

GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

BUREAU OF PUBLIC WELFARE

Report of Activities in Connection with
The settlement of the Metis

Period
January st to January st

BUREAU OF PUBLIC WELFARE

Province of Alberta

Edmonton Alberta

February

Transcribed by David Morin

Sir:

I have the honour to submit herewith a report covering activities in connection with the rehabilitation of Metis

Respectfully submitted

F J BUCK
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Public Welfare

Honourable Dr W W Cross
Minister of Health and in Charge of Relief
Edmonton Alberta

GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA
Bureau of Public Welfare

Report of Activities in Connection with
the Settlement of the Metis

Period
January 1st to January 31st

Relief medical care and hospitalization for necessitous Metis families have imposed a heavy charge on the Province during recent years. A condition on which any general improvement throughout the Province appears to have very little bearing.

The following are the salient features dealt with by inquiry and report of the Half breed Commission and subsequent investigations regarding the conditions under which the Metis population has existed and the programme inaugurated by the Government for their rehabilitation.

The term "Metis" as used throughout this report means persons of mixed blood (white and Indian) who are living in groups scattered throughout a great part of Central and Northern Alberta.

The influx of the white population and the extension of settlement and development together with the depredations of the itinerant trapper have resulted in the depletion of both game and fur in many large areas which previously provided a means of livelihood for extensive Metis settlements creating conditions of extreme privation and rendering their occupation precarious even in the remote and wholly unsettled districts.

The plight of those in or near white settlements is worse than is that of those who live in districts remote from such settlements as they have few means of livelihood. The tendency is to roam less than those in remote areas; game is difficult to get; fur practically non-existent and many of the lakes depleted of fish to an extent that prohibits fishing as a commercial enterprise.

While some have settled down as farmers and are making a living at that occupation the majority appear to be without either means or ability to establish themselves under the conditions now facing them

While conditions have been met to a great extent by the Government's relief policy assistance of that nature can only be considered as a palliative measure for people who have followed their mode of life which has now ceased to be a means of providing for them In those semi settled areas in which the Metis predominate from sixty to eighty percent of them have been in receipt of direct relief from time to time during the past five years Hospitalization and medical care have been required by indigent families for an equally large percentage The investigation of the Half breed Commission disclosed that there are between and Metis in the Province While the proportion of those in receipt of relief hospitalization and medical care throughout the whole Province is not as high as it is in the areas referred to there is no doubt that assistance has been necessary for the majority

There is every indication that the large proportion of indigent Metis for whom medical care and hospitalization has been necessary is due to a great extent to the conditions under which they live It is a common practice even in the settled areas for large families (in some cases as many as ten or twelve persons) to live in a one room shack without ventilation or any regard for the protection of their health or for the simplest rules of sanitation together with a total disregard of any precautions to prevent the spread of infectious and contagious diseases particularly tuberculosis and large numbers are located in areas remote from medical assistance of any nature

The extensive inquiry and detailed report of the Half breed Commission sets out that the evidence obtained clearly indicates an unfortunate state of affairs and the necessity for assistance and guidance being provided to

enable these people to meet the changed conditions with which they are faced in order to rehabilitate them under new conditions created by settlement and development. With this in view, at the request of their leaders, it was agreed upon that areas of a suitable character be set aside wholly for settlement of Metis from vacant Provincial lands. Representatives of the Metis people submitting locations for such settlement areas, the main requirements given consideration being as follows:

Centred or adjacent to existing Metis Settlements if suitable vacant Provincial lands available

Containing a considerable proportion of reasonably good agricultural land

Containing or adjacent to a lake or lakes from which a supply of fish could be obtained

Having sufficient accessible timber suitable for the erection of buildings (shelter for families and livestock)

So far as possible, be located so as to be free from interference by white settlers

The following is a list of the areas which were submitted by the Metis representatives as suitable for Metis settlement purposes:

Area No. Keg River Containing approximately townships lying in the Northern part of the Province North of the South line of Township and adjoining the West bank of the Peace River

Area No. Big Prairie Containing approximately townships lying approximately miles North of the West end of Lesser Slave Lake

Area No. Utikuma Lake Containing approximately townships bordering on Big Whitefish Lake

