

F-194

March 18/96

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with a mixed sense of anxiety, urgency, and frustration that I find myself writing this letter on an early spring Sunday afternoon. Instead of looking forward to what should be a season of renewal and hope, the residents of Ipperwash find themselves fearing a repeat of the nightmare that was the summer and fall of 1995.

In 1987, my wife XXXXXXXXXXXX and myself purchased a modest building lot near the shores of Lake Huron, within a section of land known as West Ipperwash Beach. We were pursuing a dream of designing and building a small home near the lake where we hoped to reside on a full time basis. We..... held no concerns or prejudices towards our native neighbours. The usual legal channels were followed during the purchase and our lawyer assured us that all was well. We proceeded with our plans and dreams and within two years, I undertook, along with my son, to build our home. As we are of modest wealth, this land and home represented a significant portion of our personal resources. In the fall of, we moved into our new home.

It was during our first summer at Ipperwash that we learned of the tensions between the local native population and the homeowners living immediate to the beach. The ownership of the beach seemed to be in question. This bothered us somewhat, but being private and quiet people we kept our concerns to ourselves. Our harmonious lifestyle came to a halt when we were served with a legal document shortly before Christmas 1992. We were being sued, along with our neighbours, for our homes plus compensation by the Kettle Point Native Band and were given forty days to respond and legally defend our properties. This year 1996 marks the fourth year since the native legal challenge was initiated with no end in sight.

Concern over our legal battle was superceded during the summer and fall of 1995 firstly, with the native occupation of the Ipperwash Military Camp and secondly, the Ipperwash Provincial Park.

As residents, we watched these events unfold with the feeling of complete helplessness. It soon became clear that the Federal Government was not going to take steps to defend the military base and the occupation continues to date. I personally feel, the successful occupation of the military base gave the natives the confidence to continue their militant policies. They were successful once so why not continue, therefore, the occupation of Ipperwash Provincial Park followed.

As these events unfolded, I contacted both Rose Marie Er, our Federal M.P. and Marcel Baubien our Provincial M.P.P. Rose Marie Er offered her sympathies and concerns but nothing more. Marcel Baubien was another.....an attitude of disdain and arrogance. At this point I would refuse to have any dealing with Mr. Baubien and certainly have no faith in the word of the provincial government he represents. It seems both levels of government are more intent on pointing fingers at each other and scoring political points, than they are in resolving the Ipperwash problem.

Meanwhile, the lack of proper O.P.P. protection during the Provincial Park occupation soon became apparent. The Ipperwash residents were left under the protection of the Kettle Point native police (a negotiated solution within the O.P.P. This resulted in many residents actually taking steps to arm themselves. Since that time, I have personally spoken to neighbours who have decided that without proper O.P.P. protection during native actions, arming themselves is the only form of protection that they can rely on. I might add, these people who normally are completely.....frustration have peaked. As a further point of interest, at one point during the Provincial Park crisis, I was told by an O.P.P. officer that they (the O.P.P.) would only respond to requests for help in cases of acute emergency, and that even then it could be doubtful if a response would take place.

It seems to me that Canadian citizens who have their homes and possibly their lives at risk due to Government policy and inaction over the years (eg. Camp Ipperwash), should be able to count on proper and secure policing during any insurrection resulting from that same inaction.

In short, my wife and myself have decided we will NOT remove ourselves or our possessions (as we did last fall) from our home. We will stand our ground and protect our home, as many other residents have decided to do. Failure by the Federal Government to guarantee policing by the R.C.M.P. in bloodshed, only this time it could well be citizen against native. This is exactly what the police should be trying to prevent. I would also like to make it clear that neither my wife nor myself have taken the step to arm ourselves, but we are NOT representative of the community in this matter.

It seems our dream of a quiet peaceful life near Lake Huron is a distant hope. I feel our native neighbours can break Canadian laws with impunity and gain media attention while we have to plead for basic, secure policing.

In summing up, I beseech the Federal Government to act proactively at Ipperwash, Ont. In 1996, by treating all Canadian citizens with fairness in regards to the Canadian law and by providing secure and proper R.C.M.P. protection to the citizens of Ipperwash.

Yours Sincerely,

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