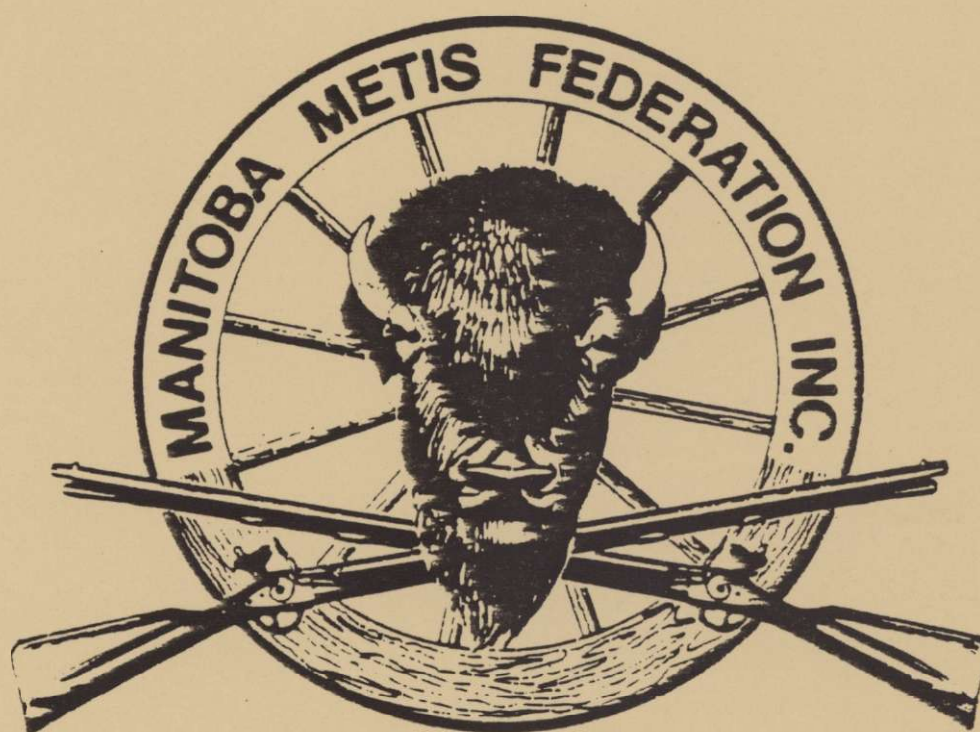


REPORT TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION
ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES



Submitted by: The South West Region
of the
Manitoba Metis Federation

Report Coordinator: Doug Racine, C.D.

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Background of the Southwest Region Report

The Royal Commission on the Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) was implemented on August 27, 1991.

Royal Commissions are set up by governments when they are faced with problems which can not be resolved through ordinary means. The impetus for the implementation of the Royal Commission as advocated by the Federal Government was a series of incidents which occurred during the 1980's and 1990's. Primarily these incidents included the intense lobby of Inuit, Indian, and Metis that Aboriginal rights be included in the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution; the tabling of the Penner Report which recommended major changes in Indian policy (1983); Elijah Harpers filibuster which helped kill the Meech Lake Accord; and the Mohawk stand off at Oka and Kanesatake.¹ Generally then, RCAP was implemented because the Federal Government and the Canadian people have failed to come to grips with the Native concerns and rights.

It would appear then that by setting up a Royal Commission that the Federal Government is prepared to act on its findings, but caution must be taken as many Royal Commissions have been in whole or in part ignored as any research could reveal. The success of RCAP's recommendations then, lie in the resolve of the Federal Government and the Canadian people as a whole to ensure they are carried out. Because of the above facts the Metis of the Southwest Region of the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) are under no illusions that their recommendations in this report will be fulfilled or even contemplated. This report is seen instead as one of many stepping stones which must be traversed to realize self-determination. The ancestors of the Southwest Metis fought hard for equality and "inclusion" in the 1800's. Today many of the same concerns still exist. We have not been assimilated into Canadian society to the point of invisibility as many in history would rather we did. Instead we have existed through discrimination and hardship which still exists today.

The Federal Government, when setting out the mandate for the Royal Commission came up with 16 terms of reference which follow:

1. The history of relations between Aboriginal peoples, the Canadian government and Canadian society as a whole.
2. The recognition and affirmation of Aboriginal self-government; its origin, content and a strategy for progressive implementation.
3. The land base for Aboriginal peoples, including the process for resolving comprehensive and specific land claims, whether rooted in Canadian constitutional instruments, treaties or in Aboriginal title.
4. The historic interpretation and application, and potential future scope of, s.91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867 and the responsibilities of the Canadian Crown.
5. The legal status, implementation and future evolution of Aboriginal treaties, including modern-day agreements.
6. The constitutional and legal position of the Metis and off-reserve Indians.
7. The specific difficulties of Aboriginal people who live in the North.
8. The Indian Act and the role, responsibilities and policies of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.
9. Social issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples.
10. Economic issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples.
11. Cultural issues concerning Aboriginal peoples.
12. The position and role of Aboriginal Elders.
13. The position and role of Aboriginal Women under existing social conditions and legal arrangements, and in the future.
14. The situation of Aboriginal youth.
15. Educational issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples.
16. Justice issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples.

The Southwest Region of the MMF selected four subject areas of the mandate which were of most concern to report on. They are as follows:

1. The causes or elements that led to the deterioration of the Metis Nation during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

