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Each month we gather and publish the latest, most 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 right data. Our aim is to provide you with the precise tools and information possible.

FIRST NATIONS HOLD BARGAINING POWER IN PIPELINE DECISIONS

Chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan suggests First Nations need stake in pipeline process

CBC News

Blaine Favel can't help but speak his mind when it comes to First Nations and Canada's oil and gas industry. Favel supports pipelines, but feels First Nations need a better deal to back these large infrastructure projects.

Favel is the chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan and former grand chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

In front of 400 oil and gas industry members in Calgary this week, Favel didn't shy away from expressing his thoughts about what needs to change. He criticized the former federal government because it "didn't deal with Indians very well. I couldn't believe the stupidity of that. They were not trying to be kind to First Nations people particularly along pipeline routes."

He thinks First Nations need an ownership stake in oil and gas projects not only to fulfill the economic aspirations of some aboriginal groups, but because recent legal decisions confirm they have a right to be at the table in making decisions about projects crossing their land..

This gives them bargaining power in pipeline routes and decisions, and means every pipeline project could be held up in court until they are brought into decision-making and give consent.

The responsible approach would be to involve them from the start, he said.

A 2014 Supreme Court decision on the land title claims of the Tsilhqot'in First Nation suggests the purpose of consultation should be to seek consent. Meanwhile, a 2014 United Nations (UN) declaration on indigenous people recommends free, prior and informed consent. The Canadian government has said this does not constitute veto power, since the declaration is an aspirational document.

Here are six questions we posed to Favel.

The ownership issue with pipelines, is that a way for more First Nations to get on board with these proposed projects?

Absolutely. I think First Nations leadership has been asking for ownership of assets on their traditional lands and participation so they can combat poverty. There have been requests for an ownership interest from the very first conversations 20 years ago. It continues, but now it is more important because the law has advanced so much that First Nations people are close to having veto power over projects, so responsible business people and responsible governments should be looking at this more seriously.

With Enbridge's Northern Gateway project or Kinder Morgan's TransMountain project, do you think there would be more First Nations on side if there was an ownership stake offered?

What do you think 'consent of First Nations' means when it comes to these projects?

The UN declaration says free, prior and informed consent, which means they have to be aware of the project, the project's implications, they have to agree with the project. So that sets a very high bar for these companies and the government has to be there. The government of Alberta, the government of B.C., and the government of Canada have to be there helping these companies. The companies can't do it on their own.

Do you think First Nations have veto power?

Pretty close, I think pretty close. If you talk to energy leaders, the environmental movement and the social consent issues, are important to them. But who has the legal power to stop a pipeline? First Nations chiefs.

What difference can the new Prime Minister make in these negotiations?

Will offering an ownership stake really convince some First Nations to support a pipeline?

I think that is one component of it. I think there are five or six elements. Ownership is one, strong environmental safety record, employment, contracts, training, and being involved in the business cycle of the pipeline opposed to the one year that it is built.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN INDIGENOUS MAN?

New book challenges misconceptions of indigenous masculinity

CBC News

A new book, *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration*, challenges how media typically links indigenous masculinity to criminal activity and violence, and takes a critical look at what it means to be an indigenous man.

Indigenous people come from a tradition of gender equity, where the sacred feminine is celebrated, so it is no surprise that indigenous masculinity is viewed differently than in some other cultures.

"Maybe it's time to think through, to be able to build healthier communities as a result of what we know about... the sacredness of men and masculinity," said editor Kim Anderson, who is a Cree and Métis educator and professor at Wilfrid Laurier University.

The book is a compilation of essays written by indigenous men from all walks of life, including war veterans, ex-gang members, fathers, youth and two-spirited people.

The aim was to "collect really powerful and positive stories about indigenous men because the stories that we see in the media and elsewhere are often about criminality, you know we don't see the positive stories," said Anderson.

Taking up responsibility

"There are some specific differences, but there are a number of similarities in terms of how indigenous people relate to each other, as relatives, and how they relate to the land," said editor Robert Alexander Innes, who is Plains Cree from Cowessess First Nation, and a professor at the University of Saskatchewan.

During the course of researching for the book, Anderson and Innes saw one theme appear several times, regarding the need for men to take responsibility for their own understanding of masculinity and how it impacts those around them.

"As opposed to mainstream masculinities where discussions might be around power and how it's deployed, all the conversations we had were around responsibilities, and how men can take up those responsibilities to the natural world as well as to all their human relations," said Anderson.

