



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.

June 3, 2010
Ottawa, ON: Parliament Hill

“Indian” Status Issue: QNW Demands Amendments to Bill C-3: Aboriginal Women Deserve Better

Quebec Native Women held a press conference today in Parliament to demand that the Government of Canada place Bill C-3 on hold so that they may make amendments. QNW president Ellen Gabriel was joined by Liberal MP Anita Neville, Status of Women critic, and Bloq Québécois MP Marc Lemay, Aboriginal Affairs critic, in demanding amendments to Bill C-3, an “Act to promote gender equity in Indian registration”.

Opposition parties have been consistent in their positions on Bill C-3, which in its current form will not end gender discrimination. They have also been critical of the Conservative government’s unwillingness to make amendments to this Bill as per the recommendations by Aboriginal organizations and opposition parties.

Canada was ordered by the BC Court of Appeal to amend S.6 of the Indian Act. Motivated by economics, the government has created the very minimum possible in its writing of Bill C-3. Canada has failed to uphold the honour of the Crown with a lack of consultations and dialogue with Aboriginal communities and organizations. Canada ignored its constitutional duties as stated in S. 35 of Canada’s Constitution Act 1982, by failing to accommodate the concerns of Aboriginal peoples.

To ignore the sound recommendations made by Aboriginal peoples before and after the Bill was introduced into Parliament is another indication of the lack of respect and apparent disdain towards Aboriginal peoples rights. The government is failing to uphold the Rule of Law, both domestically and internationally without regard to the discrimination perpetuated under the current legislation.

QNW calls upon all Aboriginal communities and their organizations, as well as all Canadians and Québécois to join our efforts in urging the government to accept amendments to Bill C-3 as per the recommendations of Aboriginal organizations, so that Canada can finally end the gender discrimination endured by Aboriginal women and their families.

The Government of Canada can request an extension from the Court of Appeals of British Columbia and create a special parliamentary committee to examine the Bill which would make recommendations. This would accommodate Aboriginal peoples' concerns and support a sincere dialogue that will move towards true reconciliation.

We would like to thank all the opposition parties who have genuinely expressed concerns regarding the inadequacies of Bill C-3, and who have listened intently to the concerns and recommendations of Aboriginal women, organizations and our communities.

While the Indian Act continues to control the lives of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, we urge that the Government of Canada incorporates this amendment that QNW has proposed in its November 13, 2009 memoire submitted to Indian and Northern Affairs:

“that the *Indian Act* amendments eradicate all forms of discrimination against Aboriginal women and their male and female descendants **by removing the element of categorization of Indian Status i.e. 6(1), 6(2).**”.

Skén:nen – In peace

Ellen Gabriel

President

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