



Progress Report

Update on Aboriginal Initiatives

Fall 2002

Aboriginal socio-economic development high on Government's agenda

In the recent Speech from the Throne, Aboriginal issues were at the forefront among a wide range of social and economic initiatives.

The Government of Canada's commitment to improving the lives of Aboriginal people was outlined in a number of areas including alleviation of poverty, improved health care, access to child care, physical infrastructure, education and other investments in social, cultural and economic development. The overall goal is to "close the gap in life chances between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians."

The Government of Canada also expressed its willingness to work with provincial governments to expand existing pilot programs to meet the needs of urban Aboriginal people.

The proposed First Nations Governance Act — along with other legislation to strengthen governance institutions in First Nations communities — has been reinstated in the House of Commons.

To read the full Speech from the Throne text, go to www.sft-ddt.gc.ca

National Working Group on Education introduced

Recognizing that education for First Nations is a priority, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Robert D. Nault has introduced the Minister's National Working Group on Education (NWGE).

The NWGE has been established to determine how the Government of Canada, in partnership with First Nations, can better foster excellence in First Nations education

and help narrow the unacceptable gap in academic results between First Nations students and other students in Canada. The NWGE will report its findings this December.

The Group is comprised of 13 Aboriginal members from across Canada. They will review First Nations education issues such as institutional capacity, teacher recruitment/retention, education standards, increased parental involvement, and more.

To learn more about The National Working Group on Education and the individual members, go to http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/m-a2002/02158bk_e.html

Guide to oil and gas approvals in the Beaufort Sea now available

The fifth and final guide in a series of "regulatory roadmaps" for the oil and gas industry operating in the Beaufort Sea was recently issued.

The Guide outlines the regulatory processes for oil and gas exploration and production on Canada's frontier lands in the Beaufort Sea. The livelihoods of more than half a million Canadians are affected nationally by this industry that is valued at \$52 billion a year.

The regulatory guide was issued jointly by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC).

It is available on the Regulatory Roadmaps Project Web site at www.oilandgasguides.com

If you would like information about oil and gas management in the North, go to http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/lts/p32/p32_index_e.html

Proposed Specific Claims Resolution Act tabled in the House of Commons

The proposed Specific Claims Resolution Act is one of several Government of Canada initiatives aimed at putting the tools of self-sufficiency into the hands of First Nations. The legislation was reinstated in the House of Commons earlier this session.

The proposed legislation would establish the Canadian Centre for the Independent Resolution of First Nations Specific Claims. It would have two divisions with distinct functions: a commission to facilitate negotiations and a tribunal to resolve disputes on validity and compensation

for claims valued up to a maximum of \$7 million. The Centre would replace the current claims body, which can only make recommendations.

The proposed model incorporates most of the recommendations made by the First Nations/Canada Joint Task Force on specific claims.

For more information about the proposed Specific Claims Resolution Act, go to http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/m-a2002/2-02156_e.html

Feedback

Progress Report invites your comments and suggestions. Drop us a line at:

Progress Report
Communications Branch
Indian and Northern Affairs
Canada

19th Floor, Room 1900
10 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0H4

E-mail:
progressreport@inac.gc.ca
Fax: (819) 953-2305

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