

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
Media Clips**



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

Thursday, April 13, 2006 ♦ jeudi, 13 avril 2006

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Source: Anglican.ca

Date: April 11, 2006

By-line: Andrew S. Hutchison

Letter to Prime Minister Stephan Harper - Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement April 11, 2006

The Rt. Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington St. Ottawa,
K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing with regard to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. This morning your Minister of Indian Affairs, The Honourable Jim Prentice, announced that your government would not honour the promise made by the previous government to issue an advance payment of \$8000 to any claimant who is 65 years of age or older.

The Anglican Church of Canada is deeply disappointed at this failure to meet the needs of elderly former students of the Residential Schools. We expected a more humane response to the needs of former students, some of whom are faithful members of the Anglican Church.

As a church we have long since acknowledged our own part in the sad history of the Residential Schools system in Canada, through the establishment of an Anglican Healing Fund in 1991, and the issuing of a formal apology in 1993. We were encouraged by the appointment of The Honourable Frank Iacobucci as special negotiator in May of 2005, and have willingly participated in the negotiations that produced the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. While we were disappointed that the change of government resulted in some delay in implementing this Agreement, we did not anticipate that your new government would fail to honour an important component, namely, the advance payments to elderly claimants.

I strongly urge you to reconsider the decision announced today by Mr. Prentice.

Yours faithfully,
Andrew S. Hutchison
Archbishop and Primate
c.c. The Honourable Jim Prentice, P.C., M.P.

Source: Anglican Journal

Date: April 12, 2006

By-line: Staff

Church protests dropping of fast-track payments

Tories will not give advances to elderly former students

April 12, 2006 - Archbishop Andrew Hutchison, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, has "strongly" urged Prime Minister Stephen Harper to reconsider the his Conservative government's decision not to give advance payments to elderly former students of residential schools before a revised agreement is finalized.

"The Anglican Church of Canada is deeply disappointed at this failure to meet the needs of the elderly former students of residential schools," said Archbishop Hutchison in a letter to Mr. Harper hours after Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice made the announcement on behalf of the federal government on April 11. "We expected a more humane response to the needs of former students, some of whom are faithful members of the Anglican church."

The government's decision reversed a provision in the revised Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement announced in November by the previous Liberal government that former students who are now 65 years of age or older are liable to apply for an advance payment of \$8,000. Following the announcement of that agreement, the Anglican Church of Canada had renegotiated the terms of the 2003 residential agreement that it signed with the federal government.

"As a church we have long since acknowledged our own part in the sad history of the residential school system in Canada, through the establishment of an Anglican Healing Fund in 1991, and the issuing of a formal apology in 1993," wrote Archbishop Hutchison in his letter. He added that the church had been "encouraged" by the appointment of former Supreme Court Justice Frank Iacobucci as special negotiator in May 2005, and had "willingly participated" in the negotiations that produced the revised Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

"While we were disappointed that the change of government resulted in some delay in implementing the agreement, we did not anticipate that your new government would fail to honour an important component, namely, the advance payments to elderly claimants," added Archbishop Hutchison.

The Assembly of First Nations had urged Ottawa to fast-track payments to elderly claimants since a growing number of them are already ill or dying.

But Mr. Prentice said, "We clearly have an obligation to all Canadians. We have an obligation to all taxpayers."

The revised agreement provides a \$1.9 billion compensation package that will be offered to tens of thousands of aboriginal Canadians who attended Indian residential schools. It offers "every eligible" former native residential school student "living on May 30, 2005" up to \$30,000 each in so-called Common Experience Payment. Each former student who applies would receive \$10,000 and an additional \$3,000 for each year of attendance in excess of the first year.

(The Anglican church operated 26 of 80 boarding schools attended by aboriginals from the mid-19th century into the 1970s. In recent years, hundreds of natives sued the church and the federal government, which owned the schools, alleging physical and sexual abuse.)

Source: NRSSS.ca

Date: April 11, 2006

By-line: NRSSS Administrator

Fast-Track Early Payment Rejected

The Conservative government had decided not to distribute early payments to Survivors sick and elderly former students of native residential schools which were promised by the former Liberal government. INAC Minister Jim Prentice told the media Monday that the *Agreement in Principle* outlined by the Liberals last November must be accomplished first, "and that will form the basis of any payments that are made." The Minister mentioned that he hopes to receive a final agreement "shortly," but failed to inform us of when the Agreement would be finished.

Survivors groups understand that this *Agreement* is belated, yet we are disappointed with the lack of Compassion with which the government is viewing this traumatic Legacy. Conservatives say that Early Payments promised last fall were never reliant upon a final agreement, which must be ratified by the courts.

