



Title & Rights Alliance

Victoria Uprising Begins

PRESS RELEASE

MAY 20, 2004

(Victoria/Coast Salish Territory) Over a thousand Aboriginal people and supporters will march on the BC Legislature today for a historic rally to notify the BC government and industry that they must stop their assault on the land and deal fairly and honourably with Aboriginal Peoples. The rally concludes a multi-day caravan that has brought Aboriginal Peoples from every corner of the province to Victoria.

“Only First Nations can provide the certainty that the provincial Crown and resource industries are craving,” said Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. “Until just accommodation of our Title occurs, neither businesses nor their investors will have the economic certainty they seek.”

“We are close to exhausting all available domestic remedies to resolve these issues,” said Guujaaw, President, Council of the Haida Nation. “There are solutions out there, but it comes down to simple respect for people and for the land. It is only by working with us that the province can build an economy that maintains a healthy environment.”

Aboriginal leaders say that they are fighting back in response to increasing assaults on their people and the land from various Crown and industry initiatives.

“It is shameful for the government of BC to take advantage of the poverty of Aboriginal communities with “take-it or leave-it” accommodation deals that force us to give up the ability to exercise our rights for token economic benefits,” said Justa Monk, Co-chair, Northwest Tribal Treaty Nations. “These divide-and-conquer tactics do not alter our fundamental rejection of the provincial Crown’s position on consultation and accommodation.”

“Premier Campbell should be aware that billions of dollars in oil and gas revenue are at risk if First Nation issues are not addressed in a timely manner,” said Chief Liz Logan of the Fort Nelson First Nation, and Chair of Treaty 8 Tribal Association. “We will no longer tolerate this behaviour, or its impacts on our people. We stand united in the face of threats by the Crown and resource industries—for our children and our grandchildren.”

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