne Veit, "Report Draft," 22 March 1977, 2.3.1.1.a.

⁵ Lena McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2013.

⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Report by Nicholas Prince, [16] April 1971.

⁷ Emil McCook seems to suggest the airstrip was constructed by the Ingenika Band, while Robert Tomah seems to suggest it was built for the band. Ingenika Band Members, interviewed by Lorraine Izony, Ingenika, BC, 25 April 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2013; Johnny Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012; Robert Tomah, "Trappers and Bushmen," *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, ed. Kaya Minogue, 81.

⁸ At first his sons Albert and William returned north. They were accompanied by Gordon Pierre, who returned in the fall to work at Finlay Forks. Rita McIsaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September 2012; Albert Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 6 November 2008; Albert Poole, "The Long Journey Home (Excerpt from Work in Progress)," *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 159, 166, passim; Helen Poole,

Ray Williston certainly argued the latter, and to this day many Elders are upset that they have had to prove where they are from or were said to be squatters during this period.⁹

When the Pooles reached Old Ingenika they found that it had been utterly destroyed. Rather than rebuild, they set up camp across the reservoir and quickly returned to a traditional way of life living off the land for the majority of their needs. For supplies they relied on Art Van Somer and that fall the family decided it was preferable to stay, and live off the land, than to return to live along the Finlay Forks access road. They abandoned the possessions they had left behind. As punishment the state cut them off from social services, such as family allowance.¹⁰

Despite this penalty, with the aid of the Van Somers other band members soon joined the Pooles. Initially many stayed temporarily, or headed to Fort Ware, but that summer at the urging of friends and family many people returned to the Point for good.¹¹ Indeed, many people wanted to go, despite the fact that the trip was dangerous and they could take only the bare necessities.¹² And while some still only wanted to relocate temporarily, the contrast between life at the Point and life in the forestry camps, combined with the fact the personal property left behind was taken or disposed of, resulted in the move becoming permanent.¹³ Still, not everyone returned to the

interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012.

⁹ Alex seems to equate traplines with land ownership. Earl Pollon and Shirlee Smith Matheson, *This Was Our Valley* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2003), 273; Alex Poole, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 6 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

¹⁰ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Lena McCook. She suggests they thought it would be intact. It was only after being flooded out at both locations that Alex moved to the Point itself.

¹¹ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Rita McIsaac.

¹² Ingenika Band Members; Vera Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012.

¹³ This included houses band members had purchased from their employers. Ingenika Band Members; Mabel Troendle, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 16 September 2008.

Point and some band members would remained in the Finlay Forks area until the mid to late 1970s.¹⁴

Returning to Ingenika allowed for the continuance of traditional economic activities and ways of life.¹⁵ (Some McLeod Lake Elders would look at the Tsay Keh Dene with envy for this reason.)¹⁶ Until 1988 there was no road to Ingenika and therefore like Fort Ware the only way to easily enter into the area was by air or barge during the summer and shipping could at times be an issue.¹⁷ Hundreds of thousands of acres surround the Point that, although technically Crown land, until recently was more or less open for them to use as they saw fit. Furthermore, even if they would eventually lose access to this land, the band hoped that the proposed 500-acre reserve at the Point would give them a larger land base than Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5 combined.¹⁸

As band members found, however, because of the reservoir things were never the same and living off the land proved harder than in the past.¹⁹ Moose and other wildlife populations tended to be lower and remaining traplines were less productive. New traplines were not always

¹⁴ Mabel Troendle's family returned in 1972, while Willie Pierre's family returned in 1976. Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012; Elsie Pierre and Mabel Troendle, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 10 November 2008; Gordon Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September 2008; Willie Pierre, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 12 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Mabel Troendle, 16 September 2008; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

¹⁵ Rose Dennis, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 20 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 9 September 2008; Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 September 2012; Rita McIsaac; Elsie Pierre and Mabel Troendle, 10 November 2008; Alex Poole, 6 October 1984; Helen Poole; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; Mabel Troendle, 16 September 2008.

¹⁶ Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Salmon Valley, BC, 1 October 2012.

¹⁷ Doug Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; Jane Inyallie, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 3 October 2012; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Letter to Chairman, Economic Development Review Committee, Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, Justa Monk from Chief Gordon Pierre, 7 June 1988; Richard Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 27 September 2012; Bob and Shirley Van Somer, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 22 March 2012.

¹⁸ Rose Dennis, 20 October 1984.

¹⁹ "History of Ingenika," *Native Voice*, 17, no. 2 (1989): 10; Mary Christina Koyl, "Cultural Chasm: A 1960s Hydro Development and the Tsay Keh Dene Native Community of Northern British Columbia" (MA Thesis: University of Victoria, 1992), 112-113; Pollon and Matheson, 276.

better not only due to these factors, but also because of their higher elevation.²⁰ Furthermore, the debris filled reservoir effectively ended the seasonal migration to find work in the south and aside from fighting forest fires there were few jobs around Ingenika.²¹

When Indian Affairs sent District Supervisor A.C. Roach to investigate on 17 August 1971, he found nine families were planning to construct cabins and stay.²² Among them was Councillor Francis Isaac, the sole band politician in the community, and they requested around \$6000 worth of aid in the form of building materials.²³ Overall Roach did not appear to be too concerned about forcing these individuals back to the Finlay Forks area and Indian Affairs even made plans to fly children to Lejac at the beginning of September.²⁴ Trapper and guide Harvey Sims, who would eventually open his own store at the Point, aided the community in their endeavor.²⁵ He had stayed at the Point as the water rose and in effect “took over the store” operated by Art Van Somer prior to 1968.²⁶ Sims and his partners also hired local Tsek’ehne to work for his guiding outfit, and for the most part community members in both Ingenika and Fort Ware fondly remember him, with Fort Ware residents recalling his store was an alternative to their own.²⁷

²⁰ Two exceptions were wolves and porcupines. Rose Dennis, 20 October 1984; Ingenika Band Members; Helen Poole; William (Billie) Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 8 September 2008; Suzanne Tomah, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 20 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

²¹ Ray Izony, “Changes in Tsay Kehnnay Dene Governance/Society;” Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

²² These cabins were often one to two rooms in size, and could contain around eight to nine family members. LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia Region from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 24 August 1971.

²³ Francis is at times referred to by his legal name of Francois. His brother, Chief Seymour Isaac, and fellow Councillor Fred Hunter were among the three to four families still living in the vicinity of Finlay Forks and employed by Carrier Lumber. LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia Region from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 24 August 1971.

²⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia Region from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 24 August 1971.

²⁵ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Johnny Pierre.

²⁶ The physical store had been destroyed by the reservoir. LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Zone Director, Northern BC, R.A. Sprenger, 27 September 1971; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

²⁷ Mabel Bird [Troendle], “Working for Andy Hagbert: Ingenika Outfitter,” *Collected Writing of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 24; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; John Poole, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 30 September 2012;

Roach's main concern was that the situation would become a media nightmare, especially if following the first frost a makeshift exodus back to 69 Mile occurred.²⁸ Citing a moral obligation to the community, he nevertheless informed Francis Isaac that since they were not living on reserve normal funding and lending was not possible.²⁹ Furthermore, as squatters they had no secure land tenure and as time went by this entire situation negatively impacted the band in ways distinct from McLeod Lake or Fort Ware, where people lived on reserve. (By 1986 the issue had even eclipsed the fact the band had received Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5.)³⁰ Nevertheless, Roach justified some level of aid due to the fact the band was "living the Indian way of life."³¹ The implication of this justification is disturbing as it meant that in order to continue receiving aid, the community was bound by whatever the department deemed an "Indian way of life." Fortunately, by the late 1970s guilt over the impacts of the Bennett Dam had become another factor justifying funding.³²

Roach was hopeful that if the province could be convinced to create a reserve at the Point, Indian Affairs could use the commitment alone to get around their self-imposed inability

Melvin Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2013; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

²⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia Region from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 24 August 1971.

²⁹ The Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council mistakenly told Harry Swain neither the Ingenika Band nor the Mesilinka Band had reserves and therefore could not get capital funding. Legally both were one band and they still owned Police Meadows No. 2, Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5. The issue was that they did not live on these reserves. Yvonne Harris describes it as a reluctance to fund. Former chief Emil McCook recalls Fort Ware had issues over funding due to the village not being contained within the legal reserve. Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, *Presentation to Harry Swain, Deputy Minister, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, August 16, 1988, Ingenika, British Columbia* (Prince George: Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, 1988), 9; Yvonne Harris, "Choices for Change: A Study of the Fort Ware Indian Band and Implications of Land Settlements for Northern Indian Bands" (MA Thesis: University of British Columbia, 1984), 24-25; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia Region from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 24 August 1971; LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Director of Lands from District Supervisor, Lakes District, A.C. Roach, 27 July 1973; Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012.

³⁰ Bev Christensen, "Native Rights: Erasmus Challenges Band," *Prince George Citizen*, 25 July 1986.

³¹ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 8 November 1971.

³² Guy Lanoue, "Continuity and Change: The Development of Political Self-Definition Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia" (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1983), 36.

to spend money on the band. Until then the province could provide aid. When he contacted the provincial Department of Rehabilitation and Social Improvement about aid, however, the department told him funding options were limited and aside from welfare it would remain limited throughout much of the history of Ingenika.³³ With regard to creating a new reserve, the Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources wanted to know what land the band would surrender in exchange for a reserve at the Point.³⁴ In response Roach told Indian Affairs that the band did not think it should have to surrender any land, as the new reserve was compensation for the impacts of the reservoir. It was with this apparent understanding that at a meeting on 15 September 1971 BC Hydro, the Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, Indian Affairs, and the Ingenika Band decided that a 400 to 500-acre reserve east of the runway at Ingenika Point was preferable due to the runway and store. Despite this agreement, Roach believed it would take some time to create a reserve.³⁵ In the meanwhile the BC Region of Indian Affairs agreed to purchase supplies for those already living there.³⁶ It is hotly debated whether they actually reached the community, with Indian Affairs maintaining they delivered them under budget and band members claiming they either never received them or that they were lost and/or ruined.³⁷ As a result, as far as many band members are concerned they constructed their cabins

³³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia Region from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 24 August 1971.

³⁴ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs, Duncan Clark from Administrative Assistive Assistant for Director of Lands, G.A. Rhoades, 25 August 1971.

³⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 8 September 1971; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Superintendent of Community Affairs from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 20 September 1971.

³⁶ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to District Supervisor, Lakes District from Regional Director, British Columbia Region, Larry Wight, 16 September 1971.

³⁷ Marj Gray, "Displaced by Lake:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 25 January 1972; Ray Izony, "Changes;" LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 8 November 1971.

with the supplies at hand and not state aid.³⁸ The larger disagreement, though, was over the creation of a new reserve that harkened back to the Aboriginal lands dispute following union in 1871.

One of the first issues to emerge was the size of a new reserve at the Point. Following the 15 September meeting Indian Affairs prepared a petition requesting the proposed reserve that Francis Isaac was supposed to get band members at the Point to sign. (They planned a similar petition for those still living along the Finlay Forks access road following meetings with Chief Seymour Isaac and Councillor Fred Hunter.)³⁹ The group at Ingenika, however, rejected it and instead requested a reserve 25,600 acres in size.⁴⁰ Rather than talk to them about this apparent change, Roach instead informed Chief Seymour Isaac of the request, and when Isaac “disapproved” of it, used this “rejection” to conclude that it was due to an outside influence.⁴¹

The Land Branch’s response to Indian Affairs that due to the uncertain nature of the area of the proposed reserve they could do nothing at the moment. Either way, they wanted to know what land the band would exchange for the new reserve. When reminded that the band felt they did not need to exchange the land because they viewed the new reserve as compensation, the province responded that it would look into whether there was any reason to compensate them.⁴²

³⁸ Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, “Ingenika,” *Yinka Dene News* 7th ed., September 1990; Bev Christensen, “Bright Christmas:..., *Prince George Citizen*, 21 December 1987; Bev Christensen, “Progress Comes Slowly at Ingenika Point,” *Prince George Citizen*, 19 September 1987.

³⁹ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Superintendent of Community Affairs from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 20 September 1971.

⁴⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Petition from Councillor Francis Isaac, 17 September 1971; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 22 September 1971.

⁴¹ Storeowner Bill Bloor argued a proper reserve should be 50,000 acres in the documentary *CBC Hourglass*. It is unknown if he ever told any Tsek’ehne his views. LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 22 September 1971; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs, Duncan Clark, 7 October 1971; *Tsay Keh Dene: CBC Hourglass Documentary*. CBC Television, 1970.

⁴² LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs, Duncan Clark, 28 September 1971.

Adding injury to insult, when they inspected the village site in October 1971 they informed Indian Affairs that they did not think the site was suitable for settlement due to soil conditions, and asked for confirmation that the band actually wanted a reserve there.⁴³

While this conflict was emerging a third state agency become involved in the matter. On 24 September 1971 Zone Director R.A. Sprenger of the Department of National Health and Welfare inspected the settlement. He found fifty-two residents at the Point, with thirteen away at Lejac Residential School, who the Sims, the Van Somers, and storeowner Bill Bloor from Finlay Forks supplied. Outside communication was provided during the forest fire season by a BC Forest Service radio used to report weather from the tanker base and it was expected Harvey Sims would bring in a Northern Mountain Air radio that fall to allow for flights throughout the year. Mennonite missionaries Tom and Wanda Buerge operated another radio. Tom Buerge informed Sprenger that the Tsek'ehne found Ingenika preferable to 69 Mile, Tutu Creek No. 4, or Parsnip River No. 5 because not only were they and their ancestors from the area, their ancestors were buried there, the hunting was better, and they were less likely to lose their kids to child protective services as at McLeod Lake. Indeed, the community thought things were so favourable that it was expected those families still in the Finlay Forks area would one day move to Ingenika.⁴⁴

As a result of these meetings Sprenger not only made Tom Buerge the lay dispenser of medical service, but also pledged to help the community by having a nurse sent up once a month, a doctor at least once every two months, and constructing a health station in the community. He was concerned about the living conditions at Ingenika and the rate of hospital admittance for

⁴³ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs, Duncan Clark from Administrative Assistant for Director of Lands, G.A. Rhoades, 5 October 1971.

⁴⁴ Sprenger refers to him as Harry Sims. LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Zone Director, Northern BC, R.A. Sprenger, 27 September 1971.

children in the community in recent months.⁴⁵ He discovered the band drew water from the reservoir and cooked food on open fires.⁴⁶ Furthermore, since no one knew how high the reservoir would go, some band members had built their cabins below the maximum flood line, only to be flooded out again, and despite plans to construct nine cabins, only one had been constructed so far, that of the Buerges.⁴⁷ In response to Sprenger's report the Medical Service declared an emergency situation, and approved the purchase of modular units and building supplies to set up the health station. They hoped Indian Affairs would help fund the purchase of supplies and requested further information about the food, radio, and flood situation.⁴⁸

Unbeknownst to Sprenger and the Medical Service, Indian Affairs had already decided to send aid on 16 September, and by November nine cabins were completed. (By December there would be eleven cabins, although there was a concern some were too close the reservoir and might slough in.)⁴⁹ Indian Affairs did not like this interference from Health and Welfare, and based on the claimed disapproval of the chief, stated the appointment of Tom Buerge was ill advised. Nevertheless, the fact the federal Department of Health and Welfare was offering aid prompted Indians Affairs into accepting responsibility for the band rather than just leaving the matter to the province.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ During the winter it could be hard to find liquid water and people sometimes had to cut multiple holes in the ice before being successful. Ingenika Band Members; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Zone Director, Northern BC, R.A. Sprenger, 27 September 1971; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

⁴⁷ Ingenika Band Members; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Zone Director, Northern BC, R.A. Sprenger, 27 September 1971; Alex Poole, 6 October 1984; Sophie Poole, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 6 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

⁴⁸ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Medical Services Regional Director, 4 October 1971.

⁴⁹ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Economic Development from District Supervisor, Lakes District, A.C. Roach, 17 December 1971.

⁵⁰ LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Regional Superintendent of Community Affairs, Duncan Clark, 7 October 1971.

It was at this moment in time that the band made its largest proposal for a new reserve. Following a meeting in Ingenika on 16 December 1971 the band produced a map outlining the lands they wanted as a reserve. (See Map 2) Although not precise per se, the band wanted an area whose boundary roughly started where the Davis River enters the Williston Lake reservoir; then up the Davis and around Mt. Grahame; then up the valley of Grahame Creek and other creeks entering the reservoir the east side of the reservoir to Deserter's Peak; around Deserter's Peak and west to Pelly Creek (encompassing Pelly Lake); then south following Pelly Creek to the Ingenika River; then following the Ingenika River to the same latitude of the Ingenika Mine (Ingenika Crag); then overland south to the Swannell River; following it south to where it turns west near Mt. Lay; then continuing south through the valley where the Helicopter Lakes are to Blackpine Lake; then following the Mesilinka River eastward to where it turns south of Carina Lake; then overland back to where Davis River entered the Williston Lake Reservoir.⁵¹ The province estimated this area covered some 716,000 acres.⁵² Of note was the fact that originally the proposed area would have simply gone southeast from the Ingenika at the same latitude as the Ingenika Mine to where the Mesilinka turns south of Carina Lake, but the band changed the boundary due to their interest in the area. (See dotted line on Map 2) Besides seeing it as compensation for the devastation of the Williston Lake reservoir, the community justified the area because it contained historic hunting grounds, and they needed it to allow for traditional economic activities in the future. District Supervisor Roach suggested Indian Affairs make this proposal to the province prior to obtaining a formal BCR to get their reaction.⁵³

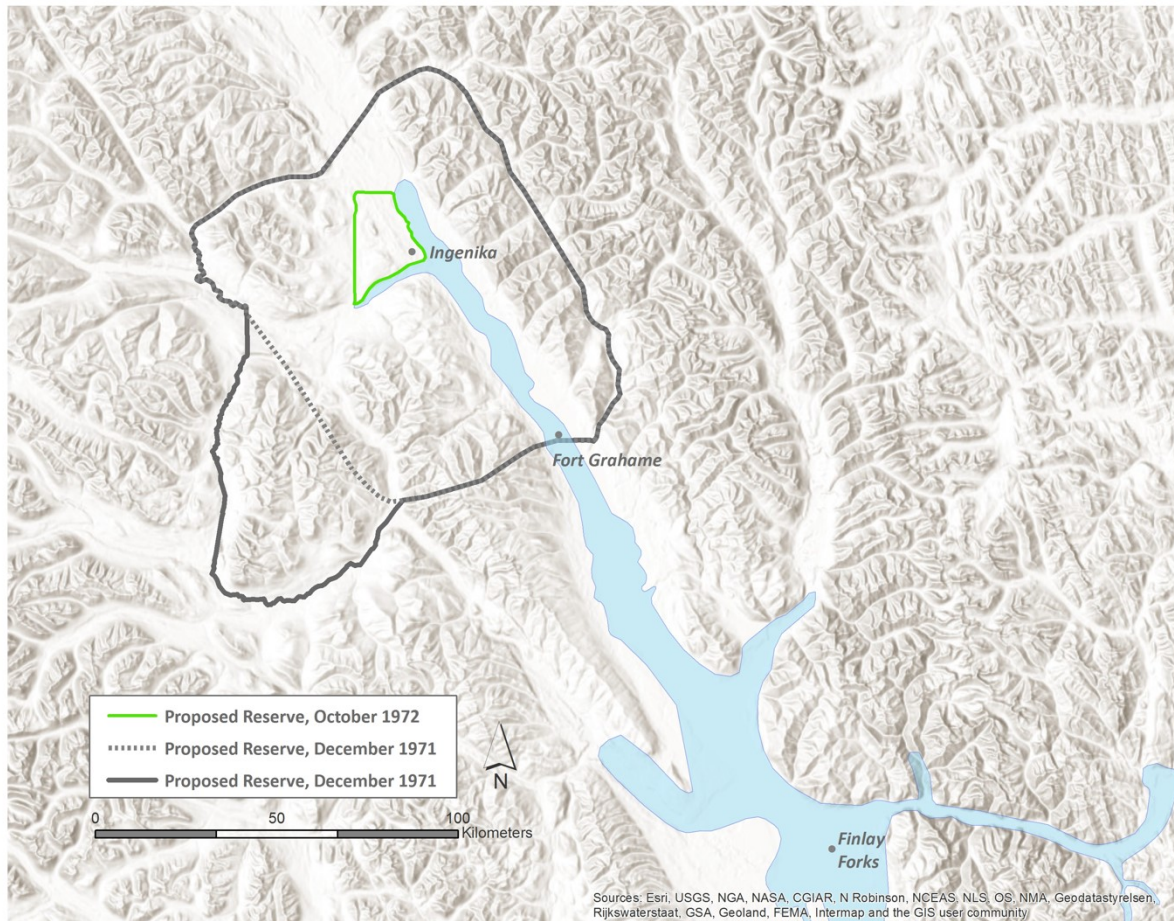
⁵¹ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Economic Development from District Supervisor, Lakes District, A.C. Roach, 17 December 1971.

⁵² NBCA, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources.]

⁵³ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Economic Development from District Supervisor, Lakes District, A.C. Roach, 17 December 1971.

Map 2

Reserve Proposals Made by the Ingenika Band in December 1971 and October 1972



Source: Map made by Lacey Fleming. LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Economic Development from District Supervisor, Lakes District, A.C. Roach, 17 December 1971; LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Ingenika Band Council Resolution, 5 October 1972.

Not surprisingly the province politely told Indian Affairs that this request was unrealistic, and they would not entertain it. (The largest reserve in Canada, Blood No. 148, is only 331,844.98 acres.) They also reminded Indian Affairs that Indian Affairs had exchanged Finlay Forks No. 1 at Fort Grahame for Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5 and therefore they would only discuss the matter further after being informed what lands the band would surrender for a new reserve.⁵⁴ A later report would note there was no basis for even entertaining a reserve of that size, especially when it came to administration.⁵⁵

The following year the last vestiges of Finlay Forks disappeared as the reservoir reached its full elevation and the waters dispersed the rump community.⁵⁶ The dreams of Finparpea were over. That May Chief Isaac had predicted that the last Tsek'ehne there would either go to Ingenika Point or Parsnip River Reserve No. 5. For his own part, he felt that that fall he would either move to continue working with Carrier Lumber or else relocate to the Point.⁵⁷ (He and District Supervisor Roach were unsure about the future of the band given the spatial divide between these two communities.)⁵⁸ In the end Chief Isaac relocated to Parsnip River No. 5 and by August it was reported only six adults were residing at Finlay Forks.⁵⁹

Seemingly unaware of this concern about the unity of the band or the impasse between the provincial and federal governments, Councillor Francis Isaac decided to write Mackenzie MLA Isabel Dawson to see if she could help the band get a reserve at Ingenika Point. Rather than respond to Councillor Isaac herself, however, Dawson forwarded the letter to the Lands

⁵⁴ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Supervisor of Lands, P.J. Clark from Administrative Assistant for Director of Lands, G.A. Rhoades, 14 January 1972.

⁵⁵ NBCA, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources.]

⁵⁶ Felix Charlie, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2012.

⁵⁷ At this point in time Tsek'ehne from all three communities were still employed by the company. Gray, "Finlay Forks Indians Gone by Fall;" Robert Inyallie, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012.

⁵⁸ Gray, "Finlay Forks Indians Gone by Fall."

⁵⁹ Felix Charlie; Gray, "They're Leaving the Forks."

Branch, whose response was that they were still not sure if the band wanted a reserve at the Point and that they would therefore contact him.⁶⁰ The province also forwarded a copy of the letter to Indian Affairs, who replied that they needed to consult with the band further on the matter.⁶¹ Of course by this point in time Indian Affairs and the province had both consulted with those living at Ingenika, and received requests for land. The only thing that was missing was a band council resolution (BCR).⁶²

On 5 October 1972, despite the fact Chief Seymour Isaac was not in attendance, Indian Affairs held a meeting at Ingenika to discuss the matter and obtain a BCR.⁶³ At the meeting the band reiterated that it saw the new reserve as compensation and not an exchange. In an attempt to appease both the band and the province, Indian Affairs decided to reduce the size of the reserve requested, and work to get the province to accept it.⁶⁴ To this end a BCR was obtained that stated the band wanted a reserve that commenced at the high water mark where the Ingenika River entered the reservoir; along the shoreline east and then north to where Ed Bird Creek entered the reservoir; then due west to the longitude where the Ingenika River entered the reservoir; and then

⁶⁰ Mike Halleran tells Francis Isaac in *CBC Hourglass* that in a democratic society like Canada people can contact the government to get things changed, but it is unclear if this statement influenced him to write MLA Dawson. *CBC Hourglass*; LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Francis Isaac from Assistant Director of Lands, A.F. Smith, 29 August 1972.

⁶¹ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Director of Lands from Supervisor of Lands, British Columbia Region, N.E. Whitehead for S.R. Colwill, 15 September 1972.

⁶² LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Superintendent of Economic Development from District Supervisor, Lakes District, A.C. Roach, 17 December 1971.

⁶³ Guy Lanoue claims a meeting was held on 15 September 1972 and a BCR acquired. I could not find any evidence for this meeting or BCR outside of his dissertation. Based on a letter dated 15 September it appears that he was referring to this meeting. Lanoue, "Continuity," 386; LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Director of Lands from Supervisor of Lands, British Columbia Region, N.E. Whitehead for S.R. Colwill, 15 September 1972; LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Ingenika Band Council Resolution, 5 October 1972; LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Supervisor of Lands, British Columbia Region from Development Officer, R.M. McIntyre, 11 October 1972.

⁶⁴ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Supervisor of Lands, British Columbia Region from Development Officer, R.M. McIntyre, 11 October 1972.

due south.⁶⁵ (See Map 2) This was an estimated 44,160 acres and it was felt that even at this size the reserve would allow the band to become self-sufficient through various economic activities.⁶⁶

When Indian Affairs approached the province, however, they took issue with the fact the report of the meeting referred to reserves being flooded and the province asked Indian Affairs to send them the names and size of reserves as well as the number of individuals living on each. The province thought perhaps the size was, or should have been, based on the terms of Treaty 8.⁶⁷ This change in response seems to have been a result of the election of a New Democrat government in the summer of 1972, although ultimately the only major difference in handling the issue was that rather than say no, the NPD would simply not respond. Despite sending the requested information to the province on 11 October 1972, Indian Affairs had not received a reply as of 28 March 1973, at which time they contacted Chief Isaac to inform him of the status of the request and noted the province's comments regarding Treaty 8.⁶⁸

All the while Ingenika was growing in size and its residents were becoming more and more upset over the failure to have a reserve created. In May 1973 Councillor Francis Isaac even implored Indian Affairs to take the matter to a higher authority so that they could deal with the issue once and for all.⁶⁹ This prompted yet another letter from Indian Affairs to the province

⁶⁵ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Ingenika Band Council Resolution, 5 October 1972.

⁶⁶ NBCA, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources.]

⁶⁷ This directly contradicts "The Origin of the Ingenika Band of Indians and the Flooding of Williston Lake," which claims the response was to ask for a land exchange. The report seems to be referring to the eventual August 1973 offer of exchange discussed later. LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Supervisor of Lands, British Columbia Region, S.R. Colwill from R.W. Digby for Director of Lands, 1 December 1972; NBCA, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources.]

⁶⁸ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Chief Seymour Isaac from Development Officer, Lakes District, R.M. McIntyre, 28 March 1973.

⁶⁹ By this time there were a reported forty-eight band members living at Ingenika, with twelve cabins. LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Chief Seymour Isaac from Development Officer, Lakes District, R.M. McIntyre, 28 March 1973; LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Supervisor of Lands from Development Officer, R.M. McIntyre, 28 March 1973; LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter from Francis Isaac, 12 May 1973.

regarding the matter.⁷⁰ When the province responded with the same old answer, Indian Affairs attempted to sway them on the matter by explaining the history of the band prior to and since the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir, noting currently there were fifty-six people (sixteen families) at Ingenika and forty-eight (fourteen families) at Parsnip River.⁷¹ Still the province would not move. In taking stock of the entire situation as of July 1973 Indian Affairs concluded jurisdictional issues between the province and the federal government complicated the matter.⁷² The following month the province once again made its offer to exchange reserve land.⁷³

This complete stonewalling by the province was taking its toll among Indian Affairs officials. In an act of frustration and possibly anger, a handwritten memorandum bemoaning the continued lack of cooperation from the province can be found in Indian Affairs records calling for the federal government to simply seize land at the Point for the band.⁷⁴ Not surprisingly they did not take this extraconstitutional step and continued to try to negotiate with the province.⁷⁵ It was decided to push the idea that the Ingenika Band was a signatory of Treaty 8 and therefore in need of a much larger reserve.⁷⁶ Indian Affairs even drafted a band council resolution to validate this decision.⁷⁷ They rejected this approach, however, once it was determined that the band did not fall under the terms of the treaty because they had not initially signed it, had not been

⁷⁰ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Director of Lands: Lands Branch, Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources from District Real Estate Officer, Lakes District, R.M. McIntyre, 17 May 1973.

⁷¹ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Director of Lands from District Real Estate Officer, Lakes District, R.M. McIntyre, 4 June 1973.

⁷² LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Director of Lands from District Supervisor, Lakes District, A.C. Roach, 27 July 1973.

⁷³ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to District Supervisor, Lakes District, A.C. Roach from Assistant Director of Lands, A.F. Smith, 21 August 1973.

⁷⁴ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Note from [R.M. McIntyre,] 7 September 1973.

⁷⁵ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from L.E. Wight, 5 September 1973; LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, L.E. Wight from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 10 September 1973; LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Regional Director – British Columbia Region, Larry Wight, 11 September 1973.

⁷⁶ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Regional Director – British Columbia Region, Larry Wight, 21 September 1973.

