

fronts at once. Constitutional status is intended to give them a voice in these decisions. Land and resources are necessary to improve their intolerable conditions of life.

At the same time, western universities are making considerable strides in native education. UBC is graduating substantial numbers of native foresters, teachers and lawyers and trying to bring native students into commerce and economics.

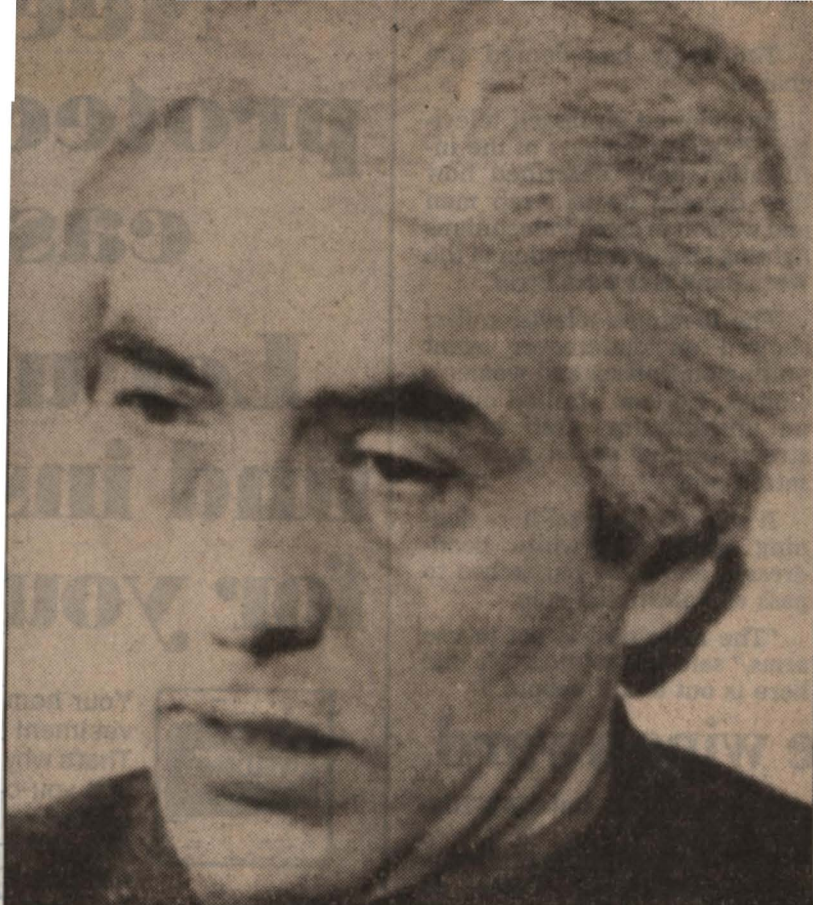
"That's the mix you need to settle land claims," Berger said. "We've tried for years to settle native claims — we've failed because we don't want to. The issue of Quebec is two European peoples trying to work out an accommodation, and that's a hell of a lot easier."

And Berger came full circle by emphasizing the importance of constitutional change:

"The change to the Constitution in 1982 guaranteeing, in Section 35, aboriginal and treaty rights has made a big difference. So constitutional guarantees are important at the end of the day. The question is, are we going to give back the land and resources that we stole from them, so they can be self-sufficient?"

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The office building on Winnipeg's downtown Smith St., where Chief Fontaine and other Manitoba chiefs work, is an example of what self-sufficiency means. The building is all Indian-owned, and energetic people of Indian heritage charge from one floor to another in pursuit of both private enterprise and collective objectives. It's a striking contrast to the terrible condition of those Indians far gone in alcoholic ruin who roll in the gutters of Winnipeg, Regina and other Prairie cities.



Grand Chief Phil Fontaine: "We have to start a healing process."

The constitutional problems of the native peoples and of Quebec are intertwined. If there is to be a major constitutional overhaul, it has to approach both these intractable situations. We cannot open up the Constitution every year, and there's a growing feeling across the country that we need to put the whole thing behind us as soon as we can, and turn our minds to more productive matters.

But in Quebec the two issues come together. Oka and Chateauguay, for instance, are local hot spots that will continue to boil until local people as well as governments find ways to live together.

A larger issue looms in northern Quebec, where the Cree Indians are watching with apprehension the development of Premier Robert Bourassa's grandiose and environmentally hazardous scheme for further hydro development.

"Has Parizeau read the 1912 Boundaries Extension Act?" Barber asked rhetorically. Parti Quebecois leader Jacques Parizeau has not recognized that the separation of Quebec might raise new questions about sovereignty in the northern part of the province, where Indians are the majority, and few speak French.

Legislation passed by Parliament 79 years ago reserves for the federal government "trusteeship" of the Indians in northern Quebec and "management of any lands now or hereafter reserved for their use."

"The Cree own northern Quebec if anyone owns northern Quebec and James Bay. Quebec doesn't own James Bay," said Barber.

It's just another compelling reason not to give up on Confederation.