

NATION



THE MÉTIS

ISSUE 1, VOLUME 3 - MARCH 2007

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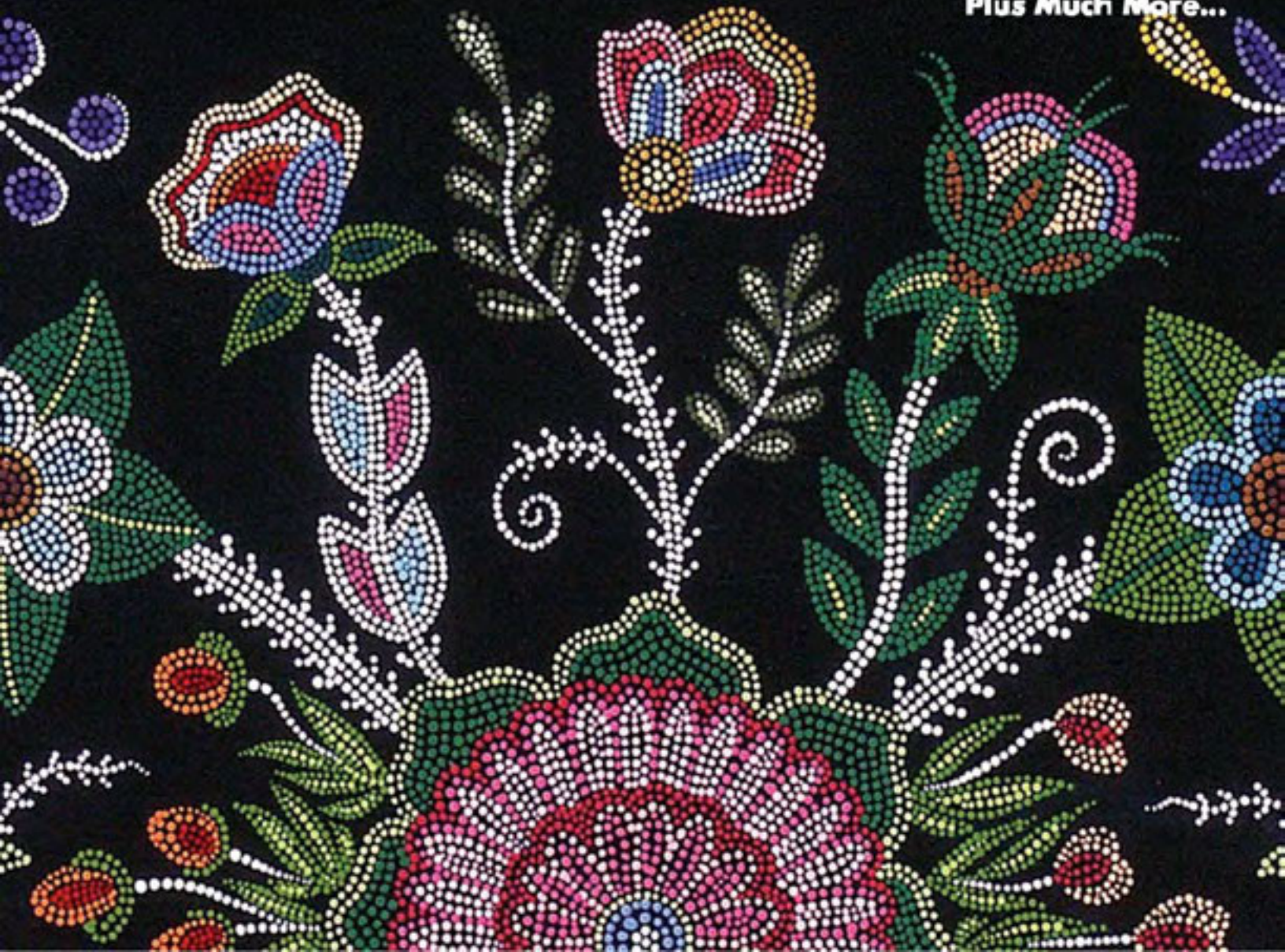
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Message from the President

Greetings from the Métis National Council!



It is my pleasure to once again introduce an issue of *The Métis Nation*. This issue covers a number of the memorable events across our Métis Nation Homeland since last fall's issue, and our feature article "The Métis Hunt for Justice in 2007" will update you in detail on our continuing quest for recognition and accommodation of Métis-specific rights through negotiations and in the courts.

This year has seen significant work undertaken by the MNC towards improving Métis health outcomes, including the inspiring story about the recent launch of the Health and Human Resources Initiative to assist Métis students to study and enter health care professions. In addition there are highlights of the National Summit on Aboriginal Health in November 2006.

Be sure to read about ongoing work regarding protection and recovery of species at risk as well as sustaining our environment. An important workshop held in Winnipeg is described, noting the focus on these subjects, and sharing

viewpoints and traditional knowledge from an Aboriginal perspective, among other discussions. Also in this issue, learn about the mountain caribou project in B.C., which aims to help recover this important animal's population there.

The Métis National Council represents the Métis Nation both nationally and internationally, and, underpinned by renewed strategy discussions in recent months by our citizens and the work of our Governing Members, we continue to make strides in improving rights implementation and quality of life for our people. Our strength and commitment to you, our citizens, the men, women, children and youth, and our respected Elders across the Homeland, continues unabated even through the often challenging times we experience.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of the Métis Nation!

Yours in nationhood,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clément Chartier'.

Clément Chartier, Q.C.
President



The Métis Hunt for Justice in 2007

By Jason Madden, JTM LAW

As in 2003, with the Métis Nation's historic victory at the Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Powley*, 2007 will also be a precedent setting year in the ongoing Métis 'hunt for justice'. In total, it is expected, that at least five decisions on Métis rights will be delivered by courts across the Métis Nation Homeland this year. Each one of these cases, in its own way, will be important to the development of Métis rights case law.

Collectively these cases will continue to push all levels of government to come to grips with Métis rights. Since 2003, some governments, such as Alberta, Ontario and Canada, have heard and acted on the directions from the Supreme Court of Canada in *Powley*. Those governments sat down with Métis in order to negotiate and accommodate Métis harvesting rights. Other governments, such as Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, have chosen an adversarial, costly and time consuming approach. Instead of engaging in

negotiations, as mandated by s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and the honour of the Crown, these governments have forced Métis into the courts, at great financial expense to the Métis Nation and all taxpayers in those provinces.

The anticipated cases can be grouped into three categories: (1) cases to establish a Métis right pursuant to the *Powley* test, (2) cases that deal with the enforceability and interpretation of negotiated Métis harvesting agreements, and (3) a case that will answer whether the Crown has fulfilled its duties and obligations to the Métis pursuant to the *Manitoba Act*.

In the first category, we have the *R. v. Goodon* (Manitoba) and *R. v. Belhumeur* (Saskatchewan) cases. In the second category we have the *R. v. Laurin, Lemieux & Lemieux* (Ontario) and *R. v. Kelley* (Alberta) cases. In the third category, we have the *Manitoba Metis Federation v. Canada* case.

R. v. Goodon

Will Goodon was charged under s. 19 of the *Manitoba Wildlife Act* for harvesting a duck in the Turtle Mountains. Mr. Goodon did not have a provincial hunting licence, but was harvesting under the authority of his Manitoba Métis Federation Harvester's Card. The *Goodon* trial began in May of 2006 and it is expected that the evidence portion of the trial will be completed by the end of summer 2007. By then, over 15 community witnesses and four experts will have testified.

This case is important because it will tackle the issue of "what is a Métis community?" in Manitoba. Further, because the Manitoba Crown is arguing that Métis harvesting rights in the province have been extinguished, the court will have to answer this important question as well. It is anticipated that a decision will be rendered in *Goodon* in the summer or fall of 2007.

R. v. Belhumeur

Donald Belhumeur was charged while ice fishing near Lebret at Katepwa Lake in southern Saskatchewan. Mr. Belhumeur did not have a provincial fishing licence and was charged under s. 11(1) of the *Saskatchewan Fisheries Regulations*.

In Saskatchewan, even though Métis harvesting rights have been proven in court cases in northern Saskatchewan (*R. v. Morin & Daigneault* and *R. v. Laviolette*), the provincial government has refused to formally accommodate Métis harvesting south of a unilaterally imposed line. A victory in the *Belhumeur* case will hopefully force the Saskatchewan government to finally act honourably and accommodate Métis harvesting practices throughout the province, rather than forcing Métis to establish rights hectare by hectare. The trial portion of the case concluded March 21st, 2007, following the testimony of three experts and 17 community



From left to right: Legal Counsel Michelle LeClair-Harding, Don Belhumeur, Dr. Arthur Ray.



witnesses. It is anticipated that a decision will be rendered in *Belhumeur* in the summer of 2007.

R. v. Laurin, Lemieux & Lemieux

In July 2004, the Métis Nation of Ontario reached an interim harvesting agreement with Ontario. The four points of the agreement were straightforward: (1) the MNO would issue up to 1,250 Harvester Cards; (2) holders of these 1,250 Harvester Cards would not be charged for harvesting within their traditional territory as long as they abided by conservation and safety requirements; (3) the interim agreement would stay in place until a final agreement was reached; and (4) the MNO would agree to a third-party audit of its Harvester Card system and the parties would undertake joint research to use in negotiating the final agreement.

In the fall of 2004, Ontario began to charge MNO Harvester Card holders south of a unilaterally imposed line, even though the text of the negotiated agreement did not include any mention of such a limitation. Messrs. Laurin, Lemieux and Lemieux were charged with various charges under the *Ontario Fisheries Regulations* for fishing on the French River (which is south of Ontario's imposed line). These MNO Harvester Card holders filed an application for stays of proceedings (in other words, charges are dismissed), based on Ontario's breach of the harvesting agreement.

This case is important to over 50% of the MNO's Harvester Card holders because they harvest south of

Ontario's arbitrary line. Moreover, the case will be important because it will deal with the Crown's obligations with respect to asserted, but as yet unproven Métis rights, and how the accommodation agreement should be interpreted.

Examinations and final arguments for this case are now complete and a decision will be rendered on June 12th, 2007 in North Bay. Additional information on this case can be found on the MNO's website at www.metisnation.org.

R. v. Kelley

In September 2004, three Alberta Ministers signed the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement (IMHA) with the Métis Nation of Alberta. The IMHA included a commitment that MNA members could "hunt, fish and trap," on designated lands, without fear of being charged, as long as the harvesting was consistent with agreed-to conservation and safety rules.

