

# THE MÉTIS NATION

ISSUE 1, VOLUME 1 - MARCH 2005



# THE MÉTIS NATION

A PUBLICATION OF THE MÉTIS NATIONAL COUNCIL

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### Above:

The granddaughter of Rosemarie McPherson standing beside Louis Riel's grave site at the St. Boniface Cathedral, November 16, 2004.

Photo by Kathy Hodgson-Smith

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# State of the Nation Address

Métis National Council General Assembly  
March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2005

Excerpts from the State of the Nation Address  
by Clément Chartier, President - Métis National Council

Elders, Veterans, Fellow Métis Leaders, Parliamentary Secretary Sue Barnes and of course, Friends, welcome to the Métis National Council's General Assembly. ...

Since being elected to office in October 2003, one of my priorities has been to visit as many of our communities as possible across our Homeland. And I must say I have been constantly struck by the strength of our nation.

Our people are coming out in ever increasing numbers. Our national symbols and flags are



prominent. Our language is heard when we come together. Ni-mi-yew-tenn oota anoosh aen wi-chi-ee-wey-yawn poor nutr aw-sawm-blii aen kaw-naa-way-taa-maak nutr lawng Michif. (*I'm happy to help at this assembly here today keeping our talk Michif*) Kaw-yaa wann-nii-tawk vutr lawng. (*Don't lose your language.*) La lawng dii Michif sii la forss di nutr nawsyoon Michif. (*The Michif language is the power of our Métis Nation.*) Our sashes are worn proudly. Our nationalist vision is growing stronger with each passing day. We truly are one people - one nation with one vision. ...

Less than two decades ago, our distinct voice, as a nation, was immersed within pan-Aboriginal organizations which hindered our pursuit of a Métis-specific self-government and rights agenda. Sure it was a hard struggle moving towards a true Métis nationalist movement, but we have now realized our goal. It's a goal we must never regress from. ... We are a proud, confident nation. As well, in the past, the biggest challenges we faced in trying to negotiate with governments were the "standard lines" that "Métis have no existing constitutional rights" and that they "didn't know who the Métis are." Well, after more than two decade in the courts, the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed what we had always known. We are a full fledged rights-bearing people with constitutionally protected Aboriginal rights. Moreover, after years of discussions and debate, we have moved forward on exercising our inherent right of self-determination through the adoption of a national definition of Métis.

...  
It hasn't been easy. There have been many roadblocks we've had to overcome. That's simply part of the struggle and I believe, these challenges make us more resilient and resolved and help us to focus our strategies. And when victory is ours, it's that much more enjoyable. So, we must stay focused on our



nation's larger vision. The full implementation of our inherent right to self-determination and self-government must guide our approaches. Staying in focus has proved successful in the past and it will again in the future as we push ahead with our rights-based agenda. ...

## RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Of course, one of the main starting points for the change we are now witness to is the new government that is in Ottawa. Since before his election as leader of the Liberal Party, Paul Martin identified Aboriginal issues as a priority for his government. The result? We have begun to see real progress in strengthening our relationship with the Government of Canada and the Canadian federation overall.

I believe this Prime Minister, unlike others before him, has a real sense of the existence and identity of the historic Métis Nation. We must all realize, Prime Minister Paul Martin's understanding is largely the result of his own initiative. Since I was elected President, I've had several positive telephone conversations and face-to-face

meetings with him. As well, members of the Board of Governors have developed strong relationships with the Prime Minister and have met with him. These relationships have helped him to understand and appreciate our people and our issues. ... Moreover, in practical terms, this Prime Minister has demonstrated a willingness to put Métis issues on the federal agenda in contrast with the willful blindness we faced from Ottawa throughout the mid to late 1990s.

After not being specifically referenced for over two decades, in February 2004, we witnessed the historic inclusion of the Métis in the Speech from the Throne. In setting out his government's priorities, Prime Minister Paul Martin specifically committed to "working with Métis leadership and the provinces in order to find the place of the Métis in the Government of Canada's policies".

And merely a month later, in March, I, along with Phil Fontaine, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), and Jose Kusuak, President of the Inuit Tapirrit Kanatami (ITK), sat down for breakfast with the Prime Minister. At this session, we

### previous page top:

Community members from Buffalo Narrows, Green Lake, Ile a la Crosse, and Meadow Lake attend the Lavolette trial in Meadow Lake to hear the court proceedings.

### previous page bottom:

The La Loche Youth Group and residents from Buffalo Narrows and Meadow Lake at the Lavolette trial.

### left:

The Métis Human Resources Development Agreement (MHRDA) Working Group.

Back Row: Keith Henry, MPCBC; Jennifer St. Germain, MNO; Jay White, MMF; Rick Wilmot, MPCBC; David Boisvert, MMF/MNC; Lorne Gladue, MNA; and Al Rivard, MNS.

Second Row: Guido Contreras, MNA; France Picotte, MNO; Kerry Smith, MMF; John Fleury, MMF; Joan Isaac, MNA; and Constance Hourie, MNS

Front: David Chartrand, MNC Minister for Social Development and President of the MMF

photo credits: Kathy Hodgson-Smith





**left:**  
The Métis Nation Board of Governors Retreat with the Federal Interlocutor  
Back Row: Interim President Bruce Dumont, MPCBC; David Chartrand, MMF; Dwayne Rath, MNS; Audrey Poitras, MNA; and Rosemarie McPherson, WMN  
Front Row: Hon. Sue Barnes, Parliamentary Secretary; Hon. Andy Scott, Federal Interlocutor for Métis; Senator Ed Hoag, MMF; MNC President Clément Chartier; and Jennifer Brown, MNYAC.  
Absent: Tony Belcourt, MNO

**bottom left:**  
President David Chartrand, MMF; Hon. Andy Scott; and Denise Thomas, MMF

**bottom right:**  
Hon. Sue Barnes, Parliamentary Secretary; MNC President, Clément Chartier and Pierre Pettigrew, Minister of Foreign Affairs

agreed to collaboratively plan a national summit, thus beginning the process of renewing the relationship between Canada and the three constitutionally recognized Aboriginal peoples. Flowing from this meeting, officials from the Métis Nation, AFN, ITK and the federal Government worked together in planning the highly successful Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable held last April 19<sup>th</sup>, in Ottawa.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the Roundtable; but our delegation was admirably led by Audrey Poitras, as the Vice-President of the Métis

National Council. Overall, it was truly a historic event and very important to the Métis Nation. First, at the Roundtable, clear prominence was given to the Métis Nation, AFN and ITK as the representative bodies of the three constitutionally recognized Aboriginal peoples. While other Aboriginal advocacy and service delivery organizations were in attendance, it was clear the Government of Canada's relationship with us is on a different level. Second, the Roundtable respected the distinctions amongst the Aboriginal peoples. Rather than being forced into a

**following page (top to bottom):**  
Prime Minister Paul Martin and MNC President, Clément Chartier

MNC Delegates to the 2005 General Assembly

President Clément Chartier and Elder Matilda Sinclair, Green Lake

Assembly of First Nations National Chief, Phil Fontaine; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami President, Jose Kusugak

photo credits: Kathy Hodgson-Smith



pan-Aboriginal forum, which has always been a failure for the Métis; specific First Nation, Inuit and Métis sessions were held. This allowed our delegation to keep the focus on our specific issues and agenda. ... Finally, during the Prime Minister's time in the Métis session at the Roundtable, Mr. Martin committed the Federal Interlocutor for Métis to moving forward on entering into a Framework Agreement with the Métis Nation.

And as a follow up to the initial Roundtable, the Prime Minister agreed to a Policy Retreat set for this spring which would involve the Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Aboriginal Leaders. As well, in order to more fully develop the issues raised during last April's Roundtable and to produce collaborative outcomes for the Policy Retreat and upcoming First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal Issues, a series of sectoral sessions focused on Health, Life Long Learning, Economic Opportunities, Housing, Negotiations and Accountability were held during the past six months.

Consistent with the Roundtable approach, each sectoral session had a Métis, First Nations and Inuit breakout session. The Métis Nation actively participated in all of these sectoral sessions and brought forward our distinct views and proposals. I would like to thank the Ministers responsible who led these delegations, as well as, all of those individuals who participated as part of our delegations. Your hard work is greatly appreciated. In addition, the Métis Nation developed its own policy paper for each sectoral area which guided discussions and are now being used to identify Métis-specific outcomes from each of these areas. ...

A very important development which adds to the Roundtable process is the commitment by the Prime Minister to hold a First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal Issues next fall. Again, we have not seen this level of meeting held since the early 1990s and it is an opportunity we must seize. It will provide the Métis Nation a chance to push our agenda and hopefully secure a series of commitments to further improve our relationship with the Canadian federation and improve the quality of life of our people in critical areas such as health, housing and education. During the next two days, we must discuss our approach to this meeting in order to maximize this historic opportunity to its fullest. ...

The Board of Governors has met several times with Minister Scott and in November, a full-day retreat on Métis Nation issues was held with Ministers Scott and Parliamentary Secretary Barnes at the Manitoba Métis Federation's head office. ... Of course, one of the main agenda items I continue to push with both of them is finalizing and signing our proposed Métis Nation Framework Agreement with Canada. This Agreement is central to advancing our relationship with the federal Government. As mandated by previous Assemblies, the Métis National Council continues to push forward on this Framework Agreement as a starting point for reconciliation and negotiations. ... Last September, I wrote Prime Minister Martin to outline a series of proposals which we could collaboratively act upon in order to strengthen our relationship.



## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POWLEY DECISION

Of course, another one of the starting points for the change we are now witnessing, is the release of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *Powley*. On September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2003, the highest court in the land affirmed that the Métis are a "full fledged rights-bearing people". The Supreme Court also affirmed that our distinct rights flow from our unique existence and identity as an Aboriginal people, and that our rights are equal to that of other Aboriginal peoples. And most importantly, that our rights must be recognized and accommodated by all governments in the country.

Since the *Powley* decision, the Métis National Council has stressed that the implications of this decision are not just limited to Métis harvesting or harvesting rights for specific Métis communities that are identified as dots on a map. Our people were and continue to be a mobile people. Our harvesting rights are an inherent right which cannot be arbitrarily limited by other governments. Many governments continue to narrow their approach and understanding of *Powley*; however, I am confident, under mounting pressure from across the Homeland, that these governments who have not come willingly to the table, will inevitably be forced to do so.

I want to applaud the work of the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Government of Alberta in this area. I believe an important standard has been established with the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement signed by President Poitras and Minister Calahasen last October. And, I view the Four Point Agreement reached between the Métis Nation of Ontario and the Government of Ontario as a success. However, I am hopeful Ontario's political leaders will live up to the full scope of that Agreement in the near future. As well, I must applaud the work of the Manitoba Métis Federation, Métis Nation Saskatchewan and Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia in pushing the harvesting rights agenda.

I also believe that what has been undertaken at the national level on *Powley* implementation has been very helpful and important. The provincial boundaries we currently reside in are artificial to our nationhood. We must find ways to work together in the name of nationalism. As one nation, we are stronger when we work together. I believe the results achieved at the national level demonstrate this. ...

As well, at the national level, the Métis Nation Multilateral Caucus, which includes representatives from each of the Governing Members and has been chaired by Jason Madden, has been instrumental in sharing information between Governing Members and learning from each other's successes and challenges. I am sure most of you have found the Caucus' Métis Harvesters Guide extremely helpful. The work of the Métis Nation Multilateral Caucus is extremely important as we continue to push the limited understandings of the federal and provincial governments with respect to *Powley*.

The Métis Nation Research Committee, which consists of representatives from each Governing Member and academic and professional experts, is led by Kathy Hodgson-Smith. It is undertaking important work with respect to the coordination of



research initiatives, setting national standards for Métis research, mapping of the Métis Nation Homeland and publishing research products for all Métis citizens to have access to. Also, the Committee is in the process of designing an on-line genealogical research tool which will allow Métis people to trace their family trees "on line" and view historical documents that have been posted to this site. This work will be invaluable to our people and to our rights-based agenda....

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Métis Nation continues to play an important role in the international community. Through our on-going interventions at the United Nations in New York and Geneva and at the Organization of the America States in Washington, the understanding and appreciation of the Métis Nation, as a distinct Indigenous peoples in the world continues to grow. As a people, we must ensure our voice is heard at the international level.

Thank you to President Tony Belcourt, the Minister responsible for International Affairs for his continued work in this area. As well, with so many important developments emerging in the international arena, I will be

increasing my role at the international level over the next year and I soon hope to establish an international desk at the Métis National Council office.

### IMPLEMENTING MÉTIS SELF-GOVERNMENT

For those of you who know me, you know that my focus has always been on advancing our rights agenda. Fundamental to this rights agenda is the need to strengthen our own national and regional self-government structures and institutions.

Numerous Assemblies have mandated the Métis National Council to move towards the adoption of a Constitution. In the last few years, we have started preliminary consultations. Recently, I convened a Retreat of the Board of Governors and the Métis Rights Panel to discuss this issue in detail and to take stock of what has been heard to date.

Direction has now been provided to the Métis Rights Panel to develop a more thorough consultation process in order to see this happen....

### MÉTIS NATION CABINET

Since taking office, I have adopted a more collaborative approach at the Board of Governors level. I have great

**previous page (top to bottom):** Veteran Robert Berard, Veteran Larry McElvrey, Veteran Eugene Desjarlais, and Veteran John Cadeau

Cecil Bellrose, MNA; Hon. Andy Scott; and MNA President Audrey Poirras

Métis National Council meet with the Acadian Society

photo credits: Kathy Hodgson-Smith

Prime Minister Paul Martin and MNA President Audrey Poirras

photo credit: Patricia Russell

**bottom left:**

Métis Veterans at the Back to Batoche Days Opening Ceremonies

RCMP Musical Ride at Canada Day

photo credits: Kathy Hodgson-Smith





faith and trust in the Métis Nation Cabinet and the work they do. Ministers Tony Belcourt, David Chartrand, Audrey Poitras, Dwayne Roth, Bruce Dumont thank you for taking the time away from your busy schedules at home. ...

I wish to acknowledge the important work of the national spokespersons for our women and youth --- Rosemarie McPherson and Jennifer Brown. As we move on implementing Métis self-government, it is of vital importance that we are inclusive of our children, youth, women and Elders. We must ensure that, within our governance structures, there is a place for these voices to be effectively heard and respected. I, along with the Board of Governors, am committed to continuing to collaboratively work with the Métis National Youth Advisory Council and the Métis Women's Secretariat to make sure this is accomplished.

To this end, I am in the process of setting up a national committee which will help me organize a national conference on the well-being of the Métis child, which I hope can take place in the spring of 2006. ...

#### HONOURING OUR OWN

To the Métis Veterans, I wish to begin by saying thank you. Thank you, for the risks that you have taken to protect the best of this country. Thank you, for the courage and leadership that you have shown in your communities and in our nation. Thank you, for the strength of conviction that you have shown in standing proud and standing with us, sharing your wisdom and having confidence in us, one and all. ...

Since our last Assembly we have lost two men who have played important roles in the Métis Nation's struggle. In February 2004, Steve Powley passed away. Steve's name and determined spirit will live on forever through the Supreme Court of Canada's first decision on Métis rights. I want to pay respect to him and his family's contributions to our struggle. Also, I would like to pay respect to Harry W. Daniels who passed away in September of last year. When we look upon our success today we know that it is based upon the contributions of those who came before us. We never achieve alone. We achieve as one people as one nation. And Harry W. Daniels led our nation to success. In 1981, Harry W. Daniels made history in ensuring the inclusion of the Métis in the Canadian Constitution which came into effect in 1982. We will be forever indebted to him for his contribution to our struggle. ...

Finally, the recent tragedy of losing four brave RCMP officers in Mayerthorpe, Alberta has touched all of us. The Métis Nation joined with all Canadians in mourning this senseless loss. One of the officers, Constable Leo Johnston, from Owl River near Lac La Biche, was a registered citizen of the Métis Nation and we take great pride in his service and bravery. Our thoughts are with his family and all the families that are suffering as a result of this tragedy.

In closing, it has been an honour to serve as your National President over the past year and a half. I look forward to a positive and productive Assembly to move forward on our collective vision.



**left:**

The Multilateral Working Team  
Back (left to right): Dave Kennedy, MPCBC; Art Duracher, MNS; Jason Madden, MNC; Rick Salter, Pape, Salter and Teillet; Dan Benoit, MMF; and Kathy Hodgson-Smith, MNC

Middle: Cindy Bertolin, MNA; Jean Teillet, MNO; Senator Ed Head, MMF; Al Benoit, and MMF; Dwayne Roth, MNS

Front: Jennifer St. Germain, MNO, and Cynthia Kolada, MPCBC.

photographer unknown



*Métis National Council Finance and Administration*  
**Minister Audrey Poitras**

**Excerpts from a Presentation to the General Assembly  
March 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005 Calgary, Alberta**

Good Afternoon, it gives me great pleasure to stand here before you and provide the General Assembly with a Finance and Administration Report for the Métis National Council.

As you heard from our Auditor BP Shore, the MNC has made significant progress including the elimination of our deficit and the full pay out on our long term financing. We have embarked on the development of much needed policies, having passed in principle the personnel manual and now completing draft financial policies. Further to this, I wish to relay to the Nation that we will continue to develop new financial strategies and initiatives that will continue to strengthen our ability to better govern not only in our internal operations but initiatives that will strengthen our Nation and our collective ability to govern on behalf of our citizens.

As you heard yesterday in President Chartier's State of the Nation Address, the Métis Nation continues to move forward on implementing its inherent right of self-government within the Canadian federation. In so doing, we recognize the importance of preparing our financial and administrative structures to increase accountability and build the foundation upon which greater steps can be taken.

