

The Métis in the 21st Century Conference

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Saskatoon

Day 3 – Tape 1

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Andy Siggner: So let's look at the growth in, by province. The big story here is that for some reason there's been huge growth in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Now the numbers are really small, and we're talking about going from about 900 people reporting Métis identity in '96 to like 2,100 or 2,400 in, in 2001 but the growth, of course, is huge. And you gotta ask yourself, what's going on there? And we'll start to do that, eventually, as we, we get into the data. So, overall we had 43% growth, but in, in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, we're looking at a five-year growth of about 25 to 30%. Still big, very big, but not as big as in some of the other provinces. Ontario more than doubled and BC grew by 73% in five years. This shows the percentage share of every province or territory that's Métis. I think I dropped, no, Nunavut's there, too. Yeah, but there have been, no, numbers are very low, but you can see, for example, that in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, you're looking at roughly around 5% of the population of those two provinces are Métis, about 2.2% for Alberta, etc. So you get a sense of what the share of Métis are in each province.

The population by area of residence. This is an important question, which I think will have to be given some consideration in light of the fact that almost 70%, 68% of the Métis population are living in urban areas. It stayed relatively stable between '96 and 2001. The rural dropped a little bit and the urban non-metropolitan area, the one in the middle there, which is urban areas of less than a hundred thousand, grew, grew a little bit from 28% up to 29%. But you can see that the metropolitan area pop is staying relatively stable. Although it's growing, it's just, it shares, not shifting.

This looks at one-year migration rates into and out of rural areas and urban areas, both the smaller urban and larger urban areas. What's

interesting, and people often talk about the rural-urban shift, is that we're seeing that, in fact, smaller urban areas lost a little bit of mi-, migrants, a net loss of about half a percent, while the big metropolitan areas gained about a third of a percent of, but the, the actual interesting thing is the in and out migration. The blue and the grey bars, which shows that there's as many, almost as many out migrants as there are in migrants, and that's why you get a low net there. So there's, there is a, a churn effect going on here, even in the Métis population. It's, it's much more pronounced for the Indian population, but it is occurring here as well. So this means that, at least in the smaller urban areas, about one in twenty Métis are moving over the space of a year.

Here's the age structure of the population. As you can see, the Métis population is a young population. About a third of it is under age fifteen. You can see, as I was mentioning to you earlier, that the fertility rate has declined. You can see that 0-4 age group down at the bottom is a much smaller set of bars than the 5-9 year olds. And that's an indication that fertility is declining. But overall, it's a very young population. There will be a, a heavy inflow into the labour force age group over the next ten years. If you look at those where 5-9 and 10-14, as they reach 15-19 and start entering the labour force, and this is particularly true, of course, in the Prairie provinces, where the demographic reality is that this population that's now below fifteen is, is going to be representing about 25% of the new entrants into the labour force in the next, in the next ten years.

This quickly takes a look at the employment rates currently for the Métis compared to the non-Aboriginal population. You'll see, actually, they're not doing so bad. The employment rate in the urban metropolitan areas, the largest cities, sitting at around 63% compared to the non-Aboriginal, which is pretty much, they're pretty close. In rural areas, there is a gap between where Métis employment rates are and non-Aboriginal rates are. I must say, though, although I haven't shown it here, is that there was an improvement in the employment rates between 1996 and 2001. What that means is that

Métis people benefited from the overall improvement of the economy in that time period because their, their employment rates improved in that time.

This looks at the distribution of the population by highest level of schooling. The Métis population are improving their levels of schooling, particularly at the higher than high school age groups, higher than high school levels, I should say. For example, those with university degrees increased from 3.7 up to 4.9, almost 5%. The non-Aboriginal population, I think, is sitting somewhere around 13%, but still, so there is a gap. But there has been improvement over the time period. And those with less than grade nine and less than high school completion have declined in that period of time, and that's the good news.

Okay, maybe what I'll do is, I'll skip through...these are just other socio-economic characteristics. You can take a look at them. And we'll finish with my conclusions. The demography of Aboriginal peoples is complex. It, typical fertility, mortality kinds of growth factors are not always applying. The growth of the Métis population is affected, it seems, more by other factors than just fertility and mortality. Some of those factors, I think, are related to the following. Although we haven't got hard proof, we certainly know from the last two days that these are the kinds of issues that are affecting Métis people. Cultural consciousness is raising, there's greater pride in being Métis. Various judicial court decisions, both pending and those that have occurred, have likely affected the growth of this population. Government policy changes and, dare I say, the infamous p-word, programs, have, have also probably increased the interest in, in declaring oneself. And, of course, there's been improvements, we think, in census coverage of, particularly, the Métis population, but there is a lag between the two.

What I'm gonna do is finish with a, a last wonderful quote that I found in a book by, in an article by, by Krieger, where he says, "For members of a given collectivity, from the family, to this day deciding who is and who is not included in the group generally determines its capacities. The fact that people may report their ethnic, religious, and other identities differently from one census to the next to suit preferred statuses is significant as evidence of

active adjustment of the population composition and to structure to changing circumstances." And I think that's an important kind of quote to take us into the twenty-first century, and what we might expect to see with the growth of the Métis population. It ain't over yet, folks. It's gonna continue and we'll wait to see what happens with *Powley* and *Blais* as to what impact it will have on the demographics, but mark my words, 2006, it'll be big as well. Thank you very much.

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