

---

## IMPLEMENTING DELGAMUUK'W

---

Biography of Stewart Phillip

*President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Chief of the Penticton Band*

Good morning everyone. It's certainly quite an impressive gathering of people here this morning. We are certainly pleased with the response to this conference. I really look forward to the next three days. It's pretty evident we are going to have some very significant and interesting discussion.

I would like to begin by paying my respects to the Coast Salish people for allowing us to have this very important conference in their territory. In particular, I'd like to recognize and acknowledge Chief Leonard George. I understand that he is here with many of his researchers. I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to the elders who have travelled a great distance to be here and are more than willing to share their critical knowledge with respect to our aboriginal title. There are many, many young people and in particular students that are here and I think that bodes well for the success of this conference. I noticed a poster in the elevator at the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Office that said something to the effect "finally a Delgamuuk'w Conference that students can afford" so it's good to see them here.

In addition, we have people from outside of BC, from across Canada. As we're all aware, the Delgamuuk'w decision not only has application and significance to BC but all across this country where there are concerns with respect to indigenous aboriginal title. Of course, we have our share of academics and legal council here which is obviously a necessity and we can always count on their presence.

The Union of BC Indian Chiefs is really pleased that the continuing response and support from our member bands who have been very reliable in supporting our long standing struggle to have our aboriginal title and rights to our territories properly recognized by the federal and provincial governments and we certainly appreciate the ongoing support. We're convinced that not only the legacy of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs but the longstanding support and direction of our elders will be vindicated and is being vindicated through the Delgamuuk'w decision. We are very proud and pleased about that fact.

It's very evident that the Delgamuuk'w decision places the onus of proving our title and rights squarely on us and it's really incumbent that the efforts of our research, that we share our knowledge and concerns and begin actively working together. When I consider aboriginal title and rights I have a tendency to personalize it. Joan and myself have six children, the youngest being twenty and we have recently been blessed with three grandchildren, and I think that it's the work of the leadership combined with the technical work and certainly the valuable efforts of research technical staff that are going to determine the future of my grandchildren. I think that things have come to a point where everything we do is critical to the future of our children and grandchildren and I really look forward to the next three days and I'm looking for a successful outcome to this conference. In closing, I'd like to thank everyone for taking time out of their busy lives to be here, to be prepared to share and contribute to our ongoing struggle.

Thank you very much.