



Elijah Harper: "We have been left out of this country since the Europeans arrived."

Harper in Hagersville: 'We want to control our lives, our future'

By Anne Jarvis
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Sept 28/90

HAGERSVILLE — Native people are ready to stand up for their rights, Elijah Harper told more than 300 people who gave him two standing ovations at Hagersville Secondary School on Saturday.

"We want to control our lives, our future," he said during a moving one-hour speech to the rapt crowd of natives and non-natives filling the school's cafeteria and spilling into the hall. "That's what this fight is all about."

Mr. Harper, the first treaty Indian to be elected to the Manitoba legislature, became a national figure when he voted against introducing the Meech Lake Ac-

cord into the legislature on June 22. His vote prevented the Manitoba government from voting on — and probably ratifying — the accord. The constitutional deal needed ratification by all 10 provinces by June 23 to become law.

He spoke in Hagersville at the Oka Crisis Forum, organized by McMaster University in Hamilton and the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy to discuss the standoff between Mohawks and the army at Oka, Que. The standoff started over a proposal to expand a golf course onto land the Mohawks say is theirs.

"We have been left out of this country since the Europeans arrived," said Mr. Harper, a 41-year-old Ojibway from Red

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