

# CPR: Everybody wants a piece of the Beebe Sub

By Scott Verity Stevenson

**NORTH HATLEY** — A few Eastern Townshippers got a chance to air their concerns over the future of an abandoned CP railway line Wednesday, when property owners, bike enthusiasts, and politicians met with Canadian Pacific real estate representatives.

The main concern appeared to be that property owners get a fair shot at buying the land if the provincial government refuses its option.

The residents, who live mostly along Lake Massawippi, were not thrilled by the idea of a steam train, while the idea of a bike trail was for the most part left out of the discussion.

**Sentier Massawippi**, whose representatives also met with CP Wednesday, want Quebec to buy the Lennoxville to Beebe subdivision — known to the railway as the 'Beebe Sub' — and convert it to a hiking, biking, and skiing trail.

But property owners were more worried about the steam enthusiasts. CP representatives gave the impression that *Nostalgie de la Vapeur* would get an option to buy the line before they did.

"We are not nostalgic for steam," said North Hatley mayor and property owner Irénée Pelletier, who lives by the rusty tracks. "On who's list are they high? Certainly not ours."

CP executive director of real estate Jacques Côté said the steam

enthusiasts would be considered the same way as adjacent property owners, not before them.

Côté said federal law states that the first priority on abandoned lines goes to other interested rail operators, but *Nostalgie de la Vapeur* missed their chance before the line was officially abandoned in January.

But he said CP would give *Vapeur* an equal chance because the group has been negotiating in good faith for months.

## OCTOBER

Côté said he does not expect an answer from Quebec before October or November — about the same time CP expects to receive a new evaluation of the land.

If Quebec refuses, CP will offer the land to the three regional municipalities and nine municipalities affected by the line, then to steam enthusiasts and adjacent property owners.

Côté said CP wants to ensure the public good by first offering Quebec the right-of-way. "We will take responsibility for the outcome of the land. Otherwise we would not offer it to the provincial government, who should be representative of the public good," Côté said. "We cannot evaluate the best use of the land, and that is why we offer it to the government."

"Our responsibility is to ensure that our shareholders get a market price. If the government is not prepared to buy at market value, our

obligation to them is gone," Côté said.

He said CP would prefer to sell the 46-kilometre stretch in one package rather than break it up. For that reason they consider the steam enthusiasts an attractive buyer. In addition the land would continue to be used as a railway.

## NOT LOCALS

"The steam train people are not from this region. Is this a consideration to you?" asked one resident. Côté replied "Yes, but there are so many other factors as well."

"If you don't want *Nostalgie de la Vapeur*, tell them, don't tell us," Côté said. "It will cost them several million dollars for their project. If I were them, I would be consulting the people."

In response to the steam-train threat, property owners along Lake Massawippi have been getting together to buy the land in groups.

In an interview Monday, *Lake Massawippi Water Protection Association* president Jim Ross indicated that group might act as an umbrella organization for the various groups of land owners.

## UMBRELLA GROUP

Resident Michael Allatt is acting as co-ordinator for one such buying group. "The purpose of the group is to help co-ordinate the purchase and financing of the land," he said. "The mechanics of the purchase and use afterwards have not yet been worked out."



Selling off railway real-estate is a complicated business, says CP executive Jacques Côté.

Canadian Pacific met with the Memphremagog regional municipality (MRC) later in the day. MRC warden Roger Nicolet said he and the mayors of the MRC are most concerned with the value CP puts on the land and the timing of Quebec's decision to accept or refuse the corridor.

"It's a very complex planning issue in our region," said Nicolet. "We are going to have to do a study."

Personally, Nicolet said, "I think it's very criminal to turn this into a major thoroughfare. It must be handled with great delicacy, especially in North Hatley and Rock Island where the line runs through the heart of town."

After meeting with CP, *Sentier Massawippi* representative Keith Baxter said his group still has a lot of work to do convincing people of the merit of their idea.

"Canadian Pacific was not discouraging to us," said Baxter. "They listened."

Baxter said a compromise was discussed between *Sentier* and the landowners. Baxter said re-routing the hiking and biking trail around the lake would be "not the worst possible scenario."

"But we are still opposed to that because the public interest is access to the lakeshore," he said.

# Who's who? Mohawk factions struggle to lead

By Eric Siblín

**MONTREAL (CP)** — When Quebec Native Affairs Minister John Ciaccia called on Mohawk Warriors last week to lay down their arms and deposit them in a sealed container, he was tapping into sacred Iroquois mythology.

