

3. URGENT NEED FOR THE PROVINCIAL MÉTIS SENATE AND ELDERS COUNCIL

As stated previously, the Métis Society of Saskatchewan is facing a variety of challenges from diverse demands of its membership and the changing reality which impose tremendous economic and political difficulties on the Métis people in Saskatchewan. In order to address these issues, both MSS and its membership as well as affiliates spell out the urgent need of the establishment of the Provincial Métis Senate and Elders Council.

The most prominent role of the Senate is to provide in-depth historical information and knowledge to help MSS in its strategic decision making and systems planning. Moreover, the Senate will certainly be able to identify contemporary issues related to economic, resource and cultural development in Métis communities. In addition, the Senate will have convincing authority to expose the current and historical barriers and difficulties in a way that constructive advice will be generated from this exposure.

In recognition of this urgent need, MSS has held several organizational meetings and a workshop to discuss the role of the Senate. A number of decisions and recommendations have been made. Among them, notable are:

1. Elders are one of the most important part of Métis human resources and also the most critical source of historical and contemporary knowledge about Métis people and Métis culture. Special and specific organizational measures must be taken to capture their knowledge and to institutionalize the communication channels between them and MSS as well as between them and the governments. The most urgent measure are believed and recommended unanimously by all the participants to be the establishment of a Provincial Métis Senate and Elders Council;

2. The Senate, with the assistance of GDI and all other MSS affiliates, should perform the duties to identify the utilization of elders' expertise and the areas they can participate within their institution and programs;

3. The Senate, whose selection will be developed and ratified by MSS, will be an advisory body of MSS. The elders and Senate's Code of Ethics should be developed by discussions and communication and also ratified by MSS;

4. The Senate should also perform as a permanent institute to carry out on-going dialogues with governments and other interested parties on Canadian Constitution, land and resource, economic development, Métis education, culture and self-government;

5. The Senate will act as mediators with disputes but shall have no political authority;

6. The Senate must participate in the curriculum development for Métis education and Métis language programs in order to provide accurate Métis content;

7. The Senate will be responsible to developing a Métis elders roster to meet demand of elders' services from different institutions. Comprehensive elders' biographies must be also developed;

8. The Senate will perform as an official communication channel of MSS to share information and common interest with other provinces.

4. ROLES OF THE SENATE AND ELDERS COUNCIL

The Senate will work in the capacity of advisory function of MSS. This function can be performed at local, provincial and national levels. The mandate of the Senate will be basically to be political advisors to help define the Visions and Missions of MSS.

The senators will become part of the circles of elders. They will always work closely with elders as their representatives. They will at times be requested to make presentations for the Gabriel Dumont Institute and its affiliates.

The senators should define and implement, with the consultation and ratification of MSS, the Code of Ethics of the Senate and Elders Council. The Code of Ethics will include ethic standards, function descriptions, and disciplinary measures. Based on the Code of Ethics, a protocol system will be established by the Senate and Elders Council.

Membership in both the Senate and the Elders Council will be a life time position.