

the Department. The evidence suggests that the Department favours a return to an elective system of government at Kanesatake, as the Minister and Departmental officials have noted publicly several times that clan mothers (associated with the band custom system, as opposed to the Longhouse) have appointed six different chiefs in five years. Further, the Department has supported efforts to initiate a referendum on an elective process.

On May 20, 1987 Grand Chief Alex Montour wrote to the office of the Minister of Indian Affairs on behalf of the Six Nations Traditional Hereditary Chiefs, to express the concerns of Kanesatake Mohawks respecting renewal of the golf course lease. Chief Montour asserted that "the land rented by the Club de Golf d'Oka is part of the territory that was set aside long ago, for the use of Kanesatake Mohawks, better known as 'common land', to serve the native community for pasture and wood cutting purposes". Chief Montour stated that the Mohawk people had unjustly lost, and were interested in taking back, their former ancestral land. He stated that the Minister of Indian Affairs had in the past expressed an intention to consider the purchase of additional lands to redress the situation at Kanesatake. The letter closed with a request for concrete action from the Department to assist the community to take the proper steps to halt the lease contract. Documentation supplied by the Department to the Standing Committee indicates that a preliminary meeting had been held on January 15, 1987 to discuss "Unification and Enlargement of the Territory of Kanesatake" and how the federal policy on enlargement of reserves might be applied for this purpose.

The Honourable Bill McKnight then Minister of Indian Affairs replied as follows:

Thank you for your letter of May 20, 1987.... concerning the land granted by Le club de golf d'Oka Inc.

Please note that the lands acquired in 1945 from the Sulpician Fathers did not include the above land. In fact, the lands which were not occupied by the Indians but known as the "common lands" were sold to the Municipality of Oka in 1947 and converted into a golf course. For your information, the remaining land was used for various development projects. Furthermore, as you know, these lands were part of your land claim which has not been accepted for negotiation, after analysis and review by the Department of Justice.

Consequently, I trust that you will understand that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada cannot intervene in this private matter.

Documentation from the Department reveals further correspondence regarding the Oka golf course in April and June of 1988. On the 12th of April 1988, a telex was sent by Chief Kanawato Gabriel of the Five Nations Longhouse People of Kanesatake to Minister McKnight:

Dear Sir, Greetings from the Five Nations Longhouse People of Kanesatake. We write to you today in an effort to curtail an upcoming future problem that will happen in our area very shortly.