

Summary of Adopted Resolutions

The following pages offer a summary of the adopted resolutions on Aboriginal issues by the Liberal Party of Canada. Extending over a twelve-year period, these resolutions are primarily the result of the diligent efforts of the members of the Aboriginal Peoples' Commission of the Liberal Party of Canada.

2005 Biennial Convention

Repatriation

WHEREAS the Government of Canada passed legislation in 1884, known as the anti-potlatch law banning cultural practices for Aboriginal people in Canada until 1951, that resulted in more than 50 arrests, jail time and the confiscation of hundreds of artifacts during this era;

WHEREAS the practice of the early physical anthropologists removed thousands of Aboriginal human remains for study primarily in Canada and in the United States without prior consent of the families of the deceased during this era;

WHEREAS collectors from around the world took advantage of the anti-potlatch law and aggressively acquired for museums, anthropologists and private collectors a large portion of Northwest Coast Aboriginal cultural property during this era;

WHEREAS two museums were built on Vancouver Island in 1979 and 1980 as one of the Government of Canada's conditions to repatriate a portion of a "Potlatch Collection" that had been confiscated as a result of the anti-potlatch law of this era;

WHEREAS as many as 40 repatriation agreements have or will be negotiated during this decade to address the illegal, unethical and immoral confiscation and collection of Northwest Coast artifacts, regalia and human remains;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Liberal Party of Canada urge the Government of Canada to act swiftly to begin drafting clear policy and legislation to provide core funding to maintain the existing conditions of repatriation, and to direct Canadian Heritage to set up an Aboriginal Museum's Assistance Program that would aid in the redress of this unconscionable injustice.

CANADA'S NORTHERN STRATEGY AND NORTHERN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WHEREAS the Government of Canada recently announced two important initiatives: Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development and the Northern Strategy, with an initial investment of \$90 million and \$120 million respectively, which will be split between Canada's three northern territories; and

WHEREAS these investments and subsequent investments in these other northern initiatives have the potential to involve drastic changes to the north and northerners' way of life; and

WHEREAS there has been no real consultation with northerners and no focused strategic planning done to guide the investment of these funds;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Liberal Party of Canada urge the Government of Canada to undertake a comprehensive strategic planning exercise involving northern residents and governments before investing any significant amount of money under the Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development and the Northern Strategy initiatives;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Liberal Party of Canada urge the Government of Canada to ensure this strategic planning is guided by principles of sustainable development, community capacity-building and governance while focusing on long-term, innovative solutions which achieve healthy and safe communities, a clean environment, and a diversified economy.

ABORIGINAL CONSULTATION

WHEREAS the Government of Canada is legally and morally obligated to consult with Aboriginal people when changing or formulating policies and legislation that have an impact on Aboriginal people and their rights; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has no consistent comprehensive policy for engaging in consultations with Aboriginal people; and

WHEREAS a federal Aboriginal consultation policy would enhance the consistency and legitimacy of consultations with Aboriginal people; and

WHEREAS the Aboriginal people should be involved in the formulation of such a policy; and

WHEREAS a process must be identified by which the Aboriginal people can be involved in creating and formulating a comprehensive federal policy for engaging in consultations with Aboriginal people; and

WHEREAS the Aboriginal Peoples Commission consists of Aboriginal people with the desire and expertise to establish Aboriginal policy direction and work in implementing the Aboriginal platform of the Liberal Party;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Liberal Party of Canada is committed to engaging Aboriginal people and their organizations including the Aboriginal Peoples' Commission, in the creation and formulation of a comprehensive federal Aboriginal Consultation Policy;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Liberal Party of Canada urge the Prime Minister to develop a policy on consultation with the Aboriginal groups, provinces and territories for approval at the next First Ministers Conference on Aboriginal issues.