As you are aware our present day governance structures and institutions are the contemporary expression of this aspiration. For over a century, our infrastructures have continued to evolve in order to realize democratic and effective governance structures and institutions to represent and serve the citizens of the Métis Nation. As technology advances, so, too must we advance and change and learn to do things differently.

By understanding our Métis governance and by engaging in comprehensive dialogue with the Nation and our provincial and federal government counterparts, it becomes clear to see how accountability to the Métis people rests in the effective

operations of our governance structures and institutions.

Currently, MNC has created the perfect environment for change. We all see the need for new approaches to financial autonomy and accountability as we continue to grow and develop. The Government of Canada has also realized the need for new approaches to Aboriginal peoples. The Prime Minister has adopted a partnership approach towards closing the social and economic gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. The 2003 Speech from the Throne established ambitious goals to "see real economic opportunities for Aboriginal individuals and communities" and to "see Aboriginal Canadians participating fully in national life... with greater economic self-reliance, and a better quality of life".

The MNC believes it is time to hold the federal government to these financial commitments and to implement a new strengthened financial relationship to overcome the problems and inadequacies of the current system. In the next year, through government to government dialogue, the MNC will be seeking to strengthen our focus through responsible spending while paying attention to results. We are currently designing a new funding relationship to support and foster the achievement of our goal of enhanced accountability and transparency. This new proposal includes:

- undertaking longer-term planning processes;
- establishing strategic outcomes for addressing Métis social and economic conditions;
- adopting detailed management and implementation plans and budgets for achieving those outcomes;
- and, finally monitoring and evaluating progress.

It is my commitment, and that of the Board of Governors in the next year, that the MNC will work toward a more improved system of governance in the areas of finance and administration.

### Dealing with the Past Year

As we are all well aware, in our respective provincial governing bodies, the current method of financing creates "cash-flow" problems for us in the implementation of our contribution agreement relations with government. The heavy reliance on project funds means that our Métis Nation government faces holdbacks pending interim or final reports. This is also a reality for the Métis National Council. This past year, many government departments were unable or unwilling to provide advance funding, and consequently, most projects have to be deficit financed, placing additional pressures on our thinly financed infrastructure.

While operating expenses remain more or less the same from month to month, the timing of payments from various federal departments varied a great deal, leading to occasions when

Métis governments are short of resources to handle commitments while awaiting interim or final payments for project funding. Métis governments are forced to meet any shortfall through line-of-credit financing at high interest rates. We are and will address these issues thoroughly.

The Métis National Council has done significant work this year towards the development of a Global Funding proposal for the Métis National Council which will provide a core funding approach which is in keeping with the on-going expectations and capacity to fuller participation by the Métis in Canada's more inclusive Aboriginal agenda. This proposal puts forward the business case for a more accountable processes and for a recognition of the new policy direction of the Métis National Council in various sector areas.

Finally, the current system does

#### below:

MNC President Clément Chartier, President David Chartrand, MMF; President Audrey Poitras, MNA; and National Spokesperson for the Métis Women, Rosemarie McPherson.

Photo Credits: Robert McDonald

#### following page:

MNC Minister of Finance and Administration, Audrey Poitras, delivers her speech to the Métis National Council General Assembly.

Photo credit: Patricia Russell





not encourage, and actually impedes, utilization of available resources in the most cost-effective manner possible. The system favours the use of consultants rather than the development of in-house expertise. In-house expertise is not only less expensive but more effective in terms of policy development. The current system also prevents effective policy coordination.

The existing system's reliance on consultants has meant that our Métis Nation governance structures have not been able to develop our human resource potential, nor equip Métis individuals with the necessary skills to govern themselves. If self-government is to be a reality, Métis people must be afforded the opportunity and the training necessary to assume public policy and public service functions.

The Métis National Council and our Governing Members and affiliated service delivery providers are the principal vehicles available for Métis to develop this capability. However, current funding arrangements prevent us from competing successfully for the Métis people who currently qualify as professionals and specialists in a variety of public policy fields.

The increased need for a policy role of the Métis National Council has meant a re-visioning of our current structure, a reconfiguration of our human resource needs and a recognition of the importance of greater inclusion and coordination with our Governing Members. We are very excited about this new approach.

In order to respond to these growing Human Resource demands, as the Minister of Finance and Administration I was asked by President Chartier to undertake an organizational review of the Métis National Council. A review was commissioned in 2003-2004 and reviewed by the Board of Governors on April

1, 2004. The review recommended that MNC's administration to be led by a three person senior management team rather than a single Executive Director. This team was to consist of a Chief of Staff, a Chief Administrative Officer and a Chief of Strategic Operations.

The Chief Administrative Officer oversees the day-to-day management, administration and finances of the MNC. We are very pleased to introduce to the Assembly, Dale LeClair, who has been recently hired to this position.

The Chief of Staff manages the Office of the President, including communications and new initiatives, such as the National Research Strategy. Kathy Hodgson-Smith holds this position.

The Chief of Strategic Operations provides policy advice to the MNC and oversees the MNC's bilateral relationship with Canada. Jason Madden, the MNC's General Counsel, has assumed this position.

As well, a few new staff have recently joined the MNC. Robert McDonald, a former television news anchor, is the MNC's new Director of Public and Media Relations. We are currently in negotiations to fill the position of Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and in the near future, we are looking forward to filling the positions for the Director of Health, Director of Finance and Director of Environment.

As you can see, the Métis National Council has made significant strides since the last General Assembly toward stronger financial and administrative practice. We are firmly committed to move even further along this path and I look forward to showing our further progress at our next General Assembly.

Thank you very much.

# Métis National Council General Assembly

March 19 and 20, 2005



One People,  
One Nation, One Voice

The **Métis National Council General Assembly** was held March 19 and 20, 2005 at the Fairmont Palliser Hotel, 133 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Calgary, AB. The Assembly began with an Opening Ceremony that included a

procession of Métis Veterans, Elders, Cabinet, and key community members.

Opening remarks were received by Assembly delegates from The Hon. Sue Barnes, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indian. Hon Barnes read aloud a prepared address which included: welcoming comments and greetings; recognition of the MNC President; and reference to: the MMF hosted Retreat the prior year; the Prime Minister's commitment to making a real difference in the lives of Aboriginal peoples based on building a solid partnership between the federal government and Aboriginal peoples; new governmental structures relating to Aboriginal issues; the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable in April 2004 and flowing from the Roundtable: six sectoral tables, an upcoming Policy Retreat and First Ministers' Meeting; the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *R.v.Powley* and the federal government's commitment of \$30 million in the prior year's budget to study the implications of the decision; Budget 2005 investments that would benefit the Métis; and recognition of Métis veterans.

Audrey Poitras, President, Métis Nation of Alberta; Rosemarie McPherson, National Spokesperson, Métis Women's Secretariat (MWS); and Jennifer Brown, Chair, Métis Nation Youth Advisory Council (MNYAC), each in turn expressed appreciation to Elder Friedel for her Opening Prayer, and welcomed Assembly delegates. Sylvia Johnson, MNA, presented t-shirts as gifts to the MNC Board of Governors on behalf of the MNA. The Honourable Pearl Calahasen, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Government of Alberta addressed the Assembly during the evening banquet later, and extended her own welcome to Assembly delegates.

The evening event included a special meal and ceremony, led by President David Chartrand, MNC Minister responsible for Veterans Affairs, to honour our Métis War Veterans. Walter Schoenthal; Harry W. Daniels. The Métis National Council and the Métis Nation of Alberta commemorated Harry Daniels with a video commemorating his contributions to the struggle for Métis rights.



The Assembly saw the following sixteen motions carried unanimously:

**One**

That the Métis National Council General Assembly appoint Will Goodon and Michelle LeClair-Harding as the Assembly Co-Chairs. (Roth, MNS Poitras, MNA)

**Two**

That the Agenda for the Métis National Council General Assembly scheduled March 19 and 20, 2005 be adopted as circulated. (Gladue, MNA; Thomas, MMF)

**Three**

That the Minutes of the Métis National Council Annual General Assembly held October 24 and 25, 2003 be adopted with correction to page 6, Motion 03 10 08, to replace "SECONDED (Dale McAuley, MB)" with "SECONDED (Dale McAuley, SK)". (Desrosiers, MMF; Roth, MNS)

**Four**

That the Métis National Council General Assembly appoint the following individuals to serve as the members of the Assembly's Resolutions Committee: (Collins, Pile)

- Michelle Duncan, Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia;
- James Norris, Métis Nation of Alberta;
- Bev Laliberte, Métis Nation - Saskatchewan;
- Nelson Mayer, Manitoba Métis Federation; and
- Hank Rowlinson, Métis Nation of Ontario.

**Five**

That the Métis National Council General Assembly accept as presented the Métis National Council Secretariat Inc. Audited Financial Statements for the year ended March 31, 2004. (Omeniho, MNA; Nault, MMF)

**Six**

That the Métis National Council General Assembly appoint the audit firm of Bernie P. Shore for the 2005/06 Métis National Council Secretariat Inc. financial audit. (Thomas, MMF; Chartier, MNS)

**Seven**

WHEREAS the existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights of Canada's Aboriginal peoples received Constitutional protection, Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 provides:

*35 (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.*

*(2) In this Act, "aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.*



previous page:

left:  
Rene Therien, Opening Ceremonies

right:  
MNC General Assembly delegates

above (top to bottom):  
Hon. Sue Barnes, Elder Marge Friedel, and Métis Veteran  
Manitoba Métis Federation Delegates  
Lucyda Lagimodiere, Anita Campbell and MMF President  
David Chartrand

facing page (top to bottom):  
Hon. Sue Barnes addresses the MNC General Assembly

MNC Minister of Finance, Audrey Potras addresses the  
General Assembly

Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia Delegates  
Dave Hodgson and MPCBC Interim President Bruce Dumont

Delegates Cecil Bellrose, MNA and Rick Wilmot, MPCBC

photo credits: Patricia Russell



WHEREAS on September 19, 2003 in a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court affirmed what the Métis people have been saying for over twenty years; s.35 is a substantive promise to the Métis, which recognizes their distinct existence and protects their existing Aboriginal rights;

WHEREAS those rights include the freedom to move within the Métis Nation Homeland to exercise those rights;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Métis National Council, as the governing body of the Métis Nation, implement policy enabling the Métis Harvesters the mobility to harvest across the Métis Homeland. (Chartier, MNS; Dumont, MPCBC)

#### **Eight**

WHEREAS Section 35 of the Constitution Act of Canada 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal Rights;

WHEREAS "Aboriginal" is defined within the Constitution Act of Canada 1982 as Indian, Inuit and Métis;

WHEREAS the Government of Canada's official position is that the inherent right of Aboriginal self-government is an existing constitutional right;

WHEREAS the Prime Minister promised that never again would the federal government make and force unilateral policy decisions on Aboriginal peoples;

WHEREAS federal officials continue to assert that they will decide on policy affecting the Métis, without any regard to the right of self-determination of the Métis to determine their own priorities and processes;

WHEREAS the federal government continues to create and implement "Pan-Aboriginal Institutions" which through past experiences do not work in the best interest of the Métis Nation,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Métis National Council (MNC), which is the recognized governing body of the Métis Nation, denounce all attempts made by Federal officials to continue their colonial and discriminatory policies by defining and forcing policies without due regard to the decision making processes of the Métis Nation, and continue to force the "Pan-Aboriginal approach" on the Métis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution, where the Métis are a separate and distinct nation, the Métis National Council instruct the Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and/or Ministers

responsible for Aboriginal programmes, services, policy and legislation to immediately consult with the MNC to resolve this issue. (Belcourt, MNO; Picotte, MNO)

#### **Nine**

WHEREAS the Métis Women's Secretariat (MWS) is the officially recognized Métis women's group of the Métis National Council; and

WHEREAS Federal Government policies have continued to marginalize Métis People and further to that the Department of Canadian Heritage has eliminated Métis women through policies that are not equal to the benefits, rights and opportunities enjoyed by First Nation and Inuit women;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Métis National Council General Assembly support the MWS in working with the Federal Ministers of Parliament to ensure that policies are amended to include Métis women; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MNC Board of Governors work effectively with the MWS in changing policies that marginalize Métis people throughout the Métis Homeland. (McPherson, MMF; Omineho, MNA)

#### **Ten**

WHEREAS Cumberland House was recognized as a National Historic Park; and

WHEREAS the federal government removed Cumberland House as a National Historic Park without consultation; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Métis National Council request that Cumberland House be re-incorporated as a National Historic Park. (McAuley, MNS; McPherson, MMF)

#### **Eleven**

WHEREAS water is essential for the everyday consumption for all living people, animals, birds, fish and every living creature; and

WHEREAS we know that it is a fundamental constitutional right to have access to water for various uses; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Métis National Council (MNC) fully support the process of working toward the concept of building a weir to elevate the water level in the Cumberland House geographic area; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, to further assist other MNC Governing Members, a strategic position be developed to assist the pursuit of ensuring Métis rights are protected for use, access and environment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a letter of support be written to accommodate both the proposal by Cumberland House and a strategic position be developed on the use and protection to all MNC Governing Members by the Métis National Council President both of which be forwarded to federal and provincial governments on behalf of the communities of Cumberland House, being the Northern Village of Cumberland House and Cumberland House Cree Nation, and the MNC Governing Members respectively. (McAuley, MNS; Chartrand, MMF)

#### **Twelve**

WHEREAS the recent Supreme Court decision has provided Métis the opportunity to address long-standing issues; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada granted the lands of the Primrose/Cold Lake Air Weapons Range to the Department of National Defence (DND) 50 + years ago; and

WHEREAS Métis in both Saskatchewan and Alberta since then have been banned from exercising our Métis traditional and cultural rights on these lands; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada, DND, have recognized the land claims of First Nations encompassing the Primrose/Cold Lake Air Weapons Range; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada, DND, has entered into discussions with First Nations for their exclusive access and hunting rights on the Primrose/Cold Lake Air Weapons Range;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Métis National Council give notice to the Government of Canada, DND, that the Métis must be at the negotiating table for the inclusion of Métis and the exercising of all Métis rights on the Primrose/Cold Lake Air Weapons Range; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the issues of access, traditional use and occupancy, land claims and resource use be fundamental to the negotiations. (Collins, MNA; Chartier, MNS)





**(top to bottom):**  
Duane Marrisseau-Beck, Kris Gladue, and Connor Lloyd

MNC General Assembly observers

MMF Delegates Rosemarie McPherson, Marilee Nault, and Richard De La Ronde

photo credits: Patricia Russell

### **Thirteen**

WHEREAS the Métis National Council (MNC) Secretariat Inc. By-laws outline that the organizational structure under Article 6(a) shall consist of a MNC General Assembly, the Board of Governors (BOG) and the office of the President; and

WHEREAS Article 10 states that any resolution to alter, amend, delete or in any way change the by-laws shall require the consent of the founding members by their presidents; and

WHEREAS Article 8(a) states that the BOG shall have responsibilities for carrying out the mandate as set out by the MNC General Assembly;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the BOG amend the bylaws to establish a process in which the MNC General Assembly delegates can submit special resolutions to amend the bylaws 60 days prior to a General Assembly. (Gladue, MNA; Rivard, MNS)

BE IT RESOLVED that any national litigation strategy regarding land claims include all Governing Members. (Gladue, MNA; Rivard, MNS)

### **Fourteen**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Métis National Council President Clement Chartier, along with the Métis Nation Saskatchewan President Dwayne Roth, meet with the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and non-Status Indians, Minister Andy Scott and other federal Ministers and/or the Prime Minister of Canada to reinstate a working relationship between the Government of Canada and the Métis Nation Saskatchewan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this issue be addressed in an expedient fashion. (Kennedy, MNS; Laliberte, MNS)

### **Fifteen**

WHEREAS the safety and well being of all Métis citizens is of great importance to the Métis Nation;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Métis National Council convene a national conference regarding the well being and safety of Métis children and families in the spring of 2006. (Dahl, MPCBC; Collins, MNA)

### **Sixteen**

That the Métis National Council General Assembly direct that the Update Reports from the Métis National Cabinet be mailed out or posted on a website for delegates' information. (Omineho, MNA; DeLaRonde, MMF)

# Women of the Métis Nation

By Rosemarie McPherson  
National Spokesperson, Women of the Métis Nation

## Who are the Women of the Métis Nation?

The Women of the Métis Nation (WMN) is a women's collective body representing the Métis Women from the Governing Members of the Métis Nation, mandated by the government of the Métis Nation as a lobbyist and advocacy body recognized to speak and represent the Métis women's agenda and perspective nationally.

## History

In 1999, Métis women came together to form the *Métis Women's Secretariat* within the MNC, to facilitate their full and equal participation within the structures of the Métis Nation. Since that time, several forums and annual assemblies have taken place, and its role within the MNC has evolved. In April 2005, Métis women adopted the name *Women of the Métis Nation*, to better reflect the central role of women within the Nation.

## Structure

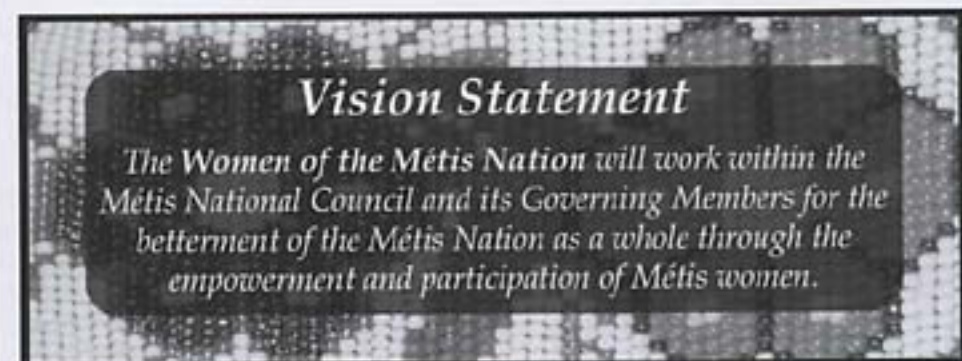
The WMN is made up of a representative Métis woman from each of the Métis National Council's (MNC) Governing Members (elected by province-wide ballot-box elections), along with a National Spokesperson, who is elected by delegates at an Annual General Meeting. I, Rosemarie McPherson of Manitoba, was re-elected National Spokesperson for a three-year term in April 2005.

