

METIS SOCIETY OF SASKATCHEWAN

**1993 METIS SELF-GOVERNMENT AND RESTRUCTURING
REPORT**

DRAFT: OCTOBER 1993

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Metis Society of Saskatchewan recognizes the inherent right of Metis to openly govern Metis. Throughout the past one hundred years, and more, that right has been ignored by the Federal and Provincial Governments and in some cases forgotten by our people. The structures we have built to manage our institutions have reflected the mainstream governments' agenda. Fortunately, our people have maintained the original intent of Metis owned institutions and so they have served to enhance the status of Metis. Our people have regained their conviction of being a self-governing nation. We now wish structures which reflect the manner in which Metis wish to govern. In order for Metis to best govern and manage, restructuring of our present institutions has to take place. These restructuring efforts began in the fall of 1992 when the Provincial Metis Council established the MSS Self-Government and Restructuring Committee. The Committee consists of eight members representing the Provincial Metis Council, The Metis Elders' Senate, the Metis Women of Saskatchewan and the Metis Youth Committee.

1.1 Mandate

The mandate of the MSS Self-Government and Restructuring Committee is to identify, develop, plan and implement the steps and phases required in the restructuring of the Metis Society of Saskatchewan, both politically and administratively including the roles of the Affiliates.

1.2 Goal

The goal of a new structure for the Metis Society of Saskatchewan is to enhance our ability to determine our destiny as a Nation.

1.3 Objectives

The immediate objective includes ensuring that the active voices of all citizens of the Metis Nation are heard and reflected in the steps and plans identified by the Committee.

1.4 Activities

The following list of activities demonstrates the significant amount of work accomplished in the first year of self-government restructuring:

- The Self-Government and Restructuring Committee has met six times;
- Two Provincial Workshops have been held. The first was the **Metis Self-Government Nation Building: Step One**

held in Saskatoon on March 17, 18 and 19, 1993. The second was the **All Presidents' Assembly** which was held at Batoche on July 21 and 22, 1993;

- To date, Area Self-Government and Restructuring Workshops have been held in eleven MSS Areas: NRI, NRII, NRIII, WRI, WRIA, WRIIA, WRIII, ERI, ERII, ERIIA, ERIII;

- Two Urban Metis Self-Government and Restructuring Meetings were held in Saskatoon on June 21 and July 20, 1993. A third is planned for October 26, 1993.

- The Provincial Metis Council has met three times to discuss and critique the proposed MSS Constitution which is intended to reflect the voices heard at the Workshops;

- A Code of Ethics has been developed based on the direction of the citizens of the Metis Nation and the guidance of the Provincial Metis Council;

- The MSS Affiliates, which are owned by the Metis Society of Saskatchewan, have become semi-autonomous delivery mechanisms;

- The Metis Elders' Senate has proposed to take on greater responsibilities. These will include mediation, arbitration and advisory and cultural representation;

- The Metis Women of Saskatchewan has developed a position paper on the involvement it seeks to have

within the Metis Society of Saskatchewan and its
Affiliates;

- The Metis Youth Committee has been recognized formally
by the Provincial Metis Council;

- Pinehouse Lake, in conjunction with the Metis Society
of Saskatchewan and the Gabriel Dumont Institute, has
taken the initiative to develop and implement a
strategic plan; and

- As part of the Metis Economic Strategy the
Saskatchewan Metis Economic Development Authority was
established to implement a strategy for local and
regional dominion over economic initiatives.

2.0 DETAILS OF THE ACTIVITIES

The following describes most of the activities accomplished
under the self government and restructuring strategy.

2.1 MSS Self-Government and Restructuring Committee Meetings

Essentially, the Self-Government and Restructuring
Committee drove the process. It met, formally, six times to
plan, direct and prioritize all of the initiatives.

Significantly more work than is shown here was conducted by
the members and their designated technicians to bring the
process to life.

2.2 Provincial Workshops: March and July, 1993

The first step in Phase I of restructuring was the **Metis Self-Government Nation Building: Step One** workshop on March 17, 18 and 19, 1993. The workshop was an opportunity to share ideas on how Metis self-government should work, including how to structure it. A package containing the information gathered at the conference has been developed and was circulated at the **All Presidents' Meeting** at Batoche and at each of the Area Workshops. A package containing the information from the Batoche Assembly was made also. Both are available upon request. If you have not yet had the opportunity to review these please do so. They each contain the background information from which the MSS proposed Constitution is drawn from.

