

From Conflict to Partnership – The New Day Agreement, the Reconciliation Journey of the Cheslatta Carrier Nation and Rio Tinto Aluminium

C. Gagnon¹, M. Robertson²

¹Communities and Social Performance, Rio Tinto Atlantic, Kitimat, British Columbia, Canada

²Cheslatta Carrier Nation, Burns Lake, British Columbia, Canada

(*Co-presenting authors: claudine.gagnon@riotinto.com, mrobertson@cheslatta.com)

“This agreement honours the justice our ancestors and previous leadership spent their lives fighting for. Now, we are positioned to begin the healing process and to advance the social and economic standing of our people for generations to come.” (Chief Corrina Leween, personal communication, 2020)

Preamble

In 1952, members of the Cheslatta Carrier Nation (Cheslatta) were forcibly evicted from their homes and resettled outside their Traditional Territory in northwest British Columbia (B.C.), Canada, with just two weeks’ notice. As the Aluminium Company of Canada (Alcan) built the Kenney Dam on the Nechako River forming the Nechako Reservoir, Cheslatta lands, villages, and spiritual sites were flooded. The Nechako reservoir would supply water to the Kemano Generating Station, which would power Alcan’s smelting operations in Kitimat, B.C. Rio Tinto acquired Alcan, the smelter and Kemano in 2007; these operations today are known as BC Works. This paper, co-authored by Cheslatta and Rio Tinto, describes the reconciliation journey from bitter conflict to successful partnership, and discusses the factors which made the journey possible.

Introduction

The people of the Cheslatta Carrier Nation (Cheslatta) lived for centuries on their traditional territory that comprises the western headwaters of the Nechako Reservoir in northwest, British Columbia (B.C.), Canada. A vast area of lakes, rivers, mountains and valleys that teemed with game, fish, waterfowl, fur bearing animals and abundant plants and berries. They maintained extensive villages at Tetachuck, Eutsuk, Ootsa, Chelaslie, Intata, Euchu and Cheslatta Lakes. (Robertson, M. 1994)

The Cheslatta were hunter/gatherers of the Athapaskan group or Dene People. Archaeological evidence confirms human occupation of the Cheslatta Territory of at least 12,000 years. (Robertson, M. 1994)

The Cheslatta enjoyed a peaceful, self-sustaining existence and were known for their fierce independence and close-knit society, always looking out for each other and making sure all were provided for. They hunted caribou, bear, deer and other game. They used the meat for food and the furs kept them warm in the long winters. Their freshwater fish diet consisted of trout, char, kokanee, whitefish and burbot. (Robertson, M. 1994)

Through the centuries, the Cheslatta developed a wide ranging and far-reaching system of roads, trails, and paths connecting their villages and supporting a diverse trading economy with their other Carrier Nations nearby, including Saikuz, Nadleh, Stelat’en and Ulkatcho, and with larger coastal communities of Bella Coola, Kemano, Kimsquit and Hazelton. They traded products unique to their Territory, including berries, fur, plants and hand-crafted products in exchange for salmon, oolichan, seaweed and beads, trinkets, guns and implements associated with the Russian fur trade beginning in the 1700’s. Later, during the early European contact era, they began acquiring horses which helped them diversify their activities on the land. (Robertson, M. 1994)

The Cheslatta readily adapted to the fur trade economy when the first Northwest Company trading post was established at Fraser Lake in 1806. They soon became the most prominent supplier of fur, fish and game to the post. (Robertson, M. 1994)

Smallpox was introduced from the coast and in 1838, the Cheslatta villages at Tetachuck experienced 95% mortality. Hundreds and hundreds of Cheslatta perished. The survivors abandoned that area and integrated into their villages at Ootsa and Cheslatta Lakes. Again in 1862, smallpox ravaged the Cheslatta population, and the toll was enormous. It was at this time that missionaries first appeared and soon established a church at Cheslatta Lake. (Robertson, M. 1994)

It wasn't until 1905, that the first European settlers established full-time residences in the Cheslatta Territory at Ootsa Lake. The Cheslatta people welcomed the newcomers and soon established trade and relationships with their new neighbors. In all, life was peaceful and prosperous. All this came to an abrupt and tragic end on April 21, 1952. (Robertson, M. 1994)

