

CANADIANA

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FIRST MINISTERS' CONFERENCE  
ON  
ABORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

MANITOBA METIS RIGHTS POSITION PAPER

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PREPARED BY THE

MANITOBA METIS RIGHTS ASSEMBLY

MANITOBA

MARCH 11, 1983

Ottawa  
March 15-16, 1983



THIS POSITION PAPER IS THE PRODUCT OF EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION BY THE MANITOBA METIS ASSOCIATION ON BEHALF OF THE METIS COMMUNITY. THESE CONSULTATIONS WERE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE FOR THE FIRST TIME A CONSTITUTIONAL DOWNSPOCK ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL METIS PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE. THE MANITOBA METIS CONSULTATION PROCESS INCLUDED:

1. REGIONAL WORKSHOPS TO TRAIN LOCAL CONSULTATION GROUP LEADERS.
2. THE FORMATION OF CONSULTATION GROUPS IN METIS COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE.
3. THE PRODUCTION (WITH CBC ASSISTANCE) OF FIVE WEEKLY, 30-MINUTE BROADCASTS, INCLUDING INFORMATION, OPINIONS, AND OPPORTUNITY FEED-BACK. THESE BROADCASTS WERE CARRIED BY 30 RADIO STATIONS SO THAT THE WHOLE PROVINCE COULD BE COVERED.
4. THE PREPARATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF WRITTEN BACKGROUND NOTES, QUESTIONS, AND REPORT FORMS, RELATED TO THE BROADCAST TOPICS.

**MANITOBA METIS RIGHTS POSITION PAPER**

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE

**MANITOBA METIS RIGHTS ASSEMBLY**

IN WINNIPEG

ON MARCH 11, 1983

THE POSITION PAPER IS BASED ON COMMENTS SENT IN BY METIS COMMUNITY CONSULTATION GROUPS ALL OVER MANITOBA. THE IDEAS AND VIEWS ARE BASED ON CONSULTATION REPORT FORMS FROM ALL OVER THE PROVINCE. THE PAPER ALSO INCLUDES RECOMMENDATIONS ENDORSED BY REGIONAL COUNCILS AT THE METIS RIGHTS ASSEMBLY IN WINNIPEG ON MARCH 11 AND 12, 1983. THE METIS RIGHTS ASSEMBLY WAS ATTENDED BY NEARLY 300 DELEGATES FROM METIS COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE. OVER 2,000 PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN THE METIS CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS.



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THIS POSITION PAPER IS THE PRODUCT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE MANITOBA METIS FEDERATION ON BEHALF OF THE METIS POPULATION OF MANITOBA. THESE CONSULTATIONS WERE DESIGNED TO PREPARE FOR THE FIRST MINISTERS' CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE RIGHTS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES, MARCH 15-16, 1983. THE MANITOBA METIS CONSULTATION PROCESS INCLUDED:

1. REGIONAL WORKSHOPS TO TRAIN LOCAL CONSULTATION GROUP LEADERS.
2. THE FORMATION OF CONSULTATION GROUPS IN METIS COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT MANITOBA.
3. THE PRODUCTION (WITH CBC ASSISTANCE) OF FIVE WEEKLY, 25-MINUTE CONSULTATION BROADCASTS, INCLUDING INFORMATION, OPINIONS, AND COMMUNITY FEED-BACK. THESE BROADCASTS WERE CARRIED BY 32 RADIO STATIONS SO THAT THE WHOLE PROVINCE COULD BE COVERED.
4. THE PREPARATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF WRITTEN BACKGROUND NOTES, QUESTIONS, AND REPORT FORMS, RELATED TO THE BROADCAST TOPICS.
5. THE ORGANIZATION OF A METIS RIGHTS ASSEMBLY IN WINNIPEG IN ORDER TO:
  - A) PRESENT AND DISCUSS SUMMARIES OF THE INFORMATION COLLECTED FROM CONSULTATION REPORTS.
  - B) ADOPT A MANITOBA METIS RIGHTS POSITION PAPER.
  - C) CONSIDER WAYS OF ACHIEVING IMMEDIATE GOALS IDENTIFIED IN THE CONSULTATION PROCESS.

THE POSITION PAPER IS BASED ON COMMENTS SENT IN BY METIS COMMUNITY CONSULTATION GROUPS ALL OVER MANITOBA. THE IDEAS AND WORDING ARE BASED ON CONSULTATION REPORT FORMS FROM ALL OVER THE PROVINCE. THE PAPER ALSO INCLUDES REFINEMENTS RECOMMENDED BY REGIONAL CAUCUSES AT THE METIS RIGHTS ASSEMBLY IN WINNIPEG ON MARCH 10 AND 11, 1983. THE METIS RIGHTS ASSEMBLY WAS ATTENDED BY NEARLY 300 DELEGATES FROM METIS COMMUNITIES AROUND THE PROVINCE. OVER 2,000 PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN THE METIS COMMUNITY CONSULTATION GROUPS.

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### THE CASE FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

As Metis, we are recognized in the Constitution of Canada as Aboriginal People. This reflects the fact that our ancestors lived here as self-governing people before the arrival and dominance of European settlement and administration.

The French and British fur trade created the overlapping of Indian and European ways which led to the emergence of the Metis as a distinct nation of people. For generations the commercial fur trade played a major role in determining our economic lifestyles. However, it was not until after the expansion of Canada into the West that we began to lose our land, and our political, cultural and economic independence. The Metis of the Red River Settlement hoped that provincial status in Confederation would help ensure the continued strength and vigour of communities.

Sadly, this did not happen and throughout Manitoba today Metis communities face grim economic and social hardship. As a nation, we have lost almost all social control over our own lives.

However, we have never accepted this situation and will tolerate it no longer. Our task is to regain control of our destiny and to re-build the self-reliance and self-respect of our communities. Our right to do this must be detailed in the Constitution of Canada.

SUMMARY OF CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

1. THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA MUST BE AMENDED TO CLEARLY PROTECT OUR RIGHT TO EXIST AND DEVELOP AS A NATION, AND TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO USE OUR OWN LANGUAGES. (PAGE 6)
2. THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA MUST ENSURE THAT THE METIS HAVE A RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP OF LAND AND RESOURCES, INCLUDING SURFACE AND SUB-SURFACE RIGHTS. THESE LANDS AND RESOURCES MUST BE EXEMPT FROM ALL TAXATION OTHER THAN THOSE SET BY METIS GOVERNING AUTHORITIES. (PAGE 9)
3. THE CONSTITUTION MUST ALSO GUARANTEE US GENERAL RIGHTS TO HUNT, FISH, AND TRAP, AND TO HARVEST OR GATHER PLANT LIFE, FOR OUR OWN USE. (PAGE 9)
4. THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA MUST CONFIRM THE RIGHT OF THE METIS TO ESTABLISH OUR OWN FORMS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT. IN ADDITION TO TERRITORIAL CONTROL OVER METIS LANDS THIS RIGHT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT MUST BE CONFIRMED IN REGARD TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS FOR OUR PEOPLE, WHEREVER WE CONSIDER THIS TO BE BENEFICIAL. (PAGE 11)
5. THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA MUST ENSURE OUR RIGHT TO DESIGN AND OPERATE OUR OWN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRAMS AS PART OF OUR RIGHT TO SELF-GOVERNMENT AND SURVIVAL AS A PEOPLE. RELEVANT PROGRAM AREAS TO BE REFERENCED TO THIS RIGHT SHOULD INCLUDE:

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CULTURAL

- I ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF BENEFITS ARISING FROM METIS RIGHTS TO LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES.
- II CHILD AND FAMILY SECURITY.
- III INCOME SECURITY.
- IV JUDICIAL AUTHORITY.
- V HEALTH.
- VI EDUCATION AND TRAINING.
- VII HOUSING.
- VIII FOOD AND CLOTHING.
- IX MULTI-MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS.

(PAGES 15 AND 16)

6. THE CONSTITUTION ALSO MUST ENSURE THAT FEDERAL FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY HAS APPLICABILITY TO THE NEEDS OF THE METIS AS WELL AS TO OTHER ABORIGINAL PEOPLE. (PAGE 16)

## NATIONHOOD AND CULTURE

Up to the time of Louis Riel, our Metis and Indian ancestors lived as independent nations. The Metis were closely bound together by common culture, including their own land base and their own form of self-government.

Since then, our independence has been greatly reduced but our national identity has continued as a result of our cultural traditions and common ways of living, our sticking together and helping each other, our pride and hope, and Metis political organization.

Our Metis culture developed from a blend of Indian and European values and lifestyles. It still features commercial and domestic forms of living off the land; notably hunting, fishing, trapping, the gathering of wild rice, herbs, roots, and berries, and farming. It includes our socials, music, jigging, "Metis Days", crafts such as sash weaving, festive clothing, country food, art, religious beliefs, historical knowledge, and our mixture of mainly Cree, English, Ojibwa, and French languages. All of this is bound together by close family ties, a strong sense of community identity, and by our common struggles for land, better jobs, improved living conditions, self-reliance, dignity, and recognition as a nation.

We belong to the Metis Nation. However, we hold this national identity within Canada and recognize and abide by Canadian sovereignty.

We want to strengthen and enrich our national and cultural identity. To do this we need to:

1. Attain a Metis land base and meaningful economic development.
2. Develop appropriate forms of self-government.
3. Strengthen Metis families; stop the loss of Metis children through the Child Welfare system and promote Metis women's rights.
4. Encourage our elders to pass on knowledge of Metis traditions and life in the past.

5. Train Metis teachers and have our children taught Metis history, language and culture in school.
6. Establish Metis education, training and research institutes and programs.
7. Establish Metis Cultural Centres, including museum and library facilities, with mobile units capable of visiting all of our communities.
8. Promote and initiate Metis festivals.
9. Develop Metis dance groups and encourage Metis musicians, singers, and artists.
10. Recognize Metis historic sites.
11. See that our view of Metis history and aspirations is included in regular school materials and is understood by all teachers.
12. Ensure that we have the continuing right to use our own languages in public institutions.

THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA MUST BE AMENDED TO CLEARLY PROTECT OUR RIGHT TO EXIST AND DEVELOP AS A NATION, AND TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO USE OUR OWN LANGUAGES.

## LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Nations are built on land. Take away the land and you take away our means of survival. Our relationship to the land defines our way of life. Our ancestor's independent occupation and use of the land before European settlement is the foundation of our special national and aboriginal rights today.

We Metis people have always made a living off the land by trapping, fishing, hunting, and farming. No one used to own the land as saleable property; instead all Metis used it as they needed it. We are aboriginal people of this land, therefore we should have the right to use it and its natural resources.

We have lost control of the land. The government decided who would have our land, whether it was legal or not. We lost control through government pressure, fraud and discriminatory laws. The governments of Canada and Manitoba promoted private land dealers, merchants and immigrant settlement. Money and business were put ahead of people. The Metis land promises of the Manitoba Act of 1870 were unconstitutionally, illegally and deceitfully violated.

We were forced out by the railway and new settlers. We helped build their towns and then got kicked out. The process continues with recent industrial projects. Hydro dams have been destroying our fish and other resources.

Our opportunities for making a good living have decreased drastically with the loss of our land. We can't use the land and natural resources to our advantage. The balance that existed in our aboriginal economies has been shattered.

We have little or no control over new products and opportunities for employment. New opportunities are on a short-term basis. Most of our

communities have 85 percent unemployment. Racism or cultural prejudice stops many employers from hiring Native People. We have been deprived of long-term opportunities to make a decent living. Because of this many Metis families have to depend on welfare allowances.

Without a land base we cannot have economic and political independence. No land equals no power. Land is the basis of all industries.

Complete control over the land includes taxes which gives power to the people. If we had control of land we could do what we think is right for our people. The Metis would then be able to set up their own forms of self-government. We could keep out the middlemen and speculators and we could choose equipment which favours local employment. Without land we have nothing to negotiate with. There is nothing we can rely on for security. Land is one of the main sources of financial support for any government.

How much control do we have over land today? --- Just try to hammer a nail without a special permit. Maybe we have control where our outhouses sit, and we're not even sure of that. Mining companies, Hydro and governments have all the say.

The government and rich people benefit from our traditional lands; financial institutions such as banks, the Hudson's Bay Company, mining and mineral exploration corporations, the forestry industry, Manitoba Hydro, the fish trade, oil companies, white farmers, and foreign shareholders, benefit.

We have an historical, traditional, economic, legal and moral claim to our lost land. We therefore deserve land or compensation in the following forms:

1. Sufficient land to build an economic base; land, or money to buy back land.
2. Sufficient money and technological assistance to develop this land base.
3. Sufficient political and legal rights to guarantee preservation and control of this land base; control through elected Metis Councils.

4. New lands, waterways and offshore rights, in place of lands lost; transfers to whole communities through a representative Metis organization; the land should be administered collectively and always remain with the Metis Nation; allocation of individual lots within the collective property would be subject to democratic control.
5. Special compensation for land, lakes, waterways, etc., destroyed or damaged by industrial projects.
6. Exemption from outside taxes on collective, Metis land holdings; surface and sub-surface rights to this land; offshore rights; powers to set collective royalties, taxes and lease rentals on Metis lands.
7. Royalty rights on all natural resource industries.
8. Veto rights over industrial projects which might have a long-term negative impact on our communities.
9. Management control over hunting, fishing, trapping, cutting, and wild rice harvesting, on lands which we use.
10. Right to fish, hunt, trap, and gather, for our own use, subject to community conservation measures.
11. Restriction of registered traplines to Aboriginal People who trap for a living, rather than as a hobby.
12. Each community should have the use of surrounding Crown Lands to enable it to plan the use of land and resources.
13. General compensation money to provide employment and social services in Metis communities.
14. Economic development funds run strictly by Metis people.
15. Compensation for lost lands in the form of money should relate to the present value of the taxes, rents and royalties collected from those lands over the years.

THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA MUST ENSURE THAT THE METIS HAVE A RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP OF LAND AND RESOURCES, INCLUDING SURFACE AND SUB-SURFACE RIGHTS. THESE LANDS AND RESOURCES MUST BE EXEMPT FROM ALL TAXATION OTHER THAN THOSE SET BY METIS GOVERNING AUTHORITIES.

THE CONSTITUTION MUST ALSO GUARANTEE US GENERAL RIGHTS TO HUNT, FISH, AND TRAP, AND TO HARVEST OR GATHER PLANT LIFE, FOR OUR OWN USE.

## SELF-GOVERNMENT

Before 1870 our Metis and Indian ancestors were totally independent, self-governing peoples. They had their own forms of leadership, councils, authority and rules, all based on a strong sense of community responsibility.

In 1870 the Metis of the Red River Settlement achieved provincial status as a safeguard against colonial domination by Ottawa. However, the loss of land and the influx of settlers quickly undercut Metis influence at the provincial level. And, since then, most Metis communities have been deprived of the land and economic base required to support even local municipal government.

North of the province's main agricultural belt, there are over 50 larger Metis communities and more than two hundred very small settlements, under the administration of the provincial Department of Northern Affairs. At present these communities do not even possess normal municipal governing powers. Their elected councils have no power to set taxes or by-laws, to sign contracts or act in any way as legally responsible bodies. Decisions and actions are subject to the veto power of the Minister of Northern Affairs. Government today still possesses colonial attitudes towards Metis communities.

In addition to municipal governing powers, Metis communities must be given extra government authority to allow us to administer and benefit from Metis land bases and to provide our own economic and social services and programs.

