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'Positive' meeting for aboriginal residential schools commission

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LINDA DIEBEL

A meeting to rescue the troubled aboriginal residential schools commission broke up yesterday with cautious optimism and a promise to meet again later in the month.

"All parties remain committed to fulfilling the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and that its work be carried out as quickly as possible in the interest of all Canadians," said a statement from the Assembly of First Nations.

The statement said the meeting, facilitated by former Supreme Court judge Frank Iacobucci, had "productive and positive discussions."

The official work of the commission halted last month with the resignation of chair Justice Harry LaForme, of the Ontario Court of Appeals, who complained publicly of government interference and blamed the other two commissioners for failing to recognize his authority.

However, commissioners Claudette Dumont-Smith and Jane Brewin Morley denied they disrespected LaForme.

The commission is part of the 2006 agreement that settled a class-action lawsuit involving aboriginal survivors of abuse at church-run residential schools.

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