

---

# Racism Awareness Week

## Motion Passed at November 18th Council Meeting

**Whereas** the Canadian Student Movement has played a vital role in shaping Canadian Society for over 60 years, and:

**Whereas** students across the country recognize that racism has become a problem of increasing proportions, and:

**Whereas** as students we believe that everyone has the right to work and grow in an environment free of discrimination.

UPEISU declare November 21, 1990 as "National Day of Action Against Racism."

**Friday November 23rd**

Canadian Black people

12:30-1:20 Robertson Library Room 104

-Voice of the fugitive

-Seven shades of pale

**RACISM:** The assumption that the characteristics and abilities of an individual are determined by race and that one race is biologically superior to another.

## Racism on PEI

It has been said to me on occasion that Islanders perceive themselves as being free from Racism. As a member of a minority group I think to myself, who are they trying to kid. If they mean racism towards blacks, oriental or possible the odd hispanic that should pass by, there may be some truth in their claim. This I feel is not a result of a more refined attitude, but rather a shortage of numbers of these groups on the Island. However if you were to ask most Islanders and I caution Islanders not UPEI students exclusively; what about racism towards the largest minority group on the Island, namely Native North Americans. The response would probably range from, they don't count to, they deserve it because they bring it upon themselves or I'm tired of hearing about them.

My response as a native is not of bitterness, nor denial, but rather I understand. I too on occasion have looked at the world with

a closed mind, absorbed only partially understood information and based my opinion as if it represented the whole.

I think I can speak for a lot of natives when the attitude is expressed that we don't count, we do count, we are humans too, and in this similarity we are equals. What have we done that any person in this country can say we deserve negative treatment? After the suppression and manipulation by government, extended groups and racist attitudes has done towards natives over the last several hundred years. However, I understand, like most native groups today in this country, I don't want compensation for this ill treatment, but rather just a fulfillment of those promises of long ago. We too are tired of hearing about these issues, more tired than any individual that does not have a personal stake.

Often through the years the underlying attitude of a lot of people I've met and known came through in most subtle manners. For instance, the very young often say things that their parents turn red in the face about, however, you know the child didn't come up with it on their own. Another is in the form of racial slurs, such as a "drunken Indian", or "like an Indian on the War Path". Another more recent expression is the attitude that Indians are getting something for nothing, as if the statistics that suggest that 90% of Canada's indigenous people are still living below the poverty line is greatly exaggerated. On top of all that, "something for nothing," how unfeeling, uncaring, and non-comprehending could one human being be towards another? We paid for that something several hundred years ago and have been paying for it ever since. I don't want people's sympathy, for I see in that an expression of racism. What I want and if I may speak for Natives across this country and minority groups at large, is to be understood. In our similarities we are equal, in our differences we are unique.

P.S.

In this article I expressed briefly the subtle Island practice of racism that I have come to call naive racism. However, I didn't centre on that issue, because I believe we most construct a positive awareness, for all that are concerned it would be a more constructive approach in dealing with the issue. Just the same the article mentions incidents that some may identify with and yet with which others may have no idea. What I want people to understand is that it is there, it may not be foreboding to the general populace, but to the individual of the minority group it hurts with great conviction.

Greg Cheverie  
Native Student