

Oneida Police stripped of its deputization

Oneida County Sheriff, Dan Middaugh revoked the deputization of the Oneida Nation Police force. The removal of deputization affects 40 police officers who come under the hand of Ray Halbritter. As indicated in news reports, over the past few weeks, Ray Halbritter and his men's Council ordered the Oneida Nation Police Department to remove dissidents from the Oneida Territory. One of the aggrieved Oneida members is Maisie Shenondoah, the clanmother who put Ray Halbritter as a representative of the Oneida Nation. Under traditional protocol, Maisie set to remove Ray from any authority, but the Bureau of Indian Affairs interference in the matter kept him as the representative. This created internal turmoil within the Oneida Nation.

With the revocation of its deputization, some members of the Oneida Nation will be able to rest a little easier.

To former students of United Church Indian Residential Schools, and to their families and communities:

From the deepest reaches of your memories, you have shared with us your stories of suffering from our Church's involvement in the operation of Indian Residential Schools. You have shared the personal and historic pain that you still bear, and you have been vulnerable yet again. You have also shared with us your strength and wisdom born of the life-giving dignity of your communities and traditions and your stories of survival.

In response to our Church's commitment to repentance, I spoke these words of apology on behalf of the General Council Executive on Tuesday, October 27, 1998:

"As Moderator of The United Church of Canada, I wish to speak the words that many people have wanted to hear for a very long time. On behalf of The United Church of Canada, I apologize for the pain and suffering that our church's involvement in the Indian Residential School system has caused. We are aware of some of the damage that this cruel and ill-conceived system of assimilation has perpetrated on Canada's First Nations peoples. For this we are truly and most humbly sorry.

"To those individuals who were physically, sexually, and mentally abused as students of the Indian Residential Schools in which The United Church of Canada was involved, I offer you our most sincere apology. You did nothing wrong. You were and are the victims of evil acts that cannot under any circumstances be justified or excused.

"We know that many within our Church will still not understand why each of us must bear the scar, the blame for this horrendous period in Canadian history. But the truth is, we are the bearers of many blessings from our ancestors, and therefore, we must also bear their burdens."

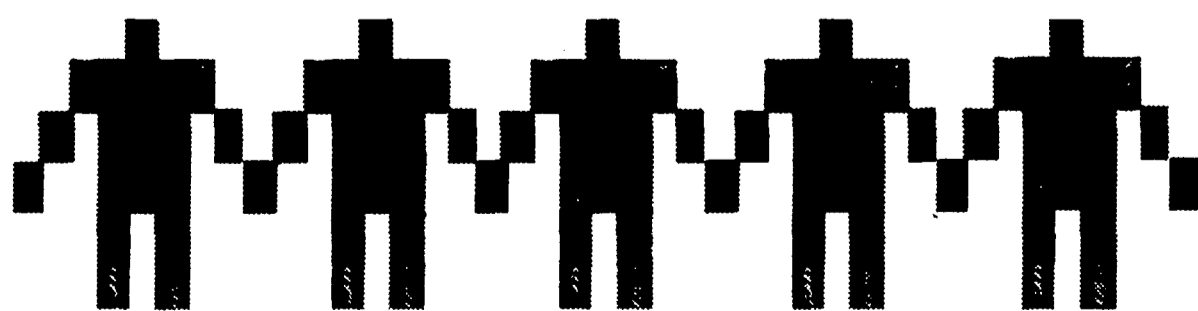
Our burdens include dishonouring the depths of the struggles of First Nations peoples and the richness of your gifts. We seek God's forgiveness and healing grace as we take steps toward building respectful, compassionate, and loving relationships with First Nations peoples.

We are in the midst of a long and painful journey as we reflect on the cries that we did not or would not hear, and how we have behaved as a Church. As we travel this difficult road of repentance, reconciliation, and healing, we commit ourselves to work toward ensuring that we will never again use our power as a Church to hurt others with attitudes of racial and spiritual superiority.

"We pray that you will hear the sincerity of our words today and that you will witness the living out of our apology in our actions in the future."

