

We are living in a time of iconoclasm, which literally means the breaking of idols. The white men who were formerly respected for bringing Western culture to this continent are now being reconsidered. The statues of those who governed by means of deception and brutality are coming down, and landmarks are being renamed.

Following the principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in 2017 the city of Vancouver launched its 150+ Naming Project, with the intention of changing the names of 150 streets, parks, and buildings to make them more inclusive of a diverse population, and to acknowledge the history of First Nations peoples on this continent. This project has undoubtedly cost time, effort and money, but it was deemed necessary to show a local government's good faith.

The proposal to rename City Square Plaza seems well-intended, but it is not part of a general movement to address historical injustice. It does show a will to rename public landmarks and to bypass procedural obstacles to that goal as far as possible.

Since 2017, two petitions have circulated in Regina, asking for the name of Dewdney Avenue to be changed to Buffalo Avenue, and for Dewdney Park to be renamed Buffalo Meadows. We can't bring back all the former inhabitants of the prairies who died of starvation and disease as a direct result of the policies of Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant-Governor of the Northwest Territories in the late nineteenth century. However, the city of Regina could have the decency to remove Dewdney's name from a major city street, and to honour the buffalo that once roamed freely here.

This change would go a long way toward demonstrating the good will of Regina City Council toward all the people it serves. It would demonstrate this body's awareness that the injustice of the past does not need to continue into the present and future.

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