

**SPECIFIC CLAIMS TRIBUNAL**

BETWEEN:

SPECIFIC CLAIMS TRIBUNAL		
F I L E D	TRIBUNAL DES REVENDICATIONS PARTICULIÈRES	D É P O S É
December 14, 2018		
Guillaume Phaneuf		
Ottawa, ON		22

**BIRCH NARROWS FIRST NATION and  
BUFFALO RIVER DENE NATION**

**Claimants**

v.

**HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN RIGHT OF CANADA**  
As represented by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

**Respondent**

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**AMENDED RESPONSE**  
**Pursuant to Rule 42 of the**  
***Specific Claims Tribunal Rules of Practice and Procedure***

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This Response is filed under the provisions of the *Specific Claims Tribunal Act* and the *Specific Claims Tribunal Rules of Practice and Procedure*.

TO: Birch Narrows First Nation and Buffalo River Dene Nation  
As represented by Neil Reddekopp, ~~and~~ Eric Pentland,  
and John Kudrinko  
Maurice Ackroyd LLP  
Barristers & Solicitors  
1500 First Edmonton Place  
10665 Jasper Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5J 3S9  
Phone: (780) 412-2700  
Fax: (780) 423-8946  
Email: [nreddekopp@ackroydlaw.com](mailto:nreddekopp@ackroydlaw.com), and  
[epentland@ackroydlaw.com](mailto:epentland@ackroydlaw.com) and [JKudrinko@ackroydlaw.com](mailto:JKudrinko@ackroydlaw.com)

1. This is the Crown's response to the Amended Declaration of Claim (the Claim) filed by Birch Narrows First Nation and Buffalo River Dene Nation (~~the First Nation~~) with the Specific Claims Tribunal (the Tribunal) on ~~December 4, 2017~~ December 26, 2018 pursuant to the *Specific Claims Tribunal Act* (the Act).

2. The Claim relates to alleged breaches of legal obligations arising under Treaty 10 regarding the provision of agricultural and economic benefits.

**I. Status of Claim (R. 42(a))**

3. The requirements in section 16 of the Act are satisfied in that:

- The Birch Narrows First Nation (Birch Narrows) Claim was originally submitted to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (the Minister) on December 9, 2009 and filed with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development on April 7, 2010.
- On August 28, 2012, the Minister notified Birch Narrows ~~the First Nation~~ in writing of his decision not to accept the claim for negotiation.
- On October 26, 2018 the Honourable William Grist ordered that Buffalo River Dene Nation (Buffalo River) be added to the Claim as a party Claimant pursuant to section 24 of the Act.

**II. Validity (R. 42(b) and (c))**

4. The Attorney General must respond to this claim according to the rules of practice applicable to pleadings in a matter of this nature and consistent

with her duties and functions in the conduct of litigation for or against the Crown in right of Canada. Canada will pursue reconciliation and is committed to a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership. The Attorney General and the Government of Canada seek to work in other contexts beyond pleadings to achieve the fulfilment of those commitments.

5. The Crown denies the validity of all of the allegations put forth in the Claim and denies it breached its lawful obligation regarding the provision of agricultural and economic benefits under Treaty 10.

**III. Allegations of Fact – Amended Declaration of Claim (R. 41(e)): Acceptance, denial or no knowledge (R. 42(d))**

6. The Crown, unless expressly admitted, denies every fact alleged in the Claim and will require the ~~First Nation~~ Claimants to prove those facts. The Crown specifically will require the ~~First Nation~~ Claimants to prove the facts in the following paragraphs of the Claim: 1415, 2728, 2829, 2930, 3031, 3132, 3233, 3435, 3536, 3637, 3738, 3940 and 4041.

7. The Crown admits the facts set out in the following paragraphs of the Claim: 3, 6, 7, 8, 1213, 1314, 15,16, 22,23, 24,25 and 2627.

8. The Crown has no knowledge of the facts in the following paragraphs of the Claim: 8 9

9. In response to paragraph 1 of the Claim, the Crown admits the ~~Claimants~~ is-a are First Nations within the meaning of s.2 (a) of the Act Specific

~~Claims Tribunal Act~~ and says that the Claimants are First Nation is in the Province of Saskatchewan.

10. In response to paragraph 2 of the Claim, the Crown admits that the Clear Lake Band adhered to Treaty 10 in 1906. The Crown further says that in 1972 the Clear Lake Band ceased to exist and the Peter Pond Lake Band and the Turnor Lake Band were created, the former became the Buffalo River Dene Nation in 1977 and the latter of which became the Birch Narrows First Nation in 1994. The Crown does not admit that the Claimants ~~is~~ are entitled to any agricultural benefits to which the Clear Lake Band may have been entitled.
11. In response to paragraph 4 of the Claim, the Crown admits that on or about December 9, 2009 ~~the First Nation~~ Birch Narrows filed this claim under Canada's Specific Claim Policy asserting that Canada had failed to provide ~~the First Nation~~ Birch Narrows with the agricultural assistance benefits it was entitled to under the terms of Treaty 10.
12. In response to paragraph 5 of the Claim, the Crown admits that by letter dated September 9, 2010 Canada informed ~~the First Nation~~ Birch Narrows that its Treaty 10 entitlement to Agricultural Benefits Specific Claim met the Specific Claims Policy's minimum standards and had been assigned an effective date of filing with the Minister of April 7, 2010
13. In response to paragraph ~~44~~12 of the Claim, the Crown admits there had been periodic requests for a treaty to cover northern Saskatchewan since the late 1870s and says the decision to negotiate Treaty 10 did not occur until 1906.

