

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
Media Clips**



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

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Source: The Chronicle-Herald
Date: April 24, 2006
By-line: Gordon Delaney

Brison enters Liberal race

Former Tory puts focus on values, economy

GREENWICH - Scott Brison, the ex-Tory who jumped to the sinking Liberal ship and survived its foundering, pushed Liberal values such as multiculturalism, bilingualism and equalization in announcing his intention to run for the party leadership here Sunday.

Supporters cheered as the Kings-Hants MP delivered a speech that played on his background as a fiscal conservative and social progressive.

Mr. Brison, 38, said his campaign leading up to the Dec. 2 leadership convention in Montreal will focus on tax reform, improving the economy, creating employment, reducing debt and strengthening rural communities.

He promised steps to attract more women to politics, help students with scholarships, build on the Liberals' Kelowna accord with First Nations and reduce barriers between religions, races and sexes.

"I want to lead the greatest Liberal party ever," Mr. Brison told about 200 supporters. On the stage he was flanked by Liberal MPs Mark Eyking and Mike Savage, along with several supporters from the Liberal youth wing.

He described himself as "a product of a Liberal Canada" in the late 1960s.

"I would not be where I am today without a Liberal Canada, shaped by Liberal ideas, based on Liberal values," he said during his announcement at a local inn.

Mr. Brison said he believes in the "politics of purpose" and, with the event being broadcast nationally, he made a direct pitch to Quebecers, where he will need strong support to win the Liberals' top job.

In French, Mr. Brison said: "It's clear that Quebec has made Canada more distinct in North America and in the world. It's also clear that Quebec has made Canada more progressive in social areas and richer in culture."

Also in French, he promised to work hard to earn the respect and support of Quebecers.

"For me, without Quebec, Canada simply doesn't exist."

Some Liberals have questioned whether his French is good enough to gain strong support in Quebec, while others say his bid could be hampered because he only joined the party little more than two years ago.

But there were no naysayers at his announcement party Sunday.

"I think Scott stands a chance because he stands for Liberal values," Devin Maxwell, the Liberal candidate in the Halifax Citadel provincial byelection set for June 27, said after the announcement. "He brings a certain energy to the table that I think we need."

"He's energetic, he's passionate. He understands business and he understands people," added John Gillis, provincial Liberal party vice-president.

"I think he produces a bold, youthful vision for Canada," said Isaac Ransom, a third-year political science student at Acadia University. Mr. Brison has been elected in the mostly rural riding of Kings-Hants four times, as both a Conservative and a Liberal. He ran for the leadership of the Progressive Conservatives before they joined with the Canadian Alliance to form the new Conservatives under Stephen Harper.

Some observers had expected Mr. Brison to drop out of the leadership race after it was revealed he had been questioned by the RCMP in their investigation of a possible leak of inside information to income trust traders in advance of a Liberal tax announcement.

"I dealt with the issue very openly and directly and immediately, the way I believe all politicians and, in fact, all people should deal with difficult issues," Mr. Brison said Sunday when questioned by reporters.

"I've moved on and I believe most people in the party and the country have as well."

But Ian Stewart, who teaches political science at Acadia University in Wolfville, thinks the income trust affair could hurt Mr. Brison's chances.

"The Liberals will be desperate to rehabilitate their image," he said. "Even if it was completely inadvertent and innocent, that will play to the lingering sense of the Liberal party as a party of entitlement and insiders."

Joe Volpe, Stephane Dion, Maurizio Bevilacqua, Michael Ignatieff and Martha Hall Findlay have also declared their candidacy for the leadership. Former Ontario NDP premier Bob Rae and Carolyn Bennett, a doctor and Toronto MP, were to launch their campaigns today. Ontario politician Gerard Kennedy, a former provincial education minister, is expected to declare soon.

Source: News North
Date: April 24, 2006
By-line: N/A

Racism exists; It's subtle but there in government dealings with First Nations

There's no question that past government practises toward First Nations and Inuit were racist and discriminatory.

We have the power of hindsight and can all agree that European immigrants to this land didn't see aboriginal people as equals.

Politicians will say it's different today, that racism no longer exists. Many Canadians would argue the government is overly generous. But they'd be wrong.

It's not out in the open, but it's there nonetheless through paternalistic policies and in the government refusal to accept responsibility for the past.

Only with lawsuits pending did the federal government agree to compensation for residential school survivors. But even political promises to rush payments for elders can't move the bureaucracy any faster. Each day, elders die without ever seeing the compensation they're due.

Government pays lip service to aboriginal title, all the while continuing to overrule First Nations objections with the stroke of a pen.

Even more troubling is government treatment of First Nations war veterans. In 2002, the federal government promised \$20,000 to veterans and their surviving spouses, but that cash came with no acknowledgement of past wrongdoing.

A simply apology would be worth so much.

Instead, apologies to Japanese, Italians, Ukrainians and Chinese come first.

It's time to resolve these past injustices by getting residential school cheques to elders and acknowledging that past policies were racist.

Only with that can new relationship between government and First Nations be forged in equality.

