

Seen by
John G. Diefenbaker

345122

Oromocto Indian Reservation,
Oromocto, N. B.,
February 26, 1960

Right Honourable John Diefenbaker,
Prime Minister of Canada,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I wish you to know that the Band of Indians of which I am the Chief is not in favour of any amendment to the Elections Act giving Indians the franchise in Federal elections, and on behalf of the Band and for myself I hereby request the Government to reconsider its plans to amend the law.

You are aware that the rights of Indians are established by Treaty and we do not wish in any way to interfere in the choice of Government of the Country.

According to statements attributed to your Government the only reason the Indians are being given the vote is so that certain other governments abroad cannot say some of the residents of Canada are deprived of voting powers. Surely this country's representatives abroad can explain to other governments the status of Indians in this country and the derivation of their rights through Treaty.

I am surprised that a Government would seek to alter in any way the status of Indians without first ascertaining whether the Indians themselves concurred and I therefore request of you that the proposed Government legislation be withheld as long as the Indians are opposed to it. I know that you will wish to have regard for the rights of the minority.

Will you please advise me of your Government's intention so that I may advise the members of my Band.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Leader of the Opposition, Right Honourable L. B. Pearson, and to Mr. Hazen Argue, House Leader of the C.C.F. Party.

Respectfully,

John Sacobie

John Sacobie,
Chief, Band No.26 of the Maliseet Indians

cc: Rt.Hon.L.B.Pearson
Mr. Hazen Argue