

INDIAN CLAIMS COMMISSION

REPORT ON THE MEDIATION

OF THE

MUSKODAY FIRST NATION

TREATY LAND ENTITLEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

April 2008

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SUMMARY

MUSKODAY FIRST NATION TREATY LAND ENTITLEMENT MEDIATION Saskatchewan

The report may be cited as Indian Claims Commission, *Muskoday First Nation: Treaty Land Entitlement Mediation* (Ottawa, April 2008).

*This summary is intended for research purposes only.
For greater detail, the reader should refer to the published report.*

Treaties – Treaty 6 (1876); **Treaty Interpretation** – Treaty Land Entitlement; **Treaty Land Entitlement** – Policy – Population Formula – Saskatchewan TLE Framework Agreement; **Mandate of Indian Claims Commission** – Mediation; **Saskatchewan**

THE SPECIFIC CLAIM

Muskoday First Nation submitted its treaty land entitlement (TLE) claim to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) in 1992, alleging a shortfall of entitlement lands based on additions to the band membership after the date of first survey (DOFS). The claim was rejected in 1996. After the Indian Claims Commission (ICC) held a number of inquiries relating to TLE issues, DIAND amended its TLE policy. Muskoday resubmitted its claim, and it was accepted under the 1998 Historic Treaty Land Entitlement Shortfall Policy on April 11, 2003. When negotiations to settle this claim began in June 2004, all parties at the table requested that the Commission provide administrative and facilitation services throughout the negotiations.

BACKGROUND

The ICC's involvement in this claim related only to its mediation mandate. As mediator, the ICC did not receive historical records or legal submissions from the parties.

Chief John Smith and his councillors signed Treaty 6 in 1876 on behalf of their followers, the descendants of whom now call themselves the Muskoday First Nation. Treaty 6 specified that government officials and individual bands were to select the location of reserves which were to be surveyed according to a formula of one square mile for each family of five (128 acres per person). Indian Reserve (IR) 99 was surveyed in 1878 and re-surveyed in 1884. Order in Council PC 1151, dated May 17, 1889, confirmed the 37.4-square-mile reserve straddling the South Branch of the Saskatchewan River (about 20 kilometres southeast of Prince Albert).

In 1998, following several ICC inquiries into TLE matters, Canada amended its policy and agreed to include eligible new adherents to treaty and transferees from landless bands after the date of first survey when calculating treaty land entitlement. It was on this basis that the Minister of Indian Affairs accepted the Muskoday First Nation TLE claim in April 2003.

MATTERS FACILITATED

The ICC's role was to chair the negotiation sessions, provide an accurate record of the discussions, follow up on undertakings and consult with the parties to establish acceptable agendas, venues, and times for meetings.

OUTCOME

On May 23, 2007, the Muskoday First Nation ratified the proposed settlement of \$10.25 million in compensation, with authorization to purchase up to 38,014 acres of land, which can be converted to reserve status.

REFERENCES

The ICC does no independent research during mediation and draws on background information and documents submitted by the parties. The mediation discussions are subject to confidentiality agreements.

PART I
INTRODUCTION

In the 1870s, some reserves set aside in what is now the Province of Saskatchewan under Treaty 6 did not meet the terms as negotiated and specified in that agreement. This is a report on how, almost 130 years after the survey and establishment of a reserve, a treaty land entitlement (TLE) claim based on such an error was, with the assistance of the Indian Claims Commission (ICC), successfully resolved.

Muskoday Indian Reserve (IR) 99 contains 9,686 hectares of land straddling the South Saskatchewan River, approximately 20 kilometres southeast of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Although IR 99 has been called “Muskoday” periodically from the time it was first surveyed, the people who lived on it were referred to as the John Smith Band until 1993, when they formally changed their name to the Muskoday First Nation. The total registered band population as of February 2008 was 1,555, of whom 558 lived on reserve.¹

This report will not provide a full history of the Muskoday TLE claim but instead will briefly outline the historical background. It will also summarize the events leading up to the settlement of the claim and illustrate the Commission’s role in the resolution process.

