

INTERNAL DOCUMENT

NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

A REVIEW OF EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS  
AFFECTING THE MANDATE OF THE  
GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE

Research and Development Division  
Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native  
Studies and Applied Research, Inc.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of this Report

This paper, which has been prepared as an internal document, attempts to provide an overview of the external environmental factors currently affecting the mandate of the Gabriel Dumont Institute. In short, this document might be appropriately described as an environmental trends analysis.

In attempting to establish the current atmosphere surrounding the mandate of self-determined education for Native peoples, seven major areas will be reviewed. These include:

- . the Demographic Environment,
- . the Geographic Environment,
- . the Political Environment,
- . the Economic Environment.
- . the Media Environment,
- . the Legal Environment,
- . the Social Environment

A few words of caution must be exercised relative to the interpretation of this report. First, the exercise, at hand, is highly subjective, particularly the interpretation and selection of the statistics and factual information which support the analysis. Second, in some areas, such as the 'political environment', current trends were perceived to be meaningless without a broad understanding of the historical events which were instrumental in the evolution of those trends. Thus, the paper is somewhat more detailed than first anticipated.

In sum, this paper does not purport to provide a definitive statement on the external factors affecting the

Gabriel Dumont Institute mandate. Rather, it provides a base for discussion and reflection which will hopefully be built upon by others more knowledgeable in the field.

## 1.2 An Overview of the Mandate of the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

Statements pertaining to the Mandate of the Gabriel Dumont Institute can be summarized as follows:

1. The Metis and Non-Status Indian people find it necessary to take control of their own education because mainstream institutions have not effectively delivered education services to Native people.
2. The students of the Gabriel Dumont Institute, and of the institutions contemplated in its education network, have the same vocation; that is, to be citizens capable of governing themselves in a democratic state.
3. All should receive the best education to prepare them for citizenship, leisure and making a living.
4. In terms of Native development, these three aims may be restated as (i) the aim of healthy Native communities and of Native self-determination; (ii) the aim of a renewed and strengthened Native culture; and (iii) the aim of employment, and of economic development and well-being.
5. The Gabriel Dumont Institute seeks to develop and to maintain in good repair those mechanisms which support local initiative and promote community development.

## 2.0 THE DEMOGRAPHIC ENVIRONMENT

### 2.1 A Youthful Population Profile

The demographic profile of the Metis and Non-Status population of Saskatchewan impacts significantly on the urgency of the Institute's mandate for a more responsive system of education. The latest statistics released by the Federal Government estimate there are 47,500 Metis and 9,500 Non-Status Indian people in Saskatchewan (C.E.I.C., December 1988).

The Native population is a young population with 35 to 40 percent being under the age of 15 years (Statistics Canada, 1984). This compares to 24 percent of the general population in Saskatchewan who are 0-14 years of age. Moreover, while the general population of Saskatchewan showed a .1 percent decrease in 1988, the Native population is growing at an annual rate of close to 3 percent a year. Whereas Native people represented 8 percent of the province's population in 1981, current estimates are as high as 11.2 percent, rising to 13 percent by 1991 (C.E.I.C., December, 1988).

With respect to demands on the post-secondary system of education, seven out of ten Native people in Canada are under 30 years of age. This compares with a rate of five out of ten for the general Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 1984).

people who are employed, seasonal or temporary employment predominate. As a result, average family incomes for Native households in Saskatchewan are approximately half that of the general provincial population (Hikel and Corbishley, 1984, pp.5-12).

#### 2.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the demographic imperative for a better system of education for Native peoples is very much in evidence. Statistics on youthful age profiles, poor socio-economic status and the lack of Native achievement and proportional representation in the mainstream educational programs leave little doubt that greater efforts must be made to ensure a system which is tailored to the special needs of Native peoples.



### 3.0 THE GEOGRAPHIC ENVIRONMENT

#### 3.1 Introduction

The population of Metis and Non-Status Indians in Saskatchewan is widely distributed throughout the province, a factor which proves particularly challenging to the provision of a comprehensive educational system. In 1981, the Census showed the North to contain 40.9 percent of the identified provincial Metis/Non-Status Indians. The urban centres (primarily Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert) contained an additional 35.5 percent of the Metis/Non-Status Indian population and the remaining 23.6 percent were scattered across the rural sectors of the province (Hikel and Corbishley, 1984, p.4).

#### 3.2 The Northern Environment

The high representation of Native peoples in Northern communities (approximately 70 percent) makes a 'community by community' approach to the delivery of culturally-appropriate educational programs the most sensible. The proportion of Native people in northern towns and villages should facilitate Native representation on school boards. A community approach to education of northern Native adults can also be specifically targeted by local needs and labour force demands. The low mobility rates of the northern

population should also serve in the calculation of the exact numbers who might benefit from educational programs in each community.

The challenges the Gabriel Dumont Institute faces in delivering its programs in the north, center instead, upon:

- 1) Low basic education achievement of adult learners,
- 2) High rates of illiteracy and early school leavers,
- 3) Difficulty in attracting quality teachers,
- 4) The Institute's geographical removal from the north affects community input, ongoing evaluation and negotiations,
- 5) Geographically isolated areas (such as the Lake Athabasca communities) are very expensive for program delivery.
- 6) Community politics or competitiveness.

Also, with the emphasis of the adult education sector on employment-related skill attainment, and the province's interest in resource diversification, the Gabriel Dumont Institute has an increasing need to be visible in the north so that it can establish its credibility with the major northern private sector employers such as the mining corporations.

### 3.3 The Rural Environment

A major challenge, in rural Saskatchewan, lies in the geographical identification of specific 'pockets' of Metis/Non-Status people for educational purposes. Recruitment of students for adult training courses and

community input on matters concerning the education of K-12 Native students is difficult with a widely dispersed population base.

Another challenge facing the delivery of G.D.I. adult educational programs, in both the north and rural areas, are the opposing needs for a 'build-upon' progression of courses, in specific districts, versus the need to distribute programs equitably among a whole lot of districts. For example, the Institute might question whether it is better to offer two basic skill-attainment courses in two separate districts or instead to offer one basic skill-attainment course in one district and later supplement this with a management-level course in that same district. As the Institute becomes progressively more sophisticated in its appraisal of market needs and demands, it may be increasingly difficult to justify equal geographical distribution of adult programming. On the other hand, to not distribute programs on an equitable geographical basis will no doubt raise the ire of regional Metis representatives.

