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One to One Minister Jane Stewart

Jane Stewart, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada



On January 7, 1998, the federal government unveiled *Gathering Strength*, an action plan designed to renew its relationship with the Aboriginal people of Canada. This plan builds on the principles of mutual respect, recognition, responsibility and sharing which were identified in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*.

Gathering Strength looks both to the past and the future. It begins with a *Statement of reconciliation* that acknowledges the mistakes and injustices of the past; moves to a *Statement of Renewal* that expresses a vision of a shared future for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people; and outlines four key objectives: renewing the partnerships; strengthening Aboriginal governance; developing a new fiscal framework; and supporting strong communities, people and economies.

On the day of the announcement, Jane Stewart, Minister of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, said, "The action plan I have laid out for you today really boils down to one simple thing – making life better for Aboriginal peoples in this country."

Shortly before announcing *Gathering Strength*, Minister Stewart graciously answered the following questions for *Dreamspeaker*. The Minister's responses clearly reflect the spirit of *Gathering Strength*.

Minister Stewart, you have frequently talked about the need for a new partnership with Canada's First Nations. In the best of all possible worlds, what would that partnership look like at the end of the day?

“I would like to facilitate a partnership that is rooted in mutual respect, responsibility and sharing. The partnership I envision is founded on a relationship that will empower Aboriginal communities to govern themselves. It will provide them with the legitimacy, power and resources they need to govern effectively..

Ideally, new partnerships between First Nations and non-Aboriginal people on several fronts will develop independently. For example, partnerships between First Nations communities, corporate Canada and professional groups, such as accountants and teachers, can provide numerous advantages for both parties. I look forward to seeing these types of connections flourishing spontaneously and directly between interested parties.

The principles of partnership between Aboriginal leaders and the federal government I believe are founded in the concepts of transparency, predictability and accountability.”

Accountability is an important issue that has often been confused, somewhat negatively, with compliance. How would you define accountability, in light of DIAND's evolving partnership with First Nations and the development of self-government?

“It’s a fact of modern life that all of us in government are being asked to account for every dollar we receive and to obtain the best possible value. In these times of limited resources, Canadians are insisting, quite rightly, that we manage that money prudently, that systems are in place to ensure accountability and that the whole process is open and transparent.

In recent years, the issue of financial accountability among First Nations has come very much to the fore, spurred by several developments, the most important of which has been the transition to self-government.

As the federal government transferred more and more control over funding decisions to First Nations, it was important to ensure that local accountability for those decisions was also enhanced. This type of accountability is based on the same principles that are common to other governments in Canada: transparency, disclosure and redress. Whatever their particular needs or however they design their programs, First Nations must respond to these principles.

I can say without hesitation that there is broad support among First Nations for strengthening their governments' capacity to meet community needs — and for improving accountability to the members of those communities.

The measures we are developing to ensure accountability — in partnership with First Nations — are a good start. Now we need to tell Canadians about them.”

How do you see weaving the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) into the federal government's action plan over the next few years?

“The RCAP recommendations will serve as a blueprint for the future activities of the federal government in relation to Aboriginal issues.

Changes will address the need to provide a coordinated approach to Aboriginal issues among all federal departments, and improved collaboration with provincial and territorial governments.

The four areas on which I believe we should focus our efforts are: strengthening partnerships, toward the kind of relationship just described to you; building stronger Aboriginal communities, and that includes efforts on the critical “bread and butter” issues of housing, water and sewer, so that communities have the capacity to sustain themselves and grow; building strong Aboriginal governance so that First Nations have the authority and resources to manage their own affairs; developing a new fiscal framework founded on stability and accountability and rooted in creative approaches to economic development as well as treatment of First Nations revenues.”

Readers will note that these four areas mirror the four objectives of *Gathering Strength*. Watch future issues of *Dreamspeaker* for more coverage of the *Gathering Strength* action plan. Meanwhile, you can find more information on DIAND's web site at <http://www.inac.gc.ca>



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Kamloops Indian Band Dayschool

Kamloops Indian Band Dayschool



Congratulations to the Kamloops Indian Band on the opening of the long-awaited Little Fawn Dayschool. Teachers and students gather around the story circle to learn about their traditional culture, language, and philosophies.



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An Interview with Wendy Grant-John B.C.'s New Associate RDG

Associate Regional Director General Wendy Grant-John brings experienced leadership and refreshing and innovative change to DIAND B.C. Region.



Wendy Grant-John, a former Musqueam First Nation Chief and B.C. Vice-Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, joined DIAND, B.C. Region, last fall as Associate Regional Director General, working alongside Regional Director General John Watson. Wendy immediately began a work schedule that would exhaust any three ordinary people. *Dreamspeaker* caught up with her recently to ask questions we thought might be on readers' minds.