The Eviction

The events leading up to April 21, 1952, began five years earlier. In 1947, the Government of British Columbia, wanting to establish economic development in the Province, invited the Aluminum Company of Canada (Alcan) to explore the massive hydropower potential in the interior of B.C. After initial surveys and reconnaissance, Alcan confirmed that the resource was enormous. And in December 1950, the Government of B.C. granted Alcan a water license for all the water in the western headwaters of the Nechako River, essentially, all the water within the Cheslatta Territory.

In the spring of 1951, construction commenced on a rock filled dam that would impound the Nechako headwaters, completely shutting off all downstream flow. By late winter/early spring 1952, the federal Government became concerned that flows of the Nechako River would be completely shut off for five years until the reservoir was filled. The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans demanded that the Nechako River, the biggest tributary to the Fraser River (which is the largest salmon river in the world) be watered, to sustain the millions of salmon that migrated up the Nechako every year. (Mike Robertson, Senior Policy Advisor, Cheslatta Carrier Nation, personal communications, 2022). After considering several options, Canada decided on March 28, 1952, that a dam could be built on Murray/Cheslatta Lake, which would create the small reservoir needed to sustain the salmon runs, until the Nechako Reservoir was filled. Dam construction started immediately. (Robertson, 1994)

Various federal departments soon realized that by authorizing the dam, the Cheslatta villages and people would soon be underwater. Officials from Department of the Indian Affairs (DIA) and Alcan came to the main Cheslatta village on April 3 and informed the people that they would soon be flooded and that the Cheslatta would have to move within 2 weeks. DIA scheduled a 'Land Surrender' meeting for April 16, 1952, telling the people "...be prepared to move immediately." (Quaw, T., Robertson, M. 2016)

Cheslatta Elder Abel Peters (a WWII veteran) spoke about the events leading up to the 'Land Surrender' meeting in a series of interviews, conducted over thirty years, with representatives of the Cheslatta Carrier Nation Archives and with various national and regional media outlets.

"We were just so surprised, and we didn't know what to do. There was no Chief because Chief Louie had died the year before. Then they try to make me Chief. No way I say. I want to be, but I know I'm going to be against the law (returning Indian soldiers lost their status as Band members)... They told us if we didn't move now, they would get police from Ottawa and arrest us, and we would get nothing." (Robertson, 1994)

The flurry of correspondence and telegrams sent between Alcan, DIA, and the Indian Agent through the weeks of April 1952, demonstrates the colonial subjugation experienced by the Cheslatta people.

"...it was most frustrating attempting to negotiate with these Indians. They have lived in an isolated area all their lives, with the result that they are a backward group, have had little supervision and, consequently, little knowledge of the Indian Act or Departmental policies." - W. J. McGregor, Regional Supervisor, Indian Office, Letter to DIA, 1952. (Quaw, T., Robertson, M. 2016)

The Cheslatta members not out on their traplines, gathered at Cheslatta's Bel-ga-tse (IR#5 village) to attend the 'Land Surrender' meeting, April 16, 1952. And while days passed with no sign of the DIA and Alcan representatives, the Cheslatta waited. The lake continued to rise around them, and the mood grew dark.

On Sunday, April 20, 1952, Alcan, and DIA officials arrived by helicopter, four days late. The 'Land Surrender' meeting commenced. At no time were the Cheslatta offered third-party advisory support. Nor was simple meeting etiquette followed, such as allowing people to take notes. According to the Cheslatta elders, *"Several of us could write and the Indian Agent came around and took our pencils and papers. I guess they didn't want to leave any evidence."* (Cheslatta Carrier Nation Archives, 2022)

"No written papers or anything, that's the way they worked it. Everything was crooked, crooked all the way." Cheslatta Elder Abel Peters (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation interview, 1992)

