

Jimmy Myo, Nêhiyawak Elder, Moosomin First Nation

Interviewer: What is your name?

Jimmy Myo

Interviewer: Where are you from?

I am from Moosomin. I worked for awhile at FSIN-Senate and became a Senator. I have a Doctors of Law degree from the university.

Interviewer: I want to ask you, a long time ago, how were leaders selected prior to the treaties being signed?

A person earned the right to be a leader, not like today where voting is done . . . not that.

There were Individuals and older people . . . perhaps older people, elder people who would select individuals that were good hunters, who owned good horses and they were able to make a good living.

They also had compassion and would help others and watch over children.

People like this lived amongst us who were not necessarily Chiefs and cared for (watched over)

all children that were not necessarily their children. These were the type of individuals who were selected to be Chiefs (leaders).

I will say in advance today, when we use the word "okimâhkân" (*pretend chief*), this is a derogatory term.

(making fun of the term Chief and making fun of us) to say "Pretend Chief."

The proper term is "OKIMÂW" (*Chief/Leader*) and this role was not given 'lightly' to just anyone.

This was a vital role with important reasons behind the role of leader.

The role of Chief or leader was given by the Creator to Indigenous people, one person to lead the people.

The reason why the role of OKIMÂW (*Chief/Leader*) was given by the Creator, and those people (Elders) who selected these individuals,

is to follow Creator's Laws - or referred to as 'Indian law' by non-Indigenous people

that "makes-fun" (lack of understanding) of Creator's laws or Nehiyaw Laws.

True Nehiyaw laws are given by the Creator and are not manmade; therefore, human beings cannot alter them.

For example, you make a chocolate bar and name it but it can be easily changed by someone making a different chocolate bar.

This is not what I am talking about. When the first human being was placed on earth,

Creator's Laws accompanied them. Everything was in place.

When two human beings were placed on earth, there was one woman and one man.

It's like what happened across the ocean but differently, when Adam and Eve were first created.

The same thing happened to Indigenous people here (Turtle Island) where the first IYINIW AYISIYINIW (*Indigenous person*) was placed on earth.

The name of the first people is too sacred to talk about. I know this knowledge but will not share this; it is too sacred to share here.

If someone has this knowledge, you will know about Nehiyaw Laws. These laws are very powerful

and cannot be beaten by anyone other than by another Nehiyaw (Indigenous person).

But they cannot be beaten by any moniyâw (white person).

For example, where we are at this time, there is a lot of suffering where we are controlled

by the white colonial government (môniyâwi) and there are many brilliant Indigenous people fighting government.

They use the whiteman laws to fight them, and they do not use Nehiyaw Laws or understand these laws.

There are many promises that were made and we (Indigenous people) understand them as treaty oaths.

We have great difficulty in making people understand what these promises are -

Pledges within Nehiyaw laws are sacred undertakings and even within our (Nehiyaw people) communities.

If we taught a young child early in their childhood about these (Nehiyaw Laws),

creating understanding would not be hard or difficult. It would not be difficult.

When children who have difficulty in learning are taught in this way,

they have no issue with completing their education at the university level, if they learn about the Nehiyaw way.

Some children, not all. For example, if a young child is taught to hunt even before they reach adulthood, they are able to learn and hunt at a very young age and master these skills.

As long as they believe in and understand the Nehiyaw Laws and teachings (foundational learning).

Some can hunt successfully by the age of 12 or 13. This is part of Nehiyaw teachings and laws that they're being taught.

They don't have to refer to a book or manual to learn how to hunt.

The father or man will teach the young boy how to hunt and transfer Nehiyaw teachings.

This is one important and sacred teaching, and we do not follow this today.

The teaching exists in very few places among our people, and that is the concept of 'good relations' or miyo wícehtowin.

We hear Elders lecturing on this - to have compassion for each other and miyo-wícehtowak (harmony), and shake hands with each other when you see each other.

However, perhaps the next day those same Elders who lecture like this are scolding someone elsewhere contrary to the teachings.