Why did you decide to take the job of Associate Regional Director General?

“As a politician I have always believed that the department’s job is to listen to what First Nations say and then, in turn, advocate that position within the government structure. I’d like to see that take place, but I don’t know how the Minister or Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs can represent First Nations perspectives if they don’t understand how the communities operate and are always being driven by what the larger government structure says is the world’s view.

Having been a Chief and having been on the national scene politically, I felt I could bring that perspective in and help to bridge the relationship between the department and the First Nations. I think that this is a key time for the department to be working

together with First Nations. There has to be a real team approach, and in order to build a team, there has to be trust. Attitudes have got to change on both sides. There has to be communication for that. There has to be an opening up of people's ears and they have to listen.

I recognize that there are a lot of questions from my First Nation community about why I decided to take this job. But I have trust in the people right now in the government, in the Minister, in the Deputy Minister and in the RDG. I think we're going to build that team together."

What do you see as your major challenge?

"I can break that down into two areas. A major challenge for me personally is to ensure that I don't put on any blinders as I look at the government structure. I think that I have to give it an unbiased analysis in order to do the job. I've been in Aboriginal politics for almost thirty years. So I have to be able to shift and make sure that I don't put any barriers in place that will stop communication from flowing freely. Just for me personally, that's going to be a challenge.

As far as the position itself, I think my biggest challenge is going to be with my own communities, ensuring that I am not considered a sell-out and that I'm not biased. Because of my political background there are certain groups of First Nations in the province that feel that I will have a particular bias to them because of political relationships over the years. The only thing I can do about that is to do the job and to show them that the political positions that have been developed over the years are not going to carry over into the position that I take as the Associate Regional Director General."

What is the main message that you would like to give to the readers of *Dreamspeaker*?

"I look at the world from a bigger, global perspective. Our world has changed so drastically in the last ten years. It's dying because of what we've done to it. We've come to a place in time where we have to recognize that we have to come together. It's time for us to break down the barriers that separate us. Come together with all of the perspective and all of the thoughts and ideas that each individual and each group has in order to ensure that we are bringing together the best of everyone's world and place in this world, to ensure that we have a world in the future. To sit in one little space in our comfort zone and say, 'I'm going to continually put forward and protect my ideas' is, in the end, going to facilitate the destruction of our world as we know it. We have to be brave enough to say, 'I'm going to let go some of my ideas about who

you are as a human being and who your people are in order to facilitate a coming together of thoughts and ideas to protect the future for our children.' I think everything should be driven by that. The ideas that I have for my children and my grandchildren and my family should be taken and expanded into our world vision so that we no longer hold any animosity or bias toward anyone else or to any group of people. We need to look at each other as a family. I know that sounds kind of airy-fairy but it's the only way we're going to survive in this world right now."



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"All Roads Lead to the Mission"

by Jolayne Madden-Marsh



"...since it was within the St.Eugene Mission school that the culture of the Kootenay Indian was taken away, it should be within the building that it is returned."
Elder - Ann Mary Joseph

"All roads lead to the Mission," he said.

In 1890, Father Coccola couldn't have known the significance his words would carry over the next hundred years.

The original St. Eugene Mission was founded by the Oblate Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church in 1873. The mission which stands there today was funded and built in 1910 by the Canadian government. It became the first "industrial and residential" school in western Canada. At the time, it was the largest building in the interior of British Columbia.

"Every means should therefore be taken to bring nomad tribes to abandon their wandering life and to build houses, cultivate fields and practice civilized life," wrote one founding Oblate.

For the most part of the century, the order fulfilled its mandate by

filling St. Eugene's classrooms with children of the Shuswap, Blackfoot, Okanagan and Ktunaxa First Nations. Over ninety-seven years, more than five thousand children were affected by the mission.

In 1970, the residential school was closed and the buildings were leased to the provincial government, which began renovations. The buildings, meant to be used as residences for mentally handicapped people, were abandoned before renovations were complete. For the next twenty years, no one roamed the halls of St. Eugene's.

On June 13, 1974, the federal government awarded the five Bands of the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council equal ownership of the land. The Shuswap, Lower Kootenay, Columbia Lake, Tobacco Plains and St. Mary's First Nations became the new "owners" of two parcels of land equalling about 346 acres. The rundown buildings, barns, and outbuildings, as well as the land, were added to St. Mary's Reserve 1A. A unique land ownership was created one which exists nowhere else in Canada: one reserve shared among five First Nations.

