

## REFERENDUM: NATIVE RIGHTS FORGOTTEN BY SEPERATISTS

(Source: Ottawa Bureau)

Samer Muscati

OTTAWA (CUP) -- Quebec separatists will need more than a mere sum to achieve independence from some native leaders. They will need the go-ahead from aboriginals within the province, or Quebec's independence could be deemed invalid and rejected by the world community. A new royal commission report states that view, and states that the government should resort to "what measures it deems necessary" to Quebec aboriginal and treaty rights. A unilateral declaration of independence by the province. The federal government should take appropriate action protecting aboriginal rights, but only after consultation with native groups says the report released Sept 15, by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Some of these actions may include Quebec recognition as an independent and lobbying the international community to do the same, as well as urging federal officials to disregard the treaty, states the study.

The federal government would be liable for protecting aboriginal rights and safeguards currently in the Canadian constitution would disappear with sovereignty. Even if Quebec included protections of aboriginal and treaty rights in its new constitution, those protections could be nullified by Quebec at any time," the report

Allen Gabriel, head of communications for the \$60 million commission, said they have received no political response from either the federal or provincial governments.

John Bray, director of communications for Indian Affairs and Northern Development, said that the federal government would not issue any comment until the commission submits its final report early next year.

However, Indian Affairs Minister Jean Chrétien, announced last May that the federal government would honour its constitutional responsibilities towards aboriginal peoples, and that they would have the option of staying in Canada, with their own government, if the province separates. He said that aboriginal people have been in Quebec for 10,000 years and have the right to self-determination.

Aboriginals claim that they should be allowed to redraw Quebec's borders if the province separates. They maintain that only they can choose whether to join a new

nation of Quebec or remain in Canada.

The Cree Nation have taken an active role in the referendum debate, since Quebec independence could make their plight in the province even more bleak. Last month, the Cree flatly rejected a provincial government invitation to help draft a new constitution should Quebecers vote for independence.

The Parti Quebecois have had problems in gaining the trust of aboriginals in Quebec and convincing them to separate because of past hostilities by the PQ towards treaty and aboriginal rights.

Notably, in the 1970s, the Cree were forced to allocate large segments of their land for mega-power projects.

Bill Namagoose, executive director for the Grand Council of the Cree, says that his peoples connections with their lands have lasted for thousands of years before Quebec and Canada even existed.

He is bewildered by PQ leader Jacques Parizeau's claim that the federal government's responsibilities to the Cree were terminated with the 1977 James Bay agreement.

The agreement extinguished the native groups' traditional aboriginal rights in exchange for compensation, but cannot be amended without the approval of the federal and provincial governments, and the aboriginal peoples.

He said that if Cree rights were extinguished, then Quebecers similarly extinguished their rights when they surrendered to the British at the time of the conquest of 1760.

"They have absolutely no moral or legal ground to take Cree land with them. We have a treaty with Canada," he said. "The Cree nation is being kidnapped . . . you can't just stake your claim on the globe and make a country."

Namagoose said that Canada is constitutionally obligated to protect native rights, and the Cree are considering legal action to force Canada to protect those rights.

The Cree and Inuit will each hold separate referendums on Quebec sovereignty before the rest of the province votes. The texts of the questions will be released later this month.

Cree and Inuit land claims currently represent more than half of the province.

David Cliche, Quebec Premier Parizeau's special adviser on native affairs, has said that an independent Quebec will retain its territorial integrity, and that his government would not respect the outcome of any referendum that gives aboriginals a mandate to secede.

## STUDENTS CAPTIVATED BY SPEAKER

by Steve Ellis

"I've never seen people pay so much attention to a speaker in the Pit!" said an astounded Fidel Murphy, Student Union Vice President External, as he exited Robertson Library in the early afternoon of October the fourth.

His comments were in response to the attentiveness of a group of over fifty students as they listened to an impassioned speech from a man dealing with AIDS and HIV on PEI.

Leonard Tierney, a speaker from AIDS PEI, spoke without reservation to the crowd about his experiences. Tierney and his wife both contracted the HIV virus while living in Alberta in 1989. His wife, pregnant at the time she became infected, passed the disease on to their now six year old daughter. Mrs. Tierney has since developed AIDS and passed away.

The important message that Tierney tried to pass on to the students was that AIDS is a disease that can affect everyone -- not just homosexuals and IV drug users. "I want to put a face to the disease," said Tierney.

Mr. Tierney, who has now been living with HIV for seven years, appealed to students not to turn their backs to this horrible affliction. Now thirty-five, Tierney said "I want to live another thirty-five years," but he later added "I can't do it without acceptance. I can't do it without support. I can't do it without hope."

The presentation was arranged through a co-operative effort between AIDS PEI and the UPEI Student Union, in recognition of National AIDS Awareness week.

Vice President Internal Tara Inman chaired the AIDS Awareness committee and in addition to the speech, organized a strong UPEI presence at "the walk '95", a fundraiser for AIDS education.

When asked how she felt the presentation in the Pit had gone, Inman cheerfully replied, "I was really pleased. It was really nice to see so many people taking an interest in such an important issue."

National AIDS Awareness week ran



Tel. (902) 368-8337  
Fax (902) 368-1024

19 First Avenue  
West Royalty Ind. Pk  
Charlottetown, PE.I., C1E 1E0

## SPORTSWEAR OUTLET

OPEN 6 DAYS A WEEK

|               |                 |         |
|---------------|-----------------|---------|
| TEES          | sizes S M L XL  | \$8.00  |
| TEES          | XXL \$7.00 XXXL | \$8.00  |
| TEES          | 100% COTTON     | \$7.00  |
| TANKS         | 100% COTTON     | \$7.00  |
| BEEFY TEES    | (HANES)         | \$7.50  |
| SWEATS        | S M L XL        | \$12.50 |
| SWEATS        | XXL             | \$14.00 |
| SWEATPANTS    | S M L XL        | \$12.50 |
| HOODED SWEATS | S M L XL        | \$16.00 |
| PRINTED TEES  |                 | \$7.00  |

**ALSO SOCKS, CAPS, JACKETS,  
GOLF SHIRTS, PHOTO T-SHIRTS, ETC.**

**SPECIAL PRICES ON TEAM APPAREL;  
WINDSUITS, JERSEYS, UNIFORMS, ETC.**

*Now Embroidery Too!*