



The Brief

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Sacred fire lit for Chantel Moore in Madawaska First Nation as activists call for disarming and defunding the police

By TRACY GLYNN



People in Toronto rallying for justice for Chantel Moore. Photo by Kayla Fast.

Upon hearing news of the Edmundston police killing of Chantel Moore, a Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation woman from British Columbia on June 4, members of the Madawaska First Nation lit a sacred fire for Moore in their community. A police officer shot Moore five times during a wellness check. She had recently moved to the city to be closer to her five-year-old daughter and mother.

Since April, police in Canada have killed at least six Indigenous people: 26-year-old Chantel Moore, 16-year-old Eishia Hudson, 36-year-old Jason Collins, 22-year-old Stewart Kevin Andrews, 42-year-old Everett Patrick and 48-year-old Rodney Levi.

Russ Letica from Madawaska First Nation invited members of the public to visit, provide an offering or say a prayer at the sacred fire that burned for one week after her death.

The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, representing 14 First Nations on Vancouver Island, have issued a statement demanding answers as to why the woman was shot and killed: “Justice must not wait and every power must be exerted to ensure that justice is served in an appropriate, immediate, and respectful way.”

In a letter to Edmundston Mayor Cyrille Simard and Edmundston Chief of Police Alain Lang, Wolastoq Grand Council Chief Ron Tremblay said: “I am writing this letter to express my inner most hurt and disgust in relation to the wrongful killing of Chantel Moore of Tofino, BC. She was a mother and young Indigenous woman who is now another statistic to the long list of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada.”

Tremblay is calling for an out-of-province inquiry on Moore’s murder. He wants the investigation team to be led by Indigenous, Black and People of Colour. “We have witnessed both in America and Canada the violent attacks on People of Colour,” said Tremblay.

Pamela Palmater is a Mi’kmaw lawyer from Eel River Bar First Nation in northern New Brunswick and Professor and the Chair in Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University. Writing in *Canadian Dimension*, Palmater says that Canadians can no longer say they are unaware that their governments and police forces are racist against Indigenous and Black peoples.

“We learned through testimony, facts, research and statistics, that yes, Canadian police forces are racist. The media also exposed countless examples of police officers who targeted Indigenous and Black peoples with racist and sexist acts of brutality, sexualized violence and death. When politicians, journalists and commentators continued to deny that racism exists in Canada, it became apparent that white privilege and supremacy are well rooted in Canadian society,” writes Palmater.

Moore’s death comes as Black and Indigenous activists call for the disarming and defunding of the police, and as Black Lives Matter actions are being held across New Brunswick and beyond following the Minneapolis police killing of George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black father of a six-year-old.

“If we truly want to effect change that could stop police killings of Black people, we must have a conversation about defunding the police,” argues Sandy Hudson, a co-founder of Black Lives Matter Toronto.

“When victims are not the right kinds of victims, police have utterly failed. When the queer community in Toronto told police there was a serial killer targeting racialized queer men in the

Church Street village, the police openly denied there was a serial killer and did not take the threat seriously. This allowed serial killer Bruce MacArthur to get away with murdering at least eight men over at least seven years,” writes Hudson. Hudson lists other examples of how the police failed to protect Indigenous women from a serial killer in British Columbia and Black trans woman Sumaya Dalmar in 2015.

Hudson is a proponent for defunding the police: “Instead of relying on police, we could rely on well-trained social workers, sociologists, forensic scientists, doctors, researchers and other well-trained individuals to fulfill our needs when violent crimes take place. In the event that intervention is required while a violent crime is ongoing, a service that provides expert specialized rapid response does not need to be connected to an institution of policing that fails in every other respect. Such a specific tactical service does not require the billions of dollars we waste in ineffective policing from year to year.”

Instead of funding police forces, Hudson calls for funding social services that provide effective public safety and for a public-health approach to drug use instead of one that criminalizes drug users.

According to Hudson, “Across Canada, policing accounts for some of the largest municipal budget expenditures. Let’s defund the police and create budgets that truly reflect our priorities. Perhaps then we could fund guaranteed access to housing, increased adult support for children in schools, and other services that create true safety and security.”

About showing up to the Black Lives Matter actions, spoken word artist and university professor El Jones recently wrote in *The Halifax Examiner*, “Today, young Black people will wake up in cells, in shelters, without jobs, without access to education. Today, Indigenous people fill up our prisons as girls like Eishia Hudson are gunned down by Winnipeg police. One day in the streets doesn’t change that.”

Jones continues:

Justice looks like tenants organizing to fight their landlords. It looks like mothers taking over abandoned buildings to raise their children in. It looks like taking resources from the police and giving it to the community for housing, for treatment, to live a full life. It looks like stopping spending money on prisons and jails and investing it in communities instead. It doesn’t look like bailouts and subsidies to corporations, bloated police budgets, money for surveillance, and putting money into punishment and never into healing.