Faced with the dilemma of what to do with the property, the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council began to explore its options

Now, after years of sitting idle, the mission is being given new life. The St. Eugene Mission buildings and 321 acres of land are being developed into a world class \$23-million destination resort. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development contributed \$1.3 million for the initial planning, consultation, design, employee training, and architectural costs through its federal economic development strategy.

The Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Bands have agreed to lease the site to the St. Eugene Development Corporation which is owned by the five Bands equally. For the next ninety-nine years, the site will be used for commercial development.

The resort, which is expected to open in April 1999, will feature many aspects of Ktunaxa/Kinbasket culture. Along with an 18-hole golf course, recreational facilities and 119 guest rooms, will be a traditional Ktunaxa/Kinbasket teepee camp. Individual teepees will feature a comfortable bed and a gas fire pit. An interpretive centre and an arts and crafts centre will be built so that guests can purchase locally produced pieces and view historical Ktunaxa/Kinbasket artifacts.

Sophie Pierre, Chief of St. Mary's First Nation, administrator of the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council and chair of the St. Eugene Mission Development board of directors, says the resort development "will provide jobs and economic stability for the

Ktunaxa/Kinbasket people and provide an avenue for them to start healing from the effects of the residential school.”

The original mission building and barn are presently under review by the Heritage Board. If heritage status is granted to the site, an attractive dimension will be added to the historical flavour of the resort.

In the main hotel, walls will feature Ktunaxa/Kinbasket artwork and colours. “It is a major consideration to keep Ktunaxa heritage in its design,” says Franco Anglesio, president of Coast Hotels and Resorts Ltd. “It is a dream of transferring a past experience into a modern reality.”

The Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council chose Coast Hotels to provide long-term operations management of the facilities. The hotel chain expects nothing but success for the new venture. According to Anglesio, “these days, people look at the history when choosing a destination site for holidays or banquets.” St. Eugene’s fits the bill.

Resort rooms are expected to run between \$110 and \$120 (off-season). “For that kind of money, you have to provide a certain level of service,” says Anglesio. In addition to high-quality rooms and suites, state-of-the-art teleconferencing services will be available in several of the nine seminar rooms.

For the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket people, the resort will provide a major source of employment. During the two-year construction period, over two hundred jobs will be created for the membership. Full-time resort operations will employ another 124 people.

In addition, local communities will reap the benefits of a projected \$1.3-to-2.6 million increase in annual tourism dollars and new small business opportunities will be created.

There is little doubt that the new resort will benefit the local community and the five Ktunaxa/Kinbasket member First Nations. The modern “road to the Mission” will help preserve the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket culture and bring it to the world.

Elder Anne Mary Joseph (1928-1994) expressed it all when she said, “...since it was within the St. Eugene Mission school that the culture of the Kootenay Indian was taken away, it should be within that building that it is returned.”



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The Seventh Generation Club is Here!



Seventh Generation Club Co-captains Gino Odjick of the Vancouver Canucks and Ivano Newbill of the Vancouver Grizzlies are flanked by the club's founding partners and youth who joined them to celebrate its launch.

A team effort by the First Nations Schools Association, Health Canada, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, B.C. Hydro and Orca Bay Sports & Entertainment has helped create an exciting new club for Aboriginal youth - the Seventh Generation Club! This club was formed to encourage First Nations kids to make healthy choices, participate in sports and the community, and stay in school. The club features mentor, career-for-a-day and pen-pal programs as well as field trips and a book club.

Membership gifts include a membership card, wall calendar, club handbook and newsletter. Members can participate in contests and

activities outlined in the newsletter. Prizes include the opportunity to be a ball girl or boy at a Grizzlies game, tickets to Canucks and Grizzlies games, and club clothing. How about joining just to learn new things? More than 1,000 Aboriginal kids already have. For your application, call (604) 990-9939 or fax (604)990-9949. Join the Club. Be a Seventh Generation kid!



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Restructuring Social Assistance within Aboriginal Communities

by *Renaë Morriseau*

It has often been said that conventional Canadian approaches to social assistance have failed Aboriginal people. While welfare is putting more cash resources into communities, the system is doing little to change the economic and social conditions that contribute to high and rising rates of dependency. The rate of social assistance dependency among First Nations is currently five times higher than in the mainstream population.

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), in partnership with the Assembly of First Nations, is scoping out the principles that will guide social welfare reform. Although Canada's overall income security arrangements are in a state of flux, this time of change provides an opportunity for Aboriginal people across the country to develop community strategies for reform pertinent to their needs, desires, and hopes for the future.

