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Quote of the week:
"There are already cases where tenants are getting booted out, and they don't have any recourse. The law really has to be changed to protect them." — Ann Harvey, director of the Inner-City Housing Agency.

January 12, 1990 North America's No. 1 Native Weekly Newspaper Volume 7 No. 45

Paddle Prairie to vote in referendum

Residents to decide on separating from federation

By John Holman
Windspeaker Staff Writer

PADDLE PRAIRIE SETTLEMENT, ALTA.

Paddle Prairie settlement residents will vote Jan. 18 on whether to accept or reject a decision to pull-out of the Federation of Metis Settlements.

On Nov. 14, Paddle Prairie council voted to separate from the Alberta Federation of Metis Settlement Associations (AFMS) because some of the councillors felt the concerns of the council were being ignored by the AFMS's all-settlement council.

The Jan. 18 referendum is the end result of a Dec. 28 meeting between the Paddle Prairie settlement council, settlement residents, and Municipal Affairs, according to Rick McDonald, director of the Metis settlements branch of Alberta Municipal Affairs.

About 65 people attended that meeting, he said.

"That was the outcome of the meeting... to let the people decide on the resolution," he claimed.

The referendum will be organized by the Paddle Prairie council and monitored by the department. The council will hire some independent people to run the referendum.

However, acceptance of the vote results by the government will depend on the wording of the referendum and McDonald

said his department will be meeting with the council on that issue.

"We just want it to be clear so there can be no misunderstanding of the wording," he added.

But council spokesperson Cora Weber-Pillwax contradicted that statement.

"I don't think the council has even considered that the government would have any say on the referendum, at all, in the wording," she added.

Weber-Pillwax confirmed the referendum will be monitored by Municipal Affairs, noting, "they're the ones that wanted the vote."

Dennis Surrendi, the assistant deputy minister of Municipal Affairs' improvement districts and Native services division, consulted the council in December, wanting a clearer understanding of the council's resolution to separate. He questioned if they had the support of settlement residents.

Weber-Pillwax indicated the three councillors who voted for the pullout are "confident" of winning support for that decision.

"I know that they have a lot of people that support them," she added.

Paddle Prairie council chairman Robert Parenteau and councillors Pat Gaucher and Emma Martineau voted to separate from the AFMS on Nov. 14.

The vote caused a bitter split on the council. Councillors Mervin Bellerose and Joe Cardinal who were not at the meeting said they would not have supported the motion of separation if they had been present.

The council wanted amendments to Bills 64 and 65, allowing municipal self-government on the settlements. They wanted settlements to get jurisdiction over their own lands and policy-making powers instead of the AFMS all council.

In a letter to Wind-speaker, Parenteau charged his council has "been placed under tremendous pressure" by Municipal Affairs to have a referendum accepting or rejecting the motion of separation.

"It should be understood that this is supported by the Council, not because of Dr. Surrendi's pressure but because our people have requested it."



Jeff Morrow, Windspeaker

A meeting place

Shirley Parmar of The Mission consoles Russell Bone from Brandon, Manitoba who came to Edmonton looking for work. The mission, a newly formed inner-city drop-in-centre, is a meeting place for Edmonton's destitute.

New pulp mill slated for High Prairie

By Dana Wagg
Windspeaker Staff Writer

HIGH PRAIRIE, ALTA.

A \$600 million pulp and paper mill is being considered for the High Prairie area but a similar-sized project planned for High Level is now on hold.

Windspeaker has learned that YFY Pulp & Paper Canada Ltd. has completed a feasibility study and has submitted a proposal to the province to build a chemithermomechanical (CTMP) mill about 15 miles west of Falher, near High Prairie.

High Prairie is located 366 kilometres northwest of Edmonton.

YFY is a subsidiary of a Taiwan company called Yuen Foong Yu (YFY) Paper Manufacturing Company Ltd. The mill would be the first major Taiwanese investment in Canada.

It's one of two forestry developments proposed for the High Prairie area currently under review by the province.

Recommendations have been submitted to cabinet, according to Nick Gartaganis, director of economic and financial analysis with the provincial forestry, lands and wildlife department.

The other proposal has

High Level pulp mill plans abandoned

been submitted by a Canadian company — Polyboard Manufacturing Corp. — which wants to build a chipboard plant at High Prairie. Gartaganis gave a ballpark figure of \$100 million for the Polyboard plant.

The developments would be located between Peavine and Gift Lake Metis Settlements and the East Prairie Metis Settlement. Also nearby are the Sucker Creek, Grouard and Driftpile Indian Reserves.

"It's a question of the government evaluating the different proposals and deciding if one or the other is suitable for the area," said Gartaganis.

Both projects would require similar amounts of timber both from Forest Management Areas and nearby private landowners, including Metis settlements, he said.

Martin McLeod, YFY vice-president, said the company hopes to meet in the near future with representatives of the Metis settlements and Indian bands located near the proposed site.

He said the company is confident it can win public support for its pulp and paper project. The CTMP mill, unlike a bleached kraft

mill wouldn't add pollutants like organochlorines, dioxins and furans to the area's river system, said McLeod.

But "it won't be without its challenges," he said, alluding to the rough ride given to proposed pulp and paper projects by environmentalists and Natives.

"We'll just have to wait and see what the reaction is. The project is a good one for the province," McLeod said. "We will be doing a very, very detailed environmental impact assessment."

The pulp mill will employ 150 people while another 150 will be employed in woods' operations. When the fine paper machine is added five years later, another 150 people will be hired at the mill.

Dennis Cunningham, Peavine Settlement administrator, said while the number of jobs to be created by the project sounds promising, the mill's 150 jobs would be of minimal benefit to his settlement, because it would be too far for workers to commute.

"The bushland operations might be of benefit to everybody," he added.

Cunningham expressed mixed feelings about the YFY project. "Anytime you take timber out of an area,

there's economic good in it. But on the other hand, there are traditional pursuits on a settlement we like to uphold like hunting."

It's too early to pass judgment on the project since the settlement has yet to see any of the company's plans, he said. A meeting scheduled for earlier this week was cancelled by the company.

Meanwhile, Cliff Smith, acting deputy minister of forestry, lands and wildlife, confirmed reports an American multinational pulp and paper company, Parsons-Whittemore, has shelved plans to build a pulp mill near High Level.

That mill would be located north of Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement and near the Dene Tha' and Boyer River Indian Reserves.

The move follows controversial hearings held on the \$1.3 billion proposed Alberta-Pacific pulp mill, which would be built near Athabasca.

After observing that often very bitter public hearing process, Parsons-Whittemore decided to back off, said Forestry Minister LeRoy Fjordboten.

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On the Local Scene

HOUSING CRUNCH • 'Skyrocketing' rent hikes force poor to scramble for housing

By Jeff Morrow
Windspeaker Staff Writer

EDMONTON

Skyrocketing rental prices in Edmonton have the inner-city poor scrambling to find an affordable place to live and housing agencies are expecting a surge in applications from people coming into the city.

Linda Trotter, housing placement worker for the Boyle Street Co-op, said she is starting to detect a steady increase in the number of people coming to her centre for help finding rental accommodations.

"The main problem I see right now is the wait. It's getting harder to find housing," she said.

She said there are more people looking for rentals now than she has seen in the three years she has worked at the centre.

Trotter blames it on insufficient shelter allow-

ances for welfare recipients and a lack of security deposits required by many landlords.

"The amount of money they're getting for rent is very low. It's just not meeting the cost of housing on the private market. It never did," she said.

The maximum shelter allowance for three people is \$490 and the price of a three bedroom apartment is \$520.

Trotter said the number of people she helps has jumped from 60 to 150 a month and she expects the number to go even higher in the coming months.

The Co-op housing service acts as a referral service for families and individuals having trouble finding rental homes.

Many of its clients are Native people coming to Edmonton from their northern reserves or settlements to find work.

Edmonton Inner City Society director Ann Harvey said she is also begin-

ning to see an increase in renters being left out in the cold.

She's expecting a rash of applicants from renters who do not fall under the Landlord Tenant Act and who have not been able to pay their rent in the last few months.

"We're beginning to get some indication this is happening. We just don't know to what extent yet," she said.

The Landlord Tenant Act requires a landlord to give a three month warning before an eviction notice is sent.

However, renters who live in boarding houses where kitchens are shared with other renters, do not fall under the act.

