

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
Media Clips**



**Résolution des questions des pensionnats indiens
Canada
Manchettes**

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Source: CBC News.ca-Canada

Date: April 11, 2006

By-line: NA

No fast-track payments for residential school survivors

The federal government will not give advance payments to residential school survivors before a tentative compensation deal is finalized, Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice said Monday.

Prentice's announcement marked a reversal of government policy. The previous Liberal government said ailing and elderly former students would be able to apply for payments of up to \$8,000.

Those payments would have been advances on a compensation package for the estimated 78,000 native students who were forced into the schools to try to integrate them into white society.

Critics say the payments should be fast-tracked, as dozens of elderly and ill former students have died in recent months.

Under the deal announced by the Liberals, survivors would ultimately be eligible for payments of at least \$10,000.

But on Monday, Prentice said the Conservative government would make no payments until the draft deal is finalized.

"We clearly have an obligation to all Canadians. We have an obligation to all taxpayers," he said.

"We have an agreement in principle. It contemplates a process that will convert that agreement in principle into a final binding agreement. We would expect that to be adhered to."

Prentice blamed a delay in finalizing the deal on one of the law firms involved in negotiations, saying it was "dragging its feet." He didn't name the firm.

Liberal Indian Affairs critic Anita Neville says some former students have taken out bank loans because they thought they would have received their money by now.

"The understanding is that they would be receiving their \$8,000 ... prior to the ratification of the courts and many people have been waiting for it and I've been told that some people have already spent it."

A spokesperson for Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada, which handles claims, says a final agreement is expected to be reached in a few weeks.

An estimated 100,000 aboriginal children lived in the system of residential schools from 1930 to 1996.

Source: Ha-Shilth-Sa
Date: March 23, 2006
By-line: Hugh A. Watts

Congratulations Nuuchah-nulth women

During most of the earlier period of the twentieth century our Nuuchah-nulth women were homemakers or mothers in their communities. Also during this same period of time the Indian Residential Schools were abducting our Nuuchah-nulth children and taking them away from their homes and depriving them of cultural nourishment.

Instead these children were confined to an institution in an attempt to teach them the benefits of assimilation into a dominant society. Many of the adult women that remained in their communities would travel to work in canneries or berry fields as this was the only work available to them.

The Indian Residential Schools seldom had employment for the Nuuchah-nulth women, and neither did the Indian Affairs. However, things were to change during the 1970's, at which time the Nuuchah-nulth First Nations were moving towards establishing their own "Band Offices."

This was an opportunity for some Nuuchah-nulth women to be offered "on the job training," for employment in the Band Office. Then into the 1980's and the 1990's many women became aware of the advantages of a good scholastic education.

These women further found that any employment opportunities was extremely competitive and demanded the appropriate education. Well, the Nuuchah-nulth women accepted the challenge of seeking the necessary education, which included having to move away from home for a Post Secondary education.

It involved some sacrifice and inconvenience but many were determined to meet this challenge.

Now we have the reality of the twenty first century, and we see our Nuuchah-nulth women in "high profile employment. Our women have become determined and aggressive in pursuit of those opportunities for employment within a "male dominated workforce."

There are now quite a number of Nuuchah-nulth women/ladies, that have succeeded with a determination to join the ranks of the professional and technical trades.

If a person were to consciously review the reality of the Nuuchah-nulth women we would find them employed as: Bank and Business staff, clothes designers, elected politicians, executive directors, owners/managers of a business or office, nurses, RCMP officers, Social Workers, secretary/receptionists, Teachers (school), trades persons, etc.

Despite this additional workload many of our Nuuchah-nulth women still make the time to continue to be a Homemaker and Mother. What an achievement all within the last twenty years. Wow!

To you ladies I say CONGRATULATIONS and wish each of you to know I am personally extremely proud of your individual and collective achievement and success.

Our path into the future is secure as a result of your participation, determination and your ambitions.

Source: Metis Voyageur
Date: January/February
By-line: N/A

Métis residential school students file statement of claim

Fifteen hundred Métis students who attended the Ile a la Crosse Residential School in northern Saskatchewan are being deprived of \$39.75 million. The substantial sum was calculated by Regina lawyer, Tony Merchant, who filed the class action this December on behalf of the former students. He spoke out against the exclusion of such students from the recently negotiated federal Indian residential school settlement agreement:

“The exclusion of these Métis students is patently wrong. It is prejudice within prejudice.”

Students have gone on record as seeking compensation for the physical, psychological and emotional harm they suffered while attending the school, which was administered by the Oblates but was primarily funded by the federal government.

