

Unit 9

Taking Action

"The fact of the matter is that there was never a time since the beginning of colonial conquest when Indian people were not resisting the four destructive forces besetting us: the state through the Indian agent; the church through the priests; the church and state through the schools; the state and industry through the traders."^{*}

From first contact until today, First Peoples have taken action to protect their ways of life in diverse ways. A continuum of resilience, resistance, and activism can be traced through different time periods.

In the early years of colonization, First Peoples often used what could be considered to be a nation-to-nation approach, through appeals, petitions, letters and speeches to government bodies. Other forms of resistance were also taken, such as refusing to participate in the creation of reserves.

But governments placed more and more restrictive obstacles in their way. In 1927 the Indian Act was amended to make it illegal for First Nations to take their concerns, particularly land issues, to court.

In more recent years, First Peoples have used, and continue to use, a variety of means to take action against the injustices of colonization.

Essential Understandings

- First Peoples in BC and elsewhere in Canada have always resisted the forces of imperialism and colonialism both individually and collectively.
- Taking action can come in different forms, from raising awareness and making requests and petitions, to disruption, protest and blockades.
- The types of actions taken by First Peoples in response to colonialism have changed over time.

Guiding Questions

- In what ways did First Peoples in the past take action against colonialism?
- How are First Peoples taking action to achieve justice today?
- How has resistance impacted Indigenous survival?
- How did/do colonial forces try to counteract resistance? What roadblocks were put in their way?
- How did the types of action taken by First Peoples change over time?

^{*} George Manuel, *The Fourth World*, page 69.

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Focus on Learning Goals

While many or all the First Peoples Principles of Learning and BC Learning Standards may be relevant, the following are suggested as a focus in this Theme Unit.

First Peoples Principles of Learning

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions

Through the understandings gained in this unit, students come to recognize the historical consequences of the actions taken by the agents of colonization, and also the possible consequences of their own actions.

BC Learning Standards

Focus Content Learning Standards

BC First Peoples 12

- Provincial and federal government policies and practices that have affected, and continue to affect, the responses of B.C. First Peoples to colonialism
- Resistance of B.C. First Peoples to colonialism
- Role and significance of media in challenging and supporting the continuity of culture, language, and self-determination of B.C. First Peoples

Social Justice 12

- Know processes, methods, and approaches individuals, groups, and institutions use to promote social justice

20th Century World History 12

- Human Rights movements, including Indigenous peoples movements

Visual Arts 12

- Roles of and relationships between artist and audience in a variety of contexts
- Influences of visual culture in social and other media
- Traditional and contemporary First Peoples worldviews, stories, and history, as expressed through visual arts

Drama: Film and Television

- Traditional and contemporary First Peoples worldviews, history, and stories communicated through moving images

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Resources

This is an overview of the required resources for the activities in each Investigation. Additional optional sources are mentioned in the activities.

Investigation 1

- *The Road Forward*. Marie Clements. National Film Board, 2017. https://www.nfb.ca/film/road_forward/

Investigation 2

- 9-1 *When Did It Happen?* page 305
- 9-2 *Chief Maquinna Speaks Out About Potlatch Laws, 1896*, page 306
- 9-3 *Taking Action in the Klondike Gold Rush, 1897*, page 307
- 9-4 *Victoria Conference 1911*, page 308
- 9-5 *Victoria Conference 1911, Delegates*, page 309
- 9-6 *Statement of the Gitga'at Chiefs, 1913*, page 310
- 9-7 *Advisors or Agitators? Words of Politicians*, page 312
- 9-8 *Advisors or Agitators? First Nations Responses*, page 313
- 9-9 *We Honour Our Grandfathers Who Kept Us Alive*, page 314
- Native Brotherhood newspaper, *Native Voice*. Issues from 1947 to 1955 online: <http://nativevoice.ca/>

Investigation 3

- 9-10 *Kanehsatà:ke Resistance*, page 315
- 9-11 *Kanehsatà:ke Resistance, Exit Slips*, page 316
- 9-12 *Kanehsatà:ke Resistance, BC Response*, page 317
- 9-13 *RCAP, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996*, page 318
- *Oka Crisis: How It Started*. CBC, 2015. 2:36 min. <https://youtu.be/fShsLqN01A0>
- *Kanehsatake 270 Years of Resistance*. National Film Board of Canada, 1993. 1 h 59 min. Online at https://www.nfb.ca/film/Kanehsatake_270_years_of_resistance/
- *Braiding Histories*, Susan Dion. UBC Press, 2009.
- RCAP website: <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples>
- “Revolution is Alive.” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/28/canada-pipeline-protests-climate-indigenous-rights>

Investigation 4

- *Their Voices Will Guide Us*. National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. <http://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NIMMIWG-THEIR-VOICES-WILL-GUIDE-US.pdf>
- *Moose Hide Campaign Learning Platform for K-12*. Website, <https://education.moosehidecampaign.ca/>
- *29th Annual Feb 14 Women's Memorial March for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women*. Access Television, 2020. 5:29 min. <https://youtu.be/MWczHXHmnJA>
- Women's Memorial March website, <https://womensmemorialmarch.wordpress.com/>
- *Moose Hide – The Beginning*. Province of BC, 2017. 1:33 min. https://youtu.be/_uIHsWjfyd0

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Investigation 5

- REDress Project. Access Online Here: <http://www.redressproject.org/>
- “Shoes on the steps of the Art Gallery” CTV News. <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/1-000-shoes-line-art-gallery-steps-friday-in-memory-of-women-killed-in-b-c-1.4718358>
- Students can examine a different point of view by author Terese Marie Mailhot. See her article, “If I’m Murdered Or Go Missing, Don’t Hang a Red Dress For Me.” Terese Marie Mailhot, *Huffpost*, 2017.
 - https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/terese-marie-mailhot/if-im-murdered-or-go-missing-dont-hang-a-red-dress-for-me_a_23019892/

Investigation 6

- *Pictograph*. 6.27 min. <https://vimeo.com/132751963>
- 10 Ways To Be An Ally To Indigenous People, *Loose Lips Magazine*, March 2018. Linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc730>
- This source from Amnesty International can be used as a follow-up: 10 Ways to be a Genuine Ally With Indigenous Communities. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc731>

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Outline of Investigations

These Investigations have more activities than most teachers will incorporate into their units. It is not expected that you will use all of the activities, or follow the sequence as it is described. The activities are intended to be adapted to fit the needs of your students and classroom.

The activities are intended to inspire ways that you can respectfully include relevant First Peoples' knowledge and perspectives in your course.

For more information, see Using The BC First Peoples 12 Teacher Resource Guide, page 6.

1. What Do We Know About Action and Resistance?
 - a. The Road Forward
 - b. Action Headlines
 - c. Action in the News
2. Early Activism and Its Consequences
 - a. How Long Have First Peoples in BC Been Taking Action?
 - b. Forms of Early Activism
 - c. Resistance and Roadblocks
 - d. The Native Brotherhood of BC
3. Kanehsatà:ke Resistance and its Consequences
 - a. Face-to-Face
 - b. Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance
 - c. An Indigenous Perspective
 - d. Perspectives in BC
 - e. Canada's Response: Action and Inaction
 - f. Reflecting on Resistance
4. Honouring the Lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
 - a. Women's Memorial March
 - b. The Moose Hide Campaign
 - c. Where Are We Now?
5. Arts in Action
 - a. Learning Stations
 - b. Diversity of Artistic Responses
 - c. Artistic Expression in Action
6. Student Action
 - a. Youth Action
 - b. Speech Making
 - c. What Can I Do?
 - d. Allies and Allyship
7. Give Back, Carry Forward
 - a. What Did You Learn?
 - b. Documenting Learning

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1. What Do We Know About Action and Resistance?

Introduce the theme of Taking Action with activities that engage students' prior knowledge and explore contemporary examples of resistance and other forms of activism.

Questions for Inquiry

In what ways have First Peoples taken action against colonialism?

a. The Road Forward

 *The Road Forward*
by Marie Clements.
National Film Board, 2017. 1
h 41 min. https://www.nfb.ca/film/road_forward/

A suggested way to introduce this unit is with the viewing of the video *The Road Forward*. It is a unique, feature-length musical documentary by Indigenous filmmaker Marie Clements that includes some of the key content and important themes of this unit. It also relates to some topics in Unit 4, Acknowledging Rights. The video is set in BC, and features prominent Indigenous artists who are musicians, composers and actors.

The Road Forward weaves three main threads through the video:

- Discussions of some key historical events in which BC First Nations took action by organizing to pursue justice and their Indigenous Rights and Title. These include the formation and work of the Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood of BC, and the organization of the Constitution Express in 1980.
- Musical sequences, some of which reflect the historical events, and others that reflect forms of injustice such as Indian Residential Schools and Missing and Murdered Women and Children.
- Personal interviews with the musicians, who discuss who they are and how their art is involved in taking action for the pursuit of justice for Indigenous people.
- Viewing the video
 - How students view the video will depend on your situation. It will probably have the most impact if students can watch it together in one sitting.
 - An outline of the sections of the video is given on the opposite page.
 - Closed Captions are available, which may help students fully understand the lyrics of the songs.
- During viewing: Students can record their reactions as they view the documentary. They could write words or phrases, make notes, or draw sketches.
- Following the viewing, give students an opportunity to reflect on the video. They could first discuss their reactions in small groups, or write a personal reflection.
- In groups or as a class, discuss questions such as:
 - What new information did you learn from the video?
 - Which sections moved you the most?
 - Did any aspect of the video inspire you? If so, in what ways?
 - How would you summarize the video for someone who hasn't seen it?
- There is also an educational component on the National Film Board website that can be accessed by schools that are subscribed to the NFB's Campus plan.

