

2 DECEMBER 1981

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Leroy LittleBear
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Dear Leroy:

At long last I am sending you the marked-up version of "Nation-States, Indigenous Nations, and the Great Lie". I hope my marks are clear.

The following insert should be made at page 14 before the last paragraph:

The proclaimed superiority of the nation-state has, in each of our examples, been used to justify the dislocation and exploitation of Indigenous nations. the "laws of nations" have been subverted by domestic rationalizations to deny whole peoples their basic rights as human beings. The myth of superiority has been used to enrich colonial populations and impoverish indigenous peoples. The patterns of oppression are essentially the same. Indigenous nations in all of our examples have been surrounded by invading peoples leaving enclaves for indigenous homelands. Each indigenous nation seeks to secure its homeland against further invasion. Each Indigenous nation is denied its right to exercise its distinct political powers. The objective of each nation-state is the same: elimination of the indigenous population as a distinct nation, and the exploitation of indigenous lands and resources for the benefit of the state.

Here is a thumb-nail bio as you requested:

" Rudolph C. Ryser is a member of the Cowlitz Tribe. He studied philosophy at Washington State University and international relations at the Center for War/Peace Studies. He has served as a political adviser to Indian Tribes and national Indian organizations in the United States, and is presently the Special Assistant to the President of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples."

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the symposium last Spring. I hope this letter finds you well. Best wishes during the holiday season.

Regards,


RUDOLPH C. RYSER

SEP 10 REC'D

To participants in the Indian Government Conference,
University of Lethbridge

*Redraft -
2 Dec 81*

Attached is an edited version of your presentation at the conference. As you know, we are preparing the presentations for publication as an anthology on Indian Government and the editing of each presentation has been done for this purpose. We have eliminated personal references, repetitious material and other items that in our judgement would not be appropriate for the book. In this process, however, we may have eliminated or altered parts of your paper that you feel are important and should be retained. Therefore, we have furnished you with a verbatim transcript of your presentation to compare with the edited version. If you wish any of the original material restored, or desire to add additional material to your paper, please feel free to do so. Also, we require a biographical sketch of yourself to use in preparing the list of contributors to the book.

We would like your manuscript returned to us within three weeks after you receive it, if at all possible. If you anticipate any difficulties in this respect (particularly if the mail strike is still on) would you please call me at 403 329-2635 (Native American Studies Department, University of Lethbridge).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Leroy Little Bear

experience, and the only other thing I am going to say maybe I don't want to take too much of your time talking up here but I am going to tell you, all this what was presented, the conlawaka I work closely with him for several years, and he really give you people real what he said, it didn't, just come from paper, it came from the heart what he said this is the best thing and this is what I don't have a stack of them this little piece of paper but I don't have a lot worse so I still say if they should have educated us from day one not almost 100 years after. This is the biggest mistake that the government ever did, and most important things of our don't forget education is the most important things of our lives today. Look at the government is very supposing that if constitution. The constitution is very supposing that if they don't bring the constitution home if the Britain agrees just to give Canada independence we still a lot worse telling to give Indian people I don't like to be asked any questions but you people like to give you a chance to ask this gentleman any questions. Thank you. Okay. questions from the floor for any of the three gentlemen.

*Conclusion
Nelson Small
1972*

Rudy Rysse

side 1. His exlency the high commissioner for Tansanea was originally scheduled to speak at this time, but as you know we replace John Monroe with the high commissioner last night at our session so today we were to have as our speaker Rudy Rysse and Earl Old person but Earl I don't think has arrived this afternoon so I will proceed by introducing Rudy Rysse and have him address you. I have known Rudy Rysse now for two years we have been working very closely together with the world council of indigenous people. Rudy is a member of the Couleets tribe in the United States area and he has vast experience in Indian government and working with Indian government. For two years before he formed his own company called Klamso a consultant firm in Seattle he worked as executive director of the small tribes organization of western Washington. He supervised the staff which numbered as many as 65 and they worked in fields as diverse as program planning, development, and human resources, judicial systems and natural resource development. The organization was responsible for 17 tribal governments in 1975 Mr. Rysse served on the staff of the American Indian Policy Review Commission in Washington D.C. and he authored the task force report on federal administration and structure of Indian affairs. Over the years Rudy has served as a consultant and advisor to the Kuitwit confederated tribes, the national congress of American Indians, the Governor Indian National Council in Washington state, the Guinot Indian tribe, and many other organizations in government among which is the world council of indigenous people. Rudy has many skills and as much knowledge about administrative systems. He has mediated many intergovernmental conflicts and he has served as a trainer in various types of workshops and he has been involved in economic planning, social service development, and worked in the development of

