

HISTORY

DRAFT

From the beginning, Native Rights or Aboriginal Rights, have been recognized in Canada. A consistent pattern in Law has recognized these rights. So has government policy. As a result a variety of agreements and settlements regarding aboriginal rights were made with native people. These agreements now blanket approximately one-half of Canada.

Since, by definition, aboriginal and treaty rights inure to individuals by virtue of the fact that they are native people, the mere fact that, an individual native person is excluded from the Indian Act does not affect his native rights. In other words native rights are derived from one's racial and cultural origins rather than from provisions of the Indian Act.

Now withstanding the lack of difficulty in precisely determining who is a Native person, a number of varied agreements and settlements with Natives have taken place. For example, the treaties.

The treatment
of the
Halfbreeds.

The halfbreeds or Metis on the other hand were treated quite differently. No separate policy by the Federal Government was put in place to maintain the Metis as a category of persons with special status. Since the halfbreeds lacked this government protection, our rights were recognized but, never settled in a satisfactory manner.

This was particularly true after the Riel Rebellion or Riel War depending on your point of view.

The Treaty-negotiations were recorded in a book entitled, 'The Treaties of Canada with the Indians 1880, by the Federal Government negotiation Lieutenant Governor Morris from Manitoba. He wrote about the situation as follows:

THE HALF-BREEDS.

Were passing from the subject, I cannot refrain from alluding to the Half-breed population of the North-West Territories. These people are mainly of French Canadian descent, though there are a few of Scotch blood in the territories. Their influence with the Indian population is extensive. In Manitoba there is a large population of French Metis and Scotch Half-breeds, and they are proud of their mixed blood. This race is an important factor with regard to all North-West questions. His Excellency the Earl of Dufferin, with his keen appreciation of men and facts, astutely seized the position and thus referred to them in his speech at a banquet in his honor, given by the citizens of the whittome hamlet, and now city of Winnipeg, on the occasion of his visit to the Province of Manitoba in the year 1877.

"There is no doubt that a great deal of the good feeling

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thus subsisting between the red men and ourselves is due to the influence and interposition of that invaluable class of men, the Half-breed settlers and pioneers of Manitoba, who, combining as they do the hardihood, the endurance and love of enterprise generated by the strain of Indian blood within their veins, with the civilization, the instruction, and the intellectual power derived from their fathers, have preached the Gospel of peace and good will, and mutual respect, with equally beneficent results to the Indian chieftain in his lodge and to the British settler in the shanty. They have been the ambassadors between the east and the west; the interpreters of civilization and its exigencies to the dwellers on the prairie as well as the exponents to the white men of the consideration justly due to the susceptibilities, the sensitive self-respect, the prejudices, the innate craving for justice, of the Indian race. In fact they have done for the colony what otherwise would have been left unaccomplished, and have introduced between the white population and the red man a traditional feeling of amity and friendship which but for them it might have been impossible to establish."

For my own part, I can frankly say, that I always had the confidence, support and active co-operation of the Half-breeds of all origins, in my negotiations with the Indian tribes, and I owe them this full acknowledgment thereof. The Half-breeds in the territories are of three classes--1st, those who, as at St. Laurent, near Prince Albert, the Qu'Appelle Lakes and Edmonton, have their farms and homes; 2nd, those who are entirely identified with the Indians, living with them, and speaking their language; 3rd, those who do not farm, but live after the habit of the Indians, by the pursuit of the buffalo and the chase.

As to the first class, the question is an easy one. They will of course, be recognized as possessors of the soil, and confirmed by the Government in their holdings, and will continue to make their living by farming and trading.

Half-breeds are
due to the Western
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free groups.
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those who live after
the habit of the Indian

The Future of the Indians.

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The second class have been recognized as Indians, and have passed into the hands among whom they reside.

The position of the third class is more difficult. The loss of the means of livelihood by the destruction of the buffalo, presses upon them, as upon our Indian tribes; and with regard to them I reported in 1876, and I have seen no reason to change my views, as follows:

"There is another class of the population in the North-West whose position I desire to bring under the notice of the Privy Council. I refer to the wandering Half-breeds of the plains, who are chiefly of French descent and live the life of the Indians. There are a few who are identified with the Indians, but there is a large class of Metis who live by the hunt of the buffalo, and have no settled homes. I think that a census of the numbers of these should be procured, and while I would not be disposed to recommend their being brought under the treaties, I would suggest that land should be assigned to them, and that on their settling down, if after an examination into their circumstances, it should be found necessary and expedient, some assistance should be given them to enable them to enter upon agricultural operations."

Morris in his address to the halfbreeds of Lake

Half Breeds. (nothing copied)

RG-10 Black, vol. 3613, file 4041

Appendix "B"

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When Treaty No. 4 was negotiated with the Indians, the

Halfbreeds living in Southern Saskatchewan presented a petition

to Lt. Governor Morris. In the petition they asked that the

Government of Canada also remember them, and that they be

permitted to keep the land they had broken along the Qu'Appelle

River. They also asked that their rights to fish and hunt

be protected, not only from the encroachments of whitemen,

but also from "arbitrary" action by the Indians. In addition,

the Halfbreeds asked the Government of the North West Terri-

ories and Canada to regulate the buffalo hunt, as well

as protect the rights of trade of the Halfbreeds. (Half-

breed Petition of Sept. 11, 1874).

