

To Mayor and Council of Mackenzie,

I believe that as a country and as a province we are becoming more accountable to the tragedy and pain of our Indigenous peoples. Recently, our neighbors to the south choose to respond and respect the indigenous people of Prince George the Lheidli T'enneh (Klate-lee Ten-eh) in renaming a street that had deep connections with John Fergus O'Grady the principle of the Kamloops Indian residential school which has been tied with such atrocious tragedies, to "Dakelh Ti" (Da-Kel Ti) meaning first nations road in Lheidli T'enneh language.

I believe it is time for our community to step up in acknowledging and respecting our neighbors too. I know that we take the time to acknowledge the traditional territories, many local bodies include the acknowledgment in emails as well. At events we invite our neighbors of the Tse'khene (se-keh-neh) people to celebrate with us with song, prayer, drumming and dancing.

But what we don't do is acknowledge what the tree crusher means to our neighbours and the people whose traditional land we are on today. If you have not had a chance to watch "The Scattering of Man" I would highly recommend although I know several council members had the privilege of watching the screening a couple years ago as did I.

I am not writing for the purpose of getting rid of the tree crusher, or removing that as part of the identification of our community. My own grandfather worked at the Finlay Forks camp processing lumber during the creation of Williston Lake. I'm writing about the lack of accountability in our community and to our visitors when they come to Mackenzie about what that tree crusher did. I can no longer look at it with pride knowing it only tells half the story, I can't look at it knowing that there are citizens of our community that have no idea (and had no idea prior to the release of the documentary) of the devastation to the Tse'khene people and their relocation.

If any council or governing individual has not seen "The Scattering of Man", I would highly recommend you do so. And once you have, take a moment to go read the signage by the tree crusher and think "If this machine represented the devastation of my family, would this signage be adequate?" I believe each of your answers as kind and thoughtful people would be a resounding NO.

So today, I humbly request that as a community we find away to recognize the displacement and lives lost to the "scattering of man" that has happened not by our hand, but definitely by that tree crusher.

Sincerely,

Dominique Symbalisty