2.3 Area Self-Government and Restructuring Workshops

Eleven Area Self-Government and Restructuring Workshops were held where the package developed from the **Metis Self-Government Nation Building: Step One** workshop was distributed and discussed, as well as other issues. Members of the Metis Society of Saskatchewan Executive were present at each of these Workshops. They presented their ideas and received input from the members. Three of the main points drawn from those Workshops included the need to decentralize the powers, provide a greater decision making role to the Local Presidents and develop a Code of Ethics with conflict

of interest guidelines. Decentralization and empowerment form the basis of the Proposed Constitution and an accompanying Code of Ethics has been drafted for membership approval.

2.4 Urban Metis Self-Government and Restructuring Meetings

The issues of self-government for Metis people living in urban communities are complex. To begin to confront these issues the Metis Society of Saskatchewan organized meetings for the Urban Metis Local Presidents to discuss and plan a strategy. The following questions were considered:

- What are the jurisdictional areas in which Metis could exercise the right to Metis government in an urban setting;
- How would a system of Urban Metis Governments relate to Municipal Governments;
- How would a system of Urban Metis Governments relate to Urban Indian Governments; and
- How could autonomous program and service systems for Metis be linked to and operate in harmony with existing delivery systems?

From the discussions addressing these questions, two potential models of Urban Metis Governments structures evolved. The Prince Albert Urban Metis Local Presidents have developed a model which brings the Local Presidents (or designates) as Chairs from each of the Locals together for

decision making. Affiliate boards would include each of these Chairs. The Regina Urban Metis Local Presidents have designed a model which divides the City into Wards. Metis Public Authorities would be developed with full representation from the Wards and would be the Authority for the Affiliates as well.

Details of each of these models will be presented to the Provincial Metis Council and subsequently to the membership at the Annual Assembly in December.

2.5 Provincial Metis Council Constitutional Discussions

Three formal Provincial Metis Council (PMC) meetings were held where MSS Self-Government and Restructuring were discussed. The PMC members decided that it would be necessary to proceed to restructure progressively rather than all at once. The most significant decision was to develop a constitution which decentralizes power and empowers the Local Presidents and their communities. This has resulted in the Proposed Constitution which demonstrates a Metis Legislative Assembly and Cabinet. It also enables the Legislative Assembly to have ultimate power to direct Phase II of the restructuring process.

2.6 Code of Ethics

A proposed Code of Ethics has been developed to establish ethical standards and conflict of interest guidelines for everyone involved in the organization.

2.7 Affiliates' Restructuring as Metis Government Institutions

The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Metis Studies and Applied Research (GDI) has been instrumental in the self-government and restructuring process: from the organization of the **Metis Self-Government Nation Building: Step One** workshop and research and writing of restructuring updates and reports to internal developments. Some of the internal developments include consultations with other Affiliates which have resulted in a draft structure for all the education, training and employment Affiliates. A **Metis Education Act** has also been formulated for legal ratification by the proposed Metis Legislative Assembly next year. The Metis Pathways to Success program continues to evolve as a Metis Self-Government Institution through greater Local and Regional control. As part of our Metis Government initiatives, the Metis Family and Community Justice Services of Saskatchewan (MFCJS) has drafted a discussion paper entitled **Metis Family and Community Justice Services of Saskatchewan, Inc Proposed Development Plan.**¹

¹

For details of the **Metis Family and Community Justice Services of Saskatchewan, Inc. Proposed Development Plan**, July 19, 1993, please contact Alphonse Janvier.

The proposed plan has two components: a provincial structure which will be responsible for legislative enactment, policy development, evaluation, accountability; and Local and Regional structures which will be responsible for the design and implementation of services. A regional pilot project is presently underway in the Saskatoon Region. The project will be administered by the MFCJS until such time as a Regional Authority is in place. There are discussions underway concerning the establishment of similar Authorities and long term planning for some communities.

2.8 The Responsibilities of the Metis Elders' Senate

The Metis Elders' Senate was established in September 1991. During our first year of restructuring intense consultations with our people have resulted in the Metis Elders' Senators deciding to take on greater responsibilities. They propose to be in charge of election and bi-election appeals and membership challenges and appeals. They will be the authority for enumeration, membership and citizenship. The Senators will act as an advisory body on issues of critical concern, such as constitutional rights and land claims. As Elder Senators we may look to them for mediation and arbitration. Since many are Veterans from international wars, they will be involved in Veterans Affairs. When Metis Elder representation is requested, we can look to the Senators for their presence.

