

**FIRST NATIONS' VIEW**

# The future: A reflective vision

by Cline Gideon

Let us have a reflective vision into the past as seen from the future. The year of reflection is 2022.

Dear Diary:

It has been quite a while since I wrote into you, hasn't it, but the time has come to further chronicle what has happened in the day of the life of a Native person in the twenty first century.

Times sure have changed since my university days in the early 1990's. Who would have ever dreamed that the Native people would be living in what we call a province of our own, which has happened only twelve years ago. What a time of transition it was, but we had no other choice when the once province of Quebec, which once holding a very large portion of what was once called Canada, finally made terms with the federal government by giving up a vast portion of what they once had so that they would be guaranteed complete rights and freedoms to run their own country within a confederacy. No one ever would have dreamed that it would happen, especially all those gloom and doom pragmatists who once said we would be all destroyed if Quebec

left the federation. ON the contrary; the country is now stable than ever before, especially now that all provinces do have a greater autonomy, especially in terms of dealing with other provinces in this hemisphere.

We the Native people played a major role in the development of this new alignment. If it were not for the Supreme Court ruling of 2009, in which the newly formed and redirected Cree Confederacy changed its tactics in dealing with the new governments of that era.

You see, before the issue of Native rights were at the forefront of deliberations in this country. The tactic used in dealing with Aboriginal rights one was to look back into our past and bring up the injustices, slaughters, starvations, etc. that had been used in dealing with us in the ancient past. You know, using the line "You have treated us so badly that now it is your obligation to right those wrongs by compensating us for that past." That was a tactic that seemed to work, but only on the outside. It always failed because the government always had some little glitch they covertly placed into the document to sabotage it when the need came. This was done for many, many years. We did not know any better because the words of the non-Natives seemed so good.

We know better now because we have finally come to understand the non-Native ways, especially in terms of dealing with their judicial court system, especially in terms of claim settlement and review. I still remember the day when we were beaten up and even run out of our lands. It took many years to get those lands back. We never realized for a long time that way to getting things done is through the courts. But we had no other choices in getting things done. I still remember the riots of '96 when our first major win took place in Mon-

treal itself. The state of emergency was placed for a full week before we were even allowed back on the streets to see the sun once again. Yes, how true it is since those good ol' days when violence sure did get something done, even though it was only to raise attention to a problem of one kind or another.

Ah yes, our very own province. You see, this province is like any other in the world today. It is not made up of true, solid boundaries like British Columbia or Atlantic (Once NB, NS, and PEI) but more so a federated province. It is defined as a province but is made up of various sectors in the new formed



nation of Canada. We even have our very own mini-United Nations, but far from as developed as the world body. Instead, it is more like gathering of the people from various Nations within the confederacy. No one thought it would ever work, including me. But thanks to Quebec when they decided to seek separation from Canada, we learned that you don't have to have a solid land base to have a strong "Nation". Thanks goes out also to the development of very cheap mass communication which has helped us to keep in touch with the other Nations within the Confederacy.

What I believe is perhaps the

greatest accomplishment for the Native population is the fact that the re-establishment of powerful traditions and institutions which once served our ancient forefathers. The Great Law of Peace (the Six Nations Confederacy) has finally been given its proper credit within the world community and especially to the newly created Nations Province. You see, the Great Law works very well in a confederated state. Built on terms of respect and loyalty, it encompassed above all the respect of Nature itself, and it is this aspect that allowed all native First Nations to build a consensus in terms of the creation of this One Big House, the Nations Province. The First Peoples have no difficulty in incorporating the concepts of the Great Law because of this one common tie, the great respect for Nature and all it encompasses.

The concept of the Great Law also appealed to the non-Natives. So much so that it was this vehicle that our Law makers used in creating the Nations Province. Also was the fact that the pollution problem, especially so in the north-eastern part of the continent where nearly all of the foliage was destroyed by the above said in the early 2010 era. It is a reminder for the world to see that vast tracts of forests that have been destroyed, not by de-forestation, but by pesticides, acid rain and other to-this-day unknown anomalies.

With this happening, Native ways and customary traditions were looked upon. There really was little choice in doing so. Respect for nature and all it contains has become the in thing of the 20's (2020's).

Yes diary, I said it once and I'll say it again, it is a good time to be Native. Through the good and the hell of it all, just to be here today is a major accomplishment. An ac-

complishment in terms of our cultural survival as First Nations people within this country. I remember in my university days at the University of New Brunswick (I still remember the name of that former province, cool!!), I recall how pessimistic I was with the survival of our Native culture, the Mi'kmaq people of the Listiguj First Nation. Wow! Had I only known how strong we would actually develop! I would have never imagined!!

Imagine the gathering of First Peoples through the land. Not just from people here in Canada but also of the new United States, where the Great Law of Peace found its true roots. Also fascinating of the gathering is the coming together of the non-Natives. It seemed not so long ago that they wanted to assimilate us! It is almost like we are now trying to assimilate them into our culture. Times sure have changed!

Well diary, today is the 27 May, 2022. I have just come from the One Hundred and Ninety Third Encaenia here at the University of New Brunswick. Nothing makes parents more proud than seeing your youngest daughter graduating from the same fine institution you and her mother graduated from a few good years ago.

Well diary, it has come to close your final chapter. Soon you will close for the final time. The accomplishments of you and the vast number of other Native peoples have been chronicled and you truly have something to look back into. You have little to frown upon in terms of that goal.

Well diary, it is time to go. You know, I think I am going to run down to the Brunswickan office and see if I could rustle up those articles a couple of my friends and I used to do back in our university days. Who knows, maybe I might find something that will make me laugh a little.

'till next time...

Wela'lieg

(Note: the Great Law of Peace is a document that for thousands of years before the coming of any Europeans guided the Five Nations Confederacy in the United States. Some believe it had an impact on the Constitution of the United States.)

## Daycare

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daycare open in September with a small financial push from the student union and the student union is sitting of a Surplus of \$30,000.

And finally, if daycare is important to you, then get out and vote for the candidates that have publicly pledged their support for daycare. Presidential Candidate; Liz Lautard-VP Internal; Eugene Tan-VP External and Tanya McGinnity-VP Activities and Promotions.

# Hit the bars.

