



July 6, 2020

Press Release: For Immediate Release

Exploratory Discussions Update

July 6, 2020 Corner Brook— On November 15, 2018, the Government of Canada and the Federation of Newfoundland Indians entered into exploratory discussions to “...address outstanding concerns regarding members of the Canadian Armed Forces, veterans, RCMP and FNI members or members of other Mi’kmaq organizations who were named in the 2008 agreement and denied Founding Membership.”

Over the subsequent 18 months, the FNI and Canada have held regular meetings (face-to-face and by teleconference); however, the 2019 federal election and COVID-19 have interrupted the pace of the exploratory discussions.

President Mitchell stated, “The Federation of Newfoundland Indians, like many others, are frustrated with the pace of the exploratory discussions. Despite these challenges, the parties have made progress, but external factors are slowing our work. We know people are looking for answers and solutions, and we are working as fast as possible given the constraints before us.”

In July 2019, the Federation of Newfoundland Indians and the Qalipu Mi’kmaq First Nation Band passed resolutions seeking to have the applications of individuals who, on the date of the Band’s formation, were members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and veterans of those forces, reassessed on the basis that they met the group acceptance criterion due to their being honourably accepted by the Band as Members of the Mi’kmaq Group of Indians. Those resolutions were forwarded to the Minister of Crown and Indigenous Relations that same month and then routed to the Minister of Indigenous Services after that department assumed responsibility for the file.

President Mitchell added, “At this point in the discussions, we are waiting for the Government of Canada to respond to our July 2019 resolutions. Once we have that response, assuming it is satisfactory, we can begin designing and implementing a process that would see members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and veterans of those forces, reassessed. I look forward to the day when we can make an announcement to this effect, and I consistently express to Canada how important it is to bring this part of our discussions to a successful conclusion.”



The FNI and Canada continue to explore possible solutions regarding FNI members or members of other Mi'kmaq organizations who were named in the 2008 agreement and denied Founding Membership. Since COVID-19, however, discussions around this group have not proceeded. We hope to resume these important discussions in the near future once Canada's representatives obtain direction regarding possible solutions.

-30-

Media:

Alison White
Communications Officer
Qalipu First Nation
709-634-5163
awhite@qalipu.ca