

## REGIONAL NEWS

...Continued

we are determined not to let anyone spoil that future", said Grand Chief Jerry Peltier at a press conference today when he replied to articles and news stories recently published in the media. "These incidents must not hamper negotiations on land claims," he added. Recalling that he was the first democratically elected chief, Grand Chief Peltier also stressed the fact that hope should not be abandoned of establishing a casino at Kanesatake, because this is one of the only projects through which the Mohawk Community at

Kanesatake can provide for its own economic future.

"To have a Casino in Kanesatake, our Community has to agree. We held an information meeting Monday evening, and we will take other steps in the future. If we ever get the agreement of the Community, then we will undertake negotiations with the Federal Government, which will follow up the matter with the Government of Quebec. The agreement currently linking us to Excelsior Casino Management Group will not come into effect if we don't get prior authoriza-

tion from the Community and the Federal Government. I want to be clear about that."

While claiming to describe power struggles and the risk of violence, one of the articles in question gave Kanesatake the distorted image of a wild west town where individuals with guns make the law, an image based on rumors and unidentified sources.

The Grand Chief pointed out several factual errors in the article, specifically with regard to:

- the allegation that the people making up the Kanesatake security force

had not received any special training, while in fact they were trained by an accredited institution;

- the allegation that negotiations over land claims were broken off in 1992 and that they had not resumed since. In fact, official negotiations were started as soon as the government appointed negotiator, Michel Robert, and the mediator, The Honourable Justice Rejean Paul, were named in May 1994. The behind the scenes negotiations, meanwhile, had never been interrupted.

Chief Peltier was frank in admitting that the social problems experi-

enced by the Kanesatake Community had sometimes resulted in acts of violence, but noted that the situation had improved considerably due to efforts made by the Community.

With regard to the federally acquired houses at Kanesatake, Grand Chief Peltier and his Council have agreed to provide advisors to the Federal Government's Management Board.

In closing, Grand Chief Peltier said if journalists come to the Community, they will learn first hand what problems are facing the Community and how the Mohawk Council is trying to deal with them.

### Police Ethics Commission Hearing Continues:

#### SOLDIER WITNESS UNMASKS SQ MASQUERADING AS ARMY

Kahnawake, Mohawk Territory. April 5, 1995. Background. Mohawk Warrior, Ron "Lasagna" Cross, filed charges against five Surete du Quebec (SQ) policemen with brutality for the beatings he received on September 26th, 1990, from Andre Turcotte, Francois Borduas, Lucien Landry, Richard Guerin and Gilles Leduc. Cross was one of over 60 Mohawks and their allies who were evacuating the Treatment Center in Oka Quebec where they had been holed up for 78 days surrounded by the Canadian Army, the SQ, RCMP, white rioters, reporters and supporters. They were protesting the expansion of the Oka Golf Club onto sacred ceremonial lands known as "The Pines" and over an ancient burial ground.

**Death threats.** The soldier who came forward voluntarily to testify, received death threats after his interview was shown on television. He asked for the Judge agreed that his name and address not be published. The lawyers for the five SQ argued that he should face up to his responsibility and allow his name and

address to be published, which is a good way to scare away future witnesses against the police. He had told his senior officers about his concerns and was told to keep his mouth shut if he knew what was good for him. Disappointed, he finally left the army and returned to university.

**Evacuation - on September 26th, 1990.** The soldier said, "On September 26th, 1990 we had order to prepare because they (the Mohawks) may be coming out. they were destroying their guns (in a big fire behind the Treatment Center) and there was a lot of yelling. A Sargeant ordered us to go to the barricades and stay between the journalists and the warriors. We had orders to arrest everybody, even the journalists, to bring the people to a tent and search them. A few military were left to watch the tents, I was behind the tent. Nobody else was there. The Warriors did not want to go with the SQ. It was evident that the military would arrest the people."

He drew a map of the TC, Cote St. Michel, the razore wire, the golf

course and the barricade where the journalists were. There were three tents with a razor wire corridor leading from the front of the Treatment Center to the tents. "I handcuffed the journalists and left them somewhere guarded by army people."

**Beating Inside the Tent.** "I went to the back of hte tent. Everybody was busy doing something. I was outside the tent and I heard yelling in the tent. So I looked inside. There were three Warriors, Lasagna and two others. I knew Lasagna because he was Number 1 that everybody wanted to arrest. Cross was dressed in camo, kneeling, with his hands cuffed in the back. One man standing over him was dressed in military police coveralls was yelling, "\*\*\*\* you!" He hit Lasagna in the thorax and he fell down. He hit him behind the back of the thigh, brought him back up so he was kneeling again. He threw him on the ground and lifted him by the hair to the kneeling position again.

**Beating in the car.** Then Lasagna was taken to an unmarked car and turned over to two other men in civilian clothes,

who could have been RCMP or SQ. While one held him at the waist another one gave him two blows to the face." He did not recognize those two." "Mr. Cross could not walk." They were holding him up, then sat him in the back of the car. One man hit him in the chest and the one in the front seat punched him. The soldier witness followed and watched them.

**Hate and aggression by the army.** The atmosphere at the time was "very special." Tension was high. We did not talk between one another. We were afraid. When the Mohawk arrived, we did not shoot. But we saw the warriors as our enemies. Some soldiers wanted to hit them. It was all hate and aggression by the army. I too, but I did not hit them. Some hit the Mohawk, laughed, spit at them and bragged about it, Cross could not defend himself because there were four guns on him."

**Identifies Turcotte.** The soldier witness was asked to identify the man who was hitting Lasagna. The four lawyers of the cops started jumping up and down in the court room. "Objection!

Describe him first", they yelled. The soldier witness said, "He was 6 feet tall and fat," which described him to a T! Then he turned around and pointed to Andre Turcotte, who was sitting behind him. His being able to identify Turcotte came as a complete surprise to the lawyers. The soldier witness had previously thought the man beating Lasagna was a soldier until he came to court and saw Turcotte there. He then realized that the SQ were masquerading as soldiers so they would get at the Mohawks as they were leaving the Treatment Centre to "go home".

Then the video of his interview with Tele Media was shown.

**Why he came forward.** The soldier witness is no longer in the army. Why did he talk about these things five years later? "The Mohawks had courage to fight to the end for what they believed in, like in other countries in the world. I thought if I was a Mohawk and was beaten for my beliefs, I would like someone to come forward and tell the truth of what they saw."

Source: MNNS Kahnawake