2. Treatment of Metis in the justice system.
3. Metis and the education system.
4. Economic and social issues.

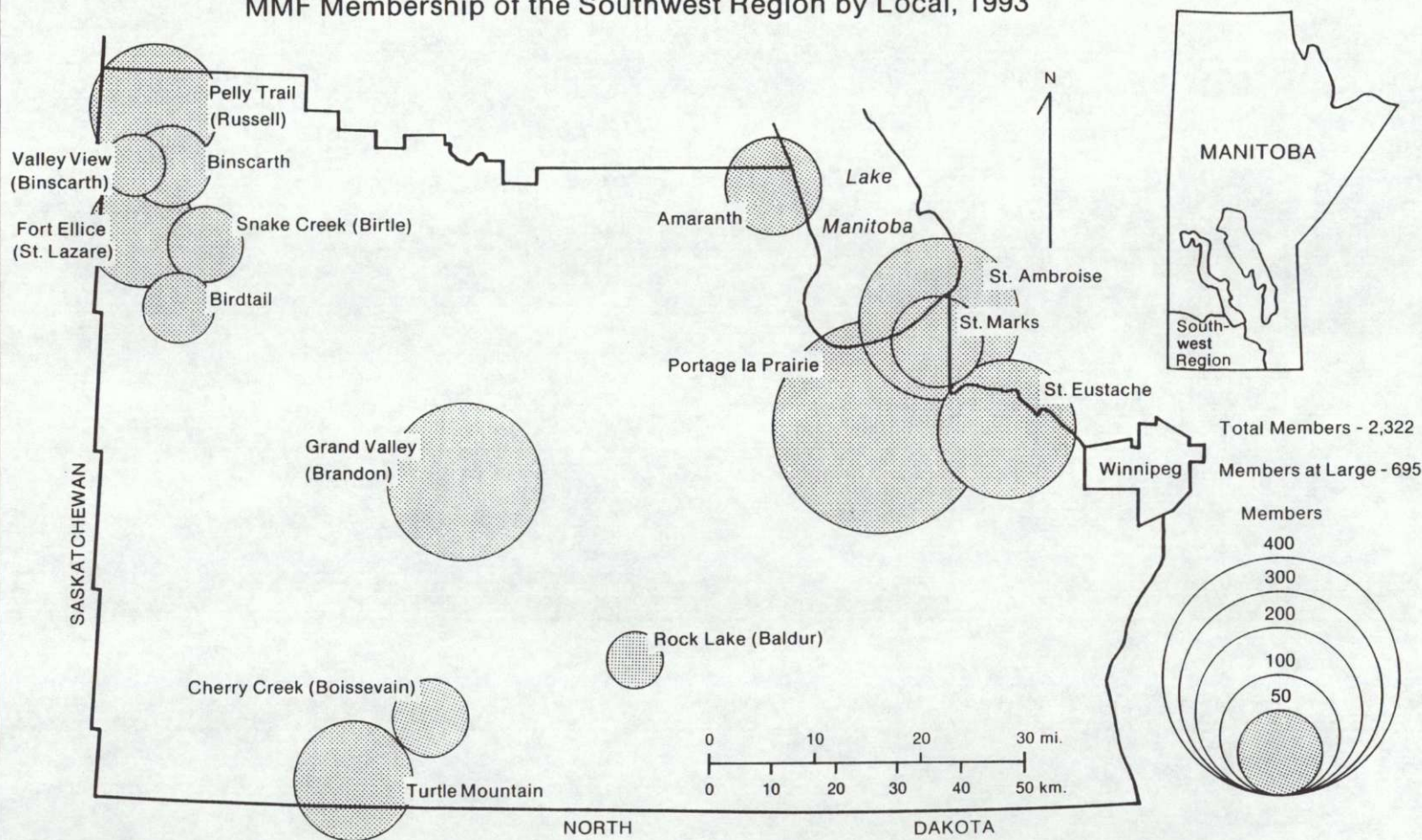
Definitions

- (a) *Aboriginal person* means any person who declares himself to be an Aboriginal person on account of descent or a personal relationship with a family of Aboriginal persons and who is accepted as an Aboriginal person by an Aboriginal community in accordance with the procedures established in this article.
- (b) "*Metis*" means an Aboriginal person who self-identifies as Metis, who is distinct from Indian and Inuit and:
 - (i) is a descendant of those Metis who received or were entitled to receive land grants and/or scrip under the provision of the Manitoba Act, 1870, or the Dominion Lands Act, as enacted from time to time;

or

 - (ii) a person of Aboriginal descent who is accepted by the Metis Nation.

MMF Membership of the Southwest Region by Local, 1993



Source: MMF Southwest Region, 1993.

DKB '93

The Deterioration of the Metis Nation in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century

The Metis nation that existed in the early 19th century suffered severe deterioration from 1870 onwards. This fact is well documented by several authors each advocating different theories and dealing with different subject areas. It is the purpose of this report to identify and formulate the causes and elements which contributed to the suppression of the Metis as a Nation. The understanding of the history of the Metis Nation will aid this document in two ways; first, it will give an understanding of the current situation in which the Metis find themselves; and secondly, it will aid in the formation of concrete recommendations which reach deeper than cosmetic in-effective solutions.

The root cause of the deterioration of the Metis nation can be found in the elitist views of the Canadian government. Like so many other governments which forced settlement on North America, the Canadian government was only interested in settling the West to create new controllable markets for their goods. The European elitist myths of the Canadian government and to some extent the Eastern Canadian (Ontario east) allowed them to believe that Metis self-determination was a crime that stood in the way of the much more civilized and righteous European forms of society and government. The Canadian government did not want to accept that the Metis had become a thriving nation. The recognition of a Metis nation would have pushed western settlement back many years and the Great Canadian Myth of a white dominated economic system would have been lost. It is this "Great Canadian Myth" with its elitist European thought which took the form in confederation that was the single most important factor in the deterioration of the Metis Nation.

The beginning of the decline of the Metis Nation can be found during and shortly after the imposition of the Riel provisional government of 1869 in the Red River settlement. Politically and militarily the Metis were finding themselves in a precarious situation after 1869. The Metis had enjoyed military superiority prior to 1870 in the Red River Settlement and to some degree in North Dakota, Southern Manitoba, Southern Saskatchewan, and North Eastern Montana. This can be demonstrated by

the military confrontations such as the Metis insurrections at the Red River Settlement, the William Sayer trial, the Battles of Grande Couteau and Seven Oaks and the many skirmishes with the Sioux and other Native nations. A strong military is a key ingredient to a sovereign nation and to some degree the Metis had achieved this status in 1869 with the Louis Riel led implementation of a provisional government. Two factors changed the status of the Metis in 1870. Firstly, there began a tremendous influx of Canadian settlers from the east. Secondly, a British force of 1200 soldiers arrived at the colony in 1870 in support of the new incoming Lt. Governor.² These two factors spelled the end for the Metis military control in and around the Red River Settlement. Metis leadership was devastated with the expulsion of Louis Riel from the North West and political power was wrestled from the Metis.

The Metis enjoyed equal political status before 1870 but this changed quickly. In the early 1870's the Metis controlled 50 percent of the popular vote and 50 percent of the seats. By 1880 the Canadian immigrants had turned the tables and the Metis had only 16.7 percent of the popular vote and only 4 of the 24 seats in government.³ Many would argue that representation by population was only proper but because the two societies were so very different culturally, economically, and socially the dominion of one over the other could not help but produce dreadful results. There can be no doubt that the Metis began to feel alienated in their own settlement. By 1880 the Metis had little to no control over their destiny in and around the Red River Settlement

The overwhelming influx of Canadian settlers on the Red River Settlement also brought upon the problem of Racism on the Metis. The treatment of the Metis people in the Red River Settlements and the Canadian West in general, has not been well documented by scholars and is an area which should be considered in the future as the effects appear to be quite devastating. Evidence of this racism can be found in a letter written from the Lt. Governor Archibald to the Prime Minister in which he writes about racism against the Metis in Winnipeg:

... not so much, I believe by the dread about their land allotment as by the persistent ill-usage of such as them as have ventured from time to time into Winnipeg from the disbanded volunteers

and newcomers who fill the town. Many of them actually have been so beaten and outraged that they feel as if they were living in a state of slavery. They say that the bitter hatred of these people is a yoke so intolerable that they would gladly escape it by any sacrifice.⁴

