

Royal Commission

on

Aboriginal Peoples

Presentation

from

Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

**Definition:**

A Métis is someone of mixed blood, who has Indian and non-Indian ancestry.

**Mandate of GDI:**

The Métis people of Saskatchewan have an agenda to re-establish Métis self-government and to take hold of the twenty-first century. The mission statement of the Gabriel Dumont Institute is "to promote the renewal and development of Métis culture through appropriate research activities, materials development, collection and distribution of those materials and the design, development, and delivery of specific educational and cultural programs and services. Sufficient Métis people will be trained with the required skills, commitment and confidence to make the MSS goal of Métis self-government a reality"<sup>1</sup>

**2.0. Success of existing programs**

Gabriel Dumont Institute has an amazing record with students in post-secondary programs. For instance, at the recent graduation ceremonies for the Business Administration students at Cumberland House, 19 out of the 23 students received Diplomas or Certificates from GDI and the University of Regina. At the

<sup>1</sup>Towards Self-Government: A Mandate for the Nineties.

Native Human Justice Graduation Exercises just concluded in Prince Albert, 23 out of 25 students received from GDI and the University of Regina the Diploma in Human Justice. These figures are consistent with what happens in every program begun by GDI. This is an 87.5% success rate in these two courses. Lest you think this is unusual, we have kept track of our students in the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program. Since 1980, when the program began, 222 students have graduated and the average rate of success to 1991 is 85%.<sup>2</sup> This can be compared with the 30% success rate of Métis people in Regional College programs and SIAST courses.<sup>3</sup>

Other programs which have been successfully completed within the last year are Health Care Administration and Wild Rice Harvesting and Maintenance in Île-à-la-Crosse, and Home Care/Special Care Aide in North Battleford. Courses currently under way include a Heavy Equipment Operator course at Batoche, a pilot Housing Administration Course in Saskatoon, and the Métis Heritage Survey Program.

## **2.1. Reasons for success**

In providing education and employment training opportunities, which are accessible and appropriate for Saskatchewan's Métis peoples, programs run through the Gabriel Dumont Institute have been designed with a number of special features.

GDI programs are, for the most part, community based. In essence, this means that courses leading to diplomas, normally attainable only by attending

<sup>2</sup> Other sources are available in Appendix A

<sup>3</sup> Source to be checked.

classes on campuses of universities and technical colleges are offered in towns and urban centres across Saskatchewan. The programs so far selected are all connected in some way with the skills necessary for self-government.

Most GDI programs offer a preparatory academic program. This ensures that students are able to put into practice the skills they have acquired, before they actually become employed.

### **3.0. 5 Year Plan. Strategy and Rationale**

The major goal of the Gabriel Dumont Institute is to prepare Métis people for self government through education.

#### **3.1. Exercising Self-Government**

The Gabriel Dumont Institute will take a lead role in educating for self-government and nation building. This will include developing, collecting and distributing materials pertaining to Métis languages, culture, history and self-government. Self-government will allow Métis people to establish programs which would be useful for further development. Statistics show that the Métis population is younger than the non-native population and is growing faster.<sup>4</sup> It is estimated that by the turn of the century, fully one third of all school children in Saskatchewan will be Métis and Indian.<sup>5</sup> This means that schools must have a Métis and Indian curriculum in place before that time.

The Métis have a historical right to their own education system. Treaty #3 indicates that “halfbreeds” have the same rights and privileges as granted to the

<sup>4</sup> Partners in Action. P.5

<sup>5</sup> Indian and Métis Education. P.1

Indians under this.

For the past several years, the Gabriel Dumont Institute has received annual block funding for training from CEIC through the Third Party Coordinating Group.

In 1991/92, the Aboriginal Labour Force strategy, entitled "Pathways" was implemented. Under Pathways, federal funds are now directed toward a Regional and six Local (Métis) Area Management Boards.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute must apply to the LAMs to deliver programs in their areas.

Although the Gabriel Dumont Institute is recognized as the "Institute of Choice," it cannot always be as economically competitive as other organizations. Therefore, it must continue to work as closely as possible with the LAM and the RAM Boards.<sup>6</sup>

### **3.1.5 Cross-Cultural Training**

There has been systemic and attitudinal racism and stereotyping toward Métis since the Hudson's Bay Company arrived in Western Canada. The Gabriel Dumont Institute is in a unique position to develop and deliver cross-cultural training programs which help others to overcome fears and myths about non-Euro-Canadian people. We are in the process of putting together a team of people to deliver programs in various governments.

#### **3.2.1. Current Employment Situation**

Most Aboriginal men are employed in the semi-skilled, manual labour areas. The percentage of semi-skilled Aboriginal men is 24.97% as compared to 17.68% in

<sup>6</sup> Gabriel Dumont Institute Strategic Plan p.25

the total work force. The percentage of manual workers amongst Aboriginal men is 16.49%.

Women are concentrated in the clerical areas. 67.35% of full-time Aboriginal women workers are clerical staff. Clerical positions for women are often equated with semi-skilled positions for men. Therefore, we can say that Aboriginal women and men are largely employed at the least skilled level in employment charts.<sup>7</sup> When we consider that about 70% of Aboriginal people do not graduate from grade twelve,<sup>8</sup> it is not surprising that so few are employed

<sup>7</sup> Chart in the Appendix D

<sup>8</sup> Chart in Appendix D