Muskoday First Nation submitted its first TLE claim to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) in 1992; it was rejected in 1996. After the Indian Claims Commission held a number of inquiries and made recommendations regarding TLE claims, Canada revised its TLE research guidelines in 1998, and Muskoday resubmitted its claim using the new criteria. This claim was accepted by the Minister of Indian Affairs by letter dated April 11, 2003.² When negotiations to settle this claim began in February 2004, all parties at the table requested that the ICC facilitate the negotiations and provide neutral third party administrative services throughout the negotiations.

¹ Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada [INAC], First Nation Profiles, Muskoday First Nation, <http://sdiprod2.inac.gc.ca/fnprofiles> (February 8, 2008).

² Robert D. Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs, to Chief Carl Bear, Muskoday First Nation, April 11, 2003, ICC file 2107-55-1M, vol. 1.

THE COMMISSION'S MANDATE AND MEDIATION PROCESS

The Indian Claims Commission was created as a joint initiative after years of discussion between First Nations and the Government of Canada on how the process for dealing with Indian land claims in Canada might be improved. Following the Commission's establishment by Order in Council³ on July 15, 1991, Harry S. LaForme, a former commissioner of the Indian Commission of Ontario, was appointed as Chief Commissioner. With the appointment of six Commissioners in July 1992, the ICC became fully operative. The ICC is currently being led by Chief Commissioner Renée Dupuis (QC), along with Commissioners Daniel J. Bellegarde (SK), Jane Dickson-Gilmore (ON), Alan C. Holman (PEI), and Sheila G. Purdy (ON).

The Commission has a double mandate: to inquire, at the request of a First Nation, into its specific claim; and to provide mediation services, with the consent of both parties, for specific claims at any stage of the process. An inquiry may take place when a claim has been rejected or when the Minister has accepted the claim for negotiation but a dispute has arisen over the compensation criteria being applied to settle the claim.

As part of its mandate to find more effective ways to resolve specific claims, the Commission has established a process to inquire into and review government decisions regarding the merits of a claim and the applicable compensation principles when negotiations have reached an impasse. Since the Commission is not a court, it is not bound by strict rules of evidence, limitation periods, and other technical defences that might present obstacles in litigation of grievances against the Crown. This flexibility removes those barriers and gives the Commission the freedom to conduct fair and objective inquiries in as expeditious a way as possible. In turn, these inquiries offer the parties innovative solutions in their efforts to resolve a host of complex and contentious issues of policy and law. Moreover, the process emphasizes principles of fairness, equity, and justice to promote reconciliation and healing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

The Commission provides broad mediation, facilitation, and other administrative services at the request of both the First Nation and the Government of Canada. These services are available

³ The original Commission has been substantively amended in the years since 1991, most recently on November 22, 2007, whereby the Commissioners are, among other things, directed to complete all inquiries by December 31, 2008, including all inquiry reports, and to cease, by March 31, 2009, all their activities and all activities of the Commission, including those related to mediation.

at any stage of the specific claims process, including research, submission, review, acceptance, and negotiation. Together with the mediator, the parties decide how the mediation process will be conducted. This method ensures that the process fits the unique circumstances of each particular negotiation. The mediation process used by the Commission for handling claims is aimed at increasing efficiency and effectiveness in resolving specific claims.

PART II
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CLAIM

In August 1876, representatives of Her Majesty the Queen met with Plains Cree, Wood Cree, and other tribes of Indians at Fort Carlton in the vicinity of Duck Lake north of Saskatoon to negotiate Treaty 6. In exchange for the surrender of Aboriginal title to 121,000 square miles of land in what is now central Saskatchewan and Alberta, the Crown promised to provide the Indians with perpetual annuities, schools, agricultural assistance, a medicine chest, and reserve lands. The treaty specified that government officials and individual bands were to select the location of reserves, which were to be surveyed based on a formula of one square mile for each family of five (that is, 128 acres per person):

And Her Majesty the Queen hereby agrees and undertakes to lay aside reserves for farming lands, due respect being had to lands at present cultivated by the said Indians, and other reserves for the benefit of the said Indians, to be administered and dealt with for them by Her Majesty's Government of the Dominion of Canada; provided, all such reserves shall not exceed in all one square mile for each family of five, or in that proportion for larger or smaller families, in manner following, that is to say: that the Chief Superintendent of Indian Affairs shall depute and send a suitable person to determine and set apart the reserves for each band, after consulting with the Indians thereof as to the locality which may be found to be most suitable for them.⁴

