

C O P Y

File 363,417

Ottawa, April 23rd, 1919

Memo. to the Deputy Minister.

LOCATION OF INDIANS ON THEIR RESERVES
IN NOVA SCOTIA.

In recent years it has been repeatedly brought to the attention of the Department that there is a pronounced tendency on the part of certain Indians in the Province of Nova Scotia, (especially the Indians of Halifax County) to occupy lands that do not belong to them, although at the same time they have large areas of land under reserve.

The reason advanced by the Indians themselves as well as by our local officers is that owing to the comparative isolation of these reserves, it is a difficult matter for the Indian resident on his reserve, to earn a livelihood, and that consequently they are compelled by force of circumstances to establish themselves either adjacent to the railroads or in the vicinity of towns and cities. This is explained by the fact of there being settlements of Indians at Elmsdale-Windsor Junction-Wellington and Halifax, all within Halifax County and all of these Indians are in occupation of land which they do not own.

On the other hand in the same county there are 2,368 acres of land set aside as reserves of which only 2 acres at Minister Lake are occupied by one Indian family.

The Indian Superintendent of Nova Scotia, Mr. A.J. Boyd has from time to time urged on the Department the policy of purchasing additional lands for these Indians at places and locations where the Indians prefer to live, but I submit that such a policy is not a wise one at the present time for there is no assurance that should such lands be secured the Indians would not later on become dis-satisfied and want to move again.

It appears to me that as there are such a number of Reserves in the county which are not occupied and on which the Indians refuse to reside, steps should first be taken to dispose of such un-occupied lands, and simultaneously every inducement should be given the Indians to settle permanently upon a location which meets with their requirements.

Such a location is to be found on the Indian Brook Reserve which although in the adjoining county of Hants lies close to the boundary line of Halifax county and is within a short distance of the railroad

This Reserve is the largest in the whole of Nova Scotia and comprises 1790 acres, a great part of which is suitable for agriculture. There is accommodation on this Reserve for most of the Indians of Central Nova Scotia and I would submit that those Indians who are in

occupation of lands which they do not own, and who are in danger of eviction at any time, should be encouraged to settle on this Reserve.

As a step in this direction, Mr. Superintendent Boyd has secured a petition from the Indians of the Indian Brook Reserve asking that the Department confirm their action in extending an invitation to those Indians of Halifax County who are in occupation of private ownership lands to locate on their reserve.

At the present time the Indians of Windsor Junction are in occupation of a small piece of land consisting for the most part of rock which is adjacent to the R.R. track. The owner of this land has given them notice to remove from his property. These Indians own wretched shacks and hovels and are without any other personal property. At the time of my visit last January they all expressed a willingness to move to Indian Brook provided the Indians of that reserve would consent and that the Department give them some assistance to do so.

The consent of the Indian Brook Indians is given in the petition previously referred to and herewith attached, whilst funds necessary to assist these Indians to move would be forth-coming or available from the sales of timber that have been recently made on behalf of the Halifax County band.

I beg leave to recommend that the petition of the Indian Brook Indians be given favorable consideration.

(Sgd.) H. J. Bury,
Timber Inspector.