

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada  
Media Clips**



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

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May 13, 2006  
The Winnipeg Sun  
(See also: The Edmonton Sun)  
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## **Compensation Cash Due To Flow: Worries about Windfall**

Marcy Nicholson, Reuters

As many of Canada's elderly aboriginals await hefty compensation cheques for the abuse they suffered as children at church-run residential schools, native community leaders are worried the sudden cash could make them the targets of thieves and scam artists.

### **'DRUGS AND ALCOHOL'**

"We know of some people who would just take the money from their grandparents and blow it. The spin-off effects would be drugs and alcohol, and it just leads on to one thing after another," said Ray Mason, chairman of Spirit Wind Manitoba, a group representing former residential school students.

The minority Conservative government recently approved \$1.9 billion to be distributed to compensate former students of the residential schools, most of which were shut down by the mid-1970s.

Thousands of the estimated 80,000 surviving recipients have claimed they experienced physical and sexual abuse and wrongful confinement, while forced to attend the schools. They will receive \$10,000 each, plus \$3,000 for each year spent in the schools, but the government has fast-tracked compensation for recipients who are 65 years of age or older, who can apply to get the first \$8,000 soon.

Many native reserves are rural and offer few employment opportunities, leaving many residents to live in poverty. Mason said many are reliant on the \$224 they receive from social assistance each month and are unaccustomed to handling large sums of cash. When the previous Liberal government originally announced an agreement in principle to compensate the aging population of former students, unscrupulous car dealers were quick to visit some reserves, Mason said.

"They were saying purchase your vehicles now and pay when you get your residential school money. They're trying to get first dibs on the money," he said.

Canadian First Nations have fought for financial compensation over the residential school issue for about 20 years, and Mason has applied for funding from Resolution Canada to help educate the recipients on beneficial ways to spend their funds.

May 15, 2006  
The Leader-Post (Regina)  
Page: A7 (City & Province)

## Group working towards meeting literacy needs

Sarah MacDonald

SASKATOON -- Six years after most people have graduated from high school, Buck Laprise, 24, is still trying to get his diploma.

Almost two-thirds of urban aboriginal people don't have the literacy skills they need to succeed in today's society and economy, says a Statistics Canada study released last year. But in the face of these dire statistics some aboriginal people, including Laprise, are trying to change that.

Laprise was headed toward a wrestling scholarship at the University of Regina when he dropped out of high school.

"Now I need my education to get it back, or try to," he said at a recent Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network (SALN) gathering in Saskatoon.

Laprise, a Dene from La Loche, said he went back to school this year not just for himself but to be "a good role model for the young ones," referring to his younger brothers and sisters.

**Aboriginal illiteracy has stemmed from poverty, negative experiences in residential schools and cultural differences. SALN plans on addressing these problems as it tackles the illiteracy problem. While 42 per cent of Canadians don't have adequate literacy skills, among urban aboriginals this number increases to 64.3 per cent.**

"We need more formal institutions to get funding for literacy," said Carol Vandale, executive director of SALN. "But there is also poverty and social issues for people learning to read and write. They need to be supported in their whole lives ... to become stable enough to stay in a program to begin to learn to read and write."

SALN is trying to develop integrated literacy programs at the community level among aboriginals so that all kinds of literacy needs are met, such as reading bill statements and understanding legal and medical terminology.

Vandale said many people are stigmatized by the fact that they can't read or write, but with a community approach to literacy this could change. She said community schools allow families to come into schools to learn literacy with their children.

Vandale also noted ties between aboriginal culture, healing and language and literacy are needed. Aboriginal literacy is focused heavily on oral traditions, such as storytelling, which differs from the emphasis on written language in English.

Maria Campbell, a Metis writer and professor from Batoche, said switching from the oral tradition to reading and writing English was very traumatic for many aboriginal people. They were punished and humiliated for making mistakes in school.

Laprise, who wants to go to university once he gets his high school diploma, admits some people are still embarrassed about their struggles learning to read and write, but he tries not to let the stigma get to him.

"I just do my work. Some of them are embarrassed but it doesn't matter. They don't encourage themselves," he said.

May 14, 2006  
The Toronto Sun  
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## **From Exclusion to inclusion: City's Chinese Community Thrived Despite Decades of Discrimination and Institutional Racism**

Brodie Fenlon

When the Canadian government apologizes for the head tax it imposed on Chinese immigrants in 1885, it will be a major milestone in the decades-old fight by Chinese Canadians for equality and respect.

More than just an apology, it will offer catharsis to a community that has triumphed over discrimination and legislated racism to literally build entire swaths of this country.

A dark stain on Canada's history, the head tax was collected until 1923, when Ottawa enacted a new law that banned Chinese immigrants outright except for a few special cases. Instantly, families were divided, some forever. Those left in Canada were unequal citizens and not eligible to vote.

By coincidence, the Exclusion Act came into effect on July 1, Dominion Day, referred to by the Chinese community from then on as "Humiliation Day" until the act was repealed in 1947 and Chinese Canadians were enfranchised.

The Conservative government under Prime Minister Stephen Harper will soon announce details of a parliamentary apology, which was promised in April's throne speech.

It's expected a ceremony will also be held on Canada Day, a hugely symbolic and meaningful gesture by a country that has for decades resisted making amends, said Susan Eng, vice-chairman of the Ontario Coalition of Chinese Head Tax Payers and Families.

"A parliamentary apology starts the process of reconciliation between the government of our country and a community that was unjustly treated," said Eng, a lawyer and former chairman of the Toronto Police Services Board. "There's an opportunity for the Canadian government, on our behalf, to restate Canadian values."

The coalition is also seeking meaningful financial compensation for the roughly 200 surviving head-tax payers and their families.

The road to an apology and reparations has not been without controversy.

A deal struck in the dying days of Paul Martin's Liberal government with the National Congress of Chinese Canadians became a lightning rod for debate because it only acknowledged the head tax was racist without providing for an apology or compensation. In exchange, Ottawa pledged \$2.5 million toward a new non-profit foundation to educate Canadians about Chinese heritage and discrimination.

Toronto lawyer Ping Tan, who signed the deal on behalf of the Congress, said the agreement was "forward looking" and represents the wishes of the majority of Chinese Canadians. While he would have preferred an apology, officials from Canada's justice department held out at the time for fear it would open the government to a flood of lawsuits, he said.

Tan opposes individual compensation and fears the demands of a "vocal minority representing a small group" are alienating non-Chinese Canadians.

"The dignity of the whole Chinese community is concerned," he said. "I can raise hell, but if the Canadian public at large doesn't agree with us, it's no good."

It's unknown if the new Conservative government will honour the deal. But either way, an apology is in the works, bringing at least some resolution to an issue that has haunted Canada and its Chinese community for 121 years.