Nehiyawak are lost. What has truly taken us on the wrong journey is money (soniyas).

This is what is being used by the government or whiteman to control us and 'bait' us to achieve his outcomes and what he wants.

Today, when someone wants to get elected as a leader, a great deal of money is used in getting elected as the OKIMÂW

at the reserve community, at FSIN and at AFN level. They pay to get elected, and people (voters)

do not pay attention to traditional concepts of leadership and who is best suited to occupy this role.

Principles of leadership such as compassion and helping/supporting children are disregarded

where monetary gain takes precedence over traditional values of OKIMÂW (Chief)

Once a leader is elected as Chief, they look for money to pay themselves (big salaries) with complete disregard to helping children.

In fact, they use children and young people as election promises in political campaigns only to be forgotten about after elections.

Today, elected leaders can live up to promises (can live up to OKIMÂW values) but they do not follow Nehiyaw Laws.

There is a shortage of housing and many people do not have a place to live.

This is our land. We have a right to housing; everyone has a right to housing.

I want to share a point. My father was present at treaty-making and he was only six months old.

He was in a moss-bag and my great grandmother would tell this story.

My dad would jokingly say, he heard and listened to the discussion during the treaty (Treaty #6) negotiations.

He understood the treaty terms and shared this with us as his family.

When housing was talked about, he said the Crown representative said,

"It is true that you will not always live in a tipi and there will be a time when we will provide housing for you."

"As your family grows and as your children have their families, I will provide housing."

"Wherever you live, across the medicine line and across the ocean, I will provide housing."

"You will not pay for it and wherever you travel, you will not pay."

Today, all of these promises should be fulfilled. We also say, we only gave up 6 inches of our land, but we don't pay attention to this.

However, it should be easy, you would think, for leaders to deal with exemptions from GST and PST.

But these remain unresolved and have been abandoned by our leaders.

Why should I bother, I don't get paid for that. We should not be thinking like this. OKIMÂW should be thinking about the children.

In the beginning during the treaty negotiations, the treaty Commissioner spoke of future generations, 'unborn children'

and I will provide for them as well. This has not been fulfilled and has not happened but it could.

We are not united as Indigenous people, the government or moniyâw (whiteman) has achieved its goal of dividing us by using money.

There a few leaders that work hard, perhaps less than half who follow Nehiyaw Laws; and others follow the colonial laws with no results.

Perhaps they speak very well but cannot deliver. Decisions are made without our involvement in law-making.

And we continue to be weakened by diseases. The onslaught of laws being imposed on us, we could stop them.

For example, this big event here, where Elders are being invited, I wonder if anything will be accomplished.

I hope they can accomplish something. There will be many people here.
Also, there will be others that will attend with no purpose and they do not believe in Nehiyaw Laws.
They are the ones who weaken our laws, and their underlying motivation is solely for monetary gain.
A person of any age can weaken (kacihkunitaw) our Nehiyaw Laws and this is the kind of person that does this.
It is very scary what is happening today. Wars across the ocean going on, and when they arrive here,
it was foretold that these will be very hard times once those wars come to this land.
Not just a few years, but for many years. Look at how long the people have been at war across the ocean for over a hundred years.
Once the wars come here, they will go on for a long, long time.
Elders have foretold that we will survive these wars and especially those people
who hold onto Nehiyaw spirituality (nêhiyawî-mawimoscikêwin) will survive.
Others, too, will survive who do not believe in spirituality. But they will face hard times and they will be very pitiful.
This is very disturbing and these will be frightening times. I am not frightened for us old people or Elders (kêhtê-ayâw)
but it is for the young people that I am most concerned about and scared for them.
Our young people, they must continue to work hard. And when I say work,
it is the same as education (learning) - to learn about Nehiyaw Laws and teachings.
A lot of people ask me why I should get along with others when they have harmed me and beat me up.
Practicing good relations is an important and sacred teaching. We don't see this,
but it is the Creator that makes these judgments and not human beings.
Those who harmed you physically have broken a sacred law. It is called pashtahowin (concept of what goes around comes around).
This is not your duty to correct or judge others. Your path is to follow Nehiyaw Laws and be steadfast on your sacred journey.
Listen to your father and mother. If you do not have a mother, whoever brought you up.
And if they do not provide you with the teachings, go to someone or someplace to seek these teachings. Make every effort to follow Nehiyaw laws.
Why do we call these Nehiyaw Laws, and where did this come from?
Why do they say we have Indian laws when we have whiteman's laws as well?
They sometimes say, the moniyâw (whiteman) law is better because right away or immediately when someone does you wrong -
maybe steals your tire from your car - a person can immediately report them to the authorities, and the offender will get charged and fined.
However, if you don't report the offender and you go about replacing your tire, Nehiyaw Laws will take over.
But you may not see it immediately (as with moniyâw law), but it will eventually impact the offender.
This is a hard thing concerning (Nehiyaw laws) because it involves our relatives sometimes,
and they're the ones that break our Nehiyaw laws and weaken (kacihkunitaw) them.
When we have our ceremonies, and we do these things,
sometimes there are those that do our ceremonies and don't respect or believe in them.
Although I should not say this but it is true. Young people must understand this and discern the difference.
You don't participate in ceremonies for no reason. You go there to pray and seek good things.
It's like what we are doing right now. We are seeking knowledge, compassion, good health.
If we give up on our spirituality (nêhiyawî-mawimoscikêwin), we too will see hard times.

