

*Private Members' Business*

I want to recap quickly a few facts to demonstrate for members on all sides of the House the progress that has been made since that time. Indeed during the summer of 1990 the government purchased, in two stages, the entire 106 acres of land necessary to launch the lands unification project at Kanesatake. The government acquired the land to put an end to the crisis and to demonstrate its good-will with respect to the principal claims of the Mohawks of Kanesatake.

In October 1990 the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development held a series of talks with representatives from Kanesatake to discuss ways of settling the issues that remain unresolved in their community.

In November 1990 the minister announced the start of negotiations with the Kanesatake negotiating committee, negotiations that were aimed at establishing a unified territory for the community of Kanesatake, solving long-standing grievances concerning the seigneurie of Lac de Deux Montagnes; ensuring housing, the necessary community infrastructures and economic development and formulating an agreement concerning self-government.

In February 1991 the Government of Canada and the Coalition of Mohawks of Kanesatake agreed to the schedule for land negotiations. The following April, in view of the growing dispute over whether the Mohawk Coalition of Kanesatake represented the community, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development announced that a plebiscite would be held to determine the type of government the community wanted. After the plebiscite an election was held and Jerry Peltier was declared the Grand Chief. Upon being elected, he was given the task of developing an elections code that would serve as the foundation for electing a permanent council for Kanesatake.

The Minister of State then asked the federal negotiator to meet with members of the new council as soon as possible to discuss the procedure for resolving grievances concerning land.

In October the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development tabled in the House the government's response to the report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs called *The Summer of 1990*.

In April 1991 the Prime Minister announced the establishment of a royal commission on aboriginal peoples. At the same time he announced new initiatives on specific land claims shortly before the publication of the report. With respect to the policy on land claims, significant changes have occurred aimed at accelerating the process of settling both specific and comprehensive claims.

The specific claims commission was established as part of the initiatives announced by the Prime Minister and will provide an independent mechanism for resolving conflicts. The commission was also given the mandate to handle arbitration at the request of the parties concerned.

Specific land claims whose origins predate Confederation have now been approved for review and a process for expediting the settlement of small claims has been set up. With regard to comprehensive claims, the government has lifted the limit of six for the number of claims that could be negotiated simultaneously.

These are some of the measures taken by the government to clearly demonstrate that aboriginal issues are at the forefront of governmental concerns.

Colleagues will also recall that the committee recommended that the Government of Canada ensure that the Six Nations Confederacy be involved and consulted in seeking a solution of the issue of administration at Kanesatake. The committee indicated, and rightly so, that it was primarily up to the citizens of Kanesatake to resolve this issue.

The Government of Canada is promoting mechanisms through which residents of the community can make their own choices concerning the type of political representation they want.

The committee also recommended that the government consult with the parties about the creation of a process for resolving conflicts between municipalities and Mohawk authorities over land use issues. It recommended the appointment of a mediator to facilitate discussions on land use, and among other things, zoning, and the appointment of an arbitrator to make binding decisions where mediation and negotiation have failed.

At the end of the 1990 conflict, the federal government appointed a negotiator to resume negotiations with the community on land issues. The negotiating table