In December 2004, Kipp Kelley, an MNA member, was teaching his children how to trap squirrels in the tradition of his Métis culture. Mr. Kelley did not have a licence and was charged under s. 24(1) of Alberta's *Wildlife Act*. At trial, Mr. Kelley was convicted because the judge found that Mr. Kelley could not rely on the IMHA as a defence. On January 23rd, 2007, the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench reversed the lower court's decision and overturned Mr. Kelley's conviction.

The appeal court held that Mr. Kelley, and Métis harvesters like him, can rely on the IMHA as a defence to

charges. The appeal judge held it would “shock the conscience of the community” if Alberta was able to proceed with charges against Métis harvesters in the face of the IMHA which explicitly authorized such harvesting. Equally important, the court recognized that following *Powley*, Alberta was under a “constitutional imperative” to accommodate Métis harvesting practices. The IMHA was Alberta’s attempt to fulfill this imperative and the honour of the Crown demanded that the commitments within the IMHA be fulfilled.

The Kelley case is also important because the appeal court found that the IMHA and accommodations like the IMHA do not depend on first proving a constitutionally protected Métis right. Métis do not have to establish harvesting rights all across a province prior to a government entering into an accommodation with them.

Accommodations are workable arrangements that achieve the constitutional imperative, outside the adversarial process and without the time and cost of litigation. Accommodations have benefit for all involved—Métis, governments and taxpayers. Alberta has decided not to appeal the Kelley decision and it remains good law in that province. The MNA has asked Alberta to deem the IMHA a regulation in order to correct the legal defect that

was pointed out by the court. As set out in the IMHA, Alberta and the MNA continue to negotiate on a longer term harvesting agreement. Additional information on this case can be found on the MNA’s website at www.albertametis.com.

Manitoba Metis Federation v. Canada

This is the most anticipated decision in 2007. The case is in a league of its own. It has taken over twenty years to get to a trial, involves over 10,000 documents and took over three months of court time to complete. Moreover, if it is successful, the case will most likely set a new course for Crown-Métis negotiations and settlements for the next generation.

At issue is whether Canada and Manitoba fulfilled their obligations to the Métis with respect to the *Manitoba Act*’s commitments to establishing a Métis land base, as set out in sections 31 and 32 of the *Manitoba Act*. The Manitoba Metis Federation is asking the court to make declarations that: (1) Canada and Manitoba failed to fulfill their obligations to the Métis that are set out in the *Manitoba Act*; (2) Manitoba’s taxation of Métis lands granted pursuant to s. 31 of the *Manitoba Act* was unconstitutional;



Florence Desjarlais poses with a deer she shot on her father’s property near Elmer Lake, Alberta. Desjarlais provides meat for her parents, her three children, and four grandchildren.

and (3) in 1870 Canada and the Métis reached a treaty.

The case does not ask for specific lands to be returned to Métis nor for a specific sum of money. However, if the MMF is successful in obtaining some of these declarations, it is likely that Canada and Manitoba will have to enter into negotiations with the MMF in order to address these issues (i.e. lands, compensation, etc.). This is similar to what governments have already done with Indian and Inuit peoples through negotiating modern day land claims or treaties in order to address the Crown's outstanding obligations, as a part of the reconciliation process that is mandated by s. 35 and the honour of the Crown.

The case's significance does not end there. It could have broader implications, for the entire Métis Nation, since the Métis scrip process, that was set up by Canada pursuant the *Dominion Lands Act*, was largely based on what was done in Manitoba. As such, a Métis treaty or land claims policy may be required. Furthermore, in dealing with the MMF's requested declarations, the court may also have to deal with the issue of whether Métis, as an Aboriginal people, fall under federal or provincial responsibility (that is, decide whether the Métis are "Indians" for the purposes of s. 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*).

All of these scenarios combine to make this an important case for the entire Métis Nation. It is expected that a decision will be rendered in the summer of 2007.

Without question, 2007 will be a pivotal year for the ongoing development of Métis law. The message that has come from the cases decided so far and what will most



MMF v. Canada lawyers Tom Berger and Jim Aldridge.

likely come from the upcoming decisions, is that governments have obligations and duties to the Métis, as a full-fledged rights-bearing Aboriginal people. These obligations and duties, as a part of the reconciliation process that is mandated by s. 35 and the honour of the Crown, require ongoing consultation, negotiations and accommodations between the Crown and the Métis in order to move toward final settlements.

Currently, there are not very many substantive Crown-Métis negotiations taking place from Ontario westward. Hopefully through the anticipated court decisions in 2007, this reality will be very different at the end of this year, and charges against Métis harvesters will be much closer to being a thing of the past. ∞

Jason Madden is a Métis lawyer originally from Northwestern Ontario. He practises in his Toronto law firm, JTM LAW, where he specializes in Métis issues.

Anticipated 2007 Decisions in Métis Rights Cases

Case	Legal Issue	Decision Rendered/Expected
<i>R. v. Kelley</i>	Reliance on a Métis harvesting accommodation agreement	January 23, 2007
<i>R. v. Laurin, Lemieux and Lemieux</i>	Reliance on a Métis harvesting accommodation agreement	June 12, 2007
<i>R. v. Belhumeur</i>	Establishing a s. 35 Métis right to harvest in southern Saskatchewan	Summer/Fall 2007
<i>R. v. Goodon</i>	Establishing a s. 35 Métis right to harvest in Manitoba	Summer/Fall 2007
<i>MMF v. Canada</i>	Whether Crown's obligations to Métis in Manitoba pursuant to the Manitoba Act and treaty between Canada and Métis have been fulfilled.	Late Summer 2007

Glossary

The Crown

Originally, the good name and word, plus authority and obligations of the reigning monarch toward his or her citizens were directly associated with the British King or Queen. The federal and provincial governments, as representatives of and acting on behalf of the monarch in Canada, became known and referred to over time as “the Crown”. (See also “Honour of the Crown” below.)

Declaration by the Court

Lawsuits include asking the court for a remedy to the alleged wrongdoing on which the case is based. Remedies often include damages (money for loss or injury), forbidding or requiring certain actions by one or more of the parties, or declarations, which are legal findings or statements from the court with respect to the issues in dispute. Declarations, because they make note of the wrong committed, and attribute responsibility for that wrong, are usually very significant not only for the case itself, but for their influence on related circumstances and cases in the future.

Examinations

“Examinations” refers to processes in the pre-trial and trial stages of a court case which allow the parties involved to discover information (facts, circumstances, opinions and evidence) that pertain to the case, and ask questions of witnesses.

Extinguishment

In its simplest form, the legal concept of extinguishment means that former rights and privileges which may have been recognized by law or practice only (or in other words, by convention), have been ended, or extinguished by specific action on the part of either or both (or several, if more than two) of the parties involved. Extinguishment can take place in a number of forms, such as by agreement, by enactment of specific laws which intentionally override the previous right or privilege, or abandonment through non-exercise of the right or privilege.

In practice, determining if extinguishment has taken place can be a very complex legal issue, combining consideration of land rights, traditional land uses, cultural significance, continuous practice and other questions.

Honour of the Crown

The “honour of the Crown” implies governments must deal respectfully, fairly, and with the utmost honesty and integrity in carrying out their responsibilities and duties toward citizens. Regarding Canada’s Aboriginal peoples, the honour of the Crown has special meaning because governments are bound not only by historical and modern agreements, constitutional and other laws, as well as court decisions, in their dealings with Indian, Inuit and Metis peoples, but in keeping with the Crown’s special (fiduciary) relationship with Aboriginal peoples.

Governments must act in irreproachable, principled ways in making and carrying out their decisions and actions affecting Aboriginal peoples, or the honour of the Crown will be compromised or destroyed – something which is considered completely unacceptable by the public and courts alike. In fact, last year, our country’s highest court, the Supreme Court of Canada, confirmed in its decisions in the *Haida* and *Taku River* cases, that the honour of the Crown is a constitutional duty which at various times and situations can create enforceable obligations on the Crown.



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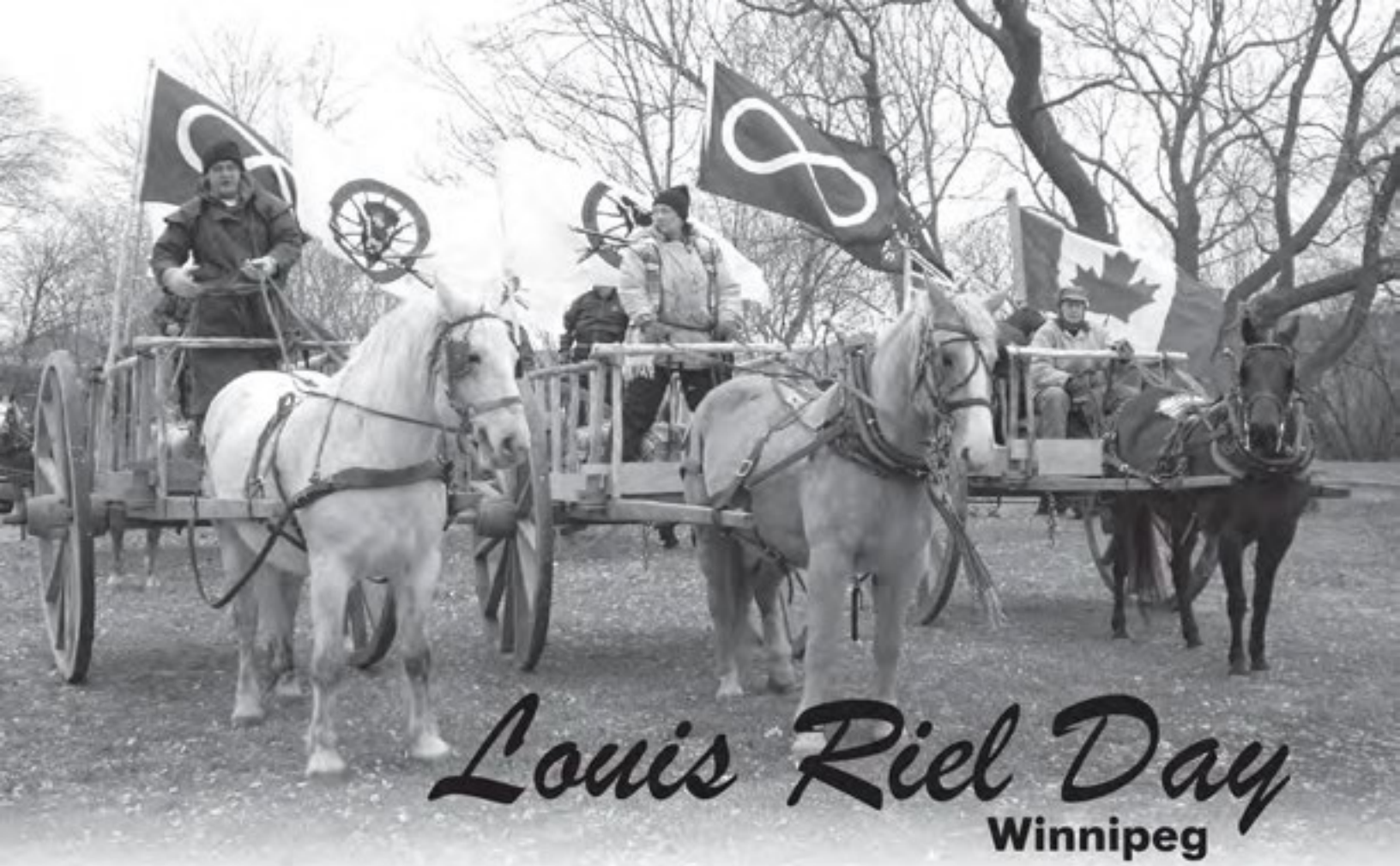


