

Wulustuk Times

Wulustuk - Indigeous name for St John River

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Wulustuk Times:

Each month we gather and publish the latest, most current and relevant native information for our readers. Proceeding with this concept, we feel that a well informed person is better able to see, relate with, and assess a situation more accurately when equipped with the right tools. Our aim is to provide you with the precise tools and the best information possible.

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'CLOISTERED DEALS' ENDANGERING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES?

p.paul

Focus on woodlands:

Look carefully and deliberately around you and also scan your community today and you'll see how much of our natural resources have failed or essentially disappeared from their natural habitats. Seems like they were here one day, and gone the next.

Within close proximity of our communities where once a vibrant forest thrived and trees stood tall and stately, we can now only see miles and miles of ugly devastation and clear-cut wasteland where foreign agencies and corporations have been allowed by our governments to cut, rip, strip, wipe out and run amuck freely. In their wake they have destroyed the precious areas we, in earlier times, respected and revered as havens for wildlife and harbours for traditional native medicines.

Looking deeper beyond the closer limits are huge trees that have so far escaped the saws, the axes and the voracious skidders, feddabunchers and other giant mechanical equipment that cut constantly killing every tree in sight. However as we speak, the days are numbered for these awesome century-old trees that are targeted for the next harvest.

The corporate harvesters operate night and day, 24/7, chewing up the land, uprooting trees and ripping up landscape to pieces while destroying all vegetation and nutrient materials and essentials that sustain wildlife.

In this reckless destruction where nothing is held sacred or worth saving, the main objective and the bottom line is only on the mighty buck that ultimately gets shuffled to the stockholder sitting at a corporate table in some far-off city. That is it.

In the native world, survival of the wilderness means preservation of wildlife and the salvation for the Seventh Generation. In government circles that native concept rates to no more than a fairy tale and having no meaning to government officials who will continue to ignore the environmental urgency and forest depletion until the last tree is cut.

So what has the average Joe on the street have to say about this government/ corporate tyranny that is basically driving our natural resources to extinction, one might ask?

In many instances the answer to that question could be quite predictable, and that is "nothing", because most people already know the type and tone of answers they will get from government officials, i.e., "Just stay cool my friend. We know what we're doing and also know what is good and right for everyone. Trust us"

But guess what, that scenario just won't fly any more, if you think back to less than a month ago in the province when 'people power' took to the streets and prevented the twisted NB Power/ Hydro Quebec deal from getting through because 'people' said NO. There will be many NO's in many areas from the people in the future.

How about those apples Mr. Politico?

From now on, 'people power' will neither be taken lightly, or for granted ever again, no matter what the stakes are, or what subjects may be involved.

It could also be said that it is a foregone conclusion that politicians from now on, will have to heed and respect the voice and rights of the citizen before making irresponsible 'single-minded' decisions regarding our natural resources. And not to forget that it is the voter who puts the politician in power and position, and it will be the same voter who will yank them out if the situation gets too sour. Make no mistake about it.

Those folks sitting in the legislature will have to think twice before pulling another 'quickie' or pre-packaged deal on NB people again.

WISDOM OF THE PAST - (Part 1 of two-part article)

An Indian is "more content a thousand times in the woods and in his wigwam than if he were in palaces and at the tables of the greatest princes of the earth." Gaspé Mi'qmaq Indian 1676

Let us go back to the days of the ancients and listen once again to their wise and perceptive words spoken so long ago. Words that never get out of date.

Father Chrestien Le Clercq, priest, Recollet, and missionary to the Mi'kmaq of the Gaspé Peninsula came to Canada from France in 1675 and went to Percé on the north shore of the entrance to Chaleur Bay, arriving on the 27th of October. In the spring of 1676 he visited the Indians at Gaspé, and then later in the summer he went to visit them at Restigouche, and in the fall at Nipisiguit (Bathurst area). In the winter he went to the Miramichi near present day Miramichi City. He quickly learned their language and he developed a system of hieroglyphic writing that enabled him to teach them his religion. He also composed a dictionary.

He wrote with meticulous detail about these inhabitants of northern New Brunswick and the Gaspé region of Quebec whose culture was a great curiosity and challenge to the French Fathers who wished to convert them to Catholicism. In 1691 he published "New Relation of Gaspesia, with the Customs and Religions of the Gaspesian Indians." New Brunswick historian, W. F. Ganong, translated it for the first time into English and published the translated version in 1910 through the Champlain Society.

Given below is one of the many events preserved by Father LeClercq in his writings. It is worth reading once again to reflect on it from the perspective of this modern age and asking ourselves if anything has really changed in the past three hundred years. The "carbon footprint" measurement of the Native inhabitants compared to the European intruders is revealed in this historical account.

