



Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0H4

8 - 7 1984

Mr. Russel L. Barsh, Counsel
4155 42nd Avenue, North East
Seattle, Washington 98105
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Barsh:

Thank you for your letter of September 12, 1983. Further to the interim reply from my Special Assistant of September 26, 1983, I have now had the opportunity to review your letter and proposals. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

The Government of Canada is not prepared to discuss the Grand Council Mikmaq Nation's views of a political relationship with Canada. Given that the Indian people of Canada are represented by their Chiefs and Councils as directed by the Indian Act my responsibility is to that end. We are therefore not willing to discuss proposals of separate status from the Mikmaq Nation or any native group in Canada outside of our current constitutional arrangement.

The relationship of the Government of Canada to its Indian peoples is an internal Canadian responsibility. As you may be aware this position was most recently supported in R v Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs ex parte Indian Association of Alberta and others (1982) 2 All ER 118 (CA) and strongly stated by Lord Diplock at 143 in refusing leave to appeal to the House of Lords:

"... it simply is not arguable that any obligations of the Crown in respect of the Indian peoples of Canada are still the responsibility of Her Majesty's government in the United Kingdom. They are the responsibility of Her Majesty's government in Canada."

I trust that this letter clarifies our position in this matter.

Yours sincerely,


John C. Munro

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working together
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