“The exclusion affects Métis people who were not given a place in the recent settlement negotiations. Their voice was unheard,” Merchant said, explaining that his law firm pressed Ottawa for inclusion of Ile a la Crosse in the historic \$2 billion residential school agreement.

His calculations were based on the assumption that students would receive the same average payment of about \$26,500 which will be going to First Nations claimants in the residential schools agreement.

Source: Metis Voyageur
Date: January/ February
By-line: Cherie Dimaline

Coming Full Circle

Returning to fight another day

At the Centre where I work, up until recently, there was a program funded through the Aboriginal Healing Foundation called "Coming Full Circle". I never paid much attention to the name, choosing instead to admire the tradition-based programming and the strength of the women who gathered each week to help one another recognize and heal from the abuses they suffered at residential schools across the nation.

It was only when I was called upon to submit a final report to the funder on whether or not the program met its goals and had indeed brought these survivors "Full Circle" that I took time to think about what it meant exactly to come full circle. What was the outcome and how could it be measured? How did we know when we had indeed accomplished this feat? And have we, as a group, as a nation, and finally, as a people, achieved this journey?

According to one online dictionary, coming full circle means, 'something or someone has come full circle after changing a lot, when they are now the same as they were at the beginning.' So, in other words, we are seeking to return to a desirable state which was in existence before interference or change. In the case of the program, it would be to return to the health and wellness of the community before residential schooling inflicted its insidious damage.

In the case of the Métis Nation then, by the same definition, we would be seeking to return to a state of strength and wellness that existed before. But before what?

As a Nation we have forged much of our identity and strength of character out of conflict.

Our greatest leaders have come out of this conflict and our community spirit has been formed by battle. We as a Nation have never really seen days when we were accepted and left to prosper as an individual people.

There were, of course, the days before Rupert's Land was abandoned and left ripe for the picking by the new governments that were forming themselves around the original inhabitants-the days of the buffalo hunt and the days of the Red River cart. We developed distinct societies quickly, Aboriginality based mostly on the traditions of First Nations mothers and lifestyles of fur trading fathers, with a language comprised of the two. However brief, this peaceful structure was impressive and prosperous for the community.

In recent years the movement towards returning to tradition has made leaps and bounds with a reclaiming of the nation's language, efforts towards rediscovering and preserving cultural roots and with the recognition and respect of our traditional teachers and Elders. The community has come a long way from the shame associated with Métis heritage that plagued much of the early days from Canada's Confederation, and the hanging of Louis Riel, up and into the 1980s. We are indeed rounding the curves of that cultural circle when we celebrate community harvests, sit around drums, learn Michif and follow the teachings of our grandmothers. But have we as a community returned 'full circle' to a place in history where we can exist without interference, where we can live as a healthy nation?

While we question ourselves, we can see that the provincial government has achieved this lofty goal. They must be very proud as they can say with a great degree of certainty that they, as individuals, as an entity, and finally as a governing body vested with the power of the people, have come full circle.

One hundred and twenty years ago government betrayed the Métis people and went back on its word.

The Métis Nation prepared a document that allowed the whole of Rupert's Land to come into Canadian

Confederation, making Louis Riel and his astonishingly quick acting provisional government, architects of the national body. Ottawa agreed to this 'list of rights' and moved swiftly to pull in the valuable lands, only to revoke its position after the political limelight had moved on and the 'rebels' had been soothed into complacency.

Today, with behaviour best suited to very young children hiding from a parent after playing ball in the house and smashing a window, the provincial government has gone back on its word.

And better yet, it continues to hide and show no accountability for its actions other than to mutter, "It's a matter of interpretation."

How can anyone take this political body seriously after it blatantly ignores its own obligations, designed in part by its own minions, and then plugs its ears to the rulings of the Supreme Courts that govern the land?

Despite the government's trivialization and immaturity, the Métis Nation continues to come together as a people to hunt and to celebrate, to teach and to learn. We refuse to walk away in the face of so much ignorance and passive aggressive hostility. I guess in this way we have come full circle. Because, without a doubt, we have returned to the fight with all of the vigor and intelligence of the old days—the days when Riel lead our people, and the country, to nationhood.

The Métis Nation has 'come full circle' to the days when we were noted for our bravest acts, our biggest accomplishments And our power of unity.

We are coming together as a people and demanding that our voices be heard. We refuse to settle down and accept whatever paltry bandaids are offered for our gaping grievances. And so, while we are not yet at a place where we can say that we have once again found fertile lands for our rich and deep-rooted traditions to take hold, we can say that we have not abandoned our traditions of rebellion, of resistance, and of strength. We are once again acting as our ancestors did, reacting to government's threats and indifference, each as cancerous as the other, with positive solution-based action and the power of conviction.

