

INDIAN TIME

A VOICE FROM THE EASTERN DOOR

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New York State Police were on hand to monitor the April 29 demonstration but did nothing to stop the illegal gambling operation going on in the background. They did, however, scold one protestor for spelling "intimidation" wrong.

MOHAWK LAND CLAIMS PRESS RELEASE

The Mohawks of Akwesasne have terminated their land claims negotiations with the State of New York effective April 1989.

There are many reasons for this decision. The Mohawk people were forced from our ancestral homes in the Mohawk Valley during the American Revolution. We made appeals to the American governments to allow us to return to our communities but those were denied. Instead, New York began to systematically and knowingly violate U.S. federal laws by taking our lands away through a series of fraudulent "treaties" beginning in 1796. We have challenged the legality of not only the Treaty with the Seven Nations of Canada but all subsequent land session "agreements."

Our people found refuge after the Revolution here at Akwesasne and in other areas. Our native culture and traditional ways of life were severely disrupted by our forced relocation. For seven generations we have felt the often traumatic effects of life on a small reservation.

New York was not content to take most of our estimated 9,100,000 acre land area. The state grabbed large sections of the reservation along the Grasse and Salmon rivers. These losses are in clear violation of the 1790 U.S. Federal Non-Intercourse Act which prohibits the taking of Indian territory without Congressional approval. The disputed areas now include the towns of Massena and Fort Covington as well as parts of the Alcoa Aluminum Company, the proposed Highgate Mall on Route 37 east of Massena, the Salmon River Central School, sections of the St. Lawrence International Seaway, part of the Town of Bombay, the village of Hogansburg and the entire Barnhart Island including the St. Lawrence Power Dam.

We estimate the value of the disputed property to be over \$600,000,000. The disputed areas of the first phase of our claim involves over 12,000 acres of land.

In its latest proposal, after five years of meetings and negotiations, New York Governor Mario Cuomo on April 17 offered

2,500 acres of swampland in the Brasher State Forest, the return of Hogansburg minus our jurisdiction and \$2,000,000 to be kicked in by the Power Authority of the State of New York and paid out over 14 years.

We did not spend half a decade at the bargaining table to be insulted.

Our people have always disputed New York's taking of our lands. Our claims are not recent but form an important part of our history here at Akwesasne. This recent phase began in 1984 when we met with New York and the U.S. federal government in Syracuse, N.Y.

Despite our internal differences within Akwesasne our people have agreed on a peaceful resolution of the claims for the benefit of our future generations. We need more land plus the means to establish effective controls over it. We need the financial resources we expected to obtain from a settlement to create a Mohawk judicial and land management system. We needed the settlement for education, improved health care, job creation plans, housing and law enforcement.

Instead of a reasonable offer based on common sense we received an ill prepared, poorly researched and entirely unrealistic response from New York.

We informed the Governor Cuomo of our desire to pursue a fair settlement which would not involve any state resident losing land or property. We spoke of ways to assist the economic growth of northern New York. We wanted to be partners in this region using the resources we would obtain from our just claims.

We feel this is still possible but not under the presentation conditions. We are reserving the right to pursue whatever strategies we deem appropriate in the securing of our land rights.

Mohawk Council of Akwesasne
(613) 575-2348
St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council
(518) 358-2272
Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs
(613) 932-9452
April 28, 1989



Children of the Akwesasne Mohawk School danced for their elders at the Akwesasne Home for the Aged on Tuesday as part of their Heritage Week. photos by Darren Bonaparte



Tri-Council To Meet

The three Mohawk councils here at Akwesasne have agreed to hold special public meetings to discuss recent developments in the land claims.

Representatives from the St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs held the first in a series of meetings at the Recreation Hall in Kanatakon May 3 to talk about the suspension of the land claims negotiations in Albany, N.Y. on April 27.

The Land Claims Committee explained the reasons for the stopping of the negotiations. The Committee noted New York was clearly not serious about the claims which made it necessary to pursue other strategies.

The people in attendance told the representatives from the three councils of their desire to have the tri-council system in place as soon as possible.

A decision was made to hold a tri-council meeting on May 11 at the St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council beginning at 7:00 p.m.

A third public information session will be held at the Akwesasne longhouse within the next two weeks.

It was clear from the May 3 meeting the people there believed New York officials were hoping the Akwesasne Mohawk land claims unity would break down because of the gambling and smuggling controversies here.

The Akwesasne leadership committed itself to responding to such tactics by calling the people together and gaining their support on the multi-million dollar claims dispute.

Protestors Continue To Picket

An estimated 50 Akwesasne residents maintained anti-gambling pickets on route 37 for a second weekend April 27.

Carrying signs stating "Real Warriors Don't Gamble" and "The People Voted No" the demonstrators started their vigil near the Raquette River before proceeding to route 37 directly in front of the Bear's Den Truck Stop and the T.V.I. slot machine center.

Members of the New York State Police monitored the demonstration in unmarked patrol cars. At one time during the protest troopers stopped to talk to the sign carriers, asking them to refrain from blocking traffic going to the gambling centers at the T.V.I. and Bear's Den.

Cars were dissuaded from turning on to McGee's Road, the main access road to T.V.I.

The demonstrators did not meet with any opposition from the gamblers although they were monitored by employees at both establishments.

The protest lasted for five hours before leaving for the day. No indication was given as to future demonstrations.