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Outline *The Road Forward* (Marie Clements, NFB, 2017)

Time	Sections	Notes
00:00:00	Introduction	The filmmaker scans pages of the <i>Native Voice</i>
00:02:50	<i>Music: Indian Man Chant</i>	Enacts the formation of the Native Brotherhood
00:08:00	Native Brotherhood recollections	Original members and descendants recall the formation and work of the Native Brotherhood
00:14:50	Male musicians introductions	
00:16:20	<i>Music: This is How it Goes</i>	Shows aspects of discrimination against First Nations women, and the origins of the Native Sisterhood
00:22:50	Native Sisterhood recollections	Members of the Native Sisterhood discuss the values of the organization
00:27:50	Female musicians introductions	
00:29:40	<i>Native Voice</i> significance	Discussions about the origins of the Native Brotherhood's newspaper, the <i>Native Voice</i> and its significance to First Nations communities.
00:33:20	Pursuit of Indigenous Rights and Title	Tom Berger and the early pursuit of Indigenous Rights and Title; Early legal cases: White and Bob; Calder. Ed Newman's thoughts on
00:38:30	<i>Music: Good God</i>	Reflecting on Indian Residential Schools
00:41:20	Musicians' personal journeys	The musicians discuss what motivates them to use their music to take action against the struggles of First Peoples
00:44:00	<i>Music: 1965</i>	Reflecting on discrimination, poverty and living conditions of First Peoples, with relevant headlines from the <i>Native Voice</i>
00:49:45	Musicians' personal journeys	Continued from earlier
01:02:30	George Manuel and the Constitution Express	George Manuel and the action take by First Nations to organize the Constitution Express in 1980.
01:06:10	<i>Music: If You Really Believe</i>	Based on the words of George Manuel, with images of the Constitution Express. Continues over recollections about the Constitution Express
01:17:45	What Would You Like to See?	The musicians state what important things need to be done for First Peoples
01:19:00	<i>Music: My Girl</i>	Reflects on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
01:29:50	<i>Music: The Road Forward</i>	All the musicians perform a song of optimism, with images of recent examples of Indigenous actions, such as Idle No More and Women's Memorial March
01:36:15	Credits	

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Formative Assessment Strategy

Use the Action Headlines activity to assess students' background knowledge about the range of ways First Peoples have taken action in the past and present.

b. Action Headlines

Have students think of their own examples of First Peoples taking action. The examples could be people taking action to resist, protest, or celebrate from long ago or more recently. They could be from around the country or province, or from their own community.

- Working individually or in pairs, ask students to write headlines that summarize their examples.
- They can write the headlines on the board, or on strips of paper that can be displayed.
- Students can discuss the actions behind the headlines and explain their example if necessary.
- Have students find common themes in the Action Headlines. What common goals did people have when they took action?
- Ask students to summarize some of the key issues that First Peoples have taken action over in the past.

c. Action in the News

Students can find out other recent or current examples of First Peoples taking action at the local, provincial or global level.

- Build on responses from the Action Headlines activity above.
- Discuss what types of sources students can use to find out recent information.
- Have students work in pairs or small groups to collect examples.
 - Ask students to identify the goals of the actions taken.
 - Students can make oral presentations to the rest of the class to present their findings.
- Students can classify the types of action taken in the examples found. (protest, legal process, blockade, awareness program, art, music)
- Further discussions could be held around related topics, including:
 - Media portrayals of acts of resistance. How are the acts or activism or resistance characterized in the media? How do media portrayals often reinforce colonization?
 - Analyse the role of social media in reporting or supporting protests and other forms of action.
 - What are some important considerations when reading news and social media? How can we be aware of false reporting?

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2. Early Activism and its Consequences

This Investigation looks at the long history of activism by First Peoples. Students can investigate a number of early examples of resistance, culminating in the Canadian governments' amendment to the Indian Act making it illegal to pursue land claims in court.


Questions for Inquiry

- What sustained First Peoples in their continual action for justice over more than 150 years of colonization?
- What methods have First Peoples used to take action against oppression and discrimination?

a. How Long Have First Nations in BC Been Taking Action?

Students can consider how long First Peoples in BC have been taking action to resist or protest colonialism. In this activity they suggest time periods in which a number of historical examples of resistance took place. Depending on the students' background knowledge and the topics you have already studied, you may want to do this as a whole class activity or in groups.

- Give students a list of historical events involving elements of resistance, protest, or other forms of taking action. They should span a long time period, from early colonization to today. You can create your own list, or use the examples given on Line Master 9-1, page 305, *When Did It Happen?*
- The events on the Line Master are:

 Line Master 9-1, page 305, *When Did It Happen?*


Events from "When did it Happen?" Line Master	KEY: Order and dates of the events
Orange Shirt Day begins	1. Tsilhqot'in War (1864)
Chief Capilano travels to London to meet the King	2. Many First Nations pull out surveyors stakes when they start to map reserves. (1880s onward.)
Tsilhqot'in War	3. Chief Capilano travels to London to meet the King. (1906)
The Nisga'a Nation takes the government to court	4. The Secwepemc, Nlaka'pamux and Okanagan Nations present Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier with the Laurier Memorial. (1910)
Many First Nations pull out surveyors stakes when they start to map reserves	5. The Nisga'a Nation takes the provincial government to court (Calder Case 1967)
Wet'suwet'en land defenders	6. Four women hold rallies in response to Federal government Bill C-45, starting the Idle No More movement. (2012)
Four women hold rallies in response to Federal government Bill C-45, starting the Idle No More movement.	7. Orange Shirt Day begins. (2013)
The Secwepemc, Nlaka'pamux and Okanagan Nations present Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier with the Laurier Memorial.	8. Wet'suwet'en land defenders (2020)

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- Ask students to put the events in order from the earliest to the most recent. They can cut out the strips to put them in order, or number them.
 - Ensure students understand that the purpose of the activity is not to get the “right answers” but to stimulate thinking about these events and the time frames when they occurred.
- As an extension, students could work together to suggest approximate time periods for the events, such as giving the decade when they happened, or do research to find dates.
- Students could create a timeline of these events, either individually, or as a class project mounted in the classroom. Other examples could be added as students progress through the unit.
- Ask students to reflect on the time span that First Peoples have been taking action against the injustices of colonization.

b. Forms of Early Activism

First Nations took action against the forces of colonialism in many ways. Students can examine a variety of primary source documents that illustrate various forms of activism in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

 Line Masters 9-2 to 9-5, pages 306 to 311.

- Students can read one or more of these primary source documents:
 - *Chief Maquinna Speaks Out About Potlatch Laws, 1896*, Line Master 9-2, page 306
 - *Taking Action in the Klondike Gold Rush, 1897*, Line Master 9-3, page 307
 - *Victoria Conference 1911*, Line Master 9-4, page 308
 - *Statement of the Gitga'at Chiefs to the McKenna-McBride Commission, 1913*, Line Master 9-6, page 310. (Optionally, use the transcript on page 311.)
- Students can work in pairs or groups to analyze one or more documents. Students can consider questions such as:
 - What is the context of this document?
 - What story does this document tell?
 - What relationships are involved in the story of this document?
 - What policy or event were the people taking action against?
 - What were their goals?
- Have students share their findings with the rest of the class.
- In groups or as a class, generate a list of different ways that First Nations took action in the past.

c. Resistance and Roadblocks


As a result of the McKenna-McBride Commission, First Nations began to work together to fight for Rights and Title, as well as other important issues such as education and health. However, the government continued to put roadblocks in place, culminating in the amendment to the Indian Act which made it illegal for First Nations to take their concerns to court.

- Allied Tribes. Students can research online to find out about the origins and actions of the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia.
 - For further examples of the work of the Allied Tribes, students can refer to documents in *Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation*. See excerpts from the minutes of the 1923 meeting with the Allied Tribes


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in Vancouver. *Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation 11/12*, Book 2, pages 28 to 30. This document includes a list of the First Nations representatives who were present at the meeting.

- Students can experience one of the interactions between First Nations leaders and the government that led up to the 1927 amendment restricting access to the courts. Two documents show how the federal politicians characterized the lawyer for the Allied Tribes in 1920, and the response of the Allied Tribes.
 - Line Master 9-7, page 312, *Advisors or Agitators? Words of Politicians*.
 - Line Master 9-8, page 313, *Advisors or Agitators? First Nations Responses*
- Students can read some excerpts from the book *The Fourth World* by Secwepemc leader George Manuel. They discuss some of the early resistance taken by First Nations, and the 1927 amendment to the Indian Act.
 - Line Master 9-9, page 314, *We Honour Our Grandfathers Who Kept Us Alive*. (The title comes from the title of the chapter that these excerpts were taken from.)

 Line Master 9-7, page 312, *Advisors or Agitators? Words of Politicians*.