Economies of scale also figure prominently in a discussion of the geographical environment and its impact on the G.D.I. mandate. Only last year G.D.I.'s proposal to train ten Economic Development Officers, in La Ronge, was not accepted because the La Ronge marketplace could not absorb the ten officers. The low mobility of the northern population negates the rationale that people, once trained,

will move to where the jobs are. This then affects the types of courses that will be funded. That is, the courses must be targeted very closely to the capacity of local labour markets. This fact might be seen as creating a very competitive environment among institutions delivering educational programs to outlying areas.

### 3.4 The Urban Environment

Native people do not, as yet, have a voice on the school boards in major urban centres in Saskatchewan. Unlike the north, Native people in urban centres have been shown to be highly mobile. In 1984, the City of Regina Planning Department surveyed inner-city schools having a high proportion of Native students. One school, with an enrollment representing 200 families (of which an estimated 65 percent were Native) recorded 290 family moves in and out of the school over the course of the year (S.C.P.C., 1988, p.76). This high rate of mobility contributes to the alienation of Native students from the community and discourages a sense of continuity in their studies. Although the Community School concept was conceived, in the early part of this decade, to address the concerns of Native students in central city schools, the powerlessness of the Community School Program to address basic issues such as

hunger and family instability are evidence of how overtaxed the program is in terms of both manpower and financial resources.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The geographic environment can then be seen as a particular challenge in the delivery of the Gabriel Dumont Institute's mandate. Varying educational needs, physical isolation and the distribution of the Metis/Non-Status population, across the province, make implementation and coordination of the Institute's mandate an expensive undertaking. More importantly, political realities and the needs of local constituencies do not always mesh well with economies of scale and sound educational planning.

## 4.0 THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

### 4.1 Introduction

A mandate for self-determined education can be viewed as one important link in the larger concept of self government for Native peoples. The political environment, defined as the willingness of governments to accept self-determination of Native peoples and to grant the resources necessary to carry forth that mandate, is perhaps the most important and the most complex of all of the 'external' forces discussed in this paper. Realistically, the political powers control two aspects of self-determination: first, the enabling legislation and, second, the economic resources to make self-determination happen.

### 4.2 Political Decisions Affecting Native Rights in an Historical Context

A proper assessment of the federal political environment rests upon an understanding of the historical events and policies which have preceded current government directions on Native self-determination. In short, what lessons could the Mulroney Government learn from past federal performance and what agendas were already set?

4.2.1 Proposed Policy of Assimilation - The 1969 White Paper on Indian Policy

The Federal political direction during the 1960's was toward the assimilation of Native people into the Canadian mainstream. This was seen most clearly in the programs affecting Status Indian people. For example, monetary bonuses were offered to Indian families who moved from Reserves to the city. The direction towards assimilation culminated in 1969 with the release of the Federal White Paper on Indian Policy. Proposals for the abolition of DIAND, the transfer of all responsibilities for Native Programs to the provinces and a refusal to recognize aboriginal rights were among those highlighted in the paper (Purich, 1986, p.183).

It is interesting to note the parallel of assimilative policy, from this broad political perspective, with the assimilative policy in the field of education. A report on Native curriculum development in Saskatchewan, (Saskatchewan Education, 1984, p.5), contains the following description of the educational policy of Native peoples, in the province, from 1944 to 1960:

...when the Saskatchewan provincial government assumed responsibility for the education of Metis and Non-Status Indian people...in 1944, the objective was to give these Native children equal educational opportunity. This meant providing the same facilities, materials, teachers and curriculum as other Saskatchewan children received...The ultimate goal of the program was

the assimilation of the Native students into the mainstream society through the alteration of their Native culture.

#### 4.2.2 Response of the Native Community to Federal Assimilation Policy

Ironically, the assimilative directions proposed in the Federal 1969 White Paper, and the subsequent retraction of that paper, did more to further the cause of aboriginal self-determination than harm it. This blatant move toward assimilation, on the part of the Federal Government, was met with anger in the Native community and Native people across the country organized and rallied to promote their cause. Blockades were erected and DIAND offices occupied (Purich, 1986, pp.183-187). The threat of militant action was thought to be very real and the ominous Saskatchewan Svenson Report of the mid-1970's was written in this tone. One of the most visible statements to the government came in 1974 with the organization of the Native People's Caravan. This Caravan travelled from Vancouver to Ottawa to demand the recognition in the Canadian Constitution of, "...the heredity and treaty rights of all Native Peoples in Canada including Indian, Metis, Non-Status and Inuit...", (Purich, 1986, p.184). Clearly, future federal policy makers would do well to heed the lessons learned by the White Paper fiasco.



#### 4.2.3 Parallels in the Field of Native Education

As a point of interest, the rejection of the Federal policy of assimilation was a decade behind the rejection of a similar policy of assimilation in Native education in Saskatchewan. By 1960, "damning studies of Native education" and "horrifying statistics" were gaining widespread recognition. A new provincial philosophy in the field of Native education was adopted which encouraged teachers "to respect the child's culture". This philosophy was particularly encouraged in the training of teachers, the development of resource materials and the creation of a provincial Native curriculum committee (Saskatchewan Education, 1984, pp.5,7,8).

The uprising and rallying of Native people across the nation, throughout the 1970's, appears also to have touched the education system. In Saskatchewan, the methodically-planned Native curriculum changes, instituted by the provincial Department of Education in the 1960's, were challenged by the Native people as they expressed their interest in undertaking local initiatives in the education of their children. Although one must be particularly cautious when reading an historical analysis of an NDP educational policy, as seen through the eyes of a Progressive Conservative government, the following excerpt from a Department of Education report (1984, p.5) is nonetheless informative:

...For the 1970's saw another shift in philosophy...[that being] general acceptance of the local initiatives approach, and more specifically the concept of Indian control of Indian education...The federal and provincial governments stopped initiating projects or directing the process. Structures which had been created in the 1960's to co-ordinate activities on a provincial level such as the curriculum committee fell into disuse. As a result, the large quantity of [Native teaching] material which was produced throughout the province by individual teachers, school divisions and boards was not co-ordinated, collected or disseminated generally. Similarly, the inclusion of Native content was never legitimized by the provincial government nor made an integral part of the core curriculum for all provincial students.

In essence, the provincial government is portrayed as a helpless observer of the development of Native education in the 1970's. The developments are promoted as ad hoc and inconsistent across the province. More importantly, the Department of Education appears to dismiss many of those developments as non-legitimate and apart from the sanctioned provincial core curriculum.

Although many of the criticisms regarding the quality and consistency of Native education in the 1970's may be valid, there is also another viewpoint. That is, given the militant political atmosphere of the 1970's, and the enormous gains in Native autonomy throughout that decade, a lot of the seemingly haphazard and unsanctioned efforts for Native control of education in the 1970's were fundamental in laying the foundation for legitimate Native educational institutions in the 1980's. It seems very appropriate,

then, that the mandate to educate the Metis and Non-Status peoples of Saskatchewan was born at a cultural conference in the latter part of this decade.

