



"THE SALMON WILL SAVE THE WORLD"

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Newsletter now called "Wulustuk Times"

Each month we try to gather and publish the latest, most current and relevant native news events and top stories for our readership. Proceeding with this concept, we feel that a well informed person is better able to see, relate with, analyze and grasp a situation more effectively when equipped with the right tools. Through the stories we present our aim is to provide easy understanding, comprehension and a good background behind a story. This is the format we try to follow for all our material.

Web access:

Not only our local readership is serviced with this format of news production, but the Internet audience can benefit as well. A talented and seemingly tireless worker, Sharon Green, from Ontario helps us to reach an audience around the world by putting up our Wulustuk Times newsletter on her web site each month. Just click on Gathering Place First Nations and in there find our newsletter, Wulustuk Times.

Contact:

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FIRST NATIONS LABELED " TERRORISTS" BY HARPER GOVT. - AFN DEMANDS REPUDIATION

Assembly of First Nations National Chief demands that Federal Government Immediately Repudiate and Remove Reference to First Nations from Military's Terror Manual List

OTTAWA, April 1 /CNN Telbec/ - Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine today demanded that the federal government immediately remove any reference to First Nations in a Department of National Defense draft counter-insurgency manual listing international terrorist threats.

According to a report by The Globe and Mail, radical Native American organizations such as the Mohawk Warriors Society are listed in the training manual as insurgents, alongside other insurgent groups.

"Any reference to First Nations people as possible insurgents or terrorists is a direct attack on us - it demonizes us, it threatens our safety and security and attempts to criminalize our legitimate

right to live our lives like all other Canadians do. Just being referenced in such a document compromises our freedom to travel across borders, have unimpeded telephone and internet communications, raise money, and protest against injustices to our people," stated AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine.

"I am calling upon Prime Minister Stephen Harper to immediately and without reservation, reject and remove any references to First Nations from all versions of the training manual."

"It is shocking and outrageous to learn that the Canadian military would consider First Nations people as insurgents or equate us to Hezbollah or Hamas. Not only is there not a shred of evidence to make this link, First Nations have always served Canada well by their contributions to the Canadian services. Such absurd allegations only serve to undermine respect for the military and lead us to believe we will not be able to rely on their protection the way other Canadians do."

Moreover, the federal government has also recently threatened that it would aggressively audit and possibly cut off funding provided to First Nations organizations who participate in, or support a peaceful National Day of Action on June 29th. This, taken with the report that we are included in the list of insurgent organizations in the military's manual, raises serious questions about the federal government's respect for freedom of speech and freedom of assembly for First Nations people. It appears that they want to silence us "The proposed June 29th National Day of Action is intended to bring focus to and generate awareness of the deplorable social - economic status of First Nations peoples in this country. Too often, First Nations poverty and the injustices suffered by our communities are not well understood. We aim to begin changing that by reaching out to Canadians and by putting our issues and our solutions front and center. First Nations people are people of integrity and we will abide by the rule of law while exercising our right to free speech," said the National Chief.

The Assembly of First Nations is the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada.

"THE SALMON WILL SAVE THE WORLD"

In Memory: Herman Saulis Vision "The Salmon will Save the World"

Not very often in this life do we get the opportunity to learn from the other side. Most of us believe in an after life and in the Creator. We have an inkling that we are all connected to something bigger than we are and that somehow we fit into a Divine plan. We may never understand what life is really all about or the bigger impact we have with our own lives. The one thing that I am assured of with this Vision is that each one of us is important and that our lives do have greater meaning. I offer this to everyone in the hopes that in sharing my father's Vision, it will assist others in the living of their lives. To me, my father became a healer and has inspired me to have a healing journey of my own. Woliwon Dad.

It was March, 1994. It all began with my father saying that he had a visitor the night before. He was in hospital in Scarborough, Ontario, close to where my eldest sister lives with her family. He had been admitted because of a heart attack. Like most of our parents, my father had heart disease and high blood pressure. These conditions are extremely common among

our people. I attribute this to the pressure we all live with trying to make the world a better place for our families and community. Unlike the other heart attacks my father had before, this one would be the last of a few that would ultimately take his life. On this day, my mother and I found him looking upbeat and anxious. My mom and I were a bit surprised but glad that he seemed to be feeling better. I asked my father what he meant by a visitor the night before. As my father grew emotional, my mom and I knew that something significant had happened.

My father started to tell us the story of his visitor. He said it began with pain that had awoken him at 1:15 a.m. He knew that time because he looked at the clock upon opening his eyes. A voice started speaking to him from somewhere behind him, over his left shoulder. When he tried to turn toward the voice, on his left side, he felt pain. The voice told him not to turn to his left but to look down to the right. When he did this and shifted toward the right side, he didn't feel the pain. The voice told him that he had spent too much time working from his left side and that he needed to change his orientation to his right. According to the voice, this was because the left was associated with all of the negative things in life: anger, jealousy, hate, envy and that the right was associated with love, happiness, hope and all the positive things in life.

As the voice was speaking to him, my father noticed that the voice had come closer and was near his hospital bed. The voice asked him if there were anything that he would like to ask, anything he would like to know about life. My father said that ever since he could remember, he always wondered why we are here and why he was here.

The voice responded by saying that the question was a very simple question to answer. Human beings are put here to make each other happy, if you are happy, then the people around you will be happy. That is all that is asked of us. At this time, the voice told my father to go ahead and look to see what the voice looked like.

My father said that he saw a beautiful man. A man with a beautiful, clear complexion and a beard, a most magnificent beard. His beard emitted light from each hair in it and had an awesome, glowing power. The man had such a strong, handsome, yet wise face. The man was dressed as a sea captain. He had a hat on like that of a captain of a ship. My father then felt that he knew what God looked like. God clasped his hands together and told my father that those were all of his faults. God then slid open his hands and said that his faults amounted to nothing and that the open hands of love are what really matter. God told my father that if you make others happy, even if it hurts you a little, that it is worth it. If you are happy, then those around you will be happy.

God then moved over to the right hand side of my father's bed. He told my father to look down to the right. My father said that when he did, he saw what God told him was the Fraser River. In that river, my father saw what he thought was the whole river boiling with silver. God told my father to look at the salmon and how happy they are to be doing what they were put on Earth to do and that the salmon never got confused about what they are put here to do. My father then realized that the silver were so many salmon in the river with their silver bellies flowing in and out of the water, splashing freely. God told my father that the salmon will save the world.

God directed my father to tell others of what he had learned and seen and that he needed to tell people about heart disease and its prevention. God told my father not to worry about how others would react for God would be standing behind him wherever he was talking and telling of his

experiences. God told my father not to worry about the up coming tests and that everything would be okay. God told my father to do what he was told. My father said that when he looked at the clock again, it was 1:45 a.m.

Needless to mention, my family was very moved by my father's Vision and we have all discussed its interpretation and meaning for our own lives. Given the fact that my father passed away almost two weeks after this incredible event, I have always felt compelled to share it in some meaningful way with the rest of my community. I know that this is what my father would have wanted and I am so honored to finally have an opportunity to bring all of this home. My father worked for a long time to help those suffering with alcohol and drug addictions to the point of giving until it hurt him. He was so happy to see others succeed and to see their lives turn around. His work brought the first rehabilitation centers to our communities like the Rising Sun in Eel Ground and our own Rehab Center here. While my father had his own issues and challenges to overcome, he did his best to help his family and the communities he served.