various tribal government institutions. So he comes to us today very well qualified to speak to the subjects of our conference this week, Indian government, so its my pleasure to introduce you to Mr. Ruddy Rysler. Thank you very much Marie, I'd like to greet the elders, I expect we Commissioner Jansanae, have yet to meet you, I expect we will later today I have to start off hand first by saying that the long list that Marie has read is really a sort of listing of my education. Most of my education has been in dealing directly with the actual circumstances that affect tribal governments in the past 10 to 15 years. When I was asked to prepare a paper for this conference I was a little frightened because I have spent the last 10 to 15 years preparing papers of I other people to deliver, not for me to deliver and so what I was required to do speak for myself and that I discovered is the most difficult task that all. What turned out to be almost more difficult than that task was to sit down and type a paper and discover that after 15 years of work everything that I would tell you today I would contradict may things I tried to teach 10 years ago. Alright, you must know that because for me it became an extremely fearful experience to find out what I am going to tell you today. So I am learning from my self for the first time. Okay, so here is the paper. The topic I have been asked to deliver a paper on carries the imposing title of contemporary Indegineous tribal states and their semi-autonomous Indegineous tribal nation. From this proposed title I have concluded that my job here is to compare the situation of Indegineous nations from various parts of the world as they relate to the government of nation states. For this presentation I have selected four such situations for Indegineous populations, and nation states have relations with an emphasis on it situations in the U.S. and Canada. I will during my discussion point to the situations in the United States, Chile, and Niquarqa. These have been selected for three reasons: one the policies of these nation states toward Indegineous nations have all been drawn from U.S. government Indegineous nations have all been drawn from U.S. governmental experience; economic, and social populations share a common political/economic, and social relationships which have resulted from what I call the great lie. I am entitled to this paper therefore Nations States, Indegineous and the Great Lie, because I believe there does not now exist an acceptable model of relations between Indegineous populations and nation states and thousands of examples of model. There are hundreds of examples of where dominant state and Indegineous relations are practicing dominating political and economic interests are practicing deceptions aimed at the elimination of Indegineous nations. It is my intent to answer three questions by the time I have concluded my presentation. They are what is the great lie, how has the great lie been used by nation states to control and then eliminate Indegineous nations and finally what

the alternatives available to Indegineous nations if they are to avoid ultimate and final destruction by nation states. At first now let me give you my renewed discovery of a historical perspective. Indian nations are made up of peoples who are the descendants of the original landlords of territories occupied for thousands of years. These nations are the successor nations to great civilizations which dominated the world for thousands of years. The nation states with which this paper is concerned are political organizations which have come into existence during a mere 200 year period. They have by various means sought to expand their influence throughout the Indegineous nation surround the Indegineous peoples, and establish colonial schemes designed to confiscate Indegineous land and natural resources while suppressing and exterminating the political identity of whole Indegineous nations. The contemporary reality is that Indegineous nations do continue to exist, though largely weakened while the nation states have grown larger more powerful and threatening to Indegineous nations. The principle means by which the nation states of Canada, the U. S., Nicaragua, and Chile have come to dominate and repress Indegineous nations is through what I am calling the Great Lie. Through each of the nation states began their existence as politically and economically weak with only a small foothold on territories the people of these fledgling nations use their weakness to gain help and support from the more powerful Indegineous nations. Indegineous nations permitted the small and helpless nations to organize governments and even increase their population by allowing increased entry of political and economic refugees from other nations in Europe. The Great Lie began to have importance as a political and economic tool for new nations occupying Indegineous territories. As a means to gain greater concessions and aid from Indegineous nations the European nations located within the Indegineous territories began the selective process of convincing Indegineous people that it is the destiny of European nations to govern and control and the use of Indegineous land. The European nations so they said had the right to govern the world because they were superior beings. Indegineous people would be described as were superior beings. Indegineous people would be described as primitive, savage, and incompetent. Indegineous people would be Indegineous that people could be convinced that their own competence that their own political, economic, and cultural systems were evil, then Indegineous peoples would come to believe these things themselves, and reject their own Indegineous nations. Once Indegineous people rejected their own values and systems they could then be drawn into the European nations and controlled. The new European nations have worked diligently to completely wipe out Indegineous history and intellectual thought and replace them with European history and intellectual thought. I am today in part a product of that process. I speak English, I don't speak my own tongue. Many of you are a product of

