

Dec. 20/93

## Mohawks outraged over housing standoff

MONTREAL (CP) — Frank Poirier and Donna Bonspille would dearly love to go home for Christmas.

Home is Kanesatake. For more than two years, the Mohawk couple have been trying to return there.

But it looks like they will spend another dismal Christmas in a rundown, 4½-room apartment they share with Poirier's brother in the Montreal district of Ville-Emard.

Despite the Christmas lights they've strung around the living room, which doubles as a bedroom, the mood isn't very festive.

"It's been very hard for me," Bonspille says.

"I've never lived in the city before and it just gets harder day by day. My whole family is in Kanesatake."

This fall, Poirier and Bonspille expected to be called home after they learned the federal government was ready to turn over to Mohawks 58 houses purchased from non-natives as part of continuing land-claim negotiations.

They wrote to the band council, but were told the houses still belonged to the federal government.

They wrote to the Indian Affairs Department, but were told the houses were there for the taking as soon as the band council signed a land-transfer agreement.

The band council will not sign any agreement that describes the lands in question as reserve lands under the Indian Act.