

Smoke Signals Radio Archive Episode 1991-08-17

Segment 2

Episode air date: 1991-08-17

Dan Smoke and John Turner discuss the Stony Point First Nations reaffirming their land base and ways that community members can get involved in supporting Indigenous initiatives. A list of supportive agencies in London is also shared.

Host(s): Dan Smoke, John Turner

DAN SMOKE: Greetings, you are listening to Smoke Signals, Native People's First Nations program for CHRW on 94.7 FM. We just heard some...the words that were spoken by some of the key players of the Stony Point First Nations. The principals that you were listening to were **Maynard George, Robert George**—who is the **chief elder** of the **Aazhoodena Nation**—which is what the **Stony Point First Nations #43** call themselves—the Aazhoodena Nation. You heard from **Clifford George** and from one of the **Japanese** brothers who was there in observance of the Stony Point First Nations reaffirming their **land base**, their self-determination as to who they are. They are a separate and distinct nation and my brother here, **John Turner**, was present there to capture the...some of the dynamics of the moment.

John, will this be taking place for the most part of today?

JOHN TURNER: Yeah, it's going to be going probably until 4 o'clock this afternoon. They were...there was going to be a mini **pow wow**. They were going to have drummers and singers and someone. When I was there—it was still quite early when I left—and they hadn't arrived yet. But hopefully it will be like a mini pow wow. So if anyone in the area is going to be up that way, up near **Camp Ipperwash**, or if they would like to make a special trip up there to show their support for Native rights and for Maynard and his people, I'm sure Maynard would be more than delighted to see them there.

You know, we, in the news, we often hear about problems from one end of the country to the other. Up north, out west, in the east, in **Quebec** and so on. And, as it happen...as it's happened at **Oka**, we were suddenly aware of what was happening there and we felt very frustrated, we couldn't do anything, we couldn't become involved, it was too far away...you know, all of that sort of thing. But there are all kinds of Natives in **London** and there are all kinds of Native problems and Native issues in London. So anyone who is interested in this sort of thing has lots of opportunities in our own neighbourhood.

You know, myself, I didn't know about Native issues really at all. I never knew about Maynard, I...you know, had just a vague notion of what was going on at Camp Ipperwash until quite recently. But now that I know, there's lots of things that I can do. Being here is one of those things. So **Canadians, Londoners** in particular, and the people in the surrounding area, there are all kinds of things that they can become involved in if they're concerned about this. Last summer, I was one of those many, many people who were extremely frustrated. All we could do

was write letters, make phone calls, and so on to politicians and things. And that seemed to have absolutely no effect at all. So we were very, very frustrated and we felt disempowered. We had...we couldn't, you know, vent our frustrations, we couldn't do anything about the horrible things that we saw happening.

But now my awareness of local issues has become much more acute and I can see that there are things that I can do. There are organizations in London like **CASNIP**, the London chapter, which meets at the N'Amerind Centre—they're very, very much involved in Native issues and so on. And people are more than welcome to go to those meetings to become members, become involved in that way. There's **Atlohsa**, I'm sure that they would be happy too if anyone had any kinds of skills—as an accountant, or as a counsellor, or as a lawyer, or whatever. If they wanted to offer their services down there, they would be more than welcome. This sort of thing, this kind of skill, is desperately needed. There are a whole variety of things—you would know more about that than I do...being a Native (*laughter*).

DS: Yes, John, that's interesting you say that. Yeah London is a good place to get involved...

JT: Yeah, I think we are something like...I may be wrong in this...but something like 7000 Natives in London itself, is that right?

DS: About 7000, maybe more than that.

JT: That's quite a few.