Three months after my father died, my mother saw a program on t.v. that was talking about the Fraser River and the salmon. She said that she saw so many salmon in the water that it appeared to be boiling in silver, just as my father had described in his Vision. She said that watching the salmon, appearing so happy, that she realized the meaning in the message of the Vision: that it is the attitude of the salmon that would save the world. At the end of the program, my mother saw the spawning salmon, that they were on their way to spawn and die, and yet those salmon were bubbling over with what looked like happiness.

I believe that this Vision is important for our people because it shows us that while we are here, our happiness is the most important thing to God. By being happy and making other happy, we can help each other. Given that we have many issues that could cause us grief, anger and fear, we have to learn to overcome all of it so that our future generations can live freely and happily. Our people have been put here to protect our land and its resources. Our language and our culture show us how to do that and how to live life like our brother the salmon: with purpose and direction. While we all know that the salmon has left our river, we are still connected. I believe that in working to restore ourselves, we can find a way to restore our river and the resources given to our people. I believe that we need to be who we were created to be. Only in being that, will we find a way out of the despair and confusion that has so many of our people locked into lifestyles that not only hurt the people themselves, but also their children the next generations to come. My intention is not to offend but to share my understanding.

An Elder from British Columbia, whose people live along the Fraser River, explained to me that salmon people know the power and importance of the salmon. She explained how from the salmon, all things are connected: the water to the earth, to the moon and to the planets, to the winged creatures through the eagle and to the four legged creatures through the bear and to the two legged creature through us. She said that her people would pray for our people that the salmon would return to us and that we would return to ourselves. Another Elder explained that when the salmon are migrating up the river, that the male salmon jumps with the help of the female salmon, and in this way, they need each other for the continuation of their species.

We all have something important to share and my father's Vision was his final contribution to us. It now belongs to all of us and I hope that we can all benefit from it.

Kasamul, Dad
All my relations,
Patty Saulis, youngest daughter

"SEE YOU IN HEAVEN" A FOND FAREWELL TO A STATELY LADY, RITA JOE WHEN I AM GONE

I leave a memory of laughing stars

Spread across the sky at night.

Try counting, no end,

that's me, no end.

Just look at the leaves of any tree, they shiver

That was my friend, now yours

Poetry is my tool, I write.

Excerpt from Rita Joe's poem When I am Gone

ESKASONI -- He whispered a Mi'kmaq prayer and crumbled freshly dug soil through his fingers before tossing it over the coffin of Rita Joe Monday.

"See you in heaven," Walter Young said of his old friend, the unofficial poet laureate and speaker of the Mi'kmaq First Nation.

"She was our hero," he said, his voice filled with emotion as other mourners squeezed past to repeat the Mi'kmaq ritual.

The Eskasoni senior was among the hundreds of mourners who packed the Holy Family Parish Catholic Church overlooking Bras d'Or Lake Monday, to pay final respects to the beloved Rita Joe.

The mother of 10 children died March 20 after a long struggle with Parkinson's disease.

More than 500 men, women and children offered prayers, songs and poetry and a few moments of laughter as they recalled the work, words and influence of the 75-year-old poet.

Members of her extended family reflected on her life, including great-granddaughter Kirsten Jasmine Denny, who sang Rita Joe's translated communion song called Kmie'wimkewey, accompanied by the Mi'kmaq choir.

Rev. Martin MacDougall and Rev. Robert MacNeil offered prayers in both English and Mi'kmaq.

"We are sad today because we won't see Rita Joe again, but we ought to be happy because she has gone home after a journey of a lifetime," said Rev. MacDougall.

The Mi'kmaq Grand Council and spiritual leaders from many of the 13 aboriginal bands in the province attended both church and graveside services.

Uniformed RCMP and Cape Breton Regional Police provided the honour guard.

An officer of the Order of Canada and one of the few non-politicians ever called to the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Rita Joe received honorary degrees from Mount Saint Vincent University and Dalhousie University. She also won a National Aboriginal Achievement Award.

Born Rita Bernard in Whycomagh in 1932, she was in foster care until she was 12, when she was sent to the Shubenacadie Residential School where she wasn't permitted to speak Mi'kmaq.

