

The Metis Society of Saskatchewan has been in existence in its present form since the late 1960s. In 1976 the name of the Organization was changed to the Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan to reflect the inclusion of Non-Status Indians as a distinct membership. This remained in place until 1988, at which time the Organization reverted to its original name and original Metis-only membership.

The major reason for the return to a Metis-only Organization was the constitutional developments in the 1980s. We, the Metis, were finally acknowledged in the highest law of the land in s. 35 of the Constitution Act 1982. With this also came four constitutional conferences at which the representatives of the Aboriginal peoples were to be invited for the purpose of identifying and defining rights for inclusion in the Constitution.

This made it clear that the Metis, as a people and nation, had to once again represent ourselves. This prompted the creation of the Metis National Council in March 1983 and the return to a Metis-only Organization in Saskatchewan in 1988. Only the Metis can represent and speak for ourselves. It is only our people who can promote and develop our rights agenda and rebuild our communities and political movements.

Since 1979, our leadership has been elected by the ballot-box system of one-person, one-vote. In 1985 there were 4,692 votes cast for the President's position as compared to 5,055 votes in 1989. We will once again be going to the polls on February 22, 1992. In this sense, we are the only Aboriginal Organization in Saskatchewan that has universal suffrage for our members, sixteen years of age and over.

In addition, every Metis person in the province has a right to membership, and consequently a right to seek elected office and/or vote in elections. We currently have over 100 Locals divided into 12 Regions. Each Region elects its representative to the Provincial Metis Council by regional ballot, and the Executive are elected by province-wide ballots.

Our Organization is currently involved in seeking constitutional rights for our people, particularly our inherent rights to a landbase and self-government. We are also engaged in promoting and developing programs and services which are sorely needed by our people. Some of these needs to varying degrees have been met through our Affiliates.