

## **The Louis Riel Institute**

**A member of the Association of Manitoba Museums**

**A Registered Canadian Charitable Organization**

**A Registered Adult Learning Institution**



### **Background:**

In December of 1985, the Manitoba Metis Federation Inc. appointed a "working group" to study the feasibility of establishing an institute which would serve as a vehicle to deal with the educational concerns and aspirations of the Metis people of Manitoba. The institute would be known as the Louis Riel Institute."

The province of Manitoba was invited, and agreed to participate in a joint working group. Provincial members were appointed by the Minister of Education and the task was begun. The feasibility of the Louis Riel Institute was researched by the joint working group during 1986, supported by a contribution of \$2,500.00 from the Minister of Education. Agreement as to the feasibility of establishing the institute was reached in January of 1987. The purpose of the institute, the goals, and the objectives were defined and agreed to by the joint working group with recommendations for further developmental work including: research, development of infrastructure, a library/resource centre, publishing and eventual program development.

Subsequent to the agreement and recommendations of the joint working group, the Manitoba Metis Federation Inc. proposed in 1987 to enter into a bi-lateral agreement with the Province of Manitoba to continue the development of the "Louis Riel Institute." This initial proposal would have set the parameters and financial resources necessary to bring the institute from a concept to reality.

The Memorandum of Agreement was submitted to the Province of Manitoba in January of 1987, with no substantive response and no agreement concluded.

The Manitoba Metis Federation Inc. continued working during 1987 although resources were depleted. The Louis Riel Institute was incorporated in February of 1988 and would operate under provincial legislation. In May of 1988, a new submission was prepared to ensure that staffing and development of infrastructure would take place and that the institute would become operational.

The Louis Riel Institute Inc. was granted tax-exempt status as a registered charitable organization by Revenue Canada as of April 1, 1988. The tax-exempt status is based on the objectives and activities set out in the submission to the Minister of Education for 1988-89, relating to the ability of the LRI Inc. to conduct research, provide advocacy and develop programs.

The Institute was created by an Act of the Manitoba Legislature, which received Royal assent on November 3, 1995. As a charitable non-profit organization, the institute promotes the educational and cultural advancement of Metis People. The Louis Riel Institute is also responsible for promoting awareness of the values, culture, heritage and history of the Metis people in Manitoba.

The objectives of LRI as outlined in Provincial Statute are:

### **Objects**

In furthering its purpose, the Institute may

- (a) promote, undertake and support research into Manitoba history and into the culture, education and languages of the Metis people;
- (b) establish, conduct and support educational and training programs;
- (c) act as an advocate for the Metis people and others in the area of education and training;
- (d) establish and administer scholarship programs for Metis students;
- (e) provide advice and reports to the Government of Manitoba about education and cultural matters relating to the Metis people, either on its own initiative or at the request of the Government;
- (f) act as a resource centre and archives for written and other materials concerning Metis education, history, heritage, culture and languages and provide and publish written and other materials relating to education curriculum development;
- (g) further the educational and socio-economic development of the Metis people in Manitoba.

Culture defines who we are, and it encompasses our entire way of life, our ethics, our institutions, our manners and our routines. The most highly developed and imaginative aspects of our culture are the arts, which help to shape our identity as a community and contribute to enhancing our way of life. This was recognized by Manitoba's founding Father, Louis Riel, and expressed in his prediction: "My people will sleep for one hundred years, when they awake it will be the artists who give them their spirit back."

### **Mission Statement:**

The Louis Riel Institute is the mandated authority responsible for Metis education and culture in Manitoba.

### **Mandate:**

The LRI advances the education of Metis people. The LRI is responsible for promoting the values, culture, heritage and history of Metis in Manitoba.

### **Cultural support:**

*The Illustrated Metis History Series:* This series was created for use in elementary school classrooms. The series consists currently of five books ranging in grade levels from two through six. Most titles sell for \$5.95. Each book comes with a glossary, suggested projects and a list of research materials. The titles are:

- Louis Riel
- Louis Riel and the Resistance of 1885
- The Birth of the Metis Nation
- The Battle of Seven Oaks
- The Buffalo Hunters

LRI regularly holds cultural workshops in the following topic areas:

Introductory and Intermediate Beadworking  
Capote making  
Introduction to Michif Language  
Finger Weaving the Metis Sash  
Sash Weaving on Inkle Looms  
Playing the Spoons  
Playing the Mouth Harp (Harmonica)  
Learning to Jig  
Lecture series on Introduction to Michif Identity and Heritage

### **Support and Donations:**

People holding historical Metis artifacts, photographs or documents are encouraged to donate items to the Louis Riel Heritage Collection and receive a (Canadian) Charitable Donation Tax Receipt.

### **Library Holdings:**

LRI has the largest holding of Michif language research in North American.

LRI has the largest holding of Metis specific research and writing in North America. Our current bibliography has over 5,000 entries.

LRI has the largest holding of photographic examples of Metis beadwork in North America.

LRI does not operate a lending library but does try make copies of its heritage materials available to researchers around the world.

LRI does joint projects and works collaboratively with our Saskatchewan counterpart the Gabriel Dumont Institute.

For further information contact:

Lawrence Barkwell  
Coordinator of Metis Heritage and History Research  
Louis Riel Institute

E-Mail: [lbarkwel@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:lbarkwel@mmf.mb.ca)  
Phone : (204) 586-8474

Louis Riel Institute  
103-150 Henry Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3B 0J7

Phone: (204) 984-9480  
Fax: (204) 984-9484  
E-Mail: [lri@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:lri@mmf.mb.ca)  
Website: [www.louisrielinstitute.com](http://www.louisrielinstitute.com)