Those owed compensation are dying at an alarming rate of more than 15 each week. We are beside ourselves with this news, we watched the Speech Throne hoping to see the well deserved recognition and a sign of respect for our elders and survivors, but to no avail.

Jim Prentice held "one of the law firms" responsible for "dragging its feet" in current talks aimed at finalizing the *Agreement in Principle* which will compensate about 80,000 former Indian Residential School Survivors. Prentice would not name the law firm. Of course there are several firms involved as part of a consortium that launched a multibillion-dollar class-action lawsuit against the government. The *Agreement in Principle* would effectively spoil the lawyer's cases.

We at NRSSS, as well as every other Survivor group have been dealing with the issue of our elders dying off at a great rate for years now. We have been hearing from Survivors, who have become cynical with our government and they believe that this is a tactic to save money. The *Agreement* in fact states that only families of Survivors who died after May 2005 will receive compensation. How about the families who lost their sisters, brothers and other extended family while they were in school?

We understand that the Federal Government has worked diligently on Indian Residential Schools Legacy. This process has been difficult for everyone involved dealing with the tragic history of our people. We also urge Survivors who are represented by legal council to ask their lawyers, if they are holding up the *Agreement* and if so, why? Also, Survivors should instruct their lawyers to expeditiously cooperate with the process and come to a final *Agreement*.

It is not unlikely that all Survivors are growing weary with patience for a resolution to the Agreement in Principle (AIP). The AIP will pay out a common experience payment to all registered survivors which is widely known as the ten and three payment; \$10,000 for attendance and \$3000.00 for every subsequent year of confinement. What we have been waiting for all this time is the first wave of payment which is compensation for all eligible former students who are 65 years of age or older.

Early payment application forms were promised by the Liberal government by January or February of this year. As a result of the change of guard in our Christmas election the Conservative government has worked diligently to take over office and open the books on the Residential School File.

In a recent press release the AFN published some positive information for survivors stating, "Prime Minister Stephen Harper assured the AFN that he would honour the Agreement. On Feb. 6, 2006 The Honourable Beverly J. Oda was appointed as the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women. Minister Oda is also responsible for the Residential Schools File on behalf of Canada."

The process from this point requires Minister Oda to present the Residential School file and the AIP for approval from the Cabinet. Upon approval the Final Agreement will be processed in two to three months. All survivors will have to be notified within four to six months according to the law. Service Canada would then make applications available and proceed to administering the common experience payment. If survivors choose to make a claim for severe physical, sexual or psychological trauma, NRSSS advises that all survivors inform themselves with the Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR).

The communication from the AFN also brought up a very important issue in regards to the safety of survivors after receiving payments from this already traumatic event. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are warning survivors to be aware of swindlers who are only motivated by taking advantage of elderly people. These base people will pretend to work for Charity organizations or pretend to be a home repairperson and try to get cash from you up front. Do not give out cash unless you know for sure that the organization is a legitimate company. If you are unsure of an organization please can check with your local Chamber of Commerce.

In some instances survivors have had to deal with family members who will take advantage of them. We may all know someone in our family who is not quite healthy and may see the money as their own. If you are in this position please contact someone you trust or your local police detachment.

Source: CNW

Date: April 12, 2006

By-line: N/A

NAN calls on Conservatives to expedite compensation for elderly residential school survivors

THUNDER BAY, ON, April 12 /CNW/ - Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler is calling on the Government of Canada to fulfill the former Liberal Government's Agreement-in-Principle to expedite compensation payments to residential school survivors who are sick or over the age of 65.

"In a lot of people's eyes this was a done deal," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler.

"Even with the change of government, our people had high expectations of being compensated based on the Agreement-in-Principle signed last November."

Fiddler's comments come after Indian and Northern Affairs Minister Jim Prentice announced Monday the Conservatives will not honour the agreement that he said now requires a final agreement and court approval.

"Our main concern is that with each passing day and week we're losing survivors and with that loss they'll never be able to benefit from the Government's acknowledgment of the wrong-doing of the residential school system," said Fiddler.

"The dollar figure isn't as important as the formal acknowledgement of the wrong-doing mostly because no number could ever fairly compensate for what occurred at those schools."

Of the approximate 5,000 residential school survivors within NAN territory - an area covering two-thirds of Ontario - approximately 1000 are over the age of 65.

"This is so important because it was a promise the government made and now it's been broken," said Constance Lake First Nation Elder Richard Ferris, 73, who attended Pelican Falls Residential School 1938 through 1949.

"We've been at this for a long time so let's just try to bring it to a closure."