

# Canadian government and church's appeal of judgment further abuses natives: plaintiff

VANCOUVER (CP) — The Anglican Church and the federal government are heaping further abuse on natives by appealing a judgment that awarded four men \$900,000 in damages for sexual abuse at a British Columbia residential school, says one of the plaintiffs.

Terry Aleck said he began legal proceedings 13 years ago and was elated on Aug. 9 when a B.C. Supreme Court judge finally held the government and the church liable for sexual abuse during the 1960s and 1970s.

But on Sept. 14, Aleck heard the Department of Indian Affairs and the Anglican Church had filed appeals.

"It's like I'm starting right from scratch again and my emotions have been like a roller coaster ride," Aleck told a news conference.

"I'm saying 'C'mon, government and church, stop, stop abusing us more. We've gone through enough pain.'"

Aleck, 45, said he dreads the thought of retelling stories in court from his painful childhood at St. George's school in Lytton, B.C., which was operated by the Anglican Diocese of the Cariboo.

He and the three other men, along with others who have settled out of court, were repeatedly raped by Derek Clarke, a dormitory supervisor at the school.

Anthony William Harding, the principal, was also implicated in the sexual assaults.

Aleck said he had hoped to close the door on the demons that have haunted him for years and have affected his two daughters and extended family members.

"I think of the four generations of people that went to

St. George's school and I think of all my best friends that suicided that were part of the residential school," he said.

"And I think of my parents and uncles and aunties and all my great aunts and grandparents that are still alive who haven't dealt with this issue."

Aleck said he has struggled with his identity as a First Nations person, contemplated suicide and battled a drug and alcohol addiction because of the abuse he suffered.

"I've gone through hell, literally, emotional hell."

Justice Paul Williamson awarded Aleck \$223,000 in general damages for pain and suffering, aggravated damages for the government's and the church's conduct in operating the school, and for future care.

The highest award of \$256,000 went to a plaintiff identified in the judgment by the initials E.R.M., while the others, E.J., and G.B.S., were awarded \$235,000 and \$189,000 respectively.

"I conclude the sheer horror of what happened to these children, and in particular the fact that all of the assaults continued over a period of time that must have seemed exceedingly long to children, warrants an award of aggravated damages," Williamson said in his judgment.

Williamson held the church accountable for 60 per cent of damages while the federal government would have to pay the remaining 40 per cent.

The higher amount for the church was based on a previous judgment that revealed Harding, the school principal, himself a perpetrator of sexual abuse, was aware of other abusers but covered up the truth.

Rev. Catherine Morrison of Lytton said the Anglican Diocese of the Cariboo agrees First Nations should receive monetary awards, along with counselling for the abuse they suffered.

However, Morrison said the church appealed Williamson's judgment because it doesn't believe it should be paying most of the money.

Peter Grant, the men's lawyer, said the church and the government do not want to pay any punitive or aggravated damages, reducing each man's award by \$75,000.

Grant also said the parties want to reduce general damages by an unspecified amount.