- Area No East Prairie Containing approximately _ townships located some miles South of Lesser Slave Lake
- Area No Malboro Containing approximately townships lying some miles North of Malboro on the main line of the Canadian National Railways West of Edon
- Area No Goodfish Lake Containing approximately townships lying miles South of Lac La Biche and adjoining Goodfish and Whitefish Lakes
- Area No Touchwood Lake Containing approximately townships lying miles West of Lac La Biche and containing several fishing lakes
- Area No A Wolf Lake Containing approximately townships lying some miles North of Bonnyville and adjoining Wolf Lake
- Area No Cold Lake Containing approximately _ townships lying some miles North of Cold Lake and adjoining Primrose Lake
- Area No Fishing Lake Containing approximately townships adjoining Frog Lake and containing the Fishing Lake Metis settlement

The necessary legislation was prepared and passed at the Special Session permitting the setting aside of areas from vacant Provincial Government lands to be used for this purpose. These areas were tentatively set aside and reserved pending a complete investigation as to their suitability. It was found that in the majority of the areas land had been disposed of by the granting or homestead entry lease timber permit etc. This resulted in some delay as it was necessary that the provisions of the Provincial Lands Act be

complied with insofar as cancellations were concerned as each item had to be dealt with separately investigated and cancelled if such action was justified As each area was cleared or in some cases the boundaries changed to exclude lands on which there were resident settlers they were definitely set aside by Order in Council preparatory to being made available for settlement under the following programme:

The title of the land to remain perpetually in the Crown but allowing for the allotment of a specific parcel of land for the exclusive use of each head of a family giving continuous tenure both to himself and his heirs so long as there is no forfeiture resulting from misconduct of a serious nature

Providing for the formation of a Settlement Association of the Metis occupying each area and for the election of a Board or Council from the members of such Association as an advisory board for the purpose of administering the internal economy of the area under a Government superintendent (The procedure to be followed and regulations covering the formation of a Settlement Association and for the election of officers of such Association attached and marked "Appendix 'A'")

Provision was made to prohibit trapping hunting fishing or taking of fur bearing animals within the area by other persons than the members of the Metis Settlement Association occupying the area

In view of the necessity for assistance by way of direct relief which was being provided for a large number of the residents within or adjacent to the areas relief work was set up where practical with a view of procuring building material and under these projects saw logs were delivered in return for the relief being provided The following statement discloses projects operated which

resulted in feet of lumber being procured from this source during the
winter of This material was placed in stockpiles at convenient
locations to be made available for those settlers unable to procure from their
own resources material of that nature necessary to complete log houses and
other necessary shelter in the Settlement Areas

Metis Settlement Associations were formed and their officers elected in accordance with the regulations and under the supervision of the Department's representative in the district for the settlement of the following areas:

- Area No Keg River
- Area No Big Prairie
- Area No Utikuma Lake
- Area No East Prairie
- Area No Goodfish Lake
- Area No A Wolf Lake
- Area No Fishing Lake

In reference to Area No at Marlboro Area No at Touchwood Lake and Area No at Cold Lake considerable doubt was expressed by the representatives of the Metis that these three areas are suitable for the purpose for which they are required Further investigation was made without delay which confirmed this opinion Consequently these areas are held in abeyance pending surveys of the adjoining districts with a view of changing the boundaries if suitable land is available

In order to provide for orderly settlement in each area provision was made for the survey of a village site or community centre suitably located in each reserved area with a view of centralizing the settlement in order to facilitate the operation of schools and the administration On the opening up of spring a small survey party commenced this work and at the same time made a careful check of each area as to its suitability for settlement of this nature Two Areas (Keg River No and Utikuma Lake No) contained considerable unsurveyed (sic) lands and this necessitated additional work in locating and surveying the village sites

In view of the requirements in the Frog Lake – Cold Lake area the area selected at Fishing Lake was not considered sufficient. Two additional townships were set aside and the area divided into two Settlement Areas of approximately three townships each (Elizabeth No. 1A and Fishing Lake No. 1).

Application forms were prepared (Form RB SF attached) and issued in each area when the area was made available for settlement. Applications have now been approved for families who requested that they be permitted to settle in the various areas mentioned. This represents some persons. Definite locations have been applied for and approved for heads of families. Of these some heads of families have now erected new homes on land allotted for their use, buildings being of log construction with lumber floors, roofs, etc. properly constructed, lumber taken out under the relief work programme mentioned earlier in this report being used for this purpose. In some cases it has been necessary to furnish windows, shingles and nails. Minimum dimensions have been laid down for dwelling houses. It has been necessary, however, in some cases, for the settler to erect temporary shelter to take care of his family during the present winter which will be enlarged to provide suitable habitation.

Some families now have a small amount of land cleared on their allotments and families have gardens prepared for next year.

