

Reform MPs want army to force natives from Ipperwash

By Pearce Bannon

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FOREST, Ont.,- The army should remove natives living at former Camp Ipperwash and reoccupy the land until negotiations for its handover are completed, a Reform MP said at a public meeting here last Wednesday.

"The only clear way for the circumstance to clear itself is for the military to reoccupy the base. I know that's controversial," said John Duncan, MP for Vancouver Island North and former Reform native affairs critic.

Duncan had been asked by a woman who lives near the former army camp why the military has not taken the camp back from Stoney Point natives who reclaimed it in 1995.

"It's dividing the community," she said at the meeting attended by about 100 people.

Duncan and Mike Scott, Reform MP for the Skeena riding in British Columbia and the party's current native affairs critic, were in the region for Reform's national convention in London. They were invited to the meeting, organized by Reform Party supporter and failed 1997 candidate Brian Richardson, to discuss account-

ability in government funding for natives.

Scott said natives living at the former army base, called "Aazhoodena" by Stoney Pointers, are doing so illegally. "I think the government has an obligation to say "This is illegal and you have to move."

A man who said he lived in the Ipperwash area told the MPs that the federal government has tried to avoid a confrontation at the

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camp, but said recent activities there will eventually lead to a clash.

The man said he had no complaint about the older Stoney Point residents, who he says were recently forced off the base by other natives. But the camp has become a training ground for "warriors," he said, and every night he hears rifle fire coming from it.

Kettle and Stony Point band member Matt Bressette--one of a handful of natives at the meeting--said a public inquiry should investigate the military's seizure of the land in 1942 and the fatal 1995 shooting of Stoney Point protester Anthony (Dudley) George outside neighbouring Ipperwash Provincial Park.

Scott said he supports an inquiry, saying the army did "something

wrong" when it removed the original Stoney Point inhabitants during World War Two. But there has not been "an orderly and rational" reclaiming of the land, he added, and people inside the camp "have been thumbing their noses" at authorities.

Stoney Pointers began moving on to Camp Ipperwash in 1993, tired of waiting for the Department of National Defence (DND) to return the land. The land was appropriated from the Stoney Point Band under the War Measures Act--the only time during the war when the act was used to take land.

The entire base, including its barracks and other buildings plus its Lake Huron beach, was reclaimed in July, 1995.

Dudley George was shot and

killed by an Ontario Provincial Police sniper on Sept., 6, 1995 during a late-night clash outside Ipperwash Provincial Park. George was part of a group of about 24 protesters who occupied the park two days earlier to protest its being built over a sacred burial ground.

Acting OPP Sgt. Kenneth Deane is appealing his 1997 conviction on a charge of criminal negligence causing death in George's shooting. In turn, the crown is appealing Deane's conditional sentence of two years less a day to be served in the community.

Representatives from Kettle Point, Stoney Point and the federal government have been meeting for nearly three years to negotiate the return of Camp Ipperwash.

Duncan, who last year took over

Scott's position as fisheries critic, is no stranger to controversy in regard to Camp Ipperwash.

Last year Duncan said the military could speed the return of the camp to the Kettle and Stony Point band by cutting off the camp's hydro. He also said that if necessary, the arm should retake the camp by force.

Speaking with reporters after the meeting, Duncan chuckled when asked if he visited Camp Ipperwash before attending the meeting.

Duncan said he was one of the last MPs to visit the camp before it was reclaimed by Stoney Pointers. "I don't think that would be a discretionary thing, to (visit the camp), simply from reports of

people living near the base."

But both Duncan and Scott seemed surprised when they heard reporters are allowed in the camp after introducing themselves at its front gate.

Both MPs said residents who live near the camp gave them "anecdotal evidence" confirming there is no policing presence on the camp. "The information I have is law enforcement officials won't go onto the compound," said Scott.

Yet both Scott and Duncan admitted they did not speak to the local OPP detachment about the police's relationship with the Stoney Pointers nor did they know native peacekeepers patrol at the camp.