DIAND B.C. Region is taking a lead role nationally, with John Watson, Regional Director General, B.C. Region, and Cynthia Williams, Assistant Deputy Minister, Socio-Economic Policy and Programming, working closely with First Nations to help to recast the vision of social assistance as a program that helps employable people to achieve independence from the welfare system while still extending support with dignity to those who require it.

Social assistance reform comes at a time when B.C. First Nations are affirming and developing their self-government packages for treaty negotiation. Regardless of whether a First Nation is in the treaty process or not, Aboriginal communities are assessing future needs in public administration and labour market needs in lands and resources. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

(RCAP) recommends that “Aboriginal control over the design and administration of social assistance programs be the foundation of any reform of the social assistance system.”

The Income Security Reform Initiative presents an opportunity to introduce the kind of structural change called for in the RCAP report. It will address five key areas: policy, demonstration projects, data capacity that serves the needs of First Nations and federal/provincial requirements, labour market and jobs, and linkages to other federal strategies.

In British Columbia, DIAND has matched the province in lowering basic social assistance payments to employable single people and couples without children. Through directing these savings - approximately 2.2 million dollars for 1996/97 - to the Training/Employment Support Initiative (TESI), it is intended that social assistance recipients will develop the skills they need to enter vocational training, educational programs, or the work force. The year-end reports show that these savings were dedicated by First Nations to training in life skills and specific job skills such as occupational first aid, construction and computer training. TESI represents the first stage of welfare reform in B.C.

The next phase will involve working with First Nations who are interested in demonstration projects in their communities, and sharing information about the ‘best practices’ that are already in place. Dreamspeaker will keep readers informed as the Income Security Reform Initiative progresses.



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First Nations Youth Video Production Workshop

by *Renaë Morriseau*

The Gulf Island Film and Television School's first all-Native youth workshop.



The monsoon of creativity has a way of putting perspective to

even the most delicate of topics. For seventeen Native youth, their opinions and attitudes on society, cultural practices and social ills led them to produce six five-minute videos at the Gulf Island Film and Television School (GIFTS) on Galiano Island in September 1997.

This acclaimed new media school, led by Director George Harris, began in 1995. With over 150 scholarships and bursaries granted to B.C.'s next generation of filmmakers to date, GIFTS is dedicated to producing community-based media programming and providing broad-based access to media training. The First Nations Youth Video Production workshop was the first of its kind.

"It's the first time that we had a program that had a cultural identity," says Harris, "I didn't have any expectations about what their stories would be about, but I knew within six days they would have six videos that they would be proud of."

Participants were given a crash course on how to produce a documentary, drama or docu-drama. Improvisation exercises were used to formulate their scripts. Character analysis and story

structure allowed participants to choose their approach. The technical workshop gave them the skills to work the Hi 8 cameras, sound and lighting. Their work was then logged, edited and digitized on the D-Vision computer system

First Nation instructors with vast experience in film and television included Namgis filmmaker Barb Cranmer, Squamish video maker Cease Wyse and Cree/Saultaux filmmaker Renae Morriseau. Their skills in pre-production, production and post-production allowed participants to utilize a wealth of information to guide them through the video-making process.

“The program gave First Nations youth from across B.C. the tools to become independent filmmakers,” states Barb Cranmer. “And how to use the medium of video to tell their stories and give voice to their communities.”

Their productions dealt with cultural practices lost then regained in “Smudge” and cultural appropriation through a satirical docu-drama approach in “Many Deals from Manybucks.” Native youth on and off reserve and their relationships with Elders were explored in “Apples.” In “Pirate TV” Native youth take over a television signal and confront the media’s influence on Aboriginal concerns. In “Blood Café” a spin-off from the “X Files”, ‘Scummy and Moldy’ try to solve the murder of a chef.

Vern Bevis from Vancouver and Lucious Perrault from Victoria teamed up to produce a drama on suicide called “The Chain.” “I’ve lost two of my friends,” says Bevis, “Drugs and alcohol - partying - having a good time; somehow shit happens and my friends killed themselves. Because of that it causes a chain reaction.” Through special effects, stylized camera angles, and looped audio of the death scream they cut dramatically to John Doe, played by Bevis, lying on the floor with blood around him. “Ketchup and soy sauce works wonderfully,” notes Perrault, who directed “The Chain.”

The full program at GIFTS received funding from the B.C. Ministry responsible for Multiculturalism, the Department of Canadian Heritage, Vancity Savings, the Vancouver Foundation and private donors. Full subsidy was given to First Nations youth to live in a retreat setting on Galiano Island.

“Currently, GIFTS is seeking funding for a two-week First Nations Youth video program in 1998,” says Deblekha Guin, Special Programming Coordinator at GIFTS. “Our hope is to bring our students to the city to shoot for at least four days, allowing more time for story structure and editing time.”