She expects boarding house tenants to be hit the hardest.

Harvey said there are "hundreds" of boarding houses in the inner city, many which are occupied by Natives living on social assistance.

"There are already cases where tenants are getting booted out, and they don't have any recourse. The law really has to be changed to protect them," she said.

Joe Blyan, Metis vice president of Zone 4, said Natives are having a difficult time already because they don't have anyone to vouch for them when they come into the city to live.

"It's going to be even more devastating to Native people. It's hard enough now because they don't have any references," he said.

Alberta Social Services Minister John Oldring announced this week his department will be considering raising housing allowances in response to the rising rental rates.

City landlords have raised the rental rates for the first time since 1983 and say the costs will become higher over the next few years because of the declining vacancy rate.



Affordable housing is becoming more difficult to find.

Native groups demand more action on crime

Task force to study downtown murders

By Jeff Morrow
Windspeaker Staff Writer

EDMONTON

The Edmonton Police Commission wants Native groups to help clean up the city's image but Alberta Native leaders insist that the commitment should be more involved than simply downplaying its violent reputation.

They want the city to recognize the needs of Native people and not view them as the source of the city's high crime rate.

Police commission vice-chairman Wayne Drewry said Edmonton's reputation as the "murder capital of Canada" is a dubious distinction the city can do without.

He wants to form a task force to study the problem of Native violence and alcohol abuse near the downtown core.

Last year there were 24 murders in Edmonton, eight were in the downtown core. Drewry said "that's just not acceptable."

"We have to find a way to tackle this thing and find out what the problem is," he said.

"We're not very happy with this title, particularly when we see a lot of the murders happening in a defined, geographic area."

Drewry noted that most of the violence that occurs in the inner city involves Natives and alcohol abuse. He said the five-member board is not going to ignore the problem any

longer.

During its meeting in December, the police commission requested that the Edmonton Police Department devise an "action plan" to study the social problems that are affecting the area.

This week, the police department announced it will form a special committee to study crime in a target area to determine why it is happening and what can be done to lessen it.

The area borders 114th Avenue on the north, 111th Street on the west and the river on the south and east.

Drewry, an Edmonton lawyer, said the commission wants Native groups to become part of the plan.

He said the commission issued its position paper to Native organizations in Edmonton late last year seeking their support and recommendations for undertaking the comprehensive research plan.

The commission is waiting to get a response.

But Metis zone 4 vice-president Joe Blyan said the commission's focus is too vague.

He said the root of Edmonton's social problems extend into northern Alberta where Native people become frustrated with the poverty in their own communities.

He said they eventually wind up in Edmonton looking for work, but encounter poverty all over again.

"We're the victims.

Why are we having such a migration into the city every fall? It's simple. There's nothing in the North," he said.

In the past, the social problems of Native people in Alberta have never been recognized by the City of Edmonton and the Native people living in the downtown core have never been the focus of any municipal government initiative, he charged.

He said the city should start recognizing Native people as citizens of Edmonton who need help and not outsiders who are causing problems.

"There are people crying for help. Our agencies are plugged up," he said.

Roy Louis, president of the Indian Association of Alberta, said he has been pushing for the city to set up a task force into Native social problems in Edmonton for more than a year.

He said there should be a Native Standing Committee on Urban Affairs established "to investigate the horrendous social problems affecting the Native community in Edmonton."

Louis said Native people make up a very significant part of Edmonton and their problems should be taken into consideration by city council.

He said there are more than 30,000 Native people living in Edmonton.

The issue should not be focused solely on bringing down the crime rate in



City police are often responding to an increasing amount of violent crime near areas like Boyle Street.

Edmonton, Louis noted, and the city council should meet with Native groups to establish a working

group in an effort to address Native needs.

Georgina Donald, director of the Canadian Native

Friendship Centre, said she received the letter from the commission but hasn't decided whether to reply.



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On The National Scene

Mohawks to get own justice system

Precedent-setting agreement by Quebec band

By Jeff Morrow
Windspeaker Staff Writer

KAHNAWAKE RESERVE, QUEBEC

The Kahnawake Mohawk Nation is on its way toward judicial independence from the provincial and federal governments.

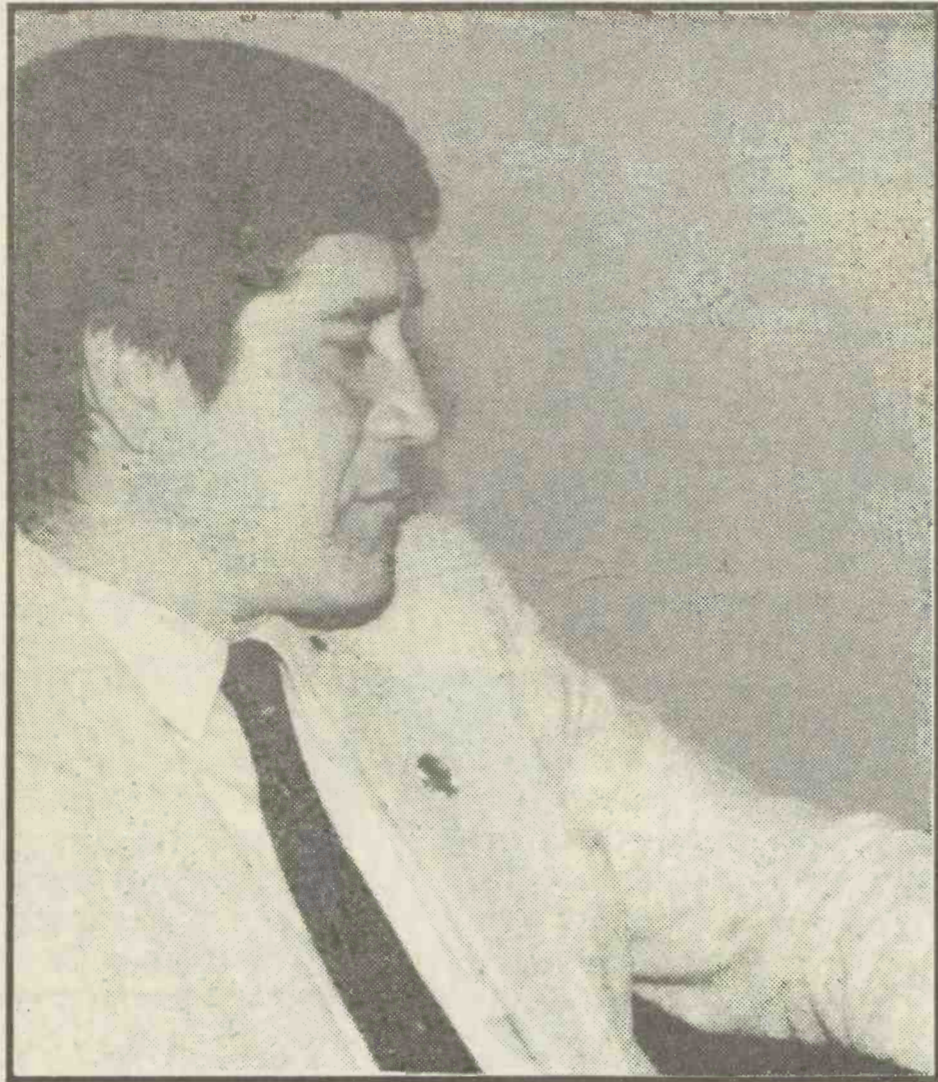
An agreement to allocate complete "judicial autonomy" to the 5,500-member band near Montreal is expected to be finalized in March.

The Quebec Minister of Native Affairs said this week "the ultimate goal of these talks is to recognize the Mohawks as a nation, not only in words but in practice."

John Ciaccia said the Kahnawake reserve will "be a nation within a state."

Ciaccia said the Mohawk people will have legal power to control their own judicial system in both criminal and civil cases.

They will also be able to



Kahnawake Chief Joe Norton
Windspeaker file photo

settle family and contractual disputes.

The Kahnawake reserve's 13-member police force will be expanded to 18 and will be given the

power of arrest.

The band has only had the power to settle disputes within its membership through mediation, but it will now be given the

power to hold trials and hand down sentences.

The arrangement will not "necessarily" have a mechanism for appeals to Quebec and federal rulings, Ciaccia said.

He also said Kahnawake Nation could be viewed as a model for other bands across Canada who want to have their own justice systems.

