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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 2, 2021

(amiskwacîwâskahikan, Wocodaki) The Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 Grand Chief Okimaw Vernon Watchmaker is appalled by the statements of Premier Kenney after hearing that a school in Calgary had a name change from Langevin School to Riverside School. Hector-Louis Langevin was a father of confederation and was considered to be an architect of the residential school system.

The change comes after non-indigenous children spent four long years lobbying their school board to have the change made. Grand Chief Watchmaker remarked that “these are incredible young people who lobbied for four long years to rename their school. I am proud of these young people and think they will be incredibly successful in anything they set out to achieve.”

Focusing in on the Premier’s statements, Grand Chief Watchmaker said that “the Premier’s diatribe was particularly insensitive especially on the heels of the mass grave discovery in Kamloops, BC and one day after a vigil was held at the Alberta legislature to show honour, respect and unity to the loss of innocent lives of First Nation children.

Just when we think we are experiencing acts of reconciliation, the Premier contradicts all the efforts toward an understanding and confirms that the Treaty Six Chiefs made the right decision to dissolve the Protocol Agreement that was made between the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations and the Government of Alberta.

On May 12, 2021, the Confederacy had sent Premier Kenney a letter dissolving the Agreement, citing that the province has been making unilateral decisions without consulting the First Nations. The Grand Chief stated that “the decision to dissolve the Agreement was made by the member First Nations at their Assembly meeting. When we gave our notice, we left the door open to discussions when the Government was ready to work in a more effective and collaborative manner. Statements such as those grounded in the Doctrine of Discovery bring dishonour to the Crown and reveals an insensitivity that it is difficult to deal with.

The real Canadian story is that we entered into a Peace and Friendship Treaty with the Crown. Sir John A McDonald acted inhumanly toward First Nations, he aggressively implemented policies and legislation in order to assimilate our people at all costs and we continue to deal with the aftermath to this day. “

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