⁷⁷ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Ingenika Band Council Resolution, [unsigned].

recognized during the McKenna-McBride commission as falling under it, and adhesions to historic treaties were against policy at the time. Therefore Indian Affairs recommended that the band exchange Police Meadows No. 2 for additional land.⁷⁸ It went hand in hand with attempts to get a meeting between the band council, provincial leaders, and Indian Affairs premised on the fact up to this point in time requests for reserve land had gone no further than the provincial Director of Lands as well as renewed attempts to discuss how it related to the terms of Treaty 8.⁷⁹

The Death of Parsnip River No. 5

While Indian Affairs was fighting to create a reserve at Ingenika Point, the reserve on the Parsnip River was dying. In many way Parsnip River No. 5 seemed to be quite promising. Since it was a reserve it was eligible for Indian Affairs funding and it promised services not available at Ingenika. Indeed, BC Hydro hooked up electrical service within three months of the first families moving onto it, and Indian Affairs hoped the reserve would soon have running water too.⁸⁰

At first one might think the five families that moved onto Parsnip No. 5 did so to benefit from these services. It appears that they lived on reserve primarily to maintain employment in the area, and among them were some Fort Ware band members, who returned home when the

⁷⁸ This process seems to have started with the publishing of a new schedule of Indian reserves in 1972. It sparked a dispute between region and district over which band owned the reserve that region won. This can be seen in a series of letters found in LAC, RG 10, Box 1, file 985/19-4-609 starting on 13 November 1973. Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC), *Schedule of Indian Reserves and Settlements* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs, 1972), 124, 128, 174; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia Region, L.E. Wight from Acting Director, Indian Eskimo Economic Development Branch, J.W. Evans, 13 November 1973.

⁷⁹ The entire process started with a series letter on 5 December 1973 in LAC, RG 10, Box, File 985/19-4-609. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Regional Supervisor of Lands, British Columbia Region from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 5 December 1973.

⁸⁰ Contrary to what individuals like Keith Billington suggest, the new reserve was not initially on a paved road with running water and electricity. Keith Billington, *Tse-loh-ne (The People at the End of the Rocks): Journey Down the Davie Trail* (Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, Inc., 2012), 66-67; Gray, "Displaced by Lake."

reserve dispersed.⁸¹ This high level of employment naturally provided an excellent opportunity for the news media to compare it with Ingenika and they even suggested that living location made all the difference when it came to whether one was employed.⁸² Inversely, they also claimed that the primary difference was a lack of proper training, and one should note that the same article also states that everyone was happy with the situation and band Chief Isaac thought Indian Affairs was doing everything it could.⁸³

One of the biggest benefits of this reserve over Ingenika disappeared in December 1971 when the school at Finlay Forks closed as result of the winding down of work connected to the dam.⁸⁴ For those Tsek'ehne children in attendance, the most likely alternative was going to Lejac Residential School, something that was equally true for children at Ingenika. (In theory Parsnip River No. 5 had the option of sending children to the McLeod Lake elementary school, but even the McLeod Lake Tse'khene did not start seriously sending their children to the same school until 1973.)⁸⁵

When a storm caused a plane carrying students from Ingenika home for Christmas to go down on 21 December 1972, it tipped the educational equilibrium in Ingenika's favor. All of the children survived, but as a result of the crash Tsay Keh Dene Elder Jean Isaac began to write to Victoria to try to get the community its own day school.⁸⁶ She was not alone in this desire, but

⁸¹ Felix Charlie.

⁸² It appears that the only reason Gray she did not overtly make this conclusion was that those employed on Parsnip River No. 5 left the reserve during the work week to live closer to the jobsite. Gray, "Displaced by Lake."

⁸³ It appears reason Gray claims the latter is because her sources for these claims were District Supervisor A.C. Roach and Nick Prince, who had a vested interest in making sure everyone was happy. It ignores the fact Chief Isaac had gone on national television in 1970 complaining about how Indian Affairs only acted if the band put pressure on them. *CBC Hourglass*; Gray, "Finlay Forks Indians Gone by Fall."

⁸⁴ "Plant Operation," *Prince George Citizen*, 3 December 1971.

⁸⁵ Gray, "Displaced by Lake."

⁸⁶ Rose Dennis, "Plane Crash," *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 83; Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 19 September 2012; "Pilot, Children Walk 4 Miles Through Storm," *Prince George Citizen*, 27 December 1972; Albert Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 11 September 2012; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

the best Indian Affairs was willing to do was pay tuition if the band provided its own school and teachers.⁸⁷ The band took this offer and ran with it. By that September it had made arrangements for a teacher and were constructing their own school.⁸⁸ The school opened in October, and for a while was the only building in the community to have electrical lights. (The school enrolled twenty-seven students, although only twenty-three were Tsek'ehne.)⁸⁹ Band members helped operate the school, and after this point in time no more students from Ingenika attended the Lejac Residential School.⁹⁰ The only downside was that in order for children to regularly attend the school their parents had to stay in the village, thereby restricting their ability to live off the land.⁹¹

The new houses on Parsnip River No. 5 also proved to not be as big of an advantage as might be initially thought as issues emerged with them during the first winter.⁹² Prior to the first five families moving onto the reserve, Regional Engineer W.G. Robinson stressed the need of proper maintenance of the plumbing system in each house.⁹³ (It should be noted this was not for running water per se, which was not installed until 1973.)⁹⁴ Yet when Indian Affairs had the houses built, they did not have them properly insulated and/or vented. As a result, if a new

⁸⁷ Jean Isaac, 19 September 2012; LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Director of Lands from District Supervisor, Lakes District, A.C. Roach, 27 July 1973; LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Director from District Supervisor, Lakes District, A.C. Roach, 28 August 1973; LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Regional Director – British Columbia Region, Larry Wight, 21 September 1973.

⁸⁸ It would later be claimed the school was constructed in 1971. Jean Isaac, 19 September 2012; LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Memorandum from Regional Director – British Columbia Region, Larry Wight, 21 September 1973; NBCA, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources;] Albert Poole, 11 September 2012.

⁸⁹ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, G.A. Rhoades, "Report on Ingenika Band of Indians in Occupation of Crown Lands at Ingenika River," 18 April 1974.

⁹⁰ Jean Isaac seems to suggest no one attended from the community after 1970, but it appears this is a non-specific date given her involvement in the creation of the new school. Jean Isaac, "Sekani History," *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 66; Ray Izony, "Changes," Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

⁹¹ Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012.

⁹² Johnny Pierre.

⁹³ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Superintendent, Lakes District from Regional Engineer, BC Engineer, W.F. Robinson, 8 September 1971.

⁹⁴ "Legals: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development," *Prince George Citizen*, 24 April 1973.

resident left the attic doors open, the heat of the house would melt snow on the roof, which then froze, creating an ice dam that resulted in future melted snow working its way underneath the shingles, and causing roof leaks. Of course, when one family did leave the attic door open during the first winter, Indian Affairs blamed them for not properly maintaining the house.⁹⁵ Making matters worse, when running water was eventually installed it too was not properly insulated, and as a result residents had to travel 2½ miles to get water during the winter.⁹⁶

These issues with the houses meant that they were little better than the cabins at the Point, with the exception that at the latter there was a band-run school. As a result, just as people abandoned the forestry camps near Finlay Forks, so too did they abandon Parsnip River Reserve No. 5.⁹⁷ In 1974 with the exception of two families everyone left Parsnip River No. 5.⁹⁸ By 1975 they too had left, and the band completely abandoned the reserve.⁹⁹ Like their relatives these individuals hoped that the move would allow them to return to traditional economic activities where band members trapped in the winter and came south in the summer to work. In response, Chief Isaac contacted Indian Affairs to inquire about what was going to happen with the houses and reserve.¹⁰⁰ He recommended moving the former to Police Meadow No. 2 and surrendering Parsnip River No. 5 to increase the size of the reserve. Given the cost of moving them, however,

⁹⁵ LAC, RG 10 Volume 11957, File 985/19-4-27, Letter to Regional Engineer from District Supervisor, A.C. Roach, 18 February 1972.

⁹⁶ Johnny Pierre.

⁹⁷ Georgina Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Bill Graham, "8,000 Acres Sought:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 10 April 1974; Al Inyallie, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; Seymour Isaac, 12 March 2012.

⁹⁸ Graham, "8,000 Acres Sought:...", LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Vernon Rhymer from Seymour Isaac, 18 September 1975; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2012.

⁹⁹ In 1977 it was reported one to two families still lived on the reserve. When the McGregor Diversion was proposed, the 1978 *Parsnip Review* noted that the reserve would be affected, but that no one lived there. Ray Izony, "Changes;" Bentley LeBaron, *Parsnip Review* (Ottawa: McLeod Lake Indian Band and Department of Indian Affairs, 1978), x, 23; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Suzanne Veit, "Meeting with Ingenika Band," Ingenika Point, 21 March 1977.

¹⁰⁰ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Vernon Rhymer from Seymour Isaac, 18 September 1975.

Indian Affairs recommended simply selling them to individuals willing to move them off reserve.¹⁰¹

In this letter Chief Isaac also gave Indian Affairs his assessment of why Parsnip River No. 5 failed. According to him the reserve was a mistake.¹⁰² Like the logging camps near Finlay Forks it was too close to town and alcohol was a problem.¹⁰³ (Ingenika on the other hand was officially dry at the time).¹⁰⁴ He felt the only reason people had moved there was to see if they were wrong about it. As it turned out, however, the soil was poor, there was too much competition from other hunters, and none of the residents had, or could get, traplines near it. Remaining traplines were north of Finlay Forks, often close to the Ingenika Point.¹⁰⁵

Ideal Indians (1974-1979)

By 1974 Chief Isaac was losing his influence in the band, in no small part due to the spatial division between the Point and Parsnip River No. 5. At a meeting in Ingenika on 16 January it was resolved that Police Meadows No. 2 should be used for agriculture; that the Ingenika Band should be divided into two bands, one at Ingenika and one at Parsnip River; that the former should receive a new reserve; and that the school at Ingenika should continue operating.¹⁰⁶ Unlike in 1970 Indian Affairs did not support this proposed division.¹⁰⁷ More importantly with most residents of Parsnip River reserve moving to the Point the spatial division

¹⁰¹ In the letter Chief Isaac admits he is not sure about the total size and the numbers he uses are not correct. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Vernon Rhymer from Seymour Isaac, 18 September 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Seymour Isaac from District Real Estate Officer, Lakes District, R.M. McIntyre, 2 October 1975.

¹⁰² LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Vernon Rhymer from Seymour Isaac, 18 September 1975.

¹⁰³ Georgina Chingee; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Vernon Rhymer from Seymour Isaac, 18 September 1975; Mabel Troendle, 16 September 2008.

¹⁰⁴ Vera Poole, "Williston Lake," 33.

¹⁰⁵ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Vernon Rhymer from Seymour Isaac, 18 September 1975.

¹⁰⁶ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Ingenika Band Meeting, 16 January 1974.

¹⁰⁷ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Francis Isaac from District Supervisor, Lakes District, A.C. Roach, 8 February 1974.

was no longer an issue. This change did, however, make the issue of creating a reserve at the Point more important. In February, in an attempt to sway the province into allowing for the creation of a reserve larger than the total acreage that could be surrendered at Tutu Creek, Councillor Francis Isaac personally wrote a letter to the provincial Land Branch arguing that a larger reserve would allow for not only a better way of life, but also economic development. This meant that fewer band members would be on welfare and the cost to the province of providing that service would go down.¹⁰⁸

Within a month Indian Affairs organized another meeting at the Point between them, the province, and the band. At it band members not only made it known that they were planning on relocating up river in the spring to a place between 2 Mile and 8 Mile creeks, but also presented their grievances against the provincial and federal governments. While acknowledging the exchange of Finlay Forks No. 1 for Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5, they argued no one had properly consulted them regarding the matter and as a result they no longer had a real land base or home in the northern Rocky Mountain Trench (the Trench).¹⁰⁹ With regard to the former the key word is “properly” as although many Elders recalled meetings taking place where state officials provided tidbits of information, none considered it actual consultation. This situation had resulted in a problem as even though legally only 168 acres of reserve land had been flooded, the Ingenika band (like other Tsek’ehne bands) had in fact lost the ability to use more much land in the Trench. Furthermore, they criticized the compensation they had received for traplines and private property for not being in kind.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to G.A. Rhoades from Francis Isaac, 22 February 1974.

¹⁰⁹ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Rhoades, “Report on Ingenika Band...”

¹¹⁰ The key word is “properly.” As noted many Elders recall meetings and hearing something, but to this day they do consider this to be proper consultation. “History of Ingenika,” 9; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Rhoades, “Report on Ingenika Band...”

BC Hydro's response was that they believed they had done everything for the Ingenika Band that the law required them to do. They also pointed out that as far as they were concerned Indian Affairs had created the two new reserves in good faith, with their location based on a desire for access to provincial roadways, schools, state social services, and employment opportunities. (As noted, although officially the Finlay River Band and Indians Affairs had "determined" these requirements, it is unclear how genuine the Finlay River Band's input into the decision actually was.) And while they failed to mention that the actual transference did not occur until three years after the reservoir began to flood, they did note that they had paid compensation for affected traplines.¹¹¹ As we shall see, compensation was limited to actual flooding.

The following day the province and Indian Affairs held a second meeting in Prince George regarding the creation of a reserve at the Point and how this change would affect which level of government provided funding and services to the band. Once again the province repeated the condition that the creation of a new reserve would require the surrender of an existing one. This time, however, they stated they were willing to exchange Tutu Creek No. 4 for a reserve between 2 Mile and 8 Mile creeks pending a review of road access needs and other interests in the land.¹¹² (At the time the province estimated the 92 acres at Tutu Creek No. 4 were worth \$56 million, which equated to around 450 to 500 acres near the Point.)¹¹³ They also indicated a willingness to take into account social and environmental disruptions caused by the reservoir, pending studies, as well as future needs. They proposed that not only should they take steps to include the band in the forestry industry, either through contracts or direct license, but also it

¹¹¹ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Rhoades, "Report on Ingenika Band...."

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ NBCA, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources.]

should be looked into whether the province could create a buffer zone around the new reserve protecting harvesting privileges from future developments.¹¹⁴

As a result of both meetings creating a new reserve “officially” became the top priority for Indian Affairs and the province, pending the surrender of Tutu Creek and a review of other interests in the land.¹¹⁵ There would also be more Tsek’ehne involvement when it came to decision making and both levels of government on conducting studies to help the community economically. The federal government also recommended that the province amend their legislation regarding compensation to take into account intangible things.¹¹⁶

It seemed the province was willing to move on the issue. What explains the sudden change in provincial policy? It appears it was a result of the band lobbying officials outside of Indian Affairs. Councillor Isaac had earlier written both the local MLA and the provincial Lands Branch in an attempt to move negotiations forward. Now in April 1974 federal Member of Parliament Frank Oberle took an interest in the matter, meeting with band members both at Ingenika and in Vanderhoof or Prince George. There was just one small problem. Oberle admired those living at Ingenika for being authentically Indian in their lifestyle and economic activities, and not drinking. As a result he argued that they should receive more than 8,000 acres (their claimed amount) under the terms of Treaty 8.¹¹⁷ Oberle’s involvement marks the beginning

¹¹⁴ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Rhoades, “Report on Ingenika Band...;”

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ For example, when a study on the resource requirements of Fort Ware and Ingenika bands was proposed in May 1974 region made sure close communication was maintained between Indian Affairs officials and the bands. The letter refers to “the Findlay and Fort Ware Indian Bands.” It appears Findlay refers to the Ingenika Band. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Director, Environment and Land Committee Secretariat, A.D. Crerar from Regional Director, British Columbia Region, L.E. Wight, 27 May 1974; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Rhoades, “Report on Ingenika Band...;”

¹¹⁷ It is unclear where Oberle got this number from. At 120 members the band would be entitled to around 15,000 under Treaty 8 and it does not seem to match any of the bands previous claims. Private citizen James Fenton would attribute this idealized life to Christianity. James Fenton, “Letters to Editor: A Model,” *Prince George Citizen*, 11 February 1975; Graham, “8,000 Acres Sought.”

of a period in which many supporters of the band presented them as “ideal Indians.” This representation of the band as a rationale for why it desired a reserve is problematic as it was contingent on band members being so-called “model” Indians. If they did falter by drinking, for example, it could be used against them to invalidate their demands for a reserve.

Even in its conciliatory mood, however, the province was only willing to exchange the 92.3 acres at Tutu Creek No. 4 for 500 acres at the Point.¹¹⁸ The band was still adamant that the new reserve was compensation and not a land exchange and when BC Hydro made the province’s offer during a meeting on 22 August, Councillor Isaac asked for the inclusion of a barge for the band, only to have Hydro’s representative say it probably would not happen. In response he said that the band council would debate the matter and get back on it.¹¹⁹ Despite hopes the band would accept, follow up meetings held throughout the fall and winter of 1974 resulted in no reply.¹²⁰ By January 1975 the *Prince George Citizen* even reported that they had refused the offer.¹²¹ But because it was an indirect, unofficial reply, the following month Indian Affairs noted they were still waiting for a response.¹²²

Why no reply? As mentioned the band had previously made it clear that it did not think it should have to surrender land to get a new reserve. In addition, the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement had offered new hope to First Nations excluded from the historic treaty process for whatever reason, including the Tsek’ehne and therefore the Ingenika Band. The James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement certainly influenced MP Frank Oberle, who felt that

¹¹⁸ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Francis Isaac from Manager, Land Division, E.S. Collins, 21 August 1974.

¹¹⁹ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Memorandum from R.M. McIntyre, 23 August 1974.

¹²⁰ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Memorandum from District Real Estate Officer, R.M. McIntyre, 26 September 1974; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Memorandum from District Real Estate Officer, R.M. McIntyre, 18 December 1974.

¹²¹ Bill Graham, “Relocation Settlement:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 8 January 1975.

¹²² LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to District Supervisor, Lakes District from Regional Director, British Columbia, Region, Larry Wight, 25 February 1975.

in order to allow their transition to a post reservoir way of life both levels of government should reach a similar agreement with the Ingenika Band. He naively saw it as a simple matter that the band could take to the Supreme Court if necessary.¹²³ His request, however, ignored the impacts on McLeod Lake or Fort Ware, as well as the history of treaties, reserves, and land claims in British Columbia, including Treaty 8. Still, Oberle contacted Indian Affairs to not only try to find out what was happening, but also to request a report on the matter. He hoped to get a settlement for Ingenika, and economic development for both Ingenika and Fort Ware.¹²⁴

Perhaps because Oberle was a member of parliament, Indian Affairs took his request for a report seriously. In preparation for the report, however, the department discovered that despite having records as far back as 1962, no one could find an official start of negotiations with the band regarding what became the W.A.C. Bennett Dam.¹²⁵ Furthermore, the Office of Claims noted that so far the band had not made any official claims with them and technically the requests for reserve land and compensation so far had been merely requests and not claims. Still, the department had conducted research, and the band did have reserve lands. With regard to Treaty 8 they refused to comment, but did recommend a few individuals to bring the matter up with.¹²⁶ One of them, J.G. McGilp, recommended Indian Affairs not raise the issue since so far Oberle had only mentioned it in discussion with the reporters and not in his correspondence with

¹²³ Graham, "Relocation Settlement."

¹²⁴ On 21 January 1975 he inquires about a "floating chipping facility." The entire exchange of letters can be found in LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609 between 14 January 1975 and 1 May 1975. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia Region, L.E. Wight from District Supervisor, V.E. Rhymer, 14 January 1975.

¹²⁵ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Departmental Secretariat from Regional Director, British Columbia Region, L.E. Wight, 18 February 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Regional Director, British Columbia Region, L.E. Wight from District Supervisor, Lakes District, V.E. Rhymer, 21 February 1975.

¹²⁶ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Departmental Secretariat from Executive Director, Office of Claims Negotiations, P.F. Girard, 4 February 1975.

Indian Affairs.¹²⁷ It was with this understanding that the report was completed and forward to Oberle on 28 May 1975.¹²⁸

Despite this approach to Treaty 8, the issue would not go away and during visits to Prince George and Ft. St. James Indian Affairs officials were asked about the subject and how it would impact the creation of new reserves.¹²⁹ Internally the response was that the Ingenika Band was in the area of Treaty 8, but had received none of the benefits of Treaty 8 with regard to annuities, treaty rights, or reserve land.¹³⁰ As noted the size of Finlay Forks No. 1 was 168 acres, while Police Meadows No. 2 was 320 acres, for a total of 488 acres. The federal government had laid out these reserves as a result of the McKenna-McBride Commission. Had they followed the formula of 640 acres per family of five, even based on the population of fifty-six reported in Indian Affairs' annual report of 1917, they should have totaled around 7,168 acres in area.¹³¹

While Treaty 8 was complicating matters on the part of Indian Affairs, in February 1975 the band held an election and an entirely new band government was elected. Gone were Chief Seymour Isaac and councillors Francis Isaac and Fred Hunter. In their place were Chief Ray Izony and councillors Albert Poole and William (Billie) Poole.¹³² Coinciding with the election, as well as the abandonment of Parsnip River No. 5, the band constructed a new band office at the Point.¹³³ Negotiations continued with the province and federal government, but Chief Izony's approach was less hopeful that the state would do anything, and more questioning of both the

¹²⁷ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Mr. Wight from Director of Operations, J.G. McGilp, 14 February 1975.

¹²⁸ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Frank Oberle, M.P. from Judd Buchanan, [28 May 1975].

¹²⁹ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Assistant Regional Director (Economic Development) from Regional Director, British Columbia Region, Larry Wight, 19 February 1975.

¹³⁰ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to District Supervisor, Lakes District from Regional Director, British Columbia, Region, Larry Wight, 25 February 1975.

¹³¹ Dominion of Canada, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31, 1917* (Ottawa: J. de LaBroquerie Taché, 1917), 7.

¹³² Lanoue, "Continuity," 387.

¹³³ Albert Poole, 11 September 2012.

ability of previous administrations to make decisions for the band as a whole, and the intentions of Indian Affairs in handling the entire situation.¹³⁴ The band combined this approach with increasing moves to return to a more traditional way of life, and as a result outside observers often equated Chief Izony's tenure with the idealized view of the band that emerged with Frank Oberle.¹³⁵ Of course for band members it was simply a desire to live like they had prior to the reservoir.

Reflecting this idealization later that month the *Prince George Citizen* printed a report on the community that presented it as a model Indian village, with no drinking and band members rejecting social assistance on principle. Given their status as squatters living on Crown land without government aid, the *Prince George Citizen* lauded the band for abandoning civilization, rediscovering and reclaiming ancestral ways, and doing everything on their own. (Of course since these ancestral ways had been the norm prior to the construction of the dam the majority of band members were simply returning to how they had lived prior to 1968.) Once again Oberle's demand for a settlement similar to the James Bay Cree and Northern Québec Agreement was noted, but missionary and community member, Tom Buerge noted it should be part of an overall approach that included the band's emotional needs too. Reflecting the band's claim that the federal government had not properly consulted with them when it came to the selection of new reserves, the *Citizen* claimed that Indian Affairs had selected the new reserves of Tutu Creek and Parsnip River for them.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ A letter from July 1977 suggests former Chief Isaac was concerned about the desire of Chief Izony to reach an agreement, but since the original letter is not available to consult it is unclear if this is true. In the documentary *CBC Hourglass* Chief Isaac seems to question the legitimacy of the Finlay River Band when he states it took the Ingenika Band five to six years to elect a chief. He told me that during his tenure as chief he was too busy and did not have enough support. *CBC Hourglass*; Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 7 November 2008; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Seymour Isaac from Land & Wildlife Programs Officer, Prince George District, R.M. McIntyre, 4 July 1977.

¹³⁵ Ray Izony, "Changes."

¹³⁶ Bill Graham, "Missionary Lives with Indians Band:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 28 February 1975.

Outside observers often presented Chief Ray Izony, and his attempts to help the band, as evidence that Ingenika was a model community. At the beginning of March, he informed a meeting of the Lakes District Chiefs Council that the band wanted land over state funding or even a reserve. Only this he argued could protect them from incursions by mining and forestry. The band rejected the reserve system in Canada and some Elders even compared them to a cage, or a corral, with Indian Affairs throwing aid in like a farmer feeds cattle. It was with this understanding of what reserves represented that they rejected the offer of 500 acres at the Point, which they saw as too small and designed to create dependency through aid.¹³⁷

Chief Izony next informed the council that the entire process of “consultation” with the band so far was flawed. As Chief Izony and his councillors stated, the band had no chief during the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, and only some band members later elected Chief Seymour Isaac as a representative to sign things for them.¹³⁸ Therefore, since the band was not properly represented things like approval of Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5 did not reflect approval by the band. Chief John McCook and the Finlay River Band Council had approved the exchange of reserve land and while he is more closely associated with the Fort Ware Band, there is no evidence that their representatives reacted negatively at this meeting.¹³⁹

At the meeting District Supervisor Rhymer invited the Ingenika Band to review files on the topic with him, especially in light of the request by Frank Oberle.¹⁴⁰ The band accepted this offer at meeting in Ingenika on 7 March 1975 in which they requested 128,000 acres to meet their aim of becoming completely self-sufficient and independent of Indian Affairs.¹⁴¹ As a sign

¹³⁷ NBCA, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources.]

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ ““Model Indian Band Wants Land – But Not Money,” *Prince George Citizen*, 5 March 1975.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Memorandum from District Real Estate Officer, Lakes District, R.M. McIntyre, 11 March 1975; NBCA, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources.]

of this intention they rejected legal aid from Indian Affairs on the matter.¹⁴² The province's response to this new request for land was to deem the issue a comprehensive claim, and therefore Ottawa's responsibility. Until Ottawa dealt with the matter, the province's offer to exchange Tutu Creek No. 4 for 500 acres at the Point stood.¹⁴³ This might sound like the province simply stepping back to allow the federal government to fulfill its constitutional obligations, but one must remember that historically BC had hampered Ottawa in fulfilling these obligations through the province's control of public lands and Section 13 of its Terms of Union. Presented with this impasse Chief Izony publicly extended an invitation to Frank Oberle to meet with the band.¹⁴⁴

Revealing the seeming ignorance of the province when it came to the internal matters of the band, BC Hydro now wrote Francis Isaac to ask about the offer for 500 acres made on 21 August 1974.¹⁴⁵ Of course Francis was by this point in time no longer a band councillor and therefore not in a position to respond in any sort of official matter. As a result it was Indian Affairs itself that responded to the letter, updating the authority on the matter.¹⁴⁶ BC Hydro carried on the favor and forwarded it to the provincial department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² It would later be reported that the band was one of the few not accepting federal funding at all. Based on a letter dated 19 March 1975 it would appear this report confused funding with aid, however. This can be seen in a series of letters found in LAC, RG 10, Box 1, file 985/19-4-609 starting on 11 March 1975. "Indians Accept Funds," *Prince George Citizen*, 20 June 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Memorandum from District Real Estate Officer, Lakes District, R.M. McIntyre, 11 March 1975.

¹⁴³ NBCA, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources.]

¹⁴⁴ Chief Izony even contacted Indian Affairs to inform them about the meeting. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Frank Oberle, M.P. from Ray Izony, 17 March 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Vern Rhymer from Ray Izony, 19 March 1975.

¹⁴⁵ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Francis Isaac from Manager, Land Division, E.S. Collins, 15 May 1975.

¹⁴⁶ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Manager, Land Division, British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority from District Real Estate Officer, Lakes District, R.M. McIntyre, 22 May 1975.

¹⁴⁷ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to District Real Estate Officer, Lakes District, R.M. McIntyre from Manager, Land Division, E.S. Collins, 28 May 1975.

For the rest of 1975 nothing more happened, and the year ended with Indian Affairs waiting for the band to make a move.¹⁴⁸ The relationship between the band and both levels of government had deteriorated to a point where the band did not want anything to do with either. At meeting held in Ingenika on 9 December 1975 the band informed Indian Affairs that aside from the department they viewed the provincial and federal governments with suspicion, no longer believing either level of government cared about their needs, or wanted to help them without getting something in return. To them their settlement at Ingenika, and their non-violent approach of not acting like either level of government mattered, or even existed, was the best way to deal with the situation.¹⁴⁹ This did not mean, however, that they had abandoned their desire for more land and the following year the band hired its own lawyer to pursue action.¹⁵⁰ They were tired of Indian Affairs telling them that they were committed to finding a solution to the issue, while at the same time feeling like the department was not honouring its promises.¹⁵¹ They expected both levels of government to recognize their inherent Aboriginal rights and deal with it.¹⁵²

This decision did not mean the band had given up on being involved in the wage labour economy. After all they had repeatedly justified their claim on the basis that it would foster economic development, provide employment opportunities, and make the band self-sufficient.

¹⁴⁸ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to District Supervisor, Lakes District from Head, Land Transactions Section, BC Region, 22 October 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Head, Land Transaction Section, BC Region from District Real Estate Officer, R.M. McIntyre, 28 October 1975.

¹⁴⁹ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Regional Supervisor of Lands, British Columbia Region from District Real Estate Officer, R.M. McIntyre, 12 December 1975.

¹⁵⁰ By 1981 Edward John of the Tl'azt'en First Nation was the band's lawyer. He would later become Tribal Chief of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council. It is unclear, if there was a band lawyer prior to that point, and if so, what their name was. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Ray (sic) McIntyre from Ray Izony, 3 February 1976; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Department of Indian Affairs from Edward John, 5 November 1981.

¹⁵¹ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to R.M. McIntyre from Ray Izony, 4 August 1976.

¹⁵² British Columbia Archives (BCA), Conference of Northwest Coast Studies fonds, MS 1308, Box 1/1, File 20, Frans Lamers, "Sekani Adaptation: An Analysis of Technological Strategies and Processes," Northwest Coast Studies Conference, 12-16 May 1976, 21.

