

## Parliamentary Wrap-Up

### **Looking Back:**

Parliamentarians returned to the House of Commons for the autumn sitting on September 19, 2016. This report covers the period from that date to October 31, 2016.

On September 28<sup>th</sup>, AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde presented to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, outlining investments needed in the next federal budget to continue closing the gap between First Nations and the rest of Canada: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/Committee/421/FINA/Evidence/EV8452351/FINAEV37-E.PDF#page=3>

On October 19<sup>th</sup>, AFN Youth Council Co-Chair Will Landon presented to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs concerning youth suicide. This presentation can be found at the following link: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=e&Mode=1&Parl=42&Ses=1&DocId=8512630>

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, AFN Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day appeared at the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications regarding the transportation of crude oil. The presentations from that appearance can be seen at the following link: [http://senparlvu.parl.gc.ca/XRender/en/PowerBrowser/PowerBrowserV2?fk=438030&globalStreamId=3&useragent=Mozilla/5.0%20\(Windows%20NT%206.1;%20WOW64;%20rv:49.0\)%20Gecko/20100101%20Firefox/49.0](http://senparlvu.parl.gc.ca/XRender/en/PowerBrowser/PowerBrowserV2?fk=438030&globalStreamId=3&useragent=Mozilla/5.0%20(Windows%20NT%206.1;%20WOW64;%20rv:49.0)%20Gecko/20100101%20Firefox/49.0)

Also on October 25<sup>th</sup>, AFN Ontario Regional Chief Day, Carol Hopkins, Executive Director of the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation and Dr. Claudette Chase of the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority appeared at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health to present on the opioid crisis in First Nations communities. That testimony can be seen at the following link: [http://parlvu.parl.gc.ca/XRender/en/PowerBrowser/PowerBrowserV2/20161025/-1/25988?globalstreamId=14&useragent=Mozilla/5.0%20\(Windows%20NT%2010.0;%20Win64;%20x64\)%20AppleWebKit/537.36%20\(KHTML,%20like%20Gecko\)%20Chrome/54.0.2840.71%20Safari/537.36](http://parlvu.parl.gc.ca/XRender/en/PowerBrowser/PowerBrowserV2/20161025/-1/25988?globalstreamId=14&useragent=Mozilla/5.0%20(Windows%20NT%2010.0;%20Win64;%20x64)%20AppleWebKit/537.36%20(KHTML,%20like%20Gecko)%20Chrome/54.0.2840.71%20Safari/537.36)

In legislative news, the Government introduced in the Senate for first reading, Bill S-3: “An Act to amend the Indian Act (elimination of sex-based inequities in registration). This legislation aims to respond to the Quebec Superior Court of Justice’s decision in *Descheneaux v. Canada* (2015 QCCS 3555). The Quebec Superior Court of Justice declared sections 6(1) (a), (c) and (f) as well as 6(2) of the *Indian Act* violated section 15 of the Charter and are unconstitutional. Bill S-3 aims to address the narrow gender based discrimination found in *Descheneaux* in section 6 of the *Indian Act*. Hearings will occur in the Senate and then in the House after second reading in each case.

Bill S-215, Senator Lillian Dyck’s Senate Public Bill to amend the Criminal Code regarding sentencing for violent offences against Aboriginal women has passed second reading in the Senate and referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. Information for those interested in presenting to the Committee about this and other bills can be

obtained through the Library of Parliament Information Service, Parliament of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A9 and by telephone at 1-866-599-4999 or (613) 992-4793.

Private member's Bill C-310 "*An Act to establish Indian Residential School Reconciliation and Memorial Day*" was introduced in the House of Commons on October 31<sup>st</sup> by Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre). The Bill seeks to recognize June 2 of each year as "Indian Residential School Reconciliation and Memorial Day". The day will not be a statutory holiday.

### **Looking Ahead:**

This Parliamentary session continues until December 16<sup>th</sup> with a break prior to Veterans Day.

Some of the Bills currently on the order paper that are of particular significance to First Nations include the following:

- C-17, *An Act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* and to make a consequential amendment to another Act. This is a government Bill, introduced by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs. The Bill is intended to address problems created by passing S-6, the Senate bill introduced under the Conservative government affecting the rights and interests of Yukon First Nations. This bill has been through first reading and committee hearings can be expected after second reading.
- C-262, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. This Private Members Bill (PMB) was introduced by NDP MP Romeo Saganash and calls on the Government of Canada to implement the UN Declaration.
- S-212, *the Aboriginal Languages of Canada Act*. This Senate Private Bill (SPB) introduced by Senator Serge Joyal is for recognition and support of Indigenous languages. Note that SPBs cannot commit the Government of Canada to spend money.
- S-215, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code* (sentencing for violent offences against Aboriginal women), introduced as an SPB by Senator Lillian Dyck requires courts to consider the fact that the victim is an Aboriginal woman to be an aggravating circumstance when sentencing violent offenders.

Engagement respecting the reform of environmental assessment and resource regulatory systems continues. More information on this process is available at the following link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/conservation/assessments/environmental-reviews.html>

The Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans will be reviewing changes made to the Fisheries Act by the previous government before the autumn session ends. Those interested in presenting will want to contact the Committee clerk.

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources continues its study on the future of Canada's oil, gas, mining and nuclear sectors which began in March. We will provide a link to the full report when it is ready.

Look to this site for future updates.