



CONFEDERACY OF TREATY SIX FIRST NATIONS CHIEFS

Media Statement

March 8, 2019 – Treaty No. 6 Territory

“I chose to wait until hearing from all called to appear before the Justice Standing Committee on the SNC Lavalin issue before giving my personal opinion on the recent resignations of former Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould and Minister Jane Philpott” stated Dr. Wilton Littlechild, Grand Chief of Treaty No. 6.

“I am deeply saddened with the resignations of these two hard-working, dedicated individuals, who have worked tirelessly on issues impacting our First Nations from the federal government level. While Ms. Wilson-Raybould herself is a First Nations person, I do not automatically support her for that reason; I have seen her take the role as a Member of Parliament for all Canadians, not just the Indigenous peoples as did I when I was a MP. As another lawyer by profession, she is aware of the Rule of Law and has maintained the ethical requirements as a lawyer; and even more stringently enforced as an Indigenous person as demanded in our cultural teachings.

Dr. Philpott was an outstanding Minister of Indigenous Services Canada as I witnessed her taking a humanistic view of the issues impacting our Nations and our Treaty citizens, particularly the children. It was a loss to us when she was moved to Treasury as there was more to do on the files she was working on with our leaders. Both would be a great loss to our country. In fact there could be a severe backlash on Indigenous issues because of the way this matter was handled.

I commend both of these Members of Parliament for taking a stand in what I would definitely say is a path to Reconciliation, standing up for what they believe in. It is not an easy task to do this, to go against the Party; I do not believe either should be penalized by the Prime Minister nor their Liberal Caucus. Instead I would recommend the Caucus look at Reconciliation as a way to heal and move forward within their Party.

In listening to the testimonies offered, I do not see the argument of lost jobs as the issue when it was reported today that the unemployment rate is at its highest. I would question whether those employed by the company are supportive of their employer having learned of the corrupt practices implemented, including the threat of moving out of Quebec if not provided a deferred prosecution agreement, when the company is bound by an agreement not to move through 2024 with the Quebec’s pension fund manager (the Caisee de depot et placement due Quebec). I would also question why the testimony of the former Principle Secretary was not conducted under oath; I find it difficult to believe he had not known of the decision of the former Attorney General until her testimony when he had been present at meetings with her.

But setting that aside, as a former Vice-Chair of the Justice Committee for five years, Commissioner to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and having worked on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, I am disheartened that the actions taken have come to over-shadow important work undertaken to correct past wrongs, to find a way to reconciliation and to uphold the



CONFEDERACY OF TREATY SIX FIRST NATIONS CHIEFS

minimum standard of rights for my fellow Indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world. Eight months ago we studied and proposed a National Council for Reconciliation and nothing has happened to our recommendation. My deepest concern and regret now is that reconciliation was just another façade.

I urge the Prime Minister to set aside pride and to reach out to these valuable former members of his Cabinet and heal within the Liberal Caucus for all Canadians to advance in these days and months ahead of us. I extend my hand to Prime Minister Trudeau, as representing the government for the Crown we entered into Treaty with, should he wish to find a path to true reconciliation.”

- 30 -

For more information, contact:

Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations
(780) 944-0334
GC.Office@treatysix.org