14. In response to paragraph ~~46~~17 the Crown says that the Order-in-Council approving the proposed treaty negotiations provided "(d) for the affording of such assistance as may be found necessary or desirable to advance the Indians in farming or stock-raising or other work."
15. In response to paragraph ~~47~~18, the Crown says that by letter dated August 2, 1906 the Acting Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, requested the Department of Justice draft a treaty based on the July 20, 1906 Order-in-Council. A copy of Treaty 8 was enclosed for information purposes.
16. In response to paragraphs ~~48~~19, ~~49~~20 and ~~20~~21 the Crown admits that the agricultural provisions of Treaty 8 were intentionally replaced with the Treaty 10 wording. The Crown further says that as Treaty 10 lands were at best only suited to small scale gardening, with no realistic potential for larger scale commercial agriculture, the intent of the wording change was that Treaty 10 agricultural benefits would be substantially less than those provided for under Treaty 8.
17. In response to paragraph ~~24~~22 the Crown admits that James Andrew Joseph McKenna (McKenna) was appointed Treaty Commissioner to negotiate Treaty No. 10 by Order-in-Council of July 20, 1906 and says that by letter dated August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1906 J.D. McLean, Acting Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, requested McKenna draft the Treaty.
18. In response to paragraph ~~23~~24 the Crown admits that during negotiations preceding the execution of Treaty 10 the treaty Commissioner received a request from one of the Bands involved in the negotiations, the identity of

which Band is unclear, for a few head of cattle to be given to those of the Indians who asked to go into the industry of stock-raising.

19. In response to paragraph 2526, the Crown admits that in 1910 an Inspector of Indian Agencies made the referenced observations.
20. In response to paragraph 3334, the Crown admits that there are documented requests by the Claimant for assistance.
21. In response to paragraph 3839, the Crown admits that the honour of the Crown required Canada to act fairly and honourably during treaty implementation. The remainder of paragraph 3839 is denied.

#### **IV. Statements of Fact (R. 42(e))**

22. On August 28, 1906 the Chiefs of the Clear Lake and English River Bands signed Treaty 10 at Ile-à-la-Crosse. Treaty 10 was ratified by Order-in-Council P.C. 2490 on November 26, 1907.
23. The agricultural assistance provision of Treaty 10 states as follows:

*Further, His Majesty agrees to furnish such assistance as may be found necessary or advisable to aid and assist the Indians in agriculture or stock raising or other work and to make such a distribution of twine and ammunition to them annually as is usually made to Indians similarly situated.*
24. There is no evidence of the Clear Lake Band engaged in agricultural activity prior to Treaty 10. The Clear Lake Band, particularly the portion

residing at Clear Lake, appears to have been more actively involved in hunting, fishing and trapping than it was in agricultural pursuits.

25. The Clear Lake Band's reserves were only suited to small scale gardening and there was no realistic potential for larger scale, commercial agricultural. Clear Lake Band members' needs for cultivation of gardens or subsistence farming were minimal.
26. Canada had wide discretion to determine what agricultural assistance was "necessary or advisable" with respect to the form, extent, time for delivery and duration of the assistance, which discretion was to be exercised in keeping with the honour of the Crown.
27. The agricultural benefits were to "aid and assist the Indians in agriculture or stock raising" with the aim of encouraging small scale agriculture.
28. Requests for agricultural assistance were made periodically by the Clear Lake Band between 1907 and 1972. In response to these requests agricultural assistance was provided to the Clear Lake Band.
29. In providing agricultural benefits to the Clear Lake Band and the Claimants First Nation, Canada exercised its wide discretion in keeping with the honour of the Crown and in satisfaction of its obligations under Treaty 10.

**V. Relief (R. 42(f))**

30. The Crown seeks the following relief:

- a. to have the claim dismissed in its entirety;
- b. costs; and
- c. such further relief as this Honourable Tribunal deems just.

## VI. Communication (R. 42(g))

31. The Respondent's address for the service of documents is:

Department of Justice (Canada)  
Prairie Regional Office (Saskatoon)  
10<sup>th</sup> Floor, 123-2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S  
Saskatoon, SK S7K 7E6  
Attention: Lauri Miller Jenilee Guebert

32. Facsimile number for service is (306) 975-5013.

33. Email address for service is:

saskSCT-6001-17-BirchNarrows@justice.gc.ca

Dated this 1st day of February, 2018.

"Lauri M. Miller"

**ATTORNEY GENERAL OF CANADA**  
Department of Justice  
Prairie Region (Saskatoon)  
123 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Saskatoon, SK S7K 7E6  
Fax: (306) 975-5013

**Per: Scott Bell and Lauri Miller**

Tel: (306) 975-6844 and (306) 975-6455

E-mail address: [saskSCT-6001-17-BirchNarrows@justice.gc.ca](mailto:saskSCT-6001-17-BirchNarrows@justice.gc.ca)

Counsel for the Respondent

Amended pursuant to the Order of the Honourable William Grist dated October 26, 2018

This Amended Declaration of Claim is dated this 14<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2018



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ATTORNEY GENERAL OF CANADA

Department of Justice

Prairie Region (Saskatoon)

123-2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor

Saskatoon, SK S7K 7E6

Fax: (306) 975-5013

Per: Jenilee Guebert and Scott T. Bell

Tel: (306) 975-6741 / (306) 975-6844

E-mail address: [saskSCT-6001-17-BirchNarrows@justice.gc.ca](mailto:saskSCT-6001-17-BirchNarrows@justice.gc.ca)

Counsel for the Respondent