#### 4.2.4 The Penner Report and 1982 Constitutional Changes

While the late 1960's and the advent of the White Paper can be viewed as a low point in federal-Aboriginal relations, and the 1970's as a time of intense conflict in the fight for self-determination, several developments in the early 1980's, toward the end of the Liberal reign, did much to restore confidence.

In 1982, with the new Constitution, Canada became "the only country in the world [to] entrench in its Constitution, rights for indigenous people" (Mulroney, First Ministers' Conference, 1987, p.9). These 'rights' were to be defined by a series of First Ministers' Conferences and Price (1986, p.68) comments that, it was the first time in Canadian history, that the provincial and federal governments were called upon to publicly state where they stood on contentious aboriginal issues.

In short, the Constitutional changes were seen as proof that aboriginal peoples "could influence the national agenda" (Purich, 1986, p.189). More importantly, once aboriginal rights were defined, entrenchment of these rights in the Constitution would help to guarantee that the

privileges granted Native people will not be continuously subjected to the benevolence of politicians.

Complementing the progressive Constitutional changes, was the formation of a Special Committee of Parliament on Indian Self-Government. The Committee was chaired by Liberal Parliamentarian Keith Penner. Although the mandate of this Committee was focused on self-government of Status Indian peoples and did not include "issues of concern to Metis" (Penner, 1983, p.5), the consultation process was comprehensive and non-discriminatory. The resulting Penner Report was hailed as a "pivotal point or watershed in Indian policy development", and for the first time Native leaders and each of the federal political parties had reached "a broad consensus" on the direction of self-government (Price, 1986, p.68). One of the most important contributions of the Penner Report may have been that it took the issue of self-government beyond the theoretical and began to legitimize it by suggesting possible implementation procedures such as block funding and transfer of lands and resources (Paquette, 1986, p.68).

The threatening assimilative policy thrust of the sixties seemed almost forgotten in the optimism for self-determination of the early 1980's. If it chose, the new Progressive Conservative Government would indeed have a firm base upon which to build.

#### 4.2.5 Parallels in the Field of Native Education

With respect to Native education, in Saskatchewan, the early 1980's might similarly be characterized as a period of legitimization. The educational mandate of the Metis/Non-Status population was formally recognized with the institution of the Gabriel Dumont Institute. Similar recognition was given other areas of jurisdiction: the Department of Education established a Community Education Branch to address the concerns of Native children attending urban schools as well as a Native Curriculum Review Committee (Saskatchewan Education, 1984, p.5).

#### 4.3 1985 Campaign Promises - Mulroney Sets His Own Agenda

Ponting (1987b, p.96) comments that, "non-Native political leaders and politicians have largely shied away from publicly involving themselves in Native issues during election campaigns." Instead, the 1985 Tory Campaign was fashioned on a commitment to reduce the escalating federal deficit in an increasingly "sluggish" economy (Eramus, 1986, p.55).

Nevertheless, in 1985, as the Conservatives came to power, Aboriginal issues were forced to the forefront. The gains made in Federal-Aboriginal relations, in the early 1980's, were heavily dependent upon a provincial-federal consensus of the definitions of "self-government" and

"existing treaty and aboriginal rights". Government leaders had failed to reach a consensus during the first two (1983-84) Constitutional Conferences and progress was mired in the hesitancy of several provinces, including Saskatchewan, to accept the Federal proposal for amendment to the Constitution.

Premier Grant Devine captured the province's hesitancy in the issue of self-government, particularly the financial implications, in his Opening Remarks to the 1984 First Ministers' Conference. He said:

...The concepts [of self-government] must be fully defined and understood before entrenchment is contemplated (p.6)...

What is now required is a careful consideration of the present roles and responsibilities of the two orders of government, particularly in relation to financial responsibilities (p.11)...

With this Federal-Provincial deadlock in place, the work of the new Conservative Government was cut out for it. Two more Aboriginal Constitutional Conferences were scheduled during its four year term and the Tories could not ignore the immediacy with which they would have to respond with a sound policy in aboriginal affairs (Price, 1986, p.68). As will be seen, when aboriginal issues were reconciled with the reality of the economic state of the country, deficit reduction became "the top government priority to impact most visibly on the course of [Native] policy" (Weaver, 1986a, p.2 and 1986b, p.33). In due

course, the training of adult Native people in Saskatchewan would be greatly influenced by the economic policies of the Federal government.

#### 4.4 The Nielsen Task Force

One of the first actions Mulroney took upon coming to power early in 1985, was to act upon his government's promise to cut the deficit. He engaged a Ministerial Task Force "to review all government programs" and appointed the Deputy Prime Minister, Erik Nielsen, as its head (Weaver, 1986a, p.2). Government spending on Native peoples was an important focus of this Task Force, for two reasons. First, costs of Native programs were escalating at an alarming rate and, second, the existing 106 programs, wholly or partly targeted to Native peoples, "had largely failed to ameliorate or alter the socio-economic deprivation of Canadian Native people" (Weaver, 1986a, pp.6,11).

In keeping with these concerns, Mulroney opened the 1985 Constitutional Conference with a "forceful TV speech" in which he reiterated the lack of socio-economic progress for Native peoples under existing programs. He cautioned that "...more welfare. More social workers. More programs..." are not the answer. Instead, he stated that his government proposed an end to poverty and dependence of Native peoples by "entrenchment of the right to self-

government". Above all, Mulroney promised that he would ensure an "up front and open approach" when discussing Native issues (Weaver, 1986a, pp.3-4).

#### 4.5 Leaked Nielsen Document Causes Furor

Only a few short weeks after Mulroney's televised promise of a new direction in Native affairs, a very damaging public disclosure was made. A confidential draft, purported to be Nielsen's preliminary report on the recommended direction for Native programming, was leaked to the press. Although never authenticated, the 61-page memorandum, with its recommendations, immediately gained the nation's attention and commanded the lead story in the Globe and Mail (Weaver, 1986a, pp.10,20). Critics asserted that the report:

"symbolized a secretive preparation of policy, not the 'up front and open' approach through consultation" just promised by the Prime Minister (Weaver, 1986a, p.20).

It also,

"raised doubt...about how open the policy-making process would be to [Native] input" (Weaver, 1986a, p.28).