that yourselves. Fortunately, we have elders who still have their own tongue. The Great Lie is simply this: If Indians reject their own history, intellectual development, languages, and culture and replace these things with European values and ideals then Indians will survive. It is from this twisted thinking that European nations have convinced millions of Indians that they should surrender their freedom and accept subjugation as a way of life. No where in the world more than in the United States has the Great Lie had a greater success. After many years of writing treaties and forcing Indians to agree to their contents, the United States government would violate those solemn agreements. To solve these violations the United States would tell the Indians that since they were incapable of understanding the agreements in the first place, the United States would use its own system of justice to find a remedy. Not international law, not the laws of Indians. Since 1831 the United States has been adjudicating disputes between itself and its Indian nations. History demonstrates that the more Indians became dependent upon the U. S. legal and political institutions the more Indians have experienced erosion of their own governmental powers, territorial, and natural resource rights, and cultural development. The U. S. not stop at simply asserting its superiority over Indians through its legal system. After 1871 when the U. S. unilaterally declared its intention to cease treaty making with Indians, it imposed a new concept on its relations with Indian nations. It asserted that Congress of the United States would exert plenary power over all matters involving Indian nations. In a more direct term the U. S. would exercise absolute and unlimited political power over the internal affairs of Indian nations. U. S. legislative dictatorship over the affairs of Indian nations. In fact, the United States government declared Indian governments illegal and such governments would be forceable suppressed. Indian nations would be cut off from the world family called the Indian reorganization act which would effectively replace any vestige of the original Indian governments with governments that would be designed and instituted by the U. S. itself. These governments would be recognized by the U. S. Congress as the legitimate governments over Indians. Territories. The constitutions for the American made Indian governments placed for all of the political authority for governments under the control of an appointed bureaucrate the secretary of the interior, and the legislative power in the U. S. limited powers to enact laws, but they were granted substantial powers to regulate and control tribal people on behalf of the United States. In a very real way these tribal governments became direct extensions

of the United States government operating under U.S. laws and policies. These tribal governments became under U.S. law colonial governments. The rules under which these colonial tribal governments operated ensured U.S. access and control over Indigneous lands, natural resource, and people. Indigneous political leaders did not at first agree to the U.S. sponsored colonial government system. Indeed many Indigneous political leaders actively opposed U.S. intervention into Indigneous political and legal affairs. Many of these leaders were able to convince their own peoples not to accept the U.S. tribal government system. Yet other political leaders of Indigneous nations accepted the money, quarantees of political power and other gifts from the United States in exchange for their support of the U.S. colonial tribal government system. Many Indigneous nations did not accept the U.S. tribal government system and retained their own government systems. Despite this advanced number of Indigneous nations accepted U.S. government authority. Now 47 years later many Indigneous political leaders are questioning the wisdom of creating U.S. sponsored Indigneous nations.

Indeeds many Indigneous nations have discovered that the overwhelming interests of Indigneous peoples have been the United States. Indigneous peoples in the U.S. have become refugees in their own land, they have become hostages to the American legal and political system. Indigneous law and political development is denied even more vigorously. The timber, oil, coal, uranium, water, and land belonging to the Indigneous nations is being used by the United States to benefit U.S. goals and aspirations, and the U.S. invented tribal government is being used against Indigneous peoples to deny them the sole use of their own property. An American invented education system is being forced on Indigneous populations to ensure that the next generation of Indigneous people will have completely forgot about the existence of Indigneous nations. Indigneous children are being taught that George Washington the founding father of their nation. In this case they are being told that their American political system was created to give freedom to the oppressed and America is a beacon of freedom for all people, but they aren't told that the U.S. is thought to destroy their well as land, their history, their language, and culture as well as their freedom. Deception through the great lie has permitted the U.S. once a weak and defenceless nation of people to become the dominant political and economic force throughout the western hemisphere. Where their economy is decimated the governments in the shambles and their peoples in poverty the Indigneous nations now look to the United States government for help and persistance. The United States and its businesses say only give us your land, your minerals, your petroleum, and your water and we will give you your freedom. This may seem a harsh endicment of the United States, but