## Role of the WMN within the MNC

The WMN serves as an advisory body within Métis Nation governance structures. The WMN National Spokesperson is represented in the MNC Cabinet and on the MNC Board of Governors, in order to ensure that the unique concerns and issues of importance to Métis women are brought forward. This input assists in the development and implementation of MNC policies, programs, direction and actions. The WMN also provides an important networking tool for Métis women in the affairs of the Nation.

## Funding

Women working within the MNC structure, because they have not formed a separately incorporated organization, have long been excluded from many federal programs designed for autonomous Aboriginal women's



organizations. This means that the WMN does not have access to core funding to support a basic infrastructure, but must rely on short-term project funding, along with the administrative assistance of the MNC.

Delegates at the MNC General Assembly in March 2005 adopted a resolution to support Métis women in their lobbying efforts to bring about change to federal policies that have served to marginalize Métis women who choose to work within the MNC structures.

Most of the funding which has been obtained in recent years has come from the Office of the Federal Interlocutor, for consultations and capacity building.

### Recent Accomplishments

In fiscal year 2004-2005, the WMN formalized its structure and role within the MNC through the adoption of a *Protocols and Principles* document. At the National Métis Women's Forum, held April 12 and 13, 2005, some fifty delegate, representing all five Governing Members, re-confirmed their commitment to the organization and made sure that the document, which outlines the WMN's mission, vision, purposes and decision-making processes, reflected their views and ideas. Once ratified by the MNC Board of Governors, this will provide a formal framework for its democratic structure and practices and will serve as a guide for the WMN as well for as the MNC itself.

Also at the National Forum, delegates adopted a resolution to ask the MNC to work with the Assembly of First Nations and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami to develop a Memorandum of Agreement to formally recognize each other's women's affiliates and the importance of women's political voice. They further requested that the agreement be forwarded to the Prime Minister and the Privy Council Office. Another resolution directed the National Spokesperson to work with MNC staff toward initiating a dialogue with federal officials, with a view to effecting changes to federal policies which exclude Métis women from funding sources.

Other activities of note last year were the participation of the National Spokesperson and other Métis women from across the Homeland in the various sectoral discussions in connection with the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtables health, housing, life-long learning, economic opportunities, negotiations and accountability. As well, the National Spokesperson participated in Board of Governors' meetings and retreats, including various meetings with federal Ministers, allowing her an opportunity to express the concerns of Métis women directly. Métis women also participated in an international meeting of Indigenous Women, held in New York City in May 2004.

### Goals for the Coming Year

The WMN National Spokesperson will continue to work hand-in-hand with the MNC Board of Governors to ensure that Métis women's views are included wherever the Nation's voice is heard.

Work plans for this year's contribution agreements are currently being drafted. The WMN is hoping for sufficient funds to allow for staff resources within the MNC in order to facilitate the accomplishments of its goals. There are also plans to include a communications component in order to increase the visibility of the WMN and to improve its networking capabilities with Métis women throughout the Homeland.



Rosemarie McPherson,  
MNC and WMN Spokesperson



Rose Bartolan  
MNCBG



MaryAnn Gagnon,  
MNS



Melanie Omenih,  
MNA



Senator Rita Gordon,  
MNO



## *Michif: The Spoken Word*

**By President Bruce Dumont,  
MNC Minister of Culture and Heritage**

The Métis National Council will continue to seek an increased awareness of the history, culture, language and aspirations of the Métis people in the 21st century among public and corporate Canadians increasing the level of public education and understanding. National events such as the Back to Batoche Days celebrations each July, the Métis Days Celebrations in Calgary and Vancouver and Winnipeg, the Louis Riel Day services and commemorations, are the gatherings of the year. The Métis National Council also sponsors such events as those held during National Aboriginal Day and as a regular activity at Métis gatherings, assemblies and meetings. The Métis Voyageur Games remains an important activity, along with the North American Indigenous Games

where Métis athletes are encouraged to participate.

The Métis National Council participates in coordination of the Michif Language and cultural activities through the Ministry of Culture and Heritage. While our capacity is extremely limited, the Métis National Council supports the important work of the National Michif Language Working Group, which will expand its role in the future to provide greater direction and consideration of cultural matters beyond language.

### **Participation in the new federal Languages and Culture Initiative**

In December 2002, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Honourable Sheila Copps, announced \$172.5 million in new investments for Aboriginal languages and cultures.

#### **above:**

The MNC National Michif Language Working Group and Canadian Heritage guest; Back (left-right): Bruce Dumont, MNC Minister for Culture and Heritage; Allan Clarke, Director General, Aboriginal Programs, Canadian Heritage; Norman Flury, Manitoba Métis Federation; Henry Hall, Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia; and Carey Calder, Métis Nation of Ontario Front (left-right): Bruce Flamont, Métis Nation - Saskatchewan; Fran Hyndman, Métis Nation of Alberta; Rosemarie McPherson, Manitoba Métis Federation; and Gilbert Gervais, Métis Nation of Ontario. Absent: Ralph Kennedy, Métis Nation - Saskatchewan

#### **facing page:**

Workshop at the MNC Annual International Michif Language Conference in Calgary, Alberta, April 1st and 2nd, 2005

Photo Credits: Naomi Gordon

The money will fund a two-year extension of the current Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI); the work of a predominantly Aboriginal Task Force, whose role will be to make recommendations to the Minister on the operational framework and activities of an Aboriginal Languages and Cultural Entity (ALCC) or entities over a ten-year period.

The Department of Canadian Heritage has invited national Aboriginal organizations, cultural and academic specialists and community leaders to recommend candidates to the Task Force. The three primary ALI partners, the Métis National Council, Assembly of First Nations and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Department have met several times over the past year in an effort to reach consensus on a number of issues, including recommended membership of the Task Force based on recommendations arising from consultations with the Aboriginal peoples, presentations from interested parties, research, as well as its own collective expertise. A number of key issues exist as a

result of this process. Rosemarie McPherson of Manitoba and Bruce Flamont of Saskatchewan are the Métis Nation representatives to this Task Force. No budget has been provided to the Métis Nation to participate in this process, with the exception of support to two individuals. Despite this lack of capacity support, the Métis National Council has encouraged and supported the work of our representatives on the Task Force.

#### **Support for Meetings of the National Michif Working Group**

It has been more important than ever that the MNC coordinate ongoing and regular meetings on the national Michif Language Working Group. This Working Group consists of individuals involved in respective Michif revitalization strategies in their respective Governing Members. The National Michif Language Working Group is co-chaired by Bruce Flamont, of Saskatchewan, and Norman Fleury, of Manitoba, both of whom are fluent Michif speakers.

The National Michif

Language Working Group representatives: Rene Therrien, MPCBC; Fran Hyndman, MNA; Ralph Kennedy, MNS; Rosemarie McPherson, MMF; Carrie Calder, MNO. The National Working Group meets in order to share expertise and success stories in strategies geared toward Michif revitalization and protection. Ideas and tools are often shared between members of the task Force to ensure that resources are not wasted on duplication of tools. The national Michif Language Working Group has developed a ten-year Michif Language Strategy to coincide with the ALCC initiative and to guide the work of the Métis Nation in the promotion and retention of the Michif language in the years ahead. It is imperative that Métis Nation Governing Members, being representative of the Métis community across the homeland, play a key role in developing and implementing strategies related to keeping the Michif language alive and in promoting the usage of Michif by Métis people.

The national Michif Language Working Group has also been used



as a body to solicit direction and feedback on the proposed ALCC initiative. Unfortunately, the Métis National Council lacks the capacity to engage beyond a couple of meetings per year, however, it is important that the officials representing the MNC share information with the Governing Members and provide our input into future directions of the Aboriginal Languages Centre Initiative being proposed by Canadian Heritage. The presentation of the MNC on this initiative can be found on the MNC website.

#### **Promotion of the Michif language through on-going communication activities of the MNC**

There are several ways that the MNC promotes the Michif language in its day to day operations. Some of these activities

include:

- Regular reports and briefing to the Métis Nation Cabinet through the Minister of Culture and Heritage. The Minister is tasked with overseeing the Language portfolio and reports to the MNC President on an ongoing basis.
- Posting of relevant information on MNC's website ([www.metisnation.ca](http://www.metisnation.ca))
- Providing Michif speakers at MNC functions, including for ceremonial purposes such as Prayers and welcomes. Also, written material is translated from English to Michif to generally promote the language where appropriate.

In closing, the Métis National Council continues to be vocal advocates for the revitalization, retention and the protection of the Michif language,

along with other Aboriginal languages common to the Métis, such as Ojibwa, Cree and Dene. The Michif Language Working Group is a key element of the Aboriginal languages strategy of the Métis Nation, as well as the important work of the annual International Michif conferences held each year hosted by one of the Métis National Council Governing Members. The Michif Language Working Group has identified a ten-year strategy as part of the implementation of their mandate to set language priorities, share best practices and guide the coordination and expenditure of fiscal resources in increasing the use of Michif language across the homeland. The Group has taken a specific focus this last year on the development of curriculum and the need to increase the teaching of Michif in the K-12 education systems.

### Upcoming National Conference

## *Well-Being of the Métis Child*

President Clément Chartier is planning a national conference on the Well-Being of the Métis Child, aiming for March of 2006. In the organization of this important event, a President's Committee has been established, Chaired by President Chartier, Kay Dahl (British Columbia), Marlene Lanz (Alberta), Helene Johnson (Saskatchewan); Judy Mayer (Manitoba); France Picotte (Ontario); Rosemarie McPherson (or alternate Métis Women's Representative), Jennifer Brown (or alternate Métis Youth Representative) and Kathy Hodgson-Smith (Métis National Council). Details will be made available on the Métis National Council website and the websites for the Governing Members.



# Order of the Métis Nation Recipient **SENATOR ED HEAD**



Biography as submitted by the MMF



Ed Head has had many nicknames. As a youngster his family called him "Moose." When he became politically active, he was called "The Voice of the North", and later "Kitchi Piyesiw." Edward Head was born in Granville Lake, Manitoba (west of Thompson), the son of Thomas Charles Head from The Pas and Mary Sayese of

Cumberland House, Saskatchewan. His maternal grandparents are James Sayese and Veronique Fosseneuve. His paternal grandparents are Charles Thomas Head and Lizzette Marcellais, a Cree woman.

Ed's parents were married in The Pas. They went to Cranberry Portage and from there walked to Cold Lake (just south of Sherridon). "The place we lived was nicknamed 'Moccasin Flats.' That's where the Métis lived, and it was always the way the Métis lived. They called us 'Road Allowance Indians,'" Ed explains. They had settled there because Ed's grandfather had moved there. His father did odd jobs for Sherritt-Gordon then was hired as a miner. Ed's grandfather had a guiding business and guided the Sherridon Mine Manager into the mine, overland from Cumberland House. "Cumberland House was the main juncture going into the North in the late 1800's," says Ed. "Eldon Brown, the prospector who discovered the ore body at Sherridon came through Cumberland House and needed a guide. My great-grandfather was busy, so my grandfather, James Sayese, met up with Brown and became his guide. He worked for Brown as a personal guide for a long time. Later he went to work for Sherritt-Gordon."

Ed took two years of schooling between the ages of 10 and 12. As a youngster he fished and trapped. "We spoke Cree with a lot of little bits of French thrown in. We ate a lot of wild meat and a lot of fish. I remember that one of my delicacies that I liked to eat was Maria (Burbot) liver, the liver of the Maria fish that was very rich in oil. They'd fry it up and put it on my bannock and it was just like butter. My mother did a lot of canning, a lot of preserving. There were a lot of cranberries, blueberries and raspberries. We used a paddle out with grandpa and his family, a whole bunch of

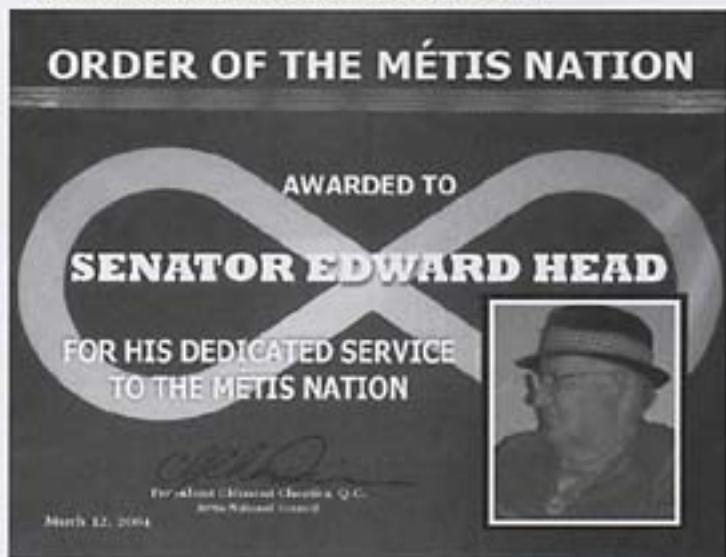
us, we had an 18-foot freighter canoe. We had that filled with blueberries when we came back."

For many years Ed trapped with his uncle, Val Couchee (an Ojibway from Ontario). Then Ed worked for sixteen or more years as a diamond driller, this work took him all over the North. His time spent mining was at the mines at Thompson and Leaf Rapids. Ed also worked for over 25 years as a guide at Lake Kissinging. In the late sixties he became active in Métis politics. He was a Manitoba Federation Vice President from Thompson Region and was elected President of the MMF in 1975-1976. He is now a Senator of the Métis Nation in Manitoba.

Ed married Angeline Lapensee, from Brochet on April 7, 1952. They have 12 children, 40 grandchildren and 38 great grandchildren (so far! as Ed says). Angeline is the daughter of Wilfred LaPensee, a Frenchman, and Philomen Merasty, a Cree woman. Ed and Angeline celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in August of 2002.

During the time Ed was Vice-President of MMF at Thompson, he and Don McIvor, then the Mayor of Wabowden, worked together to set up Native Communications Inc. (radio). Don got an initial grand of \$75,000 from the government. Early on they traveled to Alberta to consult with Adrian Hope (a President of the Métis Nation of Alberta) who was instrumental in starting Native Communications in Alberta. For many years Ed served on the Board of Directors of Native Communications Inc.

In October/November of 2000, Ed chaired the Western Commercial Fisheries Conference, which was held in Winnipeg. Currently, Senator Head chairs the MMF Commission for the Métis Laws of the Hunt.



# Order of the Métis Nation Recipient **JIM SINCLAIR**



Biography as submitted by the Sinclair Family



Jim Sinclair was born on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1933 in Punnichy, Saskatchewan, of Indian parents denied their status under the Indian Act. Treated by the Canadian government as part of a group of Aboriginal people with no rights, he lived in a squatter community with no

running water or other services on a road allowance - a bush covered 66-foot wide strip of public land, reserved by the Crown for road building purposes. He was educated at various schools that accepted "road allowance" students. Some schools provided hot lunch programs for students, but excluded the road allowance people, who went hungry because their parents were squatters who did not pay taxes. Jim's first political involvements were in the Lestock / Punnichy district of Saskatchewan, where there had been an active Métis organization for several years. He became active in the Red Power Movement.

Jim became a field worker for the Métis Society in 1964, and worked throughout Saskatchewan organizing local groups. In 1967, he was elected to the board of the newly formed Métis Society of Saskatchewan. In 1971, he was elected President of the Métis Society, and held that position for the next 18 years. Under Jim's leadership, the Métis Society worked diligently to improve the living conditions of Aboriginal people, and sought to have their rights formally recognized. The Métis Society eventually became known as the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (AMNSIS), and became one of the most powerful and effective voices for its members in the country. It was also the first Aboriginal organization to implement a province-wide democratic one person, one vote election process. Jim worked extensively to organize people at the community level, to get them to sober up, take responsibility for their lives, and to lead others in the struggle for their rights. He learned to become an expert at using the media, at using confrontation politics to force government to deal with peoples' immediate needs and rights. He focused on

issues of importance such as housing, institutional racism, Aboriginal land rights, hunting, fishing and trapping rights, and education. He was part of the team who helped to establish a major network of alcohol treatment centers, along with the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Métis Studies and Applied Research, a well respected institution of post-secondary education in Saskatchewan.

In 1971, Mr. Sinclair organized 20,000 Aboriginal people at Batoche, Saskatchewan to rally for the rights of the Métis, and began discussion with federal and provincial governments regarding Constitutional rights. Jim helped to establish the Native Council of Canada, which included Métis and Non-Status Indians, serving as its first interim president, where he continued to struggle for welfare services, social programs and adequate housing. Over the years, Jim continued to pursue avenues to entrench the rights of Métis and Non-Status Indians in Canada's Constitution. During the late 1970's and early 1980's, Jim continued to lobby governments for inclusion of Métis People in Canada's Constitution, leading numerous delegations to the United Nations at Geneva and the British and European Parliament to speak on Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. He also opened discussions with the Archbishop of Canterbury regarding the Church's role in the plight of Aboriginal people, and met then with the Queen of England. In addition, Jim pressed the Federal Government to amend the Indian Act so that those people, primarily Indian women who had been denied status, could regain it.

