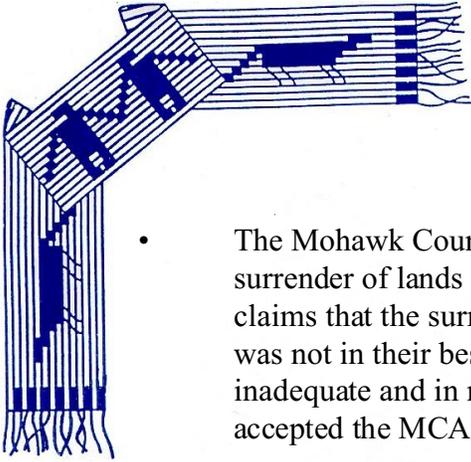

Fact Sheet



The Tsikaristisere/Dundee Claim

- The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's (MCA's) specific claim relates to the alleged 1888 surrender of lands in the Dundee area in the Province of Quebec. Simply put, the MCA claims that the surrender was invalid because it was not their intention to surrender and it was not in their best interests. MCA also claims that the compensation received was inadequate and in no way approached the actual value of the lands. Canada recently accepted the MCA's claim for negotiation under the Specific Claims Policy.
- The territory known as the Tsikaristisere or "Dundee lands" is on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River roughly opposite Cornwall. It consists of approximately 20,000 acres in the most westerly portion of the Province of Quebec, in the area now known as the Township of Dundee. Historically, it was part of the land recognized as set apart for the Mohawks of Akwesasne.
- From the early 1800s, the Dundee lands had been leased out to non-Mohawk settlers. Some of the leases were made directly by Akwesasne Chiefs, while others were made with the involvement of the Crown. None of the leases were proceeded by a surrender for lease of the lands by the Mohawks.
- Administration of the leases and collection of the rent over the ensuing years was irregular. As leases expired, the Mohawks demanded a return of the lands, which they needed for their own purposes. Because of the mounting pressures between the lessees and the Mohawks, the situation involving the Tsikaristisere/Dundee lands was subject of a federal Commission of Inquiry in 1887.
- The following year, the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs came to Akwesasne and proposed to the Mohawks that they surrender their interest in the Tsikaristisere/Dundee lands in exchange for \$50,000 in compensation. An alleged surrender was signed on February 16, 1888, but the Mohawks maintain that their intention was to reclaim the leased lands gradually rather than surrender them.

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- Most of the leased Tsikaristisere/Dundee lands were subsequently patented to private individuals. Between 1889 and 1927, about 10 per cent of the patented lands were purchased and returned to reserve status; since 1971, other lands within the Tsikaristisere/Dundee area have been purchased by Canada, but do not have reserve status. Part of the land is environmentally sensitive, and both Canada and the Mohawks of Akwesasne have stated their joint intention to protect those areas.
- The MCA's claim was partially accepted for negotiation in 1988 on the basis of inadequate compensation resulting from the 1888 surrender, but these negotiations broke down in the mid 1990s. The MCA subsequently revised its allegations in the context of evolving case law and submitted additional research. In response to this development, Canada conducted a legal review of the revised submission and new evidence. In the negotiations to be undertaken now between Canada and MCA, the parties will be seeking to resolve outstanding issues with respect to the alleged invalid surrender, the alleged inadequate compensation and alleged invalid leases.