She would later relearn her ancient language and become a mentor to younger generations in the ways of the Mi'kmaq culture and language.

Rev. MacDougall said the hardship she faced in her childhood as an orphan never stopped Rita Joe from being a powerful, quiet influence on natives and non-natives of all ages.

He noted that she used her gifts "to ease the pain and suffering in the world because she knew pain and suffering should not have the last word."

"She was so charitable in doing good works . . . so inspired. . . . She got the job done.

"And she wasn't a glory seeker, but did it all quietly, like a soft breeze going through trees.

"She was a peacemaker and a peacekeeper," said Rev. MacDougall.

"I can feel her spirit here," said one of her sons, Basil Joe, after the ceremony.

"When I was singing and playing the drum today . . . when they were bringing her into the church . . . I could feel her and her hospitality around me."

Rita Joe's books include Songs of Eskasoni (1988), Lnu and Indians We're Called (1991), Kelusultiek (1995) and Songs of Rita Joe: The Autobiography of a Mi'kmaq Poet (1996).

She got her zest for writing in the late 1960s when Micmac News published one of her poems. In 1978, Halifax's Abenaki Press published Poems of Rita Joe, a slim paperback of 26 poems, many with Mi'kmaq translations and glossary of Mi'kmaq words.

HARPER NIXES \$5.1 B KALOWNA ACCORD AIMED TO TACKLE NATIVE PROBLEMS

p.paul

OTTAWA (March 22) - Parliament has voted to resurrect a \$5.1- billion program for First Nations health, education and housing but the racist-led minority Conservative (Harper) government will ignore the measure.

A private member's bill spearheaded by the previous Prime Minister, Paul Martin, requiring the government to "fulfill its obligation under the Kalowna Accord" easily passed the House of Commons by a 176-126 vote on Wednesday (Mar. 22)..

Harper says that the Accord designed to help Native people was solely recognized and agreed to by the previous government and therefore is inconsistent with this government's path and direction. The new government is pursuing a chartered course of its own which leaves very little room or resources for the Kalowna Accord.

The present Minister of Indian Affairs Jim Prentice also made his terse statement on the subject saying that this government believes that "money is not the real problem".

In retrospect, one former Progressive Conservative Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney offered full support for the Accord shortly after its announcement in 2005.. Mr. Mulroney believed the Accord presented a unique opportunity for the government and native people to work together in solving problems in health, housing, education, lack of jobs and economic instability that have plagued native communities for decades.

The 2007 budget forwarded by the Harper government has failed native people immensely, leaving them out of the economic picture as if they did not exist or were less than worthy of equal recognition or consideration to others..

In promoting the Kalowna Accord, Paul Martin envisioned a better day for native people that would one day put a permanent end to social and economic stagnation and deprivation in native communities. The Kalowna Accord generally won overwhelming support from most sectors in Canadian society for the historical breakthrough and opportunities it presented to native people.

Unfortunately, within a few short months after the Kalowna Accord was announced the Martin government was defeated and the new regime reversed many of the Liberal initiatives that were in place, and literally shattered most of the gains and advances made by native people over the past few years.

FED AND DIA OFFICIALS SAY NATIVE "HARD LINE" COULD SPARK VIOLENCE

p.paul

TOBIQUE FN, - Once again the federal leader Stephen Harper along with the minister of Indian Affairs, Jim Prentice are at loggerheads with their clientele, Canada's native people.

The current issue at hand is the widespread dissatisfaction and anger over the snub in the 2007 budget that generally sidestepped their interests.

The native reaction was quick and one of outrage as many native leaders have indicated that both the leadership and the people could very well resort to taking definite steps to remind the federal government to take a closer look at their situation .

In fact the government squeeze and pressure tactics have escalated dramatically since the Six Nations stand a year ago regarding the Rambo-like takeover of traditional Mohawk lands for corporate interests and use in industrial and housing development.