Let me remind you that if you must ask about the present condition of indigenous peoples in the United States and you must explain how that condition can be passed on to you must conclude that it resulted from the actions of traders to indigenous people the actions of Europeans or the actions of both. I prefer to accept the view that indigenous nations have been deceived by Europeans with the help of indigenous traitors who have given their loyalty to the nation state and turned against the indigenous nations. In many ways the situation in the U.S. resembles the stage of political government in the U.S. during the latter 19th century and the early 20th century. Both were born from the same mother, the nation of the United States gained release from its mother over 200 years ago, Canada is still tied to its mother by an umbilical cord called the British North American Act. But like the U.S., Canada wants to become a full grown power able to act on its own without following the rules set down by the mother. Unlike the United States, Canada had to wait a long time before asking the royal mother if it could leave home and grow up. Everything Canada knows about conducting relations with bigger brothers, the United States learned from its mother, or its bigger brother, and broke them with indigenous nations. So did Canada. Just as indigenous nations created a legislative dictatorship over indigenous nations so did Canada, now Canada is at a crossroads belatedly separating from the mother but the indigenous nations are an obstacle. Canada cannot become a free and independent country unless it can claim to have control over all of the territory in upper North America, all of the people, and all of their land. The indigenous nations in Canada have learned from the mistakes of their brother to the south and they are not now fully prepared to give Canada all of their lands, natural resources, and people. To remedy this problem the Canadian government is now seeking to learn from its brother in the south by promoting the parliamentary enactment of an Indian government act. This act is for all practical purposes a direct copy of the U.S. Indian reorganization act. In fact the Canadian government has consulted extensively with U.S. officials over the years to take advantage of the model policies and approaches used toward indigenous governments developed in the U.S. While Canada's structure is somewhat different from the U.S. structures, it has worked to accomplish the same goals. The elimination of indigenous nations and the superimposition of Canadian European values over indigenous values. The goal in Canada is achievable if the Canadian officials successful in seeking to carry out the great life. The effort to politically assimilate indigenous people in Canada is a recognition by Canada that indigenous nations are wholly outside of the Canadian federal system. Were it not the fact of what Canada wouldn't even be a part of its percent of what Canada perceives to be a part of its

territory it knows belongs to the indigenous nations and not to Canada. Those are unseed territories. Canada cannot become a full nation without controlling indigenous people and that 64% so what they offer in exchange for all of that is recognition of Indian government in their constitution and by their law just as the U.S. government said about instituting the process of doing the same. Just as the U.S. sought to do that to gain control over indigenous lands and resources and the people, so Canada now seeks to repeat that. Canada has already worked to implement the great lie by telling indigenous people that the Canadian constitution can will protect indigenous nations and prevent further erosion of aboriginal rights. But they offer you not control only the right. Canada cannot permit indigenous nations to continue to exist. They will always be a threat to Canada's sovereignty, its political integrity as a nation. The Canadian government has time and time again denied that the first nations of Canada the indigenous nations have original claim to the vast territories that are called Canada. The Canadian government has denied that the first nations have a political identity separate from that federation called Canada, and that Canada has no right to claim political or economic rights within indigenous territories. To admit to such things would create a situation where it could be argued that Canada has only administrative responsibility to indigenous nations, and that the indigenous nations and the United Kingdom have a political relationship not dependent at all upon the existence of Canada. So Canada's solution is to institute the Great Lie. We will help you brother, come and join us, and you can be yourself, but watch what happened in North America to the south and many of the brothers are not a part of the family any more, they are part of America. In Nicaragua we have a very similar situation, there are three tribes there the miskitho, the rayma, and the summo. They occupy half of Nicaragua the eastern half, they are the majority population in eastern Nicaragua. Under the summosa roseen they were told that they must be Nicaraguans not miskithos, not raymas, not summos. They must be Nicaraguans and if they were not to be Nicaraguans then they would be dead. Many of those people in those tribes revolted against the summosa roseen even though it was supported by the United States and other western powers to be held in power. It was a revolution instituted by the indigenous people against an oppressive roseen. The sentinistas who were the religious leaders who were the labor leaders in Nicaragua who were also the hispanic descendants and not indigenous people said we will take the lead and we will save you from this mad man summosa as they did and so they took up the revolution against summosa and they won and everyone was proud. For now they were done with the oppression; the miskithos, the raymas, and the summas had decided now they would have an opportunity to have their own land and their

