

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
Media Clips**



**Résolution des questions des pensionnats indiens Canada
Actualité**

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May 12, 2006
Press Release

The BC First Nations Leadership Council

(Coast Salish Traditional Territory/Vancouver, BC) – The BC First Nations Leadership Council commends the public announcement made yesterday by Indian Affairs and Northern Development Minister Jim Prentice that the federal government has given final approval to the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and confirmed an early payment of \$8,000 for residential school survivors who were 65 or older as of May 30, 2005.

The settlement announced in the House of Commons marks an historic and impressive day for First Nations in the journey towards reconciliation and healing for First Nations' families and communities as well as in our relationship with Canada. There has been incredible determination and resolve demonstrated by National Chief Phil Fontaine and also by the federal negotiator, Honorable Frank Iacobucci, to reach a fair and just resolution. The Settlement Agreement must now be approved by the courts in nine jurisdictions at which point, survivors will have a mandatory six-month period to review the agreement details.

The First Nations Leadership Council recognizes that there is still work to be done, and the Residential Schools agreement does not negate the devastation and tragedy that First Nations people endured. More than 80,000 survivors are alive today, and the legacy of intergenerational effects continues to impact all aspects of First Nations' lives. However, the final Agreement provides a strong path for healing and rebuilding that will ensure the restoration of hope and well-being for our people, our families, our communities, and our culture.

Residential School Survivors may find the application form for Advance Payment on the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada website at www.irsr-rqpi.gc.ca and further information is available on the Assembly of First Nations website at www.afn.ca/residential schools.

May 12, 2006
CBC.ca: News

Native leaders fear residential-school money will bring exploitation, abuse

Manitoba aboriginal leaders say their communities could become engulfed in chaos as the federal government releases compensation money to former residential-school students. The federal cabinet has approved a \$1.9-billion deal to compensate former students for abuse suffered at native residential schools. The deal will give them a lump sum of \$10,000 each, plus \$3,000 for each year spent in the schools.

Native leaders say they saw the trouble brewing last fall, when the former Liberal government announced the compensation package. Ron Evans, head of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, says payday loan companies showed up on reserves, offering advances on the settlement cheques in return for steep fees.

Evans expects quick-loan companies to be among the many opportunists swarming reserves in the coming weeks, as some former students begin receiving cheques.

"We want to warn our people to be on guard for those people that try and take advantage of the situation," he told CBC News.

He said anyone who is expecting a payment should make sure they don't sign away their money in advance without knowing how much it will cost them.

'There's going to be a lot of chaos'

The head of Spirit Wind, a group representing hundreds of former residential-school students, predicts reserves will see a glut of alcohol and drugs as people suddenly find themselves with more cash than they've ever seen.

"A lot of money, fast money, spending big money – there's problems that will come along with it," Ray Mason said.

"When you see large sums of money infusions into a community, definitely there's going to be a lot of chaos, a lot of alcoholism, a lot of drugs, a lot of money-spending – you know, buying of vehicles – and the older people, we're afraid that they'll be taken advantage of."

Mason wanted to set up a program to prepare communities for the sudden influx of cash, but the compensation package was approved before he had time to secure funding for his proposal.

Statistics Canada estimates about 80,000 people who attended Indian residential schools are still alive today.

May 12, 2006
Meridian Booster (Lloydminster)

No clawbacks on compensation:

A long struggle for people seeking residential school compensation is winding up in Saskatchewan as the province has recently decided not to claw back on other forms of assistance.

Peter Worden

A long struggle for people seeking residential school compensation is winding up in Saskatchewan as the province has recently decided not to claw back on other forms of assistance.

Last November, the federal debacle over Indian Residential Schools raised some hope as well as some concerns with the government announcing it would compensate students who had attended the schools many years ago. Several recipients feared that other forms of financial assistance would be compromised by seeking such compensation.

“Normally, any kind of assets or income that you have are taken into account in determining what kind of benefits you would receive. But in this case, you would be considered exempt and it will not affect the benefits you are receiving,” said Debbie Clark, spokeswoman for Sask. Community Resources.

The decision for compensation came from the federal government, but was then passed out to the provinces for them to dictate how exactly to dole out the money. By being left up to the provinces, many Saskatchewan citizens thought residential school compensation would spell a decrease in Sask. Assistance Program (SAP) and Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA) funding.

“There were definitely questions out there because other provinces had even enacted legislation or were in the process of doing that,” said Clark. “So for sure, it is a concern for anyone who is on an income assistance program.

“This is something that is happening in a number of provinces and some have said, like us, they will not dig into other assistance programs.”

Clark added that Saskatchewan is setting a precedent for other provinces to follow regarding how compensation for former students of residential schools should be dealt with.

Residential schools in Canada began operating as early as 1857 and were compulsory for all Aboriginal children age seven to 15 by 1920. Numerous accounts of children taken forcibly from their families, as well as reports of sexual and physical abuse, have led to the modern-day call for restitution. Statistics Canada estimates there are 80,000 people alive today who once attended a residential school. Of the 16,243 official claims against the Government of Canada, only 3,753 have yet been settled.

