



**THE TRUTH IS HARD  
BUT  
RECONCILIATION WILL BE HARDER**

**SENATOR MURRAY SINCLAIR**

**What kind of relationship did we have?**

**Relationships between people**

**VS**

**Relationship between peoples**

**Indigenous self-reliance was the norm  
Mutual dependence and support was part of  
the early relationship**

**The Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Treaty  
of Niagara of 1764 gave assurances**

**Land rights and Indigenous self-determination  
were assured**

**Pre and Post Confederation Treaties followed  
that pattern**

**Canadian legislation did not**

**What kind of relationship do we have?**

**Colonization and Domination**

**Imposed Poverty with resulting consequences:**

**Recent high incarceration**

**60s scoop and ongoing child removals**

**Health problems**

**Housing needs**

**Damaged water supplies**

**Poor historical education for everybody**

**Lack of Indigenous self-respect**

**Lack of respect by Non-Indigenous people**

**Loss of mutual respect**

**Individual and Systemic Racism**

**Racism is not just about hate.**

**Racism is primarily about  
the presumption of superiority  
and  
the assumption of supremacy**

## **How did we get here?**

**Racist beliefs were the essence of the colonizing approach by European forces from the outset (e.g. Doctrine of Discovery) but like any bad relationship, the colonizers hid those beliefs until the advantage was gained.**



## **Thomas King in “The Inconvenient Indian”:**

**At the Lake Mohonk conference in October of 1886, one of the participants, Charles Cornelius Coffin Painter, who served as a lobbyist for the Indian Rights Association, pointed out the obvious, that the treaties made with Native people had been little more than expediencies.**

**In his talk, Painter quoted General William Tecumseh Sherman, who had said that treaties "were never made to be kept, but to serve a present purpose, to settle a present difficulty in the easiest manner possible, to acquire a desired good with the least possible compensation, and then to be disregarded as soon as this purpose was tainted and we were strong enough to enforce a new and more profitable arrangement."**

**This is the same General Sherman who philosophized that "The more Indians we kill this year, the fewer we will need to kill the next."**

**Canada waged war through the use of law  
from the time of Confederation to  
colonize, assimilate and educate.**

**Pre 1867 laws vs post 1867 laws**

*“When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write, his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian.*

*He is simply a savage who can read and write.”*

*“It has been strongly pressed on myself, as the head of the Department, that Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence,*

*and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men.”*

**Prime Minister John A. MacDonald**  
**House of Commons**  
**May 14, 1883**

**“I want to get rid of the Indian problem...  
Our objective is to continue until there is  
not a single Indian in Canada that has not  
been absorbed into the body politic and  
there is no Indian question, and no Indian  
Department, that is the whole object of  
this Bill.”**

**DM Duncan Campbell Scott - 1920**





Thomas Moore before and after his entrance into the Regina Indian Residential School

# UN Convention on Genocide (1949)

## Article 2

**In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:**

**(a) Killing members of the group;**

**(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;**

**(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;**

**(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;**

**(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group**

# **What kind of relationship do we want?**

**Canada seems to want a relationship of equality, justice, peace and friendship.**

- Better programs and services**
- Recognition of “compatible” rights**
- Addressing racism and discriminatory practices**
- Education of Canadians**

**There is a feeling among some that Indian Residential Schools were a good idea done badly and that Indigenous people still should assimilate.**

**Others resent Indigenous people making costly demands.**

**“You can have your rights, but not on my dime.”**

**Indigenous people want immediate needs addressed using their own customs and traditions**

**Ultimately want their right to self government and self determination entrenched beyond the reach of the Federal Government and the Provinces**

**They also want the resources for their ongoing existence to be shared from the resources of the country as other levels of government do.**

**There is a very clear disparity in the views of  
each side.**

**Reconciliation will not be achieved so long as  
one side sees it as a question of rights...  
and the other side sees it as a question of  
benevolence.**

**Reconciliation and renewing the relationship;  
what will it take?**

**Understanding**

**Commitment**

**Leadership**

**Planning**



**What are the hurdles?**

**Understanding**

**Commitment**

**Leadership**

**Planning**

**The TRC Final Report has 94 Calls to Action  
which together constitute a plan for  
Reconciliation**

**There will need to be a willingness to change  
the way we do things, both for Indigenous as  
well as non-Indigenous people and institutions**

**It will take time**  
**It will take change**  
**There will be a cost.**

**But the cost of doing nothing,  
or of continuing to do the same thing,  
will be even greater.**

**We have failed at what we have tried.**

**We need to move on.**



**"Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."**

**(attributed to Albert Einstein)**