Hundreds of years ago, before the European colonization of America, the Iroquois prophet known as the Peacemaker convinced warring tribes to bury their hatchets and war clubs in the hole of an uprooted tree.

The Five Nations, Mohawks among them, formed the Iroquois Confederacy, banding together under a finely woven political-religious system — the Longhouse.

Mohawks of various political stripes now lay claim to the revered tradition of the Longhouse. Rival factions routinely speak in the name of the Longhouse, the Mohawk Nation or the Iroquois Confederacy.

Yet behind the verbiage lies a three-way struggle for power involving band councils, traditionalists, and Warrior militants.

Last week, the Longhouse government at the Akwesasne reserve, south of Cornwall, Ont., castigated the paramilitary Warrior Society for using the crisis at Oka to further its own power manoeuvres and get-rich schemes.

## DISPUTE LOGO

Beneath a Mohawk Nation logo depicting a Longhouse, the Akwesasne traditional chiefs said the Warrior "use of this letterhead is totally misleading."

The Warrior Society, which has risen to the fore behind Mohawk barricades at Oka and the Kahnawake reserve, south of Montreal, responded to the Akwesasne chiefs by calling them traitorous sell-outs, unworthy of the Iroquois letterhead.

The ineffectual Kahnawake band council at Oka — relegated to the sidelines in its own territory — closed its offices this week.

The Mohawk crisis began June 11, when Quebec police tried to tear down a roadblock at Oka established by the Mohawks to block expansion of a golf course on to land they claim is theirs.

Since then, competing fax ma-

chines have been churning out pages of propaganda.

For those unfamiliar with the partisan strains of Mohawk politics, the pronouncements can be dizzying.

The Longhouse ties the community together in clans, a matrilineal system in which clan mothers appoint chiefs.

## PRESERVE RITES

Despite the federal government's imposition of elected band councils at Mohawk reserves early this century, the Longhouse system persisted. Traditionalists continued to meet in the Longhouse, practicing customary rites and selecting chiefs.

But the place of the Warriors has undergone changes in recent times.

"There was always a Warrior Society — whether it manifested itself as a soldier, a lacrosse player or just someone serving the community in an aggressive manner," says Tom Hill, director of the Woodland Cultural Centre at the Six Nations reserve near Brantford, Ont. In the Longhouse, the Warriors

were counterbalanced by the more conservative elders, and the two forces were kept in balance by the clan mothers.

Today, moderate Mohawks and Warriors are acting out conflicting Iroquois visions.

Embodying the moderates is the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy (the Tuscorora nation joined the original Five Nations in the 18th century), the traditional seat of the Mohawk Nation which gathers 50 chiefs from all Iroquois communities.

The confederacy has denounced the Warriors active on the Akwesasne and Kahnawake reserves for their use of arms and their links to

casinos and cigarette smuggling.

The Warriors dismiss many traditional chiefs as "Uncle Tomahawks."

## FACE PRESSURES

Hill ascribes the breakdown in Mohawk consensus to pressures of the late-20th century.

"We live in a world of M-16s, of computers, of high technology, of immediate information."

"The system worked very well when everybody followed one point of view."

The Warriors manning the barricades in the pine forest at Oka invoke the Great Law of the Peacemaker.

"They're using that to justify

their stance that in the case of Oka. The expropriation of land for the golf course was a threat to that peace and a threat to that land," Hill explains.

"They're not prepared to sit around a bargaining table for 100 years and talk about a land claim."

The moderate view says the way for the Iroquois to protect the legendary Tree of Peace is by negotiation.

"It should not be done at gunpoint," says traditional Iroquois chief Jake Thomas of the Six Nations reserve.

"That's why we buried our weapons of war."

# Senate has some work to do

**OTTAWA (CP)** — Mohawks asked the elders of Canadian government Wednesday to help build a better understanding between their nation and non-natives.

"There must be a new relationship developed," Billy Two-Rivers, a Mohawk elder from the Kahna-

wake reserve near Montreal, told the Senate committee on aboriginal affairs.

"Otherwise there will be nothing but turmoil, chaos and confrontation for the future."

"You as elders and you as sena-

tors have a responsibility to inform your government and your people of the historic relationships of responsibility the government has taken upon itself to aboriginal people of this land." Two-Rivers told committee members whom he called "brother elders."

# OKA:

Continued from page one.

be in a position to complete the transaction," Martin said in Ottawa Wednesday.