The case for racism against the Metis can be further backed up from a quote from the French ethnographer Marcel Giraud. Giraud, throughout his two volume set on the Metis presents an ethnocentric (Racist) view of the Metis using words and phrases to describe the Metis such as "lack of diligence and initiative", "primitive and archaic attitudes", etc.⁵ Giraud, as ethnocentric and racist as he was, still readily admits that in the early 20th century that racism was a prime factor in the Metis situation. Giraud states in reference to the Metis middle class that:

It is certain that such elements in the Metis population, generally poor and without prospects, are exposed to prejudices that are too numerous and too powerful for them to gain easy admission into white society: prejudices that proceed not only from Anglo Saxons, lacking in sympathy toward human beings whose language and religions are alien to them but also from French Canadians.⁶

The economic factors in and around the Red River Settlement would also play an important role in the dispersion and deterioration of the Metis Nation. With the influx of Canadian settlers and the imposition of the European forms of government the Metis found themselves in an alien economic system which was biased to their original forms of subsistence, trade and business. One factor which severely affected the Metis of the Red River Settlement was the solidification of the United States/Canada border. Prior to 1870 many Metis depended on the procurement and sale of buffalo robes to the United States. By 1873 the United States had effectively closed down free trade south of the Red River Settlement and it became no longer economically feasible to operate such a business. One historian, Gerhart Ens, advocates that this was one of the many reasons some Metis families chose to move further west.⁷ Moving west meant that the border could be circumvented and the buffalo trade could be carried on.

The Metis of the Red River Settlement also encountered major obstacles on the agricultural front. The early 1870's saw an infestation of grasshoppers descend on the Red River Settlement. The effects of the infestation were so bad that little and in some cases no grain was harvested. In many cases Metis

took out seed grain mortgages to continue to farm but were unable to pay them back.⁸ A final reason why Metis found it difficult to continue farming was their river lot system of land distribution. The large scale grain farming techniques of the new settlers was not compatible with the river lot system which created problems of transportation and subdivision.⁹

The Manitoba Act was implemented by Louis Riel during his provisional government in 1869-70. Section 31 of this act was to ensure 1.4 million acres of land was distributed to Metis families while section 32 was to ensure that titles of land that was already occupied were distributed. These sections of the Manitoba Act were to ensure that the Metis people received their already occupied land and to receive land for their families, particularly their offspring, so that the transition into a new economic and social era could be dealt with fairly. If this act would of been implemented fairly without prejudice, Louis Riel would have died a content person. But the several inconsistencies which have been revealed by several authors including D. M Sprague, D. Bruce Sealey, and Emily Pelletier raise serious doubt that the process of delivering out the claim was, if not completely, partially a land grab and an informal and formal disinheriting process carried out by Canadian Society.¹⁰ Other Authors such as Thomas Flanagan and to some degree Gerhart Ens argue that in general the Metis land entitlement was fairly distributed.¹¹

The question of compensation of lost lands is currently being handled by the courts. The decision reached will depend heavily upon the aforementioned authors and their research. The fact that there were many inconsistencies can not be disputed. Even Flanagan's research, whose studies were funded by the Department of Justice and whose research will be used in court against the Metis claim, cannot dissolve the Federal and Provincial governments of blame. He reveals many inconsistencies and injustices in the distribution process. Flanagan in his chapter on Metis Children's Land Grants briefly mentions four inconsistencies. Each quote follows:

1) The Metis were at first content, but quickly became restive when there appeared to be no progress towards selecting and announcing their reserved townships so that immigrants could be warned off.¹²

2) In August 1872 the half-breeds of High Bluff and Poplar Point submitted a memorial to the Lieutenant Governor stating that they had selected townships in this area as part of their reserve, and asking that immigrants be ejected. Archibald advised Arkins that it was better for this valuable area to be in the hands of new settlers than of the Half-breeds, many of whom, being under age, would be incapable of conveying and thus form a serious obstruction to development of one of the most valuable spots in the province.¹³

3) Hudson Bay Company and school reserves within the townships, homesteaded quarter sections, fractional townships broken by rivers and lakes, and road allowances combined to produce many odd shaped allotments, some even broken into multiple pieces. One settler of St. Andrews complained "Our people feel they are entitled to square lots and that clear of roads."¹⁴

4) Ryan asked to be allowed to seek out the Metis at their hunting camps, but Dennis overruled this request: "It is not necessary to look up parties who have claims. If they care for their interests, they will themselves come forward and establish their claims".¹⁵

In Flanagan's conclusion of the chapter he states:

It is obvious that the Dominion Government fulfilled its obligation to distribute 1.4 million acres of land to the Metis children. Great efforts were made to locate the eligible recipients, to divide the land among them by means of a lottery, and to grant title through letters of patent from the Crown... There is simply no evidence to sustain would be allegations that the government never gave the 1.4 million acres to the Metis or that it defrauded them of land.¹⁶

It appears that with the above information that there seems to be a great deal of misinterpretation of the facts by Flanagan. Certainly it seems that there is a movement afoot to discredit the current land claims procedure. In researching these land claims it is apparent that there were many inconsistencies in the transfer of land to the Metis and even Flanagan, the most ardent critic against Metis claim, must reveal the facts (but not acknowledge them in his conclusions).

The loss of land by the Metis, whether it was because of unscrupulous land speculators or a sale of last resort because of discrimination in the area, must be documented as perhaps one of the prime factors of the deterioration of the Metis Nation. What was once considered as a homeland by the Metis, the Red River Settlement by the 1990's was only a memory to many of the former inhabitants. Many

Metis moved to peripheral areas of the North West where it was hoped a better life could be had. Many of these same Metis families can be found in the Southwest Region.

The deterioration of the Metis nation then finds its impetus in the Great Canadian Myth of economic prosperity in the name of so called civilized culture. From the myth came the systematic removal of Metis self-government by force. The government assisted flood of immigrants and soldiers to the Northwest devastated the Metis. Racism and military might combined to make living as a nation virtually impossible. Economically the landscape of the Northwest changed quickly as the buffalo industry disappeared and the River Lot system became incompatible with large scale grain farming. Culturally the Metis found themselves as a minority alienated from society and subsequently pushed to the bottom of the Canadian socioeconomic classes. It appears the Metis never stood a chance against the "Great Canadian Dream".

Treatment of Metis in the Justice System

The treatment of the Metis in the Canadian justice system until recently has not been well documented. Three landmark reports have been produced since 1989; two by the Manitoba Metis Federation and one from the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. These reports include The Struggle For Recognition: Canadian Justice and the Metis Nation (1991).¹ The Manitoba Metis Federation's submission to the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (1989) and the (Manitoba) Aboriginal Justice Inquiry itself. Each document is well researched and reveal that the justice system has failed the Aboriginal people. What is even more disturbing is little has been done to correct the situation since the reports have been released.

