

phenomenon that Morissette concludes is a result of band members' belief that their personal situation will not be affected whether they participate in band politics or not.

In the concluding chapter, Morissette shifts her attention to the role of women in the community. It is an appropriate conclusion, given the chronological trajectory of Morissette's narrative, and also considering the marginalization of women throughout the colonial era. It is, after all, only recently that women's voices have begun to be heard and listened to. Morissette does an excellent job of situating the role of women in Kitigan Zibi, as working within the political margins of the community over several generations. According to Morissette, women's advocacy efforts began in the 1930s with the establishment of the Indian Homemaker's Club, and carried on into the 1970s at which point Shirley Tolley, a member of Kitigan Zibi, co-founded the Quebec Native Women's Association. These initiatives were followed by the establishment of Waseya House in 1991, a safehouse for women suffering from domestic abuse that also offers health and legal consulting services, as well as training and employment programs. As Morissette notes in her concluding paragraph, the development of these organizations by Anishinaabe women demonstrates "interstitial leadership in social governance, growing autonomy, and a political culture specific to this genre." (p. 152)

In the end, *The Secret Struggles of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Leaders* is a worthwhile read for anyone interested in a localized history of Anishinaabe governance and politics. Although Morissette does an admirable job of letting Anishinaabe voices speak for themselves, it would have been nice if those voices could have been named and recognized for their contributions. In a so-called era of reconciliation, it is clear that there is still much work to be done.

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Ed Whitcomb, *Understanding First Nations: The Legacy of Canadian Colonialism*. Ottawa: From Sea to Sea Books, 2019. 200 Pages. ISBN 978-0986596742. \$19.95 paperback.

The history and past policies regarding the Indian people cannot and must not be ignored, for their effects are with us all in the present Indian fact. To deny the past and to refuse to recognise its implications is to distort the present and to distort the present is to take risks with the future that are blatantly irresponsible.

-(Wahbung: Our Tomorrows 40th Anniversary Edition, Manitoba Indigenous Cultural Education Centre)

I read Ed Whitcomb's *Understanding First Nations: The Legacy of Colonialism* and three chapters jumped out at me to get me thinking. One was the chapter predicting that those old colonial names should have mattered. The second was "We are all Treaty People," although it lacked consideration for non-human relatives. The third concerned the Indian Act, so racist a piece of legislation that we need to change it as soon as possible. Before the Black Lives Matter movement shook the world, the Wet'suwet'an crisis was unfolding low key in Canada, all contributing in one form or another to an important conversation about relationships. Otherwise, what is called 'reconciliation' is just more dancing around the table similar to the Constitutional talks of the early 80's.

It was leisurely reading that I enjoyed over several mornings with a coffee in the backyard, sitting outside with the birds singing, traffic whizzing by on the Bishop Grandin Boulevard behind my house thinking Whitcomb must be sitting somewhere feeling like a trusty old Farmer's Almanac: "I said that those statues were an issue even before it happened to Sir John A McDonald and our lady the Queen." Perhaps renaming the historically problematic names is a starting point, but it's still merely the tip of the iceberg. He is also right that Pierre Elliott Trudeau did more harm when he introduced the 1969 White Paper. Should we suggest changing the name of the airport in Montreal next? There are all kinds of textbooks that need the same attention. I went through undergrad with instructors referencing Tom Flanagan. Indigenous activist Michael Redhead Champagne said in a Global News interview, "I think renaming [Bishop Grandin] absolutely has to happen, but the City of Winnipeg has much more capacity than just renaming a street. They're in charge of police, paramedics, libraries, and community centers, so I expect the city to be doing much more than just renaming a street."

Whitcomb mentions this book is not for Indigenous people or academics, but the common person. In his words, it is for "non-Indigenous Canadians who suspect things went terribly wrong in the past." He points out the federal government consistently violated the treaties, the Constitution, the rule of law, the concept of fair treatment, and its own promises. Also timely is the chapter about water issues on reserves. Ottawa spent \$240 billion in eight months on Covid-19 relief, so water issues obviously could have been fixed long ago. The lack of political will is because the average Canadian doesn't know how bad it really is. He describes the book as, "a short, easy-to-read, factual account of the problems facing First Nations over the last 150 years, many which they still face. It was intended to be a 'no holds barred,' a clear account of what has been done to them by settlers and

their Federal government.”

Whitcomb notes, “International pressure was important to amend the Indian Act in 1951. Some Canadians realized that the cultural genocide they had been practicing against First Nations people was unacceptable, especially for a country that was championing human rights at the new United Nations.” He concludes the chapter identifying the elephant in the room: no one has figured out how to retain what is (perhaps) valuable in the Indian Act while jettisoning what is not. International pressure may be necessary to get Canada to change legislation that impacts only First Nations. Unfortunately, public opinion still isn’t in favor of First Nations.

Whitcomb is an ally and another voice in an important educational process. His book would be a good introduction to the Indian fact here in Canada for anybody. To conclude, I’d say the strength of the book is that he does a great job summarizing 150 years and delving into the deeper issues like layers to an onion. Also helpful is the matter of fact way in which he describes the double standards and the contradictions that go unnoticed by even educated Canadians who buy into the negative myths. Not that long ago, Alan Lagimodiere, Manitoba’s newly appointed Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, was confronted by NDP Opposition Leader Wab Kinew, over his refusal to condemn Residential Schools. Kinew strongly expressed that the schools’ intent was to kill the Indian in the child. To his credit, I saw Mr. Lagimodiere walk back the foolish words he used, and at the Treaty Two 150 year celebration in Clear Lake, he admitted that Indian Residential School history is, in fact, genocide.

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