own nations once again. But not long after the Sandinista is assumed the great powerful role of leaders of Nicaragua they went to the Indigenous peoples and said you are Nicaraguans you are not moskitnos, you are not raymas, you are not summas. If you are not Nicaraguans you are dead and so the revolution continues to produce and Indigenous nation. Nicaragua offered to these summas/ raymas, and moskitnos a government, they said, we will give you a government as a part of our government and we will even permit you to have a representative in our government however we will select him and their representative in the German Natzie to become their representative in the parliament of the Sandinestas and so where is the Indigenous nation now. The same controversy exists there as it exists here as it exists in the U.S. and everywhere where the nation states are the goals of nation states the central issue remains are the goals of nation states the same as the goals of Indigenous nations, and all we conclude or can conclude by looking through history but if they are not Indigenous nations can co-exist but if they become a part of a nation state that is dominated by someone else the Indigenous nation will disappear. In Chile we have a situation that exists exactly the same the new government of pinoshay advised the Mapuchay the people who had occupied the territory for thousands of years they must move from that territory because there is copper and tin under you ground and so when they would not move the pinoshay government enacted a law that said the government has the right to take that land all they require is that one person not even a Mapuchay but one person within the Indigenous territory to say yes you can have my land and then the government would have the land and the authority to take it all, and so they have one hundred communities in the last year have been devastated for Indigenous communities and their land has been opened up for copper and coal and zinc and nichol and tin to advance the interest of Chile to advance the interests of other peoples but not the Mapuchay, even their own land cannot benefit them now. What can be done. It is very simple and perhaps that's why its most difficult, as we hear from our elders they say over and over and over again over centuries they have said hold on to the nation of people defend the nation of people against all enemies. Ascertain your own government you don't have to ask for a government. You have no people then there is no reason to even argue but yet all over the world there are Indigenous populations who carry out governmental activities understood historically and in contemporary terms and often they ask the nation state to give them the power to act. The only power that exists for any people whether it is the United States or Canada whereas the people themselves act to conjure up the nation as if the people themselves act to conjure up the strength, to force that nation upon the rest of the world and say we are here and we don't plan to disappear. Our power comes from within and from X. our access to the great

spirit. With those two things the indigenous nation can survive. It cannot survive by asking someone else to permit it to survive. Thank you very much. Thank you Rudy, I would like to ask Dave Nicholson if he would come and join us up here. I understand he is on the program this afternoon as well and I would like to at this point introduce our next speaker, Earl Old Person, now many of you from Southern Alberta undoubtedly know Mr. Old Person. He has been the leader the representative of the Blackfoot government and people in the territory south of us called Montana for years and years and years. I don't know if he has ever lost an election and the reason for that is that he has been very faithful to his constituency and they have felt he has very adequately represented them and lead them. Earl I understand is also very well respected for his farming, his ranching, and he has been very active with various other organizations in the United States including the National Tribal Chairmans Association and the National Congress of American Indians. He has made many representations on behalf of his people to other parts of the world, and other nations and other activities in the United States to see to it that they protect their heritage as Indian people. Thank you Mr. Old Person for coming today and I would like to ask you to speak now. Thank you madam, chairman again. I was caught by surprise. My friend didn't tell me that I was going to be a speaker so it may look like I may have a prepared statement but I do not have. I have a few notes that kind of reminds us. It is good to see that we have some of our elders that are here today, and I think these elders that are here taking part in this gathering that we are having here in Lethbridge are the reasons why you have the Indian studies program. They are the people who are the so called backbone to the things that exist and that we fight for. Very few of these oldtimers and even the middle aged people and the younger people maintain that Indian name. I sometimes am questioned about my name Old Person. I guess they expect that I be using a name, not that I am that young, but these names were handed down these are the names that were given according to leadership according to the visions the dreams that our oldtimers and our people that look to nature the people that look to the spirit for their guidance. This is where these names come from, and they are of great significance. I picked from no one, but they were of great significance. I see our friend Larry Pruner, Dan Chiefmoon, Larry is one of those people who are looking to you as the young Indian leader for their survival, for maintaining and preserving the lands for that we call our so called reserves out our reservations, which I don't refer to them as reservations, our reserves. Because I don't think anyone reserved these lands for us, except those people that were determined those people that were brave and strong and fought for these lands that still exist and that caused us to exist today. Although that we have had many treaties we have had many agreements with the governments that we deal with, and I

