

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
Media Clips**



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

Friday, August 11, 2006 ♦ vendredi, 11 août 2006

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Indian Residential School Coverage

August 11, 2006
Thunderbay's Source
Online

Art celebrates church's apology

Jodi Lundmark

This Aug. 13 to 19 at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery, the work of nine Anishinaabe artists from Manitoulin Island will be on display. The Manitou Collection: Celebrating the Spirit of the People consists of 38 acrylic works that is currently touring the province. The paintings showcased display the contributions First Nations artists have made to Canadian society.

The Manitou Collection has a history tied in with the apology of the United Church of Canada to Aboriginal people for their hand in assimilation. This year is the 20th anniversary of the church's first apology and in 1988, as a response, the collection was donated to 26 northeastern Ontario United Churches.

The church again apologized in 1998 for pain and suffering caused by their role in operating residential schools.

The tour is being co-coordinated by the United Church's Northeastern Ontario Manitou Conference and the WKP Kennedy Gallery in North Bay.

The Manitou Collection showcases work by Don Assinewai, Leland Bell, Blair Debassige, Doug Fox, James Jacko, Melvin Madahbee, Stanley Panamick, Randy C. Trudeau and Tim Trudeau. It will visit nine Ontario communities over 18 months.

August 11, 2006
Vancouver Sun
Page: A14 (Editorial)

The rule of law has never worked for aboriginals

Julian Gill-Peterson, Vancouver Sun

Re: From Caledonia to B.C., law-breaking should carry consequences, Editorial, Aug. 10

Indeed, there is a fine line between civil disobedience and anarchy.

Unfortunately, there is no such thin line between the rule of law and the systemic atrocities inflicted by the government of Canada upon the Iroquois people ever since Jacques Cartier and other Europeans first "discovered" the well-developed and peaceful society of the Six Nations. **Now they have chosen to disobey Canada's "rule of law," the very same rule of law that rubber-stamped the catastrophe of residential schools and the disenfranchisement of aboriginal peoples.** Pardon me if I am not at all outraged by their choice to challenge the rule of law that has so **brutally struck them in the past.**

I think The Sun's view is exactly the kind of **historical ignorance that continues to fuel the disadvantaged position of aboriginal peoples in Canadian society.** How far have we come since 1867?

Julian Gill-Peterson

Burnaby

Woodlands School Coverage

August 10, 2006
Canadian Press Newswire
(See also: MacLeans.ca)

Abused residents of B.C. institution shocked at government compensation

Camille Bains

VANCOUVER (CP) - People who were physically and sexually abused at an institution for the mentally ill say they're shocked at a compensation package being offered by the B.C. government.

Bill McArthur, one of over 3,300 abused residents of the Woodlands School in New Westminster, B.C., wept Thursday as he talked about the emotional toll he's endured. "This compensation package that is put forth by the government is very inhumane, it's very cold, unfeeling," he said.

McArthur and others who suffered abuse at Woodlands are vehemently against the package that includes a **point system** to measure the degree of abuse people went through - everything from repeated sexual abuse to being denied meals and medical treatment.

Advocates say each person should be awarded a common amount similar to settlements by the federal government for aboriginals who were abused in residential schools.

McArthur didn't want to talk about what happened to him inside the facility that residents' parents forced the government to close in 1996 after it had been operating for over 100 years.

But a 2001 report by a former ombudsman said people were repeatedly sexually and physically abused, some ending up pregnant while others had broken limbs and burned skin from being dragged into hot baths at the institution that's been described as a hell hole.

A total of 3,314 people who suffered abuse at Woodlands are still alive and are part of a class-action lawsuit that may proceed without an adequate compensation package.

"I feel this government has a moral obligation to do the right thing," McArthur said.

"Let's settle this matter out of court in a fair and equitable manner so that the residents are spared the torment of having to relive the horrors that they went through."

Members of the We Survived Woodlands Group want Attorney General Wally Oppal to withdraw the point-system document and come up with a more respectful way to compensate people.

They say former ombudsman Dulcie McCallum's **report called for a respectful way to deal with victims who suffered systemic abuse.**

Oppal was not available for comment but Stan Hagen, minister of children and family development, said he couldn't comment on the matter because former residents have been pursuing a class-action lawsuit.

"Obviously, I have a lot of sympathy for their situations but the challenge for us is that government does not agree that there was systemic abuse," Hagen said.

"We've always said that we will review any individual situation and where there is substantiated evidence of abuse, then appropriate action, including compensation, could be considered."

However, former residents say records from Woodlands don't exist and those that do don't list any abuse by staff.

Adrian Dix, health critic for the Opposition NDP, said many who lived at Woodlands are now elderly and that the government needs to offer them a more fair settlement.