Director George Harris believes that GIFTS on Galiano Island offers more than just the ideal location away from the pressures and

distractions of urban living. “It is also home to many writers, artists and entertainment professionals whose enthusiastic support enrich this unique learning environment.”

For more information on upcoming programs contact
1-800-813-9993 within B.C. or 1-250-539-3290.



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Blueprint for the Future

A Project of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation

The Blueprint for the Future conference is a series of Aboriginal youth career fairs which exposes Aboriginal youth to educational and career opportunities through interactions with Aboriginal and Canadian business leaders. Blueprint for the Future is a project of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, which has recently expanded its mandate. While the Foundation has traditionally provided financial assistance to Aboriginal students to pursue education opportunities in the arts and cultural industries, it has expanded to include support for business and science education, reflecting the growing need for support in these crucial development areas.



With over 1200 Aboriginal youth in attendance and 90 workshops to choose from, the Alberni District Secondary School planned its trip well. Home School Co-ordinator Shane Pointe (centre, back row) believes that the students - grades nine to eleven - received a well rounded look at their career options. "They knew what workshops they wanted to attend," says Pointe, "They were excited to leave our small community for the day, and go to

something that was specifically for them.”



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Aboriginal Youth Traveling the Information Highway

Tania Koenig-Gauchier

Six of Canada's Aboriginal youth are traveling a path - an information highway - to become future leaders, after working with an innovative summer project in Ottawa aimed at providing better opportunities for Aboriginal youth.

The Aboriginal Youth Network (AYN, a website), the United Youth of Turtle Island (UYTI, a charitable organization), and *Aboriginal Youth Today* (a national newspaper) teamed up to provide this unique training opportunity.

Initiated, designed, and delivered by Aboriginal youth groups, this project provided an opportunity for youth to address their needs. This grassroots approach to youth training and employment appears to have been an effective one. Tania Koenig-Gauchier, project manager, says, "As a group, we felt it was important that the youth have the ability to connect with their roots, community and peers. We didn't want them to just push paper for eight hours a day. This more balanced approach to their employment worked for us."

Each participant received computer training and then created his/her own personal homepage on the AYN site (www.ayn.ca). In addition, the youth were all given specific job titles and various tasks which were accomplished over the summer months.

Mike Henry (Ojibway, 17) and Justus Polson-Lahache (Algonquin/Mohawk, 15) worked on web page creation and design. They designed and added new features to the website such as news articles; an on-line guest book; and a scholarship, employment, and entrepreneurship section for Aboriginal youth. Justus also provided a fully-loaded website on Wu-Tang Clan for the enjoyment of all

the "rap" fans on the AYN.

Neegan Aaswakshin (Saulteaux Ojibway, 14), Winona Polson-Lahache (Algonguin/Mohawk, 17), and Chris Van Hartskamp (Cree, 23) worked as a group organizing, coordinating and hosting various activities for the United Youth of Turtle Island.

As a community events coordinator, Neegan spearheaded the events and activities for the UYTI youth group. She says, "It was hard at times, but we did it! I am proud of what we, the youth, were able to do on our own."

Winona, as a fundraiser/marketer, was in charge of researching potential private and public sector donors for the charity. She also designed press releases and acted as a liaison between the media and Aboriginal organizations. She says, "I was lucky to get this summer job, and we all learned a lot from it. I met a lot of Aboriginal youth on the Internet, and I had a lot of people e-mail me after they saw my homepage on the AYN."

Chris researched the possibility of establishing an Aboriginal youth healing facility and Aboriginal youth public housing in the Ottawa area. Chris was a perfect choice for the job because, having lived on the streets, he possesses intimate insight into the problems faced by the urban Aboriginal street youth. As a result of his work, negotiations and plans are now underway with Gignul Housing Corporation to form an Aboriginal youth housing unit in the Ottawa area.

As a journalist for *Aboriginal Youth Today*, Joe Parkins (Cree/Metis, 21) wrote various youth articles and acquired the experience and exposure he needed to further his writing career. Joe also did double duty as the project office manager, taking care of all the daily office operations, including conducting meetings and addressing employee concerns.

The most popular activity was meeting other youth from all over the world on Internet chat lines such as the ever-popular Native American Chat. Many friendships were formed, information shared and networking was accomplished, providing an important forum for youth to connect and dialogue with their peers.