President Chartier Meets the Governor General

On February 1st, 2007, Métis National Council President Clément Chartier paid a visit to the Governor General of Canada at Rideau Hall in Ottawa. In an informal and friendly conversation, which lasted longer than planned, President Chartier informed Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, about the challenges facing the Métis Nation, as well as the latest MNC initiatives to improve the lives of Métis people.

During the meeting, it was made clear that Michaëlle Jean – Canada's third female, second non-Caucasian, and first African-Canadian Governor General – understands the challenges faced by Aboriginal peoples, and deeply sympathizes with them. She supports all steps taken to improve the quality of life of Métis, and is committed to using her influence to actively promote such initiatives. ∞

Photography by Zoran Vidic



Louis Riel Day

Winnipeg

Each year on November 16th, ceremonies are held across the Métis Nation to commemorate the life and death of Louis Riel, a man who fought to defend his Homeland and culture, and sacrificed his life for his people. Although he was executed for treason, Louis Riel was no traitor. He died for the values that define Canada today: equality of all Canadians, freedom of

personal and religious beliefs, and recognition of the historical and cultural uniqueness of a myriad of nations living in Canada.

On November 16th, 2006, President Clément Chartier joined Manitoba Metis Federation President David Chartrand for the ceremonies in Winnipeg, the city where Riel was born in 1844. ∞



Top: Horse-drawn Red River carts bear the traditional Métis infinity flag and the MMF flag along with Canada's maple leaf.
Bottom: MMF President David Chartrand addresses the crowd.



Aboriginal veterans shows their respect.

Remembrance Day in Ottawa

Métis and other Aboriginal veterans were among thousands who gathered in Ottawa on November 11th last year to commemorate the sacrifices of service men and women during the two World Wars, as well as other wars and peacekeeping missions.

This time, they also paused to mourn the deaths of the 42 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat who had been killed in the ongoing war in Afghanistan.

MNC President Clément Chartier participated in the ceremony at the National War Memorial by laying a wreath on behalf of the Métis National Council. Executive Senator Reta Gordon, accompanied by Ottawa Council Senator Lois McCallum laid the Métis Nation of Ontario wreath. Past President Shaun Redmond laid a wreath on behalf of the MNO Veterans' Association.

Photography by Robert J. McDonald

The veterans were greeted by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his family, and Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean. In the cold weather, under a steady freezing rain, the veterans, many of them in wheelchairs, saluted firmly while singing the national anthem.

While a pair of Second World War Mustang and Hurricane planes flew over downtown Ottawa, a 21-gun salute was featured to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure the peace we enjoy today. ∞



Top: Some of the wreaths placed at the War Memorial.
 Bottom: MNC President Chartier with Mary Simon, President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Phil Fontaine, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

Three Years Later...

Post-Powley Work Continues

For the Métis Nation, one of our most defining moments occurred with the historic decision by the Supreme Court of Canada in September 2003, recognizing Métis as a full-fledged, rights-bearing people in the *Powley* case. Following release of this decision, negotiations commenced between the Métis National Council and its Governing Members, with the Government of Canada. The result was commitment by the Government of Canada to a three-year funding program which commenced in the 2004-2005 fiscal year, and officially ends on March 31st this year.

As this funding period draws to a close, significant related rights work completed across the Métis Nation in the "post-Powley" era continues, and the extension of funding through Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians (OFI) is actively being pursued.

The main activities and objectives mutually agreed by the Métis Nation and the Government which have received focus under this funding fall into four main areas:

- Capacity for multilateral processes, for Métis to participate in a meaningful way in bilateral and multilateral government (federal, provincial and Métis) forums regarding harvesting and Métis rights matters arising following the *Powley* decision;
- Undertaking communications initiatives to enable implementation of all post-Powley and multilateral process-related work, including awareness raising with the public and across the Métis Nation Homeland, about Métis-specific Aboriginal rights, especially regarding harvesting for food;



A surge of reporters presses Steve Powley, accompanied by Métis lawyer Jean Teillet and MNO President Tony Belcourt, after the historic victory at the Supreme Court on September 19, 2003.

Photography courtesy the Métis Nation of Ontario

- Initiating and/or continuing Métis identification work, including registration processes for Métis citizens and harvesters; and,
- Enhancing governance and electoral capacity, to enable research, discussion and development work related to Métis Nation governance and electoral capacity.

At the same time, a national research project of significant importance has also been taking place. The distinct Métis Nation culture and identity, kinship patterns and genealogy, what is Métis Nation territory, mobility, land and resource use, traditional Métis economies and self-government are among subjects raised and/or studied under the umbrella of this research initiative. This avenue of post-Powley work continues to be in progress under the guidance of a national research team convened by the MNC.

The results of the post-Powley research initiative are useful in promoting understanding and acceptance of the Métis presence and reality in Canada, and providing a documented, factual basis for Métis rights-based negotiations for accommodations by federal and provincial governments.

During its three year period, this funding program has

allowed the MNC to convene regular meetings of the Multilateral Caucus. This caucus, consisting of two to three representatives from each of the Governing Members and officials at the MNC, discusses legal and policy issues that are important to multilateral processes, such as Crown-Métis relations, and shares information on Métis harvesting-related initiatives between jurisdictions, with a view to harmonizing Métis harvesting approaches and regimes.

In relation to the third-year benchmark approaching for the present post-Powley funding program, the MNC is currently completing a roll-up report of work across the Métis Nation completed to date and remaining to be done, to showcase the accomplishments of Governing Members and successes achieved. In anticipation of this continuing work and having identified its continuing requirement for substantial financial support, a proposal for a renewed three- to five-year program was submitted to the Government of Canada.

As we go to press, funding commitments for post-Powley have yet to be announced by INAC for the new fiscal year starting April 1st. The MNC will continue to advocate for federal support of this important work. ∞



The late Steve Powley with MNO Region 4 Councillor Brent McHale.

Speaking Tour Continues

This year the Métis National Council is continuing its Law School Speaking Tour, a series of speeches or guest lectures delivered at universities across Canada. The tour aims to raise awareness about the historic 2003 *Powley* decision by the Supreme Court of Canada, and its implications for the Métis Nation.

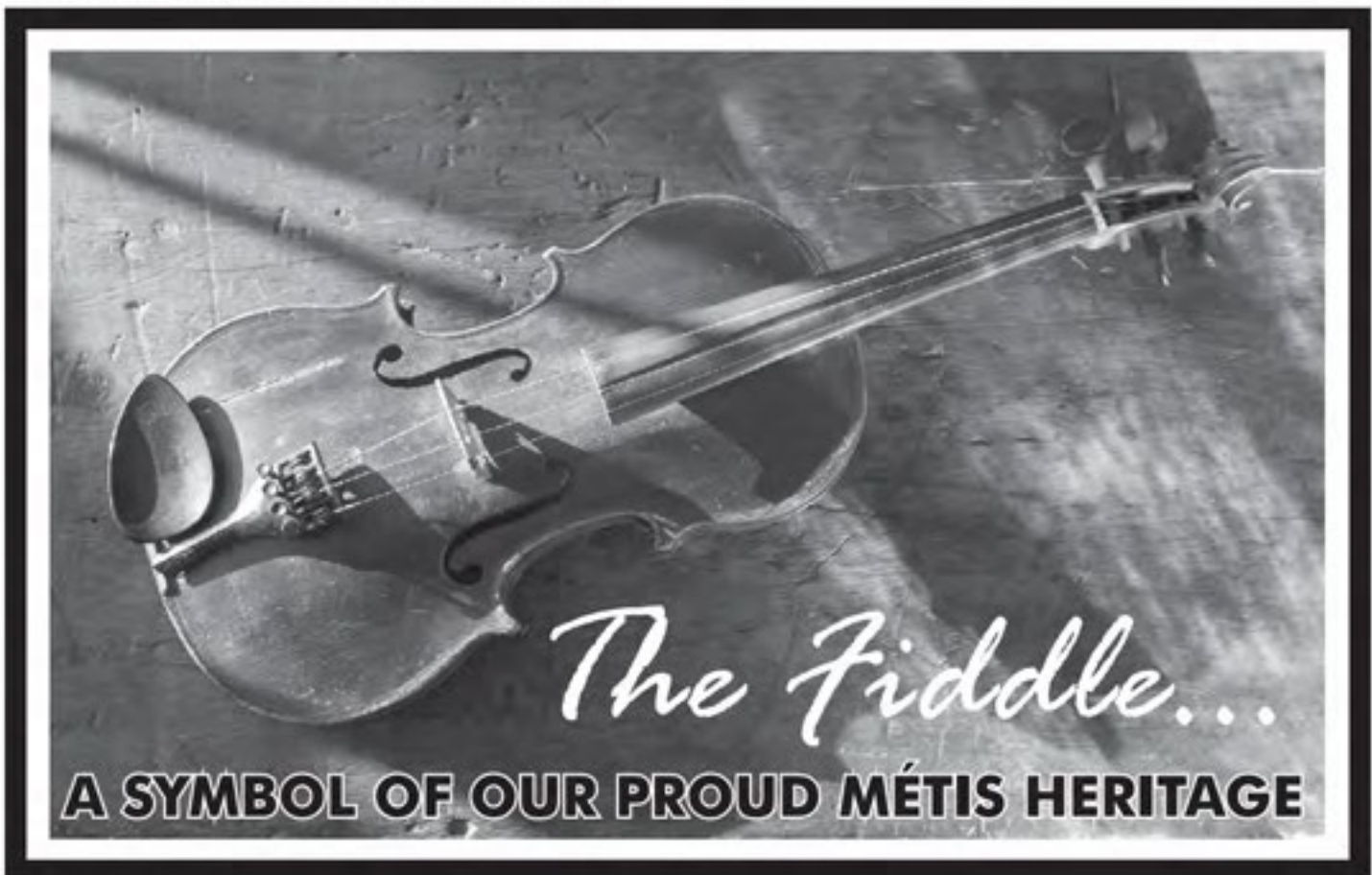
MNC President Clément Chartier, and Métis lawyers Jason Madden and Jean Teillet on behalf of the MNC, continue to provide law students and other academics from Victoria to Halifax with background on the Métis people and the Métis Nation's perspectives on Métis-specific Aboriginal rights.

