

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
Media Clips**



**Résolution des questions des pensionnats indiens
Canada
Manchettes**

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November 16, 2006

Counterpoint: Native Assimilation is not the Answer

National Post

By: Harvey McCue

In a recent editorial, this newspaper praised former Ontario cabinet minister Alan Pope for his proposal to relocate the Cree residents of the troubled Kashechewan First Nation from their reserve near James Bay to the outskirts of Timmins, Ont.

But Mr. Pope and his media admirers are merely reiterating what many Canadians have argued for generations is the salvation for First Nations: "Get off the reserve and get a life!" In fact, this sentiment began in earnest with Duncan Campbell Scott who, as the deputy minister for Indian Affairs in the 1800s, officially commented numerous times that the only good Indian was an extinct one, or words to that effect.

If the residents of Kashechewan agree to it, the relocation proposed by Mr. Pope will result in their assimilation. The same would be true of any other isolated First Nations communities that accept this route.

Elsewhere, other First Nations, such as the Cree on the Quebec side of James Bay, are actively pursuing economic and social progress, and rejecting the conventional wisdom that says success for First Nations lies in **assimilation**. The principal difference between the communities on the two sides of the bay is that the Quebec Cree have acquired authority over their lives.

That authority has enabled the Quebec Cree to fashion a growing regional economy, a quality of life that combines ancient Cree traditions with Western modernization and a cultural confidence that is the bane of Quebec separatists. They have found a successful course that does not involve assimilation. Life is not perfect for the Quebec Cree, but they do have the tools to work at resolving their problems.

The Ontario Cree, by contrast, have been virtually ignored. The communities there have been left to subsist on federal government handouts rather than developing policies for their own benefit. That subsistence has led to what some might call a culture of dependence.

The condition stems from the views of an army of officials, who have been unwilling to see northern Indian communities as self-reliant. And so Ottawa continues to provide a minimal level of services, which ensures that a wholesale social collapse will be avoided but ignores any meaningful consideration of how these communities might become successful. Consequently, the residents lack the tools, i.e., the infrastructure, the institutions, the fiscal resources and, more importantly, the self-determination to do much more than make do with handouts.

Indeed, the federal government doesn't really know what "self-government" means for First Nations. If the Quebec Cree had relied on Ottawa to achieve their local and regional governments, their nation would now be in tatters. Moreover, the process to achieve Indian self-government - as Ottawa defines it -- is mired in bureaucracy with little guarantee for success.

Relocating northern residents is the easy way out, the quick fix. The slow strangulation by the umbilical cord of government handouts is not a viable option either. Instead, we should support Kashechewan and similarly situated First Nations in creating a northern economy, and ensuring that they have the power necessary to take control of their land and resources.

For two centuries, officials and politicians have been trying to figure out how to get rid of Indians. As their strategic roles as key players in the early economy of the fur trade and as military allies waned, the preferred strategy came to be moving them as far as possible from developing areas onto remote, isolated patches of land. Duncan Campbell Scott predicted that residential schools would possibly be the final step in the process. Failing that, the Indian Act was used as an instrument of the state to get rid of Indians through the loss of Indian status.

Mr. Pope's suggested urban relocation of an entire community is just another step in that desperate process. Assimilation is simply not a justifiable or worthy goal for this country to pursue.

Ontario : Aboriginal Protestors Erect Highway Blockade

The Ottawa Citizen

An **aboriginal campaign** to erect posters at the site of a land claim in Eastern Ontario descended into a tense road blockade yesterday after several army vehicles came upon the site. Tyendinaga Mohawk residents posting signs on the contested land used several vans to block Highway 2 near Deseronto for nearly half an hour after five army vehicles approached. The town is the site of a planned 140-home subdivision -- but the Tyendinaga Mohawks say the land belongs to them.

Destroying Cave Only Way to Gather Information

Times Colonist

By : Jeff Rud

Removing the roof of a cave on Skirt Mountain in Langford was the most feasible option to collect information, said Justine Batten, director of the archeology branch in the Ministry of Tourism Sports and the Arts.

A representative of the Songhees **First Nations** charged yesterday that destroying the cave, which is sacred to aboriginal people, is a form of **cultural genocide**.

"The roof of the cave was looked at by a professional geologist and found to be too unstable to be entered and worked within to conduct the assessment," Batten said. "So the only way to safely examine this cave is to take the roof off."

Batten said the assessment requires digging test holes in the floor of the cave and there was concern that the roof wouldn't hold up under that kind of activity. "We're not going to ask anybody to risk their life."

The only way to know if this is a protected site "is if we can obtain some verification that it falls within the parameters of the legislation," she said. "If we don't have that verification, we're not protecting it in any event."

"There is often the situation with archeology where, to preserve the information, you in fact have to destroy the site. The idea is if you can't maintain the site itself, you then at least collect the information so that everybody in the future has access to that information because it tells us something about our past."

The floor of the cave is covered with cobbles, or large stones. Batten said the hope is that "in the sediment beneath those cobbles, there may be cultural information" such as human remains, tools or other evidence the cave was used in the past. If such material is found, it may be extracted, she said.

Tourism, Sports and the Arts Minister Stan Hagen is in China and was unavailable for comment.

The controversy over the cave comes at an interesting time. A ceremony of "reconciliation" with the Songhees is tentatively scheduled for the legislature Saturday to deal with the fact the provincial house of government was built on Songhees lands.