One day at Isle Percé some French "gentlemen" asked Father LeClercq to go with them as an interpreter to visit some Indians with the purpose of making them "understand that it would be very much more advantageous for them to live and build in our fashion." After listening to these Frenchmen who were trying to convince the Indians how the white man's ways of living were superior and made more sense, the lead Indian came forward and this is what he said:

"I am greatly astonished that the French have so little cleverness, as they seem to exhibit in the matter of which you have just told me on their behalf, in the effort to

persuade us to convert our poles, our barks, and our wigwams into those houses of stone and of wood which are tall and lofty, according to their account, as these trees. Very well! But why now, do men of five to six feet in height need houses which are sixty to eighty feet high? For, in fact, as you know very well yourself, Patriarch—do we not find in our own all the conveniences and the advantages that you have with yours, such as reposing, drinking, sleeping, eating, and amusing ourselves with our friends when we wish? This is not all, my brother, have you as much ingenuity and cleverness as the Indians, who carry their houses and their wigwams with them so that they may lodge wherever they please, independently of any seignior whatsoever? You are not as bold nor as stout as we, because when you go on a voyage you cannot carry upon your shoulders your buildings and your edifices. Therefore it is necessary that you prepare as many lodgings as you make changes of residence, or else you lodge in a hired house which does not belong to you. As for us, we find ourselves secure from all these inconveniences, and we can always say, more truly than you, that we are at home everywhere, because we set up our wigwams with ease wheresoever we go, and without asking permission of anybody.

"You reproach us, very inappropriately, that our country is a little hell in contrast with France, which you compare to a terrestrial paradise, inasmuch as it yields you, so you say, every kind of provision in abundance. Thou say of us also that we are the most miserable and most unhappy of all men, living without religion, without manners, without honour, without social order, and, in a word, without any rules, like the beasts in our woods and our forests, lacking bread, wine, and a thousand other comforts which you have in superfluity in Europe. Well, my brother, if you do not yet know the real feelings which our Indians have towards your country and towards all your nation, it is proper that I inform you at once. I beg you now to believe that, as miserable as we seem in your eyes, we consider ourselves nevertheless much happier than you in this, that we are very content with the little that we have; and believe also once for all, I pray, that you deceive yourself greatly if you think to persuade us that your country is better than ours. For if France, as you say, is a little terrestrial paradise, are you sensible to leave it? And why abandon wives, children, relatives, and friends? Why risk your life and your property every year, and why venture yourself with such risk, in any season whatsoever, to the storms and tempests of the sea in order to come to a strange and barbarous country which you consider the poorest and least fortunate of the world? Besides, since we are wholly convinced of the contrary, we scarcely take the trouble to go to France, because we fear, with good reason, lest we find little satisfaction there, seeing, in our own experience, that those who are natives thereof leave it every year in order to enrich themselves on our shores.

"We believe, further, that you are also incomparably poorer than we, and that you are only simple journeymen, valets, servants, and slaves, all masters and grand captains though you may appear, seeing that you glory in our old rags and in our miserable suits of beaver which can no longer be of use to us, and that you find among us, in the fishery for cod which you make in these parts, the wherewithal to comfort your misery and the poverty which oppresses you.

"As to us, we find all our riches and all our conveniences among ourselves, without trouble and without exposing our lives to the dangers in which you find yourselves constantly through your long voyages. And, whilst feeling compassion for you in the

sweetness of our repose, we wonder at the anxieties and cares which you give yourselves night and day in order to load your ship. We see also that all your people live, as a rule, only upon cod which you catch among us. It is everlastingly nothing but cod—cod in the morning, cod at midday, cod at evening, and always cod, until things come to such a pass that if you wish some good morsels, it is at our expense; and you are obliged to have recourse to the Indians, whom you despise so much, and to beg them to go a-hunting that you may be regaled.

"Now tell me this one little thing, if you have any sense: Which of these two is the wisest and happiest—he who labours without ceasing and only obtains (and that with great trouble) enough to live on, or he who rests in comfort and finds all that he needs in the pleasure of hunting and fishing? It is true, that we have not always had the use of bread and of wine which your France produces; but, in fact, before the arrival of the French in these parts, did not the Gaspesians live much longer than now? And if we have not any longer among us any of those old men of a hundred and thirty to forty years, it is only because we are gradually adopting your manner of living, for experience is making it very plain that those of us live longest who, despising your bread, your wine, and your brandy, are content with their natural food of beaver, of moose, of waterfowl, and fish, in accord with the custom of our ancestors and of all the Gaspesian nation. Learn now, my brother, once for all, because I must open to thee my heart: there is no Indian who does not consider himself infinitely more happy and more powerful than the French.

