

Welcome to our Inaugural Issue

Welcome to the first edition of the *FNFI Update*. This newsletter will be produced on a regular basis to keep First Nations and other interested parties informed and up-to-date on developments concerning the First Nations Fiscal Institutions Initiative (FNFI). As part of the FNFI, a *First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act* (Bill C-19) was introduced into Parliament in December 2002 and we will be actively tracking its progress.

The next issue of *FNFI Update* is currently in the works and we look forward to keeping you updated. Your comments, questions and ideas for future editions are always welcome and can be sent to mail@fnfi.ca.

New Act Introduced into Parliament

On Monday, December 2, 2002 at 3:00 p.m., the *First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act* was introduced into the House of Commons as Bill C-19. This was the first of three readings.

Following the reading, a press conference was held and was attended by Harold Calla, Chief Tom Bressette, Deanna Hamilton, Manny Jules and Minister Nault. Following the press conference, Manny Jules and Minister Nault gave a number of interviews to a wide range of media. Memorable highlights included CTV's Mike Duffy referring to the introduction of Bill C-19 as an "historic day in Parliament" and Minister Nault's acknowledgement that the federal government's fiduciary obligation will not be diminished by the legislation.

Second reading concluded on February 25, 2003 with the Bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources.

Key Media Support C-19

The introduction of Bill C-19 in the House of Commons gave the media across the country its first opportunity to review and comment on this important legislative initiative.

Reactions were favourable with the media quickly recognizing the significance of establishing First Nation fiscal institutions to provide First Nation governments with the tools necessary to establish the economic basis to a better future.

An article in the December 2002 issue of *Windspeaker* applauded the move forward and took issue with the AFN Special Chiefs'

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Key Media Support C-19 (continued from page 1)

Assembly on Fiscal Relations in November which took issue with the optional nature of the legislation. As the article states, “The draft legislation was already optional. Isn’t that what optional means?” and goes on to say that “...in the end...they decide that the answer is that everybody gets exactly what they wanted from Day 1.”

In the mainstream media, the lead editorial in Canada’s most influential daily newspaper, the *Globe & Mail* on Saturday, December 7, 2002 acknowledged the significance of First Nation Fiscal institutions by stating that “[this legislation] would be a strong step toward building the institutional infrastructure of self-sufficiency. On that road lies hope.”

The editorial also reflected on the importance of the institutions as essential instruments of self-government. In quoting Manny Jules (“You can’t have your hand out and say, ‘I’m self-governing.’ In order to achieve self-government we have to contribute to our

own betterment.”), the *Globe* editorial concluded: “It’s a fair point. The responsibility for building the infrastructure of native reserves should not rest forever in federal hands. It’s unfair to the aboriginal bands involved, which should be able to build their own communities and be held accountable for doing so.”

However, Doug Cuthand – a leading Aboriginal journalist with the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix* – may have best captured the significance of Bill C-19 in a December 6, 2002 article, where he asserted: “...First Nations must have the ability to raise their own revenue if they are to become independent, set their own priorities and meet the needs of their people. Times are changing and our people need to move ahead with self-government and economic development. In the process, all options must be explored.”

Spreading the Word

The four institutions have worked diligently since Spring 2002 to provide information to as many people as possible. All regions of Canada have been included in this consultation and information strategy. Consultation and information sessions have included First Nations and Tribal Councils, other governments, and organizations – such as the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada – with whom we hope to form mutually beneficial partnerships. Listed at right are some of the consultation and information sessions that have taken place to date.

Consultation and Information Session Highlights

2002	Region/City	Group/Organization
May 28	Fredricton, NB	Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs
June 18-20	Essipit, PQ	Assembly of Quebec and Labrador Chiefs
July 8-11	Nelson House, MB	Ethnew Pimatisiwin 7th Annual Cree Nations Gathering
July 16-18	Montreal, PQ	Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Annual General Meeting
July 30	Vancouver, BC	FNFI Presentation to Province of British Columbia
August 28	Toronto, ON	Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC)
September 18-20	Port Alberni, BC	First Nations Summit Meeting
September 26-27	North Vancouver, BC	AFN, National Conference on Fiscal Relations (Information Meeting)
October 16	Toronto, ON	Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business @ BoM
October 18-19	Toronto, ON	Indigenous Bar Association Annual Conference
November 6-9	Saskatoon, SK	Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada (AFOA)
November 19	Ottawa, ON	AFN, Special Chiefs Assembly
November 22	Canmore, AB	Meeting with Treaty 7

Following the Legislative Process

When a bill is introduced into Parliament, it goes through a legislative process that involves several steps. To date, Bill C-19 has received its first and second readings.

Notice/Introduction and First Reading

- Bill becomes public.
- Motions are adopted without debate or vote.

Second Reading

- Debate on the principle and objective of the bill.
- Clauses not discussed in detail.
- Amendments may be made to the motion that the bill be read a second time and sent to committee, but no amendments can be made to the bill itself.

Committee

- Bill C-19 will be referred to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources.
- Appearances by the Member or Minister sponsoring the bill.
- Outside witnesses called for testimony.
- Clause-by-clause consideration.
- Development of amendments if deemed necessary.

Report

- House considers the bill as reported by Committee, including proposed amendments.
- Further amendments may be proposed by any member of the House.
- The amendments are debated and voted on.
- A motion to concur, with or without amendments, is then proposed and voted on.

Third Reading

- Review of the bill in its final form.
- Motion to read the bill a third time and pass.
- There may be amendments to the motion but not to the bill at this stage.

Bill is adopted.

- Consideration by the Senate Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples
- Senate goes through essentially the same process as the House, including amending the bill.
- If the Senate proposes amendments, a member of the House makes a motion to concur with those amendments. If the Senate and the House disagree and cannot resolve the conflict, the bill is defeated.

Royal Assent

- With the support of the House and the Senate secured, the bill is ready for Royal Assent.
- Assent is given by the Governor General or a deputy of the Governor General.

Following the Legislative Process

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- Once assent is given, the bill becomes an Act of Parliament.
- Enactment may be delayed until a specified time, or until necessary regulations are developed and approved.

The Next Step

Bill C-19 was referred to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources on February 25, 2003. No date has been set for the hearings.

Timeline for the Parliamentary Process

Date	Parliamentary Study (House of Commons and Senate)
August 15, 2002	• Notice
December 2, 2002	• Introduction and First Reading
February 25, 2003	• Second Reading and Referral to a Committee
2003	• Committee • Report • Third Reading • Senate (same stages as for the House of Commons) • Royal Assent

FNFI on the Internet

The following Web sites have more information about Bill C-19:

- First Nations Fiscal Institutions
www.fnfi.ca
- First Nations Finance Authority
www.fnfa.ca
- First Nations Financial Management Board
www.fnfmb.com
- First Nations Statistical Institute
www.firststats.ca
- First Nations Tax Commission
www.fntc.ca

Contact Information



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