

April 15, 1999

The Hon. Robert Nault
M.P. Kenora - Rainy River
House of Commons
Rm. 407
West Block
OTTAWA, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Honorable Robert Nault:

RE: GRASSY NARROWS TRADITIONAL LAND USE AREA AND RESOURCE ISSUES:

This letter is confirm to you our total dissatisfaction with the lack of positive response to correspondence that was sent to Minister of Indian Affairs, Minister of Natural Resources, and Minister of Environment.

Specifically the letter from Jane Stewart (see attached), Minister of Indian Affairs stating that "the federal government has no jurisdiction over the management of resources on provincial Crown lands." In our letter to Jane Stewart dated March 6, 1999:

we requested protection of our land base (2500 or more square miles of our Traditional Land Use Area) and the protection of our culture, which originates from and is dependent upon that land base.....Therefore, in the interests of asserting our rights as First Nation people and to protect our culture from eradication and our land from further destructive exploitation, we must make the following demand. Representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of the Environment, and the Minister of Indian Affairs must meet with the people of Grassy Narrows First Nation to discuss and to hopefully resolve these issues.

The basis of our requests to the Minister's are;

As First Nations our Aboriginal Rights are protected under the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and were confirmed and further protected by Treaty #3 which was ratified by our Forefathers.

As First Nations our Inherent, Aboriginal and Treaty Rights are protected under s.25 and recognized and affirmed under s.35 the Constitution Act of 1982.

The principles laid forth by the Supreme Court of Canada in the

Delgammukw decision apply to our traditional lands and territories and waterways.

The other serious issue that continues to be ignored is the funding that was discontinued for Grassy Narrows First Nation's Mediation liaison Officer in 1997. (see attached John A. Olthuis April 6/99). The Mediation liaison Officer was one of the key positions Grassy Narrows had to protect our land resources, and to have a say in decisions that are made at the government levels. We need the funding of the Mediation liaison Officer reinstated, and the negotiations to be opened again.

The response to requests we made for the BUMP UP PROCEDURE on the Forest Management Plan continues to be a farce. Attached is a copy of a letter sent to Michael Williams, Director Minister of Environment, attention Blair Rohaly, and dated April 13, 1999.

MNR states:

"On the strength of the company's assertion that the forest industry would suffer considerable hardship the Ministry of Natural Resources supports the Company in their need to continue operations during this period..... The Ministry of Natural Resources is seeking your approval to proceed with forest operations, pursuant to Section 3.5, step 7 of the Forest Management Planning Manual for Ontario's Crown Forests (FMPM).

We believe the above statement made by MNR on behalf of Abitibi to be grossly overstated. They continue to overlook our hardship and the far reaching devastation we live with that is caused by the forestry practices of Abitibi. We have written and verbally stated the strong opposition we have to the current forestry practices of Abitibi and in general the resource extraction on our Traditional Land Use Area without our direct, historic, knowledgeable and valuable input.

We find this letter to Ministry of Environment by Ministry of Natural Resources to be a great insult to our First Nation People. Throughout our letters to government departments, media, and supporters, we have been straight forward in stating that we are requesting the clearcutting to stop and any other resource extraction due to the complete environmental devastation we are facing. We will not allow this to continue and we are forced to take steps that will ensure the safety and well being of our future generations.

To mention one such effect on our people:

April 15, 1999 Early Morning- One of our hunters went out to his hunting grounds that he uses year after year and was saddened by the sight of loggers that had comfortably set up camp right where he has hunted for years.

We appeal to you, Robert Nault, M.P. to bring our issues up in the House of Commons, and for once treat our people with the respect we have so long lacked from the leaders that govern us. The First Nation People need to be treated with decency.

TO ALL MY RELATIONS I REMAIN SINCERE,

**CHIEF WILLIAM FOBISTER SR.
ASUBPEESCHOSEEWAGONG
GRASSY NARROWS FIRST NATION**