MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO

MNO 101 & MNO Governance
MNO Community Information Sessions
February 2016
The Métis are… a distinct Aboriginal peoples with a unique history, culture, language and territory that includes the waterways of Ontario, surrounds the Great Lakes and spans what was known as the historic Northwest.
MNO citizens are descendants of the Métis people that emerged in west central North America with their own language (Michif), culture, traditions and way of life. Collectively, these people refer to themselves as the Métis Nation, which includes Métis communities within Ontario.

from the Preamble – Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES OF CANADA

CONSTITUTION ACT, 1982

35. (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.
(2) In this Act, “aboriginal peoples of Canada” includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.
WHO ARE THE MÉTIS?

National Métis definition

"Métis" means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of Historic Métis Nation ancestry, and is accepted by the Métis Nation.

Métis National Council *
November 2002
MÉTIS POPULATION DYNAMICS

- 389,780 Canadians Self-Identify as Métis
- 86,020 Ontarians Self-Identify as Métis
- 87% live in Ontario and the Western provinces
- 69% live in urban areas

The Métis population in Ontario rose from 73,605 in 2006 to 86,020 in 2011

28% of the Métis population in Canada was 14 years old or younger in 2011 compared to 16% of the non-Aboriginal population.

Source: 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada
The MNO was established in 1993

The MNO Secretariat was created as the legal and administrative arm of the Métis Nation of Ontario in 1994

The MNO Secretariat represents and advocates on behalf of its registered citizens with respect to collective rights, interests and aspirations, as well as providing social, economic, and cultural supports to Métis individuals, families, and communities through a province-wide service delivery system.

The MNO maintains the only recognized provincial Registry of Métis Citizens in Ontario.
THE MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO (MNO)

Statement of Prime Purpose

- Expresses the values and principles of the Métis Nation of Ontario
- Embodies the vision of the Métis nation and is central to all aspects of the MNO.

“Guided by our spiritual values we aspire to attain our highest potential”

From the Statement of Prime Purpose
Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) Consists of 19 elected representatives which include:

- MNO President
- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Secretary Treasurer
- 4 Senators
- 1 Youth Representative
- 1 Post Secondary Representative
- 9 Regional Councilors
The locations of the MNO’s 29 Chartered community councils.
THE MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO

Governance
MÉTIS CULTURE & WAY OF LIFE

Traditional Knowledge

- encompasses all aspects of the Métis way of life – biological, ecological, economic, social, cultural and spiritual.
- Traditional knowledge is part of the collective memory of a community, and is passed orally from one generation to the next through songs and stories, as well as through actions and observation.
MÉTIS RIGHTS


Five year agreement (November 2008), to

- build on the bilateral process between MNO and Ontario
- strengthen, strengthen the relationship between Ontario and the MNO,
- Enhance MNO capacity
- Recognize the distinct identity and culture of the Métis
- Improve quality of life for Métis children, families and communities in Ontario

Renewed for a second five year term (April 2014); building on 2008 Agreement with

- Increased focus on Métis rights through “advancing reconciliation between the Crown and the Métis people”
- Commitment to jointly pursue discussions with Canada on Métis rights and the Crown’s consultation duties
- New commitments to advance initiatives that support Métis children and youth be all they can be
Advancing Métis Rights: MNO-ADM Joint Working Group

• Established further to the MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement to support its implementation

Commits high level representatives of MNO and Ontario to meet regularly and ensure progress is made on the goals and objectives set out in the MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement

• Joint research and assessment of historical Métis communities

• Establishing a Root Ancestor methodology to support the Independent Review of the Harvester Card Registry and eventual removal of the cap on Harvester Cards
Advancing Métis Rights: Interim Harvesting Agreement

- Successfully negotiated with Ministry of Natural Resources in 2004 following the *R. v. Powley* decision to protect Métis harvesters who were continuing to be charged by MNR officers