In 1982, the Government of Canada invited Inuit, Métis and Indian People to discuss the definition of rights





# Order of the Métis Nation Recipient **SAM SINCLAIR**



## Biography as submitted by the Sinclair Family



Sam Sinclair has served his Nation and country well, and continues to do so today. Sam was born in Slave Lake in 1928, and remained there for the first 16 years of his life. From there, he joined the Canadian Army, where he served for 38 months. While in the Army, he was very active, not only

in duty, where he travelled from England to Belgium and then to Holland, but he was also very involved in sports. Mr. Sinclair was Track and Field Champion in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division in Holland, where he was competing against athletes that were in the British Empire Games and trained by persons who were in the Olympics. While in Holland, Mr. Sinclair earned the title of Middleweight Champion in boxing, and to this day, he and his son are the only Aboriginal persons to be inducted into the Boxing Hall of Fame. Sam Sinclair returned to Canada, and began to serve the Métis Nation. He became president of the Métis Nation of Alberta in 1979, where he served for 8 years, and during this time he sat on the board of the Native Council of Canada. But this wasn't his only job. In addition to this, Sam worked for 25 years

for the Alberta government, where his main focus was Aboriginal issues. Mr. Sinclair also sat on the board for the World Council for Indigenous Peoples, where he continued to travel to various third world countries such as Peru and Panama.

Sam Sinclair did find time in his busy schedule to marry Edna, his beautiful wife of 57 years. Sam is the proud father of 6 children, 17 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren. To this day, Mr. Sinclair continues to be very actively involved in the international and national arena, with the Métis Veteran's Association, where he was the President for 8 years and now sits as a board member. Mr Sinclair, you have served the Métis Nation well in the past and continue to do so today. We are very proud of his contributions.



## Order of the Métis Nation Recipient Jim Sinclair ...

and open the door for inclusion in the Canadian Constitution. The Métis took legal action against the Prime Minister when they were not invited, resulting in the Métis attaining equal representation and a voice at the Constitutional table. The Métis National Council was formed to represent the Métis at the table. For the first time since the death of Riel, Métis people had venues to meet the highest level of politicians in Canada. In 1987, during the last of four conferences on the Constitution, Jim took a strong and much publicized stand with the Provinces, particularly the Premiers of Saskatchewan and British Columbia, who opposed the rights of Métis people to a land base and self-government. Throughout the 1980's and 90's, Jim continued in the struggle for the rights of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada. He had four

private audiences with Pope John Paul. His relationship with the Pope facilitated his attendance in Fort Simpson, North West Territories, where the Pope openly supported Canada's Aboriginal People and their treaty rights. From 1994 to 1996, Mr. Sinclair led the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, formerly the Native Council of Canada. In 1996, was elected President of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples of Saskatchewan, a position that he continues to hold today.

He currently resides in Green Water Provincial Park in Saskatchewan, and is an avid golfer. Jim is proud of his association with his colleagues, who died struggling for the rights of Aboriginal People of Canada. He vows to continue their struggle until every Aboriginal person in Canada feels that they are truly part of Canada.



# Order of the Métis Nation Recipient **ELMER GHOSTKEEPER**

Biography as submitted by the Ghostkeeper Family



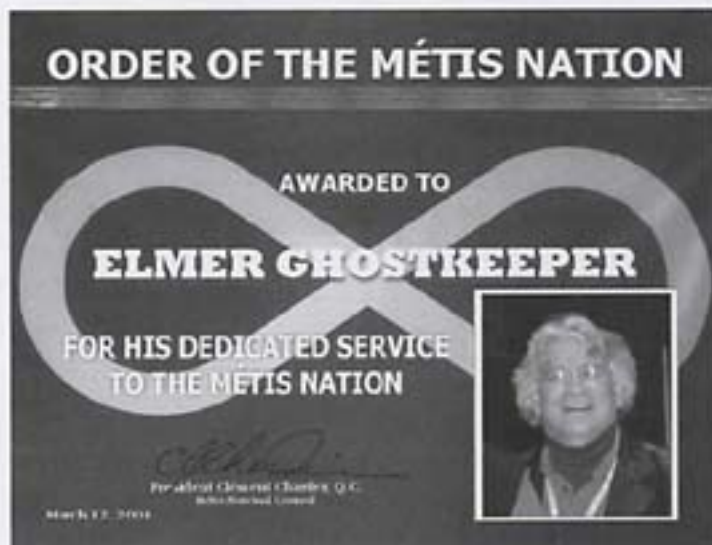
Mr. Ghostkeeper served as a survey technologist for Associated Engineering Services Ltd. from 1970 to 1972. He was the assistant City Engineer for the City of Whitehorse, Yukon Territory from 1973 to 1974. He was elected

President of the Alberta Federation of Métis Settlement Association, a Métis political organization representing Aboriginal land based people from 1980 to 1984. He was selected for the Canadian Young Achiever Award to attend the Canadian Constitution Repatriation Ceremony in Ottawa in 1982. He established and managed the Paddle Prairie Mall Corporation, a retail business from 1986 to 1991. He received the Ralph Steinhauer Award of Distinction in recognition of exceptional academic achievement for two years, in 1994 and 1995, where he studied for his Masters of Arts Degree in Anthropology at the University of Alberta in 1995. He created his own business, a partnership of Aboriginal wisdom and western scientific knowledge as an analyzing model, and works with that still today. He authored a book, "Spirit Gifting: A Concept of Spiritual Exchange" in 1996. He was elected a Fellow of the Arctic Institute of North America at the University of Calgary in 1996. He was a business group leader in Aboriginal Affairs for the Alberta Pacific Forest Industries Incorporated from 1994 to 1998. He was a visiting Aboriginal scholar at the New Sun Fellowship - McGill University, McDonald Campus, Montreal, in 1998. He served as the regional manager for Aboriginal Health Services in the Capitol Health Authority from 1999 to 2001. He was an international presenter at the 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Thinking, in Auckland, New Zealand in 2001. He was the director for the Center of Tripartite Negotiations for the Métis Settlement's General Council from 2002 to 2003. He established

Ghostkeeper Synergetics Limited, an Aboriginal consulting business, which he has worked for since 1984. Since then, he has created Ghostkeeper Global Limited, an Aboriginal multipurpose business, where he has worked from 2000 to present.

His educational background is very full: he received a diploma in 1968 in Civil Engineering Technology from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. In 1980, he achieved a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Alberta, Department of Anthropology; where he went on to receive in 1995 a Masters of Arts Degree from the University of Alberta, Department of Anthropology. His view is that life on Mother Earth is a gift, a test, a trust, and a temporary assignment from the Creator. His motivating force is studying, learning and teaching truthful wisdom and knowledge about wellness to self and others. He has a family of two sons and a daughter, and his passion is the horse.

Elmer Ghostkeeper played an important role in securing recognition of the Metis in the Constitution of Canada, lobbying the premiers of the western provinces, primarily Alberta, to ensure the support for Metis inclusion when it came to vote of premiers. Without this work, we may have seen a very different outcome. He is honoured tonight for making his important contribution to the inclusion of Metis in the Constitution and for securing the protection of Metis rights a gift for all.





# Order of the Métis Nation Recipient **HARRY DANIELS**

**Biography as submitted by the Daniels Family**



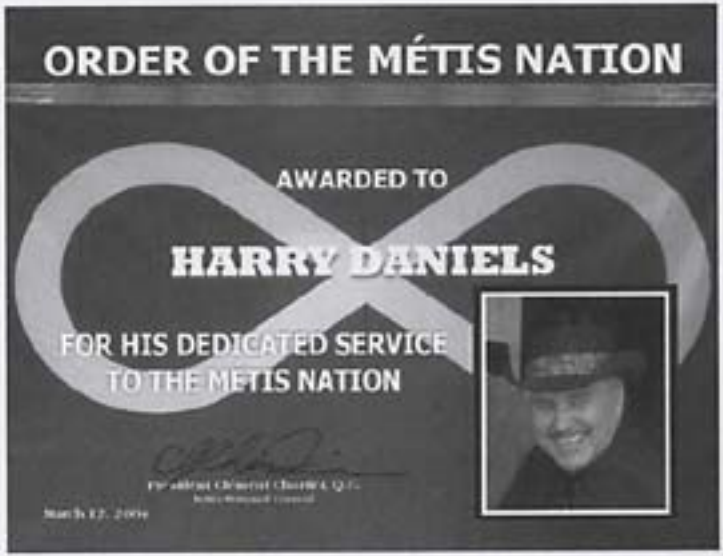
Harry Daniels was one of the founding members of the Saskatchewan Métis Society. In Harry's younger years, he was involved in a variety of labour union concerns. In 1966 to 69, he attended the University of Saskatchewan, majoring in political science. Harry has been involved in and

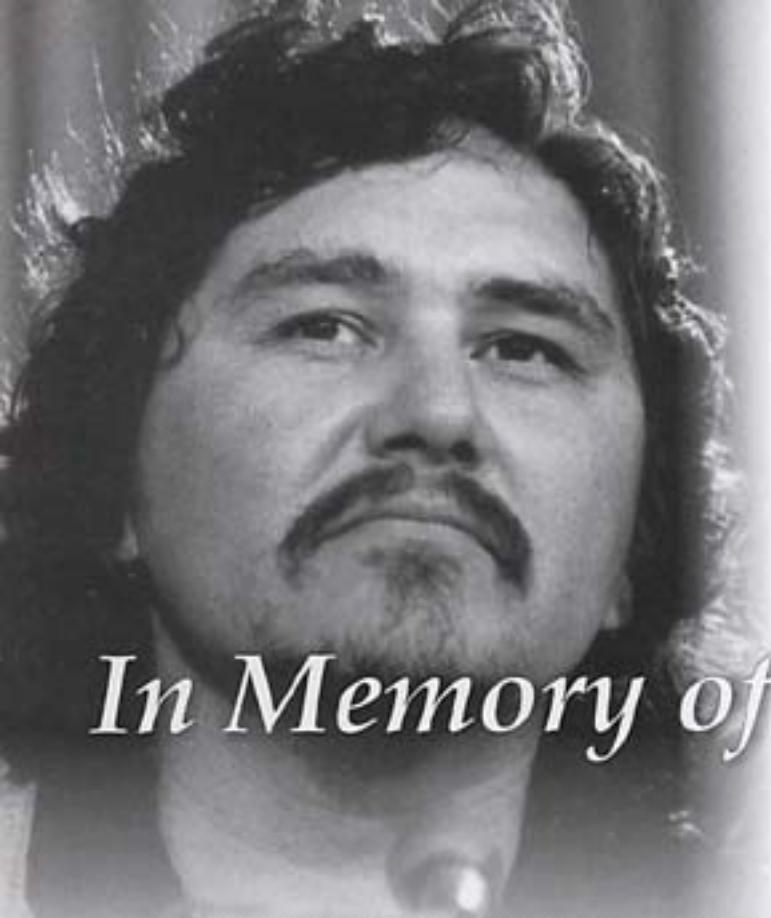
has worked on the serious issues and concerns facing native people throughout Canada for more than 39 years. When Harry was attending university, he travelled to the United States and met with the leaders of the Black Panthers and the American Indian Movement to learn their strategies and organizational techniques. His reputation as a radical and outspoken person came about due to these visits, and since then, with the RCMP bugging of his phone and tailing him for years after. Harry served as Administrator for the Métis Society of Saskatchewan. Harry served as native peoples organizer in the North West Territories. For the Lac La Biche Development Corporation in Alberta, Harry served as the research consultant. Harry served native people in a variety of positions, such as coordinator of Field Operations for the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Harry's first experience with elected office in native associations came in 1972, when he served as Vice President of the Métis Association of Alberta, and during this period, was also a representative for Aboriginal people at the United Nations conference on the Environment in Stockholm, Sweden. During 1974-75, Harry held the elected office of Secretary Treasurer of the Native Council of Canada. Harry was the director of Aboriginal Rights Research for the Métis Association of Alberta, and at the same time, was part of the non-governmental organizational group For Habitat, the United Nations on Human Settlements. At the Constitutional talks in Ottawa in the late 1970's, the Native Council of Canada had two seats. The Indian women formally requested a seat at the table. When the federal

government refused the women's group, Harry gave up one of the seats of the Native Council of Canada to the Indian women, giving the women's group a voice at the table. As a national Aboriginal leader, Harry gave his support to the Indian women in their struggle for inclusion in the Indian Act, for he felt if they had no rights, then there would be no rights for anyone. In 1979, Harry served as chairman of the Métis and Non-Status Crime and Justice Commission. Harry has written numerous papers, articles, submission papers, books on subjects relating to the Constitution and Aboriginal rights. Since 1974, Harry served several terms as President of the Native Council of Canada and its successor, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples until the year 2000. In 2002-2003, Harry taught at the University of Saskatchewan in Métis History for the Department of Native Studies. Harry received an honorary Doctorate of Law from the University of Ottawa.

Harry was born in Regina, Saskatchewan and presently resides at Regina Beach. During the 1970's and 80's, Harry was one of the leading Aboriginal leaders in national Constitutional negotiations. He negotiated with four Canadian Prime Ministers, and has been one of the most visible and charismatic modern Aboriginal leaders. Harry W. Daniels is most widely known among Métis people as the man who negotiated the expressed inclusion of "Métis People", whose rights are protected in the Constitution. Only two people in history have negotiated the expressed inclusion of the Métis in the Constitution: Louis Riel and Harry W. Daniels.





# *In Memory of Harry Daniels*

## *A Métis Voice for the People*

**A Message from MNC President Clément Chartier**

On behalf of the Métis Nation, President Clément Chartier offers his regrets on the passing of Harry W. Daniels on September 6, 2004. "It is a sad day for the Métis Nation as we say goodbye to one of the great Métis leaders of our time. I offer my condolences to the Daniels family and wish them well during this time of mourning and remembrance." Mr. Daniels is survived by his partner, Cheryl, sons Michael, Conway, Alexandre and Gabriel and daughters, Chantelle and Chigal.

Mr. Daniels committed his life's work to the advancement of Aboriginal people and will be remembered for playing a leading role in negotiating the express inclusion of the Métis into the Constitution Act, 1982. The Métis inclusion in s.35 of the constitution "recognized and affirmed" the Aboriginal rights of the Métis which led to the historic Powley decision by the Supreme Court of Canada which upheld our Aboriginal right to harvest. "The inclusion of the Métis in s.35 has implications that will be felt for generations," said President Chartier, "It will continue to be a significant building block in strengthening the Métis Nation and will be Mr. Daniel's legacy to the future generations."

Earlier this year, on March 12, the Métis National Council honoured Mr. Daniels for all his contributions to the Métis Nation when they presented him with the "Order of the Métis Nation". "The Métis National Council instituted the Order of the Métis Nation this year, to recognize the significant and historical

contributions of our Métis citizens. "There was no doubt that Harry W. Daniels should be one of its first recipients," said President Chartier.

Mr. Daniels was known as a man with his own style; epitomizing that unique Métis "joie de vivre" in the way he dressed and the way he talked. He was known for kicking up his heels in a jig or the two-step, whenever he had a chance or whenever the mood hit him. It was that passion for life and for the Métis way of life that endeared him to many, including those who would be political opponents. But those who thought that his personality meant that he was easy going at the negotiations table; soon found out that he was a brilliant and hard line debater who would not surrender his beliefs in the Métis Nation and Aboriginal rights.

During the constitutional negotiations, Mr. Daniels was asked, "Who are the Métis?" Mr. Daniel's famous response, "We know who we are; we know the generations of discrimination we have endured; we don't need anybody to tell us who we are. If you identify as Ukrainian or Italian, we don't question who you are or try to tell you who you are. We self identify, just like everybody else in this country."

A memorial service and celebration of the life of Harry W. Daniels was held at Regina Beach on September 16, the date which would have been his 64th birthday. Further celebrations took place in Ottawa. *Harry Daniels A Métis Man for the People* can be viewed on the Métis National Council website at [www.metisnation.ca](http://www.metisnation.ca)

# Métis Nation Honours Its Veterans

by David Chartrand,  
MNC Minister Responsible for Veterans

As has become a tradition at the Métis National Council, this year's General Assembly saw the celebration of Métis WWII and Korean Veterans and those Veterans who have served in peace time. This year the Métis National Council honoured: Larry Wilson McElrevey, of Vancouver, BC; Robert Berard, Edmonton, Alberta; Walter Schoenthal, Regina, Saskatchewan; Eugene Desjarlais, St. Laurent, Manitoba; and John Cadeau, Lake Huron, Ontario. As well, Minister Chartrand and President Clément Chartier honoured Major (Retired) Ed Borchert, MMM, CD. of Calgary, Alberta. Mr. Borchert has served as the Spokesperson on behalf of the National Métis Veterans Association for the last two years. He continues to lobby actively on behalf of the Métis Veterans and bring voice to the issues and concerns of the Métis Veterans who are now in very senior years. The Métis Nation believes in the great contribution that these men have made to the well being of the Métis Nation and this great country. We honour their courage and their spirit. We honour the sacrifice and the struggle. We honour their families and those many other Veterans who are no longer with us and those who could not be in attendance at this event. These men are among our greatest heroes and we are humbled by the freedom they have sought and the pride in which they stand tonight.



## To Honour Our Métis Veterans

Mr. John Cadeau served for twenty five years from 1951 to 1975. He retired as a Sergeant with his final post as CFB Downsview.

