

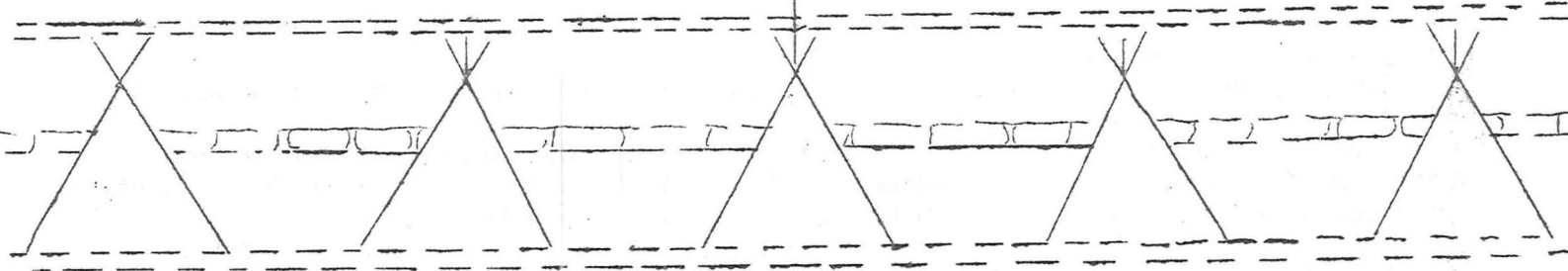
TEKAWENNAKE

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SIX NATIONS NEWS

Local Indians Want Ottawa To Reaffirm Treaty Rights

Six Nations Reserve representatives came home from a conference at Toronto with mixed emotions.

The local representatives to the five-day conference included Mrs. Rena Hill, representative of the Six Nations and New Credit Reserves on the federal Indian advisory committee of Ontario and Chiefs Richard Isaac and Fred King from the Six Nations and New Credit Reserves, respectively.

The conference was staged as preliminary studies for amendments to the Indian Act.

Mrs. Hill told The Expositor Saturday that the Six Nations tribes were disappointed that no local representative had been named by the government in the Ottawa convention which will deal with making amendments to the Indian Act.

She said the Six Nations council had sent a recommendation to the Toronto consultations resolving that the government should retain the act but reaffirm all treaties which set out rights and privileges of the Indians.

"These treaties should be reaffirmed so we know where we stand," said Mrs. Hill.

She also said the act will have to be flexible so all Indians can be covered and protected by their treaties.

Mrs. Hill said she is also concerned about the government considering the National Brotherhood of Indians as representatives of Indians all across Canada.

"The NBI is a western group," said Mrs. Hill, "and it doesn't contain any representatives of eastern tribes. Our real representation is the National Indian Advisory Council."

Mrs. Hill said she was pleased to learn at the conference that the department of health and welfare is "footing the bill" for the conversion of Lady Willingdon Hospital at Ohsweken to a home for elderly Indians.

Chief Isaac said he hoped some good will come out of the week-long meeting. "The Indian Act, like all acts, needs reversing," said Chief Isaac. "But I don't think too big of a change would be good. Moderate revisions are what the act needs."

Mrs. Hill said the Six Nations council will send a resolution to the government seeking representation to the Ottawa meetings which might be held in February.

The conference got under way with a demonstration the first day by young people of the St. Regis Reserve which is located at Cornwall.

Mrs. Hill said the other representatives voted to allow the St. Regis group to address the conference and the demonstrations ended.

"They were young people, but they expressed themselves very well," said Mrs. Hill. "They explained their situation and asked that the Jay Treaty be honored," she added.

Chief Frederick Plain of Sarnia's Chippewa Indians pleaded with the Indian representatives to refuse approval of any changes in the act until the government "Acknowledges the existence of and inviolability of Indian treaties and rights."

Chief Plain called the act the "wholesale violation" of Indian rights guaranteed in writing during the past 200 years.

The Indian Act is viewed with mixed emotions on the reserves. Some Indians feel the Indian Act holds the Indians back and should be abolished.

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