



Metis Settlements General Council Intervention:
Agenda item 12 – “Future Work”, April 19th 2018.

SPEAKER LIST #18 – PRESIDENT GERALD CUNNINGHAM

[BEGIN]

RECOGNITION BY THE CHAIR***

Thank you Madame Chair:

I am here representing the only legislated land based Metis in the world.

One of our Elders, who has just recently past, said to me “ the only thing I ask you is protect our lands, our environment, and way of life”

In 1938 – the Canadian province of Alberta set aside 12 areas of land for the exclusive use of our Metis people in the north western parts of Canada.

Between 1940 - 1960 the Provincial Government of the time rescinded and dissolved 4 of our Metis Settlements and forcefully removed those populations to existing Metis Settlements, leaving us with the Eight existing Metis lands.

We launched a lawsuit against the Crown in Right of Alberta in 1989 – resulting in the Metis Settlements – Alberta Accord whereby the government signed fee simple title ownership of 1.25 million acres of land over to the Metis Settlements General Council along with the assent of legislation that provides the framework for our self-government.

However, the problem of paternalism remains – the government still maintains tremendous control over our decision making – furthermore our people still fear the future loss of our lands and ways of life by the threat of land being taken away or threats of development in our traditional lands.

We have done our outmost in protecting our lands from Crown appropriation and unilateral development of our traditional Lands by way of an amendment to the Canadian Province of

Alberta’s Constitution – which provides some protection of our lands but until such time our lands are protected from expropriation from the Federal Crown as entrenched in the Canadian Constitution we will continue to call on Canada and all member states to protect indigenous lands as the greatest means of providing protection from environmental threat. Indigenous people are the true stewards of their traditional lands and equipped with traditional ecological knowledge will make possible the greatest form of environmental rehabilitation. We must first prohibit any further expropriation and find ways to repatriate lands in colonial state control.

It has been 28 years since the finalization of the out-of-court settlement with the Provincial Crown and living with the formerly mentioned threat of continued loss of lands, weighs heavy on our hearts.

I request the United Nations and member states Call on the Canadian Government to immediately begin dialogue with the Metis Settlements General Council on the protection of our lands from further crown expropriation!

We will not rest until Canada fully recognizes our lands as Metis lands and not lands under crown control. This will allow our people, to live the rest of their lives in peace and harmony and further allow our ancestors and Elders their dignity.

In conclusion – again, we Call on Canada to fully recognize our lands and jurisdiction which includes the recognition of our rights to lands below the surface, including but not limited to, mines and mineral rights as emphasized by Article 26.

Thank you Madame Chair.

[END]

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