Other similar confrontations have occurred as a consequence over the past several months in different parts of Ontario for the same reason, i.e. trampling of native rights and takeover of Indian lands..

A ripple effect across the country has already started and the native resolve is not decreasing by any means.

So far, Jim Prentice, an apparent novice in Indian matters, has shown remarkable ignorance and an incredible lack of finesse in dealing effectively with native problems that stretch locally to nationwide scope.

There is a serious concern whether Mr. Jim Prentice should continue with his "boy scouting " promenade through the present maze of obstacles facing him and his government, or should he tender his resignation immediately before he creates a major disaster too complex or impossible to fix.

Recently Minister Prentice was quoted to have warned native people of speaking out publicly and too forcefully and organizing forces for barricading, blockading public roads and highways in defending their lands from being taken over by outside agencies for exploitation and industrial development.

Rather than acting on their behalf, the Minister of Indian Affairs, Jim Prentice has taken the opposite direction by siding with his superior, Stephen Harper; who is bent on undermining and destroying many impressive advances and leverages made by Native people in recent years.

For instance, within hours after the PC victory in a federal election last year, the \$5.1 B Kalowna Accord which was destined to help native people right across the board, was immediately quashed and thrown out by Harper.

The Accord would have tackled the massive problems and dysfunctions faced by native people in health, housing, education, economy, etc. had it been allowed to run its course. This would also have moved the desperate native conditions up a notch higher to match the rest of the country.

"Not to be" according Jim Prentice and prime minister Harper, indicating that higher national priorities come first and foremost to appease their constituents, and blockading and closing roads and highways would be counterproductive.

As Prentice coldly puts it "Native leaders and First Nations will be responsible for the consequences if they continue with their heated rhetoric about the coming summer of barricades, blockades and balaclavas.

Many native nations and their leaders took this warning to mean that the Native issues are not important in the 2007 federal budget, nor was it intended to relieve the misery, poverty and economic instability in native communities. Conversely, there are clear signs indicating that the federal agencies will unlikely advance any workable resources to native people within the near future while the Harper government is at the helm.

The native nerve has been pinched with this 2007 shortsighted budget that literally ignores desperate aboriginal plight and conditions

Enter therefore, another era of collective native turmoil, public protests and demonstrations to fight an all-out battle of survival against a government bent on terminating native nations through legislation and angling to free itself of fiduciary responsibility for native people.

The 2007 Harper budget will go down in the books as one monumental 'terminator' designed to eradicate native identity and a permanently erase aboriginal nations from this land.

In addition, it will not bode too well with the poor, the needy, and the homeless who are as vulnerable and maltreated as native people and who essentially don't have a leg to stand on.

Harper has indeed embarked on a cruel and selfish journey with his pro-corporate budget.

BUDGET BACKLASH MAY TRIGGER A SUMMER OF PROTEST ACROSS CANADA

VANCOUVER - COAST SALISH TERRITORY, March 21 /CNW/ - "As sure as spring follows winter, Stephen Harper's Budget 2007 shall trigger a summer of Aboriginal protests from one end of this country to the other," predicted Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. The rage and anger of Aboriginal leaders continues to reverberate across the country in the aftermath of the release of Harper's Budget 2007. "In our view, this latest deliberate attack against Aboriginal people represents 'strike three' for the Harper government. First it was the complete rejection of the Kelowna Accord, second it was Canada's refusal to support the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People and now we have the announcement of \$21 million in new spending for Aboriginals in the face of a \$9 billion dollar surplus," added Grand Chief Phillip. "Enough is enough. Our communities have long since reached their breaking point," stated Grand Chief Phillip. "The internalized violence of poverty in terms of increasing infant mortalities, suicides, homicides, drug-related gang violence, child apprehensions and massive unemployment is dangerously close to flashing over to an outward expression of externalized violence in the form of roadblocks, rail blockades and more Caledonia-style occupations of disputed lands." Grand Chief Phillip continued, "Let's be clear. We do not need more Federal government welfare payments. What we do need is for the Government of Canada to fully meet its Constitutional and lawful obligations in the area outstanding land rights issues. We need the Government of Canada to take heed of the recently released Senate Report, entitled, 'Negotiation or Confrontation: It's Canada's Choice' which outlines the over 1000 outstanding specific claims across Canada. We need the Government of Canada to recognize and accommodate our Aboriginal and Treaty entitlements to the Lands and