Mr. Cadeau was born on September 19, 1932 in the historic Métis community at Georgian Bay on Lake Huron. John Cadeau felt the need to serve his country and joined the army after turning 18 years old. He took his basic training in Kingston, Ontario. This was an experience for a young man who had not travelled. After basic training, he was moved to Edmonton for two weeks for final preparation for Korea. Then they were shipped via train to Seattle, Washington where 5,000 American and Canadian troops were moved to

the front lines via an old WW2 Liberty Ship.

In 1952, John was injured and evacuated to Japan to a British hospital. Afterwards he returned to Korea in the middle of the night via a fishing boat with several others and was returned to the front line. A year later, John was moved from 25th Infantry Brigade headquarters and spent two weeks at Mash 227 for an operation. In 1960 he participated in a peace keeping mission in Egypt. During his service, John Cadeau earned seven medals: 2 Korean War Medals; a NATO Medal; Korean Medal from United Nations; United Nations Emergency Force; and the Canadians Decoration Medal.



*Veteran John Cadeau*



Walter lived in Regina all of his 69 years. In 1950, at the age 14 he joined the Royal Canadian Army, which brought him to Germany in 1952 to help with the post-war efforts with the 1st Division Headquarters. This career unfortunately ended when his leg was crushed by a truck while on duty. This left his leg permanently paralysed from the knee down, and so he was discharged and went back to Regina.

Following a couple years as a Class 1 driver, he began to become very active with the local Aboriginal community. Walter joined the Métis Society of Saskatchewan in 1961, which led him to become one of the first

Area Directors for the organization, through which he helped establish what is now known as MACSI. Walter was a founding member of the National and Provincial Association of Friendship Centres, and served as the CEO of the Regina Friendship Centre. He has been a Senator for the National Association of Friendship Centres for 20 years, which is a lifetime position.

Although Walter retired at age 65, he is still active today with the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan.

Walter has 6 children and 5 grandchildren.

*Veteran Walter Schoenthal*

Robert Berard, a proud Métis, was born into a family of eight brothers and sisters on a farm near Tofield, Alberta.

Moving to Edmonton, Robert grew up with a passion for the military uniform, spending young summers training with rifles at peace-time army.

When the Second World War broke out, Robert intended to volunteer, but was unable to because his father was ill. After his father's death in 1941, Robert enlisted in the infantry with the Edmonton Fusiliers, and was sent overseas with the Regina Rifles.

In England, Robert was trained as a commando then

transferred to the Royal Canadian Engineers.

In 3 ½ years, Robert saw action in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany and rose to the rank of Corporal.

In the post-War years, Robert was married and had two children. Robert was also employed with the Alberta government as a boiler engineer.

It is with privilege that we recognize our Métis Brother, Robert Berard, and honour him for his selfless sacrifice on behalf of thankful world, and thankful Métis Nation. He is a role model and an exemplary representative of all of our proud Veterans.



*Veteran Robert Berard*



*Veteran Eugene Desjarlais*

Eugene was born in St. Laurent on March 5, 1919 and spent his early years working as a farmhand through the Great Depression, earning \$5.00 a month.

Eugene joined the Royal Canadian Army in 1941, beginning his first mission in Normandy. He fought in Europe throughout the war with 65th

Tank Transporter, he was also a qualified driver mechanic. Eugene was stationed in Holland following the war, until he left the service in 1946.

He then returned home to St. Laurent, and spent many challenging years re-adjusting from the war. He eventually found work in a coal mine in Bisette.

Larry Wilson McElrevy was born in Vancouver August 1, 1950. He was married on August 25, 1973 and has four children, three sons and one daughter who is serving in the Canadian Armed Forces, Edmonton.

Mr. McElrevy joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1974. He became a Field Engineer and served with 3 Field Engineer Squadron/ 1 Combat Engineer Regiment (1 CER) at the CFB Chilliwack BC. He was posted to CFB Shilo for four years, where he had the chance to see some of his Métis culture at various summer festivals throughout Manitoba. Mr. McElrevy was then posted back to CFB Chilliwack, but he took with him a new insight into the Métis half of his culture, as well as two new sons. He remustered to EME (mechanic) in 1984 and was posted again to CFB Chilliwack. He went to the

Golan Heights in 1989 and 1990 and retired at CFB Chilliwack 1 CER in 1993.

He joined the BC Corps of Commissionaires in 1996 where he is currently employed. He has been associated with the BC Métis Veterans Association since 2003. He laid a wreath for the BC Métis Veterans at the Remembrance Day ceremonies this year at CFB Chilliwack Cenotaph. Other Veterans informed him that this was the first time they could remember a wreath being laid for Métis Veterans. Mr. McElrevy said "It was a very proud day for me as my veterans brothers and sisters recognized what a contribution the Métis Veterans did for Canada, our home." He is currently helping the BCMVA locate retired veterans and helping them find their Métis heritage.



*Veteran Larry Wilson McElrevy*



Ed Borchert is an Alberta Métis born in Red Deer, Alberta. Formal education was plagued by failure and as a result, he claims to have only Grade One, page ten. In his own words, he is "a simple Warrior with the wisdom and guidance from our Elders."

He served Canada for 31 years as a member of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI). He held every rank from Private to Company Sergeant Major and retired as the Regimental Major for the PPCLI in 1995. After his service, he opened a Restaurant in the Museum of the Regiments in Calgary as well as a Construction

Company. In 2001, he sold them and retired to fight for the Rights of Métis Veterans, our Elders, our Mothers, and our Children. He says that all that he does is guided by the Creator, that he may bring honour to our Nation.

Ed feels that the creator has blessed him and our Métis Nation in many ways. The Government of Canada has just agreed to a Spiritual journey back to the Battlefields of Europe to "Call Home the Spirits of our fallen Warriors," a vision he had in 1998.

In all that he does, Ed continues to honour our Métis Nation and the Ancestors of our Nation.

*Major (Retired) Ed Borchert*



# Métis Nation Looks to Advance Métis Veterans Compensation File

by David Chartrand,  
MNC Minister Responsible for Veterans

Métis National Council Minister of Veterans Affairs and Manitoba Métis Federation President David Chartrand along with National Métis Veterans Association President Ed Borchert met face to face with the Honourable Albina Guarnieri, Federal Minister for Veterans Affairs. On the agenda, the Métis Veterans compensation file. This meeting comes following a recent appearance by the Métis Nation's leadership and Métis Veterans at the House Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. There, House Committee members were critical of the department's current handling of the Métis Veterans file.

President Chartrand was cautiously optimistic that we would have good news to report to Métis Veterans and the Métis Nation following this meeting. The Métis National Council sought an agreement from the Minister to a streamlined process to collect the necessary facts in order to quickly move forward on addressing Métis Veterans compensation issues. President Ed Borchert estimated only 700 Métis Veterans remain with us. Mr. Borchert is quoted saying "This number is decreasing everyday and the time to act is now! We cannot allow the on-going delays to continue. Canada's honour to these brave men and women who fought for this country is at stake."

In a letter which followed the meeting between the Métis delegation and the Minister of Veterans Affairs, the Minister also committed to follow-up as expeditiously as possible, with Métis Veterans and their spouses to ensure they are receiving the benefits and services for which they are entitled. These announcements followed the March 21, 2005 meeting. Minister Guarnieri committed to a partnership with the Métis Nation and to provide funding to explore the history and contributions of Métis Veterans during the wars and subsequent demobilization, including the review of the treatment Métis were subject to entering and returning from WWII and the Korean War.

"Minister Guarnieri has assured us that the Government of Canada values and honours the accomplishments and contributions our Veterans have made," explained President



Chartrand, adding that he was cautiously optimistic the past and ongoing challenges faced by Métis Veterans will be fully redressed in the immediate future.

"We are hopeful this will be Canada's most important first step as a partner with the Métis Nation towards ensuring our Veterans will be properly respected for their service to our country and for their personal and family sacrifices," President Chartrand said. "After the years of neglect and virtual abandonment of many of our service men and women, there is some government action," President Chartrand went on to say. "The government has acknowledged that this issue must be dealt with fairly and quickly before there are no Veterans alive to see any forthcoming expression of Canada's gratitude."

Last year was the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day Landing, with this year, the celebration of the liberation of Holland, following which was the V-E Day celebrations. The Métis National Council had submitted a proposal for support from Veterans Affairs, on behalf of the National Métis Veterans Association, to ensure available funding for the attendance of Métis Veterans at these events. No response was received this year to this request. To the best of our knowledge, no Métis Veterans were able to attend either of these historic events.

**above:**  
David Chartrand, President,  
Manitoba Métis Federation and  
MNC Minister Responsible for  
Veterans.

**facing page:**  
Veterans Larry Wilson McElrevey,  
Robert Berard, Walter Schoenthal,  
John Cadeau, and Eugene  
Desjarlais receive sashes and  
trophies in honour of their  
contributions to Canada and to  
the Métis Nation.

**inset:**  
President David Chartrand

photo credits: Kathy Hodgson-  
Smith

## McGill University Presents *Louis Riel Opera*

by Jennifer Brown



It was a cold Thursday evening when we stepped out of the Delta hotel in Montréal to make our way to the Louis Riel Opera put

on by McGill University's - Faculte de Musique. I had the honour of attending the event with President Chartier, President Poitras, Interim President Dumont, Women's Representative Rosemarie McPherson, and other wonderful people such as Kathy Hodgson-Smith, Keith Henry, and a handful of other people. We all hopped into taxis and made our way to the Place des Arts, Theatre Maisonneuve.

I wanted to start by acknowledging the cast of the Opera who did an exceptional job in their performance, it was amazing to see our culture, our heritage, our past, depicted

by individuals who sang and spoke with a commanding presence in both French and English. Luc Lalonde, a baritone, commanded the role of Riel; his ability to display the conflict and struggle that Riel faced at that time was amazing, in Act 2 - Scene 5 in Riel's Cell. I was brought to tears as one of the two girls who played Julie Riel (Riel's mother) embraced her son to remind him of his youth and renew his courage. Gabriel Dumont was played by Thomas Leslie, and though his role was depicted less in the opera it was still a stunning performance.

In their simple costumes (none of which included an actual sash) the cast of characters could transform from a fence into Métis scouts ready to defend their land from the invading William McDougall. McPherson and Keith Henry on each side of me. The stage was dark, Louis Riel was written above in bold, as the light trickled across centre stage a noose hung down, a man stood still as the audience came to silence. I

**above:**  
Jennifer Brown, National Spokesperson for MNYAC

**right:**  
MNA President Audrey Poitras, Harry Somers, Composer, and MNC President Clément Chartier

**left:**  
MNC President Clément Chartier, Dixie Ross-Neill - Director of Opera Studies, Faculty of Music, McGill University and MNA President Audrey Poitras

photo credits: Kathy Hodgson-Smith



knew what was going to happen; as all Métis children know the story of Riel - tried for treason, though murdered for the execution of Thomas Scott - and still I couldn't help but want to cry as they led Riel to the top of the gallows, wrapped him in a white cloth and lifted him to the darkened heavens in the rafters. Did I enjoy the opera in its entirety? Not at all. I can honestly say that I was disgusted in Scene 6 of Act 2 when they horribly depicted that would be a celebration for the Métis community. This I don't blame on the actors, as it was based on the original opera, however the cultural aspect of the Métis people was horribly done. Their "Métis Celebration" was essentially a poor example of First Nations powwow round-dance, with a Métis woman rolling on the ground with not one but two Métis men. I was ashamed to hear the young women sitting behind me state "they know how to party" in a very sarcastic tone followed by a laugh. I was sitting there in shock, because I haven't seen or heard of a traditional Métis celebration that was conducted in that way, or

perhaps someone wasn't telling me. The only other thing I found lacking in the story of Riel's life during that time period, was the inclusion of a traditional fiddle piece. Among the violins, violas, cello, horns, trombone, harp, piano and flutes, percussion and other orchestra pieces, a traditional Métis fiddle piece would have been lovely. At times though, in my heart I could hear the fiddle, and I truly believe that it would have only added to the thought and feeling behind the Métis people, as Riel did state, "My people will sleep for 100 years and when they wake, it will be the artists who give them back their souls."

I have to thank President Chartier and the Métis National Council for affording me this beautiful opportunity, because I don't think that this will be something I will have the chance to see again in my life time. Thank you for exposing me to new type of artistic exploration of our people, that experience is something I will always take with me.



## MÉTIS NATIONAL COUNCIL

[metisnation.ca](http://metisnation.ca)

# www.metisnation.ca

One People

*One Nation • One Vision*



THE MÉTIS NATIONAL COUNCIL  
BALLIEMENT NATIONAL DES MÉTIS



## *Métis National Council Environment* **Minister Dwayne Roth**

**Report to the General Assembly  
March 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005 Calgary, Alberta**

This fiscal year included varied activities overseen by the MNC's Ministry of Environment, which were sustained through the efforts of the Director of Environment and interim Environment file management through contract personnel. A hiring process is currently in progress to fill the Director position. [Note: Donald Sharpe has been hired as the new Director of Environment for the MNC.]

The Métis National Council Environment Committee consists of the Minister of Environment for the Métis National Council, and/or a designated Chairperson, MNC officials, and a political and technical representative from each of the Governing Members (GM). This committee is mandated to give advice to the Minister, to consider potential environment directions for the Métis Nation, to coordinate activities and discuss issues of common concern across the Métis Homeland. This committee is an important element of the success of the initiatives undertaken by Environment in this year. On the Métis National Council Environment Committee we have Minister Dwayne Roth, Robert Stevenson (Appointed Chairperson), David Hodgson and Dean Trumbley, MPCBC; George Quintal and Robert E. Lee, MNA; Peter Thrun and Dwayne Roth, MNS; William Flett and Dan Benoit, MMF; Anita Tucker and Paul Heighington, MNO; Rosemarie McPherson, Women of the Métis Nation; Jennifer Brown, Métis Nation Youth Advisory Council; Dale LeClair, Métis National Council. Thanks to Valerie Nicholls for her work on the Environment file for the last few months. Ms. Nicholls has since joined the MNC as Director of Intergovernmental Affairs.

The MNC and the GMs indicate the importance of working collectively to deal with issues, and also in planning and designing the direction of the Métis

Nation on environmental issues. Our voice needs to be included in all national dialogues in Canada. Challenges in this fiscal year included recognition that a significant portion of the MNC's work is pursued in response to the Government of Canada's agenda, rather than by an agenda identified by the Métis Nation. While the MNC engages with the government on many worthwhile projects incorporating Métis-specific priorities, the process is currently more externally driven than desirable, and than it could be, if core MNC environment capacity were established. Accordingly, the MNC has begun lobbying in earnest for such support, to be funded by Environment Canada.

The following is a brief overview of the current projects and their status:

### **Long-term Management of Nuclear Fuel Waste Initiative**

This is the largest environment project. It is funded by the industry-based Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) as well as Natural Resources Canada. Letters of agreement with the Governing Members (GMs) provide for flow-through funding to facilitate and report on Métis community dialogues on the options being considered for the long-term storage of nuclear fuel waste. The MNC's main role is project management and coordination, as well as interim and roll-up reporting on the projects and of the dialogue results to the funders.

The Environment Committee held a training session during its December meeting to ensure a common information base and allow GMs to discuss the information dissemination, collection, and dialogue process. GMs are currently completing their

dialogues across the Homeland and must report results to the MNC by March 31, 2005. While the main portion of this project will be completed shortly, a smaller portion will continue into the new fiscal year with follow-on activities, including review of the NWMO's draft report on Canadians' recommendations regarding which option to use for the long-term storage of nuclear fuel waste in Canada.

#### **Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) Review**

This act requires the federal Minister of the Environment to call for its five-year parliamentary review by March 31, 2005. A Contribution Agreement by Environment Canada (EC) to the MNC was concluded in January 2005; it provides for the research and development of a Métis Nation position paper that will (1) provide capacity and preparation by the Métis Nation for its paper/submission to the review committee, and (2) be submitted to EC officials for consideration/use in their preparation of their Minister's parliamentary submission. The draft position paper has been submitted to Environment Canada, and it will be considered by the Environment Committee at its meeting immediately following the General Assembly, to finalize and make a recommendation to the President and Board of Governors to adopt as the Nation's position on this matter, then prepare to present to the Parliamentary Review Committee.

#### **Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS)**

The MNC's participation in the CWS Aboriginal Capacity-Building Initiative regarding species at risk received late funding this fiscal covering February to

March 2005, following a protracted proposal process and attempts to negotiate a funding arrangement over much of the fiscal year. Main activities are information-, relationship- and meeting-based to allow review of, and enhance knowledge on, species at risk and habitat protection. GMs are participating in these activities via the Environment Committee, and updates to the MNC website to include species at risk information will also be made.

In related activity, the National Aboriginal Committee on Species at Risk is in preparatory stages and includes a member nominated by the MNC to represent its interests. A contribution agreement was anticipated for this fiscal year to fund the MNC's participation, and the official appointment of the MNC's member to this committee by the federal Minister of Environment was also anticipated; however, delays due to apparent CWS bureaucracy have stalled progress into the new fiscal year.

#### **Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA)**

The MNC participated in collaborative efforts with the Assembly of First Nations (ITK declined to participate) and CEAA to write a draft terms of reference (TOR) for CEAA's proposed Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC). The MNC Environment Committee responded following its December meeting discussion with feedback on the draft TOR, and further information from questions raised was subsequently shared. This project is on hold pending further investigation of the potential legal and policy consequences of the draft TOR and the MNC's participation.



**left:**  
The MNC Environment  
Committee:  
(left to right) Paul Heighington,  
MNO; MNC Minister of the  
Environment and MNS President,  
Dwayne Roth; Dan Benoit, MMF;  
Peter Thrun, MNS; Dean  
Trumbley, MPCBC; and Bob  
Stevenson, Committee  
Chairperson

photo by Kathy Hodgson-Smith

# Frequently Asked Questions

## 2004 Métis Harvester's Guide

### What is this Guide?

This 2004 Harvesters Guide has been prepared by the Métis National Council in collaboration with its Governing Members as a part of the Métis Nation's multilateral process on Métis harvesting.