Line Master 9-8, page 313, *Advisors or Agitators? First Nations Responses*

 Line Master 9-9, page 314, *We Honour Our Grandfathers Who Kept Us Alive*

d. The Native Brotherhood of BC

Students can tell the story of the creation and work of the Native Brotherhood of BC. The NBBC is considered to be the oldest active Indigenous organization in Canada. The Brotherhood started ostensibly as a union organization for fishers, but was also secretly keeping land and Rights issues alive in the communities. It developed into a province-wide advocate for First Peoples rights and equality. It still exists today to represent First Nations fishermen, tendermen, and shoreworkers in BC.

At the same time, the Native Sisterhood worked to support the goals of the organization, and advocate for First Nations women and families.

- Students can conduct a research or inquiry project into the origins, goals and consequences of the Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood of BC. Some possible questions to research include:
 - Why was the Native Brotherhood formed?
 - How have the goals of the Native Brotherhood changed over time?
 - How did the Native Brotherhood work to have Indigenous Rights acknowledged?
 - What was the role of the newspaper *The Native Voice* in the work of the Native Brotherhood?

Here are some suggested resources for researching the Native Brotherhood:

- Interviews with family and community members. Students may have family members who were, or still are, part of the organization.
- Primary source material: Read copies of the Native Brotherhood newspaper, *Native Voice*. Issues from 1947 to 1955 are available online: <http://nativevoice.ca/>
- Primary source material: Brotherly Appeal. Read a letter sent out in the early years of the Brotherhood to First Nations communities, ca. 1932. In “Native land claims letters : Nass and Skeena rivers area,” Indigenous Academia Resources website. Online at <http://summit.sfu.ca/item/10353>. Scroll down to File 23 to download

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the letter. (Note that the letter is only one page; the pdf file contains four copies of the same letter.)

- Video: *The Road Forward* https://www.nfb.ca/film/road_forward/. View or review the section of the video that highlights the Native Brotherhood. See Investigation 8-1a, page 288 and the outline of the video on page 289.
- Book: *The Native Voice : The History Of Canada's First Aboriginal Newspaper And Its Founder Maisie Hurley* by Eric Jamieson. (Caitlin Press, 2016.)
- Theses: The formation of the Native Brotherhood has been the subject of a number of university theses. Students may want to look at these for more detailed research. Students should be alert to the typical language and perspectives possible with academic works from the 1980s and 1990s.
 - *The Native Brotherhood Of British Columbia 1931-1950 : A New Phase In Native Political Organization*. Jacqueline Patricia O'Donnell. Master's Thesis, UBC, 1985. Linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc712>
 - "We Are Not Beggars": *Political Genesis of the Native Brotherhood, 1931 - 1951*. Peter Parker. Master's Thesis, SFU, 1992. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/56368034.pdf>

3. Kanehsatà:ke Resistance and its Consequences

One of the key turning points in First Peoples' relationships with other Canadians came in 1990, when the Kanehsatà:ke Mohawks and the town of Oka came into conflict over traditional lands. The long stand-off shocked many Canadians by the level of conflict, and had some long-lasting consequences as a result.

Questions for Inquiry

- What does the Kanehsatà:ke Resistance (Oka Crisis) teach us about resistance and protest through this formative moment in Canadian history?
- What are some consequences of the Kanehsatà:ke Resistance?

a. Face-to-Face

- Introduce the topic by showing the famous image of a Mohawk Warrior and a Canadian soldier face-to-face. It is readily available online, but one source is [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Face_to_Face_\(photograph\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Face_to_Face_(photograph))
 - Discuss students' reactions to the image.
 - Explain that this is a famous image in Canadian history. Ask if any students know what the photo represents.
 - After students discuss the image, you may want to discuss the same scene from a different perspective. See <https://mediaindigena.com/what-impact-did-the-oka-crisis-have-on-you/> (This image shows the extreme presence of the media in the conflict.)
- Have students do a gallery walk of other famous images from the conflict at Kanehsatà:ke. There are many images available online that you can use to create the gallery. One source is

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this CBC article: <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/oka-crisis-the-legacy-of-the-warrior-flag>

- Have students generate questions and observations from these images.
- Depending on students' background knowledge, discuss what students know about the Kanehsatà:ke Resistance, also known as the Oka Crisis.
- Students can view a news report from 1990 to see the level of conflict that had built up at Oka.
 - *Oka Crisis: How It Started*. CBC, 2015. 2:36 min. <https://youtu.be/fShsLqN01A0>
- Additional Resources for the Kanehsatà:ke conflict:
 - Interview: 30th Anniversary Interview with Ellen Gabriel. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-50th-anniversary-special-friday-1.4903581/years-after-oka-mohawk-activist-ellen-gabriel-says-indigenous-people-still-treated-as-dispensable-1.4903609>
 - Article: Developer Offers to Give Land Back. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/kanesatake-pines-gregoire-gollin-1.5204242>
 - Book: Gord Hill, *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book*
 - Podcast: Secret Life of Canada Ep. 42 Kanesatake 300 years later (33 minutes) <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc727>


b. Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance.

- Students can view this classic National Film Board documentary by Abenaki filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin. They can use the graphic organizer on Line Master 9-10, page 315 to guide their viewing.
 - *Kanehsatake 270 Years of Resistance*. National Film Board of Canada, 1993. 1 h 59 min. Online at https://www.nfb.ca/film/Kanehsatake_270_years_of_resistance
 - It is suggested you split the viewing into three parts to support a beginning-of-class review, and end-of-class debrief. This is reflected in the graphic organizer on the Line Master.
 - Students can use the graphic organizer to record in point form their observations, quotes from the documentary and flash points from the conflict.
 - At the end of each viewing day have students share their graphic organizer contents that they have recorded. This will support any misinterpretations, or need for clarifications. It will also allow expression of what is resonating with students.
 - Each viewing day also comes with an optional exit slip prompt. They are found on Line Master 9-11, page 316.
- Areas of focus: While watching the documentary, students can focus on different topics. You may want to have students select one of the topics to watch for, or use them for discussion following the viewing.
 - Role of Indigenous Women
 - Historical context
 - Role of Media and Treatment of Media
 - Provincial Police and Federal (military) involvement
 - Justice

Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance.

https://www.nfb.ca/film/Kanehsatake_270_years_of_resistance

**This documentary should be previewed by the teacher and used with teacher discretion.*

 Line Master 9-10, page 315, Kanehsatà:ke Resistance

Line Master 9-11, page 316, Kanehsatà:ke Resistance, Exit Slips

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c. An Indigenous Perspective

- Students can consider an Indigenous scholar's perspective on the Kanehsatà:ke resistance. They can read an excerpt from the book *Braiding Histories* by Potawatomi-Lenapé scholar Susan Dion. In the section "Events at and Public Responses to Kanesatake" she discusses her take on the events at Kanehsatà:ke, and reactions to them.
 - *Braiding Histories*, Susan Dion. UBC Press, 2009. The relevant text can be accessed online as part of the promotional material at the UBC Press website: <https://www.ubcpress.ca/asset/9065/1/9780774815178.pdf>. The Kanehsatà:ke events are discussed on pages 8-10 (PDF pages 20-22)
- Students can react to quotes from Susan Dion. They can identify these paragraphs in the online material, or you could read them aloud to the class.

That anger, it seemed to me, reflected an incredulous attitude, one demanding "By what right do 'they' (Indians) inconvenience 'us' (Canadians)?" What the images represent for me is the chasm that exists between too many of us. As Noel Dyck (1991, 13) writes, "Generally speaking, Indians and non-Indians stand on opposite sides of a history of interaction and tend to be polarized further by an unequal knowledge of each other. (Dion, page 9)


Without understanding the history of our relationship, how can Canadians make sense of current conditions? How is it possible to understand by what right we take a stand at the barricades? We have been speaking back to non-Aboriginal people since their arrival in our land, but what do they hear when we speak? How is justice possible in the wake of such learned ignorance? (Dion, p10)

- Students can share their reflections verbally with a partner or small group. Groups can then share with the whole class.

d. Perspectives in BC

Give students an opportunity to learn about ways that people in BC reacted to the events around the Kanehsatà:ke resistance.

- Students can read an article describing a protest in Vancouver in the midst of the conflict. See Line Master 9-12, page 317, *Vancouver Takes Action*.
- Have students find other BC media reports about the event when it was happening. Students may be able to find commentary from local newspapers if they have been digitized. (Also some community libraries may have clipping files.)
 - See a listing of online newspaper sources, Part Two, page 43.
- Ask students to give examples of the diversity of opinions held by BC Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in reaction to the Kanehsatà:ke resistance in Quebec. Ask, how significant was the resistance for BC Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?


 Line Master 9-12, page 317, *Vancouver Takes Action*

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e. Canada's Response: Action and Inaction

In the aftermath of the Kanehsatà:ke Resistance, and the action Elijah Harper took to bring down the Meech Lake accord, Canada initiated the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). Students can learn about the connections between Kanehsatà:ke and RCAP, and the action – or lack of action – on the Commission's recommendations.

