

GST battle not over yet

By Scott Smith

OHSWEKEN - The fat lady has yet to sing on the GST issue.

The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians are spearheading a renewed call for First Nation tax immunity on the GST, and enlisted some heavy hitters to come and lend some moral support last Thursday at the Ohsweken Community Hall.

The Deputy Leaders of both opposition parties attended the day-long meeting, and both offered assurances that Natives would not be paying the controversial tax if they were in power.

"I agree that it isn't enough to simply say your opposed to the government's initiative while your in opposition. We have to be very specific by giving you deadlines as to just when we will

move when we form the government," said Liberal Party Deputy Leader Sheila Copps.

"It's clear that this will have to be one of the first priorities of our party. Our second priority will have to be to abolish the GST altogether, and I think a lot of Canadians are waiting for the day when that will happen."

New Democrat Deputy Leader Nelson Riis also said his party is committed to repealing the GST for everyone. He said a tax revolt is unfolding from coast to coast where people feel they are being taxed to death.

He said that the application of the GST to First Nations people

was just another part of the slow erosion of Native rights under the Progressive Conservatives. He called the failure to respect tax immunity for Natives "the thin edge of the wedge" where the government is attempting to ignore the historical and inherent rights of Natives.

For Chris McCormick, one of the organizers from AIAI, the tough talk, even from opposition leaders, was music to his ears. The association has been lobbying hard to restore momentum into the anti-GST fight, which lost some of its fizz after initial outrage when the tax was first

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