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MANITOBA METIS FEDERATION

A Report on

Metis Self-Governance in Urban Manitoba

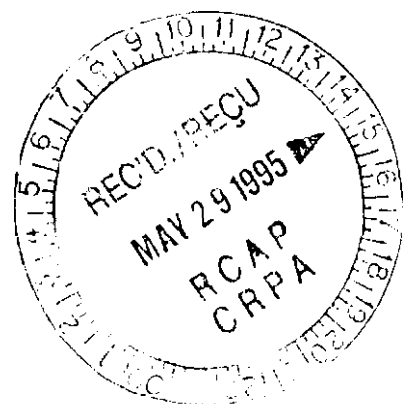


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I). PREAMBLE

The inherent right of the Metis people to self-governance forms the parameters of this report, which will explore currently existing economic and social factors influencing the state of being of the Metis people. The report will review the structure of existing Metis institutions, define the capabilities for self-governance and suggest its practical application in an urban environment such as Winnipeg, Manitoba.

This report is prepared by the Manitoba Metis Federation with the assistance of the Winnipeg Region, staff of the MMF and other Metis researchers. Funding for this submission was obtained from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The following activities were undertaken and completed in preparation of this report:

- i). consultations with members of the Winnipeg Region of the Manitoba Metis Federation.
- ii). compilation of data and reports available in the Manitoba Metis Federation files including Annual Reports, Reports for Annual General Assemblies, etc.
- iii). review of literature and statistical data.

II). INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the benefits of Metis self-governance in Canada's cities, we must have an appreciation of the situation of Metis people in urban centres. Metis people in urban settings face enormous and often insurmountable difficulties such as

discrimination, lack of culturally appropriate social services and assistance programs, lack of basic needs such as housing and a higher crime and unemployment rate than the general population.

In the face of high unemployment and a future on welfare, combined with the lack of services in rural communities, moving to the city is seen as the only viable option for many Metis people. The move to escape unemployment, poverty, alcoholism and violence in their communities often tragically transforms itself into a life of ghettoization, chronic unemployment, dependency on welfare and substandard living conditions. Closely associated with poverty and dependence is a devaluation that occurs and often manifests itself in alcohol abuse, domestic violence and a sense of hopelessness.

Most of the Metis people who move the cities lack education and/or any meaningful employment skills and have little or no employment history and many are female, single parents with several dependents. The poverty endured by Metis people in cities affects their mental, physical and social health resulting in a diminished ability to function in society. As the result Metis people are significantly over represented on child welfare rosters, family violence statistics, criminal justice system involvement and subsequently, prosecution and incarceration statistics.

Approximately two thirds of the Aboriginal migrants to Winnipeg are women and over half of urban Aboriginal families are headed by a female single parent. According to the most recent Canada census statistics, Aboriginal income levels remain one half to two-thirds that of non-Aboriginal people, and social assistance or welfare rates are more

than twice the nation average. Difficulties in obtaining employment for Aboriginal women is even more acute as their educational levels tend to be lower than the general population. This, frequently combined with personal, community and systemic barriers attributed to a lack of self-esteem and lack of support and access paints a particularly grim picture. This debilitating lifestyle is often perpetuated by Aboriginal children whose own futures are made uncertain by the realities of their family situation.

Life in the city for Metis people has only served to rapidly deteriorate that family unit. The statistics on the disproportionate involvement of Metis people in the justice and child welfare system speak volumes to the need to address this situation. The manner in which the dominant non-Aboriginal educational, social welfare and justice systems have controlled the lives of Metis people has only led to disaster for Metis people. This has been well documented in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. The commissioners found that:

In the face of current realities confronting Aboriginal people, we believe that it is important to recognize that the greatest potential for the resolution of significant Aboriginal social problems lies in Aboriginal people exercising greater control over their own lives.

The dependency on alcohol, the increasing rates of suicides, homicides and criminal charges and the high rates of incarceration are problems that we believe can be dealt with by Aboriginal people themselves.

These social conditions, we believe, are indeed the products of dependency and powerlessness, created by past government actions and felt deeply by the majority of Aboriginal people. This dependency will not disappear, we are convinced, until Aboriginal people are able to re-establish their own sense of identity and exercise an considerable degree of self-determination.
(Vol. 1, p. 263)

We agree with the Commissioners who found that:

There must be a drastic shift in thinking about power and authority. The federal and provincial governments and their officials have to accept that Aboriginal people must have the necessary power and authority to govern themselves in this area. Impediments to the exercise of such power and jurisdiction must be removed. (Vol. 1, p. 264)

We must work together to find new solutions. Many of the problems experienced by Metis people in urban centres can only begin to be resolved after we receive the full recognition of our right to govern ourselves and to establish our own institutions for the delivery of services to Metis people.

III). METIS IDENTITY, HISTORY AND CULTURE

i). Historical Overview:

The cultural distinctiveness and the common political consciousness of the Metis people developed long before the establishment of the Canadian federation. The Metis people antedate the State. The union with Canada which came later was based on a bargain that Canada and Manitoba reneged on after 1870.

The Metis people are one of the "founding" peoples of Confederation, but have not been given the recognition warranted. Metis people appeared in eastern Canada shortly after European traders made contact with the Indian populations. However, it was in western Canada that the people of mixed ancestry (the Metis) evolved into a new and

distinct entity. With their mixed tradition and command of both European and Indian languages, they were logical intermediaries in the commercial relationship between two civilizations. Metis people did not choose to assimilate either as European-Canadians nor as Indians but decided to fight to maintain the dual heritage born. As the number of people increased they developed a new culture with a distinct language, Michif.

By 1869 the population of the Red River Settlement - one of the largest west of the Mississippi and north of the Missouri on the plains of North America - consisted of 9,350 Metis and 1,600 non-Metis. Unlike in eastern Canada where Indians in the Red River Settlement between 1820 and 1870, Europeans and Indians were absorbed by the Metis.

In 1869, Canada attempted to force its way into Manitoba. The Metis people under the leadership of Louis Riel repelled the attempt to be sold as part of a real estate deal to a company of adventurers based in London.

President Riel, head of the provisional government, sent delegates to Ottawa to negotiate the terms of entry into Confederation, including Abbe Ritchot, whom was sent to represent the Metis interests.

An "Anglo-Protestant" historian, W.L. Morton, who depicted the Metis as a band of primitives (Alexander Begg's Red River Journal, Introduction, p.3) described the circumstances leading to the provinces' entry into Confederation as a new "nation", a unique ethnic and political reality, whose sense of nationhood underlies a proper understanding of the Resistance of 1869. "The Canadian Government...had no idea it was

dealing with a corporate entity, a 'nation' by sentiment and by their own claim..." As to the objects of the Metis people Morton wrote (Manitoba: The Birth of a Province, Vol.1, p. xv)

"Underlying all the Red River Resistance was the question of title to land. Fur had been the source of livelihood and wealth under the old order. But the new order that was coming was agricultural, and wealth would be land..."

And further, Morton emphasized that the reason Riel's people wished to enter Canada as a province was to

"...make such terms with Canada as would enable the people of the North-West to control its local government...and as would allow them to possess, as individuals as a people enough of the lands of the North-West to survive as a people, and to benefit by the enhancement of the wealth of the North West that settlement would cause."

The Manitoba Treaty negotiated between the Metis people and the Canadian Government was to recognize the particular right of the Metis to land. It was a Confederation pact. It was the basis upon which the Metis agreed to join the fledgling federal state. The Manitoba Treaty was essential to the creation of this province. In 1870 the Red river was Metis territory, held under the acknowledged sovereignty of the British Crown. The British Parliament would not contemplate permitting a transfer without Canadian officials first coming to terms of agreement with the local Red River population. The Red River population was, by numbers by culture and by power, Metis.

The Manitoba Treaty was a pact between people of which only a portion was reduced to provisions of the Manitoba Act, 1870.

Section 31 of the Manitoba Act, 1870 represents special recognition, in the constitution of Canada, of the distinct corporate character of the Metis people. This section provided for a grant of lands from the public lands, for the purpose of extinguishing the Indian title of the Metis. This special grant of lands was agreed to by Canada after elaboration by Abbe Ritchot toward the special, national interests of the Metis. The failure of the governments to perform their obligations derived from S. 31 is well documented.