Ceremonial demonstrations and exchanges will be carried out by the Elders' Senate. This may include conducting opening and closing prayers, directing swearing-in ceremonies and oaths, presentation of awards and gifts of recognition and displaying the Metis flags and sashes. In a sense they are the guardians of our culture and ethics. With these new responsibilities our Senators will be very busy and will require as much support as we can all give them. Greater detail of their duties will be clarified in Phase II.

2.9 The Position of Metis Women of Saskatchewan

The position of the Metis Women of Saskatchewan will be presented to the Provincial Metis Council on October 18 and 19, 1993. It will be presented to the membership of the Metis Women of Saskatchewan for ratification in November and subsequently to the citizens of the Metis Nation in Saskatchewan at the 1993 Metis Society of Saskatchewan Annual Assembly.

2.10 The Role of Metis Youth

In 1992, two Metis youth from each region were invited to MSS Annual Assembly. With the assistance of the MSS, the Metis Youth Committee² organized skill and knowledge building workshops for Metis Youth and others. Such topics

²

Membership in the Metis Youth Committee is based on being Metis and between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five.

as culture, health, justice and education were discussed in depth. In March of 1993, the Provincial Metis Council formally recognized the Metis Youth Committee with designated responsibilities. It was decided that they would be consulted on all matters directly affecting Metis youth. The Metis Youth Committee was also given the duty of representing the Metis Society of Saskatchewan in public forums when issues about youth were being addressed. The Metis Youth Committee is planning to hold a meeting at the MSS Annual Assembly. The Metis Youth Committee intends to study the proposed constitutional changes and will define their position within the new concept once it is ratified by the membership.

2.11 Self-Government in Pinehouse Lake

Pinehouse Lake has declared itself a self-governing community. To enact this declaration it has initiated the **Five Year Strategic Plan on Education, Training and Employment for Pinehouse Lake** in consultation with the Gabriel Dumont Institute and with the support of the Metis Society of Saskatchewan. Other Affiliates, such as the Saskatchewan Native Economic Development Corporation, and in the near future SMEDA, and the Metis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan, are providing support to the community. The citizens of Pinehouse Lake are making their own future brighter as they assume control.

2.12 The Metis Economic Strategy

The goal of the Metis Economic Strategy is "to include the improvement of accessibility to equity capital funds, the acquisition of a land and resource base to ensure long-term self-sufficiency, and the establishment of a managerial and trained labour force infrastructure which will enable the Metis to become full partners within the mainstream Canadian economy. In effect, we seek ownership and control over all forms of economic development that affect our people. Consistent with our overall self-government framework, a key condition of the strategy is the maximization of local and regional input into policy planning as well as the actual design and delivery of economic initiatives. As a general principle, decision-making and program delivery will be decentralized. This is in recognition of the view that local residents are best equipped to identify their economic needs or problems as well as the solutions most appropriate to their area. To carry out the strategy, a Saskatchewan Metis Economic Development Authority (SMEDA) as well as a system of area and Metis community economic development authorities, each with its own board, will be formed."³

3

Quoted from the Review Draft of the *Governance Study: Metis Self-Government in Saskatchewan*, August 16, 1993, pages 80-81.

3.0 RELATED ACTIVITIES

The intention of this section is to identify related self-government and restructuring activities which have had and will continue to have an effect on our efforts.

3.1 Tripartite and Bilateral Agreements

Recently, the Metis Society of Saskatchewan entered into two major political agreements. Both may be viewed as significant interim steps towards constitutionally recognized Metis self-government. Each sets out a specific process for engaging in constructive dialogue with either or both the provincial and federal governments regarding matters of vital concern to our people.

3.1.1 The Tripartite Agreement

The Tripartite Process Framework Agreement, signed in February of 1993 by the Metis Society Saskatchewan, the Government of Canada, and the Government of Saskatchewan has several important tasks to accomplish during its five year lifespan. Basically, the goals are to protect the unique identity of our people while, at the same time, transferring to the Metis greater control of relevant provincial and federal government institutions, programs and services. The Agreement's Mission Statement also recognizes that these transfers cannot be achieved effectively unless more financial

and human resources are made available to strengthen existing Metis administrative structures. Identifying and securing these resources for application by Metis institutions is viewed as a crucial ingredient for the success of the Agreement.

3.1.2 The Bilateral Agreement

The second interim process, a Bilateral Process Agreement between the Metis Society of Saskatchewan and the Government of Saskatchewan, was signed in June of 1993. This Agreement is intended to enable the two parties to address a wide range of policy and planning issues. Meetings and decisions resulting from the process are also expected to clarify the extent of federal jurisdiction for Metis people in the province.