Continuing in this vein, that summer Councillor Billie Poole wrote Indian Affairs to try to secure real employment for band members in cleaning up the reservoir.¹⁵³

The province's response was to not interfere the band or its settlements on Crown land. This decision only applied, however, to status band members. The province saw anyone else as in violation of the provincial law and therefore subject to prosecution. It appears this policy was designed to encourage the band to reach a settlement lest non-status community members, including the Buerge and Sims, be forcibly removed. It stemmed from the fact band members were considering leaving the Point to live at other sites in the traditional territory.¹⁵⁴

Despite promises by Tom Buerge that this move would not occur without a settlement, by 1978 there were a reported three communities: Ingenika Point, Ingenika Mine/Grassy Bluff, and Tucha Lake.¹⁵⁵ These settlements reflected an attempt to return to the traditional land use system that existed prior to the reservoir, and make traditional economic activities easier. It included more than just the three previously mentioned communities, with individuals living at 8 Mile Creek, Davis Creek, Eagle Rock, Horn Creek, Mesilinka, and Tobin Lake. To facilitate this approach the band began constructing new infrastructure and in essence to rebuild their traditional territory.¹⁵⁶ For many, life at these locations was better than at the Point, in no small

¹⁵³ Poole was adamant the employment should not be a band contract or a make work program. The entire exchange begins with a letter date 4 July 1976 and can be found in LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Rae McIntyre from Billy Poole, 4 July 1976.

¹⁵⁴ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to James Buerge from District Forester, M.G. Isenor, 7 July 1976; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Regional Supervisor of Lands, British Columbia Region from Land & Wildlife Programs Officer, R.M. McIntyre, 7 July 1976; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Thomas Buerge from District Forester, M.G. Isenor, 7 July 1976.

¹⁵⁵ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Forest Service, M.G. Izonor (sic) from Tom Buerge, [July 1976]; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Tom Buerge from District Forester, M.G. Isenor, 21 July 1976; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Frank Oberle, M.P. from District Manager, Prince George District, L.M. Savill, 1 August 1978; Albert Poole, 11 September 2012.

¹⁵⁶ Ingenika Band Members; Jean Isaac, 9 September 2008; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Regional Supervisor of Lands, British Columbia Region from Land & Wildlife Programs Officer, R.M. McIntyre, 7 July 1976.

part due to their distance from the winds and waters of the reservoir and the pollutants they carried.¹⁵⁷

These communities were not new. The Tomah family had lived at the Mine/Grassy Bluff since before the creation of the reservoir, and had lived there since the return of the community to the Point. Others joined them over the intervening years and by 1980 the *Prince George Citizen* estimated fifty band members lived at the Point and fifty at Ingenika Mine/Grassy Bluff.¹⁵⁸ For a while there was even a school located there.¹⁵⁹

In 1977, at the prompting of McLeod Lake, Ingenika became involved in the study that led to the *Parsnip Review*. At a meeting held in Ingenika on 21 March 1977 regarding the report the chief and council denounced the way both levels of government had handled the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. As Chief Izony stated, Parsnip River Reserve No. 5 was too small, had poor soil and was too close to Mackenzie. More importantly despite attempting to return to the past, the band had found it was impossible. The reservoir prevented it. Chief Izony was not alone in holding these views and a quick vote revealed unanimous agreement with his views. An unnamed band member even told officials that no benefits had come to the band from either the dam or the reservoir.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Ingenika Band Members; Jean Isaac, "Sekani Life Style, 14 July 1994.

¹⁵⁸ Ray Izony considers this date to be the actual date the community at Grassy Bluff was re-established. Hazel Allan, "Missionary Couple: Their Faith Led Them North," *Prince George Citizen*, 16 July 1980; Rose Dennis, 20 October 1984; Ingenika Band Members; Ray Izony, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 3 October 2012; Albert Poole, 11 September 2012.

¹⁵⁹ Jean Isaac, 9 September 2008; Albert Poole, 11 September 2012.

¹⁶⁰ A meeting was schedule with Fort Ware for 10 May 1977, but I could find no record of what happened. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Veit, "Meeting with Ingenika Band;" LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Rae McIntyre from Suzanne Veit, 26 April 1977.

Despite this firm rebuking of past policy, the band was still interested in finding employment cleaning the reservoir.¹⁶¹ That summer band members from Fort Ware, Ingenika, and McLeod Lake were employed logging around the reservoir.¹⁶² The job would continue in 1978 and expand to include winter work the following year.¹⁶³ On the political front, however, things took a turn for the worse.

At the beginning of 1978 Indian Affairs declared the Ingenika Band a “special project.”¹⁶⁴ That winter Chief Izony had moved to Vanderhoof where the local Indian Affairs office was located, only to reportedly resign along with his councillors the following spring, and be re-elected along with Albert Poole later that fall.¹⁶⁵ During this period of limbo, however, Ray had been busy trying to help the band. On 22 September 1978 he wrote Frank Oberle to provide a brief history of the band. According to him the traditional territory of the band extended from south of the Peace Reach to about 80 miles north along the mountain range east of the Finlay River, with a width of around 40 miles. (Given that the Finlay Reach was some 90 miles in length this area is smaller than the actual traditional territory). To the north was the traditional territory of Fort Ware; to the south was the traditional territory of McLeod Lake. Citing the

¹⁶¹ A meeting was schedule with Fort Ware for 10 May 1977, but I could find no record of what happened. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Veit, “Meeting with Ingenika Band;” LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Rae McIntyre from Suzanne Veit, 26 April 1977.

¹⁶² Julie Cooper, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Jack Isadore, interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 4 August 2004; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Minutes: Peace Waterways Improvement Project: Planning Committee Meeting, 20 October 1977; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Memorandum from Lands & Wildlife Program Officer, R.M. McIntyre, 21 October 1977.

¹⁶³ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Minutes: Peace Waterways Improvement Project: Planning Committee Meeting by Construction Engineer, D.S. Cameron, 18 April 1978; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Memorandum from Lands and Wildlife Programs Officer, Prince George District, R.M. McIntyre, 20 April 1978; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Williston Lake Debris Disposal Information Meeting, 25 June 1979; LAC, RG 10, Volume 11957 File Part 1, File 985/19-7-12-618, Letter to Ray McIntyre, Assistant Supervisor of Economic Development from John Warren, Socio-Economic Development Co-ordinator, UBCIC, 15 March 1979.

¹⁶⁴ LeBaron, xiv.

¹⁶⁵ This series of events is discussed in a series letters in LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609 starting on 1 August 1978 and continuing until December. By 1985 the band had opened an office in Vanderhoof to ease communication with the federal and provincial governments. This would later be moved to Prince George. Malcolm Curtis, “A Primitive Life...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 5 February 1985; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Frank Oberle, M.P. from District Manager, Prince George District, L.M. Savill, 1 August 1978.

detrimental effect of reserves, (he claims they mark Indigenous peoples, are not really Indigenous land, are not a true home, and are only a means of assimilation) he proposed a ninety-nine year lease for the band.¹⁶⁶

This categorical rejection of everything he believed an Indian reserve stood for is itself indicative of the fact that although the Fort Grahame Tsek'ehne had technically had reserves since the McKenna-McBride Commission, they had not really mattered until after the reservoir, and in the case of the Ingenika Band, they had rejected them altogether. Still without a reserve or an agreement to get around not having a reserve, issues surrounding funding still existed. For example, the very next day *The Prince George Citizen* reported that BC Forest Service had vetoed funding for the band under the Canada Works program to construct housing since they were squatting on Crown land.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, even if the band did not live on a reserve or receive funding it did not mean Indian Affairs left them alone. When all the teachers in the schools at Fort Ware and Ingenika resigned in the fall of 1978 due to safety concerns, Indian Affairs stepped in to handle the matter for both bands despite providing limited funding to Ingenika school.¹⁶⁸ And although Indian Affairs ultimately concluded the primary issue was that teachers were unprepared for life in isolated communities, they decided to talk to the RCMP detachment at Mackenzie to see about having more patrols in both communities.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Yvonne Harris cites an equally small traditional territory from Finlay Forks to Ingenika. Yvonne Harris, 23; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Frank Oberle, Member of Parliament from Chief Ray Izony, 22 September 1978.

¹⁶⁷ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, "Around BC: BC Interferes in Indian Aid:...", *The Province*, 23 September 1978.

¹⁶⁸ John Asling, "Former Teachers Terrorized:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 8 November 1978; "Meeting Postponed," *Prince George Citizen*, 9 November 1978; "Native School Closed," *Prince George Citizen*, 24 October 1978; "Threat to Teacher: School Kept Closed," *Prince George Citizen*, 13 September 1978.

¹⁶⁹ Indeed, Fort Ware had one of the best attendance and performance records in the district. "Community of Fort Ware:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 14 September 1978; "Native School Closed."

All the while Indian Affairs and the band held meetings throughout October and November 1978 as the latter prepared its case.¹⁷⁰ At a meeting in October Chief Izony requested information on “the cutoff” of 320 acres at Police Meadows No. 2 during the McKenna-McBride Commission, loss of reserve land to the Williston Lake reservoir, and Aboriginal rights in general. Rather than respond per se, on 26 February 1979 C.E. Riach of Public and Intergovernmental Relations sent Chief Izony reports and documents connected to the McKenna-McBride Commission, Treaty 8, the Williston Lake reservoir, Aboriginal rights, and modern comprehensive treaties up to the Nisga’a negotiations.¹⁷¹

That year Indian Affairs produced a draft report that contained a section on the impacts of the Williston Lake reservoir on the Tsek’ehne. The report is concerning because for all of its useful information, it also contains factual mistakes. Ignoring these flaws, however, it concluded that not only did the transition to Tutu Creek and Parsnip River fail, but so too did the attempted return to Ingenika Point and a traditional life due the loss of fur bearing animals, other wildlife, and an easily travelled river system. The department not only hoped that they could study the few unnamed band members living off-reserve around Mackenzie to see why their transition succeeded, but also proposed that the band could develop a commercial whitefish operation in the reservoir itself.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Frank Oberle, M.P. Prince George-Peace River from District Manager, Prince George District, L.M. Savill, 7 December 1978.

¹⁷¹ Since most of the documents are not included in the same file as the letter it is unclear which BCR was included as evidence that the order-in-council (P.C. 1969-2068) authorizing the exchange of reserve land was legitimate. It appears it is the BCR dated 26 March 1968. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Chief Ray Izony from Public & Intergovernmental Relations, BC Region, C.E. Riach, 26 February 1979; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1, “Finlay River Band Council Resolution, 19 February 1965; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1, Finlay River Band Council Resolution, 28 July 1967; LAC, RG 10, Box 396, File 985/8-3-27-1, Finlay River Band Council Resolution, 26 March 1968.

¹⁷² First, it confuses the Finlay Forks Reserve at Fort Graham with Finlay Forks itself. Then it cites the start of negotiations to exchange Finlay Forks No. 1 as 1965. Next, it gives the expected size of the Tutu Creek and Parsnip River reserves, seemingly unaware that they increased in size when they were surveyed. With regard to compensation it claims every trapline owner affected received \$3,500 (based on an annual sustain yield of \$5,000) as was as every cabin owner. It was claimed only thirty-nine individuals lived at the Forks when the water rose.

The reservoir itself had grown in size as the province increased its maximum elevation an additional five feet to 2,205 feet in 1979.¹⁷³ At this elevation it covered around 440,000 acres (438, 118 acres to be precise) or about 2,000 acres more.¹⁷⁴ At this new elevation BC Hydro expected every year to lower the reservoir by thirty-five feet.¹⁷⁵ Even this was not high enough, though, and in 1986 it was proposed to raise the reservoir another five feet to 2,210 feet with preliminary investigations identifying land claims as the only Indigenous issue that would emerge from it.¹⁷⁶ This never took place, and according to Statistics Canada the elevation today is 2201.44 feet.¹⁷⁷

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People moved to the Point to escape things like alcohol abuse and diseases of poverty, such as tuberculosis. Although things got better, neither completely disappeared with the

Naturally it simplified things like where people wanted to move after the water began to rise, but it seems unaware that after four families said they wanted to live on Parsnip River No. 5, one more family joined them. At the same time, it ignored all requests for reserve land at Ingenika, except for the request for 128,000 acres in March 1975, and then does so anachronistically. It also ignored negotiations after the 1974 offer to exchange 500 acres at Ingenika Point for Tutu Creek, although it does discuss the 1976 move of some band members to Tucha Lake, although not by name. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, 2.8 Native People, 25 June 1979.

¹⁷³ Kwadacha Archives (KA), File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Memorandum from Legislative Intern, Dale Jackson, 10 June 1986.

¹⁷⁴ A memorandum from 10 June 1986 states the estimated difference was 15,000 acres. The total area is the amount given by BC Hydro. A basic statistics information sheet on the dam and reservoir from 1974 gives an approximate surface area of 409,600 acres (640 square miles), but no ultimate elevation. Two years later it was reported that the surface area was 416,000 acres (650 square miles.) Currently, the official Statistics Canada area, however, is 435,153 acres (679.9 square miles). Either way the total area of land lost to the Tsay Keh Dene seems to be 264,403 acres based on the information provided by Jean Isaac and Ray Izony. BC Hydro, "Williston Reservoir," *BC Hydro: For Generations* https://www.bchydro.com/community/recreation_areas/williston.html (accessed 1 June 2015); Jean Isaac, "Sekani 'Tsey Kehneh,'" *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 79; Ray Izony, *Tsay Keh Dene Elder Engagement Information*, 24; KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Memorandum from Legislative Intern, Dale Jackson, 10 June 1986; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Vice President of C.E.S.O., J.R. France from C.E.S.O. Volunteer, W.B. Hemmingsen, 29 August 1976; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.9, Box 1, Peace River Project – Basic Statistics, May 1974; Statistics Canada, "Principle Lakes, Elevations and Area, By Province and Territory," *Statistics Canada* <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/phys05-eng.htm> (accessed on 1 June 2015).

¹⁷⁵ KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, J O'Riordan, "Williston Lake Potentials Study," 25 March 1975.

¹⁷⁶ KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Memorandum from Legislative Intern, Dale Jackson, 10 June 1986.

¹⁷⁷ Statistics Canada.

move.¹⁷⁸ This fact challenged portrayals given by individuals like Frank Oberle who argued the community was composed of ideal Indians and therefore deserved a large reserve. This idealized view, however, had prompted changes in funding and as the 1980s began Indian Affairs was reported as providing some funding for education, health care, and other programs.¹⁷⁹ Despite this limited funding, or perhaps because of it, the Ingenika Band increasingly sought to make its plight known to the wider world, and in doing so shame the Canadian state (both federal and provincial) into action.

On 4 July 1980 the *Prince George Citizen* printed one of the first articles to call into question an idealized view of the band. It dealt with the transition of the band-run school to Accelerated Christian Education due to a number of issues that contributed to problems with child protective services.¹⁸⁰ It also noted, however, that some parents were unhappy with the religious education and pointed out that the highest level of education in the community was Grade 8 with most individuals under twenty no longer fluent in their own language.¹⁸¹ (Similar levels of language fluency were reported in Fort Ware and McLeod Lake at the time.)¹⁸² This situation revealed a larger issue as it created a divide in the community, especially if Elders decided to not teach the younger generation because they did not know the language.¹⁸³ Complicating the entire situation was that because of the reservoir community members could now only teach some things verbally.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁸ In 1987 Chief Gordon Pierre explained how the band dealt with those who drank. Hazel Allan, "Northern Nurse: This Job a Labor of Love," *Prince George Citizen*, 3 July 1980; Christensen, "Bright Christmas;" Elsie Pierre and Mabel Troendle, 10 November 2008; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

¹⁷⁹ Koyle, 103-104.

¹⁸⁰ Hazel Allan, "Attendance is Seasonal: Christianity Plays Big Role in Ingenika School," *Prince George Citizen*, 4 July 1980; Ray Izony, "Changes;" Albert Poole, 11 September 2012.

¹⁸¹ Allan, "Attendance is Seasonal."

¹⁸² McLeod Lake Elder Zepheria Isadore claims language retention is better in other two communities. Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, 1 October 2012; Lanoue, "Continuity," 3-4.

¹⁸³ Jean Isaac, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 24 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

¹⁸⁴ Ingenika Band Members.

Band members were still concerned, however, about how they would come across to outsiders. In another article in July 1980 Hazel Allan reported that they feared she would tell the world how bad the community was or how poor they were. They were still upset over an article in a Lower Mainland newspaper from 1977 that painted them in a bad light and drove away potential guiding clients. As a result, the article reported on a squatter community of incredibly clean cabins, without running water or electricity, where although residents had to boil water, at least it tasted okay. (Allan noted that Chief Izony planned on shortly installing running water in his home at Grassy Bluff.) Debris was still a major issue with no end in sight around the Point, but band members found employment removing it. Band members made more money off of trapping, and storeowner Harvey Sims even bought squirrel pelts from children so that they could buy candy. And although Allan discovered that some band members were on welfare, the communal attitude was against receiving it, especially if work was available.¹⁸⁵ As Elders in all three communities told me the lack of money and cost of supplies meant that some individuals began to share less with other band members, offer less help, and protect what they had.¹⁸⁶

All the while Indian Affairs was still waiting for the band to make a move. Indeed, despite the band's rejection and counteroffer to the proposal to exchange Tutu Creek No. 4 for 500 acres at the Point the department still hoped the band would accept it. Yet when they contacted the band's lawyer in November 1981 regarding the status of the offer, they transformed it to include the surrender of Parsnip River No. 5.¹⁸⁷

Federal politics, however, were beginning to change in Canada. In 1983 a special committee on Aboriginal self-government in the House of Commons that included Frank Oberle

¹⁸⁵ Hazel Allan, "Impressions of Ingenika: Sekani Live a Simple Life," *Prince George Citizen*, 16 July 1980.

¹⁸⁶ Among the Elders I interviewed this information is common knowledge. See Suzanne Tomah, 20 October 1984.

¹⁸⁷ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Letter to Barrister and Solicitor, Edward John from Assistant District Manager, Prince George District, R.M. McIntyre, 18 November 1981.

petitioned Indian Affairs to help both Ingenika and Fort Ware. Of concern was the lack of adequate health care in both communities; there was no permanent nurse in Ingenika and tuberculosis was present in Ware.¹⁸⁸ This intervention does not seem to have made Indian Affairs act and throughout the 1980s health issues, such as the cost of medical evacuation flights and contaminated water emerged at Ingenika.¹⁸⁹ Not helping the situation was that at the time the village only had three water sources: a well, Sims pond (Harvey's Lake), and the reservoir. Residents had to boil or treat it prior to use, and there was no sewage system.¹⁹⁰

Nevertheless, Oberle still hoped to pressure the minister to deal with land claims issues. Juxtaposed with this demand, however, was Chief Ray Izony, who, while acknowledging the issues caused by the reservoir and desire for government action, also stressed just how far Ingenika had come from the initial camps of Tsek'ehne in 1969.¹⁹¹ The band was working to working to control its image.

It was also taking steps to build connections with the outside world. In 1984 the village received a data message terminal to facilitate audio and text based communication as part of an agreement with Communications Canada to test the equipment for them. In doing so it provided the band a way of communicating that was not dependent on the BC Forest Service or the Medical Services Branch. This change was important, as storeowner Harvey Sims, who had kept the previous radio, planned on leaving the community.¹⁹² When he did leave the community he

¹⁸⁸ "Ingenika, Fort Ware: 'Horror Stories' Heard," *Prince George Citizen*, 15 April 1983.

¹⁸⁹ A number of articles discussing these health issues can be found in the *Prince George Citizen*. I have included a few examples. Bev Christensen, "Housing, Land Problems:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 8 June 1987; Bev Christensen, "The Sekani Indians of Ingenika:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 11 April 1987; "Sprawling Region: Health Concerns Listed," *Prince George Citizen*, 2 March 1986.

¹⁹⁰ Christensen, "The Sekani Indians of Ingenika."

¹⁹¹ "Ingenika, Fort Ware: 'Horror Stories' Heard."

¹⁹² "Data-Message Terminal: Ingenika Getting Test System," *Prince George Citizen*, 8 June 1984.

sold his supplies to the band at cost. Using Special Agricultural and Rural Development Agreement (ARDA) and Indian Affairs funding, the band took over his store on 1 July 1984.¹⁹³

Just as the band got into the store owning business, though, the forest industry finally reached the south side of the Ingenika River after re-entering the traditional territory in the 1970s and moving steadily north.¹⁹⁴ Along with it came mining, which had more or less disappeared in the Trench as a result of the mineral reserves placed by the province following the 1956 memorandum with Wenner-Gren.¹⁹⁵ Like McLeod Lake and Fore Ware, the band sought to control development in their traditional territory. Its approach was to try “to fit in with industry and benefit from it.”¹⁹⁶ Logically one of the easiest ways to ensure the band benefitted was by using the court of public opinion.

In February 1985 the *Prince George Citizen* ran another story on Ingenika that rather than highlighting how the band lived a traditional lifestyle, focused on how “primitive” things were in a community found in one of Canada’s richest provinces. To make matters worse according to Chief Izony, although he hoped things would change, BC Hydro and the province still ignored the band.¹⁹⁷ The following month, however, both the Ingenika and Fort Ware bands made headlines in the *Prince George Citizen* not for life in the villages, but because of their treatment in Mackenzie by a local hotel owner. Due to claimed minor damage and messes left behind, the owner of the Timberman Inn Motel refused to rent rooms to band members of either band unless

¹⁹³ Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, “Annual Report 1985: Fifth Annual General Assembly, July 10, 11 and 12, 1985: A New Horizon Youth of Today... Leaders of Tomorrow,” 16; Rita McIsaac.

¹⁹⁴ Isadore Izony, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, August 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Ray Izony, “Changes.”

¹⁹⁵ Jean Isaac, “Sekani ‘Tsey Kehneh,’” *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 79.

¹⁹⁶ Jean Isaac, “Sekani ‘Tsey Kehneh,’” 80.

¹⁹⁷ Curtis, “A Primitive Life....”

the Medical Services Branch could guarantee an uneventful stay.¹⁹⁸ (Another hotel, the Plainsman Motor Inn followed suit.)¹⁹⁹ This was a problem as other hotels in the town were either regularly booked by loggers, or undergoing renovations.²⁰⁰ Nor was it a new issue as one of the hotel under renovations, the Alexander Mackenzie Hotel, had been the cause of a human rights complaint in 1985 by the Ingenika Band.²⁰¹

Rather than face the issue alone both bands turned to their tribal council for help. In response to this complaint the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC) looked into the matter for both bands, while Director of Medical Services, Keith Billington, pledged to send patients to Prince George if needed.²⁰² Town administrator Vernon Ciccone also proposed that the bands look into purchasing their own accommodations in Mackenzie and/or work with McLeod Lake to complete an already proposed friendship centre.²⁰³ When confronted by the *Prince George Citizen* the manager of the Timberman Inn noted she was blacklisting individual guests, and was not simply denying reservations to both bands for no reason at all.²⁰⁴ Under threat of a human rights complaint from the Fort Ware Band and CSTC, she agreed to differentiate between band members when they tried to get a room, and only ban those with a history of disturbance.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁸ Medical Services was approached because at the time band members from both bands were flown to Mackenzie for medical services, and had to stay in local hotels until the next flight back home was available. Malcolm Curtis, "Two Many Complaints, Manager Says:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 11 March 1985.

¹⁹⁹ Malcolm Curtis, "Motel Has Blacklist of 'Problem' Guests," *Prince George Citizen*, 13 March 1985.

²⁰⁰ Malcolm Curtis, "Indians to Monitor Room Rental Policy," *Prince George Citizen*, 12 March 1985; Curtis, "Two Many Complaints, Manager Says:..."

²⁰¹ Malcolm Curtis, "Mackenzie Dispute Settled," *Prince George Citizen*, 14 March 1985.

²⁰² Billington notes some band members saw the doctor in Vanderhoof at the time. Curtis, "Two Many Complaints, Manager Says."

²⁰³ It is reported McLeod Lake began construction in the late 1970s/early 1980s, only to have the semi-completed structure demolished after their three-year lease expired. Curtis, "Indians to Monitor Room Rental Policy."

²⁰⁴ Malcolm Curtis, "Motel Has Blacklist of 'Problem' Guests," *Prince George Citizen*, 13 March 1985;

²⁰⁵ Curtis, "Mackenzie Dispute Settled;" "No Problem Says Indians," *Prince George Citizen*, 25 March 1985.

The Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council

The CSTC had first emerged as the Lakes District Council of Chiefs around the same time as the announcement of the infamous White Paper in 1969.²⁰⁶ In 1979/1980 it was renamed the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council reflecting the fact the bands included in it were Dakelh (Carrier), Tsek'ehne (Sekani), or in the case of Takla Lake, both.²⁰⁷ On 15 April 1982 the council declared that since the Dakelh and Tsek'ehne had not signed a treaty they still owned their traditional territory. Among the signatories of this declaration was Chief Ray Izony.²⁰⁸ Two years later the council submitted a land claim.²⁰⁹ As with other Indigenous groups in BC, negotiations did not begin in earnest until the province began to change its views regarding treaty and Aboriginal title in the late 1980s.²¹⁰ Nevertheless, beginning in 1988 the council passed resolutions demanding more involvement in forestry and general economic planning, compensation for trappers affected by logging, and control of fisheries in the traditional territory.²¹¹

The council represented the Ingenika and Fort Ware Bands for many years, with Fort Ware leaving in 1986 after helping form the Kaska Dena Council in 1981, while Tsay Keh Dene, the successor band of the Ingenika band, left in 1994 due to issues over what the council deemed important and the services provided.²¹² After this point in time the only Tsek'ehne First Nation in

²⁰⁶ Ray Izony told me in part this council was formed because Prime Minister Trudeau wanted one single First Nation. Wendy Aasen, "Should the Clans Decide? The Problems of Modelling Self-Government Among the Carrier-Sekani Indians of British Columbia" (MA Thesis: University of Alberta, 1992), 16-17; Ray Izony, 3 October 2012.

²⁰⁷ Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, "Dene Lhunats'odilh (Let the People Gather Together): Conference of Indian Language and Culture," March 11-14, 1986; Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, "What is the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council," *Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council: Newsletter* 1, no. 1 (March 1982): 4-5.

²⁰⁸ Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), V-2003-02158-2, Box 3, Volume 1, Environmental Protection - Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, File E5000-2395, "Carrier and Sekani Declaration and Claim, April 15 1982."

²⁰⁹ "History of Ingenika," 11.

²¹⁰ Jean Isaac, 9 September 2008.

²¹¹ CSTC, *Presentation to Harry Swain*, 56-63.

²¹² Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Johnny Pierre.

the council was Takla Lake, and some Elders wonder why they still call themselves the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council if most Tsek'ehne nations have left the council.²¹³

McLeod Lake was never technically a member of the council, having left the Lakes District Council in 1979, just as it became the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, due to concerns over how the council managed funds as well as a sense it was too Dakelh and not interested in Treaty 8.²¹⁴ Many would view this decision as sound, but in an attempt to have McLeod Lake rejoin the council, the CSTC tried to form a Sekani Tribal Council, an action that only alienated them and Fort Ware.²¹⁵ Despite only Ingenika and Takla Lake remaining part of the CSTC following the collapse of the Sekani Tribal Council there were proposals in the early 1990s for the Tsek'ehne to have a separate tribal chief in the council, who would serve alongside a Dakelh tribal chief.²¹⁶

The Court of Public Opinion II (1985-1990)

Just as in Fort Ware, issues emerged in Ingenika with the band owned store in 1985 due to shipping costs, issues with inventory management, and accounts receivable. This state of affairs was despite the fact that an Economic Development Officer was in charge of the store and Indian Affairs feared that the store might run out of supplies.²¹⁷ Unlike Fort Ware, however,

²¹³ Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Donny Van Somer, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2013.

²¹⁴ Chief Harry Chingee would later protest the proposal by the council to take over services from Indian Affairs in the Prince George District in 1990 for the same reason. CSTC, "Dene Lhunats'odilh;" CSTC, "What is the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council," 4-5; INAC, Band Alliances – Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, V-2003-02158-2, Box 3, Volume 1, File E4200-9-2395, Letter to Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council from Chief Harry Chingee, 30 October 1990; Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; John Poole; Patrick Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Verne Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.

²¹⁵ According to Verne Solonas an agreement was signed to create the council in the late 1970s/early 1980s. Aasen, 19; INAC, Box 3, Volume 1, File E4200-9-2395, Letter to Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council from Chief Harry Chingee, 30 October 1990; Patrick Prince; "Reserve Will Build \$440,000 Complex," *Prince George Citizen*, 10 February 1987; "'Rights' Brief: Logging Decision Blasted by Indians," *Prince George Citizen*, 28 May 1982; Verne Solonas.

²¹⁶ Aasen, 19, 65.

²¹⁷ Financial reports received in September 1985 revealed much of the funding the band had received to run the store had been used to offset accounts receivable. LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Superintendent of Economic Development, Prince George District, Gary Jung from Business Services Officer, Prince George District, Blair Carlson, 15 October 1985; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part

Indian Affairs was limited in what it could do since the band did not live on a reserve. For example, while the department formulated grandiose plans to aid Fort Ware in February 1986, the recommendations for Ingenika were to simply hire a new Economic Development Officer and arrange a bank loan.²¹⁸ (They changed this recommendation in October to recommend that the Economic Development Officer should work with the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council.)²¹⁹ According to the department since the band was squatting on provincial Crown land they were the province's responsibility.²²⁰ Nevertheless, Indian Affairs was willing to use Ingenika to help others in need.²²¹

Despite this setback, it appeared things were beginning to change for the band. In 1985 and 1986 the band even reported that negotiations were steadily progressing, they were gaining access to more funding, and employment prospects existed not only in salvage operations, but also forestry.²²² Still, problems remained. During the winter of 1986-1987 the band not only needed additional funding to keep the store operational, but had to get emergency repairs done on their grader to keep the airstrip clean.²²³

5, Letter to Chief & Council, Ingenika Indian Band, from Superintendent, Resource, Economic & Employment Development Branch, Prince George District, Blair Carlson, 30 July 1986.

²¹⁸ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Resource, Economic & Employment Development Branch, Prince George District: Fort Ware & Ingenika Stores, February 1986.

²¹⁹ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to District Manager, Prince George District, George Cornwell from Superintendent, Resource, Economic & Employment Development Branch, Prince George District, Gary Jung, 31 October 1986.

²²⁰ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Letter to Director, R.E.E.D. Branch, BC Region, Lionel Munaweera from Superintendent, Resources, Economic, Employment & Development Branch, Prince George District, Gary Jung, 23 September 1986.

²²¹ For example, the supply of fuel available at Ingenika was considered when it came to supplying Fort Ware and their store. LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Part 6, Letter to Director, Resource, Economic and Employment Development, British Columbia Region, Lionel Munaweera from Assistant Head, Advisory Services, Resource, Economic and Employment Development, British Columbia Region, R.D. James, 20 August 1986.