Resources within our respective territories. Further, economic development needs to become a major priority within Federal Government spending. Currently, economic development represents only 4% of Federal Government Aboriginal program spending," stated Phillip. "Obviously the Government of Canada is not listening. Perhaps a summer of barricades, balaclavas and burning tires will serve to draw attention to the urgency of the desperate situation of the Aboriginal people of Canada," concluded Grand Chief Stewart Phillip. For further information: For further comment: Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, (250) 490-5314, President

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL PAYOUT BACK ON TRACK, SURVIVORS GET \$24K BY FALL p.paul

TOBIQUE FN, - A technical snag that developed in Saskatchewan a couple of years ago regarding the federal payout of over \$-billion settlement money to 80,000 former students of Canada's Indian Residential Schools Program has been resolved. This allows the process to proceed again on a normal schedule.

It is anticipated that the regrouping and prepping procedures for the huge payout will take several months to complete. A date somewhere around the fall has been suggested when the 80,000 former students will receive their estimated \$24K checks for the mental, physical, sexual and criminally abuse they suffered while confined in residential schools. Payments will vary according to the time spent in residence, the documented proof and kinds of abuse, trauma suffered and the loss of culture, language and intimate ties with family and community.

The last residential school closed its doors in British Columbia in 1994 after more than a hundred years of operation under various churches and the federal government.

Survivors have sought compensatory funds from the churches and government for over a half a century and only within this 21st century government is willing to offer compensation and settle the differences permanently.

During the years of legal wrangling, class action suits, delaying tactics by the government to agree on a payout figure, many of the former students died waiting for their payment.

For the many unfortunate students who have passed on over the half century delay, the latest information seems to indicate that the kids of the deceased will inherit some portion of the monies owed to their deceased parents.

Details on this alternate payment plan will be available in our future issues.

INMATES' RELIGIOUS RIGHTS SUPPORTED

By Judy Harrison. Thursday, March 08, 2007 - Bangor Daily News

AUGUSTA - Catholics, Protestants and Muslims joined representatives from Maine's tribes Wednesday in urging legislators to support a bill that would guarantee incarcerated American Indians the right to practice their religion.

The Legislature's Judiciary Committee heard testimony on LD 507, which would amend the Maine Human Rights Act to include the "accommodation of Native American religious practices or ceremonies" in state prisons and county jails. The MHRA currently outlaws discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodation, credit and education opportunity.

"This legislation is needed because the federal law has no bite to it," Rep. Donald G. Soctomah of Indian Township, the Passamaquoddy tribal representative who sponsored the bill, told the committee. "Prisoners have to sue to get their rights."

Denise Lord, associate commissioner for the Department of Corrections that runs state prisons, said her department supports the goals behind the bill, but suggested it might be included in the statutes that govern her department rather than the MHRA. She also suggested the language should cover all religions.

"My department is committed to moving forward on providing access to spiritual practices for Native Americans," she told the committee.

Lord said after the hearing that a federal lawsuit filed earlier this year in U.S. District Court in Bangor by Sacred Feather Native American Circle, a group of Indian inmates incarcerated at the Maine State Prison in Warren, has halted talks at that facility. The groups sued prison officials alleging that their constitutional rights to freedom of religion have been violated.