think its been said time and again and enough that those treaties and those agreements were broken, they were not lived up to, but our oldtimers they recognize them they took them as to be sacred to them, but what was within those treaties were not the things that they were made to believe that were in the treaties. I am speaking on my side the border. Many of the oldtimers that I have come acquainted with I began my political leadership back in 1954. I became a tribal councilman and I been a councilman ever since. I became a chairman in 1964 and was a chairman up until 1978 was off for two years, and I guess you might say I was demoted, but I made a comeback, and I am again a chairman. But mostly I was giving the the Chief then in 1978 for the first time since 1934 of the Blackfeet people. But these oldtimers I used to interpret for them and when their half long and in braids these are the people who wore their dress, they did not dress dressed in Indian this was their dress, they did not dress just for certain occasions but it was their way of dress. A lot of them did not it, but sometimes I would catch some of them that when they had to they will. But they would take with me, they would confer with me and they would tell me constantly that in the treaties that were suppose to be in the treaties. And I certainly believed them as an interpreter a full blood member of the Blackfeet tribe I speak the language fluent I understand it. I still have difficulty in getting across to the people I just wonder what kind of understanding what is being said and I just wonder what kind of interpreters they had in those days. So I certainly agree that there were things that they were made all understand and realize the kinds of confrontation the kinds of things that come before us day after day week after week month after month year after year we often hope of new administrations that take place within our nations that they would do something that would begin to cause things to happen for the Indian people. I believe there have been many recommendations they have send people out into the Indian country to find out what does the Indian people want what is there desires and we begin to come up with the things that we think that we want for our nations for our countries but still we find our selves back at the bottom of that totempost. In the United States we had of our kind that had fought and wanted someone that was of our kind to take leadership whether its in the national, regional, or the local level to deal with the Indian problems. Hoping that various agencies that deal with Indian problems. Some of the problems would be a way of solving and answering some of the problems and some of the desires and some of the concerns that we Indian people have, but again that too I guess somewhat failed because there was someone at the higher up was giving the direction as the gentleman said, and so they were guided in a direction where they were answering to someone else other than the Indian people. I think many of

leaders tribal leaders up until recently have worked and become leaders and took on that responsibility just by experience and have worked through experience. They did not have) such a spectacular background of education but they were working with what was real with them. I myself, I do not have a background, in which case I do not have any kind of education I think I have told this to my friend Bill Swiney that the only kind of degree I ever had was a phd.

wasn't a doctrine but a post hole digger and that's gone too because they have machines for that today. But working through experience the real thing that we see that actually happens to the reservations that we have the Indian lands that we occupy are the reasons that we speak up and I believe this is the reasons for our oldtimers speak out. They often question. They are very sceptical about various things that come to them. They begin to wonder where is this going to take us what is this going to cause us, and sometimes we think they are a little bit crazy to ask this question, but in the long run we begin to see that they are right. The gentleman spoke of the Indian reorganization act of the United States which we are under the Blackfeet. Our oldtimers at that time questions that particular act, and a lot of those oldtimers and members during that time, refused to vote for this act to come onto the reservation, but it prevailed, it came on, but I would say this much that the government may have thought that this particular act would help cause the Indian people to go out of existence, but I think they made a mistake when they forced us and require the Indian people the Indian children to go to schools and learn their ways. This is where the mistake came, because those people who took advantage of this are the people that begin to take lead and they begin to turn things around, and I believe that through them they begin to turn those different laws around, and they begin to take a hard look at the kinds of things that were coming to the Indian people. It was at one time when perhaps our leaders sat there and agreed with the kinds of things that came to them, but the time also came when they begin to hold off those kinds of things until they had a chance to see what was going to happen. And so --- end of tape 2 side 1. Slide 2. And so these oldtimers had something that they didn't have to use documents, they didn't have to use papers, whatever they had said was right there was real. They were teachers way back then they taught, our ancestors taught, there childrens how to get out and learn how to survive and to make livelihoods for their family people, they taught them how to go out on warpaths and to go out and hunt the buffalo to go out and seek for the kinds of things that would help their people. As I have said were real if they were not careful they lost out. If they were not careful in doing what they were told to do and taught to do, they caused their people hardship. I was talking to a group one time, and I was referring to a river that our ancestors crossed that river whether it was in the summer or winter whether it was blizzarding or not

