

## **APPEAL COURT GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO LABRADOR SCHOOLS CLASS ACTION**

In a decision released today, the Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal upheld a lower court decision granting certification of class action status to five related residential school class actions.

While the legacy of residential schools also in Canada was addressed by political and legal settlement in 2006, individuals who attended schools in Newfoundland and Labrador were excluded from the settlement. Today's decision confirms that claims against the Government of Canada respecting the operation of schools attended by Inuit, Innu and Métis persons and located in Cartwright, Northwest River, St. Anthony, Nain and Makkovik, can proceed as class actions.

The claims, which have not yet been proven in court, allege that the Government of Canada participated in a scheme to obliterate aboriginal languages, traditions and beliefs in Labrador, through requirement that school children reside at institutions isolated from their families and communities. The claims allege negligence and breach of fiduciary duty.

Lawyers for the class members estimate the class size at 5,000 to 6,000 living members. Up to 4,000 class members are constituents of the Nunatsiavut Government.

Spokesman Danny Pottle, an official with the Nunatsiavut Government, called on the Government of Canada to come to the negotiating table and drop its policy of excluding Labrador Inuit, Innu and Métis from the national reconciliation process. The Nunatsiavut Government is not a party to the class actions, but supports the class actions as being in the interests of a substantial number of its constituents.

For more information on this class proceeding, call:

**Danny Pottle**

Minister of Finance  
Nunatsiavut Government

709-899-4132 (c)

**Steven Cooper**

Ahlstrom Wright Oliver & Cooper LLP  
80 Chippewa Road, Suite 200  
Sherwood Park, AB T8A 4W6

scooper@awoc.ca

780-464-7477  
780-918-7964 (c)

**Ches Crosbie, Q.C.**

Ches Crosbie Barristers  
169 Water Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
St. John's, NL A1C 1B1

ccrosbie@chescrosbie.com

709-579-4000

**Kirk Baert**

Koskie Minsky LLP  
20 Queen Street West  
Suite 900, Box 52  
Toronto, ON M5H 3R3

kbaert@kmlaw.ca

416-595-2117