The direction that the policy was taking was also a major concern and "Native leaders moved swiftly to criticize it" (Weaver, 1986a, p.28). In sum, Nielsen's draft repeated many of the 1969 White Paper assimilative priorities such as the disbandment of DIAND, the transfer of Indian/Native programs to the provinces and found only 25 percent of the



federal Native programs to meet 'strictly legal obligations' to Native peoples. The rest were seen as "discretionary social programs" or programs "in areas that would normally be [assumed by] municipal/provincial jurisdictions" (Weaver, 1986a, pp.6,11,12). In essence, the federal government concluded that it "had done far too much, whereas Indians, the provinces and the business sector had done far too little" (Weaver, 1986a, p.12).

#### 4.6 Mulroney Forced into Making Policy Statements

The leaked Nielsen document was very damaging to the Mulroney government. Mulroney replied almost immediately with a strong policy statement which reiterated his belief in aboriginal rights and the consultation process (Price, 1986, p.72). His public statement read:

My policies and those of my government are based on certain principles:

- the special relationship between Canada and the Aboriginal peoples should be strengthened;
- aboriginal rights, especially the right of self-government should have constitutional protections;
- current funding levels of programs designed to correct the serious inequities which exist for native people and native communities will be maintained;
- policies regarding aboriginal people will be made after open, public consultation, especially at the grassroots level;

All of these policies are dedicated to enhance the ability and power of Aboriginal communities to control their own affairs.

(Weaver, 1986a, p.22)

#### 4.7 Federal Government Program Decisions Affecting Native Education in the Interim Years, 1985 - 1987

As the analysis has shown, the Mulroney Government was forced very early in its tenure into a public statement of aboriginal policy. To have the Nielsen document referred to in similar tones as the 1969 White Paper was extremely damaging and Mulroney was obligated in the two years leading up to the 1987 Constitutional Conference on Aboriginal Rights to publicly maintain his stance on self-government with a highly visible consultative process. Crombie, the Chairman of Mulroney's new Native Policy Committee of Cabinet set the tone of the new government's Native policy when he stated: "Really meaningful self-government and political freedom cannot flourish effectively in an environment of continued economic dependence" (Weaver, 1986b, p.23). In this perspective, two federal program initiatives, the Canadian Jobs Strategy and the Native Economic Development Program, began to have major impacts on the direction that Native adult training would take in Saskatchewan.

#### 4.7.1 The Canadian Jobs Strategy

The Canadian Jobs Strategy (C.J.S.) was announced by the Minister of Employment and Immigration on June 28, 1985. The program was described as a "collective national effort" involving the federal, provincial and private sectors as "economic and social partners" to address "regional and labour market needs" (C.E.I.C., 1988). Bluntly, C.J.S. switched the responsibility for job creation to the private sector. Unlike past programs such as STEP, it was not designed to enhance and support the concept of Native self-government by developing Native management and training skills. Being employer-driven, CJS takes this management-training initiative away from the Native people.

The CJS program has also been criticized in that many Native people live in communities where the private business sector "is almost non-existent" (Eramus, 1986, p.57). The technicalities of the program such as the limited amount of training weeks and the restrictions on current employment serve to prevent Native people from progressing through a complementary series of training programs or from leaving dead-end jobs to obtain more education. Further, the program is very much tied to the identified shortages of the labour market and does little to promote advanced education for the sake of knowledge and personal fulfillment, two very important aspects of the Gabriel Dumont Institute mandate.

A final criticism of this program is that a large number of educational institutes can access it. Therefore, the educational atmosphere becomes very competitive.

#### 4.7.2 The Native Economic Development Program

While not as directly related to the educational training of Native peoples, the Native Economic Development Program, conceived by the Federal Government in 1986, is interesting in that the principal of providing endowments directly to Native people is one that could well set a benchmark for future educational funding. In essence, the Native Economic Development Program strategy gives Native people the leverage to deliver their own goods and services. Although the full benefits and accountability of this funding approach have yet to be analyzed, the concept is one which promotes Native self-sufficiency.

### 4.8 Saskatchewan at the 1985 and 1987 First Ministers' Conferences

#### 4.8.1 1985 - A 'Bottom's Up' Approach

As shown earlier, in this analysis, the Saskatchewan Government was strongly opposed to Trudeau's 1984 proposed Constitutional Amendment. The major rationale in refusing

to support the amendment was that the financial implications of self-government could be enormous for the province.

A year later, at the April 1985 First Ministers' Conference, Devine maintained a similar stance but softened it by introducing what might be termed a 'bottom's up' approach to the issue of aboriginal self-determination. For example, in his Opening Remarks to the Conference (pp.3-5), Devine listed recent accomplishments of the Saskatchewan Government in Native affairs. He mentioned the recent commitment of funds for the Metis to purchase land at Batoche. As well, he noted that the Province had been working with AMNSIS on a technique to enumerate the Metis and had recently produced a policy paper and funding for Aboriginal economic development. In this speech, Devine (p.4) directly referred to Native control in education and other potential institutions of self-government. He said:

At present, Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan also have under their control four post-secondary institutions, seven economic development institutions...and an agreement...to study the feasibility of creating Indian justice systems within the context of our present system.

It appears the provincial strategy was to divert attention from the difficult legal issue of how to define self-government and instead to emphasize its commitment to develop "the economic and human resources that will provide the basis for the self-sufficiency of aboriginal communities".

In retrospect, the Gabriel Dumont Institute would have a lot to gain from this 'bottom's up' approach and was in a

position to be of value to the government. The Institute was now both provincially and nationally recognized and thus could provide a very credible vehicle for the province to use in demonstrating its commitment to Native self-sufficiency. Second, the Gabriel Dumont Institute has always respected, in pursuit of its mandate, the authority of the Provincial Department of Education. For example, the Institute has never asked to have its own University but desires Federated College status. Likewise, if separate schools were to be established for Metis/Non-Status children in the K-12 system, the Institute would still subscribe to the academic and technical authority of the Department of Education and grant diplomas through the Minister of Education.

Indeed, the field of education appeared to be a major way in which the Devine Government could demonstrate its commitment to Native peoples and a significant number of provincial government policy papers began to be circulated on the subject<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, the Gabriel Dumont Institute was formally recognized by the Department of Education in an affiliation agreement with the two universities.

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<sup>1</sup>Overview of Policies Bearing on "Aboriginal Peoples" by Saskatchewan Advanced Education and Manpower, Northern Division. Current Initiatives Undertaken by the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower in Order to Foster Native Participation in the Labour Force, by Saskatchewan Advanced Education and Manpower.  
Native Programs Policy Statement (July 1985), Marine Perrand and Jim Peck, Advanced Education and Manpower.

