

**Native caravan in Ottawa**

**Riot police bar Indians as Parliament opens**

OTTAWA (CUP) — An RCMP riot squad forced close to 300 militant Indian demonstrators off Parliament Hill on Monday while the new session of Parliament opened undisturbed.

The riot police forced the demonstrators down the stone steps of the House of Commons from a position they had gained in an earlier skirmish, and pushed people to a 15-foot drop over a stone wall, reportedly clubbing both demonstrators and bystanders alike.

Many of the demonstrators were members of the Native People's

Caravan that left Vancouver in early September to travel across Canada, unifying dissent and gathering supporters for their eventual march on Ottawa. The Caravan held a public rally in Toronto last Saturday.

Earlier on Monday, the Indians marched up Rideau Street to the Hill, where they were faced with a wooden barricade backed by RCMP. The marchers struggled for about 20 feet up the steps before they were stopped; any individuals who managed to break through RCMP lines were beaten.

Meanwhile, 100 soldiers with bayonets provided the traditional colour guard for Parliament, and an army band warmed up to play O Canada.

The demonstrators remained on the Hill for about two hours, beating drums, singing, and making speeches. The army band was booed as it played, as was Chief Justice Laskin who appeared to review the guard.

Violence erupted again when the RCMP began pushing people off the Commons steps. When the riot squad appeared and ordered everyone off

the Hill, the Indians responded by throwing rocks, bottles and sticks.

During the fighting that followed, Don Whiteside of the Canadian Federation of Civil Liberties was beaten by riot police as he tried to explain who he was.

"For the riot police to come in and beat people indiscriminately is unacceptable," Whiteside said later.

Over 20 arrests were made by the RCMP most of them in the second battle. Two of the Indians will be charged with obstructing the police but no other charges have been stated as yet.

Native people's leaders were not available for comment as they had departed the scene for a private strategy session.

The charge of the riot squad was ordered by superintendent Marcel Sauve, officier at the head of criminal investigation branch A of the Ottawa RCMP.

"It had become an unruly crowd" he said. "Our men were being beaten with rocks and sticks. Three of our men were injured slightly and treated in a local hospital. Afterwards we picked up spikes and chains and other weapons."

No reporters at the scene saw anything but belts and picket signs in the hands of the demonstrators.

Sauve refused to reveal exactly how many officers had been at the demonstration, saying only that "they had adequate reserves".

"We had carefully planned this operation in conjunction with the Ottawa police," he concluded.

When asked to comment on the statement made by Don Whiteside, Sauve said only, "We have no comment to make on that statement".

The demonstrators were especially angered that no MPs came out to speak with them, and that they

were not acknowledged by Chief Justice Laskin.

The Caravan was organized in order to bring nation-wide attention to the plight of the native peoples minorities in Canada, and to provoke the government into radical policy changes toward these minorities. It has successfully unified people of all ages and broken down former barriers between Indians, Metis and non-status Indians.

The caravan of cars and assorted vehicles met with previous police harassment in Vancouver, Edmonton and North Battleford, Saskatchewan.

**MANIFESTO**

Caravan participant Vern Harper, a Saskatchewan Indian who now lives in Toronto, said, "The government now has two choices — to make radical changes or openly oppose us, and we're ready for both. We're prepared for trouble".

During the demonstration speeches Louis Cameron, leader of the Ojibway Warriors Society which occupied a Kenora park earlier this summer, read out manifesto.

"We are here to talk about violence. We are against violence. The violence of racism, poverty, economic dependence, alcoholism, land theft and educational warfare. This is the violence that has hurt our people."

"We say you have been unreasonable. The proof is evident in the condition our people live in. We only seek to live as free people. The will of the people to be free is supreme. The right of the people to be free is divine."

Among the demand of the native peoples is the repeal of the present Indian Act and the firing of Judd Buchanan, Indian affairs minister. They demand that the hereditary and treaty rights to land areas be respected in the constitution of Canada.

Also urged are improved housing, medical and educational facilities and especially an educational system that is not to destroy the cultural heritage of native people.

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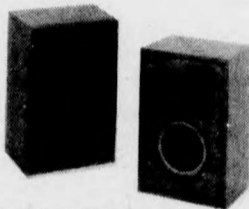
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