

# Area native rights groups

By Vicki White, Expositor Staff

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HAMILTON — Local native rights groups are planning to join a rally in Ottawa on Saturday.

Some activists are also planning to stay until Nov. 13 for what they call "a peaceful occupation" of the Department of National Defence offices in Ottawa.

The rally on Parliament Hill will mark the end of the Freedom for Natassinin Peace Walk, which began Aug. 6 in Halifax to raise support for the Innu people's efforts to halt low-level military flights over their homeland in Labrador.

The Innu say the flights damage the environment and prevent them from continuing their traditional way of life.

Many Innu have been sent to jail for continued protests at Canadian Forces Base Goose Bay and a bombing range near the base. Pilots conduct

about 7,000 low-level training flights in Labrador each year.

Mavis Fenn, a Burlington resident who joined the walk for eight days, said she expects at least one bus and a number private cars will take supporters from this area to join the two thousand protesters organizers are expecting.

The rally has been organized by the Innu and the Alliance for Non-Violent Action.

Ms. Fenn says she is willing to be arrested for blocking access to the government office, which she describes as "a symbolic action being taken against the place where the decisions are made against the Innu, without their permission.

"I'm a middle-aged, middle class mother and to break the law is very foreign to everything about me, but I believe that this is extremely important.

"Being a mother, I want a better world for my

## to join Ottawa rally

children and if they're going to have that world I'm the one who has to give it to them."

Betty Doxtater, a native rights activist from the Six Nations reserve, said the rally comes at "a perfect time."

She was frustrated to hear that the RCMP's investigation of its response to this summer's rock-throwing incident when Mohawks were evacuated from the Kahnawake reserve found that the force responded well under the circumstances.

"It is very difficult for us to be empowered, when we are constantly knocked down.

"I want a good life for my children, but it's very difficult for me to teach them to be strong as native people when we are continually oppressed."

Ms. Doxtater will be going to Saturday's rally and she encourages both natives and non-natives to join her.

"It is your responsibility as Canadians to support us (native people), to understand us and to encourage us."

Rev. Peter Hoyle, from the Mount Hamilton United Church, also voiced his support for the rally.

He said Canada is "a nation in serious trouble," which should now follow the lead of the native people.

They provide "real hope that Canada will discover a spirituality that allows us to overcome the rape of the environment, and the pillaging of the lower and middle economic classes," said Mr. Hoyle, who spent two months behind the barricades at Oka.

People interested in joining the rally can take a bus from St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Hamilton at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday.