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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.

Contact:

You can reach us at Box 3226, Perth-Andover, NB. Canada, E7H 5K3, or at Box 603, Ft. Fairfield, ME 04742. Call us at 506-273-6737 (NB. Canada), and on the net we're at pesun@nbnet.nb.ca

HISTORIC BIRCHBARK CANOE FOUND IN U.K. STORAGE SHED

Postmedia News

A birchbark canoe from 18th-century Canada, possibly the oldest in existence, has been hauled from a storage shed at a British estate and is to be repatriated to the country where it was made some 250 years ago.

The stunning find, announced last week by the National Maritime Museum in Cornwall, England, dates from the Canadian posting of a British army officer, Lt. John Enys, who fought against the rebellious American colonies during their War of Independence in the 1770s and early 1780s.

The canoe, created at an as-yet unidentified First Nation, was acquired by Lt. Enys somewhere in Eastern Canada and apparently shipped back to Britain as a souvenir of the officer's time overseas.

It was recently found stored in a barn at the Lt. Enys family estate near Penryn, England.

Though damaged by the passage of time and now in two pieces, the canoe was carefully moved from the shed last week for a planned exhibition in the new year at the Cornwall museum, where experts will undertake preservation efforts ahead of the artifact's return trip to Canada.

“Moving the canoe is the beginning of a whole new journey back to Canada for this incredible find,” Andy Wyke, boat collections manager at the Cornwall museum, said in a statement announcing the discovery.

In September, following a public exhibition in Britain, the canoe is to be transported to the Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough, Ont., to become part of its permanent collection.

“When we received the call from the Lt. Enys family to identify their ‘canoe in a shed,’ we had no idea of the importance of the find,” George Hogg, trustee and archivist at the Cornwall museum, said in the statement. “We knew we had something special, but having worked with the British Museum on the artifacts and the Canadian Canoe Museum, we now believe that this is one of the world’s oldest birchbark canoes. This is a unique survival from the 18th century.”

Wendy Fowler, an Lt. Enys family descendant, noted that the estate “holds many secrets, but I believe this is the most interesting to date.”

She credited the Cornwall museum with “brilliantly ensuring and repatriating another element of our great family history” adding: “I’m most grateful that my great, great, great, great, great Uncle’s travels have led to such a major chapter of boating history being discovered in Cornwall.”

John Lt. Enys, who lived between 1757 and 1818, helped defend Quebec City after a long winter siege by American invaders in 1776.

He also took part in the British victory at the Battle of Valcour Island on Lake Champlain in October 1776.

Lt. Enys was posted to forts in Upper Canada, including Niagara and York (the future Toronto) in the 1780s, and his published journals recount time spent fishing as the Revolutionary War wound down.

The Cornwall canoe isn’t the first birchbark treasure from Canada found stored under layers of dust and dirt in the British Isles.

In 2007, a large canoe believed to be almost 200 years old was returned to Canada after being discovered in the rafters of a storage area, under a brood of nesting pigeons, at a small Irish museum.

Nearly trashed as junk in 2001, a last-minute decision to probe its past revealed that relic’s remarkable history and prompted a binational project to restore what was then believed to be the oldest canoe of its kind in the world.

The six-metre-long canoe was determined to have been a cargo craft used to carry furs and military supplies in colonial New Brunswick.

The Maliseet “masterpiece” — described at the time as equivalent to finding a “Rembrandt in the attic” — was transferred to the Canadian Museum of Civilization, where a team of conservators spent months preserving the relic.

TRIBE ALLEGES HARASSMENT AT BORDER STATIONS

The Quoddy Tides

Allegations of harassment of Passamaquoddys at border crossings into Canada might be seen as an inconvenience to non-Natives, but some members of the tribe view the reports as another step in the path by the Canadian government to write the tribe out of existence. Referring to the Canadian government's actions as a genocide of the Passamaquoddy, Hugh Akagi of St. Andrews, chief of the St. Croix Schoodic Band of Passamaquoddy, states, "They've been destroying our territory, our traditional culture, the rights of our people (that's genocide.)" Mary Bassett, a Passamaquoddy elder from Sipayik, agrees. "We have to feel that we're fighting genocide." She notes that there have been 14 deaths of Passamaquoddys this year, and a number were drug-related. "It's a life-and-death struggle."