Justice also looks like Black and Indigenous people organizing together, and white people holding the line for hours in the street to protect Black and brown and Indigenous people from police.

It is young people and elders speaking together. It is communities arguing about strategy, and those who choose to use their energy to work for community in other ways. It is the people who do the work of organizing unseen: the banner makers, the crowd marshals, the people bringing water. It is the man walking the crowd for hours with hand sanitizer, tirelessly offering it to people. It is fighting and dancing. It is kneeling and protesting. This is how we practice. This is how we learn what justice feels like. This is how our lives matter.

Tracy Glynn is a news writer and editor with the NB Media Co-op.

“We need to make the changes ourselves”: Shaunessy McKay on the police shootings of Indigenous people

By SHAUNESSY MCKAY

This cannot happen again. We need to do more than a walk, more than a rally, and a lot more than just demand changes. We need to make the changes ourselves. We need to stop asking permission and start asserting the care of our communities.

We need security. Not tribal police or Indigenous officers, or more of the same, whatever the flavour. I do not mean replacing cops with cops. I do not mean allowing some of us a well-paid opportunity to bully the rest of us. We need personal security, which means not only is everyone safe, but that everyone feels safe; that everyone is healthy or working toward health; that everyone is honest and responded to on the basis of honesty. We are more than capable of doing that ourselves; we always have been.

And by “we,” “ourselves,” and “us,” I absolutely do not mean everyone with a status card and appropriate “official” blood quantum. I mean everyone we will welcome into our communities based on that understanding. I mean everyone we already have welcomed into our communities on that basis — our friends, our immediate families, our extended families, and our created families. I mean everyone who has shared a history and culture with us, and wants to share our future. And not anyone who has harmed us or brought pain and suffering to our communities.

Lives are being wrenched away from us as we stand and watch it happen. And I mean not just the lives taken at the point of a gun by the juries, judges, and executioners they call their “police.” I mean also the lives of desperation, the lives of shattered dreams, the lives of tedious emptiness that are imposed upon us by those destroying our communities.

This is not a call to action . . . that time passed a long time ago . . . but rather a call to commune, to settle ourselves on community, to bring about the change that will free our children from our fears and make all of us whole.

Each of us knows what should have been done instead of pulling out a gun and taking life. We know the right thing to do now.

Shaunessy McKay is a Mi’kmaw woman from Eel Ground First Nation and co-author with Roland Chrisjohn of *Dying to Please You: Indigenous Suicide in Contemporary Canada*.

It is past time to talk about police spending in New Brunswick

By ADITYA RAO

There’s a conversation brewing about police funding across the country, and it’s time to pay attention. New Brunswickers would be shocked to learn just how much is spent on policing, compared to other cities in Canada.

Rodney Levi, a 48-year-old member of Metepenagiag First Nation near Miramichi, was shot and killed by RCMP on Friday night, June 12. The police alleged Levi had knives and that their stun guns did not work. It was the second fatal shooting of an Indigenous person in New Brunswick in just over one week.

On June 4, Chantel Moore, a 26-year old Indigenous woman from Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation in British Columbia was killed by Edmundston police during a routine wellness check. Her boyfriend called the police due to concerns that she was being harassed.

So far, the police have refused to release any information about the officer who killed Moore. Despite her death being part of a pattern of violence against Indigenous women



Black Lives Matter rally at Fredericton City Hall on June 2. Since this rally, a New Brunswick chapter of Black Lives Matter has formed. Photo by Sarah Kierstead.

Toilet paper in a time of tax havens: New Brunswick politician calls J.D. Irving’s charity “spam,” tables motion to ban financial assistance to companies that use tax havens

By TRACY GLYNN



Kevin Arseneau, Green MLA for Kent North. Photo from the Office of the Green Party Caucus.

On May 27, Kevin Arseneau, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Kent North, tabled a motion in the New Brunswick Legislature calling on the government to ban financial assistance to any companies that are known to use tax havens and implement a publicly-accessible beneficial ownership registry by the end of the year.

A month ago, Arseneau said he was not impressed by what he called “spam” from a J.D. Irving Ltd. representative about their toilet paper donation to shelters and transition houses in New Brunswick.

On April 27, Chris MacDonald, J.D Irving’s Director of Government Relations, wrote to all New Brunswick MLAs to tell them the toilet paper the company is “donating to shelters and transition houses is made 100% here in New Brunswick.”