In January 2007, President Chartier spoke at the University of Winnipeg.

Upcoming appearances in March will include law faculties at the University of Windsor, University of British Columbia, and University of Toronto. ∞



President Chartier at the University of Winnipeg in January 2007.



Photograph of President Chartier by Nhu Hong, Fiddle by Glenn Torressan, The Thunderbird Group

Rod Bruinooge, Métis M.P.

On behalf of *The Métis Nation*, Métis National Council staffer Joshua Kirkey recently interviewed Rod Bruinooge, Conservative M.P. for Winnipeg South, at his office on Parliament Hill, and provided this profile.

Rod Bruinooge originally hails from Thompson in northern Manitoba, an isolated rural community eight hours' drive from the nearest large urban centre. The north is part of who he is, and he believes it has given him a different take on life. He enjoys the wilderness and hopes eventually to return to the north after making a difference in Ottawa.

Before entering politics, Mr. Bruinooge was a professional filmmaker in Winnipeg. He believes that film is a positive medium allowing Aboriginal perspectives to be expressed, and a powerful art form that can bring these perspectives to large audiences.

Mr. Bruinooge is Métis and a card-carrying member of the Manitoba Metis Federation. With typical Métis independence, Mr. Bruinooge feels that life is something to achieve on one's own. He has experienced first-hand the lesson that you must be self-sufficient, since government will not always be there for you. While government can and should assist, he says he would like nothing more than to find ways for self-determination to be put back into the hands of all Aboriginal people.

Mr. Bruinooge is very proud to be a Métis citizen, and he feels that it is an honour being the Member of Parliament in the same area that Louis Riel once represented. He feels that representing Métis is important and wants to ensure that government watches out for their interests.

Upon his election in January 2006, Mr. Bruinooge was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians. In this role, he is working to build a relationship with the MNC, by meeting with its Board of Governors, and attending events such as the Métis Lands, Métis Rights conference and the Annual General Assemblies of the Métis Nation of Alberta and Manitoba Metis Federation.

In Mr. Bruinooge's maiden speech to the House of Commons on April 6th, 2006, he proudly commemorated Métis veterans: "This past weekend I had the pleasure of attending the Métis National Conference in my home province in Manitoba. I can tell

the House that the Métis people are fiercely proud of their veterans. I, along with them, look forward to the day when their sacrifices and their selfless contribution is awarded the recognition it deserves, not just from their families but also from government."

Mr. Bruinooge looks forward to continuing his relationship with Métis across the Homeland in the work that lies ahead. ∞



Rod Bruinooge, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, speaks in the House of Commons.

MNC Continues to Support International Initiatives

Although The Métis National Council was deeply disappointed by the postponement of the adoption of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples last December, we are committed to continue to contribute to ensuring the best possible Declaration.

"It is important that we continue to work with Indigenous peoples and the many states that are willing to champion the Declaration" said MNC President Clément Chartier. "It is

crucial that we meet the concerns expressed so that Indigenous peoples will be welcomed into the fold of humanity as equally deserving of justice, dignity and human rights."

Tony Belcourt, MNC Minister for International Affairs, said that "The Métis National Council deplores any actions that damage Canada's international human rights record, and urges action by all parties in opposition to assist Indigenous peoples to obtain a just Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

within the 10 month deadline established by the Bid Committee."

Various states and the UN administration are attempting to come up with a way to proceed. Canada had been a champion of the Declaration until the current minority government took office, and in a stunning reversal of international human rights policy and diplomacy, voted with Russia against the Declaration in the Human Rights Council last June. Canada is presently seeking to open the text for further negotiations.



The MNC has also been actively involved in the drafting of the Organization of American States (OAS) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The OAS held two negotiation sessions in Washington, D.C., in December 2006 and January 2007. The MNC was represented at these discussions by Paul Chartrand and Minister Belcourt. The issues facing the UN Declaration are spilling over into the OAS process, with some states, including



Photography by Andrea Still



Left: Old League of Nations Building, Geneva
 Left Inset: Flags in Geneva
 Right Inset: Head table, World Intellectual Property Organization
 Above: World Intellectual Property Organization building, Geneva

Canada, attempting to re-open text which had previously received provisional agreement. The OAS will hold another negotiation session in late April 2007 in La Paz, Bolivia. The MNC will be represented at that meeting by President Chartier and Minister Belcourt.

While in Bolivia for the OAS negotiation session, President Chartier and Minister Belcourt intend to meet with Bolivian Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca.

President Chartier met with Minister Choquehuanca at the 36th OAS General Assembly in June 2006 in the Dominican Republic. Both expressed their interest in exploring potential projects and ways that the Indigenous peoples of Canada and Bolivia could collaborate. It is hoped that this meeting will result in the development of a positive working relationship between the MNC and the Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia. ∞

MNC Presentation on Kelowna Accord Bill

In November 2005, the historic First Ministers' Meeting (FMM) on Aboriginal Issues was held in Kelowna, B.C., representing the culmination of almost two years of hard work by federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal leadership. The resulting document, reflecting the commitment of all parties to work toward bridging the gap between Aboriginal people and other Canadians within a decade, through commitments of substantial investments to health, education, housing, and economic opportunities, became known as the *Kelowna Accord*.

The election of the minority Conservative government in January 2006 resulted in a different policy direction at the federal level, and much of the promise of the *Kelowna Accord* was not carried through.

Last spring, former Prime Minister Paul Martin introduced Private Member's Bill C-292, *An Act to Implement the Kelowna Accord*, which passed first, second, and third readings in the House of Commons. This was especially significant since most private members' bills are defeated on second reading.

On November 21st, 2006, the Métis National Council addressed the committee to present the Métis Nation's interpretation of the outcomes of the FMM and the contents of the private

member's bill. Rosemarie McPherson, Spokesperson for the Women of the Métis Nation, spoke on behalf of MNC President Clément Chartier in outlining the Métis Nation's unwavering support for the *Kelowna Accord*.

Spokesperson McPherson stated that the *Kelowna Accord* represented a leap of faith with respect to

longstanding challenges that Aboriginal people face. She highlighted how leaders from every political stripe across the country came together with the Aboriginal leadership to chart a new course. She stressed that the *Kelowna Accord* was not about partisan politics, but was a collaborative effort to address the shameful conditions Aboriginal people face in Canada. Equally important, she added that the Accord was much more than a concrete plan for closing the socio-economic gap between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians – it represented hope, trust, respect and compromise.

The committee passed the bill without amendments, returning it to the House of Commons, where it was presented for a third and final reading on March 21st, 2007, where it was passed by a vote of 176 to 126. It now goes to the Senate.

If you would like to read the speaking notes from the MNC presentation before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, please visit

www.metisnation.ca/pdf2/Sp_eakingNotesC-292.pdf ∞



Top: WMN Spokesperson Rosemarie McPherson at the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.
Bottom: Spokesperson McPherson shares a word with Mary Simon, President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

Residential Schools Agreement Update

The Indian Residential School system arose prior to Confederation, in the context of missionary activity on the part of a number of Christian churches in Canada. The federal government got involved in the development and administration of Indian Residential Schools after Confederation and assumed full responsibility in 1974. The last of these schools closed in 1996.

Sadly, the mention of residential schools today calls to mind the loss of culture and language (judged by many to be cultural genocide) as well as wide-spread abuse, both physical and sexual, which were suffered by vulnerable Métis, First Nations and Inuit children. While some students

may have escaped the harsher forms of abuse, all were subjected to questionable standards of education and poor living conditions. The experiences that residential school survivors lived through have often been passed on in a tragic inter-generational legacy, which may include physical and psychological problems, substance abuse, family breakup, and in some cases, a continuation of the cycle of abuse. These challenges are a terrible burden on Aboriginal communities, whether Métis, First Nations or Inuit.

Métis people are estimated to comprise approximately ten per cent of Indian Residential School survivors. In addition, many Métis people attended similar church-run

residential schools which are not considered by government to fit into the definition of "Indian Residential Schools", a definition which is critical in determining who can benefit from the Settlement Agreement which was recently negotiated with representatives of survivors and the Assembly of First Nations.

The web site of Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (www.irsr.gc.ca) provides information on the history of residential schools as well as up-to-date information on the Settlement Agreement and Alternate Dispute Resolution. For the convenience of those who may be eligible for compensation under the agreement, we have reproduced in this issue the



Students line up for photographs at an Indian Residential School.

Frequently Asked Questions (p. 21) from the government web site. Information can also be obtained by telephone at 1-866-879-4914.

But what about those Métis residential school survivors whose schools do not appear on the government's list of eligible schools, and who therefore do not qualify for compensation under the agreement? While our experience to date does not give much cause for hope, we do encourage you to request the addition of your school (see information box below).

Métis survivors from the Ile-a-la-Crosse Residential School have had their hopes for justice shattered. During the last election, Stephen Harper promised in a radio ad to compensate survivors from Ile-a-la-Crosse. But in January of this year the Conservative government said that the school does not qualify.

