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## First Nations concerned with residential schools commission

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*Nipissing First Nation, Canada (UOI) 12-08*

Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief John Beaucage is greatly concerned with the direction of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission – especially the situation following the resignation of Commission Chair, Justice Harry S. LaForme.

Grand Council Chief Beaucage is primarily concerned with the feelings and concerns of the residential school survivors.

“I am disappointed that Justice LaForme has tendered his resignation. I am hoping that it will be interpreted by the survivors of Residential Schools as a sign that their plight is denigrated in a way that is not acceptable to Grand Council Chief Beaucage.

“Above all the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is about healing, not about who is sitting in the room,” he said.

During October, Justice LaForme resigned as Commission Chair of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission, citing an “incurable problem” that may lead to the dissolution of the Commission.

Beaucage is calling for dismissal of the remaining commissioners, Jane Brewin Morley and Claude Dumont-Smith with a full review and reconstitution of the Commission.

“With Justice LaForme’s resignation, I can say without a doubt, that First Nations have lost confidence in the Commission as it is presently constituted. Clearly, the remaining commissioners are responsible for these turn of events and need to be replaced,” said Beaucage.

In his letter to the Hon. Chuck Strahl, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Beaucage stated: “The two commissioners are unprepared to accept that the structure of the Commission and the TRC’s course is to be charted and its objectives are to be shaped ultimately through the actions and leadership of its Chair.”

“These questions need to be addressed immediately and First Nations must play an instrumental role in the review of the Commission’s mandate and the selection of the new commissioners,” said Beaucage.

Justice LaForme is a judge with the Ontario Court of Appeal. He is also Anishinabek, and a citizen of the Mississaugas of New Credit.

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