²²² CSTC, "1986 Annual Report: Sixth General Assembly, July 24 & 25, 1986: Our Land, Our Resources, Our Way of Life," 27; CSTC, "Annual Report 1985," 11-16.

²²³ Christensen, "Progress Comes Slowly at Ingenika Point;" LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Memorandum from Gary Jung, 1 October 1986; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Record of Conversation or Interview by B. Carlson, 9 October 1986.

The band had elected Gordon chief that October, in part because Ray had decided to live a more traditional life at Mesilinka.²²⁴ Ray was not alone and about forty band members left the Point and Vanderhoof to live at Blackpine Lake on the Mesilinka River in 1986.²²⁵ Unlike the communities that had existed at Grassy Bluff or Tucha Lake, this group eventually formed into a *de facto* band known as the Mesilinka Band led by Ray Izony that would exist until the early 1990s.²²⁶ Almost immediately recognized as a distinct band by Indigenous organizations, from the perspective of Indian Affairs they were merely Ingenika band members.²²⁷ This official view was not necessarily a problem, because as former Chief Izony told me, community members formed the band not out of conflict, but to assert territorial rights and allow for better land use practices.²²⁸ Nor did it stop the band from requesting their own reserve at Blackpine Lake or asking for funding to open their own store.²²⁹

Gordon expanded the trend of seeking to use public opinion to get a settlement for the band and eventually he found success.²³⁰ Despite the bureaucratic nightmare that had emerged when it came to dealing with Indian Affairs, the province, and BC Hydro, Chief Pierre would not let up pressure and he even openly questioned why the province built the dam in the first place.²³¹ Changes taking place in the province aided him. Under pressure from most of the

²²⁴ Christensen, "The Sekani Indians of Ingenika;" Ray Izony, "Changes."

²²⁵ These numbers would remain constant until the end of the decade. "History of Ingenika," 10; Ray Izony, 3 October 2012.

²²⁶ Indeed, some residents of Grassy Bluff has returned to the Point in 1985. CSTC, "1990 Annual Report: 10th Annual General Assembly, July 3, 4, and 5, 1990: Protect Our Natural Resources," 42; Jean Isaac, "Sekani Life Style, 14 July 1994.

²²⁷ CSTC, "1990 Annual Report," 42; CSTC, *Presentation to Harry Swain*, 9, 64; "History of Ingenika," 9-10; INAC, *Schedule of Indian Bands, Reserves and Settlements including Membership and Population, Location and Acreage in Hectares, December 1990* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1990), 123.

²²⁸ Ray Izony, 3 October 2012.

²²⁹ CSTC, *Presentation to Harry Swain*, 64; "History of Ingenika," 10.

²³⁰ Jean Isaac, "Sekani History," *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 67.

²³¹ For example, when he requested the federal government formally request land for reserves in January 1987 he was simply turned down. Numerous articles discuss the matter. I have included a few examples. Diane Bailey, "Indian Land Claims: Forest Industry 'A Pawn,'" *Prince George Citizen*, 9 March 1987; Bev Christensen, "Indians Not Impressed with Government Offer," *Prince George Citizen*, 23 February 1989; Pollon and Matheson, 276.

roughly one hundred ninety-eight bands in BC, the provincial government was beginning to reverse its policy regarding Aboriginal lands and Aboriginal title. In 1987 the province formed a Native Affairs Secretariat with the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs in charge.²³² For the first time since the colonial period Victoria had an official position to deal with Indigenous Affairs in the province

While the province was changing, the band was courting public opinion to support their case. To get the province to act, beginning in 1987 more and more articles began to appear in the local newspapers, which at the request of the band highlighted all of the negative aspects of life at the Point as well as past injustices.²³³ By September 1987 their story reached a national audience when *The Globe and Mail* ran an article on the band and shortly afterwards the news program *W5* featured them.²³⁴ As Chief Pierre put it band members were “refugees in our own land.”²³⁵ Indeed, many articles coincided with state visits to the community and attempted to provide a counterweight to official reports.²³⁶ The band hoped that with enough public pressure they could force Indian Affairs to provide them with the same levels of funding available to bands living on reserve. Not wanting to prejudice the settlement, Chief Pierre did not ask for a

²³² It became the Ministry of Native Affairs in 1988. Jonathan Malloy, *Between Colliding Worlds: The Ambiguous Existence of Government Agencies for Aboriginal and Women's Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 119.

²³³ Among the negative aspects were high unemployment; low education levels; a lack of educational opportunities; inadequate housing; and the absence of a sewage system or potable water. Numerous articles discuss the matter. I have included a few examples. Some Elders note they were unaware about the quality of the water when they first moved up. Diane Bailey, “Health Hazards Concern Indians,” *Prince George Citizen*, 28 February 1987; Bev Christensen, “Ingenika: A Struggle Between Old, New,” *Prince George Citizen*, 13 June 1987; John Cruickshank, “Two Decades Later, BC Offers Aid: . . .,” *The Globe and Mail*, 22 September 1987; Pollon and Matheson, 267-270; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

²³⁴ Christensen, “Bright Christmas;” Cruickshank, “Two Decades Later, BC Offers Aid.”

²³⁵ Christensen, “The Sekani Indians of Ingenika.”

²³⁶ Numerous articles discuss the matter. A good example is Bailey, “Health Hazards Concern Indians.”

set amount.²³⁷ And even though these portrayals were not perfect per se, it appeared that over time they began to have their desired effect.²³⁸

The change was not instantaneous. Following a meeting on 28 February 1987 provincial Intergovernmental Minister Bruce Strachan admitted that no one had properly informed the band, and as result the federal government created the new reserves without consultation.²³⁹ The band now wanted improved housing at the Point as well as three plots of land: a 2,000 acre reserve at the north end of the Finlay Reach where the new village of Tsay Keh Dene would be located, a 1,000 acre reserve on the Mesilinka River, near Blackpine Lake, and a 300 acre reserve at the Point.²⁴⁰ The band hoped this land base would allow them to develop economically, protect their traditional territory and traplines, and find inclusion on their own terms in the ever approaching forest industry.²⁴¹ When it came to dealing with this request, however, Strachan conveniently ignored the province's past resistance and instead pointed to a new Indian Affairs policy of not creating new reserves in BC.²⁴² Land claims in the province complicated the entire situation despite the fact that the band was adamant that since it would not require a treaty their request had no connection to their land claim as part of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council.²⁴³

²³⁷ Bailey, "Health Hazards Concern Indians;" Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

²³⁸ These errors generally took the form of incorrect dates or hyperbole. Numerous articles discuss the matter. I have included a few examples. Bailey, "Health Hazards Concern Indians;" Cruickshank, "Two Decades Later, BC Offers Aid."

²³⁹ The *Prince George Citizen* mistakenly claimed Strachan created the provincial Indian Advisory Committee, which had existed in one form or another since 1950. BCA, Indian Advisory Committee fonds, GR-1071; Bev Christensen, "Displaced Indians Seek New Property," *Prince George Citizen*, 3 March 1987; Christensen, "Housing, Land Problems."

²⁴⁰ Christensen, "Displaced Indians Seek New Property."

²⁴¹ Christensen, "The Sekani Indians of Ingenika;" Jean Isaac, 24 October 1984; Marion Jackson, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; Johnny Pierre; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; Geraldine Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

²⁴² Koyl would characterize the Native Affairs Secretariat as instituted in part to blame the federal government for Aboriginal issues in British Columbia. Christensen, "Displaced Indians Seek New Property;" Koyl, 108-109.

²⁴³ "Claims Can Differ," *Prince George Citizen*, 29 August 1987.

As a result of this impasse by April 1987 the *Prince George Citizen* was reporting that band members were debating whether to organize a roadblock or request foreign aid. Not helping the situation was that shortly after his meeting with the band, Strachan had changed portfolios, becoming the Environment Minister. As a result the band had to explain their situation to the new Intergovernmental Affairs Minister, Stephen Rogers, who would later reveal his own ignorance by stating he wanted to know why no one had helped the band since the creation of the reservoir.²⁴⁴

At a provincial level the matter was becoming political. On 9 June 1987 when Rogers visited the community, Chief of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, Edward John, accompanied him. Two opposition NDP members of the legislature – health critic Lois Boone and social services and housing critic John Cashore – followed them two days later.²⁴⁵ The latter two wanted to publicize the entire situation and following the visit Rogers pledged to push the issue with the federal government, although Chief John was doubtful considering Indian Affairs' new policy of not creating reserves or bands.²⁴⁶

As it turned out Rogers was successful and on 22 June 1987 he was able to convince the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Bill McKnight, to join him in pledging to aid the Ingenika Band both in the short term as well as the long term. Even with this commitment, however, McKnight was quick to inform reporters that since the federal government had created Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5 it had no liability. In his view

²⁴⁴ Christensen, "The Sekani Indians of Ingenika."

²⁴⁵ Bev Christensen, "Indians at Ingenika Point:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 12 June 1987; "Ottawa to Receive Ingenika Proposal," *Prince George Citizen*, 10 June 1987.

²⁴⁶ More precisely, the two NDP MLAs pledged to tell the story of the band, its overcrowded and substandard housing, non-potable water, 100% unemployment, and lack of a land base caused by the reservoir. This employment rate was based on the exclusion of traditional economic activities. Christensen, "Indians at Ingenika Point;" "Ottawa to Receive Ingenika Proposal."

BC Hydro was the liable party.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, both ministers stated they were unsure if the band wanted to stay at the Point, especially given the request for a settlement near Hydro Creek.²⁴⁸ To help reach a final agreement the federal and province governments, along with BC Hydro, formed a three party committee.²⁴⁹

Given the history of promises since 1968 it should come as no surprise that Chief Pierre was “hopefully doubtful” about the entire situation. He saw the inclusion of a third party, BC Hydro, combined with the claim that it was the liable party, as a ploy by the federal government to ignore the issue now that it seemed like the province was willing to do something.²⁵⁰ (Inversely, however, other band members saw the prospect of admitting liability as the main reason why no one had dealt with the band prior to this point in time.)²⁵¹ Not helping the situation was that by this point in time the band had learned about the aid given to the Taku River Tlingit despite the fact that although they lived in BC and Yukon, they only had reserves in latter. It seemed to challenge the claim by Ottawa that they could not provide similar aid to the band because they were squatting on Crown land.²⁵²

Meanwhile public pressure outside of the community helped ensure both levels of government dealt with the matter. While he was visiting Quesnel, BC, in July, protesters confronted Prime Minister Brian Mulroney about the situation and he promised that he would aid the band in achieving a settlement.²⁵³ The new committee formed to deal with the matter visited the community on 17 July 1987. It was not promising, however, that the province denied any

²⁴⁷ “Ingenika Indians Promised Gov’t Aid,” *Prince George Citizen*, 23 June 1987.

²⁴⁸ Bev Christensen, “Promise of Gov’t Help:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 24 June 1987; “Ingenika Indians Promised Gov’t Aid;” “Ingenika Solution in Works?” *Prince George Citizen*, 16 June 1987; Marilyn Storie, “Ingenika Problems Probed,” *Prince George Citizen*, 17 July 1987.

²⁴⁹ Christensen, “Promise of Gov’t Help.”

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ Pollon and Matheson, 278.

²⁵² Christensen, “Promise of Gov’t Help.”

²⁵³ Gordon Clark, “Mulroney Visits Quesnel:...,” *Prince George Citizen*, 13 July 1987.

ability to handle the issue due to federal control of reserve creation and funding for status Indians, while Indian Affairs wanted to take a hands off approach, and BC Hydro saw itself as merely providing information.²⁵⁴

In preparation the band's lawyer had put together a specific claim, stating the federal government had breached its fiduciary responsibility during the negotiations regarding the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir. Specifically it stated the Crown had not represented the band's best interests; not sought proper compensation from the province or BC Hydro; not properly informed band members; allowed BC Hydro to flood Finlay Forks No. 1 prior to transferring it to the province; not created a reserve at Ingenika or provided services; not gotten the consent of most band members; and gotten consent from some via duress and undue influence.²⁵⁵ The band also formally informed Indian Affairs that not only did it lack proper representation on the Finlay River Band Council, but also that in losing access to the hundreds of thousands of acres of traditional territory throughout the Trench it had lost more than just Finlay Forks No. 1. They had lost the transportation network that existed in the Trench, access to resources needed for traditional economic activities, and overall education opportunities for a generation.²⁵⁶

Rather than do nothing, the provincial and federal state finally took steps to resolve housing, water, sewage, supply, education, and employment issues in the village. The province provided \$180,000 to help the band, while BC Hydro provided funds to buy a new water pump for the community. The federal Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation provided four

²⁵⁴ Storie, "Ingenika Problems Probed."

²⁵⁵ INAC, "Status Report on Specific Claims: Tsay Keh Dene (BAND-609)," *Reporting Centre on Specific Claims* http://services.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/SCBRI_E/Main/ReportingCentre/External/externalreporting.aspx (accessed 14 August 2017).

²⁵⁶ Koyl, 80-81.

modular homes for Elders. The Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, however, was quick to point out progress had not been made on settling the issue of compensation for land lost to the reservoir and the lack of proper consultation in selecting Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5 was raised once again.²⁵⁷ That Christmas the band held a community dinner in their newly constructed training centre. Chief Pierre told the *Citizen* the best Christmas gift would be a reserve at Hydro Creek.²⁵⁸

The following year (1988) the forest industry crossed the Ingenika River in earnest.²⁵⁹ By 1989 logging was occurring along the Ingenika River itself, with plans to move northward. Ideally both Chief Pierre and Chief Izony wanted to encourage a mixed economy for their bands of traditional economic activities and wage labour employment and to accomplish this goal both pushed for the creation of reserves. Unfortunately, as members of both bands found out, logging companies preferred to hire outsiders, and logging disrupted traplines, if not destroying them outright.²⁶⁰ Making matters worse, the forest access roads that accompanied logging allowed outside hunters to come into the area and band members reported that they not only overharvested, but also disturbed cabins and caches they encountered.²⁶¹

Ultimately, Chief Pierre decided the best way to get involved was for the Ingenika band to form two companies: one involved in silviculture and one involved in logging.²⁶² To this end

²⁵⁷ Christensen, "Progress Comes Slowly at Ingenika Point."

²⁵⁸ Christensen, "Bright Christmas."

²⁵⁹ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Letter to Chairman, Economic Development Review Committee, Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, Justa Monk from Chief Gordon Pierre, 7 June 1988; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Letter to Indian and Northern Affairs from Economic Development Officer, Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, Hugh Hughson, 26 July 1989.

²⁶⁰ By 1992 Mary Christina Koyl reported only one band member was still trapping and working leather. "History of Ingenika," 10-11; Koyl, 37; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Letter to Chairman, Economic Development Review Committee, Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, Justa Monk from Chief Gordon Pierre, 7 June 1988; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Letter to Indian and Northern Affairs from Economic Development Officer, Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, Hugh Hughson, 26 July 1989.

²⁶¹ Pollon and Matheson, 274, 276, 279, 288.

²⁶² LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Letter to Chairman, Economic Development Review Committee, Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, Justa Monk from Chief Gordon Pierre, 7 June 1988.

the band secured funding for training and involvement and despite some issues and protests, employment opportunities began to emerge, most notably with Fletcher Challenge Canada and Finlay Forks Industries.²⁶³ When both companies decided to work with the band, Indian Affairs aided the band in this involvement.²⁶⁴

Ingenika also worked with Fort Ware to help alleviate the damage done by the forest industry and ensure Tsek'ehne involvement.²⁶⁵ In March 1989 Indian Affairs provided funding to allow both bands to form Tsay Tay Forestry Limited in conjunction with Fletcher Challenge Canada and Finlay Forest Industries. They hoped that pending repayment of debts the band would take over the company in five years.²⁶⁶ Operations began on 1 May, and forty individuals from both bands found employment, thereby dropping the unemployment rate from 80% to 18%.²⁶⁷ The company proved highly successful and by end of the 1989-1990 season the band reported \$1 million in profit.²⁶⁸

²⁶³ For example, during the summer of 1988 issues emerged when it came to getting funding for two skidders in the summer of 1988. Pollon and Matheson cite a *Calgary Herald* article claiming the band already had two skidders in the winter of 1987. Based on a series of documents found in LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5 starting on 7 June 1988 it appears to be a misunderstanding. CSTC, *Presentation to Harry Swain*, 64; "History of Ingenika," 10-11; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Letter to Chairman, Economic Development Review Committee, Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, Justa Monk from Chief Gordon Pierre, 7 June 1988; Pollon and Matheson, 280.

²⁶⁴ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Letter to Co-ordinator/Band Manager, Ingenika Band, Lorna Wandio from Director, Economic Development, British Columbia Region, Rabi Alam, 21 February 1989; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Letter to Ingenika Tribal Administration from Engineering Superintendent, Steve Potter, 23 March 1989.

²⁶⁵ Jean Isaac, "Sekani 'Tsey Kehneh,'" *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 80; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013.

²⁶⁶ Crampton mentions Tsay Keh Dene Industries Limited in his article. It is unclear what its relationship to Tsay Tay Dene Forestry is. Littlefield, Dorricott and Cullon note a joint venture between the two bands, but not the name. The *Native Voice* notes Chief Pierre's desire for the band to manage a cut block for a third party. It is unclear if this arrangement is its achievement or if he was referring to the settlement that created Tsay Keh Dene. Colin Crampton, "Problems of Environmental Conservation for the Sekani Ingenika Band in Northern British Columbia, Canada," *Environmental Conservation* 19, No. 1 (1992): 77; "History of Ingenika," 11; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Memorandum from C.A. Pinette, 1 May 1989; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 3, File 4527-610-1, Letter to Gary June from General Administrator, Fort Ware Indian Band, Michael Metcalf, 8 October 1989; Loraine Littlefield, Linda Dorricott and Deidre Cullon, "Tse Keh Nay Traditional and Contemporary Use and Occupation at Amazay (Duncan Lake): A Draft Report," Unpublished report, 2007, 5-6.

²⁶⁷ LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Exhibit 'H,' 1989.

²⁶⁸ CSTC, "1990 Annual Report," 41.

Tsay Keh Dene

While the band was finding economic success, negotiations with the province, BC Hydro and the federal government resulted in them reaching an agreement in 1989. Valued at \$13 million (\$2 million of which was from BC Hydro) it included 3,000 acres of reserve land; 295 acres of fee simple land; a new village with electricity and running water; infrastructure improvements; and economic aid, especially with regard to harvesting, guiding, and forestry. It would lead to the creation of a 2,000-acre Finlay River reserve at the north end of the Finlay Reach near Hydro Creek, a 1,000 acre Mesilinka reserve on the Mesilinka River near Blackpine Lake, and a plot of land at the Point, which the agreement barred anyone from living on. In exchange the band would surrender Tutu Creek No. 4 and Parsnip River No. 5 and release the other signatories from liability. The band approved it on 13 September 1989.²⁶⁹ Bad weather delayed the official signing ceremonies on 5 October.²⁷⁰

This approval did not mean that the band thought it was an ideal settlement, however.²⁷¹ Author Shirlee Smith Matheson reports Chief Gordon Pierre as stating it was still meager compared to the amounts offered to the individuals impacted by the Columbia River project and the environmental studies costing \$10 million conducted in the area at the time.²⁷² Both he and Chief Ray Izony of the Mesilinka Band had not been happy that the initial proposal for the

²⁶⁹ Davis gives the total as \$12.8 million. *The Globe and Mail* simplifies the 3,000 acres of reserve land to about 1,200 hectares, and excludes the fee simple land. Numerous articles detailing the negotiations can be found in the *Prince George Citizen* starting on 22 February 1989. "Across Canada: Displaced by BC Dam, Indian Band Gets \$13 Million," *The Globe and Mail*, 16 September 1989; Bev Christensen, "Reserve Near Williston Lake: Indians Offered \$1.5 Million," *Prince George Citizen*, 22 February 1989; Alison Davis, *Sekani Ethnobotany: Traditional Role of Plants Amongst the Sekani People* (Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2008), 4; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Agreement between the Ingenika Band of Indians and British Columbia and British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority and Canada; LAC, RG 10, V-2003-02165-5, Box 2, File 4527-609, Part 5, Letter to District Superintendent of Economic Development, Gary Jung from Co-ordinator, Ingenika Co-ordinator Committee, Clarence Riach, 22 August 1989.

²⁷⁰ "Signing Ceremony Delayed," *Prince George Citizen*, 5 October 1989.

²⁷¹ Ingram, 20; Koyl, 111-114; Pollon and Matheson, 277; Helen Poole.

²⁷² Pollon and Matheson, 277.

agreement only recognized one band and therefore included only one reserve.²⁷³ Even to the end, the band was also worried that the agreement might fall through, especially if irreconcilable issues emerged between Ottawa and Victoria.²⁷⁴ For example, in March the province attempted to make either the federal government or the band pay for the settlement.²⁷⁵ In hindsight some band members would see it as the culmination of a twenty-year struggle that saw repeated government inaction, and which at least raised the community from the “third world conditions” found at the Point.²⁷⁶

In April 1990 construction began on the new community and by July it was well underway.²⁷⁷ Among those hired to complete the job were band members and as a result the unemployment rate further dropped. (Band members would find even more jobs once the village was completed.)²⁷⁸ That winter band members relocated from the Point to the partially completed village.²⁷⁹ Aside from the few who had lived at Parsnip River No. 5, this was the first time band members had easy access to many of the modern utilities and services most Canadian take for granted.²⁸⁰ It was not entirely welcome and many Elders still view modern technology as a big factor contributing to cultural loss.²⁸¹ For example, some noted how the telephone resulted in less visiting as band members communicated through them or believed no one was home if no one answered.²⁸² (Elders in McLeod Lake also note the decline in intra-community visiting over

²⁷³ Christensen, “Indians Not Impressed with Government Offer.”

²⁷⁴ “History of Ingenika,” 10-11.

²⁷⁵ Bev Christensen, “New Community Proposed: Indians Still Waiting,” *Prince George Citizen*, 27 March 1989.

²⁷⁶ Jean Isaac, 19 September 2012; Koyl, 112; Albert Poole, 11 September 2012; Albert Poole, “Where Are We Going?” *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 3.

²⁷⁷ CSTC, “1990 Annual Report,” 41; Jean Isaac, “Sekani History,” *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 67; Ray Izony, “Changes.”

²⁷⁸ Jean Isaac, “Sekani History,” *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 67.

²⁷⁹ CSTC, “Ingenika,” *Yinka Dene News* 7th ed., September 1990; Jean Isaac, 9 September 2008; Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012; Leo Hebert, “Housing Officer Report: Ingenika Housing,” *Yinka Dene News* 6th ed., June 1990.

²⁸⁰ William (Billie) Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012.

²⁸¹ Robin Tomah, “Our People,” *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 28.

²⁸² Johnny Pierre; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012.

time, especially once the reserve was electrified).²⁸³ As a result, some Elders see the village as a form of passive assimilation, along the lines of other reserves and/or treaties, and they are taking measures to combat it.²⁸⁴ Others simply preferred the Point, or thought the new village should have been in a different location.²⁸⁵

Conclusion

When faced with the storm of development that engulfed the southern Trench following the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, the Ingenika Band sought isolation. In doing so they challenged British Columbian Aboriginal policy, which denied Aboriginal title, as well as federal Aboriginal policy that held the bands should live on their reserve(s). Since their move to Ingenika Point was without official approval they were considered squatters, and therefore not eligible for much of the funding and programs available to First Nations at the time. It was the Department of Health and Welfare that forced Indian Affairs to accept responsibility. Yet initially what little aid they received was in connection to the fact outsiders viewed them as authentic Indians. When the few band members living on Parsnip River No. 5 moved to the Point this dashed any hopes that the rest of band would move to it or Tutu Creek No. 4. The fight to create a new reserve at the Point once again revealed the conflict between Ottawa and Victoria when it came to Aboriginal policy in the province. Initially the province would only create a reserve of equal size to a reserve surrendered. In 1974 the province changed this to a reserve of equal value. The band, however, refused any sort of one on one exchange, arguing they deserved a new reserve. Ultimately it was able to use public opinion to force the province, federal government, and BC Hydro into a settlement in 1989 that led to the construction of Tsay Keh

²⁸³ Adele Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; Al Inyallie; Richard Solonas.

²⁸⁴ Phillip Charlie, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 6 November 2008; Jean Isaac, 9 September 2008; Elsie Pierre and Mabel Troendle, 10 November 2008; Johnny Pierre; Gordon Pierre; Mabel Troendle.

²⁸⁵ Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012; Johnny Pierre; Mabel Troendle.

Dene. The band had successfully defied the policies of the federal government and province in their attempt to live a traditional lifestyle and won.

Chapter 9 – A Lake of Sorrow: The Shared Impacts of the Williston Lake Reservoir on the Tsek’ehne, 1968-1990

The W.A.C. Bennett Dam divided the Tsek’ehne. It affected all three bands differently and they pursued their own ways to deal with their unique situations. Yet many of the impacts of the dam were common to all three bands. This fact is not always recognized. This situation is especially true when a second contributing cause, or result, exists in one band that is not present in the others. All three bands had to deal with not only being flooded out of a portion of their traditional territory, but also an influx of non-Tsek’ehne settlers. Even the dead were not safe as graveyards were inundated or sloughed into the reservoir. Because of familial ties the loss of a graveyard by one was a tragedy for all. The very climate had changed and the negative impacts the reservoir had on traditional economic activities, combined with the inability to use it to for an inland fishery as well as limited compensation meant economic hardship in general. All of the repercussions meant that in instances where the reservoir did not directly kill individuals it was often a contributing factor. These common impacts united the three bands together and have provided an opportunity to strengthen the connections between them in the face of the numerous divisive effects. In doing so, it provided an opportunity to strengthen the Tsek’ehne community.

Flooded Out

Some authors have assumed that the Ingenika Band was the only Tsek’ehne band affected by the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. In part this belief is due to studies like Mary Christina Koyl’s thesis, “Cultural Chasm,” which focuses on them alone.¹ It is also based on the amount of traditional territory the Ingenika Tsay Keh Nay lost, which included the Finlay and Peace

¹ Mary Christina Koyl, “Cultural Chasm: A 1960s Hydro Development and the Tsay Keh Dene Native Community of Northern British Columbia” (MA Thesis: University of Victoria, 1992).

reaches of the Williston Lake reservoir. After all, it was their villages of Finlay Forks, Fort Grahame, and Old Ingenika that were flooded.²

Such claims completely ignore the fact that the traditional territory of the McLeod Lake Tse'khene includes the Peace and Parsnip reaches of the Williston Lake reservoir. Furthermore, although Finlay Forks was a Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay village, it was a site of regular interaction between McLeod Lake and Fort Grahame. Inversely, some authors say that the traditional territory of the Fort Ware Tsek'ene only extended as far south as the northern tip of the reservoir around the Akie River.³ In reality, however, this boundary is a result of negotiations undertaken to deal with territorial overlap in preparation for the modern comprehensive treaty process.⁴ Still by gross area McLeod Lake has lost more land to flooding than Fort Ware. Yet as we shall see while the reservoir is often blamed for issues in Fort Ware, it is not nearly as often blamed for issues in McLeod Lake, despite the fact all three bands lost territory.⁵

It is also not merely a question of how much land each band has lost. The new lake flooded residential, economic, cultural, social, burial, and religious sites and infrastructure throughout the northern Rocky Mountain Trench (the Trench). And while some sites and infrastructure remained, many Elders consider the best sites taken from them. Gone were the villages they had grown up in and where their ancestors lived and/or were buried. Traplines they

² Koyl, 69, 112.

³ This explains the disparity between maps of the band's traditional territory and Koyl's assertion Fort Ware lost "a significant portion of their traditional hunting, trapping and fishing territory." BC Treaty Commission (BCTC), "Statement of Intent: Traditional Territory Boundary: Kaska Dena Council," http://www.bctreaty.net/nations/soi_maps/Kaska_Dena_Council_SOI_Map.pdf (accessed 24 June 2015); BCTC, "Statement of Intent: Traditional Territory Boundary: McLeod Lake Indian Band," http://www.bctreaty.net/nations/soi_maps/McLeod_Lake_SOI_Map.pdf (accessed 24 June 2015); Koyl, 103; Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2013; Melvin Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2013; Saul Terry, "No Land, No Jobs, No Future for McLeod Lake," *Union of BC Indian Chiefs Up-Date*, August 1984, 2; Traditions Consulting Services, Inc., *Site C Clean Energy Project: Volume 5 Appendix A15 Part 3: Aboriginal Land and Resource Use Summary: McLeod Lake Indian Band, Final Report* (Vancouver: BC Hydro Power and Authority, 2013), 1-2.

⁴ Emil McCook, 5 March 2013.

⁵ Patrick Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012.

relied on for money were underwater or partially submerged. Sites where traditional use and medicinal plants grew no longer existed.⁶

The Tsek'ehne also lost a tool when it came to teaching traditional knowledge and oral history. In traditional Tsek'ehne society the land itself is a teacher. It is both experiential, and a concrete example of concepts and past events.⁷ Its loss meant some traditional teachings are now limited to the completely abstract and oral.⁸

Not even graveyards were safe from the reservoir. Making matters worse was the fact that the W.A.C. Bennett Dam was not the first time a hydroelectric reservoir had affected an Indigenous graveyard in the province. Indeed, it echoes the experiences of the previously mentioned Cheslatta T'en, which as J.E. Windsor and J.A. McVey point out in their article "Annihilation of Both Place and Sense of Place" was traumatic because graveyards provide a sense of identity and connection to the past.⁹ The same is true for other sites lost to the reservoir for as Derek Ingram argues it resulted in "cultural displacement" due to the "drowning of memories," and this displacement in turn has led to social distress in all three communities.¹⁰

⁶ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Phillip Charlie, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 6 November 2008. Some Elders consider the entire traditional territory to be sacred. The UBCIC mistakenly claims three bands: Ingenika, Fort Grahame, and McLeod Lake lost their reserves to the reservoir. It is unclear why they make the distinction between Ingenika and Fort Grahame. UBCIC, *Stolen Lands, Broken Promises: Researching the Indian Land Question in British Columbia*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver: Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 2005), 30.