In the allotments of land provision has been made to make land available in parcels ranging from acres to acres outside of the village site. The villages or community centres have been surveyed into residential lots of approximately one acre, thus allowing sufficient land for a garden for each home, reserving lots, each varying from three to five acres in extent, for church, school, etc. In the survey of the village site a definite plan has been followed.

out in each case providing for roads lanes recreation grounds etc Adjoining or in close proximity to each village site an area has been selected and reserved for operation as a community farm

EDUCATION The Department of Education has formed a school district of the Fishing Lake Area No and the settlers have taken out logs and erected a school building the Department of Education furnishing the usual grant which is provided for schools in pioneer or newly settled areas of using it for the purchase of materials not obtainable locally and for school equipment It is expected that this school will be in operation early in the spring

Elizabeth Area No A and Goodfish Area No have been organized by the Department of Education into school districts and the settlers are now proceeding with the taking out of logs and such other material as may be obtained locally for the construction of the schools which will be built when weather conditions permit either during the latter part of the winter or early in the spring

RELIEF – Assistance by way of direct relief is being provided to members of these Settlement Associations in exactly the same way and under the same regulations as it is provided to other citizens of the Province However some progress has been made towards self support in four of the areas now being settled

In Keg River Area No no relief whatever has been issued since the organization of the Settlement in September as arrangements were made with Mr J H Johnston District Engineer to make employment available on the Hay River highway for any members of the Association requiring work The

majority of those in need of a winter grub stake worked on the road the total earnings of the settlers being approximately

In Big Prairie Area No and Utikuma Lake Area No a set up was made enabling the Metis to have pounds of the authorized fish catch in Utikuma Lake Those in need of winter work are now employed on this project organized and set up by the Metis Association at Utikuma Lake with the assistance of the Department's officials Fishing is now in progress Metis in need of work from Big Prairie participating in the boxing hauling and delivering of the fish from the Area No relief has been issued in this Area since the fall

At East Prairie Area No provision was made that any member of this Association in need of assistance should be eligible for participation in the hauling of fish from Utikuma However a number of these men are trappers and have been able to take care of themselves No relief has been issued during the present winter for any member of this Association

At Goodfish Lake Area No considerable progress has been made in establishing indigent settlers from Lac La Biche and other points in the Area Relief is still imposing a heavy charge but arrangements have now been made for a small fish set up with an allotment of the catch in Whitefish Lake adjoining the reserve and a small order for the delivery of approximately poles to the Northern Alberta Railway has been arranged for These two activities will provide limited gainful employment for some of those in need

In Area No A Wolf Lake Area No A Elizabeth; and Area No Fishing Lake very little progress has been made up to the present time in arranging gainful employment for the settlers However it has been possible to place a small contract for telephone poles in Area No A Elizabeth work on which is now under way This will reduce the number of those requiring direct relief by providing the necessary gainful employment

The attached statement marked "Appendix 'B'" sets out in brief the relief situation at the present time in all areas that have been organized and in which settlement is progressing. It will be noticed some of the approved settlers have received direct relief from time to time and that are still receiving direct relief.

Any members of Associations receiving relief or any assistance by way of material are now required to work in return for it on various projects set up in the Areas the results of which will benefit and assist in the re-establishment of the settlers. Logs are being delivered under the supervision of the Bureau and the Boards of the various areas to be sawn into lumber for use on the Areas both in the erection of public structures and shelter for settlers unable to procure material from their own resources. This statement attached marked "Appendix 'C'" sets out in detail the progress that has been made towards the establishment of the settlers on the Areas now organized.

The relief roadwork project authorized under the Dominion Provincial Agreement opening up the road from Lac La Biche North under the administration of the Department of Public Works provided employment for a number of those in the Goodfish Lake Area sufficient to carry them through the winter.

In all areas now organized the settlers have opened up clearing and brushing new roads into the town sites from existing new roads by voluntary labour. Between Fishing Lake and Elizabeth Areas some miles of road is now passable for horse drawn vehicles; also some miles in the Goodfish Lake Area.

