



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.

HEAD OFFICE

Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation
P.O. Bag #5
Valleyview, Alberta T0H 3N0
Telephone: (780) 524-3307
Fax: (780) 524-2711

SUB OFFICE

c/o Santa Fe Plaza
18178 – 102 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5S 1S7
Telephone: (780) 444-9366
Fax: (780) 484-1465

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

First Nations Education and a Conservative Sleight of Hand

Edmonton, Alberta – October 24, 2013 – With the latest release of the draft legislation for a First Nations Education Act the Harper government is trying to pull off quite the magic trick. The uproar among First Nations regarding this newest piece of legislation is concealing a much more terrifying amendment threatening to be passed in silence.

Bill C-428 is poised to undergo its third reading in the House of Commons and it proposes amendments to the *Indian Act* that will have a huge impact on First Nations Education within Canada. The bill itself is going to make changes to the *Indian Act* currently the only piece of legislation that deals with on-reserve education. The trick and the insidious nature of this bill is that it is a private member's bill. "As a private member's bill, not only did Bill C-428 survive prorogation of Parliament but it has not required any consultation with First Nations whatsoever. They are trying to change the *Indian Act* without actually talking to the Indians," states Rose Laboucan, Portfolio Chief of Education for Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta.

This bill has been put forward by Rob Clarke, a Conservative MP from Desnethé – Missinippi - Churchill River, and because it is a private member's bill, it has ignored many of the rules that would normally apply to upcoming legislation. "Not only have we not been consulted on these changes, changes which will affect our children's education and future, but this bill [Bill C-428] conflicts with the proposed First Nations Education Act. You have two different pieces of legislation that are going to do two different things, what is the government trying to do?" states Chief Laboucan.

The frustration and anger at the new First Nations Education Act has seemingly allowed Bill C-428 to work its way, unnoticed, into almost becoming law. "Is the First Nations Education Act a smokescreen for this bill? Myself and the other Chiefs of Treaty No. 8 have many questions about the changes that are happening in First Nations education and they are not getting answered by this government," states Chief Laboucan before continuing, "Let me be clear, Mr. Harper, we need to be consulted on any changes to the education system, it doesn't matter if it is a private member's bill or not. These are our children. You cannot make laws and decisions without talking to us first."

Contact:

Greg Posein
Communications Coordinator
gposein@treaty8.org
18178 – 102 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5S 1S7
Ph: (780) 444-9366

###