Source: News North (NWT)

Date: April 24, 2006

By-line: Cec Hodgson-McCualey

Minister shows interest in the Sahtu

Life is brighter in Norman Wells this week now that the wind died down and the sun is shining. We had our first visit with Honourable Jim Prentice, minister of Indian and Northern Affairs.

His visit lifted our spirits because he wasted no time in coming to visit the North. Maybe the Conservatives will keep their promise by doing more for the North. He is very approachable and listens well. Of course I put my two bits worth in for the all-weather road. I even presented him with a Women Warrior doll and some research we did in our fight for the road. The minister really went on about the opportunities and the richness of the North at the gathering of Sahtu delegates.

I put in my pitch by giving him a little history and geography. Told him we have five regions in the NWT, Sahtu is the larger region and situated right in the centre of the territory and is the only region that is isolated, and until we are part of the whole territory, by a road, we in the Sahtu and Beaufort Delta will miss out on jobs and opportunities.

My spirits picked up when he asked for a copy of our research!

With the circle of Northern leaders, we see many familiar faces, friends I haven't seen for ages. I'm not to sure what they are all about, what they are doing and planning sounds complicated. I still am of the opinion that all this political change and movement that is going on in self-government, resource sharing, etc., sounds like mission impossible looking at this whole, huge territory with 32 scattered settlements with transportation and communication almost none to speak of.

The aboriginals who pursue this route must really believe in it.

I still say our GNWT is in place, aboriginals have been the majority in the legislature, most MLAs are aboriginals and have been in the past. Aboriginals should have been busy for the last 45 years, ever since government moved into our territory. The aboriginals jumped on the bandwagon and have taken advantage of the GNWT's system.

Educate their people and take over and run the GNWT. Get educated and learn the job of running a government. What's going to happen to this big bureaucracy called the GNWT? They are not going to go away. I just can't believe self-government is the way to go, especially when the majority of aboriginals are drop-outs. Why not stay with the GNWT and just concentrate on educating the people? If not, in the end southerners will end up running all these self governments because they are educated!

Oh well, who cares, I don't. All I'm going to concentrate on is the positive. The North is going to move ahead, opportunities are there and the all-weather road will come. They are going to start on the Bear River bridge this year - should be completed in two years. So 2006 is going to be a good year and Norman Wells is in the centre of all the development to come!

GNWT seems to have a big push towards tourism. They have been nosing around Sahtu on tourism. They might as well forget about tourism in the Sahtu region until they complete the extension of the Mackenzie Highway to Tuk!

Talk about tourism, we need publicity for the NWT - and what better publicity than sending a hockey team from Sahtu called Sahtu Warriors to play at Gillingham, Kent, England, against the Invicta Dynamos on May 1-4. Will write about them next week.

Source: News North (NWT)

Date: April 24, 2006

By-line: Chris Windever

Feds won't seek 'unanimity' on pipeline; Indian Affairs minister won't wait for Deh Cho

New **Indian** and Northern Affairs minister **Jim Prentice** wrapped up his first tour of the North last week, but stopped short of making any specific policy announcements. In Norman Wells, Prentice told the Circle of Northern Leaders that the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper will balance economic development with social and environmental concerns when it comes to the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline.

But the minister made it clear he doesn't want to see the consultation process bog down if it doesn't receive universal support from **First Nations** in the Territory.

The Deh Cho **First Nation** is one group that doesn't support the pipeline.

"We intend to consult, but that consultation will be followed by decision making," Prentice said. "Our decisions will reflect the best interest of Canada and the consensus of the majority of **Aboriginal** and public government stakeholders, (but) we do not intend to convert the process of consultation into a quest for unanimity."

Speaking to reporters in Yellowknife, Prentice also said he supports the concept of a socio-economic fund to offset impacts of the proposed Mackenzie Valley natural gas pipeline, though he didn't commit to the \$500 million figure promised by the previous Liberal government.

The fund requires enabling legislation in Ottawa to be passed before it goes ahead.

"You'll have to stay tuned," Prentice said. The minister also touched on payments for **First Nation** elders awaiting compensation for their time spent in **residential schools**. Prentice had little concrete to offer elders.

The minister said the compensation deal announced by the Liberal government in November 2005 required a final document from all parties involved in the settlement, and approval from courts in seven provinces. To date, neither of those things has happened, though Prentice said he expects to see a copy of the final agreement "in the next few days."

"We'll be in a position following that to deal with issues such as interim payments and the court approval process."

Prentice's Northern trip wrapped up in Whitehorse on Friday.

Source: CBC.ca Saskatchewan

Date: April 21, 2006

By-line: N/A

Deal close on residential schools, Indian Affairs minister says

A final deal on a compensation package for residential school survivors is only days away, Indian and Northern Affairs Minister Jim Prentice said Friday.

It was last year when Ottawa and First Nations organizations settled on a \$1.9-billion compensation package for as many as 86,000 aboriginal people who attended church-run schools.