MNC President Chartier reacted to this news by stating, "This new development is extremely

disheartening for Métis students who attended the Ile-a-la-Crosse Residential School and who believed they were finally going to be compensated for the abuse and suffering they endured at the school. In light of this unfortunate error, I am

hopeful the Conservative Government will commit to working with the Métis of Northern Saskatchewan in order to develop a distinct compensation package for the students of the Ile-a-la-Crosse Residential School." ∞



Girls learn sewing at an Indian Residential School.

HOW TO APPLY TO HAVE YOUR SCHOOL ADDED TO THE LIST OF ELIGIBLE SCHOOLS

You can apply to have your school added to the list by using the online form available at www.residentalschoolsettlement.ca. You can also write a letter and mail your request the address at right.

Provide the name of the school you believe should be added to the list and reasons why you think it should be added. You do not need to provide any documents or school records. Individual survivors and groups can request the addition of a school.

If you have any questions about the addition of schools to the list, call 1-866-879-4913.

Residential Schools Settlement

Suite 3-505
133 Weber St. North
Waterloo, Ontario
N2J 3G9

1-866-879-4913

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions: Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement

(From Indian Schools Resolution Canada web site: www.irsr.gc.ca)

1.Q. What is the Settlement Agreement and how does it address the legacy of Indian Residential Schools?

1.A. The Settlement Agreement represents the consensus reached in the discussions led by the Honourable Frank Iacobucci with legal counsel for former students, legal counsel for the Churches, the Assembly of First Nations and other Aboriginal organizations. Mr. Iacobucci was appointed by the Government of Canada on May 30, 2005 to negotiate a fair and lasting resolution of the legacy of Indian Residential Schools, and an Agreement in Principle was previously announced on November 23, 2005.

The Settlement Agreement proposes a Common Experience Payment to be paid to all eligible former students who resided at recognized Indian Residential Schools, an Independent Assessment Process for claims of sexual and serious physical abuse, as well as measures to support healing, commemorative activities, and the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Although the Settlement Agreement has the full support of all parties involved in its creation, including the Government of Canada, it still requires the approval of the courts in nine Canadian jurisdictions.

2.Q. How will the Settlement Agreement be approved, and when will it come into effect?

2.A. Approval of the Settlement Agreement will be sought from the courts in nine Canadian jurisdictions over the coming months. Following court approval, a five-month opt-out period will apply. It is proposed that the Settlement Agreement would come into force unless more than 5,000 eligible former students formally opt-out by the closure of the opt-out period.

Common Experience Payment/Advance Payment

3.Q. What is the Common Experience Payment?

3.A. The Common Experience Payment (CEP) is a lump-sum payment that recognizes the experience of residing at an Indian Residential School(s) and its impacts. Upon verification, each eligible former student who applies for the CEP would receive \$10,000 for the first year or part of a year of residence plus an additional \$3,000 for each subsequent year of residence.

4.Q. Who is eligible for the Common Experience Payment?

4.A. All former students who resided at a recognized Indian Residential School(s) who were alive on May 30, 2005 will be eligible for the Common Experience Payment. This includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit former students. The list of recognized Indian Residential Schools can be found in Schedules E and F of the Settlement Agreement. Additional schools may be added to this list in the future, provided that they meet the criteria set out in the Settlement Agreement.



5.Q. How and when can I apply for the Common Experience Payment?

5.A. The final approved application form for the Common Experience Payment does not currently exist and will only be made available after the Settlement Agreement comes into effect (see Question #2). Eligible former students will have a period of four years after the Settlement Agreement comes into effect to apply for the Common Experience Payment.

6.Q. What is the Advance Payment and how can I apply for it?

6.A. The Government has announced an Advance Payment program for former students who resided at a listed Indian Residential School and who were 65 years of age or older on May 30, 2005, the day the negotiations were initiated. Upon application and verification, eligible former students will receive an \$8,000 Advance Payment, which would then be deducted from any future Common Experience Payment or other payment related to their experience at Indian Residential Schools.

Advance Payment application forms will be accepted until December 31, 2006.

Advance Payment application forms are available at www.irsr-rqpi.gc.ca and can also be obtained from the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada Help Desk at 1-800-816-7293.



7.Q. Will I need to have a copy of my school records to apply for the Advance Payment or the Common Experience Payment?

7.A. No, former students do not need to obtain a copy of their school records in order to apply for the Advance Payment or the Common Experience Payment. The Government of Canada will verify former students' attendance at listed Indian Residential Schools.

8.Q. Do I need a lawyer to apply for the Advance Payment or the Common Experience Payment?

8.A. No, a lawyer is not required for applications for the Advance Payment or the Common Experience Payment.

9.Q. Will I be eligible for the Advance Payment or Common Experience Payment if I have settled my claim through either litigation or the ADR process?

9.A. All eligible former students who resided at a recognized Indian Residential School(s) may apply for the Common Experience Payment after the Settlement Agreement comes into effect (see Question #2), including former students who have settled their claims through litigation, the ADR process, or the ADR pilot projects.

Similarly, eligible former students who have settled their claims through litigation, the ADR process, or the ADR pilot projects may apply for the Advance Payment, provided they meet the criteria for that program (see Question #6).

10.Q. Will receiving the Advance Payment or Common Experience Payment affect social assistance benefits?

10.A. The Government of Canada is working with the provinces and territories and all Federal departments to ensure that payments to former students provided for in the Settlement Agreement do not impact on social assistance payments.

11.Q. Will the Advance Payment or Common Experience Payment be taxable?

11.A. The Advance Payment and the Common Experience Payment will not be subject to income taxes.

Healing and Truth & Reconciliation

15.Q. How does the Settlement Agreement address the ongoing needs for healing, commemoration and a truth and reconciliation process?

15.A. Continuing to support healing, educating, and bringing all Canadians together to understand the legacy of Indian Residential Schools are important parts of this resolution process. The Settlement Agreement provides:

- \$60 Million for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and research centre;
- \$20 Million for a Commemoration program for events and memorials to commemorate the legacy of Indian Residential Schools, to be managed by the Government in conjunction with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;
- \$125 Million as an endowment to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation to continue to support healing programs and initiatives for a further five years; and
- \$100 Million in cash and services toward healing initiatives, to be contributed by the Church entities involved in the administration of Indian Residential Schools.

16.Q. Will health supports continue to be available to former students?

16.A. Yes, health supports currently available to former students in the ADR or litigation processes will be made available to all former students eligible for the Common Experience Payment and their families upon implementation of the Settlement Agreement.



Independent Assessment Process

12.Q. What is the Independent Assessment Process?

12.A. The Settlement Agreement provides for an enhanced alternative dispute resolution process called the Independent Assessment Process (IAP). Following the Implementation Date of the Settlement Agreement for a period of five years, the IAP will be the only way a former student may pursue a sexual or serious physical abuse claim, unless he or she has formally opted out of the Settlement Agreement. Compensation through the IAP will be paid at 100% by the Government in all cases, following validation of the claim by an independent adjudicator.

13.Q. When can I make a claim in the Independent Assessment Process?

13.A. The IAP application form is not yet available; it will be made available as part of the implementation of the Settlement Agreement. Processing of IAP claims will begin as soon as the Settlement Agreement comes into effect (see Question #2).

14.Q. What happens to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) claims still underway?

14.A. Until the courts approve the Settlement Agreement, the current ADR process will continue to receive applications, hear claims, and award compensation to former students.



Legal Fees

17.Q. Does the Settlement Agreement provide for payment of legal fees for counsel representing former Indian Residential School students?

17.A. For many years, legal counsel have undertaken a substantial amount of work on behalf of former students and, in many instances, may have not yet received payment. Following implementation of the Settlement Agreement, legal counsel will receive fees for work undertaken in relation to representing former students. The Settlement Agreement provides that legal counsel who accept a payment for legal fees from the Government agree not to charge former students any legal fees or disbursements in respect of the Common Experience Payment. Legal fees payable under the Settlement Agreement are subject to verification and approval by the courts. ∞



Photography courtesy Library and Archives Canada / PA-023097 (top) and PA-102575 (bottom)

Launch of Métis Historical Online Database

By Meika Taylor, University of Alberta

Over the last three years, as part of the Métis National Council's National Research Initiative, Dr. Frank Tough and the Métis Archival Project (MAP), based at the Faculty of Native Studies, University of Alberta, have been developing a database containing textual information that has been extracted from various archival documents and high-resolution digital photography/scans pertaining to the historical Métis Nation.

The *Métis National Council Historical Online Database* will allow users to access Métis-related archival information, previously available only at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa or on

microfilm. Additionally, the database will contain a Family Tree Application that will assist genealogists and Métis users of the website in constructing Métis family trees.

The launch of this unique website has been scheduled for Friday, May 4th, 2007 at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. For the event, jointly sponsored by the MNC and the university, the website launch will showcase three main archival document series: Manitoba Affidavits, 1901 Census and a small sample of the Northwest Scrip. ∞



Meika Taylor is the Project Coordinator for the Métis Archival Project. She began working with Dr. Tough in January 2006 as a part-time research assistant. In the summer of 2006 after her graduation from the University of Alberta with a bachelor's degree in Anthropology, she was put in charge of research coordination and writing full-time for MAP.

About this Project • How to use this Site • Links and Resources • Contact Us



MÉTIS NATIONAL COUNCIL

Historical Online Database

User name:

Password:

LOGIN

				
SEARCH	EXPLORE	BUILD	LEARN	MNC HOME
Search our Archives. You can search by family name, by date or by location.	Browse our Archival Documents. You can browse alphabetically or by type or year.	Build your family tree. You can create, edit, print and save your own family tree.	Learn about Métis genealogy, including the history of archival documents.	Return to the Métis Nation Home Page.



Government of Canada

Gouvernement du Canada



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Politicians and Aboriginal Leaders Renew Commitment to Improve Health

Stemming from the work at the First Ministers' Meeting (FMM) on Aboriginal Issues in Kelowna in November 2005, several Premiers have taken action on initiatives to close the gap between Aboriginal people and other Canadians within a decade.

The first of these initiatives, the first-ever National Summit on Aboriginal Health, was held November 27th and 28th, 2006 at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue in Vancouver, B. C. The Summit was an unprecedented gathering attended by representatives from federal, provincial and territorial governments and Métis, First Nations and Inuit leaders, who expressed their unwavering commitment to take practical steps to follow up on the work endorsed at the last FMM. The Summit demonstrated that the health of Aboriginal people continues to be a priority for

Canada, and that another year cannot be lost before practical measures are taken.

The Métis National Council was pleased to play a role alongside the Premiers, provincial and territorial ministers and senior officials in addressing the urgency of fixing what's wrong.