Reports of Passamaquoddys having trouble crossing the border into Canada began cropping up this summer. Denise Altvater, director of the American Friends Service Committee's Wabanaki Youth Program, relates several recent instances of the difficulties the tribal members have faced. Last summer Passamaquoddys had tried to cross the border to attend the funeral of a family member at a reserve in New Brunswick, but one of them was told she had to pay \$200 for a 24-hour pass to attend the funeral, because she once was charged with a non-felony offense, although she wasn't convicted. Another time, family from Maine had tried to cross to travel to the Tobique reserve, where a family member was dying. One of the Passamaquoddys, though, was denied entry into Canada because he had a previous OUI conviction. Passamaquoddys, including a former chief, recently have been strip searched at the Canadian border crossing, and a Passamaquoddy who was finishing a law degree at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton "was harassed at the border" so much that she left UNB and enrolled at the University of Maine, Altvater says.

Passamaquoddys trying to cross the border into Canada are now being told that their tribal ID cards are not sufficient identification for entry into the country. Other tribes, including Micmacs and Maliseets, are not reporting harassment at the border, though.

Legal issues considered

At a meeting organized at Sipayik on December 4 to discuss the issue and to consider how to respond, Newell Lewey, a Passamaquoddy from Sipayik, commented, "It's time for us to say, 'We're going to make our own rules as a sovereign people.'" Other governments, then, would have to petition the tribe, in tribal courts, to seek any changes. "For over 200 years we've been following their chain of command. They claim that we have sovereign rights but that we don't exercise them," he said, adding, "For over 235 years these rights have been eroding away. Maybe the border is just one more right being taken away. We have to stop it somewhere and reestablish ourselves as a sovereign people."

Pat Paul from the Tobique First Nation in New Brunswick, who publishes the Wulustuk Times, urged, "We have to force border issues on a united front. Historically and traditionally we have a legal right to cross and re-cross the border at any time going either direction. This land originally was not a white country. It was always known by our people as the red land. We, the aboriginal people, are spiritually bound and akin to the rocks, the rivers and the mountains of this land."

The mountains with all the inclusive terrain are permanent and natural elements of the land put there by the Creator. These are the basic icons to our landscape. They, therefore can't be moved, tampered or erased by the mere stroke of a pen. Embedded within these natural elements is our aboriginal title, our sovereignty and our inherent and indigenous right to move and travel freely in any direction."

"The Passamaquoddy speak the same language as the Maliseet, which shows traditionally that we are a united single nation. We strongly maintain that this national unity to this day. Unfortunately over the years the white imaginary border creators divided us," he said. "The border is a discretionary creation, it is not natural. In fact it is a figment of someone's wild imagination that a line lies there. The real fact is, however, in our hearts, minds and traditions, our people have never separated nor have we ever given consent to anyone to draw an imaginary line dividing our people and our nation. It is a shameful ruling and a tragic consequence in our relations that has caused conflict, undue turmoil and above all, a direct assault on aboriginal people."

The Passamaquoddy are a tribe whose traditional territory stretches from Mount Desert Island in Maine to Lepreau in New Brunswick, and the U.S./Canada border splits the territory in two. Although the tribe has land claims in New Brunswick, it has not been accorded First Nation status by the Canadian government.

Hugh Akagi observed, "The issue is the recognition of the Passamaquoddy in Canada." While the Micmacs and Maliseets are recognized by the Canadian government, the Passamaquoddy and Penobscots are not.

In their efforts to gain legal status as a First Nation in Canada, the Passamaquoddy have been asked to prove that they've maintained a society in the country. While they've produced research showing that the tribe has a long history in Canada, the Canadian government questions whether the tribe has maintained a community there, Akagi said. "We had three reserves in Canada, and now they're asking us to prove we're a community." Although the tribe no longer has a reserve in Canada, he said tribal members have maintained a community by going to the reservations in Maine and bringing the culture back with them to Canada.