"What they need is help and support now," Dix said.

Former residents, their parents, and advocates for the disabled also say they're opposed to the government wanting people to go before a tribunal to outline their abuse.

"Let's not revictimize the former residents of Woodland School who have already been victimized," McArthur said.

"They've been through enough. Let's not run them through the meat grinder again."

Arlene Schouten, whose daughter was abused at Woodlands, said the majority of people who suffered wouldn't be able to detail what happened to them.

"The majority of people who were abused at Woodlands are unable to speak, they are unable to represent themselves," Schouten said.

"To ask vulnerable people to go through this is disgusting, just completely disgusting."

Margaret Birrell, executive director of the B.C. Coalition of People with Disabilities, said the compensation package is also hard to swallow because parents of institutionalized

children worked so hard to close such facilities when the abuse allegations began to surface.

"We are the only province that did that so these are the pioneers in Canada."

August 11, 2006
Globe and Mail
Page: S1
Globeandmail.com

Woodlands package sparks fury - Government plan to compensate victims by allotting abuse 'points' causes outrage

Matthew Kwong

Vancouver -- A government compensation package that uses points to quantify the severity of sexual, physical, emotional and psychological torment, including allotting "compensation points" conditional to the type of penetration during rape, has outraged residents who were abused at the Woodlands School.

"I have never seen such an **abusive document** in my life," Margaret Birrell, executive director of the B.C. Coalition of People with Disabilities, said yesterday.

"Persistent incidents of anal and vaginal intercourse -- 45 to 60 points; one or more incidents of oral intercourse -- 26 to 35 points," Ms. Birrell said, reading from the compensation rules.

An incident of "tortuous physical assault" causing scarring or injury for more than six weeks is worth one to 10 points.

In March, the B.C. Supreme Court certified a class-action suit from the victims alleging abuse against Woodlands, which started as an insane asylum in 1878 and finally closed in 1996. One-third of the 3,314 people seeking redress have been excluded from the compensation package, due to a legal bind that doesn't recognize victims abused before 1974. It was in that year that the government enacted the law that holds the Crown liable for the actions of its employees.

Early this month, the province gave a \$510 payout to each of the former residents, including those abused before 1974, said Stan Hagen, the Minister of Children and Family Development.

But the \$510 "was a goodwill gesture and . . . is not linked to the class-action suit," he said.

Eligible Woodlands victims must tally up their points in order to receive the additional compensation they feel they deserve as part of the class action settlement -- a process many are calling "inhumane."

Members of the We Survived Woodlands Group, which includes family members of former residents as well as the victims themselves, said the "degrading" points system forces them to relive the horrors they've tried to forget.

Mr. Hagen would not comment on the compensation package as it is before the courts, but he said "it's based on a similar process that was used by the federal government in dealing with the issue of [native] residential schools."

Also critical is the fact not everyone is eligible for compensation.

"Can you imagine someone who was abused in 1972, who was raped?" said Arlene Schouten, the mother of a former Woodlands patient. "Could you honestly go to them and say, 'I'm sorry, but your situation happened in 1974, so too bad?' "

Bill McArthur is one of the 1,133 Woodland survivors locked out of compensation because he was "abused on the wrong side of 1974."

Mr. McArthur, who was 7 when his mother took him to Woodlands in 1963, vividly recalled how nurses would forcibly submerge his head under ice water until he almost drowned.

"I'm sorry, I'm so emotional," he said, his voice rising. "This is horrifying that the government is forcing us to go through this again. This is so inhumane, I'm sorry," he said, as he left the room, comforted by friends.

Gregg Schiller, co-ordinator for the We Survived Woodlands Group, said he'd like to see a "common experience payment" model, where a lump sum is given to victims, as was the case with natives who suffered in residential schools.

"That seems to be a very fair model. There's no reason the government cannot extend that to people at Woodlands, we're talking about less than 4,000 people," he said.

During its years of operation, Woodlands School was to be a patient-care facility for the province's mentally disabled children. Within its walls, though, staff molested children left in their care, forced them into cold showers or scalding baths, locked them in extended isolation and beat them, according to a review commissioned by the government in 2000.

August 11, 2006
Vancouver Sun
Page: B4

Compensation offer an 'insult' - Survivor of physical and sexual abuse at closed institution 'very offended' at being ineligible

Jeff Rud, CanWest News Service

WOODLANDS - Former residents of Woodlands Institute for the mentally ill seeking compensation for abuse suffered at the defunct New Westminster facility say the provincial government should withdraw a settlement offer they describe as "insulting."

The offer, revealed Thursday by the We Survived Woodlands group, includes a compensation points' chart that could conceivably allow some victims to be paid up to \$247,500.