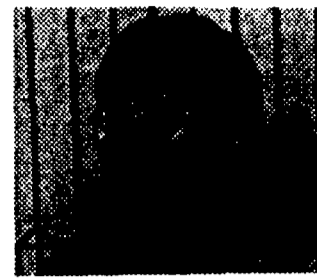
signed

The Right Reverend Bill Phipps
Moderator of The United Church of Canada



US Department of the Interior Defends Akwesasne Update on Re-licensing of NYPA Power Project

by
Jim Ransom



On April 10, 2000, The United States Department of the Interior (DOI) issued a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission strongly criticizing a March 22 proposal by the New York Power Authority for the re-licensing of the St. Lawrence - FDR Power Project.

"NYPA's proposal not only is deficient with regard to the minimal requirements of its likely licensing obligations under the Federal Power Act (FPA), but the information currently in the record, quite simply, cannot support NYPA's assertion," stated Andrew L. Raddant, Regional Environmental Officer, United States Department of the Interior.

NYPA's March proposal states "The existing hydroelectric operations of the St. Lawrence-FDR Power Project have little or no direct environmental effects on resources downstream of the Project." The DOI letter strongly objected to NYPA's assertion on three grounds.

Raddant states "First, the downstream studies have not been completed yet, so NYPA's conclusion cannot be supported in the existing record. Second, even for those studies that have been completed, we have concerns about their adequacy and accuracy. Third, NYPA's - and FERC's evaluation of the impacts of the project is not limited to "direct" environmental effects. The NEPA clearly requires consideration of indirect and cumulative impacts, as well as direct impacts."

Akwesasne community members have long depended on fish from the St. Lawrence River to feed their families. The dam has presented a physical barrier to fish migration and the Power Project has harmed aquatic habitat. These concerns with the fishery were echoed in the DOI letter as Raddant states "...the record supports the statement that passage is blocked by the dam, not merely hindered as stated by NYPA." Raddant adds "Aquatic habitat did increase with dam construction, but the quality of the overall aquatic habitat decreased."

Of great concern to Akwesasne residents is that Akwesasne has borne an unfair burden of environmental harm through direct and indirect environmental impacts associated with the project. The March NYPA Proposal and other studies it has undertaken have touted the socioeconomic benefits the Project has brought to the North Country. However, NYPA has not even discussed any of the negative socioeconomic impacts from its project.

Raddant addresses this issue "...we object to NYPA's failure to include in its

See NYPA on page 6

Tribal Members File Suit Against Park Place Entertainment

Termed as dissident group of St. Regis Mohawk Indians by outside media, a suit has been filed to revoke the agreement between the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and Park Place Entertainment. The agreement signed on April 14 gives Park Place the right to all future casino operations from the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe.

Phillip Tarbell, on behalf of tribal members, contends that the current government of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe cannot enter into contracts. Their terms expired and are not in current elected positions.

Mr. Tarbell also said it jeopardizes the agreement signed on July 31, 1996 with Alpha Hospitality by both governments [Constitutional government and People's government]. He stated the contract was not realistic. Park Place doesn't even have land to put a casino on "and they said they would be ready in a week?". He thinks the contract isn't going to go, any where and that Park Place is protecting their own interests.

Park Place has a large investment in Atlantic City and is the owner of Caesar's Palace and Bally's casinos.

He also said, "Hilda is speaking out of both sides of her mouth. She made the motion in December 1993 'No more secret deals...you have to bring it to the people.' and they [three chief's system] have a secret meeting on Friday with Cumis and Goldberg [PPE]."

The suit against PPE and the Tribe will be answerable in Tribal Court. Phil stated the Tribal Court still exists and is recognized in the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. He is hoping for a summary judgment against the parties.

The suit filed in Tribal Court alleges that Park Place "fraudulently induced" the Tribal Council to enter into the agreement and accuses Park Place of interfering with the tribe's earlier deal with the Catskill Development and the Monticello Raceway Development Co. to build a casino on the raceway.

Members were seeking damages from Park Place, its chief executive Arthur Goldberg and chief counsel Clive Cummis.