

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nz9KcPtDa94>

1) Why Treaties Felt “Good” at First (Indigenous view)

Phil’s core point: **Indigenous leaders weren’t naïve — they were adapting to a world that had permanently changed.**

What they wanted from treaties:

- A survivable future after ecological collapse (buffalo, fur depletion)
- Tools for a new economy (farming transition)
- Education (“**the cunning of the white man**” = reading/writing)
- Health supports
- Protection for children and community continuity

Why they trusted the process:

- Treaty-making was understood as **sacred** and validated through ceremony, gifts, pipe, wampum, verbal commitments, “spirit and intent.”

2) The “Two Ships Passing in the Night” Problem

Kathleen frames the clash as **two incompatible systems colliding:**

Indigenous framework

- Treaty = **relationship + sharing + moral commitment**
- Verbal promises = binding
- Ceremony = ratification
- Law = Indigenous law + sacred obligation

Crown framework

- Treaty = **land acquisition + investor certainty**
- Written word = the only “real” contract
- Enforcement = courts applying **colonial law**
- Goal = control of land/resources for settlement and extraction

Result: **A built-in mismatch that the Crown benefitted from.**

3) What People Actually Got (and why it’s still explosive)

Examples they give:

- Small reserves (often less than what was discussed/needed)
- Farm implements promised, then withheld
- Schools promised (but this becomes the opening to later catastrophe)

- Cash annuities that became symbolic and insulting over time

Phil's personal example:

- Treaty 1 annuity: **\$5/year to this day**
- Treaty date cited: **August 3, 1871**
- "Outside promises" add-ons exist (e.g., "the buggy"), and modern disputes hinge on translating 1871 language into today's reality.

Big conclusion:

- **Complaints started "the day after"** because delivery didn't match spirit/intent.

4) The Crown's Leverage Was Life-or-Death

This session makes the power imbalance explicit:

Tools of coercion and "reward/punishment":

- Deny food rations
- Withhold agricultural tools
- Seize weapons (so people can't hunt)
- Permit systems controlling livelihoods (trap lines, etc.)
- Force dependence, then police dependence

Kathleen names this as formal government policy, not rumor:

- Edgar Dewdney is cited as implementing **reward and punishment**
- Coercion existed alongside treaty-making
- Add disease impacts: smallpox, TB, flu → mass death → weakened bargaining power

When people are starving and sick, "consent" becomes coerced.

5) "Indian Lands Were Open for Business"

They connect past to present:

- Then: mining/logging/hydro/farming could access Indigenous lands with few constraints
- Now: the same logic shows up as "certainty for third-party investors"
- Modern conflict is still about **resource access** and who controls the wealth.

6) The Indian Act (1876) = The Enforcement Machine

They call it plainly:

- **Racist document**
- "Our apartheid document"

- A global outlier: a law targeting a specific “race of peoples”

What it did (as described here):

- Installed Indian agents as on-the-ground enforcers
- **Pass system** (permission required to leave reserve)
- Replaced Indigenous governance with imposed election structures
- Removed women’s governance power
- Banned cultural practices (potlatch; sun dance/thirst dance)
- Forced residential schooling
- Blocked resistance:
 - banned raising money for land claims
 - blocked hiring lawyers
 - threatened disbarment for lawyers who helped

Key quote used:

- Duncan Campbell Scott (1920): eliminate the “Indian problem” until there’s no “Indian department.”

7) Why the Indian Act Still Exists (the hard truth)

Phil explains something uncomfortable but real:

- Poverty + long dependency produces fear:
 “If we get rid of the department... who’s going to look after us?”
- Some provisions feel protective (Kathleen’s examples):
 - tax treatment on-reserve
 - structural familiarity
- So repeal requires **a replacement framework**, not a vacuum.

8) Change Is Happening — But Through Modern Treaties / Self-Government

They cite progress channels:

- Modern treaties (e.g., **Nunavut, Nisga’a**) where governance is recognized
- Many Nations elect by “custom of the band” now (though still requires Minister sign-off)
- Cultural bans lifted; ceremonies revived; rebuilding intergenerational knowledge is now urgent

The Emotional Core of the Session

Phil's story of humiliating welfare gatekeeping and the license-plate demand is doing something bigger than history:

- It shows how the system **engineered dependence**
- Then used dependence to **humiliate and control**
- Which destroys trust across generations

What This Session Sets Up Next

Treaties + Indian Act lead directly to the next inevitable mechanism:

Residential schools

Because once the treaty includes "schoolhouse" and the Indian Act enforces assimilation, the "education promise" becomes the pipeline into **forced removal and cultural destruction**.