

A CANADIAN HOT TOPIC

A DEBATE : “Should the Canadian government get involved in promoting the social mobility of Indigenous People?” This debate is organized following a call to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Several people take part in it.

JIM, 75

Jim is a bad-tempered old man. He is fed up with Indigenous activism. For him, residential schools were a way for native people to get an instruction and this is what enabled some to escape poverty and find jobs. He attended a religious school and was beaten black and blue too. However, he was not forcibly separated from his family and has trouble understanding the trauma faced by native people, all the more so because he wasn't really told about it. What's more, he hates paying taxes and thinks Native people can easily get rich with the Casino business.

GUNTER, 35

Günter is a migrant who arrived in Canada a few years ago. He doesn't know anything about Native people that he calls “Indians” out of ignorance. For him, what's left of their culture is the folklore and they have great opportunities in the tourism industry. Yet, he tends to be sensitive to their cause. He doesn't like inequalities and he agrees that the government could make more efforts. But he doesn't think Canada is a bad country. He feels grateful for having been given a working visa.

JESSIE, 45

Jessie has two children. She tries to raise them well and teaches them to have empathy. For her, Canada was right to apologize about residential schools but she thinks that much more remains to be done. She has several ideas: - instruction in schools - Indigenous awareness training programmes – Youth Programmes.

PROUD EAGLE, Attawaspikat Chief

Proud eagle is the Chief of the Blackfoot Nation. He thinks the success of Canada is based on a profound injustice that could lead to the disappearance of his culture. All First Nations should unite to have the government respect them. Shocked at the high rate a suicide within his community, he is determined to take action. He could organize hunger strikes, demonstrations all over the country using social media. He is ok to receive money from the government but he would like to be involved in all the decision making.

INOLA, Blackfoot Woman

Inola is a young Blackfoot woman. She thinks the government should do more about Indigenous issues. She was pleased about the 2008 apology of Prime Minister Harper but she hasn't got past the trauma yet. Indeed, her father was sent to a residential school and had trouble being a good parent. What Canadian people need to understand is that Indigenous people have really suffered and that this affects their present lives. She wants to dispel Myths about Indigenous people living off the state. Most do pay taxes because they live off reserves and those living on the reserves can't own land so things are way more complicated! What's more, they were the first inhabitants of this land! So let's stop discrimination and prejudices!

A Debate: "Should the Canadian government get involved in promoting the social mobility of Indigenous people?"

Expressing my opinion:

In my opinion, ...

As far as I am concerned, ...

To my mind, ...

Speaking personally, ...

From my point of view, ...

I consider that..... I think that.....

Useful vocabulary:

to bring communities together

to work hand in hand

to assert one's rights

to come to grips with a problem

to cause a stir

to speak one's mind

to be in a predicament

no laughing matter

Idioms

to do things by halves

Might is right.

When there's a will, there's a way.

to turn a deaf ear to somebody

to bury one's head in the sand

A fault confessed is half redressed!