Anderson believes that indigenous masculinity has become linked with violence and criminality because of the long history of colonialism.

"Prior to an interference from colonization, indigenous men were embedded within families and communities where they had tremendous responsibilities that they exercised on a daily basis," said Anderson.

"Those are the things that were disrupted, and those are the things that contribute to the levels of crisis and traumas in our communities and the violence that people experience."

Beyond defining what masculinity is, Anderson and Innes said the book highlights what needs to be changed to ensure a positive future for indigenous boys.

Among those changes are a need for positive role models and a promise that positive pathways are available.

LIBERAL BUDGET INCLUDES BILLIONS IN NEW SPENDING FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Spending commitments aimed at bringing about 'transformational change'

The Canadian Press Posted

Billions in new spending will be directed toward aboriginal programming, including funding to address issues including education, reserve water and child and family services, the Liberal government signalled in its budget released Tuesday.

The commitments are considered one of the central themes of the government's first financial road map, with \$8.4 billion earmarked over the next five years.

The spending also represents a significant increase over the investments that would have been made under the Kelowna Accord, Finance Minister Bill Morneau told a news conference before the budget was tabled in the House of Commons.

The greatest portion of the money goes toward First Nations education — \$2.6-billion over the next five years for primary and secondary schooling on reserves — though the government extended its window from the four-year period outlined in its campaign platform.

The funding also significantly ramps up in later years, with \$801 million set to flow in the last year of the five-year period, which falls outside the Liberal mandate.

Morneau defended the government's approach to addressing the socio-economic conditions of indigenous peoples.

"One of the things I am most proud of in this budget is that we have decided to make very significant investments for indigenous people in this country," he said.

The budget also includes nearly \$2 billion for water and wastewater infrastructure over five years to end boil-water

advisories, which Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has committed to doing within five years.

Specifically, the budget proposes \$141.7 million be spent over five years for the monitoring and testing of reserve drinking water and \$1.8 billion over the same time period for facility operation and maintenance.

Cindy Blackstock, the president of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, said she is disappointed by the government's pledge on child and family services.

Blackstock, a social worker who fought and won against the federal government in a lengthy dispute over funding for on-reserve child welfare services, said she was looking for \$200-million this year to close the gap.

"My feeling is, that bar falls far below what is required to meet the order that is required by the Canadian Human Rights

Tribunal," Blackstock said.

"It is \$71 million in year one and then \$99 million in year two. If you look at the overall figure it is over \$600 million, but

that's back-ended."

Much of the funding falls after the next election, Blackstock added, noting that puts the funding at risk and does not address the depths of inequity faced by kids on reserve.

"I think people need to look closely at what they're actually spending and when," she said. "The biggest investments on the First Nations file are after the next election."

Craig Alexander, vice-president of economic affairs at the C.D. Howe Institute, said he is encouraged to see that the government is keen to invest in changing the outcomes of aboriginal people— an effort he views as an "economic imperative."

"I think if the aboriginal community has better outcomes, the Canadian economy will have better outcomes," he said.

Money is part of the solution but deep challenges remain, Alexander added.

"We need to understand that isn't a silver bullet," Alexander said. "There are some underlying barriers that actually need to be addressed so that we get the positive outcomes."

The budget also contains additional commitments, such as \$40 million over two years for the inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women.

9 ABORIGINAL STUDENTS FROM NEW BRUNSWICK READY TO TACKLE IT WORLD

5 grads of JEDI and francophone community college program already have job offers from IBM in Bedford, N.S.

CBC News Posted: Ma

Nine aboriginal students from New Brunswick graduated Thursday from an intensive IT program designed to teach them to develop apps for both Apple and Android mobile devices.

Five of the students already have job offers from IBM in Bedford, N.S., and at least one is planning to set up her own business.

"I am so proud and honoured to be here today. It was a long journey, but we did it," said Erin Leaman, of Esgenoôpetitj First Nation, who will be joining IBM.

Leaman says the 57-week program, a partnership between the Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI) and the francophone community college network, has opened up a whole new future for her.

The married mother of two says she had been working as a supervisor in retail sales, which she described as a good job that provided for her family.

"But I wasn't passionate about it. I wanted to do something I had passion for — something I would love," Leaman said following Thursday morning's ceremony at the Fredericton Inn.

"This, I knew, once I entered it, this could be a career — a life-long career. And I would be happy doing this," she said.