“Even the box the tissue comes in is made in New Brunswick. The process to produce tissue starts with the planting of seedlings and eventually ends with the creation of parent rolls of tissue (these are very large rolls weighing 5 tonnes, measuring 7 feet in diameter and 17 feet in height) at our tissue mill in Saint John. These parent rolls are then converted to end-user consumer products at our facility in Dieppe,” wrote MacDonald.

About one hour later, Arseneau responded to MacDonald: “Beyond the opportunistic aspect of this public relations effort, your charity hardly masks the harm done by the shameless use of tax havens by the companies you control.”

“Very few New Brunswickers would need your charity if you had preferred to pay your taxes on your corporate profits in Canada, rather than in Bermuda and elsewhere. Be aware that toilet paper does not erase the traces of dirty money passing through tax havens,” continued Arseneau.

Arseneau noted in this letter to J.D. Irving that since the 1970s, “millions (if not billions) of dollars that should stay here have gone to these tax havens.”

In response to the criticisms that J.D. Irving pay their fair share of taxes, Mary Keith, J.D. Irving’s Vice-President of Communications, said: “As regards to your statement regarding tax havens, the fact is the J.D. Irving Limited group of companies are owned and controlled by entities and Canadian citizens resident in Atlantic Canada and pay all taxes due and owing in Canada.”

Arseneau hopes to change some of the rules that allow companies to avoid contributing to public coffers. “New Brunswick is a province that has a lot of wealth, enough wealth to pay for our needs, but that wealth is being funnelled out of the province by large corporations using tax havens. We need to ensure that everyone is paying their fair share,” said Arseneau.

“Most of the legislation regarding taxation is federal and that

is harder for us to change, one thing we can do here in New Brunswick is refuse to give any additional financial assistance to companies that shield their income in offshore accounts,” continued Arseneau.

Arseneau’s motion proposes to ban financial assistance to companies that benefit from property tax breaks, wage subsidies, business development funds or any other source of government revenue or tax breaks.

In the 1970s, K.C. Irving pioneered a corporate tax avoidance scheme when he moved to Bermuda and opened tax-free accounts to shelter the profits of his companies that were operating in New Brunswick.

Alain Deneault is a scholar and writer on tax havens. In his book, *Legalizing Theft: A Short Guide to Tax Havens*, Deneault calls tax havens “places where capital finds itself at ease in acting outside all legal constraint.”

Last November, when New Brunswick’s Liberal Party Leader Kevin Vickers suggested that the province become a tax haven like Ireland, Deneault responded: “tax havens are a scourge that explain the difficulty that Western jurisdictions, such as New Brunswick, have in properly funding public services.”

“Canadian businesses funnel tens of billions of dollars into tax havens to avoid paying their fair share of taxes, and at the same time federal and provincial governments, allowing themselves to be strangled by debt, must either cut services or charge fees for them, moving the tax burden onto the middle class and small and medium businesses,” stated Deneault.

According to Deneault, European Commissioner for Competition Margrethe Vestager has denounced Ireland’s tax haven as a form of legislative abuse.

Arseneau agrees with Deneault that the missing revenues from corporate tax avoidance are causing New Brunswick’s public services and programs to suffer. “By arranging to pay as little tax as possible, you are removing bread from the mouths of children, the elderly, the workers, the most vulnerable and, finally, all of our society,” wrote Arseneau to MacDonald.

Arseneau is not the only provincial government representative raising concerns over corporate tax dodging. Arseneau’s Green colleague in the Legislative Assembly, Megan Mitton, is also denouncing tax havens.

“We have corporations and the extremely wealthy who are actually in some cases profiting from the pandemic, and we have corporations who are registered in tax havens and they’re going to be able to access bailout money here in Canada,” said the Memramcook-Tantramar MLA to the audience at an online Green Party panel discussion on April 28.

Mitton argued that the federal government should follow other countries in not allowing such corporations to receive emergency funds. Denmark, Poland, Scotland and Wales have said they will not provide COVID-19 bail-out funds to corporations that shelter their profits in tax havens outside their countries.

Meanwhile, J.D. Irving is running ads of images of front line workers during the COVID-19 pandemic that say “today, we are prouder than ever to call ourselves Canadian.”

According to Deneault in *Legalizing Theft*, governments are losing billions from tax avoidance by multinational corporations and wealthy individuals: “that shortfall means that event if they were inclined to pay for hospitals, schools, cultural centres, transit systems, accessible legal institutions, and other social services, they cannot afford to do so.”

The reduction of government revenue due to COVID-19 is already leading the city of Saint John, location of the J.D. Irving and Irving Oil headquarters, and other jurisdictions to propose austerity measures, but there are provincial New Brunswick representatives preferring tighter tax rules.

“Believe me, if COVID-19 taught me anything, it is that it is necessary to attack the virus of generalized tax avoidance. Without tighter tax rules, the post-crisis economic recovery will be difficult and will be on the backs of ordinary people, for the benefit of the better off,” stated Arseneau.

