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Nov. 24/81

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MINISTER OF JUSTICE  
MINISTRE DE LA JUSTICE  
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TO HON. JEAN CHRETIEN, MINISTER OF JUSTICE:

LAST NIGHT YOU ANOUNCED TO THE HOUSE THAT YOU HAD STRUCK AN AGREEMENT WITH THE PROVINCES TO REINSTATE SECTION 34 WITH THE ADDED WORD :EXISTING: TO APPEAR IN THE TEXT.

WE UNDERSTAND THAT YOU BELIEVE THAT THE ADDITION OF THIS WORD DOES NOT CHANGE THE INTENT AND MEANING OF THE TEXT OF SECTION 34 WHICH WAS BEFORE THE HOUSE AND APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY EARLIER THIS YEAR.

WE, HOWEVER, HAVE A CONCERN THAT THE ADDITION OF THIS WORD TO THE TEXT MAY, IN FACT, BE A LIMITING FACTOR WITH REGARD TO CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION OF RIGHTS CURRENTLY UNDER NEGOTIATION THROUGH THE CLAIMS PROCESS. WE MAY VERY WELL REQUIRE FURTHER CLARIFICATION OR ELABORATION TO TAKE THIS IMPORTANT ASPECT OF OUR RIGHTS INTO PROPER CONSIDERATION IN THE CONSTITUTION.

WE WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE TOWARDS THE RESOLUTION OF OBTAINING THE RECOGNITION AND AFFIRMATION OF ABORIGINAL AND TREATY RIGHTS OF THE INDIAN, INUIT AND METIS PEOPLES OF CANADA.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR EFFORTS TO DATE TO RESOLVE THIS MOST PRESSING ISSUE. WE DID CALL YOUR OFFICE THIS MORNING TO REQUEST A MEETING WITH YOU. WE WOULD APRECIATE YOUR ADVICE AS TO THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY FOR A MEETING TODAY.

ON BEHALF OF THE ABORIGINAL RIGHTS COALITION:

- LOUIS (SMOKEY) BRUYERE, NCC
- CHARLIE WATT, ICNI
- GEORGES ERASMUS, DENE NATION
- DAVE PORTER, CYI
- JANE GOTTFRIEDSON, NWAC
- BILL LEE, NAFC

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