



Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta

To Protect, Promote, Bring to Life, Implement, and Sustain the True Spirit and Intent of Treaty No. 8 as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the waters flow.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

First Nations Education Act Is The Same Car With New Paint

Edmonton, Alberta – April 16, 2014 – With First Nations finally getting a look at the new *First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act*, the discovery that all the changes to the act are cosmetic has caused deep concern among the First Nations of Treaty 8 [Alberta].

The five main objections by the Chiefs from across Canada are claimed, by the Government of Canada, to be addressed under the new revision but First Nations are unconvinced. “For every point the government claims to have addressed I can give you a reason it doesn’t alleviate our original issue,” states Chief Richard Kappo, Grand Chief of Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta.

One of the concerns was to have First Nations control over First Nations Education. “They have definitely changed the name [of the act] but the core of it remains the same as before. Ultimate authority to dissolve, change or transfer any entity that handles First Nation education still resides with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs,” states Chief Kappo before continuing, “while an oversight board has been created, they simply advise the Minister, he is still able to unilaterally do anything he wants in any given on-reserve school.”

Another outstanding concern is around statutory funding and funding to support Indigenous languages and cultures. However, the act, only states that a portion of funding First Nations would already be receiving must go towards languages and culture. “It’s not new support. We are getting the same amount of funding, still lower than our provincial counterparts, and all they have done is added a section to the act that says we have to spend part of that same funding to teach language and culture. They have just painted an old car a new colour,” states the Grand Chief.

“We are looking for something that is developed in the true spirit of co-operation and co-development, we are willing to work with the Minister on anything that will be developed, from the ground up, into a system that will help our children meet our educational goals. The old way of including First Nations input as a footnote to the process hasn’t been successful in the past and won’t work moving into the future,” states Chief Kappo.

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