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SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION

BRIEFING NOTES

WITNESS:

The Algonquin Council:

Lena Nottaway
William Commanda
Richard Kistabish
Salamon Wawatie
Major Kistabish
Louis Jerome
Kermot Moore
Pamela Keistabish

DATE OF APPEARANCE:

January 5, 1981, 6:00 p.m.

SOURCE OF NOTES:

Opening Statement during the testimony

BACKGROUND:

The Algonquin Nation is geographically outlined by the Ottawa River watershed which stretches from the Abitibi region of the North to the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers in the South.

Prepared by: John McDonough

Library of Parliament
Research Branch

January 13, 1981

MAIN POINTS:

It must be remembered that the native people, the Algonquins, were and always will be the first inhabitants of our land.

The Algonquin people have always enjoyed self-determination and have always managed by themselves without assistance from anyone.

The Algonquins look to the Royal Proclamation of 1763. They did not sign any Treaties and they did not extinguish their rights as to trapping and fishing.

According to the Algonquins the whole issue of the constitution is based on land and the way of living together, yet there is not the slightest mention of Indians on their land in the proposed Joint Resolution.

THE ALGONQUIN ACT:

They wish to reach an agreement on the boundaries of the territory over which the Algonquins have full jurisdiction. This jurisdiction would be transmitted and implemented by an Algonquin Act. This would define the territory where the Algonquins would have control of ownership if the resources, control of education, political freedom, cultural and religious freedom, hunting, fishing, control of health and environmental protection laws. This would be a contract between two nations, the Euro-Canadians and the Algonquins.

PATRIATION:

The Algonquin Council rejects the idea that by patriating the constitution the Canadian Parliament has the right to make any decision concerning their people without consultation.

AMENDMENT AFTER PATRIATION:

Since most provincial Premiers oppose native rights, any such discussion would be meaningless.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Algonquin Council proposes the creation of representative government for native people flowing from the universal principles of justice; by "native" they mean status, non-status Indians and Métis.

This concept is that of a country-wide native constituency, which would elect Members of Parliament on a per capita and territorial basis. They would represent the indigenous entity in the same manner as the established government represents the economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights of other Canadians.

All benefits which presently accrue to the provinces must go to the native constituency, including equalization payments, as per the policy on have not provinces.