

Press Conference held for School "A"

FIRST LINE/MOHAWK RD

-- Many local political figures were heard from at the press conference for school "A" held on Thursday. Approximately 30 people were present.

Six Nations councilor George Montour read a letter from William Montour dated October 7, 1992. William Montour was the Six Nations elective council chief in 1989 and is currently the Chief of Staff for the Assembly of First Nations. William Montour's letter said that the condition of the schools in 1989, "started our struggle to provide modern, safe and culturally significant buildings in which to educate our children."

The letter stated, "These buildings (Emily C. General and the almost completed School B) exist because of the strength and fortitude of the people of this community who decided that the Government of Canada has a clear obligation to live up to with regard to Aboriginal people. In October of 1989, the (then) Minister of Indian Affairs, Pierre Cadieux recognized this obligation and agreed on behalf of the Government of Canada to provide financial resources to construct three new schools. The Council representatives and community representatives who were at this meeting committed our community to provide the forces to construct these three new schools. This was the

agreement."

William Montour's letter continued, "We cannot allow the bureaucratic system of the Department of Indian Affairs to delay the completion of our project." He concluded by writing, "This office is at your disposal in assisting to get this project back on schedule."

Ruby Jacobs, the Chairperson of the School Project Management Team read correspondence from Nina Burnham, former Six Nations Councilor who served in 1989. Her letter had the same tone.

John Peters, a current Six Nations Councilor and a Councilor in 1989 read an interesting tidbit from a newspaper, the region has just approved the spending of \$12.7 million for a World Chess Tournament in Hamilton. Peters said, "if they can give Hamilton \$12.7 million for a chess tournament, then they can damn well give us money for our school."

Also on the agenda were Keith Jamieson, the spokesperson for the Six Nations Education Association, Alton Van Every who is a Trustee for the Brantford Board of Education, Heather Longboat a student of Emily C. General, Lori Powless a student of the School "A" district, Bob Speller the Brant/Haldimand M. P., and Doug Forbes, the district director of the Southern District

Office on Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

Forbes said he already "fought this battle" and got "beat up". He said that INAC does not have enough money to go around and does not argue that School "A" is needed, "as fast as it can be built," but the money in the regional budget is not there for it. He did encourage the community to take the matter to Ottawa.

Elective Band Council Chief Steve Williams rounded out the discussion by passing out a petition. He said the money needed is not, "a hand-out, they (the government) owe us this money from land claims." Williams also said that it would be easier for the government to give the money needed for the school than the "\$110 billion" owed in land claims. He assured the crowd that the councilors are not, "forgetting" about the School "A" District and that they are going to "push" for the school because the "kids" and parents were promised a school in five years time.

