

the Imperial Government of England, by the sanction of our mother, Her Britannic Majesty the Queen of Great Britain.

We desire, in conclusion, to request the Government to concede to us, in accordance with the decision of the Six Nations Council of 17th February last, the privilege of exercising the franchise, in a special manner, as heretofore given to us by a special provision, by Act of Parliament of Canada.

Your Government is requested to consider the fact that there are some of that portion of the population of our reserve who are Pagans, and many of whom are not, in regard to property qualifications, entitled to a vote, even if they so desired, who are desirous of setting aside the Franchise Act. That in regard to civilization, education, enlightenment and progress, it would be unwise for the Government to support the weak contentions of these people, who are praying for the retrogression of our people to a position such as existed two hundred years ago.

In conclusion, we desire to express the hope that the Government may kindly support the recent decision of the council, and retain for us the exercise of the franchise, as herein requested by us.

And we, your humble petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

In support of that petition, there are some 276 names. These names include, of course, the great majority of the chiefs and leading men of the Six Nation Indians. It would not be fair, although I have pledged myself to always try and advance the interests of the Six Nation Indians, as expressed by their regularly constituted authorities, to conceal the fact that I have also received a petition, signed by 354, asking that the franchise, which was forced upon them some twelve years ago, be taken away because it introduces an element of discord in their midst and instead of bringing about that era of civilization which it was expected to promote, has tended to bring about discord and antagonism among the various families living on the reserve. The petition against the franchise is as follows:—

We, the undersigned, warriors and members of the Six Nations, residing in the townships of Tuscarora, Oneida and Onondaga, in the province of Ontario, desire from the council of chiefs held 1st March, 1898, a privilege to express our views respecting the enfranchisement to the Indians of the Six Nations

And at the council of the warriors, held 4th March, in their council-house, a decision was arrived at, that a petition will be circulated to solicit the signatures of those who are not in favour of the enfranchisement.

Therefore, your petitioners desire to ask you to bring the matter before the House of Commons, now in session, to have that privilege, and to exempt the Six Nations from the operation of the enfranchisement.

We, therefore, your petitioners, hope to have the fullest attention from you, as we ever pray, &c., &c.

This petition is signed by 354 who are opposed to the retention of the franchise. I have a petition here signed by the Missisagua Indians, who have a council of their own election, and are not governed by the here-

ditary system, signed by some 31, in favour of the franchise. These are the peculiar circumstances in which the Six Nation Indians are placed.

Mr. DAVIN. What is the relative number for and against?

Mr. HEYD. I think that the two petitions in favour of the franchise contain together 276 names, while the petition opposed to it has 354 names. The Six Nation council is constituted of some 60 chiefs, who are elected by the women from the various families of the tribe. These are almost unanimously in favour of the franchise. Those opposed to the franchise are principally the pagan element, which has always objected to it. Numerically the hostiles have the majority. Now that they have had the privilege of exercising the franchise, that they did not at first want, these people have learned to appreciate it. Being precluded from exercising their hereditary combative instincts, they find an opportunity of getting rid of their superfluous steam at election time, and have learned to be most inveterate politicians. They take the Conservative or Liberal side in the most ardent manner, and take a most lively interest in politics, and are just as well qualified to exercise the franchise as are the whites. It may be a matter of some interest to those members who have not large Indian settlements in their constituencies to learn that in my constituency out of 4,000 Indians 667 have the right to vote, and of these a great many have learned to appreciate that privilege. It is on their behalf that I am lifting up my voice to-day, and while I am sorry to take up the time of the House, it must be admitted that a great deal of its time has been absorbed in much more frivolous discussion. Although, in the first place, a great many were opposed to the franchise, they appear to have exercised it to a considerable extent when they had the opportunity. In the first election after they were given the franchise, which took place in 1887, there were 463 voters on the list, and of those 250 voted.

An hon. MEMBER. What did they cost?

Mr. HEYD. I am proud to say that it does not cost anything to get an Indian to vote. He is sufficiently loyal to our country to come forward and vote as he thinks best in the interest of his country without any money inducement. It may be interesting to hon. gentlemen to know how they voted. In 1887, the magnificent personality of the present Minister of Customs (Mr. Paterson) induced 123 to give him their support, while 127 went against him. It was supposed by the Liberals that the Indians were put on the list because they were under the control of the Government that managed their affairs. That may or not have been the case; but naturally the Indian is loyal to the Government, and they