Appendix 'A'

THE METIS POPULATION BETTERMENT ACT

REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE FORMATION OF A
LOCAL ASSOCIATION (SETTLEMENT) AND FOR
THE SETTING UP OF THE BOARD OF SUCH ASSOCIATION

- (a) No Association to be formed pursuant of Section of the Metis Population Betterment Act without authority of the Minister
- (b) When authority is given for the formation of an Association the Minister shall cause a meeting to be called of those Metis eligible to form an Association at point conveniently located adjacent to or within the area in which the said Metis reside
- (c) Those eligible to participate in such meeting and to become members of an Association and to vote in the election to the Board of each Association shall be confined to Metis of the full age of years who have resided in Alberta for a period of at least five years immediately prior to the date of the organization meeting
- (d) An official appointed by the Minister shall preside at such meeting
- (e) The official presiding shall have the minutes of the meeting properly recorded and shall act as Returning Officer in connection with the election of candidates to the Board At the conclusion of the meeting the Official presiding shall submit to the Minister:
 - A copy of the Minutes of the meeting
 - The names of those nominated to the Board
 - The names of those elected to the Board together with the record of the number of votes received by each candidate

ELECTION OF THE BOARD

The Board shall be elected from those nominated

The election shall be by secret ballot

The procedure to be followed by members of the Association eligible to vote in actually casting their ballot shall be decided by the Officer presiding at such meeting. At the first election the candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected for a period of three years; the candidate receiving the second highest number shall be declared elected for a period of two years; the candidate receiving the third highest number of votes shall be declared elected for a period of one year. Notwithstanding the term of office for which the first Board is elected they shall remain in office until the date of the next first annual election after the term of office would terminate.

At all subsequent elections the candidate elected shall hold office for a period of three years.

ELECTION – ANNUAL – shall be held between the 1st day of May and the 31st day of July and shall remain the same date each year excepting when such date falls on Sunday in which case the election shall be held on the day following.

In any case of an equality of votes in any such election the Returning Officer shall have the casting vote. At first meeting of the Board after election the Board shall elect one of their members to act as Chairman of the Board for the succeeding year.

An election may be set aside by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on a report of the Minister if it is proved by two witnesses before an official appointed by the Minister to hear complaint and take evidence in the matter that gross irregularity was practised at the said election and any member of the Association who is proved guilty of such irregularity or connivance

thereto may be declared ineligible for re election for a period not exceeding five years

THOSE PERSONS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE – Metis of the full age of years and who are members of the Association and who have resided within the area set aside for the use of the Association for a period of at least one year; provided however that at the first election held in any Association after its formation the residence qualification shall not apply

QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

- (a) Full age of years
- (b) Must be a Metis and a member of the Association
- (c) Except at the first election must be a resident within the area set aside for the use of the Association for a period of at least one year

THE FOLOWING SHALL NOT BE ELIGIBLE TO BE ELECTED TO THE BOARD:

- (a) Any persons who has been convicted of a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment for a period of two years or more
- (b) Any person who has been convicted of three minor offences punishable by imprisonment

UPON ELECTION MEMBERS OF THE BOARD SHALL BE REQUIRED TO TAKE A DECLARATION OF OFFICE AS FOLLOWS:

That he will declare he will truly faithfully and impartially to the best of his knowledge and ability execute the office to which he has been elected and that he is not receiving and will not receive any payment or reward or promise thereof for the exercise of any partiality abuse or improper use of the functions of his office

BOARD MEETINGS

A meeting of the Board shall be held within three days after each annual election

The Board at any meeting at which the Chairman and a quorum of the Board are present shall decide by resolution the date hour and place of the succeeding regular meeting of the Board and any member of the Board not present at such meeting must be notified by the Chairman in writing of the date hour and place of such meeting

The Board shall hold the ordinary meetings openly and no member of the Association shall be excluded therefrom excepting for improper conduct but the person presiding at any meeting may cause any person who has been guilty of improper conduct at such meeting to be expelled and excluded

The Board may by unanimous consent waive notice of any meeting and hold a meeting at any time but every member of the Board must be present at such meeting

A majority of the whole Board shall be necessary to form a quorum

The Board shall hold not less than four or more than twelve ordinary meetings in each year

The Board may make rules and regulations for calling meetings governing its proceedings for the conduct of its meetings and generally for the transaction of its business Any question dealt with by the Board upon which there is an equality of votes shall be deemed to be in the negative but may be submitted to the Minister and his decision thereon shall be final Every meeting of the Board shall be held at a convenient and suitable place within the boundaries of the area set aside for the use of the Association

FORFEITURE OF SEAT ON BOARD

Any member of the Board may resign his seat but such resignation must be made at a meeting of the Board and shall be accepted by the Board at that meeting

If a vacancy occurs on the Board through death resignation or otherwise the Board may by unanimous vote with the approval of the Minister appoint a member to the Board to serve on the Board for the unexpired term of office of the Board member being replaced

