

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
Media Clips**



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

Tuesday, February 13, 2007 ♦ mardi, 13 février 2007

Table of Contents/ Table des matières

IRS ARTICLES-ARTICLES D'IRS

1. "George Erasmus briefing session on Indian Residential Schools and Aboriginal Healing Foundation"
2. **CBC North** "9 judges set to formally approve school deal"
3. **Radio-Canada Manitoba** « Neuf juges discuteront de l'accord d'indemnisation le mois prochain à Calgary Radio-Canada »

"George Erasmus briefing session on Indian Residential Schools and Aboriginal Healing Foundation"

TRANSCRIPTION/TRANSCRIPTION
BRIEFING/MISE À JOUR

Transcription prepared by Media Q Inc. exclusively for Indian Residential Schools Resolution
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DATE/DATE: February 13, 2007, 9:15 a.m.
LOCATION/ENDROIT: National Press Gallery Board Room, 150 Wellington St., 6th Floor, Ottawa, ON
PRINCIPAL(S)/PRINCIPAUX: George Erasmus, President of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation
SUBJECT/SUJET: President of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation George Erasmus is holding a briefing session concerning Indian Residential Schools and his Foundation's work and its recommendations to Government, Aboriginal communities and Canadians concerning the complex issues relating to long term healing and reconciliation.

George Erasmus: Aboriginal people have suffered historical trauma as a result of Canada's policy of forced simulation. The residential school system has ended some time ago but, in relation to the actual trauma, it hasn't been that long. Healing is central to our ability to resolve the effects of these traumas and to address the pressing social issues of the day. The announced Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement signals commitment to healing and we applaud that.

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation's current contribution to community initiatives will be expiring in March of '07, next month. And the point we want to make is that we are exhausting the funding that we have from previous agreements. The initial three hundred and fifty million, the forty million that was forwarded to us a couple of years ago. All our programs were forwarded to March of '07.

And initially when the agreement was announced a couple of falls ago, it looked like the timing was just perfect, that this past December might be when everything would come to the end of the process of courts looking at it and the six month period would be resolved and we would enter into a funding agreement to receive the one twenty-five million that was promised in this agreement. Unfortunately what's happened is it's taken a lot longer than people thought. First there was going to be a small little gap, April and May perhaps. Then it was four months. Now the best guess here in Ottawa is that it will likely be next November or December before we are able to sit down with Ottawa and sign a new agreement for the one twenty-five million.

And so the problem we have is that the projects that we have funded, the healing efforts of this across the country, it's the only healing effort like it and we are the only source of funding. There was no other alternatives. When we were created, Canada forced us to agree that we couldn't borrow money. And so we're left in a situation in which we must receive some kind of temporary funding. We've been working with government since the announcement of the final settlement agreement and the promise of the one twenty-five to figure out how we would receive the money in advance.

At first it looked like there was going to be no problem and then eventually it became difficult and this past December during the AFN Assembly, Minister Prentice was asked a question from the floor after he gave a speech and at that point, he promised, I think it was December 8th,

that he would in fact support us receiving some temporary funding, some bridge funding. He would support us with forty million dollars. What we need it ten million per quarter and so it is forty million we would need for the year.

And that looked okay so we started trying to resolve that and one thing has lead to another and because of government processes and internal bureaucracy, we still haven't had resolve and it looks like it may not be resolved. So that's the concern. We know that the initiatives that have come forward from the final settlement agreement, the compensation will be eventually very useful but the reality is, unless there is healing done, it is very hard for success to occur in any of the other areas.

We need healing for self government, we need healing for economic development, we need healing for education and we know that this work that we have been doing is doing some excellent work. We've had independent research look into this. We've come out with a final report and the report states that we need about three years just to get the initial start of healing underway where we can go through an exploratory process of setting up a healthy, safe program, communities start finally to come on board of the project, figure out all the little kinks and actually, finally initiate healing.

And the research also says we need to be in communities about ten years before we have a reasonably healthy community, before we can leave. So we know healing is a long term requirement. The money that we have invested into the community has been well spent but we've only been in part of the communities and the research also indicated that less than a third of our projects had actually three years of our funding at the time of the release of the final report which was last January. So the reality is, we need to be in those communities a lot longer and so we employ government to resolve the problems of the funding for the hundred and twenty-five million because we badly need the resources.

Question: (inaudible) how money has been spent and what happened to (inaudible)?