The MNC's delegation was led by Vice-President and Minister of Health David Chartrand. Representatives from each Governing Member were in attendance, including Métis Nation British Columbia President Bruce Dumont, who attended as part of the B.C. delegation as a special guest of Premier Gordon Campbell. The MNC was pleased to see one of its own citizens, Senator Gerry St. Germain, act as the federal representative at the Summit.

The Summit was entitled, "Many Trails – One Journey," and addressed actions in three key areas to



Representatives at Health Summit, including Senator Gerry St. Germain (far left), MNC Minister of Health/MMF President David Chartrand and MNBC President Bruce Dumont (both back row, centre).

improve the health outcomes of Métis, First Nations and Inuit people: Leadership and Partnerships, Innovative and Collaborative Service Delivery, and Monitoring Progress and Moving Forward.

In his introductory statements, Minister Chartrand highlighted the strength of the representatives gathered to resolve common health challenges, stressing that the health care crisis is not solely a Métis issue or an Aboriginal issue, but a Canadian issue.

Minister Chartrand spoke in a plenary session on Innovative and Collaborative Service Delivery about the soon-to-be-announced \$10 million Health and Human Resources Initiative (refer to article p.28). The program will provide much-needed bursaries and scholarships for Métis looking to enter health care professions.

As host, Premier Campbell declared his hope that by the year 2015 the life expectancy gap between Aboriginal people and the general population will be cut to less than three years from the seven and a half years that we see today. He expects to see a 50% reduction in the gap in youth suicide rates, a 50% reduction in the gap in infant mortality and a 33% reduction in the prevalence of diabetes among Aboriginal people.

The Summit ended with a commitment by all present to form an implementation committee to monitor progress in the effort to close the gap in health statistics between Aboriginal people and other Canadians. This work will continue over the course of the year, and Manitoba Premier Gary Doer will host a second meeting in fall 2007 to examine the progress and make plans for continuing to move forward. ∞



Top: Part of MNC delegation (left to right): Marlene Lanz (MNA President Region III), Marielee Nault (MMF Health Chair), Bruce Dumont (MNBC President), Marie Van Humbeck (MNBC Director of Health) and Marc LeClair (LeClair InfoCom).
Centre: MNC Minister of Health David Chartrand speaks to the assembly. Métis delegates in photo (left to right): Marc LeClair (LeClair InfoCom), Minister Chartrand, Pierre Lefebvre (MNO Executive Director) and Marlene Lanz, MNA President Region III).
Bottom: Métis infinity flag on display along with Canadian maple leaf and provincial/territorial flags.

Health Human Resource Strategy for Métis Students



Ashley Blaise dreams of becoming a doctor and serving her community in the north, and enrolling in pre-medical studies is the first step toward realizing that dream. The recent announcement regarding scholarships and bursaries for Métis students was just the lift she needed to know that potential resources may be available to complete the long educational road that lies before her.

On February 6th, 2007, Métis National Council Minister of Health David Chartrand and Federal Health Minister Tony Clement held a joint press conference to announce a \$10 million Health Human Resource Strategy for Métis students. Métis students from Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta were present at this historic event and were given the opportunity to meet and speak with the two Ministers.

The four-year strategy aims to provide opportunities for Métis students to participate in training and post-secondary studies in the area of health. This offers a viable way to develop and support an adequate supply of qualified Métis health care providers. With more than 25 health care professions to choose from, there are ample opportunities for many students to apply. The future looks bright for Métis health care as students become qualified and become active providers in their communities.

Ashley Blaise and other Métis students like her will have their work cut out for them when they graduate – their entry into community health care roles will be warmly welcomed and lead to a busy career. The MNC is pleased to have had the opportunity to contribute to the development of resources that will make it easier for students like Ms. Blaise to contribute to improving the lives and health care outcomes of Métis people. ∞



Top: Métis student Ashley Blaise presents a fiddle to federal Health Minister Tony Clement.
Bottom: Marcella Hamilton (MNS), federal Minister of Health Tony Clement, Nancy Gonneau (MNO), Evelyn Lesiuk (MNA), Ashley Blais (MMF), MNC Minister of Health David Chartrand.

Métis National Cancer Strategy

Chronic diseases like cancer are a serious and growing public health problem in Canada, particularly amongst Aboriginal peoples. While cancer has biological roots, there are also psychological, social and economic issues that need to be taken into account. That's why the Métis National Council works with every level of government to get support for initiatives and policies that can help Métis people whose lives are touched by cancer.

Stress is now recognized as a defining element of life for Aboriginal people with cancer. Besides health problems related directly or indirectly to cancer itself, many appear to have stressful lives resulting from marginal economic and living conditions, and often unsuccessful integration and adaptation of health care systems for Aboriginal people.

The MNC anticipates receiving funding to support the Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control (CSCC) within the following three areas: CSCC priorities, Governance and Best Practices.

A workshop gathering together MNC Governing Members, National Cancer Program representatives, cancer experts from governmental agencies, community organizations and institutions working in the field will be held in Winnipeg in late March.

Participants will exchange knowledge and strategies consistent with Métis cultural approaches, and will develop a Métis Cancer Framework as an action plan which will answer questions such as:

- How can the unique needs of the Métis Nation be reflected within the Strategy?
- What are the highest priorities within the current Strategy and how can they be relevant to the Métis Nation?
- How can the CSCC best meet the governance and health ambitions of the Métis Nation?
- How can Métis people's unique perspectives be addressed within or outside of the current model?
- Are there existing and successful cancer control strategies that could be expanded or replicated within the Métis Nation?

By taking a holistic approach to enhancing knowledge about cancer and its risk factors, potential interventions and social supports, this capacity-building project is expected to contribute to the decrease in health disparities that exist between the Métis and the general population and lead to the improvement of the overall well-being of Métis people. ∞



MNC Health team at work (Clockwise from foreground): Al Benoit (MMF Senior Policy Advisor), Kim Bulger (MNC Director of Health), Eduardo Vides (MNC Health Capacity Manager), Duane Morrissette (MNC Health Project Officer), Barbara Van Haute (MNC Health and Human Resources Initiative Manager), Su-Ping Walther (MNC Health Policy Analyst), Vladimir Kostine (MNC Suicide Research Coordinator), David Chartrand (MNC Minister of Health).

Finally - Compensation for Primrose Communities

Residents of the communities of Cole Bay, Jans Bay, Beauval and Ile-a-la-Crosse waited 55 years for an event which took place on January 22nd, 2007. That was the day the federal government finally announced an investment of \$15 million "to improve the long-term economic viability of the Primrose Lake communities". The provincial government is expected to contribute an additional \$4.5 million.

The creation of the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range (PLAWR) in 1953 abruptly shut out Métis hunters, trappers and commercial fishermen from some 10,000 square kilometres of traditional harvesting territory in northern Saskatchewan, leading to three generations of hardship for these communities.

The announcement was the culmination of lawsuits, out-of-court settlements and twelve years of negotiations by the PLAWR Negotiating Committee, made up of Métis representatives from the four affected communities. The previous Liberal government and the Province had made a commitment to a similar \$19.5 million package in 2004, but it took another three years for the agreement to be announced.

First Nations in the area were also affected. The Canoe Lake (Saskatchewan) and Cold Lake (Alberta) First Nations lost access to traditional harvesting lands when the Range and the Cold Lake military base were established. Canoe Lake received a \$13.4 million settlement in 1997, and Cold Lake was awarded \$25.5 million in 2002. Both settlements also included the restitution of lands. Unfortunately, the grievances of Métis people in the area had to wait several more years for resolution.

According to Jim Prentice, Federal Interlocutor for Métis, the money is not meant as compensation for individuals, but rather as a contribution to economic advancement in an area that has been left out of the booming economy of nearby northern Alberta.

The money is intended to be used for economic development and infrastructure projects in the area, such as Internet access and roads. The funds will be administered by the Primrose Lake Economic Development Corporation, a community-based, non-profit corporation. The management board hopes to provide funds directly to elders who had been living off the land in 1953. They also hope to see the

establishment of a scholarship program for youth and the allocation of funds for much-needed housing.

This hard-won victory is bitter-sweet for the affected communities, since many of the elders whose lives were affected are no longer here to reap the benefits of their struggle for restitution. ∞



Top: Karoline Benoit, CBC Radio Canada, interviewing MNS Senator Jim Faval.

Bottom: Town-hall meeting explaining compensation to residents.

The Nation Comes Together: Special Meeting of Board of Governors and Committees

On November 29, 2006, the Métis National Council Board of Governors held a special joint meeting in Ottawa with its committees. Representatives from the Women of the Métis Nation and the Métis National Youth Advisory Council were present and all MNC staff also attended. Officials from the MNC's Governing Members, who participate in and support the committees and work on portfolios including health, environment and rights, also attended.

President Clément Chartier noted he convened the meeting in recognition of the importance of having Métis leadership and key officials participate in a discussion for a renewed strategy for the Métis Nation. The aim of the gathering was to give the leadership of the Métis National Council an opportunity to assess its current vision and direction, and to consider a strategy for moving forward, informed by the experience gained to date in its relations with the minority Conservative government.



Governing Members and portfolio holders shared information on the successes and struggles of the past year, along with other noteworthy information concerning work and developments in their respective jurisdictions.

The meeting also saw the passing of a resolution in which the Métis Nation recognized the Québécois as a

nation within a strong and united Canada, which was subsequently presented at a press conference (see separate article p. 32-33).

It was announced at the meeting that there were plans for a two-day follow-up leadership retreat to discuss issues of concern to the Métis Nation, building on what was started that day. ∞



The Métis Nation Supports the Québécois Nation

On November 27th, 2006, the House of Commons overwhelmingly passed a historic motion stating: "That this House recognize that the Québécois form a nation within a united

Canada." Prime Minister Stephen Harper explained that the word "nation" was used with a cultural-sociological interpretation, rather than in a legal sense. After the vote, he declared that "Canadians across

the country said 'yes' to Quebec, 'yes' to Quebecers, and Quebecers said 'yes' to Canada."

Two days later, the Métis National Council Board of Governors held a special joint meeting with its committees in Ottawa. The meeting recognized the timely opportunity to speak to Canadians about the existence of the Métis Nation and to draw parallels between the Québécois nation and our own. After a full discussion, consensus was reached on a resolution of support for the recognition of the Québécois Nation (full text on p. 33).