Chief John Smith and Councillors William Badger, Benjamin Joyful, John Badger, and James Bear signed Treaty 6 at Fort Carlton on August 23, 1876,⁵ on behalf of the 22 families paid with them at that time.⁶ In 1879, M.G. Dickieson, the Acting Indian Superintendent for the North-West

⁴ Canada, *Treaty No. 6 between Her Majesty the Queen and the Plain and Wood Cree Indians and Other Tribes of Indians at Fort Carlton, Fort Pitt and Battle River, with Adhesions* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1964), 3.

⁵ Canada, *Treaty No. 6 between Her Majesty the Queen and the Plain and Wood Cree Indians and Other Tribes of Indians at Fort Carlton, Fort Pitt and Battle River, with Adhesions* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1964), 5-7.

⁶ W.J. Christie, Indian Commissioner, Fort Garry, Memorandum, October 10, 1876, in Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), RG 10, vol. 3636, file 6694-1.

Territories, stated that they were “largely composed of half-breeds and Swampy Indians who have removed from Manitoba.”⁷

According to one of the Treaty Commissioners who negotiated Treaty 6, John Smith initially requested a reserve “on South Branch of Saskⁿ River below Red Deer Hill, on north side of said River.”⁸ A year later, however, the acting Indian Agent reported that the Band had begun to cultivate the land and now wanted its reserve on both sides of the river:

John Smith and band would like their reservation on both sides of the south branch about due east from Prince Albert. They complain that after they took treaty last year that they went and took their reservation and commenced improving it but no sooner had they done so than a number of Half-breed came in and built along side of them. This band have about 80 acres in crop and have erected the walls of a school house.⁹

In the summer of 1878, Surveyor Elihu Stewart received verbal instructions from Lieutenant Governor David Laird and Assistant Surveyor General Lindsay Russell to define the boundaries of the reserve for John Smith. Stewart began his work on August 9, but “the Indian Chief objected to line on south side of reserve, as I was instructed to run it.”¹⁰ On September 9, the Lieutenant Governor met with the Chief to try to resolve the problem with the survey, “and in the afternoon the Reserve of John Smith was satisfactorily arranged by giving the Indians Crossing Island in addition to their other lands.”¹¹ Stewart resumed his survey of John Smith’s reserve (which he called the Muskoday Reserve) on September 23 and completed both the definition of the rectilinear boundaries and a subdivision of part of the reserve into farm lots on September 30, 1878. His survey plan shows

⁷ M.G. Dickieson, Acting Superintendent, Department of Indian Affairs, Battleford, NWT, to Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, July 21, 1879, Canada, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended June 30, 1879*, 105.

⁸ W.J. Christie, Indian Commissioner, Fort Garry, Memorandum, October 10, 1876, LAC, RG 10, vol. 3636, file 6694-1.

⁹ James Walker, Acting Indian Agent, Battleford, NWT, to Lt. Governor, NWT, Battleford, August 20, 1877, LAC, RG 10, vol. 2656, file 9092.

¹⁰ Natural Resources Canada, Field book 729, Canada Lands Survey Reports (CLSR), E. Stewart, Dominion Land Surveyor (DLS), Indian Reserve Survey Diary, 1878–79, August 9, 1878.

¹¹ Natural Resources Canada, Field book 729, CLSR, E. Stewart, DLS, Indian Reserve Survey Diary, 1878–79, September 9, 1878.

24,097 acres on both sides of the South Branch of the Saskatchewan River, including Crossing Island. On the plan, he notes: “The number of souls in the band for which this Reserve has been set off is 170 (under Chief John Smith) to which add 10% for increase – 187.”¹²

Stewart apparently sketched the river that bisected the reserve but failed to physically survey the shoreline; in 1884, Surveyor A.W. Ponton re-surveyed IR 99 to correct this error. The plan of this second survey, which is attached to Order in Council PC 1151 dated May 17, 1889, confirming the reserve, shows a corrected area of 37.4 square miles (23,936 acres). This acreage satisfied the land entitlement under Treaty 6 for 187 people ($23,936 \div 128 = 187$). The Order in Council describes the reserve land briefly:

The portion of the reserve situated north and west of the river is generally a rolling prairie of rich black loam, interspersed with poplar bluffs and numerous ponds and small lakes. South and east of the river the country is generally level. The soil is a rich black loam, and being of a more sandy quality in the north-eastern corner. This portion is grown up with small poplar, scrub and willow. Ponds and lakes abound. The large island in the river, containing an area of three hundred and four and a half acres, more or less, and which is included in the reserve, contains large balm of Gilead and birch.