"He finished his speech by the following last words, saying that an Indian could find his living everywhere, and that he could call himself a seigneur and the sovereign of his country, because he could reside there just as freely as it pleased him, with every kind of rights of hunting and fishing, without any anxiety, more content a thousand times in the woods and in his wigwam than if he were in palaces and at the tables of the greatest princes of the earth."

Source: William F. Ganong, trans. and ed., *New Relation of Gaspesia, with the Customs and Religion of the Gaspesian Indians*, by Chrestien LeClerq (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1910), 103–07.

..... all my relations, Nugeekadoonkut

ONTARIO NATIVES EYE STAKE IN HYDRO ONE EXPANSION

Globe/Mail

A collective of aboriginal communities across Ontario is angling to build and manage new electrical transmission lines as part of a major expansion of the power grid.

A group of 22 first nations recently formed the Lake Huron Anishinabek Transmission Co. and named veteran Ontario native leader John Beaucage as chief executive officer. The company is aiming to take an ownership stake in part of Hydro One's three-year, \$2.3-billion plan for 20 new transmission projects. The project is expected to create about 20,000 jobs.

The ownership initiative is one example of a growing push by native leaders across the country to work more closely with Canada's business community. For decades, native politics has been dominated by disputes with governments over unfulfilled promises going back to the original treaties crafted by European settlers.

Many of those issues remain, but the focus is shifting. "We're very determined," said Serpent River First Nation Chief Isadore Day, chair of the company's board. "We are going to seek to obtain the full benefit of all the major transmission lines in the treaty territory."

The McGuinty government announced the plan last September, releasing a map showing proposed transmission arteries that would run east from Sault Ste. Marie to Sudbury with a link to Manitoulin Island; south from Sudbury to the GTA; and a link in the northwest between Nipigon and Wawa.

Smaller lines will also be built as part of the expansion, which aims to bring remote renewable power to the province's urban centres.

At the time, the announcement promised opportunities for aboriginal participation, but no specifics. Mr. Day said native communities have plenty of people who can do the work, but they're also talking with non-aboriginal firms to help manage the projects.

A spokesperson for Hydro One confirmed "preliminary" talks are under way with the company and said Hydro One is interested in working with aboriginals on the transmission projects.

Development projects in Ontario, from mining in the north to housing in the south, have been abandoned in recent years due to native protests, but in this case, communities are hoping to secure an ownership role at the outset.

There's also a new tone coming from the top. After a quiet start, Shawn Atleo, the Assembly of First Nations' rookie National Chief, is addressing more national events this year – often on economic issues.

Last month, he was the first AFN leader to address the Toronto Board of Trade, where he told a packed room: "We're open for business." He's since delivered this message to similar audiences in Vancouver and Ottawa.

Mr. Atleo's predecessor, Phil Fontaine, started to make some of these connections during the end of his term and is now running an advisory firm that includes working with the Royal Bank of Canada.

In an interview, Mr. Atleo said the Lake Huron proposal is just the type of approach he's encouraging: using treaties as the foundation for securing aboriginal co-ownership of development projects.

"It's that notion that we're in this together," he said, citing similar examples happening across the country. "Lurching along from conflict to conflict is a pattern we all agree we need to break."

Clint Davis, president and CEO of the Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business, a 25-year-old organization that includes Canadian branches of large multinationals like PepsiCo. Inc. and Xerox Corp., said several factors are behind the rise in deal making, including: court rulings requiring consultation with aboriginals; an increased focus by companies on corporate social responsibility; the increased settlement of land claims and the fact that aboriginals and immigrants are the only sources of Can. population growth.

The Ontario government's transmission and energy plans will ultimately involve several arrangements with aboriginals, Mr. Davis predicted. "I think this is just the start," he said.

ONTARIO HOSPITAL UNVEILS MEDICINE LODGE

The Sudbury Star

Aboriginal healing has been going on in "various ways, places and spaces" at Sudbury Regional Hospital for many years, says Joyce Helmer.

The chair of the hospital's Aboriginal Healing Council said she was "over the moon" on Thursday when the hospital unveiled its Mshkikii-Gaming -- Medicine Lodge. It will provide a visible, sacred place for aboriginal healing right off the main lobby of the new Sudbury Regional Hospital.

"This is so meaningful for our community," said Helmer, also the vice-president of the Shkagamik- Kwe Health Centre.

"It will bring a whole different aspect to the forefront that hasn't been as visible in the past."

The circular room design is based on a similar lodge at the Wikwemikong Health Centre.

It has a fireplace in the middle with ventilation that will allow for ceremonies such as smudging. It's a first for a hospital in Ontario.

"Many of the aboriginal health centres have a lodge, such as this one. Hospitals, however, do not," Helmer said. "They may have a derivative of this type of facility, but they do not have fire, for example, or water."

