

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
Media Clips**



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

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June 22, 2006
PRNewswire

Courts to Notify Former Students of Canada's Indian Residential Schools about the Settlement Process; Hearings to Start in August

A national notification programme began today, on behalf of Courts across Canada, to alert former students of the Indian residential school system and their families about their legal rights in the settlement of the class action lawsuits over the schools.

The settlement notification process will occur in phases. First, through initial notices which will be published, mailed, and broadcast throughout Canada, former students and their families will learn how to give their views about the fairness of the settlement. Then, Courts across Canada will hold public hearings. If all of the Courts approve the settlement after those hearings, another notice will be distributed to explain how to get a payment from the settlement or be excluded from it.

Considering the 80,000 living Aboriginal people who are former students of the residential school system, the settlement provides:

1) At least \$1.9 billion available for "common experience" payments to former students who lived at one of the schools. Payments will be \$10,000 for the first school year (or part of a school year) plus \$3,000 for each school year (or part of a school year) after that.

2) A process to allow those who suffered sexual or serious physical abuses, or other abuses that caused serious psychological effects, to get between \$5,000 and \$275,000 each. Students could get more money if they also show a loss of income.

3) Money for programmes for former students and their families for healing, truth, reconciliation, and commemoration of the residential schools and the abuses suffered: \$125 million to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, \$60 million to research, document, and preserve the experiences of the survivors, and \$20 million for national and community commemorative projects.

The government will pay lawyers representing former students up to approximately \$100 million in fees, plus costs and taxes.

A toll-free telephone call center at 1-866-879-4913 has been set up to handle inquiries, with a link to crisis line services. Also, a website displays the detailed notice, settlement agreement, list of recognized schools and hostels, and other information at <http://www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca>.

Former students and family members have the right to object to the settlement if they don't like some part of it. Those with objections must, by August 25, 2006, write to Residential Schools Settlement, Suite 3-505, 133 Weber St. North, Waterloo, Ontario

N2J 3G9, send an email objections@residentialschoolsettlement.ca, or call 1-866-879-4913, to explain why they are against the settlement.

Objections will be considered at one of several settlement approval hearings. Former students and family members may ask to speak at the hearing held in the Court overseeing their claim. The hearings generally affect people based on where they now live. The dates, starting times, and locations of the hearings, are as follows:

Hearing	Location	Hearing date	Time
Ontario	Ontario Superior Court of Justice Court House 361 University Avenue Toronto, ON M5G 1T3	August 29-31, 2006	10:00 a.m.
Quebec	Superior Court of Quebec Palais de justice 1 Notre-Dame Street East Montreal, QC H2Y 1B6	September 8, 2006	9:30 a.m.
Saskatchewan	Court of Queen's Bench Court House 2425 Victoria Avenue Regina, SK S4P 3V7	September 18-20, 2006	10:00 a.m.
Northwest Territories	Court House 4903 - 49th Street Yellowknife, Northwest Territories X1A 2N4	October 3-4, 2006	10:00 a.m.
Manitoba	Court of Queen's Bench Law Courts Building 408 York Avenue Winnipeg, MB R3C 0P9	October 5-6, 2006	10:00 a.m.
Nunavut	Nunavut Court of Justice Arnakallak Building (Building #224) Iqaluit, Nunavut X0A 0H0	October 10-11, 2006	9:30 a.m.

British Columbia	The Supreme Court of British Columbia The Law Courts 800 Smithe Street Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 2E1	October 10-12, 2006 10:00 a.m.
Alberta	Court of Queen's Bench Court House 611 - 4 St. S.W. Calgary, AB T2P 1T5	October 12-13, 2006 10:00 a.m.
Yukon	Supreme Court of the Yukon Territory 2134 Second Avenue Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 5H6	October 16-17, 2006 10:00 a.m.

With the exception of those who attended the Mohawk Institute in Brantford, Ontario, former students and their families should attend the hearing in the Province/Territory in which they now reside. Those living in Labrador, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, or outside Canada, are affected by, and may attend, the Ontario hearing. Former Mohawk Institute students are affected by the Ontario hearing regardless of where they now live.

June 22, 2006
CNW Telbec

Statement by Assembly of First Nations National Chief on the Federal apology for the Chinese Head Tax

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine issued the following statement today on the apology by the federal government for the Chinese head tax:

"On behalf of the Assembly of First Nations, I congratulate Chinese-Canadians and their descendants who were victimized by the racist policy of the Head Tax. It is long overdue.

The unjust policies of the past often served only to widen racial and social divisions in this country. The government of Canada is right to acknowledge and redress these injustices. We congratulate the recipients of this apology and their descendants for securing this long-overdue apology from the government.

