



11-1-1952

## Letter from Nelson Mason to Representative Burdick Regarding Legislature Seat for Fort Yates Indians, November 1, 1952

Nelson A. Mason

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NELSON A. MASON  
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW  
ELTINGE BUILDING  
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA  
November 1, 1952

Honorable Usher L. Burdick  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

In re: The Real Americans

Dear Congressman:- A few days ago I found my office filled with descendants of our earliest known Americans. Two men had come to town from Fort Yates and Cannon Ball, and went about the "Indian Village" area of the South Side near the N. P. depot and grain elevators, and brought several along to see me. In due course they said they had become interested in the idea of the Indians getting a seat in the Legislature, as I had told them relating to "State of Maine" The letter I had mentioned reads as follows:

"(Maine's Coat of Arms)"  
portrayed  
STATE OF MAINE  
DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH  
AUGUSTA

April 2, 1952

"Your recent letter to the Governor of Maine relating to representatives of the Indian tribes to the Maine legislature has been referred to this office for attention.

"The 1st sentence of Section 354 of Chapter 22 of the revised statutes of Maine, 1944, reads: 'Biennially on the even-numbered years, on the 1st Tuesday of September, the PENOBSCOT Indians shall hold their election for the choice of governor and lieutenant-governor of said tribe, and a representative at the legislature of this state.' A similar provision for the Passamaquoddy tribe of Indians appears in section 356 of said chapter 22.'

"The last paragraph of Section 2 of Chapter 9 of the revised statutes of Maine, 1944, deals with the compensation of the representatives of the Indian tribes and reads as follows: 'The member of the Indian tribe elected by it to represent the tribe at the biennial assembly of the legislature shall receive a compensation of \$200 for such attendance.'

"These representatives of the two Indian tribes sit in the Maine legislature as consultants and are available for any discussions concerning Indians. However, they are not permitted to vote.'

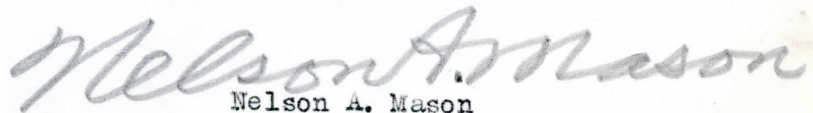
"If there is any further information which you might desire, kindly advise.'

(Signed) Samuel H. Slosberg, Director of Legislative Research "

It is my recollection we have gone over this before, but there are possibilities.

We might discuss this here or in Washington somewhat, but the move here appears to have aroused some genuine interest. Due to constitutional and legislative provisions some study and plans may result in a change of some sort.

Best wishes,

  
Nelson A. Mason