Through an interpreter, the Cheslatta presented their community's demands for compensation. The Cheslatta wanted a) new land and buildings purchased before they moved; b) a monthly pension paid to each band member for life; c) the cemeteries moved to higher ground; d) reparation for loss of traplines and habitat; and e) roads built to the villages so they could move their furniture, equipment and belongings. (Mike Robertson, personal communications, 2022)

Indian Agent Robert Howe called these demands *"...fantastic and unreasonable definitely out of the question."* DIA and Alcan promised, if Cheslatta surrendered, they would receive fair compensation. Alternatively, if Cheslatta refused to surrender, they would still have to move, and receive no compensation. The meeting adjourned without resolve, resuming the next morning, April 21, 1952. By day's end, according to DIA records, the Cheslatta Carrier Nation unanimously voted to surrender their land, 2600 acres.

"... (and for the DIA) to sell to the Aluminum Company of Canada, our Cheslatta Indian Reserves, numbered 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 16, for the sum of approximately \$130,000, provided that this amount is sufficient to re-establish our Band elsewhere to our satisfaction on a comparable basis. The total cost of our moving and re-establishment to be borne by the Aluminum Company of Canada." The Land "Surrender" document, April 21, 1952. (Quaw, T., Robertson, M. 2016)

Forty years later in 1991, the Cheslatta commissioned Donald Brown, a forensic handwriting expert to analyse all documents dated April 21, 1952. The forensic examination of the 'Land Surrender' document, purportedly including signatures signed X from each of the Cheslatta members, were deemed to be forged. (Robertson, M. 1994)

The Aftermath

On April 22, 1952, without assistance from Alcan or the Government, and facing horrible road and trail conditions, the Cheslatta began their forced exodus from their homes in Cheslatta Lake to Grassy Plains, 30 miles north. They only took what they could carry on their backs as the Indian Agent and Alcan had promised that they could return in a couple months and retrieve all their belongings, furniture, equipment and livestock.

Unbeknownst to the Cheslatta, immediately after they left, contractors hired by Alcan and the Government of B.C. began the destruction of the Cheslatta villages. Teams of people moved into the three villages and commenced the demolition of all houses, barns, smoke houses, corrals, fences...everything. The Indian Agent found out that the contractors refused to burn the church, so he hired a helicopter and burnt it

down himself. (Mike Robertson, personal communications, 2022). By early July, every vestige of Cheslatta existence had been reduced to piles of ashes.

“We have completed the demolition of the Cheslatta Indian Reserves” said H. Jomini, Alcan contractor in a letter to Shakespeare, Alcan lawyer, August 6, 1952. (Robertson, M. 1994)

When the Cheslatta people returned to retrieve their belongings and equipment, they were horrified and outraged to learn that everything had been destroyed.

Years later, Cheslatta Elder Abel Peters said *“They told us to only take what we needed and come back later. They said it would be safe, my tools, saws, and everything. When we came back, it was all burnt down.”* (Mike Robertson, personal communications, 2022)

The Cheslatta people quickly realized that the promises of new land and houses were lies. People set up camps under spruce trees at Grassy Plains and in old, abandoned shacks and barns. Many became sick and tuberculosis was widespread. The formerly prosperous, well-organized community quickly fell into a deep depression. The proud Cheslatta were like refugees in a new land, with new customs, new language, and it took its toll in alcoholism, loss of cultural livelihood and resulted in death. (Mike Robertson, personal communications, 2022).

Eventually, by 1953, the Indian Agent began securing options on parcels of land, generally unproductive farms and homesteads. The parcels were eventually purchased by each individual using their own compensation money. It was not until 1964, 12 years after the eviction, that the land was designated as an Indian Reserve. (Quaw, T., Robertson, M. 2016).

A Step Forward Together

“Every journey starts with a single step. Our goal is to put Cheslatta footprints back on our Territory – For the first time since 1952, we have access to the land again” (Chief Corrina Leween, personal communication, 2022).

The authors spoke with Chief Corrina Leween on her reflections about the journey to reach the New Day Agreement. In addition, the authors used a timeline developed by the Cheslatta Nations Archives, date-stamping key events since 1952. Comments from the Chief and historical records show the significant steps taken by the Cheslatta people over the last 70 years.