We have come full circle in a manner of speaking, and are back at a point where we can find and take up the causes and tools of our ancestors. And while it is not the end of the road, we can certainly travel towards a better resolution for the generations yet to come now that we have returned to this place.

After all, a circle makes a better wheel with which to move forward, especially when it is carrying the hopes of an entire nation.

Source: Grassroots News

Date: April 11, 2006

By-line: N/A

Lost Boys forge ahead in quest

The Lost Boys and others like them including women also forced into group foster homes across the province are only weeks away from taking their demands for a full public inquiry into the government's operation of the homes and full access to their personal Childrens Aid Society case files directly to the Manitoba legislature.

Our story is out there and is known widely by the public and government officials and yet the government has not come forward to do the right thing and formally address our concerns," said Warriors of Lost Boys Inc. vicepresident Sam McGillivray. "We have given the government the opportunity to respond and to initiate action on this file but it appears that like so many other issues they prefer to ignore the situation rather than treat us in an honorable and respectful manner.

"We will in short order demonstrate to the government that we are not going away, that the number of survivors men and women are growing in numbers and that like the residential schools scandal the situation and ramifications will only become greater the longer it drags its feet," he said.

Members of the group say they have received additional information from former Childrens Aid Society workers of that period that reinforces their contention that government officials knowingly split native families and undermined the cultural and linguistic identity of native children in their care as part of a program of forced assimilation and ignored reports of widespread physical, mental and sexual abuse suffered by many of these children at the hands of the group and foster home operators.

"Not only are other native people coming forward to tell their stories but now we are hearing from judges, former foster parents and social workers about their own knowledge of what was happening to us in these homes and the great emotional damage those experiences inflicted upon us, our families and our people," said McGillivray.

"The jig is up. The dirty secret is out and we deserve the recognition from the government that they stole the childhoods we should have had growing up with our families and communities from us and stole the children of mothers and fathers.

Powderhorn, McGillivray, Brian Richards, Larry Bone and Max Simpson, among other group foster home survivors say the government's failure to respond to their demands for disclosure and an inquiry frustratingly parallel the refusal by successive federal and provincial governments to admit the shameful legacy created by the residential school system.

"This was a system equally as bad, maybe worse, than residential schools," says McGillivray. "When you think of residential schools, forced adoption and everything else society was throwing at our people to destroy our way of life and families you can see there was something very dark at work in all this."

And the group rejects that what occurred to them can be excused as a product of the era of well-intentioned but misguided social experiments.

"Is it coincidence that these things were always directed at native people, their culture and communities?" asked McGillivray. "No that's too easy an explanation. This was deliberate and the result of non-aboriginal society and the government viewing native people as uncivilized, wild or something and attempting to break the fabric of our culture and families.

"We are not going away. We have organized to send a message that we are reclaiming our history as tragic as it may be. It is our history and we will not be silent out of shame any longer. "We expect the governments, both federal and provincial to do what is honorable and just without forcing us to take legal action."

The group says it is offering the government until the end of this month to commence serious discussions with its members on compensation for their forced and lengthy separation from their families and communities.

“Most of us lost our personal identity, opportunities for education, to retain our language and traditions and some of our brothers and sisters were horribly abused physically, mentally and sexually at these institutions,” said Powderhorn.

“Like residential school survivors we too deserve some form of compensation and acknowledgement of that experience.

Source: The Daily Gleaner

Date: April 12, 2006

By-line: Campbell Morrison

MP Scott takes on his new role

For the first time, Fredericton Liberal MP Andy Scott joined the debate on the throne speech from the opposition benches.

"There is a role in opposition to point out limitations and inadequacies, but that can be a constructive role," he said during debate Tuesday.

The former Liberal cabinet minister gave a different sort of speech than those he had delivered in his past 12 years on Parliament Hill. Instead of praising what was in the throne speech, namely the Conservative government's five priorities, he went after what was not.

"The repeated commitment to a limited number of priorities does lend itself to the observation that some very important things were left out," he said.

Reaching to his immediate past as Indian Affairs minister, Scott bemoaned the lack of mention of either the \$2-billion resolution to the survivors of Indian residential schools or the \$5-billion commitment to improve the health, education and housing standards on First Nations.

He said there was no mention of investing in research and development, or of ensuring post-secondary education is accessible, and no reference to regional economic development or investing in infrastructure, or culture.

"I was also surprised at the lack of reference to what I consider to be a huge demographic challenge facing the country," he added. "It is most acute in Atlantic Canada but I think it visits all of rural Canada in particular in terms of the shrinking and aging population. It simply cannot be sustained."

Scott went on to suggest that the level of investment in the Conservative government could be as much as 60 per cent less than the levels sustained by the former Liberal government.