Kahnawake Grand Chief Joe Norton told Windspeaker the agreement will help the Mohawks enter the 1990s with a modern focus.

He said it will enable the Kahnawake Mohawks to have "control over their own lives."

And it will help them settle problems that have erupted with band factions torn between traditional values and contemporary systems.

The dispute involves the development of an on-reserve bingo parlor, which many of the Elders and traditional Mohawks object to.

Provincial News

Kehewin lawsuit dropped, says councillor

By Dana Wagg
Windspeaker Staff Writer

KEHEWIN RESERVE, ALTA.

A Kehewin councillor says Chief Gordon Gadwa has dropped plans to sue 13 band members for \$500,000.

The chief filed a statement of claim Sept. 25 at Edmonton's Court of Queen's Bench as uncertainty surrounded his future.

But it has yet to be served on any of the individuals named in the suit, according to band councillor Roland Dion, one of the 13 people.

And it must be served to be effective, according to lawyer Dennis Roth, who's representing the 13 people.

Roth has yet to file a statement of defence in response to the claim. "Unless they're served, there's nothing more we need to do," he said.

Dion said Gadwa "didn't serve anybody and he's refusing to serve anybody. He backed out on it."

"We point-blank asked him for them but he wouldn't give them to us. We wanted to be served," he said.

It looks like a dead issue for now, he said.

Gadwa was confronted before Christmas at the band office by all 13 people, said Dion.

"He said he wasn't serv-

ing anybody, that he was taking everything back," said Dion.

"But come election time in March, I'm sure you'll have a few pages to write then," he said.

While there's some hard feelings between Gadwa and the councillors, "we're all trying our darndest to try and work as closely as we can with each other regardless of the situation," said Dion, who doesn't intend to seek re-election.

"I think people will survive until March."

Named in the suit were five of the six councillors, who attempted in August to have Gadwa removed as chief.

Gadwa in his statement of claim said the 13 people libelled him by accusing him of bribery, manipulation, intimidation and patronage. They also accused him of "being evil" and cast "aspersions as to his ancestry," he said.

In an Aug. 17 Band Council Resolution, the dissident councillors accused the chief of acquiring a treaty number "through questionable means," according to a court document filed by Gadwa's lawyer.

Gadwa, who had been locked out of his office in August regained control of the reserve in late September after meeting with the council and threatening legal action.

Gadwa and his lawyer Saul Birenbaum couldn't be reached for comment.

National News Notes

More funds urged for C-31 Indians

OTTAWA

Canada should commit more money to help Indian women and their children regain lost Indian status, according to a Native panel holding cross-country hearings on Bill C-31.

After passing legislation allowing reinstatement, the federal government committed \$295 million to cover the costs of restoring status to an estimated 65,000 women and children.

But Chief William Montour of the Assembly of First Nations said the number of people seeking reinstatement has exceeded all government estimates. A recent commitment of \$1.3 billion to help the bands may not be enough, since costs incurred could run to \$5 billion by the end of the decade, he said.

Montour said the government will also have to deal with the need by some bands for more reserve land for the returnees.

Montour said 65,000 Aboriginal people have already sought reinstatement and 40,000 still have to be processed.

June referendum for northern land claim

YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.

Negotiations on the Dene/Metis claim in the Northwest Territories must be finalized by the end of March and then go to a referendum in June, according to the NWT Metis Association.

If there is no final agreement by the end of March, the federal government will cut off negotiations, according to a Metis Association news release.

In a recent letter to the Dene Nation and Metis Association, Pierre Cadieux, the minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, stated he's committed to reaching an agreement by March 31, 1990.

The Metis want a joint assembly of the Dene Nation and Metis Association before the end of January to instruct the Dene/Metis negotiating team in finalizing negotiations.

The association also wants a referendum on the comprehensive claim, which is for \$500 million over 20 years and 70,000 sq. km. of land.

RCMP detachment called 'training centre'

CARDSTON, ALTA.

The RCMP detachment in Cardston was dismissed as a training centre for recruits in 1980 shortly after a Blood blockade of its businesses, an RCMP officer told a public inquiry this week.

Commanding officer Peter Wright said the decision followed a meeting in which Blood representatives and RCMP K-Division officials agreed constables stationed in Cardston were too inexperienced. Rookie constables were often sent there for six-months training.

The Blood blockade drew attention to their land claim. The band blocked access to Cardston, 255 km south of Calgary, and to some businesses on Highway 5, south of the Blood Reserve boundary.

Wright also testified a detachment on the reserve was a bad idea. The Blood's six-man police force caused a lot of problems for the Cardston RCMP detachment in 1978. The tribal police force often dropped off intoxicated people at the RCMP holding cells without proper authority.

If the RCMP are to be replaced on reservations by Native police, those officers must be disciplined and well-trained if they are to do a proper job, Wright said.

The officer also blamed poor relations between the Blood and the RCMP on the reserve's former director of protective services, Wilton Good Striker.

Good Striker told the Cardston detachment in 1976 that RCMP visits to the community weren't welcome, said Wright, who testified at an inquiry in Lethbridge examining strained relations between the Blood and RCMP. The inquiry resumed Jan. 8 after a month-long Christmas break.

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Viewpoint

Rent controls needed before it's too late

The rich get richer.
The poor get poorer.
That's the lesson behind the new year's early Christmas gift for the poor as landlords jack up rental accommodation by as much as 25 per cent for 1990. Already beleaguered inner-city residents, many of whom are elderly and are on fixed incomes, will probably face one of the worst housing crisis in years in Edmonton.

More and more poor people, including many Native people who fall in that category, are knocking on the doors of such places as the Boyle Street Co-op and the Edmonton Inner City Society as they desperately struggle to find an affordable place to live.

It's all a sign of the times, say some landlords and developers who say that the rental 'holiday' for Edmontonians in the 1980s are over and local renters should expect to pay as much as anyone else in Canada for decent accommodation in the 1990s.

Rental holiday? Considering that Edmontonians in the 1980s came through one of the worst recessions in modern Canadian history, you have to wonder where this kind of assessment comes from.

It's time for landlords to wake up and smell the coffee because the shoe can fit on the other foot, too.

The provincial government has at its fingertips a chance to play the responsible role in helping the poor and needy who clearly cannot afford to pay the outrageous rents that money-grubbing landlords are foisting on renters.

Before it's too late, the government should act quickly and decisively to implement rent controls in this province before rent hikes get out of control and force the poor and the elderly out on the street.

With the city's vacancy rate at its lowest since 1981, renters are at the mercy of landlords.

Given the state of housing in some sectors of the city, there's no question that while the price of rental accommodation will be going up, it's very unlikely that the quality of decent housing will reflect that price hike in the tenement-like housing offered by slum landlords in the city.

Time and time again, unscrupulous landlords have been forced to upgrade housing conditions to a tolerable, decent level only after complaints have been lodged by renters.

In this city alone, there are people who are living in housing without proper plumbing, without heat, with faulty and dangerous wiring. You name it, you'll find it in this city.

Skyrocketing rent hikes are a reflection of the times, as some landlords say.

That's a telling statement. Because what it really shows is the difference between those in society who put profit before compassion, self-interest before the common good.

Landlords do not have to jack up rents by astronomical amounts. They should have a legitimate right to profit from their endeavours but not to the point of gouging renters, particularly those who cannot afford to live anywhere else.

It may be a capitalist marketplace. But within this place is the underclass of society — the poor and needy who do not have much but would like to keep a roof under their heads.

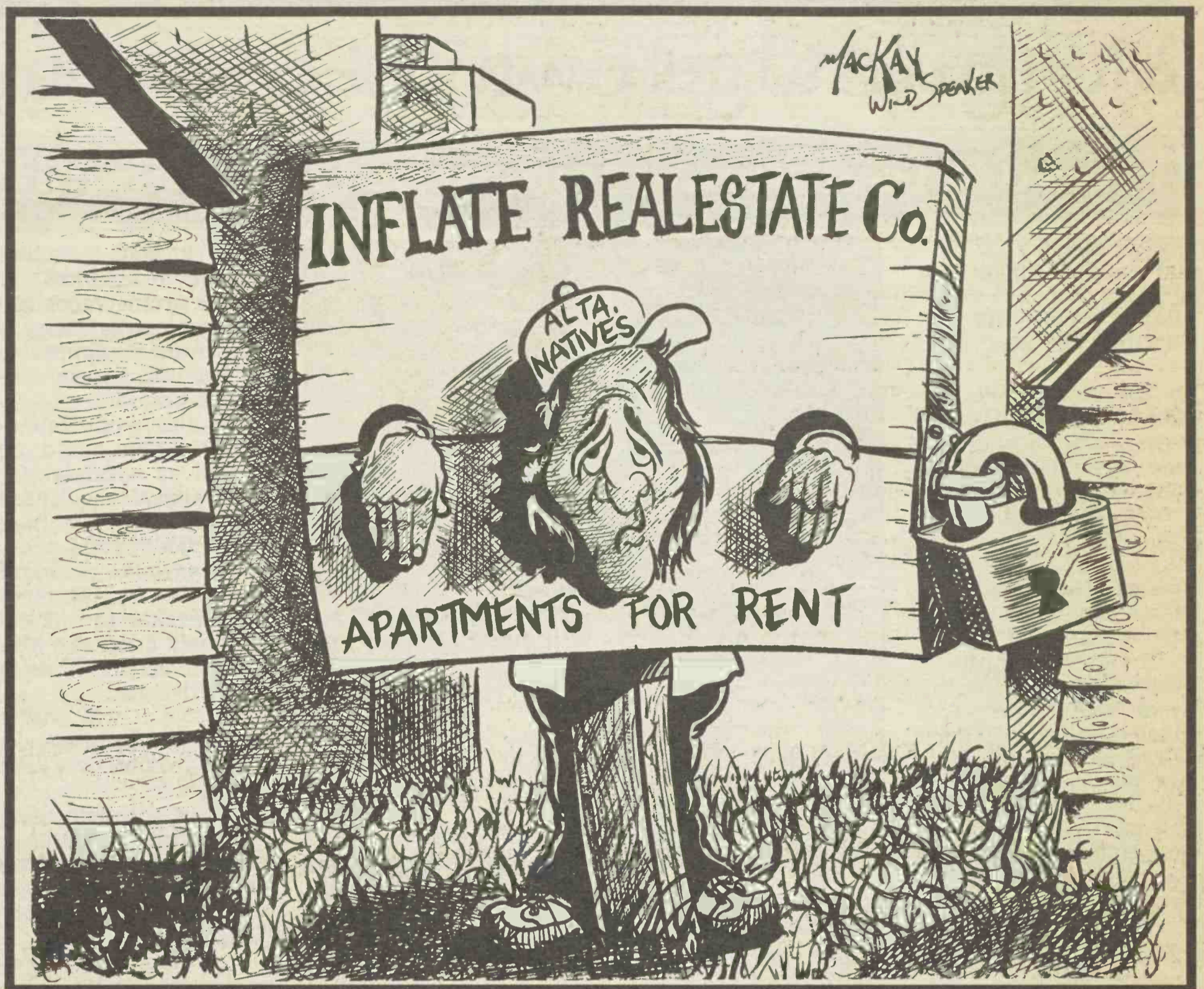
For Native people who fit in that category especially, skyrocketing rent hikes will add another barrier to seemingly endless ones that stop them from making headway with their lives.

The Alberta government talks about keeping families together in times of need.

It's a time of need now.

And it's time to act and act fast before too many people are hurt.

Editorial Page



Letters to the Editor

Time to get on with 'The Metis Dream'

Dear editor:

The early Metis people fused in classic Metis fashion, the equality of man and democratic rights with the Indian traditions of consensus and respect for the wisdom of elders.

These principles of democracy and fair play have historically been an essential part of the Metis way of doing things.

The Metis people were homeless, but always carried in their hearts a two-part dream: 1) a Metis homeland and 2) an economic chance for all Metis people.

Metis people were always skilled negotiators and organizers. Through the skills of negotiating and organizing, the settlements were born.

The settlements were and still are on Crown land. The mere stroke of a pen in the hands of someone biased against Metis peoples and settlements would vanish.

The old Metis Betterment Act and very limited economic opportunity combined to create a very chaotic problem on settlements.

At first the Government used settlement supervisors, then went to settlement councils. One group on a settlement could get a majority of its members elected to council.

Under the old act, the council is Okemowan, so everything would flow to the one group. Everyone else barely survived in a state of despair and helplessness.

A group of Elders decided to correct these problems by securing Metis lands, ensure economic

opportunity for all, plus creating a true democracy by making the Metis people Okemowan.

Elders like Maurice L'Hirondelle, Sid Beaudry, Fred Carifelle, Joe McDermott, Richard Poitras, Asolphus Ghostkeeper, Joe Cardinal, Fred Martineau, Rober Aulotte and Adrian Hope.

The following quotes are excerpted from "An Historic Meeting", the record of a meeting of Metis Elders held in 1979.

"The finest thing that ever happened to the Metis people is that they got together and organized themselves and got land set aside for them. . . We must continue to work together for the betterment of our people in the future," said Elder Maurice L'Hirondelle, East Prairie.

"If we had not been united in 1939, the Government would have refused to grant us the settlements. But we were united and, therefore, they gave us the land. Cooperation is still the key — we must remain in agreement among ourselves," said Elder Adolphus Ghostkeeper, Paddle Prairie.

"The most important thing about the settlements is that they gave the Metis people a land base. No matter where they go now, they always have a home to go back to," said Elder Robert Aulotte, Fishing Lake.

The Alberta Accord is the product of the elders actions to correct problems and at long last, secure the Metis dream.

I feel the accord uses great wisdom in securing the land. The people are Okemowan under the ac-

cord and must vote before anything may be done with the land. The all-council must then agree. Then the Minister must agree. All three things must be done before anything is done with the land.

What would happen if the land is deeded to a settlement and the old act retained? The settlement council would still be Okemowan.

A quorum of three people could theoretically sell the settlement land. No, I like the cross checks of the Accord.

Democracy under the accord would mean the people of each settlement are Okemowan and pass their own rules, not on a quorum of three people as it is today.

The accord has enough economic development funds to give everyone a chance, instead of a few.

Today our young people do not have a chance. Under the accord, they have every opportunity. We have already lost far too many youth to the cities. Much more and the settlements will become an old age home and vanish. We must think of the future, youth, that is the duty of elders.

No one can really guarantee anything in this life. We have plenty of ability, all we lack is the opportunity. Our young people don't have a decent place for dancing, sports or anything else. Under the accord package, a sports arena/meeting hall is possible.

If Paddle decides to continue with the accord, the youth should consider making their views and priorities known and help

with the community planning.

Always when people become too selfish and greedy, they lose everything. If the accord provides opportunity for all, why try for another generation for more? In the meantime the wrong people or the wrong economic circumstances may arise and with the stroke of a pen, all would be lost.

Actually the federation had its roots in the St. Paul Metis Constitution of 1932. I feel we will need the strength of unity even more in the future. The wisdom of the elders is useful today. We should also have more respect for our elders.

I do not like all of these strangers coming here and speaking for us. We are perfectly capable of speaking and deciding for ourselves.

Besides they do not live here, so have absolutely no way of understanding anything about what's going on here and are probably a large part of the current problem.

The ballot box is better. It preserves everyone's dignity. A date for the ballot established by the settlers here is better than one imposed from the outside. Now it is up to each individual here to decide.

This time lets respect consensus, or pretty soon, no one will believe us. If we give respect and dignity, we will receive it! Then let's get on with the Metis Dream, before it becomes the Metis Nightmare!

Lawrence Graham
Paddle Prairie

Opinion

A new year is a time for reflection

Tansi, ahnee and hello. This morning there is new snow.

Each individual flake spirals lazily through the purple haziness of early morning like a dancer.

If you close your eyes and listen, the right way you can almost hear the beat of the drum they follow.

In the wind is an honor song. Morning emerges elegantly, gracefully like a planned thing.

Snow. In the past few days there has been the teasing presence of a false spring. The river opened up a little and the people everywhere were walking with the extra jump to their step that comes from warmth and sunshine.

From my window, those mornings, I could see the grass again and the hard grey face of the pavement. Perhaps if I had tried

hard enough I could have believed that this evidence pointed to the early arrival of springtime. I didn't.

This is the first moon of the year. The Old Ones called it the Earth Renewal Moon. This is the moon that is born of the longest and darkest day of the year.

