

in the new policy. I would say that someone miscalculated in the budgeting process.

The Native Women's Association of the N.W.T. stated in their submission (at p. 3):

We have no faith in the Government of Canada if they cannot budget properly. DIAND has records on status Indians across the country. They know what year children are born, they know the population has increased amongst the Aboriginal people. They can estimate their budget on five (5) year work plans. We cannot help it if DIAND does not plan their budget based on age and potential post secondary age groups from year to year for eligible Native students. We recognize that the Federal Government does not have unlimited funds for Government expenditures, but with First Nations' input better planning could be accomplished with a proper budget increase, year to year. The budget voted on must be increased to meet the demand by our Native students.

The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council found impractical the Department's practice of waiting until student applications to university were accepted before allocating funds to the bands and tribal councils administering the program. The President of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Mr. George Watts, stated (Issue 9:21):

Under the DIA system, what happens is you identify the budget but you do not get the approvals until you get all the documentation in place and until some bureaucrat approves it. They got their budget in place for their post-secondary education; however, they did not get approval from the Department of Indian Affairs until March to go to school in [the preceding] September. . . .

In other words, at the end of the government fiscal year they finally get approval to go to university. The department had been telling bands to finance the education program until the government approved it. Some bands do not have the cashflow, any money of their own, so they cannot fund university students with the hope that they might get approval in March. What happens if they do not get approval ?

The students that appeared before the Committee explained why they felt the aboriginal population could not afford student deferrals of even one year:

It is still a very fragile momentum that we have been able to develop in these past ten years of native people developing our self-esteem, our self-confidence, saying yes, I can do something with myself and my community. We have seen an increased number of people taking that opportunity and going with it. This policy is detrimental to that momentum.... (Issue 3:29)

We cannot afford to have any of those students deferred. There are policies the federal government is moving down fast, as devolution takes hold, where the communities are taking more and more responsibilities. We want to do that, but we need to have the training and the education to be able to do it properly. At the same time, we are dealing with the hope and the spirit of the people at the community and we are trying to change the harsh realities they live in. We have