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Laforme was right to quit TRC body

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To the Editor,

It's a good thing that Judge Harry Laforme has resigned from what has been called the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

As someone sworn to uphold the law, and see justice done and not delayed, it must have been more than frustrating for him to be part of a body whose mandate explicitly subverts and denies justice to tens of thousands of survivors of Indian residential schools—and to the countless children who died in them, including in the Alberni residential school.

When I wrote to Mr. Laforme after his appointment as head of the TRC, I mentioned this to him, and I asked him how he could justify heading a body whose three commissioners were chosen by the very churches they were supposed to investigate. And, how the TRC could uncover admitted criminal acts in residential schools when Laforme declared that no criminal investigation would occur.

I also asked how the TRC could claim legitimacy when it has no power to subpoena documents, issue summonses, or allow names to be named at its forums.

Mr. Laforme never replied, but the issue remains: how can the TRC be considered legitimate when its own mandate prohibits any TRC commissioner from hearing or accepting any testimony involving wrongdoing at an Indian residential school?

An inquiry into Indian residential schools, whose final report is not allowed to mention wrongdoing? That's kind of like a murder investigation that cannot discuss any act of violence.

Where I studied law, that kind of arrangement would have been called a conspiracy to deny justice. And trying to pass off such an explicit coverup as a bond fide inquiry would have been called what it is under the law: an act of fraud.

Kevin D. Annett,

Nanaimo

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