

You are no doubt aware of the problem that now exists here in Kanesatake pertaining to the land situation and more specifically the area of "our" lands we call "The Pines".

It is imperative that we meet to discuss this urgent matter before it is allowed to get out of hand. Even now our young men have vowed that no work will be carried out in this area even to the extent of a possible usage of violence. Violence breeds more violence. The vicious circle will not end. The minds of honourable men should be opened to reason, therefore we call upon your integrity as a leader to stick with us so that no harm will come to either side yours or ours. We request a meeting with you as soon as possible to halt the threat of this grave situation that faces both our peoples.

We await your reply.

Two days later, the Municipality of Oka obtained an interlocutory injunction from the Quebec Superior Court against the Six Nations Traditional Hereditary Chiefs and the Warrior Society, ordering the Mohawks to abstain from interfering, disturbing, intimidating or threatening municipal employees from performing their work on municipal land.

In May 1988, the Club de golf Oka Inc. submitted a proposal to the Municipality of Oka to expand its golf course from nine to eighteen holes. The Municipality held an option to purchase the land required for the proposed expansion.

On June 15, 1988 the Minister replied to Chief Gabriel in a similar vein as the 1987 letter to Chief Montour. In addition, Mr. McKnight stated "the band does not have a property interest in the land claimed". The Minister stated that the Department could not become involved in the matter. However, the Minister pointed out that a study had been initiated with the Band Council's support, to assess land needs at Kanesatake.

Between August and September 1988, the Municipality selected a site for the proposed expansion and made an offer to purchase the privately held land which was adjacent to municipal lands. In its evidence before the Standing Committee, the Municipality maintained that the proposed golf course expansion did not involve "The Pines" but rather land owned by Mr. Maurice Rousseau and that it was already the object of a housing development plan. In making this assertion, the Municipality seemed to be under the impression that "The Pines" (the original common lands used by the Mohawks within the Sulpician grant) were restricted to the evenly planted rows of trees, placed in this fashion by Mohawks and Algonquins under the guidance of the Sulpicians and that the forested land owned by Mr. Rousseau was a natural growth forest.

However, the evidence of Mr. Michel Girard an historian who has studied the history of the Oka forest in some considerable detail was that both the original nine-hole golf course and its proposed expansion involved lands that were once part of the historic "common lands" which are of such importance to the local Mohawk population. Mohawk