Although some overlap is probably inevitable, the two Agreements - Tripartite and Bilateral - are designed to complement one another. In certain instances, matters raised within the Bilateral discussions may be referred to the Tripartite committees for further attention. By the same token, issues which cannot be resolved through Tripartite may be placed on the Bilateral agenda.

Both the Tripartite and Bilateral Agreements are important to the MSS as interim steps towards our self-

government goals. They allow us to continue building and, where appropriate, re-shape our existing administrative infrastructure. At the conclusion of these Agreements, the MSS will then be fully prepared for a more comprehensive transfer of control over relevant institutions, programs and services as well as the funding arrangements needed to manage these self-government structures.⁴

3.2 The Metis National Council and Self-Government

The Metis Nation continues to assert its right to govern itself. In preparation for a new governing structure which reflects that right, the Metis National Council has introduced the interim national governing body of the Metis Nation: "Organized as seven separate and distinct executive portfolios, the interim governing body is structured to reflect the long standing interests of the Metis Nation. Each portfolio is managed by an appointed representative of the Metis Nation chosen for his/her knowledge and expertise in the portfolio area assigned and defined as: National Affairs, Gerald Morin; Justice and Social Development, Norm Evans; Human Resource Development and Land Claims, Ernie Blais; Economic Development, Ron Swain; Culture and Status of Women, Sheila Genaille; Communications and Royal

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Sections 3.1, 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 were indirectly quoted from the Review Draft of the Governance Study: Metis Self Government in Saskatchewan, August 16, 1993, pages 47 to 53.

Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Gerald Thom; and Environment and Northern Development, Gary Bohnet."⁵ This restructuring step is in harmony with the proposed Metis Society of Saskatchewan Constitution which seeks to implement a legislative assembly and cabinet. Ministers will have portfolios similar to those activated by the Metis National Council.

3.3 The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Self-Government Studies

In Saskatchewan, the Metis Society of Saskatchewan, several of its affiliates, the Metis Women of Saskatchewan and many individuals have conducted research for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Of interest to our self-government and restructuring aims are the following studies:

■Governance Study: Metis Self-Government in

Saskatchewan - contact person, Clem Chartier, MSS.

■Metis Society of Saskatchewan Report to The Royal

Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, August 1993 - contact MSS office.

The Metis National Council also has been involved in several studies with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples where it has affirmed the right of Metis to govern Metis. Saskatchewan Metis participated in all of the national research. These studies have resulted in a report

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Quoted from: The Métis National Council, *The Métis Nation*, 1:1:August, 1993, page 1.

reflecting the aspirations of the Metis in Canada. The report will be presented to the Commission this fall.

4.0 PHASE II OF METIS SELF-GOVERNMENT AND RESTRUCTURING

Phase I of the Self-Government and Restructuring plans will come to an end at the 1993 Metis Society of Saskatchewan Annual Assembly. As it was mentioned above, the Provincial Metis Council felt that complete restructuring cannot take place until the Local Presidents have greater decision making powers. It is intended that the Local Presidents in their new role will be the driving force behind Phase II which begins immediately after the Assembly. The following is a list of potential initiatives the Presidents can take under advisement as activities for Phase II:

- Implementation of the Metis Legislative Body;
- Finalizing the Code of Ethics;
- Finalizing the Roles and Responsibilities of the Metis Women of Saskatchewan;
- Finalizing the Roles and Responsibilities of the Metis Youth;
- Definition of the MSS Area Boundaries;
- Establishment of Elders' Senate Responsibilities;
- Planning and Development of Urban Metis Governments; and
- Establishment of Affiliates as Metis Government Institutions.

Other activities will be initiated by the Self-Government and Restructuring Committee upon direction from the Legislative Assembly.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Metis Society of Saskatchewan has developed a new Constitution which addresses the concerns and the ideas expressed by our people during this past year of consultations. "The major debate has addressed the issues of decentralization, accountability, streamlining and greater involvement of the Locals in the decision-making and running of the Organization. In order to accomplish this objective the consensus currently developing revolves around a restructuring which it is believed will give the Locals a greater role in administering the political and administrative affairs of the Organization. It is being proposed that a Metis Legislative Assembly be created, composed of the Local Presidents and the Provincial Metis Council."⁶

⁶ Quoted from the Review Draft of the **Governance Study: Metis Self-Government in Saskatchewan**, August 16, 1993, page 58.