The Metis during the 1800's implemented their own justice systems. The most well documented is the rules of the buffalo hunt. These regulations allowed for the most amount of buffalo to be taken with the minimum threat to life and in the shortest amount of time by everyone involved. These rules were critical to the subsistence of the Metis. The buffalo hunt usually involved several hundred people and sometimes as many as 1,200 Red River carts which certainly would have taken tremendous administrative ability.¹⁷ The Metis operated on a highly developed democratic system that utilized rule by consensus. Leaders were elected for individual tasks and in turn was responsible to his electorate.¹⁸ Punishments for breach of the laws of the buffalo hunt have been described as lenient. Alexander Ross, who mistakingly thought the Metis justice system was inferior to European forms of justice, wrote in 1856 in reference to the Metis justice system:

Value is fostered among them by the mildest of means; for what do such a people fear from such a breach of the penal code? Punishments here are scarcely more than nominal; and may well suggest the question to a more civilized community, whether it is always the severest punishments that have the best effect in reclaiming offenders.

Ross further states that "... we have ... no tread mills, no hulks, no pilary, no penitentiary, no white sheets, no Botany Bay." Survival on the Prairies meant survival of your group. This was realized by

Native tribes and the Metis justice system borrowed heavily from them.¹⁹ Mike Brogdon, a writer on Metis and justice describes the form of justice used by the Metis in the community of St. Laurent (Saskatchewan) around 1880:

This new system was sophisticated. Its predominant feature was that of mediation, of settling disputes with minimal harm to both parties, rather than of adjudication, of findings of guilt with punitive sanctions. Community law was concerned with the restoration of the integrity and harmony of the community, not with the stimulation of individuals or families through convictions.²⁰

The understanding of the current problem of Metis and the justice system requires a brief explanation of why it was that the Metis became the target for the judicial system. The Metis way of life was systematically being criminalized so that they could be controlled. The Hudson Bay Company criminalized free trade with the United States in the 1800's which severely effected Metis trade patterns and economic subsistence. What was once an economic mainstay was now a crime. The Red River Settlement insurrection and the Battle of Batoche although seen in Metis eyes as responsible government was criminalized as treason. Finally vagrancy laws helped the police round-up and control the Metis with no justification in the early 20th century. Brogdon states:

First because the Metis people disproportionately appeared in the nineteenth century courts- variously accused of breaking economic laws, of political insurrections and later of vagrancy- does not in itself demonstrate their criminality. Criminals were what the Canadian state and its predecessors made of them. Criminality was a social artifact, a device through which Metis rights to act according to their own laws could be denied.²¹

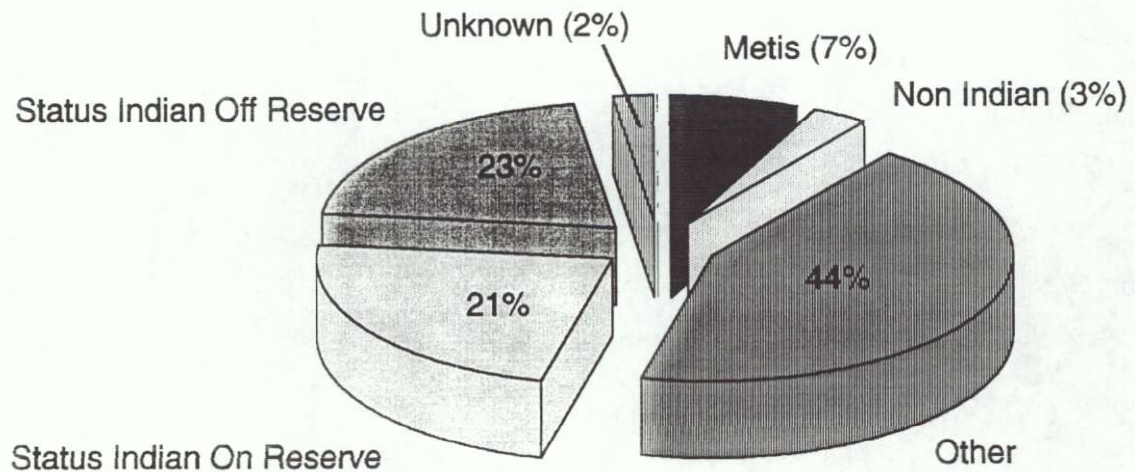
The three aforementioned reports comprehensively and accurately document the problems of Metis in the current justice system. The evidence that is provided by these reports point to a grave injustice being committed against the Metis and Aboriginal people in general. Statistics gathered by the Southwest Region on the MMF reinforce most of the reports findings. Statistics gathered at Brandon Correctional Institution (BCI) for a single day (04 14 1993) revealed that the sentenced prison population consisted of 53% status 8% non-status, 11% Metis and 28% other.²² Statistics gathered from a one

year period indicate that of the 1326 persons processed through BCI, 44% were status, 6% were Metis and 3% were non-status. These statistics reveal two important facts: a clear over representation of Aboriginal people in the justice system and the fact that Aboriginal people are less likely to traverse the legal systems as successfully as are other ethnic groups. It is easy to deduce from the statistics the over representation of Aboriginal people. For the second point, Aboriginal people comprise 53 percent of the people being processed through BCI and 72 percent of the people incarcerated. Whereas Non-Native people comprise 47 percent of the people being processed and 28 percent of those incarcerated. Therefore, it can be deduced that Non-Native people have more success (for whatever reason) avoiding incarceration in the justice system.

Representation of Aboriginal people on the staffs of the legal system.

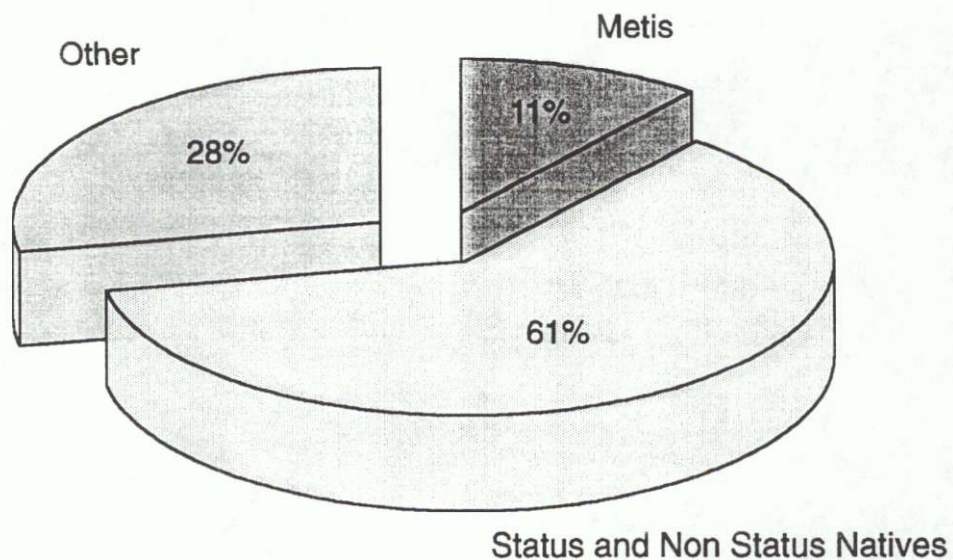
In the MMF's submission (1991) to the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (AJI) they stipulate that the last figures they had seen showed Aboriginal people make up 0.9% of the personal of the Winnipeg City Police, 6.3% of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and 1.5% of the Brandon City Police.²³ Updated statistics from the Brandon City Police reveal that Native representation (all Metis) has climbed to 5.6% or 4 out of 72.²⁴ Aboriginal staff representation at BCI also indicates an under representation. Currently (1993) BCI estimates of the 100 employees at BCI, 8 are Aboriginal. This statistics importance cannot be overlooked considering Aboriginal people approximately make up 55 percent of the people processed through BCI and 72 percent of the sentenced inmates. In phone interviews with BCI they indicate that they have implemented a strong recruiting campaign but have failed to be able to retain Aboriginal employees for varying reasons such as better job offers, trouble with the law, and the job being antithetical to the Native ethics of noninterference. The South west region of the MMF see only one solution and that is implementation of the recommendations of the three aforementioned reports.