Akagi maintains that the current Conservative government of Canada is "playing a game of stall." He commented, "We have to take this to another level. This government won't help us," adding, "We've been divided as a people for 200 years, and nobody's helping us."

Canada did recently agree to endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but Akagi commented that the government's acceptance was conditional on the declaration not interfering with Canadian law. "Their acceptance of the declaration isn't really acceptance at all."

The UN declaration sets out a number of principles to guide cooperative relationships between indigenous peoples and states, such as equality, partnership, good faith and mutual respect. The declaration was adopted at the UN in 2007, with the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand the only countries to vote in opposition. Australia and New Zealand have since endorsed the statement, and on November 12 of this year Canada endorsed it, leaving the U.S. as the only country that has not endorsed the UN declaration. Paul believes that the U.S. has not endorsed the declaration because "they're the biggest perpetrator of land grabs and genocide."

Concerning treaties that give Native peoples the right to travel freely within their territory, Akagi maintains that Canada selectively chooses the sections to follow of the Jay Treaty and the Treaty of Ghent, and has decided not to respect the section that states that Native peoples have the right to travel freely.

Changes in border requirements

Previously, Passamaquoddys have had difficulties entering into the U.S., but after Passamaquoddy representatives met with David Lumbert, the port director in Calais for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, those issues have been cleared up.

According to Joanne Ferreira, chief of the media relations division of the Office of Public Affairs for U.S. Customs and Border Protection in Washington, D.C., Passamaquoddy and other tribal identification cards are currently being accepted for entry into the U.S. because of some flexibility in implementing the requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). As of June 1, 2009, WHTI requires all travelers to show a valid passport or other approved secure document when traveling to the U.S. from areas within the Western Hemisphere. In time, tribal documents will need to be able to be scanned and will have to denote identification and citizenship and include certain security features. Five tribes in the U.S. have signed agreements to develop tribal cards that are in compliance with the U.S. government's requirements, but the Passamaquoddy Tribe has not yet signed an agreement. Grant funding is available to assist the tribes in developing the enhanced tribal ID cards.

A statement released by Joel MacDougall of Atlantic Region media relations for the Canada Border Services Agency says that all permanent residents and Canadian citizens are encouraged to carry proper identification when traveling to and from Canada. Proper identification includes a Canadian birth certificate, a Canadian passport, a permanent residence card, a citizenship card or a certificate of Indian status. Every person registered as an Indian under the Canadian Indian Act can enter and remain in Canada by right. The Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS) is an identity document issued by the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) confirming that the cardholder is registered status Indian under the Indian Act. The statement says, "Native American Indians are accorded entry to Canada by right, if they are registered on the Canadian Band Lists. Virtually all members of the Indian nations whose traditional lands straddle the border are entitled to be registered under the Indian Act, and once they have exercised this option, they may enter Canada by right. The following U.S. documents may be used to establish identity and status for Native American Indians: Enhanced Tribal Card, when available, and Form I872 American Indian Card."

However, while U.S. Customs is recognizing the Passamaquoddy identification cards, Canada is not, since the Passamaquoddy are not considered "status Indians." Akagi says he was told by a customs officers that the cards were not being recognized for entry into Canada because they are not issued in Canada. He then asked the officers why they recognized U.S. passports, since they aren't issued by Canada. "Canada stamps us with a number to identify us as an Indian. In Germany, they stamped people with a number to say they were a Jew."

"Canada is very afraid of the issues we've brought up," said gkisedtanamoogk. "They're afraid I'm not in Canada when I travel in Canada, that I'm in Wabanaki land."

Strategies developed

Suggestions by those at the December 4 meeting included having a think tank comprised of attorneys, elders and scholars examine the treaties and develop a policy and work with the Maine congressional delegation to put pressure on Canada. It was also suggested that the Passamaquoddy find out what other tribes in the U.S. and Canada are doing on this issue and work with them. Getting the support of elected and traditional tribal leaders was also urged.