INUIT SUICIDES 4 TIMES HIGHER THAN AVERAGE, STUDIES SHOW

YELLOWKNIFE NWT—The Inuit of the Northwest Territories are committing suicide at a rate four times the national average, studies tabled in the territorial assembly indicate.

More than half of the 172 suicides in the territories since 1978 have been in the 15-24 age group and the vast majority were male.

The studies show suicide rates exceed the national average everywhere in the territories, but are especially high among the Inuit. Between 1978 and 1988, the rate of suicides among Inuit averaged 53.4 per 100,000, compared with 22.3 per 100,000 for others. The average Canadian suicide rate over the decade was about 14 per 100,000.

The issue hit close to home for members of the legislative assembly when an Inuit member had to return home 10 days ago to deal with his son's suicide.

"I find myself thinking about this more and more each day," said Peter Ermer, a member from the Keewatin region.

Missing Cornwall Island Man Drowned in St. Lawrence River

The search for Albert "Babnan" Jocko has ended with the discovery of his body in the St. Lawrence River, Cornwall City Police reported.

At approximately 2:13 pm, on Saturday, April 29, an unidentified Cornwall resident discovered the remains of an apparent drowning victim while boating in the area off Cornwall's Prince Arthur Street.

The body was found approximately 200 feet from shore and brought to dry land with the help of the Ontario Provincial Police.

Police say the drowning victim was later identified as Albert Jocko, 44, of Cornwall Island. He was reported missing on March 5th after crossing the frozen St. Lawrence on foot.

Foul play is not suspected.

2 Injured in Car Accident

Two Akwesasne men were injured Wednesday after an accident on Route 37. Police have charged Darren T. Mitchell, 28, of St. Regis with felony driving while intoxicated.

Mitchell's car went off the road due to excessive speed and overturned a number of times. Mitchell and Darman W. Terrence were admitted to Alice Hyde Memorial Hospital for injuries sustained in the crash.

SMUGGLER'S BLUES

Bench warrants were issued in Ontario Provincial Court Friday, April 28, for the arrest of a number of Akwesasne people who failed to appear in court on charges of smuggling.

Richard Gordon Oakes, and Thomas Angus Square, 33, both of St. Regis, were jointly charged with possession of smuggled cigarettes in connection with a September 22, 1987 incident.

Sidney Armstrong, 50, of St. Regis Road, Hogansburg, is wanted for possession of smuggled cigarettes in connection with an October 2, 1987 incident.

Ronald Richard Cree, 35, of Raquette Road, Hogansburg, is wanted on a charge of smuggling cigarettes, possession of smuggled cigarettes, and failure to report imported goods in connection with an incident on October 8, 1987.

Robert Michael Skidders, 52, of St. Regis, is wanted for possession of smuggled cigarettes in connection with a September 22, 1987 incident.

AKWESASNE MAN UNHARMED AFTER U.S.S. IOWA EXPLOSION

Seaman Recruit Arthur R. Swamp, 20, of Akwesasne is safe at his Navy Base in Norfolk, Virginia after an explosion in the turret of the U.S.S. Iowa.

The explosion killed 47 servicemen. His family was originally told that Arthur had been injured, but this was eventually found to be untrue.

Arthur is the son of Robert and Rita Swamp of State Road. He graduated from Massena Central School in 1987 and enlisted in the Navy in September, 1988. Arthur was in turret #3 at the time of the explosion, having been transferred from the ill-fated turret #2 not long before.

The U.S.S. Iowa was one of four battleships built in World War II. The 46 year old vessel was mothballed after the Korean War and recommissioned by Ronald Reagan's first Navy Secretary, John Lehman.

3 PEOPLE INJURED IN ACCIDENT

A St. Regis man was charged with DWI after a two-car collision in Fort Covington that sent three people to a hospital.

Malone-based police state police say Joseph L. Sharrow, 39, of St. Regis, Quebec, was travelling west on Drum Street when his car went into the eastbound lane.

An oncoming car driven by Martha E. Nason, 30, of Malone, N.Y., swerved into the westbound lane to avoid Sharrow's car, but Sharrow also swerved back to his own lane and struck Nason's car.

Nason, Sharrow, and William Foote, 69, a passenger in Sharrow's car, were taken to Alice Hyde Memorial Hospital in Malone. Foote was admitted with multiple contusions, Nason was admitted with bruises, and Sharrow was treated and released.

Sharrow was also charged with failure to keep right and not wearing a seat belt. Foote was charged with not wearing a seat belt.

The 16-inch gun turret that exploded was capable of propelling shells as heavy as 2,700 pounds over inserted manually and detonated with an electronic primer. The technology behind this system is over a half century old and considered obsolete by experts.

Navy investigators were still working to determine the cause of the blast while President George Bush attended services for the lost crewmen at Norfolk Navy Base.

Arthur's parents plan to visit him at the end of this week. His mother says he is upset about the loss of his fellow crewmen but looks forward to serving his country for the next four years.

SEED CEREMONY MAY 6

The traditional Mohawk community will gather together at the Akwesasne Longhouse May 6 to hold the Seed Ceremony.

At this time the Creator has brought spring rains and warmer days to prepare the earth for the renewal of life.

Traditional Mohawks believe it is necessary to return thanks to the Creator for the seeds which will be planted this year. It is also believed that by showing our gratitude through singing and dancing we are helping the seeds to grow.

The longhouse ceremony is set to begin around 9:00 a.m. May 6th. All those native people who want to give thanks are encouraged to attend this ceremony.