At the end of the summer, Justus and Chris joined a walk with the Native Youth Movement from Ottawa to Sagkeeng First Nation in Manitoba. At the Sacred Assembly held there, they voiced their concerns about social and political issues affecting their peers. Chris says, "Walking with the Native Youth Movement opened my eyes a lot. It was cool meeting other youth who feel the same way I do. I also learned a lot about traditional Anishinabe ways, something I am not always able to learn in the city."

The project was jointly funded by the Department of Indian Affairs' Summer Student Career Placement Program and by Métis Training Initiatives. MicroWorks, an Ottawa-based computer networking company, provided the equipment and technical support..



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Klondike Shelter - Seton Lake Strikes Gold

by *Jolayne Madden-Marsh*

Seton Lake housing co-ordinator Cyril Sampson shows the versatility of Klondike cabins - the top part of the house is all Klondike. .



Michael Basarab is like the gold rush - he's assisting the Seton Lake First Nation in developing an economic opportunity. The Band bought the assets of Klondike Cabins Ltd. from Basarab and has already built six log homes for members living on the reserve just south of Lillooet in B.C.'s interior. "We are trying to change the economic development and housing situation with the Seton Lake Band," says Chief Garry John.

Basarab started making log homes and cabins with the purchase of a sawmill in the Yukon 23 years ago. His family-run business revolutionized the time-worn experience of living in drafty log homes. By adding two strips of Ethafoam gasket into grooves cut into each length of log, Basarab's custom-processed logs absorb the inevitable expansion and contraction logs undergo during extreme weather.

When the Seton Lake First Nation began a Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development housing demonstration project, things really got rolling. This project provided the First Nation with \$259,000 to develop an idea for community-based housing programs, with a focus on Aboriginal workers and local resources. The project was successful, the Band proving that log homes were the way to go for a good many reasons.

"We saw the opportunity to link up with Klondike and went for it,"

says Chief Garry John. The Seton Lake First Nation purchased all of the assets of Klondike Cabins and moved them from their home in Watson Lake, Yukon, to the reserve. "The Band members pitched right in and put up the plant building in a week or so," says Basarab.

A management agreement was signed between Klondike Cabins and the Seton Lake Band. Michael Basarab wasn't ready to leave the family business, so he assists the Band with industry regulations and helps secure sales and contracts. Dana, Michael's son, is the production co-ordinator, overseeing the mill and the work it does. On-the-job training is supplied for up to 13 employees (based on full-time mill work) all of which is handled by the Basarabs. It's a great deal for all involved.

When the Band held an information meeting and a vote on the potential of purchasing the assets of Klondike Cabins, members voted unanimously in favour of the purchase – with the provision that Seton Lake members benefit from the housing and get first shot at the jobs. The first run of the mill at the new location was staffed mostly by Seton Lake members, including two women who did routing. "They're fast, efficient, and accurate," says Basarab of female mill employees. Other positions held by Band members include the cut-off saw, drill and planer operators.

Northern white spruce and lodgepole pine are the favoured logs for homes because of their clear, fine grain (caused by the longer, slower growing period in the north) and their lower cost. All the wood used on the site is brought in from farther north by rail, as BC Rail goes right past the reserve's Band office. A lock-up kit, which is what most people buy, includes everything you need to build the house from the ground up, including subflooring and trusses, windows, doors and roofing. The pieces can be put together by a few friends in a weekend.

Klondike's unique product has attracted attention from as far away as Japan, England, New Zealand, Germany and Hong Kong. The company has designed and built log structures for, among others, a 367-square-foot cabin and a 3,000-square-foot home, city street planters and the exterior of the Whitehorse hockey arena. Klondike staff spend a lot of their marketing energy in trade and home shows in the west, trying to obtain contracts for more homes.

All this translates into good things for the Seton Lake First Nation. Klondike Shelter Ltd. will be able to provide housing and jobs for many Seton Lake members, and the economic spin-offs will affect members for years to come. Even the nearby First Nations can take advantage of the log homes. As Chief Garry John put it, "Neighboring Bands know we're willing to talk swap – x number

of truckloads of timber for new homes.” Now that’s real Klondike Gold!



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Sharing Knowledge at NEXUS - APEC'97

by Barbara Hager

Casino operators, forest products specialists, artists, battery pack rebuilders, air conditioning experts, clothing designers, ordinance disposal specialists, dude ranch operators and many others from across the country spotlighted their businesses at the NEXUS conference. Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies Call Centre Manager Tom Semaginis puts his mouth where his money is - the call centre business.



Hundreds of Aboriginal entrepreneurs from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States were among the thousands of delegates from the Pan Pacific region who gathered in Vancouver in November for Apec '97. As part of the NEXUS/APEC '97 conference, the Aboriginal contingent came together on Squamish traditional territory to display their products and services, make international sales and connections, and share motivational stories on how to maintain an Aboriginal identity in the global marketplace.

