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Talking Back to the Indian Act: Critical Readings in Settler Colonial Histories. By Mary-Ellen Kelm and Keith D. Smith. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018. 248 pages. \$29.95 paper; \$23.95 electronic.

In *Talking Back to the Indian Act*, authors Mary-Ellen Kelm and Keith Smith lead a master class on the statute legislating comprehensive federal control of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The authors seek not only to inform readers about the Indian Act, but also to encourage us to think about historical thinking and historiography as such. Emphasizing how and why historians must substantively engage Indigenous methodologies and perspectives in their work on settler-colonial histories, the book maps subtleties of historical documentary analysis and the importance of bringing Indigenous methodologies and ways of knowing and being to the critical reading of any text in settler colonialism. As guides to settler-colonial histories of Canadian Aboriginal policy and Indigenous perspectives and experiences, Kelm and Smith take care to present the complexity of contexts and interpretations one necessarily navigates moving through the landscape of documents informing, amending, implementing, and protesting the Indian Act.

This collaboration is a natural outgrowth of the authors' recent works. Mary-Ellen Kelm, an editor of the *Canadian Historical Review* with expertise on the colonial construction and clinical control of Aboriginal bodies and gender, is particularly well suited to this dual approach of exposition and metahistorical critique, having recently presided over the journal's "Historical Perspectives" issue featuring new approaches to Indigenous histories, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and treatments of Confederation, biography, and teaching Canadian history. Kelm's reader in Aboriginal women's history in Canada edited with Lorna Townsend, *In the Days of Our Grandmothers* (2006), is particularly relevant.

Keith Smith's *Liberalism, Surveillance, and Resistance: Indigenous Communities in Western Canada, 1877–1927* (2009) analyzes liberalism's justification and application in colonizing what is now British Columbia and southern Alberta, discussing the gap between liberalism's rhetoric of inclusion and its reality of exclusion, the practices of discipline and surveillance imposed upon First Nations, and also Indigenous resistance. Smith's *Strange Visitors: Documents in Indigenous-Settler Relations in Canada from 1876* (2014) is similarly structured to *Talking Back*, in that both introductions discuss the wider challenges of academic readings of Indigenous primary sources while also offering discussion questions on the material.

Talking Back takes the Indian Act as an entry point to study Indigenous-settler relations in the Canadian context. The introduction sets the course: "it is not a history of the Indian Act, [rather] a set of lessons in interpretation around sections of the Indian Act and the documents that it generated" (9). These lessons include concepts foundational to historical thinking, as well as how to resituate texts according to Indigenous methods, accompanied by compelling illustrations and charts. *Talking Back* is organized according to four themes dominant to the Indian Act and settler colonialism more generally: governance, enfranchisement, gender, and land. Kelm and Smith progressively build up foundational tools in documentary analysis and

conclude with appendices listing stimulating discussion questions and contextualizing timelines.

The first chapter, which establishes a legislative context for the Act and also discusses Indigenous responses to and experiences under the Act, is prefaced by a series of questions encouraging profound engagement, setting the book's dialectical rhythm. Passing from Act excerpts to Parliamentary debates on the statute, to Ojibway and Six Nations Grand Council proceedings, to personal testimonies of the Act's impositions, the reader is presented with a pluri-vocal context emphasizing relationality and change over time. The second chapter, on governance, asks the reader to consider questions of responsibility and authority, for example with reference to Indian Agent correspondences or to the words of the great Cayuga chief Deskaheh, to interrogate the causality of their respective sources of authority. Then, by introducing selections from the 1996 final report of the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, Kelm and Smith encourage the reader to return to these earlier sources and "to pull out as much meaning from the written text as we possibly can" (61).

The third chapter focuses on enfranchisement in Canadian Aboriginal policy as a "particularly severe lack of respect for Indigenous cultures" (95). By playing the 1876 Act's original sections against debates over enfranchisement arising during 1874's Indigenous Grand Councils, Kelm and Smith contrast policymakers' disrespectful intentions with Indigenous resistance. This tension returns in Duncan Campbell Scott's 1920 testimony to the House of Commons Special Committee and the subsequent 1920 Act amendment, a 1920 op-ed by the solicitor for Six Nations, and a letter protesting involuntary enfranchisement written to the minister responsible for Indian Affairs by the esteemed Kanien'kehá:ka World War I veteran Onondeyoh (F. O. Loft).

The fourth chapter asks the reader to "remain alert to continuity as well" especially as it relates to how the "Indian Act and its effects have tended to produce and confirm negative stereotypes of Indigenous women" (127). Once again, Kelm and Smith display mastery in their choice of primary materials, which variously include 1876 Indian Act sections; 1985 amendments to a case study of Nehiyaw iskweh Rosalie Howse's 1891 loss of Indian status by marriage; testimonies from Aboriginal women on their experiences; and excerpts from the British Columbia Supreme Court decision on *McIvor* (2007) and a 2010 position paper on Bill C-3 by the Indigenous Bar Association in Canada. Along the way, readers are introduced to central concepts in Canadian Aboriginal law such as the Crown's Duty to Consult, First Nations jurisdiction over citizenship, and the need for far-reaching legislative reform of Aboriginal policy in Canada.

The final chapter discusses the incommensurable centrality of land to both settler colonists and Indigenous peoples. Once again, probing questions preface sections from the 1876 Indian Act, which are brought into sharp relief alongside selections from the 1911 dispute between the federal government and the province of British Columbia over jurisdiction concerning reserve lands in the province, and conclude with a powerful 2008 witness by Stó:lō scholar Lee Maracle articulating that in her experience "Indigenous peoples are no longer 'immigrants' to be disenfranchised,

forbidden, prohibited, outlawed or precluded from the protected laws of this country. But we are a long way from being participants” (198).

Talking Back is meant to be a study guide, and its accessible style and probing directions are intended to help readers both develop their critical toolkit and a familiarity with important primary documents in Canadian Aboriginal policy. However, scholars will also find *Talking Back* an impressive and engaging resource, and a welcome contribution to the study of Canadian settler colonialism.

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