

Six Nations offered less than one cent on the dollar for land

by Paul Barnsley

SIX NATIONS - One of the main reasons the band council decided to take Canada and the province to court was the settlement offer made by the federal government for a area of land near Dunnville.

Moulton Township, the land called Block 5 by Land Research, covers 30,800 acres. Six Nations claim to Block 5 was accepted for negotiations under the DIA's Specific Claims Policy on September 17, 1993.

Phil Monture, the Land Research Director, says the federal government offered Six Nations \$3.5 million to extin-

guish all existing legal claims to the block of land.

Monture says Councillor John Peters summed up council's reaction to that offer. "If your intent was to insult us, you've succeeded," Peters reportedly told DIA negotiators.

Considering council expects full payment for the unsundered, unsold land as well as interest, it's easy to see why the offer could be considered insulting. It works out to about \$114 an acre. Current real estate prices are at least 100 times that amount.

The Land Research Director

doesn't understand how the government arrived at the \$3.5 million figure. "We asked them if they would show us on paper how they came up with that dollar figure. We didn't get an answer," he says.

Monture finds that lack of accountability unacceptable. "It's take it or leave it. If you don't like it, sue us. They've set themselves up as judge, jury and hang-man in this process," he said.

The Specific Claims Policy deals with claims related to the administration of land and other Native assets and to the fulfillment of treaties. When the DIA's Office of Native Claims accepted the Six Nations claim to Block 5 they admitted that they could not negate the research done by the band.

Block 5 was not part of the mandate given to Joseph Brant by 4 Confederacy Council sachems in 1796 but Brant nominated a purchaser for the land, anyways, without the knowledge of the Confederacy council. Band council argued in 1993 that the land was never surrendered.

Block 5 was originally sold in 1798 to William Jarvis. Six Nations asked for the land back

Crown sold the land, with a 5,175 provincial pound lien still owing to Six Nations, to Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk. Some money was paid to Six Nations but the records show the last payment made was in February of 1853. Six Nations has still not received full payment.

"What happens when you don't pay your mortgage?" Monture asks rhetorically.

Six Nations received some money from the unauthorized sale of block 5 but no money was ever seen for the sale of Block 6, now Canborough Township (adjacent to the north to Block 5), which happened in similar circumstances.

Block 6 also was not included in the Joseph Brant's mandate to find purchasers but was also sold. No money was ever seen by the original Native land-

has not yet been accepted for settlement under the Specific Claims Policy. Monture thinks the claim on this land is even stronger than the claim on Block 5.

Even Blocks 1 to 4 which make up the land that Joseph Brant was mandated to sell for Six Nations were never fully paid for, according to research done by the Land Research office.

"We've got no problem with the surrender of Blocks 1 to 4 but Six Nations didn't get the lawful proceeds," says Monture. "The bottom line is we weren't fully paid for Blocks 1 to 4."

