



Le Métis



President's Message

It was most fitting that Winnipeg was chosen as the location for our recent Métis National Council Policy Forum and General Assembly. This is the beating heart of our Métis Nation, the place where we first joined forces to protect our identity, our families, our way of life and our Homeland. At the General Assembly on November 28-29, Governing Members of the Métis National Council passed resolutions demonstrating our continued commitment to defend Métis Nationhood.

Most significantly, the Métis National Council General Assembly approved an official map of our Métis Nation Homeland. The map clearly defines the territories in the North West where our distinct culture, economy and political identity flourished into Nationhood. We also took steps to defend the integrity of our Métis Nation, resolving to take action against unauthorized use of our name and our flag; affirming our commitment to work with Mi'kmaq and other First Nations to defend ourselves against false claims to our identity; and placing the Métis Nation of Ontario on probation for breaching Métis Nation's Citizenship requirements.

The Homeland map reflects the extent of the territory where we built up our way of life, our economy and our communities. We have heard some defensive responses from First Nations and others about this map. It is important to recognize

that the shape of our Homeland has not changed much across more than two centuries of Métis Nation history. We know that First Nations have history on this land going back thousands of years. Métis have shared the land in partnership with First Nations, Native Americans and Inuit for many generations. As Indigenous peoples, we each have rights to the lands. This should not be something to fear, but rather to embrace. Today, there are also Citizens of our Métis Nation living beyond the boundaries of our Homeland. We welcome them to sustain a connection to our Homeland and Nation by applying for MMF Citizenship from outside of the province. Métis are and always have been highly mobile.

Today, it has become imperative that we protect and defend our Homeland, identity, symbols and rights from those making false claims. In recent years, there has been an alarming rise in numbers of individuals and groups, with no tie to our history or Homeland, self-identifying as Métis to lay claim to our unique culture and constitutionally-protected rights. Your Métis Government is taking a strong stand to protect us from this kind of identity theft.

As part of that effort, one of the Métis National Council's own Governing members - the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) - has been placed on probation. For many years, MNO has accepted applications for Citizenship from individuals with no ancestral ties to our Homeland. These individuals may be Non-Status Indigenous people, but are not Métis Nation Citizens under the National Definition adopted by the Métis National Council in 2002: "Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, and is accepted by the Métis Nation. 'Historic Métis Nation' means the Aboriginal people then known as Métis or Half-Breeds who resided

in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland. 'Historic Métis Nation Homeland' means the area of land in west central North America used and occupied as the traditional territory of the Métis or Half-Breeds as they were then known."

This definition was approved by all Métis National Council Governing Members to abide by. If one of our own Governing Members cannot uphold this definition and its requirements for Métis Citizenship, what hope do we have to defend ourselves from outside groups further east that lay claim to our rights and identity? MNO must verify that its members are Citizens of our historic Métis Nation and Homeland, as all other Métis National Council Governing Members have done. Last year, rather than adhere to this basic requirement, MNO unilaterally attempted to alter the boundaries of our historic Métis Nation Homeland to include six additional communities across Ontario, as far east as the Quebec border, without consent from other Governing members of the Métis National Council.

There is only one Métis People and one Métis Nation. We cannot allow others to define or confuse what our Métis Nation is or who our Citizens are. There will always be people out there we still have to teach and to educate about who we are. We have a very big job ahead of us. The next generation should never again have to fight for the most basic recognition and understanding of our rights, our history or our identity.

For those facing illness, grief or loss, I share my sympathies, prayers and encouragement. May every reader take courage as we write a new chapter in our history: one that will find us where we belong, as partners in Confederation. We are here. We know who we are. We have come a long way, and we are here to stay.

Meeqwetch,

∞ President David Chartrand, LL.D. (hon), O.M.

Métis National Council discusses Identity and Homeland at policy forum



The map above outlines the MNC approved official map of the Métis Nation Homeland. The Homeland map reflects the extent of the territory where the Métis historically built their way of life, and established their communities. As the Métis have always been highly mobile we encourage those Citizens living beyond these boundaries to apply for MMF Citizenship.

The Métis National Council (MNC) held the Recognition of the Métis Nation Policy Forum on November 26-27 in Winnipeg. Discussions included the Métis Nation’s government-to-government relationship with Canada, advancing reconciliation, and the Recognition and Implementation of Rights Framework being developed by the federal government.