Prentice made his comments in Whitehorse on the last day of a week-long tour of the three northern territories. Earlier this week, lobbyists and lawyers for the survivors said they had heard a final package may not be ready until next year.

There was great concern some people wouldn't live long enough to receive the compensation.

Prentice told reporters Friday the Conservative government isn't stalling on residential school payments. He says the final document is in place and court approval is being sought.

"I expect to have the final agreement in my hands within the next several days," he says. "I anticipate from my discussions with [special mediator Frank Iacobucci] that it will take another week or so to secure the agreement of all the parties."

The common experience payments would be for all residential schools students, which would release the government and churches from all further liability relating to the Indian residential school experience, except in cases of sexual abuse and serious incidents of physical abuse.

About 13,000 people who attended aboriginal residential schools in the 20th century have sued Ottawa and church organizations, alleging physical, sexual and emotional abuse and loss of culture and language. About 3,000 of the claims are from Saskatchewan.

Source: Goldstream News Gazette

Date: April 21, 2006

By-line: Brennan Clarke

Saving Sencoten

Central Saanich teacher leading charge to save local indigenous language from extinction

To many people, language is little more than the words we use to communicate thoughts.

For John Elliott, it's a lifeline to preserving 10,000 years of aboriginal culture.

"The language is the voice of the land. It's about our whole environment and how we interact with nature," he said. "The language is all about your beliefs and your whole world view."

Elliott, a teacher at Lau'Welnew tribal school, has dedicated the last 30 years of his life to preserving Sencoten, an indigenous language spoken by Coast Salish First Nations on both sides of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, with the Saanich Peninsula at the heart of the ancient culture.

Elliott's crusade to save the language is a continuation of work his father began in the early 1970s.

Dave Elliott, a longtime fisherman, was working as a janitor with the Saanich Indian School Board when he decided to create a phonetic alphabet for Sencoten. It was a difficult task since Sencoten, like many indigenous languages, contains a range of sounds that are difficult to capture with the conventional 26-letter Roman alphabet used around the world.

"My father used to say the language was dying and people were losing the whole value system," Elliott recalled. "I'm taking his work one step further."

When Europeans first arrived on Vancouver Island in the mid-1800s, there were an estimated 7,000 Sencoten speakers. Today, Elliott said that number has shrunk to a mere two dozen elders, due in large part to a residential school system that prohibited aboriginal children from speaking their native tongue.

"There's only 23 or 24 fluent speakers remaining," said Elliott. "Usually they're older people and some of them aren't that healthy. (The language) could die with the elders that are here today."

But the bid to save Sencoten (pronounced Sen-Cho-then) is yielding some encouraging results. All 200 of the school's students study the language, and the program has been around long enough that former students are now parents who speak the language around their children.

"The fluency's coming, but it's slow. It took 50 years to take it out of us through the boarding schools," Elliott said. "After a couple of generations it's going to make a difference. In the past there's been nobody at home to speak the language."

One of the most useful teaching tools for young aboriginal students is First Voices (firstvoices.ca), a three-year-old website that allows First Nations to record and archive their native languages.

First Voices, a co-operative venture between the Saanich Indian School Board and the provincially funded First People's Heritage Language and Culture Council, contains still pictures, video clips, recorded voices, games and other features to pique the interest of young learners.

Elliott said the website is just a tool, not the saviour of his people's language.

"It's only a tool kit really. There has to be a personal commitment to really knowing the language," Elliott said, noting the irony of using modern technology to save an ancient language.

"It really is ironic. A lot of these things that are taking our kids' minds away and now we come along with an Internet tool."

First People's Heritage Language and Culture Council executive director Tracy Herbert, said so far 134 B.C. languages and three Yukon languages have been archived on the site. It's also attracted interest from other indigenous groups in Canada, such as the Mi'kmaq.

"There are about 32 languages and 70-plus dialects in B.C. alone," she said.

The provincial government, which provides about \$600,000 a year to help the council support First Nations arts, recently handed over an extra \$1 million in one-time funding specifically for languages.

Herbert said the federal government hasn't been quite so supportive. Although B.C. is home to 60 per cent of Canada's aboriginal languages, the Department of Canadian Heritage provides just \$232,000 a year for language programs in B.C.

Four years ago, former Heritage Minister Sheila Copps pledged \$160 million to preserve native languages, but the federal government has yet to follow through on that commitment Herbert added.

"It is a race against time and we really need to work co-operatively with the communities and the language stakeholders," she said.

For Elliott, there's no distinction between saving the language and saving the culture, since many of the words refer to creation stories and legends.

Examples of Sencoten language

TENEW: land, earth or soil; can also mean "a wish for the people."

SNANET: rock, mountain or boulder; can also mean "gift," since mountains are considered sacred places that the creator gave to the people.

STEME: rain; but also means "a person falling from the sky," a reference to the first person who came to earth.

TETACES: island; also means relatives of the deep in reference to humans who were turned into islands by the creator and told to look after the people.

SCAANEW: salmon; also means "working people," which relates to a creation story in which the creator transformed a group of hard-working people into salmon.