MITSC will be meeting with tribal leaders from Maine in January and will discuss the issue with them then. In addition, the Passamaquoddy have two seats, one representing the U.S. side and one the Canadian side, on the Assembly of First Nations' Atlantic Policy Congress, but the U.S. seat is not presently filled. Akagi suggested that the seat be filled to demonstrate the unity of the tribe. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will be meeting at the UN headquarters in New York in May, and an effort will be made for Passamaquoddy to attend to bring up this issue. Other avenues suggested include the World Court or a citizens' tribunal.

EX-PM MARTIN BLUNT ON ABORIGINALS

Paul Martin spoke at a luncheon Wednesday in Winnipeg to more than 300 aboriginal and business leaders.

It's been five years since the Kelowna Accord and nearly that long since Paul Martin's brief prime ministerial career came to an abrupt end, but his passion for improving the lot of aboriginal Canadians is undiminished.

Today, the 72-year-old former PM, a wealthy man best remembered as the Liberal finance minister who conquered the federal deficit in the 1990s, spends about 60 per cent of his time guiding several family initiatives aimed at promoting aboriginal businesses and education.

In an impassioned and witty speech to a Winnipeg business luncheon Wednesday, Martin was blunt in his assessment of the living conditions faced by many aboriginal people, the inequity in school funding between First Nations schools and those in the rest of country and the implications of these injustices for Canada.

"This is not only unspeakably immoral, it is economically dumb," the nation's 21st prime minister said. "It is dumber than a bag of hammers."

Martin said Canada is failing the youngest and fastest-growing segment of its population at a time when a huge wave of baby boomers is crossing into retirement and the nation stares down the barrel of tough, new global competition from the likes of China, India and Brazil.

In November 2005 at a meeting of Canadian, provincial, territorial and First Nations leaders in Kelowna, B.C., then prime minister Martin helped forge an agreement for tackling key aboriginal issues such as education, employment and living conditions. It came with a \$5 billion price tag that the subsequent Conservative administration refused to implement.

About 325 aboriginal and business leaders attended Wednesday's luncheon, which was cosponsored by the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce and the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce.

Earlier Wednesday, Martin swore-in the nine-person Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce's new board of directors. "It was really cool," said Andrew Clarke, the ACC's chairman, in describing the ceremony.

The Martin Aboriginal Initiative is devoted to encouraging aboriginal kids to stay in school and pursuing careers in fields such as business and banking. It also assists in the development of aboriginal businesses. In Winnipeg, Martin's not-for-profit corporation has worked with such organizations as Children of the Earth High School, the Business Council of Manitoba and the Winnipeg School Division.

NB IMPROVES IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL TESTS

New Brunswick's education system has made small gains in an international assessment but the province is still far from head of the class.

The Programme for International Student Assessment study, which tests 15-year-old students in 65 countries every three years, looked at student performance in math, reading and science.

The results were released on Tuesday and demonstrated that Canada is doing well among the 65 countries assessed.

But among the provinces, New Brunswick remains below the country's average in all three areas.

New Brunswick, for example, is eighth in reading up from 10th in 2000.

Education Minister Jody Carr said he believes there is even greater room for improvement in future tests.

“Literacy results are expected to continue to improve for both the anglophone and francophone sectors, as the first group of students who received the full benefit of the early literacy initiatives starting in 2004 will write PISA assessments in 2012,” Carr said in a statement.

New Brunswick saw its rank in math improve to seventh from ninth. And in science, the province's students saw their ranking move to ninth from 10th.

On a national level, the PISA results showed Canada had scored its best in reading, earning sixth place behind Shanghai-China, Korea, Finland, Hong Kong-China and Singapore.

On a regional level, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia tied with four other jurisdictions for second place in reading, following Shanghai-China.

TEENS DOWN ON MATH, READING

The Nova Scotia government says newly released statistics show the need for improvement in the province's public education system.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) measures the achievements of 15-year-olds in 65 countries, including Canada and each of the 10 provinces.

The report found students in Nova Scotia performed at the national average in science, yet below the Canadian average in reading and math.

The government said Nova Scotia's best showing internationally was in reading, placing 13th in the world.

Nova Scotia students also improved on the national stage, rising from the lower third among provinces to fifth in each of the three subject areas.

Education Minister Marilyn More said "while this assessment has a lot of good news for Nova Scotia, we need to do better."

"Our challenge, as always, is to continue to improve within Canada," More said in a news release.

"The financial and enrolment challenges facing our province also underscore the fact that we need to work closely with boards and our other partners to keep ourselves, and our investment in public education, focused on better outcomes for students."

In Canada, about 23,000 students from 1,000 schools participated in the testing, which mostly focused on reading with a secondary focus on mathematics and science.

The testing, an initiative of countries that belong to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), was first carried out in 2000 and is repeated every three years.

As a whole, the 2009 testing showed Canadian students rank above the international average in reading, mathematics and science.

Seven areas performed better than Canada in math: Japan; Hong Kong, China; Finland; Korea; Singapore; Switzerland; and Shanghai, China.

Six areas performed better than Canada in science: Shanghai, China; Korea; Finland; Hong Kong, China; Singapore; and Japan.

"The performance of students in all provinces, with the exception of Prince Edward Island, was at or above the OECD average in these two domains," said a federal report highlighting Canada's result.

Although the 2009 Canadian results are similar to its results in 2000, Canada's relative ranking declined in all areas due to improvements in other countries' performances and a drop in the proportion of high achievers in Canada between 2000 and 2009.

"In order to maintain its competitive edge in the future, Canada will need to improve at the rate of the top-performing countries rather than simply maintain its competency level in reading, mathematics and science," the Canadian report said.

In Nova Scotia, girls significantly outperformed boys in reading, while boys outperformed girls in mathematics. There was no significant difference in performance between boys and girls in science.

Nova Scotia had the smallest gap in average performance between boys and girls in the country.

The study was administered to 2,133 students at 72 Nova Scotia schools in April and May 2009.

CREATIVE EDUCATION

An artist is not a special kind of person. Every person is a special kind of artist.

That's what Moses (Amik) Beaver believes and what he teaches at Sunset Park Public School.

They never cease to amaze me," Beaver says of the children. The younger they are, the more they don't think of what they will paint ... they just paint. All they need is a little guidance."

Beaver, a resident of Nibinamik (Summer Beaver) First Nation, a fly-in reserve 500 kilometres north of Thunder Bay, spent the last two weeks as artist in residence at the school.

Working with kids is like a holiday," he says, as a group of junior kindergarten students makes bird sounds to go along with the cardboard cutouts of eagles, geese and seagulls. You might as well start them young and teach them we're all part of nature and not masters of it."

The initiative is funded by the Ontario Arts Council's aboriginal artist in schools program.

Because we have aboriginal students in our school we thought it was important to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the aboriginal culture," says school principal Roberta Bedard.

Beaver worked with the students to create six large murals that will hang in the library.

The two-week journey encouraged conversation between the students.

They are developing art appreciation and are seeing themselves as artists," Bedard says.

Beaver's paintings reflect traditional Woodland Art.

I call it that. Who is going to argue? I am from the woodlands," he says.

His work is distinct for its multi-layered approach, embedding images of spirits, human faces (including his own) and animal forms against the backdrop of nature.

The two-week program culminated Thursday in a showcase of the students' artwork.

The best part is when they light up," Beaver says. Some of these students might not be good with math or English, but when you see their hands on stuff, that is when they shine."

Ciarra Roy, 10, is happy knowing her contribution to the murals will leave a lasting impression.

Every time new people come into the school they will be able to see what other people have done when they were here," she says.

Her work will also grace the pages of *Our journey with Moses* (Amik) Beaver, Sunset Park Public School 2010, to be published by Bedard.