Interviewer: What was the role of women and what was their work? Did you ever hear about the women who were called 'ochitowiskewak'?

No, not totally but partly I heard about 'ochitowiskew.'

The ochitowiskew is like the OKIMÂW (Chief), who had compassion and cared for the people.

They knew about a lot of things, they knew about medicines.

They loved the children and when they were asked, they treated and helped children with medicine when they were sick.

When other women were having babies, these women (ochitowiskew) were called upon as midwives.
I would think this happened in other places and I'm sure this was the case.
As my mother used to say that the ochitowiskew was highly regarded (had a leading role) in our society.
As a people (Nehiyawi- ayisiyiniwiwak), our OKIMÂW does not own everything or own the people.
A woman owns half of everything.
Young women, they should never forget that they own half of everything, half of Nehiyaw law.
And they have the right to talk about Nehiyaw law in its entirety and what it means.
They (ochitowiskewak) were knowledgeable and had great expertise.
When they spoke, they spoke with great knowledge and were understood with clarity.
I'm not saying that people didn't understand but rather they (ochitowiskewak) were gifted with this work and knowledge.
As ayisiyiniwiwak (human beings), everything was gifted to us, from the beginning when the Creator put us on this earth.
We were given everything - how to make a livelihood, how to find our way out of difficult situations.
What to do when we are sick and where to seek help.
It was told, if you get sick in the future, access help from Elders who will be there.
Rely on Nêhiyanak (Cree community) rather than whiteman's way. We were lectured about this.
It is the Elders (kêhtê-ayâw) and through spiritual beings from the Creator
that medicines will be taught and transferred to the gifted ones to help and heal with gifted medicines.
You will be gifted information perhaps through visions. Women will have visions and men will have visions about medicines to use for healing.
From there information about medicines will be transferred to one another and handed down.
Today, this does not happen. Nehiyaw medicines are held by certain people
and if you want to access these medicines, you have to pay a lot of money to that person.
As Nehiyaw people, we were gifted these medicines without a price, or they were free.
We weren't supposed to make money from them. We were given other things to make a living,
but the medicines were gifted to us for free. We don't sell medicines.
I heard about some place, I don't know where. They're going to put a hospital together
with Indian doctors, with whiteman doctors and they're going to put their medicines together.
They aren't going to be able to heal one person if they weaken or 'wipe-away' (kacihkunitaw) the spiritual healing powers of the Nehiyaw medicine.
The person (individual) who was gifted the medicine is the one who has the responsibility or 'right' - and nobody else -
to use the medicine to heal people. Appropriate protocol has to be used to access the use of the medicine.
Someone who goes around saying, "I'll make a sweat, give me a thousand dollars. . ." (laughter)
You know, that's not right - consequences for breaking natural laws (pastahon) and, in a spiritual sense, weaken the Nehiyaw laws.
(Kascihkunitamsiu – Cree word as an act of weakening or neutralizing Nehiyaw Laws)
And there are consequences on an individual basis. The person who breaks natural laws
impacts on them personally and does not impact everyone. For example, if we know a medicine and we use it properly,
we will not weaken or destroy the spiritual aspect of it. It will remain whole.
Like some Elders in the past, they didn't use their medicines until someone got sick.
And if it was accessed from these older Elders with appropriate protocols, then they used their medicines.
We had one Elder (passed away now), with a humorous name, who was very gifted (with spiritual powers)
and knew a lot of medicine. He was blind and his name was Paskwachas.
One time, my father was travelling with his horse and wagon, and he suddenly fell forward and started vomiting (got very sick).
The horses continued on without being driven and they made it back home.
My father had vomited a lot of blood and was very sick. Right away, the family went to this Elder
and gave protocol to help my father. He doctored my father and gave him medicine to drink.