A majority of the Indians of this band are settled along the river on a level bottom, or flat, about a mile wide.¹³

ESTABLISHING A TREATY LAND ENTITLEMENT CLAIM

The 19th- and 20th-century treaties negotiated with the Indians in northern Ontario, the Prairies, and northern British Columbia – the Numbered Treaties – all included a formula (either 32 acres per person or 128 acres per person, depending on the treaty) for calculating the size of reserve lands.¹⁴ Unfortunately, neither the treaties nor the correspondence and reports associated with them explained when or how those population figures were to be obtained, leaving unanswered many important

¹² Natural Resources Canada, Plan B1033, CLSR, E. Stewart, DLS, “Plan of the Muskoday Indian Reserve on the South Saskatchewan River in Treaty No. 6,” September 1878. There was no reason given for the 10 per cent increase.

¹³ Order in Council PC 1151, May 17, 1889, pp. 50–51.

¹⁴ This section relies on Donna Gordon, *Treaty Land Entitlement, A History*, report prepared for the ICC (Ottawa, December 1995), reprinted in (1996) 5 ICCP 339.

questions. Were the figures determined by the number of people in the band at the time of the treaty, or when the survey was done, or at some other time? Were the numbers to be determined from the treaty annuity paylists, by a separate census, or by a count of those present when the survey was done?

After the federal government announced in 1973 its intention to settle specific claims where Canada had not fulfilled its treaty obligations to set aside reserves, researchers needed policy guidelines to answer these questions. Initially, Canada only validated claims where a shortfall of land was established based on the band's population according to the treaty annuity paylists at the date of first survey, with no consideration given to people who were absent or who joined the band after the survey. In 1983, the Office of Native Claims Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs distributed "Research Guidelines" for the validation of TLE claims which expanded the eligibility criteria to include people who joined the band after the date of the first survey:

The general principle which applies in all categories of land entitlement claims is that each Treaty Indian Band is entitled to a certain amount of land based on the number of members. Conversely, each treaty Indian is entitled to be included in an entitlement calculation as a member of an Indian Band.

The following criteria are intended as guidelines in the research and validation process for treaty land entitlement claims.¹⁵

Under the heading, "Persons included for entitlement purposes," the guidelines included, with certain defined restrictions, those who appeared on the payroll for the year of survey, absentees, new adherents to treaty, transfers from landless bands, and non-treaty Indians who marry into a treaty band.¹⁶

In 1989, Canada and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) agreed to establish the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC), which was charged with, among other things, developing proposals for the settlement of TLE claims in Saskatchewan that would satisfy

¹⁵ DIAND, Office of Native Claims, "Historical Research Guidelines for Treaty Land Entitlement Claims," May 1983, reprinted in (1996) 5 ICCP 512.

¹⁶ DIAND, Office of Native Claims, "Historical Research Guidelines for Treaty Land Entitlement Claims," May 1983, reprinted in (1996) 5 ICCP 512 at 515.

both Canada and the First Nations. On September 22, 1992, after two years of research and negotiations, representatives of the federal and provincial governments (Saskatchewan had a legal obligation under the 1930 *Natural Resources Transfer Agreement* to provide “unoccupied Crown lands” for the creation of Indian reserves), along with most of the First Nations in Saskatchewan with recognized TLE shortfalls, signed a Framework Agreement defining the manner in which the parties agreed to fulfill outstanding TLE obligations to Entitlement Bands in Saskatchewan.

According to this negotiated agreement, the basis for determining the final settlement for each First Nation that signed the Framework Agreement was the “equity formula”: historical percentage shortfall x current population x acres per treaty (128 acres in Treaty 6) equals the quantum of land that could be purchased by a First Nation to settle a claim. The historical percentage shortfall was determined by comparing the amount of land that the First Nation did receive with the amount of land that it should have received; in order to establish that acreage, it was necessary to define who could be counted with the First Nation for entitlement purposes. The procedures established by the OTC were based on the 1983 Office of Native Claims guidelines, with additional interpretations and definitions that were accepted by both Canada and the First Nations.