To better understand the national identity of the Michif (Metis) people one must think beyond the limits of written history as much Metis history and tradition is found in an oral context. It is difficult, but not impossible, to put the development of a people of oral tradition into a context of written understanding.

ii). Languages:

Michif languages are influenced by Cree, Saulteaux, French, Gaelic. Yet the overall patterns of the language are anything but haphazard. Michif is a very specific combination of languages. The three known languages are identified as Michif French, Michif Cree and Michif Saulteaux. The Michif people identify their languages simply as "Michif".

iii). Metis Traditional Music and Dance:

Metis fiddle music is unique and unlike that of Scottish, Irish, French-Canadian,

Cajun or old-time fiddle music. The Western part of Canada and the U.S. is where the Metis fiddle can be heard. The tradition is oral and has come down through generations. The Red River Jig is the main dance of the Metis. The actual origin of this dance is unknown, but by the 1800's the dance existed from Alaska to James Bay. Metis dancers dance to the fiddle and this creates a unique style of dance unlike any other. It is said that, since the Michif were such expert horsemen and had a love of music and dance, the Michif were the source of the musical ride of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. This particular piece of oral research is not conclusively documented and is added for interest only.

iv). The Michif Flag:

The political and military identity of the Michif people is documented by the late 1700's and the early 1800's. The national flag of the Metis was evident in 1816 in Red River. Although the Michif had many symbolic flags which evolved over time, the infinity flag has survived. This particular flag has a blue background and a white infinity sign which has two meanings; the joining of two cultures and the existence of a people forever. This flag depicted that national, political and military force of the Metis since 1816.

v). Significant Historical Events

Throughout history the Metis have clearly demonstrated their intent to maintain and protect their land.

a). 1816 - Battle of Seven Oaks:

The Metis military challenged the Hudson's Bay Company and the newly arrived Selkirk settlers on the issue of Metis rights to hunt and trade freely, especially regarding the sale of pemmican which was among the economic mainstays of the Metis. On June 19, 1816, the two groups faced each other on Frog Plain at Seven Oaks (Winnipeg). The outcome was a Metis victory.

b). 1849 - The Sayer Trial:

In the Spring of 1849, a young Metis named Guillaume Sayer of the Red River was arrested for contravening the restrictions of the Hudson's Bay Company on free trade. The Metis, under the leadership of Louis Riel (Senior) again challenged the Company. The result was that trade was free for the first time.

c). 1851 - The Battle of Grand Couteau:

The greatest battle of the Metis was against the Sioux Nation in 1851. On July 13th of that year, the Metis from St. Francois Xavier (west of Winnipeg) had gone on their usual buffalo hunt only to find themselves surrounded by between 2,000 - 2,500 Sioux warriors. The Metis numbered 67 in military strength. Using their skill to operate large buffalo hunts and their ability to use rifle pits for protection, the Metis ward off three attacks by the Sioux warriors. After this the Sioux, acknowledged the Metis as the new "Masters of the Plains".

d). 1869 - The Red River Resistance:

Louis Riel (Junior) was 24 years old when he led the people of Red River through the challenge by eastern Canada to take over the western territory, which was the homeland of the

Metis. It was the first time that the Metis would be challenged by an outside military force. To meet this political and military challenge, the Metis set up a provisional government and worked hard to bring the territory into Canadian Confederation as a province. This venture was successful. The Metis List of Rights became the Manitoba Act of 1870 and the Province of Manitoba was founded. This was not without consequence however. Louis Riel was exiled to the U.S. and the Metis continued in an intensified struggle for survival as a people and as a nation.

e). 1885 - The Battle of Batoche:

The Battle of Batoche was the final clash between the Metis and an army composed of 8,000 Canadian troops under General Middleton and units from the militia and the North West Mounted Police. The actual Battle of Batoche was preceded by the Battles of Duck Lake and Fish Creek. The Metis were joined by Cree Chiefs Big Bear and Poundmaker to fend off the Canadian troops. The success of the Metis in the earlier battles was not to be the case in the final battle of Batoche. Chiefs Big Bear and Poundmaker arrived too late. The Metis were greatly outnumbered and without sufficient ammunition. After four days of battle, the Metis were militarily defeated. Louis Riel, now 41 years old, was taken to the Regina jail as were some of the leaders of his Indian allies. Others were taken to Stony Mountain Penitentiary (then a North West Mounted Police barracks). These were sentenced to jail terms for their involvement in the military battles. Louis Riel was tried and hung for treason on November 16, 1885. He was brought back and buried in St. Boniface.

In the aftermath of the resistance, the Metis people suffered displacement again. Troops burned Metis homes and destroyed their property. Many Metis moved west where they again pressed to secure a permanent land base. However, they were met with political impediments and new legislation which they were not even able to understand. As the result many Metis lost their land grants or scrip because they were disqualified if

they moved out Manitoba or they were subjected to the viles of fraudulent land speculators. Many were forced into slums on the fringes of Indian Reservations and onto road allowances surrounding white communities.

vi). Inherent Right:

The Metis people feel strongly in the need to constitutionally entrench an inherent right to Metis self-governance in the Constitution. This does not suggest any measures of sovereignty outside of Canada. It is seen as a provision which would provide Metis and other levels of government with the opportunity to negotiate self-governance agreements. The Metis believe in Canadian unity and view self-governance as a Nation within a Nation. Several Metis associations have entered tri-partite negotiations with federal and provincial governments to examine ways of expanding the involvement of Metis associations in the design and delivery of governance programs. The Manitoba Metis Federation is one of these. They wish to work within the parameters of Canadian federalism and are of the belief that Metis governments must be subject to the rule of the law. Metis governance should only affect the lives of Metis where legislation or an administrative order has been properly passed; applied by legal means, carried out by proper authorities; and administers the same treatment to all Metis. Metis do not seek arbitrary measures, rampant patronage or despotic rulers.

vii). The Land Base Issue:

Metis self-governance off a land base such as that in urban centres, would take the

form of Metis self-governing institutions. The decisions of Metis self-governing institution would apply only to those Metis who choose to participate in their affairs. As such, Metis self-governing institutions would possess jurisdiction and responsibility for Metis individuals over a clearly defined range of matters. The current structure and design of the Manitoba Metis Federation, and its respective institutions, provides a model of a structure which promotes Metis rights at the provincial level while allowing for autonomy of the Metis at the community and regional levels.

viii). The Metis Defined:

The definition of Metis or classes of membership in the Manitoba Metis Federation was amended in 1994. "Aboriginal Person" means Indian, Inuit or Metis as stated in the Canadian Constitutional Amendment, 1982. "Metis" means an aboriginal person who identifies as Metis and who is distinct from Indian, Inuit and non-Aboriginal. It should be noted that any person who is Metis and is 18 years of age is entitled to membership in the Manitoba Metis Federation.

"Metis Nation" refers to the community of Metis persons as defined and which group is represented nationally by the Metis National Council and provincially by the Pacific Metis Federation, Metis nation of Alberta, Metis Society of Saskatchewan, Manitoba Metis Federation, Ontario Metis Aboriginal Association and the Metis Nation-Northwest Territories, acting either collectively or in their individual capacity, as the contest requires, or their successor organizations, legislative bodies or governments.

Many Metis, Indians and Inuit residing in urban centres find themselves lumped

together and referred to generally as Aboriginal people. When one is misable and stripped of their identity, culture and benefits they undergo a form of culture shock. An area related to Metis identity and of importance to Metis self-governance is the establishment of a Metis specific database. At this time there is no way to measure how many Metis people are involved with social service agencies, the criminal justice system, etc. because there is no accurate system of identification. The Metis population in Winnipeg and in Manitoba can only, at best, be estimated under the current system to enumerate the Metis population in Winnipeg and in the province. Agencies working with Metis people have been asked to identify "Metis" as a separate ethnic category and, therefore, assist in data collection. Lacking, however, are the resources necessary to maintain an up-to-date data base.

The Aboriginal rights of the Metis are recognized in s. 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, thereby acknowledging the emergence of a distinct nation. One of the rights referred to in s. 35 that has been recognized by both government parties is the right to self-governance. If the right of self-governance is to be defined by agreement in such a way as to accommodate the existing constitutional framework, it will be necessary to reach an agreement respecting institutional and other arrangements to rectify the historical inequalities which have placed the Metis in a disadvantaged position in the distribution of goods and services.

Article 27 of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides for the collective rights to inter alia, enjoyment of culture and use of language. The

languages of the Metis have been eroded by the education systems of the province, and practices of cultural genocide are still felt today.