It feels good. I can share what I have painted and what I have written with other people," Ciarra says.

As Beaver heads home, he takes with him memories including a drawing of his likeness from one of his students.

They are my greatest motivators and my worst critics," he says. They speak their minds. I love them."

NATIVE EDUCATION NEEDS MULTI-PRONG APPROACH

Star-Pheonix

Historically, Indian education has been a dilemma. On one hand, it was necessary to educate the Indians. On the other, what and how much was the question.

The first institutions were called industrial schools and they were boarding schools run by the federal government across the country. The plan was to educate Indian boys to become farm hands and the girls to be domestics.

The government soon tired of the schools and gave the churches free rein to run the residential schools. The difference was that, in addition to the training as farm labourers and domestics, a healthy dose of religion was thrown in. The students were not obligated to attend school after they reached age 16, so they dropped out in droves.

The residential schools started to show their age in the 1960s, and the Department of Indian Affairs set up joint school agreements. Some Indian children got to stay at home and were bused to integrated schools in a local town. Their graduation rate still was dismal.

In the 1970s a grassroots movement spread like a prairie fire across the West. In Alberta and Saskatchewan, Indian parents conducted a series of school strikes. Parents withdrew their children from the integrated schools and demanded that schools be located on their reserves.

The National Indian Brotherhood in 1972 adopted the policy, "Indian Control of Indian Education," which called for control of education from curriculum content to staffing, management and executive management.

The policy led to on-reserve schools from kindergarten to Grade 12. But in spite of all the steps in the right direction, the high school graduation rate of First Nations students continues to be low. The dropout rate on reserves is 70 per cent.

The 2004 report from the auditor general pointed out that, at the current rate, it will take 28 years for First Nations students to catch up with the rest of Canada.

Clearly, something is not working.

This has not gone unnoticed in Ottawa. Indian Affairs Minister John Duncan and Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo last week jointly announced the formation of an expert panel to develop a new plan for on-reserve education that is standards-based, accountable, and both culturally and regionally appropriate. The panel has about six months to present its plan.

This study is overdue, but it can't be restricted only to the education system.

Schools don't exist in a vacuum. They serve the community with all its strengths and weaknesses.

The history of education and our people has left a bad taste. In the past, education in the residential school system brought pain and loneliness. Our old people have bad memories of their formal education.

While some families can look back on generations of educated people, few First Nations families have that life experience.

Many of our people lack self-confidence, and forget that education takes many forms and has been with us for generations.

Our people learned at home from their parents and grandparents. Education was widely shared and was a lifelong experience. We lived off the land and thrived for centuries. Children grew up learning important life lessons from elders. Parents taught their children how to read and write in Cree syllabics.

A century ago, our people had a much higher rate of literacy than they do today, but that was in Cree.

People wrote to each other in Cree; church prayer books, Bibles etc., were in Cree. My Grandfather taught my Dad and his siblings Cree syllabics at home. When my uncle was in the army he would write home in Cree. The information he relayed remained secret.

Today, half our people live off-reserve and don't go to reserve schools, but the high dropout rate persists. There are other forces at work, and it should be up to the expert panel to point this out.

Housing, both on or off the reserve, is usually crowded and substandard, and not conducive to good study habits. The student's home environment can't help but play a major role in success at school.

As well, Indian education has been seriously underfunded over the years in spite of a rapidly growing First Nations population. Today there are more than 140,000 First Nations people in

Saskatchewan, of whom more than 70,000 are younger than age 20. This is placing enormous strain on our education infrastructure.

Every year, more and more of these young people enter the workforce poorly equipped for the competitive world that lies before them.

This is a necessary but complex conundrum to solve. The answers don't begin and end at the schoolhouse door; it involves the attitude in the community and the home.

We must remember that Canada contains a variety of First Nations languages and cultures. Also there are more than 600 First Nations, all at varying stages of development. What works for one First Nation will not necessarily work for another.

