

Revenue says no to GRE

by Paul Barnsley, staff reporter

OTTAWA - The federal government is not ready to help Grand River Enterprises create sixty jobs on Six Nations. The Ministry of Revenue has denied GRE's application for a permit to buy Canadian grown tobacco for their cigarette processing plant in Ohsweken.

Revenue told GRE that they would have to pay excise tax on the tobacco, citing the precedent set by the Montenet tribe on the Point

Bleu reserve in Quebec who agreed to pay taxes on their business. GRE refused, saying that the Quebec precedent is not at all similar to their situation.

"Point Blue is an eighty per cent white-owned bagging plant, not a tobacco manufacturer," explains GRE spokesman Jerry Montour.

"Revenue had no choice under the excise tax laws," Haldimand-

"I just don't see how there can be a place called Canada for First Nation people.

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GRE gets 'no' permit

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Norfolk MP Bob Speller says, "But, I look at this as just losing round one. There will be a round two and three."

Speller is continuing negotiations with Justice, Indian and Northern Affairs and Agriculture to work out a way to make Canadian tobacco available to GRE.

GRE may not be willing to wait.

Jerry Montour is fighting mad, "I just don't see how there can be a place called Canada for First Nation people. How can two nations live side-by-side peacefully when one nation controls all the commodities?"

Montour suggested there is more to this decision than meets the eye. He points out that Bloc Quebecois members have been aggressively pressuring the federal government to take strong action against natives in Quebec.

"Two thirds of Quebec is unsettled Mohawk land. The Bloc is trying to de-militarize the Mohawk nation," he says.

Reform leader Preston Manning agrees, "the Bloc knows that the Mohawks will oppose any sovereignty of Quebec. Some future government of Quebec is going to have to deal with that," he told the Canadian Press.