

## Metis Adhesion to Treaty Three

In 1875, the first and only numbered treaty between Canada and the Metis was signed as an adhesion to Treaty Three: In Ontario, mixed-ancestry people were dealt with in several ways. The Metis community at Fort Frances, which is now part of the Coochiching First Nation, signed an adhesion to Treaty 3 in 1875 as “Half-Breeds”.

In 1871 Nicholas Chatelain (a Metis HBC trader, manager and interpreter) was hired by the federal government as an interpreter and was present at the treaty negotiations with the Ojibway and Metis at Lake of the Woods (Treaty No. 3). It was Chatelain who requested that the Metis be included in Treaty No. 3, Morris refused this request but indicated that those Metis that so wished could sign an adhesion to the treaty. On September 12, 1875 Chatelain, acting on behalf of the Metis of Rainy Lake and Rainy River signed a memorandum agreement with Thomas Dennis. This agreement, known as the “Half-Breed Adhesion to Treaty No. 3,” set aside two reserves for the Metis and entitled them to annuity payments, cattle and farm implements. Unfortunately the Department of Indian Affairs did not ratify this agreement and over the following ten years the Metis sought to receive the promised benefits.

In August of 1876 Chatelain informed Thomas Dennis that the promises had not been kept. The matter was referred to Indian Affairs who declared that they would only recognize the Metis if they agreed to join the Ojibway band living nearby. Evidently some interim annuities were paid. A further attempt to obtain treaty rights was made in 1885 when Chatelain on behalf of “The Half-Breeds of Rainy Lake” petitioned the department for annuities, in the amount of \$782 for forty-six people. They also requested the cattle and farm implements they had been promised. Since this followed on the heels of the 1885 Resistance, the government relented and back payments from 1875 were granted. Chatelain and others continued after 1886 to lobby for the full compensation due, but the department would not move any further and considered the matter closed.



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