The Journey to the New Day Agreement

Thirty-one years have passed since the ‘Land Surrender’ meeting. The ‘resettled’ Cheslatta community does not receive water or sewage services until this year; it’s **1983**. (Mike Robertson, personal communications, 2022).

A year later, in **1984**, the Cheslatta file a Specific Claim with Canada and with the DIA. In their Statement of Claim, Cheslatta outlines the many injustices that took place in 1952 and demand that the DIA address them. The Cheslatta, once a close-knit, well-established society, now live on parcels of Reserve land scattered across some 175 miles.

By **1993**, Cheslatta Specific Claim is settled with Canada. Meanwhile 85% of Cheslatta members are unemployed.

1995 is marked by the Government of B.C.’s retroactively cancelling Alcan’s Kemano II Hydroelectric Project (Kemano Completion Project). This milestone is achieved after Cheslatta mounts a campaign against the project between 1982 – 1995, bringing International attention on Alcan and the federal

and provincial Governments for *'running roughshod over the small Indian Bands and the environment.'* (Mike Robertson, personal communications, 2022)

Finally, in September **1999**, Cheslatta, stating that *"...we are tired of fighting, and we've got much work to do"* invites Alcan to a meeting at Cheslatta. Alcan acknowledges that *"...we are both going to be here a long time,"* and agrees to meet the Cheslatta. It would be Cheslatta and Alcan's first meeting since April 21, 1952. (Cheslatta Carrier Nation Archives, 2022)

Fast forward, it's now **2003**, and Corrina Leween, the great grand-daughter of the legendary Cheslatta Carrier Nation Chief Louie, is elected Chief. Chief Leween is the youngest person and the third woman ever elected Chief of Cheslatta Nation.

Five years later in **2007**, Rio Tinto acquires Alcan.

In an unprecedented move, in January **2012**, Rio Tinto "returns" 12,000 acres of fee simple land to Cheslatta including all the old villages sites and Reserves lost in 1952 and all the Cheslatta River properties. **"No Strings Attached."** Abel Peters resides over this event. *Note: Rio Tinto supplied boxes of pencils and paper to the gathering, making sure the people had an opportunity to record this special day.* (Mike Robertson, personal communications, 2022)

At the time, Chief Corrina Leween says, this action is the foundation for *"transparency and creates the trust needed to take the next step in building the partnership between Cheslatta and Rio Tinto."*

May 2012, the **New Day Agreement** negotiations commence between Cheslatta and Rio Tinto.

September 2012 Cheslatta Elder, **Canadian war veteran** and 'Land Surrender' meeting interpreter Abel Peters dies. He is 90. Having witnessed his courage and long-standing advocacy, the Cheslatta continue Abel's efforts for restitution and by **2019**, the Nation reaches a Reconciliation Agreement with the Government of B.C. Fittingly, Chief Corrina Leween says, *"We negotiate because our ancestors were not allowed to negotiate."*

Reconciliation

Seventy years have passed since the 'Land Surrender' meeting at Bel-ga-tse (IR#5), and governments and citizen groups worldwide now see the severe repercussions of colonization for Indigenous culture, ceremony and traditions. Accordingly, when Rio Tinto destroyed rock shelters of exceptional significance at Juukan Gorge, near the Brockman iron ore mine in the Pilbara, Western Australia, Rio Tinto CEO Jakob Stausholm responded by saying:

"We fell far short of our values as a company and breached the trust placed in us by the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we operate.... We know that we cannot change the past. But we can continue to seek out, listen to and respect different voices and perspectives, to ensure that in the future, cultural heritage sites are treated with the care they deserve. And the changes we make should improve, over time, our engagement with Indigenous and First Nations communities in every region where we operate worldwide. This is the legacy we aim to create, together." (www.riotinto.com/news/inquiry-intojuukan-gorge).