My father was healed and survived. (My father) saw the power of our medicines and this Elder respected and protected his medicines. My father much later told us that this Elder told him, the medicine he gave him was the first time he ever used it. The Elder said to my father, "It was our niece who came to me and cried asking for my help." My father and Paskwachas were related as cousins.

Late Elder Paskwachas said, this was the first time he used this particular medicine. So, this is one example of Nehiyaw Law where you saw respect at a high level, protecting the spiritual aspect of the medicine. We were shown not to use your medicine without use of appropriate protocol to access it. Perhaps offer tobacco. However, in the past, we did things differently, we didn't offer tobacco and sweetgrass, etc. What we did, we offered the pipe. If you didn't have a pipe, you would ask to prepare or load the pipe and only then offer the pipe to the Elder. You would then tell the Elder the reason for offering the pipe whether it was for doctoring for you or your child. You would offer your gifts to the Elder at this time. If the Elder accepts the offering of the pipe, then you can be sure that he is able to help you. Not always the Elder will accept the pipe, because they knew they could not help. The Elder would say, I am not able to accept the pipe because I am not able to help. I could try but I know that I cannot help. They would refer you to another Elder that could help you. In the past, Elders were strong and powerful and were able to help. Like today, if someone did things properly and had faith in the gifts they were given, we could probably cure cancer. We would be able to cure cancer. I'm not trying to say that I want to jump and ask for a thousand dollars to cure cancer. No not that - but that's how it is supposed to be. But that's how it was. We are supposed to respect that, and only that way it will work. But, if you start charging stuff like that, it will never work. It's up to the guy, the one who is doing the asking to determine what they are prepared or able to offer. Long time ago, there were a lot of teachings and they were strict. I experienced this and saw this, at the age that I am... One time, there was a sundance at nakawiyininahk (Saulteaux reserve) and we were living there (points to direction) and we came home after the sundance. An Elder from Onion Lake came and camped at our place. I guess, I didn't know; but my father had invited him. My family were sitting in the tent and they started gathering up blankets, a gun, rope, saddle and a horse. My older brother (late), sometimes he used to pick on me but I couldn't do anything because I was too small. Then, our father told us to follow him as he went over to the tent where the Elder (from Onion Lake) was camped. He placed all of the goods where the Elder was and loaded the pipe and offered it to the Elder. My father then asked the Elder, "I want you to lecture one of my sons." The Elder was sitting there sharpening his knife. The Elder said, "Ahey, I will tell him as much as I can and lecture (kakêskihkêmow) him." While the Elder spoke, he sat there sharpening a knife. He finished sharpening his knife. He tested the sharpness of his knife on a twig. The knife was so sharp it sliced through the twig very easily. I was thinking in my mind, now my older brother who used to torture me is going to get a stern lecture from the Elder. The Elder asked my father, "Which one of your sons am I lecturing?" To my surprise, my father pointed at me. The Elder asked me to go sit beside him. Oh goodness, I was so scared, and the Elder asked me, "Do you see this knife young man?" I was just a young kid. The Elder pitched the knife on the ground in front of me and said, "This knife is very sharp, and if I get you mad for what I'm going to tell you, take this knife and stab me!" I was so frightened, let alone move and stab him.

