



Lekwungen Cheryl Bryce
SPAET Stand, 16 November 2006

Remembrance Day 2007

Why do we take one day for Remembrance? Who do you remember?

On November 1, 2007, I attended a meeting on the Western Forest Products (WFP) land sale issues. There were approximately 500 people attending to express their concerns including First Nations from Sooke and Port Renfrew and Provincial and Federal political representatives.

I didn't plan on speaking until Charlene, a First Nations woman from T'it'q'et (Lillooett) tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Cheryl, I need your help. I want you to speak for me because I am too nervous." I was surprised, out of all the people attending she spotted me among them all and asked me to speak for her.

She said, "Please, go up to there and speak for me. Tell them, First Nations have been here longer than Campbell's government. He is killing us and nature's beauty. He needs to stop and change his decision and protect the land." She said this calmly but with a tone of urgency and great sadness. It was so heart wrenching to hear her say this to me and it took all I could from crying. I say this with respect, she is physically disabled and in her words and her action of being there she was fighting for the land.

A wonderful person who took the time to come down and express her concern for all nations, but especially for those being impacted directly by the land sale and potential development. I thought of her words, along with the fact that it was coming up to the date of the SPAET Stand last year, and could not help but cry. The sacred cave was destroyed and so was a part of us. However, I did manage to speak for her and she was there beside me.

I also added a few additional words, including some about Remembrance Day coming up. Everyone here tonight spoke about land use and how much use they were going to lose with the crown land sale and development.

However, as First Nations we identify with the land and exist because of the land. So when you treat the land this way you are killing us. There are a lot of people wearing poppies in honour of those who fought for this land and those that died for this land. However, we are forgetting what is going on here today on the same land. Look at what we are doing here today and what it is doing to us.

Remember, November 16, 2006 when a stand was made on SPAET (Bear Mountain) to protect sacred land. I will do it again and stand with my relatives from Sooke and Port Renfrew if that is their wish.

On Remembrance Day I want everyone but especially government to remember where you come from and where you want to see your children grow up. Remember, who you are and what you have now and what you want all our children, grandchildren and generations to come to have and what they will become.

Remember First Nations identify with the land and you are killing us when the land is treated this way. You are killing all of us. I want you [MLA, John Horgan] to take that to Campbell and all governments.

I am sharing a few of my thoughts on Remembrance Day and what I am remembering today. I am thinking of and remembering. I didn't know my Grandpa, Late Frank George but I heard a lot about him from my Late Mom, Dad and Grandma, Late Edna George. I am thankful for many people especially, my Grandma and Grandpa.

Today I am remembering them both. My Grandpa fought in the war for the land and my Grandma in her actions and role in protecting and healing the land. Take the time today and any day to remember all those that have fought for our land and sustained our existence. Do it in silence or do it in celebration but most importantly do it in your actions.

With respect,
Cheryl Bryce