Aboriginal Representation in the House of Commons and the Senate

WHEREAS Aboriginal people face extreme challenges in advocating and promoting the social challenges that face Aboriginal people in the Government of Canada;

WHEREAS Aboriginal people have been historically excluded from the democratic process in Canada and have only recently gained the right to vote;

WHEREAS Aboriginal people constitute a significant portion of constituents in different regions of Canada and 4.4 percent of the Canadian population;

WHEREAS Aboriginal people could have 14 Aboriginal representatives in the House of Commons, and 5 Aboriginal senators, if changes were made to include Aboriginal people in the democratic process, on an inclusive basis;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Liberal Party of Canada encourage the Government of Canada to conduct a study, through Elections Canada, to identify the legislative requirements for the installation of Aboriginal people as members of Parliament and as senators on an inclusive and proportional basis;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Liberal Party of Canada encourage the Government of Canada to appoint five Aboriginal people to the Senate before the next federal election.

2000

Aboriginal Youth Strategies

It resolves that the Liberal Party of Canada encourage the federal government to affirm and maintain its historic and fiduciary role by ensuring the well being of Aboriginal children and youth. It invites the federal government to participate in ongoing policy development, research advocacy and funding to support the development of Aboriginal children, the youth agenda, and post-secondary education. It provides for the design of

Aboriginal suicide prevention initiatives. Finally, it recommends the transfer of responsibility for the provision of youth programs and services for Aboriginal people at resource levels that meet the needs of all Aboriginal children and youth.

National Housing

It resolves that the Liberal Party of Canada encourage the federal government to follow through with previous recommendations and priority resolutions that called for the transfer of all jurisdiction and resources to a nationally constituted Aboriginal housing authority that should be empowered to address the issues of affordability, access, adequacy, home ownership and core need for all Aboriginal Canadians in the new millennium. It was also resolved that the Liberal Party of Canada encourage the federal government to ensure that this nationally constituted body enter into delivery agreements with all existing regional and community based aboriginal housing authorities and be resourced to develop an effective and self-determining Aboriginal housing delivery program.

Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Tribunal

It resolves that the Liberal Party of Canada urge the federal government to support the enactment of legislation to establish an Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Tribunal with the authority to mediate disputes and make binding decisions on Aboriginal and treaty rights to expedite the settlement of claims in a manner that will uphold the honour of the Crown.

1998

National Aboriginal Children & Youth Strategy

It resolves for the development of a dedicated Aboriginal component within the National Children & Youth Initiative. It provides for the transfer of responsibility for youth programs to Aboriginal people. It provides for ongoing policy development, research, advocacy and funding capacity to support the development of Aboriginal children and youth agendas. Finally, it requires the establishment of an Active Measures Fund jointly managed by the federal government and Aboriginal people to facilitate the development of a national longitudinal survey of Aboriginal children and youth.

Aboriginal Economic Development

It resolves for support of Aboriginal business and economic initiatives, including facilitating increased involvement of the private sector in Aboriginal development through the use of federal tax incentives. It provides for enhanced support of Aboriginal trade including the recognition of Aboriginal traditional and commercial trading practices and rights under international agreements and treaties. It provides for the development of

an ongoing Aboriginal Economic Development Round Table involving senior economic and development Ministers and Aboriginal People to guide developmental initiatives.

Support of the Inherent Right to Self-Government

It resolves for full support of the participation of Aboriginal people in national unity initiatives. It invites the federal government to commence discussions with other orders of government and Aboriginal peoples on the future recognition and elaboration of Aboriginal and treaty rights. It invites the federal government to establish an independent inherent right Appeals Advocate to promote and defend the existence of Aboriginal and treaty rights.

1996

Aboriginal Fiscal Relations

It resolves to develop a process on fiscal relations between Aboriginal people and other orders of government. It resolves to review whether and how the existing fiscal and taxation system can be tailored to improve the development prospects of Aboriginal people. It provides for consultation on various issues, such as uneven and uncertain application of the goods and Services Tax. It provides for the appointment of a Director of Taxation to commence discussions with representatives of Aboriginal people on the nature and scope of the consultation process.

