

MEMORANDUM ON THE GOVERNMENT REPORT: RE HALF BREED
QUESTION

by

J P Brady

Transcribed by David Morin

Question Whether inview (sic) of past experience settlement on reserves is feasible and practicable

Answer It is the opinion and belief of this Association that the only feasible and practicable means of meeting and effecting (sic) a solution of the Metis problem must be through a segregated form of settlement. The problem is essentially one of central control and supervision particularly with respect to medical control and educational facilities. Decentralized or individual settlement would fail to meet the problem in any respect. It is evident that the authorities base their belief on false impressions gained from an incomplete study of the late St Paul Halfbreed Reserve. These erroneous conclusions have resulted from a lack of knowledge of the genuinen (sic) facts and conditions surrounding the above stated "past experience" on which the Government base their grounds for doubts.

The document included in the Report tabled by the Government of the Province of Alberta containing official information of the Department of the Interior Ottawa Re: St Paul Halfbreed Reserve and being an official statement of the facts pertaining to the formation development management and abolishment of this project; (sic) is a document the perusal of which would lead one unacquainted with the problem to an erroneous opinion adverse to any further experiment of a similar nature.

This Association however has given exhaustive study to this project its developments and effects and from authentic information and facts which we are prepared to substantiate it will show conclusively that it is both illogical and unjust (sic) that the Department should endeavor to place the Metis in the light as indicated in the point in question and ascribe to them certain causes conditions and effects over which they exercised (sic) no control.

We have prepared a document entitled the "St Paul Halfbreed Reserve" a copy of which was forwarded to our local Provincial member for St Paul giving further facts and information not contained in the Government Report herein to before referred to. A perusal and study of this document will give fuller information and present a new angle to the point in question raised by the Provincial Government.

Question Whether such Reserves should be adjacent to or removed from existing settlements

Answer This problem is one of meeting the situation and dealing with it when and where it arises. The Metis comprised in the proposed scheme are divided into two classes.

The greater majority favor settlements removed from existing

settlements with the proper health and educational facilities instituted thereon. This class have no permanent residence in any locality, are not settled on any lands and in most cases are appallingly destitute as a study of the economic survey derived from the questionnaire returns in the hands of the Provincial Department of Lands and Mines will show.

A minority who have established themselves on the various tracts under consideration, who in most cases are residents of long standing thereon and who have improvements of a permanent and semi permanent nature. The Fishing Lake settlement of Metis may be cited as a community who have (sic) held their particular location since the earliest settlement of that part of North Eastern Alberta. This class should be given consideration by allowing thwm (sic) to retain their locations.

Question Under what form of management any such reserves should be administered?

Answer It is the opinion and belief of this Association that the form of management most suited to these reserves is that as laid down in our resolutions and recommendations submitted to the Executive Council of the Province of Alberta under date of th January which we quote in part as follows:

“a board of management to be selected from the members of the respective reserves to act in conjunction junction (sic) with such administrative body as may be appointed or set up by the Government to administer the reserves and the affairs of the occupants thereof.”

Question Whether any other form than policy of settlement is preferable.

Answer It is the opinion and belief of this Association as hereinbefore stated in reply to Question the only policy which can effectively deal with the problem is one of segregated settlements with the proper medical and educational control.

Question The extent to which Canada may be considered to have met any obligations to these people.

Answer The Half breed question is directly associated with the extinguishment of the Indian title. The claims of the Half breeds were jointly recognized at that time by the Federal Government who admitted their claims to share in the Indian title because of their possession of the country with the Indians. The Indian title was extinguished by Treaties made of that day as between the Government of Canada and these people thereby (sic) creating for those desirng (sic) to enter into Treaty what is noe (sic) known as Treaty Indians and wards of the Dominion Government governed.

by a special Department devoted entirely to their welfare and interests. Treaty Indians therefore (sic) may (sic) be considered as having received a fair measure of settlement by Canada in satisfaction of any obligations due them by the Government of Canada.

In dealing with the Half breeds the Government of Canada issued Scrip a measure which would have been commensurate to the needs of the time had there been afforded a measure of protection whereby they would have been protected in the full enjoyment and satisfaction of the concession granted them. For reason that no protective measures were instituted for the protection of these primitive people the terms and manner in which these concessions were given created also a legal means whereby people of superior training and perception the White race acquired the concessions intended as settlement of the obligations due them by the Dominion Government.

It may be said (sic) and we fully emphasize this statement (sic) that the most ardent advocates of Scrip Issuance were the aforesaid class who dealt with a people extremely primitive uneducated and entirely lacking in business (sic) ability foresight and sense of value (sic) values.

No provisions were made in the matters of health education and training to enable the Halfbreeds to take their place in the new structure of society into which they were helplessly thrown. Thus they find themselves at a disadvantage in their contacts with a race of superior social and cultural attainments. The welfare of the individual and the protection of life and property are the primary duties of the state and we submit that in these regards the Government of Canada has failed to discharge their obligations to the fullest extent.

Question If not whether any further obligations is that of the Dominion or the Province on partly Dominion and partly Provincial.

Answer It is the opinion and belief of this Association that since the transfer of the natural resources by the Dominion Government to the Provincial Government the Halfbreed question involves four Departments of the Provincial Government: Lands and Mines Education Public Health and Agriculture and is therefore by that reason entirely a Provincial issue.