## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES 9<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY, 4<sup>TH</sup> SESSION

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Native Council of Canada

(MÉTIS and NON-STATUS INDIANS)
LE CONSEIL NATIONAL DES AUTOCHTONES DU CANADA
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PRESS RELEASE

NATIVE COUNCIL OF CANADA PRESIDENT SLAMS BILL C-48

(YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T., FEBRUARY 24, 1981) -- THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIVE COUNCIL OF CANADA, HARRY W. DANIELS, CALLS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S BILL C-48 A GROSS ACT OF NEGLECT AND ALIENATION.

The passage of Bill C-48 will sound the death knell for the aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories and Yukon.

The massive land grab and alienation of the Native people from their land which has been incomplete, would now be assured by the double dealing politics of Ottawa. On the one hand they are deeply involved in land claims negotiations with the aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories and Yukon, while on the other hand, in the most insideous manner, they are attempting to ram through a piece of legislation which would forever close any doors that might lead to a just and positive resolution of the aboriginal title issue. The Native people, dealing in good faith, are being stabbed in the back by federal politicians and bureaucrats.

The passage of Bill C-48 can be interpreted only as an attempt to further erode and abrogate aboriginal and treaty rights. The recent recognition and affirmation of aboriginal rights in The Canada Act 1981, by the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution, would be a shallow attempt to recognize rights that could be so indifferently taken away by another act of Parliament. Careful scrutiny and sound judgement must be exercised to ensure that we are not adopting the Machevellian principle "that the end justifies the means".

Is Canada so morally bankrupt that an inspired moment in history could be destroyed with callous disregard for the aspirations of Canada's first citizens?

At the board of directors' meeting of the Native Council of Canada held in Yellowknife in February 21-22, 1981, a motion was unanimously passed to support the position of the Native people of the Northwest Territories and Yukon and that of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

This most recent threat to aboriginal rights in the Northwest Territories and Yukon causes great concern to the rest of the Native community in Canada. As in the case of the James Bay Agreement, the Native peoples involved in land claims negotiations are dealing with the axe of industrial development and energy and resource exploitation hanging over their head. We will not stand idly by while measures are being taken that endanger our future existence as a people. You can rest assured that the Native Council of Canada and its member organizations will become actively involved to bring about the downfall of this piece of legislation.

Solutions to the situation should be looked at from a northern point of view. It is obvious that Bill C-48 has not received northern input with regard to land tenure and resource ownership. This would ensure that the interests of all northerners would be fairly represented and protected. Top priority must be given to the outstanding aboriginal rights negotiations now underway with the Council of Yukon Indians in Yukon, COPE, Nunavut and the Dene and Metis of the Mackenzie Valley before passage of Bill C-48.

## NATIVE COUNCIL OF CANADA PRESIDENT SLAMS BILL C-48

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