



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.

Press release
For immediate distribution

Laurent Commission Report: Taking Actions for Indigenous Children

Kahnawake, May 4th 2021 —The *Laurent Commission on Children's Rights and Youth protection* (hereafter CSDEPJ), whose mandate is to examine the youth's protection services through different intervention networks in Quebec, is a relief for Indigenous peoples.

On February 5th 2020, Quebec Native Women (hereafter QNW) published a report to the Special Commission. In this memoir, we reiterated the need to implement Viens Commission's call for actions related to the youth's protection services. We also recommended a jurisdiction transfer of the Indigenous youth protection services.

Following the release of the CSDEPJ report, we are noticing that a majority of QNW's recommendations is present and congruent with our memoir's recommendations. Therefore, QNW is in favor of Laurent Commission's report. Although Chapter 9 of CSDEPJ, a section dedicated specifically to Indigenous youth and children's protection, is only 2 pages-long, QNW nevertheless considers it to be complete.

Moreover, our organisation welcomes the report's recommendation to, once again, implement Viens Commission and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' (hereafter NIMMIWG) call for actions which we are ongoingly addressing in our daily struggles. As indicated in our memoir, the implementation of Viens Commission's call of actions is imperative and a pressing concern.

" *Viens Commission and the NIMMIWG inquiry both have shed light on preoccupying observations and data that have been known for a long time. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada have been equally severe on the functioning of social and legal services, as well as the Indigenous youth's protection services.* " This quote from the CSDEPJ's report summary explains and recognizes the importance of taking action for Indigenous children as to respect and enact First Nations and Inuit's right to self-determination and governance autonomy.

Considering that at the current time, there is no entity or organization that specifically looks after the rights and well-being of Indigenous children in Quebec, the CSDEPJ proposes to appoint a Commissioner who will oversee the rights and well-being of children in Quebec. The latter will be supported by a second commissioner who is exclusively dedicated to the well-being and rights of Indigenous children. This assistant commissioner would work until the Indigenous nations themselves set up such institutions. The establishment of such a commissioner will make it possible to counter the over-representation of indigenous children in the child welfare system and to respect the distinctive values and culture of the communities. QNW is pleased to see that this report maintains that the preservation of Indigenous cultural identity is a fundamental right. Cultural displacement has a major impact on the development, health and lives of our children.

"Self-determination in youth protection is inseparable from the well-being of Indigenous children in Quebec. Several commissions have already addressed these issues and the solutions are known. It is time to take action." This excerpt from the report tabled on Monday clarifies that it is not necessary to redo the work of previous commissions of inquiry, but rather to continue the process and avoid a discriminatory application of the *Youth Protection Act* towards members of Indigenous communities.

As mentioned in our brief, QNW believes that in order for Indigenous communities to regain some confidence in the colonialist system in which they find themselves, it is essential that they be included in the development of self-determination in child welfare. We are therefore very supportive of the idea of self-determination so that each community is able to manage its own services. In this way, these services will be more culturally appropriate and representative of each community's particularities.

Quebec Native Women applauds the work of the Commissioners and would like to thank them for the exclusive attention paid to First Nations and Inuit in Chapter 9: *"I think there are going to be some big changes,"* Viviane Michel, President of Quebec Native Women.

-30-

Source:

Doreen Petiquay Barthold
Communication Officer

Quebec Native Women
Business Complex, River Road
C.P. 1989, Kahnawake (Québec) J0L 1B0
[514-757-1508](tel:514-757-1508) | communication@faq-qnw.org