- Students can find out background to RCAP using Line Master 9-13, page 318, *RCAP, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996*.
- Discuss the connections between the Kanehsatà:ke resistance and the creation of the Royal Commission. Ask, why do you think the government felt it necessary to create the Royal Commission?
- Students can investigate how people in or near your community contributed to RCAP. They can search the RCAP database of public hearing transcripts by looking up the nearest community to you where hearings were held.
 - Go to the RCAP website: <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples>
 - Click on "Search Database"
 - On the Search page, for Document type, select "Transcript."
 - Select British Columbia for the Province
 - In the City field, choose the nearest city to you where a hearing was held.
 - Click on Search and you will go to the transcript for that city. A couple of more clicks takes you to the transcript.
 - Note that some transcripts begin with a list of speakers, while others do not.
 - Students can scan through the transcript or enter search items to search the text.
- Students can find the statement of one person to share with the class. They can summarize the main points that the speaker made. In groups or the whole class students can discuss what changes have been made, if any, to the issues brought up by the speaker.
 - Please note: some of the statements are very potent and may be triggers for some students.
- Discuss with students some of the possible reasons that action on the recommendations from RCAP was not taken, while there has been more action on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action. (Or has there?) What might have changed between 1996 and 2015?

 Line Master 9-13, page 318, *RCAP, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996*

f. Reflecting on Resistance

- 4-2-1 strategy: Ask students to think about what they have learned about the Kanehsatà:ke Resistance, using this learning strategy.
 - On their own, students think of four words or phrases that express the most important ideas they learned.
 - Students then form pairs or small groups and share their words to find ideas they have in common. From this list, they agree on two words or phrases that express the most important ideas.
 - Then the pairs or groups pick one word or phrase that best express the most important learning or the big idea they took away from the learning experience.

Formative Assessment Strategy

Use the 4-2-1 learning strategy to assess students' understandings of the significance of the Kanehsatà:ke Resistance of 1990.

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- Students can compare the Kanehsatà:ke Resistance with more recent examples of resistance such as Idle No More and the Wet'suwet'en resistance in 2019-2020.
 - Students can refer to a news article, "Revolution is Alive" that connects the events of Kanehsatà:ke to recent activism including the Wet'suwet'en resistance. Access online here: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/28/canada-pipeline-protests-climate-indigenous-rights>
- Have students draw conclusions from what they have learned about the Kanehsatà:ke Resistance. Ask questions such as:
 - How does understanding what happened at Kanehsatà:ke help to understand other conflicts between Indigenous people and provincial and federal governments?
 - What question(s) should a person ask when seeing media coverage of a blockade, road block or standoff between Indigenous people and levels of government?

4. Honouring the Lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Indigenous women are statistically more likely to experience violence than other groups in Canadian society. For decades Indigenous families and communities have known that the number of women, girls and Two-Spirit people who have gone missing or have been murdered is a national crisis. Activism protesting and bring awareness to what is considered an epidemic has taken place for at least fifty years.

One result of the activism was the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, initiated in December 2015, with a Final Report delivered in June 2019.

Please Note: The topic itself, and many of the resources, can trigger strong reactions and emotions from students. Using any of these activities requires a sensitive understanding of your students' ability to deal with the material.

Recommended Resources:

Their Voices Will Guide Us is a useful educational resource developed by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It includes 18 different themes. Examples of the themes are:

- Empowerment of Women and Girls
- Systemic Causes of Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls
- Racism, Discrimination, and Stereotypes
- Impact of Colonization on Indigenous Women and Girl

Access the resource here: <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc728>

Moose Hide Campaign Learning Platform for K-12. Website, <https://education.moosehidecampaign.ca/>

This resource gives much support for teachers to develop a Moose Hide Learning Journey in their classroom. The journey as outlined includes five steps:

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- 1) Open My Eyes; 2) My Own Backyard; 3) In to Me I See; 4) My Pledge
- 5) Keep the Fire Burning.

Questions for Inquiry

- How have Indigenous and non-Indigenous people organized around the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls?
- How can you take action to end violence against women and children?

a. Women's Memorial March

One possible introduction to the topic is to learn about the annual Women's Memorial March. It started on the Downtown Eastside in Vancouver on Valentine's Day, 1991, and has been carried on ever since. Women's Memorial Marches are now held around Canada and the USA.

- Students can view a video about the Women's Memorial March: *29th Annual Feb 14 Women's Memorial March for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women*. Access Television, 2020. 5:29 min. <https://youtu.be/MWezHXHmnJA>
Please Note: Ensure you view this video before sharing with students.
 - Ask students to share their reactions to the video.
 - Discuss the purpose of the Women's Memorial March.
 - Point out this march, held in 2020, was the 29th such march. Ask, why has it been going on so long? (For example, action still needs to be taken to stop the violence; also it is a memorial to honour the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.)
- Have students investigate the protocols and procedures followed during the Women's Memorial March. See the website, <https://womensmemorialmarch.wordpress.com/>
 - Students can work in groups to identify some Indigenous protocols that are followed. (For example, it is centered on family; speeches are given in remembrance (part of the Oral Tradition); songs and drumming are part of the procession; it ends with a feast.
- Students can find out if Women's Memorial Marches have been held in your region.

b. The Moose Hide Campaign

The Moose Hide Campaign began in BC as a way to take action and build awareness of violence towards women.

- Begin by determining if students are aware of the Moose Hide Campaign, and if any of them have participated in it.
 - If they have some awareness, ask them to explain the purpose of the campaign, and some of the activities that are involved.
 - The Moose Hide Campaign, as stated on its website, "is a grassroots movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys who are standing up against violence towards women and children." The overall goal is to take action against the violence, and can involve men, women and children.
- Students can learn about the campaign by viewing one or more of these videos:

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- *Moose Hide – The Beginning*. Province of BC, 2017. 1:33 min. <https://youtu.be/uIHsWjfyd0>. In this video the founders of the campaign explain its origins.
- *The Moose Hide Campaign*. First Nations Health Council. 2015. 5:49 min. (Please preview this video, as it contains content that may be disturbing to some students.) <https://youtu.be/0O8a5JOd8Bs>. BC First Nations men explain why the Moose Hide Campaign is so important, advocating for men to stand up against violence towards women and children.
- The Moose Hide Campaign website has a wealth of information and ideas for classroom activities. The goal is for students to undertake activities that they will experience personally and help support the movement. You can make the Moose Hide Campaign a class project as a way for students to Take Action. <https://moosehidecampaign.ca/>
- In groups, brainstorm a project or idea that can be created in groups or individually to raise awareness about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
 - As an example, see the project undertaken by Coquitlam students for Red Dress Day in 2021. See Investigation 6a below,
- Some Moose Hide Campaign events could include:
 - Walks to end violence
 - Fasting ceremonies in high schools OR fathers fasting for the women and children in their lives in elementary schools (see the fasting guide on the Moosehide Campaign website).
 - Ceremonies to honour women and children in the traditional ways of the people of the territory
 - Ceremonies to honour men who are walking the path of honour in their value for, and treatment of women and children.
 - Host an art show. Create something to spread awareness. For example, see this spoken word poem given as part of the Moosehide Campaign: Lady by Bryant Doradea; Moose Hide Campaign 2018, 2:12 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_btmR48tOk
- As a class, choose one of the options and pursue either an individual or class project to participate in this campaign.
- Planning Information for Class Project and Fasting:
 - Moose Hide Campaign Awareness day is in February each year: see the website for details
 - You can order moose hide pins from the website for your school, or host a kiosk at a community event
 - Classes can host a 'day of fasting' following the fasting guide provided on the Moose Hide Campaign website. Make sure students discuss the necessary precautions.
 - Students can break the day of fasting by holding a gathering, eating together, and showcasing other ways they have chosen to raise awareness:
 - Class art installation: photography, poetry, music
 - Students can also review the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Final Report and Calls for Justice (see Calls for Justice for all Canadians), as a means to decide what ways they will move forward in addition to the day of fasting.

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c. Where Are We Now?

- Ask students to investigate what progress has now been made on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls campaign to end violence.
- Investigate one article or document (for example, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Final Report: Calls for Justice) and present to the class whether or not you feel that progress is being made in this effort.

5. Arts in Action

Many Indigenous contemporary visual artists, musicians, filmmakers, performance artists use their art forms to challenge the status quo and to take action against colonialism, and to explore aspects of identity.

Question for Inquiry

- In what ways do artists take action through their artistic expression, such as visual arts, music, film-making, literature, fashion and digital arts.

a. Learning Stations

Introduce the Investigation using Learning Stations. Each station could have an example of one artistic work which students can observe, experience, and reflect upon.

- The works will ideally be ones students haven't seen before, be arresting or thought-provoking, and contemporary.
- As an example, here is a possible set of stations:
 - Station 1. Large picture from one of the Red Dress Campaign installations. If possible find an image from a local campaign.
 - Station 2. Digital device set up with the video Savage, by Lisa Jackson. <https://vimeo.com/68582103>
 - Station 3. A T-Shirt design or poster by the artist Chippewar (Jay Soule), such as the mock movie poster, "Back to 1491 part 2." See <https://chippewar.com/>
 - Station 4. An image of a painting by Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun. See many examples at <https://lawrencepaulyuxweluptun.com/retrospective.html>

b. Diversity of Artistic Responses

It is important to understand that Indigenous artists have a variety of responses to social issues and concerns. Students can investigate some of the creative ways that artists and other have taken action to bring awareness to the issues of violence against Indigenous women. (See also Investigation 4 above.)