The group filed a similar lawsuit in 2003 that resulted in a settlement that included monthly smudging ceremonies but not the construction of a sweat lodge that prison officials have said poses potential security problems. That agreement expired in 2005 and the group refiled the lawsuit with a new attorney representing them.

Such action should not be necessary, Denise Altvater, director of the Maine Wabanaki Program American Friends Service Committee and a Passamaquoddy, told the committee.

"From its inception in 1870, the American Correctional Association has recognized and emphasized the role of religion in the correctional process as a primary rehabilitation tool to help reform prisoners, restore their values and prepare them to be productive members of society," she said.

"However, to this very day, the freedom of Native Americans to practice their traditional religious ceremonies in prison continues to be questioned in the courts and is notably absent from state legislation."

Altvater testified that the roots of the current clash were "embedded in the historical battle between Christian colonists and indigenous people." Indians are the only group of people in this country whose religious ceremonies were outlawed by the federal government, she said.

"Prisoners are people most of us would rather not think about and certainly not a group of people we want to grant privileges to," Altvater concluded. "Religious freedom is not a privilege; it is a basic, indisputable human right, inherent to human dignity which extends to all individuals in every segment of society."

David A. Ummah, a Muslim, supported the bill on behalf of Portland's NAACP chapter. He said that his decade in the military had shown him how American institutions could change.

"When I first went in in 1981," he said, "we had no Muslim chaplains and no space to pray. By the time I left, we had Imams and our right to daily prayer and to observe holidays such as Ramadan had been recognized."

Ummah also said that if the federal government could recognize that captured enemy combatants such as the prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have a right to practice their faith, then the state could and should recognize Indians' right to practice their religion.

Representatives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, the Episcopal Diocese of Maine and the Allen Avenue Unitarian Universalist Church in Portland also supported the bill.

Indians make up a small percentage of state prison population. Of the 2,080 incarcerated, Lord said after the hearing, 47 identified themselves as American Indian.

Information about the number of Indians serving sentences at county jails was not readily available Wednesday.

Lord also said outside the hearing room that Indians request to hold many ceremonies outside and their use of fire and sweet grass had made accommodation of their religious practices more difficult than the accommodation of Christian, Buddhist, Muslim and other practices that can more easily be held in the prison's nondenominational chapel. Although guards are not in the chapel when services are being held, Lord said, two of its four walls are glass and guards can see what is going on inside and intervene if needed. No one testified against the bill Wednesday. A work session on LD 507 is scheduled to be held at 1 p.m. Thursday, March 15.

RETIRED JUDGE HEADS INQUIRY INTO DEATH OF NB NATIVE

VANCOUVER - Retired B.C. Supreme Court judge William H. Davies was named yesterday to be commissioner of the public inquiry into the case of Frank Paul, who was allegedly dumped by Vancouver police in a downtown alley and later found dead. B.C. Solicitor-General John Les announced the inquiry on Feb. 22 in response to ongoing public concern about the case, and to ensure public confidence in the administration of justice. Mr. Paul was arrested by Vancouver police on Dec. 5, 1998, for being drunk in a public place. It is alleged that police later dragged the soaking wet man out of a drunk tank and into a police wagon to dump him in a cold downtown alley. The 48-year-old native man was found dead in that spot the next day. Hypothermia was listed as the cause of death.

DAN'S CORNER - Class System In Native Communities Flourishes

In Native society, prior to contact with the Europeans, there was no such thing as a class system. There were no richer and poorer; the ruling philosophy of "sharing" made sure of that. Even the leaders were no richer than others in the community. In fact, many leaders often temporarily had less than other members of their communities, because they gave away what they had when there was a need. Food was distributed within the community to everyone.