Similarly, the unmarked graves of 215 Indigenous children, found at a former residential school in B.C., Canada, was an awakening for Canadians. Many would learn, for the first time, about the systematic abuse institutionalized in the residential school system over 125 years; Canadians would begin to understand the intergenerational trauma experienced by Indigenous people as a result. In all, some 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis children would be forcefully removed from the families between the 1870s-1990s, (<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1625663008357/1625663325319>) including Cheslatta

children, who were sent to Lejac Residential School in Fraser Lake. It is estimated that 7% of Cheslatta's population died there up to 1976. (Mike Robertson, personal communications, 2022). Personally, the authors sincerely believe that over the next century, reconciliation is the most important progress that Canada can make as a country, and that collectively, Canadians can make as fellow citizens.

Canada's reconciliation journey substantively began in 2008, when the Canadian Prime Minister offered an historic apology to former residential school students and their families. Alongside the Government of Canada's apology, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was released. The TRC included 94 Calls to Action." Rio Tinto's Human Rights Policy is aligned and furthers the aspirations of TRC #92, which is a call to action to "corporate Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework."

Having an Indigenous-Lens to Guide Operational Decisions

"We continue to evolve and deepen the way we engage and interact with Indigenous people. Building and holding trust isn't easy to do. But it's something, our team strives to do in practical ways, each day" Ivan Vella - Chief Executive Officer Aluminium.

The Rio Tinto Aluminium Atlantic Communities and Social Performance (CSP) team is building relationships with some 25 different Indigenous communities in British Columbia and Quebec. Acknowledging that this is work in progress and is a journey in building trust, is the first step to fostering an enduring relationship with First Nations. As such, CSP is mandated to consider and to represent each community's unique culture and traditions within BC Works. CSP, Indigenous communities and other BC Works operational teams collaborate with care to address a range of legacy issues, including: eulachon, salmon, sturgeon and other fish species and habitat protection; supplier and workforce development; contracting and employment; flood management, debris removal and reparation for flooded lands; the monitoring and evaluation of the potential effects of the smelter's air emissions on human health, soils, aquatic ecosystems and vegetation; water stewardship; and, the monitoring of ocean shipping lanes.

"We've shifted from taking a defensive approach with Indigenous communities – using tactics which focus on litigation, and short-term thinking, to building a culture, in which shared-value creation and collective benefits are the objectives." (Sébastien Ross, Managing Director Atlantic Operations, Rio Tinto Aluminium, personal communication, 2022)

The cultural shift Sébastien speaks about reflects Rio Tinto Atlantic's aspiration to incorporate an Indigenous-lens across all its operations in Canada. In this regard, Ivan Vella, Rio Tinto CEO Aluminium, spoke about Indigenous people being at the centre of the company's strategies; this includes Rio Tinto's ability to support global decarbonization efforts. At the First Nations Major Project Coalition **Toward Net Zero** conference in Vancouver, B.C., in April 2022, Ivan addressed the linkage between Indigenous people, and the ability for society and industry to meet one of the most pressing challenges today, decarbonization.

"Rio Tinto sees the decarbonization era as being a unique opportunity to further meaningful Indigenous economic reconciliation. We think Rio Tinto's strategy to advance the circular economy, is harmonious with Indigenous values" (Ivan Vella, personal communication, 2022)

As a mark of the company's commitment to producing low carbon products aligned with international human rights, Rio Tinto complies with the Aluminium Stewardship Initiative (ASI) standard. The ASI credentials provide independent verification certifying the most stringent global environment, social and governance standards traced through every stage of the aluminium manufacturing process. Notably says Andrew Czornohalan, Rio Tinto's Director of Power & Projects Kitimat and Kemano, *"it means that the CSP, Operations, Project Management, and Procurement departments "must have an Indigenous lens when making decisions. Our job as leadership is to impart this expectation across all departments. I don't see Indigenous relationships as the 'soft' fluffy side of our business. It's core business."* Beyond product

certification, Andrew Czornohalan contends that without win-win relationships with Indigenous peoples, there will be no access to the critical minerals required for decarbonization.

