

SUIT

FROM A1

along County Road M on the Menominee reservation. A sign posted at the scene declared it "a permitted and experimental industrial hemp field operation."

Federal agents, however, reported confiscating about 30,000 marijuana plants weighing several thousand pounds. A search warrant affidavit showed

that agents had reported evidence of illegal possession, manufacture and distribution of marijuana in the tribe's agricultural operation.

No arrests have been reported, although agents at the time reported that their investigation would continue.

While immediately denouncing the drug raid, tribal leaders had announced plans to seek relief in court. Much of the suit focuses on the federal

government's relaxed restrictions on industrial hemp as a way of providing material for such legal products as paper, textiles, detergents and building materials.

With states now allowed to develop hemp crops, the tribe argues that it should be treated as a state, too, and allowed to grow hemp without regard for whatever restrictions exist in Wisconsin state law.

The tribe is represent-

ed in the suit by Brendan Johnson, a Minneapolis-based attorney who previously served as a federal prosecutor in South Dakota and also as chairman of a federal panel on Native American issues.

In a prepared statement, Johnson expressed confidence that the tribe would prevail on the central issue of whether it should be permitted to grow industrial hemp.

"This is a straightforward legal issue," he said.