Morris answered their requests by saying he would see

what he could do to permit the Halfbreed people to keep their

lands along the river, and stated that he was almost certain

that their rights would be respected. However, he did point

out, that he was only giving such assurances to the Halfbreeds

already in the Qu'Appelle area, for all persons of mixed

extraction who would subsequently move into the area would

be treated like White Settlers. Morris also stated that he

would ask the North West Council to look into the possibility

of regulating the buffalo hunt, and consider passing other

laws to protect game. (Morris Address to the Halfbreeds

*Qu'Appelle
was
Halfbreed.*

The priests of Qu'Appelle have lived:

1. have a long history of residence and the halfbreeds in the Qu'Appelle area were not (if at all) satisfactorily dealt with by the Federal Government. The Federal Government regarded the halfbreeds as someone else's (the province's) responsibility.

The activities of the governments in neglecting their responsibilities coupled with the desire of the churches to expand their religious influences prompted the churches becoming involved intensively with the halfbreed population in Western Canada.

There were many conflicts to which the native people particularly the halfbreed had become victim. To

1. There was the settlement of aboriginal claims. This conflict results from injustice of not receiving a satisfactory settlement of claims. Always there was the question of who was responsible Federal or Provincial Government.
2. There was the conflict of the English and French over a number of issues:
 - A. Religion (Catholic or Protestant)
 - B. Language (French or English)
 - C. Political affiliations (Liberal or Conservative)
 - D. Schooling (Separate schools or Public schools)

The establishment of Industrial schools and agricultural activities had its beginnings in the 1800's. In a letter from Father Fourmond of the catholic church to the Department of the Interior Minister White regarding an Industrial school.

"We had before the Rebellion a large farm so as to show them a good example and to encourage them (halfbreeds). Since then our lack of means has prevented us from continuing the same. I then formed an agricultural society which about 50 young halfbreeds are members but to keep afloat this, your society, the miserable times through which we are now passing we would require special assistance and encouragement from honourable and powerful person like yourself. We have loaned oxen and ploughs even furnished several ten dollar to enable parties to enter for their lands, but what we have done is nothing compared to what remains to be done. One of the best ways to make good farmers of our halfbreeds would be to give particular attention to that portion of the petition relative to an Industrial school."

Industrial schools and
agricultural activity
both.
Halfbreeds and
Treaty Indians

Industrial schools and agricultural activity were both for the halfbreeds and Indian under treaty. The halfbreeds particularly were encouraged to develop a land base to support the tax system. The objective was to have the native people contribute to the tax system.

The Lebret Metis Farm Lands were obtained by the provincial government mainly from the Oblates (the Oblates are an order of the catholic church).

It is very questionable exactly how the Oblates came into possession of these lands. From oral testimony the origin of much of this land has its origin in script. From the individuals who had this land as script and how this transferred to the Oblates give rise to many questions. Namely whether the Oblates paid for the land or was it received for nothing?

One thing is clear that the land, when acquired had obligations attached. This is manifest in the commitments which the Oblates required the provincial government to assume, when the sale of Land transfer of 1945. This is discussed later in the report.

From information from land transfers examples of no transfer sums registered coupled with statements of resident of the area who were involved in the farm. Oblates got the land often for \$100 and sometimes nothing. Also the Oblates got the land as the commitment to impliment the program which was discussed.

The program of the operation of the farm was part of a larger plan to independance for individual Metis. The idea was to train the Metis family while training, the family head would receive an employment allowance or wage as it was called. This allowance was less than he could have made in a comparable work situation. After training for five to fifteen years the family would be established with land, equipment, and livestock. This program would establish independance. This program resulted in two things:

- (1) The Metis family would be a contributing tax base for the community. Also because of community involvement would become a model citizen or parishoner.
- (2) Metis families would no longer be recipients of Relief therefore, a saving would be realized to the community.

This program was the original intent and deserves merit.

The provincial government became very involved in this program of the Oblates in the thirties. At that time the local municipalities petitioned the provincial governments to assist because the metis were becoming a heavy charge of relief in the municipality at Fort Qu'Appelle.

What resulted was very active involvement of the provincial government in the Oblate Metis Farms. Farms were jointly run or established in municipalities which were heavily burdened. E.g., Crescent Lake, Cooked Lake, Willow Bunch, Lestock, etc. Again the original objective of assisting metis to become tax payers was always encouraged. The farms were run jointly by the government and the Oblates in the late thirties and early forties. There were contracts signed between the government and the Oblates to carry out the established activity of the farm.

The contract between the Oblates and the provincial government came up for renewal as the CCF was elected in Saskatchewan. The government did not continue the contract with the Oblates, but continued the farm operation. The Department of Social Welfare continued the activity of a Metis Farm which was to train and employ the metis residents of the

region. The continuation of the farms was the fulfillment of the original intent. Also this continuation of the farms and the fulfillment of the intent as originally outlined in the program was manifest in the establishment of Co-operative operations. Each metis farm had the establishment of these co-operatives as part of the operation of the farm. Always the farm continued even until today as the Metis Farm for the benefit of the metis people.

LAND DESCRIPTION

Lebret is located fifty five miles east of Regina.

Lebret Metis farm is located in the Qu'Appelle Valley north of the village of Lebret.

There are two farms which are now together make up the present Lebret Metis Farm.

One is land which was historically the farm used as part of the Industrial school for treaty Indians.

The other is land which was always used as Metis Farm.

PROPOSAL

Our proposal is the fulfillment of the program and intent for which historically the farms were established.

namely:

- (1) Training of individuals and families
- (2) Establishment of individual in farming activities

The would be accomplished by establishment of a economically viable farm unit. This unit would be self-sustaining and viable. The farm unit would have as part of the operation a training component. Utilizing existing land buildings we would continue the present operations of grain farming, hog operations, cow-calf operations, dairy and other farming activities that would be viable units.