



The horrific news yesterday that hundreds of unmarked graves of children were uncovered at the former Marieval Indian Residential School reveals again the truth of the ongoing atrocities committed against Indigenous peoples. We, as Indigenous peoples, understand this as a form of genocide that started with the very youngest of innocent lives – children who had no idea of where they were being taken and what was going to happen to them. Young lives ripped away from their families to never again experience kinship and love, someone to tuck them in at night, kiss their boobos when they were hurt, or tell them they were loved and that they mattered.

While these ongoing investigations into gravesites at residential schools continue, Indigenous peoples are suffering. As we struggle to make sense of our place in the approaching recognition of Canada Day, we are painfully reminded of the impact that policies of governments and religious institutions have had on the lives of Indigenous peoples, for us today and for our ancestors. The genocidal policy of residential schools is not only history – it is an ongoing lived reality for people who went to these schools and for their families who must continue to relive this pain and grieving.

Barry LaBillois, President and Chief of the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council shares the following statement:

*I am the son of a residential school survivor. When my father returned from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, he said that the experience was not what he expected. He thought the TRC would offer him some counseling. But instead, it only opened old painful wounds – things he tried to bury deep inside and not think about. I feel this pain and trauma again now. Like my sisters and brothers, I hesitate to talk to others for fear of causing further harm. I believe we cannot begin to heal as a country until all the buried truths are revealed.*

*Hearing the news about the former Marieval Indian Residential School has had a traumatic impact, opening old deep wounds and retraumatizing Indigenous peoples. Canada Day is an opportunity to heal as a nation – it gives us a day to reflect and draw attention to our relationship with one another. It is a time for leadership to demonstrate to Canadians how to talk about these issues – that Canada Day can be a day of truth and reconciliation.*

To date only 9 of the 94 calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Report have been implemented.

The New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council is the voice for status and non status Indigenous peoples who reside off reserve in the province of New Brunswick.

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