George Erasmus: Well we have projects where we actually have healing lodges where people will actually come and spend time, perhaps a weekend sometimes, a number of weeks, thirty days and so forth. We have other projects where they're outreach projects, in the communities where I come from, in Yellow Knife, the Northwest Territories, a project called the Healing Drum where they actually have mobile service.

They're working out of one centre and they will travel to different communities, set up healing programs so that community people don't actually have to leave their communities. And it'll be, in some instances, people use psychiatrists or psychologists but what we've found is that people would prefer their own traditions, their elders. And there's a bit of mixing and matching going on but usually over eighty percent of our projects would prefer to have their own elders involved, even if there's a psychologist involved, it's a smaller portion of the healing.

Question: (inaudible)?

George Erasmus: Well our biggest fear is that the projects would all come to an end. They have partners but there's no way that they could have the required funding from the partners. The partners sometimes are providing office space, small portion of the funding, in kind and so forth. The lions share of the money is coming from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and so if you cut off that source, then you're going to quickly (inaudible) and in the end, I would suspect that virtually ninety-nine percent of the projects would come to an end.

And then a year down the road we would have to start over again, but meanwhile what would happen would be these are highly skilled people and the requirement for them elsewhere is such that they could easily get work elsewhere and I would think the communities would be left without resources and they would have to start up again and we would lose, not one year but we would lose at least two years because there'd be a full other year of start up again, probably with new people and you'd have to reestablish yourself with the community.

We're looking at three years of funding beyond this March with the new money. And so there would be this huge gap and we would lose the time and I suspect that many of the projects wouldn't bother trying to restart simply because they would be just too much trouble.

CBC North "9 judges set to formally approve school deal"

Judges from across Canada will gather in Calgary next month for an unprecedented sitting to deal with the Indian residential schools settlement, CBC News has learned.

The nine provincial and territorial superior court judges will be holding a special two-hour joint-session in Calgary on March 8.

Sources have told CBC the goal is to issue formal approval orders for the settlement package.

The nine courts have already provided written reasons that support the deal, which is designed to provide compensation to some 78,000 aboriginal people who attended the schools in the 20th century.

The Calgary hearing will be unique, according to Dwight Newman, the associate dean of law at the University of Saskatchewan.

"It seems very unusual," he said. "I've not heard of the courts doing something like this before."

The residential schools settlement is supposed to end years of lawsuits launched against the government and the churches that ran the schools.

Over the past 15 years, some 13,000 people have filed lawsuits alleging sexual and physical abuse. Some allege the schools, typically run by churches and supervised by the federal government, caused them to lose their language and culture.

The compensation deal provides for payments for every student who went to the schools, plus more money for those who suffered physical and sexual abuse.

There's also money for healing and remembrance programs. When all segments of the deal are added up, it could be worth \$4 billion to \$5 billion, according to documents filed in a Regina court last year.

The federal government and various church groups are sharing compensation, though Ottawa will be paying almost the entire amount.

Even after formal approval by the courts, compensation could be stalled for some time.

The federal government is challenging the legal fees charged by one of the law firms involved - Regina-based Merchant Law Group.

Radio-Canada Manitoba « Neuf juges discuteront de l'accord d'indemnisation le mois prochain à Calgary
Radio-Canada »

13 février 2007

Radio-Canada: Manitoba (RSS)

TIME: 11:19 AM

Pensionnats autochtones : Neuf juges discuteront de l'accord d'indemnisation le mois prochain à Calgary
Radio-Canada

Neuf juges provenant de partout au Canada se rassembleront à Calgary le mois prochain pour discuter de l'accord d'indemnisation des ex-pensionnaires autochtones.

Le réseau anglais de Radio-Canada a appris que les juges responsables de finaliser cette entente se rencontreront le 8 mars prochain pour une réunion de deux heures. Le but de la rencontre est d'entériner officiellement l'entente.

En vertu de l'accord, 80 000 autochtones du pays se partageront des compensations évaluées à 2 milliards de dollars pour la perte de leur langue et de leur culture et pour les sévices sexuels ou physiques que certains ont vécus.

Le vice-doyen de la faculté de justice à l'Université de la Saskatchewan, Dwight Newman, croit que cette rencontre est inusitée dans le milieu judiciaire.

Une fois que les juges entérineront l'entente officiellement, d'autres étapes sont prévues avant le début de la distribution des paiements aux autochtones, dont une période où les ex-pensionnaires peuvent se retirer de l'entente.