

ROYAL COMMISSION ON INDIAN AFFAIRS FOR THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Meeting with the Teslin Lake Band or Tribe of Indians on the Atlin

I.R. on Saturday, June 19th, 1915.

EDGAR SIDNEY is sworn to act as Interpreter,

Mr Commissioner Macdowall explains to the assembled Indians the scope and power of the Commission, and

CHIEF BILLY JOHNSON addresses the Commission as follows:

I feel very glad to see you here to-day - I have come a long way to see you and I am going to tell you just how we live. I am just here to see you because someone told us you were coming here. I thought you were stopping over here to see me, and I am glad that you have come over here to see us. If you were to stay until tomorrow we would be glad to tell you all we have to say, but as you are leaving tomorrow I will try and tell you now what I have to say. I don't want to have any land - I want to be free as I was before - just like the Chief of the Atlins who is sitting on the other side of me - This is my country and it belongs to me. I don't know how to work at anything. My father, grandfather and uncle just taught me how to live, and I have always done what they told me - We learned this from our fathers and grandfathers and our uncles how to do the things among ourselves and we teach our children in the same way and we are going to keep on doing this until the last. The time is coming now - About 1-1/2 months more everything is coming up; that is the garden stuff and that is what we are going to live on, and that is all we know and any other work besides that we cannot do.

Mr Commissioner Macdowall: If your children are taught to do the other things the white men do, don't you think you could learn to do it?

A. I have no children.

Q. But I mean the Indians generally?

A. We have no one to teach us.

Q. Suppose the Government gave you a man to teach you, don't you think the Indians could learn then?

A. What are they going to teach our children?

Mr Commissioner Macdowall: To make their living in the same way

*as white men do - make their living*