The membership of Metis communities is made up of individuals who have proudly acknowledged their heritage and maintained it under strenuous conditions. It must be noted that the identity remains in view of consistent and aggressive attempts over the years to destroy and deny Metis language, culture and land base, traditions, educational systems, economic development programs and social service programs.

IV). GOVERNANCE

i). The Definition of Metis Self-Governance:

The right of the Metis people to self-governance means simply that, we, as Metis have a right to our own democratic political institutions, a right to represent the interests of the Metis nation within the Canadian federation and the right to manage our social, cultural and economic affairs. The main purpose of self-governing bodies to enable them to effectively manage the affairs of their members. Metis self-governing institutions would possess jurisdiction and responsibility for Metis individuals over a clearly defined range of matters.

Metis governance structures would promote Metis rights at the provincial and federal level while respecting the autonomy of the Metis at the community and regional levels. They could take the form of a provincial Metis legislative assembly mandated to enact legislation and administrative orders at periodic assemblies and be comprised of

Local Presidents. A provincial executive council or Cabinet elected on a province-wide basis would be empowered to implement the legislation through its various departments such as economic development, social services, housing, etc.

One of the major problems in the area of governance is the lack of recognition and entrenchment by municipal, provincial and federal governments of the unique status and rights of the Metis people and their governments and institutions. The solution is the recognition, by all levels of government, of the right of Metis people to govern themselves and for governments to fulfil their fiduciary responsibilities by reaffirming the inherent right of Metis self-governance and assisting in the establishment of our own institutions for the delivery of culturally appropriate services to metis people. Where this is not possible, provisions must be made for appropriate Metis representation and input.

Self-governance to the Metis people in urban areas simply means having a say in matters directly affecting the people. It does not mean independence from Canada or its municipal, provincial or federal governments.

It is essential that the existing local government bodies recognize both Metis and Indian governments and work cooperatively in transferring control over the delivery of services by those institutions which have the greatest impact on the lives of the Metis people. This begins by acknowledging the right of the Metis people to self-governance.

ii). Metis Government Structures:

It is essential that there be a clear understanding of existing Metis governmental structures. At the national level we have Metis National Council which is made up of

provincial Metis federations and associations.

The provincial federations are organized on the basis of regional associations or "Regions" which comprise the total of local associations or "Locals" within the boundaries of each Region. The boundaries are established by resolution of the Board of Directors of the Federation at an Annual General Assembly. The boundaries establishing "locals" are determined by the Regional Committees pursuant to rules established by the Board. Local boundaries are established by the Board for electoral purposes only and it is incumbent on Locals to inform the Federation of changes in membership lists and newly formed Locals, etc. Such was found necessary for improved communications between Locals and the Head Office of the Federation.

The provincial organization, the Manitoba Metis Federation Inc., represents Manitoba's Metis population, at the individual, provincial and national levels and is governed by a Board of Directors comprising of members from each Regional committee and the President of the Federation. The Federation is governed by a President and seven Regional Vice-Presidents and fourteen Regional Board Members responsible to local associations and their members. The Board has the power to manage and administer the affairs of the Federation. (Appendix I)

The Metis women also has representation throughout the province through establishment of the Metis Women of Manitoba Association. The President of the Metis Women of Manitoba sits on the Metis National Council of Women, a national organization made up of the Presidents of the provincial Metis Women's organizations.

The President of the Metis Women of Manitoba also sits on the Federation's Board. It should be noted that women continue to run and assume positions within our government structure in addition to special representation.

There are currently 20 Locals in Winnipeg Region with a total membership of approximately 8,000. These Locals are administered by a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and a Secretary-Treasurer each holding office for a term set and determined by each local. (Appendix II) Any change of executive officers is required to be registered with the appropriate regional office and with the "Head Office" of the Federation.

Each Region is governed by a Vice-President and two other members who sit on the Federation's Board of Directors. They are elected by members of the Region in accordance with the by-laws of the Federation. The Winnipeg Region represents the Metis people of Winnipeg on the Board of the Manitoba Metis Federation. The executive officers of the Winnipeg Region hold office for a term not exceeding three years and three months.

All representatives are democratically elected by the Federation's membership. The structure of Metis government has been shaped by the evolving history of the Metis people with significant emphasis on consultations with the Metis people and Metis communities. To this end the following Resolution was put forward and unanimously carried at the 1992 Annual General Assembly:

WHEREAS it appears as if there is some confusion as to the duties, responsibilities and accountability of the Metis leadership:

AND WHEREAS this gives the general Assembly a feeling of frustration, lack of power and control over their Assembly. The Assembly being the governing body of the Manitoba Metis.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the resolutions passed at the Annual Assembly be documented and distributed stating what action has been taken and by whom.

Another resolution passed at the 1992 Annual General Assembly further indicates a desire to be as available and accountable to the member ship as possible:

WHEREAS the Board of Directors of the Manitoba Metis Federation Inc. are answerable to the Metis people of Manitoba for the ongoing Management and Administration of structure and programs within the Manitoba Metis Federation, Inc;

AND WHEREAS the Annual General Conferences are designed for the Delegates to provide direction, acquire answers to previous concerns;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors be made to answer the questions as they are directed toward them and not to use the limited time that is available to delegates on the floor of the Assembly.

As a result the entire Board is available to answer questions from the membership. The purpose of our Metis governments and institutions is to achieve recognition of Metis people and our governing institutions in an effort to improve the conditions of the Metis people and to preserve and revitalize the Metis identity. Our Metis government representatives have continued to lobby for improved housing, training and employment opportunities, education, health and welfare improvements. At both the local level and through the Metis National Council negotiations are occurring on the constitutional concerns of Metis people. The Metis National Council is currently in the process of

negotiations with the Federal government with respect to the following issues:

- Recognition of the Metis as a founding nation of Canada
- Metis Land Base
- Metis self-governance
- Federal assumption of responsibility for the Metis; and
- Metis representation in the House of Commons and in a reformed Senate.

We will continue to assert our right to govern ourselves and take whatever steps are necessary to regain and reassert our right and jurisdiction to deal with our needs, problems and development as determined by the Metis people and in a manner which is consistent with our social values, traditions and culture.

The Metis are willing to work with other governments in addressing past and present injustices perpetrated on our people. It is the wish of the Metis people and the mandate of our own government institutions to continue to make every effort to improve the social and economic situation of the Metis people and to preserve and revitalize our Metis culture and identity. Only our own representatives are in position to care and to continue to lobby for improved housing, training and employment opportunities, education, health and welfare improvements.

Metis governments are working for the recognition of Metis peoples and Metis government institutions in urban settings. Metis people continue to struggle for representation in the House of Commons in a reformed Senate.

iii). Metis Representation on City Councils:

We are of the position that we should have representation in the governing structures that affect our people in urban centres. We have observed the consistent and systemic under-representation of Aboriginal people, particularly Metis people on City Councils.

Our elected representatives, although consulted from time to time, are largely ignored at the municipal levels. In urban centres the Metis have continued to provide input in issues that affect the Metis people through committees and interest groups. This input has resulted in positive action and benefits for all citizens residing in urban centres such as Winnipeg. The problem is that most municipal governments often make decisions without consulting the Metis people who have large urban populations directly affected by such decisions.

Groups of concerned individual Metis people have got together and formed locals in various areas of urban centres such as the City of Winnipeg. The Winnipeg Region elects representatives to voice the concerns of their constituency. Our Winnipeg Regional representatives should have a place at City Council where they may voice the concerns of the Metis population of Winnipeg and take part in decisions affecting them. We have expressed a willingness to work with all levels of government.

Our research has revealed that the integration of Metis people into an imposed system of control produces negative results. As discussed above the situation of Metis people must be addressed. Input into the provision of all other programs and services is

essential to address the systemic discrimination our people face in urban centres.

The discrimination that we have observed in the delivery of services by social, education, child welfare and criminal justice systems are both systemic and individual. There continues to be a prevalent lack of respect, sensitivity and awareness of Metis people. Racism is perpetuated by the dehumanizing and depersonalized institutions of the dominant society where there are no effective plans to address racist individuals and behaviour; no plans to educate or sensitize people to understand the Metis and other Aboriginal cultures; no significant affirmative action results and no meaningful plans to eliminate the structural or systemic racism that prevents meaningful participation of Metis people in systems which have a disproportionately negative impact on Metis youths and adults which have been particularly harsh in the treatment of Metis women.