#### 4.8.2 1987 - Devine Stands Firm

The final First Ministers' Conference on Aboriginal Constitutional Matters was held in March, 1987. Mulroney, still hurting, from the Neilsen scandal, pleaded the rights of Aboriginal Peoples (Mulroney, 1987, p.9):

We want to ensure that Canada's Indian, Inuit and Metis are given the means of establishing their rightful place within Canadian society. In short, we welcome self-government, for we feel it mirrors the democratic principles which have helped to shape Canada...

Newfoundland, Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan all rejected this "last-ditch federal proposal", the latter three because specific powers to be given Native peoples had never been properly defined. In the last year the Saskatchewan Government had tallied a \$1.2 Billion deficit and it could ill afford to buy into a scheme with an uncertain "price tag". Devine reiterated his government's skepticism that there "are constitutional solutions to the economic and social problems" facing Native people and emphasized his 'bottom's up' approach whereby "governments [should] individually pursue means to solve aboriginal issues" (Eisler: March 27, 1987, pp.A1, A4; March 28, 1987, p.A1).

In keeping with this approach, in the Fall of 1987, Gabriel Dumont Institute was awarded the three-year contract to administer the Native Services Division of SIAST. In making the press announcement, the Minister of Education emphasized that:

This agreement represents a major new direction for Native education in Saskatchewan...For the first time, Saskatchewan's aboriginal people can directly influence publicly-funded vocational and technical training and decision-making...This agreement is opening doors to Native students on an equitable basis...

In conclusion, the Saskatchewan Government has been heavily criticized for its refusal to endorse the rights of Native peoples in the Constitution, until those rights are satisfactorily defined. On the other hand, the government has developed and is acting upon an alternative 'bottom's up' approach to empower Native people. With this approach, the government, which is in a serious deficit situation, has control over the purse strings. Although the Gabriel Dumont Institute is seen to be playing a lead role in the Saskatchewan Government's strategy, the short-term nature of contracts, such as the SIAST Native Services Division, and the uncertainty of yearly provincial budget endowments to the Institute characterize the later 1980's as a time of evaluation and proving the worth of the Institute.



## 5.0 THE INTERNAL POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

### 5.1 The New Metis Society of Saskatchewan

While external political directions have been seen to heavily influence the Gabriel Dumont Institute, the internal political environment of aboriginal politics can also be seen as influencing control over the Institute's mandate. In the past, when hard external political times have fallen upon the Institute, Gabriel Dumont has been able to rely on its political parent for strength in positioning itself in negotiations with senior governments.

In 1988, the political parent of Gabriel Dumont Institute, the Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan, was dissolved. In its place arose the new Metis Society of Saskatchewan. Over the next few years the Metis Society will be seeking to establish itself, to access funding, and to build its reputation with the senior levels of government. In the interim, through this period of stabilization, the Gabriel Dumont Institute, as an affiliate, may not be able to rely as heavily upon its political parent. In the coming months and years, it is in the best interests of the Institute to support and work with the Metis Society as it strives to achieve its desired level of recognition.

## 6.0 THE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

### 6.1 Examples Set by Saskatchewan Francophones

As the complexities of the political environments unfold, the Legal Environment is beginning to provide some hopeful precedents on the issues of self-determination.

The Francophone community in Saskatchewan has recently won the rights, in court, to have their own separate schools. Even though the Metis and Non-Status Indians, in Saskatchewan, do not have the constitutional privilege of the French in Canada, the Francophone experience is very relevant to the Native community. For example, it will be informative to watch the progression of French separate schools and to see what basis is used to determine when such a school is warranted. In other words, the Francophone community will show the Native people of Saskatchewan the practical limits and complexities in setting up a separate school system.

The media coverage of the Donald Marshall inquiry and the recent report on Native people in the justice system, by the Canadian Bar Association, are positive evidence that "there is a growing inclination in some circles to consider the extent of the inequities faced by aboriginal societies in Canada" (Hall, 1988). Twenty years ago none of these things were happening.

## 7.0 THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

### 7.1 Introduction

The media coverage afforded the Constitutional Conferences on Aboriginal Rights, for the first time allowed millions of Canadians to read about and watch the articulation of Native rights as portrayed through the words of the country's aboriginal leaders (Price, 1986, p.68). Native people have achieved many victories toward self-determination over the last few years, such as the entrenchment of aboriginal rights in the Constitution and access to both the political and religious elite (Ponting, 1987a, p.6). It might now be asked, "Are these victories merely 'symbolic' or are Canadians prepared to accept and support self-determination of Native people and their systems of education?"

### 7.2 Public Attitudinal Surveys

Within the last three years there have been two national opinion surveys on the subject of aboriginal issues. In December of 1986, Ponting, a political sociologist, from the University of Calgary, interviewed 1,834 Canadians. The respondents were randomly chosen and personally interviewed in their homes. Ponting's survey, which was designed to solicit the opinions of non-Native

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University degree. During the time they would have achieved that grade level, the type of education on Indian issues was biased and considered of little importance to general Canadian development. The prevailing image of Indians at the time was gathered from the Lone Ranger television show.

Eramus further comments (1986, p.54) that, "It is a situation which is slowly changing as we use every opportunity at our disposal to inform people so that the majority can make informed decisions before it is too late to reverse the destruction of our cultures".

(ii) Native Issues Not Seen As A Priority

Lack of knowledge, not surprisingly, leads to apathy or a lack of prioritization, in the minds of the Canadian public, about issues concerning Native peoples. When given a list of five problems facing Canada, and asked to rank them by importance, 76 percent of surveyed Canadians chose either environmental protection or reduction of the national debt as their top priority. The improvement of the socio-economic situation of the country's aboriginal peoples was prioritized by only 7 percent of those surveyed and fell two percentage points behind women's issues (Ponting, 1987b, p.12).

## (iii) Self-Determined Government and Education

The ICNI survey found that 61 percent of Canadians are supportive of the right of Aboriginal peoples to self-government and the same percentage believe the negotiation and implementation of self-government is a shared Federal-Provincial responsibility (ICNI, 1987, pp.3,46). Canadians are, however, less yielding when the terms of self-government are defined. For example, the public is positive toward Native peoples having special treatment, that is, having protection of their existing rights, but because of the importance Canadians attach to equality for all, that support does not necessarily translate into support for an extension of those rights (Ponting, 1987a, p.45). The Editorial on the following page, shown as Exhibit One, is one example of how strongly some Canadians feel about equality.

Only about half of the public endorses giving aboriginal governments powers similar to those granted the provinces (ICNI, 1987, p.49). Instead of a 'carte blanche' approach, the public appears to favor a more flexible definition of self-governing rights with appropriate powers being negotiated according to the mandate of the institution in question (Ponting, 1987a, p.45; ICNI, 1987, p.49). This would appear to be congruent with the Saskatchewan Government's current approach. On a more positive note,

language and cultural matters were seen by 80 percent of the public, and education by 68 percent of the public, as areas where aboriginal peoples should have control (ICNI, 1987, pp.27-28).