they were crossing it. They had to swim across, but I advised use at that time that don't try it today. There is a bridge use it otherwise you will catch pneumonia, but that was their life was real. The tribes in the United States today have been tried with just about everything different. Our governments have come to us making many sound as if they are the kinds of legislation, making them sound as if they are the kinds of things that is going to get us on our way or is going to begin to solve those problems that we have been questioned with, but we find at the end that they were directed in a way where we would fall. Many of the tribes in the United States came under what was known as an allotment act whereby some individual members were given certain portions of lands as their own lands that were done this was another way of those people that were our leaders seeing us losing out on the lands that we occupy. Later years they came up with what was called my people they referred to as forced patents, because those people they allowed to those people who had these lands to get a patent in other words its no longer under trust of Indian owner or under the government it was just like anyone else's land they could sell at any time they want. This was another way of seeing that our lands would go out of existence. They had a program known as and of course the Indian reorganization act came about, and then we had a program called relocation this was where they were relocating our people especially our young family members into the metropolitan areas into the larger cities and telling them this is where the survival is this is where you are going to get your jobs that you want. Many of these people got the kinds of things that you want. Some of these people came back but a number of these people stayed and made a go of it and are quite successful, and so these kinds of different things that came to us our Indian people made a stand and were making them turn to where they were not doing as the way they were thought it would do to the Indian people. A story was told about a minister that came to an Indian fellow evidently this Indian was about half in need of drinks and the minister came to him and the fellow naturally went to the minister and wanted some help from him as far as money was concerned to get another drink. The minister says you know I haven't seen you in church for many years now, I have been helping to have to start going to here and there. He says you going to have to start going to church again. He says because if you don't there is a place for those people who don't go to church, and he says and that place is a place where it is always hot, crowded, smog, dirty, he went on and made it just sound awful, and the fellow stood there and he says yes I believe I know what you mean. He says isn't that what these various things that is Indian people inspire of these various things that is confronting them, and that is causing them to take a hard look at the kinds of things that's coming to them are making a move at the forward move. Not to get away from the kinds of

things we still hope we could preserve and maintain in as far as our Indian way of life. I think many people misunderstand that whenever we say think that we want to go back and live our way of our ancestors, they think that we want to go back and live in our teepees all year around to be in our Indian costumes all year around, to get away from this that we have today, but I believe that the Indian people today do want to maintain it those that are able to maintain and preserve. If its our dance, if its our song, if its our language, if its our artwork and crafts whatever, they are the kinds of things I believe that the Indian people want to keep and continue practicing and the showing their younger people as they are coming, but at the same time to go forth and to do the kinds of things that they feel is going to help their Indian people, their reservations, and the kinds of things that they are desiring for. Today, we have many of our young people such as we have here today, the Indian people are taking advantage of the kinds of things that are being made available to them, such as this university that you have here. We have some of our kind thats taking leadership, such as Marie, and others that are here, heroy. I think a few years ago you would never picture people like that to take the lead but they are taking advantage of this opportunity that is coming to them, and I believe this is the reason that we are not followers anymore neither we are not trying to lead, but we are taking a stand where we can walk together with those people who let us at one time, and that we would be able to have the same opportunities, and be able to have the same kinds of things that we can offer to them and where we can help one another. I had a magazine article in Forbes advertising I guess in it said we don't want your help, but we want your business. The reason for this is that we are too many times marked as people wanting help all the time. They never realize that we are making efforts we have our endeavors we have our ways of trying to make something more permanent that we can look to and refer to as ours that we as the Indian people promote and perhaps make it a success, and when it becomes successful that it be recognized, just like any other business or any other effort that is made throughout this country. We deem our pencil factory to be successful at this time, and we hope that it would be recognized just like any other non-Indian industry. That people would recognize it that the products we put out are just as good as any other product that is being made. This is the kind of thing that I wanted to get across the nation, and most of all it is our people that done the work, the Indian people, and those people had no education, they had no training, about putting pencils together or pens and today they are experts, and it makes them proud, it lifts them up, and it makes others look and see that it can be done. I have a fellow colleague here, Mr. Swaney, who are making the same kinds of efforts, their endeavors are the same and yet their problems are just as great as anyone else. Constantly