The Metis are capable of taking responsibility for the administration of programs involving the training and education of our people, providing services to our children and families, developing housing and economic development programs as such is essential to the maintenance of our people and our culture. These conclusions are supported by the committee for Aboriginal Electoral Reform whose main recommendation was for the creation of Aboriginal constituencies through which Aboriginal people can gain direct representation in proportion to their population. ("The Path to Electoral Equality", 1991)

iv). Intergovernmental Relationships:

To ensure the success of any transfer of programs and services to the Metis government, sufficient funding is essential for our institutions if we are to provide the staff

and resources necessary in delivering badly needed essential services to the Metis people.

Roadblocks often pointed to by municipal, provincial and federal governments in an effort to avoid addressing the situation of Aboriginal people in urban environments is the jurisdictional issue. Each level of government has denied any responsibility for Metis people often pointing to other levels of government in an effort to avoid their fiduciary obligations.

The solution lies in the recognition of the rightful place of Canada's Metis people in the Constitution. All levels of government must also recognize that they have a fiduciary obligation, responsibility and role to play in addressing the situation faced by Metis people in Canadian cities. Subsequently, the federal, provincial and municipal governments should be consulting Metis governments, acknowledging and correcting the past injustices perpetuated on the Metis people. All levels of government continue to introduce legislation and implement policies that impact our people without consulting our governments and our people. The result is a magnification and perpetuation of problems faced by Metis and all Aboriginal peoples. Past injustices must be corrected and cease to continue. Consultations with Metis and other Aboriginal governments in a manner that acknowledges the right of Metis people to self-determination is necessary to begin working together to address the problems in our communities. We have made every effort to respond to and work with all levels of government but when we are consulted we are not compensated as are other outside consultants. This has put a tremendous strain on our institutions and people who are already overworked and underpaid.

v). Relations Between Municipal and Metis Governments:

The integration of Aboriginal or Metis people into the imposed social systems of control has been a painfully slow process of co-opting Aboriginal people into an alien value system - usually producing negative results. What we propose is an end to the marginalization of Metis people through the establishment of our own institutions to better provide the needed programs and services in a more culturally appropriate manner. We are willing to provide input into the modification of existing policies and the provision of services impacting Metis people. Our existing government structure is capable of taking full responsibility for the administration of programs especially as it concerns the training and education of our people. The training and education of our people is essential to the maintenance of our culture. Input into the provision of all other programs and services is essential to address the closed doors and systemic discrimination our people face on a daily basis.

V). EXISTING METIS GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

i). Education and Training:

An example of a Metis educational model for self-governance already exists in the Louis Riel Institute. Its strategies lie in the aim to change systems that have failed Metis as individuals and as members of the collective in the past and make existing systems more sensitive to the needs of for education of Metis.

The Louis Riel Institute is a unique and evolutionary model of Metis advocacy found in the education system. Its strength comes from its expansive array of services

from support and advocacy to input in policy development. The Institute undertakes to further the advancement of literacy and education among the Metis people of Manitoba and includes:

- a). the power to conduct research in accordance with its objectives and provides a suitable library resource centre for the compilation of resource material related to education, Metis culture and history and the Michif languages.
- b). the power to acquire, accept and appeal for funds and carry out such activities in furtherance thereof as may be necessary, and
- c). the power to conduct workshops and public education activities.

Unlike a Metis-controlled institution as the Gabriel Dumont college, the Louis Riel institute is an autonomous body that encourages Metis participation and influence in current mainstream programs. It is accountable to the Board of Directors of the Manitoba Metis Federation but operates an arms-length from them with a general Policy Board, a Working Board and its own administration and staffing. (Appendix III)

The base for self-governance in education is complicated by varying structures, powers and financing schemes. Jurisdiction in education now is shared in varying degrees, disputes and ambiguities, among various authorities. As the result, the Louis Riel Institute is essential to the Metis community in that it promotes the representation of Metis interests in the educational system. In addition to providing advocacy, the Institute can play an instrumental role in the administration of education programs for Metis children and adults. By acting in an advisory capacity to provincial education administrations, the Institute can participate in developing criteria and regulations for Metis-content programs,

promote adequate funding for such programs and evaluate current and new educational programs. Through a Metis council, assistance can be offered to school divisions to develop councils on Metis education and history. The goals of the Louis Riel Institute are as follows:

- a). to influence the educational system in Manitoba to better the educational circumstances and opportunities of the Metis.
- b). to work towards the attainment of significant decision making power by Metis people respecting educational matters that directly affect them.
- c). to conduct research in education, history, language and other areas which relate to the educational circumstances of the Metis, and the survival and enhancement of Metis culture and language.
- d). to provide input which leads to significant changes in teacher training and curriculum development for the promotion of educational programs that provide for Metis needs and that better reflect the significant historical role of the Metis in Western Canada.
- e). to promote the professional and academic education of Metis people and to provide professional help to Metis people in provide for Metis needs that better reflect the significant historical role of the Metis in Western Canada.
- f). to promote the education of Metis people in technical, business and other fields.
- g). to establish a publishing house as a part of the Institute.
- h). to provide a suitable resource centre for the support of the objectives of Institute. at
- i). to promote the study of the Metis people and of other aboriginal peoples of Canada and the world.
- j). to retain Metis culture by the establishment of museums, historic sites and other means.

k). to carry on all other activities which will foster the implementation of the education policy of the MMF.

The scope of potential activities for the Louis Riel Institute is only limited by imagination for the needs of the Metis community are broad. A major task is to establish a rich collaboration of many forces in the Manitoba community. The Louis Riel Institute recognizes that Metis representatives are only one among many with viewpoints and demands, and their presence does not relieve public officials from the burden of seeking their own public interest conclusions. Administrative policies about Metis education ought to be guided by reasoned analysis, systematic long-range planning, and a sensitive accommodation of present social and political needs to future ones. Implicit in the foundations of the Louis Riel Institute is an awareness that public participation is both useful and desirable, but essentially within well-defined and manageable limits. In each case, the benefits to be derived from broadened participation will come from many sources: volunteers; school parent committees; regional advisory committees; Metis teachers; elders; and provincially elected leaders.

The Michif Languages Project is another program of the Louis Riel Institute that has been developed to locate and record Metis linguistic traditions and culture. Its objectives are:

- a). to preserve the vanishing languages of the Metis people of Manitoba and thereby promote the cultural survival of the Metis in their traditional homeland.
- b). to promote research and language development in the Metis languages of Manitoba.

c). to promote initiatives and research by Metis in the preservation and promotion of their linguistic traditions.

d). to promote the retention and teaching of Metis oral tradition and history.

e). to foster the promotion of heritage studies of Metis culture, thereby strengthening the historical traditions which moulded the province of Manitoba.

The Michif Languages Archives has been established to document the languages, lore and oral literature of the Manitoba Metis people. Each oral documentation would be accompanied by biographical and background information and recorded as a permanent source for future Metis heritage studies. Although this provides a viable avenue for collection and storage, the task is monumental and limited access to funds for this project results in a sporadic and ad hoc approach.

As the above attempts to indicate, the Louis Riel Institute is an existing model of a self-governing institution that is realistic under current educational policies and services and with government affirmation and adequate financial resources can become a self-operating entity. The Metis people need novel forms of self-governance as the present system of governance in education has failed too many Metis.

An Education Profile of the Manitoba Metis Federation membership, completed in 1988 showed that 80% of Metis respondents had no high school diploma. Of those who attended high school, 67% entered general or vocational studies which preclude them from university entrance opportunities. Furthermore, only 2% of youth between the ages of 18 and 24 either attend or have completed university. Metis people are economically

powerless and academically ostracized by the education system. Current legislation requires two years in the labour force, or age 21 to apply for financial assistance from Student Aid. Furthermore, Metis students at the post-secondary level are experiencing difficulty in accessing the Manitoba Government Bursary from the Student Aid program. Statistics tabled by the Province of Manitoba indicate the following:

11 Metis University Students were assisted through Canada Student Loans

0 Manitoba Government Bursaries were awarded to Metis students

0 Metis post graduate students received assistance.

Metis students attempting to further their education or take employment training must compete for the same pot of money as Manitobans in general. There is no recognition for the fact that Metis students tend to fall into the economically and/or financially disadvantaged sector. Students must qualify for and accept a full Canada Student Loan before they are eligible for a Manitoba Government Bursary. Students do not know what amount their loan will be until they actually get it. Once the student receives his or her Canada Student Loans automatic qualification for the Manitoba Government Bursary does not exist. Unknown extenuating circumstances are measured and this is for the most part discretionary. There is also a Manitoba Government Grant Program but available only to students who qualify for the Canada Student Loan and the Manitoba Government Bursary. Under the circumstances Metis students would not be in the considered category. One can only imagine the chaos that Metis students find themselves facing when applying for post secondary education.

