



DID
YOU
KNOW..

DESKAHEH....IROQUOIS PATRIOT

(Deskaheh was born on the Grand River Lands in 1872. He became a Chief of his Young Bear Clan of the Cayuga Nation in 1917, In 1921, he was appointed Speaker of the Six Nations Council, the same year he crossed to England to carry the news to King George V of the aggressiveness of his Majesty's Colony, Canada, against the Iroquois peoples. So many of his people felt that the lack of response from Britain should be called to the attention of the League of Nations.

With Canadian authorities attempting to arrest him before he could again go to Europe, he fled out of Canada, and arrived in Geneva, Switzerland, during August 1923. The British Commonwealth countries and the United States prevented the case of the Iroquois from reaching the floor of the League of Nations and Deskaheh eventually returned to Rochester, N.Y. He was unable to re-enter Canada lest he be arrested. The speech which follows was the last one he made - March 10, 1925 - over a Rochester Radio Station.)

My home is on the Grand River. Until we sold off a large part, our country extended down to Lake Erie, where 140 winters ago, we had a little sea-shore of our own, and a birch bark navy. You would call it Canada but we do not. We call the little ten miles square we have left "Grand River Country".

We have the right to do that. It is ours. We have the written pledge of George III that we should have it forever as against him or his successors and he promised to protect us in it. We didn't think we would ever live long enough to

find that a British promise was not good. An enemy's foot is on our country, and George V knows it for I told him so but he will not lift his finger to protect us nor will any of his ministers.

One who would take away our rights is, of course, our enemy. Do you think that any government should stop to consider whether any selfish is to be gained or lost, in keeping of its word?

In some respects, we are just like you. We like to tell our troubles. You do that. You told us you were in great trouble a few winters ago because a great big giant with a big stick was after you (world war 1). We helped you whip him. Many of our young men volunteered and many gave their lives for you. You were very willing to let them fight in the front ranks in France. Now we want to tell our troubles to you. I do not mean that we are calling on your governments. We are tired of calling on the governments of pale-faced peoples in America and in Europe. We have tried that and found it was no use. They deal only in fine words—we want something more than that—we want justice from now on.

You young people of the United States may not believe what I am saying. Do not take my word but read your history. A good deal of true history about that has got into print now. We have a little territory left - just enough to live and die on. Don't you think your governments ought to be ashamed to take that away from us by pretending it is part of theirs?

You ought to be ashamed to let them. Before it is all gone, we mean to let you know what your governments are doing. If you are a free people, you can have your own way. The governments at Washington and Ottawa have a silent partnership of policy. It is aimed to break up every tribe of Red-men so as to dominate every acre of their territory. Your high officials are the nomads today - not the Red People. Your officials won't stay at home. Over in Ottawa, they call that policy "Indian Advancement." Over in Washington, they call it "Assimilation". We, who would be the helpless victims, call it tyranny.

*To be continued in Tekawennake issue dated December 19, 1973.

Taken from Akwasasne Notes

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