The Aboriginal Healing Council was formed in the early '90s to examine how the hospital could make a difference to aboriginal patients, Helmer said.

"At that time, there was, of course, the construction (of the new facility) happening," she said. "We were able to put this room in the plan for the construction of the hospital."

The ceremony to publicly unveil the lodge was the culmination of more than a decade of planning.

"It's a huge partnership. Bringing together traditional and western medicine is key at this point in time and it will hopefully increase the health and well-being of everybody," Helmer said.

During the ceremony, Dr. Roy, the hospital's president and CEO, presented Helmer with cloth and tobacco.

"The tobacco is the contract. The hospital has said to us with this gift that they have a contract with us now to work with us," said Helmer, who presented sweet grass to Roy. "We presented the sweet grass in return acknowledging that gift with kindness and respect," she said.

Roy spoke about the right a patient has to receive culturally sensitive care. "We are pleased to demonstrate our respect for your traditions and your cultures," he said.

Deborah Fildes, the hospital board's aboriginal representative, said her job is to give aboriginal people a voice at the table.

"Our voice has been heard with great clarity," she said. "What has been created here is a sacred place." Artist Leland Bell presented a painting he calls Comfort Place, which will hang in the lodge.

"You need comfort to be able to accept the healing," Bell said.

He said he hopes the painting will add to the medicine lodge and that "when people come there they are able to feel some comfort."

INDIAN ACT CHANGES TABLED IN HOUSE

CBC News

The federal government tabled legislation Thursday that could see more than 45,000 Canadians recognized as status Indians under changes to the Indian Act.

The changes come after Ottawa lost a court challenge addressing the different ways that men and women are treated when it comes to Indian status under the Indian Act.

In 1985, Ottawa changed the rules for women who married non-natives. They would retain their status, as would their children, but not their grandchildren.

The rules are different, however, for Indian men. A man who married a non-native can pass status to two generations.

Last year's court decision has prompted the government to extend Indian status for one more generation. This means grandchildren of such a union will now have native status, but not great-grandchildren.

The financial impact of the move is not yet known, Minister of Indian Affairs Chuck Strahl told reporters outside the House of Commons Thursday.

"If every single person that was eligible applied, you might end up with a change in the Indian status membership of about eight percent in the country," he said.

However, many of the people that might apply would not necessarily want to move to a reserve, Strahl added.

"A lot of these people are urban aboriginal people who have made a life off reserve and so because of that it's almost impossible to guess and it would be a complete guess as to the financial impacts."

The government is also in talks with national aboriginal organizations about other issues that came up during the consultation period but are outside the scope of the bill, including membership on reserves, voting privileges and Indian citizenship, Strahl said.

DAN'S CORNER - Colonial Rule Carries on Today

Dan Ennis is a 60-year-old, self-described traditionalist member of the Tobique First Nation in New Brunswick who sees Indian Act- implemented, elected band councils as an extension of colonialist rule.

He and an indefinite number of other members of various Maliseet and Mi'kmaq communities formed a break-away group in 1996 that they call the Wulustuk Grand Council and which Ennis says is a return to the consensus-style government Indians had before European contact.

A Jan. 21 public statement, purportedly from this group but with Ennis as the only contact, appeared in the February edition of the Mi'kmaq-Maliseet Nations News. It sets out the Wulustuk Grand Council's position on land rights and its relationship with any non-Natives occupying or thinking about occupying what Wulustuk considers traditional Native land.

Ennis says his council held a meeting Jan. 15 wherein it was decided by consensus to issue the declaration on land rights. He said it was published in numerous mainstream newspapers in Eastern Canada and the bordering State of Maine.

Ennis' council operates outside the official sanction of elected band administrations, so it is not recognized by the Canadian government. Ennis made clear in a Feb. 17 interview this suits him fine. The Wulustuk council also is not recognized by the majority of Aboriginal people who work within elected First Nations' councils, according to one elected band official, who also expressed doubt that 50 to 75 people attend Wulustuk council's monthly meetings, as Ennis claims. ...

All my Relations

DEAN'S DEN "Feather" - "Road of Promise"

Feather

I found a little downy feather
And it made me sort of wonder whether
If it might have come from duck or goose

And what's the reason it came loose,
Why was it lying on the ground
This pure white feather that I found
Soft and fuzzy as a breeze
I studied it - there on my knees,
And came away very much impressed
Continued on ... somehow refreshed!

D.C. Butterfield

Road Of Promise

The road of Promise is narrow
Rutted and dusty and long
And much of the pathway is potholed
Still, stoicly I struggle along,
For my final Home, I trust I'll find
Maybe, just round the next bend
And I only can hope - the gate is not locked
When I come ... to my journey's end!

D.C. Butterfield

Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you can be successful or be happy.