



Government of
Saskatchewan

Information
Services

Legislative Building
Regina, Canada
S4S 0B3

(306) 787-6281

News Release

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug. 18, 1986

Indian and Native Affairs Secretariat 86-597
The Lebret Farm Land Foundation Inc.

LEBRET FARM TRANSFER TO METIS AND NON-STATUS INDIANS

The provincial government will transfer title of the Lebret Metis Farm to the Lebret Farm Land Foundation Inc., it was announced today by Napoleon Lafontaine, chairman of the board of the foundation, and Indian and Native Affairs Minister Sid Dutchak.

The 1,153-hectare (2,860-acre) farm is located north of Lebret, which is six kilometres east of Fort Qu'Appelle. The land has been under lease to the foundation since April 30, 1986. The farming operation provides employment, training and income for local Metis and Non-Status Indian people.

The Metis and Non-Status Indians have an historical association with the land which goes back to the period prior to 1865, when the village of Lebret was founded. From the 1930s, a Metis farm was operated by the Oblate Fathers in addition to their mission and residential Indian school. The Metis and Non-Status Indians of the south east area have sought ownership of the farm since the 1970s.

"The government based its decision to approve the transfer on two main factors," Dutchak said.

"First, the unique historical relationship between the Metis and Non-Status Indian people of the south east area and this particular area of land and, second, the special continuing interest which the membership of the foundation has shown in developing this land for the benefit of local Metis and Non-Status Indian people."

Dutchak added that the transfer should not be misconstrued as a Native land claim. He said it is a singular action by the government in response to a unique situation.

The chairman of the foundation said he feels the transfer will further Metis and Non-Status Indian economic development in the area.

"The board of directors of the foundation are pleased with the provincial government's decision to give us legal title to the property," Lafontaine said.

"The ability to plan long-term will assist in full development of the farm's potential. Ownership of the land will enhance the foundation's ability to obtain financing and other funding for agricultural programs and any other projects which would further develop training and economic development for the Metis and Non-Status Indians in the south east area."

Since April 30, 1986, 20 area Metis and Non-Status Indians who had been receiving social assistance became self-sufficient through work associated with the operation of the farm.

86-597.....3

"The government has been very impressed with the initiative, hard work and subsequent success of the Lebret Farm Land Foundation," Dutchak said. "We are confident that they will continue to build this land into a valuable asset to the Metis and Non-Status Indians of the south east area."

-30-

For further information, contact:

Napoleon Lafontaine
Chairman of the Board
The Lebret Farm Land Foundation Inc.
Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan
Phone: 332-4598

or

Joe Leask, Secretary
Indian and Native Affairs Secretariat
Regina, Saskatchewan
Phone: 787-6250