“To expand the operational footprint necessary to meet the low carbon economy, it starts with doing the right things, right at home, first. It’s an interconnected world. There is no growth in smelting, in any location, without a partnership with Indigenous people first.” (Andrew Czornohalan, personal communication, 2022) While they share the same perspectives on many topics, on this point Chief Corrina Leween and Andrew are particularly aligned. *“When First Nations and industry join forces to sustainably manage our natural resources and strengthen our economy, everyone wins.”*

The New Day Agreement

“The New Day Agreement is another step in our journey. It marks the start of a new relationship between our Nation and your company. Based on the principles of mutual respect, the certainty that goes with that, and a long-term active partnership.” (Chief Corrina Leween, personal communication, 2020).

The signing of the New Day Agreement occurred in February 2020. A key symbol in the reconciliation journey was shared at the ceremony. Rio Tinto presented the Cheslatta with an aluminium paddle. The paddle remains a hallmark today, signifying that the Cheslatta and Rio Tinto are paddling in the same direction with equal effort.

“The New Day Agreement took quite a while to reach, and during talks both teams openly discussed tough issues, but each day when talks ended we walked away from the table as friends.” (Lianne Olson, CSP Advisor Watershed, personal communication, 2022).

Kevin Dobbin, Business Partner - Strategic Indigenous Partnerships says the New Day Agreement is relationship reset between Cheslatta and Rio Tinto. *“The ‘New Day’ provides Cheslatta and BC Works space to move our relationship in a new direction. It’s only the beginning of what we can do together.”* (Kevin Dobbin, personal communications, 2022).

Both Cheslatta and Rio Tinto point to economic reconciliation as being one of the most successful aspects of the New Day Agreement. The Kemano T2 project, a 7.6km tunnel through the mountains to bring water from the Nechako Reservoir to Rio Tinto’s Kemano hydroelectric plant, began in 2019. Cheslatta-owned Contracting Services is providing much of the hauling, barging, welding, and inventory management, among other things to T2. The unemployment rate at Cheslatta is now near zero.

“And I’ve noticed a lot of people who are not from Cheslatta - they enjoy working for Cheslatta, and it’s like they’re proud of it. They work with us. And for us. And not above us and not below us, or anything. So, I’m so proud of my Nation. I think Really. Really. Is this happening? I come home to this?” (Janet Whitford, Councillor, Cheslatta Carrier Nation, personal communication, 2021).

Moving into year three of the Agreement, some of the other key factors contributing to the agreement’s successful implementation include:

- Creating the Nechako Reservoir Stewardship Program, a joint **30-year** initiative that leverages Indigenous knowledge to maintain the Nechako Reservoir watershed ecosystem. The program is also spurring recreation and tourism opportunities in the Cheslatta Territory.
- Establishing a remote training centre located in Cheslatta’s community to deliver trades, safety, marine and driver training courses.
- Launching A **New Day Scholarship Fund** to provide scholarships for Cheslatta students of all ages.
- Expanding the procurement strategy and supplier development program to support Cheslatta business participation on more BC Works capital and annual operational projects.

“Maintaining the New Day agreement and managing it ‘together’ is critical to its success and to our relationship. We want to make sure we are in regular communication and all of us are living up to the

agreement for the benefit of future generations” (Sophie Gaussiran-Racine, CSP Advisor, personal communications, 2022).

Conclusion

“The Chief’s portrayal of Cheslatta’s partnership with Rio Tinto - as proud, respectful, transparent, and active - is an accurate depiction of everything her Nation has become under her leadership. (Ivan Vella, personal communication, 2022).

It’s now 2022, the Cheslatta Carrier Nation is based at Southbank, on the south shore of Francois Lake, 23 kilometers south of Burns Lake in Northwest, B.C. There are approximately 380 Cheslatta members, and many live on the 17 Reservations scattered over some 1400 hectares.

As for Rio Tinto, today BC Works operates one of the lowest carbon aluminium smelters in the world, powered by the Kemano Generating Station; the water of which is sourced from the Nechako River. One legacy of the Kenney Dam construction is a resolve by Rio Tinto to do business differently in 2022, compared to 1952.

According to Rio Tinto Aluminium CEO Ivan Vella, the principles of the New Day Agreement are durable. These include:

1. Acknowledge past injustices and resolve to make the necessary changes to fix them;
2. Protect and promote Indigenous economic, cultural and social rights
3. Work together to solve problems;
4. Be accessible, be realistic and be truthful; and,
5. Look for win-win solutions.