fighting for the things that they feel and see is right for them, and now a statement that are wrong to them. I used in many occasions when he refused to go to school, and when he went to school, he refused to do his work, until one time in one of his text books, his grandfather's picture in the book, and that was going to be part of their lesson, but it was towards the end of the book, and when he saw that he determined that he wasn't going to miss one day of school. He was going to do everything to keep up with school. and to do his work, because he was waiting for one day one great day that was going to come, and that was the day when they come to that page of his grandfather, and the teacher were wondering, they began to wonder about him. My what changed him you know. He is an excellent student now. He is never absent, and then that day came they come to that page, and the teacher got up for the lesson the teacher says all right today come to this page but this page we are going to skip today because it is not that important. You can just about see what Tom Porter felt, now he felt. It was a great let down. He just went the other way, completely opposite from what he tried to do, and I believe this tells us that if we are giving just a half a chance the same kind of recognition that others get the same kind of recognition that our people may get I think we the people will be willing to come together, come together and do the kinds of things that can help us together, but inspite of that he is going around trying to encourage people to make a stand and to try and to do the kinds of things that would help for our cause. Our people and to continue to make that stand for our cause. Today we have a great question among the Indian tribes in the United States, and I think Mr. Swiney will verify this particular statement. Today we do not know where we Indian people are going. We do not know the kinds of things that's going to come within this administration that we have, because at one point our leaders say that they will not cause hardship to the needy, to poor, to those that need help. On the other hand that we see that they are the number ones that they are hurting at this time, and so it is another a separate fight today is how are we going to get the message to those people that we look to for our survival, this is where I believe that look to for our help, and this is where I believe that coming together banding together, and knowing what and the kind of message that we want to relay, it is very vital at this time. I have said in one of my talks that 80 years are the years of being realistic. We cannot pretend no longer, we cannot look at things in a way that we do not deem them serious, but we are going to have to take a look at whatever we stand for and whatever we want to take a real way, because I believe in a statement that was made by one of the lawyers that we had back in Washington, D.C. when one of our old timers asked him through me as an interpreter, he says why is our treaties broken, why are they not lived up to by

the government. The lawyer pointed at a bulb, a light bulb, he says when the white man came, I guess that's Columbus that was remarked last night he was looking for India, and he saw us people and referred to us as Indians, and he says its good thing he wasn't looking for turkey maybe they would refer to us a gobblers, but he says when they came to this continent you Indian people outnumbered them, there were more of you people you were powerful, they came they had to do something, they had to make some kind of treaty they had to agree with you in some way, but as they became stronger and many in numbers they could care less for those treaties. He says its just like this light bulb their so strong today they are so great today they can break these treaties just like the light bulb, and its true, but I certainly commend our leaders today, I certainly commend those people that are making a stand today. That inspite of these kinds of things that we are made to believe that could happened that they are still making a stand and that they are still coming forth and that they are going to continue coming forth with the kinds of things that they believe in the kinds of things that they believe that they believe to give the kinds of answers that we are looking for, and I know so long as this exists so long as we have these kinds of leaders we are going to continue fighting for those things that we feel is ours. As the oldtimer says in the future you are going to continue fight, not with bows and arrows, but you are going to be going to be looking in, and it is today. They are looking at the values of our lands of our lands that we live on, they see many things that we have that they want again, and they are going to come at us and we are going to make that stand, we are going to have to depend on you people who are the leaders and will be the leaders, these oldtimers need you, they need your help for them to exist, for the lands to exist, and for the kinds of things that they practice to exist. Its going to take that leadership, and so with that I do hope that regardless of this border line that we see I would say that that does not separate us, but that joins us together, and that is the kind of stand that we must begin to make whether we are Blackfeet, Bloods, North Peligans, North Blackfoot, Flathead, whatever, we are Indian people as my people say we are the real people. When they refer to the so called Indians on my reservations they call them Mesipatle that's not Blackfeet, that's not Indian, its real people and so we are the real people and we are fighting for what the real people stands for. Thank you. Before I call upon our next speaker I know that you have sat a long time so you may take a stretch and have some coffee, and then we will take our final speaker this afternoon. So in the absence of the governments representative Dave Nicholson has agreed to speak on the federal perspective. Dave has the experience and knowledge to speak on the subject. Dave David was born in the Maritimes received his education at St. Dunston University part of the Anticadia University. He spent three years in military service. He worked in Portugal in

*St. Dunston
Dave Nicholson*

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4401 University Drive,
Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 3M4,
27 November 1981

Rudy Ryser,
c/o World Council of Indigenous Peoples Office,
Room C-812,
University of Lethbridge

Dear Rudy,

Thank you very much for speaking to the Southern Alberta Council on Public Affairs on November 19th. Your speech stimulated a great deal of interest, and as a result, I am sure that more southern Albertans are aware of the native constitutional position.

It was very good of you to agree to speak at a moment's notice. Not only did you help us out of a difficult position, you spoke to the topic as if it had been arranged weeks in advance.

I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you again the next time you return to Lethbridge. If you would agree to speak to my political science class for a few minutes one day, I would be very happy.

Thank you again for your help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ian Brown".