It travels through what's left of the old year and on into the new. It brings with it an elegant motion inward. It is a time of contemplation.

The color of this time of the year is white. The pure glistening white of the snow that falls outside this window. It is the color of purity and wisdom. It is the only color that is a combination of all other colors. A balance and a harmony.

Maybe it's just coincidence that the snow is falling as I prepare myself to enter a new year. Maybe the climatic conditions just happen to be occurring this way.

Maybe the snow this morning is just Old Winter Man announcing his continued control of things until the real springtime chases him into shadow once more.

Maybe. One thing I've managed to learn and believe over



TOUCHING THE CIRCLE

By Richard Wagamese

the last few years is that nature seldom does anything by accident. In every small change of rhythm and condition there is something there for me to learn or use.

With this in mind the snow this morning becomes an indication that it's time to remember the things the Old Ones said about this time of the year.

It is the time of renewal. Underneath this soft blanket of snow and ice, the earth is gathering its energies.

The tiny seeds which will become plants and trees are coming into harmony with the ground. The animals which are the sleeping ones are resting and allowing the universe around them to offer them protection as they rest from one season of growth and prepare for another.

It is the same with

human beings.

In the old days, the elders would tell stories and legends around the tribal fire. Because everything was in a state of rest they believed that the spirit world was in the same state.

They could talk about the good and bad spirits safely without fear of angering the unhealthy spirits.

When the teachings and stories were finished, the people had more time to dwell on their meanings. There wasn't as much activity during the winter months and there was less distraction.

The people had more than enough time to contemplate the teachings of the elders. Through the long winter nights they could go inward and see how these teachings applied to their individual

families and lives.

In this modern world it is possible to do the same. At the turn of the year the fashionable thing for people to do is to make resolutions.

This is the time when all kinds of promises are made to ourselves to either quit something or start something. This is the time when we assess the good and bad things in our lives.

The time when we focus on things we'd like to change or add to the daily routines of our living.

The winter is the direction of the north on the Great Wheel of Life. It is the direction of wisdom. This is the time on the Medicine Wheel when human beings reflect on all the teachings that have come their way throughout their travels around the wheel in the past year.

This is what the snow has reminded me of this morning. Sometimes it is so easy to take things for granted. Sometimes I can get so caught up in the day by day events in my life that I forget to put them into the proper perspective.

I forget that making a success of life in this modern world for me is based entirely on belief and practice of those old teachings

and traditions.

Nature is a great reminder. The biggest thing that I can do for myself on a day to day basis is to stop moving around first thing in the morning and take a good long look at what is happening in the world around me. Even a small winter thing like falling snow has its message. Our world is the greatest spiritual teacher.

This morning, I am into a new year and a new decade. The 1980's were a great learning time for me. I grew up there. The 1990's hold a great deal of promise. What I need to remember as I move into them however are all of the hard lessons I had to learn through the old decade. As I move into this new year I need to recall all of the lessons contained in that one year of 1989.

This is the Earth Renewal Moon. Like the moon I move graceful from one year to another. Like the moon I take the time to contemplate all the teachings in the travels I have gone through in that last year. I gather my energies and move into the coming seasons with grace and dignity.

Until next week, Meegwetech.

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Translation of 'Touching The Circle' by Joe Redcrow

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Letters to the Editor

Parenteau defends Paddle Prairie pullout

Dear editor:

As chairman of the Paddle Prairie Settlement Council, I would like to clarify for your readers a few points regarding the position of the Paddle Prairie Council and the recent happenings on our settlement.

Despite Mr. Hardy's statements, it is true that the Paddle Prairie settlement is no longer a part of the Federation of Metis Settlements.

For those who are unaware, there is no legal problem with this withdrawal.

The corporation's bylaws of the Federation in Clause 6 state clearly that a settlement council can withdraw its membership at any time with notice in writing to the Federation.

This notice in writing was provided to the Federation on Nov. 15, 1989, the day following the motion to withdraw.

The chairman also attended the November Federation All-Council meeting and read aloud the motions to the assembly.

The government of Alberta was also informed of the decision at the same time.

The reaction from the Federation and the government has been similar. Both parties, as represented by Mr. Hardy and Dr. Surrendi, continue to deny or attempt to ignore the decision made by the Paddle Prairie Council.

They have stated directly or indirectly that the decision was made at an improperly called meeting where two councillors were absent.

Again, these statements and suggestions are untrue.

The motions were made at the Accord meeting and voted on twice — once by everyone present at the Accord meeting, including

the five settlement councillors, then once again by the five council members at a special meeting convened immediately. Two members of the council opposed the motion to withdraw and three supported the motion. As chairman, unless I totally misunderstood how democracy works in this country, I take this to mean that the motion is carried.

Since the memorable day of November 14, 1989, one of the councillors who opposed the motion has continued to attend the Federation All-Council's meetings and Mr. Hardy and the other Settlement Councils continue to recognize his input as representative of Paddle Prairie.

The same councillor, Mervin Bellerose to be specific, also met several times with Dr. Surrendi, the assistant deputy minister of municipal affairs.

Although we requested Dr. Surrendi to meet with the council, we were only granted one meeting and that was to be told that he had no intention of discussing our motions or our concerns until he had heard from "the people."

He proceeded to follow his own process of pressuring the people at Paddle Prairie to get back into the Federation and continue the Accord process.

We have made it clear to both the Federation of Metis Settlements and the government of Alberta that we do not consider ourselves out of the negotiating process. But we are definitely, at this point, not a part of the Federation.

We do not support the legislation (Bills 64 and 65) as they are being proposed by the Federation and the Government of Alberta. I think if the other settlement members took the time to consider all the implications of this Accord, which could threaten the future of

the Metis people, they would not support this deal either.

Hearing only from the Federation executive and the government in their explanation of this deal means the people only hear one viewpoint.

I ask the people of all the settlements: have you ever had the opportunity to hear from another lawyer, or to hear a second viewpoint on this deal?

Has anyone ever told you the disadvantages and the dangers of going through with the Accord as it is set up? Consider these points at least:

1. You are signing over the ownership of your settlement lands to another body, the General Council. The option was there from the government of Alberta to have the land held by each settlement, but his plan puts all land and therefore all power in the hands of the General Council and the Minister; I can't believe members of a settlement would so easily hand over their lands to be held by someone other than themselves.

2. You are signing away trapping, hunting and fishing rights anytime the province of Alberta wishes to impose provincial law in these areas;

3. You are signing away all rights and claims to subsurface resources. Yet, the fact that a litigation has been in process for at least 14 years proves that this should not be a decision reached without full understanding and input from all settlement members;

4. You are signing away all rights to have any say about the water on the settlements. The government can proceed with water diversion plans at any time without your involvement. To use the water on your settlement means you may,

at any time, be forced to apply for permits.

In general, all of these points can be used against the Metis people of Alberta, if the government in the future says that this Accord is the way that we, as Metis, have determined what aboriginal rights we are prepared to give up.

In other words, the Federation has through this proposed Accord agreed and is trying to get all of us to agree to sign away those rights which are ours if we continue to support each other.

We have not forgotten that the other side of the negotiating table is the government of Alberta.

We have been placed under tremendous pressure on our settlement by Dr. Surrendi's insistence that the people must hold a vote to demonstrate support for their council before he will deal with their motions.

He has done this on no other settlement but has in the past sent groups of concerned settlement members back to "go through their elected representatives" to be heard.

We are proceeding with a vote on the Paddle Prairie Settlement on January 18, 1990. It should be understood that this is supported by the council, not because of Dr. Surrendi's pressure but because our people have requested it.

As chairman and on behalf of the council, we have not acted yet without the direction and support of the majority of our settlement members. We did our own referendum of support through an informal petition where we received a wide majority of support.

Sincerely,
Robert Parenteau
Chairman
PADDLE PRAIRIE
SETTLEMENT COUNCIL

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Provincial News

Montana band sues feds for loss of reserve 80 years ago

By Dana Wagg
Windspeaker Staff Writer

VANCOUVER

The Montana Band from Hobbema is suing the federal government for compensation for the loss of much of its reserve 80 years ago.

Twenty square miles were taken by Ottawa from the band in 1909 by Ottawa and sold to settlers in future years, leaving the band with just 10 square miles, claims the band.

"They came along and ate off two-thirds," said band lawyer Gary Nelson, in an interview from his Vancouver office.