- Students can investigate the Red Dress project to learn about one response to violence against Indigenous women that has become widely adopted.
 - REDress Project. Access Online Here: <http://www.redressproject.org/>

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- “Shoes on the steps of the Art Gallery” CTV News. <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/1-000-shoes-line-art-gallery-steps-friday-in-memory-of-women-killed-in-b-c-1.4718358>
- Students can examine a different point of view by author Terese Marie Mailhot. See her article, “If I’m Murdered Or Go Missing, Don’t Hang a Red Dress For Me.” Terese Marie Mailhot, *Huffpost*, 2017.
 - https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/terese-marie-mailhot/if-im-murdered-or-go-missing-dont-hang-a-red-dress-for-me_a_23019892/
- Ask students to reflect on these different points of view. Ask questions such as:
 - Which point of view aligns with your thinking?
 - Is there a place for both points of view?

c. Artistic Expression in Action

- Have students select a work of art by an Indigenous artist and explore how the artist has used their work to take action in some way. This could be in the visual arts, music, literature, or other form of expression.
 - As an example, students can view the video *Kelli Clifton – Ts’mSYen Artist*. The artist uses her work to promote learning of the Ts’mSYen language. D. Dueck, 2020. 9:23 min. https://youtu.be/yiK_9p9JxI4
- Alternatively, or as an option, students could create their own piece of art to express a reaction, protest, or build awareness of contemporary concerns and issues that are important to them.
- Students could hold a showcase to share their explorations or creations.

6. Student Action

Students can examine ways that First Peoples and others their age have taken action to support goals important to First Peoples. They can decide to take some form of personal or group action. They can also consider the concept of allyship.

a. Youth Action

Discuss examples of youth who have taken action against injustices.

- Students can investigate the actions taken by students at Dr. Charles Best Secondary School in Coquitlam during Red Dress Day in 2021. Their Social Justice 12 class was involved in a month long inquiry project that included creating a public Red Dress display and writing letters to MLAs and MPs demanding action to ending the current genocide of Missing and Murdered Women and Girls.
 - Students can find out more about the project and some of the reactions to it at one or more of these links:
 - “Why are red dresses hanging in Coquitlam trees? Students hope you’ll ‘Google’ it to find out,” *Tricity News*, May 4, 2021. Linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc729>.
 - “Red dresses hung across B.C. to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.” *Global News*, May 5, 2021. (video and article) <https://globalnews.ca/news/7838341/red-dress-day-b-c/>

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- Speech in the BC Legislature by local MLA Rick Glumac praising the work of the students. Recorded in Hansard, May 13, 2021. Linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc739>.
- Pictograph. Students can view this video which shows Sto:lo youth creating a new pictograph to make their marks on the land. Pictograph. 6.27 min. <https://vimeo.com/132751963>
 - You may need to explain what a pictograph, or rock painting, is. For examples, see http://www.bradshawfoundation.com/canada/western_canada/western_canadian_rock_art.php
 - See a similar project described in this article: Power, Protest and Pictographs. <https://thetyee.ca/Culture/2019/08/19/Power-Protest-Pictographs/>
- Students can find out about the activism of youth such as Autumn Peltier.
- Find other examples at the Moose Hide Campaign website (<https://moosehidecampaign.ca/>) and the Project of Heart (<http://projectofheart.ca/bc/>)

b. Speech Making

One way to take action is to make a speech that expresses a point of view and challenges or motivates others to take action. Students can prepare and deliver a speech to convince others to take some form of action on an important issue for First Peoples.

- The speech could address a contemporary issue or topics. Alternatively it could be put into a historical context.
- For suggestions to develop speeches see *English First Peoples 10–12*, First Peoples Oral Traditions, Lesson 6 - The Power of Voice, pages 81 to 82.
- If students have viewed the video *The Road Forward*, they can recall the segment by Ronnie Dean Harris about the “longhouse voice” used for delivering speeches. See the video segment starting at 42:45 min.

Cross-curricular Connection
English First Peoples: Oral Traditions

c. What Can I Do?

Discuss and carry out other ways that students can take action.
For what purposes would they want to take some kind of action?

- Students can design a campaign to take action and support an issue presented in this unit or other units of the course. Potential questions to address include:
 - Why is it important to take action?
 - How will this be done?
 - Who will be involved?
 - Who is the target audience and why?
 - What impacts do you hope to see as a result of your action?
 - What are the potential challenges that could arise?
- Students can organize a group collective action. For example, fasting for a Moose Hide Campaign or organising an event with community members or Elders. This could be an opportunity for a consensus activity in which students think about a collective action they can build together.

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d. Allies and Allyship

Students can investigate different perspectives on the topic of allyship, and allies of Indigenous people.

- Ask students if they are familiar with the term ally or allyship in terms of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Students can suggest what they understand, or predict, the meaning of the terms to be.
- Have students research to find different perspectives on the idea of allyship. After students have found different perspectives they can present them to the class, citing the sources of the information or opinions.
 - One print source is found in *Speaking Our Truth*, by Monique Gray Smith (Orca, 2017). See pages 118 to 120.
- Discuss how the term ally could be problematic (proclaiming yourself an ally, white saviourism, etc.) but also how it can be a goal for students and communities that are non-Indigenous.
- Optional resources about allies:
 - This is an excellent source by local First Peoples authors in BC. See 10 Ways To Be An Ally To Indigenous People, *Loose Lips Magazine*, March 2018. Linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc730>
 - This source from Amnesty International can be used as a follow-up: 10 Ways to be a Genuine Ally With Indigenous Communities. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc731>

7. Give Back, Carry Forward

Students reflect on the important things they have learned in this unit, and consider how they can give back and carry their learning forward.

Refer to the Major Project outline, page 51.

a. What Did You Learn?

Students can consider these questions:

- What is one new thing you learned in this unit that you would consider a gift?
- What is one thing growing out of your learning that you can take action on?
- What are some new things you learned about where you live?
- What did you learn about yourself?

b. Documenting Learning

- Students can discuss or share ideas for documenting their learning.
 - Students can begin to come up with ways that they can showcase their learning in this course, while connecting to both “giving back” and “carry forward” what they have learned.

When Did it Happen?

These are some examples of times that First Peoples took action. Put them in the order you think they happened.

Orange Shirt Day begins
Chief Capilano travels to London to meet the King
Tsilhqot'in War
The Nisga'a Nation takes the government to court
Many First Nations pull out surveyors stakes when they start to map reserves
Wet'suwet'en land defenders
The Secwepemc, Nlaka'pamux and Okanagan Nations present Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier with the Laurier Memorial.
Four women hold rallies in response to Federal government Bill C-45, starting the Idle No More movement.

Chief Maquinna Speaks Out About Potlatch Laws, 1896

THE NOOTKA CHIEF SPEAKS.

TO THE EDITOR:—My name is Maquinna! I am the chief of the Nootkas and other tribes. My great grandfather was also called Maquinna. He was the first chief in the country who saw white men. That is more than one hundred years ago. He was kind to the white men and gave them land to build and live on. By and bye more white men came and ill treated our people and kidnapped them and carried them away on their vessels, and then the Nootkas became bad and retaliated and killed some white people. But that is a long time ago. I have always been kind to the white men. Dr. Powell knows it and Mr. Vowell and all the white men who come to my country. And now I hear that the white chiefs want to persecute us and put us in jail and we do not know why.

They say it is because we give feasts which the Chinook people call "Potlatch." That is not bad! That which we give away is our own! Dr. Powell, the Indian agent, one day also made a potlatch to all the Indian chiefs, and gave them a coat, and tobacco, and other things, and thereby we all knew that he was a chief; and so when I give a potlatch, they all learn that I am a chief. To put in prison people who steal and sell whiskey and cards to our young men; that is right. But do not put us in jail as long as we have not stolen the things which we give away to our Indian friends. Once I was in Victoria, and I saw a very large house; they told me it was a bank and that the whitemen place their money there to take care of, and that by-and-by they get it back, with interest. We are Indians, and we have no such bank; but when we have plenty of money or blankets, we give them away to other chiefs and people, and by-and-by they return them, with interest, and our heart feels good. Our potlatch is our bank.

I have given many times a potlatch, and I have more than two thousand dollars in the hands of Indian friends. They all will return it some time, and I will thus have the means to live when I cannot work any more. My uncle is blind

and cannot work, and that is the way he now lives, and he buys food for his family when the Indians make a potlatch. I feel alarmed! I must give up the potlatch or else be put in jail. Is the Indian agent going to take care of me when I can no longer work? No, I know he will not. He does not support the old and poor now. He gets plenty of money to support his own family, but, although it is all our money, he gives nothing to our old people, and so it will be with me when I get old and infirm. They say it is the will of the Queen. That is not true. The Queen knows nothing about our potlatch feasts. She must have been put up to make a law by people who know us. Why do they not kill me? I would rather be killed now than starve to death when I am an old man. Very well, Indian agents, collect the two thousand dollars I am out and I will save them till I am old and give no more potlatch!

They say that sometimes we cover our hair with feathers and wear masks when we dance. Yes, but a white man told me one day that the white people have also sometimes masquerade balls and white women have feathers on their bonnets and the white chiefs give prizes for those who imitate best, birds or animals. And this is all good when white men do it but very bad when Indians do the same thing. The white chiefs should leave us alone as long as we leave the white men alone, they have their games and we have ours.

I am sorry to hear the news about the potlatch and that my friends of the North were put in jail. I sympathise with them; and I asked a white man to write this in order to ask all white men not to interfere with our customs as long as there is no sin or crime in them. The potlatch is not a pagan rite; the first Christians used to have their goods in common and as a consequence must have given "potlatches" and now I am astonished that Christians persecute us and put us in jail for doing as the first Christians.

