

Canada must adopt UN declaration on indigenous rights: Littlechild

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Littlechild further said that the road to change was a long one. He explained how in 1926, the first indigenous people's delegation to ever visit the League of Nations, made up of members of the Iroquois Six Nations, went to the League's headquarters in Geneva. However, they, like a Maori delegation very shortly afterward, weren't even received by the Assembly there.

By the '50s and '60s, the international indigenous peoples movement had begun to gain momentum, as groups from across the world banded together with similar complaints ranging from the banning of indigenous culture and language to genocide. However, in 1977, history repeated itself when once again, when an international indigenous delegation, this time headed by Littlechild, were still not allowed in the UN buildings, this time in New York.

"In 1977, we couldn't even get into the building," Littlechild remembered. "With elders with four pipes leading the way, we locked elbows, four-by-four, and marched."

However, soon after that event he said things began to move rather quickly for the indigenous people's movement. By 1993, the UN had declared "The Year of the Indigenous People" and by 2002 had established the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, to which Littlechild was appointed representative for North America.

However, despite these large steps forward in a relatively short period of time, Littlechild expressed frustration at Canada's, as well as Alberta's, refusal to accept the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, something already honoured by most other nations and political bodies—such as the State of Arizona less than three weeks ago on 12 March.

"The delegation from Canada was one of only two countries to vote against the Declaration," remarked Littlechild. "[We] could look to our neighbours down south [for leadership]."

By refusing to accept this declaration, Littlechild feels Canada has created two sets of laws, with indigenous peoples on the bottom end.

However, he ended the speech on



BEATING INJUSTICE A traditional sweetgrass and drum ceremony followed Wilton Littlechild's speech Monday night.

hopeful note, saying that in the past 30 years, indigenous peoples worldwide have made great successes in their attempts for respect, recognition

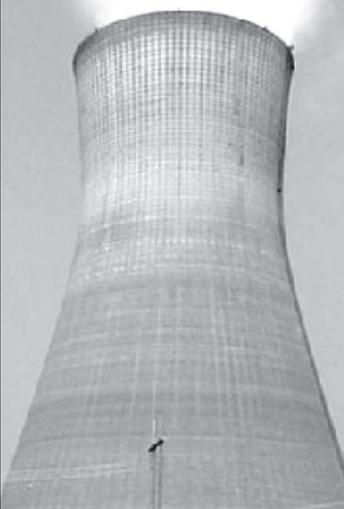
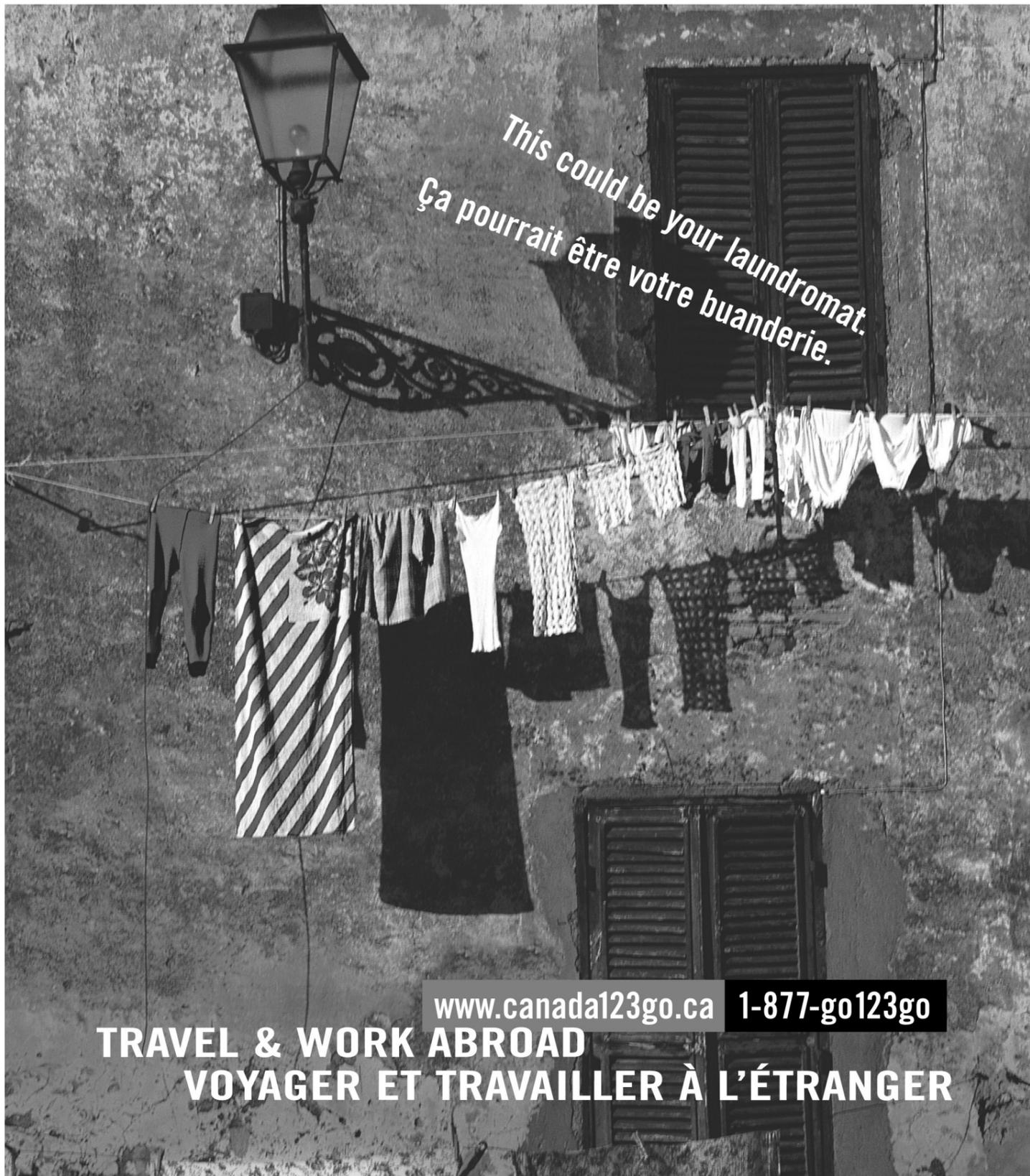
and justice. He also expressed hope for the continued fight for human rights.

"All of you sitting there, you have a story. Continue to do what you do,

and I look forward to the day when you are up here [on this stage] and we can all become better people," Littlechild said.

Fact: 28 March marked the 28th-year anniversary of the 1979 Three Mile Island disaster. During the early hours, the nuclear powerplant located on Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania began overheating. Plant operators eventually got the situation under control, but an explosion days later released radioactive materials into the atmosphere. Some plant employees were exposed to unhealthy doses of radiation, although nearby residents were apparently unaffected. Since the crisis, not one nuclear powerplant has been ordered in the US.

Fact: Just like the dream of a nuclear-powered America, the *Gateway's* regular publishing schedule is coming to an end. Now's your chance to attend a *Gateway News* meeting, held in 3-04 SUB Fridays at 3pm, while you still can. Or consider volunteering for our summer issues.



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