Admission Summary
Brandon Correctional Institute from 92/04/01 to 93/03/31



Source: Brandon Correctional Institute, 1993.

Ethnic Origin of Inmates
Brandon Correctional Institute for April 14, 1993



Brandon Correctional Institute, April 14, 1993.

The recommendations given in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, the Metis submission to the AJI report, and The Struggle for Recognition seen to have been almost completely ignored. A critique made one year after the delivery of the AJI report by reporter Paul Somyn states:

The AJI report made 293 recommendations. Of those recommendations, the provincial reports that 107 or 36% are solely within its jurisdiction; 19 percent are within federal jurisdiction; 22 percent require joint federal provincial action; and a further 23 percent are in other jurisdictions of these recommendations, the province has identified that 239 relate to the justice department, but has set aside 22 of them as constitutionally impossible.²⁵

By all appearances the province of Manitoba and the federal government does not have any interest in implementing the majority of the recommendations of the AJI report. Of the promises that the province has made, little has been done. Somyn's report in regards to these promises, assess the progress as follows:

A) Create four working groups to deal with recommendations in the areas of justice, northern and Native affairs, natural resources and family services. **ON HOLD**

B) Create three sub groups to focus on courts, corrections and policing. **ON HOLD**

C) Hire a special prosecutor to determine whether further charges should be laid against James Houghton in the 1971 murder of Helen Betty Osborne. **DONE** No charges will be laid.

D) Tighten the provinces policing on granting immunity. **DONE**

E) Expand circuit courts to all portions of Manitoba and review the Jury Act to make jury selection more community based. **ON HOLD**

F) Increase Aboriginal participation in the delivery of justice services. **IMPROVING**; As of March 1992, 5.76 percent of the justice department is Aboriginal, up from 4.83 percent prior to report.

G) Extend the service of spiritual elders to all provincial institutions and assist inmates in maintaining family ties while incarcerated. **IMPROVING**; Native elders program in place at all seven provincial institutions. Currently considering question of family ties.

H) Consult with Ottawa to amend the Indian Act to provide equal split of property in marriage breakdown. **ON HOLD**: But province says Ottawa has indicated it will handle this.²⁶

Of the recommendations of the AJI which are not being implemented by the provincial government

Somyn further states:

- A) No creation of an Aboriginal justice inquiry commission to implement reforms and recommendations in the report.
- B) No creation of a separate Aboriginal justice system.
- C) No special commission to settle land claims and no recognition of the Northern Flood Agreement as a treaty.
- D) No special investigation unit to handle complaints of police misconduct.
- E) No commitment to create an Aboriginal justice college to prepare graduates for positions in the justice system ranging from court reporters to police officers to attorneys.²⁷

This interaction by the federal and provincial government can only be considered criminal. The suffering of Aboriginal under the current systems is unconscionable. Further delay will only aid in degrading Metis and Aboriginal people in a country which needs each and every nation within to flourish. If a country is judged by their treatment of their minorities then Canada must be considered a failure. The MMF report to the AJI report sums up what must be done to ensure justice to the Metis.

In our experience voluntary cooperation and coordination of effort will not accomplish the desired outcome. An empowered coordinated effort is necessary with significant portions of the provincial and federal mandate being portaged to aboriginal political, correctional and social service delivery organizations.²⁸

If such a process ever took place it would allow the Metis to control their destiny, implement community based solutions based on reintegration of offenders into the community instead of lengthy prison terms which result in community alienation and incarceration.

WE RECOMMEND THAT:

the MMF submission to the Manitoba Justice Inquiry, The Struggle for Recognition, and Report of The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba be reexamined by the federal and provincial governments and that their recommendations be implemented forthwith.

Educational Concerns

The Metis of the Southwest Region see education as an integral part in the realization of economic well being and self-determination. Recent statistics have revealed that the Metis of the Southwest Region on average have less success in the current educational system than the average Manitoban. The Southwest Region believe that this problem must be addressed and that the concrete recommendations made in this report be implemented with a sense of urgency.

A.S. Lussier, a Metis historian, adds clarity to the current situation by analysing the historical aspects of Metis and education. Lussier divides his overview into three sections; pre 1869-70; 1810-1945; and the postwar period. Lussier explains that between 1818 and 1870 the European educational system had little impact on the Metis. The majority of Metis pursued training in the fur trade. The Metis that were educated came from the well to do families. Poorer families and illegitimate children were looked down upon by the priests who were the only teachers in the Northwest at the time. The 1870-1945 period as explained by Lussier saw the systematic denial that the governments had any responsibility to the education of the Metis. In some communities Treaty Indians were financed by the Federal government and Metis could only attend if there was a spare seat. Communities where the Metis were considered squatters and did not pay land tax were required to pay hefty amounts to send their children to school. Large families of course were at a distinct disadvantage. In a series of workshops run by the Southwest Region in April of 1993 the Elders from several of the Locals cited poor access and discrimination as the prime reason they quit school. St. Lazar Elders stated that they were relegated to the back of the classes and were not encouraged to participate where as French students were favoured by the teachers. Several of the elders from St. Lazar stated they quit school because of discrimination and that it "wasn't worth the hassle". Turtle Mountain Elders stated that one could obtain grade 8 but in order to go further one had to board at white homes in Deloraine which at the time was virtually impossible because of discrimination. Economic hardship was also a factor advocated by the Elders.

In many cases family members had to work to help feed the family. In other cases there was no money to buy the textbooks required. In many of the peripheral area of the Southwest Region access to grades above grade 8 required being transferred many miles. The stories by the Elders of the discrimination and inaccessibility of the school system are too numerous to mention but suffice to say prior to 1965 it was virtually impossible to receive a higher education in many Metis Locals. The post war period as advocated by Lussier saw the human rights movement make some changes. Lussier explains however that there were other problems...