MAQUINNA, X (his mark)
Chief of Nootka.

Source: Victoria Daily Colonist, April 1, 1896, page 5.

Taking Action in the Klondike Gold Rush, 1897

In 1897 miners began travelling through the territories of the Dunne-za and Sekani on their way from Edmonton to the Klondike Gold rush. Many miners didn't respect or understand the protocols of the First Nations or their land and property.

That fall, Inspector J.D. Moodie of the North-West Police went from Edmonton to the Yukon, looking for the best route to build a road. This took him through the Peace River district of north-eastern BC. His report records some of the tensions that were building between First Nations and outsiders. This excerpt describes some of the actions taken by the Dunne-za and Sekani during this time.

**North-West Mounted Police
Patrol Reports
Inspector JD Moodie in Charge of Patrol from Edmonton to the Yukon 1897**

POLICE PROTECTION.—ST. JOHN DISTRICT.

One of a party of prospectors going through this district shot two stallions belonging to Chief Montaignee, because they were, he said, chasing his horses. On hearing of this the chief sent two parties in different directions to intercept the white men, declaring that if he was not paid for his stallions he would shoot all the prospectors' horses and then the man who killed his. I believe the matter was settled. Another man stole an Indian pony, and the owner followed him to Fort Graham and recovered it. As the man said he was poor and had no money, the Indian did not press his claim for payment for use of horse or his own time coming after it. A white man told me that he had been robbed in a wholesale way between Dunvegan and Fort St. John by a hired man, who then decamped down the River.

FORT GRAHAM.

Mr. Fox informs me that the Indians here at first refused to allow the white men to come through their country without paying toll, and it was only after much talking that they agreed to keep quiet this summer in the hope that the Government would do something to help them. They threatened to burn the feed and kill the horses; in fact, several times fires were started, but the head men were persuaded by Mr. Fox to send out and stop them. A large number of horses have been lost, but whether these have merely strayed or have been driven off it is impossible to say. A guide engaged by several parties (who joined in the expense) deserted a few miles up the river on hearing of a party of St. John Indians having come over to intercept the horse killer as above mentioned, at least this is the reason given.

Even amongst the whites there have been several rows, with threats of shooting, and Constable Fitzgerald was appealed to and quieted things, by threatening to arrest and hold until my arrival any one making a disturbance.

There is no doubt that the influx of whites will materially increase the difficulties of hunting by the Indians, and these people, who, even before the rush, were often starving from their inability to procure game, will in future be in a much worse condition; and unless some assistance is given to them by the Indian Department, they are very likely to take what they consider a just revenge on the white men who have come, contrary to their wishes, and scattered themselves over their country. When told that if they started fighting as they threatened, it could only end in their extermination, the reply was, "We may as well die by the white men's bullets as of starvation." A considerable number of prospectors have expressed their intention of wintering in this neighbourhood and I think it would be advisable to have a detachment of police stationed here, as their presence would go far to prevent trouble. The number of Indians, men, women and children in this District is about 300.

Source: Sessional Papers, Canada, 1899. Volume 12, Paper 15, part 2, page 12-13.

Victoria Conference 1911

In 1909, most of the First Nations in BC joined together to take action on Rights and Title by forming the group, the Indian Tribes of British Columbia. First Nations leaders from around the province met at a conference in Victoria in March, 1911. They held a meeting with Premier McBride and the cabinet, which is reported in this article from the Victoria Daily Colonist.

INDIAN DELEGATES MEET EXECUTIVE

Ninety six Indian chiefs and delegates who, in the language of their spokesman, had "dragged their weary bodies great distances to ask for justice," appeared before the provincial executive yesterday morning to discuss the question of the title to the unsundered lands of British Columbia. They were accompanied by Dr. A. E. Bolton, Rev. C. M. Cate and Mr. J. I. Teit, of the Columbian Institute of Anthropology of New York, who acted as spokesman for those who were unable to speak English. The members of the executive who met the visiting aborigines were the Premier, Hon. Price Ellison, Hon. Thos. Taylor, Hon. A. E. McPhillips, and Hon. Dr. Young.

Chief R. P. Kelly, who is now in charge of the Methodist Mission at Hartley Bay, read the memorial of the delegates. It set forth in brief that the Indians claim that the Indian tribes still hold full proprietary rights in the unsundered lands of the province. This claim, the memorial said, was acknowledged by Sir James Douglas, by the Colonial Office, and afterwards by the then Governor General, Lord Dufferin. As it was now denied by the provincial authorities, the Indians asked that it be submitted to the courts.

Chief Kelly denied the allegation that the agitation over this alleged title had been fomented by the "Society of Friends of the Indians." On the contrary, he alleged that the claim was advanced by the Indians themselves "in the hope that justice would be done them."

Chief John Chilkaleetsa of Douglas Lake, also spoke through the interpreter. He said, "I wish to hear from you whether you claim that this country of British Columbia belongs to you and your government or does it belong to the Indians? If you claim that it belongs to you, then we are of opposite opinions, and I desire that we should go together to some big court house to have it settled."

George Quakatsion, sub-chief of the Cowichans, said: "God knows that I do not come here with a lie in my heart or my mouth to deceive you. We are crowded by white people and we are trying to learn their ways but when we turn our cattle out to graze they are put in pound and we are made to pay for them. My name is written here in this country because God has placed me here and in doing so he put lands here for me to stay on. I just want to get one word from the government as to wheether it thinks we own any land or does not."

You can read Premier McBride's reply in the rest of the article on line. The article continues with a list of all the delegates, which you can see on the next page.

Source: *Daily Colonist*, Victoria BC. March 4, 1911, page 15. (Linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc732>)

Victoria Conference 1911, Delegates

The Delegates.

The interview was notable as bringing together, as never before in history, the principal Indians of every section of the province, the delegates including chiefs from the international boundary line on the south, the great Peace River district beyond the Rocky Mountains on the east, the west coast of Vancouver Island, and the Naas and Skeena in the awakening north. Of the aboriginal company, it may in fairness be said, that many of the delegates were men of notable intelligence as well as fine physique—as a group, comparing very favorably with as many white men. No fewer than a dozen too were men men of worldly substance, possessed of properties valued at from \$25,000 to \$50,000, and even in isolated instances, much more than the latter moderate fortune. The cards of the native callers left with the Premier, included those of Ambrose Reid, of the Tsimpsan tribe; Baptiste Loggan, chief of the Vernon band of the Okanagan; Thomas Adolph, of the Fountain band of the Shuswaps; Johnson Grant of the Kitamaahs; Chief W. J. Lincoln, of the Kincolliths; Chief Matthew Johnson, of Port Simpson; Chief A. N. Caulder, of the Lakaitaps, Naas River; Chief Andrew Mercer, of the Alyanish tribe; Chief Samuel Weeshakes, of the Gwinahas; Chief Walter Woods, of Kitiakdamut; Peter Kelly, of Kithah-ta and Queen Charlottes Basil Selhesket, of the Shuswaps; William Pierrish, of the same historic tribe; Chief Francis Selpaghen, of the Little Shuswap band; Chief Adrian, of the Shuswap and Chase Indians; George Quakatsion, of the Cowichans; Eli, of the Nanaimos; Chief Baptiste William of the Williams Lake band; Chief Louis, of the Kamloops band of the Shuswaps; William Kweltesket, of the Soda Creek Band of the Shuswaps; Chief Chianut, of the Nkamip Band of the Okanagan; Chief John Nhamchln, of the Chopaca Band of the Okanagan; Chief John Baptiste, of the Cayuse Creek Band of the Lillooets; Chief John Tselahitsa, of the Douglas Lake Band of the Okanagan; Antoine Tagholest, of the Shuswaps; Chief James, of the Pemberton Band of the Lillooets; Chief Harry, of the Squamish tribe; Chief James Nretesket, of the Lillooet Band of the Lillooets; Chief Joseph Kakyelth and Samson Squaikaylim, of the Cowichans; Chief John Whistamnitsa, of the Spences Bridge Band of the Couteau or Thompson tribe; Noel, of the Cowichans; Chief Tom, of Squamish; Chief Basil of the Bonaparte Band of

the Shuswaps; William Yelamugh, of the Thompsons; Ignace Jacob, of the Douglas Lake Branch of the Lillooets; Telson William of the Shuswaps; John Williams, of the same native nation; Stephen Uretesket, of the Lillooets; Henry Nice, of the Kitamaahs; Billy Asso, Chief of the Laquiltos; Morice Saxl, of the Pavillon Band of the Shuswaps; Chief Joshua Brown, of the Kithkahtlahs; Chief Charles Noel, of the Quakwiltis; Chief George, of the Laquiltos; Chief Thomas of the Sliammons; Chief Charles Smith, of the Laquiltos; Chief Albert King and Peter Elliott, of the Bella Coola tribe; William Nahame, of the Squamish tribe; Chief Charlie, of Squamish; Chief Thomas, of the same tribe; Chief Jullan, of Clo-oose; John Elliott, of the Cowichans; Chief Julius, of Sechelt; Chief Thomas Harris, of the Tsawaitinos; Chief Robert, of the Pavillon band; Chief David, of Saanich; Saul, of the Okanagans; Bazille Falardeau, of the Shuswaps; Thomas Lindley, of the Okanagans; Chief Maximin, of the Halowt band of the Shuswaps; Chief Louis Lookamls, of the Ohiats; Harry of the Nanaimos; Hereditary Chief Antoine Seamawon of the Cowichmans; Chief Antoine Yapsklnt, of the Coldwater band of the Thompson nation; Hereditary Chief Francois Pakelpitsa, of the Pentleton band of the Okanagans; Alexis Sklus, of the Ashnola band of the Okanagans; Abraham Jack, of the Chemainus tribe; Chief Charles Allison, of the Hedley band of the Okanagans; August Jack, of Chemainus; Chief Peter Tatoosh, of the Ohiats; Thomas James, of the Songhees; Sub-Chief Louis Frank, of the Spuzzum band of the Thompsons; Charles Weskaletsa, of of the Cowichans; Chief Joe, of Esquimalt; William Jack, of the Songhees; Thomas Paul, of Saanich; Chief Harry Nega, of the Mamallik-alulas; S. Cook, of Nimpkish; Peter Edward, of the same tribe; Philip Thomas, of the Shuswaps; Chief Thomas Jack, of the Anderson Lake band of the Lillooets; Chief Louis James, of the Seaton Lake band of Lillooets; August James of the Shuswaps; Chief Alëck of the Tsawaitinos; Chief Billy, of the Matalipes; Chief Jim Wahnuk, of the Tenatuks; and Chief John Clark of the Clawitsis.