⁷ Georgina Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; William (Billie) Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 8 September 2008.

⁸ Georgina Chingee; Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Salmon Valley, BC, 1 October 2012; Johnny Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012; Helen Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September 2012.

⁹ Windsor and McVey confused the Crooked River with Parsnip River. J.E. Windsor and J.A. McVey, "Annihilation of Both Place and Sense of Place: The Experience of the Cheslatta T'en Canadian First Nation Within the Context of Large-Scale Environmental Projects," *The Geographic Journal* 171, no. 2 (2005): 153-154, 155-156, 161n11, passim.

¹⁰ Guy Lanoue claims this distress only occurred in McLeod Lake. I argue it occurred in all three communities. Derek Ingram, "Community-Based Knowledge Capture: Tsay Keh Dene Development and Online Archival System" (MA Thesis: University of Northern British Columbia, 2012), 29, 56; Guy Lanoue, "Continuity and Change: The Development of Political Self-Definition Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia" (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1983), 3.

The Tsek'ehne consider graveyards sacred.¹¹ Spirit houses are built over the graves of the dead and maintained by family members. For the Ingenika Band, and through familial connections with the other Tsek'ehne nations, a source of significant anger is the loss of graveyards in the Trench either to direct flooding or the sloughing in of the bank.¹² There were in fact numerous gravesites throughout the Trench that were flooded.¹³ Each village flooded had a graveyard and many trappers as well as their family members buried their deceased on their trapline.¹⁴ Still others chose the location of their burial. Some were recent. Some were so old that local residents have forgotten the names of the residents.¹⁵ Complicating the whole situation is that historically community members did not bury all of the dead. Some were burned, had their last shelter pulled down over them, or were placed in trees. Quite interestingly, the Tsek'ehne saw scaffolds as a form of punishment for the dead.¹⁶

¹¹ Loraine Littlefield, Linda Dorricott and Deidre Cullon, "Tse Keh Nay Traditional and Contemporary Use and Occupation at Amazay (Duncan Lake): A Draft Report" (Unpublished report, 2007), 40; Earl Pollon and Shirlee Smith Matheson, *This Was Our Valley* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2003), 277.

¹² "Ingenika, Fort Ware: 'Horror Stories' Heard," *Prince George Citizen*, 15 April 1983.

¹³ Zepheria Isadore refers to the graveyards at Finlay Forks. Marion Jackson refers to the graveyard at Tsay Keh Dene. Zepheria Isadore, interviewed by Richard Almond, Salmon Valley, BC, 29 July 2004; Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, 1 October 2012; Marion Jackson, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; Littlefield, Dorricott and Cullon, 45; Rita McIsaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September 2012; Virginia Pierre, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 5 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; John Poole, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 30 September 2012; Tsek'ehne Kemess Meeting.

¹⁴ Marion Jackson; John Poole.

¹⁵ Virginia Pierre, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 9 August 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

¹⁶ Jenness, Lanoue and Morice claims scaffolds and shelter burial were a normal burial technique. Missionary ethnographer Adrien Morice, however, claimed Christian burial became the norm following contact with missionaries. While inversely Diamond Jenness would argue some of the Elderly were merely abandoned. D.L.S. [A.G. Morice], *Fifty Years in Western Canada: Being the Abridge Memoirs of Rev. A.G. Morice, O.M.I.* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1930), 128; Diamond Jenness, *The Sekani Indians of British Columbia*, no. 84, *Anthropological Series*, no. 20 (Ottawa: J.O. Patenaude, 1937), 58-60, 62-63; Lanoue, "Continuity," 251; A.G. Morice, "The Fur Trader in Anthropology: And a Few Related Questions," *American Anthropologist* 30, No. 1 (1928): 83-84; A.G. Morice, *The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia (Formerly New Caledonia), 1660 to 1880* (Smithers: Interior Stationery Ltd., 1978), 6; Willie Pierre, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 11 December 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

In preparation for the creation of the Williston Lake Reservoir provincial officials promised the Tsek'ehne that they would relocate their graveyards to Parsnip River No. 5.¹⁷ Not everyone believed they would keep this promise, however, and some Tsek'ehne took the initiative and moved the graves of family members.¹⁸ Still, Tsay Keh Dene Elder Mabel Troendle recalls the ribbons that were placed on hills prior to the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir marked gravesites.¹⁹ Despite these promises, Elders are not sure what happened to the graveyards in the reservoir basin and as it turned out even those thought initially safe on the shore could slough in the reservoir.²⁰

For example, while Elders are pretty sure the province never saved the graveyard at Finlay Forks they are less sure about Fort Grahame.²¹ Some authors say that the province simply burned the village, bulldozed the graveyard, and placed a concrete slab over it prior to flooding to prevent the unearthing of coffins as the water rose and fluctuated in succeeding years.²² Others say, however, the graveyard was simply flooded and some Elders even recall seeing coffins floating amongst the debris.²³ Still more have heard that the province unceremoniously placed

¹⁷ Martha Egnell, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012; Littlefield, Dorricott and Cullon, 45; Virginia Pierre, 5 October 1984; Pollon and Matheson, 277; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2012.

¹⁸ Jimmie and Nora Massetoe, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012.

¹⁹ Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012.

²⁰ Martha Egnell, 8 March 2012; Bernard McKay, *Crooked River Rats: The Adventures of Pioneer Rivermen* (Surrey: Hancock House, 2000), 174; John Poole; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter.

²¹ Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

²² Stanley claims the graves at Fort Grahame were moved to "Grassy Bluff at Ingenika Point." Grassy Bluff and Ingenika Point are two separate locations and the statement is similar to stating they were relocated to Ottawa at Toronto. She cites Pollon and Matheson, who clearly state the relocation was to Parsnip River No. 5. Bev Christensen, "Indians at Ingenika Point:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 12 June 1987; Koyl, 69; Littlefield, Dorricott and Cullon, 45; Jimmie and Nora Massetoe; Virginia Pierre, 5 October 1984; Pollon and Matheson, 277; Meg Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers: Harnessing the Power of the Peace and Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2010), 111, 111n29, 278n29.

²³ Jimmie and Nora Massetoe; Johnny Pierre; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012; Tsek'ehne Kemess Meeting, Prince George, BC, 2 October 2012.

those buried there in a mass grave at Parsnip River No. 5.²⁴ At first these outcomes might sound contradictory, but Fort Grahame had three graveyards at it, with a fourth across the river at Factor Ross.²⁵ The Tsek'ehne only know the fate of the last one. It sloughed into the reservoir in 1983.²⁶

Unfortunately, it was not the only graveyard lost to soil erosion. At the Point the continued sloughing in of the shoreline led to tragedy when the graveyard began to fall into the reservoir one stormy day.²⁷ Quick thinking saved some of the graves, but the graveyard had to be relocated three more times before it reached its current location.²⁸ As a result, by 1983 the *Prince George Citizen* reported one hundred fifty graves had slid into the reservoir at the Point.²⁹

The reservoir also covered the material record of the Tsek'ehne in the Trench. Many archaeological sites were lost, and Elders are not happy that the province did not conduct comprehensive studies beforehand in an attempt to even document them.³⁰ In comparison around the same time Egypt had worked to save the Abu Simble temples that the Aswan High Dam was going to flood. Adding injury to insult the province instead focused on prehistoric life, collecting

²⁴ Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, 1 October 2012; Pollon and Matheson, 277; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012.

²⁵ Ingenika Band Members, interviewed by Lorraine Izony, Ingenika, BC, 25 April 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Johnny Pierre; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

²⁶ Ingenika Band Members.

²⁷ Ingenika Band Members; Littlefield, Dorricott and Cullon, 45; Lena McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2013; Pollon and Matheson, 277; Vera Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

²⁸ Vera Poole recalls Louie Tomah saved many of the coffins. Louie, however, does not mention this event in his interview with me. Pollon and Matheson, 277; Vera Poole, 15 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

²⁹ Another graveyard at Chowika Creek almost sloughed into the reservoir around 1984, but was saved by Ingenika band members. Malcolm Curtis reported in 1985 that another graveyard had slough into the reservoir. It is possible it was the Chowika graveyard. Malcolm Curtis, "A Primitive Life...", *Prince George Citizen*, 5 February 1985; Ingenika Band Members; "Ingenika, Fort Ware: 'Horror Stories' Heard," *Prince George Citizen*, 15 April 1983.

³⁰ The investigation by Robert McGhee in 1963 was limited in scale. Yvonne Harris, "Choices for Change: A Study of the Fort Ware Indian Band and Implications of Land Settlements for Northern Indian Bands" (MA Thesis: University of British Columbia, 1984), 36; Ray Izony, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 3 October 2012; Ray Izony, "Changes in Tsay Kehnnay Dene Governance/Society," Lanoue, "Continuity," 211-213; Geraldine Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; Stanley, 38-39.

and publicizing fossils found in the vicinity of the dam site, although as any archaeologist will tell you that is paleontology.³¹ The destruction of sites also did not stop with the reservoir and as developments continued and moved further north, they destroyed more and more archaeological sites.³²

This continued destruction of archaeological sites is even more problematic when one considers the debate over whether the Tsek'ehne are recent arrivals to the Trench. Starting with fur trader Daniel William Harmon, various authors and academics have argued the Tsek'ehne only moved into the Trench following Nêhiyawak movement westward as a result of the fur trade.³³ The basis for this argument has often been the scarcity of archaeological evidence. Anthropologist Guy Lanoue for example claims that there is simply not enough archaeological evidence in the Trench to prove long-term inhabitation by the Tsek'ehne, despite acknowledging that the reservoir destroyed many sites. (He also claims there is no evidence of historic village sites in the Trench.) One should note, however, that not only did he base his conclusion on a lack of archaeological evidence, but also on his own views about the quality of life possible in the Trench.³⁴

Oral traditions contradict this claim of recent arrival into the Trench. They contain memories of not only megafauna, but also where their habitat was in the traditional territory that

³¹ British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, "Peace River Power," (Vancouver: British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, [1968]), 3; Ranulph Fiennes, *The Headless Valley* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973), 167; Pollon and Matheson, 224.

³² Ray Izony, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 23 September 2008.

³³ British Columbia Archives (BCA), Conference of Northwest Coast Studies fonds, MS 1308, Box 1/1, File 20, Frans Lamers, "Sekani Adaptation: An Analysis of Technological Strategies and Processes," Northwest Coast Studies Conference, 12-16 May 1976, 6; J.C. Guiltner, *The Mighty Peace River Country and McKenzie Highway: Historical and Tourist Guide* (Edmonton: Bulletin Printers Ltd., [1962]), 75; Daniel William Harmon, *Harmon's Journal 1800-1819*, ed. W. Kaye Lamb (Victoria: New Caledonia House Publishing, 2006), 115; Jenness, 5-9, 11; Lanoue, "Continuity," 19, 35, 211-213, 365; Littlefield, Dorricott and Cullon, 5; A.G. Morice, *The Great Dene Race* (Vienna: The Press of the Mechitharistes, 1906), 36-37; A.G. Morice, *The History of the Northern Interior of British*, 29-30; William Quackenbush, "Tastes of Canadians and Dogs: The History and Archaeology of McLeods Lake Post, British Columbia" (MA Thesis: Simon Fraser University, 1990), 19-20.

³⁴ Lanoue, "Continuity," 19, 211-213, 238.

have even reached the popular culture of Canada.³⁵ So do some recent academics, including archaeologists who have worked in the Trench with what remains.³⁶ Archaeological evidence now points towards continuous human occupation since the last Ice Age, with the transition in views occurring in the early 1980s.³⁷ (One can see a similar transition with regard to the concept of a Nêhiyawak westward movement.)³⁸ For example, Lanoue conducted his fieldwork in 1978-1979, while Yvonne Harris did hers in 1983.³⁹ Unlike Lanoue, however, she argues one should refrain from making conclusions because of the lack of evidence, especially given the oral tradition.⁴⁰

This loss of land and all it represented went hand in hand with an influx of non-Tsek'ehne individuals into the traditional territory that created competition for resources in the land that remained. In doing so it further contributed to the impacts of the reservoir. It also coincided with the beginning of the reserve era in Fort Ware and McLeod Lake brought about by the displacement caused by the reservoir. And although this event meant radically different things for each band, there were a few common aspects, such as restricting land use in the

³⁵ Ray Izony, 23 September 2008; Gordon Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September 2008; Albert Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 6 November 2008; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012; William (Billie) Poole, 8 September 2008; S.E. Schlosser, "Attack of the Mammoth," *Spooky Canada: Tales of Hauntings, Strange Happenings and Other Local Lore: Retold by S.E. Schlosser* (Guilford: Insider's Guide, 2007); Mabel Troendle, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 16 September 2008.

³⁶ Alison Davis argues not only that the Tsek'ehne always lived in the Trench, but also that they were pushed westward by the Nehiyawak and Dane-zaa. Koyl presents Nehiyawak and Dane-zaa incursions as a loss of land. Alison Davis, *Sekani Ethnobotany: Traditional Role of Plants Amongst the Sekani People* (Bloomington: Trafford Publishing, 2008), 1; Yvonne Harris, 36; Koyl, 23-24; Littlefield, Dorricott and Cullon, 2, 5, 41; Quackenbush, 19-20.

³⁷ Stanley, 39.

³⁸ As good place to start is to talk to a Nehiyawak Elder or read James Smith, "The Western Woods Cree: Anthropological Myth and Historical Reality," *American Ethnologist* 14, no. 3 (1987): 434-448.

³⁹ Yvonne Harris; Lanoue, "Continuity," 2-3, 184, *passim*.

⁴⁰ She does note it is possible that those at McLeod Lake are recent arrivals to McLeod Lake, but sees no evidence with regard to the Trench as a whole. Yvonne Harris, 35-36.

Trench and increasing the tendency of individuals to remain in the village for longer periods throughout the year, especially if they had children.⁴¹

A major impetus for this incursion was the forest industry. The first sawmills in the vicinity of McLeod Lake spread north in preparation for the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. At the same time a new city emerged in 1966 in conjunction with the dam. Named Mackenzie, it was built for the forest industry, and it represented the fact that logging would not end with the clearing of the reservoir basin. It also resulted in a significant number of non-Tsek'ehne individuals moving into the Trench, who not only saw the Tsek'ehne at one of the worst points in their history, but also often judged the circumstances to be the norm. Not helping the situation was that the treatment the Tsek'ehne received from some of these new neighbours often did not foster good relations.⁴²

Climate Change

When the Ingenika Band reached a settlement in 1989 it received a plot of land at the Point for the graveyard that they agreed was not for settlement. They still use it to this day and it raises the question of why the village did not simply stay at the Point. A prime reason was due to climate and its effects on the band, for not only did the reservoir flood out the Tsek'ehne, it also changed the very climate of their homeland causing wind and sandstorms. The new village of Tsay Keh Dene was a response to and an acknowledgement of this alteration.⁴³

Unlike many of the other repercussions of the reservoir, climate change was expected. Indeed, as early as 1957 it was expected the reservoir would hold heat and in doing so delay first

⁴¹ Lanoue, "Continuity," 157, 164.

⁴² Lanoue specifically refers to McLeod Lake. I argue the same is true for all three nations. Lanoue, "Continuity," 4-5, 46-48.

⁴³ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Mabel Troendle, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 16 September 2008. Pollon and Matheson note BC Hydro denies any climate change took place. They also note that lack of concrete information regarding the subject. Pollon and Matheson, 300; John Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 11 January 1977.

frosts within ten miles of its shoreline.⁴⁴ Rather than question what impact this change would have on ecological systems, Premier W.A.C. Bennett proudly repeated it at numerous events. Keeping true to false concepts such as “rain follows the plow,” it appears he was quite proud his government would warm the subarctic.⁴⁵

Part of the problem with predicting how the dam would affect the climate was that studies looking at climate were lacking for the northern Trench. Reports from the turn of the century suggested the Trench received between two to six feet of snow in winter, with light rain in the summer. Surveyors said game was limited in number and most fish lived in the Parsnip River.⁴⁶ By the 1930s, however, Diamond Jenness stated it was “rather dry,” and surveys for the Alaska Highway in 1942 estimated eighteen inches of snow was the norm.⁴⁷ Not helping the situation was that as late as 1952 precipitation amounts were unknown to outsiders east of the Parsnip River.⁴⁸

Even when construction began, the closest the province came to conducting a study was with regard to the average amount of snow in the Trench and when it melted. Even then, it was

⁴⁴ Interestingly, as the reservoir started to fill it was argued in the *Canadian Geographic Journal* that the change would be minimal. Northern British Columbia Archives (NBCA), Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.9, Box 1, J. Lewis Robinson, “The Rocky Mountain Trench in Eastern British Columbia,” *Canadian Geographic Journal* 77, no. 4 (1968): 138-139; “Peace River Project Hot Topic,” *Prince George Citizen*, 9 October 1957; Martin Robin, *Pillars of Profit: The Company Province 1934-1972* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1973), 211.

⁴⁵ Simon Fraser University Archives (SFUA), W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-32-0-10, W.A.C. Bennett, An Address By The Honourable W.A.C. Bennett, Premier Of British Columbia to Men’s Canadian Club, Ottawa, November 26, 1957; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-33-0-8, W.A.C. Bennett, “Provincial-Municipal Relations:” Address Given By Hon. W.A.C. Bennett, June 2, 1958; SFUA, F-55-33-0-8, W.A.C. Bennett, “Canada Faces A Challenge:” An Address By The Honourable W.A.C. Bennett Premier Of British Columbia to The National Convention Junior Chamber Of Commerce, Victoria, June 30, 1958; SFUA, F-55-33-0-8, W.A.C. Bennett, “British Columbia Today And Tomorrow:” An Address By The Honourable W.A.C. Bennett Premier Of British Columbia to The Annual Convention Canadian Education Association, Victoria, September 16, 1958; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-33-0-9, W.A.C. Bennett, “British Columbia Today And Tomorrow:” Premier’s Speech To Annual Convention Of Canadian Education Association, Empress Hotel, September 16th, 1958; SFUA, W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F-55-53-0-2, W.A.C. Bennett, “The Power Development Story in British Columbia:...,” 16 September 1961.

⁴⁶ A.W. Harvey, “The Peace River Country: Report of Exploration Surveys in the Peace, Parsnip and Findlay River Valleys,” *Fort George Herald*, 5 April 1913.

⁴⁷ Jenness, 1; NBCA, Helen Mustard collection, 2004.24.16, Box 1, G.S. Andrews, “Alaska Highway Survey In British Columbia, 2 March 1942,” [*The Geographical Journal* 100, no. 1 (July 1942)]: 9.

⁴⁸ “Snowplow Gangs Will Patrol Hart Highway Next Winter,” *Prince George Citizen*, 8 September 1952.

conducted to ensure the dam could handle the spring runoff and not due to any concern regarding the impacts on climate or even environment.⁴⁹ Still they provide some glimpse into the climate that existed prior to the reservoir. Its report, produced in 1965, concluded that the climate of the Peace River watershed ranged from cold, snowy winters to mild, rainy summers with temperatures ranging from -40° C to 32° C. Snow accumulations ranged from 40 inches in the valleys to 150 inches in the mountains, with the spring runoff beginning in late April/early May, peaking in late May/early June. Overall average precipitation was 30 inches, with the Parsnip watershed warmer and wetter than the other two, with an average annual precipitation of 60 inches.⁵⁰

Since the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam Elders in all three communities have noticed an increase in precipitation, cloud formation, and fog and they say it is generally colder. Inversely, however, they also note how winters are not as cold and a 2008 study found that the summers were now drier on average, with up to half of precipitation coming in the winter.⁵¹

Perhaps we will never know the exact ways that the reservoir changed the climate in the Trench. What we do know, however, is that the winds and cut banks, combined with the sandy soil of the Trench, create huge sand storms at the north end of the reservoir that sometimes reached as far north as Fort Ware.⁵² As with many other impacts of the reservoir no one expected this outcome, despite the fact Paul Haworth had noted in 1917 that when the wind hit the sandy

⁴⁹ “27,000 Square Miles of Territory: Runoff Study Starts In Peace Watershed,” *Prince George Citizen*, 23 May 1963; Pollon and Matheson, 300.

⁵⁰ BCA, Portage Mountain Development..., GR-0880, Box 64, David Rockwood, “Derivation Of Maximum Probable Flood Portage Mountain Project Peace River, British Columbia” (Vancouver: International Power And Engineering Consultants Limited, 1965), 7-8.

⁵¹ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Robert Inyallie, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 8 March 2012. Other sources note warmer winters. Colin Crampton, “Problems of Environmental Conservation for the Sekani Ingenika Band in Northern British Columbia, Canada,” *Environmental Conservation* 19, No. 1 (1992): 76; Davis, 7; Pollon and Matheson, 181.

⁵² Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Mary Ann and Murphy Porter.

banks along the rivers in the northern Trench that it created dust.⁵³ The potential for these storms is worst when the water is lowest and it exposes more reservoir bottom to the wind.⁵⁴ As a result they are most common during the spring when most residents want to go outside after along winter.

Elders first noticed these storms in 1971.⁵⁵ And even today many people simply remain in their houses when they happen.⁵⁶ Even this decision does not ensure safety as the winds can be strong enough to rip the roofs off of people's cabins, knock over trees, or blow down tents.⁵⁷ Runways only contribute to them and unlike the old village Ingenika, the runway at Tsay Keh Dene is a distance from the community.⁵⁸ The storms cover berry patches, and affect the food of many local animals.⁵⁹ They make it difficult to make dry meat, and the fine particles have led to skin, eye, respiratory, and stomach problems for many residents, especially among the young and old.⁶⁰ A key problem is that the winds carry more than just sand. Pollutants that settle on the bottom of the reservoir are included in the wind if they are light.⁶¹

Complicating the matter is that many Elders in all three communities recall more and more people became ill after the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir. As with alcohol use, the sudden increase made it seem like no one ever got sick before this point in times.⁶²

⁵³ Paul Haworth, *On the Headwaters of Peace River: A Narrative of a Thousand-Mile Canoe Trip to a Little-Known Place of the Canadian Rockies* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1917), 80.

⁵⁴ Crampton, 76; Ingram, 18-19; Littlefield, Dorricott and Cullon, 46; Jimmie and Nora Massettoe; Pollon and Matheson, 269; Stanley, 111-112.

⁵⁵ Ray Izony, "Changes."

⁵⁶ Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012.

⁵⁷ Ingenika Band Members, interviewed by Lorraine Izony, Ingenika, BC, 25 April 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

⁵⁸ Robert Inyallie.

⁵⁹ Elizabeth Pierre, "Stories Related to Us by Our Elders," *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, ed. Kaya Minogue, 69; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012.

⁶⁰ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Rose Dennis, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 20 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

⁶¹ Indeed, in 2000 alone 80% of Tsay Keh Nay reported skin, eye, or respiratory problems. Ingram, 20.

⁶² Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Emil McCook, 5 March 2013.

Compounding the entire situation is that the flooding of the reservoir psychologically scarred many Tsek'ehne, especially as they tried to reconcile what was, with what is.⁶³ The entire event challenged traditional beliefs (including religious) and destroyed trust, especially in the state.⁶⁴ The fact that the reservoir took time to flood meant that some band members began to fear it would rise still higher, despite what state officials told them. It can sometimes be difficult therefore to distinguish between illness caused directly by the impacts of the reservoir, and illness caused by the psychological impacts of the reservoir, and its weakening of the immune system.

BC Hydro continues to attempt to prevent these dust storms and reduce overall dust levels while still being able to lower the reservoir.⁶⁵ Many Elders believe the province should have planned ahead in the first place to prevent such issues and some think the storms will never end.⁶⁶ Potential solutions to the sand storms include revegetation of the reservoir bottom, an artificial island to divert the wind, and keeping the reservoir level continuously high.⁶⁷ These solutions, however, have not been promising. On the one hand revegetation has proved difficult for a number of reasons, including the wind, fluctuation of the reservoir, the sandy soil of the reservoir bottom, and erosion.⁶⁸ Not helping the situation is the annual drawdown of the reservoir has made the littoral zone essentially abiotic.⁶⁹ On the other hand, since the cost of building an artificial island is prohibitive the province has never tried it, and keeping the reservoir at a

⁶³ Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 September 2012; Helen Poole; Geraldine Solonas; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012; Bob and Shirley Van Somer, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 22 March 2012.

⁶⁴ Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012.

⁶⁵ Ingram, 19-20; Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

⁶⁶ Jean Isaac, 12 September 2012; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

⁶⁷ Ingram, 19-20; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

⁶⁸ Ingram, 19-20; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, 15 March 2012.

⁶⁹ BCA, GR-0880, Box 6, Division of Applied Biology, BC Research, *Limnological Studies of Williston Lake During the Summer and Fall, 1975: Project 1711*, 2, 46.

constant level negates the justification of creating the reservoir in the first place.⁷⁰ Reservoirs exist so dam operators can lower them to keep energy production at a constant level regardless of natural water flow rates.

Not helping the entire situation is the spray program conducted by the BC Forest Service, and at times BC Hydro, for pests and weeds.⁷¹ Officially both organizations consider what they spray to be safe.⁷² Questions remain, however, especially in light of allegations by major news organizations that the province was using Agent Orange during the 1960s and 1970s.

(Technically the province only used 2-4-D and 2-4-5-T, which can be combined to form Agent Orange. Although the province banned 2-4-5-T in 1978, they still use 2-4-D.)⁷³ No matter how outlandish these claims may be, there can be no doubt that spraying contributes to the general pollutant levels in the reservoir, and throughout the entire Williston Lake reservoir watershed.⁷⁴ Some Elders even associate the diminished quality of moose with this spraying, rather than the reservoir itself.⁷⁵

Failed Fishery

One cannot completely separate terrestrial wildlife from aquatic life in any ecosystem. Herbivores, such as moose eat aquatic plants, while carnivores eat fish and other aquatic animals. (When BC Hydro draws down the reservoir, access to both is easier.) The province originally

⁷⁰ "History of Ingenika," 10; Ingram, 20.

⁷¹ Pollon and Matheson note BC Hydro had stopped aerial spraying by 1989. Davis, 5; Ray Izony, "Changes," Pollon and Matheson, 278, 292-296; Gordon Shrum, *Gordon Shrum: An Autobiography*, ed. Clive Cocking (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 126-127.

⁷² Former head of BC Hydro Gordon Shrum even drank a glass of herbicide for the news media to prove its safety. Health Link BC, "Aerial Spraying in BC's Forests," <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile90b.stm> (accessed 26 October 2015); Shrum, 126-127.

⁷³ Jon Woodward, "Toxic 'Agent Orange' Sprayed in BC: Documents," *CTV News*, <http://bc.ctvnews.ca/toxic-agent-orange-sprayed-in-b-c-documents-1.791471> (accessed 26 October 2015).

⁷⁴ Crampton, 77.

⁷⁵ Bev Christensen, "Land Claim Strategy," *Prince George Citizen*, 13 September 1988; Elizabeth Pierre, "From the Heart of Grandma Elizabeth," *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 59.

hoped the reservoir would improve the overall quality and quantity of fish as a result of the transformation of their environment from riverine to lacustrine. Premier Bennett even claimed that the new reservoir would allow for the emergence of a commercial whitefish fishery where one had not existed.⁷⁶ Prior to and during the hearings into the dam provincial fisheries officials were adamant that the proposed reservoir be prepared for recreation by not only properly clearing it, but also constructing public access roads, trails, campsites, and boat launches.⁷⁷ (This proposal was made again in 1975 following studies on the lake.)⁷⁸ The debris prevented either from happening.⁷⁹ Even barring the debris, fish had a hard time coping with the periodic lowering of the reservoir and the sloughing of the shore into the reservoir.⁸⁰ Perhaps as a result, in 1975 a provincial study reported that the lake was oligotrophic, with water quality similar to Kootenay or Kalamika Lake.⁸¹

The soil and debris in the reservoir resulted in high mercury levels in fish throughout the reservoir's watershed that rendered them unsafe for children, expectant mothers, and commercial use. (It is not recommended for others.)⁸² Coliform levels also remain high in the reservoir to this

⁷⁶ BCA, W.A.C. Bennett interview, T1675:0021, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by David Mitchell, 16 June 1977.

⁷⁷ BCA, GR-0880, Box 57, Fisheries Management Division, "Fisheries Problems Associated With Development Of The Peace River And Its Upper Tributaries For Hydro-Electric Purpose," (Vancouver: Department of Recreation & Conservation, [1959]), 6-7, 16-18; BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Proceedings In The Province Of British Columbia..., August 2nd 1962, 109, 112-113, 117-118; NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.6, Box 6, "Roads, Trails, Campsites Sought: Peace Project May Create Vast BC Vacationland," *Daily Colonist* 2 June 1960.

⁷⁸ Kwadacha Archives (KA), British Columbia Water Comptroller fonds, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, J. O'Riordan, "Williston Lake Potentials Study," 25 March 1975.

⁷⁹ Ironically Ray Williston would later state the reservoir basin had not been entirely cleared to provide cover for the fish. BCA, Ray Williston interview, T1375:0015, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 8 October 1975, Victoria, B.C.; Curtis, "A Primitive Life...."

⁸⁰ Ingenika Band Members.

⁸¹ KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, O'Riordan, "Williston Lake Potentials Study."