## E X H I B I T O N E

## Treat problem, not symptoms

Without quoting Georges Erasmus, a Canadian Bar Association panel has sounded virtually the same "powderkeg" warning: that Native impatience may lead to civil disobedience. There already is some "disobedience", as noted above, just as there are other problems involving the law.

The CBA committee on Native justice on Sunday unveiled a document, *Locking Up Natives in Canada*, which proposed a separate justice system, designed and run by Natives. The panel cites such statistics as Natives making up only two per cent of the Canadian population, but 10 per cent of federal prisoners. (In the Prairies, they constitute five per cent of the population and 32 per cent of the number in penitentiaries.)

If these barristers were practising medicine, they would be accused of seeking to treat the symptoms and not the disease. It is true there is this "imbalance" in prison,

but is that a valid argument for some prison quota system, or that the Canadian laws that apply to one race should not apply to all others?

The CBA might do well to review a number of U.S. experiences, including the Detroit and Newark riots and the Kerner report on these disturbances. Blacks in the late 1960s made up 10 per cent of the population but were similarly a disproportionate segment of the prison totals. Part of the "solution", if it can be called that, was election of more black judges and use of more blacks on juries. Nothing, however, created separate laws.

The CBA does well to call further attention to Native questions. However, answers must be found in better education, enhancement of Native spiritual experience on the reserves, and not just after incarceration, and in fostering the understanding that they are a part of Canada, not apart from it.

Editorial  
Leader Post  
August 23, 1988



## 8.0 THE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

### 8.1 The Media as a Social Force

The foregoing analysis has shown that although Canadians are not as knowledgeable on Native issues as would be ideal, when asked to comment on specific areas of self-determination such as the right to govern cultural, language and educational affairs, some very definite opinions emerge. A more informed public will, in time, become a more demanding public with respect to governments clearly having to state their positions on aboriginal issues (Price, 1986, p.68).

The media then becomes a powerful force in shaping public opinion on Native issues. At a recent Saskatchewan conference on native employment, Joan Beatty, former editor of New Breed magazine criticized the news media for continuously placing all Native news stories under one umbrella. She said, "We resent being lumped into one pot" for "we do not all think, feel or react the same...". Similarly, Brizinski, a Professor of Native Studies at the University of Saskatchewan, discusses the stereotypes that have developed to the detriment of Native people. Brizinski says that people develop images "to simplify reality" but with these images come prejudice and fear (Munroe, 1988, p.C1).

Sadly, because of low literacy levels and geographic isolation, one of the groups that may have been most believing of the inaccurate stereotypes presented by insensitive media presentations is the Native populace itself. Recent trends toward community-based adult education programs and informative gatherings such as the Gabriel Dumont Cultural Conferences and 'Back to Batoche Days', play an important role in providing Native role models visible to the general Native population and instilling in them a pride in their heritage.

Also in a positive light, many groups are publicly taking on the cause of Native peoples. The Human Rights Commission and the Department of Education have made great strides in recent years in eradicating prejudicial learning materials. Documents published by Gabriel Dumont Institute, which provide historical and culturally accurate information on the Metis, will, in time, do a great service to the people.

## 8.2 The Media As A Political Force

For all of the negative images attributed to the media's portrayal of Native people, it has, at times, worked to the benefit of the cause of Native people, most particularly in the political realm.

Nielsen's Task Force viewed the media "as consistently sympathetic to Native peoples and the key instrument for

keeping Native issues before the public at a higher level of prominence than other social policy issues" (Weaver, 1986a, p.18). Further, the federal Cabinet document leaked in early 1988 captures the fear of the power of the media, in relation to the treatment of Indian people, from the viewpoint of the government. The telling excerpt from the 1988 leaked document in part reads:

Although status Indians and Inuit amount to a small proportion of the Canadian population, their treatment is a highly visible test of federal social policy, both at home and abroad...

Tony Hall, a Professor of Native Studies at the University of Sudbury, has written an interesting commentary on the place afforded aboriginal issues in the recent federal election campaign. He begins by observing that the request by Erasmus, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, for a nationally-televised leaders' debate on aboriginal concerns, was media news for only a few hours. Hall writes,

Then the plan sunk without a trace. Neither the media nor the public (nor, apparently, the politicians) showed much interest in it.

Professor Hall speaks of "political realities: there are many bigger, richer, more cohesive, more influential and ultimately more attractive constituencies for politicians to serve before they get to the grievances of aboriginal groups". Reflect, for example, on the extremely low rate of representation of Native peoples among elected government

bodies. One each in the Saskatchewan and Federal legislatures.

In his revealing analysis, Professor Hall lists evidence of growing unrest among Native peoples, evidence that reminds us of the militancy of the early and mid-1970's. He speaks of events heavily covered by the media: the Lubicon Indians, the sit-ins on the runways of the jet-fighter base in Goose Bay, Labrador, and of the logging road blockade in Northern Ontario. He observes:

In all of these disputes, and in the dozens of others like them now simmering throughout Canada, Native groups have resorted to force only after years, if not decades of officially sanctioned negotiation and litigation. Again and again these processes have led to apparent dead ends...

Quite rightly the platform of Free Trade in the most recent Federal election is seen by Hall and many aboriginal peoples as an issue of utmost importance. He writes:

...a monumental trade deal looms on the horizon that would, if implemented, add vast complications to the eventual resolution of aboriginal land claims in Canada...what Mr. Mulroney and his colleagues are attempting...is to guarantee U.S. access to Canadian natural resources...Imagine how aboriginal people view the prospect of seeing yet another layer of jurisdiction over their ancestral lands...

The struggle for recognition of self-determination, at the federal level, appears to be a long way from reaching a conclusion. Luckily the media is capturing these events and bringing them to the Canadian public.

## 9.0 THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

### 9.1 Introduction

A major external issue in the struggle for a self-determined education system is the question of how the system would be financed. It would be unrealistic to think that Native communities, given their current financial positions, could be expected to finance major initiatives, in the field of education, without direct resources from senior governments.

In analyses of the general issue of self-determination, arguments have been put forth "that additional costs will be minimal because a large part the resources currently spent on [Native peoples] will simply be transferred" over to the Native institutions (Purich, 1986, p.221). However, the reality of socio-economic conditions for Native people, shows that current expenditures on programs for Aboriginal people are not enough (Purich, 1986, p.221). Certainly there would be little extra money for major new initiatives in the field of education. One might then ask, "What are the states of the Federal and Provincial economies? Where do provincial priorities lie and will there be extra money for initiatives in Native education?".

