

140,059

Ottawa, August 20, 1909.

Sirs,-

Having reference to your petition, (undated) asking the Department to investigate a complaint that an indignity has been placed upon the Indians of the Restigouche Indian reserve by their being separated from the whites in the Church services, I have to say that, although not a matter in which the Department had a right to interfere, a communication was sent to His Lordship Monseigneur A. Blais, Bishop of Rimouski, on the 16th ultimo on the subject mentioned by you. In reply a letter has been received from His Lordship, in which he states that this separation was made in favour of the Indians and had no purpose whatever of making a distinction of colour and race among those who attend the church on the reserve. His Lordship further states that at a formal meeting regularly called and presided over by your missionary on July 7, 1907, the Indians of the reserve made choice of the seats that have been set apart for them and their choice was ratified by the Bishop, thus making it impossible for the whites to compete for the privilege of acquiring and enjoying the seats in that part of the church designated and preferred by the Indians. It would appear, therefore, from His Lordship's letter that the setting apart of certain seats in the church for the Indians was done solely in their interests and without any desire to create class distinctions.

Yours faithfully,
 Nicholas Jerome,
 Mr. John Gedeon, and others,

J. Pitre, Esq.,
 Indian Agent,
 Pointe a la Garde, Que.

Your obedient servant,

Secretary.

Dept. of Indian & Northern Affairs, Letterbook,
 10 August 1909 - 28 August 1909, (R.G. 10, Volume 5252)

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