Survivors of residential schools are confident that they, too, will receive an apology from the Prime Minister on behalf of the Crown once the court approval process for the Settlement package is complete. Our case, like that of the Chinese-Canadians, was similarly unjust and misguided, but for us, the policy was for the purpose of eradicating our languages and cultures.

In exercising his leadership to make this apology, Mr. Harper demonstrates the understanding that in order for both the perpetrators and the victims to heal, there is a need to express a true and sincere apology and to seek forgiveness.

Residential school survivors look forward to the day when we too will receive our long overdue apology. We look forward to working with the Prime Minister and his staff to set the date and the content of that apology.

Today, we honour the Chinese community and commend their persistence in the pursuit of justice and redress. Residential school survivors, their descendants, First Nations citizens and all Canadians look forward to a similar apology from the Prime Minister on behalf of the Crown."

The Assembly of First Nations is the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada.

June 23, 2006
Yellowknifer

Family at heart of Aboriginal Day: Generations come together

Emily Watkins Northern News Services

Family and identity is at the heart of importance for many aboriginal people.

When a family is broken, identity is broken and years of problems and healing could result.

"Family is the most important," William Apsimik, an Inuvialuit elder says without hesitation.

"Families have to come first - there are too many things happening. No time for family - no time for important things."

Apsimik, who is originally from Tuktoyaktuk, says that when he was young, country food was all they ate.

Their clothing came from caribou, which they caught, skinned and made together as a family.

"We spent time together, played games and worked together."

Marie Niziol was separated from her family when she was forced, by law, to go away to a residential school in Fort Smith.

Niziol says she missed her family and the strict environment of the school run by nuns was difficult to absorb.

"I was really young when I went. I was only six," Niziol says.

"They were very strict, but they didn't hit or anything. But we (her sister and herself) were just very lonely for our parents."

Niziol remembers they did a lot of praying and had to follow specific rules. She says that though the hurt of separation from family was strong, it made her stronger.

Kiera Kolson, a Dene girl who grew up in Yellowknife, says the biggest thing youth deal with is identity - they don't know who they are or where they came from.

"I myself am looking for my identity," Kolson says.

"It is a stability for me, and I don't have that option."

The lack of recognition of treaty rights and funding for self-government by the government of Canada has contributed to a lack of pride and identity, she says.

"My father is Gwich'in and my mother is T'sont'ini," Kolson says. "My mother's people are from Rocher River - but (shortly) after the treaty was signed with the government, they were disbanded."

She says the disbanding of the families occurred when the missionaries came.

"This is why I am looking for my identity," she says.

"I only know two words of Gwich'in - hello and goodbye."

She continues to search, saying that if youth could connect and know more about their past that it would give them an identity.

"We need to know where we came from to know where we are going."

Connecting to the older generation will give aboriginals more of an identity, she says.

The way to promote healing, Kolson says, is to get back to their traditions - go out on the land, and listen to the elder's wisdom.

Niziol agrees with Kolson and says the past can't be changed, but it is important for people to move back to healthier ways. "We need to go back to the land, back to family and community - we need to give to the future generations," she says.

For Apsimik, who is a Christian, the answer for aboriginal families is not just to reconnect. "My God is a jealous God about my people," he says. "He doesn't want them scattered all around."

"You've got to stand for yourself and who you are - study the word of God and listen to his spirit."

June 23, 2006

The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)

Page: B8 (National)

(See also: the Calgary Herald; the National Post)

Harper's Front Bench Shows Hints Of Talent

Don Martin, CanWest News Service

OTTAWA -- They weren't supposed to be this good. A cabinet loaded with rookie ministers set up the tantalizing probability of gaffes leading to numerous goners under zero tolerance prime minister.

There's been more sizzle than fizzle on Stephen Harper's front bench as Parliament adjourns for the summer.

This could be because they're up against a hapless Liberal Opposition which trembles at thought of taking a firm stand on anything has largely lost the will to live until it gets new leader in December.

And, to be honest, any analysis of ministers this early stage is more about assessing personalities and their effectiveness in presenting Harper-imposed mandate. They are not generally allowed to think outside the tight little Harper hammered them into right after the swearing-in ceremony. So they mostly taunt Liberals about the 13 years they had to fix nagging problems the Conservatives inherited.

there are promising hints that some ministers might, in the future, be capable of independent thought and creative policy.

* Finance Minister Jim Flaherty was supposed to be a hard-right ideologue, replicating his conduct under former Ontario premier Mike Harris. But he delivered an acclaimed budget of moderate tax cuts and core program spending boosts topped off by the child care subsidy and a one per cent GST cut on Canada Day. He's served notice on plans to restore clarity to bank fees, tighten stock market regulation while refusing to simply roll over with an open vault to solve a fiscal imbalance he believes may be more imaginary than real.

*** Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice was handed a \$5-billion problem. He had to kill the Liberals' costly election-eve Kelowna Accord without inciting riots on the reserves.**

Prentice has tried to fill the Kelowna coffin with targeted money. He's aimed money at drinking water problems and violence against aboriginal women. He will tackle the problem of urban Natives, a huge but often overlooked issue, with \$600 million from any windfall surpluses. And after years of Liberal foot-dragging, it

was Prentice who finally got money flowing to the survivors of Native residential schools.

* Take a bow, Stockwell Day. Yes, you're reading that correctly. The former Alliance leader, who was the Liberal poster boy of fear for extremists the Conservatives could appoint to cabinet, has proven himself very capable in the hot seat Public Safety portfolio.

He appears to have negotiated a softening of the U.S. demand for a border-crossing passport and has begun arming border guards. He banned the Tamil Tigers as a terrorist group and dealt well with the alleged terrorist bust in Toronto. And this week he delivered legislation to eliminate the federal firearms registry.

Where was this guy as Alliance leader? Oh, right. Jet-skiing.

* Treasury Board president John Baird puts on a helluva show in the Commons -- arms swinging, finger pointing, teeth bared and voice seething with partisan contempt for all non-Conservatives. It's not always his best face being put forward. But Baird had one assignment this term -- get the Federal Accountability Act through Parliament before the summer recess. That was accomplished this week, going through with nary a discouraging word as Liberals gulped and ran, unable to say if they were for or against the bill.

* Calgary MP Jason Kenney is not technically in cabinet as parliamentary secretary to the prime minister. But that job's given Kenney a spotlighted role that would leave most ministers in fetal-position whimpering. When Harper's away, the Liberals try to kill Kenney.

So far, they haven't left a scratch on his five o'clock shadow as he effortlessly delivers fluently bilingual answers to any topic in what passes for a dignified Commons style, seemingly without a glance at his talking points.

Now, we pause briefly to acknowledge a handful of ministers who could use summer school to brush up on portfolio performances.

Conspicuous by her absence, perhaps, is opposition bull's-eye Environment Minister Rona Ambrose. She gets a pass until fall when her oft-promised made-in-Canada plan is rolled out as Kyoto's replacement.

No such leniency for Health's Tony Clement, the only minister who has not delivered on one of Harper's five priorities, in this case guaranteed surgical wait times. Public Works' Michael Fortier has not, as promised, emerged to say anything from his hole in the unelected Senate. International Trade's David Emerson has not delivered on the reason he was brought over to the Conservatives, that being to land a softwood lumber deal with the Americans which looks increasingly unlikely. Defence's Gordon O'Connor's single-source heavy-lift aircraft deal is worrisome, given his former lobbyist

credentials. And Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay has yet to shine, albeit in a portfolio that's got an impossibly steep learning curve. And as he'll find out soon, if he hasn't already, the moment there's any shine to the portfolio, Harper will step into the spotlight. That's what you get for being a potential rival in the future.

June 22, 2006
The Whitehorse Star
Page: 7 (Opinion)

A call for government accountability

Yesterday, June 21, was a day of strong cultural significance among the native people in Canada.

They marked the summer solstice (the first day of summer and longest day of the year) with ceremonies, celebrations and prayers.

It was a day on which traditional ceremonies continue to be practised despite the historical impact of colonization.

Ceremonies are still held throughout Canada by those aboriginals who have the deepest respect, commitment and honour to follow the traditional ways of their cultures.

The importance of today is also acknowledged by the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) and its national Aboriginal Social Workers Interest Group. Its purpose is to advocate on aboriginal issues pertaining to policy, social work practice, education and research.

As a day of recognition, June 21 has a long history in the political arena. In 1982, the Assembly of First Nations called for its recognition as National Aboriginal Solidarity Day.

In 1990, the Quebec National Assembly recognized June 21 as a day to celebrate native cultures.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recommended in 1990 that there be a National First Peoples Day. At the Sacred Assembly, Elijah Harper called for a national holiday to celebrate aboriginal people.

Former governor general Romeo LeBlanc declared June 21 as National Aboriginal Day on June 13, 1996.

While June 21 marks a day of celebration among Canadian natives, it also marks a day of deep prayer and ceremony for those aboriginals who continue to suffer from the long-term effects of residential schools and of the colonial practices of early Canadian politicians. Statistics provide evidence that aboriginal people are among the poorest populations in Canada.

CASW, in a series of reports on the poverty of women in Canada, states that income disparities between women and men persist, and that women's income is further influenced by age, marital status, family status and ethnicity.

