

NDP candidate gets fast lesson on native issues

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OHSWEKEN — Chris Stanek, NDP candidate in Brant-Haldimand riding for the Sept. 6 provincial election, received a quick lesson from Six Nations councillors Tuesday night when he outlined his position on native rights.

The 23-year-old student spoke strongly in favor of native self-government and "allowing the First Nations to run their own programs."



Chris Stanek
Learned a lot

After Manitoba MLA Elijah Harper's public stand against the Meech Lake Accord, he said, councillors probably were familiar with his party's position.

Coun. Sandy Porter, however, was not

"When you say 'self-government' it really bothers me, because I've been hearing it too long and it's being said by the wrong people.

"I think people like yourself . . . should be well aware that self-government is something that's being pushed down our throats.

"Self-government comes when we begin to make decisions for ourselves," said Coun. Porter.

Coun. John Peters noted that the federal government is encouraging a form of legislated municipal government for native bands.

He called that "merely sand-box politics where the Indians play among themselves and the minister maintains the final say."

Mr. Stanek quickly assured councillors that any initiatives

affecting the Six Nations community would "have to come from here first, rather than from the top down."

Chief Coun. William Montour said one thing he would like to see is action on the many environmental problems facing the community and the province.

"In the debate last night (Monday) Bob Rae said that Peterson is a corporate premier. I hope he (Mr. Rae) is an environmental premier.

"We cannot sit here as aboriginal people and watch mother earth be desecrated."

In a later interview, Mr. Stanek said he was grateful that councillors took so much of their time to explain the issues to him.

He emphasized that the federal government's self-government policy is different from that of the New Democrats.

Stay In touch

Mr. Stanek said the best way for a provincial politician to meet the native community's needs would be "to stay in constant touch . . . to make the relationship between our nation and their nation" work.

In other business, council passed a motion requesting that Chief Coun. Montour talk to Defence Minister Bill McKnight.

Councillors want the minister's guarantee that food and medicine from Six Nations will be allowed to pass freely through the army lines at Oka, Que.

Last week, a delegation taking food to the Kanasatake Mohawks had to wait for hours at the police barricades, and only a few people were allowed into the community.