More local Metis people should be involved in making community decisions; not outsiders deciding what is right for the Metis. We need control over child care, local school systems, hunting and fishing, our own local police force, training programs, health, recreation and housing. We know the social, economic and cultural conditions in our communities and the services and programs needed for the betterment of our communities. If we were self-governing we also would be able to hire more Metis people.

Our self-governing authorities should be democratically chosen, Metis councils.

The idea of direct Metis representation in Parliament and in the Manitoba Legislature would give us greater recognition and help protect our rights. However, we do not want token seats as an alternative to real self-government.

The Manitoba Metis Federation is the political arm of the Metis of Manitoba. This includes Indians who do not have Indian Act status and who wish to belong to the Federation. The MMF is the only political body of the Metis which we recognize in Manitoba. A major role of the Federation is to encourage community programs, without becoming embroiled in them. The MMF should promote Metis self-government and self-reliance and fight for constitutional recognition of our rights.

THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA MUST CONFIRM THE RIGHT OF THE METIS TO ESTABLISH OUR OWN FORMS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT. IN ADDITION TO TERRITORIAL CONTROL OVER METIS LANDS THIS RIGHT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT MUST BE CONFIRMED IN REGARD TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS FOR OUR PEOPLE, WHEREVER WE CONSIDER THIS TO BE BENEFICIAL.

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MATTERS

### A. Economic Development

The use of our traditional lands and resources have been stripped away from us. Our cooperative community way of life is almost gone. With everything so controlled by government there is no way for Metis to be self-sufficient. We need land and a resource base.

Metis people at the local level must have a say and more control over economic development without outside interference. Goods that are produced here and then sold locally and regionally would cut out the middleman and create an economic base. More monies should be made available for long-term rural development in the north and in the south, together with the establishment of economic development corporations, to develop a wide range of economic options.

### B. Employment

At one time, everyone was involved in productive activities that benefitted both the individual and the community. Old ways of making a living have grown less each year without new opportunities to take their place. Our traditional skills are not recognized, and we seldom are employed for the few job opportunities that become available. We have lost control over the ability to create our own employment.

We must create our own desirable types of employment based on our existing natural resources in ways which will be beneficial to all. The solution is in the control of funds at the community level; with locally determined development strategies pointed toward short and long term ventures. Hiring should be done at the local level. More jobs, training and financial assistance should be made available at the community level. On the other hand, we also need more access to existing forms of jobs.

C. Income Security

In the past people had the means of making their own living and didn't have to depend on welfare as we do today because there is no work. We have moved from communal sharing to an individualized system that breaks down the fabric of community. We have no control over the design of the present welfare system. There will be no income security until an economic base is established. Welfare payments are degrading because they keep people in poverty and because they are administered on an insulting charity basis. Cheap welfare must not be allowed to continue as a substitute for meaningful economic development.

With access to natural resources and our own land we would have a base for proper income security. Metis should handle their own welfare; the money should be administered at the local community level with Metis people hired as social development workers.

We must ensure that quality community support services, facilities, and income supplements, are developed to permit Métis persons with physical, intellectual or psychological handicaps to live in dignity with their own families and home communities. We also must establish comprehensive neighbourhood support services in urban centres to serve Métis families and individuals who migrate to large towns or cities. This would include assistance in securing income benefits to which they are entitled.

D. Child Care Support

The government child welfare system is increasingly replacing community systems of child and family support. Present child care agencies do not involve local people; they just take the children away. Because children are taken away from their extended communities and culture, many are losing the knowledge of their heritage. The existing child welfare system has been disastrous to Metis communities.

We must establish our own child care agencies, this includes the establishment of our own guidelines, with management and control at the local level. We should develop such community based resources as day care, nurseries, foster care homes, and the placement of Metis children in Metis homes, particularly within extended families. Metis people should be trained as social workers, as they understand our needs better.