Ottawa has offered to buy the 27 hectares of land slated for expansion of the golf course, and set it aside for Mohawk land claims. Another \$2.5 million has been offered in compensation to the town for missed economic opportunities. Ottawa has already purchased 12 hectares of disputed land for \$1.4 million from French landowner Maurice Maxime Rousseau.

Mayor Jean Ouellette recommended acceptance of the federal offer but residents demanded a referendum and insisted the native barricades must come down before anything else can be done.

Lagacé-Dubé said her home will likely form part of the federal settlement package offered to the town of Oka.

"That proposition seems the most plausible," she said. "But my heart tells me that this is my home."

Jean-Pierre Marcellin, owner of an Oka antique shop, said he was drowned out at the council meeting when he tried to say other viewpoints should be heard. He said a window in his shop was later broken.

"If there's such hatred, I have two windows left," Marcellin said in an interview Wednesday. "Will I have to ask the municipality to buy me a bullet-proof vest?"

Oka resident Gilles Vézina called the council meeting an exercise

in "collective hysteria."

"They don't represent all the citizens of Oka," Vézina said. "They're creating a climate of panic."

Barbara Jacobs, 19, a Mohawk from Kahnawake who ventured into Oka on Wednesday for the first time since the barricades went up, took issue with the town council's decision.

"It's maddening — it seems like the Indians have no rights," said Jacobs, who visited a bank at Oka. Jacobs said she supported the

blockade in the beginning, but "it's gone on too long." But she had no criticism of the Mohawk Warriors who are manning the barricades. "They're supporting the cause (of Indian land claims)."

Behind the road barriers, Paul Simon said that natives are exasperated over the impasse in negotiations.

"Everybody's fed up," said Simon, a heavy-set Mohawk wearing a red baseball cap and matching suspenders.

"Down in the village it's getting

worse every day. They're angry at us."

Following the Indians' expulsion Wednesday of several journalists behind the native barricades, reporters covering the story decided to walk out of the Mohawk-controlled area. The walkout came after the journalists presented a petition to the Mohawks asking that they be allowed to do their jobs in an unrestricted way.

In Ottawa, Billy Two-Rivers, a band council chief on the Kahnawake reserve, said whites in Cana-

da receive different treatment than natives when it comes to land.

"When a white government decides to expropriate or take Indian lands, they do it with the passage of an order-in-council, and they tell us we have no rights and we have no title to our land," Two-Rivers said outside a Senate aboriginal affairs committee hearing on the Oka standoff.

"But when it serves their purpose they listen to the demands of a municipal government in dealing with Indian lands."

# Talks: Canada negotiating by fax — Deer

By Lisa Schlein

**GENEVA (CP)** — A Mohawk Indian leader criticized Quebec's negotiating tactics in the Oka land dispute Wednesday but said plans to involve international observers in resolving the standoff is a breakthrough.

A four-member Mohawk delegation outlined its position and grievances against Canadian authorities during a news conference after two days of testimony to the UN Human Rights Sub-Commission in Geneva.

Kenneth Deer, a member of the Kahnawake Longhouse and chief spokesman for the Mohawk delegation, derided the Quebec government's negotiating methods.

"They are basically negotiating through the media," Deer said. "Canada puts its position and sends it by fax to the Mohawks and notifies the press and vice-versa. That's the only way negotiations are taking place at this time."

He said face-to-face talks are more productive.

But Deer acknowledged some positive movement in the government's position. He said Canada agreed to permit the Paris-based International Federation of Human Rights to be part of the negotiating process.

"To me, this is a breakthrough in our discussions about having an international non-governmental or-

ganization as an observer," he said.

## MOBILIZING OBSERVERS

Jean-Claude Fouque, general secretary of the federation, said Tuesday his organization was mobilizing 24 observers to help end the dispute.

The federation is an independent coalition of human rights groups in 55 countries that investigates allegations of abuses.

Federation member Danielle Petit said Canadian authorities were "in the course of accepting" international observers. Quebec Native Affairs Minister John Ciaccia said the province would be willing to foot part of the bill for the observers.

Since arriving in Geneva on July 21, the Mohawk delegation has been promoting its cause throughout Europe. Last Monday, they went to the Hague where they petitioned the International Court of Justice to look at the Mohawks' land claims.

"Canada is very concerned about its international image," Deer said. "The world is focusing on Oka. Native people have an opportunity to elevate the arguments to higher level. We should take advantage of that situation."

The Indians received support from a coalition of 30 groups and human rights organizations from 15 European countries.

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