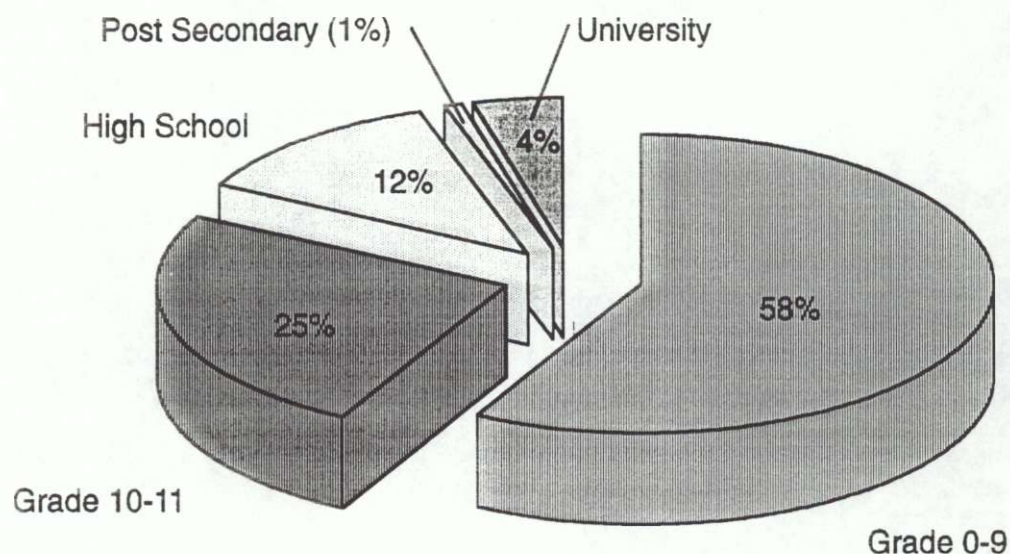
The way of life at home of Metis people was so at variance with the dominant society that often times we didn't get the reinforcement we needed at home through the school. We often got the opposite at school. We were told this was ridiculous, this was really silly. Because of that we weren't getting the positive reaction. So what do we do? ...we develop a low sense of self esteem.²⁹

Despite the low sense of self esteem Metis students were developing from a culturally alien educational system, the postwar period saw some positive educational programs put in place. Universities implemented programs such as BUNTEP and Native Studies. These programs address only a few of the problems. Much work has yet to be done.

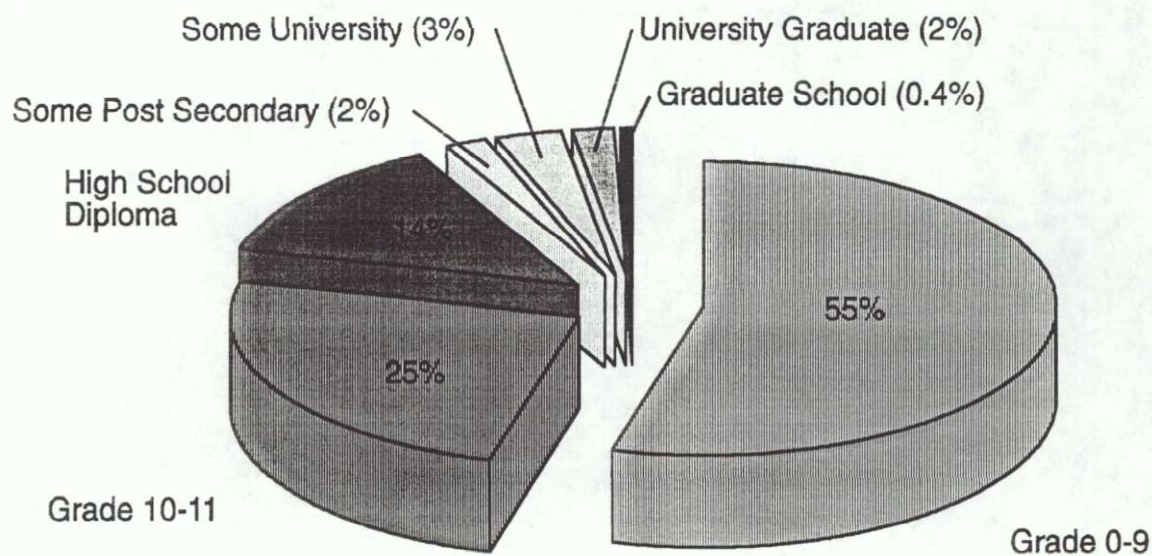
Today the Metis of the Southwest Region still find themselves educationally disadvantaged. A 1988 survey conducted on the Metis of Manitoba by the University of Manitoba revealed that 55 percent of the respondents had only grade 9 education or less. A further 25 percent had grade 10 or 11 and only 2 percent had graduated from University.³⁰ When the respondents were divided into the areas of North, South, and Winnipeg, the South had even worse results. The Southern Regions had 58 percent with grade 9 or below and 25 percent with grade 10 or 11.³¹ Financial problems was cited as the reason for quitting for 25 percent of the respondents. The work shops conducted for this report revealed little hope that things had changed since the survey was completed.

Research conducted by the Southwest Region reveal that one of the prime factors which influence low participation of Metis in the education system is alienation.³² Many Metis find themselves in a

Metis Education Level (Southern Manitoba)



Manitoba Metis Education Level



school system which is dominated by white society. A survey conducted by the Southwest Region in April of 1993 revealed that of seven school divisions interviewed (including Pelly Trail, Portage la Prairie, Turtle Mountain, Birdtail, Pine Creek, Turtle River and Brandon) only 3 Native teachers were employed full time.³³ Representation of Native people in administration was also found lacking. Only 3 Native persons were found in school administration, two of which were within the Brandon School Division. Representation of Metis on the school board was also lacking. Of the seven school divisions interviewed only one had Native representation. When questioned about this under-representation superintendents stated that they did not receive Native applications or that they did not discriminate, they just picked the best qualified applicant. When asked about under-representation in administration one superintendent mentioned that there janitor was Metis. The respondents to these questions fail to realize that positive role models and culturally sensitive employees are essential to any education- especially in grade school.

The lack of Metis sensitive curriculum was seen by the Southwest Region as an area which needs vast improvement. Until recently many textbooks referred to Louis Riel as a traitor and the Metis as savages and rebels. Participants involved in workshops for the report stated that the complete exclusion of Metis history and accomplishments contributed to feelings of alienation. The survey conducted of the seven school divisions revealed that there is reason for hope. All but one division has implemented some type of Aboriginal and Metis awareness program. Although in some divisions it appears to be almost token. Pelly Trail has implemented an English language development program for its treaty students. Portage La Prairie School Division has a Native Studies program at one school and has implemented some cultural awareness classes in its elementary school. Birdtail School Division is looking at implementing Native language and building a Native cultural room. Pine Creek School Division and Turtle River have used Native speakers and implemented some Native awareness. Brandon School Division seems to be the most advanced in Native Curriculum. Besides having the Native Studies

program in one high school, they have employed a Native consultant and are currently working on Native Studies curriculum for all schools.

