

# Tyendinaga Indians Claim Part of Sophiasburg Township

Is Foresters Island in the Bay of Quinte near Deseronto in Sophiasburg township or does it form part of the Tyendinaga Indian Reserve?

Tyendinaga Chief Earl Hill and his band claim the mid-bay Island is part of the reservation and apparently has some support from old survey records to substantiate the claim.

The question was before the Ontario Municipal Board in Belleville yesterday at a hearing held to ascertain actual boundaries of various municipalities and has been adjourned to May 30 at Picton when Sophiasburg township will pre-

sent its side of the case.

Belleville Lawyer Robert Temple represented the Mohawk Reservation at yesterday's hearing and citing original survey records contended that Foresters Island was part of the Tyendinaga Reserve.

The 50-acre island is now owned by the Dawson brothers of Deseronto who purchased it a few years ago.

The old survey records listed the southern boundary of the Indian Reservation as being the Bay of Quinte "including Captain John's Island."

The "Captain John" referred to was Captain John Deseron-

tyou, one of four Fort Hunter Mohawk Indian chiefs who came to Canada with their bands at the time of the American revolutionary war.

The four Indian chiefs were commissioned in the British Army. Three of them, including Captain Deserontyou later settled in Tyendinaga. Deseronto was named after Captain John.

Some time before the turn of the last century the name of the island was changed to "Foresters" in recognition of the work of the Indian physician Dr. Peter Martin (Oronhyatekha). For 26 years he headed the Independent Order of Foresters.

Oronhyatekka pioneered fraternal insurance and the Foresters for many years operated an orphanage on Dr. John's Island.

Following Oronhyatekha's death in 1907, Foresters Island showed up in registry office records as being in Sophiasburg township and not part of Tyendinaga Reserve.

To the average resident it possibly doesn't matter greatly whether the now deserted Foresters Island is part of Tyendinaga or is included in Sophiasburg.

But fishing and hunting rights are involved and because of this it does matter to Tyendinaga Mohawks.