



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

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First Nations Summit pleased with commitments in today's Speech from the Throne

Coast Salish Traditional Territory/West Vancouver, BC — The First Nations Summit is pleased with the announcement contained in today's Speech from the Throne to act on the 2001 review dealing with the offensive murals in the rotunda of the legislative buildings in Victoria.

"We have been seeking the removal of this offensive material from the provincial legislature for decades. We are pleased that this government has made a commitment to work with First Nations in acting on recommendations contained within the 2001 Speaker's Advisory Panel report", said Grand Chief Edward John, a member of the First Nations Summit Political Executive and the First Nations Leadership Council.

"First Nations have always maintained the murals in the rotunda of the legislative buildings are demeaning and degrading and do nothing more than uphold negative stereotypes of First Nations as a conquered and subservient people. While we respect the artistic integrity of the murals, there is no place for them in the buildings that represent the positive contributions of all British Columbians in building this province", added Chief John.

The First Nations Summit is also pleased with the provincial government's commitment to continuing the pursuit of a new relationship with Aboriginal people in BC and to be a model for other provinces as reflected in the following statement in today's Throne Speech;

*"It stands proudly for the inclusion of Canada's Aboriginal people as full and founding partners in Confederation.
It stands firmly for the recognition and respect of Aboriginal rights, title and self-determination within the Canadian Constitution"*

"We have the commitments necessary now we need to work together with the provincial government to transmit these commitments into real on the ground results that will ultimately lead to a resolution to the land question in this province and the closing of the devastating socio-economic gaps faced by our people", concluded Chief John.

The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in the treaty negotiation process in British Columbia. Background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

-30-

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