But in order to be fully compensated, a victim must agree to submit medical and work records and possibly undergo independent medical examinations as well as questioning by government lawyers.

The offer also excludes anyone abused before August 1974, when legislation made government responsible for abuse by its employees.

That would exclude 1,133 of the 3,314 former residents of Woodlands who are still alive. About two-thirds of the residents have died and their families would not be compensated.

"I am very offended. I think it's a total insult," said Bill McArthur, 47, who said he was beaten and sexually abused at Woodlands.

McArthur would not be eligible for any compensation because he left the institution just before the cut-off date.

However, he is also angry the province wants eligible residents to go to great lengths to prove abuse.

To collect the maximum, a former resident would need 121 or more points, proving multiple instances of abuse as well as the lasting effects.

Abuse Level 8, for example, described as "Repeated, persistent incidents of anal or vaginal intercourse" or "Repeated, persistent incidents of anal/vaginal penetration with an object" would result in 45 to 60 points.

More points would be added for levels of harm caused by the abuse.

For example, "modest detrimental impact" would be worth one to five points while "continued harm resulting in serious dysfunction" from 20 to 25.

Other points would go to aggravating factors such as humiliation and racist acts. There would also be points awarded for "loss of opportunity," maxing out at 21 to 25 for "chronic inability to obtain employment."

Compensation ranges from \$1,000 to \$9,000 for scoring one to 10 points, to \$221,000-\$247,500 for 121 or more.

Woodlands survivors are calling on Attorney-General Wally Oppal to withdraw the offer and table a "dignified and respectful" process that would be based on "common-experience payments."

That would compensate all Woodlands residents equally without any court process.

Oppal wasn't available Thursday to comment.

However, Children and Families Minister Stan Hagen said a points system was requested by the plaintiffs and is a "blueprint" Ottawa uses for such cases.

August 11, 2006
The Province
Page: A19 (News)

Points-for-abuse plan 'inhumane, degrading' - Survivors of abuse must tally violations to get compensation

Glenda Luymes

Survivors of abuse at the now-closed Woodlands Institute are being asked to tally up the violations against them in order to receive government compensation.

The more points they score, the more money they'll receive.

"It's very inhumane. It's going to be very degrading," former resident Bill McArthur said yesterday.

McArthur is a plaintiff in a class-action lawsuit that was filed against the provincial government in 2002. The group isn't happy with an out-of-court settlement it was recently offered.

"I've never seen such an abusive document," said Margaret Birrell of the B.C. Coalition of People with Disabilities.

"There are pages of different kinds of abuse that each person will have to prove happened to them . . . This is not right."

It's been 10 years since the New Westminster home for the mentally handicapped was closed. In 2001, an inquiry by ombudsman Dulcie McCallum concluded there was widespread abuse at Woodlands.

McArthur said he'd like to settle the matter out of court, but the government's proposed method will force former residents to "relive the horrors that they went through."

The package assigns points to various types of abuse -- from 11 points for meals denied to 45 points for repeated rape. Cases of physical assault, including severe beating, whipping and second-degree burning, score 21 points.

Under the deal, residents would be paid \$9,000 for 10 points and up to \$247,500 for 121 points or more.

Members of the We Survived Woodlands group yesterday urged Attorney-General Wally Oppal to withdraw the "insulting" document and meet with them to find an alternative.

"Honestly, it's not about the money," said Marilia Neto, the sister of a survivor. "My brother falls into the category of not being able to speak for himself.

"It's a disrespect to expect him to identify what happened to him and appear before a tribunal to tell them about his case."

Neto said her brother Thierry had his teeth removed and is now "deathly afraid" of being tied down. Because he cannot speak, she said she won't ever know what happened to him at Woodlands.

"The government needs to acknowledge his suffering," she said. "There's no way a points system can work because of the nature of the people we're dealing with."

Woodlands survivors are also upset that the compensation package is only for people who were abused after 1974. A B.C. Court of Appeal ruling in another case found that the province could not be held liable for its employees' actions before Aug. 1, 1974.

"By making a legal offer, the government is saying the abuse deserves compensation," said Vancouver-Kingsway MLA Adrian Dix.

"If that's the case, why don't they extend it to everyone? When you're dealing with a vulnerable group, it shouldn't be hard for them to get the compensation they deserve."

Of the 3,314 Woodlands survivors still alive, 1,133 would not be eligible for compensation because they were at the school before 1974.

"We are still willing to review each case on an individual basis," said Stan Hagen, the minister of children and family development. "But we have taken the position that it's not systemic, and I don't know another way [apart from a points system] to award compensation."

August 11, 2006, 12:20
CKNW News Talk 980
Online

Liberal Government slammed over Woodlands compensation

VICTORIA/CKNW(AM980) - The Provincial Government is defending its compensation offer to Woodlands residents, but the NDP says the Liberals are re-victimizing the victims.

