

Treaty Gift Carved By Tofino Men

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Members of the Maa-nulth First Nations display canoe paddles in the legislature's Rotunda Wednesday afternoon moments before their treaty was introduced into the house. The canoe and paddles were carved by Joe and Carl Martin. (Canadian Press Photo)

By Keven Drews

A red-cedar canoe carved by two Tofino-area men was presented to the Maa-nulth nations inside the B.C. legislature's Rotunda Wednesday at noon.

Mike Morton, press secretary for Premier Gordon Campbell, said the premier presented the 18-foot-long canoe and five paddles, all carved by Joe and Carl Martin, as gifts to the Ucluelet, Toquaht, Uchucklesaht, Kyuquot and Huu-ay-aht nations during a brief ceremony attended by about 300 people.

Hereditary Chief Bert Mack, of the Toquaht First Nation, then presented Campbell and Senator Gerry St. Germain with two paddles.

"I'm actually quite honoured to do it," said Joe Martin, a member of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, about the carving.

The canoe is officially named Tloo-ya-yak-sheetle.

Martin said he signed a contract to do the work for the provincial government at the end of October.

Martin said he and his brother then spent 10 full days and as much as 12 hours a day working on the canoe, which was felled in the TFN's traditional territory around Kennedy Lake.

The log was transported to Stockham Island, near Opitsaht, and then finished at the late Henry Nola's carving shack on Chesterman Beach, next to the Wickaninnish Inn.

The canoe, painted black on the outside and red on the inside, was transported to Victoria earlier this week.

The Maa-nulth nations were in Victoria to mark the introduction of their treaty, officially known as bill 45, to the B.C. legislature.

Morton said the event may have marked the first time a canoe was presented to First Nations

inside the legislature.

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(Editor's note: Joe Martin says Tloo-ya-yak-sheetle means "he who calms down the waters."
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