

# New Brunswick hangs onto children

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the attention of the Bathurst social workers, Bathurst in the norther shore area of New Brunswick.

"The mother presented herself in court way back in September without a lawyer. It was postponed to January, court was called again and she had no lawyer so we found a lawyer for her," he said.

He said the agency took the children into care. "During all this time nothing was contested. In March Six Nations appeared at the appeal."

Six Nations Band Council has launched a legal battle with the Province of New Brunswick for the return of the seven children.

Band Council Chief Wellington Staats said the seven youngsters have been placed in two separate non-native foster homes in New Brunswick despite legal efforts by the "Band" to return them to social services care here.

"This is like the 60's," Staats said. "But it's the 90's. We can't believe this is happening today."

In the 1960's native children

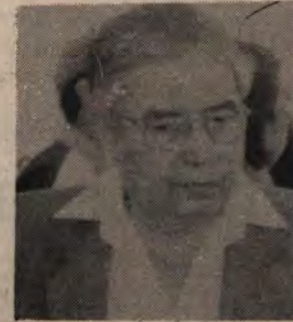
were taken from their families homes and cultures by the hundreds and placed in non-native homes.

Staats is still hopeful talks with the Ministry of Social Services will be successful in bringing the children home.

Staats said the children's extended family has come forward to provide homes for the children at Six Nations. "They'd be here, at home, with family and with their own culture and people."

The two year old case began when the children's mother, a

band member, who had, had contact with Ontario Social Service



**Band Chief Wellington Staats**

workers in Hamilton, abruptly left Ontario, April 22, 1996, for New Brunswick.

In less than a week she had come to the attention of the New Brunswick social service agencies and within four months her five oldest children were placed in foster care. A week later the two youngest were apprehended and placed in foster care and New Brunswick courts granted interim custody to the Minister of Health and Community Services.

The children's mother contested the interim custody order and a trial was ordered in November of 1996.

Six Nations Band Council wasn't made aware of the case until seven months later, on June, 25, 1997 when the mother told the Band New Brunswick was going to court for permanent guardianship of her seven children.

When band personnel attempted to intervene, Staats said they were told by Ministry workers they could not release any documentation on the case.

The band is caught in a legal nightmare that could see New Brunswick continue to keep the children.

"We are trying to negotiate with Ontario, the federal government, through the Minister of Indian Affairs and the New Brunswick social services ministry to get these children back into Ontario so we can get possession of them."