

CUT "OFF" LANDS

FACT SHEET

ULKATCHO BAND

1. In 1916 the McKenna-McBride Commission cut-off 4065 acres from Ulkatcho Reserve No. 1. Later this was adjusted to 4003 acres, leaving 365 acres. The main village of Ulkatcho was on this reserve.
2. The McKenna-McBride Commission was set up in 1912 by both the Federal and Provincial governments. The McKenna-McBride had power to make cut-offs only if the Band consented. This was part of the Commission's terms of reference and was long established Indian land policy.
3. On 7 June 1915 the McKenna-McBride Commission met with Ulkatcho Band at Fort Fraser. The spokesman, Chief John, complained that the land of Ulkatcho No. 1 was "no good, being all rock-unproductive." Because of this the Band desired additional reserves. Ulkatcho made an extensive claim for more land and gave no consent to any cut-offs.
4. Later the McKenna-McBride Commission ordered the cut-off at Ulkatcho No. 1. They based this decision on the recommendation of the Indian Agent. The Indian Agent said that since the Band was getting new reserves, most of Ulkatcho No. 1 should be taken away.
5. The McKenna-McBride Commission did allot 11 new reserves to Ulkatcho Band, totalling 5700 acres. In making these allotments the Commission was acting within its powers and was merely recognizing Indian rights to lands that they had long used.

6. But ordering the cut-off without the Band's explicit consent was contrary to their powers. This injustice was "legalized" after the fact by laws passed by the Federal and Provincial governments. The cut-off land was turned over to the Province's control and today is part of the Ootsa Forest Reserve. But the injustice remains.

7. TODAY'S SITUATION.....

The 23 Bands with McKenna-McBride cut-offs have formed an Action Committee to push for a just settlement of this issue. The Committee seeks negotiations with both the Federal and Provincial governments. The Federal government has recently said it is ready and willing to come to a settlement.

The Action Committee calls upon the Provincial government to enter into negotiations. The McKenna-McBride Commission was a joint Federal-Provincial Commission. The Province was involved at every step of the Commission's work and approval, including the cut-offs. Today the Province has control over the cut-off lands. The Province has a legal, moral and political responsibility to come to a just solution of this grievance.

The Committee calls for a land freeze on cut-offs and for the Province to recognize its responsibility to deal justly with Indians.

The Committee's position for settlement is: return of cut-off lands where possible or alternate lands of equal worth.

The Bands are willing to talk and the Federal Government is willing to talk. How about the Province?