“Unless you want to be tax justice champions, don’t send me spam,” Arseneau ended his letter to the J.D. Irving representative.

Tracy Glynn is an editorial board member of the NB Media Co-op.

Police spending in New Brunswick

across Canada, and despite the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in New Brunswick promising an inquiry into an anti-Indigenous bias in policing, the Premier mused that this was an isolated incident.

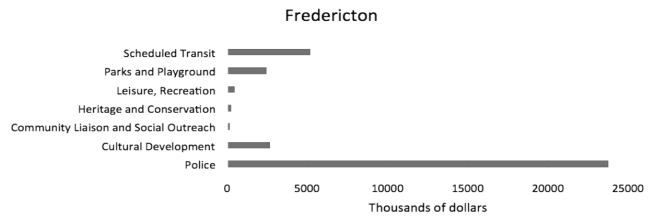
Moore’s death came just days after Regis Korchinski-Paquet, a Black-Indigenous woman, died after falling 24 storeys in Toronto when police arrived to perform a wellness check, sparking Black Lives Matter protests in Toronto. These protests themselves came on the heels of protests worldwide following the murder of George Floyd, a Black man, who was killed by a Minneapolis police officer who choked him to death by kneeling on his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds.

Moore did not need armed police officers performing a wellness check. What if we diverted the police budget towards other services? A look at our province’s police budgets would suggest that it is certainly time to re-examine how much New Brunswickers spend on policing.

Fredericton City Council approved a 2020 budget that would see a full fifth of its spending fund policing, amounting to nearly \$24 million in a total budget of \$124 million. With an approximate population of 66,000 this year, the per capita police spending in Fredericton is at \$360.

Seem low? By way of comparison, Fredericton spends around 75 per cent more on policing per capita as Toronto which has a population nearly 100 times that of Fredericton. Although some of that difference can be explained by economies of scale, Fredericton also spends 10 per cent more per capita than Miramichi on the police, a town that is just 25 per cent the size of Fredericton.

The graph below shows just how skewed the amount spent on the police in Fredericton is as compared to other services funded by the city.



Part of police spending in Fredericton can be attributed to the tragic 2018 shooting of two officers and two civilians. In the wake of that shooting, Fredericton hired 16 new temporary officers to fill in the gaps as some officers needed leave. This year, the city will hire 10 new temporary officers. But even without those positions, the police budget would look largely the same.

The City of Saint John is going to cut \$1.2 million in police funding this year. But this is not in response to nationwide calls for defunding police forces. It is, instead, as a result of \$10 million in across-the-board cuts annually to meet debt-servicing needs despite some of the country’s richest families having made their fortunes in that city.

Saint John plans to spend \$23.3 million on the police force after accounting for the cuts, still making up 14% of the city’s total spending at a cost of approximately over \$330 per capita. Nevertheless, the City of Saint John expects all departments of the city to make cuts, even those whose budgets are a fraction of the overall city budget.

Policing budgets in New Brunswick make up a significant proportion of municipal spending. The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples have called for funds from police budgets to be reallocated to social services. Some New Brunswickers have taken to Twitter to air their discontent and are demanding a conversation about this issue.

We know that most criminalized actions that the police deal with on a day-to-day basis, after all, are non-violent offences.

Panhandlers do not need tickets from police, they need universal basic income and mental health support. Individuals with addictions do not need tickets for public intoxication, they need housing and access to healthcare. Survivors of sexual violence need trauma-informed care and a justice system that holds perpetrators accountable.

We must dramatically reduce police budgets and reinvest in community centres, civilian mediators, unarmed investigators and de-escalation training. We can fund public childcare centres, create anti-racism projects and build affordable housing.

This is simply a question of priorities.

According to the Saint John Human Development Council, a full quarter of children in Fredericton are living in poverty. That number is nearly half for racialized children in New Brunswick – a rate nearly twice the national rate. Although part of the reason is lack of childcare, there are no municipally run childcare facilities anywhere in New Brunswick.

The word “homelessness” does not appear a single time in Fredericton’s 2020 budget. The city had allocated a measly \$35,692 per year for a Housing First initiative from 2018 to 2020, but appears to have used none of the money according to the 2020 budget. In Saint John, a 14-unit affordable housing building is being built for just \$2 million as part of the Victoria Commons Project. If just 10% of that city’s police budget were reallocated to affordable housing, it could double the investment in this project.

It is past time that we reckon with the size of police spending in this province. As jurisdictions around the world contemplate reimagining policing in the wake of protests against anti-Black racism and police brutality, the time is ripe for New Brunswick to have this conversation now.

Aditya Rao is a lawyer and resident of Fredericton.

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