(laughter) I sat there for a long time getting lectured by this Elder.

All of these things that I have just talked about was mostly what he told me.

This is mostly what he told me. He (also my mother talked about this at different times)

spoke a lot about what is happening today and that we make every effort to avoid it.

There is going to be a lot fighting and bad relations among people,

and money is going to be a huge factor in this conflict. Government is going to give you lots of money.

Money is going to destroy you. We see this today.

Many people are having very hard times today. Some have no houses (place to live).

Interviewer: What do you think, grandfather, how can young people use our traditions to help them today? How can they use them to help themselves?

First thing, if a person doesn't know what to do and doesn't know what it means to pray (kakisimo) -

Pray when you first go to bed and speak Cree (nêhiyawêw – speak Cree) in prayer.

If you are unable to speak your language, it's okay to use English. You can use English.

And you must commit to understand what Nehiyaw oyasiwîwin (Cree law) is and the reason why it exists.

As well, why whiteman's (moniyâw) law exists.

Do the same in the morning and pray (kakisimo). Even if you forget one or two days,

But the moment you remember, say your prayer.

When you go to a gathering, go and listen even if you don't understand (Cree).

It isn't necessary you sit in front. Listen patiently and ask someone sitting near you

to translate for you what was said in prayer. It will not take you long and you will begin to understand fairly quickly.

It does not take a person very long to learn the language with the right intentions.

However, if a person is learning to speak the language to make money,

It's going to take a hell of a long time - oops, I'm sorry about that."

It will take many years. But if you have faith and believe in Nehiyaw spirituality,

it will not take long to learn the language, not even one year.

But you don't have to start making ceremonies. You don't have to start making sundances or giveaway dances

unless you have acquired the rights of access through a vision or you were gifted (transferred)

by an Elder and always with appropriate protocols (rites of access).

You cannot as a person undertake any ceremony without proper rites of access and use of proper protocols.

For many years, there was a man that hosted sundances for about 20-30 years.

His name is Adam Swiftwolfe. He transferred the right of making a sundance to his grandson.

The young man cried when his grandfather transferred the sundance to him.

But he couldn't do anything but to accept the transfer of the gift.

He will be hosting the sundance the end of next month.

This is the situation, it is easy to understand. But as an individual,

you start with prayer (kakêsimowin) and it must come from the individual (be initiated by the individual).

Everything, an individual must initiate for themselves and that is the way of our Cree worship (nêhiyawî-mawimoscikêwin)

And the direction cannot come from another person. It must start with you as an individual,

and after that you can ask someone (a learned person) what to do.

Very soon, you will be able to do things on your own.

When a person (ayisiyiniw) or a young person or child seeks knowledge in a good way,

that individual will be able to complete their education (learning) easily. If they think they can complete

their education on their own and learn only whiteman's laws, it's going to be very difficult.

It will be very hard. This is why so many people give up or quit because they are lost.

For example, I counseled many students at the university and that's what they told me. They felt very lost and didn't know what to do. They came and talked to me in my office to ask for help. Another thing, many are controlled by alcohol. Many of my own children are also involved with alcohol and they don't listen to me. The ones that choose to listen to me do not use alcohol.

I meant to say the ones that listen to my wife and me.

Alcohol has done a lot of damage to our people, including money (mícimihkâcikan – bait) and drugs.

The impact of alcohol - eventually you don't know your kinship (wâhkôhtowin). You have no respect for anyone.

You assault your relations. When you sober up, you have regret, but it is too late then.

Interviewer: How did the ayisiyiniwak (people) live? How did they make a living? How did they live before treaties? There was no money and no moniyâw (whiteman) food.

This is very good (meewasin) that you ask me this.