⁸² In 1992 the limit for commercial fish was 0.5 ppm, while 0.2 ppm was the norm. Izony notes in the mid-1990s band members were advised to restrict their consumption of fish from the reservoir to one a year. Bob Van Somer heard it was one per month. Gery Ardley, "Pinchi Lake Fish: Mercury-level Checks Show Indians Affected," *Prince George Citizen*, 23 December 1976; Ray Izony, "Changes;" Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012; Bob and Shirley Van Somer; Tom Watson, *Evaluation of Mercury Concentration in Selected Environmental Receptors in the Williston Lake and Peace River Areas of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Environmental Resources: British Columbia Hydro, 1992), ii, vi, 1, 4, 5, 14, 32, 34.

day, rendering it unpotable.⁸³ Furthermore, since coliform is indicative of bacteria populations in water, this high level actually contributes to mercury levels since certain types of bacteria can transform inorganic “safe” mercury into “dangerous” methyl mercury. Scientists, however, only announced this process in 1969, a year after the completion of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. They had discovered it as a result of investigations into the adverse health effects of mercury in humans that they were only beginning to understand in the 1950s and 1960s. Not helping the situation was that the reservoir’s watershed, which included the Pinchi Fault, was naturally high in mercury levels and therefore they did not drop as time went on, as is common with most other reservoirs. As result, while normal mercury concentrations in fish are 0.2 ppm, in 1988 averages ranged from 1.42 ppm in bull trout to 0.044 ppm in kokanee.⁸⁴ Yet a 1975 report by the province claimed heavy metal levels in the reservoir were not of concern.⁸⁵

As a result of apprehensions over mercury and other pollutants, many band members refuse to fish in the reservoir, preferring instead the cleaner streams and rivers flowing into it and other bodies of water in the traditional territory. Yet these bodies of water are still almost exclusively within the watershed of Williston Lake reservoir, and some Elders report lower catches after its creation.⁸⁶ Many Elders are worried about aquatic life in the Trench. Some Elders have heard that poison in the water killed the fish.⁸⁷ Even waterfowl are suspect, with some Elders hearing that due to contamination of their food source they are no longer safe to

⁸³ “History of Ingenika,” 10.

⁸⁴ Pinchi Lake had a mercury mine. Tom Watson, *Evaluation of Mercury Concentration in Selected Environmental Receptors in the Williston Lake and Peace River Areas of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Environmental Resources: British Columbia Hydro, 1992), i-iv, vi-vii, 4-10, 14-20, 26-31 passim.

⁸⁵ BCA, GR-0880, Box 6, BC Research, 1.

⁸⁶ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Georgina Chingee. Crampton, 77.

⁸⁷ Richard Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 27 September 2012.

eat.⁸⁸ Some have noticed reduced populations of birds in general.⁸⁹ Among them is Tsay Keh Dene Elder Billie Poole, who misses the experience of travelling on the rivers and hearing them sing.⁹⁰ It challenges claims made in 1970 by some conservation officers that the reservoir might be good for waterfowl.⁹¹

Fish was one of the main sources of protein for the Tsek'ehne.⁹² This fact can be easily overlooked in a province where salmon is often perceived to dominate, especially since with a few exceptions Tsek'ehne traditional territory did not include salmon streams.⁹³ It could be dried or salted depending on what was at hand.⁹⁴ McLeod Lake Elder Anita Vallee told me that historically fish was the main food source at McLeod Lake.⁹⁵ It challenges earlier assumptions regarding the Tsek'ehne and fish. For example, Adrien Gabriel Morice claimed the Tsek'ehne “despised fish and lived on venison,”⁹⁶ although he did admit this aversion might be merely pragmatic or due to the view hunting was more proper.⁹⁷ This view continued throughout the

⁸⁸ Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012.

⁸⁹ William (Billie) Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012.

⁹⁰ William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012.

⁹¹ NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.14, Box 10, Cole, “Displaced Person’s View of Williston Lake.”

⁹² Adele Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; Doug Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012; Davis, 7; Jenness, 1-2; Bentley LeBaron, *Parsnip Review* (Ottawa: McLeod Lake Indian Band and Department of Indian Affairs, 1978), 11; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012; Richard Solonas.

⁹³ For example, prior to the dam *The Province* referred to the Peace as a “non-fish river,” while a 1989 article juxtaposes the Tsek'ehne as hunters with the Dakelh as fishermen. Bev Christensen, “When Hunting Is More Than A Hobby,” *Prince George Citizen*, 21 October 1989; NBCA, Ray Williston fonds, 2000.13.2.5, Box 6, William Ryan, “Business Today: Words Can’t Describe Big Peace Project,” *The Province*, [n.d].”

⁹⁴ Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, 1 October 2012; Julia and Isadore Izony, “Stories Related to Us by Our Elders,” *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 75; LeBaron, 11; Susan [Suzanne] Tomah, “Stories Related to Us by Our Elders,” *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 70.

⁹⁵ During the McKenna-McBride Commission it was reported the McLeod Lake Tse'khene were making more and more central to their diet. BCA, MS 1056, Royal Commission of Indian Affairs in British Columbia (1913-1916) Transcripts 1914-1915, Box 3, File 4, Stuart Lake Agency, Examination of W.J. McAllan, Indian Agent for the Stuart Lake Agency at the Board Room, Victoria, November 15th, 1915; Anita Vallee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.

⁹⁶ D.L.S., 65.

⁹⁷ D.L.S., 65; Morice, “The Fur Trader in Anthropology,” 79; A.G. Morice, “The Western Dene: Their Manners and Customs,” *Proceedings of the Canadian Institute, Toronto* 26, no. 152 (1889): 130.

twentieth century. A 1938 report on Fort Ware claimed that the band did not eat fish, and did not even know how to make nets, while journalists denounced suggestions that the 1989 agreement with the Ingenika Band include provisions for commercial fishery as not understanding a group that “historically looked down on Indians who obtained food by fishing.”⁹⁸ It is telling, however, that Chief Gordon Pierre rejected it because of the pollution in the reservoir, the decline in fish stocks and species, and the fact his band members were not fishermen and therefore lacked experience and infrastructure when it came to marketing fish.⁹⁹ He did not reject it because his band was culturally opposed to fishing. Still, while many Elders told me fish was one of the main sources of food, with fish and wildlife being the other, others told me it was a secondary activity employed when hunting failed, while McLeod Lake Elder Jack Isadore pointed out that fish were also caught in the fall as bait for traps and to feed dogs.¹⁰⁰

Historically hooks were fashioned from bone and/or wood.¹⁰¹ Some employed nets, especially in McLeod Lake, and some Elders note how their Elders carried the sticks necessary to anchor a net with them at all times.¹⁰² (Diamond Jenness notes the use of fish traps, but none of the Elders I talked to mentioned them.)¹⁰³ Some Elders like Zepheria Isadore once set nets nightly before the reservoir and nets could be set year round even through the ice.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Bev Christensen, “Reserve Near Williston Lake: Indians Offered \$1.5 Million,” *Prince George Citizen*, 22 February 1989; LAC, RG 10, Volume 7538, File 27,163-1, Memorandum from Indian Agent, 30 June 1938.

⁹⁹ Bev Christensen, “Indians Not Impressed with Government Offer,” *Prince George Citizen*, 23 February 1989; Bev Christensen, “New Community Proposed: Indians Still Waiting,” *Prince George Citizen*, 27 March 1989.

¹⁰⁰ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Jack Isadore, 4 August 2004.

¹⁰¹ Davis, 18; Jean Isaac, “Sekani ‘Tsey Kehneh,’” *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 78; Jenness, 39.

¹⁰² Anonymous #3, interviewed by author, October 2012; Frank Hunter, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 19 December 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; Al Inyallie, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; Zepheria Isadore, 29 July 2004; Virginia Pierre, 5 October 1984; Agnes Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Suzanne Tomah, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 20 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*.

¹⁰³ Jenness, 42;

¹⁰⁴ Robert Inyallie; Zepheria Isadore, 29 July 2004.

After the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir net use became less common.¹⁰⁵ This decline was a result of the fishing changing after the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir.¹⁰⁶ The creation of the reservoir changed the type and quality of fish in the Trench.¹⁰⁷ In part this change was because the massive alteration to the environment ruined some spawning grounds.¹⁰⁸ Species like arctic grayling, mountain whitefish, and rainbow trout declined in favor of bull trout (Dolly Varden), kokanee, lake trout, lake whitefish, ling, and peamouth chub.¹⁰⁹ This did not mean fish species disappeared per se, and in 1975 it was reported that of 2,400 fish caught 35% were lake whitefish, 20% mountain whitefish, 15% suckers, and <10% rainbow trout, bull trout, and Arctic Grayling. Distribution of species was also not uniform throughout the reservoir.¹¹⁰

Many Elders do not even recall seeing kokanee until after the creation of the reservoir. Now they are plentiful.¹¹¹ Ironically, however, despite often being seen as sport fish in the rest of British Columbia, some Elders say they ruin the water when they spawn and die off and while

¹⁰⁵ Anonymous #3; Al Inyallie; Guy Lanoue, *Brothers: The Politics of Violence Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia* (Oxford: Berg Publishers Ltd., 1992), 21.

¹⁰⁶ "History of Ingenika," 4.

¹⁰⁷ Koyl, 79.

¹⁰⁸ Ingenika Band Members; Watson, 26.

¹⁰⁹ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Zepheria Isadore 29 July 2004; Anita Vallee. In 1910 Arctic trout are reported. In 1913 it was reported the Parsnip River had bull trout, Arctic grayling/Arctic trout, and rainbow trout. Some Elders recall Dolly Varden and char being plentiful prior to the reservoir, although not necessarily in the rivers. Anita Vallee notes whitefish have declined, but does not specify the type. According to Zepheria Isadore bull trout have declined since the reservoir, although she seems to be referring to the ability to catch them. A 1985 newspaper article claims the reservoir is "known for its Dolly Varden, Rainbow Trout and Arctic Grayling." BCA, GR-0880, Box 57, Fisheries Management Division, "Fisheries Problems Associated With Development Of The Peace River...", 4-6, 13-14; BCA, GR-0880, Box 60, Proceedings In The Province Of British Columbia..., August 2nd 1962, 109; Malcolm Curtis, "Ocean of Debris:...", *Prince George Citizen*, 5 February 1985; "Exploring the Peace River:...", *Fort George Herald*, 1 October 1910; Yvonne Harris, 49; A.W. Harvey, "The Peace River Country: Report of Exploration Surveys in the Peace, Parsnip and Findlay River Valleys," *Fort George Herald*, 29 March 1913; Harvey, "The Peace River Country," 5 April 1913; KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Executive Summary: Re: Finlay-Omineca Strategic Environmental Plan, [3 December 1984]; Littlefield, Dorricott and Cullon, 44-45; Tina Loo, "Disturbing the Peace: Environmental Change and the Scales of Justice on a Northern River," *Environmental History* 12 (2007): 901; Pollon and Matheson, 282, 284-285.

¹¹⁰ KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, O'Riordan, "Williston Lake Potentials Study."

¹¹¹ Some Elders recall kokanee before the reservoir. Jimmie and Nora Massettoe; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012; Mary Ann and Murphy Porter; Bob and Shirley Van Somer.

kokanee have flourished arctic grayling have declined to the point where by 1989 they were almost entirely gone.¹¹² Other fish merely suffered. For example, in 1975 Ingenika band members recall finding dead bull trout all along the reservoir shore. Others recall finding worms in the fish or injured fish.¹¹³ Some say that now when eaten the flesh tastes wrong or is mushy.¹¹⁴ Despite these observations officially the province says that the total number of fish in the reservoir increased, only to decrease due to overfishing, especially at the mouth of tributaries, and the fluctuation of the reservoir.¹¹⁵

Compensation

This loss of lands, sites, and resources, combined with changes to the climate, wildlife, and fisheries might had been mitigated had proper compensation been provided. However, aside from exchanging flooded reserve lands, the province only provided compensation on an individual basis, and only if traplines and/or state recognized private property were going to be partially or completely flooded. With input from Indian Affairs, BC Hydro determined compensation. Unfortunately, Indians Affairs' only requirements were that it be fair, just, and "given" to those it felt the reservoir would affect and who they informed in 1964.¹¹⁶ The department was unwilling to fight for higher valuations or recognition of Aboriginal title, traditional land ownership, historic development officially on Crown land, or resource sites, while BC Hydro only provided compensation for what it was legally required to. As a result, Euro-Canadians often received more money simply because they questioned the amount offered

¹¹² Pollon and Matheson, 282; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, 9 March 2012.

¹¹³ Ingenika Band Members.

¹¹⁴ Jimmie and Nora Massetoe; Richard Solonas.

¹¹⁵ BCA, T1675:0021, W.A.C. Bennett; KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Executive Summary: Re: Finlay-Omineca Strategic Environmental Plan, [3 December 1984]; KA, File 0242651-E, Volume 2, Memorandum from Legislative Intern, Dale Jackson, 10 June 1986; Loo, "Disturbing the Peace," 901; Pollon and Matheson, 284.

¹¹⁶ Ray Izony, "Changes;" Pollon and Matheson, 272; William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012.

to them.¹¹⁷ In hindsight Elders feel the province essentially bribed them to legitimize the construction of a dam and reservoir that no one ever properly informed them about and if they had been, they would certainly have not accepted money for it.¹¹⁸

Of the twenty-nine objector letters sent in 1962, only twenty-two individual Tsek'ehne, or Tsek'ehne partnerships, officially received money for traplines and private property lost to the reservoir: eight from McLeod Lake and fourteen from the Fort Grahame section of the Finlay River Band.¹¹⁹ (See Appendix C) The province strictly enforced this criteria and they refused to compensate anyone whose trapline or private property was on the edge of the reservoir, even if it sloughed in or the reservoir reduced productivity, thereby lowering its value. Naturally, this policy provoked anger from anyone who fell into the latter two categories.¹²⁰

Highlighting the lack of proper consultation, even today not all Elders are aware of the disparity that existed between amounts received or even how valuation was determined. Indeed, some Elders said to have received compensation do not appear on the official list.¹²¹

Complicating the matter is that at the time some Elders did not really know what the English

¹¹⁷ Ingenika Band Members; Albert Isadore, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 18 March 2013; Ray Izony, "Changes;" Koyl, 58, 96-97, 99, 101, 119-122; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, G.A. Rhoades, "Report on Ingenika Band of Indians in Occupation of Crown Lands at Ingenika River," 18 April 1974; Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; McKay, 172; Holly Nathan, "Building Dams, Constructing Stories: The Press, the Sekani and the Peace River Dam, 1957-1969" (MA Thesis: University of Northern British Columbia, 2009), 21; Johnny Pierre; Pollon and Matheson, 173-183, 188; Sharon Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2013; Anita Vallee.

¹¹⁸ Doris Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 26 September 2012; Stanley, 121.

¹¹⁹ Nathan states thirty-two families received compensation. As proof she cites Koyl who does not discuss the matter on the pages cited. BCA, Commission on British Columbia Railway (1977), GR-0500, Box 7, File 13, Exhibit 153, Summary of Compensation Payments Made for Traplines and Improvements Thereon to Flooding of the Finlay and Parsnip River Valleys by BC Hydro; Koyl, 47, 69, 101; Nathan, 21, 21n18.

¹²⁰ Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2013; Phillip Charlie; Jimmie and Nora Massettoe; Andrew Solonas Sr., interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 29 July 2004; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012.

¹²¹ For example, former chief Emil McCook thinks the valuation was by how much 12 km of trapline was worth. Rose Dennis; "History of Ingenika," 9; Ingenika Band Members; Marion Jackson; Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 7 November 2008; Emil McCook, 5 March 2013; Pollon and Matheson, 273; Sophie Poole, interviewed by Maureen Pierre, Ingenika, BC, 6 October 1984, *Ingenika Band (Gem Book)*; William (Billie) Poole, 12 March 2012; Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 6 March 2012.

word “compensation” meant, and many individuals considered what they got to be either the first of many annual payments or a mere pittance, with the latter provoking anger.¹²² Not helping was that Indian Affairs held the money in trust, and some Elders feel any sign of anger on their part resulted in them receiving less money in the long run, while others unknowingly “spent” their compensation when Indian Affairs used it to pay for goods and services provided to them.¹²³

BC Hydro based their valuation on recorded productivity and the formula that every one hundred beavers caught per year was worth \$5,000.¹²⁴ According to Indian Affairs records, the province only gave \$36,950 in compensation to the Tsek’ehne. Even this total is deceiving, however, as the province did not equally distribute the amount, with some individuals or partnerships receiving a mere \$100, while others received \$4,600 depending on the amount of damage and estimated value of the losses incurred.¹²⁵ No consideration was given to developments made on traplines and because of poor recording keeping amounts were highly speculative, and unlike a properly maintained trapline not renewable.¹²⁶

¹²² Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. See Marion Jackson. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Veit, “Meeting with Ingenika Band.”

¹²³ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. Some Elders believe certain individuals receive annual payments and/or that everyone should receive them. See Sophie Poole, 6 October 1984. BCA, GR-0500, Box 7, File 13, Exhibit 153, Summary of Compensation Payments Made for Traplines and Improvements Thereon to Flooding of the Finlay and Parsnip River Valleys by BC Hydro; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Veit, “Meeting with Ingenika Band.”

¹²⁴ As Lanoue points out this valuation was only arrived at after much debate. It would later be said it covered the estimated profit for twenty years, although Indian Affairs would maintain it was based on one year alone. Lanoue, “Continuity,” 381-382; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Memorandum from District Real Estate Officer, Lakes District, R.M. McIntyre, 11 March 1975; ““Model Indian Band Wants Land – But Not Money,” *Prince George Citizen*, 5 March 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, 2.8 Native People, 25 June 1979.

¹²⁵ A Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources report, despite explicitly stating exact amounts cannot be found in department records, claims that total compensation was over \$35 million dollars, a number almost six times the amount the Forest Service spent on the clearing the reservoir. Many Elders give ranges or averages, and at times members of the same family claim they received different amounts. BCA, GR-0500, Box 7, File 13, Exhibit 153, Summary of Compensation Payments Made for Traplines and Improvements Thereon to Flooding of the Finlay and Parsnip River Valleys by BC Hydro; Georgina Chingee; Albert Isadore; Ray Izony, 3 October 2012; Ray Izony, “Changes,” NBCA, 2004.24.23, Box 1, [Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources,] “The Origin Of The Ingenika Band,” Andrew Solonas Sr., 29 July 2004; Geraldine Solonas; Richard Solonas; Sharon Solonas; Anita Vallee.

¹²⁶ LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, 2.8 Native People, 25 June 1979; McKay, 172.

It was not enough to allow individuals to transition to the provincial wage labour economy, and even if it had been, employers proved less than willing to hire the Tsek'ehne.¹²⁷ Making matters worse, provincial legislation at the time only considered compensation for tangible things.¹²⁸ For intangible things, like a way of life, BC Hydro provided next to nothing in compensation,¹²⁹ despite the fact the dam caused “profound cultural, physical, and mental stress.”¹³⁰ It is because of all the things not compensated for that Doug Brown argues there was no compensation at all.¹³¹ Nevertheless, as Suzanne Veit concluded, “the social and cultural lifestyles [of Fort Ware and Ingenika] were radically altered with no serious thought given as to the long term implications of these community disruptions.”¹³² With regard to McLeod Lake she suggested that the “social and cultural isolation... may be partly responsible for the high incidence of social disorganization presently experienced by the Band.”¹³³

Given the fact that the province did not even study the ecological impacts, it should come as no surprise that they conducted no social or cultural impact studies prior to the construction of the dam. Indeed, even many of the studies that took place after the creation of reservoir focus on the economic impacts as opposed to the cultural ones.¹³⁴ Despite this focus, many researchers have discovered that traditional economic activities among the Tsek'ehne are not merely a means

¹²⁷ In 1976 Frans Lamer even claimed compensation was minimal and barely covered two or three years of trapping. Seemingly supporting this claim, twelve years prior the *Prince George Citizen* had reported the poorest family in Fort Ware made \$1,400 in a year of trapping. “At Fort Ware: Housing Programs for Indians,” *Prince George Citizen*, 5 August 1964; BCA, MS 1308, Box 1/1, File 20, Lamers, 21; Lanoue, “Continuity,” 4; Pollon and Matheson, 276; Sharon Solonas.

¹²⁸ Curtis, “A Primitive Life...,” LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Rhoades, “Report on Ingenika Band...”

¹²⁹ Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, 9 March 2012.

¹³⁰ Ingram, 16-17.

¹³¹ Doug Brown, “Carrier-Sekani Self-Government in Context: Land and Resources,” *Western Geography* 12 (2002): 39.

¹³² LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Suzanne Veit, “Report Draft,” 22 March 1977, 2.3.1.1.a.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ In 1981 it was proposed that a Montréal consulting firm, Lou D'Amore and Associates conduct a cumulative socio-economic impacts study for Ingenika and Fort Ware, although it appears nothing came of it. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Memorandum from District Planner, Manfred Malzahn, 19 August 1981.

of surviving, or earning money, but have social and cultural aspects that help reinforce identity.¹³⁵ It is a major reason why individuals in all three communities chose to continue doing them in the face of the difficulties and chaos created by the reservoir; they are fighting the social distress that emerged. Yet because of the loss of so much land and resources to the reservoir, these activities are harder to do.¹³⁶

Deaths

By far the most personal impact of the Williston Lake reservoir were the number of people who died as a result of it, and the social disruption it brought that contributed to other deaths. Quantifying the number of Tsek'ehne deaths that resulted from the W.A.C. Bennett Dam can be highly problematic. (A discussion of my methods and full analysis of Tsek'ehne deaths from 1917 to 1993 can be found in Appendix D.) All told between the beginning of 1968 and the end of 1993 provincial death records contain one hundred forty-one Tsek'ehne deaths in British Columbia.¹³⁷ If you exclude causes clearly not related to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and Williston Lake you have a total of forty-one.¹³⁸ (This reduction in the number of deaths is problematic as some Elders view most, if not all deaths, after 1968 as related to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam).¹³⁹

¹³⁵ For example, Lanoue notes a return to dog sleds in Fort Ware in the late 1970s was in part due to this importance. Davis, 5; LeBaron, x, 9-10; Lanoue, "Continuity," 41, 48, 101-103, 127, 140, 147, 164, 188, 195, 206, passim; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 985/19-4-609, Veit, "Report Draft," 22 March 1977, 2.3.1.1.a; Place, 13; William Quackenbush, "Tastes of Canadians and Dogs: The History and Archaeology of McLeods Lake Post, British Columbia" (MA Thesis: Simon Fraser University, 1990), 16-17; Andrew Solonas Sr., interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 10 September 2004; Stanley, 110.

¹³⁶ Lanoue often directly references McLeod Lake, but I believe it applies to all three bands. Keith Billington, *Tse-loh-ne (The People at the End of the Rocks): Journey Down the Davie Trail* (Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, Inc., 2012), 60; Lanoue, "Continuity," 3-4, 101-102, 127; Littlefield, Dorricott and Cullon, iii, 51, passim; Pollon and Matheson, 276; Terry, "No Land, No Jobs, No Future for McLeod Lake."

¹³⁷ BCA, Vital Statistics Agency Death Registrations, 1872-, GR-2951.

¹³⁸ Causes not related to the reservoir include old age (60 plus), obviously unrelated accidents, illness (including childhood and cancer), and any instances in which the cause is unknown. Some Elders might attribute unknown causes to the reservoir. This number does not mean that dam or reservoir did not cause these illnesses, however, merely that determining the casual link is beyond this study. Furthermore, this number only deals with cause of death, not the overall health of the individual per se. BCA, GR-2951.

¹³⁹ Geraldine Solonas.

Four of these were due to drowning in the reservoir itself.¹⁴⁰ The reservoir, however, also impacted its tributaries.¹⁴¹ Where they once emptied into the Finlay, Parsnip, or Peace rivers, they now flowed into a reservoir that fluctuated at a much higher elevation. Since water flows to lower locations, this increase in the elevation of the water it drained into meant that in certain locations these tributaries could be much deeper.¹⁴² The reservoir for example enlarged the Ingenika River all the way to the Swannell River.¹⁴³ As a result, Elders no longer knew them as they once had.¹⁴⁴ All told, some eight additional Tsek'ehne drowned in a tributary of the reservoir and they are often included in the total of people drowned as a result of the dam. If one assumes a direct connection to changes in the tributary caused by the reservoir, this number brings the total up to forty-nine individuals.¹⁴⁵

The rest of the deaths are connected to the reservoir and its impacts on Tsek'ehne society and individual Tsek'ehne. As noted alcohol abuse emerged with the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir as Tsek'ehne in all of the communities tried to self-medicate. McLeod Lake is unique among the three Tsek'ehne nations because the Euro-Canadian settlement of McLeod Lake is wet and has had a beer parlor, bar, and stores that sell liquor since the construction of the

¹⁴⁰ BCA, GR-2951, 1988-09-008193; BCA, GR-2951, 1988-09-014338; BCA, GR-2951, 1988-09-014339; BCA, GR-2951, 1992-09-023115.

¹⁴¹ Yvonne Harris claims the change was minor or insignificant. Yvonne Harris, 49.

¹⁴² Georgina Chingee; Zepheria (Sophie) Isadore and Ivor Smaaslet, 1 October 2012; Geraldine Solonas.

¹⁴³ Jay Sherwood, *Return to Northern British Columbia: A Photo Journal of Frank Swannell, 1929-39* (Victoria: Royal BC Museum, 2010), 173.

¹⁴⁴ Lena McCook.

¹⁴⁵ Among the Elders included in this dissertation this information is considered common knowledge. Some died by going through the ice when water is lowest in reservoir. See Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 March 2012. BCA, GR-2951, 1968-09-012142; BCA, GR-2951, 1968-09-012148; BCA, GR-2951, 1974-09-011471; BCA, GR-2951, 1979-09-009536; BCA, GR-2951, 1979-09-012954; BCA, GR-2951, 1980-09-020585; BCA, GR-2951, 1981-09-008016; BCA, GR-2951, 1989-09-015602.

Hart Highway.¹⁴⁶ This situation fueled alcohol abuse on reserve.¹⁴⁷ As McLeod Lake Chief Harry Chingee explained it also led to a vicious cycle of “poverty, alcoholism and unemployment. Unemployed Indians find it difficult to get work and turn to booze. As a result they are not employable.”¹⁴⁸

Alcohol abuse soon took its toll and nine Tsek’ehne between 1972 and 1990 died from alcoholism, alcohol related accidents and exposure, and diseases caused by alcoholism and/or a weakened immune system.¹⁴⁹ Prior to 1968 there are no recorded deaths from these causes.¹⁵⁰ There are, however, two recorded instances of Tsek’ehne dying from drowning while intoxicated prior to 1968.¹⁵¹ This metric actually dropped following the construction of the dam with only one recorded death taking place during this period.¹⁵²

Related to deaths resulting from alcohol were deaths from assault both against others (traditional assault), and against the self (suicide). As noted prior to the creation of the reservoir fighting among the Tsek’ehne was almost unheard of. There were a few exceptions, however. Of the one hundred eighty-nine deaths recorded from 1917 to the end of 1967 four were due to assault, and none due to intentional suicide. Of these four only one has a connection to alcohol.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁶ Gordon Clark, “McLeod Lake Indians: Fight is One of Hope,” *Prince George Citizen*, 11 July 1987; Yvonne Harris, 22; Jack Isadore, interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 July 2004; Harold Morin, “Death Rate Tops Birth Rate Among Macleod Lake People,” *Nesika* (Chinook Means “Us”): *The Voice of BC Indians* 3, no. 2 (1974): 12.

¹⁴⁷ Yvonne Harris, 23.

¹⁴⁸ Clark, “McLeod Lake Indians: Fight is One of Hope.”

¹⁴⁹ BCA, GR-2951, 1971-09-018968; BCA, GR-2951, 1972-09-013026; BCA, GR-2951, 1974-09-004484; BCA, GR-2951, 1974-09-006755; BCA, GR-2951, 1974-09-010980; BCA, GR-2951, 1974-09-020148; BCA, GR-2951, 1980-09-020502; BCA, GR-2951, 1986-09-020120; BCA, GR-2951, 1990-09-001472; Jean Isaac, “Sekani History,” *Collected Writings of the Tsay Keh Dene*, 67; Jack Isadore, 21 July 2004; Jack Isadore, interviewed by Richard Almond, McLeod Lake, BC, 4 August 2004; Richard Solonas.

¹⁵⁰ BCA, GR-2951.

¹⁵¹ BCA, GR-2951, 1962-09-008963; BCA, GR-2951, 1966-09-017362.

¹⁵² BCA, GR-2951, 1992-09-014497.

¹⁵³ BCA, GR-2951, 1943-09-027087; BCA, GR-2951, 1949-09-095214; BCA, GR-2951, 1962-09-014709; BCA, GR-2951, 1966-09-017364; “Son Faces Charge in Father’s Death,” *Prince George Citizen*, 3 August 1966.

Yet much of the literature seems to suggest this is just another fact of life for the Tsek'ehne, alongside high infant mortality rates, and substance use and abuse.¹⁵⁴ This assumption is largely false because beginning in 1968 assault became a major cause of death for the Tsek'ehne. During the periods of 1967-1976, 1977-1986 and 1987-1993 assault was the second leading cause of death for the first two periods and third in the last period.¹⁵⁵ Twenty-eight confirmed assaults causing death took place between 1968 and 1993. Five were self-directed assaults, or intentional suicides. Officially only four were connected to alcohol consumption or abuse (three assaults and one suicide), but unofficially the number was higher. One was a delayed death resulting from wounds suffered years before.¹⁵⁶

Despite similar impacts, outside observers have presented the number of deaths differently depending on the community. The change was so dramatic at McLeod Lake that the number of deaths made national headlines in August 1974 in *The Globe and Mail*. The articles cites as reasons for the deaths factors ranging from a curse due to the location of a new cemetery, to alcohol and people getting hit on the highway while drunk.¹⁵⁷ Six months earlier reporter Harold Morin in *Nesika* had placed direct blame on the deadly combination of drinking and the

¹⁵⁴ Yvonne Harris, 16-17.

¹⁵⁵ BCA, GR-2951.