The Métis Nation shares a historical connection to Québec because of the marriages between Québécois voyageurs and fur traders and First Nations women, resulting in the genesis of the Métis Nation. The Canadian government's suppression of the Métis uprisings was viewed at the time as a direct attack on French Catholics, and then Prime Minister John A. Macdonald said of Riel at the time, "He shall hang, though every dog in Québec bark in his favour." There were angry demonstrations in Montréal following the hanging of Louis Riel in 1885, and Wilfrid Laurier, then in opposition but later to become the first Prime Minister from Québec, was a passionate supporter of Riel and the Métis people.

The Métis Nation proudly stands in support of the recognition of the Québécois as a nation within a united Canada.∞



President Chartier declares the Métis Nation's support for the Québécois Nation.

WHEREAS the Métis Nation, as an Indigenous peoples, developed its own identity, language, culture, way of life and self-government prior to Canada's crystallization as a nation-state;

AND WHEREAS based on this existence, the Métis Nation possesses the inherent right of self-determination and self-government;

AND WHEREAS the Métis Nation has consistently reaffirmed its desire to implement its self-government within the Canadian federation;

AND WHEREAS the Métis Nation has long been recognized as a partner in building and defending a strong and united Canada;

AND WHEREAS the Métis Nation has an important history and kinship connections to the Québécois nation within Canada;



MNO President Tony Belcourt speaks at the press conference in support for the Québécois Nation while President Charlier looks on.

AND WHEREAS the Métis Nation's unique identity and rights, as a distinct Aboriginal people, have been recognized and protected within Canada's Constitution;

AND WHEREAS the Canada-Métis Nation Framework Agreement agrees that Canada and the Métis Nation will engage in a process that reconciles the Métis Nation's self-government with the Canadian federation;

AND WHEREAS the Métis Nation values Canada's diversity and believes that the recognition of distinct nations, such as the Québécois and the Métis Nation, within Canada strengthens our bonds to Canada and to each other.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. The Métis Nation's leadership recognizes the Québécois as a nation within a strong and united Canada;*
- 2. The Métis Nation calls upon other Canadians to support the recognition of the Québécois as a nation within a strong and united Canada;*
- 3. The Métis Nation's leadership work to encourage cultural exchanges between the Québécois and the Métis people; and*
- 4. The Métis Nation are committed as a people to ensure full participation in protecting a united Canada.*

Species at Risk: Our Heritage, Our Responsibility

A workshop sponsored by the National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk (NACOSAR), intended to share experiences and knowledge and build capacity within Aboriginal communities about species at risk, was held in Winnipeg, November 7th through 9th, 2006. Approximately 300 delegates, from the Métis National Council and other national Aboriginal organizations, attended.

Workshop presentations focused on four themes:

- Ecosystems Management;
- Plants, Medicines, Flora;
- Aquatics; and
- Animals.

One of the goals of this workshop was to improve knowledge of sustainable resource management practices to protect and recover species at risk. The opportunity for Aboriginal peoples to come together to explore a new view of science and time-honoured resource management, building a genuine diversity of thinking, resulted in a unique and valuable learning opportunity for participants.

Workshop goals included illustrating best practices and proven methodologies for protecting and recovering species at risk and critical habitats. Presentations focused on an Aboriginal point of view, and Aboriginal projects and programs.

The workshop also facilitated contact between Aboriginal researchers, community leaders, governing bodies, representative Aboriginal organizations and various levels of government. Capacity for Métis, First Nations and Inuit to act as resource managers in their own right, and Aboriginal peoples' responsibility to ensure that Aboriginal traditional knowledge (ATK) is encouraged and appropriately shared, were also topics of discussion.

Métis presentations at the workshop focused on walleye and sturgeon recovery, seed recovery and bison herds, delivered by Dan Benoit of the Manitoba Metis Federation. Toni Appleby, a representative of the Women of the Métis Nation, delivered a presentation on mountain caribou (see B.C. Mountain Caribou Project, p. 36-37).

Given that the workshop was taking place in the heart of the Métis Homeland, MMF organized and hosted a field trip for NACOSAR members to St. Laurent, a Métis community of 1,000 on Lake Winnipeg. The trip included a visit to the St. Laurent fish ponds where walleye (pickerel) are reared for release into Lake Winnipeg.



Foreground: Claude Lambert, background: Allan Gaudry

As a pilot project, about 80,000 pickerel fingerlings were released last June at a cost of \$10,000 for fish food and rearing pond helpers. Another batch will be released later this year in June. Notable about this project is that it is self-financed and locally managed.

Traditional ice fishing by gill-netting was also demonstrated. The net is set with a "jigger," a Métis invention that mechanically creeps along the bottom and allows the net to be easily extended under the ice.



Back row, left to right: Paul Heighington, MNO; Miles Arfinson, MNA; Conrad Boucher, MNA; Robert Gaudry, MMF; Alan Murin, MNC – NACOSAR; Dan Sharp, MNC; April Madlean – Collart, MNBC; Dean Trumbley, MNBC.

Front row, left to right: Dan Benoit, MMF; Gary Lipinski, MNO; Lindsay Thompson, MMF; Toni Appleby, Women of the Métis Nation; Jennifer Larose, MNBC.

Following the field trip, a NACOSAR meeting was held in the St. Laurent church hall.

Participants agreed the workshop was a success. Henry Lickers, a respected First Nations biologist and Co-Chair of the ATK subcommittee of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, summarized the meeting and concluded as follows:

“We are part of the natural world and the natural world is part of us. ... We have a responsibility to the rest of the natural world. ... Our respect for the natural world is reflective in how we use the gift of creation. ... Peace is communicated when our responsibility is in tune with our use. ... Wisdom is gained when the communication with the natural world is realized.” ∞

What is NACOSAR?

The National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk, or “NACOSAR” as it is commonly referred to, is composed of six members appointed by the federal Minister of the Environment under authority of the Species at Risk Act: one each recommended by the Métis National Council, Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Native Women’s Association of Canada, and Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, plus one member-at-large.

The role of NACOSAR is to advise the Minister on administration of the Act, and to provide advice and recommendations to the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council.

NACOSAR members are assisted by a policy and planning subcommittee comprised of technicians from each of the five national Aboriginal organizations.



Left: The Manitoba Métis traditional dancers provided entertainment.



Right: Invited Elders. Back row (left to right): Simon Lucas (AFN), Robert Wasicuna (Guest Elder, Lakota, NWT), Ted Chartrand (MNC). Front row (left to right): Paul Skanks (NACOSAR), Judy Swamp (NWAC), Johnny Karetok (ITK).



B.C. Mountain Caribou Project

By Gary Ducommun, MNBC

Métis Nation British Columbia has embarked on a Mountain Caribou Project which is aimed at increasing Métis involvement in the recovery of this species. Funding for this project is being provided by the Aboriginal Capacity Building Fund under Environment Canada's Species at Risk Program, and will allow Métis to actively participate in multilateral discussions, planning and activities related to the conservation and recovery of this species.

The project is also important because it will allow MNBC to build relationships with government agencies, First Nations, non-government organizations and others who work with and have an interest in Mountain Caribou. MNBC will also build capacity (human resources and technical knowledge and expertise) to be involved in a meaningful way at planning tables and in recovery projects.

Mountain Caribou in southern British Columbia are a unique ecotype, known as the Arboreal Lichen-Winter Feeding Ecotype, of which there are 13 sub-populations. The MNBC project is directed at the three sub-populations that

are located in the Selkirk and Purcell mountains. These Caribou are a trans-boundary population, since they move throughout a specific range in B.C. as well as Idaho and Washington states.

The only caribou population that exists in the lower 48 states, Mountain Caribou are listed as "endangered" in the United States. In Canada, pursuant to the Species at Risk Act, the same population is designated as "threatened" by the *Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada*, as well as being on the Red List of the Province of British Columbia's Conservation Data Centre.

The Selkirk/Purcell sub-populations of caribou are considered to be the most endangered large animals in Canada. The 2006 population estimate for the Selkirk

herd has declined to 37 animals; the south Purcell herd is estimated at 20 animals and the North Purcell herd no longer exists. These populations have been in decline since the first European contact; however, the decline has been rapid in the past few decades, and they will become extinct if nothing is done.

Threats to the current viability of



Photography courtesy the Government of Canada

Mountain Caribou include: habitat change, predation, human-made disturbance, and climate change. Of particular concern is forest harvesting, which removes and fragments suitable mature and old forests, and back-country recreation activities which may affect both short-term behaviour of caribou and longer-term habitat use.

The predominant mortality factor of caribou is predation by wolves and cougars, and it is believed that predation rates have increased as a result of an increased number of deer and elk. These other species are better suited to take advantage of new habitats that are created by forest harvesting activities than are

caribou. In other words, the increase in population of deer and elk increases the number of predators who, due to forest harvesting, find caribou an easy prey. This fact, coupled with diminishing habitat and increased competition for limited food sources, contribute to the vulnerability of the mountain caribou population.

As part of this project, MNBC's team will be talking to Elders and harvesters to begin to document a Traditional Knowledge base for supporting our planning process. Early information, for example, confirms that Métis were harvesting caribou for sustenance in the area as recently as the 1960s. ∞

Gary Ducommun, RP Bio., is the MNBC's Mountain Caribou Project Team Leader. Team members include Toni Appleby, Project Wildlife Technician, and Mark Carlson, Captain of Natural Resources (Region 4, B.C. Métis Assembly of Natural Resources).



What's Ahead for the Women of the Métis Nation



Delegates at the Women of the Métis Nation's Annual General Assembly in Winnipeg last year.

The Women of the Métis Nation are getting ready for two important events that will be held this year: the 2007 Annual General Assembly and the National Aboriginal Women's Summit.

The 2007 Annual General Assembly will be held in Vancouver, B.C., March 30th through April 1st, 2007, and it is bound to be a very exciting event. The women will not only discuss business and strategic planning, but will have a number of opportunities to celebrate various aspects of Métis culture. There will be a "Meet & Greet" on the evening of March 30th so that the women can get to know delegates from other provinces. There will be a banquet on March 31st, at which Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras will present the keynote address. The banquet will also feature a fashion show displaying traditional and modern Métis fashions.

The loss of traditional knowledge in their communities was a serious concern of the delegates at the 2006 AGA in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The delegates asked the WMN Board to work towards a plan so that Métis women, the traditional knowledge keepers, are able to retain and pass it along to future generations. As the first step to address these concerns, this year's assembly will feature a traditional knowledge workshop on beading. The WMN Board is working with the MNC and the Office of the Federal Interlocutor to bring about a multi-year process for this endeavour.