The last federally run residential school was in Saskatchewan. It closed its doors in 1996.

May 12, 2006

CBC North Iqaluit Regional English News (8:30)

Some Inuit want apology from Ottawa for residential school experience

Some Inuit in Nunavut are calling for an official apology from Ottawa for the time they spent in residential schools. Earlier this week, federal cabinet approved a \$2-billion compensation package. It includes healing programs and a truth and reconciliation commission to bring former students and school staff together. Students who meet the criteria will also receive \$10,000 and another \$3,000 for each year they spent in residential school. But as Patricia Bell reports, they also want something money can't buy.

"I am happy about it. It's something that I've been working on for over 20 years now."

Peter Irniq says he's relieved compensation will soon be on the way. The former commissioner of Nunavut attended residential schools in Chesterfield Inlet, Yellowknife, and Churchill. Irniq says children were taken away from their parents and the land, forced into schools and hit if they spoke Inuktitut or made mistakes. He says the compensation shows the federal government recognizes the wrongdoing and he's thankful. But Irniq wants Ottawa to go a step further.

"We still have to hear the Government of Canada apologize to the former residential school students, survivors as we call them."

Andre Tatou (sp) spent 10 years in a residential school in Chesterfield Inlet where he now lives. Like other former students, it's still painful for him to talk about his experience in the system. But Tatou does say he would like an official apology on top of the compensation.

"I would have the, more feeling if they would say, if they would apologize, in voice like, saying that they're sorry for what they have done to us when we were just a little kid."

Both men say an apology and the compensation would help turn the page on what they call a sad saga. But they say the healing for former residential school students will last a lifetime. Patricia Bell, CBC News, Iqaluit.

May 12, 2006
The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
Page: A15 (Forum)

Vellacott appears to have been pushed to resign

Doug Cuthand

Did he jump or was he pushed? Maurice Vellacott's short career as a chair of a parliamentary committee came to an ignominious end after he stuffed both feet in his mouth and openly criticized Beverley McLachlin, the chief justice of the Supreme Court.

I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall while the higher-ups told him to jump or be pushed. In the House Prime Minister Stephen Harper weakly defended Vellacott, stating that his remarks were not those of the government and he wouldn't seek his resignation. But it was obvious that while Harper was defending him in public, he gave him the trap-door treatment behind the scenes.

Vellacott's letter of resignation was anything but contrite. He accused the Liberals of having a "reckless partisan nature" and thinking that they have a "divine right to govern." It was obvious that he wouldn't have resigned unless he was given a strong shove.

Harper is a control freak and so far he has kept the loose cannons firmly tied down. However Vellacott mouthed off to a CBC reporter and the partisan dogs of war jumped all over him. It was obvious that the opposition was waiting for cracks to appear in Harper's brick wall of control and Vellacott was just the guy they were waiting for.

Much of the success in the recognition of First Nations rights has come as a result of decisions by the Supreme Court in relation to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This has been a sore spot with right-wing politicians, who claim those decisions that go against their point of view are being made by "activist judges."

When someone chairs a committee that deals with the implementation of rights and the impact of court decisions, it's important that person has some respect for those institutions.

On the plus, side the Conservatives have ratified the agreement to compensate residential school survivors. Now the agreement can be implemented and workshops are already being planned across Indian Country.

Those who are older than 65 are eligible for an immediate pay out of \$8,000.

This agreement has been a long time coming. It has been supported by all sides of the house and the aboriginal organizations, and it was an important part of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Now it is finally coming to a reality.

The agreement doesn't satisfy all the parties however. Metis students who attended the Ile-a-la-Crosse boarding school are not eligible for a settlement package. Clement Chartier, the head of the Métis National Council has already expressed his disapproval.

It's been a busy year with new chiefs being elected for a large number of First Nations. Chiefs who were re-elected include Bryan McNabb at the Gordon's First Nation, Robert Sylvestre at Birch Narrows, Connie Big Eagle at Ocean Man, Calvin Sanderson at Chakastapasin, Irvine Star at Starblanket, Gilbert Ledoux at Muskeg and Todd Cappo at Muscowpetung.

New chiefs include Rick Gamble at Beardy's, Luther Constant at James Smith, Sheldon Wuttunee at Red Pheasant and Ellen LaCaine at Wood Mountain.

Congratulations to all the chiefs, both re-elected and new. Taking on the mantle of leadership in Indian country is both an honour and a challenge. We look up to our chiefs and councils to provide wisdom and leadership in the challenging days ahead.

Congratulations to Team Saskatchewan! Our men's hockey team went east and returned the big winner. In a 4-2 victory over team Ontario South the Saskatchewan men's hockey team emerged unbeaten at the national tournament.

The big treat was that people all across the country could watch our national hockey final on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network. This is the type of programming we need more of from APTN. It brings us together and showcases our talent.