

Attention News/Assignment Editors:

Ipperwash Inquiry Resumes Next Week With History Testimony

TORONTO, Aug. 13 /CNW/ - The Ipperwash Inquiry resumes next week with the testimony of Joan Holmes, B.A., M.A., president of Joan Holmes Associates Inc, an Aboriginal rights and research consulting firm. Ms Holmes is the second of two experts to testify at the evidentiary hearings that started the Inquiry hearings last month.

Next week's hearings are scheduled for Tuesday, August 17, Wednesday, August 18, and Thursday, August 19, in Forest, Ontario.

Ms. Holmes will trace the history of relations and land transactions between Great Lakes Aboriginal people and governments from the mid-18th Century to 1995. Her presentation will include an examination of the land transactions between 1927 and 1928 in which the Kettle Point and Stony Point First Nation surrendered land, the purchase of the Ipperwash Provincial Park by the province and the expropriation of the Stony Point reserve during the Second World War.

As part of that review, she will trace the requests for return of the former Stony Point reserve territory and governmental responses to such request, including requests made by the Honourable Jean Chrétien when he was the Minister Responsible for Indian Affairs. The Department of National Defence used the War Measures Act to appropriate the former Stony Point Reserve in 1942. As well, Ms. Holmes will review the contemporary claims concerning the possible existence of burial grounds of both Ipperwash Provincial Park and the nearby Camp Ipperwash.

During three days of hearings in July, the Inquiry heard testimony from Darlene Johnston, B.A., LL.B., LL.M., a specialist in Great Lakes Aboriginal history and a descendant of the Great Lakes Aboriginal ancestors. She is also a member of the Inquiry's Research Advisory Committee. Her presentation is available on the Inquiry's web page www.ipperwashinquiry.ca

The Inquiry was established by the Government of Ontario to inquire into the fatal shooting of Dudley George during a protest by Aboriginal people at Ipperwash Provincial Park in 1995.

The Inquiry is to report on the circumstances that led to the shooting and is also to make recommendations designed to avoid violence in similar circumstance in the future. The Honourable Sidney B. Linden is the Commissioner.

The historical presentations set the context for the evidence to be heard later in the year about the 1995 protest and the subsequent events.

Commissioner Linden has separated the Inquiry into two phases that will run concurrently. Part I will deal with events surrounding the death of Dudley George. Part II will deal with the policy issues and recommendations directed to the avoidance of violence in similar circumstances.

Next week's hearing will be held at the Forest Memorial Community Center (Kimball hall) at 6276 Townsend Line, Forest, Ontario. Forest is part of the Municipality of Lambton Shores. The hearing on Tuesday, August 17, will start at 10:30 a.m. and at 10 a.m. on the subsequent days. The schedule of further hearing days is posted on the Inquiry's website: www.ipperwashinquiry.ca.

For further information: Peter Rehak, Communication Coordinator and Media Relations Officer, The Ipperwash Inquiry, (416) 212-6876.