

the situation involved more than strict questions of legal rights because of the fundamentally different historical perspective of native people. This letter was not well received by the Municipality which concluded that the Minister had been swayed by radicals. On the 10th of July, the Oka Municipal Council requested the assistance of the Sûreté du Québec by addressing the Director-General of the Sûreté du Québec, Robert Lavigne. In its written brief to the Committee, the Municipality of Oka stated that this request read (in part):

We ask you, therefore, to put a stop to the various criminal activities currently taking place on the Chemin du Mille and to arrest the authors of the crimes so that we can proceed with re-establishing the recreational use of the occupied lands.

You are hereby officially informed that we are prepared to clean up the public lands, but we will not be able to do so until you have restored public safety in the occupied territory.

We are counting on you to settle the issue without further delay and without further requests from us.

On the 11th of July, the Sûreté du Québec “decided to intervene”, in the words of the Municipality of Oka.

In retrospect, one can detect an escalating pattern of conflict beginning in early 1987 over an important issue of land use. This conflict found plenty of fuel in unresolved native grievances, inter-racial tension and the tension within the Mohawk community itself. Eventually, the controversy over land use in The Pines became symbolic of Mohawk land rights in general. This pattern of escalating conflict continued until the shaky state of peace that managed to hold from early 1987, was completely shattered by the events of July 11, 1990.