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In September of 1995, I was not surprised by the incidents that occurred in and around Camp Ipperwash (Stony Point Reserve) and Ipperwash Provincial Park. I was however surprised by some the personal and public aftershocks that effected my family and me. Now, five months later, I look back on the things that have been done and things that have not been done and I wonder if we really do not learn from history.

I was not surprised by the incidents that preceded the shooting of Dudley George. As a member of the Township of Bosanquet Council from 1985 to 1994, I had a front row seat to the machinations, (albeit secretive) of the Federal Government in its dealings with our neighbours of Kettle and Stony Point. The many years of broken promises and little or no communication resulted in a simple act of civil disobedience; the occupying of Camp Ipperwash by an impatient minority. The lack of will by the Department of National Defence under successive Conservative and Liberal governments to enforce the legal ownership of Stony Point as a military cadet camp created an amazing amount of rancour in our municipality as the occupiers, knowing there was no law, created a state of apprehension and fear by firing off rounds of gunfire and intimidating those who lived close by.

Conveniently for those federally elected, there was an election during this period and other native problems, such as smuggling of cigarettes, needed their attention. As a member of Council and as an individual, I sent messages to those in charge, suggesting that it would be the inaction of the Federal government, not natives and not the neighbours, which could ignite this potential powder keg. All but Rose-Marie Ur, M.P. for Lambton -Middlesex gave me the brush-off and I sympathised with her inability to influence those in control who were intent on ignoring, as they had for fifty odd years, the broken promises of Camp Ipperwash.

When I got word in the spring of 1995 that the occupiers might try to evict the remainder of the military presence there, I knew that the half hearted attempts of the federal negotiator had failed. When they did what they said and as Chairman of the Economic Development Committee, I was invited to meet this negotiator at a special Council meeting, I knew why. He was and all his actions had been but window dressing on the broken windows of no policy and no will by the federal government to do anything but pull back. It became obvious that there was no plan and the rumour of the takeover of Ipperwash Park in the fall was the next obvious step by the occupiers to try and exact some semblance of action out this federal government. An escalation no doubt, but an escalation of civil disobedience not of violence.

When the occupiers walked into Ipperwash Provincial Park, they had created such a sense of imminent doom for the provincial officials involved, that the park was handed over with little fanfare. But the immediate call up of the O.P.P. tactical unit was a call to arms for the occupiers, a red flag, a reminder of Oka, Wounded Knee and other similar incidents where the long term inaction of the federals created civil disobedience that was treated as an insurrection instead. So the occupiers showed off for the media. They painted their cars and they donned balaclavas. They created the right adrenaline effect that a tactical squad trains for. And the rest is history. Dudley was shot and there should be an inquiry.

So when blood was spilled, everyone went loco. The police acted like we were under martial law and it was their hides not the citizens hides that would be protected. The media called in all their troops and we had our fifteen days of infamy and they had their hours of disgracefully inaccurate reporting of speculation and rumour. The Council, to which I was once belonged, acted like the Mayor of Oka and inflamed the situation by issuing an ill-advised press release. And where once we had a

a small group down to 8 people the previous winter, occupying parts of the Camp, we now had native brothers and sisters by the hundreds converging on this centre of solidarity. Simple disobedience had escalated into confrontation, whites against natives, friends against neighbours and North Lambton under siege by the media and a military like police presence.

[REDACTED]

I wasn't much effected at work but our events, such as the annual Quilt Show were. My wife and one daughter work and attend the high school in neighbouring Forest where the police had established the anti-insurrection centre. My daughter has a boyfriend named [REDACTED]. People kept asking my wife how Abby was getting along with [REDACTED]. This went on for days and puzzled her until one friend said well isn't he a native, being as Henry is a common native surname and [REDACTED] has an olive complexion. She was flabbergasted by this since natives are in our schools and our community, seemingly until this happened, just like everyone else. The barriers were going up.

I am asked regularly to comment on things by T.V. , radio or print people. When two weeks after the incident of September, I was asked to do a T.V. interview on the 'rumoured' takeover of the Pinery Provincial Park by the natives, I was astonished. I asked the reporter if he had done his homework and if they were coming by land or sea? I finally negotiated to be interviewed if they would ask and report on the continued economic development at Kettle Point and in Bosanquet which they did. But they weren't the only ones chasing rumours. Everyone, including the elected ones and the police were caught up in a web of hysteria. My boss wanted to close the museum and there were reports of the 'whites' at Ipperwash arming themselves.

Eventually things cooled down but the residual distrust had not. Natives were now branded by too many as lawbreakers who don't get punished. Neighbours were mad at the police for not fully protecting them and seemingly applying two standards of justice. Things were ripe for the coming together of these elements and a series of meetings, of which I helped in organising, spawned the Ontario Foundation of Individual Rights and Equality, a grassroots organisation of people who woke up to the facts in a hurry. I didn't join. I felt the rhetoric and intellectual chaos created by the shock of 'this happening here' wouldn't help in creating future economic opportunities for all of us. I put my energies instead into creating a forum for North Lambton political and business leaders to discuss how our energies could be spent wisely to effect the mess the federal government had helped create. This coming together of native and non-native leaders has resulted in an action plan we are carrying out and simple acts of trust between people.

So what to make of all of this? I think we should stop being so damned paternalistic to natives. As they have proven time and time again, they have the smarts to play our games back in our face. Bravo for them! What we need to start doing is listening and responding in an open-minded and timely way to their demands for justice and readjust our readings and interpretation of 'white man's history' accordingly. We cannot change or rewrite history but we can be fair, it is only Canadian to be so. We cannot change the fact that a continuation of our ignorance and neglect in facing these facts is a bomb that will continue to tick away. But as I say this I also must say that the extortion like tactics used by the natives to press their demands and the resultant economic and social chaos this creates on the innocent 'white' victims of their demands must be remedied quickly and equitably as well.

It is time for the Federal Government of this land to 'walk their talk' and put energy into similar native issues across this land so others don't have to face what my family and friends did this past fall. If we learned anything from this bad incident, it is this. Do not make decisions in isolation of local people and their knowledge. National standards must prevail but can only be effectively enforced when all the players are participants in them. The cocoon of power that envelops the denzions of the Rideau must be cast aside once in a while so that it is the rights and needs of the citizens that prevail not just the dictates of political expediency.

[REDACTED]