

Native People

Favor slower development

by Elissa Barnard

In the face of government and business pressures to rapidly develop the North, a delegation of northern native people is touring 70 centers in Canada to press for recognition of native rights.

George Erasmus, president of the Dene nation, and Georgina Sydney and Bob Charlie of the Council of Yukon Indians (CYI) held a public meeting Monday to explain the "Northern Native Rights Campaign."

Before pipelines such as the Alaska Highway gas line, necessitating a freeze of activity within five miles of each side of the pipeline, hydro dams which involve the flooding of towns, and other kinds of development take place, it is vital to have the issue of land claims satisfactorily solved, the speakers said.

"Recently MPs have said 'go ahead with the pipeline.

Land claims can wait. We need land claims decided before development. We are going to depend on the land. We live off it. We're one with it," Georgina Sydney told those attending the public meeting.

The native people are not against resource development, George Erasmus added, but want a lot slower development and one "integrated with what's going on."

The Yukon Indians, whose position has been weakened—the "infiltration" of white people during the gold rush and Alaska Highway, are asking for equal participation in the existing provincial government, Bob Charlie said in an interview.

The Dene nation, a group of five tribes, amounting to 11,000 people, living in the MacKenzie Valley of the Northwest Territories (NWT) have a different proposal.

"Our people have a long history in this area of the world, Erasmus said, "We have our own way of life, our own culture, education, economy and political leaders. We use the term nation to mean a complete way of life."

"The Dene never gave up the right to land and self-government," Erasmus added.

"We want the NWT divided into smaller territories, perhaps two. In one, the homeland of the Dene we want our own system of government. The right of any nation is to have their own political system."

The Dene hold meetings at the community, and regional level and have a national assembly before coming to any decisions. The leaders and the people thus make policies together, Erasmus said.

The Dene hope to continue this form of self-government, whereby the leadership power is restricted at the community level and individuals are part of the decision making process.

"This is not a separatist position", Erasmus said. The Dene hope to have relations with the federal government similar to those which presently exist between the federal government and the provinces. What they don't want is a British parliamentary system, contrary to their traditional form of government.

"If the political evolution continues as it has been, we will become a province and we prefer not going that route," Erasmus said. "We're not looking for reservations. We know what that does to people."

The Dene argument rests on the principle of self-determination and the necessity for "decolonialization". However non-Dene living on the traditional home lands will be allowed full participation in the government, Erasmus said.

Two recent land settlements, the James Bay Agreement and the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement (COPE) settlement, should not be used as precedents by the federal government, Erasmus explained, because the basic formula of recognizing native rights is still to "take 99 per cent of the land and leave one per cent," which cannot be claimed if any resources including timber are found.

In Ottawa the government responded positively to a delegation of six native and Inuit organizations visiting last week but it is playing a waiting game, Erasmus said. He was surprised by the apparent ignorance of even the liberal caucus on Indian Affairs.

"The parties in Ottawa simply don't believe native rights is an issue any more," he said. The touring delegations are hoping to make it an issue, by contacting concerned individuals in Southern Canada and causing pressure to bear on government to change its policies.

CUPE dissatisfied

by Alan Adams

Representatives of CUPE 1392, Modern Building Cleaning and Dalhousie University will be meeting on March 27 to attempt to come to terms concerning the worker mobility clause in the contract. CUPE has been working without a contract since mid summer.

CUPE representative Al Cunningham said the difference concerns "the ability to move workers from shift to shift." He added that he thinks "the difference is a minor problem and should be resolved shortly. After that we expect to sign."

University vice-president for administration, Louis Vagianos, told the *Gazette* that "there is some difference of opinion over worker mobility but it should be resolved soon."

Meanwhile other problems seem to be arising between CUPE and Modern.

A letter dated March 18 to the cleaning staff stated "any-

one caught dumping ashtrays into the garbage can be fired," while another letter listed Modern's clothing and conduct rules, telling the Dalhousie employees that "your failure to comply . . . could result in disciplinary action being taken or your dismissal."

CUPE 1392 vice-president Keith Barrett described Modern as "discriminatory as hell and ridiculous as far as we are concerned. Modern is here as administrators, not as supervisors. We're beginning to wonder who we're working for. If it means taking Dalhousie to court to find out the facts then we are prepared to go."

An employee at Modern's Halifax office, who refused to give her name, said by questioning Modern's policies "you are not interested in having the campus cleaned." She refused to answer further questions.

Modern is a division of Dustbane Enterprises Ltd.



Administration to untarnish image

by Alan Adams

Dalhousie University has undertaken a publicity programme to offset a tarnished public image over the CUPE strike and to try to neutralize public pressure concerning the low tax rate the university pays.

Dalhousie has run advertisements in the Halifax Chronicle-Herald, Mail-Star, the weekly Barometer and the Telecaster. All ads list the community services Dal provides "that are hard to match."

Vice-President Andrew MacKay said the reasons for the ads "goes back to when we were involved with the CUPE strike. The position of the university was not adequately represented in the media and we thought it would be useful to print the university's story." MacKay added "they had nothing specifically to do with the user-pay tax formula but until one really knows what the city is proposing, it is difficult to know what to do."

Doreen Ste. Onge, assistant to Information Services head

Derek Mann, who was responsible for the writing of the ads, told the *Gazette* the ads were placed "to show how much impact the university has on the community." She added that recent criticism from Mayor Edmund Morris about Dalhousie not being taxed was considered when placing the ads.

Presently Dalhousie pays a minimal amount of taxes for the services provided to the university but that could change if the user-pay formula is implemented.

Ike Kent, Comptroller for the City of Halifax, said "it seems fair that everybody pays for the services available to them." Kent said because Dalhousie is an educational institution by law, it is exempt from most taxes. He added "it is a little unfair that the university having so much property yields very little in proportion to the services available to them." Kent said the city is considering implementing a user-pay formula but "we haven't been given the power to implement it yet."

The Gazette's new constitution will be debated at Council

Sunday night

We are trying to:

- Get elected students at large involved in the management side of the paper
- Ensure editorial autonomy from Council
- Let a publishing Board handle the financial aspects of the paper.

The Gazette Publications Society is an attempt to have the Gazette directly responsible to students, streamline our operation, and define the paper's relationship with Council.

If you are interested in our proposal for a real student newspaper drop by our offices or come to the Council meeting Sunday at 7:00.