Before treaties and even before the arrival of the moniyâw (whiteman),

we (nêhiyâw ayisiyiniwak) were very wealthy, not in terms of money but in different ways.

We had everything - like our food was pure and there was little or no sickness from the food we ate.

If we wanted something sweet, we ate berries and they still grow today.

That's what we used, we preserved our berries which we keep over winter.

We didn't have jars but we dried (sun-dried) the berries. You may have seen bags where dried berries were stored.

When the dried berries were cooked, they were very good and delicious.

Meat and fish were dried in the summer and stored to eat later.

Also when they hunted, meat was dried. At times large kills were made to sustain whole villages (towns).

Within villages, there was one person that was gifted with the ability to call (kanachipahat) the buffalo.

They built these fences (buffalo pounds or corrals). You may have seen what they built at Wanuskewin (Heritage Park).

But what was actually built was very high so the animals (the buffalo) would not jump out.

On one side, there was a ramp and the buffalo ran up on the ramp and fell on the other side.

The hunters would sit on the buffalo pound and shoot the buffalo from there.

Once the hunt was done, they skinned the animals, prepared the hides and meat.

From the skins they made robes for bedding or they tanned the hide for moccasins and made a variety of clothing from there. Nothing was wasted.

The bones were used; they crushed the bones for soup. They made tipis from the tanned hides.

They must have been warm because wind wouldn't go through. Grass was used inside the tipi, and they pinned down the tipi. A fire was built in the middle and at night,

a stick was used to push ashes over the hot coals. When they had to start the fire again, they would use dry grass and uncover the hot coals. This would immediately start the fire.

And wood chips were used to feed the fire. The fire was there throughout the night and over the winter (by keeping the coals alive).

For the people who lived in the south, where there was no wood, buffalo chips (manure) were used for the campfires, which kept them warm.

They would select places to camp, perhaps near a river, like in Montana or near the Saskatchewan River where winter camps were typically chosen. These areas were well known as winter campsites and also where buffalo would stay for water and winter shelters. Animals instinctively knew where to winter.

They also prepared by the way they ate to survive over winter.

They had fat on their body to survive cold winter temperatures and weather.

Interviewer: What is your understanding of "treaty right to education" according to what was negotiated and what was promised at the time of treaty making?

In the beginning, the mōniyâwi-OKIMÂW (Crown) and nêhiyawî-OKIMÂW negotiated, and it was promised (by the Crown),

“What I know about the written word, I will teach you all of that.
I will teach you about how I make a living (livelihood), I will teach you about agriculture (seed the land).
I will teach you about livestock and other ways to make money. I will teach you this” (that means oil).
If whiteman drills oil, he has to show us how. Everything will be equal. That’s what it means.
They are supposed to educate us - how to look for oil, how to dig for oil.
Also, when they (federal government) gave the resources to the province in 1935? 1930? - the federal government failed to include Nêhiyawak.
Already we should have been educated about how to extract the oil then...everything.
For example, the City of North Battleford constructed houses
and Nêhiyawak should have been awarded half of the construction contracts to build these homes.
In this case, we should have been given instruction (training) on how to obtain materials for the construction of homes.
Everybody was to be educated on how to start a business. That’s part of the treaty right to education that includes everything.
For example, if you wanted to learn how to make footwear (shoes), you were to be educated on all aspects of that kind of business.
How to make footwear, where to sell, how to advertise - everything. That was supposed to be equal, and we don’t have that.
They don’t even - I bet the government didn’t even tell (about treaties) to half of the employees (public servants)
or half of their people - especially today. Many môniawi-okimawak (white people) don’t understand (the treaties).
So today that puts us at a disadvantage and marginalizes us, and that was part of their goal.
They want our land (kituskînow). It is going to get harder for us and we will see hard times.
There is warfare (across the ocean), and I wonder if that will reach us here, and it might get here.
Because I hear people talk this way. And others from across the ocean, they are looking at our land.
Someone else is going to take our land from us. If that happens, it will cause war and our people will be pulled into the conflict.
What is going to help us (save us) is our nêhiyawî-mawimoscikêwin.
Always, this is what we (nêhiyaw ayisiyiniw) must think about, and if we deviate from our Cree worship it will be to our detriment.