DS: But London is a place where we have some strong political leadership. We have one political organization—**AIAI**— which is the **Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians**. We also have the different agencies located here in London. We have the **N'Amerind Friendship Centre** which is located at the corner of **Colborne** and **Horton**. It has a very effective mandate of programs, a whole slate of programs designed to help the urban First Nations members to come together to find some answers for themselves. And we have the **Nokee Kwe** which is the Native workshop for...it's called the **New Beginnings Program** that they have...that they offer for First Nations people. The **skimijaatwen** it's called—it is known as—where they teach employment skills, life skills, and they do a little upgrading there as well. And as John you were saying, **Atlohsa**, and they are a healing organization to deal, to help deal, and help heal the family violence that occurs in many of our First Nations homes, domestic situations. I'm sure if I've forgotten anyone, they will let me know to (*laughter*)...to let us know who they are and what they are doing. But those are just some of the places where there is opportunities for Native people to go. To get some of the inner growth that we don't see encouraged too much by non-Native society. Where you can find some answers about who you are and where you're going.

So on that note, I believe that with what is happening at the Stony Point First Nations #43, I think that we are gonna be hearing a lot from them. I believe that...also that...it's not the last that we have heard from the Stony Point First Nations. London was also the...was visited this week by the **Minister of Natural Resources** and **Minister of Native Affairs, Bud Wildman**,

from the **NDP government**. He was here to listen to some of the concerns of the First Nations settlements in and around the London area. I believe on Monday he was in town. I wasn't present but I did hear that he had gone out to the **Oneida** settlement on Monday morning to hear some of their concerns. I guess some of the concerns that the Provincial Government is involved with and trying to deal with are on a tripartite basis. It's a communication process designed for, and to be accommodated by, the federal government, the provincial government, and the First Nations government. And on the table presently, before this tripartite process, is...are the agenda items: policing, education, and **hunting and fishing rights**. As I understand it, hunting and fishing rights is something that comes under the auspices of the **provincial government** because of the **Game and Fish Act** and we have been very successful First Nations people in getting recognized that when Native people do their hunting, do their fishing, and are gainfully involved in this enterprise, they are doing it strictly for their own needs. They are doing it strictly for their own needs in the way that the game and fish were given to Native people. That they are using just what they need for their families. They are just taking nothing that will imbalance the present game and fish supplies that are out there at present. They do not take any more than they need. And I think this has been a problem because, as we have read about from time to time, different hunters—**Native hunters** and **Native fisherman**—have been arrested and we are trying to resolve this issue so that Native hunters and fisherman will be exempt from the Game and Fish Act when they're only looking at hunting and fishing for what they need.

And I think policing is also a big issue and that has been of note, particularly in the London area. Recently, we had some situation at the **Chippewas of the Thames** reserve where there was, I guess, a shooting incident. And it's these items that make it evident that...you know, that there is a healing that has to take place on our home reserves. And that when the papers and media sensationalize these stories by the fact that there is guns being used against...Native people against Native people, I think that we have a responsibility to explore further into the issue and find out just exactly what...what is happening and why it is happening. And that is becoming more evident as time goes on, that as the healing is taking place, we will hopefully see less and less of this kind of action.

And also this week, we did see we were in the papers. There was a Supreme Court decision that denied the **Temagami First Nations** their land claim to about 40,000 square acres of land in northern **Ontario** bordering the **Ontario-Quebec border** and it was a sad day for Native people. I should reflect some of the statements that were presented by the national leader **Ovide Mercredi** of the **Assembly of First Nations** who did have, he did say that we can look at it in a positive way because even though the Supreme Court made the decision that the Temagami were not...their land claim was not gonna be awarded to them, basically because of the decision...the treaty...the **Robinson-Huron treaty**, which was negotiated back in the 1870s, that at that time since the Temagami First Nations they had a land they did observe some of the treaty rights that were given and some of the privileges that were given, that were accorded that treaty...that he was saying that Aboriginal title is something that has never been recognized by the federal government and in this decision by the **Supreme Court of Canada**,

Aboriginal title was certainly recognized, was certainly recognized in a way that Native people, Aboriginal people, First Nations people, across this land would like to be recognized.

And I think that with those words, it is comforting to know that it may be a setback initially but down the road, you know, I think that Aboriginal title will be able to succeed for future generations to plant the seed for Native people being able to get back and go back and live in the traditional manner accorded them by the **Creator**, and by their elders. So at this time, we are going to listen to an **Oglala Lakota Sioux** brother—his name is **Mitch Walking Elk**. He has an album out entitled *Indians* and the song we are going to hear is “**If They Come in the Morning.**”