Any member of the Board may be removed from office by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the grounds of dishonesty incompetency (sic) intemperance or immorality and declared ineligible to hold office as a member of the Board for a period not exceeding five years

IF AFTER THE ELECTION OF ANY PERSON AS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD HE IS:

- (a) convicted of a felony or
- (b) without being authorized by resolution of the Board so to do absents himself from two consecutive meetings of the Board or
- (c) ceases to be a member of the Association or
- (d) ceases to reside within the boundaries of the area set aside for use of the Association or
- (e) is deemed by the Minister to be an improper person to hold such office for any reason whatsoever

Then and in such cases he shall cease to be a member of the Board forthwith and his office shall be declared vacant

DUTIES OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD – He shall be the chief executive officer of the Association and shall:

- (a) Cause the laws rules and regulations governing the Association to be duly executed
- (b) Cause correct records to be kept of all proceedings at all meetings of the Association and of the Board
- (c) Control and regulate all matters of procedure and form and adjourn the meeting to a time named
- (d) So far as may be within his power cause all negligence carelessness and violation of duty to be duly prosecuted and punished
- (e) Report and certify all by laws and other acts and proceedings of the Board to the Minister
- (f) To communicate from time to time to the Board all such information and recommend such measures as may tend to better the welfare of the Association
- (g) To keep a correct list of all who are members of the Association

APPOINTED BOARD MEMBERS

If in any Association the number of members for the Board is for any reason not nominated or elected or by resignation or otherwise has been reduced to a number less than a quorum the Minister may appoint some person or persons to fill the vacancies in the Board

The Board may from time to time appoint standing or special committees consisting of one or more of its members and may delegate to such committee any matter for consideration inquiry or management

The Board of an Association may pass by laws and regulations not inconsistent with the provisions of the constitution of the Association pertaining to the

management and governing of the Association and the reserved area occupied by their Association. Any such by law and regulation passed by the Board shall become effective when approved by the Minister.

(Note two tables taken out of pages and because of a format incapability. These tables appear in "MetisReport Alta .doc", "MetisReport Alta .doc" and "MetisReport Alta .doc".

GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA
Bureau of Public Welfare

File: _____

METIS SETTLEMENT OF _____ No ___ Date _____

Name (in full) _____ of _____ Alberta

Married Single or Widower _____ Number of dependents residing with applicant _____

Are you a member of the Metis Association of Alberta? _____ Education _____

(State grade reached)

Length of residence at present address _____

Previous residence during the period covered by the five years immediately prior to the date of this statement (Complete details are required giving actual land locations and occupation)

Were you farming during this period? _____

Experience in any class of trained work (trapping logging tie making carpentry or any other work) _____ Present Occupation _____

What Physical disability if any _____ Have you been in receipt of relief? _____ If so when? _____

Military Service in France _____ Elsewhere _____

Are you or any member of your family living with you in receipt of pension allowance or income? _____ If so amount: _____ Source: _____

Do you own or have any interest in any real estate? _____ If so give details of such land and nature of interest _____

How do you proposed to gain a living if you settle in the area into which you propose to move? _____

Name and ages of family and others dependent upon you for support and residing with you Give names and ages:

????? _____ Wife _____

Sons _____ Daughters _____

Other dependents if any _____

?????antage of Settler:

Settler's Father _____ (Name in full) _____ (Tribal Origin if Indian or Metis)

Was he eligible for Treaty? _____ If so state whether treaty was accepted or he was non treaty

Settler's Mother _____ (Name in full) _____ (Tribal Origin if Indian or Metis)

Was she eligible for Treaty? _____ If so state whether treaty was accepted by her at any time

Settler's wife _____ (Tribal origin if Indian or Metis)

Has she ever accepted Treaty? _____ If so give details _____

Owens the following property:

Land: ___Qr of Sec ___Twp ___Rge ___W ___ Value _____ Mortgage Owing _____

Livestock: ___ Horses ___ Milch Cows Other Cattle: _____ Taxes Owing _____ Hoqs _____ Sheep _____

The information given in this statement is given by me for the purpose of obtaining permission to become a resident of the Metis Settlement at _____

I _____ of _____

Make oath and say:

I am a member of the Metis population of Alberta
I have resided within the Province of Alberta continuously during five years immediately prior to this date
I am the full age of twenty one years
The answers given by me to the questions above set out are true in stance and in fact

SWORN BEFORE ME

this _____ day of

at _____

in the Province of Alberta

Commissioner for Oaths



REMARKS: