



IROQUOIS CAUCUS

Iroquois Caucus demands Valcourt's resignation

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – June 4, 2015) The elected chiefs of the seven communities that make up the Iroquois Caucus are demanding the resignation of Bernard Valcourt, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, in light of his actions at an event at which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission unveiled its long-awaited report. Mr. Valcourt stood out by refusing to stand and acknowledge Justice Sinclair's recommendation for Canada to hold an inquiry into the cases of murdered and missing First Nations women.

As Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, he should have been the first person to rise to his feet in order to acknowledge the issue. While it is clear that the Minister exhibited little enthusiasm for the Truth and Reconciliation report, the Iroquois Caucus nonetheless are angered that he should lack the grace to acknowledge the pain and suffering of our people regarding the loss of hundreds of Indigenous women. His actions are a stain on the Canadian government.

Instead of joining the rest of the country in graciously receiving the report, by his shameful actions, Mr. Valcourt clearly displayed his contempt for the people he is ostensibly 'serving' as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. He refused to take perhaps the greatest opportunity he'll ever have to show at least a measure of solidarity with First Nations.

We are the first to acknowledge that the Minister's job is a challenging one. It is a position where one must endeavor to find solutions to long-standing and difficult issues. As the liaison between the Canadian government and First Nations, the Minister must always conduct him/herself with understanding, integrity and – most importantly – respect. His lack of respect is a poor reflection of the Canadian people he represents and a strong indicator that his bad faith toward working with First Nations will only continue.

The Iroquois Caucus hereby calls on Mr. Valcourt to resign his position immediately. Should he fail to do so, we ask that the Prime Minister remove him from the position and replace him with someone who understands the importance of maintaining proper decorum and sensitivity to the issues at hand.

The Iroquois Caucus is comprised of elected leaders from Akwesasne, Kahnawà:ke, Kanesatake, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Six Nations of the Grand River, Tyendinaga and Wahta.

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