

# Commentary

## Where does the understanding lie?

by **Lincoln Tritt**

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Once again, another elder has passed on. How many do we have left? Two?

It seems, with each passing of the elders, there are less and less Neets'i Gwich'in surviving.

While we are busy keeping the Whiteman out of our lives, they have taken over our minds.

In Arctic Village, there are more people who can understand and identify with the Whiteman than the extremely few who can understand and identify with the traditional Natives or Elders.

As with the passing of the Elders, so too are common sense approach to problems and situations. It is frustrating to watch the people listening to the White-

man's answer that, from my experience and learning's, are obviously wrong and will lead you back to the same problem. Yet, when I criticize or make suggestions, from their reactions, I feel like a trouble maker.

Now I can feel the exasperation's of the past Elders.

I think, for this reason, we definitely must make some drastic changes in our Native education institutions and our government. As it is, when I go into our school or the council office, I see people sitting around playing with their toys or their little games. As a result, the people's minds are not developed, they are processed. Ultimately, they end up following nonsense directions when the problem or work can be done

more effectively and with lasting results, if they know how to use their own mind. This would enable them to evaluate the problem and with the future in mind, provide a lasting or flexible answer.

Although the village is peaceful and there are no signs of problems, the lives of the next Gwich'in generation is in great jeopardy. This would not be a problem if talking can take care of everything, but while people are talking, they seem to have forgotten what physical work is. In the age of computers, I guess this should be expected. In relation to life, no machinery can replace what was already there. The only thing the machines can replace is reality. Without reality, there is no chance for life.