The implementation of Native Studies courses in high school is seen as a positive effort but falls short of the Manitoba Metis Federation's goal. The MMF believe that history and social studies classes must include positive reinforcing subsections on the Metis. This, the MMF believe will have two effects: first by providing an understanding of the Metis, racism will be combatted; secondly it will reinforce Metis identity making the Metis student feel included instead of excluded. A second objective of the MMF is to begin awareness of the Metis people in grade school along with other cultures.

The under-representation of Metis in post secondary education is also a major concern of this report. The University of Manitoba survey (1988) shows that only 7.4 percent of the Metis population (over 18) accessed post secondary education and that only 2 percent graduated from university.³⁴ Statistics on the amount of Metis in college or university are very hard to obtain because of human rights violations which could occur if status questions were included in registrations. An interview with the Native counsellor at Brandon University revealed that the 1988 statistics appear to have remained the same. The Metis of the Southwest Region feel that this problem can be corrected if counselling were provided. Counsellors could provided encouragement and help the students access finances. The Metis of the Southwest Region also realize that success in accessing university depends largely on the successful completion of secondary school and that a comprehensive holistic approach by the MMF and the school boards must be taken at all educational levels to solve the under-education problem. Currently the MMF has undertaken programs to solve this problem. They form parts of advisory committees, they are developing Metis curriculum for schools and Metis people are speaking at schools. Little more can be done without adequate financial resources. The Southwest Region currently and historically have not had the funds to hire a full time or even a part time educational counsellor. What is needed is funding for

educational staff to deal with problems in curriculum, funding, access into institutions, financial counselling and support, and the under representation of Metis in administration and teaching.

WE RECOMMEND THAT:

the federal government supply funding to the MMF so that they can confront the many problems which Metis face, i.e. the lack of educational counsellors, etc.

there be a concerted effort by both the Federal and Provincial governments to ensure proper representation of Metis in the administrative and teaching areas of the educational system.

educational institutions of grade 12 or less carry compulsory Metis content in the curriculum to combat racism, inform students, and to ensure the delivery of a culturally reinforcing curriculum for Metis students.

Pathways to Disaster or Success?

Pathways to success is a federal government initiative to address the high rates of Aboriginal unemployment and the labour market needs of Aboriginal people. Fundamentally Pathways to Success is a program in which Aboriginal people and organizations can access funding for upgrading and trades training. The delivery infrastructure will be made up of a series of boards made up of Aboriginal people and Canada Employment and Immigration staff. These boards will make decisions on who gets training, what the training will be and when it will be delivered. The training offered consists of upgrading to grade 12 and possibly two years of college. The restriction of education i.e. no university or three year college courses, reflects the Employment and Immigration Canada (EIC) mandate of supplying Aboriginal persons with a job at the minimum amount of expense.

By all appearances the Canada Employment Center (CEC) will be targeting the unemployed sector which in itself is a noble cause but fails to address the many other problems of education and employment of the Metis. In a Pathways introduction workshop presented to the Southwest Region by Brandon CEC, one participant stood up and asked in regards to the limited education offered that "You mean to say you'll make my son a welder but you won't make him a doctor?" Pathways to success then has the ability to appear racist in the eyes of many of the grass roots people. Pathways to success appears to many as only a band-aid solution to a problem which grows out of the inadequate school system and is perpetuated by under-funding of self-determination strategies such as Metis educational staff and counsellors.

The pathways agreement between the MMF and the federal government has yet to be signed. Many of the board structures are dominated by status. The MMF have informed the federal government that they do not wish to sit on boards that are dominated by status Natives. The Metis people have different concerns than status Natives. Many Status organizations have education and employment infrastructures in place on reserves and to some extent have ample education budgets supplied by the

federal government. Many of the status problems are reserve oriented where Metis concerns lie in small Metis communities with no land base. For these reasons and many others, the MMF is attempting to have Pathways delivered to them by an independent contract. This would allow for a greater self-determination and probably greater success.

The Pathways to Success Strategy is a five year program which was started in February 1990. Currently talks are ongoing to extend the program but allocation of funding has not been confirmed. Because of the bureaucratic quagmire which has been created from this program the Southwest Region has only recently (March 1993) set up its required local management board for pathways. These board members must undergo extensive training as dictated by the local CEC so they are able to make sound decisions in the purchase of course and selections of participants. This it is expected to run into the fall of 1993. If the strategy is not renewed this will give the Southwest Region one year of operation.

The criteria and power that the CEC demands is another concern of the Southwest Region Metis. It appears that participants in the pathways programs will require that the individual is unemployed or on welfare. To access training then a person would have to quit his job and either apply for Unemployment Insurance Benefits or get on the welfare role. Programs that are approved by the LMB can also be cancelled by the CEC. If the program does not fit the CEC mandate of putting people directly back to work with the minimum of cost then the CEC can refuse funding. Clearly, the Pathways program is a federal program which caters to federal goals rather than Metis goals with ultimate power in decisions which influence criteria of applicants and the duration and types of courses that will be offered are held by CEC and EIC. This analysis reveals that racism and paternalism of the federal government still exists today. The Metis of the Southwest Region believe that the benefits of such funds could be maximized by block funding to the MMF. This would allow Metis to deliver appropriate programming to the appropriate people without having to traverse federal government rules and regulations.

WE RECOMMEND THAT:

pathways dollars be blocked funded in a separate contract to the MMF so that federal government rules and regulations and under-representations on management boards be avoided so that the employment concerns of the Metis can be met.

Economic Concerns

One of Louis Riel's main reasons for implementing his provisional government at the Red River Settlement was that he knew the Metis people needed time to adjust to a new economic order. Between 1870 and 1890 the Canadian west was swamped by Canadian settlers. Racism, the lack of a European form of education and an economic system which did not reflect the Metis culture created a great disadvantage for the Metis people. Today many Metis still practise basic resource extraction such as hunting; trapping; fishing; small scale farming and ranching; and tree servicing and removal.

The Metis communities in the Southwest Region are spread out and vary in their forms of economic activity. St. Ambroise and Amaranth depend largely on commercial fishing. St. Eustache Metis have historically been farm labour and travel to Winnipeg for employment. St. Lazar, Binscarth, and Russell Locals depended on small scale farming, farm labour and manual labour for the rail road. Turtle Mountain Metis have traditionally depended on hunting, trapping, guiding, farm labour, and tree extraction. Today many of the young Metis travel outside their communities for work which is still predominately manual labour.

