

Smoke Signals Radio Archive Episode 2000-05-06  
Segment 3  
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*Dan and Mary Lou Smoke present listeners with an overview of current news events taking place across the country.*

Host(s): Dan Smoke, Mary Lou Smoke

**DAN SMOKE:** Waciye! Koolamalsi. Shekoli. Boozhoo. And I'm going to read a couple more public affairs, a couple more current news events that are taking place across the country. This is written by Shaun Durkin. The slug is "Ramsay conviction prompts review call." Ottawa. "Parliament should make it easier to get rid of MPs convicted of serious crimes," New Democrat, Dick Proctor, said yesterday. Proctor made the statement in the Commons the day after former-Reformer-turned-Independent MP, Jack Ramsay, was sentenced to nine months for an attempted rape 30 years ago. Ramsay, who faces a separate trial next week on a charge of unlawful confinement, is appealing the attempted rape conviction. Under Parliamentary rules, even if it were to be upheld after all appeals were exhausted and he went to jail, Ramsay would not be required to resign his seat. Only MPs sentenced to two years or more automatically lose their seat. The Commons can vote to expel a member for any reason, but this is rarely used. The most notable example was the expulsion of Louis Riel. Proctor called on Parliament yesterday to set up a committee to review the rules, arguing no private business, or union, or community group would allow an executive to continue in office if convicted of a serious offence such as attempted rape or fraud or corruption. Proctor said later, "A lot of Parliamentarians, and certainly most Canadians, would find that being convicted of a serious offence like attempted rape, like defrauding taxpayers, and still being allowed to sit in the House of Commons or the Senate is not acceptable." Proctor said he has not heard proposals for new rules, but suggested MPs be expelled for crimes that carry a high maximum sentence, even if they are jailed for less than two years. He also suggested some form of suspension of privileges and possibly pay in cases where there is a conviction under appeal. If the appeal is successful, privileges and pay would be restored, but a person who is convicted should step aside unless they can clear their name.

**DS:** And Mary Lou has a story on the Saskatoon city police officers that went to court.

**MARY LOU SMOKE:** Yes, Dan. Spectators got into a shouting match about racism yesterday outside the court, where two city police officers made an appearance on charges of dumping a Native man outside the city on a frigid winter night. Constables Dan Hachen and Ken Munson, charged with unlawful confinement and assault, both elected to be tried by judge and jury. The two-day preliminary hearings were set for this fall. Outside court, members of a group known as the **Grandmothers Vigil for Justice** held a candlelight protest. Cheryl Selsie, a friend of the two policemen, lambasted reporters outside the courthouse, saying media coverage has been biased. Her discussion with protestor Margie Prat Cherrell turned into a shouting match about racism. "How much beer do you drink? How much bingo do you play?" Selsie yelled at Prat Cherrell, who responded by calling Selsie a racist. Selsie and Prat Cherrell also argued about other cases where police mistreatment had been alleged.

**DS:** Nya:weh, miigwetch, Mary Lou. And about that particular story, I just want to say this comment. We both know Margie Prat Cherrell. We know her mother. Margie was here back in 1990 at the Indigenous Peoples Conference which was held at King's College. And that summer, Margie was one of the presenters. She's a traditional teacher, traditional singer. She

doesn't drink, she doesn't smoke, she doesn't play bingo. But this lady, for some reason, felt compelled to throw a stereotype at one of our ceremonial leaders. Now, if that's not racist, I don't know what is. But we know Margie Prat Cherrell, and Margie responded...it must've been the emotional venting of how she must've felt by being attacked in this way. Now, these officers, who are innocent until proven guilty, will have their day in court. But for this lady, who's a supporter of these officers, to start yelling at the Native people who have numerous incidents to tell and who are reporting these incidences to the RCMP Task Force who are doing a criminal investigation of the Saskatoon Police department, as well as the **Saskatchewan Federation of Indian Nations**, who are also conducting an investigation, and so that's the reason why there were so many Native people present on the courthouse steps that day. And for this lady to just come in and inflame and escalate the tension, is just...I don't know where she's coming from. I think she must be...she must know something that everyone else doesn't know. That's the only explanation I can think of.

**DS:** Anyways, we're going to listen to **Litefoot**. Litefoot, **Cherokee** rap artist. He was also the Rap Artist of the Year for the Native American Music Awards for 1998 and 1999. This is from his **Good Day to Die** CD. This is "**My Land**," here on Smoke Signals.