

INFORMATION

Ontario New Democrats **NDP** Nouveau Parti Démocratique

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EXCERPTS FROM A SPEECH BY NDP LEADER STEPHEN LEWIS
TO THE SALES RESEARCH CLUB, ROYAL YORK HOTEL,
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1976, ON THE SUBJECT OF REED
PAPER AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE NATIVE PEOPLES

(Reporters and editors please note: a summary of Stephen's speech on Reed Paper delivered October 27 at the forest resources forum at the St. Lawrence Centre is now available from his office on request. Contact Tom Coleman or Marcia Boyd 965-3311)

Ontario New Democratic Party leader Stephen Lewis last night called for renegotiation of 1905 and 1912 treaties with the Indians of Northwestern Ontario (Treaty 9) in order to restore their faith and confidence in our process of government and to help to prevent unhappy acts of outrage over the Reed Paper issue.

The Ontario government frequently accedes to the rights and demands of private companies. "Can we not make concessions to Native Peoples similar to those we make to other sectors of our society?"

Since 1974, the federal government has made more than \$1.4 million in allotted grants and awards to Reed Paper Company through its Department of Regional Economic Expansion, he said.

In contrast, the treaties signed with the Indians of Treaty 9 provide for trapping, hunting and fishing rights on a very
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"The government has shown a lack of recognition of what Reed means as an industrial polluter in Ontario. Reed means mercury and mercury means Reed."

He said "the irony of awarding the right to potential devastation" of Indian communities - a total population of more than 20,000 people - to the same company that was responsible for the mercury pollution of the English-Wabigoon River system "is just too much for people to cope with."

In Japan, the government had co-operated with victims of mercury pollution to take the polluting corporation to court for compensation. Criminal negligence charges have now been laid against corporation officials because of the Minimata disease their industry caused.

In Ontario, however, no action has been taken against Reed to recover compensation for health or job losses, many to Native Peoples, as a result of the mercury pollution.

"It's a bit much to give such preferential right to a vast timber tract when the company (Reed) has not even been asked to fulfill a moral obligation of compensation to the Indians in those communities."

A member of the corporate audience, with evident general approval, told the NDP Leader that this was an issue in which Tories and Grits agreed with the NDP position "100 per cent".

The government misjudged this issue completely, Mr. Lewis said. Premier Davis thought that jobs and investment in Northwestern Ontario would be enough to engage public support.

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