"It was the best decision I have made in my life."

Fellow graduate and future IBM employee Jake Saulis, of Woodstock First Nation, is equally "ecstatic."

He says he "stumbled across" the course through the reserve and it's been "work, work, work" ever since.

But the opportunities are "unbelievably endless. It's awesome," he said.

'Opportunities are knocking'

Melissa Lunney, who heard about the program through word of mouth and "jumped at the chance," agrees.

"I actually had no direction in life. I really didn't know where I wanted to be, or what I wanted to do," said Lunney, of Elsipogtog First Nation.

"I now have the confidence to go out and get what I want," she said, which is her own business.

Lunney says she has an idea for a new app and has been accepted into a business accelerator program.

"Like I said, opportunities are knocking at my door right now."

Lunney and her classmates are the second cohort of aboriginal programmers from the Mobile Application Development (MAD) program.

It's designed specifically for aboriginal students by integrating a cultural component into their studies, according to JEDI, an aboriginal, not-for-profit organization dedicated to working with partners to foster aboriginal economic development in New Brunswick.

All of the graduates worked "very hard," said Liane Roy, president and CEO of the province's francophone community college network.

It's a very intensive course, she said, noting it can take up to two years to complete similar programs at other institutions.

Only nine of 12 students in the latest class managed to graduate, but Roy is confident they are equipped with the skills to be "very well prepared to be able to have good careers" in the field.

THUNDER BAY POLICE 'RACISM' MUST BE ROOTED OUT, LAWYER SAYS

Police too quick to deem indigenous deaths 'non-criminal,' formal complaint alleges

CBC News

A formal complaint filed this month against city police in Thunder Bay, Ont., is seeking a comprehensive review of the service with an eye to eliminating alleged racism.

Brad DeBungee filed the complaint saying police ruled out foul play too quickly in the death of his brother Stacy DeBungee, after Stacy's body was found in the McIntyre River on Oct. 19, 2015.

The complaint, filed with Ontario's civilian police oversight body, the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD), also claims there is a pattern of Thunder Bay police declaring the deaths of First Nations people are not suspicious within hours of a body being discovered.

"They gave me the runaround, like they tried to brush everything off, saying we [police] see it as an accidental drowning," Brad DeBungee told CBC News.

He doesn't buy the Thunder Bay police theory that his brother, 41, passed out on the river bank and rolled into the water.

'Basic steps'

A private detective, hired as part of the complaint process, said his preliminary investigation showed police didn't interview people with important information about Stacy DeBungee's death.

"I took what I would classify as some very basic steps in a death investigation to talk to some people," said Dave Perry, a retired Toronto police detective.

Perry said it didn't take him long to learn DeBungee's debit card was used after his death.

"There appear to be a few things that absolutely need to be cleared up," Perry said. "To me, it would be routine that an investigator would want to know the answers to all those questions."

The Thunder Bay police investigation into DeBungee's death is continuing, according to Brian Gover, the lawyer representing the police service.

Thunder Bay police issued a news release on Oct. 20, 2015, the day after DeBungee's body was found, saying the death was "non-criminal."

'Knee-jerk ruling'

Similar news releases were issued by Thunder Bay police after the death of two First Nations teens — Jethro Anderson, in 2000 and Reggie Bushie in 2007.

"I simply don't see how with this sort of knee-jerk ruling out of criminal conduct when the alleged victims are Aboriginal people, how you can simply ignore the patterns," said lawyer Julian Falconer who is representing Brad DeBungee in his complaint.

"If you were to package all this and have one word that describes this — it's racism," Falconer said, adding that there is a "crisis in confidence in the First Nations community from the repeated conduct" of Thunder Bay police.

The chief of Rainy River First Nations, where Brad and Stacy DeBungee are members, joined the formal complaint against the police.

"As I learned more and more about the case, I became very angry," Chief Jim Leonard said. "This has to stop. It happens over and over and over again."

The complaint also has the public support of Grand Chief Ojichidaa Warren White of Treaty 3 and Fort William First Nation Chief Peter Collins.

Thunder Bay police "rejects entirely" the premise that there is a crisis in confidence among First Nations people regarding police conduct, police lawyer Brian Gover said.

Gover said there is no connection between the death of Stacy DeBungee, 41, and the deaths of the First Nations teens that are currently part of an inquest into the deaths of seven indigenous students in Thunder Bay.

