



Editors' Comments

... And so, with all this we hope you are now more comfortable and we have helped to ease your burden. We hope these words have helped to restore a sound mind, body and spirit. We hope that now you may focus, with a clear and good mind, on the words of thanksgiving, the Ohentonkariwatehkwen (the words that come before all others). We celebrate the fact that life exists, for we understand that it is by pure chance that it does.

And so it is Sonkwaiatison, our Creator, that as we prepare to begin this new day, we take a few moments to centre ourselves, to reflect on who we are, on our place within the Circle of Life, and on our responsibilities to all of Creation.

We begin by turning our thoughts to you, Ietinistenhen Ohontsa, our sacred Mother, the Earth. We know that you are sick and you are dying at this time because of the way we, the two-legged, show you disrespect and abuse of your gifts. And yet despite this, your love for your children is such that you continue to provide all we need to survive on a daily basis. You continue to fulfil your responsibilities and carry out your duties in accordance with the instructions given you in the beginning of time. For this we are grateful. And so it is, we turn our minds to you, we acknowledge you and we give thanks. So be it in our minds . . .

Kanatiio (Allen Gabriel) Kanesatakeronnon
(Kanesatake Mohawk, Bear Clan)

The Thanksgiving Address noted here is from the first volume of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. It is offered on a daily basis by those Mohawk people who follow their tradition. It provides a daily opportunity to give thanks and to reconnect with all of life. Not all Mohawk reconnect in this way and those who share similar sentiments often express them within their own religious

practices. This short portion of the Address reminds us of what we as Aboriginal people bring to the discussion of sustainability. We bring a perspective on the questions of life based in tradition, spirituality, or at the least some of us bring the promise of a view that enriches and informs the current research perspective on these questions. We are also part of the challenge of disrespect and abuse of our Earth Mother as some of our communities make damaging development choices.

In this volume, we do not offer all the answers but we do offer insights into the way Aboriginal peoples in Canada and scholars of Aboriginal economic development are adding to the vision of sustainability for our children. Some communities are choosing strategies that focus on non-renewable resource development and they are tapping into the same technologies as other companies in those industries. Others are working with alternative technologies and embracing the most modern, leading edge ways of developing their resources. Most of the communities highlighted here have strategies that encompass a variety of ways of meeting their needs and vision for the future. Scholars have presented their findings in this area of study and provide thorough, sensitive analyses and recommendations.

The communities that do not have a voice in this special volume dedicated to sustainability are those communities who still face challenges in changing their cultures of dysfunction, abuse, and distrust, and of limited opportunity. This volume is dedicated to those communities who are still struggling. My prayers are that you find the personal strength to give all the needed support to leaders strong in community visions for dignified livelihoods for all members. If the gifts of our Earth Mother are honoured as they are used then the promise of what Aboriginal people might offer to the rest of the world will be met. Take the hope that is offered here.

Peace and good health, Wakchan