

STATEMENT *of* PRIME PURPOSE

of the
MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO

Where We Got Our Name

The paternal ancestors of the Métis were the former employees of the Hudson Bay and Northwest Fur Companies, and their maternal ancestors were Indian women of the various tribes.

The French word “Métis” is derived from the Latin participle mixtus, which means “mixed;” in French “mele;” it expresses well the idea that is sought to be conveyed.

However appropriate the corresponding English expression “Halfbreed” might have been for the first generation of the mixture of blood, now that European blood and Indian blood are mixed in every degree, it is no longer general enough.

The French word “Métis” expresses the idea of this mixture in the most satisfactory manner possible, and thus becomes a proper race name. Why should we care to what degree exactly of mixture we possess European blood and Indian blood? If we feel ever so little gratitude and filial love toward one or the other, do they not constrain us to say: “WE ARE MÉTIS!”

– Louis Riel, 1885

Who We Are As A People

We, the Métis are a people of the lands, which gave rise to our history and tradition and culture.

We call those lands the Métis Homelands. The Homelands stretch from the lakes and rivers of Ontario; cross the wide prairies, traverse the mountains into British Columbia and into the northern reaches of the Northwest Territories. They include the hills and valleys of the north-central American States.

These are our lands. They are Métis lands. They are the lands of our past which nurture us today and which we value as the precious foundation of our future.

As Métis who live in the Homelands, we hold it to be a fundamental truth that we are one of the Aboriginal peoples of the Americas.

The Métis Nation continues today to be the embodiment of our past, the source of sustenance for our present while giving rise to our hopes and aspirations for the future.

We are a Nation, born of independence, and self-sufficiency whose teachings are founded on the values of honesty and truth. We are proud of our rich heritage. We are inspired by the values and traditions of our ancestors. The strength of our society is based on democracy, freedom, fairness, equality, generosity, justice and the customary and written law of our people. Above all, we cherish harmony and peace.

As Aboriginal people we hold sacred the rights of the individual and of the collective. We have respect for each other, for the land and for the animal and plant life that surrounds us. We are people who honour and respect the family, our elders who hold the key to the past, and our children, who are our future.

Guided by our spiritual values we aspire to attain our highest potential.



Now Therefore We Declare As Follows:

We, the Métis Nation, are a distinct Nation among the Aboriginal peoples in Canada and as such our Aboriginal and treaty rights are recognized and affirmed under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

We, the Métis Nation, have the inherent right of self-determination and self-government; We, the Métis who live within the Métis Homelands of Ontario, desiring to bind our people together to collectively promote our common cultural, social, political, and economic well-being, have founded the Métis Nation of Ontario, to be our representative body with the following aims and objectives:

- ∞ to research, publish and promote the genealogical documentation of the Métis, and to establish and maintain a registry of the Métis Citizens of Ontario;
- ∞ to establish democratic institutions based on our inherent right of self-government;
- ∞ to encourage the full participation of all Métis in the Métis Nation;
- ∞ to promote and foster community development;
- ∞ to re-establish land and resource bases;
- ∞ to develop prosperity and economic self-sufficiency within the Métis Nation;
- ∞ to provide care and support necessary to meet the fundamental needs of the citizens of the Métis Nation;
- ∞ to promote the improved health and wellness of the individual, the family and the whole Métis community;
- ∞ to establish effective means of communication for the Métis Nation;
- ∞ to encourage academic and skills development and to enable citizens of the Métis Nation to attain their educational aspirations;
- ∞ to promote the history, values, culture, languages and traditions of the Métis Nation and to create an awareness of our proud heritage;
- ∞ to promote Métis artistic and cultural achievement;
- ∞ to ensure that Métis can exercise their Aboriginal and Treaty rights and freedoms and in so doing, act in a spirit of cooperation with other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people;
- ∞ to establish good relations and maintain our historic alliances with all Aboriginal peoples for the pursuit of our common interests and goals;
- ∞ to continue our affiliation with the Métis National Council for the representation of the interests of the Métis Nation in Ontario at the National and International levels;
- ∞ to gain the recognition and respect of the Métis as a Nation and a people.
- ∞ to protect and preserve the land and waters within our homelands for future generations.