

# New Brunswick inks fourth native logging deal

KINGSCLEAR, N.B. (CP) - The New Brunswick government reached its fourth logging agreement Thursday, with the signing of the Kingsclear First Nation, located just southwest of Fredericton.

Kingsclear Chief Bob Atwin said the deal offered a qualified resolution to the ongoing logging dispute.

"The harvest and sale of the wood will put money in pockets and allow people to provide for their families," Atwin said.

The agreement allows natives from this mid-sized New Brunswick reserve to cut 15,000 cubic metres of timber off Crown lands.

The wood can only be sold within the province and the stumpage fees will go to the band council.

Atwin said a band meeting will be held next week to determine how to divide the reserves allocation.

Kingsclear is the fourth reserve

to sign a temporary logging deal with the province. Tobique, Eel River Bar and Burnt Church reserves have already inked deals.

The province is negotiating with another reserve today in Woodstock and two others later this month at St. Marys and Eel Ground.

The agreements give bands per capita cutting rights over five per cent of the annual allowable cut on Crown lands. They are also temporary, pending the outcome of a provincial task force on native logging and a possible Supreme Court challenge, and only apply to this cutting season.

Native logger Labelle Saulis said he was disappointed the reserve didn't push for the return of logging equipment that had been seized in illegal operations.

"Someone's getting a good deal, but I'm not sure it's me," said Saulis, whose three-quarter tonne truck and logging equipment were seized two weeks ago.

Big Cove, near Richibucto,

N.B., is the only band to declare that it won't sign a deal with government. They are concerned the offer, no matter how temporary, sets a legal and political precedent for future land-claim negotiations.

The province offered the con-

cession to stop illegal harvesting after the New Brunswick Court of Appeal ruled natives had no treaty right to cut trees on Crown land.

Natives are pursuing those rights through the Supreme Court of Canada.

The province has set up an aboriginal committee to look at how native loggers can be incorporated into the tightly controlled Crown licence system.

The group is expected to submit a report this fall.