Nelson said if the courts rule in favor of the Hobbema band, it will have to decide how much should be awarded.

He said he had "no idea" how much the compensation might amount to if the band's claim is successful.

The dispute centres around the surrender of land to the government by former members of the Bobtail Band.

The government at the time approached those members to surrender the land after Montana Band members "completely refused," said Nelson.

"The government decided the Montana band wasn't the proper ones from whom to take a surrender — even though they had taken a surrender from them eight years earlier — and they determined the proper people were remnants of the Bobtail Band," said Nelson. "They went through

this charade of taking a surrender of the reserve from this group," said Nelson. "They took the surrender from the wrong group and did the Montana Band out of its land."

The Montana Band isn't challenging its surrender of land in 1901 to the Crown for the Calgary-Edmonton railway.

The government paid a considerable amount of money to the former Bobtail members for the land surrendered in 1909, which left the Montana Band with just 10 square miles.

The area was originally set aside in the late 1800s for a band headed by Chief Bobtail. But the band didn't stick together too

long; members dispersed or joined other bands around 1890. The chief and some of his followers then took scrip while others joined the Samson and Ermineskin Bands adjacent to the Bobtail Band.

In 1896 a group of refugee Indians took advantage of an amnesty and returned from Montana — where they had fled after the 1885 rebellion — to establish the Montana Reserve settling on land which had been earlier set aside for Chief Bobtail and his band.

Nelson hopes the case will be heard this fall at the Federal Court of Canada in Edmonton and predicted the trial will last five days.

Indian land claims nearing agreement

By Dana Wagg
Windspeaker Staff Writer

EDMONTON

Three bands are likely to have their land claims accepted by Ottawa in 1990 for negotiation, says an Indian Affairs official.

Alexis, Janvier and Alexander will probably be added to the list, which would bring to 13 the number of claims in the province accepted by Ottawa for negotiation, said Allan Tallman, acting manager of lands in Edmonton.

Highlighting the list of claims being negoti-

ated is the Lubicon Lake's 50-year-old dispute. Talks broke off in Jan. 1989. The band is asking for 246 sq. km. of land centred near Little Buffalo and \$170 million. Ottawa has refused to budge, however, from its offer of \$45 million.

Other bands involved in formal negotiations with Ottawa include Grouard, the Blood, Blackfoot, Cold Lake, Duncan's Band, Stoney, Louis Bull and Tallcree.

Ottawa recently finalized land claims with Whitefish Lake and Sturgeon Lake.

Rocky Mountain House National Historic Park is recruiting park interpreters for the summer season. Duties include presenting information to park visitors, participating in demonstration programs and a variety of other challenging tasks.

Basic requirements include 2 years of post secondary education, experience in interpretation, and in 3 of the following: public speaking, creative writing, graphics arts, theatrical arts, or A/V presentations.

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Community News

Aboriginal awards night honor Ft. Mac locals

Hi! Looking for a hot band to play good music for your social? Well, Don Sauve and his 'Taste of Nashville' are back in town and busy. But Don tells me they're available for any gigs.

Just lately, 'Taste of Nashville' played good country rock at the Sacred Heart School in Edmonton. They are talented, especially with the lady Celeste L'Hronnelle singing and picking away on the bass guitar.

You can reach Don at 454-7039.

And how about this! The Ray Fox Road Show.

In his spare time, Ray who now owns a school bus, drives various bands and individual singers to different gigs in and out of province. That's one way of getting our musicians recognized.

Ray, who is not a bad musician himself, has taken with him on the road such known talents as, "The Weekend Warriors," Elvis Grey and many others.

"It's basically a travelling band and although we are set up to play at any function, we also use talents from the community we are to play at. It's a great time," commented Fox.

Did you know that Ray is also into recordings? He is and he goes under the handle of Crazy Fox Productions.

And that is the other side of Ray, who is kept busy running the Native Perspective/ CFWE at Lac La Biche.

WINNIPEG: It is so nice to hear from old friends. Percy Tuesday recently called to tell me a search is going on right at this moment, to find out if his son Jason Tuesday will be the first in Canada to graduate at age 15. It would make him the youngest graduate from high school ever.

Proud father Percy says his son skipped two grades, is a wiz in computer science, and his average is in the eighties.

People will remember Percy from his days here in Edmonton. Percy used to do a lot of singing at Native functions and once appeared on Native Nashville North, a CBC/AMMSA television variety show.

Percy is now a certified Life Skills Coach, but he still sings and plays guitar whenever time allows him to.

Nice hearing from you Percy.

ALEXANDER: Okay, Rene Paul! I understand you have one hot hockey team at Alexander. Well, Rene, I'd

Droppin' In
By Rocky Woodward

like to challenge you. But first of all, let me tell you a story about the team you'll be going up against, (IF) you decide to take up the challenge.

I have heard from the grapevine that you have a line called the SMURF LINE! I also hear they are pretty fast and know how to score goals. But they have never run into the BULLDOGS TWIN TOWERS, have they? The smurfs are history!

Now as their coach I am not trying to scare you off but when other teams have played us, they shake in their little skates, faced by the awesome defense of the 'Twin Towers' and our forward line, simply called: The Metis, French and Fighting Irish Connection.

One time this line went down on goal, scored their goal, crashed through the boards behind the net and chased their opponent's parents home.

So, if you decide to take up the challenge, give us a call at BULLDOGS 455-2700. Coach Rocky (the bladerunner) Woodward.

FORT MCMURRAY: It's a happening! On January 20th; The Nistawoyou Friendship Center will be host of the Regional Aboriginal Awards night.

The awards night is held in recognition of individuals from the Fort McMurray area that have contributed in some way to their community.

Guest speaker will be Chief Billy Diamond from James Bay, Quebec.

Entertainment will be supplied by powwow dancers right from the community and other local talents.

All of this will be held at the Mackenzie Park Inn with supper to start at 5:30.

The cost for this gala affair is set at \$15 per person. I think it will be money well spent. I also understand a dance will be held later in the evening, with music supplied by the Conklin group.

And Program Director Dora Palmer says the center is looking to book round dance and powwow singers, locally. "Outside groups interested in visiting us and seeing Fort McMurray. We would appreciate a call," she said.

Thanks for the info, Dora.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE: It's a go! The Friendship centre will begin Cree masses on January 23. A mass will be held each week on every Tuesday evening.

The other thing the centre is high on is Alcoholic Anonymous meetings. On Tuesday evenings beginning at 8:30 AA meetings are held, Thursday evenings Alateen Meetings and every Monday evening the regular AA meeting can be your call to sobriety.

Program director Iris Schenk said that a crafts course and moose-hair tuffing course will begin sometime in February.

For more info., please call the centre at 845-2788.

Thank you, Iris.

EDMONTON: Will Danny Stonechild, the light heavyweight, be a contestant next month on the undercard of the Razor Ruddock fight, when they announce his opponent and IF the fight does take place?

I talked to someone from the boxing commission but he says no information can be given out until everything is finalized. Not even a hint?

My guess is...Danny will be fighting.

Did you know that Joe Blyan has a club/lounge located on Stony Plain Road? Well, he does and Joe simply calls it JOE'S PLACE.

I understand a great New Year's Eve bash was held there, with local Native talent and...wild meat was on the menu!

That's different. Best of luck in your new business venture, Joe.

That's it! See you all next week and don't forget to drive safely. The person sitting next to you could be the next president of the MAA, the next Chief of Tobacco Hill, the next prime minister of Canada...

Compiled by Tina Wood and Connie Morin

NATIONAL FILM BOARD, Special Screenings of Aboriginal Films, beginning Sept. 6, every Wednesday at noon, 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.; N.F.B. Theatre, 120 Canada Place, 9700 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION ANNUAL FRIDAY NIGHT SUPPERS; Fort Vermilion; Starting Nov. 24; Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

ST. HENRY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL; every Sunday in Ft. Vermilion at 10:15 a.m.; children 3-8 years old are invited to attend; for more info. call Leona Skulmoski at (403) 927-3712.

POWWOW DANCING LESSONS; every Monday from 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.; and Wednesdays from 7 - 10 p.m.; Bonnyville Native Friendship Centre; for more info. call (403) 826-3374.

FREE SOUP KITCHEN; Tuesdays & Thursdays 12 - 1 p.m.; Bonnyville Native Friendship Centre; for more info. call (403) 826-3374.

