

Statement by
THE CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS
in support of the demands by the
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES OF CANADA
FOR THE CONSTITUTIONAL ENTRENCHMENT OF
THEIR ABORIGINAL AND TREATY RIGHTS

While the Canadian Labour Congress has refrained from taking a formal position on the Constitutional issue, we are making one exception, because of the unique and special position which Canada's Aboriginal Peoples must have in our country.

Though the solemn treaties, guarantees and promises they received left much to be desired in being honoured, they at least provided hope as well as a basis for advancing just claims for fulfillment.

Now that Canada's constitutional arrangements are about to be substantially altered, our aboriginal peoples are understandably alarmed at the prospect that they may well lose even the limited rights they were promised by the Crown and by the governments composed of other Canadians admitted into their homeland.

The CLC shares the sense of alarm of our Aboriginal Peoples at this very real prospect. We believe that other Canadians and their various governments have a special obligation at this time to ensure that the aboriginal and treaty rights are reaffirmed, secured and honoured in full.

The CLC, therefore, calls upon the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and his government, as well as the Joint House-Senate Committee on the Constitution, to act promptly and effectively to ensure the entrenchment of aboriginal and treaty rights in the revised Constitution, and also on the right of aboriginal peoples to be fully and meaningfully involved in the process of constitutional change.

We also call upon provincial governments to promptly affirm their full support for these just claims of our aboriginal peoples; and, within the limits of their powers, to put these rights into practice.