

their families. More recent immigrants have struggled with racism and misconceptions as they come to take their place in the Canadian nation.

Despite the many barriers to reconciliation, this Commission remains cautiously optimistic. At the Alberta National Event in March 2014, TRC Honorary Witness Wab Kinew spoke about the changes that are already happening across this land that give rise to hope. He began by explaining that all day he had been carrying with him

a ceremonial pipe, a sacred pipe, which when you bind the two sides together—the stem and the bowl—it offers us a model of reconciliation, of two forces coming together to be more powerful than they were otherwise. So it's important for me to come up here before you all and to speak Anishnaabemowin, and a little bit of Lakota, and to carry a pipe because it sends a message. It sends a message to those who designed the residential school system, that you have failed. We were abused. Our languages were assaulted. Our families were harmed, in some cases, irreparably. But we are still here. We are still here. So in honour of my late father, Tobasonakwut, a Survivor of St. Mary's residential school in Rat Portage, Ontario, I wanted to say that. I so wish that he could have seen this—the final event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission—so that he could see how this country has changed. How when he was a child, he was told that he was a savage. He was told that he was nothing. He was assaulted, taken away from his family, taken away from his father's trapline. To see the change that has happened, where today in Canada, there are tens of thousands of people from all walks of life gathering together to set that right and to stand up for justice for Indigenous peoples.

The world has changed in another way as well; the old dichotomy of white people versus Indians no longer applies. Look around at Canada today. There are the descendants of Europeans. There are the descendents of Indigenous peoples. But there are also the descendants of Arab nations, of Iran, of the Slavic nations, of Africa, of the Caribbean, Southeast Asian, Chinese, and Japanese peoples. The challenge of reconciliation may have begun between Indigenous peoples and Europeans, but now the project of reconciliation will be undertaken by the children of all those nations that I just mentioned. And though the world has changed, and Canada has changed, we still have a long way to go.... We are all in this together. Let us commit to removing the political, economic, and social barriers that prevent the full realization of that vision [of reconciliation] on these lands. Let us raise up the residential school Survivors, and their example of courage, grace, and compassion, in whose footsteps we walk towards that brighter day.<sup>284</sup>

At the community level, where contact between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples is often minimal or marred by distrust and racism, establishing respectful relationships involves learning to be good neighbours. This means being respectful—listening to, and learning from, each other; building understanding; and taking concrete action to improve relationships. At the Victoria Regional Event, intergenerational Survivor Victoria Wells said,