## 9.2 The Canadian Economy

The accumulated federal debt is now over \$300 Billion and experts are predicting that if interest rates remain at their current level (a three-year high), the cost of carrying that debt will surge (Canadian Press, Feb. 1, 1989). In a recent report, Wood Gundy Inc. estimates that the Federal Government's 1989-90 budget deficit will climb more than \$3 Billion above the \$28.6 Billion figure originally forecast by the Finance Department (Kohut, Nov. 18, 1988).

The deficit federal economic environment might be seen as causing an increasingly competitive barrier between the Universities and the Gabriel Dumont Institute and thus jeopardizing the attainment of Federated College status. Perhaps universities are resentful that Gabriel Dumont Institute is competing with them for limited federal funds.

Analysts speculate on several methods the Government may use to decrease the debt load and increase revenues to cover the expenses of new programs promised in the recent election campaign. Likely scenarios include increasing personal income taxes and the introduction of a new national sales tax. Corporations are unlikely to bear more than a little of the brunt of the tax increases as corporate taxes, particularly with the implementation of free trade, must remain competitive with those in the United States (Kohut, Nov. 18, 1988).

The alternative to increasing taxes is, of course, a cut in government spending, i.e. program spending. Because the Conservative Government is now celebrating its second term in office, "most of the easy cuts [in programs] have already been made". One economist predicts that further significant cuts would have to touch on the areas of "statutory spending" (about 45% of federal expenditures) such as unemployment insurance payments, or pension spending, which with an aging population grows by about 8 percent a year (Kohut, Nov. 18, 1988). We might also speculate that since cutbacks in statutory spending would involve legal interpretation and would elicit a national outcry, it is possible that we may see further continued cutbacks in discretionary programs, an alternative that has the real possibility of affecting services and special training initiatives for Native peoples.

In the Spring of 1988, the Mulroney Government suffered a second humiliation of a leaked document, this time a secret paper from a meeting of senior DIAND officials. This paper may serve to give us clues as to the direction the federal government will take in funding aboriginal institutions in its deficit situation. The paper states that the Federal Government "should carefully avoid expanding the scope of [its] responsibilities for aboriginal peoples". In doing so, the paper cautions that:

- (a) the primary focus of federal aboriginal policy is status Indians living on reserves; and

- (b) The federal government considers program expenditures for Metis and Non-Status Indians to be primarily a provincial responsibility.

A federal block funding arrangement for Metis/Non-Status Indians appears remote. Already we have seen the major federal aboriginal training initiative in Saskatchewan, the CJS program, coming in the form of a program that is not specific to Native people. If these statements are proven true, in future, the Gabriel Dumont Institute will have to maintain a high degree of expertise in liaising with a great number of 'line' federal government departments to obtain funding for specific programs. The biggest problem will be to keep abreast of the various programs which may appeal to the educational needs of Native people.

### 9.3 The Saskatchewan Economy

In the Fall of 1988, the Conference Board of Canada ran a telling subtitle which read: "No pause in Economic Growth Except for Saskatchewan". The recent impact of drought on the province's agricultural sector and the collapse of world oil and grain prices have severely dampened the province's economic outlook. Employment in agriculture for the six-month period ending in September 1988 was 15 percent lower than a year ago and repercussions have been felt right through to the trade and retail sectors (Rochon, 1988, pp.15-16). Last year, for the first time in over a decade,



Saskatchewan experienced a net population loss. Concern over the economy has not only affected those whose income is resource-dependent but has spread right through the population. A national Globe-Enviro-nics Survey in November 1988 showed that Saskatchewan residents "were more pessimistic than any other Canadians about the strength of the economy (Adams, 1988).

Still clear in the minds of both the provincial government and the constituents of the province is the budget of June 1987. In March of that year, Finance Minister, Gary Lane "issued a financial statement indicating the provincial deficit for the 1986-87 would be \$1.2 billion or \$800 Million more than he projected during the election campaign" (Stobbe, 1989, p.8). Lane's promises of "tough action", government downsizing and privatization have been evidenced in every sector of the community, including the G.D.I. budget. Also foremost in the minds of Saskatchewan residents is the urgency of supplementary payments to bolster the agricultural sector and the strategy toward diversification of Saskatchewan's resource base. Few would argue that funds for an enormous new initiative in the field of self-determined Native education are not in ready supply.

#### 9.4 Saskatchewan Government Priorities for Capital Expenditures

In 1988, the Saskatchewan Government published an inventory of major projects, having a value of \$10 Million or more, being planned or underway in the province. This inventory includes the projects of both public and private investors. It is particularly informative, for purposes of this paper, to examine the types of projects the Provincial Government is choosing to invest its money in.

Exhibit Two shows the emphasis of provincial capital expenditures in developments of an industrial resource and utility nature. Educational institutions have been apportioned only a very small percentage of provincial capital funds (less than \$200 Million over the next few years). Moreover, almost half of the large capital expenditures in education have been awarded to an institute with a direct tie-in to the resource industry, the School of Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan (\$92 Million).

**EXHIBIT TWO**  
**Major Projects, Planned and Underway, Saskatchewan Government**

1. Industrial Resource Developments
  - . \$135 Million Uranium Mine at Dawn Lake
  - . \$200 Million Amonia Plant near Regina
  - . \$65 Million Power Beaking Stations
  - . \$1,200 Million Bi-Provincial Upgrader, Lloydminster
  - . \$11 Million Chopsticks Manufacturing Plant, Meadow Lake
  - . \$500 Million Shand Power Station, Estevan
  - . \$120 Million Rafferty/Alameda Dams, Estevan & Alameda
  - . \$700 Million Co-op Upgrader, Regina
  
2. Commercial and Institutional Projects
  - \*. \$33 Million University of Regina Capital Expansion Program
  - . \$12 Million Renovation Sherbrooke Community Centre
  - \*. \$64 Million New Facilities, University of Saskatchewan
  - . \$12 Million, Regina General Hospital Expansion
  - . \$11 Million, St. Anthony's Home, Moose Jaw
  - \*. \$92 Million, College of Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan
  - . \$34 Million, Innovative Housing '88
  - . \$56 Million, Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, Regina
  - . \$118 Million, Saskatoon City Hospital
  - \*. \$7.5 Million, Wollaston Lake School
  - . \$10 Million, Senior's Home, Saskatoon
  - . \$25 Million, St. Joseph's Hospital, Estevan
  
