

Six Nations' group allows contractor to get equipment

By Michael-Allan Marion *May 21*
Expositor Staff

DUNNVILLE — A Six Nations group is showing compassion to a contractor by allowing him to pass through a padlocked gate to the Dunnville dam to get his trapped equipment.

"We don't have a fight with the contractor," Confederacy Chief Arnie General said Wednesday.

"The guy was only doing his job. We recognize he's got a family to feed."

The Hodenushonnee Environmental Delegation, supporting the Confederacy chiefs, had refused to let anyone through the gate to one of the dam's weirs since the group locked it at the end of March.

The move was designed to stop the Grand River Conservation Authority from completing permanent repairs on the weir, situated on 810 hectares of land that is the subject of a claim by the Six Nations.

Construction was halted while extra staff from the federal government research the claim. But the action stranded some equipment owned by contractor Ontario Construction of St. Catharines.

The contractor was working on the weir repairs when the controversy trapped a backhoe and a pile driver.

On Tuesday, a company official wrote the Confederacy requesting the return of his equipment, saying it was needed at another job.

The chiefs granted the request Wednesday. Some Confederacy supporters stood by the gate Thursday morning while the equipment was removed.

"We're not heartless," said Mr. General.

"We believe in a working relationship, but the only thing is the government doesn't believe in working relationships."

Company officials declined to comment.

The dam repairs were needed after the weir failed during the winter.

The work is part of a multi-million-dollar repair to the dam that Dunnville councillors hope will turn into the construction of locks.

Six Nations band council and the confederacy say the GRCA has not taken proper environmental care of the land in the claim area.

The band council threatened a court injunction to stop the repairs until the claim was settled. At the same time, confederacy supporters locked the construction site.

The GRCA cut the lock five weeks ago in an effort to complete repairs, but the environmental delegation put on a new lock and has kept constant guard over the site.