The policy forum also highlighted the critical issue of groups in eastern Canada that are wrongfully claiming Métis identity. These groups appropriate the cultural symbols of the Métis Nation, while undermining and attacking Indigenous groups like the Mi’kmaq in Nova Scotia and the Innu of Quebec.

Saint Mary’s University professor Darryl Leroux joined the Policy Forum via Skype to provide an overview on the rise of these “eastern Métis” groups. Leroux has looked at over 5000



Saint Mary’s University professor Darryl Leroux provides an overview of the “eastern Métis” rise over Skype.

genealogical records from these groups, finding that 70% of these records trace Indigenous ancestry to one Indigenous woman from the 1600s, and the same handful of women are used to claim Métis identity by thousands of people today. Approximately 30% of the genealogical records Leroux has studied show no Indigenous ancestry at all.

“A key phenomenon that I believe leads to this self-Indigenization that I call “race shifting” is the Powley decision,” said Leroux. “We see that after the Powley decision in September, 2003, there’s actually quite a bit of movement on the ground of individuals and organizations that are formed to oppose Indigenous people’s rights that turn to Métis identity to stop Indigenous peoples from either being able to claim those rights or just oppose those claims.”

The Powley decision affirmed the hunting rights of Steve and Roddy Powley, two Indigenous hunters charged with breaking Ontario law when they killed a moose in 1993. They argued that section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, protected their right to hunt for food because they identified as Métis. The Supreme Court ruled in favour of the Powleys in 2003. However, the definition and “test” they adopted to identify rights-bearing Métis people did not completely align with the National Definition of Métis adopted by the MNC one year earlier in 2002. According to the MNC definition, “Métis” means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of



University of Alberta professor Frank Tough provides information on Law and Métis Geography during the MNC Policy Forum in Winnipeg.

historic Métis Nation Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation. The definition clarifies that the “historic Métis Nation” was based in west central North America.

Under the Powley decision, the term “Métis” may refer to any people of mixed ancestry who developed a distinct community and culture separate from both their Indigenous and European ancestors. While all Métis Nation Citizens who fall under the National Definition meet the Powley criteria, not all those who meet the Powley definition have the historic Métis Nation ancestry required by the National Definition.

This has left a loophole allowing non-Métis people with mixed ancestry to claim Métis identity and rights without having to verify ancestral ties to the historic Métis Nation.

“Eastern Métis” are self-identifying as Métis, but do not have historic Métis Nation Ancestry and have not been accepted by the Métis Nation. Members of these eastern groups may have distant Indigenous heritage, but mixed ancestry is not the same as Métis Nation Citizenship.

According to Leroux, “eastern Métis” groups have grown exponentially in recent years to include tens of thousands of newly self-identified Métis who bear no connection to the historic Métis Nation of the prairies, its culture, its political resistance, or its struggles under discriminatory practices such as the scrip system, residential schools or the Sixties Scoop. Dozens of “eastern Métis” groups are currently operating in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec. A number of these groups have gone to court in an attempt to assert legal status as rights-bearing Métis peoples under the Constitution Act. To date, none of these cases have succeeded.

The MNC acknowledges the threat that fraudulent “Métis” groups present to the Métis Nation’s ongoing struggle for recognition and has taken the next step toward defining “historic Métis Nation Ancestry” by developing a Métis Nation Homeland Map. The map clearly defines the areas in west central North America where the historic Métis Nation emerged and flourished.

In October, the Métis National Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs,



The map above shows the activities of Métis Scrip Commissions from 1885-1925. The orange box shows claims considered under the Manitoba Act, the yellow area are claims considered after treaties, and the white area are claims considered at the same time as treaties.

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agreeing to work collaboratively on the issue of individuals claiming Métis identity with no ancestral connection to the historic Métis Nation. MNC is open to signing similar agreements with other First Nations.

“I want to assure you that you’ve got the support of our Nation in the west,” said Manitoba Metis Federation President David Chartrand, addressing a Mi’kmaq delegate in attendance at the policy

forum. “We need to send a message loud and clear that the Metis Nation will support the First Nations in trying to preserve and protect our identities and our nations.”

