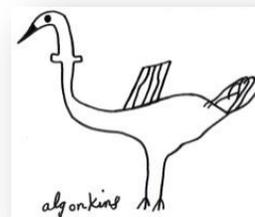


November 21, 2016

To: Dr. Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs

**Cc: Jody Wilson-Raybould, Minister of Justice and Attorney
General of Canada
Maryam Monsef, Minister of Democratic Relations**

Re: Canada's Constitutional Beginnings, Nation-to-Nation, and Reconciliation



On November 16, 2015 I wrote you a letter about Algonquin issues, what nation-to-nation means to Indigenous people, and what reconciliation means as well. In this letter I talked about Canada's constitutional beginnings in 1764 during the Treaty at Niagara. I needed to do this because many Canadians operate under the erroneous assumption that Canada's constitutional beginnings are rooted in 1867. In this letter I then moved into a discussion of how despite many Supreme Court victories Canada continually amends their land claims policy in ways that remains within the same policy goal: Indigenous extinguishment. This is not what nation-to-nation means nor is it reconciliation, yet these are the promises the Trudeau government campaigned on. Here is a small excerpt of my letter:

“Through Canada's termination policy agenda Canada is offering the Algonquin Anishinaabeg in Ontario only 1.3% of their land and a one-time buy out of \$300 million. This is the reality imposed on us despite Indigenous efforts to take the matter all the way to the SCC. There is so much wrong with this. First, it ignores court decisions, second, it denies the nation-to-nation relationship, third, it denies Indigenous Nations the right to maintain their own jurisdiction of their land and resources in a manner that provides them with their own resources to then construct meaningful governance bodies and mechanisms such as the right to generate an income from their land and water ways. There is no need for Indigenous nations to be dependent on the purse strings of oppression. We are capable Nations, with capable members, capable of making our own decisions. This last statement is not to deny the need for some assistance in addressing the worst that colonial oppression has resulted in.”

Over six months later on June 9, 2016 you responded to my letter. Within your letter you seemed to misunderstand what nation-to-nation really means yet you continue to use the words “nation-to-nation” and “reconciliation”. Actually I am not sure if you truthfully misunderstand or if you are doing a political dance around the very real issues I raise. In your letter you take it upon yourself to educate me about the Algonquin land claims process suggesting the idea that non-status inclusion is all that is required to make the land claims process legitimate. Trust me when I tell you that I do not need this education as this was the area of my doctoral work. Your evasiveness on the issues I raise are disenfranchising and annoying to say the least.

Experiencing your response as also disingenuous and patronizing, on August 23, 2016 I responded as I wanted to re-state clearly the core of what nation-to-nation and reconciliation really means to Indigenous people. In my response to your response I was as clear as possible. Here is a direct quote from this letter:

“If there are 200 acres of land, the settler Canada Nation is entitled to 100 acres and Indigenous Nations are entitled to 100 acres. From these equal amounts of acreage the Nations are then entitled to the full and complete jurisdiction of the land and resources to then build institutions such as education, health care, laws, 2 courts, and child care programs that speaks to them and their ability to acquire a good life.”

On October 18, 2016 you participated in a ceremony on Parliament Hill regarding the recent signing of the Algonquin Agreement in Principle (AIP) that, and as I stated in my original letter to you, only offers the Algonquin 1.3% of our land and a one-time buy-out of \$300 million. The ratification of the AIP was incredibly pitiful: the voter turnout was poor; “majority” was not a defined term in the AIP; codified within the AIP was an out-clause that the voting outcome c/would be ignored; and a two stage ratification process was not a part of the process. While this was the case you called the signing of the Algonquin AIP “a momentous milestone and a significant step forward on renewing Canada’s relationship with the Algonquins of Ontario.” Here is a link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/canada-ontario-and-algonquins-sign-land-claim-agreement-in-principle/article32420336/>

Recently Policy Options published an analysis of the AIP ratification process: <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/november-2016/deeply-flawed-process-around-algonquin-land-claim-agreement/>

Canada, Ontario, and the liberal government should be embarrassed to impose these land claims processes and agreements on Indigenous people who through oppressive power many are forced to participate. Nation-to-nation and reconciliation cannot be achieved through a power structure that manipulates people into submission and participation.

By now I trust that I have been very clear in teaching you what nation-to-nation means. While I sent you this second letter in August, you have not responded. My goal in sending this current letter is to let you know that I remain interested in learning how you justify what the liberal government is doing to Indigenous Nations beyond evasive and patronizing rhetoric.

All three of these letters are posted publicly at www.lynngehl.com.

Sincerely,

Lynn Gehl Ph.D
Agonquin Anishinaabe-kwe