¹⁵⁶ A 1977 article notes three deaths caused by assault in Fort Ware were alcohol related, while the deaths records merely noted the person was by assault. BCA, GR-2951, 1968-09-015594; BCA, GR-2951, 1970-09-009573; BCA, GR-2951, 1971-09-008036; BCA, GR-2951, 1971-008661; BCA, GR-2951, 1971-09-017464; BCA, GR-2951, 1972-09-015079; BCA, GR-2951, 1973-09-019244; BCA, GR-2951, 1974-09-018003; BCA, GR-2951, 1974-09-018099; BCA, GR-2951, 1975-09-020073; BCA, GR-2951, 1975-09-020074; BCA, GR-2951, 1977-09-019005; BCA, GR-2951, 1979-09-009047; BCA, GR-2951, 1980-09-007463; BCA, GR-2951, 1981-09-006171; BCA, GR-2951, 1981-09-014519; BCA, GR-2951, 1982-09-007842; BCA, GR-2951, 1982-09-014916; BCA, GR-2951, 1985-09-021582; BCA, GR-2951, 1986-09-017454; BCA, GR-2951, 1988-09-022331; BCA, GR-2951, 1989-09-022683; BCA, GR-2951, 1990-09-014833; BCA, GR-2951, 1991-09-005904; BCA, GR-2951, 1991-09-014105; BCA, GR-2951, 1992-09-014991; BCA, GR-2951, 1992-09-024274; BCA, GR-2951, 1992-09-011032; "Jury Rules Shooting Accidental," *Prince George Citizen*, 30 January 1974; Pope, "Housing, Alcoholism, Economics Are Biggest Ills."

¹⁵⁷ Lanoue notes a high death rate at McLeod Lake in his dissertation based on 1978-1979 fieldwork. He gives a total of about thirty-five between 1962 and 1979, but notes he could find no proof in official records. Some Tsay Keh Dene Elders recall a different curse. Malcolm Gray, "Violent Death Common on BC Reserve," *The Globe and Mail*, 6 August 1974; Lanoue, "Continuity," 171, 171n2, 208n2; Elsie Pierre and Mabel Troendle, 10 November 2008.

highway, recommending the province drop the speed to 60 mph between the bar and reserve and an increased police presence.¹⁵⁸ Both articles, however, makes no mention of the W.A.C.

Bennett Dam or Williston Lake reservoir as reasons for why people would drink. They also ignore the fact McLeod Lake had lost a significant portion of its traditional territory as a result of both.

According to reporter Malcolm Gray there were thirty-five deaths between December 1972 and August 1974 in McLeod Lake, with nine happening since October 1973.¹⁵⁹ (Richard Solonas recalls twenty-nine deaths from the early 1960s to 1972.¹⁶⁰ Some Elders recall fifty deaths one year, but did not give me the year.)¹⁶¹ Gray's number is problematic, as it does not correspond with provincial death records or oral histories. (Solonas' does.) It does, however, roughly correspond with the past twenty years, or since the completion of the Hart Highway.¹⁶² Based on a series of articles published in the *Prince George Citizen* and *Nesika* it is clear that Gray mistakenly gave the first period as twenty months rather than twenty years, possibly as a the result of a typo in the *Citizen* on 27 May 1974.¹⁶³ Gray also unknowingly includes the same

¹⁵⁸ Morin, "Death Rate Tops Birth Rate Among Macleod Lake People," 12.

¹⁵⁹ Gray, "Violent Death Common on BC Reserve."

¹⁶⁰ Available provincial death records suggest a similar number, albeit a little lower. BCA, GR-2951; Richard Solonas.

¹⁶¹ Harry Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012.

¹⁶² BCA, GR-2951.

¹⁶³ In February 1974 Kant cites twenty-eight deaths since 1957, while Morin cites twenty-seven deaths due to accidents (seventeen) or drowning (ten) since 1956. Morin's numbers are higher than official death records show. In May 1974 Bill Graham cites eighteen deaths since 1972 and thirty-two since 1956. BCA, GR-2951; Bill Graham, "McLeod Lake Indians: Alcohol is the Real 'Curse,'" *Prince George Citizen*, 29 May 1974; Bill Graham, "'Unnatural:' Death Curse Feared at McLeod Reserve," *Prince George Citizen*, 27 May 1974; Gray, "Violent Death Common on BC Reserve;" Tony Kant, "McLeod Lake Indians: Death Rate Probe Asked," *Prince George Citizen*, 8 February 1974; Morin, "Death Rate Tops Birth Rate Among Macleod Lake People," 12; "Now Hear This....," *Prince George Citizen*, 28 May 1974.

individual twice in the article due to confusion over names and relations.¹⁶⁴ The *Vancouver Sun* reported a number closer to reality in 1984: eighteen deaths since 1974.¹⁶⁵

This stands in stark contrast with a 1993 *The Globe and Mail* article on the “high” number of deaths by assault in Fort Ware. It cites provincial judge Cunliffe Barnett, who blames the deaths on the impacts of the Williston Lake reservoir, most notably the disruption of traditional economic activities, isolation, and unemployment. According to him, this change in turn created “third world conditions” of poverty and poor social services, which led to low levels of education and alcoholism, and contributed to the violence that caused death. One should note that in this instance Barnett does not clearly define the high number of deaths and depending on how one reads the article, the number of deaths is between four and seven since 1986.¹⁶⁶

What explains the difference? Both articles cite reputable people, although the reporters writing on McLeod Lake seem to misunderstand some of their sources. Certainly time is one factor. The articles on McLeod Lake are from the 1970s while the article on Fort Ware is from the 1990s. By the 1990s the news media had made the general public aware of the impacts of the dam. Is it just a matter of the reporters not knowing the impacts? Perhaps, but I argue the most important factor is the existence of other reasons in McLeod Lake. Barnett attributes all of the issues in Fort Ware to the reservoir. In McLeod Lake, however, the journalists attribute them to things like the Hart Highway and an unspecified curse. Yet McLeod Lake lost more traditional territory than Fort Ware, and traditional economic activities were harder to do in what remained.

¹⁶⁴ Gray, “Violent Death Common on BC Reserve;” “Man Faces Charge In Shotgun Deaths,” *Prince George Citizen*, 15 July 1974.

¹⁶⁵ This number roughly corresponds with provincial death records. BCA, GR-2951; Terry, “No Land, No Jobs, No Future for McLeod Lake.”

¹⁶⁶ The article seems to note more deaths than found in the provincial death records, but since the article seems to contradict itself regarding the number and does not give names it is unclear. Billington claims Fort Ware has the highest per capita rate of people shot or stabbed in British Columbia. In her M.A. thesis Mary Christina Koyl notes a 1992 newspaper article from the year before citing three deaths in a year. Billington, 217; Koyl, 124; Deborah Wilson, “Third World in BC’s Back Yard,” *The Globe and Mail*, 27 February 1993.

It appears therefore that they overlook the reservoir as a cause, when it should be included alongside the Hart Highway, and perhaps even a curse. Sadly, this omission only contributes to the divisions that exist between the three bands.

Attempts at Unity

The Tsek'ehne are not ignorant or unaware of the divisions created by the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. As mentioned, some lament the fact that people no longer travel up and down the Finlay and Parsnip rivers from Thutade Lake to Summit Lake. Others strive to maintain old connections between the bands and between families. At times unity came in strange places. For example, those living in urban centres like Mackenzie or Prince George, where the Tsek'ehne form a minority have noticed differences between bands do not matter as much as the commonalities. This situation is especially true in Prince George, where the Lheidli T'enneh and other Dakelh First Nations outnumber the Tsek'ehne.¹⁶⁷

Officially there have been more attempts to bring the three bands together other than the failed Sekani Tribal Council.¹⁶⁸ In July 1978 the three communities organized a conference at McLeod Lake to bring them together.¹⁶⁹ Topics discussed ranged from a proposed forestry road to Fort Ware, to hydroelectric developments like the McGregor Diversion and Site C. They discussed these topics within the context of traditional economic activities, land claims, education, and the W.A.C. Bennett Dam.¹⁷⁰ According to Guy Lanoue, eighty people from Fort Ware attended, while only twenty from Ingenika were there. As he reports while people did work together in preparation for and during the event, issues emerged over pan-Indianism versus

¹⁶⁷ Lanoue oddly claims Tsek'ehne do not do well off-reserve. Lanoue, "Continuity," 84, 90, 99n10.

¹⁶⁸ Lanoue, *Brothers*, 107.

¹⁶⁹ Julie Cooper, Geraldine Solonas, and Sharon Solonas mention a meeting, but not the year. Julie Cooper, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012; Debbie Hogan, "Sekani Gathering," *UBCIC News*, August 1978, 16-17; Lanoue, "Continuity," 75-81, 98; Geraldine Solonas; Sharon Solonas.

¹⁷⁰ Hogan, "Sekani Gathering," 16.

Tsek'ehne culture, with Fort Ware and Ingenika not as receptive to the generalities found in the former.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, a second reunion would take place in August 1980. At this meeting development and its continued threat to traditional economic activities was a point of concern, especially given the lack of input the communities felt they had in it.¹⁷² From the point of view of some Elders, industry has a tendency to try to bully the Tsek'ehne when it comes to new developments.¹⁷³ Yet there is hope that together the three bands can fight back.

Conclusion

The Williston Reservoir divided the three Tsek'ehne First Nations in the Trench by effectively ending transportation in the Trench and thereby communications. This reinforced differences caused by the disparate long-term impacts faced by each band. Too often individuals use differences to divide the bands. Nevertheless, there were a number of common long-term impacts that all three bands faced and this has provided opportunities to strengthen the connection between them. All three lost an important part of their traditional territory and the sites contained within. Sure, Ingenika might have lost the most land, but they were not the only ones to lose land due to the flood and because of the familial ties between the bands, all three have lost the graves of their ancestors. The climate of the Trench changed as a result of the reservoir. This change was not limited to one band or even the Tsek'ehne, although it is true that the Ingenika Band suffered the most from sandstorms. Similarly, while fishing might have been more important in McLeod Lake, Elders in all three communities found that the reservoir not only changed the type of fish they could catch, but also the quality of the fish in general. All of these negative impacts might have been easily overcome had proper compensation been

¹⁷¹ Debbie Hogan, "Sekani Gathering," *UBCIC News*, August 1978, 16-17; Lanoue, "Continuity," 75-81, 98.

¹⁷² Adele mentions meetings in the 1980s. Adele Chingee, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012; "Sekani Days," *Indian World: "The Choice Is Our"* 3, no. 5 (1980): 5-6.

¹⁷³ Ray Izony, 23 September 2008; William (Billie) Poole, 8 September 2008.

provided, but because of provincial law at the time, combined with a refusal to acknowledge Aboriginal title or traditional land ownership, compensation was lacking. These impacts have caused social disruption in Fort Ware, Ingenika, and McLeod Lake. And while some turned to alcohol and others vented their anger and frustration in inappropriate ways, the deaths that followed the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett affect all Tsek'ehne. Yet hope remains, and the three bands have worked together as Tsek'ehne.

Conclusion

Hydroelectric dams often damage and destroy the lives of people, both Indigenous and settler, even while producing 63% of Canada's electricity.¹ Yet not only do these dams often disproportionately affect the former, but state inaction forces them to take matters into their own hands if they want their rights protected.² As James Waldram argued, hydroelectric policies in Canada represent a continuation of past Aboriginal policies.³ Neither were developed and enforced with consideration for or engagement with Indigenous peoples until their implementation. In the case of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam this situation represented a continuation of British Columbian Aboriginal policies from the post James Douglas period of the mid-1860s to 1991, which were characterized by a disregard for Aboriginal title, small reserves, and the treatment of Indigenous peoples as obstacles to the development of the region. Indeed, despite not legitimizing any European settlement in their territory via treaty, the province only recognized reserve land, traplines and private property as deserving of compensation when it came to considering the potential impacts of the Williston Lake reservoir. The end result was one of the biggest national disasters for the Tsek'ehne, who not only lost much of their traditional territory, but had to confront settler colonialism in Canada as separate federally recognized bands. Rather than creating a sense of Tsek'ehne identity as anthropologist Guy Lanoue

¹ Canadian Hydropower Association, "Facts: Five Things You Need to Know About Hydropower: Canada's Number One Electricity Source," *Canadian Hydropower Association* <https://canadahydro.ca/facts/> (accessed 21 November 2016).

² Jack Glenn, *Once Upon an Oldman: Special Interested Politics and the Oldman River Dam* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999); James Horning, ed., *Social and Environmental Impacts of the James Bay Hydroelectric Project* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999); Jean Manore, *Cross-Currents: Hydroelectricity and the Engineering of Northern Ontario* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999); Thibault Martin and Steven Hoffman, ed., *Power Struggles: Hydro Development and First Nations in Manitoba and Quebec* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2008); Richard Salisbury, *A Homeland for the Cree: Regional Development in James Bay, 1971-1981* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1968); James Waldram, *As Long as the Rivers Run: Hydroelectric Development and Native Communities in Western Canada* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1993).

³ Waldram, 4-5, *passim*.

suggests, the dam divided the Tsek'ehne and in doing so increased the importance of the three bands.⁴

Dams are cultural artifacts of the societies that build them.⁵ In this sense, the W.A.C. Bennett Dam is a physical testament to the logic of hydroelectricity – a firm belief that an abundance of cheap electricity guarantees industrialization and economic prosperity.⁶ It is also a monument to settler colonialism. Defined as a form of colonization characterized by a focus on land acquisition combined with the replacement of Indigenous societies and labour by non-Indigenous ones, examples of settler colonialism can be found around the world.⁷ In this sense, the W.A.C. Bennett Dam is part of a wider global history of colonialism and empire. It reveals, however, that rather than being a simple moral story of good and bad, the entire process surrounding its construction was a complicated, “profoundly vulnerable, contingent and aspirational project that has never entirely contained the identities, experiences and relations of power in [BC].”⁸ For example, rather than literally replacing them with a new population, a reservoir meant to benefit settlers living elsewhere displaced the Tsek'ehne, but in doing so “put” Tsek'ehne traditional territory to “better” use. BC Aboriginal policy, with its denial of

⁴ Guy Lanoue, “Continuity and Change: The Development of Political Self-Definition Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia” (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1983), 34-35, 214-215.

⁵ David Billington and David Jackson, *Big Dams of the New Deal Era: A Confluence of Engineering and Politics* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 3, 5, 13, 251, passim; Thomas Hughes, *Networks of Power: Electrification in Western Society, 1880-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 2, 176, 265, 405, 465; Manore, 1, passim; Paul Pitzer, *Grand Coulee: Harnessing a Dream* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1994), xiii-xv, passim.

⁶ Ken Coates, *Best Left as Indians: The Federal Government and the Indians of the Yukon, 1894-1950* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 15, 37, 166, 193, 244-245, passim; Michael Lawson, *Dammed Indians: The Pick-Sloan Plan and the Missouri River Sioux, 1944-1980* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), xix-xxiii, 179-194, passim; Manore, vii-viii, passim; Liza Piper, *The Industrial Transformation of the Subarctic Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 2, passim; Frank Tough, “As Their Natural Resources Fail:” *Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), 8-9, 299, 301-302, 307.

⁷ Lorenzo Veracini, “Introduction,” in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, ed. Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 1-6; Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999), 1-3.

⁸ Laura Ishiguro, “Histories of Settler Colonialism: Considering New Currents,” *BC Studies*, no. 190 (2016): 7.

Aboriginal title, small reserves and perception of Indigenous people as lazy and in the way of progress, facilitated it. Yet the finer details of how this process happened reveals the boundary between colonial aspirations and actualizations.

By constitutionally making Aboriginal peoples a federal responsibility and natural resources a provincial responsibility a conflict exists. In theory the federal government should have protected the Tsek'ehne. In reality, however, this division of power allowed both levels to use pre-established policies to pursue their own agenda to the detriment of the affected Indigenous group. A similar situation existed following the Calder case in 1973 where, despite a decision that established Aboriginal title had at least once existed, the province's refusal to even budge on the matter of Aboriginal title and treaties limited negotiations on land and resources until 1990.⁹ Currently it is the reason why despite apparent wins in the Delgamuukw and Tsilhqot'in cases, treaty negotiations have not noticeably sped up in BC.¹⁰

Academics have studied the W.A.C. Bennett Dam since its completion.¹¹ Most studies, however, focused on the downstream impacts, only briefly mentioning the effects on the Tsek'ehne as part of a larger study, or else did not discuss the Tsek'ehne at all.¹² The Tsek'ehne are a northern First Nation. Just as with their natural resources it appears mainstream Canadian

⁹ Calder et al. v. Attorney-General of British Columbia [1973] SCR 313.

¹⁰ Delgamuukw v. British Columbia [1997] 3 SCR 1010; Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia [2014] 2 SCR 257.

¹¹ David LeMarquand, "Environmental Planning and Decision-making For Large-Scale Power Projects," (MA Thesis: UBC, 1972).

¹² Karl Froschauer, *White Gold: Hydroelectric Power in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999); James Howell, "The Portage Mountain Hydro-electric Project," in *Northern Transitions*, vol. 1, *Northern Resource and Land Use Policy Study*, ed. Everett Peterson and Janet Wright (Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Resource Committee, 1978); LeMarquand; Tina Loo, "Disturbing the Peace: Environmental Change and the Scales of Justice on a Northern River," *Environmental History* 12 (2007): 895-919; Tina Loo, "High Modernism, Conflict, and the Nature of Change in Canada: A Look at *Seeing Like a State*," *Canadian Historical Review* 97, No. 1 (2016): 34-58; Tina Loo and Meg Stanley, "An Environmental History of Progress: Damming the Peace and Columbia Rivers," *Canadian Historical Review* 92, No. 3 (2011): 399-427; Earl Pollon and Shirley Smith Matheson, *This Was Our Valley* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2003); Meg Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers: Harnessing the Power of the Peace and Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2010); Stephen Tomblin, "W.A.C. Bennett and Province-Building in British Columbia," *BC Studies*, no. 85 (1990): 45-61; Waldram.

society is only interested in them when it serves a purpose.¹³ Sadly this appears to be the case in the academy as well. My dissertation is an attempt to help rectify this situation and contribute to the growing field of northern Indigenous history.

Histories of Indigenous people in Canada tend to focus on the period prior to World War II.¹⁴ My study ends in 1990 and there are relatively few analyses of this modern era, despite the major events and developments that took place in the post-World War II period. In going up to 1990 this study challenges the colonial stereotype that Indigenous people are relics of the past unable to authentically exist in the modern world. Indeed, in a field of study where the earliest (radiocarbon) dates employ the time scale Before Present (BP), with present defined as 1 January 1950, the opportunity to “assign whole peoples to alien pasts that are unable to comprehend modernity” always exists.¹⁵

Working “After Present” also helps connect Indigenous and European epistemologies. I not only began with oral rather than documentary research, but conducted numerous interviews with members of the community. As Robin Ridington argues in “Dane-zaa Oral History” the use of interviews in history represents not merely their repetition, but the creation of oral history itself.¹⁶ This oral history directly challenges the existing political economy dominated histories of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, which have ignored Tsek’ehne perspectives.¹⁷ In privileging

¹³ Jim Mochoruk, *Formidable Heritage: Manitoba’s North and the Cost of Development, 1870 to 1930* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2004), xii-xiii, 379-380, passim.

¹⁴ Lawson, xii-xxiii, 199-200, passim.

¹⁵ Direct quote from Richard White. Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 7, passim; Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, 20th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), xxiv.

¹⁶ Robin Ridington, “Dane-zaa Oral History: Why It’s Not Hearsay,” *BC Studies* no. 183 (2004): 39-42.

¹⁷ Froschauer; Howell; LeMarquand; Loo, “Disturbing the Peace;” Loo, “High Modernism, Conflict, and the Nature of Change in Canada;” Loo and Stanley, 399-427; Pollon and Matheson; Stanley; Tomblin; Waldram.

Tsek'ehne views it is also a direct challenge to pan-Indianism, which claims to fight colonialism, and yet perpetuates the colonial assumption that all Indigenous people are the same.

Prior to the completion of the Bennett Dam the Tsek'ehne had quite literally lived in a Trench isolated from many of the forces of settler colonialism. During the colonial period BC had been “on the edge of empire”¹⁸ and even after union with Canada in 1871 northern BC west of the Rockies was in many ways beyond the reach of the colonial state.¹⁹ One can attribute this lack of control to the general absence of successful non-Indigenous development or settlement in the northern Rocky Mountain Trench (the Trench) prior to World War II. This situation was not for a lack of serious attempts, but it did benefit the Tsek'ehne in number of ways. First and foremost, the lack of a permanent government presence resulted in the general absence of Indian agents in the day-to-day life of the Tsek'ehne.²⁰ Without this enforcer of the Indian Act, unlike many other First Nations, no one confined the Tsek'ehne to their reserves. Nor did they suffer from the day to day effects of BC Aboriginal policy, although these policies still technically applied to them. A residential school did not even exist for this part of the Stuart Lake Agency until 1922 and it was not until 1949 that the majority of Tsek'ehne children attended it. As a result, the Tsek'ehne were able to continue a traditional lifestyle throughout their homeland,

¹⁸ Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

¹⁹ This fact was revealed by Gitksan businessman Simon Peter Gunanoot for thirteen years in the early twentieth-century. His exodus after being accused of murdering two men revealed the inability of the BC Provincial Police, the Royal North West Mounted Police and the Pinkerton National Detective Agency to not only get their man, but also to enforce Canadian law. The fact that it began in the Hazelton area, one of the gateways to Tsek'ehne territory, is revealing when it comes to the level of state power in the area as well as native-newcomer relations. Some good sources on Gunanoot are David Williams' *Trapline Outlaw* and Historica's *Chasing Shadows*, although it should be noted Williams assumes Gunanoot was guilty. *Chasing Shadows: The Simon Gunanoot Story*, directed by Monty Bassett (Historica Canada, 2001); David Williams, *Trapline Outlaw: Simon Peter Gunanoot* (Winlaw: Sononis Press, 2005).

²⁰ An excellent book on the day to day role of Indian Agents is Keith Smith's *Liberalism, Surveillance, and Resistance*. Keith Smith, *Liberalism, Surveillance, and Resistance: Indigenous Communities in Western Canada, 1877-1920* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2009) or Robin Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye: Indian Agents, Government Power, and Aboriginal Resistance in Ontario, 1918-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

using the rivers and other waterways of the area as their main transportation routes. This way of life was neither static nor stuck in the past. Indeed, as the twentieth century progressed it came to include participation in the wage labour economy via a seasonal migration similar to the one described by John Lutz on the coast.²¹

Like many other First Nations in northern Canada, things began to change for the Tsek'ehne after World War II.²² Increased involvement in the wage labour economy was connected to more development in the southern half of the Trench, which itself was related to the construction of the Hart Highway. Completed in 1952, "the Hart" connected northeast BC with the rest of the province. 1952, however, is merely the date of completion for this roadway and it is no coincidence that the year it reached McLeod Lake, 1949, was the year widespread attendance at the Lejac Residential School began. As noted, some Elders think attendance at this educational institution had the biggest impact on the Tsek'ehne.

Eight years later the province announced they had signed a memorandum the year before to construct a monorail through the heart of Tsek'ehne territory. Given the Tsek'ehne's experience with the numerous proposed projects prior to this point in time, they had no reason to believe anyone would follow through on the proposal or that it would negatively impact them. Unlike numerous other proposed railways in the Trench, however, something actually resulted from initial surveys, and in the summer of 1957 the province signed a second memorandum that switched the focus to hydroelectric development. The federal government and the province did nothing to inform the Tsek'ehne about the potential negative impacts of these projects. At the

²¹ Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia, 1848-1930* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996); John Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008); John Lutz, "Work, Sex, and Death on the Great Thoroughfare: Annual Migrations of 'Canadian Indians' to the American Pacific Northwest," in *Parallel Destinies: Canadian-American Relations West of the Rockies*, ed. John Findlay and Ken Coates (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

²² Coates.

time the Tsek'ehne were facing the continued changes of the postwar period and as a result when the Peace River project went forward in 1961 the Tsek'ehne were unprepared to react to it.

The Tsek'ehne were not informed despite the fact Ottawa was well aware of both memorandums, albeit less concerned about a more or less provincially contained monorail. The federal government was concerned the Peace River project threatened hydroelectric development on the Columbia River. In part this situation was because Ottawa had lost its decades long battle with BC over Aboriginal policy in the Great Settlement of 1927 and did not seem eager to restart it. It was also because until the province nationalized BC Electric in 1961, the failure of the Peace River Power Development Company to get a contract from BC Electric or the BC Power Commission meant the Peace River project was going nowhere. With nationalization, however, the Peace River project was almost certain, but given the lack of firm opposition from the federal government, no one took proper steps to ensure the provincial government or BC Hydro adequately consulted with the Tsek'ehne and/or considered the impacts of both on them. The fact that the Navigable Waters Protection Act did not protect the Tsek'ehne because Ottawa refused to enforce it reveals that a law only works if it is enforced. Calling the dam illegal does nothing for the Tsek'ehne except remind them the federal government did nothing while the province constructed the dam. It calls into question the significance of the 2012 amendments to the act that limited its applicability.

Calling what occurred consultation is misleading. Despite initial attempts to have the Tsek'ehne directly involved in the hearings and consultations that surrounded the Peace River project, Indian Affairs quickly positioned itself as a middleman between the province and the community. Rather than dealing with the issue of Aboriginal title to Tsek'ehne traditional territory, compensation was limited to traplines, personal property and reserves. Like the

numerous states discussed in James Scott's *Seeing Like a State*, the federal government decided what was best for the Tsek'ehne.²³ It is true that both levels of government held meetings and Indian Affairs obtained band council resolutions, but the lack of information provided, combined with the limited number of meetings, gives the appearance that these meetings merely took place to "legitimize" something Indian Affairs had already agreed to. Not helping the situation was that information about the dam and its impacts repeatedly changed, and many Tsek'ehne were employed away from the community. Nevertheless, it was the responsibility of Indian Affairs to overcome these issues and make sure the people were properly consulted. Their failure to do so meant that the Tsek'ehne did not truly understand the effects of the Peace River project, and in the case of the Fort Grahame section of the Finlay River Band (Fort Grahame Tsay Keh Nay) lacked a habitable reserve when the water began to rise. The success of the Ingenika Band's claim regarding the matter is testament to this fact.

When the water rose the cumulative and destructive impact of these issues became clear. As with other hydroelectric dams, the W.A.C. Bennett Dam remade the very landscape for the colonial state both physically, and as it divorced it from its Indigenous past, epistemologically.²⁴ This outcome was intentional. Canadian law allowed it, and as the province's perception of the Navigable Water Protection Act revealed, could be interpreted to facilitate it.²⁵ The end result

²³ James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

²⁴ Paul Carter, *Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988); Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2002); Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographic Change* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2000); Piper, 283, passim; Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).

²⁵ Martin Chanock, *Law, Custom, and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Steven Hoffman, "Engineering Poverty: Colonialism and Hydroelectric Development in Northern Manitoba," in *Power Struggles*, 127-128, passim; Paul McHugh, *Aboriginal Societies and the Common Law: A History of Sovereignty, Status and Self-Determination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Kenichi Matsui, *Native Peoples and Water Rights: Irrigation, Dams, and the Law in Western Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009).

was that the new reservoir caught the Tsek'ehne off guard. Because the province had failed to properly clear the reservoir basin, the new Williston Lake, rather than being a pristine body of water was a debris-filled cesspool. Both levels of government expected the three communities based around McLeod Lake, Fort Ware and Fort Grahame to simply move onto their reserves. The reserve era had begun for the Tsek'ehne and all the detrimental aspects of British Columbian Aboriginal policy became meaningful to them. As a result, they were increasingly isolated from one another. In the case of the Fort Grahame section of the Finlay River Band, however, federal plans to relocate them to two new reserves were three years too late. As a result, the group had to live in temporary logging camps as the water rose, a situation that not only differentiated them from the Tsek'ehne at Fort Ware and McLeod Lake, but also contributed to the division of the Finlay River Band into the Fort Ware and Ingenika bands.

Further isolating the three bands from each other were the different circumstances they found themselves in. McLeod Lake bore the brunt of settler colonialism as their location in the southern Trench was the site of continued development, most notably in the form of forestry. The province even suggested a new hydroelectric development to reverse the flow of the McGregor River over the Arctic-Pacific divide. With a total reserve area of 599.6 acres, the question emerged of how the band could not only have some level of control in the activities surrounding them, but also benefit from them. The answer they came up with was adherence to Treaty 8.

Despite the seemingly never ending fight to get their admission, McLeod Lake signed one in 1999/2000. Through it they secured control of 50,000 acres, 45,000 of which is currently contained in twenty-two reserves, (See Map E-2) and received about \$38 million to cover treaty

rights, the cost of their lawsuit, and lost resource revenue.²⁶ Some band members see the adhesion as the best thing to happen to the community, in part because of the jobs created.²⁷ As evidenced by the current court case over the western boundary of Treaty 8, other Tsek'ehne do not necessarily agree.²⁸ Nevertheless, the adhesion gave the band ownership and control over more land than the modern comprehensive treaty process offers.²⁹

Adhesion did not mean McLeod Lake readily embraced connection with other Treaty 8 First Nations, however. Despite being signatory to the treaty, they are not part of the Treaty 8 Tribal Association. Some Elders recall that the association was not eager to have them included in the treaty as according to them the association did not consider the western boundary of Treaty 8 to be the height of land at the time. Once they signed, though, the association began to push for their membership and despite not signing adhesions to Treaty 8, Kwadacha and Tsay Keh Dene are increasingly seeing pressure from the association to include them as well.³⁰ The association now argues the western boundary is the height of land and the western boundary is currently before the BC Supreme Court.

Adhesion also did not mean the end of McLeod Lake's treaty claims, however. All three bands are part of the modern comprehensive treaty process, with a renamed Fort Ware – Kwadacha – represented by the Kaska Dena Council.³¹ All three seek land and self-government,

²⁶ Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), "Reserves/Settlements/Villages: McLeod Lake 618," http://fnppn.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca/fnp/Main/Search/FNReserves.aspx?BAND_NUMBER=618&lang=eng (accessed 14 August 2017); Royal BC Museum, "Treaty 8 Adhesion: Hope for the a (sic) New Future," *Living Landscapes* www.livinglandscapes.bc.ca/prnr/mcleod_lake/treaty.html (accessed 29 January 2014; site discontinued).

²⁷ Marion Jackson, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.

²⁸ William Stodalka, "Treaty 8 Nations Wrestle with Province Over Western Boundary," *Alaska Highway News*, 1 January 2016.

²⁹ Verne Solonas, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 20 March 2012.

³⁰ Patrick Prince, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 19 March 2012.