The purpose of this Guide is to provide Métis citizens with helpful and timely information relating to harvesting in their region of the Métis Nation for this Fall. This Guide includes:

- background information on the *Powley* case;
- information on the various Métis harvesting initiatives and/or agreements that are in place for this Fall;
- regional contact information for Métis harvesters; and
- helpful lists on what to do if you are harvesting this Fall.

It must be emphasized that this Fall's harvesting season continues to be one of transition across of the Métis Nation Homeland. While we have attempted to provide Métis harvesters with as much information as possible in this Guide, it will not answer all of your questions and is not legal advice. As well, developments following the publication of this Guide may substantially change some of the information provided.

In order to avoid any confusion or misunderstandings, all Métis harvesters should contact their regional Métis government in order to obtain the most up-to-date information available prior to going out harvesting this Fall.

### What is the *Powley* case?

On September 19, 2003, with the release of the *Powley* case, the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed what the Métis people have been saying for over twenty years. Namely, Métis people have rights that are recognized in and protected by Canada's Constitution.

Moreover, the Supreme Court asserted that s. 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 is a "promise" to the Métis people and its central purpose is to recognize them, to value distinctive Métis culture, and to enhance their survival.

The Supreme Court did not define who are the Métis people in Canada. Instead, the Court set out who the "Métis" are for the purposes of s. 35. The Court said that the term "Métis" in s. 35 refers to distinctive Métis collectives who, in addition to their mixed ancestry, developed their own customs, way of life, and group identity-separate from their Indian, Inuit or European forebears.

Specifically, in the *Powley* case, the Court set out a "test" for establishing Métis harvesting rights protected by s. 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. The Court applied this test to the Sault Ste Marie Métis community and to the Powleys and found that the Powleys were exercising the Sault Ste. Marie Métis community's constitutionally protected right to hunt. However, this does not mean that the case is limited in its application to only the Sault Ste Marie Métis community. The test applies across the Métis Nation Homeland.



The *Powley* case also set out criteria for who can exercise a Métis right to harvest. These include: (1) you self identify as Métis; (2) you are ancestrally connected to a historic Métis community; and (3) you have been accepted as a member of a modern Métis community which has evolved from a historic Métis community.

The Supreme Court also emphasized the urgent need to develop more systematic methods to identify Métis rights-holders. In answer to government claims about Métis identification problems, the Court said that this issue was not an insurmountable problem and that the difficulties must not be exaggerated in order to defeat Métis claims.

Finally, it is important to remember that the *Powley* case confirmed that Métis harvesting rights, like all Aboriginal rights, are collective rights. While Métis harvesters can exercise the collective's right as an individual, it is the collective that protects and holds the right for future generations. Therefore, Métis harvesters should be aware of and follow Métis-made laws and regulations that are in place across the Métis Nation Homeland.



## What has been done since the release of the *Powley* case?

Since September of 2003, the Métis Nation has been working to ensure that the *Powley* case is respected by the federal and provincial governments and that it is implemented, in partnership, with the Métis Nation's governments.

Ultimately, the Métis Nation wants to ensure that legitimate Métis rights-holders, who are harvesting within Métis self-regulation regimes, are able to harvest for food without fear of harassment, screening or charges from the federal or provincial governments.

The Fall of 2004 continues to be a period of transition with respect to Métis harvesting. In some regions of the Métis Nation, much progress has been made and interim arrangements are in place. In others, provincial governments have unilaterally implemented policies which effectively continue to deny Métis harvesting rights.

Irrespective of these short-sighted positions on the part of some governments, the Métis Nation continues to push forward on fulfilling the promise of s. 35 to the Métis. In all regions of the Métis Nation, Métis governments are undertaking consultations on the *Powley* case, as well as, developing and implementing their own Métis harvesting regulatory regimes. In some regions, Métis governments are already operating their own Métis-made laws.

The sections that follow provide status reports on what is in place and happening across the Métis Nation Homeland.

## Ontario

Since 1995, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) has been facilitating the Métis harvest in Ontario under a Harvesting Policy that was developed in consultation with Métis harvesters. Under the MNO's Harvesting Policy, Métis citizens are issued Harvesters Certificates for harvesting within their traditional territory.

On July 7th, 2004, the President of the MNO and the Minister for the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) in Ontario reached a Four Point Agreement (Agreement) whereby the MNR agreed to recognize the MNO's Harvesters Certificates in all Métis traditional territories in Ontario identified by the MNO.

Unfortunately, on October 6th, 2004, the Minister for MNR unilaterally announced that the MNR would only recognize MNO Harvesters Certificates north of Sudbury. At the time of printing this Guide, the MNO continues to implement the Agreement reached on July 7th - with no distinction for Harvester Certificate holders south of Sudbury. MNO also continues to urge the MNR to uphold the Agreement in its entirety.

What does this mean for Métis harvesters in Ontario this year?

For valid MNO Harvester Certificate holders north of Sudbury, the MNR will recognize your Harvesters Certificate as long as you are harvesting for food in your traditional territory. You will be treated the same as First Nation harvesters and not face charges unless you are harvesting in a manner not consistent with safety and conservation values set out in the MNR's Interim Enforcement Policy.

For valid MNO Harvester Certificate holders south of Sudbury, the MNR may charge you for harvesting for food within your traditional territory. However, the MNO will support all harvesters with valid Harvesters Certificates who are harvesting within the terms of the MNO's Harvesting Policy against charges laid by the MNR.

For information on Métis harvesting in Ontario contact:

Métis Nation of Ontario  
1-800-263-4889 (Ontario Only)  
613-798-1488  
[www.metisnation.org](http://www.metisnation.org)

*the* Métis  
Nation *of*  
Ontario





## Manitoba

The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) is undertaking the Métis Harvesting Initiative to implement and protect the harvesting rights of the Manitoba Métis Community. Through extensive consultation, the Métis people have identified a series of objectives to guide the implementation of Métis harvesting rights in Manitoba.

To start, the MMF is issuing Métis Harvester Identification Cards. These Cards identify Métis harvesters and prevent the fraudulent abuse of our Métis harvesting rights by non-Métis.

The MMF has also set up a Métis Conservation Trust Fund to raise and distribute funds for local and regional Métis-directed conservation initiatives, and to support and safeguard Métis rights.

Finally, the MMF is committed to a Métis-developed management system and Métis Laws of the Harvest recognizing Métis rights, jurisdiction, and responsibility. This includes surveys and management tags for gathering wildlife and fisheries data as well as Métis-made common-sense rules to protect resources such as bag limits and seasonal restrictions.

What does this mean for Métis Harvesters in Manitoba this year?

In September 2004, Manitoba Premier Gary Doer pledged his government would follow the Powley case and respect Métis harvesting rights. Further, Manitoba Conservation Minister, Stan Struthers, agreed his department would honour the MMF's Métis Harvester Identification Cards and the harvesting practices of the Métis would be respected.

Despite promises made, the Manitoba Government has indicated that Métis Harvester Identification Cardholders may still be charged, have property seized, or both. If such cases arise, the MMF will support all validated Métis Harvester Identification Cardholders hunting, fishing, trapping, or gathering for food or domestic purposes, while following the Interim Métis Laws of the Harvest. The MMF is continuing to issue Métis Harvester Identification Cards.

For information on Métis harvesting in Manitoba contact:

Manitoba Métis Federation  
Natural Resources Unit  
1-800-665-8474 (Manitoba Only)  
204-586-8474  
[www.mmf.mb.ca](http://www.mmf.mb.ca)



### Interim Métis Laws of the Harvest FIRST EDITION



*Gabriel Dumont, Captain of the Hiert*



Guide to Métis Hunting, Fishing,  
Trapping, and Gathering

## Saskatchewan

In 1994, the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan passed the Métis Wildlife and Conservation Act ("Wildlife Act") and accompanying regulations. This Wildlife Act provides for the facilitation of the Métis harvest in Saskatchewan by providing for the issuance of licenses to Métis harvesters, as well as, establishing safety and conservation standards.

Since 1996, with the decision in *R. v. Morin & Daigneault*, Métis in northwest Saskatchewan have had their constitutional right to harvest for food recognized in law. Based on this decision, Saskatchewan Environment ("SE") unilaterally adopted a policy response that Métis, who were living north of the Northern Administration District ("NAD") in a community they have a longstanding connection to and who were practicing a traditional lifestyle can harvest for food without a license.



The MNS does not agree with SE's narrow interpretation of the law relating to Métis rights in the province and since the release of the *Powley* case it has pushed for negotiations in order to enter into a province-wide Métis harvesting agreement. To date, the Government of Saskatchewan has refused to negotiate with the MNS.

What does this mean for Métis harvesters in Saskatchewan this year?

The MNS has instructed Métis citizens in Saskatchewan to use their MNS Citizenship Cards for identification purposes for the harvest this fall and to follow the Wildlife Act. Since there is no agreement in place between the MNS and SE, Métis harvesters should be aware that they may be charged.

For Métis who permanently reside north of the NAD, in a community they have a longstanding connection to, and who are practicing a traditional lifestyle, they can harvest for food without a license.

For information on Métis harvesting in Saskatchewan contact:

Métis Nation - Saskatchewan  
1-800-343-6667 (Saskatchewan Only)  
306-343-8285  
[www.metisnation-sask.com](http://www.metisnation-sask.com)



## Alberta

On October 1st, 2004, the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) signed an Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement (Interim Agreement) with the Government of Alberta which recognizes the constitutionally protected harvesting rights of Alberta Métis.

The Interim Agreement applies to Métis harvesters who are members of the MNA or are eligible to be members. Current MNA membership cards will be accepted as proof that a person is a Métis harvester under the Interim Agreement.

What does this mean for Métis harvesters in Alberta this year?

The Interim Agreement allows Alberta Métis (i.e. members of the MNA) to hunt, fish, and trap on identified Métis harvesting lands within the province of Alberta. Métis harvesting lands include all unoccupied provincial Crown lands (as long as there is no development or activity on the lands that would make it unsafe); occupied Crown lands, such as wildland parks, natural zones and some types of provincial parks that have designated hunting areas. Métis can harvest on private land with the permission of the owner/occupants, or on leased land with the permission of the leaseholder.

Harvesting must be carried out in compliance with regional conservation measures and must conform to safety laws, such as no night hunting, shooting across a road, etc. Other applicable licenses are required when using a motorized vehicle or boat, gun registration and possession of firearms and other weapons.

For information on Métis harvesting in Alberta contact:

Métis Nation of Alberta  
1-800-252-7553 (Alberta Only)  
780-455-2200  
[www.albertametis.com](http://www.albertametis.com)



## British Columbia

In 2002, the Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia ("MPCBC") established the British Columbia Métis Assembly of Natural Resources ("BCMANR") in order to develop natural resources policy to support the sustenance and cultural needs of the Métis people in British Columbia. The BCMANR is continuing to consult with Métis citizens with a view to developing a implementing a Métis-made harvesting policy in the upcoming year. MPCBC will also begin issuing Métis Harvesters Cards in the near future.



Unfortunately, since the release of the *Powley* case, the Government of British Columbia has refused to formally negotiate with MPCBC with respect to Métis harvesting in the province. However, some discussions are occurring at the officials level.

MPCBC continues to push the Government of British Columbia to recognize and respect the implications of the *Powley* case.

What does this mean for Métis harvesters in British Columbia this year?

MPCBC encourages Métis citizens in British Columbia to continue to exercise their harvesting rights in the province in a manner consistent with the *Powley* case. Since there is currently no formal Métis harvesting arrangement between MPCBC and the Government of British Columbia for this Fall, Métis harvesters should be aware that they may be charged.

For information on Métis harvesting in British Columbia contact:

Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia  
Natural Resources Department  
1-800-940-1150 (British Columbia Only)  
604-801-5853  
[www.mpcbc.bc.ca](http://www.mpcbc.bc.ca)



## **If I plan to harvest this Fall, what should I do?**

1. Contact the Métis Nation government within the province you live in order to receive the most up-to-date information relating to this Fall's harvest;
2. Follow safety and conservation standards while harvesting;
3. Ensure you have the appropriate identification needed for Métis harvesting within your province (i.e. Citizenship Card or Harvesters Card); and
4. Bring this Guide with you and follow the steps outlined in the next section if you encounter an enforcement officer while harvesting.

## **What do I do if I encounter an enforcement officer while Harvesting?**

1. Be calm, polite and courteous throughout the encounter. Being confrontational will not be helpful.
2. Clearly identify yourself as Métis and state that you are exercising your Métis right to harvest for food. This is very important. If you do not identify as Métis then different law and/or regulations may be applied to your harvesting activities. As well, claiming a Métis right after you did not identify as Métis or identified as something else may be problematic for administrative and legal purposes.
3. Show your Métis Nation identification to the enforcement officer. This will depend on what part of the Métis Nation Homeland you are in. For example, some Métis Nation governments issue specific Métis harvesters cards (i.e. Métis Nation of Ontario, Manitoba Métis Federation and Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia) while others are using existing membership cards for the purposes of Métis harvester identification (i.e. Métis Nation - Saskatchewan and Métis Nation of Alberta).
4. Make it known to the enforcement officer that you were only harvesting for food, social or ceremonial purposes.
5. If the officer asks you questions like 'what do you know about Métis rights or the Powley case?' or 'what Métis community you are from and when was it formed?' - you do not need to answer. In fact, you should be aware that additional information you provide at that time may be used against you at a later date. All you have to say is that you are exercising a Métis right to hunt for food and provide your identification.
6. Ask for the enforcement officer's name and identification number and write it down. Also, if you can make notes on anything that was said during the interaction.
7. Report any encounters, seizures of charges to your respective Métis Nation government immediately.



## What else should I be aware of this Fall?

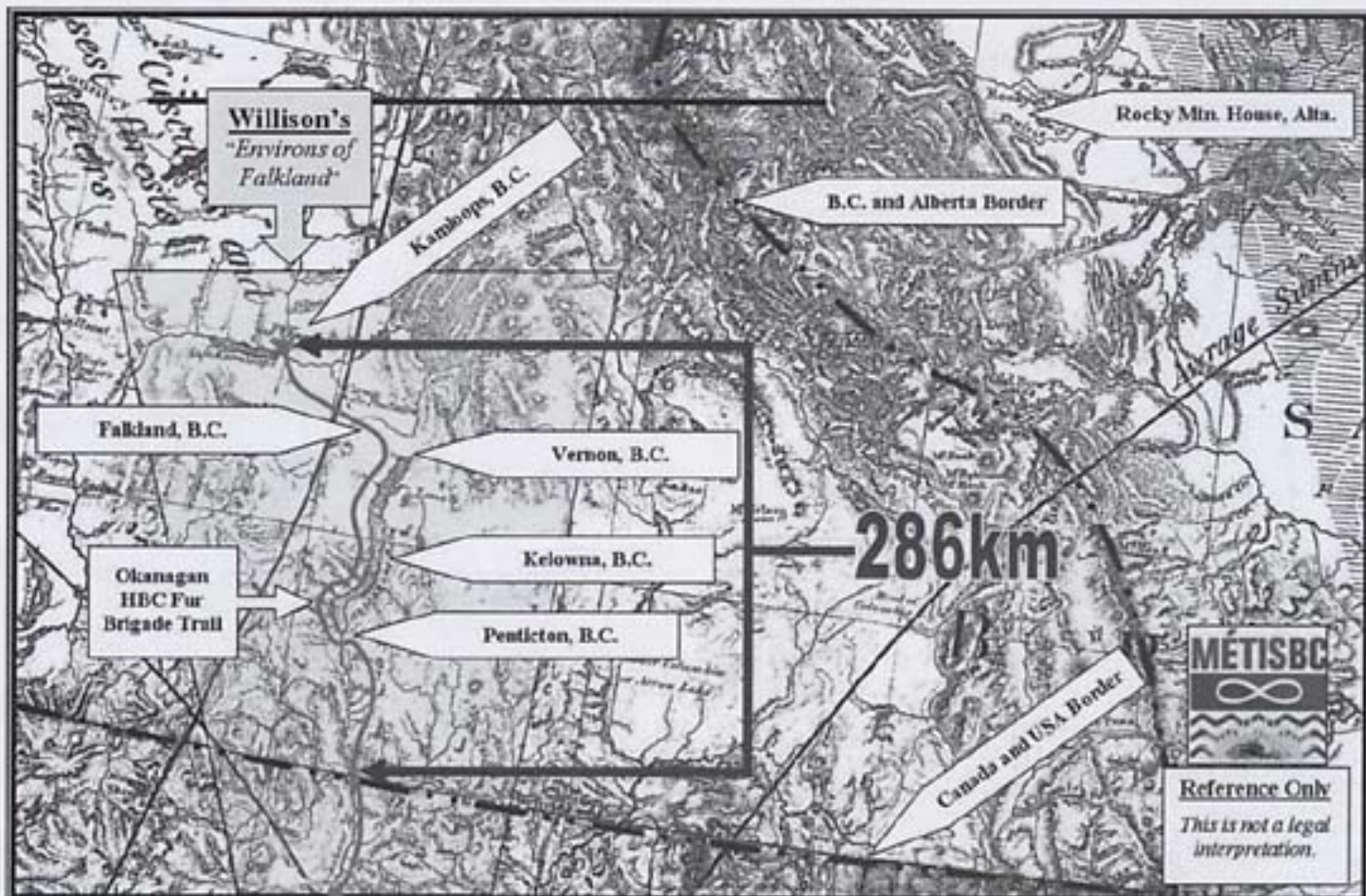
**Conservation & Safety:** It must also be remembered that no rights are absolute. In particular, there are limits on the Métis right to hunt when safety and conservation issues arise. For example, the law does not support a Métis right to harvest at night with lights or on road corridors. Also, if there is a legitimate concern about the survival of the animal, and all harvesting of that animal has been denied in a specific area, a limitation may be justifiably imposed on Métis harvesting.