Aboriginal trapping, fishing and hunting rights

It resolves that the federal government enter into discussions with Aboriginal people to renew the fur protection and promotion strategy under the direction and control of Aboriginal people. It suggests strengthening access to inland and coastal fish resources. It suggests a review of the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy, the development of alternative marketing techniques and more consultative mechanisms. It provides for the development of a strategy to recognize and protect the hunting rights of all Aboriginal peoples.

Land Claims

It resolves for the creation of an independent Indian Claims Commission with effective facilitation and mediation roles. It recommends an amendment to the land claims policy in order to provide access to all Aboriginal peoples. It suggests the federal government work with Aboriginal people to set out a finite time frame for conducting and concluding the review.

1994

Inherent Right to Self-Government

It resolves three resolutions on the inherent right of self-government. It resolves that the Liberal Party recommend a votable resolution that the inherent right to self-government is an existing Aboriginal right. It resolves the Liberal Party recognize the contribution of the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien in the development of Aboriginal policy and law. It recommends that the Liberal Party work closely with the Aboriginal Peoples' Commission of the Liberal Party of Canada in the implementation of the Aboriginal platform. It resolves that the Liberal Party urge the federal government to honour treaty obligations by recognizing the ongoing fiduciary responsibilities of the Crown. It resolves the Liberal Party recommend the federal government establish a process for the transition to self-government.

Aboriginal Platform

It resolves that the Liberal Party develop an action plan to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the implementation of the Aboriginal platform. This platform consisted of a series of priority resolutions and the inherent right of self-government, treaties and claims, and Aboriginal affairs developed at the 1992 biennial convention.

Aboriginal Land Claims

It resolves that the Liberal Party recognize the inherent right to self-government to include culture, language, education, health, social development, natural resources and justice.

It resolves that the Liberal Party include Treaty First nations in the implementation of the inherent right to self-government. Finally, it recommends that the Liberal Party urge the federal government to resolve the Lubicon Cree land and compensation claim.

Aboriginal Community Development

It resolves that the Liberal Party redesign its economic and employment initiatives to support Aboriginal community development. It recommends support measures to enhance access to Aboriginal community development projects. It recommends, through tax incentives, promotion of economic development through First Nation controlled corporations. It recommends consultation with aboriginal communities on the issue of housing. It recommends that the Liberal Party support consultation on increasing Aboriginal access to international markets.

1992

Inherent Right of Self-Government

It resolves that the Liberal Party entrench the Aboriginal right to self-government within the Canadian constitution. It recommends the creation of a senior Ministry of Aboriginal Peoples and First Nations Relations to oversee the implementation of self-government. It suggests that the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development become a subsidiary department, maintaining responsibilities such as program delivery. It suggests that senior management be replaced with qualified Aboriginal people.

Treaties and Land Claims

It resolves that the Liberal Party amend the land claims process, in particular doing away with specific and comprehensive claims classification, the inclusion of the right to self-government, the removal of extinguishment from the claims process and the development of an Independent Commission. The Commission would have such features as a composition of individuals selected by Aboriginal people and the federal government, responsibility for facilitating and chairing negotiations and providing funding to First Nations for research and negotiations.

Aboriginal Affairs

It resolves that the Liberal Party develop various programs for the implementation of the Aboriginal right to self-government. These programs include a separate Aboriginal justice system, increasing Indian education services and resources and a national program to deal with the dismal housing situation for Aboriginal peoples. It suggests the Liberal Party reject the imposition of goods and Services Taxes to Aboriginal people. Finally, it recommends greater involvement by Aboriginal people in the policy and management process of the Liberal Party.

Justice (recognition of Louis Riel)

It resolves that the Liberal Party introduce a bill recognizing Louis Riel as a Father of Confederation.