It is reported that the Indians will, upon receipt of the written reply promised them by Premier McBride, denying their petition, appeal in the matter of their supposed claim, to Ottawa and to London. J. M. Clarke, K. C., of Toronto, has been retained by them as counsel in this regard.

Statement of the Gitga'at Chiefs to the McKenna-McBride Commission, 1913

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Hartley Bay B.C. Aug. 1/13

Mr. Wetmore, Chairman
Indian Commissioner.

Unfortunately we are not able to be all at Home here in Hartley Bay in time to meet you as our work is not yet done at the canneries, so we decided to leave this note for you in case you visit our Village during our absence; Therefore, we hereby make the following statement in writing, which we trust you will consider same carefully the same as if we had a talk with you personally.

We shall not consider or accept any offer from any one until our claim is settled by Justice. Our prayer is that our title for our land and unsurrendered lands be made clearer, recognized and acknowledged to us by both the Dominion and Provincial Governments, that is the vital point of our request or claim.

We have no new request or new thing to state before you, but the same old claim demanding our title be settled by Justice.

Signed Head Chief Ambrose Robinson
Alec Moody
John Anderson
H. L. Clifton

Statement of the Gitga'at Chiefs to the McKenna-McBride Commission, 1913 – Transcription

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Signed Head Chief Ambrose Robinson
Chief Aleck Moody
Chief John Anderson
Chief H. L. Clifton

Advisors or Agitators? Words of Politicians

Bill 13 was an Act which would change the way First Nations lands would be dealt with by Canada and BC in the spring of 1920. The leaders of the Allied Tribes visited Ottawa, delivered a petition and asked to speak to the House of Commons. This is part of the debate that took place in response to their request.

Arthur Meighen was the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, and soon to become Prime Minister.

W. L. Mackenzie-King was the Leader of the Opposition, who later became Prime Minister.

House of Commons Debates, Ottawa. March 29, 1920

Mr. MACKENZIE KING:

There are some representatives of the Indians in the city at the present time who wish to be heard in reference to the matter, and who are anxious to present their case to some members of the House, and I think it is due to them that we should give them a chance of being heard through their representatives.

Mr. MEIGHEN: It is a wonder they did not petition me.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I do not know why they did not, unless it was, as the minister has intimated to-night, that he was not inclined to listen to the Indian point of view.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I never heard of the matter before.

(Cy Peck was a government MP representing the Skeena Riding. The first part of his speech about his familiarity with First Nations in the Skeena Region has not been copied here).

Mr. PECK: I should like to know who are the Indian agitators that come from British Columbia. Some representatives of the Indians may be all right, but I may mention a man named O'Meara—

Mr. FIELDING: An Italian, apparently.

Mr. PECK: He is an agitator, wherever he comes from. He annually makes a business of going to the Indians and collecting a few hundred dollars to keep him going. He is a sea lawyer and keeps up an agitation from year to year, and these people come down and try to confuse—I was going to say confound—the minister.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: That is not the gentleman I refer to.

Mr. PECK: This man is typical of them.

Mr. BUREAU: I have the names of the men here. They are Peter Calder, of Nishga Tribe; George Matheson, of Tsimshian Tribe; Peter R. Kelley, of Haida Tribe; Basil David, of Shuswap Tribe; all representing the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia.

Mr. PECK: I know them; they are all O'Meara's children.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The minister wondered a moment ago why the representatives of the Indians did not petition him. If the minister is agreeable to postponing this matter I shall be glad to ask them to see him to-morrow if possible, or at any other time he may suggest.

Mr. MEIGHEN: For the sake of getting the Bill through I would deny myself the extreme pleasure of seeing Mr. O'Meara.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am not speaking of Mr. O'Meara.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I am afraid there is too much truth in the remarks of the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Peck). Mr. O'Meara has undoubtedly made himself the parent of considerable trouble among the Indians of British Columbia, and I do not feel very sympathetic at all towards his whole mission and his conduct.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am not referring at all to Mr. O'Meara, but to a man named J. A. Teit.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Mr. O'Meara is not an Indian, but one of a number of people who make themselves leaders of Indian trouble. He is not alone in that regard. The Indian is just as much the victim of the agitator as many other people in this country, and when Mr. O'Meara is presenting Indian affairs and obtaining signatures to petitions he does not pretend to do so on his own behalf. He always puts forward the Indians. I do not think there is any reason for delaying this Bill at all. So far as I am concerned it would only mean coming back again. These men have been heard times without number, back over the years, by the last Government and the Government before the last. I would not wonder but that the leader of the Opposition himself has received delegations on this very point. It has been in controversy—if you call this a controversy—for years and years; I cannot say how long, but I know the dispute dates back into a good part of the period of the Laurier Administration, if indeed it does not antedate that. I do not think that any good purpose would be served by crowning the matter with another delegation and sitting and listening to the story over again.

Advisors or Agitators? First Nations Responses

The members of the Allied Tribes who had travelled to Ottawa reacted quickly to the astounding remarks made by the politicians. This is part of their response to the Parliament submitted by Peter Calder, George Matheson, Peter R. Kelly, and Basil David on March 29, 1920.

The House of Commons of Canada
In Parliament Assembled

1. Your Petitioners are the duly authorized representatives of the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia, including nearly all the principal Tribes of said Province.
2. Through Hansard your Petitioners are informed of the debate regarding Bill 13, which occurred in your Honourable House on Friday 26th inst., and have considered the same.
3. Your Petitioners have noted in particular certain statements which upon that occasion were made by the Minister of the Interior and the Member for Skeena, or by one of the said Honourable gentlemen. The statements to which we refer, either in the very words used or in effect are the following:-
[The first 5 statements from the debate are from the section quoted on Line Master 9-7.]
(6) p. 326 - MR. MEIGHEN: I understand there is not Indian agent or missionary or any one who has anything to do with it who does not denounce the men, or the man, at the head of it.
(7) p. 326 - That the delegation represents a minority of the Indians or a small portion of the whole.
(8) p. 826 - That the delegation is a lot of trouble makers.
(9) p. 326 - That Mr. O'Meara acts without authority.
4. Your Petitioners declare that the statements above set out are, and each of them is gravely erroneous and entirely unfounded.
5. Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your Honourable House refer the said statements to a Special Committee for full investigation.

The Allied Tribes continued their action to get politicians to see their point of view about the land claims, as shown in this excerpt:

Meeting between the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia and the Minister of the Interior, Vancouver, July 27, 1923.

Peter Kelly

One other remark I would like to make is in reference to our general counsel, Mr. A. E. O'Meara. The idea has gone abroad that Mr. O'Meara leads the Indians by the nose, as it were, and he agitates our minds, even against our will. I think I can say before this representative body of Indians, I think representing almost every corner of this Province, that that is not quite correct. Mr. O'Meara advises, we have engaged him for that. We have engaged him to give us his opinion, his interpretations of important matters, but we reserve the right to act on his advice. What we do not approve of we never accept, and we have rejected many a plan brought forward by Mr. O'Meara. We have not at any time bound ourselves down to the place where we would be compelled to accept all his plans. I do not think it is necessary to say any more on that matter. As to his being the sole agitator, I think he agitates insofar as we allow him to agitate.

[page 15]

The first comprehensive written record of the British Columbia land claim was a memorandum of the Douglas Portage Chiefs, prepared by their counsel A. E. O'Meara, date May 3, 1911.

We honour those chiefs for their diligence, and we honour their counsel who suffered the abuse of his brothers at the bar.

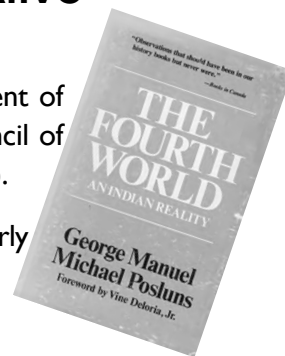
George Manuel, *Fourth World*, 1974, p. 82.

We Honour Our Grandfathers Who Kept Us Alive

Excerpts from *The Fourth World* by George Manuel, 1974.