AA MEETINGS; Tuesdays & Thursdays starting at 8:00 p.m.; Bonnyville Native Friendship Centre Hall; for more info. call Larry Ducharmes at (403) 826-3374.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS; Tuesdays starting at 7:30 p.m.; Bonnyville Native Friendship Centre; for more info. call Brian Tercier at (403) 826-3374.

SWIM NITE; Fridays from 9 - 10 p.m.; Bonnyville Swimming Pool; free to all members; for more info. call (403) 826-3374.

HEAD-SMASHED-IN-BUFFALO-JUMP MINI-EVENTS; Each Sunday from Dec. through March; celebrating this rich Native heritage; Artifact display; arrangements can be made to accommodate large group tours; for more info. contact Louise Crow Shoe at (403) 553-2731 or Calgary Office (403) 265-0048.

TEA DANCE; Jan 12; 7 p.m. to 1 a.m.; The Dene Tha Dancers will be doing the honors along with Tallcree Singers; free moose stew and bannock will be offered; there is no charge; High Level, Alberta

PRINCE ALBERT INDIAN METIS FRIENDSHIP CENTRE 6TH ANNUAL ABORIGINAL TOURNAMENT; Jan. 12, 13, 14, 1990; Prince Albert Communiplex; Entry Fee: \$550 payable in advance; 1st Prize - \$3,200, trophy and jackets, 2nd Prize - \$2,200, 3rd \$1,100 & 4th \$1,100; for more info call Prince Albert Friendship Centre at (306) 764-3431.

TALENT SHOW; \$10 per entry per adult category and \$5 entry for kids 15 years old and under; cash prizes and trophies given out; small admission to offset costs \$3 for adults, \$1 for kids under 12, and Golden Age free (65 and over); Entries can phone the friendship centre and ask for Howard Walker at 926-3255; High Level, Alberta

C.N.F.C. MODELING PROGRAM; Jan. 17, 24, 31 &

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Feb. 7; 13-18 year olds, males & females; for more info. call Rene at (403) 452-7811.

CLIFFORD METCHAWAIS MEMORIAL HOCKEY TOURNAMENT; Jan. 26 - 28, 1990; Goodfish Lake, Alberta; no contact but slapshots are allowed; for more

info. call Randy Metchawais at (403) 594-1457.

MEMORIAL ROUND DANCE; In Memory of Simon Prosper Jackson; Jan. 27, Goodfish Lake, AB; Pipe Ceremony at 5:00 p.m., supper to follow; There will be giveaways, singers will be paid; everyone welcome; sponsored by Prosper Delver & Lillian Jackson & Family.

ONION LAKE TREATY 6 NATIVE RECREATIONAL HOCKEY TOURNAMENT; January 27-28, 1990; Lloyminster Centennial Civic Centre; Total prize \$2,400.00 plus trophies; Entry fee is \$200; Deadline Jan 19, 1990; certified cheque or money order; contact Ron Harper at 344-2107 (days) or Ray Chocan at 344-4673 (evenings)

4th ANNUAL 1990 TUNE-UP GOLF; Feb. 2-5, 1990; Sahara Golf & Country Club, Las Vegas, Nevada; for more info. call Gina (403) 585-4298 (home) or Bill (403) 585-2139 (home) or Emile (403) 585-3805 (home).

CO-ED NATIVE VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE; For interested Native Groups and Associations; Registration deadline, Feb. 5, 1990; for more info. call Brian Gladue at (403) 452-7811.

C.N.F.C. NATIVE RECREATION HOCKEY TOURNAMENT; Feb. 16, 17 & 18; Held at Enoch Recreation Centre; for more info. call Rene Houle at (403) 452-7811.

SENIOR HOCKEY TOURNAMENT; March 16, 17 & 18, 1990; Regina Exhibition Stadium - Exhibition Park, over \$7,000.00 in prizes; Entry Deadline: March 9, 1990; for more info. contact Milton Tootoosis at (306) 584-8333.

REACHING JUST SETTLEMENTS (LAND CLAIMS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA); Feb. 21 & 22, 1990; University of Victoria, Victoria B.C.; conference sponsored by the School of Public Administration & The Division of University Extension and Community Relations, University of Victoria; for more info. call (604) 721-8055.

BUFFY SAINTE-MARIE: LIVE IN CONCERT; Mar. 30, 1990 at 8 p.m.; Calgary Centre for the Arts, Calgary; for ticket info. call (403) 294-7472.

NATIONAL INDIAN ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS; (Men/Ladies), April 7-8, 1990; University of Regina Physical Activity Centre; Entry deadline: March 29, 1990 for more info. contact Milton Tootoosis at (306) 584-8333 or Fax (306) 584-0955.

12th ANNUAL SPRING POWWOW; April 14-15, 1990; held at Canada Centre East Building Regina Exhibition Park; for more info. contact Melody Kitchemonia at (306) 584-8333 or Fax (306) 584-0955.

BIRTLE INDIAN SCHOOL REUNION; July 1990; Winnipeg, Manitoba; for more info. Write to W.C. Thomas, Box 280, Hodgson, Manitoba, R0C 1N0 or call (204) 645-2648 (bus.) or (204) 645-2456 (Hm.).

Provincial News

Little Red River band pushes for federal review of Daishowa pulp mill

By Jeff Morrow
Windspeaker Staff Writer

LITTLE RED RIVER,
ALTA.

The Little Red River Band of northern Alberta isn't trying to cut down the developers of a mega pulp mill in Peace River, claims Chief Johnsen Sewepagaham.

They just want the federal government to recognize its obligations to Indian people.

He is pushing for a federally-sponsored review of the \$500 million Daishowa Canada Ltd. project he fears will damage the environment and affect the livelihood of his people.

After a recent decision by the federal government to delay construction of a dam in Saskatchewan, Sewepagaham is optimistic Native concerns will be heard here.

And if the federal Environmental Assessment Review Office postpones development of the Daishowa project until public hearings are held, "that just means we were right all along — that something was wrong with the way the pulp mill was authorized and pushed through



Chief Johnsen Sewepagaham Windspeaker file photo

by the provincial government," he said.

The Daishowa project is more than half-built and company officials say any delay in construction could jeopardize the project.

Sewepagaham said that's not his worry.

"I won't feel bad. They

should clean up their act. It will give the whole industry something to think about."

The Little Red River Band is currently drafting a position paper to present to the federal government demanding it step in and halt construction of the mill

until a public review is held.

Construction of the hotly-contested Rafferty-Alameda Dam in Saskatchewan was recently put on hold until similar hearings are held.

Sewepagaham said if the federal government can do it in that case, they should do it here.

"We're hoping to use that as an example. It should affect the outcome of the Daishowa mill," he said.

But Daishowa vice-president Tom Hamaoka said his company has already spent \$400 million on the project, and a delay will have a "substantial impact" on the future of the mill.

Sewepagaham maintains the federal government has an obligation to ensure forestry projects do not contaminate the environment with pollutants that could destroy Native culture.

He said Natives in northern Alberta have never been given an opportunity to question the development and operating process of the mill although the company convinced the provincial government it was environmentally sound.

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Community Profile

Helping Native youth a vocation for ex-offender

By John Holman
Windspeaker Staff Writer

EDMONTON

Native youth court worker Fraser Thompson can understand the frustration and agony his young clients face.

He knows low self-esteem kills the motivation to get an education or to lead a normal life.

Thompson knows because he has been in those shoes.

The 32-year-old Cree man has been working for the last five years as a Youth Court advocate with Native Counselling Services (NCS), which helps indigenous people across the province understand Alberta courts.

Fraser knows the life of a young Native in trouble with the law. Because, he too, found himself in a lot of trouble as a youth growing up in Edmonton's river valley community of Cloverdale.

"There was constantly trouble to get into — you didn't have to look far," Thompson recalled.

"(Kids) were expected to be hardcore."

There were many Native families in his old neighborhood which was steeped in poverty. Older teenagers made crime a part of growing up, coercing their younger brothers and sisters into taking part.

Thompson grew up poor, as the oldest of seven brothers and sisters. After his father walked out on the family when he was 14-years-old, his mother single-handedly raised the family on her own.

As a teenager, Thompson ended up in jail, not for long, but long enough to realize crime was a dead end.