The Metis communities themselves have historically been economically depressed. The lack of educational opportunity, the poor land which they occupy and the economic discrimination based mostly on racism have been the main contributors to the communities situation. The diversity of each communities problems dictates that only a regionally based program would be of benefit. Attempts by the federal government to implement economic programs for Natives has been a failure in the Southwest Region.

The Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy (CAEDS) which is a program that was to assist Canada's Aboriginal people gain economic stability has done very little for the Metis of the Southwest Region. The Pathways strategy which is part of the CAEDS has already been mentioned and so far has provided no benefits for the Metis of the Southwest Region. Besides Pathways the most

criticized program from CAEDS is the Aboriginal Business Development Program (ABDP). The ABDP's purpose is to provide financial and developmental assistance to Aboriginal entrepreneurs and communities for business purposes. Application procedures require a statement of intent and based on approval a comprehensive business proposal which also must be approved. The April 1993 workshops conducted for this report revealed tremendous disappointment in ABDP. The majority of Southwest Region Metis who tried to access this program stated that their number one reason for not accessing funds was frustration of the complexity of the criteria and application process. The whole process was deemed by many people of the Southwest Region as writing and researching a small book. In many cases Metis neither have the education or the time to undertake such an endeavour. The degree of problems that exist in the application process can be seen in statistics from CAEDS (March 28, 1991). In Manitoba 579 statements of intent were received by ABDP of which 330 were rejected or withdrawn and only 121 received approval of their business plan.³⁵

Statistics from CAEDS also revealed that the majority of funds go to large projects. 66 percent of the total funds provided go to projects over \$100,000.00 and represent only 10 percent of the applicants.³⁶ Criteria for the program requires that the applicant must have 10 percent equity. These figures indicate that Aboriginals who have access to \$10,000.00 or more are the ones accessing the majority of funding. The money is not being provided to do the most amount of good for the most amount of people. Furthermore, although it could not be proven, many Metis of the Southwest Region believe that the treaty Native has access to financial and administrative support from their band councils whereas Metis have little or no support because of lack of funding to the MMF. The Metis of the Southwest Region believe that business funds could be dealt with much more effectively at the Metis regional and national level. This would allow for much more understanding of the problems and concerns of the Metis and hopefully eliminate the unequal distribution which favours the well to do.

Local Economic Problems

Several Locals have problems specific to their area. Solutions to these problems will take a concentrated effort on the specific problem by the federal, provincial and MMF governments.

St. Ambroise

St. Ambroise is a small fishing and trapping town on the shores of Lake Manitoba. The Prime source of income is from commercial fishing. Recently fish stocks in Lake Manitoba have been depleted. Fishermen are returning with little or no fish. This has resulted in severe hardship and the fish stock sees no sign of recovery. The fishermen at St. Ambroise present at a workshop for this report unanimously agreed that there should be a fishing moratorium for a period of 5 years. The moratorium can not be implemented by itself without financial compensation; the equipment must be maintained, loan payments must continue for those who have them and their families must eat. Special job centres could also be set up to help fisherman find other jobs for the moratorium period. The Metis of St. Ambroise have also suggested that a fish hatchery be set up at St. Ambroise to maintain fish stock. This would benefit the community by providing supplementary jobs to a community that has a one job economy.

Amaranth

Amaranth is a small Metis community which is located beside Lake Manitoba and the Sandy Bay Indian Reserve. Unemployment in this local is approaching 90 percent. When asked what the prime source of income was in the community at a workshop conducted by the Southwest Region they replied "welfare". Amaranth is poorly served by government departments such as the Canada Employment Centre and Social Services. Amaranth Metis watch as money is continually pumped into the nearby reserve and even though they grew up under the same conditions, they receive nothing. This community needs tremendous financial and moral assistance which must be delivered by their own people. The

Canadian governments have failed miserably in providing any type of assistance. The Metis of the Southwest Region believe that they deserve a chance to assist their own people. This of course requires funding directly to the MMF, the Southwest Region and Amaranth Local so a joint solution can be synthesized.

WE RECOMMEND THAT:

funding be made available to the MMF so that Metis communities and individuals can be assisted in implementing economic recovery plans designed to meet the unique needs of the Metis.

Social Concerns

The MMF Child and Family Support Program (MCFSP) began operation in 1984. The impetus to start such a program grew partially out of the cultural genocide that was being practised by Child and Family Services in the 1960's, 70's and 80's. During this time approximately 3,000 Aboriginal children were removed from their homes and exported out of the province for adoption. In most cases these children found themselves in urban white families.³⁷ A Manitoba Review Committee was set up to investigate these practises and in their conclusion the Chairman, Judge Kilmelman stated "Having now completed the review of the files... the Chairman now states unequivocally that cultural genocide has been taking place in a systematic and routine manner."³⁸ A second reason that the MMF have pushed for an independent child and family support program is the high youth admissions into custody. Between 1984-1987 the Metis youth made up 38 percent of those admitted to open custody and 30.4 percent of those admitted to secure custody. This is compared to admissions to open custody of 27 percent for Treaty Native and 35 percent for non-Native. As well as 30.4 percent for Treaty Native and 39.1 percent for non-Native for secure custody.³⁹ The implementation of a full scale Metis delivery system of child and family services is becoming even more urgent as parallels and direct correlations are being drawn between the Manitoba Child and Family services method of removal of children from their families and culture and youth admissions to custody.⁴⁰

The MMF Child and Family Support Program has attempted to resolve these problems but many obstacles have been encountered. Potential Metis foster homes have been turned down because of the lack of material resources.⁴¹ Funding must be made available to assist these homes as currently (March, 1991) there are only 2 Metis foster homes which service Manitoba Metis.⁴² This fact is further reinforced by follow up research by the MMF (1988). Although a policy directive was set up in 1984 to curtail the amount of Aboriginal children sent out of province and country still the majority of Metis children are being placed in culturally alien homes.⁴³

The MMF are encountering several problems in trying to implement their Child and Family Support Program. Firstly, the MMF lack the financial resources to respond to referrals. Sufficient funding is required to build a solid administration support system and a well educated and or experienced staff. Secondly, the Metis have had problems with Child and Family Services (Manitoba) who have been uncooperative with access to files and late referrals of Metis specific cases which make effective preventive action from being taken. Finally the lack of knowledge of mandated agencies of the referral procedure which inform the MMF of specific Metis cases is producing only a small amount of referrals.⁴⁴

The statistics supplied in this report are only the tip of the iceberg. This report is partially designed to bring attention to the blatant disregard shown to previous reports. This inaction verges on criminal negligence.

WE RECOMMEND THAT:

funding be made available to the MMF to develop a strong social services network that caters to Metis specific needs.

Conclusion

The Metis of the Southwest Region are currently and have been historically forgotten. This report was devised to bring to the attention of the government the historical, social, economic, and justice concerns of the Southwest Region of the MMF. This report brings us one step closer to the realization of self determination through documentation and analysis. It is the hope of the Southwest Region that the recommendations contained within this report be swiftly acted upon by the governments of Canada.

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