Everything was done with the ancestors and the seventh generation yet to come in mind, a reverent model of accountability. Leadership did not bring power, and people were not judged by the accumulation of their possessions. All of these attributes of feudalism were the legacy of the new post-contact dominant society, and they have caused a great deal of damage for Native people everywhere. In Native society prior to contact, all human beings were considered equal and related. Leaders were the servants of their people. But things changed. When I was a kid in the 1930s and 40s, all Indian people were still equal, equally poor by Euro-Canadian standards. But, according to these same standards, Indians were no part of a class structure. They were below poor. They were just Indians living in imposed desperation and Third World conditions.

During my lifetime, I witnessed this and I also saw it gradually begin to change until my people were also thrust into a class structure of the "haves" and "have nots," just like our colonizers. It began after the end of the Second World War. The bureaucrats and politicians suddenly remembered there were Indians living on those pieces of land, the reserve ghettos, and they decided to lend a hand to those poor, wretched people. They decided they would make some changes to make conditions more civilized, more like Euro-Canadian conditions.

And things did begin slowly to change for those poor Indians. The Indian agents began to appoint favored, compliant, "good" Indians to some menial/meaningless positions of authority by designating certain tasks to them. Thus was born the class system for Indians. In the 1960s, the federal government began pouring money into the reserve system, and the new class system experienced a steady growth from that time until today. In the 1970s and 1980s, the government began pouring millions and millions of dollars into the reserve system. The class system, by this time, was solidly entrenched within the reserve system, and many leaders forgot those traditional philosophies upheld by our ancestors.

Once these new breed of leaders, elected through the imposed Indian Act legislation, got into positions of power they became exactly like the Indian agent: unaccountable to anyone, and prepared to stay in power for life at all costs. They practiced favoritism, making themselves, their friends and their families rich from the public coffers. They practiced nepotism, building themselves and their families big houses with picket fences, buying big cars or trucks and building summer cottages for family to enjoy while others lived in substandard conditions or went homeless. They had learned the strategies well from the colonizers. It was a class system in all its Euro-Canadian splendor.

Today, all reserves in Canada have a class system. Most have a wealthy class, a middle class, a poor class and a desperate class. Yet, overall, Indian people remain below even the most desperately poor Euro-Canadian class.

We continue to copy our Euro-Canadian colonial masters by dreaming up ways to combat the rapidly growing disparity between the "haves" and the "have nots." We establish committees, conduct studies and surveys, and set up institutions and government departments as a way of appearing to look for solutions. We create, just like our Euro-Canadian masters, bigger, costlier, more cumbersome and more bureaucratic governments to fight poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, domestic violence, pollution etc. But it's all to no avail, just like our Euro-Canadian masters.

We fail to recognize, acknowledge, accept or reconcile just who the real culprit is in all of the man-made, self-destructive madness and abuse of power we are witnessing today. We turn on individuals instead of confronting power structures and systems, structure like the exploitive and exclusive free market economy, big business monopolies, the development-for-development's-sake paradigm. These are the structures constructed by small, fearful men with no vision. This kind of paradigm needs a class structure in order to thrive, and, unfortunately, some Indian people have bought into this. They have become victims of the colonial mind set.

DEAN'S DEN - Blood Brothers

Brave Bear and Bold Beaver together
Had survived from the time of the flood
And now they walked truly as brothers
Bound by the vows of the blood,
That binding oath to their friendship
Sealed by the nick of the knife
When the vital fluid flowed freely
And linked their kinship for life,
The promise to stand by each other
Blood-Brothers under the sun
Until Mother Earth is no longer
And the days of man's passage are done,
But the spirit called "Biased and Petty"
Was quick to take note and react
With nothing but selfish intentions
To interfere in the plan of the pact,
Thus a wedge was driven between them
And no matter how hard they might try
The dividing lever of - different

Proved to be a powerful pry,
So - the bear went over the mountain
To see what things were to see
And the beaver stayed in the valley
To dwell in the dammed water's lee,
Now, both of them missed the moral
Don't give in to the mean-minded game
But remember we're creatures created
Basic "Blood-Brothers" ... the same!
--D.C. Butterfield