



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Quebec Native Women supports NWAC's position for a proper consultation process before the adoption of a *Family Homes on Reserve and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act*.

Kahnawake - March 7 - Quebec Native Women would like to express our support for the Native Women's Association of Canada's (NWAC) position concerning the introduction of *The Family Homes on Reserve and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act* by the federal Government.

QNW is disappointed that the short 2-month consultation period that did not allow for proper consultation of all communities is the basis for the new legislation introduced by the Federal Government. "Most laws are given at least one year" said Ellen Gabriel, President of QNW. "The manner in which this was done did not allow for proper consultations of all community members and ignored the recommendations of the Report of the Ministerial Representative Matrimonial Real Property Issues on Reserve submitted by Wendy Grant-John to Jim Prentice, then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. In fact the legislation does not take into account the basic cultural values of Indigenous people nor the realities currently facing Aboriginal communities" she added.

The Federal Government introduced this legislation in spite of the recommendations of ALL Aboriginal groups, as stated in NWAC's press release. QNW believes that the Government is acting too hastily to alleviate the scrutiny of the international community. It lacks the consideration of looking into the future and how it affects Aboriginal women and our communities. "This is only one of many parts of the Indian Act that was designed to undermine and discriminate against Aboriginal women" says Ms. Gabriel. Therefore the Federal Government should respect the recommendations of Aboriginal organizations and groups who took the time to consider the impacts of this issue upon communities but who also desire to create a regime based upon the jurisprudence of Aboriginal nations.

In fact this is not the first time Aboriginal peoples and organizations have not been consulted properly - we just have to look at the issue of proper consultations revolving around Bill C-21 and the repeal of Section 67 of the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Aboriginal people, women in particular, want this legislation that will end the centuries of discrimination and inequality faced by Aboriginal women through the Indian Act: but based upon our terms and not on a unilateral decision by the Federal Government that ignores our Indigenous values and also ignores non-legislative measures.

QNW calls upon the solidarity of all Aboriginal leaders to work together with Aboriginal women's organizations, to help create a proper MRP regime based upon cultural values, customs as well as human rights.

Respectfully,

Ellen Gabriel

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