

Akwesasne

“The Mohawk people of Kahnawake, Kanasetake and Akwesasne asserted Aboriginal title to their ancestral lands in 1975.”

A Mohawk community situated along the banks of the St. Lawrence River. There are northern and southern portions that lie within the Canadian provinces of Quebec and Ontario, and the U.S. state of New York.

Barricade

“To halt further development of the Pines, a group of people from Kanesatake constructed a barricade on a local road, blocking access to the area.”

A temporary barrier for protection against attack or for blocking the way.

Chlor-alkali

“In 1962, Dryden Chemicals Ltd. began operating a chlor-alkali plant in Dryden, Ontario.”

Any of a group of chemicals (as chlorine and sodium hydroxide) that are manufactured by the electrolytic decomposition of sodium chloride.

Chlorine

“The plant used mercury to manufacture chlorine, which was in turn used to bleach paper at the Dryden Paper Company Ltd.”

A chemical element that is a greenish yellow irritating gas of strong odor used as a bleach and as a disinfectant to purify water.

Dryden Chemicals Ltd.

“The poisoning is the result of Dryden Chemicals Ltd. dumping mercury into the English-Wabigoon river system between 1962 and 1970.”

A company that operated a pulp and paper mill located in Dryden, Ontario. It used mercury to make chlorine for bleaching paper. The mill dumped mercury-contaminated waste material into the English-Wabigoon river system.

Effluent

“In 1970, the Ontario government ordered the company to stop dumping mercury into the river system. However, the law only included water effluents, not air emissions.”

Liquid waste or sewage discharged into a river or the sea.

Emission

“In 1970, the Ontario government ordered the company to stop dumping mercury into the river system. However, the law only included water effluents, not air emissions.”

Something sent forth by emitting such as substances discharged into the air (as by a smokestack or an automobile engine).

Grassy Narrows

“Approximately 90 per cent of Grassy Narrows residents suffer from mercury poisoning.”

An Ojibwe First Nations community located 80 kilometres north of Kenora, Ontario. Residents have suffered from mercury poisoning caused by Dryden Chemicals Ltd. dumping mercury into the English-Wabigoon river system

Injunction

“After two injunctions to remove the roadblock were ignored, Oka town council asked the provincial police force, the Sûreté du Québec (SQ), to intervene.”

A court order commanding or forbidding the doing of some act.

Kahnawake

“Mohawk from two nearby reserves — Kahnawake and Akwesasne — along with a group of activists called the Mohawk Warrior Society, joined the protest.”

A Mohawk First Nations community located on the shore of the Saint Lawrence River, south of Montreal, Quebec. Some residents erected a blockade on the Mercier Bridge to show support for the Kanesatake Mohawks.

Kanesatake

“The crisis was sparked by the proposed expansion of a golf course and development of townhouses on disputed land in Kanesatake that included a Mohawk burial ground

A Mohawk First Nations community located on the shore of the Lake of Two Mountains, west of Montreal, Quebec. They had a land dispute over control of an area called “the Pines” with the nearby town of Oka, Quebec.

Mercury

“The poisoning is the result of Dryden Chemicals Ltd. dumping mercury into the English-Wabigoon river system between 1962 and 1970.”

A heavy silvery white poisonous metallic chemical element that is liquid at ordinary temperatures.

Mercury Poisoning

“A 2016 report found that more than 90 per cent of residents in Grassy Narrows and Whitedog First Nations have symptoms of mercury poisoning.”

Occurs when your body is exposed to too much mercury. Symptoms include impaired senses and balance, shaking, slurred speech, numbness and tunnel vision.

Methylmercury

“Small organisms in the sediment like plankton absorb mercury and convert it into methylmercury – more toxic than the metal form – and it enters the food chain.”

Any of various toxic compounds of mercury containing the complex CH_3Hg^- that often occur as pollutants which accumulate in living organisms (such as fish) especially in higher levels of a food chain.

Oka

“After two injunctions to remove the roadblock were ignored, Oka town council asked the provincial police force, the Sûreté du Québec (SQ), to intervene.”

A small village on the northern bank of the Ottawa River, northwest of Montreal, Quebec. The mayor gave the go-ahead to build a townhouse complex and expand a golf course into an area the Kanesatake claimed as theirs.

Operation Salon

“On 20 August, the armed forces’ Operation Salon began. Four thousand soldiers took up positions in and around Kanesatake and Kahnawake.”

Military deployment of the Royal 22nd Regiment to remove the barricades at both Kanesatake and Kahnawake, open the Mercier Bridge, remove the strong points of opposition, restore public order and security.

Plankton

“Small organisms in the sediment like plankton absorb mercury and convert it into methylmercury – more toxic than the metal form – and it enters the food chain.”

The tiny floating plants and animals of a body of water.

Remediation

“In 2017, the Ontario government committed to funding an \$85-million remediation plan for the English-Wabigoon river system.”

The action of remedying something, in particular of reversing or stopping environmental damage.

Reserve

“Related protests and violence occurred in the Kahnawake reserve, to the south of Montreal.”

A tract of land set aside under the Indian Act and treaty agreements for the exclusive use of an Indian band.

Royal 22e Regiment

“Members of the Royal 22e Regiment (the ‘Van Doos’) took over from the SQ at the Kahnawake and Kanesatake barricades.”

A francophone infantry regiment of the Canadian Army.

Sulpicians

“In 1859, the Province of Canada gave the Sulpicians official title to the land.”

A member of the Society of Priests of St. Sulpice founded by Jean Jacques Olier in Paris, France, in 1642 and dedicated to the teaching of seminarians.

Sûreté du Québec

“Tensions were high, particularly after the death of Corporal Marcel Lemay, a Sûreté du Québec police officer.”

Quebec Provincial Police.

The Pines

“To halt further development of the Pines, a group of people from Kanesatake constructed a barricade on a local road, blocking access to the area.”

The Mohawk community of Kanesatake had a land dispute over control of this territory with the nearby town of Oka. The Mohawks were opposed to the development of this land since it contained a Mohawk burial ground.

Treaty 3

“Grassy Narrows is a signatory to Treaty 3.”

Agreement that provided the federal government access to Ojibwe lands in present-day northwestern Ontario and eastern Manitoba in exchange for various goods and rights to hunting, fishing and natural resources.