Government finances programs supposedly geared to provide opportunities for education advancement seems to be failing the Metis as well. The number of Metis who are assisted by these programs are few and the dollars expended do not justify the participation of Metis in government programs. For example:

a). New Careers

Four million dollars (\$4,000,000) expended. Only 16 students were Metis out of a total enrolment of 477 students.

b). Student Aid Program

11 Metis University students received some assistance through Canada Student Loans, No Metis students received provincial bursaries and/or grants.

c). English Language Development Program

Millions of dollars were spent in English language development with no known output. Few of these dollars were targeted to English language literacy for aboriginal students.

d). BUNTEP (Brandon University Northern Teacher Education Program)

\$3.1 million dollars expended. Six Metis students participated of a total of 68 students.

Constitutional responsibility for education lies directly and solely with the province and how this responsibility is carried out is more than a matter of policy and priority. Quality of education and who will get what are decisions made within the systems. This appears to be so tightly controlled that at times one might think it is out of control. A good example of this is the Metis student at R.B. Russell School who is completing Grade

12; 304 and is unable to read. This example is used to indicate that the problems are serious and deserve to be addressed with care and sensitivity that can be best realized by a Metis-governed institute.

The powers of administration in education has been exercised directly through provincial departmental programming and indirectly through a variety of educational agents such as school boards and universities, all of which impact on the Metis. Within the past decade, various reports have expressed dissatisfaction with the direction and quality of education received by Metis people. specific issues include questions regarding:

- academic attainment in public schools;
- participation and graduation rates in higher education institutions;
- attention paid to Metis culture in education curriculums;
- Metis influence in education programs which affect them.

The consequence has been a serious deficiency in Metis preparation to participate in the economic and social life of larger society. By all major indicators of growth and development, the Metis community is the least advantaged and most neglected population sector in the province.

ii). Economic Development:

The Manitoba Metis Community Investments Inc. (MMCI) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Manitoba Metis Federation and a model of a Metis self-governing economic development institution. Its mandate is the pursuit of economic development and investment activity on behalf of the Manitoba Metis Federation its membership.

(Appendix IV)

The overall mission statement mandates the Manitoba Metis Community Investments Inc. to act as the economic development and investment arm of the Manitoba Metis Federation. More specifically, the company has established the following corporate objectives:

- a). to pursue capitalization and diversified investment activity on behalf of the Manitoba Metis Federation so as to further its long term self-sufficiency goals.
- b). to pursue the enhancement of economic development capacity within the Regions of the Manitoba Metis Federation.
- c). to conduct its activities on a business like basis so as to develop and maintain long term credibility and profitability.

As these objectives indicate, the Manitoba Metis Community Investments Inc. is a "for profit" company with two distinct roles; the first being the pursuit of capitalization and investment activities to generate long term profitability and growth, and the second being the development of the capacity to assist in the pursuit of economic development initiatives on a provincial wide basis. Self-sufficiency is essential to the company's long term survival and will dictate the level of future growth. The pursuit of self-governance and local economic development can only be achieved through self-sufficiency and the creation of mechanisms to ensure continued profit making.

The Manitoba Metis Community Investments Inc. serves as a holding company in respect to its investments and, as such, is divided into two areas of activities; Capitalization and Investment and Economic Development. (Appendix V)

At the present time three capital and investment activities exist:

a). Metis Housing Construction Corporation

The Manitoba Metis Community Investments Inc. received funding from the Native Economic Development Program to establish a construction company to capitalize on potential opportunities, particularly those related to housing construction projects of potential opportunities, particularly those related to housing construction projects provided for by CMHC/MHRC programs. The Metis Housing Construction Company started business in March 1990 as general contractors who build commercial complexes and houses and renovate buildings in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. The Metis Housing Construction Corporation provides the required legal counsel, accounting and training in promotion, pricing and positioning. Subsequently, it provides the positioning needed for Metis trades people to successfully compete for contracted work.

The Metis Housing Construction Corporation has been contracting to do jobs throughout the province of Manitoba, primarily for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Most of the work is sub-contracted to Metis trades people. In the first two years of operation the Metis Housing Construction Corporation had successfully tendered and completed a commercial retail complex, 16 houses and a transition centre for native women. The total value of these contracts was in the range or \$2.0 million.

b). Real Estate Investments

The Manitoba Metis Community Investments Inc. received funding through the Native Economic Development Program to construct an office/warehouse complex at 1635

Burrows Ave. in Winnipeg. The 31,000 square foot building was completed in march 1991 and has a 60% occupancy rate. The purpose of this investment is to largely generate long term profits through rental income and capital appreciation. Such investments provide an on-going cash flow and financial stability.

c). The Louis Riel Capital Corporation:

The Louis Riel Capital Corporation is a new financial corporation funded by the Federal Government under its Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy program. Its mandate is to make certain loans and guarantees for the start-up, acquisition or expansion of commercial businesses owned and controlled by Metis people in Manitoba. The services are offered to persons eligible for membership in the Manitoba Metis Federation and financing will be available to all business sectors, including agriculture and fishing.

The Louis Riel Capital Corporation is a separate entity from the Manitoba Metis Federation with its own distinct Board of Directors. The composition of the Board includes four individuals appointed by the Board of the Manitoba Metis Community Investments Inc. and three selected by unanimous agreement of the initial four appointees. The Corporation operates with a fund of \$8,242,160 to be injected over a five year period and used for the following purposes:

- term loans for establishing, acquiring or expanding operations,
- working capital loans,
- bridge financing loans, and

-loan guarantees.

In addition to the three subsidiaries of the Manitoba Metis Federation, two independently operated Metis corporations are in existence and have demonstrated the ability to be independent and self-sufficient over the years. These are:

a). Pemmican Publications Inc.

Pemmican Publications Inc is an example of a Metis-operated institution which is self reliant and financially independent. This publishing house, where the Manitoba Metis Federation owns 51% of the shares, promotes Metis and First Nations philosophies and perspectives through a print form. In addition to publishing Aboriginal fiction and non-fiction, Pemmican Publications publishes children's books that emphasize aboriginal cultures. An independent, profit making corporation, Pemmican Publications' sales total over \$2000,000 annually with markets as far as Australia.

b). The Median Credit Union:

Another example of a successful Metis-operated institution, this Credit Union was founded in 1978 as the Metis Credit Union of Manitoba. The driving force behind the founding of the Credit Union was the Manitoba Metis Federation and its members. The Credit Union later changed its name to the Me-dian Credit Union of Manitoba in order to reflect the new bond of association which opened up membership to the total aboriginal community.

The mission statement of the Me-dian Credit Union is as follows; "To be a progressive Indian, Metis and Inuit Financial Organization that provides a wide range of

professional financial services that are effective and responsive to the needs of its membership."

The Me-dian Credit Union operates as an autonomous entity owned by its user-members in the community. Policies are set by an elected board which, in turn, hires the general manager. This determination of overall operational policies by elected officials assures consideration of member needs and local decision making while leaving the manager and staff free to conduct the day-to-day affairs of the Credit Union.

The primary objective of the Me-dian Credit Union is to identify and serve the financial needs of Aboriginal communities and organizations in the Province of Manitoba. Representation by Metis people in the Me-dian Credit Union are as follows:

- Employees - 50% Metis
- Investors - 50% Metis
- Loans - 40% Metis
- Corporations - 30-40% Metis
- Individual Clients - 50% Metis

Pathways to Success is a cooperative project between Employment and Immigration Canada, the MMF and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. It is intended to develop a partnership between this federal initiative and the aboriginal community. The MMF views this policy as an incremental step toward self-governance in the area of education and training with linkage to economic development. It will complement and support existing Metis self-governance structures. (Appendix VI) A Metis Local Management Board and

a First Nations Local Management Board, in Winnipeg, meet regularly with Employment and Immigration Canada officials to undertake planning and decision making on issues affecting the Aboriginal Labour force in Winnipeg.

The Manitoba Metis Federation has entered into a Tri-partite forum with the Governments of Manitoba and Canada to pursue self-governance negotiations with respect to economic development. This mandate provides some initial direction for an on-going negotiation process which is ultimately intended to result in specific agreements. There is an urgent need, however, for a comprehensive economic strategy. The prolonged absence of the Metis people from the economic life of the nation has resulted in massive unemployment and social problems. A Financial Profile of the members of the Manitoba Metis Federation completed in 1988 showed that 54% of the respondents indicated that their total family income was under \$20,000. Furthermore, 60% of all respondents indicated that for some period in the last two years they have been unemployed. The present condition of the Metis people is a stark contrast to their tremendous commercial achievements of the past. Traditionally the Metis were a commercial nation whose entrepreneurs pursued ventures in national and international trade. The historical evidence of their entrepreneurship is seen in the fur trade with the Hudson's Bay Co., the organized buffalo hunt, the manufacture of pemmican and leather goods and the massive transportation of these goods to the Canadian and World markets. There are many reasons why the Metis people of today have not regained the commercial prominence that their ancestors enjoyed in the past, one of which is a lack of access to the necessary capital to

generate development. The Manitoba Metis Federation agrees that access to capital infusion is a crucial factor in the success of a business. The programs and institutions required to provide the necessary assistance are non-existent.

A second key ingredient in the success of a business is that management has the necessary skills or access to management advice so that the business may function properly. Training in the areas of bookkeeping, employee management, computer operation, time management and marketing are but a few skills needed for success in business.

The Manitoba Metis Federation believes that the missing key ingredient that will lead to establishment of successful Metis businesses is the procurement of a market. The current philosophy holds, that after economic development programs provide assistance with the acquisition of capital infusion and the necessary managerial advice, the Metis business person is left to fend for him or herself in the market place. Therefore, the Manitoba Metis Federation advocates for an economic strategy that will establish selective government purchasing of supplies and services as a vital element in the development of Metis businesses and employment. An example is taken from the United States "set-aside" contracting policy whereby the minority owned firm is guaranteed a federal procurement contract for a period of up to nine years. This is viewed as an innovative approach in assisting the Metis people to become involved in business. We believe that government purchasing could be used as a national industrial strategy where new jobs for the disadvantaged in our country can be established through the provision of a "set-aside"

contracting service to our Metis communities. There are several other major benefits that the Metis community would attain from the establishment and development of Metis businesses under a "set-aside" system. Firstly, employment opportunities with the probability for advancement and mobility with the manufacturing industries would increase, and secondly, it would provide the most conducive environment for the successful implementation of training programs. At the present time there is a complete absence of a Metis business community to perform this vital role. Thirdly, this new strategy would provide a coordination medium for a comprehensive program of services and assistance from government, private industry and the Metis community. And finally, it will generate not only the necessary capital, but the management and leadership skills that are absolutely essential to the concept of Metis self-governance.

Employment opportunities for Metis people are greatly needed. There continues to be a widening disparity in socio-economic conditions between Metis people in urban centres and the population at large. As indicated earlier in this report an overwhelming number of Metis people are dependent on social welfare programs to survive. There is a chronic need for trained Metis professionals in almost all economic sectors. The few qualified professionals are already employed causing a severe shortage of educated and skilled individuals available to work on establishing and operating institutions of Metis self-governance. A cataloguing and assessment of "human resources" in terms of education and skill level would be a starting point. These people should be utilized more in developing and operating Metis initiatives. This means developing Metis professionals

for administration work in addition to political and organizational activities.

The development of a central, permanent Metis-owned and controlled capital fund, separate from direct grants and subsidies and from the combined or divided assets of Metis individuals and groups, would provide an on-going revenue source for financing business initiatives that would directly benefit the Metis people. Control would be at the community level with direct representation by Metis officials. Currently funding is conditional on percent of owner equity, a complicated and lengthy application process and a general inadequacy of many government programs toward the needs of the Metis people. Therefore, the effective development and on-going security of Metis institutions must include Metis control of block funding, shares of taxes or a separate tax base and independent revenue sources derived from a capital base.

iii). Housing

The Housing Branch of the Manitoba Metis Federation (Appendix VII) has linked with the Rural and Native Housing Program to develop a number of housing programs available to rural Metis people. The Section 79 Home Ownership and Rental Program provides home ownership options for low income families and seniors living in rural areas of the province. The Emergency Repair Program is available to low income persons who live in rural areas in substandard housing and require replacement housing. The intention of the program is to repair the home until acceptable living conditions until a replacement home can be found. The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program is available to low income home owners in Manitoba with the exception of the cities of Winnipeg and

Brandon and the towns of Selkirk and Steinbach. Under agreements with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation the MMF delivers federal housing programs through its housing branch on a fee-for-service arrangement. The Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation cost-shares some of the programs under federal/provincial funding jurisdictions, none of these programs are available to Metis people living in urban centres.

In the past year the Manitoba Urban Native Housing Association has been established in Manitoba. This is an association of the Urban Native Housing Organizations and the Manitoba Metis Federation as well as the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. Furthermore, with the cooperation and involvement of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Manitoba Housing a formal tri-partite process has been established whereby the Manitoba Urban Native Housing Association will have an effective voice on urban housing issues in Manitoba. The full participation of the MMF in this association enables the Urban Native Housing Program to directly linked to the incremental implementation plans in the housing sector of the Manitoba Tri-partite negotiations.

In 1990, the Manitoba Metis Federation contracted Larsson Consulting Ltd. from Ottawa to research and present a proposal for a Metis Housing Institute which would meet the complex requirements of a self-governing institution. The existing MMF housing branch became a starting for this proposal. Furthermore, the Metis Self-Governance Tri-partite Negotiations produced a process agreement which identified housing programs as structures of Metis self-governance.

A Metis housing institution would be expected to serve all Metis people, including people in remote areas with very low cash incomes, rural people and urban people. It would also have to be capable of designing, funding and delivering housing programs within its own financial realities. Historically, the MMF has operated to a large extent in a role of facilitating the birth and operation of other, semi-independent settlement housing associations and non-profit corporations that maintain only a loose association with it. In that role the MMF has limited itself to developing strategy, identifying needs and providing advice, but is not otherwise involved. While such a relationship produces housing, it does not necessarily lend itself to producing a cohesive organization that would lead to a Metis self-governing institution. However, the ability to operate independently is not incompatible with a role that consists primarily of acting as a delivery agent. It will require the development of new programs, the modifications of existing ones, as well as the delivery of current Canada Mortgage and Housing and Manitoba Housing Programs that are now suitable. None of this excludes the continuation of government programs under existing agreements.

If the MMF is to deliver housing effectively, the institution must contain the skills required to develop policies, administer programs and provide a full range of service delivery. This in turn will necessitate an organization of sufficient scale to attract and retain skilled staff. A larger-scale organization with a higher level of activity will also be consistent with the larger resource base required to fund the MMF's own housing initiatives. These can be best achieved through a process of transition, rather than a

drastic reconfiguration of existing roles and activities.

The MMF Action Plan for the establishment of a Housing Institution identifies several objectives that are imperative to meet the housing needs of the Metis people in the province. These are:

- a). to carry out housing related programs (consistent with those of a Canadian Private Corporation) for the social and economic advancement of the Metis people in manitoba;
- b). to develop, with an initial capital base, the construction activities and housing policies which will be sufficient to sustain the growth of the associations housing initiatives and its service on a long-term basis;
- c). to source capital for the funding of viable housing and economic development projects to be undertaken by the Metis people of Manitoba;
- d). to provide professional, technical and management services to existing and new Metis housing businesses;
- e). to promote the contribution that the Metis housing business can make to the Manitoba communities, particularly in the area of skill development and equitable job creation for the native and non-native people in the province;

A Metis Housing Institute would enable a design and delivery of housing programs to the Metis in the province, including urban centres which are currently excluded from existing programs. An essential part of this institute will be the establishment of a structure appropriate for the expanded range of tasks. A Board of Directors with majority control by the Manitoba Metis Federation, but provisions for collateral involvement and consultations, would make up the organizational framework for the Institute.

At the 1988 Tripartite Metis Self-governance Assembly (March 25th & 26th)

extensive workshops were held with the membership to discuss the issue of adequate Metis housing. During these discussions the Metis assembly identified problems with the current housing system and recommended changes which would improve the housing system to meet their particular needs. Some of the problems included the lack of accessibility to the service, poor local control by government affiliators and the lack of controls in prioritizing needs and allocations of land for housing. Metis contractors were not always used and the application process lacked clarity and organization. Single and elderly housing units were needed and vacant units were not always fairly allocated. Income limits were not adjusted for local conditions and Metis representation in the review of applicants was not considered. This same assembly made recommendations for a Housing Institution that would meet their needs. They stated that the Metis need an organization that is geared to Metis interests, is stable, competent and efficient, free of excessive political interference, while remaining accountable to the Metis people and capable of providing a full range of services including financing, design, construction and management. The process of applying for housing should be simpler and in cooperation with other native and government housing agencies. Improved communication and increased avenues for local input from the people was recommended. Lastly, the Housing Institute would be able to recognize local variations in needs and desires while maintaining an equitable allocation of resources. Generally, housing should be acceptable and decent, affordable, suited to Metis lifestyles, flexible enough to individual circumstances and designed for future expansion.

The Manitoba Metis Federation has taken an active role in ensuring the availability of adequate housing for rural and remote Metis communities by way of agreements with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation and the Rural and native Housing Corporation. Furthermore the MMF has assisted in the start-up of a number of non-profit groups which are now relatively independent. Many are Urban native groups such as Knew Housing which owns 305 detached single units; Dakota/Ojibway Tribal Council which has about 250 renovated units in Winnipeg and in other urban areas; Aiyawin Housing which owns about 100 units in Winnipeg, and the Metis Housing Development Inc. This organization has links with the MMF, since the MMF appoints Board members to Manitoba Metis Community Investments and the MMCI, in turn, appoints the Metis Housing Development Inc. Board. This organization currently has a contract to build 13 houses in Winnipeg.

Considering the active role that the MMF has had in the area of housing, there is no question about feasibility of a Metis Self-governing Housing Institute which can control its own operational budget and financial resources and continue to ensure that the Metis people of Manitoba, including those residing in urban centres, have adequate homes.

iv). Child and Family Services:

On a consistent basis hundreds of Aboriginal children are placed in the care of the Winnipeg Child and Family Services Agency and other government child care agencies across the province. It is estimated that over 50% of the entire caseload is Aboriginal

with the majority being Metis, given that most First Nations clientele are referred to their own mandated agency, very few Metis children get placed in culturally specific foster homes. Most are being cared for by foster parents unfamiliar possibly insensitive to issues affecting Aboriginal children. It is not surprising that a large number of Aboriginal children find their way into the criminal justice system at a very young age. The Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Commission was implemented to review the status on Metis and First Nations and Inuit people in the criminal justice system. Its report, released in August, 1991, recommended the development of a Metis child welfare institution. With the intent of developing the Michif Child and Family Services Agency, the MMF met with provincial officials only to discover disinterest in any discussions pertaining to same and the issue was forwarded to the Native Affairs Cabinet. Since then correspondences have been exchanged although no formal negotiations have transpired. There have also been ministerial shuffles and internal changes within the Manitoba Metis Federation which has contributed to the issue being in a relaxed state.

In 1991, the Manitoba Metis Federation established a Child Care/Justice Committee to review the current situation facing Metis children and their families. The Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Metis Child and Family Support Program, which was established by the MMF in 1985. The support program identifies issues and envelops advocacy and support systems for Metis families with the provincial child welfare system. This program is funded by the Province of Manitoba with its role being to identify issues related to Metis families within the mainstream child welfare system across the province

and develop advocacy and support services for Metis children and families. More specifically, the role of the Metis Child and Family Support Program includes:

- participation in identifying potential Metis resources throughout the regions, such as recruiting prospective adoptive families, foster homes, developing parent education programs and designing orientation and Metis cultural awareness workshops.

- involvement in the repatriation of Metis adoptee and reuniting them with their family of origin is a very important role.

- support and advocacy in case-specific situations at the discretion of the client.

The Metis Child and Family Support Program Repatriation Resource Fund has been established to assist Metis victims of the out of province adoption policies to search for their families of origin. The program is currently searching for the necessary resource base which would fund activities such as searching for legal documents and conducting reconciliations. Furthermore, the Metis Child and Family Support Program with the collaborative efforts of the MMF Tri-Partite Committee have agreed to mobilize a staff within the program to develop a central data and statistical resource information base specific to Metis child welfare and its issues. This would include an indepth analysis of all existing research material, entry of case files and studies, deciphering of coded data and development of new strategies for retrieval of information relevant to Tri-Partite negotiations.

With assistance from the Metis Child and Family Support Program, the Metis Women of Manitoba developed a proposal under the Federal Family Violence Initiative

Program for funds to deal with the issue of family violence in the home.

The Metis people of Manitoba want control over issues relating to their children and families. At a Child and Family Services Workshop held in 1988, the majority of the membership advocated a Metis-controlled Child and Family Services Agency with a fully legislated mandate to provide protection and support services. They found existing organizations to be bureaucratic, inaccessible and insensitive to Metis issues. There was the added concern that Metis children were being raised in non-Aboriginal foster homes and adopted into non-Aboriginal families.

There are organizations that exist to provide services to Metis children and families, however, currently they are inadequate and not geared to Metis families. The high representation of Aboriginal people in child and family service statistics requires that staff delivering the services be educated about the cultural values of this client group in order to provide adequate services. Less than 10% of staff at the Winnipeg Child and Family Services agency are of aboriginal decent and employees of the agencies are not offer cultural awareness training as it is not recognized as an important element of the job.

The Metis Child and Family Support Program is currently negotiating with the Winnipeg Child and Family Services Agency to assume a role in developing placement resources for Metis children. At the front end of this relationship is a collaborative effort to identify the needs both for the Metis clientele the Metis community and for the Winnipeg Child and Family Service and its staff. In addition, the establishment of a Metis Child and Family Service data base is essential and staff must be adequately trained

in the design and operation of this project.

Improvements to the Child and Family Services System, for the Metis people will only occur with the empowerment of the Metis people within this system. Transfer of control of this service is crucial to permit the Metis people of the urban and rural areas the opportunity they inherently have to manage their own lives and direct their own future.

VI). DELIVERY OF SERVICES

Despite the present lack of legal authority and resources, the Manitoba Metis Federation continues to pursue initiatives aimed at managing the social, cultural and economic affairs of the Metis people. Its very composition defines a structure of self-governance. The Federation is a democratic body with province wide ballot box elections of leadership. Members participate in the provincial body by local associations and elections are held at the community level. Leaders are elected on a local, regional and province wide level. Through this system, local associations give direction to regional councils, which in turn give direction to the provincial executive or council. The provincial councils serve as the political voice of the Metis people. They articulate Metis objectives and needs, develop policy for dealing with governments to achieve these objectives and participate in the design and delivery of programs and services directed toward Metis social and economic development.

The Manitoba Metis Federation has heard the needs of the Metis people and undertaken steps to develop services and programs that would make meaningful contributions to meeting those needs. The Louis Riel Institute is a model of a self-

governing institution in education as the Manitoba Metis Community Investments Inc. is an economic development. Furthermore, housing programs have been in effect since the 1970's and Child and Family Services is receiving priority consideration in the 90's. The existing Metis Institutions are capable of administering programs and services and addressing issues that affect the Metis people. Metis service delivery institutions could provide the Metis people with much needed on the job experience and training and are better able to respond appropriately to Metis people and their concerns. They would provide culturally sensitive services that would clearly better address our own particular needs, interest and rights.

While the Manitoba Metis Federation has worked hard to build democratic institutions, they are seriously circumscribed by lack of legal authority and resources. The issue of financing is paramount to any discussion regarding self governance for aboriginal institutions. Autonomy is meaningless in the absence of sound financial resources. There are a number of potential revenue sources which have been identified and could serve to fund Metis self-governance institutions and a brief review of each is warranted:

a). Direct Income Taxation

This involves the power to levy personal and corporate income taxes on residents of a particular jurisdiction. Given the present circumstances, this source represents a fairly theoretical avenue as a clear territorial majority within a large jurisdiction is a pre-requisite to implementation of such taxation. The Metis of Manitoba cannot currently fulfil this requirement.

b). Income Tax Sharing

This avenue entails a sharing of income taxation. This option could

overcome the territorial requirement but would precipitate jurisdictional issues with respect to defying equitable shares and accounting for responsibilities of multi-government institutions operating in the same territorial areas.

c). Income Tax Exemptions

This option could provide exemptions for Metis persons and/or entities. This avenue would not necessitate a defined territorial area but would call for clear eligibility and acceptance standards, that is, there would be a clear need for a definition of Metis people and/or entities and some means of qualifying for such eligibility. Individual exemptions would do little to serve self-governing institutions as the savings would accrue directly to those exempted.

d). Resource Revenues

This avenue would provide Metis institutions with the powers to derive revenues from resource activities. This could entail sharing schemes vis a vis existing royalties and/or the provision of ownership rights in resources. This represents one social compensation for the loss of the historical economic base and would provide a source of funds to participate in the future development of resources for the benefit of Canada as whole.

e). Compensation Funds

Somewhat related to the above is the issue of funds in recognition of the occupation of Metis territory and the past contribution to Canada in further development, migration and urbanization of the West. Such compensation is not new to the federal and provincial governments but does require some equitable recognition of the past contribution and a willingness to make amends for the same.

f). Sales Taxation

This represents the power to levy taxes on retail purchases. It poses similar problems to that of income tax and/or income tax sharing where defined territorial jurisdictions are not in existence.

g). Municipal/Regional Government Taxation

This would generally include real property tax and other special local taxes acceptable under current policy. These are normally controlled by provincial legislatures which can essentially dictate fiscal policy at the local government level. Metis people contribute to such taxes to the extent that they currently reside in local government areas throughout Manitoba and as

well benefit from the expenditures of such revenues in the services provided. As with other territorial based taxation, this avenue is predicated on an exclusive Metis land base so to clearly define the jurisdictional power, rights and responsibilities of all parties.

h). Block Funding

This can best be described as unconditional general purpose transfers which would enable Metis self-governance institutions to make independent spending decisions. This is a very viable option, because in general the concept of equalization payments represents an equitable and efficient means of intergovernmental fiscal transfer. The process is favoured to conditional grants which have the tendency of diminishing autonomy but conversely, such payment mechanisms do require rigid accountability on the part of representative institutions.

i). Private Sector Ventures

As in the past, Metis groups can derive revenues from private sector ventures. Direct and/or joint venture participation in various economic sectors not only provides for potential profit but further exercises certain controls over resources and the benefactors of their exploitation.

j). Conditional Grants

These are best defined as special purpose grants provided to aboriginal institutions for the provision of designated services, such as child and family services, housing programs, etc. The funds are generally made available on an annual basis and the practise is representative of an "agency" agreement to administer programs offered by existing senior agencies.

k). Ad Hoc Grants

Specific grants for one-time and/or on-going activities. These are generally provided for a wide variety of purposes but are such that they present no continuing obligation for Canada or Manitoba. Such grants are not exclusive to aboriginal people but there are a number of programs currently providing for native support and economic initiatives which generally fall in this category.

VII). RECOMMENDATIONS

Metis Identity, History and Culture

1. The Government of Canada should recognize the right of Metis to control their own membership and facilitate a Metis driven enumeration process.
2. The Government of Canada must recognize the inherent right of the Metis to a land and resource base and entrench this in the Constitution.

Governance

3. Constitutional reaffirmation of the inherent right of Metis Self-Governance in section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982 is recommended.
4. Both the federal and provincial levels of governments must vacate jurisdictions to Metis governments.
5. The commitment to vacate jurisdictions to Metis governments should be entrenched in the Constitution.
6. A process must be developed between the Metis Nation and the government directed at resolving the land claims issue.
7. Guaranteed Metis representation at all levels of government.
8. Any proposed transfer of federal jurisdiction over areas that affect the Metis must be made to Metis governments.

Education and Training

9. Establish the Louis Riel Institute as a Metis Self-Governing Institution in Education through provincial legislation.
10. Guarantee of funding to the Louis Riel Institute for a minimum of 20 years with annual funding increases equal to that received by other public education Institutions in Manitoba.
11. Collaboration with the Department of Education and Training to establish a system-wide information data base would permit an analysis of the impact of existing policies and programs on Metis students.
12. Introduce legislation which would establish the advocacy role of the Louis Riel Institute, empowered with statutory authority to enable intervention on behalf of Metis students at all levels of the education system in Manitoba.

3. Introduce legislation which would establish the Louis Riel Institute with statutory power of advocacy for the effective representation of the interest of Metis people at the local and community level throughout the Province of Manitoba.
14. Provide legislative support for the principle of equality of opportunity in education for Metis people and the principle of the betterment of educational circumstances of Metis people.
15. Establish a scholarship fund which would award grants, provide subsidies and financial assistance to Metis youth and adults accepted for enrolment in post secondary institutions. The fund would be administered through the Louis Riel Institute.
16. Develop a Student Support Centre which would assist Metis students, through counselling, advocacy and incentives aimed at motivating students toward the pursuit of higher academic standards and achievements. The Student Support Centre would operate through the Louis Riel Institute.
17. Enhance the significance of Metis culture through the establishment of historical sites and museums to promote the historical contributions of the Metis people in the development of Western Canada.
18. Implement the Language Enhancement Program to increase literacy in the Michif language and include this language in the public school curriculum for Metis students and others.
19. Develop Metis-content course material and training packages to be channelled into the regular provincial public school system.
20. Establish a resource-base of Metis representatives to serve on various legislated boards and commissions on issues related to the education system.
21. Review the current practice by mainstream schools to stream Metis students into lower academic levels.
22. Develop Metis teacher training programs.
23. Establish a Resource Library, as part of the Louis Riel Institute, to provide suitable literacy sources for the Metis and others.

Economic Development

24. Establish the Manitoba Metis Community Investments Inc. as an Institution of Self-Governance in economic development.
25. Recognize the Louis Riel Capital Corporation as a component of the over-all economic development strategy for Metis self-governance.
26. Funding for economic development must be appropriated on a guaranteed basis to assure continuity in a manner similar to that available to other governments.
27. Procurement of a sound capital base such as cash investments, resources, land and other real property to be managed and administered through the Louis Riel Capital Corporation.
28. Investment of this capital base in sound, strategic projects to ensure long term perpetuity of the investments.
29. Derive a revenue stream from the investment to ensure its continued growth and provide on-going funds for community development activities.
30. Establish a Small Business Incubation Program with the federal and provincial governments which would offer minority controlled businesses access to capital, managerial assistance and a market, similar to the U.S. "set-aside" contracting policy.
31. Implement the "Pathways to Success" policy as an incremental step toward self-governance by integrating its principles with the reality of Metis and First Nations government structures in Manitoba.
32. Create an Economic Development Office at the MMF with a staff position which would provide assistance to Metis people pursuing economic development activities such as assistance with project proposals, funding applications, feasibility studies and research.
33. Develop a human resource base where educational skill levels of individuals would be noted and utilized more in developing and operating Metis initiatives.
34. Develop a human resource base where educational skill levels of individuals would be noted and utilized more in developing and operating Metis initiatives.
35. Existing government agencies and departments, as well as Metis Self-Governing Institutions should be run by Metis people when Metis are affected as the main target group.

36. Using the current model of the MMF Housing Branch, expand into a Housing Institute which would be strong enough to negotiate on equal terms with governments, bands and the housing institution of other governments.
37. The Housing Branch would continue its operation but would build stronger management skills, improve contacts with the communities and be directly responsive to their needs
38. Linkages between the Housing Institute and the Manitoba Metis Community Investments Inc. would provide independent source of funds for new projects and programs.
39. The Housing Institute can assist the Metis to purchase homes by establishing a working arrangement with the Me-dian Credit Union for guaranteed loans or other forms of assistance to Metis people to encourage home ownership.
40. Establish a Planning department within the Housing Institute with architects to provide assistance to Metis people in designing and constructing their own houses.
41. Increased employment and on-the-job training opportunities for Metis people correlate with increased housing activities.

Child and Family Services

42. Establish a fully mandated Child and Family Services Agency for Metis children and families.
43. Create a central Record Department at the MMF where data collection and statistical information on Metis families can be accumulated and stored.
44. Transfer of provincial funding to the Michif Child and Family Services Agency for Metis children and families.
45. Decentralization of authority, control and responsibility for Metis children and families to the Michif Child and Family Services Agency.
46. In conjunction with the provincial government and the University of Manitoba negotiate a professional training program for Metis Child and Family Services staff.
47. Develop a province-wide training model in Metis cultural awareness for staff of existing Child and Family Service Agencies.

48. Establish a program aimed at recruiting Metis foster homes and adoptive families for Metis children currently in the care of existing agencies and government departments.
49. Develop Metis child placement standards.
50. Secure a stable resource base for the Metis Repatriation Program.

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