“I believe the New Day Agreement principles could apply to any agreement between Rio Tinto with any Indigenous community anywhere in the world, going forward.” (Ivan Vella, personal communication June 2022).

When asked, if a telegram were to be sent from Cheslatta to Rio Tinto in 2022, what would Chief Corrina Leween’s words be? Chief Leween said this:

“We can’t change the past. But we are changing the future. In that respect, we know that the solutions needed to reach net zero will rely on using Indigenous lands and resources. Therefore, any economic development now and into the future will either be Indigenous-led or have strong Indigenous partnerships; this will not only ensure respect for our lands and cultures but will also ensure we build a better more inclusive society. We’re sharing Cheslatta’s story, so that other Indigenous Nations know they can do it too; they can also prosper. Our experience shows, Cheslatta and Rio Tinto are stronger together.”

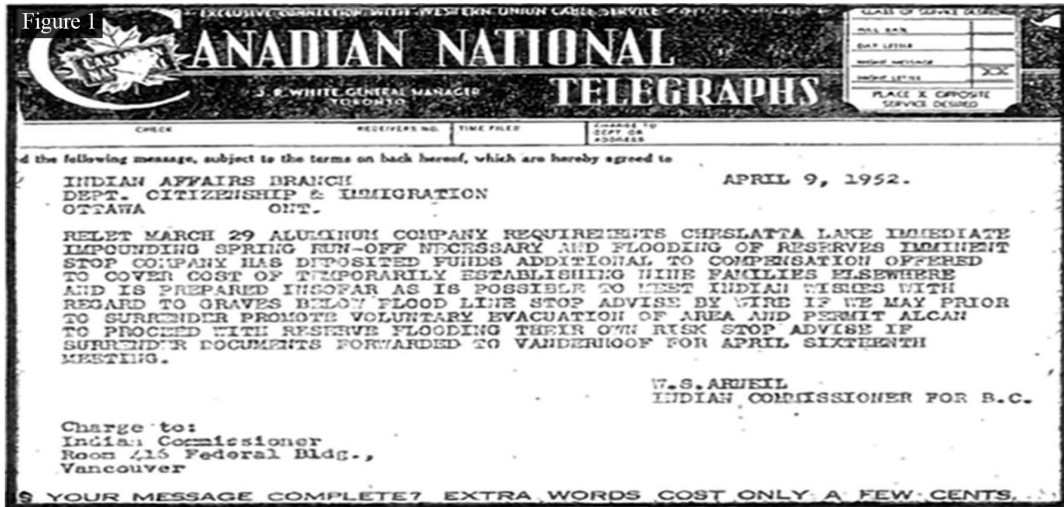
Acknowledgements

Rio Tinto is more committed than ever before, to become a more inclusive, respectful and caring company. This culture starts with humility and with gratitude to the Indigenous peoples whose land we operate on – from the Haisla Nation, Kitselas, Kitsumkalum and Gitga’at Nations, where our smelter is located in Kitimat; to the Cheslatta Carrier, Skin Tyee, Nee Tah-Buhn, Saikuz, Stelat’en and Nadleh Whut’en Nations, where we operate our reservoir in the Nechako region.

We thank Cheslatta Carrier Nation for trusting us and for living the New Day Agreement together.

We also wish to acknowledge Cheslatta Elder and Private Abel Thomas Peters. Abel enlisted in the army in 1943 in the 102nd Northern British Columbians and became part of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles. He served Canada in WWII. Abel was sent overseas in September 1943; he landed on Juno Beach on June 6, 1944.