Interviewer: What do you want to tell young people, to think about - to not get pulled away?

If someone is thinking (learning) about Nehiyaw oyasiwîwin (Cree Law) and if you ask an Elder for this knowledge,
they will be happy and willing to teach. Elders are not given a chance to teach
because we (people) place greater value on moniyâw laws and education.
I don’t say that we (iyiniw ayisiyiniw) don’t learn or be educated in moniyâw laws.
It’s like we shouldn’t make fun of Christianity (whiteman’s religion) and have respect for it.
But as iyiniw ayisiyiniwak, we were given by the Creator our nêhiyawî-mawimoscikêwin - to respect it even if we don’t follow it.
This is one of our Nehiyaw oyasiwîwina (Cree Laws), and young people must understand this.
Also, their mind (mâmitonêyihcikan) will be cleansed (blessed) if they use that and they know everything has sacred spirit (acahk).
Everything has a living spirit (acahk) like the grass, and that’s why we say in treaty,
“as long as the grass grows” because it has a spirit (acahkomahka). The grass will always grow
and nourish or sustain the animals, and we (iyiniw ayisiyiniwak) depend on the animals for food.
As treaties say, “as long as the river flows...” and I refer to the Saskatchewan River at its source in the west.
And if they stopped poisoning the water for a week, the river would naturally cleanse itself.
We would have pure water. That’s what it means, that’s what it means in the treaties, “as long as the river flows...”
All the new things today such as computers and stuff like that, this is what should be provided to educate us.
If we can’t afford to buy them, they would be provided to us and we would be trained how to use them.
This is - "as long as the river flows." Everything that’s new when the moniyâw (whiteman) gets it, we get the same or equivalent (equal). The same.
This is one thing that was used in Nêhiyaw oyawiwîwin - everything equally and we received the same - equality (tipahon),
meaning equally. For example, if we ate together with respect,
we take only half, no more. This is what equally means.

You go for water, you take a scoop and the other person takes a scoop,
the same thing.

It seems difficult to understand Nêhiyaw oyasiwîwin (Cree law), but it's not hard.

You must firmly have faith in mâmawi-ôhtâwîmâw (Creator), and above all,
mâmawi-ôhtâwîmâw (Creator) is first (nikan) when you pray (kakisimow).

Then it is mother earth (okâwîmâwaskîy). We hear many elders refer to the earth as our mother.

Everything grows from mother earth, such as medicines we use for healing.

Like the clothes we wear and the lights (light bulbs). That's where they originate from - mother earth (askiy)

Everything - cars, trains, airplane, houses - any kind of building on the reserve or in the city - comes from our mother earth,
comes from her body. To be clear, our mother earth produces everything.

Today, that's why the whiteman (moonias) is wealthy and we (iyiniw ayisiyîniw) should be equally rich or more so.

The intent was it was on loan. Today, when you loan out your land,

it's one-third to you and two-thirds to them. But our understanding (of the treaty)

was half and half equal sharing. It is clear we should receive more than one-third.

If we were looking at four parts, each party should receive two parts. Two parts to nehiyaw and two parts to moniyâw (whiteman).

And in the division of five parts, three parts for Nehiyaw and two parts for moniyâw (whiteman or white person).

So with that, I want to say to the young people that are going to school or just starting school,
don't forget that is your livelihood (kipimâcihowin). You are working on your life (pimâtisiwin)
and this is part of your work (atoshkakowin).

It is like us (Elders), we have worked very hard all of our lives to provide for you (our children).

And now it is up to you (young people) to look after (provide for) your children.

If you don't provide for your children, they will have a difficult time.

I am not trying to scare anybody, but that's what will happen and that is the truth (tapwîwin).

I hope for the best and that we can all live a good life always (kakikê)

and get along (good relations) and help one another.

I am truly grateful to the ôkimawak (our leadership) on how hard they work to advocate for us.

Their work is very difficult and hard. Êkwa (that's it)?