

Mar. 14, 1996

F-14 H

Justice Robert Reid

Dear Mr. Reid:

We are writing this letter to attempt to give you some insight into what it is like to live in the Ipperwash.

We have lived between Kettle Point and Ipperwash for 23 years. We have many friends and acquaintances in this area, some native, some not. Until the incidents last July, this was a relatively peaceful, enjoyable place to live. That has changed drastically for the worse and has not improved.

The emotional roller coaster ride since that time has been non-stop with more negative emotions than positive. Following is a sample of some of the emotions; feelings we continue to try to deal with:

1) Bewilderment:

- a) At why a small group of Natives were allowed to walk into the Ipperwash Army Camp and put our military on the run. Why weren't they stopped and told until negotiations were done they could not take over the camp.
- b) At why we have two sets of laws in Canada. This must be so as we continue to hear Fully Automatic gunfire (as recently as Mar 12/96) from both Kettle Point and the Ipp. Army Camp. Are these weapons not restricted in Canada, and if so, why are OPP or Kettle Point Police not confiscating them and laying charges? IS THIS JUSTICE?

2) Frustration:

At the lack of action by our Government and OPP against law breakers (on video) throughout this whole process. We watched our hard-earned tax dollars go up in smoke at Ipperwash Provincial Park as Natives who took over the part burned the store, kiosk, etc to the tune of \$400,000.00 or more. (No arson charges laid).

3) Abandonment:

Even though the OPP commander assured us on Wed. afternoon that everything was under control and "the OPP weren't going anywhere," within 18 hours of that comment, the command center was evacuated (with no advice to us). We, the taxpayers, were left to fend for ourselves in the defense of our homes and possessions.

4) Fear:

With OPP back 10 km (at Native demand) we had no idea what would happen. Hundreds of Natives from as far away as OKA and Northern Ontario continued to move into the Army Camp. Fires in the middle of Hwy 21, and attacks of OPP Command posts left us afraid at what might happen next.

5) Anger:

Why were we considered so unimportant that we were left on our own? Our Town of Bosanquet officials could not get a meeting with Gov't officials to speak to them about the problem. Nor could we get a seat at the negotiating table, because all this also affects our tax base, economy, etc.

There have been one or two positive aspects of this whole situation also:

- 1) It has brought neighbors and community closer together, realizing we have no one to help us but ourselves.
- 2) There is a wider spread awareness of the need for equality in our country. The organization of Ontario Foundation for Individual Rights and Equality has just begun to build support for fairness to all. ONE country – ONE law for all. It is becoming more widely known that our government is spending billions of dollars on 3% of the population. If natives are Canadians they should be equal, if they don't consider themselves Canadian – Why are we supporting them?

This is a very short list as I could probably write pages of text on this subject. We are not racist people, however, Gov't native policies tend to be racist – treating natives better than taxpayers.

We certainly hope that this issue can be resolved quickly and fairly to all parties.

Camp Ipperwash should be returned to the natives, however, we can't give away the farm in the process. This country simply can't afford it.

This whole situation is in a word: UNBELIEVABLE! If we hadn't lived through it (and continue to do so – as our properties are worthless), we wouldn't have believed this could happen in a democratic Canada.

We would appreciate hearing your viewpoint on the past and future developments in this area, and the Gov't reasonings for its actions or lack thereof.

Yours truly,

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