Children and Families Minister Stan Hagen says the point system for rating abuse is not new, "It's a model that was used by the Federal Government in negotiating claims that resulted from the residential school situation."

Hagen says the Government has always said it will compensate individual cases of abuse providing there's substantial evidence; but as to his thoughts on the fairness of this process, he says it's still before the courts, "So, I'm not going to offer an opinion."

NDP Critic Adrian Dix has no such qualms, "There should be, just as there has been in other cases, residential schools for example, compensation for all people at Woodlands based on common, base experience."

Agent Orange Media Coverage

August 11, 2006

New Brunswick Telegraph Journal

Page: A2 (News)

(See also: Toronto Star, Regina Leader-Post)

Levels of dioxin at Gagetown too low to be of serious concern - Independent researchers also says testing of such defoliants as Agent Orange at base did not pose threat to long-term health of people

Chris Morris,

Canadian Forces Base Gagetown, once a testing ground for the infamous war defoliant Agent Orange, has been given a clean bill of health. Independent researchers hired by the federal government to study the impact of herbicide spraying at the sprawling New Brunswick base have determined present-day levels of dioxin are too low to be of serious concern. They also have found that U.S. military testing of such defoliants as Agent Orange and Agent Purple at remote areas of the base in 1966 and 1967 did not pose a threat to the long-term health of people involved in the program. Col. Ryan Jestin, the base commander, reacted to the two reports by immediately lifting restrictions on access to three areas of the base where soil sampling had found higher-than-acceptable levels of dioxin, a toxic byproduct in the production of herbicides like Agent Orange. "I intend to resume training in those areas," Jestin said, adding that Gagetown is a "world-class training facility." Mary Mitchell, an official with Health Canada who attended the news conference to release the health reports, said there is no reason for people to be concerned about lingering effects from herbicide spraying at the base. "The contractors have concluded that present-day levels of dioxins do not pose health concerns for people who work at Gagetown or for those who use the area for recreational purposes," Mitchell said. "The levels today are simply too low to have an effect." The Ontario-based firm, Dillon Consulting, and U.S.-based RBR Consulting, carried out the study on current impacts on the base, while Cantox Environmental from Ontario looked at the effect of the U.S. military tests in the mid-60s. A peer reviews of the reports raised concerns about the objectivity of the findings and cautioned one report's assumptions could lead to a significant "underestimation of potential health risks". But, the federally appointed commission charged with getting to the bottom of the Agent Orange controversy is standing by the consultants. "If I felt myself there was a significant flaw, I would have said so," said Dr. Dennis Furlong, who is heading up the fact-finding mission. **People who are hoping to get compensation or military disability pensions as a result of their exposure to herbicide spraying at CFB Gagetown were disappointed with the results, and said their health was harmed by long-term exposure to herbicides. "I think it's all a whitewash," said Art Connolly, vice president of the Agent Orange Association of Canada. "They (federal officials) are looking for ways to save money."** A report of soil sampling analysis, released in June, found nine sites inside the combat training area at CFB

Gagetown contained dioxin levels higher than national standards. But officials maintain there is no risk to the thousands of soldiers who use the training grounds to conduct military exercises each year. Consultants are advocating more study into the potential health effects of anglers who use the Nerepis River and Swan Creek Lake to determine the risk of consuming fish where containments remain. The two reports are the first of several to examine health impacts from defoliant use at the New Brunswick base. More extensive reviews of all the sprays that have been used over several decades - and their impacts - will be coming in the fall and winter. Chemicals to clear brush have been used at the base - as they have across Canada - since the 1950s. Many of the compounds were contaminated with a potent and highly toxic dioxin called 2,3,7,8-TCDD, which has been linked, at high exposures, to cancer, birth defects, immune system deficiencies and emotional problems. Some U.S. military personnel involved in the Vietnam War have received compensation because of health concerns arising from the use of defoliants like Agent Orange. But researchers looking at the Gagetown case say there is no comparison between the small, limited amounts tested at the New Brunswick base and the millions of gallons of herbicides applied in Vietnam over a long period of time. Veterans on hand for Thursday's press conference questioned this conclusion. "If it affected an American in Vietnam why would it not affect a Canadian at Camp Gagetown?" asked Grant Payne, of the New Brunswick chapter of the Black Watch. They also said more soldiers were exposed to Agent Orange and Agent Purple in 1966 and 1967 than the 19 personnel estimated by consultants. Despite the latest health reports, veterans are being advised to continue trying to get pensions and compensation if they believe their health has suffered because of spray programs at Gagetown. So far, five Gagetown veterans have been awarded military disability pensions because of dioxin-related illnesses. - with files from Shannon Hagerman