Similarly, the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women recently reported, "One in seven (2.4 million) Canadian women is living in poverty today."

Canadian women are the highest among this country's most vulnerable groups living in poverty: single moms (51.6 per cent), senior women (41.5 per cent), independent women (35 per cent), and women with disabilities have an average income of \$13,000, the same as aboriginal women.

Demographics and statistics indicate a trend that aboriginal women with families are at a distinct disadvantage.

Single-parent aboriginal families encounter increasing barriers in terms of housing, education, health and access to services as a result of living in poverty, particularly those women living in urban areas.

Aboriginal people continue to struggle with the effects of alcoholism, domestic violence, incarceration, sexual molestation and lost identity. Many aboriginal people live in conditions equivalent to those experienced in Third World countries.

The aboriginal people in Canada have always maintained their native heritage with pride, and June 21 has become the day when they may share cultural experiences with other citizens in recognition of aboriginal contributions to Canada.

It is also the day to remind governments of their accountability to commitments they have not fulfilled and key issues they have not addressed.

This commentary was submitted by Brenda Gladue, chair, CASW Aboriginal Social Workers Interest Group, Ottawa.

June 23, 2006
The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
Page: A15 (Forum)

Canada's stance on UN declaration disturbing

Doug Cuthand

The Stephen Harper government wants to stall the vote on a United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples that's been 20 years in the making.

Canada has decided to join with the United States and Australia in calling the declaration "profoundly imperfect." The government is maintaining this position despite a motion from Parliament's aboriginal affairs committee that calls on it to support international adoption of the declaration.

The motion got support from Bloc Quebecois, Liberal and New Democratic members on the committee, with the Conservatives abstaining.

For the past couple of decades we have watched work on this declaration move forward at a painfully slow pace.

International diplomacy is a series of endless meetings and consultations, so when a committee finally comes forward with something it's cause for celebration.

International conferences of non-governmental organizations on indigenous issues were held in Geneva Switzerland in 1977 and 1981, leading to the establishment of the UN working group on indigenous populations in 1982.

The group began in 1985 to develop a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. It completed the draft eight years later and submitted it to the sub-commission on prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities.

There it was reviewed, adopted and sent for consideration by the UN Commission on Human Rights.

The UNCHR poked and prodded the draft for about a decade, and it has now reached the stage where it will be voted on by the new Council on Human Rights. It's on the agenda for a meeting that will last through June 30.

Two driving forces were behind this declaration and the lobbying to have the topic addressed at the UN.

First, the indigenous populations in developed countries such as Australia, the U.S. and Canada, who have seen a revolution in political awareness and education in the

past few decades, decided that if their home countries were unable or unwilling to recognize their rights, then they would take the issue to an international level.

Second, countries that had received independence from colonial powers realized the plight of peoples who were colonized and still living within the country that colonized them. Indigenous people had their rights taken away and had to fight to take control over their lives.

It's estimated that more than 300 million indigenous peoples are spread around the world from Northern Canada to Central America to the South Pacific and Northern Europe. They have been displaced by settlers and only are able to occupy a small amount of their traditional lands. Their languages and cultures are distinct from that of other residents of these countries.

Efforts to integrate these populations into the mainstream have been counterproductive largely because of a failure to recognize the importance of indigenous cultures and languages.

The declaration itself is a far-reaching document and stands as one of the most important statements to protect and recognize the rights of aboriginal peoples.

It could well be adopted as a document that defines section 35 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which recognizes and affirms existing aboriginal and treaty rights.

The declaration covers: the preservation of ethnic and cultural characteristics and distinct identities; protection against genocide; rights to religious, languages and cultural institutions; ownership and possession of indigenous lands and natural resources; protection of cultural and intellectual property and; maintenance of traditional economic structures and ways of life. It also includes the honouring of treaties and agreements signed with aboriginal peoples.

However, the Conservative government refuses to support the declaration.

Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice has stated it contravenes the Canadian charter when it comes to land claims and national defence. This is a specious argument, given that the charter recognizes aboriginal and treaty rights.

But the Harper government is adamant that the declaration "needs work" and it's willing to kill it rather than address it.

The government's stance is worrisome because it has shown very little positive action toward treaty and aboriginal issues.

Are the Conservatives more interested in showing their redneck constituents that they can be tough on Indians rather than extend the olive branch of hope to our people? In

Opposition they were silent on important issues such as residential schools, but harangued the government over issues of accountability and "equality" with regards to First Nations.

I guess we will have to wait until they get their majority to discover their real agenda. Meanwhile, valuable developments such as the United Nations declaration fall by the wayside.