

Work halted on logging road

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PEMBERTON, B.C. (CP) — Crews halted work on a controversial logging road Monday after a native observer showed RCMP officers ancient native burial sites he said were endangered by the work.

The work stoppage was the latest development in increasingly bitter confrontations involving the company building a road for International Forest Products, residents and local loggers and the Lil'wat Indians.

Lil'wat Indians have been intermittently blocking a logging road being constructed for the forest products company, which obtained an injunction against the blockade late last

month.

The injunction, however, provided for observer Johnnie Jones to monitor construction activity to prevent damage to burial sites. He took RCMP Sgt. Harry McLaughlin on a tour Monday. McLaughlin later told reporters that Jones had the authority to stop work if the sites were at risk.

The company building the road for International Forest Products says it will consult its lawyers to seek clarification of the court order.

Earlier Monday, local loggers pulled down a blockade on Highway 99 near this community about 160 kilometres north of Vancouver which had

prevented traffic going in and out of the Mount Currie band reserve. The heavily treed, mountainous area is about 30 minutes drive from the Whistler ski resort but does not affect skier traffic, which has unimpeded access to Vancouver.

The blockade came down after police warned protesters that the action was illegal.

The loggers said they wanted to send a message to the provincial government that something must be done about disruptive and economically harmful Indian blockades.

The Indians claim the area where the work is underway is part of their traditional sacred burial grounds.