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**Jesse Wente: Beyond Reconciliation: Looking Towards the Future of Canada**

Reconciliation is a generational project that can only be completed through the involvement and participation of all communities (i.e. Indigenous and non- Indigenous). The project is not necessarily about “re-conciliation” since that would require a time period when the Indigenous people and the European settlers to of had a fair, healthy, and at peace relationship which was never the case. The project therefore is more about the conciliation, in other words building a functioning relationship between two groups that was never there before.

Indigenous peoples have been subjected to a “forging” process of the formation of a new nation that was being constructed, known as Canada today. The Indigenous culture was perceived as a threat to the building of the new nation which lead to the extreme horrific action of cultural genocide such as forcing Indigenous children to attend residential schools where they were forbidden to exercise their cultures. This was known as an effective and easy way to deal with the “problem” of indigenous peoples “getting in the way” of European projects. The last residential school only closed 22 years ago, in 1996. This may seem as a shock to many Canadians because they were never educated on Indigenous exclusion and their unfair-treatment, however “ignorance can only be an excuse once”. Canada cannot hide from its history; the stories of Indigenous struggles must be heard in educational institutions so that people will begin to be more aware so that actions that involve change towards the unfair practices that are still present today. Practices such as the sterilization of Indigenous women and the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in Child-welfare and the legal system Indigenous people are rightfully the sovereign peoples of this state, however that right has been resisted through illegal acts of the disobedience of treaties and through the attempts of erasing their cultures hence, genocide.

Indigenous peoples included the European settlers when they first arrived. They attempted to convey the message that their territories which they have occupied “forever” to have enough resources to share with their newly acquainted Europeans. The diversity of the “forest” (i.e. the land) has the capability of providing enough for all its members to sustain a healthy life. Their attempts in conveying this message is apparent in the treaties that were signed and agree upon by the European settlers. An example would be the “Dish of One Spoon treaty which conveyed a strong message through an analogical perspective of how all individuals only need one spoon since it unfair and unnecessary to have two. The reason of why one must only have a singular “spoon”, or a single “scoop”, is to make sure that everyone gets their fair share that depends on a healthy survival. All treaties, including this one has been broken despite them being legal documents. Indigenous peoples reconcile on the daily due to their ancestors' torturous treatments. Their history is dominated by these horrific actions, which generates anger towards the ones who occupy their lands and who create solutions through their European lenses that are detached from the traditional Indigenous perspectives and way of life.

Canada has a chance to fix the issues revolving Indigenous affairs. It is only a 150-year-old country, still in a malleable state of its formation thus the possibly of change. Canada took a dark path into its creation, however that does not mean it is unable to shift into a brighter one. It is through education that the realization of the best course of action needed into shaping our country’s future.

“You plant a tree not to enjoy the shade, you plant it so others can enjoy the shade” -Jesse Wente