

An outpouring of emotion



Photo by Christopher King

Protest...

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Idle No More Movement provides emotional moments for its participants

Doreen has been with the Idle No More movement since it started over a month ago in support of Spence and her month-long hunger strike, in which she is refusing to eat solid food to get the attention of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Governor General David Johnston to sit down and talk with other First Nation representatives.

"This is symptomatic of something that is wrong with the relationship between the First Nations people and the Crown," said Tyendinaga Chief Donald Maracle,

about marching in downtown Ottawa.

Maracle was one of over 100 chiefs who refused to attend Friday morning's meeting with Harper and his cabinet in solidarity of Spence's refusal to attend the meeting because of Johnston's planned absence.

"There has to be political will. And right now it does not seem that there is any," said Maracle about the governor general's plan to attend a separate, more informal meeting in the afternoon.

Doreen chalked a lot of Idle No More's success to today's youth and social media.

"Social media is a tool we use to spread awareness to the masses," said Doreen. He said he is a proactive supporter of the movement by helping organize a few controversial CP railroad blockades in Tyendinaga. During those blockades, CP had to get an emergency court injunction to remove the occupiers from the rail line.

"There are more in the works," said Doreen. However, he would not give more specifics about when it such a protest could happen again.

Maracle said he supports the Idle No More movement because he said there is a lack of clean drinking water in his community since there are not enough funds to buy a water filtration plant to help the 4,000 residents with safe water.

Other reserves, such as Sandy Lake in northern Ontario, lack proper infrastructure during the winter. This leads to bursting sewage pipes and heater malfunctions, which make for inadequate shelter.

Maracle has represented Tyendinaga for over 20 years and he said he does not see an end to this political pressure until aboriginal demands are met.

"We cannot continue to be blind regarding these issues, and I think the First Nations cause is just."

Above: A protester cries during speeches at the Idle No More march in downtown Ottawa on Jan. 13. The march took place on Wellington Street around the Prime Minister's Office during the Assembly of First Nations.



Photo by Jason Prupas

Idle No More protesters took to the streets in front of Parliament Hill while First Nation leaders and activists delivered a number of speeches on Jan. 11.



Photo by Jason Prupas

Idle No More protesters took to the streets in front of Parliament Hill in Ottawa while First Nation leaders and activists delivered speeches on Jan. 11.



Photo by Nam Phi Dang

Photo, left: Participants of the Idle No More movement knock on the Prime Minister's Office door on Jan. 11 in Ottawa.



Photo by Christopher King

Grand Chief Derek Nepinak mourns at the Idle No More march in downtown Ottawa on Jan. 13. The march took place on Wellington Street around the Prime Minister's Office during the Assembly of First Nations.