



New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

NBAPC official statement in response to the federal pre-budget announced on March 19, 2019

The New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council is frustrated at the continued discrimination towards off-reserve Indigenous people in the federal pre-budget announcement on March 19, 2019. We demand recognition of off-reserve Indigenous peoples' rights and the Federal Government's fiduciary responsibility to non-status and Metis.

"We expect more from Canada. Our high expectation of a good-faith relationship with Canada comes after the signed political accord between our national affiliate the Congress Aboriginal Peoples and Canada last year. Canada has moved forward successfully with the accord with other national organization such as NWAC and MNC, so why the exclusion?" says Interim President & Chief, Amanda LeBlanc. "As I sat in the gallery during the pre-election budget announcement by finance minister Bill Morneau, waiting to hear where Canada would finally be keeping their word to over 75% of the Indigenous population, I was slowly let down as we were, yet again, not ignored but actively excluded from the Government of Canada's plans for "renewed relationship" attempts."

A summary of the over \$4.5B in new spending on Indigenous peoples included:

Jordan's principle: \$1.2B - with a case currently before the courts on the discriminatory policies around accessing services, the current restrictions stipulate that only certain status children or those residing on a reserve, can access supports through Jordan's principle. Without this case being determined, this funding suggests the Federal government plans to continue to support these discriminatory applications that they have already applied.

Languages: \$333.7M - *Indigenous Languages Act* is being discussed through Bill C-9, but with plans to administer this money through Heritage Canada, it is understood that it will only be accessible to on-reserve schools, excluding the majority of Indigenous children who must access education through the mainstream, public school systems.

Education: \$815M - Described as a division between only First Nation (reserve communities), Metis & Inuit students, again, would not allow access for those who are status non-status, Metis or southern Inuit, who reside off-reserve.

Calls to Action: \$194.6M - there are 10 Calls to Action being addressed, all with a focus on reserve communities.

Other spending: \$328M -

\$9M to Indspire (only accessible to students with Status);

\$60M *urban Aboriginal programs*, including Friendship Centres;

\$211M to increase management on reserve;

\$48M for infrastructure projects on reserve that protect from climate-related hazards.

The deliberate exclusion of the off-reserve, and Canada's continued, targeted violence to the majority of the Indigenous population, even after numerous court decisions, most recently the CAP/Daniel's decision, shows Canada's hollow commitments are just that, lip service to the off-reserve with no real intent on lessening the injustices they have caused to our communities.

As the majority of the Indigenous population live off-reserve and must access mainstream, public services i.e. public-schools, public medical facilities etc., this budget fails to meet our needs and shows Canada's hollow commitments are just that, lip service to the off-reserve with no real intent on lessening the injustices they have caused to our communities. These public funds are not being used responsibly as literally billions of dollars are being spent to improve the lives of Indigenous peoples, yet the majority of those funds, go to a minority of the population. That's not to say our families on reserve don't need the resources too - but the reality is, when the majority of the population lives off-reserve and are not able to access these services, how does Canada expect to confidently say to taxpayers that they are being fiscally responsible?

We demand full recognition of the Indigenous population residing off-reserve in Canada through their chosen representatives. We access the public services and expect our needs to be met. It is time for Canada to stand by its commitments and have an actual realistic plan to meet the needs of the majority of the Indigenous population.

Recently, with the S3 consultations, the funding announcements and other efforts being focused to the reserve communities, we have seen the Governments true intentions on how it plans to work with us. It looks like they will only deal with us in the courts, which is really unfortunate and an incredible waste of taxpayers dollars.

Amanda LeBlanc
Interim President & Chief
New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council