The Native Investment Trade Association (NITA) produced the conference and trade show, which was also known as "Global Indigenous Business", specifically to coincide with APEC. It became apparent at the two-day NITA event that Canadian Aboriginal business owners share many of the same goals and challenges as their counterparts among Native American, Maori and Aborigine entrepreneurs.

The trade show was open to the public and showcased an eclectic mix of exhibitors -- commercial businesses, community ventures and Aboriginal artists. Among the exhibitors who took advantage of the international audience at APEC were Northern Native Broadcasting Yukon, U'Mista Cultural Centre, Theytus Books, Tl'oh Forest Products, All Nations Trust Company, and Mahemigew Inc. The tremendous response by Aboriginal companies, organizations and artists to the trade show created the need for conference organizers to install a large tent at the entrance of the Squamish Centre for the overflow of exhibitors.

The products and services displayed at the trade show were diverse, and it was evident that Aboriginal business owners cater to both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal marketplace. This year's trade show was also a clear indication that while the hospitality industry (restaurants, ecotourism and hotels) and the arts (original art, reproductions, fashion) are still an important source of employment in Aboriginal Canada, there is strong growth in business services, technical and trade-based companies, communications, and food products.

Exhibitors promoting Aboriginal books, furniture, industrial material, cultural centres, record labels, and investment and business services, were as plentiful as the art and tourism ventures that are more typical of Aboriginal business conferences of the past.

While a steady flow of visitors attended the trade show, about 100 people spent two days at the NEXUS-APEC '97 conference at a nearby trade centre. Speakers from North America, New Zealand and Australia addressed a wide range of issues facing Aboriginal business owners.

The creation of jobs was a primary topic of discussion at the conference, both at the podium and among delegates in the audience. Most western countries have national unemployment rates of close to 10%; however, Aboriginal communities often have unemployment rates of 50% or higher.

It was clear during the two-day conference and trade show that Aboriginal people have an important role to play in the Global Village. Aboriginal businesses can register a powerful voice on an

international level by establishing and maintaining high standards of environmental and social responsibility in such areas as manufacturing, resource harvesting, and ecotourism. They can also look to Aboriginal business owners in other countries as potential partners, investors or importers. Perhaps most importantly, Aboriginal people in other Pan Pacific countries represent a viable customer base for the products and services offered by Canadian Aboriginal companies.

NEXUS/APEC '97 succeeded on many levels -- in terms of sheer numbers of exhibitors, and in the wide range of critical business-related issues discussed at the conference. Perhaps the greatest lesson to be learned at this international event was the realization that Aboriginal Canadians are not unique in their motivation and commitment to building a strong economic future for their families, villages, and nations. We have a great deal in common with our Aborigine, Maori and Native American colleagues, and conferences such as this are valuable in developing networks that will assist entrepreneurs in achieving economic goals on a personal, community and national level.



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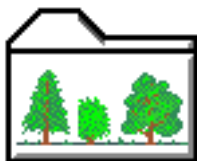
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Entrevue avec la ministre Jane Stewart

Jane Stewart, Ministre des Affaires Indiennes et du Nord



Le 7 janvier 1998, le gouvernement fédéral dévoilait son plan d'action *Rassembler nos forces* élaboré dans le but de renouveler la relation avec les peuples autochtones du Canada. Ce plan mise sur les principes de respect et de reconnaissance mutuels, de responsabilité et de partage qui ont été définis dans le *Rapport de la Commission royale sur les peuples autochtones*.

Rassembler nos forces se penche à la fois sur le passé et sur l'avenir. Il débute par une *Déclaration de réconciliation* qui reconnaît les erreurs et les injustices du passé, passe ensuite à une *Déclaration sur le renouveau* qui exprime la vision d'un avenir commun pour les Autochtones et les non-Autochtones et qui explique les quatre grands objectifs des mesures à prendre : renouveler les partenariats; renforcer l'exercice des pouvoirs par les Autochtones; établir une nouvelle structure financière; et renforcer les collectivités et les économies.

Le jour de l'annonce, Jane Stewart, ministre des Affaires indiennes et du Nord, déclarait : « Le plan d'action que je vous présente aujourd'hui se réduit à une simple chose : améliorer la vie des Autochtones de ce pays. »

Peu après l'annonce du plan d'action *Rassembler nos forces*, la ministre Stewart a bien voulu répondre aux questions suivantes, pour *Dreamspeaker*. Les réponses de la ministre reflètent l'esprit

qui anime le plan d'action *Rassembler nos forces*.

