

21 June 2025

**Email to Cadmus Delorme**

Trevor Bearance

Cadmus, good fellow, replied graciously, even if it is hard politically to respond to the position I stake out.

Cadmus, you are a (very) good man doing good things. I am glad to see you Chancellor (of the U of R where I got my first degree) and I welcome your Reconciliation Day message.

I live with NonIndigenous people. Much as mainstream Canada has made big strides in relations with Indigenous people—I remember too well when it was really ugly—one big hurdle remains the belief, appearing to be reinforced regularly as in the recent AFN reaction to Mark Carney's "nation-building" initiatives, that Indigenous people—at least as represented by their leadership—don't really care about Canada and are "only" interested in (further) feathering their FN Elite nests.

White people are used to being exploited by elites—their own. The populism plaguing us is rooted in this hard-won cynicism. "Free Trade"—"Investor Rights" (Jim Stanford) allowing foreign capital to further dominate the country—added to the distrust. Working class people resent being fleeced by another (FN) one, with the racists capitalizing on this.

We will always have elites: But who in their right mind wants Trump and his kind supplanting the inherited ones? Live with what we've got and work around them when we can. Constrain them as best we can through democratic processes; recognize and reward those either different or better-inclined showing some restraint with a measure of "humility." Accept that we cannot ask First Nations peoples to be better than every other constituency in this country. The rest of Canada can focus on the corruption, injustice, power imbalances, and rigged politics that have been institutionalized.

FN people can focus on the "Blackstones" of their world calling out the predators amongst them. (We may forgive them shuddering at the prospects.) The Indigenous world will always have a cadre of elites, historic and wannabe, in a polarizing class system. My nephew worked North in the uranium mines with a Dene chap who told him "There have always been rich Indians and poor Indians, and that's the way it will always be." We can understand if mainstream Canada has no taste for what seems to them like just making rich Indians richer while the rest languish further in marginalization, poverty, indolence and, grievously, crime, addiction, and violence. Right or wrong—we both know there is hyperbole and injustice in this—this is how the Reconciliation call tends to get construed, or worse, in places like where I live. First Nation elites need to give the rest of Canada reason to believe they are better doing their part—however "minor" compared to Mainstream "major"—to bolster trust, advancing Reconciliation and making progress credible. They need to do a better job than all other elites have ever done, certainly the Democrat and Republican ones who refused to do what would have spared us from the MAGA gang.

Take care. If I can help in some way, let me know.

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