The policy forum helped to inform the deliberations of the MNC General Assembly on November 28-29, where the Métis Nation Homeland Map was approved.

Indigenous Youth Leaders tour MMF Home Office

Winnipeg high school students affiliated with the Indigenous Youth Leadership Program (IYLP) visited the MMF Home Office on November 27 and 29.

The Youth leaders from grades 9 through 12 received a tour of the Home Office building, learning about Métis history, culture and governance, as well as the different careers and training opportunities available through the MMF and its Metis Employment and Training Department. Students enjoyed many different activities, including presentations, trivia, and a luncheon, taking away a larger knowledge base about the Métis Nation in Manitoba.

IYLP is a leadership program offered through the Winnipeg School Division to any Indigenous high school student in the division. The focus of the program is to provide opportunities for students to connect and learn more about Indigenous cultures in Manitoba, through engaging with culturally rich activities that build leadership skills and promote school completion.



Métis National Council holds General Assembly in Winnipeg

MNC delegates gathered in Winnipeg on November 28-29 for a special sitting of the Métis Nation General Assembly.

The Assembly discussed Year 2 priorities under the Canada-Métis Nation Accord, signed by MNC and the federal government in April 2017. The Accord provides funding to the Métis Nation in priority areas including housing, employment, training, early learning, and child care. It also outlines priorities for current and upcoming negotiations including health care, education, Veterans, Residential School Survivors, and Sixties Scoop Survivors.

Last year, the Métis Nation General Assembly adopted a resolution mandating MNC President Clément Chartier to review the integrity of the Métis Nation Homeland and Citizenship as related to the Métis Nation of Ontario's (MNO) citizenship registry. President Chartier presented his completed report to the General Assembly on November 28.

In 2002, MNC adopted its National Definition of Métis. Following the adoption of this definition, in 2004 all five MNC Governing Members—Manitoba Metis Federation, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, Métis Nation of Alberta, Métis Nation of British Columbia, and Métis Nation of Ontario—agreed to re-register all of their Citizens to ensure that each met the requirements of the National Definition. President Chartier's report found that MNO did not complete this process.

"MNC's four western governing members have spent years conducting the arduous process of re-registering each Métis Citizen so that only those who meet the national definition can be entitled to be registered as a Métis Citizen and vote in Métis Nation elections," President Chartier told the Assembly. "This process has resulted in a denial



MMF President Chartrand provides remarks on updates to Sixties Scoop, Veterans and Economic Development at the MNC General Assembly held in Winnipeg November 28-29.

of registration rights to many people including long-standing members of those governing members. Contrast this with the MNO's grandfathering in of members that has resulted in many non-Métis voting in our elections and at the MNC General Assembly."

President Chartier's report made six recommendations, including the adoption of a Métis Nation Homeland map which was approved by the General Assembly on November 29. The Homeland map defines the historic Métis Nation Homeland. As one of the criteria for Métis Nation Citizenship is historic Métis Nation ancestry, this new map will help discern Métis Citizens from Non-Status individuals and "eastern Métis": eastern Canadians with mixed ancestry who are claiming Métis identity without a connection to the historic Métis Nation.

President Chartier's report also recommended the suspension of MNO from the MNC pending review of their Citizenship registry. The Assembly responded to this recommendation by passing a resolution to place MNO on probation for one year while they review their Citizenship registry to ensure each of their Citizens meets the National Definition.

"There is a very dangerous precedent being set by Ontario," said MMF President David Chartrand. "Our people are rooted in the prairies. Métis Citizens can trace their history back to the historic Métis Nation Homeland. These are the citizens of the Métis Nation."

MNC delegates passed several other resolutions at the General Assembly, including:

- Resolution for the development of 10-year Métis Nation Accords with the federal government in the areas of Homelessness, Environment, Justice, and Youth
- Resolution supporting the MNC's Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia and similar collaborative arrangements
- Resolution mandating the MNC to take any action necessary to protect the term "Métis Nation" and the Métis Nation infinity flag from appropriation by outside groups

The MNC represents the Métis Nation in Canada at the national and international levels. There are approximately 400,000 Métis Nation citizens in Canada, roughly a quarter of all Indigenous peoples in the country.

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