

O t t a w a,
June 17, 1960.

Mr. Fred de la Ronde,
3320 E. Keith Road,
North Vancouver, British Columbia.

Dear Fred:

I have learned of the useful work you have been accomplishing among the native Indians of British Columbia. I congratulate you on those endeavours.

The recent legislation extending to all Indians the right to vote at federal elections has, I understand, produced some inquiries with which you have had to deal. Perhaps I may repeat to you the assurances I gave before the House of Commons that the legislation in question does not in any way affect the treaty or other rights of the Indians. I made this quite plain when announcing this proposed legislation to the House of Commons, and I hope it will be helpful to you and to the Indians of your area if I repeat that existing rights and treaties traditional or otherwise possessed by the Indians will not in any way be abrogated or diminished in consequence of their having the right to vote.

The Indians of your area should understand that far from taking away existing rights from them, Parliament's intention in passing the legislation was to confer an additional right on them, the right to vote without restrictions. Naturally, the extension

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of this right to vote to all Indians does not compel any of them to exercise the right, it merely extends to him the right to decide whether he will vote or refrain from voting and his rights will not be jeopardized regardless of the course of action he follows.

With best regards,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

Original signed *R*
by
John G. Diefenbaker

CG/cc