³¹ BC Treaty Commission (BCTC), "Kaska Dena Council," *BC Treaty Commission: Negotiations: Nations* <http://www.bctreaty.net/nations/kaska.php> (accessed 22 September 2015); BCTC, "McLeod Lake Indian Band," *BC Treaty Commission: Negotiations: Nations* <http://www.bctreaty.net/nations/mcleod.php> (accessed 22 September 2015); BCTC, "Tsay Keh Dene Band," *BC Treaty Commission: Negotiations: Nations* <http://www.bctreaty.net/nations/tsaykeh.php> (accessed 22 September 2015).

if not some form of sovereignty.³² As a show of solidarity and unity they dealt with territorial overlap before submitting their statement of intent and defining their traditional territory for the purposes of treaty.³³ Despite officially being three different First Nations they are all still Tsek'ehne.

If development surrounded McLeod Lake, Fort Ware suffered from a lack of connections to the outside world. Here the big question was to reduce this isolation, without losing the benefits it brought. As time went on it seemed more like confinement as the cost of living increasingly outpaced the buying power of the community and the economic activities engulfing the southern Trench moved further and further north. Like McLeod Lake, Fort Ware wanted to control what was happening in their traditional territory, not necessarily to stop it, but to make sure they benefitted from it. Rather than seek treaty, however, the band attempted to work with the various tribal organizations in their area to achieve this goal. When they found the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC) lacking, Fort Ware abandoned them for the Kaska Dena Council. (Fort Ware had been a founding member of both.)

Despite working to build connections with the outside world, Kwadacha is still “considered one of the most isolated communities in BC.”³⁴ The road completed in 1990 was only a logging road, and supplies do not always get in every week. Furthermore, while Tsay Keh Dene has maintained its own store, the North West Company's Northern Store division took over Kwadacha's store in the late 1990s only to have it return to band ownership in 2012.³⁵ Forest

³² As the *Native Voice* points out “self-government and self-sufficiency ultimately depend on land rights.” By sovereignty I mean something along the lines of the domestic sovereignty of American tribes. “History of Ingenika,” *Native Voice*, 17, no. 2 (1989): 11; Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2013.

³³ Emil McCook, 5 March 2013.

³⁴ Loraine Littlefield, Linda Dorricott and Deidre Cullon, “Tse Keh Nay Traditional and Contemporary Use and Occupation at Amazay (Duncan Lake): A Draft Report” (Unpublished report, 2007), 5.

³⁵ In 1987 the HBC's Northern Store Division was purchased. Three years later it was renamed the North West Company, although officially the company considers 1987 to the year the union of 1821 was undone, and considers itself the successor of both the historic HBC and NWC. Keith Billington, *Tse-loh-ne (The People at the End of the*

access roads can be dangerous, especially in sections where they are only one lane wide. People are required to have two-way radios to call their location to other drivers. As with the Hart Highway, the road has resulted in a number of deaths in both communities.³⁶ The forest access road is not without its benefits, however, and now emergencies are not necessarily limited to air ambulance for help. Still, a new distinction in the communities now exists between those who can afford to purchase a motor vehicle and those who cannot.³⁷ Since the prices are higher for goods in all three communities, especially as one heads further north, this distinction often means there are differences in quality of life when all else is equal.³⁸ There is a further concern that driving has replaced more traditional modes of travel, thereby contributing to cultural loss.³⁹ Inversely, however, it can make hunting easier.

The Ingenika Band was quite literally in-between Fort Ware and McLeod Lake. Initially surrounded by the same developments that faced McLeod Lake, they had abandoned the temporary logging camps and their new reserves on the Finlay Forks access road in 1971 in an attempt to find isolation and live a traditional lifestyle. Settling at Ingenika Point, the band successfully defied the province and federal government, who neither approved of this action nor wanted to forcefully relocate them. Rather than seek treaty or even initially attempt to find a solution through membership in CSTC, the band appealed to both levels of government, asking for a settlement to the situation. Indeed, the band to this day vehemently denies its territory is part of Treaty 8, a fact that reveals how definitions of the treaty that include them not only ignore

Rocks): *Journey Down the Davie Trail* (Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, Inc., 2012), 52, 54-55; North West Company, "About Us: History," <http://www.northwest.ca/about-us/history.php#prettyPhoto> (accessed 2 December 2015).

³⁶ At times this causation is indirect and due to bootlegging. Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2013.

³⁷ Mary Ann Charlie and Laura Seymour, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 5 March 2012; Emil McCook, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012; Mary Jean and Willie Poole, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 9 March 2012.

³⁸ Mike Abou.

³⁹ Al Inyallie, interviewed by author, McLeod Lake, BC, 21 March 2012.

Indigenous agency, but can also be seen as a form of lateral violence. When this approach failed to achieve anything, the band, in conjunction with the CSTC, actively courted public opinion. As a result, in 1989 a settlement was achieved that led to the creation of not only the community of Tsay Keh Dene, but also the Tsay Keh Dene First Nation.

Unfortunately, the modern comprehensive treaty process derailed the agreement. None of the new reserves were officially created, Ingenika is still Crown land, and the band still owns Police Meadows No. 2, Tutu Creek No. 4, and Parsnip River No. 5.⁴⁰ Currently the community uses Police Meadows as a farm and they have even reintroduced bison into their traditional territory. Tutu Creek, however, is overgrown with no evidence of its existence, while Parsnip River No. 5 is a true ghost town, with nothing but the graveyard, foundations and a midden left behind.⁴¹

Even if both levels of government had fulfilled the agreement, the new village of Tsay Keh Dene did not solve all of the problems of the band. Even though the site was selected to cut down on dust, dust remains an issue, especially in the spring when the reservoir is low and the rising temperatures create winds. Not helping the situation is the fact that every year the shoreline erodes closer and closer to the village itself.⁴² Elders are still awaiting the beaches promised by W.A.C. Bennett and others, as well as the dock promised in the settlement.⁴³ This situation only fuels second thoughts over the entire settlement.⁴⁴ And although for a brief period in 1989-1990 David Suzuki would feature the history of this band as a shining example of settler

⁴⁰ Louie Tomah and Mike Abou, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 6 March 2012.

⁴¹ John Poole, interviewed by author, Prince George, BC, 30 September 2012.

⁴² Rita McIsaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 17 September 2012; Mabel Troendle and Elsie Pierre, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012.

⁴³ *Tsay Keh Dene: CBC Hourglass Documentary*. CBC Television, 1970; Jean Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 12 September 2012; Vera Poole, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 15 March 2012.

⁴⁴ Koyl, 113-114.

colonialism in Canada, today the community is more or less unknown.⁴⁵ One wonders if Shoal Lake, Manitoba, will face a similar outcome once the freedom road is constructed.⁴⁶

As one can see, despite facing unique circumstances and dealing with them in distinct ways, the three nations have faced numerous shared impacts. (Indeed, even the origins of the circumstances they found themselves in connected them.) All three bands were flooded out of a shared traditional territory and thanks to interconnected familial relations in a certain sense they are equally affected. Nowhere can one better see this situation than when the rising water disturbed the graves of their ancestors throughout the Trench. Along with this change in the environment, came a change in the climate. The very fish in the waterways of the Trench were different and the high levels of mercury in the reservoir precluded promises that the new reservoir would create a fishing industry. Perhaps if someone had provided proper compensation to all three bands they would have had an easier transition after the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir. Yet in a province that refused to deal with unsundered Aboriginal land and promoted the creation of many small Indian reserves, the amount received for traplines, private property, and reserve land was meager. It might not have been intentional, but the way both levels of government handled the situation almost guaranteed the impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam would leave the once self-sufficient Tsek'ehne in poverty.⁴⁷ As a result, despite successfully transitioning into the wage labour economy following the decline of the fur trade, they nevertheless found themselves dependent on a welfare system that was not designed to find

⁴⁵ David Suzuki, "Confrontations Bring Out Latent Racism: We Have To Deal With How We Treat Natives," *Prince George Citizen*, 4 August 1990; David Suzuki, "From the Amazon to BC: Growth vs. Native People: The Fight Never Ends," *Prince George Citizen*, 25 November 1989.

⁴⁶ Adele Perry, *Aqueduct: Colonialism, Resources and the Histories We Remember* (Winnipeg: Arp Books, 2016) 99-100.

⁴⁷ Steven Hoffman, "Engineering Poverty: Colonialism and Hydroelectric Development in Northern Manitoba," in *Power Struggles*, 127-128, *passim*.

them meaningful employment.⁴⁸ The numerous effects of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam also led to the death of many Tsek'ehne. Not only did people drown in the reservoir and its tributaries, but the social breakdown that followed led to increases in alcohol related deaths and fatal assaults. These shared consequences united the bands and have provided an opportunity to strengthen the connections between them in the face of the numerous divisive effects.

Looking to the future, the modern comprehensive treaties will build upon the new settlements reached with BC Hydro by both Kwadacha and Tsay Keh Dene. As with treaty negotiations, they reached a sort of détente with BC Hydro and some Elders are pleased.⁴⁹ Kwadacha signed their agreement on 27 November 2008. As part of it they received about \$15 million in a lump sum payment and about \$1.6 million per annum with the latter amount price indexed to increase with inflation.⁵⁰ Tsay Keh Dene signed their second agreement on 29 January 2010 and they received \$20.9 million and \$2 million per annum.⁵¹ Perhaps more importantly, both agreements contain provisions designed to foster better relations with BC Hydro, and increase economic activities.⁵² So far only McLeod Lake has not reached an agreement with them.

⁴⁸ Arthur Ray, "Periodic Shortages, Native Welfare, and the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1930," in *The Subarctic Fur Trade: Native Social and Economic Adaptations*, ed. Shepard Krech III (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984); Hugh Shewell, *Enough to Keep Them Alive: Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Tough.

⁴⁹ Seymour Isaac, interviewed by author, Tsay Keh Dene, BC, 7 November 2008; Emil McCook, 6 March 2012; Melvin Smaaslet, interviewed by author, Kwadacha, BC, 7 March 2013.

⁵⁰ BC Hydro, "Agreements," *BC Hydro: For Generations* https://www.bchydro.com/community/aboriginal_relations/key_initiatives/agreements.html (accessed on 28 August 2015); BC Hydro, "Kwadacha First Nation Votes Yes for Historic Agreement," *BC Hydro: For Generations* https://www.bchydro.com/news/press_centre/news_releases/2008/Kwadacha_First_Nations_votes_yes_for_historic_agreement.html (accessed on 28 August 2015).

⁵¹ BC Hydro, "Agreements," BC Hydro, "Tsay Keh Dene Vote Yes to Williston Settlement Agreement," *BC Hydro: For Generations* https://www.bchydro.com/news/press_centre/news_releases/2009/yes_vote_rights_historic.html (accessed on 28 August 2015).

⁵² BC Hydro, "Agreements," BC Hydro, "Kwadacha First Nation Votes Yes for Historic Agreement," BC Hydro, "Tsay Keh Dene Vote Yes to Williston Settlement Agreement."

As a discipline, history is about critically analyzing evidence to help us better understand the past as well as the present. Understanding the history and impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam on the Tsek'ehne is fundamental to understanding contemporary British Columbia and Canada. It reveals not only how Aboriginal policy functioned on the ground, but also the intricacies of federal-provincial relations in Canada. Sadly, as seen in the promotional material for the proposed third dam on the Peace River, the Site C Clean Energy Project, the logic of hydroelectricity, though archaic, at some level remains. Indeed, the biggest change has been that BC Hydro now markets hydroelectric power as “clean” energy.⁵³ Such an assertion ignores the environmental devastation that occurred in the past, and despite official promises to ensure it does not happen again, opponents to Site C do not believe this rhetoric. Instead, they look to the environmental devastation that occurred with the creation of the Williston Lake reservoir as evidence for their fears.⁵⁴ Two First Nations, Prophet River and West Moberly, have even taken the matter to court.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, as with the Tsek'ehne, the Canadian legal system, which in theory could protect their interests, did not.⁵⁶ Indeed, despite election promises even the recent formation of a New Democrat-Green government in BC does not guarantee construction will stop.

⁵³ Numerous examples exist. A good starting point is BC Hydro, “Site C Clean Energy Project,” *Site C Clean Energy Project*, <https://www.sitecproject.com/> (accessed 29 June 2017).

⁵⁴ Numerous examples exist. A good starting point is Faisal Moola, “Site C Approval Is the Wrong Decision for BC,” *David Suzuki Foundation*, <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/panther-lounge/2014/12/site-c-approval-is-the-wrong-decision-for-bc/> (accessed 29 June 2017).

⁵⁵ *Prophet River First Nation v. Canada (Attorney General)* [2017] FCA 15.

⁵⁶ “Supreme Court of Canada Refuses to Hear BC First Nations’ Site C Dam Appeal: Prophet River and West Moberly First Nations Argued Approval of Project Violated Treaty Rights,” *CBC News*, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/site-c-1.4183590> (accessed 29 June 2017).

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Appendix A – “Indian Affairs”

Indian Affairs is the colloquial term for the department or branch of the federal government that handled the federal government’s constitutional responsibility for “Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians.”¹ Below is a chronology of the official names. Please note that despite recent name changes, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Act, 1985 still defines the department.²

Table A-1 – Official Names for “Indian Affairs,” 1868-Present	
Indian Branch, Department of Secretary of State of Canada	1868-1869
Indian Branch, Department of Secretary of State for the Provinces	1869-1873
Indian Branch, Department of Interior	1873-1880
Department of Indian Affairs	1880-1936/1937
Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Mines and Resources	1936/1937-1950
Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration	1950-1966
Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources	1966
Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	1966-1971
Indian and Northern Affairs	1971-1978
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	1978-2011
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada	2011-2015
Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada	2015-Present

¹ British North America Act, 1867, s.91(24).

² Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Act, 1985.

Appendix B – On-Reserve/In Settlement Population 1980-1989

Table B-1 – On-Reserve/In Settlement Population 1980-1989			
	Total Population	On-Reserve	Ratio
1980/1981 ¹			
McLeod Lake Band	228	62	27.19%
Fort Ware Band	226	163	72.12%
Ingenika Band	169	125 ²	73.96%
1982/1983 ³			
McLeod Lake Band	234	75	32.05%
Fort Ware Band	221	162	73.30%
Ingenika Band	194	11 ⁴	5.67%
1986 ⁵			
McLeod Lake Band	250	82	32.80%
Fort Ware Band	228	171	75.00%
Ingenika Band	207	134	64.73%
1989 ⁶			
McLeod Lake Band	304	108	35.06%
Fort Ware Band	260	180	69.23%
Ingenika Band	235	168	71.49%

¹ Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), *Schedule of Indian Bands, Reserves and Settlements including Membership and Populations, April 1, 1983* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1983), 104-106.

² One hundred sixteen lived at Ingenika, which of course is technically off-reserve.

³ INAC, *Schedule of Indian Bands, Reserves and Settlements including Membership and Population, Location and Acreage in Hectares, June 1 1985* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1985), 117-118.

⁴ It is unclear why the number is so low for this period. It could be a typo or it could reflect people living off-reserve as well as outside of communities like Ingenika.

⁵ INAC, *Schedule of Indian Bands, Reserves and Settlements including Membership and Population, Location and Acreage in Hectares, June 1 1987* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1987), 147-148.

⁶ INAC, *Schedule of Indian Bands, Reserves and Settlements including Membership and Population, Location and Acreage in Hectares, December 1990* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1990), 122-124.

Appendix C – Compensation

The following table shows how much compensation individual Tse Keh Nay officially received as a result of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. As noted, the amounts listed are not necessarily what the individual received. It has also appeared in Exhibit 153 of the Royal Commission on the British Columbia Railway as well as Guy Lanoue’s dissertation “Continuity and Change.”

Table C-1 – Compensation			
Date	Name	Amount	Reason
20 September 1963	Max McNabb Tylee	\$4,600.00	Damages: Parcel 234
20 September 1963	Louie Solonas	\$1,300.00	Damages: Parcel 238
20 September 1963	Antoine & David Solonas	\$2,400.00	Damages: Parcel 254
20 September 1963	Andrew Solonas	\$1,950.00	Damages: Parcel 237
20 September 1963	James Alec Poole	\$2,750.00	Damages: Parcel 264
20 September 1963	Willie Pierre	\$1,250.00	Damages: Parcel 229
20 September 1963	Maxime Pierre	\$200.00	Damages: Parcel 262
20 September 1963	Larry Pierre	\$2,500.00	Damages: Parcel 255
20 September 1963	Keom Pierre	\$600.00	Damages: Parcel 255a
20 September 1963	Joe Pierre	\$2,050.00	Damages: Parcel 231
20 September 1963	Duncan Pierre	\$1,750.00	Damages: Parcel 256
20 September 1963	Bob John Pierre	\$2,350.00	Damages: Parcel 257
20 September 1963	William & Seymour Isaac	\$1,725.00	Damages: Parcel 260
20 September 1963	Isadore Izony	\$2,500.00	Damages: Parcel 263
20 September 1963	Frank Hunter	\$2,900.00	Damages: Parcel 254
20 September 1963	Isaac Frank	\$600.00	Damages: Parcel 244
20 September 1963	Modeste Alexis	\$1,225.00	Damages: Parcel 241
9 March 1965	Tomah Izony	\$450.00	Cabins Destroyed
9 March 1965	Thomas Tomah	\$375.00	Cabins Destroyed
March 1965	Michel Sam	\$100.00	Damages: Parcel 239a
Unknown	Allan & Leon Inyallie	\$1,525.00	Damages to trapline
Unknown	Ann Prince (re. Dixon)	\$1,850.00	Damages to trapline
	Total	\$36,950.00	

¹

¹ Lanoue cites Jack Woodward, Unpublished report prepared for the Legal Services Commission, 1978: Appendix 21. British Columbia Archives (BCA), Commission on British Columbia Railway (1977), GR-0500, Box 7, File 13, Exhibit 153, Summary of Compensation Payments Made for Traplines and Improvements Thereon to Flooding of the Finlay and Parsnip River Valleys by BC Hydro; Guy Lanoue, “Continuity and Change: The Development of Political Self-Definition among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia,” (PhD Dissertation: University of Toronto, 1983), 389.

Appendix D – Deaths

The death records of British Columbians are made public thirty years after the year of death. In general, GR-2951 in the BC Archives contained them and they are currently mostly available online.¹ They do not, however, contain all deaths in the province.² During the early twentieth century, it appears that some deaths were simply not reported. For example in 1918 the *Prince George Citizen* reported twelve McLeod Lake Tse'khene had died of measles.³ None of these deaths appear in official records.⁴ Some missing records appear to refer to deaths that took place under mysterious circumstances and/or were subject to a police investigation. For example, on 4 April 1967 the *Prince George Citizen* contained obituaries for the deaths of two Tse Keh Nay, one of which was under investigation. Only the one not under investigation can be found in the GR-2951.⁵

Prior to 1957 the province kept the death records of status Indians separate from the death records of other British Columbians.⁶ During this period, it was fairly easy to identify who was Tse Keh Nay due to the simple fact death records listed the band membership of the individual, if not their parents. One can also use the location of birth and/or death, primary residence, genealogy, and surname to identify people. Location, however, can be problematic, especially for older records, since the state officials who made the death record and/or catalogued it in the archives, might be unaware of locations. One can see this situation in the case of two individuals,

¹ British Columbia Archives (BCA), Death registrations, 1872-1988, GR-2951; BCA, "BC Archives – Genealogy," <http://search-collections.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/Genealogy/BasicSearch> (accessed on 7 December 2015).

² Guy Lanoue, "Continuity and Change: The Development of Political Self-Definition Among the Sekani of Northern British Columbia," (PhD Diss., University of Toronto, 1983), 171, 171n2, 208n2.

³ "Local and Personal," *Prince George Citizen*, 20 August 1918.

⁴ BCA, GR-2951.

⁵ "Town and Country," *Prince George Citizen*, 4 April 1967; BCA, GR-2951, 1967-09-005092.

⁶ BCA, "Guide to Using the BC Vital Statistics 'Indian' Birth, Marriage and Death Registration Microfilm," http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/assets/Indian_registrations_guide.pdf (accessed 14 November 2016).

one who died at Tucho Lake and the other at Fort Ware.⁷ Both appear as unknown location when you search using the BC Archives website. Here the Prince George Diocese records proved invaluable when I combined them with oral history and cross referenced them with surnames and places of deaths.⁸ Indeed, this information was key to identifying people after 1987 when death records stopped recording whether or not one was Indigenous.⁹

Having identified Tse Keh Nay death records I divided them into decades starting in 1917, age groups, and causes of death. The age groups were infants, defined as those under one year of age; children, defined as those between one and seventeen years of age; adults, defined as those between eighteen and fifty-years of age; and Elders, defined as those over sixty years of age. There was also one death record that claimed the individual had been born over a month after they died. I categorized it as other and treated it as an outlier.¹⁰ When it came to causes of death I grouped them into nineteen categories. These were unknown, infectious disease, accident, auto accident, air crash, natural causes, dehydration, drowning, heart disease, assault/murder, constipation, childbirth, execution, cancer, industrial accident, alcoholism, suicide, poisoning and other. Since many of these categories were not regular causes of death, I next identified the top three causes of death for each decade. Quite interestingly “unknown” was the top cause of death between 1917 and 1926, 1927 and 1936, and 1986 and 1993; the second highest cause between 1947 and 1956; and the third highest cause between 1937 and 1946. It appears that apart from the period between 1986 and 1993 the main reason for this situation is that no one conducted autopsies on the individuals in question.

⁷ BCA, GR-2951, 1979-09-020403; BCA, GR-2951, 1983-09-020583.

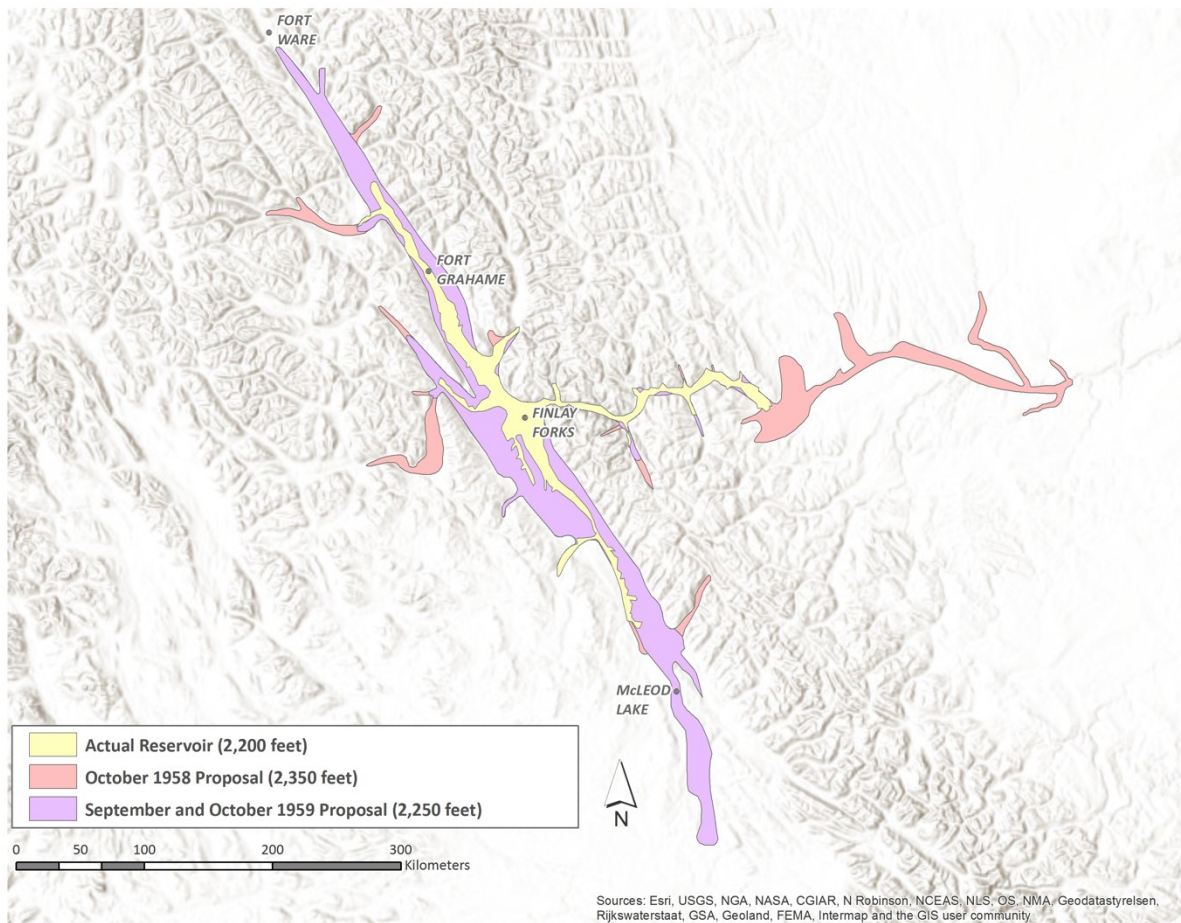
⁸ E.F. Ted Williams History Centre, 2011.23, Genealogy Records: Carrier and Sekani People.

⁹ BCA, GR-2951, 1987-09-020409; BCA, GR-2951, 1988-09-002223.

¹⁰ BCA, GR-2951, 1946-09-095618.

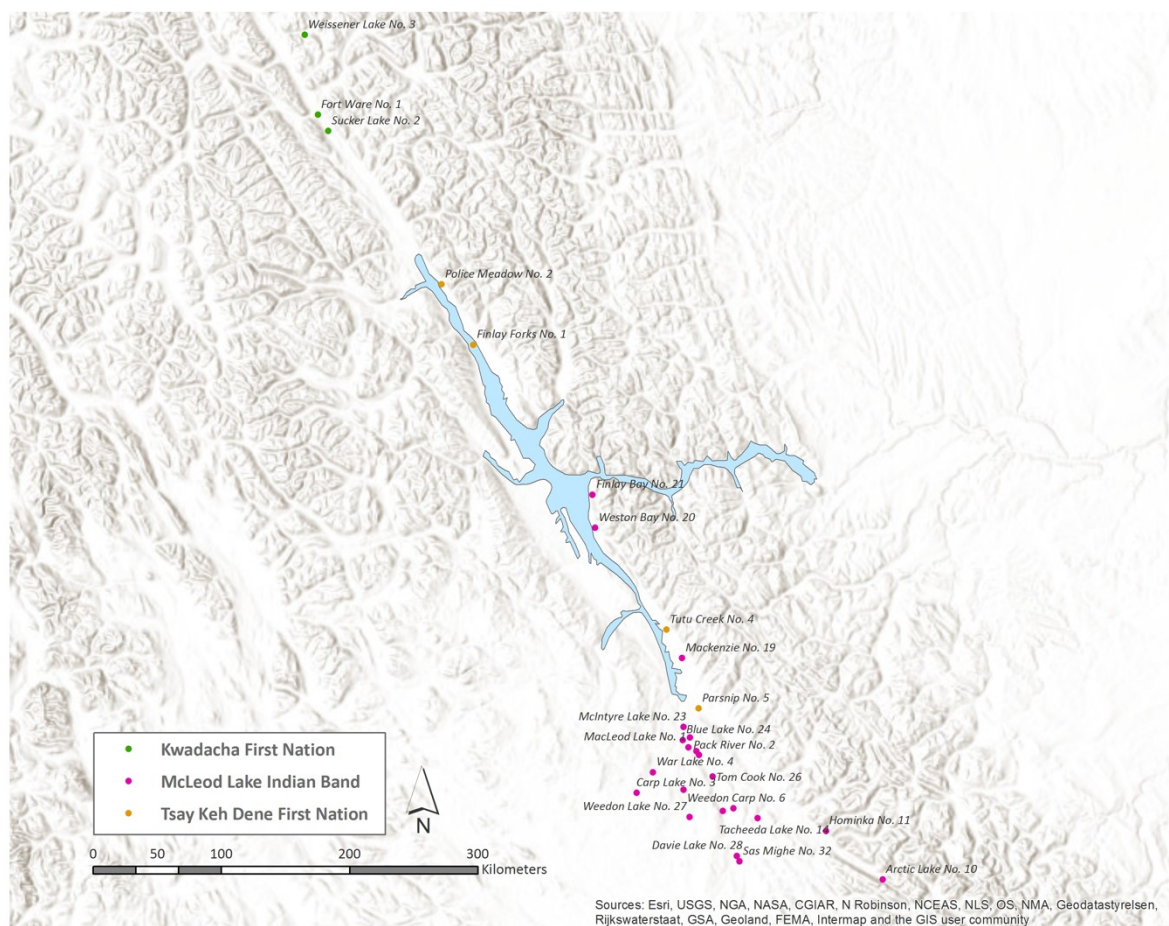
Appendix E – Miscellaneous Maps

Map E-1 – Expected Reservoir Size Based on Height of Water



Source: Map made by Lacey Fleming. British Columbia Archives (BCA), GR-0880, Box 57, Fisheries Management Division, "Fisheries Problems Associated With Development Of The Peace River And Its Upper Tributaries For Hydro-Electric Purpose," (Vancouver: Department of Recreation & Conservation, [1959]), Figure 1; BCA, GR-0880, Box 59, BC And BB Power Consultants Limited, "Peace River Hydro-Electric Project Report," (Vancouver: BC And BB Power Consultants Limited, 1959), 9, 12; BCA, Portage Mountain Development..., GR-0880, Box 64, David Rockwood, "Derivation Of Maximum Probable Flood Portage Mountain Project Peace River, British Columbia" (Vancouver: International Power And Engineering Consultants Limited, 1965), Figure 1; BCA, MS 2353, "Comprehensive Plan Of Peace River Power Development Company Ltd....," December 1959, 18, 41.

Map E-2 – Location of Current Tse'kehne Reserves



Source: Map made by Lacey Fleming. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), “Reserves/Settlements/Villages: McLeod Lake 618,” http://fnp-ppn.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca/fnp/Main/Search/FNReserves.aspx?BAND_NUMBER=618&lang=eng (accessed 14 August 2017); Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), RG 10 M, 78903-77 Item 54, Stuart Lake Agency, 1916; LAC, RG 10M, 78903-77, Item 55, Stuart Lake Agency, 1949.