

In Our Words – Deceit and Deception

Bomgiizhik –

So, after the Robinson, Huron and Superior treaties took place, of course the government just kept rolling on down the line and they just named them Treaty 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, so on. And so, the numbered treaties fell shortly after the Great Lakes Treaties and by then they had everything down packed.

Dabasaaniwqwat –

Treaty 1 was done August 3rd, 1871. It was signed nation-to-nation, the treaty was with the Anishinaabe and the Queen. And when they say the treaties are legally binding, they are not talking about Canadian law, they are talking about consultation and consent, that's what makes the treaties legally binding.

When the treaties were signed, the clan mothers were satisfied with the three main articles of treaty: health, education and shelter. They were okay with the idea that the Queen was going to pay for those things. And what happened there was when they were satisfied with the content of the treaty they instructed the leaders to sign off on that document.

Bomgiizhik –

So, what people, I think, need to know is that the numbered treaties are very different to the Superior-Robinson Treaties and the Superior-Huron Treaties, there is absolutely no talk about health care, and there is no talk about lodging, and there is no talk about education. And, we didn't need those things from the British. But because of the small pox and the eradication of the buffalo on the plains thousands and thousands of indigenous people were starving to death. And of course, it was the British, the crown, that took advantage of that situation and implemented those three things which is now the basis of the Indian Act.

Dabasaaniwqwat-

The Queen's representatives said, when they had that article of treaty, that treaty article, they said, "I'll take this to Ottawa," the commissioner said, "I'll take this to Ottawa, and when I come back we'll enforce the treaties." And that never happened, instead, five years later they legislated the Indian Act.

Dave Mowat –

So, the plan of the industrial school has failed by 1861. In 12 years, it has failed. And so, the plan shuts down but the school of course stays there, physically, it stays there. And then, they just go on the provincial plan, whatever it was at the time. And then, 1867 Confederation, John A. MacDonald writes the majority of the British North America Act. Includes section 91(24) and that give the Dominion of Canada federal authority to now control our people as been said "from cradle to grave." And it gives them the legislative authority to then enact the Indian Act.

Giidaakunadaad –

In 1876 that was a direct assault on the clan system, this is the system that was created for our extermination. This was not a brand-new plan 1876. If my research is right, the Gradual Civilization Act, which later became the Indian Act, began in 1857. So, this is a 20-year plan on how to break down this system.

Dabasaaniwqwat –

You see chiefs and councils came in in 1876. Articles of treaty happened in 1871, who signed the treaties? The clan leaders signed the treaties, it wasn't chiefs and councils. And, that's where the grand chief, and various organizations, the AFN, the AMC, SCO... they fall under this system here. They fall under the Indian Act. Indian Act chiefs and councils.

Giidaakunadaad –

In some communities this was legally enforced, they held elections at gun point. And, you had to be Christian to participate in those elections. And that's how the chief and council system came to be. That was a direct act of violence on our systems of governance. And then, now, what's happening today, this is no longer seen as legitimate, and chief and councils are misunderstood as our leadership.

Dabasaaniwqwat –

See over here, we don't call them chiefs over here. Chiefs is a derogatory term, and we don't call them chiefs. We call them Ganigaadiziiad, Ganigaadiziiad the ones that lead, Ganigaadiziiad.

Giidaakunadaad –

When you call for a chief, you actually think that you're calling for some kind of a municipal representative, or provincial representative, or a territorial representative. No. you are actually calling an administrator of a policy of government. These are not accidents. This was complete and total political strategy to tear down every single institution of the indigenous people that existed here.

Dabasaaniwqwat –

See, when you buy land under that process, under treaty land entitlement, when you buy land, what you are saying is the Queen owns that land. That's what you are saying. And, the Queen doesn't own that land. We own it, we own all the land. What they're doing is they never honoured the treaties, so what they're doing is they're living here for free. They're living here for free. That's what they're doing.

The queen said that "we'll hold this land in trust for you." So, why would we let her hold that land in trust for us? That land is ours. The parks, the forest and all of that is ours yet. They can't hold it in trust, why are we allowing her to hold this in trust?

Dave Mowat –

The reserve system wasn't supposed to last. It was an experiment. It was a school of civilization. We will get them civilized and turn them into farmers and then we will get rid of the Indian reserve. Because, then we have created the enfranchisement policies. And enfranchisement will now allow us to remove the reserve off the political map.

Bomgiizhik –

How we had seen the reserve boundary was very simple. That was a place indigenous people could stay. And, that was going to be used for them. And that, the settlers were not allowed to live on there. But that didn't mean we were to be contained on there. It didn't mean that they couldn't live off the reserve. So, the treaty was to protect their right to live off the reserve, with special protections for the reserve. But in actuality, the crown turned it around and used the reserve as a place to colonize. And, they started to remove the people off the lands so there could be a free for all in resource extraction.

Giidaakunadaad –

These were all acts of colonialism. The only problem now is that this thing, this policy, coupled with residential school and social engineering, you know, all of that. The only problem is we're still existing. Through all these different – whether it was legislated genocide, or it was all out physical genocide. Or you know. What do they call it in residential school... cultural genocide. We were not supposed to be existing. We were supposed to be gone by now.