- Provided protection for Métis harvesters, harvesting for food within their traditional territories

- Capped MNO Harvester Cards to no more than 1,250 but committed MNR and MNO to work toward an independent review of the Harvester Card Registry and eventual removal of the cap

- In anticipation of the independent review, MNO negotiated an additional 200 Harvester’s Cards with MNRF in September 2015
Other Advancements: Federal Engagement on Métis Rights

- Federal government consultations on Canada’s comprehensive and specific claims policies

- Doug Eyford Report, *A New Direction: Advancing Aboriginal and Treaty Rights* (April 2015), recommended:

  “Canada should develop a reconciliation process to support the exercise of Métis s.35 rights and to reconcile their interests”
Other Advancements: Federal Engagement on Métis Rights

• In March 2015, President Lipinski met with Benoit Pelletier, the Federal Government Special Representative who undertook a review of Canada’s Specific Claims Policy

• President Lipinski emphasized that Canada’s ongoing exclusion of Métis from both specific and comprehensive claims policies is inconsistent with Canadian and International Law

• Mr. Pelletier’s final report was submitted to the Harper Government in summer 2015, however, it was not made public
Other Advancements: Federal Engagement on Métis Rights

• In June 2015, Tom Isaac was appointed as the Ministerial Special Representative to engage with Métis organizations to
  • Lead engagement Métis governments, provincial and territorial governments, other Indigenous organizations and others to map out a process for dialogue on Section 35 Métis Rights
  • Engage with the Manitoba Métis Federation to explore ways to advance dialogue on reconciliation with Métis in Manitoba in light of the Manitoba Métis Federation SCC decision (2013)
Harry Daniels v. Canada Case at SCC

• Métis leader, Harry Daniels started this case in 1999 when he was president of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

• Daniels sought declaration that Métis and non-status Indians were “Indians” within the meaning of s.91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867

  • Trial judge concluded Métis and non-status Indians were within s.91(24)

  • Federal Court of Appeal confirmed that Métis are within federal jurisdiction under s.91(24) but overturned the trial decision regarding non-status Indians

• SCC heard case October 2015 – decision is expected in early 2016
Liberal Party Commitments to the Métis Nation

On September 29, 2015, the Liberal Party announced its “Reconciliation with the Métis Nation Plan,” which included the following commitments relevant to the MNO:

– Work with Métis groups, as well as the provinces and territories, to establish a federal claims process that recognizes Métis self-government and resolves outstanding claims

– Convert current year-to-year funding, made available to provincial Métis communities for Métis identification and registration, to a permanent initiative
Liberal Party Commitments to the Métis Nation (continued)

- Undertake a review, in partnership with Métis communities, of existing federal programs and services available to the Métis Nation, to identify gaps and areas where strategic investments are needed in order to improve Métis quality of life.

- Renew the Aboriginal Strategic Employment and Training Strategy (ASETS) and also expand its funding by $50 million per year.

- Work with Métis communities, and existing Métis financial institutions, to develop a Métis Economic Development Strategy. We will also provide $25 million over five years to implement this new strategy.

- Fulfill the commitment in the Kelowna Accord to enhance existing scholarships and bursaries available to Métis students, in partnership with the Métis Nation.
Federal Government Cabinet Mandate Letters

On November 14, 2015, the Prime Minister released his mandate letter to Minister Carolyn Bennett, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, which provides the following direction in relation to reconciliation with the Métis Nation:

- Work, on a nation-to-nation basis, with the Métis Nation to advance reconciliation and renew the relationship, based on cooperation, respect for rights, our international obligations, and a commitment to end the status quo.
Other Key Federal Government Commitments

• The new federal government has made two other key commitments that are critical to the MNO:

  • To fully implement the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Final Report and the 94 Calls to Action in the Report

  • To launch a National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
“Guided by our spiritual values, we aspire to attain our highest potential”

from the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose

Merci - Thank You - Marsee