

KEY POINTS/TOPICS – Winnipeg Engagement, February 13th, 2024

SELF POLICING AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

- respective to the community they serve. As well, there needs to be a provision that acknowledges the role of the leadership within a community.
- It is important to see and accept that the community is responsible for the formation of the government and not the other way around.
- First Nations need to be allowed to set their own frame of rules, instead of only moving forward with one frame of mind.
- Each First Nation is on a different path, and that needs to be recognized.
- How legislation has been limiting them from trying their best to save their nation. They get calls because their people trust them to get there instead of asking 100 questions.
- There is a strong need for pre and post consent of the people because when laws or bills are passed there is no way that they get to decide what is right or beneficial for them.
- First Nations Policing will understand the need for protection and betterment because they will be aware of the history of the First Nation. This will reduce the criminalization from moving to the next level.
- The values and cultures of the First Nations need to be taken into consideration, by listening to the committees and their respective Chiefs.
- Ensuring that First Nations are significantly involved in the implementation of the legislation.
- Prioritizing engagement with First Nations communities and provinces/territories during the review process to gather feedback and ensure the legislation is meeting its goals effectively.
- It is essential for First Nations to have access to the final draft of any document produced by Canada to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Government needs to recognize that First Nation communities hold an authority that is of equal magnitude to the authority of the government and moving forward, that needs to be kept in mind.
- There's a call for decolonization in the creation of traditional policing methods instead of simply emulating provincial models.
- Consultation is very important by this they meant an actual community consultation to identify and match that elements we have brought up in are appropriate.
- Evaluation of current position for example size of different communities means having a clear picture of the real dynamics of communities.
- Identification of needs and readiness of the people for these legislations should be included in the early stages of the implementation.
- Healthcare, childcare and sovereignty of data are also supposed to be considered during the implementation process.
- Community consultation could be a good solution to lead that peaceful environment after the legislation is enforced.
- First Nations Chiefs need to have the final say, as to the approach that should be taken in developing and implementing the legislation.
- Standalone police services offer advantages in tailoring services to fit community needs, including implementing restorative justice models.
- There's a call for culturally relevant laws and regulations respectful of Indigenous languages and traditions.

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- Comprehensive review processes involving Indigenous nations are essential for addressing long standing issues.
- First Nations need to be educated on what the legislation means.

MISTRUST

- There is mistrust, as promises made in the past have made no impact as it is seen today.
- Recognizing that the term “essential services” means less when it has been decades to provide services.
- A commitment from Canada that it takes place and is enforceable for public safety, is needed.
- Looks like we are set up to fail since the Indian Act is enforced.
- The foundation is broken, and we are following the same thing to be in deficit. This will not work; we are just wasting our time here.
- Historically, Canada has been able to produce final documents, such as treaties or legislation, without full input or agreement from First Nations, leading to concerns about potential changes or deviations from agreements made during negotiations.
- Control over legislation by Canada can ultimately result in control over First Nations communities, which raises questions about the need for such control.
- The lack of financial support for initiatives like Bill C31 highlights the disparities and injustices faced by First Nations communities, where promises made by the government are not fulfilled.
- The government of Canada needs to recognize that even though the money has been promised and present, it is still not used in a manner that is appropriate. There are legislations that are constantly being developed for some purpose in trying to fulfil promises made but never actually fulfilled.
- It is important to note that legislations were made with contracts of 10 to 20 years, and that they remain unfulfilled even upon renewal of said contract. Contracts are rendered useless if they are simply promised and renewed year after year, all the while the funds meant for First Nations police are being poured elsewhere.

DRUG ISSUE

- Instead of more legislation, it is needed to see where and when the drugs are being poured into a community.
- Concerns have been raised by elders and leaders about the presence of drug dealers, bootleggers, and individuals not living according to community rules.
- Crime Prevention, public safety, prevention of illegal entry of alcohol and drugs is needed.
- Most of the crime in our community is related to drugs and alcohol in some way. Our First Nations are generally 14% violent crime rate driven by virtually uncontrolled drug dealing and child apprehensions.

EQUAL PAY

- The cost per officer, and per service, should be consistent across Canada. Also, the funds should be the same as the RCMP is funded federally.
- Provide equal funding, equipment, uniform and training to the members of the first nation police just as one provided to non-first nation police communities.
- Manitoba has raised concerns about the funding formula not reflecting population proportions accurately, advocating for per capita funding distribution.

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- There is a call for the adoption of deterministic mechanisms in funding distribution, similar to those used by Indigenous Services Canada for other funding allocations.
- Setting up mechanisms for equitable funding distribution based on population, environmental factors, and remoteness is crucial to support entities like MKO in establishing self-administered police services.

MEASURABLE STANDARDS

- There must be measurable standards for the policy of public safety.
- The statutory obligations should be measurable.

OTHER ISSUES AT HAND

- The broader picture of justice focuses on punishments, but it was felt that trauma and the colonial justice system need to be addressed.
- A healing process is needed that addresses all the things the First Nation people are going through.
- There are other areas in deficit, and they are all connected, such as health care, childcare, education etc.
- The focus needs to move from the law of punishment to that of help and development.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICING

- There is concern over how the policing program will address dealing with the taxes and buildings, and contaminated groundwater, and cottage owners cutting wood with no means to enforce the First Nations laws to protect natural resources.
- There is concern over how to enforce laws when 500 boats are in the harbour illegally fishing, and bringing the fish to the USA. There have been hundreds of millions of dollars of fish taken from the land and over a decade this population has destroyed ways of life.
- Policing wildlife, and natural resources too so people can't cut trees whenever they want.

TICKETS AND PROSECUTION

- Self-governing reserve by-laws, and how to prosecute? The issue is that the Manitoba Justice System makes decisions on the RCMP by-laws.
- We have been campaigning since 2021 and are glad the government is working with us. Without prosecution, there's no law enforcement.
- 40% of crimes and drugs must go. Ticketing is a means of guiding people to the right way.
- Properly trained officers in searches for intoxicants. Manitoba designates this by law there's no designated peace officer.
- Safety officer empowered to write tickets.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRAINING

- Infrastructure: to have all policing services in one building.
- Training: Train officers to cross-train and can do more than 1 job.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

- Some have questioned that other supporting programs like First Nation Safety Officer's (FNSO) won't be a part of it or not eligible for the benefits of this new legislation.
- There is a concern that making a new legislation will cause separation from others, and the funding could instead be included into existing programs.

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- Data Sovereignty is an issue, as there is mistrust that the Government has been using their data for different purposes.

EXTENDING AGREEMENT BEYOND 5 YEARS

- Consider extending the agreements beyond the five years, to align with existing grants that support self-government efforts.
- Exploring the possibility of a 10 year grant, as a step towards self-government for First Nations Communities.
- There is a need for sustainable agreements that go beyond five years, reflecting the long-term nature of treaties and ensuring mutually beneficial resource utilization.

COLLABORATIONS

- Collaboration with provinces is crucial as they have the authority to designate and authorize individuals as police officers.
- In Manitoba, historically, contracting for policing services was limited to the RCMP or the Manitoba First Nations Police Service. Legislative changes are needed to allow contracting with other policing service providers.
- In Saskatchewan, there are standalone police services like File Hills, which provide a wide range of investigative services similar to the RCMP.
- Indigenous leadership must negotiate with provincial governments to ensure the best policing services for their communities, considering legislative constraints and contractual agreements.
- provincial cooperation is essential for the success of these initiatives.