

Transcribed Excerpt from the Oral History Interview with Henry Mitchell, an American Indian Canoe Maker, 1938

Mrs. Mitchell: “Did you see in the papers where the Indian representatives to the state legislature were trying to get an increased salary. The other representatives get \$600.00, but the Indians get only \$200.00. They say it's because they don't serve on committees, and so don't have to do so much work, but they're there all the time and they have to pay their expenses back and forth. Leo Shay says he doesn't have much left when he get through; and that while he's out there he can't do anything else. Leo could do that committee work just as well as anyone, but the Indians aren't allowed to have a voice in state affairs because they aren't voters. All they have to do out there is to look out for the interests of the Indians. Just why the Indians shouldn't vote is something I can't understand. One of the Indians went over to Old Town once to see some official in the city hall about voting. I don't know just what position that official had over there, but he said to the Indian, ‘We don't want you people over here. You have your own elections over on the island, and if you want to vote, go over there.’

“The Bangor News had something about the Indian legislators the other day. I don't know whether you saw that or not. *(She went into another room to get two clippings from the News. One of these told about the efforts of the Indian representatives to get increased pay. The Indians, the clipping said, were likely to get an increase of \$200.00 rather than the \$400.00 asked for. The other clipping from the G. and S column, said that the solons at Augusta had said that the Indian legislators didn't do as much work as the others and consequently didn't deserve as much pay. G and S, however, said that considering the sort of work the other lawmakers were doing, the Indians ought to get a salary of \$10,000.00 a year, and vacations in Florida thrown in.)* “Leo (Shay) said there were only four people out there that were against that increase. All the others were in favor of it, and rather than vote against him, some of them walked out.”