The complaint, filed on March 18 by Brad DeBungee and Jim Leonard, makes four requests of the civilian oversight body:

That the OIPRD investigate the complaint, not the Thunder Bay police.

That the officers involved in the investigation into the death of Stacy DeBungee be investigated for misconduct.

That Thunder Bay police be removed from the investigation into the death of DeBungee and another police service assigned to complete it.

That a "systemic review" be conducted to determine whether Thunder Bay police practices comply with its own policies and legal obligations, and whether those policies can be improved to prevent future concerns about indigenous death investigations.

A spokesperson for the OIPRD said it usually takes a couple of weeks for the agency to determine whether it will be investigated, and an investigation generally takes four to six months to complete.

The OIPRD does not publicly comment on specific complaints.

AN UNOFFICIAL MALISEET LAND WARDEN

March, Piyatekenisowi kisohts, meaning when spruce tips fall, wanted to be a strong winter month. One could often hear the bombing of tree bark splitting in the deep cold of night. Many days the sun was strong enough to draw sap up in the trees. On nice days the heatless sun reflected on the heavy white carpet beckoning to the ice fishermen to try forest lakes. By April, Takwaskweni kisohts meaning Crust on snow, the sun was quite high creating slight melting that froze at night so that the snow would support moose hunters but not moose. When the moose broke through the crust, it impeded their progress. It was no longer necessary to wear so many layers of clothing. The end of the month was the time to make maple syrup. Every once in a while the cold wind gathered up some newly fallen snow creating a ring depositing it in another place. We enjoyed sitting by the humming stove eating a piece of freshly made cake and watching the wind's activity.

Some considered the late Peter Paul a warden looking after the land that the Creator had made for them, but in more recent years had been taken from them. Ever since he was a young teenager Paul had accompanied his grandfather, Noel Polchies to meetings with farmers who eyed parts of the reserve that they wanted to add to their farms. Noel had a strong policy to never sell your land. Some of the Indians were easily tricked into agreements after being given strong drink. It was a tradition held by the elders that the island close to the Reserve had been attached to the mainland, a part of the original tract of Reserve land, but that one spring it was cut off from the main land by the spring ice floes that crashed along the bank cutting through it and formed an island. A greedy neighbor now owned the island raising corn on the rich soil there.

Peter Paul knew other traditional stories about how land had been taken from them. He had a barrel business that took him to many surrounding farms selling newly made barrels or picking up or delivering barrels in need of repair. He always had his eye on the surrounding country side noting any new construction that could destroy the land. It might be a change in the course of a stream, a favorite fiddlehead area that would now be lost forever or a new road cutting through prime forest opening up a prime hunting territory to the increasing white population.

Peter Paul frequently drove to Fredericton and St. John always keeping an eye peeled for new construction or development. He alerted me about a nice old farm bordering the St. River that was for sale. It had many acres of Balsam fir that could be harvested. Large trucks coming from as far away as Virginia were now buying New Brunswick Balsam firs to be decorated for their Christmas observances. There was an abundance of these trees growing south of the St. John River. In the early 1960s New Brunswick Hydro began buying all the farms and other properties on both sides of the St. John. The next step was to clearcut all the trees in a large strip on both sides of the River from Mataquac to Woodstock. The Mataquac Dam would change the old slow flowing river with its large flood plain noted for beaver, muskrats and many kinds of fish, turning it into a large lake drowning many sites that many years. The marvelous variety of wildlife in the river valley had attracted Maliseet to the area thousands of years ago. In a flash Peter Paul saw the River life change. The old treaties had promised that Maliseet that

they could live as they had. The changes in the St. John River were to make it much more difficult to harvest plants, animals, birds, and fish in keeping with their traditional life style.

In the mid 1960s Louis R. Caywood, an archaeologist from the Western Plains was hired by the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission as archaeologist for Meductic until the flooding would take place. Peter Paul volunteered to help so he could be a watch dog over the project. He was appalled watching a bulldozer scrape layers of earth from the flat and dump them into the St. John. When a skeleton of a woman was found outside the cemetery wall, Peter explained that it was a woman who was not a Christian so the priest would not permit her to be buried in the holy ground of the Catholic cemetery. Today the destruction of the earth continues while some Indians watch and wait for the opportunity to save mother earth from fracturing. Although the Maliseet lost their lands by treaties, they continued to use certain areas for traditional purposes.

Nicholas N. Smith