

Declaration of the Tahltan Tribe

We the undersigned members of the Tahltan tribe, speaking for ourselves, and our entire tribe, hereby make known to all whom it may concern, that we have heard of the Indian Rights movement among the Indian tribes of the Coast, and of the southern interior of B. C. Also we have read the Declaration made by the chiefs of the southern interior tribes at Spences Bridge on the 16th July last, and we hereby declare our complete agreement with the demands of same, and with the position taken by the said chiefs, and their people on all the questions stated in the said Declaration, and we furthermore make known that it is our desire and intention to join with them in the fight for our mutual rights, and that we will assist in the furtherance of this object in every way we can, until such time as all these matters of moment to us are finally settled. We further declare as follows:—

Firstly—We claim the sovereign right to all the country of our tribe—this country of ours which we have held intact from the encroachments of other tribes, from time immemorial, at the cost of our own blood. We have done this because our lives depended on our country. To lose it meant we would lose our means of living, and therefore our lives. We are still, as heretofore, dependant for our living on our country, and we do not intend to give away the title to any part of same without adequate compensation. We deny the B. C. government has any title or right of ownership in our country. We have never treated with them, nor given them any such title. (We have only very lately learned the B. C. government makes this claim, and that it has for long considered as its property all the territories of the Indian tribes in B. C.)

Secondly—We desire that a part of our country, consisting of one or more large areas (to be selected by us), be retained by us for our own use, said lands, and all thereon to be acknowledged by the government as our absolute property. The rest of our tribal land we are willing to relinquish to the B. C. government for adequate compensation.

Thirdly—We wish it known that a small portion of our lands at the mouth of the Tahltan River, was set apart a few years ago by Mr. Vowell as an Indian reservation. These few acres are the only reservation made for our tribe. We may state we never applied for the reservation of this piece of land, and we had no knowledge why the government set it apart for us, nor do we know exactly yet.

Fourthly—We desire that all questions regarding our lands, hunting, fishing, etc., and every matter concerning our welfare, be settled by treaty between us and the Dominion and B. C. governments.

Fifthly—We are of the opinion it will be better for ourselves, also better for the governments and all concerned, if these treaties are made with us at a very early date, so all friction, and misunderstanding between us and the whites may be avoided, for we hear lately much talk of white settlement in this region, and the building of railways, etc., in the near future.

Signed at Telegraph Creek, B. C., this eighteenth day of October, nineteen hundred and ten, by

NANOK, Chief of the Tahltans.
NASTULTA, alias Little Jackson.
GEORGE ASSADZA, KENETL, alias Big Jackson.
and eighty other members of the tribe.