Madame la ministre, vous avez souvent parlé de la nécessité d'établir un nouveau partenariat avec les Premières nations du Canada. Dans le meilleur des mondes, à quoi devrait ressembler ce partenariat?

«J'aimerais favoriser un partenariat qui soit basé sur le respect mutuel, la responsabilité et le partage. Le partenariat que j'envisage suppose l'existence d'un rapport qui habilitera les collectivités autochtones à se diriger elles-mêmes. Il va leur donner la légitimité, le pouvoir et les ressources dont elles ont besoin pour se gouverner elles-mêmes.

Idéalement, plusieurs partenariats indépendants vont se former entre les Premières nations et les non-Autochtones, dans divers domaines. Par exemple, des partenariats entre les collectivités des Premières nations et le secteur privé ou les groupes professionnels, notamment les comptables et les enseignants, présentent des avantages pour les deux parties. J'ai hâte de voir ce genre de rapports s'établir spontanément et directement entre les parties intéressées.

Les partenariats entre les chefs autochtones et le gouvernement fédéral sont, je pense, basés sur les principes de la transparence, de la prévisibilité et de la responsabilisation. »

La responsabilisation est un élément important qu'on confond souvent, un peu négativement, avec la conformité. Quelle serait votre définition de la responsabilisation, à la lumière des nouveaux partenariats du MAINC avec les Premières nations et compte tenu de la tendance vers l'autonomie gouvernementale?

«Aujourd'hui, on demande au gouvernement de rendre compte de chaque dollar qui lui est attribué et d'en retirer un profit maximal. En cette ère de restrictions budgétaires, les Canadiens insistent - et ils ont raison de le faire - pour que cet argent soit administré prudemment, pour que des systèmes soient en place afin d'assurer une responsabilisation adéquate et pour que l'ensemble du processus soit ouvert et transparent.

Au cours des récentes années, la question de la responsabilisation financière des Premières nations a été mise bien en évidence, poussée par plusieurs faits nouveaux, le plus important étant la transition vers l'autonomie gouvernementale.

Le gouvernement fédéral a progressivement cédé aux Premières nations le contrôle des décisions de financement, et il a dû pour

cela assurer que la degré de responsabilité locale à l'égard de ces décisions était aussi augmenté. Cette responsabilisation repose sur les principes qui sont communs aux autres ordres de gouvernements du Canada : la transparence, la divulgation et les voies de recours. Quels que soient leurs besoins particuliers ou peu importe la façon dont elles conçoivent leurs programmes, les Premières nations doivent respecter ces principes.

Je peux affirmer sans hésitation que les Premières nations sont généralement favorables à l'idée d'accorder à leurs gouvernements plus de ressources pour leur permettre de répondre aux besoins de leurs collectivités - et d'accroître la responsabilité vis-à-vis des membres de la collectivité.

Les mesures que nous élaborons pour assurer un degré adéquat de responsabilité - en partenariat avec les Premières nations - sont un bon départ. Il faut maintenant en parler aux Canadiens.»

Selon vous, comment les recommandations de la Commission royale sur les peuples autochtones (CRPA) vont-elles s'incorporer au plan d'action du gouvernement fédéral pendant les prochaines années?

«Les recommandations de la CRPA vont servir de principes directeurs pour les activités futures du gouvernement fédéral à l'égard des questions autochtones.

Les changements vont porter sur la nécessité de coordonner les approches de tous les ministères fédéraux en ce qui concerne les questions autochtones, et de promouvoir la collaboration avec les gouvernements provinciaux et territoriaux.

Je pense que nos efforts devraient être concentrés sur quatre secteurs, soit : renouveler les partenariats et tendre vers le genre de relation que nous venons tout juste de décrire; renforcer les collectivités autochtones, notamment déployer des efforts à l'égard des questions fondamentales que sont le logement, les réseaux d'aqueduc et d'égouts, de sorte que les collectivités puissent subvenir à leurs besoins et se développer; renforcer l'exercice des pouvoirs des Autochtones de sorte que les Premières nations disposent des pouvoirs et des ressources nécessaires pour gérer leurs propres affaires; établir une nouvelle relation financière basée sur la stabilité et la responsabilité et tenant compte des méthodes créatives de développement économique des Premières nations et de leur mode de gestion des recettes.»

Les lecteurs auront remarqué que ces quatre secteurs correspondent aux quatre objectifs de *Rassembler nos forces*. Ne manquez pas les prochains numéros de *Dreamspeaker*; nous

publierons d'autres articles sur le plan d'action *Rassembler nos forces*. D'ici là, vous pouvez obtenir plus d'information sur le site Web du MAINC - <http://www.inac.gc.ca>



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