

# Committee appointed to settle native land claim at Oka

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OTTAWA (CP) — Indian Affairs Minister Tom Siddon has appointed a committee of Mohawks and federal, provincial and municipal government representatives to settle the native land claim at Oka, Que.

Federal negotiator Bernard Roy will meet other committee members soon and serious negotiations should begin "in the not too distant future," Siddon said Tuesday.

The tense summer standoff at Oka was spurred by the Mohawks' claim to land that the village of Oka wanted for a golf course expansion.

## Ottawa bought land

The federal government bought about 40 hectares of disputed land in the summer, but hasn't agreed on how it will be given to Mohawks.

Siddon said he held off negotiations because of internal squabbles among different factions at the Kahnésatake Mohawk settlement near Oka.

There are still arguments among the current band council, the former band council and at least two traditionalist Longhouse groups over who are the legitimate representatives of the Kahnésatake

Mohawks.

But Siddon said he is convinced a coalition of Mohawks from the area represent a good cross-section of the community.

## Coalition members appointed

The coalition presented Siddon with a petition last Thursday with the names of 400 adults from the area.

"We have sought a broad base of expressed support for a negotiating committee," said the minister.

Six members of the coalition — Crawford Gabriel, Bertha Bonspille-Peltier, Clarence Simon, Ivan Nicholas, Jerry Peltier and Philip Quevillon — were named to the committee.

Roy will be joined by other federal officials yet to be named, along with representatives of the Quebec government and the municipality of Oka.

Chief George Martin or another representative of the current band council also will be invited to participate, said Siddon.