

FIRST MINISTERS' CONFERENCE
ON
ABORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

STATEMENT BY SANDRA LOVELACE
ON BEHALF OF
THE INDIAN WOMEN OF NEW BRUNSWICK

STATEMENT BY SANDRA LOVELACE ON BEHALF OF THE NATIVE WOMEN
OF NEW BRUNSWICK

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE PREMIER OF NEW BRUNSWICK AND THE
PRIME MINISTER FOR GIVING ME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS
THE VIEWS OF NATIVE WOMEN OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

WE HAVE BEEN SITTING AT THIS HISTORICAL ASSEMBLY AND WE
HAVE BEEN HEARING FROM OUR NATIVE LEADERS ABOUT UNITY,
SELF-GOVERNMENT AND BUILDING NATIONS, BUT IN FACT NATIONS
CANNOT BE BUILT WITHOUT OUR NATIVE WOMEN. WE ARE THE FIRST
TEACHERS TO OUR CHILDREN WHO ARE TOMORROW'S LEADERS.

NATIVE WOMEN HAVE BEEN FORCED TO TAKE A STAND ON ENTRENCH-
MENT OF EQUALITY ON SECTION 35 OF YOUR CONSTITUTION. WE
MUST INSURE THAT NATIVE WOMEN PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF OUR INDIAN SELF-GOVERNMENT. DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST NATIVE WOMEN HAS BEEN GOING ON SINCE THE ENFORCE-
MENT OF THE INDIAN ACT BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

SINCE MY CASE WAS RULED IN OUR FAVOUR, ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME
THE INJUSTICE SUFFERED BY NATIVE WOMEN AND THEIR DESCENDANTS
WAS RECTIFIED? WE ALL HAVE TO STAND TOGETHER TO BUILD UNITY.

UNDER ARTICLE 2 OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE
ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
CANADA IS COMMITTED TO EMBODY THE PRINCIPLE OF THE EQUALITY
OF MEN AND WOMEN IN OUR NATIONAL CONSTITUTION AND TO TAKE
"ALL APPROPRIATE MEASURES, INCLUDING LEGISLATION, TO MODIFY
OR ABOLISH EXISTING LAWS, REGULATIONS, CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES
WHICH CONSTITUTE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN".

WE, THE NATIVE WOMEN, FEEL NO ONE SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO
DISCRIMINATE. I THINK EVEN GOD WOULD AGREE WITH ME.