George Manuel (1921-1989) was a Secwepemc leader and activist. He was president of the National Indian Brotherhood of Canada (1970-1976), founded the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, and was president of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (1979-1981).

These excerpts from his book *The Fourth World* recall and comment on the early resistance taken by First Nations, and the 1927 amendment to the Indian Act.



Resistance.

The fact of the matter is that there was never a time since the beginning of colonial conquest when Indian people were not resisting the four destructive forces besetting us: the state through the Indian agent; the church through the priests; the church and state through the schools; the state and industry through the traders. (p 69)

Greatness From the People.

We cannot recall to life the great political leaders whose names are still commonplace in their own villages without first recalling that their greatness came from the people whom they led. There were many little housewives and ordinary workmen, whose names are lost to all but their most direct descendants, who carried on the struggle in the way they led their own lives and in the material and spiritual support they lent to make our spokesmen strong.

Their strength will be returned to their children three times over. (p 70)

Potlatch Laws resistance.

One way [to take the potlatch beyond the arm of the law] was to disassemble the potlatch, by holding the different parts – the feast, the dances, the giving – at different times and places. Another was simply to move the feast to a distant place known only to the invited guests, perhaps a distant island. I can remember people passing out oranges with dollar bills stuck in them. As long as the police or agent could not find all the elements of the potlatch present in one place or time, there was no offence. The variations that grew out of the possible loopholes were as numerous as the people who kept the traditions strong.

We honour all those grandfathers whose imaginations rose above those of their oppressors. (p 78-79)

Darkest Hour

On March 31, 1927, the Parliament of Canada passed an act to amend the Indian Act which made it an offence to raise funds for the purpose of pressing any Indian claim:

149A. Every person who, solicits or requests from any Indian any payment or contribution or promise of any payment or contribution for the purpose of raising a fund for the prosecution of any claim which the tribe or band of Indians to which such Indian belongs ... shall be guilty of an offence and liable upon summary conviction for each such offence to a penalty not exceeding two hundred dollars and not less than fifty dollars or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding two months.

I do not know if this was the darkest hour in the history of the Parliament of Canada. If there were other moments when the forces of law and order were so warped and distorted I will let others speak of their own suffering. (page 94-95)

New Organizing Action

The land claim did not die when Parliament declared the finality of its own judgement. But the central focus of organizing activity on the part of the Indian people of British Columbia did change from the question of aboriginal title to the more immediate causes of poverty with the onset of the Great Depression: welfare, employment opportunities, the local application of hunting and fishing regulations. These were the issues that had brought people together in the very earliest intertribal organizing efforts.

But there was not surrender in the struggle for survival. There was only a strategic change in direction in the face of heavy fire which was essential to carry on the struggle. (page 95)

Kanehsatà:ke Resistance

Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance

Delve into the action of an age-old struggle as Abenaki filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin spends 78 tense days filming the now-infamous stand-off between the Mohawks, the Quebec police and the Canadian army.

As you view the documentary, use this chart to record your observations, quotes from documentary, flashpoints from the conflict, and any other thoughts you have.

Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance Part I: 0 min. – 35.40 min.
Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance Part II: 35:40 min. – 1h 09 min.
Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance Part III: 1h 09 min. -End

Kanehsatà:ke Resistance - Exit Slips

Kanehsatà:ke Conflict

Part I Exit Slip: Make A Connection

What have we learned this year that corroborates, matches, or links to Part I of the documentary?

Kanehsatà:ke Conflict

Part II Exit Slip: Meaningful Moment

Select a meaningful moment from Part II. Be sure to summarize, quote or explain the moment and WHY it was meaningful, what you learned or it taught the viewer.

Kanehsatà:ke Conflict

Part III Exit Slip: Takeaway

What is your takeaway? What did you learn? What will stick with you?

Kanehsatà:ke Resistance: BC Response

Vancouver Takes Action in Response to Oka

Downtown intersection blocked by 300 protesters

By STEWART BELL

Traffic at a major downtown Vancouver intersection was blocked for more than four hours Tuesday night by supporters of Mohawk Indians in Oka, Que.

"Army out of Oka, no more genocide," chanted about 300 protesters who sat and stood at the intersection of Georgia and Howe beginning at 7:30 p.m.

When two dozen police officers approached the intersection at 11 p.m., the protesters agreed to move to the lawn in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery, where a camp had been set up Monday night after a 90-minute vigil stopped traffic at the intersection of Georgia and Granville.

The Vancouver Blockade Support Group organized the camp-in Tuesday after the chief of staff of the Canadian Armed Forces announced the military would dismantle the Mohawk barricades at Oka. Tents were scattered around the art gallery lawn and signs, one reading: "This is Indian land," leaned against the building.

Jack Wasacase, who was leading the group with a megaphone, said he agreed after talking to senior police officers at 11 p.m. to move the

demonstration in order to avoid a violent confrontation.

"We just don't want anyone hurt. We have children here and we have elders here," said Wasacase, a Saulteaux Indian from Saskatchewan who now lives in Vancouver.

But an hour later, the protesters were back at the intersection and traffic was once again blocked.

Three police officers emerged from the Hotel Vancouver 45 minutes later and told Wasacase that hotel managers in the area had been complaining about the noise. The protesters again moved to the lawn outside the art gallery and agreed to stay there until morning, when they will decide on further actions.

They also agreed that uniformed police officers would wander around the demonstration. A police spokesman said they would act "strictly as a limited police presence."

The mostly non-native crowd was joined by about 25 Haida Indians, who demonstrated at Peace Park on the south side of the Burrard Street Bridge before walking downtown to join the protest there.

Bernice Brown, a Haida who now lives in Vancouver, said the native demonstration was organized by the

United Native Nations. "This is in sympathy with Oka, and to get the withdrawal of the military," she said.

Peter Leach, a Lillooet Indian who now lives in Vancouver, said one of the chiefs of the Stl'atl'imx Nation had asked him to come to the demonstration to say a prayer for the Mohawks. Representatives from other native groups, including the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en, also came to show solidarity for the Mohawks.

But Stephano Muzzatti came for another reason. He said he wanted to defend what he thinks most Canadians want, which is for the military to dismantle the barricades at Oka.

"The Indians have valid land claims, but they have no more right than me or you to use weapons," said Muzzatti, who was heckled for voicing his views.

"All they are doing is turning public support against them. I supported the Indians up until this. But I don't anymore."

The Vancouver Sun, August 29, 1990, page 2.

RCAP: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996

1990 was a pivotal year for Indigenous Canadians. Two major events dominated the news that summer: the Kanesatake Resistance at Oka, Quebec, and the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, with a focus on Elijah Harper in Manitoba.

The actions taken at Kanesatake, and the media attention it attained, made Canadians more acutely aware of the injustices facing Indigenous people.

That same summer, the Meech Lake Accord, which was intended to amend the Canadian Constitution, failed. This was largely due to the actions taken by Elijah Harper, a First Nations member of the Manitoba parliament. His was the only vote against the provincial parliament passing the resolution to accept the Meech Lake Accord. He voted against it because Indigenous people had not been consulted or involved in the negotiations.

The government of the day, under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, had to respond to a growing awareness of the lack of rights for First Peoples. As governments often do when faced with an issue, it called for a Royal Commission, whose mandate was to “investigate the evolution of the relationship among aboriginal peoples the Canadian government, and Canadian society as a whole.”

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) was initiated in 1991. The resulting five-year investigation was a monumental project. The Commission, with 4 Indigenous and 3 non-Indigenous members, travelled the country to hear submissions in nearly 100 diverse communities.

In the Final Report the Commission made over 400 recommendations, some of which required the Canadian government to make constitutional changes. The major recommendations include:

- The creation of an Indigenous parliament.
- A new Royal Proclamation acknowledging Canada’s commitment to a new relationship.
- Laws setting out a treaty process and recognition of Indigenous Nations and governments.
- Replacement of the federal Department of Indian Affairs with two departments, one for the new relationship with Indigenous Nations and one for services for non-self-governing communities.

However, after the Final Report was submitted in November, 1996, little direct action was taken, particularly on the major recommendations that required significant changes to government policies.

Although the Royal Commission didn’t have the results that had been initially hoped for, it remains an impressive and comprehensive body of research into the relationships between Indigenous people, Canadian governments and Canadian society.

This Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was born in a time of ferment when the future of the Canadian federation was being debated passionately.

It came to fruition in the troubled months following the demise of the Meech Lake Accord and the confrontation, in the summer of 1990, between Mohawks and the power of the Canadian state at Kanesatake (Oka), Quebec.

As we complete the drafting of our report in 1995, further confrontations at Ipperwash, Ontario, and Gustafson Lake, British Columbia, signal that the underlying issues that gave rise to our Commission are far from resolved.

Source: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Volume 1, page

RCAP by the Numbers
Public hearings held: 100
People making submissions: over 2,000
Research studies commissioned: 350
Pages in the final report: 4000
Recommendations: 440
Recommended time for renewal: 20 years
Volumes in the report: 5
Year of Final Report: 1996
Year of official government response: 1998

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Final Report (1996)

- Volume 1: Looking Forward, Looking Back
- Volume 2: Restructuring the Relationship (2 parts)
- Volume 3: Gathering Strength
- Volume 4: Perspectives and Realities
- Volume 5: Renewal: A Twenty-Year Commitment

You can read the Final Report online. Do a search for the keywords “RCAP Final Report”