But it wasn't until his alcoholic mother's tragic suicide when he was 17, that he decided to turn his life around.

Now 32, the well-groomed, articulate young man is driven by strong ideals.



John Holman, Windspeaker

Native youth court worker Fraser Thompson.

Thompson believes Native people must receive fair treatment in Canada's judicial system. As a court worker with young offenders, he is fighting to ensure that happens.

He acts as a liaison between juveniles, police, social workers and teachers, making sure Aboriginal delinquent youths are properly represented by Legal Aid.

On a regular work day, Thompson counsels three to five kids.

Native people, who tend to be humble and shy, are often intimidated by the legal system, he noted. So Thompson offers information and advice, helping them comprehend the judicial system.

His job is to help young offenders understand the charges they face, which range from breaking and enter to murder.

"Some want to plead guilty right away," he explained.

Fraser encourages his clients to change their lives,

to get out of the rut of poverty and crime and strive for a better life.

"We're all the result of our environment," he explains. Many poverty-stricken youth, says Thompson, fall into a life of crime that continues on into adulthood.

"All of the young people I've spoken to are very easy to converse with. They are all very bright, energetic children when you give them the chance to be," says Fraser.

He lays out the facts and challenges them, asking if they want to continue the way they're going and whether they enjoy it.

"You know what it will lead to," he tells them.

Thompson has seen young offenders grow up to be adult criminals, some dying in their life of crime, others getting locked up.

Before training with NCS as a court worker, he moved from job to job. But he held a strong belief that there was a better life for him.

Over time he also came to believe, there was a better life for Native people across Canada than a life of poverty, which has so many trapped in its tentacles.

It's poverty, he believes, which spawns alcoholism and crime, in the Native community.

He says federal mistreatment of Native people is the biggest obstacle to overcoming poverty and crime. Through the denial of self-government, the failure to reimburse lost resource revenues generated on Native land, the threat to post-secondary education funding and the mismanagement of money meant for Native bands and people and the insufficient funding for business ventures, it has kept Native people where they are.

Thompson criticizes the federal government for spending so little money on preventative measures and programs that will stop young people from continuing to commit crimes.

"I find so much money being spent after the fact. For example, it costs about \$165 (a day) to reside a young offender at the young offenders' institution," he says.

"How much money do

we spend before the fact?" he asked.

Consistency and stability is the secret of a good life, he says. And when young offenders are released, they find themselves back in their old life of crime and poverty, he noted.

To help them leave that behind, young offenders should be given support and be offered the opportunity to get an education and to take self-help programs, says Fraser.

His answer and dream is to see an elders' residence built in Edmonton, which could serve as a cultural centre for Native youth, as well as a place where adults and youth could get an education.

"Education is something you have to use to your benefit," Thompson declares.

Without it, job options are reduced and doors to further education remain closed, he said.

In his work, Thompson continues to face barriers. The often stereotypical view judges have of young Native offenders is a major headache.

"People look at a lot of the kids and because of their inconsistency and criminal activity, they (feel the kids) are no longer

useful, that they are just on a self-destruct mode (and should be jailed)," he says.

"But you can take a negative situation and turn it into a positive one if you work at it. Anything that is going to benefit you will involve a lot of hard work."

For Fraser Thompson, his hard work as a youth worker with Native people, is slowly paying off.



Good News
Party Line

MEMORIAL ROUND DANCE

In Memory of Simon Prosper Jackson; Jan. 27, Goodfish Lake, AB; Pipe Ceremony at 5:00 p.m., Supper to follow; There will be giveaways, singers will be paid; Everyone Welcome; Sponsored by Prosper Delver & Lillian Jackson & Family.

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Sports

Agony of defeat goes beyond the ice

Greetings from the Invisible Man. I'm sure my clear visage in the last issue had a lot of people guffawing over their coffee. I don't think my editor was as happy though. I remedied it by drawing a happy face on my paper.

The National Sport: The Canadian love of hockey and its heroes had not really made an impact on me until recently when I sat beside a loving father and his two kids at Edmonton's Northlands Coliseum, where the Oilers battled the Los Angeles Kings.

The little girl, about six or seven years old, cheered for LA, especially Gretzky, yelling "Go Gretzky!" even when his shifts ended. The boy cheered whoever was cheering at the time, switching allegiances whenever he heard the thunderous Oiler's cheers or the occasional nearby LA fan.

Whenever a goal was scored, the boy jumped off his seat and excitedly clapped his hands, carried into euphoria by the roaring boos or cheers of the crowd.

The Oilers won 5-4. The little girl started bawling, pitifully wiping her nose and scrunching fists into her eyes, pawing away her tears.

Her father could offer no consolation, no matter what he did. The boy happily tromped out of the arena with them, unaware of the win — joyful from joining in with the final pandemonium of the fans.

On Sunday, I saw the Calgary Flames burn the Oilers 3-1. It was a brutal game and blood was spilled. Beside me sat two old ladies, calling the play as it happened. They even taught me some interesting expletives when some of Calgary's high-sticking and blatant holding offences went unpenalized.

Other fans (from Calgary) incessantly screamed at the players to "fight, fight, fight!". Flame Stu Grimson and Oiler Dave Brown accommodated that twice.

Fighting. Violence. That's when the fans seemed the loudest. Pity.

Goodfish Lake: Ten teams played good hockey here from Dec. 28-30, playing in the Christmas Casey Halfe Memorial Tournament. It was named in honor of Casey Halfe, who used to be the goalie for the Goodfish Lake Flames and an outstanding sportsman. Halfe



Sports Beat...

With John Holman

SPORTS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Slave Lake Mixed Curling Bonspiel Jan. 19-21.
- Clifford Metchewais Memorial Tournament Jan. 26-28.

helped establish recognition for the Flames in the Alberta Centennial Hockey League (ACHL).

The Edmonton Blackhawks took home \$1,500, champ jackets and a trophy; the St. Paul Rockets took second and \$1,000 plus a trophy; Enoch came third for \$600; Hobbema finished fourth for \$400.

The Blackhawks were beaten by St. Paul 4-3 in their first game of the tournament. And since it was in a double-knockout format, the Blackhawks were delegated to the B division. But St. Paul came out the losers when Edmonton played for six victories to meet St. Paul in back-to-back championship games.

St. Paul succumbed to the Blackhawks losing 5-2 in the first game and battling to a 4-4 tie in the A final. So the title came down to a shoot-out.

Blackhawk Joe Halfe snapped one from the centre line

to get the goal that got the championship jackets, trophy and money.

For all his trouble Joe Halfe (of Goodfish Lake) won the Most Valuable Player award.; Joey Potts of Hobbema took the best left defence award while Brian Halfe of Goodfish Lake won the best right defence award; another Goodfish player, Daniel Houle, garnered two awards as best centre and top-scorer; yet another Goodfish player, Bobby Houle, was voted the best forward; the best goalie was Cliff Sherstabbitef from the Blackhawks, Craig McDonald from Enoch was the runner-up.

The Edmonton Blackhawks are the ex-Goodfish Lake team but most of them are in Concordia University, attending post-secondary education.

This year the team is taking a one-year leave of absence from the ACHL to restructure the team, since most of the regular players are in Edmonton.

Bonnyville: There will be a snooker tournament here from Feb. 16 to 18 with room for 32 players. It will be held at Donny's Arcade and cash prizes will be offered. If you're interested you can call Donny at 826-6810, or Eugene at 826-3333, extension 14 or Herman at the same number, extension 10, Herman also has a home phone number, 826-4215. Whew! You can even call Ray at 826-4732.

Lesser Slave Lake: The 11th annual mixed curling bonspiel will be held here Jan. 19-21. Play will be limited to 32 teams with a \$100 entry fee. Interested teams can call June Houle at (403) 849-3039.

Goodfish Lake: The 2nd annual Clifford Metchewais Memorial Tournament will be held here from Jan. 26-28, not from 22-28 as it appeared in the last column. Better call fast, though, the tourney is limited to 12 teams with an entry fee of \$300. Interested teams can call Randy Metchewais at (403) 594-1457 in Cold Lake.

Remember folks, if you want a star Indian or Metis athlete to appear in *Sports Beat*, give me a call. Also, you can drop me a line at 455-2700 to let everyone know about your sports-related activities or tournaments.

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PRESENTATIONS : JANUARY 24th

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NON - INSURED BENEFITS; DR. H. HODES

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