Twenty-six Saskatchewan First Nations had established a TLE shortfall and were parties to the Framework Agreement, but during the negotiations, there was a recognition that there were other bands who could later prove to have valid TLE claims. As a result, Article 17 was included to ensure that those Bands would be dealt with on the same basis as those covered by the Framework Agreement, if they chose that approach.

The issue of Article 17 and its relevance to both validation and negotiation of TLE claims in Saskatchewan was considered by the ICC in 1996 in its inquiries into the rejected TLE claims of both Kawacatoose and Kahkewistahaw First Nations. After reviewing documentation and hearing from many of the people who participated in the negotiation of the Framework Agreement, the ICC concluded in the Kawacatoose Inquiry that Article 17 did not apply to the criteria to validate a claim, but was to apply to the settlement of claims after validation:

While the Commission has determined that the Framework Agreement does not give non-Entitlement Bands an independent basis for validation ...

... once substantiation of the claim of a non-Entitlement Band has occurred, as in the present case, section 17.03 applies, stipulating that Canada and Saskatchewan will support the extension of the principles of settlement contained in the Framework Agreement to that band.¹⁷

The ICC reiterated this position in its subsequent report on the TLE claim of the Kahkewistahaw First Nation:

Since the release of the Kawacatoose report, we remain unchanged in our view that section 17.03 is limited to circumstances in which a band's treaty land entitlement claim has *already* been accepted for negotiation in accordance with the terms of treaty. In other words, section 17.03 applies in the context of *settlement*. It does *not* afford a separate basis for *validation* apart from treaty. It represents an agreement among Canada, Saskatchewan, and the Entitlement Bands, that, once a non-Entitlement Band's claim has been accepted for negotiation independently of the Framework Agreement itself, then the settlement of that claim can be dealt with much more expeditiously by avoiding protracted bargaining on points that have already been negotiated.¹⁸

Article 17 is significant because, after the Framework Agreement was signed, Canada changed its criteria on who to include in calculating TLE at the validation stage. In 1993, it allowed only those who were members of the First Nation at date of first survey (including people who were absent at that date). In 1998, after the ICC recommendations in a number of TLE inquiries, Canada expanded the categories to also include additions to membership after the survey – new adherents to treaty, transferees from landless bands, and non-treaty people marrying into the band. Even so, some specific aspects of the OTC working assumptions allowed the inclusion of some people who would be excluded under Canada's guidelines and the application of the less inclusive criteria would mean that post-Framework Agreement TLE settlements would not receive levels of compensation equivalent to those received by First Nations who were parties to the Framework Agreement. This variance in eligibility made it difficult for Canada and Saskatchewan First Nations to reach final

¹⁷ Indian Claims Commission, *Kawacatoose First Nation: Treaty Land Entitlement Inquiry* (Ottawa, March 1996), reported (1996) 5 ICCP 73 at 229.

¹⁸ Indian Claims Commission, *Kahkewistahaw First Nation: Treaty Land Entitlement Inquiry* (Ottawa, November 1996), reported (1998) 6 ICCP 21 at 100. Original emphasis.

agreement on the total number of people to include in the treaty land entitlement formula, leaving the question to be worked out at each individual negotiation table.

PART III
MEDIATION OF THE CLAIM

Negotiations towards settlement of the Muskoday treaty land entitlement claim began in February 2004. Parties to the negotiations included Canada, Muskoday First Nation, and the Province of Saskatchewan (because of its legal obligation to provide “unoccupied Crown lands” for the creation of Indian reserves). At the request of all the parties, the ICC facilitated the discussions.

For the most part, facilitation focussed on matters relating to process. With the agreement of the negotiating parties, the Commission chaired the negotiation sessions, provided an accurate record of the discussions, followed up on undertakings, and consulted with the parties to establish mutually acceptable agendas, venues, and times for the meetings. The Commission was also available to mediate disputes if and when requested to do so by the parties, to assist them in arranging for further mediation, and to coordinate any studies or other research that might be undertaken by the parties to support negotiations.