E. Health

In the past, Metis and Indian people looked after their own health needs by herbs, medicines, mid-wifery, and so forth. Now we have substandard programs which are not adequate to deal with new diseases, pollution in wild meat and fish, poor housing, poor food and poor mental health. Few recall the old ways of treatment and there is an almost total dependence on today's medicine and drugs.

Metis people should have greater input into the health services made available to them. Communities should have some sort of emergency medical facilities complete with qualified staff. More services in drug and alcohol abuse are needed, as well as community homes for nursing the elderly. Dental care services should be provided to all of our communities. It is important to always recognize the close connection between spiritual strength and bodily health.

F. Education and Training

In times past we had our own education based on livelihood, community values, and well-being. Today we are taught European cultural views designed towards adapting to the dominant society, the present school system is based on this. Thus it is foreign to our people; it is not understood by parents and both students and parents are lost.

Metis should have local control over their education and training. We need more Metis trained as teachers and as educational administrators, more emphasis on Metis and Native culture, and the establishment of Metis educational institutes and programs. More trades and university training should be made available for Metis adults, along with proper financial and other support services.

G. Justice

In the past Metis had no jails or lawyers; community pressure kept people in line and elders imposed the penalties on offenders. Today many Metis people are not aware of their legal rights. There are few Metis lawyers and no Native judges. Legal aid should be improved and more counselling should be made

available to explain the legal system. We need more Metis family court workers and community designates to act in an advisory capacity.

Metis people should be in the Legislative Assembly and have a say on all levels of law. Local justice committees and magistrates should be created to maintain law and order at the community level. Metis people should be educated to be lawyers and judges.

#### H. Housing

There is little control over housing because we have neither land nor money. In the past Metis built and owned their own homes. Today government tells us where to build, we rent rather than own, and housing is substandard. Good housing is out of reach for the average Metis.

Housing should be suited to local needs and conditions. Housing projects should be community controlled and make maximum use of local labour and materials.

#### I) Food and Clothing

In times past Metis lived off hunting, fishing, trapping and gardening with the hides of animals used for shoes, clothing and blankets. Today there is nearly a complete dependence on commercial products. It is hard to find store products of our own making.

The problems could be solved by establishing a local economic base. We should establish our own food processing plants, have our own farms, access to existing food resources and our own clothing industry for our own style of clothing. Metis want their right to hunt and fish. Community sharing has been part of our lives all along.

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RIGHT SHOULD INCLUDE:

1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF BENEFITS ARISING FROM METIS RIGHTS TO LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES.
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THE CONSTITUTION ALSO MUST ENSURE THAT FEDERAL FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY HAS APPLICABILITY TO THE NEEDS OF THE METIS AS WELL AS TO OTHER ABORIGINAL PEOPLES.

### CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS

Categories of Metis rights which should be identified in the Constitution of Canada as part of the rights of Aboriginal Peoples include:

1. Land and natural resource rights.
2. Self-government rights.
3. Social and economic rights.
4. Language and other cultural heritage rights.

These rights should be defined within the context of the Canadian Confederation but should reflect the special aboriginal character of our nationhood. They should be entrenched in the Constitution as collective, rather than individual rights. The individual rights spelled out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms would still apply to Aboriginal People, but not at the expense of our collective rights.

Changes to the Constitution which affect the rights of Aboriginal People should require the consent of the Aboriginal People affected.

The constitutional process of defining our special rights and of providing for their implementation and enforcement should continue. These matters are of too great importance to rush through them in a few short months. The Metis should have full representation in the ongoing process.

We are fighting for our future and our children's future. Our leaders should present a united front when fighting for our constitutional rights. Further community consultations should occur. There should be immediate follow up to this round of Metis community consultations. Community action committees should be formed to deal with different areas of concern. The Metis Rights position paper should be made available to all MMF locals and consultation groups.

For over a century, we have been branded as rebels and outcasts. Now is the time to finally win the Metis battle for a legitimate and secure place in Confederation. In this way, full honour will at last be given to the cause of Louis Riel and other Metis heroes of the past and present.