

# Riot police brutally suppress Indian demonstration



Graphic from Akwesasne Notes

OTTAWA (CUP) --- RCMP riot squad officers forced close to 300 militant Indian demonstrators off Parliament Hill on Sept. 30 in the second pitched battle between the two groups.

The riot squad appeared from nowhere and forced the demonstrators back down the steps they had won in a previous battle, off the Hill, out onto Metcalfe Street and back to Indian headquarters.

During the skirmish, riot squad officers pushed people off the stone wall on top to the Hill, a fifteen foot drop, and down the stairs using their clubs liberally on bystanders as well as demonstrators.

Earlier in the day the Indians marched from an abandoned government building eight blocks below Parliament Hill, up Rideau Street to the Hill before being met by a solid wall of RCMP officers and a wooden barricade. The Indians fought the RCMP for about 20 feet before they were stopped. RCMP officers kicked protestors in the groin and ganged up on individual Indians who broke through the lines. One hundred soldiers armed with bayonets provided the color guard for Parliament Hill and later a back up for the RCMP.

The Indians remained on the Hill beating their drums, singing and making speeches for about two hours while Parliament was in session. They booed the army band playing O Canada and also booed Chief Justice Bora Laskin when he appeared to review the guard, after the session ended.

Violence erupted again when the RCMP started pushing people off the steps of the House of Commons. Then the riot squad appeared and ordered everyone off the

Hill. The Indians fought back throwing rocks, bottles and sticks.

During the fighting Don Whiteside of the Canadian Federation of Civil Liberties was beaten by riot police as he tried to explain who he was.

"For the riot police to come in and beat people indiscriminately is inexcusable," Whiteside said.

Charlotte McEwan, an elderly Ottawa activist, was also pushed to the ground by the police rush.

"They were pushing everybody down those steps and you know what 20 concrete steps can do. There were quite a few bloody faces," she said.

Bob Buckingham, National Union of Students organizer and a participant in the demonstration said, "I think it's a disgrace. It's symptomatic of the way the Indian in this country is treated by the white man's government."

He was disgusted that no member of Parliament came out to talk to the demonstrators and Chief Justice Bora Laskin did not even acknowledge their presence.

He went back to lodge a complaint with his member of Parliament and discovered that all the MPs were "hobnobbing and having a booze party," in the Parliament buildings.

Indian leaders were not available for comment as they had returned to their headquarters for a private strategy session.

The charge of the riot squad was ordered by Superintendent Marcel Sauve, officer in charge of the

Criminal Investigation Branch, A Division, Ottawa, of the RCMP.

"It had become an unruly crowd. Our men were being beaten with rocks and sticks and had taken all measures possible to disperse the crowd. Three of our men were injured slightly and treated in a local hospital. Afterwards we picked up spikes and chains and other weapons," he said.

Canadian University Press reporters who were in the midst of the fighting saw only belts and picket signs in the hands of the demonstrators. Other reporters at the scene also say they saw no other weapons in the hands of the Indians.

Sauve refused to say how many RCMP officers were at the demonstration stating only that "they had adequate reserves, including the riot squad over and above the number that were seen."

"We had carefully planned this operation in conjunction with the Ottawa police," said Sauve. There were 20 Ottawa policemen guarding the American embassy during the demonstration.

When asked to comment on the statement made by Don Whiteside, Sauve said only that "we have no comment to make on that statement."

Over 20 arrests were made by the RCMP, most of them in the second battle. Ottawa police say that two of the Indians will be charged with obstructing the police but other charges are as yet unknown. All arrests were made by the RCMP and processed by the Ottawa police.

The Indians arrived in Ottawa, Sunday night and took over an abandoned government building, saying that they would stay until Minister of Indian Affairs Judd Buchanan met with them.

While the Indians were on the Hill they shouted to the RCMP and soldiers that they "didn't come 4,000 miles to stop here. We'd rather die here than in your institutions."

During the speeches Louis Cameron, leader of the Ojibway Warriors Society who occupied a Kenora park earlier this summer, read a manifesto and list of demands that they wanted met by the government.

"We the native peoples have banded to come to Ottawa seeking justice. We are here to talk about the right of all people to live as free people. For many years we have received promises instead of human rights, instead of justice; we are here to say the people cannot live on promises.

"Today our people exist in the midst of the Canadian extension of European competitive values. Today our people have alcoholism, they have no education, no work, no housing. Today our people have no respect.

"We are here to talk about violence. We are against violence. The violence of racism, poverty, economic dependence, alcoholism, land theft and educational warfare. This is the violence that has hurt our people. We say it is time for the democracy of Canada to end its political and social violence against our people.

"We say it is time for the Canadian political system to be reasonable and listen to the voice of our community. We say you have been unreasonable. The proof is evident in the condition our people exist in. Since politicians have taken control of our lives the destruction of our communities has increased.

"This time we are still willing to talk but we will not sit idly to the side while the destruction of our people is completed. We only seek to live as free people. It is the way of the land and its children. The will of the people to be free is supreme. The right of the people to be free is divine."



"If you don't like it here in Canada why don't you go back where you came from?"

Graphic from the Denver Post

"Board of Governors, Senate or Council it may be for you."

PAUL MITCHELL AND KEITH REYNOLDS