The New Day Agreement Mural



Telegram from Indian Commissioner for B.C., 1952



Chief Louie's Family and Cheslatta People (1911)



Chief Corrina Leween



Abel Peters 2010 (88 years old), 1942 (20 years old)



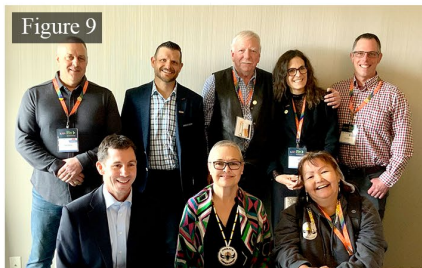
Mike Robertson, Senior Advisor Policy, Cheslatta



BC Works Kemano 2022



Cheslatta Lake, 1910



Front: Ivan Vella, Rio Tinto CEO Aluminium, Chief Corrina Leween and Councillor Janet Whitford
Back: James Rakochoy, Andrew Czornohalan, Mike Robertson, Claudine Gagnon, Jim D'Andrea
 Leaders of Cheslatta Carrier Nation and Rio Tinto at the First Nations Major Projects Coalition (FNMPC) Net Zero Conference, April 2022



Devon Louis, Member of Cheslatta Carrier Nation and Equipment Operator, Kemano T2 Project



Chief Leween at the New Day Agreement celebration with the next generation of Cheslatta people

References

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (1992) “After the Flood”

Cheslatta Carrier Nations Archives

Czornohalan, A. (2022, September 21) Personal communication (Personal interview)

Dobbins, K. (2022, October 15) Personal communications (Personal Interview)

Gaussiran-Racine, S. (2022, September 21) Personal communications (Personal interview)

Leween Chief Corrina (2022, September 23) Personal communication (Personal interview)

Leween Chief Corrina (2020, February) Personal communication (New Day Agreement speech)

Olson, L. (2022, September 20) Personal communications (Personal interview)

Quaw, T., Robertson, M. (2016) *The Seven Telegrams: Events Leading Up to the Eviction of the Cheslatta People*

Robertson, M. (2022, September 23) Personal communications (Personal interview)

Robertson M. (1994) *The Story of the Surrender of the Cheslatta Reserves. - April 21, 1952*

Ross, S. (2022, September) Personal communications (Speech)

Vella, I. (2022, June) Personal communications (Meeting with Cheslatta Carrier Nation)

Vella, I. (2022, April 25-26) Personal communications (First Nations Major Project Coalition Toward Net Zero conference, speech)

www.cheslatta.com/history.com ‘Cheslatta History Condensed’ (video)

www.cheslatta.com/history.com ‘Timeline: Cheslatta Carrier Nation and “Southside” Community’

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1625663008357/1625663325319>

www.riotinto.com/news/inquiry-into-juukan-gorge

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNZqkqARzAg ‘The New Day Agreement’ (video)

Figures

- I. Figure one – Telegram from Indian Commission to Indian Affairs Branch (1952). Source: Quaw, T., Robertson, M. (2016) *The Seven Telegrams: Events Leading Up to the Eviction of the Cheslatta People*
- II. Figure two – Chief Louie’s family and Cheslatta people (1911). Source: Cheslatta Carrier Nation Archives
- III. Figure three – Chief Corrina Leween (2022). Source: <https://www.cheslatta.com>
- IV. Figure four – Elder Abel Peters (2010). Source: Cheslatta Carrier Nation Archives
- V. Figure five – Private Abel Peters (1942). Source: Cheslatta Carrier Nation Archives
- VI. Figure six – Mike Robertson, Senior Policy Advisor holding the New Day paddle, a symbol of signifying that the Cheslatta and Rio Tinto are paddling in the same direction with equal effort (2022). Source: Rio Tinto | Change and Reconciliation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y19nhipBcXg>
- VII. Figure seven – BC Works Kemano (2022). Source: BC Works
- VIII. Figure eight – Cheslatta Lake (1910). Source: Cheslatta Carrier Nation Archives
- IX. Figure nine – Leaders of Cheslatta Carrier Nation and Rio Tinto at the First Nation Major Project Coalition Net Zero Conference (2022): Source Rio Tinto
- X. Figure ten – Devon Louis, Member of Cheslatta and Equipment Operator on Kemano T2 (2022). Source: Rio Tinto | Safer Together- Looking after our Future <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAYb7oExuG0>
- XI. Figure eleven: Chief Leween with the next generation of Cheslatta people (2022). Source: Rio Tinto