Although the Commission is not at liberty, based on an agreement made with the negotiating parties and addressing in part the confidentiality of negotiations, to disclose the discussions during the negotiations, it can be stated that the First Nations and representatives of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Province of Saskatchewan worked to establish negotiating principles and a guiding protocol agreement, which helped them to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution of the Muskoday TLE claim.

In addition to agreement on the terms of a negotiation protocol, other elements of the negotiation included agreement by the parties on the nature of the Commission’s role in the negotiations; agreement on final population figures for determining shortfall acres for settlement purposes; the effect of Article 17 of the 1992 Saskatchewan Framework Agreement on the settlement criteria; integration of settlement lands into the Muskoday First Nation Land Code; varying the payment schedule stipulated in the Framework Agreement; the impact of the bilateral (Canada and Saskatchewan) discussions relating to the cost-sharing provisions in the Framework Agreement; compensation for land and mineral resources, as well as negotiation and ratification expenses; and, finally, settlement issues and agreements, communications, and ratification of the final settlement.

One issue – the application of the appropriate TLE guidelines, before and after validation, to the negotiation of TLE claims in Saskatchewan in light of Article 17 of the Framework Agreement

and past practices followed by Canada in settling other claims – was also of concern to three other Saskatchewan First Nations who were proceeding to negotiations on treaty land entitlement claims. The four First Nations (Muskoday, Sturgeon Lake, Gordon, and Pasqua) and Canada agreed that an appropriate and cost-effective way to address this issue was to come together at a common table. The ICC was asked to facilitate the discussions. After an exchange of relevant documents and after meetings held in fall 2004, the parties were able to agree on eligibility criteria. Each First Nation then subsequently proceeded with its individual negotiations.

Researchers for Canada and Muskoday First Nation exchanged information relating to the background of certain band members who had been added to the Band's annuity payroll after the date of survey to reach agreement on those eligible to be counted towards treaty land entitlement. As well, survey plans, field notes, and correspondence were reviewed by staff of the Legal Surveys Division of Natural Resources Canada in Regina to assist the parties in discussions on the size of the reserve when it was first established.

By the end of January 2005, the parties were able to agree on acreage and population figures. Canada made an offer to settle on October 31, 2006, which the First Nation accepted by Band Council Resolution dated November 6, 2006. The negotiated settlement included cash compensation for land and minerals of approximately \$10.25 million plus negotiation and ratification costs, and authorization to purchase up to 38,014 acres to be added to the Muskoday reserve.

The settlement agreement was finalized and initialled by the parties in February 2006 and was presented to the members of the Muskoday First Nation for ratification on March 19, 2007. An absolute majority of eligible voters in favour of the agreement was required, and the first vote failed to meet this requirement. The agreement was successfully ratified on the second vote on May 23, 2007. On January 10, 2008, a ceremony was held at the Muskoday First Nation to sign a ceremonial document acknowledging the TLE settlement agreement, attended by the Chief, Council, Elders, and community members, the federal Minister of Indian Affairs, and the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations for the Province of Saskatchewan.

PART IV
CONCLUSION

Credit for the successful negotiation and settlement of the Muskoday treaty land entitlement claim belongs to the parties. They were diligent and thorough as they worked towards agreement on the many important issues before them. The Commission, in its role as a neutral third party facilitator, helped maintain the focus and momentum of the discussions. With the ICC also performing many of the necessary administrative tasks, the negotiating parties were able to concentrate their full attention on the substantive details of the negotiations and settlement.

The experience that the ICC has gained over the years, together with the expertise that it has developed, was especially beneficial at the common table. The Commission was pleased to have provided these additional services to the discussions involving the four Saskatchewan First Nations with TLE claims and similar issues. The early success at the common table in resolving these issues has led, at the time of this writing, to the successful negotiation and resolution of three of the individual TLE claims, with the fourth First Nation heading towards ratification of its claim.

FOR THE INDIAN CLAIMS COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Renée Dupuis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Renée" and last name "Dupuis" clearly distinguishable.

Renée Dupuis, C.M., *Ad.E.*
Chief Commissioner

Dated this 12th day of April, 2008.