**Gun Registration:** You are required to register your firearms pursuant to federal law. The *Powley* case did not exempt Métis from gun registration requirements.

**Harvesting with Non-Aboriginal People:** If you are harvesting with non-Aboriginal harvesters make sure they have the required licensing under applicable laws. Your Métis right cannot be used for the purpose of harvesting for other non-Aboriginal people or groups. This does not mean you cannot harvest with non-Aboriginal hunters just make sure they are properly licensed.

**Commercial Harvesting:** The *Powley* case dealt with the right of Métis to harvest for food. It did not deal with commercial rights. This does not mean that Métis do not have the Aboriginal right to harvest commercially, it simply means that there is no case law to support this claim at this time. The issue of commercial harvesting will have to be dealt with in another case.





## R. v. Willison B.C. Provincial Court Upholds Métis Hunting Rights

by Jean Teillet,  
of the law firm of Pape Salter Teillet

### *The Short Story of the Willison Case*

On November 26, 2000 near Falkland, B.C., Greg Willison was stopped by a conservation officer. Mr. Willison had a deer in the back of his half-ton truck and had no B.C. license. He produced his Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia (MPCBC) card. He claimed his right to hunt for food, as a Métis, without a license.

The conservation officer seized the deer and charged Willison under section 26(1)(c) of the B.C. *Wildlife Act* and s. 5(1) of the B.C. Regulations enacted under the *Wildlife Act*.

The case went to a trial that lasted seven days from June of 2004 to February of 2005. These kinds of trials are divided into three parts. This judgment deals only with Parts One and Two. Part Three has not yet been dealt with by the court.

Part One in a Métis hunting trial is about the actual facts of the hunting—Did Mr. Willison shoot the deer? Where did he shoot it? Did he have a license? When did he shoot it? Was the season open for that particular type of animal? etc. This part of the trial, in this case, was handled by way of

above:  
map illustrating the historic brigade route, which went from Fort Kamloops (where the North Thompson and Thompson River confluence, and which includes the Falkland area where Mr. Willison was hunting) to Fort Okanagan (now in the United States).  
Source: 1871 Railway  
Map courtesy of MPCBC

agreed facts. In

other words, Mr. Willison freely admitted hunting the deer, not having a B.C. license and that he was hunting for food on Crown land. What Mr. Willison claimed was that he had a right to shoot the deer for food and without a license by virtue of his Métis right.

Part Two of a Métis hunting trial is where the defendant, Mr. Willison in this case, has to prove that he has a Métis right to hunt in the area where he shot the deer. Mr. Willison has to prove, in this part of the trial, that there was a historical Métis community in the area, that it continues to exist in some form, that hunting was integral to the historic Métis community and continues to be significant to the contemporary community, and that he is a member of the contemporary Métis community. Mr. Willison was successful in proving all of this part of the trial.

Part Three is about Justification. No right are absolute and Métis hunting rights are no exception. The Crown can limit those rights if it can reasonably justify its actions. The court has set out a few reasons on which the Crown can limit aboriginal hunting rights—conservation and safety—being two of those reasons. This is the part of the trial that has not yet been dealt with and the reasons for judgment do not cover this issue.

Having noted that there is more to come, the reasons for judgment are still very important because they uphold a Métis right to hunt in the Okanagan/Thompson area of B.C. Because the B.C. government has refused to recognize that any Métis communities exist in B.C., this judgment is an important victory for the Métis in the Province and for the Métis Nation generally.

### *The Big Issues in Willison*

The biggest issue in the case was the meaning of "Métis community". When, if ever, did a Métis community exist in "the environs of Falkland"? Did a Métis community exist at the time of effective European control? What is the geographic extent of the historic Métis community? Is there a contemporary Métis community in the area? Is there sufficient continuity between any historic Métis community and a contemporary Métis community? Finally, is Mr. Willison a member of the contemporary Métis community?

The Crown conceded that Mr. Willison is Métis and that he has self-identified as Métis for his whole life. The Crown also conceded that Mr. Willison has an ancestral connection to the Thompson/Okanagan area through Métis ancestors who live and worked in the area.



### *The Thompson/Okanagan Area*

The trial judge found that there was an historic Métis community in the "environs of Falkland" which includes a geographic area that is part of the historic fur trade Brigade Trail. The trail went from Fort Kamloops to Fort Okanagan.

### *Why this area?*

The trial judge based his geographic description of the historic Métis community on evidence of the historic brigade route, which went from Fort Kamloops (where the North Thompson and Thompson River confluence, and which includes the Falkland area where Mr. Willison was hunting) to Fort Okanagan (now in the United States). This was the route of the fur traders in the first half of the 19th century.

The Métis were the people who transported the furs in the brigade system. They arrived in the area by 1810-1811 and established families in the area. The brigade system flourished for about 40-50 years.

### *The Historic Métis Community in the Thompson/Okanagan*

The trial judge found that the Métis community can be understood in reference to their relationship to the Brigade Trail of the fur trade. He held that a defining



characteristic of the Métis in B.C. prior to effective control (which he determined was 1858-1864) was their close association to the fur trade and the nomadic lifestyle it required.

Dr. Angel, the defendant's expert historian stated that some of the people who came to B.C. were Métis already because of their connections with Red River.

The trial judge called the historic community the "environs of Falkland" and limited the community to that portion of B.C., which is essentially the fur trade Brigade Trail from Fort Kamloops south through the Okanagan valley to what is now the United States border, and its environs.

The trial judge stated that for 40-50 years, in connection with the B.C. fur trade, the Métis were "indispensable" members of the B.C. aboriginal/non-aboriginal economic partnership. He was satisfied that a community of Métis persons existed during these years and that it was an historic rights-bearing community.

#### *The Contemporary Métis Community*

The judge referred to the Métis National Council's definition of Métis:

"Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, is distinct from other aboriginal peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation".

The judge said he had no hesitation in finding that there exists a Métis community in the Thompson/Okanagan area. He said it was apparent that the Métis seek each other out and that their purpose in "seeking each other out is to enhance their survival as a distinct community and to protect practices that were historically important features of Métis communities... I do not believe the existence of the community turns on the precise number of persons, but rather the conclusion that there exists a meaningful community for the relevant purpose." (par 111-112)

The judge stated that provided that persons meet the membership criteria set out in *Powley*, he did not believe it necessary to establish that every member of the local Métis community can demonstrate a personal ancestral connection to the particular Métis persons who formed the B.C. ancestral community. Mr. Willison has that connection.

Based on this, the trial judge was satisfied that Mr. Willison is a rights-bearing member of the local contemporary Métis community.

#### *Continuity between the Historic & Contemporary Métis Community*

The Métis came to the Thompson/Okanagan area in 1811 and by the 1860s they are largely invisible.

However, they continued in and around Kamloops. As in *Powley*, the trial judge noted that there was evidence of the Métis culture going "underground" due in part to discrimination. He reiterated the Supreme Court of Canada's statement in *Powley* that the continuity requirement focuses on the continuing practice of the members of the community, rather than on the community itself.

#### *Does this mean all Métis in B.C. have the right to hunt?*

Strictly speaking the judgment will apply to the Métis community in the "environs of Falkland". That is, those in the Thompson/Okanagan area along the old fur trade Brigade Trail. However, it should be taken as a precedent for the existence of Métis communities in B.C. and that they have harvesting rights. It would be astonishing if Métis in only this area of B.C. could prove hunting rights. More likely there are many areas of B.C. where Métis have harvesting rights, if not throughout the Province. The Métis will have to undertake research to prove their rights in other areas, as it is unlikely, in light of the judge's limitation on the geographic area of the Métis community, that the B.C. government will accept this case as a province-wide hunting right for all Métis in B.C.

#### *If Métis go hunting or fishing will they be charged?*

Based on our experience in the rest of Canada, it is likely that the B.C. government will continue to charge Métis who try to exercise their harvesting rights, especially those who live outside of the "environs of Falkland". The MPCBC will make every effort to negotiate with the B.C. government so that Métis throughout B.C. can exercise their harvesting rights without fears of charges.

#### *What happens now?*

Because the issue of justification has not been dealt with, the Crown may choose to return to court and present justification evidence to show that the B.C. government has reasonably denied Métis hunting rights. The usual attempt by provincial governments is to try to justify their regulatory scheme based on conservation and safety.

Alternatively, the Crown may decide not to present justification evidence and may accept the court's finding that Métis have harvesting rights in B.C., at least in the "environs of Falkland". Or, the Crown may simply appeal this case to the B.C. Supreme Court.

# Hunt for Justice Continues

by Jason Madden,  
General Counsel

Métis National Council President, Clément Chartier, joined with the leadership of the Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia (MPCBC), in heralding the *R. v. Willison* decision of the British Columbia Provincial Court which recognizes and affirms that Métis in British Columbia have the right to harvest for food.

The *Willison* case began back in November 2000 when Greg Willison, a citizen of the Métis Nation, was stopped by a conservation officer outside of Falkland, British Columbia. Mr. Willison had a mule deer and informed the officer he was exercising his Métis right to hunt for food. He produced his MPCBC membership card to the officer. The officer seized the deer and charged Mr. Willison under the *British Columbia Wildlife Act*.

After a 6 day trial, Mr. Justice Hugh C. Stansfield of the British Columbia Provincial Court found that the Métis community in and around the environs of Falkland has a right to hunt for food that is protected by s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. Further, the Judge found that Mr. Willison is a member of that rights-bearing Métis community and was exercising a constitutionally protected right to hunt for food. In his ruling the Judge recognized the legitimacy of the Métis National Council's national definition for citizenship within the Métis Nation and the work of the MPCBC on implementing an objectively verifiable Métis identification system that should be recognized by governments.

President Chartier once again called on governments from Ontario westward to respect the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *R. v. Powley* and the mounting lower court judgments which recognize and affirm Métis have a constitutionally protected right to harvest for food.

President Chartier said, "The Métis Nation continues to be forced to use the courts in order to ensure governments respect Canada's Constitution. This approach does not uphold the honour of the Crown. Métis remain willing to negotiate. We do not understand why some governments prefer to waste taxpayer's money on costly litigation rather than working collaboratively with Métis governments."

The Métis Nation continues to face challenges in Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan:

- In Ontario, the Métis leadership continue to urge the

Government of Ontario to fully honour the Four Point Agreement reached between the Métis Nation of Ontario and the Ministry of Natural Resources back in July 2004;

- In Manitoba, many charges have been laid against Métis harvesters and several court dates have been set throughout that province, including, the case of Will Goodon which is set to be heard in January 2006;

- In Saskatchewan, a decision in *R. v. Laviolette*, a Métis fishing rights case which will deal with the denial of harvesting rights to Métis who live south of the Northern Administration District in that province, is expected to be delivered on July 15, 2005 in Meadow Lake.

President Chartier encouraged all governments to follow the lead of the Government of Alberta on respecting Métis rights and working with Métis governments. Last fall, that government signed an Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement (IMHA) with the Métis Nation of Alberta. The IMHA recognizes Métis can harvest for food in Alberta while ensuring that conservation and safety.

"It's is clear that the courts are willing to ensure justice is done even if governments refuse to do their jobs by respecting Métis rights. I urge these remaining provincial governments initiate good faith negotiations with Métis governments in order to implement the *Powley* decision rather than continuing to force our hunt for justice in the courts."

The Métis National Council represents the Métis Nation within Canada at a national and international level.





THE MÉTIS NATIONAL COUNCIL  
RALLIEMENT NATIONAL DES MÉTIS

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September 12, 2004

The Hon. Paul Martin  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Parliament Hill  
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

On behalf of the Métis National Council I thank you for the invitation to participate in the special meeting on Monday, September 13, 2004 to discuss health issues of particular concern to the Métis Nation. This is certainly an excellent opportunity for us to address the many health issues which continue to plague our people, which we look forward to doing in our opening statement and ensuing discussion.

For our people, the issues surrounding health are much more complex and illusive than for the Aboriginal peoples and governments represented by the Assembly of First Nations and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the advocacy organizations, the Native Women's Association of Canada and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples. In particular, if any substantial progress is to be made with respect to the health status of our people, the issue of s.91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* which authorizes the government of Canada to enter into relationships with the "Aboriginal peoples" or "Indians" and their governments must be resolved. To date your government maintains that s.91(24) does not encompass the Métis and therefore uses it as an excuse not to provide most government services to the Métis Nation: services which are generally provided to Indian and Inuit peoples.

In addition, we have struggled for many generations to have our mere existence as a people or nation recognized by the government of Canada. This of course was not the case when armed forces were sent west to suppress our people in the late 1800s and in the later scrip commissions which were used to dispossess our people from their lands, and the subsequent denial of access to the resources of those lands, compounding the denial of our Aboriginal rights, including Aboriginal title to our lands. It is interesting to note that the Supreme Court of Canada, per curiam, in *R. v. Blais* on September 19, 2003 referred to this history of scrip speculation as "sorry chapter in our nation's history", while Judge White, of the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan, during the trial in *R. v. Laliberte* commented that if necessary he could take judicial notice of the fraud permeating the scrip process.

Not only did these actions take place historically, modern day adverse activities continued to be faced by our people. For example, in the 1930s the Métis community at St. Madeleine, Manitoba was uprooted and their homes burned to the ground. The same thing happened to the Métis at Crescent Lake, Saskatchewan in the 1960s. Métis traditional resource users were also displaced from their homes and harvesting areas in portions of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1954 with the creation of the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range. They have yet to be adequately compensated, while their First Nations neighbors have been dealt with. The same sorry story with respect to our Métis Veterans who valiantly served Canada and the free world. They are still patiently waiting for their turn to be dealt with honestly and admirably.

The Métis Nation has a distinct and unique history, as well as geographic territory. We have a common history, sense of community, language (Michif), culture, music, way of life and have expressed acts of solidarity when necessary. No where else in the Americas has this form of genesis or emergence of a new and distinct Aboriginal nation occurred.

We wish to make it abundantly clear and state unequivocally that the Métis National Council is the sole and legitimate representative of the Métis people or nation within Canada. In this connection, we extend our warmest and most sincere thanks to you for being wise and brave enough to recognize the existence of our people and nation, and acknowledging us as the "Métis Nation".

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Is it then little wonder why we face the health conditions we do today? While the special meeting will address the obvious and daily health problems encountered by our people, I believe it is also critically important that we address the underlying or root causes of our current conditions. In particular, our people are suffering from a spiritual and psychological fatigue. There is a certain malaise, or underlying unhealthy state being experienced by our Nation, based on the sad and unfortunate actions visited upon us by the colonial and Canadian governments historically and the continued federal government denial of our rights and our exclusion from most programs and services provided to the other Aboriginal peoples (Indians and Inuit).

If we are to successfully deal with the health status of the Métis people, while dealing with the immediate and daily issues, we must also take bold forward steps to bring the Métis people and nation to a healthy state and a position equal to that of the other Aboriginal peoples. This we maintain, must proceed simultaneously to the long and overdue improvement in the health status of Aboriginal peoples which you are addressing through the special meeting.

In the spirit of moving forward, I propose the following action:

1. Entering into a Métis Nation Canada Framework Agreement.

We are encouraged that in follow-up to the April 19<sup>th</sup> Canada-Aboriginal Round Table that you have asked the Federal Interlocutor for Métis to begin this initiative. We look forward to a successful conclusion in the near future. Reflecting back at the breakfast meeting of March 11, 2004, in raising this matter with you, I also proposed that a companion action to this Agreement would be the mandate by the Cabinet for the Federal Interlocutor to enter into negotiations with the Métis Nation.

2. Canada - Métis Nation Relations Act.

It is proposed that your government pass an Act acknowledging the historic contributions of the Métis Nation, recognizing the Métis National Council and its Governing Members as the representatives of the Métis Nation in its relationship with Canada, and the central role that they play in providing public services to Métis people, accountability and so forth. The subject matter of the Act could be negotiated between our respective officials and leaders.

3. Section 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*

Using the 1939 *Re Eskimos* case as a precedent, the question of whether the Métis fall within the term "Indians" in s.91(24) should be referred to the Supreme Court of Canada.

4. Scrip process under the *Dominion Lands Acts* (1874-1930)

- a) The scrip process and legislation providing for the process (with related Orders in Council) were the creations of the federal government, acting unilaterally without the free and informed consent of the Métis. As the legitimacy of this legislative action and related processes is highly questionable, and as the federal government unilaterally imposed this scrip system/process on the Métis, the federal government should initiate a judicial review in order to determine if such action was legally capable of extinguishing the Aboriginal title of the Métis, and if it was, whether extinguishment actually was effected as the system was so fundamentally flawed and rife with fraud. In any such judicial review, the Métis National Council and its Governing Members would have to be accorded standing as a party, with the fiscal resources to participate in a meaningful way. *Or:*
- b) The establishment of a fifty million dollar fund for the Métis National Council to continue with its current and future litigation with respect to the questions outlined in paragraph a). In particular, the Métis National Council is a party, along with the Métis Nation Saskatchewan and the Métis of northwest Saskatchewan in a Statement of Claim filed in 1994, seeking a declaration that the Métis of northwest Saskatchewan continue to have Aboriginal title to the lands and resources of northwest Saskatchewan. Further, the Governing Members from the prairie provinces through the Prairie Métis Leaders Forum are currently exploring the potential for filing Statements of Claim throughout the rest of the prairie provinces outside of northwest Saskatchewan. *Or:*
- c) Establish a Royal Commission on Métis Land Questions, with a specific mandate to examine the questions outlined in paragraph a), reporting its findings, along with recommendations. The mandate and terms of reference should be worked out with the Métis National Council. In addition, adequate fiscal resources must be made available to the Métis National Council and its Governing Members to ensure that we are able to make well researched and documented submissions to the Commission. *Or:*

- d) Establish a Métis Nation Claims Commission, similar to the Indian Claims Commission, which will hear submissions from the Métis National Council and its Governing Members, the federal government and provincial governments. The mandate and terms of reference would be worked out with the Métis National Council. As in paragraph c) adequate resources would be made available to the Métis National Council and its Governing Members.

