

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL LAW SECTION

JEFFREY HARRIS, CHAIR

The Section has been extremely active this year. We met with the Department of Justice in October. That same weekend, as a result of a letter sent to the Minister responsible for Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC), several Aboriginal Law and ADR Section executive members had a very productive meeting with Minister Goodale and his officials in Ottawa. We discussed serious concerns and potential improvements to the program designed by government to resolve claims.

We held a follow-up meeting with Mario Dion, Deputy Minister, in April 2004 in Montreal. As a result of these discussions, we submitted Resolution 04-08-A for consideration by CBA Council in Winnipeg, recommending that CBA urge the Canadian government to broaden the scope of the Residential Schools Dispute Resolution Process to include automatic base compensation for loss of language and culture, and for minor physical and sexual abuse, for all claimants.

The Section was involved in the April 2004 letter to the Secretary of the Federal Court of Appeal Rules Committee commenting on the Committee's March 2004 discussion paper on offers to settle (CBA submission 04-14).

Excellent liaison with the Indigenous Bar Association (IBA) continues. The IBA addressed members at our April meeting concerning appointments to the Supreme Court of Canada. As a result of the Section's subsequent discussions, we submitted a resolution for Winnipeg (04-04-A), recommending that the CBA urge the Government of Canada to recognize all three founding peoples of Canada in appointments to the Supreme Court of Canada.

In collaboration with International Law, we held a National CLE program in Montreal in April 2004 entitled "*Despite State Borders: The Evolving Importance of International Law and Institutions to Indigenous Peoples and their Public and Private Partners*". We schedule our annual Section meeting the same weekend, to make activities and information more accessible to members. Approximately 30 attended in Montreal.

The Section organized a CLE program entitled "*Fiduciaries: Beware the 'F' Word*", and a Section business meeting August 18 in conjunction with the CLC in Winnipeg.

Our latest newsletter was delivered electronically to 785 members in June 2004.

Highlights - 2004-2005

- Spring 2005 CLE program - Ottawa location proposed
- Increased legislation and law reform work; October meeting with DOJ
- CLE program in conjunction with CBA CLC & Expo in Vancouver in 2005.
- Section meeting open to members April 2005 and August 2005

- Increased liaison and collaboration with Indigenous Bar Association and other relevant organizations
- Web content development and Section E-Newsletter.