The second major event of 2007 is the upcoming National Aboriginal Women's Summit, to be held in Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador, June 20th through 22nd. The idea for the gathering originated at the First Ministers' Meeting in Kelowna, B.C., in November 2005, when a promise was made to hold a special summit for Aboriginal women, in order to reflect the importance of women's issues in the



Infinity by Christi Belcourt
christi@thebreath.com, www.christibelcourt.com

country's Aboriginal agenda. Provincial and territorial premiers, as well as federal ministers and officials, are expected to attend this important event, which will be co-hosted by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Native Women's Association of Canada.

WMN representatives have been participating in the summit planning committee since the fall of 2006. The committee is working hard to design themes and workshops that will allow Aboriginal women delegates to discuss issues and concerns of importance to them.

Both events present an excellent opportunity for Métis women to exchange their ideas and experience, as well as to ensure that their voices are heard by government decision-makers. ∞



President Chartier provides encouragement to the Women of the Métis Nation.

Métis Youth Gather to Build Bridges

Métis youth from across the Homeland gathered in Saskatoon March 10th through 13th, 2006 for the 9th Annual National Métis Youth Conference. The theme for the event was "Building Bridges through Cultural Awareness."

Métis National Youth Advisory Council Spokesperson Jennifer Brown explained that the theme had been chosen to emphasize the revitalization of cultural awareness and to spark greater pride among Métis youth. It was also felt that there was no better place to begin building upon these goals than in Saskatoon, known as the "Bridge City."

The youth were joined by Elders, Métis leaders and politicians, including Saskatchewan's Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations, Maynard Sonntag, and Saskatoon's Deputy Mayor Elaine Hnatyshyn. MNC President Clément Chartier was on hand to deliver the first of the conference's welcoming remarks.

A variety of workshops were held throughout the duration of the conference. Participants were given the opportunity to attend one of five workshops at a time on a



Top: President Chartier presents the Young Métis Leader Award to Dalton Mathias of Ontario. The other Young Métis Leader Award was presented to Chelsea Lavollée of Manitoba.

Bottom: Delegates at the 9th Annual National Métis Youth Conference in March 2006.



Left: MNYAC Spokesperson Jennifer Brown addresses the workshop.
Right: Jigging Workshop participants get active.



number of topics related to cultural awareness. The workshops were facilitated by staffers from the MNC and its Governing Members as well as professionals in their respective fields. Featured workshops ranged from Métis History and Jigging, to Healthy Living, Traditional Games, and Leadership Development.

The conference's entertainment included the ever-popular "Métis Idol" celebrations, with contestants from all regions dueling against one another to obtain the coveted crown. There were a number of categories to allow everyone a chance to compete, including the older adults who participated in the conference. Prizes were awarded to the top three participants in each category. The

categories included duets, male and female, group competitions, as well as a competition for singing in Michif and even an animal call.

Other highlights from the conference included the Métis Youth Role Model Awards Banquet. These awards were presented to Métis youth who act as role models to all of us by excelling in a number of categories. There were a total of nine awards presented (see information box below).

The conference was a resounding success, with all participants feeling enriched by participating in Métis cultural activities and privileged to share in fun with others from across the Métis Homeland. ∞

2006 MÉTIS YOUTH ROLE MODEL AWARD WINNERS

Young Métis Leader
Chelsea Lavallée / Dalton Mathias

Volunteer Services
Dylan Gaudry

Career Advancement
Danielle Levesque

Academic Achievement
Angela Beam

Métis Culture & Heritage
Ginny Gonneau

**Harry Daniels Award for
Personal Achievement**
Kelvin Desjarlais

Athletic Achievement
Dallas Fiddler-Boyer

**Gabriel Dumont
Award for Valour**
Marc Telosky

Group Achievement
Canoe Expedition II

Lii Michif Piikishkwewuk! The Michif People Are Speaking!

From March 17th through 19th, 2006, the fifth annual National Michif Conference was held in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Michif speakers from across the Homeland joined Métis leaders, representatives from the Gabriel Dumont Institute, the Anishinabek First Nation and the federal government to exchange information on their efforts to revitalize the Michif language.

Following the opening ceremonies, Elder Norman Fleury and Michif scholar Peter Bakker spoke on the work currently underway to promote Michif in Canada and internationally. The MNC's National Michif Language Working Group, comprising representatives from each Governing Member and led by Bruce Dumont, MNC Minister of Culture and Heritage, gave presentations on language revitalization work in each province.

Allan Clarke, Director General of the Aboriginal Affairs Branch of Canadian Heritage, outlined the federal government's Aboriginal languages policies and vision of the work that lies ahead.

Workshops, including presentations by Elders on how they have passed on the language to youth, allowed delegates to learn conversational Michif.

A highlight of the conference was a presentation on Michif song by Métis Nation of Ontario President Tony Belcourt with Nelson Toulouse, the Deputy Grand Chief of the Anishinabek Nation.

The continued work to revitalize the Michif language will be showcased at the upcoming sixth annual National Michif Conference in Winnipeg from March 23rd through 25th, 2007. ∞

Lii Michif Piikishkwewuk!
By People Michif From The Michif People Are Speaking!

5th National
Michif
Conference

MARCH 17-19, 2006
West Western Nfld Western Resch 1999
2000 1 way 151
Thunder Bay ON

CONTACT Phone: 513-764-188 or toll free: 1-800-271-1659 • www.mnc-1706.org

Update on Aboriginal Languages Funding

In 2002, then Minister of Canadian Heritage Sheila Copps announced \$172.5 million in federal funding over eleven years to support Aboriginal languages, to include work toward the establishment of an Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Centre (ALCC).

In November 2006, the new Conservative Minister, Bev Oda, announced that the remaining \$160 million from the original allocation, including plans for the ALCC, would be cut—a reduction of \$50 million over a ten-year period. However, she did announce \$5 million per year in permanent funding, meaning that the MNC and Governing Members would retain their budgets for Michif language initiatives. ∞

Statistics Canada Seeks Clarification of Terms Defining Aboriginal Ancestry and Identity

The next Canadian Census is a long way ahead — it will take place in 2011 — but Statistics Canada is already planning a series of panels called the “StatCan Tour,” designed to improve its understanding of some terms that are crucial for the Aboriginal ancestry and identity questions.

Over the next few months, in 27 sites across Canada, Métis, First Nations and Inuit people will have chance to shed more light on their understanding and definition of such terms as Aboriginal “ancestry,” “identity,” “band membership” and “registered or treaty Indian.”

In this fast-changing world, there is an increasing need for up-to-date definitions and clear terminology, and Statistics Canada is committed to ensuring that they acquire an in-depth understanding of these terms so that the data they compile accurately reflect the reality of today’s Aboriginal population. This will contribute to the planning and design of more appropriate and effective programs and services for Métis, First Nations and Inuit people.

Along with the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (also conducted by Statistics Canada), the Canadian Census is a major source of statistics on Métis, First Nations and Inuit in Canada. ∞



**Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2006
and Arctic Supplement
(Adults - aged 15 and over)**

London, Ontario offices
 4-86-2226 or 1-800-461-9511
 4-Canada, 1-800-461-9511
 Also available in French

INTRODUCTION

Hello/Bonjour, l'ami... from Statistics Canada. May I speak with ___?

Statistics Canada, in partnership with Aboriginal organizations, is conducting the Aboriginal Peoples Survey to collect data on lifestyles and living conditions of Aboriginal people in Canada.

This information will help Aboriginal organizations and communities along with various levels of government understand the needs of Aboriginal people in Canada. To reduce the number of questions asked, information relating to your household collected during the 2006 Census, will be added to the information you provide in this survey. All information will be kept confidential and used for statistical purposes only. While your participation is voluntary, your assistance is very important to ensure that the survey results depict an accurate picture.

CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED

Form Type 0 7

FINAL OUTCOME CODE

- 0 Complete
- 1 Partial
- 2 Not attempted
- 3 Unusable
- 4 Abused for duration of survey
- 5 Language barrier (not official language)
- 6 Unable to locate
- 7 Not eligible
- 8 Deceased
- 9 Refused
- 10 Not visited
- 11 Unavailable/Unable to communicate

PROV	CD	CU	IRBUBM	PRM04	Completed by:
					1 Telephone 2 Visit

FILL SECTION IN ONLY IF INFORMATION OR LABEL HAS CHANGED OR IS INCORRECT

Family Name: _____

Given Name: _____

Number and Street or lot and subdivision or exact location: _____

RR, Box, P.O. Box, etc. City, Town, Village, Municipality or 9th Reserve: _____

Province or Territory: _____ Postal code: _____ Area code: _____ Telephone Number: _____

INFORMATION SOURCE

Language of interview

01 Anishinabe - Menominee	02 Cree	03 Ojibwe	04 Inuktitut - Inuvialuit
05 Anishinabe - Ojibway	06 Métis	07 Inuktitut - Labrador	08 English
09 Cree - Plains	10 Métis	09 Inuktitut - Nunavut	09 French
10 Cree - Quebec	11 Stongne	10 Inuktitut - Nunavut	10 Other - Specify
11 Cree - Saskatchewan	12 Other	11 Inuktitut - Inuvialuit	

Person responding

1 Selected respondent	02 Other	1 Proxy - parent or child	1 Reason
		2 Proxy - other family	2 Selected respondent unable to answer
		3 Other	3 Selected Respondent absent

Interviewer's Identification Number: _____ Batch Number: _____

Interviewer's Assignment Number: _____ Day: _____ Month: _____ Year: _____

Interviewer's Signature: _____






The Métis sash, sometimes known as the arrowhead sash, originated with the voyageurs, who used it for a variety of practical purposes as they carried out their journeys across Canada during the fur trade. To many, the sash symbolizes the weaving together of the various cultures, languages, traditions and beliefs to form the integrated whole of our heritage.

The sash is woven of yarn and usually about three metres in length. Traditionally, it was tied around the waist with the fringed ends hanging to hold a coat closed. Other times it is used as a scarf or a rope. On formal occasions, Métis women often wear the sash diagonally across the front of their clothing, pinned at the waist.

Particular sash designs are sometimes commissioned for a specific event or institution. Each MNC Governing Member has its own distinctive sash with unique colours.



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RALLIEMENT NATIONAL DES MÉTIS

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