Because of the complexity of the problem, I suspect the expert panel is most likely to recommend a process rather than present a hard and fast plan. To develop a one-size-fits-all solution will not be in keeping with the diversity of First Nations.

HARPER'S BELATED MOVE ON NATIVE EDUCATION

Five years after scrapping the Kelowna Accord, Prime Minister Stephen Harper is proposing to start all over again. In a letter earlier this month to Shawn Atleo, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Harper said he is open to the idea of a "Crown-First Nation gathering" to discuss education, economic development, governance reforms and accountability.

All these issues and more were part of the accord negotiated in November, 2005, at Kelowna, B.C. by then prime minister Paul Martin and the 10 premiers with the leaders of various aboriginal groups, including the AFN. The accord committed Ottawa to spend \$5 billion over five years improving the delivery of education, among other things, to aboriginal peoples.

But Harper disowned the Kelowna Accord when he became Prime Minister two months later. In office, Harper has made progress on the symbolic front of the aboriginal file, including the apology for abuses in residential schools and the ratification of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. But he has been slow to embrace Kelowna-like measures to improve the quality of life for First Nations and other native peoples. As a result, the problems have continued to fester, notably in native schools. In the United Nations index of educational attainment, Canada's status Indians rank 71st in the world, as opposed to the No. 1 ranking for non-aboriginal Canadians.

"Regarding First Nations education, we agree that this matter is an important priority for advancement," said Harper in his letter.

Better late than never.

DAN'S CORNER Ennis' Solstice

Once again it us the time when our Mosums (Grandfather) Sun stops his journey south and turns to begin his journey north. It is Winter Solstice. Winter Solstice is the point upon the Great Hoops of Life where the sacred relationship between the Great Mother, and the Great Father becomes more observable to the People. Our original instructions teach The People that we should make special observance of this natural phenomenon through ceremony and through passing on those Original Instructions, which are our Traditional Teachings. We learn through this sacred relationships that are in balance and in harmony and that are loving, equal, respectful and nurturing. Winter Solstice is when our People slow down all of our activities and sit quietly in order to be in the Present in the Now, in the Beginning. It is also a time for remembering and honoring our sacred oneness with all of Great Creator's Creation and our oneness with the Love and the Peace and the Joy that is Great Creator.

The love, joy, peace and compassion which is evident at this time is ever so good for our hearts and what is good for our hearts and what is good for our hearts is good for our Earth Mother.

To all of our relatives and we are related we send you strong loving and healing energy so that today your heart, your home, your lives and your spirit are filled with love, peace, joy and happiness.

We send strong healing energy to our relatives who are suffering in pain, in turmoil or are otherwise in need of love and healing. May the sacred life force of Love bring healing and may it lift heavy hearts.

We share your love, peace, joy, and laughter. Your joy and happiness lifts the hearts of Grandmother and Grandfather.

Whenever we are in ceremony your are all carried within the light of our hearts and are lovingly remembered through light, through peace and through love.

From our lodge to yours we send your light, love, peace and healing.

All My Relations, Dan Ennis

DEAN'S DEN, ... "Once"

Once there were valleys
Where green meadows grew
And my dream-bed come morning
Was covered with dew,
Once there were mountains
Where the sky brushed the peaks
With foothills for pillows
And snow-covered cheeks,

Once there were rivers
Where streams were the tears
With water-fall fountains
White-capped chandeliers,
Once there were forests
Where trees were the fleece
Great stands stood in folds
Whose crowns filled each crease,
Now the west wind whispers freedom
And the high hawk hangs and hopes
Field flowers form and fill in faith
Yet ... the climate scarcely copes! - D.C. Butterfield

Quotes On Education

Education is a progressive discovery of our ignorance - Will Durant, (1885-1981) Author, Historian

Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper. -Robert Frost

Education is a movement from darkness to light. -Allen Bloom

I have never let my schooling interfere with my education. -Mark Twain

Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one. -Malcolm S. Forbes

Education is not an automatic process. The learner must care, must strive, and sacrifice for it - Pat Paul, Elder Tobique First Nation