

ment. The Society is now ready to hear from the Indians of Canada, from their own opinions, and state matters that might conduce to the advantage, and advancement of our people. For myself I believe no Society is perfect until every man is qualified by industry, intelligence, and by the very fact that he possesses some real interest in the welfare of the country, and being so qualified he has a right to give a voice in the direction of State affairs as well as local affairs. It would be useless to give the Indian the voice in the State affairs, if he has not the right to exercise his power in a way which should be to the interest of his band. But so long as the Indians will look to others for help, so long will they remain in a prostrate condition; the true secret is that they should help themselves. It is like the old fable of the man whose cart stuck in the rut, and who called on Hercules to help him out of his difficulty, and was told to put his own shoulder to the wheel and get it out himself. So if we are to be elevated, it must be the result of our own efforts. If we are to become superior to our present condition, it must be the result of our united efforts in pushing our rights as British citizens. If you are contented with the privileges you now enjoy, very good; but if you think that improvements can be made, now is the greatest opportunity to speak. The Canadian Indian Research and Aid Society is ready to co-operate with the Indians of Canada; but without the Indians themselves taking a voice in the work, it cannot be expected that the Society can accomplish its aim and object. Looking into the third question asked by the circular,—“Do you wish to have more voice in the management of your own affairs than at present, and if so to what extent, and in what way?” My people of Tyendinaga Reserve are unanimous in saying yes, we wish to have more voice in many respects; for instance, in regard to schools—the band build all the school houses, and pay for the teachers, but they have no voice as school trustees; the Indian Department appoints officers who are paid from the Indian funds, but the Indians have no voice in the appointments. The local Indian agent should we think be altogether done away with on many reservations in Ontario, where the Indian Chiefs in council are competent to run their own local affairs, as matters connected with the band always come from the Indian council—but the agent gets the honor by the Department. I do not by any means wish to say that we do not need the Indian Act; but I claim that a large improvement can be made in the said Indian Act, to come up with the requirements of our present stage. If the Indians are not allowed the privileges asked for, the Government cannot tell whether or not they are really competent people.

To the sixth question, “Will you send delegates to the proposed Conference?” I reply yes, the chiefs and chosen delegates will be sent to represent our band.

Tyendinaga Reserve, June, 1891.

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