

Ministre des Affaires indiennes et
du Nord canadien et interlocuteur fédéral
auprès des Métis et des Indiens non inscrits



Minister of Indian Affairs and
Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor
for Métis and Non-Status Indians

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H4

JAN 19 2005

Ms. Liz White
Mr. Ron Kaplansky
Trustees
Lubicon Legal Defence Fund
321 Wellesley Street East
TORONTO ON M4X 1H2

Dear Ms. White and Mr. Kaplansky:

This is in response to your co-signed letter dated September 16, 2004, received in my office on November 22, 2004, in which you share your concerns regarding the land claim of the Lubicon Lake Indian Nation. I also note that you provided me with a package of documents related to the claim. Thank you for this information and your words of congratulations on my appointment as Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians.

As my predecessor informed you last March, this government remains firmly committed to a just settlement of the land claim of the Lubicon Lake Indian Nation. The federal negotiating team is equally committed to reaching a settlement of this long outstanding claim.

Canada and Alberta have successfully concluded 11 treaty land entitlement claims with other First Nations in Alberta totaling in excess of \$200 million. In addition, Canada has concluded settlements on over 40 specific claims with 18 First Nations all over Alberta, not to mention the hundreds of settlements achieved in the rest of Canada.

Canada has always negotiated, and will continue to negotiate, in good faith. Canada has demonstrated its support for these negotiations by providing millions of dollars to the Lubicon Lake Indian Nation to support its participation in the negotiation process as well as assigning extremely capable senior public servants and Chief Negotiators, chosen from outside the Public Service, to represent Canada over the past 25 years.

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Canada

Negotiations over the past six years have resulted in substantial progress on a number of key issues including membership and all aspects of the detailed and very complex negotiations regarding the construction of a new community at Lubicon Lake. Canada has also made a significant offer (over and above our offer on compensation) toward the establishment of a permanent special fund under Lubicon control to sponsor future economic development opportunities for the Lubicon so that they can be largely self-sufficient after the land claims settlement. Canada and Alberta have also honored the 1988 Grimshaw Accord which provides the Lubicon with a 95-square mile reserve land base. In fact, the offer made to the Lubicon on land by Canada and Alberta is actually better than the 1988 offer.

The settlement of the Lubicon Lake Indian Nation Claim remains a priority for the Government of Canada; however, there is more involved in reaching a settlement than the desire for one. All parties must be prepared to compromise. Canada wants a settlement that is fair to all parties, including other First Nations and the Canadian taxpayers. I am pleased with the progress that has been achieved to date and hope that all parties to the negotiations will recognize its significance and build on it to achieve a final settlement.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Scott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Honourable Andy Scott, PC, MP