5. Section 31 of the *Manitoba Act, 1870*

The Métis National Council fully supports and endorses the letter of September 7, 2004 from President David Chartrand to you, in which a solution to address the longstanding issues contained in that letter is provided.

It has now been 22 years since s.35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* has come into force. While we have made some gains, especially with the *Powley* decision in the Supreme Court of Canada last September, and through a relationship with Human Resources and Skill Development Canada, there remain many unanswered questions, and in some sense, lack of movement by the federal government in recognizing Aboriginal governments. By and large we are still treated as "organizations" while we have made substantial progress in internal governance developments. There are three constitutionally recognized peoples, with representative governmental infrastructures and processes. This reality must be taken into account.

Any success in federal government-Aboriginal peoples relationships must be based on that recognition. The days of pan-Aboriginal and advocacy group representation must be abandoned. Only peoples and nations have the right of self-determination. Only such peoples and nations are capable of forming governments. As you have well recognized, we must now do business on a government to government basis. To me this includes meetings at the highest political levels.

In closing, I want to reaffirm that the past injustices cannot be addressed through symbolic action. That is why the Métis National Council remains steadfast in its rejection of any form of pardon for Louis Riel. Mr. Riel and many other Métis fought and died for the rights and well-being of the Métis. That is what we continue to strive for. That is what the federal government must address. We believe that you can, and will, lead this effort on behalf of your government.

The Métis National Council Board of Governors is pleased that you continue to lead this country's government and look forward to a meeting with you in the near future so that we can further explore the above proposals and other subject matters of concern to our Governing Members. In the meantime, we are encouraged by the special meeting on health and look forward to working with your ministers and the provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia in a multilateral process as agreed to by the Hon. Ralph Goodale, then Federal Interlocutor for Métis, in 2003.

Yours sincerely,



Clément Chartier, Q.C.  
President

c.c.: Hon. Andy Scott  
Hon. Sue Barnes  
Hon. Irwin Cotler  
Members of the Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs  
Board of Governors, Métis National Council

## *Métis Nation Releases Compilation of Canada - Aboriginal Peoples Policy Papers*

The Métis National Council released its compilation of policy papers from the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable sectoral sessions process. The papers focus on the areas of Health, Life Long Learning, Housing, Economic Opportunities, Negotiations and Accountability.

In order to prepare these policy paper, the Métis Nation undertook a series of consultations with Métis leadership, Métis community representatives, officials working in Métis program and services delivery, academics and experts in these respective sectors. Clément Chartier, President of the Métis National Council stated, "I would like to thank all of the people who participated in our consultations and represented the Métis Nation in the various sectoral sessions. I look forward to working with the Government of Canada in order to implement the excellent ideas, proposals and recommendations that were brought forth on behalf of the Métis people."

While each policy paper includes a series of specific outcomes relating to the specific sectors, several main themes flow throughout the papers and their recommendations:

**Recognition:** There is a need for the Government of Canada to formally recognize the Métis Nation's governments and their respective jurisdiction and responsibility to govern their own affairs and deliver services to Métis people. Based upon this recognition, intergovernmental government-to-government relationships between

the Government of Canada, the Métis Nation and other parties (e.g., provinces) can be successfully implemented.

**Reconciliation:** The Supreme Court of Canada has said that reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples must occur and that it can only occur through negotiations. The Métis remain the only constitutionally recognized Aboriginal peoples with which the Government of Canada still refuses to formally negotiate with even after the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *Powley*. This impediment must be overcome in order to begin the process of true reconciliation with the Métis people.

**Inclusion:** There is a large policy vacuum in the federal system with respect to how to deal with the Métis. This makes many departments hesitant in dealing with the Métis or unaware of how to deal with the Métis Nation's unique governance structures and institutions. The 2003 Speech from the Throne commitment to find the place of the Métis within federal policies must be realized. A collaborative process, to achieve this commitment, must be put into place. Through establishing a coherent and consistent approach to Métis engagement and involvement systemic exclusion for Aboriginal programming by intent or by design will be eliminated (e.g., Health Canada's current exclusionary approach to Métis).

**Self-Sufficiency:** A key value and aspiration of the Métis people has always been self-sufficiency. Métis

people pay federal and provincial taxes (e.g., approximately \$550 million annually in personal income taxes alone). Métis do not seek a 'handout' from any level of government. The Métis Nation seeks strategic investments in their governance structures and institutions to improve the quality of life of its citizens on par with other Canadians. Numerous strategic investments were identified, including: child care, support for Métis education trusts, community personal health care workers, a patient capital fund for economic development, etc..

**Building on Success:** The Government of Canada must build on what is working and producing results rather than continuing to establish new delivery structures and institutions for every new federal program. Human Resources Social Development Canada's (HRSDC) Aboriginal Human Resource Development Strategy (AHRDS) was highlighted as a best practice. This developmental platform should be enhanced by HRSD and built upon by other federal departments.

**Strengthening Accountability:** The Métis Nation believes in strengthening the accountability of the Government of Canada and Métis governments and institutions to Métis people. Strengthening accountability will come through building on what is working, horizontally managing resources, setting clear targets and measuring results and moving towards a fiscal transfer relationship. There is a clear

*United Nations Special Rapporteur*

## *Urges Action for Canada's Métis*

OTTAWA (April 18, 2005) — The Métis National Council is encouraged with the findings of a United Nations report examining Aboriginal human rights and fundamental freedoms in Canada.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, outlined in his report to the UN that the Canadian government appears committed to closing the unacceptable socio-economic gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. However, he was also clear with regard to the Métis people that important areas of concern remain to be addressed, noting in particular:

"Métis land claims have not been dealt with in any significant way, except partially in Alberta, leaving the Métis without a land and resource base and with no way of settling their grievances at the national level."

Mr. Stavenhagen turned to Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, recognizing it as the basis for Aboriginal and treaty rights while specifying that the interpretation and implementation of these rights has not progressed as it should:

His conclusions to the UN noted,

"While Aboriginal persons may eventually attain material standards of living commensurate with other Canadians, the full enjoyment of all their human rights, including the right of peoples to self-determination, can only be achieved within the framework of their reconstituted communities and nations, in the context of secure enjoyment of adequate lands and resources."

On June 1, 2004, Mr. Stavenhagen met in Winnipeg with Métis National Council President Clément Chartier, Métis Nation Minister of Social Development and Manitoba Métis Federation President David Chartrand and Métis Nation Minister of International Affairs and

Métis Nation of Ontario President Tony Belcourt. The Rapporteur's report includes conclusions and recommendations on a number of Métis Nation issues discussed during that meeting.

The Métis National Council, in keeping with the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable process commenced by the Prime Minister in April 2004 and the needs outlined in Mr. Stavenhagen's report, is urging the Canadian government to follow through on its promise to provide concrete solutions to the issues facing the Métis Nation.

President Clément Chartier commented today that, "The Special Rapporteur's report speaks to ensuring the social, economic and cultural survival and well-being of Métis in Canada. Our proposed Canada-Métis Nation Framework Agreement provides a solid basis for our collaborative efforts to move forward. On behalf of the Métis Nation, I urge the federal and provincial governments to take immediate action."

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*Métis Nation Releases Compilation of Canada - Aboriginal Peoples Policy Papers ...*

need to negotiate and implement a Métis Nation - Canada Accountability Framework in order to move forward on these objectives.

Collaboration: There is a need to get partners working together to achieve better results. The Métis Nation is supportive of working collaboratively with the Government of Canada and provinces from Ontario west in a

Métis-specific multilateral process (e.g., expanding the existing Métis Nation Multilateral Process on Harvesting and Access to Resources) to achieve this.

The Métis National Council continues to participate in the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable follow up work in order to turn many of these recommendations into outcomes for

the upcoming Policy Retreat between the Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Aboriginal Leaders, as well as, the First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal Issues. A more comprehensive overview is provided here with a full copy of the compilation available on the MNC website ([www.metisnation.ca](http://www.metisnation.ca)).

# Metis National Council Embarks on National Research Strategy

*Do Your Genealogical Searches Here, Amongst Other Things*

by Kathy Hodgson-Smith

## Background

On September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2003, in *R. v Powley* ("Powley"), the Supreme Court of Canada held that the Métis are a distinct Aboriginal people who have existing constitutionally-protected rights. Specifically, the Court articulated a test for establishing a Métis right to hunt and who can exercise a Métis right to hunt. In the 2004 Federal Budget, resources were allocated to the Office of the Federal Interlocutor (OFI) to provide capacity support to the Métis National Council ("MNC") and its Governing Members in order to undertake work related to the multilateral process and other issues arising from Powley. The Metis National Council work plan submitted under the *Métis Nation's Post-Powley Resources Umbrella Agreement* and focused on those areas of research related to the questions which arose from the Supreme Court of Canada decision and to advance those questions which the Metis Nation feels are pertinent to ensuring the future of the culture, history, language and distinct identity of the Metis people.

## Metis National Council Research Strategy

The MNC undertook research related to the overall objectives of the Post-Powley resources which, jointly funded by the OFI, the MNC and the Governing Members (Metis Nation of Ontario; Manitoba Metis Federation; Metis Nation - Saskatchewan; Metis Nation of Alberta; Metis Provincial Council of British Columbia), based upon an agreed upon terms of reference. The overall goal of the National Research Strategy (NRS) is to undertake a coordinated research effort on the history of the Metis Nation, bringing together community-based and archival research experts and methodologies. A key component of this activity will include the development of research partnerships with existing research institutions, research organizations and/or individual researchers. As part of the NRS, through the work of the National Resource Team (NRT), national standards and methodologies will be determined which will guide the work conducted in this and future research efforts. The NRS also includes the compilation and inventorying of past research studies related to the Metis Nation





generally, historically, and to bring together information on contemporary Métis land and resource use where appropriate. Research forums are planning to bring together research experts, academics and community members active in research initiatives across the Metis Nation Homeland.

Within 2004/05, the Metis National Council identified the following research components:

I. The establishment of a National Research Team (NRT) to coordinate research activity to be undertaken by the Metis National Council and oversee the development of research standards and guidelines for research conducted by and on the Métis Nation, as well as for use by the MNC and Governing Members as it relates to methodology; research ethics; data storage, dissemination; and establish a long term research strategy for the MNC which builds capacity within the MNC and its Governing Members.

The National Research Team is led by President Chartier, as part of his Ministerial portfolio on Métis Rights and Self Government. Team participants are: Kathy Hodgson-Smith (Chairperson, Métis National Council); Gary Lipinski (Métis Nation of Ontario); Denise Thomas (Manitoba Métis Federation); Art

Durocher (Métis Nation - Saskatchewan); Robert Lee (Métis Nation of Alberta); Dr. Mike Evans (Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia). As well a number of academic and other research experts have joined the Métis National Council in overseeing the national strategy: Dr. Nicole St-Onge, University of Ottawa; Dr. Peter Usher, Usher Consulting; Dr. Frank Tough, University of Alberta; Dr. Arthur Ray, University of British Columbia; Les Branconnier, St. Boniface Historical Society; and Laura Hanowski, Saskatchewan Genealogical Society.

II. The Métis National Council has begun development of a web-based version of an MNC Historic Database for Métis consumption for conducting genealogical searches; Scanning of historic documents and creating digital photographs for inclusion in the digital version of the MNC Historic Database (the 1901 Census is an example of a historical document that could be used as the basis for the historic database).

III. As well, specific national research initiatives will be supported in order to research the geographic extent of settlement and economic activity by Métis Nation in the region Ontario and west; develop capacity

**facing page:**  
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council CURA Partners: North West Saskatchewan Métis Council, Métis Nation - Saskatchewan, University of Alberta, University of Saskatchewan Research Team

photo credit: Kathy Hodgson-Smith

**bottom left:**  
Métis National Council National Research Team.  
Back Row (left to right): Kathy Hodgson-Smith, MNC (Chairperson); Art Durocher, MNS; Dr. Frank Tough, University of Alberta; and Dr. Mike Evans, MPCBC  
Front Row: Dr. Nicole St-Onge, University of Ottawa; Robert Lee, MNA; Laura Hanowski, Saskatchewan Genealogical Society; Dr. Peter Usher, Peter Usher Consulting; Dr. Arthur Ray, University of British Columbia; and Les Branconnier, St. Boniface Historical Society.

Photo Credit: Clément Chartier

**bottom right:**  
University of Alberta Dr. Frank Tough and the Métis Archival Project Team

Photo Credit: Kathy Hodgson-Smith



within the MNC to: a) store materials; b) re-store materials; c) conduct research; d) publish; e) develop accessible educational materials and curriculum; f) primary data dissemination; g) archival and contemporary research capacities; h) build up alliances and relationships with other archival and historical research centres and universities and compile and index relevant historical documents related to the Métis land use and occupancy.

### **Metis Nation Research Products**

The results of this year's efforts, which began in earnest in early winter, included two separate meetings of the NRT, to discuss, coordinate and support the research, develop national standards and maintain quality control over research methodology and data management as it pertains to historical / archival / genealogical and community-based research. Reports of the research priorities set by the MNC NRT shall be made public upon completion on the MNC website ([www.metisnation.ca](http://www.metisnation.ca)).

Further, the MNC Board of Governors has ratified a draft ten-year research strategy, to involve the Métis National Council and Governing Members and provide overall research direction to academic and other research initiatives. Further, a number of academic papers have been identified and commissioned, engaging established research advisors, graduate and undergraduate student researchers in various educational institutions and research organizations.

Perhaps the most exciting development is the web-based version of the MNC Historic Database for the purposes of supporting the identification of Métis through public access to organized and relevant historical documents to conducting genealogical searches. Original historic documents and photographs will be made available, as rights can be secured, to allow individuals undertaking their

genealogical research to explore a series of record groups which provide a rich genealogical record of the Métis. The historical records shall allow immediate access to relevant documents to those undertaking to link to the historic Métis Nation through genealogical research. Such record groups include Dominion Land Grants of Half-Breed Scrip, and Manitoba Land Grants; Various census' including the Red River Census of 1880 and the Census' of Canada to 1906. As well, we are developing databases to capture the Hudsons Bay Company records, including Voyageur contracts undertaken by the Hudsons Bay Company. The University of Alberta Métis Archives Project, the University of Ottawa and the St. Boniface Historical Society are actively engaged in developing these databases. Scanning and digital photography of these historic documents is also underway, allowing the MNC Historic Database user to follow the trail all the way to the original source document. Limitations apply, of course, and our ability to include the thousands of records which exist in our national and provincial archives and private collections is limited only by our financial and human resource capacity challenges to get the work done. The MNC has set aside a three year period to complete the Historic Database project. Stay tuned for the launching of this web site, which will be accessible through the MNC mainsite, as well.

**below:**

Erin McGregor, Dr. Frank Tough, and MNC President Clément Chartier

Photo Credit: Kathy Hodgson-Smith





# MÉTIS NATIONAL COUNCIL RAILLIEMENT NATIONAL DES MÉTIS

metisnation.ca

## *The Facts About Métis Harvesting*

Dear Fellow Canadians:

Prior to Canada's crystallization as a country, the Métis have harvested for food in order to sustain ourselves as an Aboriginal people. We have continued this practice through the generations and it is essential to our on-going existence and health as a people.

Recently, many so-called "conservationists" have been attacking governments and the courts for recognizing the constitutional rights of the Métis people to hunt and fish for food from Ontario west. Their unsubstantiated and inaccurate claims suggest Métis harvesting is "unregulated" and will "destroy fish and wildlife supplies for others". Nothing could be further from the truth. Here are the facts Canadians should know:

- Métis Nation governments from Ontario west have objectively verifiable Métis identification systems which help federal and provincial natural resources officers to identify legitimate Métis rights-holders in the field.
- Métis Nation governments have in place, or are in the process of putting in place, harvesting regulatory regimes to ensure conservation and safety. Legitimate Métis harvesters follow the rules established by Métis.
- All Métis harvesting regulatory regimes systems include a means of data collection on annual harvests. Métis Nation governments are willing to work with other stakeholders to more accurately capture and share this data when true partnerships are established.
- Métis harvesters are not "new" harvesters. Métis continue to practice the same traditional lifestyle they have for generations.
- Claims about overwhelming numbers of Métis harvesters are nothing more than fear-mongering. The fact is, it is estimated that only 10-15% of the total Métis population are active harvesters.
- The annual take by Métis harvesters is minimal in comparison to the hundreds of thousands of fish and wildlife licenses issued by provincial governments annually.
- Through governments establishing working relationships with Métis Nation governments, federal and provincial natural resources departments will have more accurate information on each year's harvest since the Métis will be partners as opposed to an unknown commodity.
- Métis Nation government ensure conservation and safety is upheld above all else. For example, in the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement signed between the Government of Alberta and the Métis Nation of Alberta, the province's conservation and safety regulations apply equally to Métis.

Thank you for taking the time to read about the facts on Métis harvesting.

Sincerely,

Clément Chartier, Q.C.  
President  
Métis National Council

the Métis  
Nation of  
Ontario



