

February 4, 2006

Editor:

Re: Yale Treaty

I see that the Yale Band has inched closer to a treaty. This may be a good thing, I don't know. In the meantime, governments need to keep in mind that the Yale Band was once part of the Union Bar Band until it broke away in 1879. Since these two villages were once a single Indian band, I can't help but wonder how the governments of both Canada and B.C. and the Yale Band would deal with the claims of the Union Bar Band in the event it ever joined treaty talks. It stands to reason that Union Bar would lay claim to much of the same territory and fishing sites now claimed by Yale. A treaty for Yale today would preclude a meaningful treaty for Union Bar tomorrow. Given this reality, I am not sure how treaties with individual Indian bands like Yale will necessarily mean greater stability for local governments, businesses, and neighbouring Indian bands. In fact, a treaty for Yale might result in costly, long-drawn-out legal battles between and among many local bands with well documented and persuasive claims to fishing sites and land in the Fraser Canyon. If this was to happen, and it surely will, some folks will be standing around wondering what the heck went wrong. My message is simple; competing claims need to be resolved before reaching any final deals under the existing B.C. Treaty Process. To do less would be folly.

Ernie Crey
215-9855 Quarry Road
Chilliwack, B.C.
V2P 3M3
604-792-2990