3. Transportation and Utilities Projects
  - . \$48 Million, Northern Transmission Loop
  - . \$16 Million, Couteau Creek-Ermine Transmission Line
  - . \$12 Million, Brada-Lloydminster Transmission Line
  - . \$16 Million, Ermine-Lloydminster Transmission Line
  - . \$18 Million, Condie-Couteau Creek Transmission Line
  - . \$13 Million, Couteau Creek - Saskatoon Transmission Line
  - . \$18 Million, Peebles-Yorkton Transmission Line
  - . \$16 Million, Shand-Peebles Transmission Line
  - . \$10.5 Million, Fibre Optic Route
  - . \$133 Million, Modernization Telephone Lines
  - . \$264 Million, Private Telephone Lines in Rural Areas
  - . \$128 Million, Modernization Telephone Lines
  - . \$400 Million, Natural Gas Distribution Program
  - . \$400 Million, Rural Underground Electrical Distribution
  - . \$102 Million, Expansion Gas Transmission Facility
  - . \$7-9 Million, Airport, City of Estevan
  - . \$36 Million, Uranium City-Rabbit Lake Transmission Line
  - . \$14 Million, Alberta Tie-In Power Connection
  - . \$23 Million, Couteau-Creek-Brada Transmission Line

Source: Buy Saskatchewan Corporation, 1988

## 9.5 The Provincial Economic Strategy as it Applies to Education

### 9.5.1 Economic Diversification and Technological Skill Training

In the Provincial Budget Address (March 31, 1988), the Saskatchewan Government reaffirmed its prime economic strategy of diversification. In the words of the Honorable Gary Lane, Minister of Finance,

...We must diversify the Saskatchewan economy by building on our natural advantages to provide new economic opportunities and to protect ourselves against global uncertainties...we believe that the Free Trade Agreement and the diversification of the Saskatchewan economy are the most realistic approaches to deal with the changes in the world economy...

The Minister also stated in the 1988 Budget Address that,

...economic development is more than the formation of capital. It is also the creation of knowledge and the development of a skilled and educated work force. This is one reason why we have made education a priority.

Given these statements, it is possible to examine the trends in provincial adult education as part of this strategy. Foremost, there appears to be a direct move in adult education toward 'practical' skill training. The major overhaul of the province's technical schools into the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology is evidence of provincial interest in this level of the education system. It is interesting to consider possible reasons for this trend.

- 1) While the province spends over a quarter of a billion dollars a year in the field of adult education, it needs to continue to attract private investment into the education system. Companies are often interested in skill-specific training. Private companies are estimated to be spending as much as \$200 million annually, in the province, for employee training and retraining (Saskatchewan Education, April 1987).
  
- 2) There is a growing presence of the Federal Government in Saskatchewan, as a direct participant in the field of adult education. The Federal Government, mainly through DIAND programs and CEIC programs, such as the Canadian Jobs Strategy, is now spending as much as \$70 Million a year in adult education and training in Saskatchewan (Saskatchewan Education, April 1987). This means that the provincial education programs are heavily influenced by the Federal economic agenda.

These first two points raise some important questions regarding the autonomy of a Native education system that is completely dependent upon external sources for its financing. Paquette (1986, p.20) states that "a commonly accepted assumption in educational finance...is that power and control tend to gravitate toward the perceived locus of fiscal resourcing." Certainly, the Gabriel Dumont Institute

- 5) It is becoming harder to ignore the specific educational needs of large subgroups within the population. These include Native peoples, baby boomers in need of specific skill retraining, and the elderly who have more time for leisure skill acquisition.
  
- 6) Given this government's prioritization of services in rural Saskatchewan, their stronghold for political votes, there may also be a hidden political agenda in the thrust toward technological and skill training programs. The rural populations can be characterized by their need for retraining as family farms collapse and mechanize. Rural populations have traditionally experienced high rates of early school leavers and upgrading and skill training becomes a priority. Similarly, the government's thrust toward bringing educational opportunities to the outlying communities fits very much with the needs of the rural populace.
  
- 7) The Provincial Government has adopted the stance that education and skill training can be used as a way to relieve the now overtaxed social welfare system. The use of education in this manner might potentially be construed as a very popular move in that people will not see the government as passively handing out welfare funds. In the 1988 Budget Address we note the reallocation of "social assistance funds to

support...Welfare Reform employment and training programs...We will continue to reassign staff from processing welfare payments to delivering the programs that enable our welfare clients to become more productive". Bridging programs for women, tree cutting programs in Northern Saskatchewan and the creation of provincial New Careers Corporation are all evidence of the province moving in the direction of reallocation of welfare funds. Again, the population that will benefit from these reallocation programs are those who will need very basic levels of adult education.

In sum, the mandate of the Gabriel Dumont Institute, with its commitment to the Native population and a community-based approach, should be very appealing to the Provincial Government at this time. Indeed, the awarding of the three-year contract of the Native Services Division of SIAST to the Gabriel Dumont Institute is a reaffirmation of the government's recognition of the Institute's achievements and objectives. The important consideration, now, will be whether the strong thrust in senior governments' educational ideology, toward technological and skill training, will overshadow G.D.I.'s original goals to provide a more academically-based education of Native people so that they will be equipped for future leadership roles.

## 10.0 CONCLUSION

This document has attempted to provide an overview of the major external environmental factors affecting the mandate of the Gabriel Dumont Institute.

Statistics on the youthful age profile of Native people, poor socio-economic status and the lack of Native achievement in mainstream educational programs leaves little doubt that greater efforts must be made to ensure an education system which is tailored to the special needs of Native people.

Varying educational needs, physical isolation and the distribution of the Metis/Non-Status population, across the province, make implementation and coordination of the Institute's mandate an expensive undertaking. More importantly, political realities and the needs of local constituencies do not always mesh well with economies of scale and sound educational planning.

Over the last decade, most particularly with the constitutional changes, aboriginal issues have been forced to the forefront of the political agendas of senior levels of government. Questions arise as to the autonomy of a Native education system that is completely dependent upon external political directions and government sources for its funding. Deficit reduction and federal program initiatives, especially the Canadian Jobs Strategy, have had a major



impact on the direction that Native adult training is taking in Saskatchewan.

As well, it will be interesting to observe whether the Saskatchewan Government's emphasis on economic diversification and technological skill training will overshadow the Gabriel Dumont Institute's original goal to provide a more academically-based education for Native people so that they might assume future leadership roles.

Finally, the analysis has shown that although Canadians are not as knowledgeable on Native issues as would be ideal, language, cultural matters and education are seen by the public as areas where aboriginal peoples should have control. The media is fast becoming a powerful force in shaping public opinion on Native issues, and in bringing inequities into the public realm. It is hoped, that in time, a more informed public will, in turn, become a more demanding public as we all strive together for the rightful self-determination of Native peoples.

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